

Bus crash
kills 16 on
Indonesia's
Java Island

P8



India New
Zealand FTA
promises zero
duty exports

P9

P11

Starc
questions ICC
role in DRS
payment



"The law applies to leaders of all parties. Why is only the BJP opposing it? The bill is being implemented to protect peace. BJP is strongly opposing because they indulge in hate speech."
—Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

Only provocative speakers oppose Hate Speech Bill: CM

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defended the Hate Speech Bill, saying only those making inflammatory remarks were opposing it

What does it propose?

The Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025 proposes 2–10 years' imprisonment for offenders and introduces collective liability for organisations involved in hate-related offences. The Karnataka govt argued that the Bill is required because no existing Indian law explicitly defines or addresses hate speech, exposing a long-standing gap in the country's criminal framework despite frequent public debates on the issue.



MYSURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said opposition to the proposed Hate Speech Regulation Bill was coming only from those who indulge in provocative and inflammatory speeches. He maintained that people who refrain from making such statements have nothing to fear, as no cases would be registered against them. Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah questioned the BJP's strong reaction to the Bill, remarking that those who have not committed any wrongdoing should not feel threatened. Citing a Kannada proverb, he said there was no reason to react defensively if one was not guilty. He rejected claims that the Bill targets specific individuals or parties, asserting that it would apply equally to leaders across the political spectrum. The Chief Minister said the legislation was aimed at preserving peace and communal harmony, noting that instances of hate speech had risen in recent years. He alleged that the BJP's opposition stemmed

Hindu outfit seeks Governor's intervention

BENGALURU: The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, a right-wing organisation, has urged Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to withhold assent to a bill aimed at curbing hate speech and hate crime, terming it "unconstitutional" and a "serious threat" to freedom of speech and religious liberty. In a memorandum, the representatives of the organisation and other outfits opposed the Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025, and warned that its provisions could be misused, like suppressing dissent. It claimed that the bill is "vague, overbroad and unconstitutional, and poses a serious threat to freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution, as well as to religious freedom."

from its frequent use of divisive rhetoric and asked whether hate speech could ever contribute to social stability. His remarks came amid criticism from Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, who accused the Congress-led government of attempting to impose an "undeclared Emergency" through the Bill. She said the Belagavi legislature session should have focused on North Karnataka's issues instead of introducing the hate speech law. Responding to other alle-

gations, Siddaramaiah dismissed claims of misappropriation under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, stating that funds are transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts. He clarified that payments for February and March were yet to be released and would be verified before disbursement. On internal party matters, Siddaramaiah said no individual is bigger than the Congress and that leadership decisions rest with the party high command, whose decision he would accept.

QUICK READ

H-IB visa holders stranded in India as interviews delayed

NEW DELHI: Indian H-IB visa holders returning to India this month for work permit renewals are stranded after US consular offices abruptly rescheduled appointments, according to immigration lawyers cited by the Washington Post. Appointments between December 15–26 were postponed due to the US government's expanded social media vetting policy, now applied to all H-IB and H-4 applicants. Lawyers reported dozens of affected clients, raising concerns for employers awaiting their return.

Govt committed to Aravallis, Yadav denies Cong claims

NEW DELHI: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Monday strongly refuted Congress allegations, calling them "misinformation and lies" regarding the redefinition of the Aravalli Hills and Range. Speaking at a press briefing, he emphasized that the Modi government remains fully committed to protecting and restoring the Aravallis, with legal mining allowed in only 0.19% of the total area across Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat. Delhi, which has five Aravalli districts, permits no mining.



HC seeks Sonia, Rahul Gandhi's response in National Herald case

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday issued notices to Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, seeking their response on an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging a trial court order that had refused to take cognisance of the ED's chargesheet in the National Herald money laundering case. The trial court had earlier dismissed the complaint against the Gandhis and others, observing that the case was based on a private complaint filed by Dr. Subramanian Swamy under Section 200 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and not on a First Information Report (FIR), making cognisance legally impermissible. The court also noted that it would be premature to consider the merits of the allegations at this stage, includ-

ing any fresh FIR registered by the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the ED, argued that the trial court's order was flawed and could set a precedent affecting other similar cases. Justice Ravinder Dubeja, after hearing submissions from both sides, posted the matter for further hearing on March 12, 2026. The ED alleges that Young Indian, a company in which Sonia and Rahul Gandhi each reportedly hold a 38% stake, acquired the debt of Associated Journals Limited, the publisher of National Herald, for a nominal sum of Rs 50 lakh. This transaction allegedly enabled Young Indian to control AJL's real estate assets nationwide, valued at nearly Rs 2,000 crore. Other accused include Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, Dotex Merchandise, and Sunil Bhandari.

After Hadi, another student leader shot in B'desh

DHAKA

Unidentified gunmen on Monday targeted another youth leader in Bangladesh, just days after the death of prominent student activist Sharif Osman Hadi, who succumbed to gunshot injuries in a Singapore hospital last week. Motaleb Sikder, a student leader, was shot in the head in Khulna city, located in south-western Bangladesh. He was immediately rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital in critical condition, according to The Daily Star. Hospital sources, cited by The Kaler Kantha newspaper, reported that Sikder was bleeding heavily upon arrival. Doctors initiated emergency treatment, and the officer-in-charge later confirmed that Sikder was out of danger. The bullet reportedly entered near one ear, pierced the skin, and exited through the other side without causing fatal damage. The attack follows the high-profile killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a 32-year-old Inqilab Mancha spokesperson and key figure in the stu-



dent-led protests last year that contributed to the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government. Hadi was shot by masked assailants on December 12 during an election campaign in Dhaka's Bijoynagar area. He was undergoing treatment in Singapore when he died on Thursday. Hadi had been a candidate for the upcoming February 12 general elections. Sikder's shooting has intensified concerns over escalating violence targeting youth leaders in Bangladesh, highlighting the continued unrest and fragile security environment in the country. Authorities are investigating both incidents to track down the perpetrators and ensure public safety.

Who is Motaleb Sikder?

Motaleb Sikder is a leader of National Citizen Party (NCP) and heads the Khulna Division head of party and also serves as its workers front's central coordinator, as per the statement released by the outfit after the shooting incident. Sikder, 42, reportedly was a key part of Bangladesh's violent student-led 2004 uprising. Sikder is a resident of Sheikhpara Palli in Sonadanga. Miscreants opened fire at around 11:45 am, targeting Sikder's head, near Gazi Medical College Hospital in the city.

CM, DCM working like brothers: Pilot

BENGALURU

Playing down reports of a power tussle within the Karnataka Congress, AICC General Secretary Sachin Pilot on Monday said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar are working together harmoniously and would accept any decision taken by the party high command. Speaking to reporters with Shivakumar seated beside him, Pilot said the issue was settled as Shivakumar had referred to Siddaramaiah as his elder brother, while the Chief Minister had called him his younger brother. He said the Karnataka government was functioning with integrity and dedication, and that the Congress was fulfilling all promises made before the elections. Pilot expressed confidence that the party would return to power in the state with a strong majority in 2028. He said every Congress worker in Karnataka would abide by the leadership's decision, stressing that the party's focus remained on governance and delivery.

Siddaramaiah denies post-Sankranti 'revolution'
Karnataka Chief Minister



Siddaramaiah on Monday reiterated that all decisions regarding the Congress party in the state are determined by the high command. Speaking in Mysuru while hearing public grievances, he emphasized, "I am making it clear once and for all. The Congress high command's decisions are final. I have spoken with the high command and they will announce their decision. That ends everything." To a query on speculations over a "revolution" (kranti) after Sankranti (January 14), the Chief Minister said, "There is no revolution, or anything of the sort. Whatever the situation, the party high command's decision is final." Responding to AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's suggestion that party issues could be resolved locally, Siddaramaiah noted, "Whatever issues exist in the party, the high command will resolve them."

K'taka man kills pregnant daughter over inter-caste marriage

HUBBALLI

A 20-year-old pregnant woman and her unborn child died after she was allegedly beaten by her father for marrying a Dalit man in Karnataka's Hubballi taluk. Police have arrested three people, including the woman's father, in connection with the crime. The victim, Manya Patil, sustained severe head injuries during an attack at Inam Veerapura village under Hubballi Rural police limits and died at a private hospital on Sunday, December 22. Her unborn child also did not survive. Her husband's parents were injured and are undergoing treatment. According to Dharwad Superintendent of Police Gunjan Arya, Manya's father, Prakashgouda Patil, along with relatives, assaulted her at her husband's residence using weapons such as an axe and an iron sprinkler pipe. The attack took place around 6.30 pm, and she succumbed to her injuries about three hours later. Manya had married Vivekananda, from the Madar caste, earlier this year after the two met in college. The marriage had faced strong opposition from her family despite prior police warnings.

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INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FTA

India, New Zealand announce conclusion of FTA negotiations

NEW DELHI

India and New Zealand on Monday announced the successful conclusion of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), describing it as historic, ambitious and mutually beneficial. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation with his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon, during which the two leaders confirmed that talks on the pact had been wrapped up. In a video message, Luxon said the agreement would create major opportunities for New Zealand farmers, growers



and businesses by expanding exports, generating jobs and boosting incomes. He added that New Zealand's exports to India are projected to rise from

Highlights of FTA

- Zero Duty market access on 100 per cent of India's exports.
- Dedicated quota of Temporary Employment Entry visa for 5,000 professionals and 1,000 Work and Holiday Visas.
- New Zealand has committed to facilitate investments of USD 20 billion into India over the next fifteen years.
- Launched on March 16th 2025, the fastest with a Developed Country FTA concludes the year on a high note for all Indian exports including textiles, pharmaceuticals, leather, Engineering Goods, Agricultural products

about USD 1.1 billion to USD 1.3 billion annually over the next 20 years. Highlighting India's scale, Luxon said the FTA would provide Kiwi businesses access

to a fast-growing market of nearly 1.4 billion consumers. According to official statements, the agreement is expected to be formally signed within the

next three months and implemented sometime next year. As part of the pact, New Zealand has committed to facilitating investments worth USD 20 billion in India over the next 15 years. India's commerce ministry said the deal provides duty-free access for Indian goods, with New Zealand agreeing to eliminate tariffs on 100 per cent of its tariff lines. This is expected to significantly enhance the competitiveness of India's labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, marine products, gems and jewellery, handicrafts, engineering goods and automobiles.

QUICK READ



Driver arrested for running over drunk man

Bengaluru

A man who was drunk and fell on the road after being hit by a bus has died in the city. Chethan Kumar, who was walking on the main road of Hegganahalli under the influence of alcohol, lost control and fell on the road, when a bus coming from behind ran over him. As a result, he died on the spot. On the other hand, the bus driver Narendra, who was scared after the accident, fled the spot. After examining the CCTV footage of the incident, the Kamakshipalya traffic police traced the driver Narendra and arrested him. He was a resident of Peenya, and a case has been registered in connection with the incident, said Dr. Anoop A Shetty, DCP, West Division, Bangalore Traffic.



Bengaluru University students protest against management

Bengaluru

Hostel students staged a protest at the Jnanabharathi campus to express their anger against the management. The students of UG and PG departments have alleged that the university administration is negligent in resolving the problems and lack of infrastructure in the hostel. The students, who blocked the road in front of the girls' hostel in the northeastern state, alleged that the university administration was ignoring their grievances and concerns.

Boy assaulted; CWC steps in

Bengaluru

In a shocking incident, a boy was allegedly kicked and assaulted at Thyagarajanagar under Banashankari police station limits. After the incident, the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) visited the house of the victim and counselled the child. After collecting information about the incident from the child and parents, the CWC officials have decided to counsel other children who have been subjected to such abuse in the area.

Forest department to seek alternative for alienated land

The physical verification of forest land will provide us a detailed picture of how much deemed forest lands can be retained and how much as to be alienated

BENGALURU

In a decision claimed to retain the green cover in Karnataka, the state forest department is expected to seek land compensation for every hectare of deemed forest to be alienated. With 3.3 lakh hectares of deemed forest under review with a joint survey being undertaken by forest and revenue department, a physical verification is being taken up at the ground level across Karnataka.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said, he has given the department a deadline of March 2026 to complete the survey with the revenue department and provide a report on the extent of land which



may have changed characteristics over the decade. But we have all the intent to retain the 3.3 lakh hectare of land under the deemed forest category, said the Minister.

Khandre said every acre of land which will be lost on account of its characteristics being changed or wrongful

inclusion of villages, schools and agriculture land being added to it will be compensated with alternative revenue land.

The previous government had done an unscientific job of adding habitations and lands which had lost its character of deemed forest simply

to comply with the SC orders. Now, we will try to rectify the same by getting land which has no habitations and convert the same into a deemed forest, said the Minister.

Khandre said the joint survey has been slow in certain parts of the state like Chikmagalur but is expected to be completed within the time frame. We intend to have the reports by March, give or take a month, he said.

Meanwhile, Khandre said the tiger census will be launched as early as in the next two months and will be carried out across the state. We definitely believe there is an increase but the census will give us the exact picture, he said.

Air India drops nonstop San Francisco flights from B'luru

BENGALURU

Air India's decision to discontinue its nonstop San Francisco services from Bengaluru and Mumbai from March 1 has triggered confusion and concern among passengers who have made bookings, particularly for travel beyond February 28.

An Air India spokesperson told, the airline has made changes to its North America schedule to better deploy capacity and manage rising costs linked to ongoing airspace restrictions. As part of the rejig, AI will significantly scale up its Delhi operations to North America. The airline will increase Delhi-San Francisco services from seven flights a week to 10, while Delhi-Toronto services will also rise to 10 weekly flights. The airline said passengers affected by the withdrawal of



the Bengaluru-San Francisco and Mumbai-San Francisco routes will be re-accommodated on alternative services or offered full refund. Air India will seek to reinstate non-stop service from Bengaluru and Mumbai, should airspace restrictions ease," the spokesperson added.

Responding to the news on social media, a passenger took to X, I have flights booked on BLR-SFO (with return) in May and DEL-SFO (with return) on May 26. What do I do. Others questioned the rationale behind the

move, noting the Bengaluru-San Francisco route is largely operated using Boeing 777-300ER aircraft.

We booked months ago to avoid last-minute hassles, now, everything is uncertain, said Nakul Tirtha, a Bengaluru-based tech professional.

An Air India passenger posted, I have family travel planned for May. What happens to our return tickets. An Air India official stated that they would reach out to the affected persons. However, while the expanded Delhi services of Air India are expected to absorb some of the displaced demand, the withdrawal of direct flight connectivity to San Francisco from Bengaluru and Mumbai is likely to have an impact on the tech professionals and business travelers who rely heavily on non-stop links to the west coast of United States of America.

'Central govt destroying rural economic security'

BENGALURU

AICC General Secretary Sachin Pilot has criticized the central BJP government for completely destroying the economic security of rural areas by making changes to the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Speaking at a press conference at the KPCC office on Monday, he said, the Indian government has made a historic mistake. For the first time in the country's history, the name of a scheme named after the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhiji, has been changed. For so long, the names of schemes with other names were being changed to Mahatma Gandhiji's name. The Indian government is completely destroying the economic security of the rural areas of the country.

BIS unveils standardised hospital billing

BENGALURU

In a major move to protect patients from hidden costs and confusing medical bills, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has introduced a new system for hospital billing. The new guidelines aim to make hospital charges transparent, easy to understand and uniform across the country. The decision comes after a long-standing demand from citizens.

A study by community platform Local Circles found 53 percent of patients in India did not receive fully itemised bills. Many were forced to pay lump-sum package charges without knowing what they were actually being billed for. Also, 74 percent of people surveyed wanted the government to mandate a fixed billing format to prevent overcharging.

BUDGET OUTLAY MAY BE CUT BY 6% DUE TO REVENUE SHORTFALL

BENGALURU

The state government is looking at an inevitable option of revising down the budget size for 2025-26 with a huge revenue shortfall looming large for multiple reasons, including the GST rate rationalisation.

Senior government officials said the budget size for the current fiscal year, estimated at Rs 4.09 lakh crore is likely to be cut by around 6 percent to Rs 3.85 lakh crore. If this happens, it will be the third successive time that the budget outlay is being reduced from the estimated figure and it also means that there will be a shortage of funds for development since the capital expenditure will be cut proportionately.

The state finances are really in a difficult condition with our revenues spiralling down. And the downward revision of the budget outlay looks in-



Senior government officials said the budget size for the current fiscal year, estimated at ₹4.09 lakh crore is likely to be cut by around 6 percent to ₹3.85 lakh crore.

evitable. Ironically, this is despite the robust economic growth in Karnataka and blame is on the wrong steps taken by the Centre in the guise of taxation reforms, said CM's economic adviser Basavaraj Rayareddi.

The Mid Year Review (MYR) of state finance pre-

sented in the legislature has stated that the GST rate rationalisation is expected to result in the state suffering a revenue shortfall of around Rs 9,000 crore from commercial taxes.

It said Karnataka will suffer another Rs 9,500-crore dent because of the Centre's decision to levy cess on luxury and sin goods and not to share it with states. Apart from this, a slowdown in the real estate sector, coupled with glitches in the e-khata portal that dealt a blow to property registration, has resulted in a 1 percent decline in revenue from the same period last year. Things are looking up now after the slow pace seen in the initial two quarters. We expect a remarkable recovery in the last two quarters and are trying hard to reach the target, said Mullai Muhilan, Inspector General of Registration and Commissioner Of Stamps.

Unethical corporate-communal nexus behind crises: Vasuki

BENGALURU

Communist Party of India (Marxist) polit bureau member U Vasuki said that the unethical alliance between corporates and communalists was the root cause of all problems in the country.

We need to sharpen our weapons, but these are not knives or sickles. The idea to resist exploitation is a weapon. Idea to challenge status quo and claim our own rights and dignity is a weapon, she said, speaking during the state-level Janadhani rally organised by CPI(M) Karnataka state committee that saw attendance of masses from across



the state. She slammed the Modi-led NDA government for replacing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with Vikasit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act.

Right from its inception, the Modi government is destroying Rural Employment Act, and this is the last nail in the coffin. They are using Lord Ram's name to sell their bogus product. For Sangh Parivar, Ram's name is the Unique Selling Point (USP). By latest changes, the basic point of guarantee in the Act is taken away.

Residents protest at KBG's house after demolition drive

BENGALURU

Protests were held near revenue minister Krishna Byre Gowda's residence after a demolition drive in Yelahanka's Kogilu village razed over 200 houses in Waseem Layout and Fakir Colony Saturday. The drive was carried out by Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) to clear encroachments for a proposed solid waste processing unit.

Over 300 residents protesting near the Minister's Sahakar Nagar home demanded alternative housing and temporary shelters for those left homeless after the demolition. Gowda, who represents the



Byatarayanapura constituency under which the area falls, is said to have assured a discussion with the residents' representatives. The residents claimed the demolition drive, which began at 4:30am, was conducted without any notice

and told that power supply to the area had been cut three days earlier. Several organisations, including Dalit Sangharsha Samithi, Praja Vimochana Chaluvali, and Dudiya Janara Vedike are representing the residents and



Dalit progress rooted in leaders' struggles: GT Devegowda

BENGALURU

MLA GT Deve Gowda said that educational institutions that create social equality through education are the real heaven.

Speaking after participating in the 99th Founder's Day celebrations organized at Dr Ambedkar Technical College, Mallathahalli, on the occasion of MH Jayaprakash's 99th birth anniversary, he said that the caste system was in full swing in the 70s. Dalits could not come into our village wearing slippers. There was a heartbreaking situation where separate cups were kept for them and water was served all over the state. He recalled that the Dalit society was able to achieve progress as a result of the struggle of eminent personalities like Jayaprakash, who understood the importance of education.

Dalits did not get proper representation in the field of cooperatives. Not a single Dalit was given the post of president in 30 district unions. He said that during my tenure, a Dalit was able to be elected as president.

He expressed his sadness that it is difficult for those who speak directly to find a presence in the political arena. PVP Trustee S Shivamallu

PVP Trust President and retired IPS officer S Mariswamy said that praising a person is of no use. His ideals should be cherished in the minds of the people. Only then will the practice make sense, he said. The education sector is changing day by day. He said that it is a challenge for all educational institutions to adapt to this dynamic.

said that Ambedkar was the first Dalit person to understand the power of education. If educational institutions are built, lakhs of families will get food. He said that the responsibility of leading this educational institution of JP, which has been built with immense expectations, lies with all the staff including the trust.

Chamundi constituency was deprived of basic amenities. PVP Trust Secretary Dr Mahadev praised GT Deve Gowda as the pioneer of the development of this area. Ambedkar Educational Institution was built by Dalits. But it is not reserved for Dalits. It is not even completely managed by Dalits. People's opinion needs to change, he said.

Pulse Polio drive records 95 percent coverage

BENGALURU

The city achieved 95 percent coverage in Sunday's Pulse Polio drive, vaccinating 10.77 lakh children under five. With 68,798 children still pending, door-to-door vaccination will continue across the city till December 24.

Strong public participation marks the National Pulse Polio Immunisation drive in Bengaluru, with authorities intensifying door-to-door outreach to cover the remaining children before December 24.

Bengaluru witnessed an encouraging response to the National Pulse Polio Immunisation campaign held on Sunday, with health officials achieving nearly 95 per cent coverage across the city. According to the Public Health Department of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), a total of 10,77,134 children under the age of five were administered the polio vaccine during the day-long drive.

The immunisation campaign was conducted from 8 am to 5 pm across all civic zones, including GBA Central, West, East, South and North. Special vaccination booths were also set up at high-footfall locations



such as Majestic bus stand, BMTC terminals, railway stations and other transit points, where 1,00,746 children received the vaccine.

In addition to booth-based vaccination, health teams also reached out to families directly. During monitoring visits near residential areas, 1,741 children were vaccinated after being identified as missed cases. Officials stated that the Greater Bengaluru Authority has set a target of vaccinating 11,34,988 children under the age of five as part of this campaign. While the single-day drive covered a majority, 68,798 children are still pending vaccination.

To ensure complete coverage, the Pulse Polio campaign will continue until December 24. From Tuesday onwards, ASHA workers, Anganwadi staff and medical personnel will conduct door-to-door visits across the city to vaccinate children who were missed during the main drive.

DEMAND FOR REHABILITATION

QUICK READ



Tractor Hits Bike; Couple Killed Devadurga

A tragic incident occurred today on the Nagaragunda Road in Devadurga taluk, where a tractor hit a motorcycle from behind, resulting in the death of a couple. The deceased have been identified as Haseena Begum (28) and Ranjan Saab (31) from Arashinigi village. The couple was traveling by motorcycle from Arashinigi to Devadurga when a tractor coming from behind allegedly rammed into their bike. As a result, the woman died on the spot, and her husband, who was seriously injured, died on the way to the hospital while being transported in an ambulance, according to local residents. A case has been registered at the Devadurga Police Station in connection with the incident.

Surprise Inspection of Central Jail by City Police Commissioner

Kalaburagi
City Police Commissioner, Dr. Sharannappa S.D., IPS, conducted an unannounced visit to the Kalaburagi Central Jail on December 22. During the inspection, he reviewed the overall security arrangements, including the functioning of CCTV systems and the conditions of inmates' cells. The Commissioner assessed the existing security measures and provided guidance to the jail authorities on areas requiring improvement. He emphasized the importance of maintaining strict surveillance and ensuring proper protocols to enhance safety within the facility. The visit aimed to ensure that the jail operates efficiently while upholding high standards of security and order.

Protest Against Veil Incident, Slipper Thrown at CM Nitish Photo

RAICHUR

Muslim women, under the leadership of the Waqf Protection Association, held a protest at Tipu Sultan Park here against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, alleging that he disrespected a Muslim woman doctor by pulling her veil (niqab). The protesters said that Nitish Kumar had insulted Muslim traditions and demanded that he immediately apologize. They stated that in a democratic country, every community has the right to follow and wear their traditional clothing, and his behavior was strongly condemnable.

During the protest, women

expressed their anger by hitting Nitish Kumar's photograph with slippers. They said that minorities, especially minority women, are being repeatedly insulted and that such incidents can no longer be tolerated. Association President Syed Mohammed Saheb and Secretary Tausif Ahmed said that such actions go against the Constitution and religious freedom.

Several people, including Akbar Hussain Nagundi, Farzana Khanum, Nanyar Tayyaba, Mateen Ansari, Syed Inayatullah Quadri Saheb, Syed Murshad Jani Saheb, Mohammed Masoom, Zafar Ahmed, M.D. Shafi, and Tabassum, took part in the protest.

ALUMNI DRIVE GROWTH

Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College Alumni Meet

BIDAR

Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College has become a household name in the district through quality education. Many students who studied here are serving in various high positions, and several others have achieved success in different fields and built a bright future. The fact that alumni are settled in India and abroad is a matter of pride for us, said Dr. Reshma Kaur, Vice President of the Guru Nanak Education Society.

She was speaking at the alumni meet and celebration program held at Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College located on Mailoor Road in the city.



She stated that Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College, established in 1980 by Sardar Joga Singh, is one of the oldest and most prestigious colleges in the district. She said the institution is being taken forward on the path shown and the dreams envisioned by Joga Singh, with continuous efforts toward development. She appealed to alumni to actively contribute to the insti-

tution's progress in areas such as curriculum development, industry collaboration, internships, research support, and placements. Emphasizing that the institution is moving toward autonomy, she noted that alumni will play an important role in taking the college to greater heights. The program was presided over by Dr. Balbir Singh, President of the Sri

Nanak Jhira Saheb Foundation.

Recalling their college days, alumni freely interacted with their classmates and celebrated together. The joy of meeting friends after a long time was evident among students from different batches. Cultural programs such as Bhangra dance, group dance, and singing added special charm to the event.

On this occasion, institution Secretary Sardar Nanak Singh, Sardar Preetam Singh, VTU Executive Council member S. Pavith Singh, Sardar Puneet Singh, Principal Dr. Veena S. Soraganvi, Dr. Dhananjay M., and Administrative Officer R. D. Singh were present.

BIDAR

MLA Prabhu Chavan began a tour of villages on Monday, visiting several areas in Chintaki Hobli to hear public grievances. While some issues were resolved on the spot, the MLA expressed strong displeasure with officials regarding problems with drinking water supply in certain villages.

In villages such as Dhuduknal, Vanamarapalli, Badalgaon, and Narayanpur, residents informed the MLA that water supply was not reaching every household. Officials provided explanations about the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) work, but Chavan expressed frustration that despite previous efforts and funds brought as a minister to ensure clean drinking water in all villages, the work had not been properly executed. He noted



that in some areas, work had been carried out even where water sources were inadequate, resulting in ongoing problems. He criticized the substandard quality of work in many places and stressed that appropriate action must be taken immediately, questioning why officials had remained inactive despite repeated instructions.

He directed that new wells be dug wherever needed and

that any disruptions in water supply be immediately identified and corrected. Officials from the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department were specifically warned to take prompt action.

Chavan emphasized the importance of personally listening to public grievances. He said he has been conducting village tours since 2009 to directly address issues and pro-

vide immediate solutions wherever possible. Road works, CC roads, and community building projects will be implemented in phases.

During the tour, officials and leaders from various departments, including tehsildar Mahesh Patil, Assistant Commissioner Kiran Patil, Education Officer B.J. Rangesh, Health Officer Dr. Gayatri, and others, accompanied him.

Concern Over Student Shortages in Schools

The MLA also visited schools and Anganwadi centers, expressing concern over low student attendance. He noted that despite significant government spending on education for underprivileged children, some classrooms had only 3-4 students, highlighting negligence by teachers and officials. He directed that teachers from overstaffed schools be reassigned to needy areas and that steps be taken to improve government schools, including addressing absentee teachers.



Grand Ayyappa Swamy Maha Padi Pooja Celebration

CHINCHOLI

The grand Maha Padi Pooja of Lord Ayyappa was conducted successfully on Monday at the New Nagar area of Chandapur, which falls under the municipal limits here.

The religious program was held with great devotion and included Ganapati Homa, Go Pooja, Ganga Pooja, Abhisheka of Lord Ayyappa, Dhoopa-Deepa, Naivedya, and a palanquin procession, followed by the distribution of Maha Prasada to devotees.

The devotional singing by young talent Diyah Hegde captivated the audience and added spiritual charm to the event. The pooja rituals were performed by Jagadish Pantalu, Karabasappa Deshmukh, Gundappa, Lakshmikanth, Channabasappa, Raghavendra, and Basheerabad Shailugouda. Prominent community members including Rajoo Kapanur, Anand Tiger, Suresh Koravi, Ramesh Padashetti, and others participated in the program. Swamis from Sabarimala devotees' ashrams across various taluks of Kalaburagi and Bidar districts, along with local devotees, were present and took part in the celebrations with devotion.

Shankarlingshwar Math Swamiji Fires Shots in Udachan Village

KALABURAGI

In Udachan village of Afzalpur taluk, Shankarlingshwar Math Hiremata's Swamiji, Shantaling Swamiji, reportedly fired shots into the air. Locals claim that six months ago the Swamiji had faced resistance from the village, which allegedly led to his temporary expulsion.

Following recent discus-

sions regarding the appointment of a new head at the Math, the Swamiji returned to the village and fired into the air. A video of the incident has gone viral on social media. Authorities received information about the occurrence on December 22, and further investigation is underway to ascertain the details of the event and ensure public safety.

Dr Abdul Khader launched the Pulse Polio campaign, reaffirming commitment to sustaining India's polio-free status

Our Goal Is to Build a Polio-Free Nation – Dr. Abdul Khader

BHALKI

Our aim is to build a polio-free nation, said Dr. Abdul Khader, Administrative Officer of the Public Hospital.

He was speaking after launching the Pulse Polio vaccination campaign by administering polio drops to children below five years of age on Sunday in the town. To prevent permanent disability caused by polio, Pulse Polio vaccine is administered once every year to all children under five years of age. Even children who have already received the vaccine are given the drops again to ensure complete protection. Due to the nationwide Pulse Polio campaign, India has become a polio-free country, he said.

RBSK doctor Dr. Nandini said that on Sunday, polio



vaccination is being carried out at all public places in the town.

Vaccination is being given at anganwadis, pre-primary schools, and all places where children under five years of age are present. On this occasion, Pulse Polio vaccination was conducted from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at public places such as the Hanuman Temple near Balaji Temple, Maruti Tem-

ple near Lecturer Colony, and all public places in the old town.

Present on the occasion were Government Employees' Association Treasurer Sunil Biradar, Nursing Officer Nandini Sunil Biradar, health officials, ASHA workers, anganwadi workers, and RBSK workers Godavari and Mukta, along with anganwadi assistant Renuka.

Grand Exhibition at Jnanasudha Mahabharata Scenes Delight Visitors

BIDAR

Jnanasudha School, one of the district's most esteemed institutions, inaugurated a two-day art and science exhibition on Monday, drawing significant attention from visitors.

The exhibition, held under the theme "Brain Wave," welcomed guests with students dressed as soldiers performing patriotic dances. At the entrance, models of BrahMos, Rafale, and Sukhoi-400 from the "Operation Sindhoor" project impressed attendees. Inside, elaborate displays and student performances further engaged visitors. Students also portrayed historical and cultural figures such as Allama Prabhu, Basavanna, Akkamahadevi, Ambigar Choud-

hary, Nuliya Chandayya, Medar Ketayya, Aydakki Lakamma, Sharane Satyakka, and Amuge Rayamma, demonstrating creativity and dedication through their projects.

A major highlight was a dramatic enactment of a Mahabharata scene, showing a conversation between Krishna, Arjuna, and Karna during Karna's defeat, staged at the school's badminton court. Visitors praised the school for organizing such high-quality displays.

The exhibition featured projects across subjects including science, social studies, mathematics, Kannada, English, and Hindi. Over 3,000 students, from LKG to 10th grade, presented their

work and explained their projects to visitors. Displays were arranged by grade and subject across four floors, showcasing GeoSpace satellites, Nilgiri Mountains, Jog Waterfall, agricultural tools, thermal power plants, science experiments, artificial intelligence, location tracking systems, pollution models, Mysore Palace, Adi Yogi statue, KRS Dam, and the world's first tribal house.

The school auditorium hosted short plays on parliamentary systems, Shivaji Maharaj, environmental concerns, and the impact of mobile phone use. The exhibition was inaugurated by District Panchayat CEO Dr. Girish Dilchep Badole and Beed Assistant Commissioner M.D. Shakeel, who appreciated the students' creativity. Also present were Jnanasudha Education Society President Dr. Poornima G., directors Dr. Muneswar Lakha and Ravi Moolge, Sapna Group Manager Chandrashekhara Patil, and Principal Sunitha Swami.



QUICK READ

Mixed reactions to new pick-up parking fee system**Devanahalli**

A week after the implementation of a new pick-up parking fee and access system at Kempegowda International Airport, passengers have expressed a combination of approval and frustration over the changes. The revised rules, introduced to improve traffic flow and enhance safety at arrival terminals, have altered long-standing pick-up practices at the airport. Under the new system, only private vehicles are permitted to enter the arrival gates directly. Yellow-board taxi vehicles have been restricted to designated taxi stands and specific pick-up zones. Airport authorities rolled out the system in phases, with Terminal 2 adopting the new rules from December 11, followed by Terminal 1 from December 13.

MGNREGA renaming will tarnish Prime Minister's image**Doddaballapura**

Senior Congress leader and district in-charge minister K. H. Muniyappa criticised the Central government for changing the name of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), stating that the move has caused deep distress among the poor and marginalised sections of society. He warned that such actions would ultimately tarnish the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Muniyappa was speaking at the unveiling of a statue of B. R. Ambedkar, installed by the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Friendship Club at Siddenayakana-halli in Doddaballapura. Addressing a gathering of local residents and party workers, he said the employment guarantee scheme was originally introduced to improve the lives of the poor, rural labourers, and oppressed communities, and any attempt to alter its identity undermines its original intent.

**Street play raises health and road safety awareness at bus stations****CHINTAMANI**

An awareness programme using street theatre was organised at the government and private bus stations in Chintamani, aiming to educate the public about health facilities and road safety measures. The initiative was jointly conducted by the Health Department and Police Department in collaboration with the Siddhartha Youth Sports Cultural Development Association. Through an engaging street play, performers conveyed important messages about the various services available under the Health Department, while also highlighting the need for responsible behaviour on roads. The programme attracted the attention of commuters, drivers, and the general public at the busy bus stations, making effective use of public spaces to spread awareness.

Speaking on the occasion, police officer Prakash emphasised the importance of road safety for the well-being of individuals and families. He urged motorists to compulsorily wear helmets while driv-

State-level pre-university Kabaddi tournament inaugurated

State-level Pre-University tenny-kabaddi tournaments were inaugurated with leaders urging students to achieve national excellence

GADAG

The state-level Pre-University (PU) college students' tenny-kabaddi tournament was formally inaugurated in Gadag, highlighting the district's growing reputation as a hub for sporting talent. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Karnataka's Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation and Tourism Minister and Gadag district in-charge minister, H. K. Patil, called upon young athletes to emerge as national and international-level sportspersons.

The tournament is being jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Gadag district Pre-University Education Department, associations of PU college principals, lecturers, physical education lecturers, and non-teaching staff. The event



is being held at the K.H. Patil Sports Stadium in Gadag and has drawn widespread participation from across the state.

Addressing the gathering, the minister noted that Gadag district has already produced several national and international players in sports such as hockey, cricket, wrestling, volleyball, and athletics. He described it as encouraging that state-level PU college tenny-kabaddi competitions are being hosted in such a sports-oriented district and

expressed hope that more national-level tenny-kabaddi players would emerge from Gadag.

Gadag has been provided with multiple sports facilities by the Karnataka government to support athletes, Dr. Patil said. These include a Mahatma Gandhi hockey turf capable of hosting national-level matches, cricket net practice grounds, and four swimming pools that are already in active use. He added that a wooden court would soon be

developed at the indoor stadium on Kalasapur Road. Further plans include installing a football turf and floodlight facilities at the K.H. Patil Stadium, enabling athletes to train and compete at higher levels.

The minister urged sportspersons to make optimal use of these facilities and strive for excellence at the national stage. He also encouraged visiting athletes to explore the historic temples and monuments of Gadag-Betageri and Lakkundi, underscoring the district's cultural heritage.

Legislative Council member S. V. Sankanur, speaking on the occasion, appealed to the government to strengthen sports guidance by appointing physical education teachers and lecturers in primary, secondary, pre-university, and degree colleges.

A damaged irrigation canal from Saudagar reservoir is causing severe water loss, threatening crops and livelihoods

Leaking canal of Saudagar reservoir sparks farmer distress**YADGIR**

The Saudagar reservoir in Yadgir taluk, considered the lifeline for dozens of villages and farmers in the region, is at the centre of growing concern as its main irrigation canal has fallen into a state of severe disrepair. Farmers allege that the authorities have failed to undertake timely repairs for several years, resulting in large-scale leakage and wastage of precious water meant for agricultural use.

The main canal of the Saudagar reservoir plays a crucial role in irrigating farmlands across multiple villages. However, due to prolonged neglect, the canal structure has deteriorated significantly. Large sections of cement lining have peeled off, cracks have developed along the canal walls, and water is now leaking out at several points before it can reach farmers' fields. Locals say that instead of nourishing crops, a huge



quantity of reservoir water is being lost along the way.

Villagers from Chattikuni, Yaddalli and Allipura have voiced strong resentment over the situation. According to them, repeated appeals to the irrigation department have yielded no concrete action. They fear that if immediate repairs are not undertaken, the coming weeks could see further crop losses and economic hardship.

Farmers in the region rely heavily on canal water from the Saudagar reservoir, especially for groundnut cultivation, which is a major crop in

the area. Due to insufficient water supply, several farmers report that their groundnut fields are already drying up. We depend entirely on this canal. With water leaking everywhere, very little reaches our land. Our crops are wilting before our eyes, said one distressed farmer.

The reservoir itself continues to hold water, but the damaged canal has rendered the irrigation system inefficient. Farmers argue that even a modest repair and proper cement lining of the canal could prevent leakage and restore regular water flow.

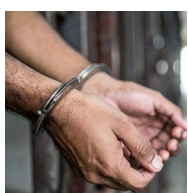
Third arrest made in K'taka navy espionage case**UDUPI**

Karnataka Police have made a third arrest in a serious national security case involving the alleged transfer of sensitive Indian Navy information to Pakistan. The latest breakthrough came after sleuths from the Malpe Police Station in Udupi district arrested 34-year-old Hitendra, a resident of Kailashnagari in Gujarat.

According to investigators, Hitendra is suspected to have played a key logistical role in the espionage operation by allegedly supplying SIM cards to the two accused arrested earlier. Police sources revealed that the SIM cards were provided in exchange for money and

were allegedly used to facilitate communication for passing classified information. Given the sensitivity of the case, Hitendra is currently being questioned in detail, and investigators believe more individuals may be involved in the network.

The arrest follows the earlier detention of two men on November 21 for allegedly sharing confidential Indian Navy intelligence with handlers in Pakistan through social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. The accused were employed at the Cochin Shipyard unit in Malpe and were apprehended by Udupi Police after a complaint was filed by the shipyard's Chief Execu-



tive Officer.

The two accused have been identified as 20-year-old Rohit and 37-year-old Santri, both residents of Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. They have since been remanded to judicial custody. Police have booked them under Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) along with Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, underscoring the gravity of the charges.

Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar earlier stated that the investigation was led by Assistant Police Commissioner Harsha Priyamvada and Malpe Station Sub-Inspector D. Anil Kumar. Acting on a tip-off, a special police team traced the suspects to a rented room in Malpe and carried out the arrests.

BAGALKOT CHILD ABUSE**Four arrested for assaulting a disabled teen****BAGALKOT**

Four people have been taken into custody in Bagalkot district after a disturbing video showing the brutal assault of a 16-year-old disabled boy at a residential school surfaced on social media, triggering widespread outrage and swift police action.

The incident reportedly occurred around three months ago at Divyajyoti School for Differently Aabled Children, a residential institution located in the Navanagar area of

Bagalkote. However, the abuse remained undisclosed until recently, when a former employee of the school shared the video with the victim's parents. Following this, the parents approached the police, leading to the registration of a case.

The video footage, which has since gone viral, shows the teenage boy lying helplessly on the floor while being repeatedly beaten with a belt and a plastic pipe. His legs appear to be pinned down during the assault as he cries



out for help. In an even more shocking sequence, chilli powder is allegedly thrown

**Proposal sent to union Jal Shakti Ministry for funds: DK Shivakumar****CHITRADRUGA**

Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has informed that a proposal has been submitted to the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti seeking the release of funds under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for the speedy implementation of the Bhadra Upper Canal Irrigation Project. The move follows the Union government's announcement of ₹5,300 crore for the project in the 2023-24 Union Budget.

The deputy Chief minister provided this information in a written reply during the winter session of the Karnataka Legislature held in Belagavi, responding to a notice raised by Chitradurga MLA T. Raghunoorthy. He said the State government is making concerted efforts to ensure timely execution of the project by securing central financial assistance.

The Bhadra Upper Canal Project has been designed to provide irrigation facilities through micro-irrigation systems by utilising 29.90 TMC of water to a drought-prone area spread across Chikka-

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said a proposal has been sent seeking central funds for Bhadra Upper Canal Project

magalur, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, and Davanagere districts in central Karnataka. The project aims to irrigate 2,25,515 hectares (5,57,022 acres) of agricultural land and fill 367 lakes up to 50 per cent of their capacity, thereby strengthening both agriculture and groundwater recharge.

The revised project, with an estimated cost of ₹21,473.67 crore, has received administrative approval. For the financial year 2025-26, an allocation of ₹1,440.29 crore has been made, and by the end of November 2025, financial progress amounting to ₹597.92 crore has been achieved. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that the State has also requested the Union government to declare the Bhadra Upper Canal Project as a national project, which would enable faster completion with enhanced central funding.

Massive devotee turnout at Male Mahadeshwara Hill**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

A massive influx of devotees was witnessed at Male Mahadeshwara Hill on the occasion of the Sesame New Moon festival, popularly known as Ellu Amavasya. Thousands of pilgrims from across Karnataka, as well as neighbouring states such as Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, arrived at the sacred hill shrine to seek the blessings of Lord Mahadeshwara and offer special prayers.

From the early hours of the morning, the entire hilly region was transformed into a sea of devotees, with long queues forming for darshan. Despite the challenging terrain and dense forest surroundings, pilgrims of all ages made the journey to the temple, underscoring the deep spiritual significance of the occasion. Authorities said the crowd turnout was significantly higher compared to regular days, reflecting the importance of Ellu Amavasya in the religious calendar.

The temple administration had made elaborate arrangements well in advance to manage the heavy footfall. Special puja-punaskara rituals were conducted continuously from morning till late night on both days. These included special abhishekam, mahamangalarati, and various harake pujas performed by priests in accordance with

temple traditions. Devotees patiently waited for hours to participate in the rituals and witness the sacred ceremonies.

To ensure the smooth movement of pilgrims, temple authorities, along with police and volunteers, were deployed at key points across the hill. Separate queues were arranged to regulate darshan, while drinking water facilities, medical aid, and basic amenities were provided to devotees. Crowd control measures were intensified, especially during peak hours, to avoid congestion near the sanctum sanctorum.

Many devotees said they had undertaken the pilgrimage after making vows, believing that prayers offered on the Sesame New Moon are especially powerful. We come here every year during Ellu Amavasya. Lord Mahadeshwara fulfils our wishes and protects our families, said a devotee from Mandya district.



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QUICK READ

‘India needs more investment to lead education’

Nalanda

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday said India still has a long road to become a global learning centre. Speaking at the Nalanda Literature Festival, he warned that big global ambitions cannot replace strong investment in schools and universities. Tharoor noted that India’s position in global university rankings has slipped. While a few Indian institutions have entered the top 200, none are among the top 50 or top 10 worldwide.

Former IPS officer shoots self after cyber fraud loss

Patiala

Former IPS officer Amar Singh Chahal allegedly shot himself on Monday after being cheated of Rs 8.10 crore by cyber fraudsters posing as wealth management advisors. In a purported note, he blamed the on-line scam for his action. Chahal was rushed to a hospital in critical condition, Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police Varun Sharma said. Chahal was earlier named as an accused in the 2015 police firing cases linked to anti-sacrilege protests in Faridkot.

Crimes, terrorism will face strong action: Police

Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Monday said terrorism and all other crimes will remain under strict police watch and action. He said the force aims to fully eliminate anti-national and anti-social elements from the Union Territory. Speaking after inaugurating the 14th Police Shaheed Smriti T20 Cricket Tournament at Kathua stadium, the DGP warned that drug mafias, gangsters and terrorists will not be spared.

India-New Zealand FTA will accelerate bilateral partnership: EAM

The India-New Zealand trade pact signals faster growth, stronger ties and wider economic cooperation

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement marks a major step forward.

Describing the agreement as a landmark, Jaishankar said it would greatly boost trade, investment and economic co-operation between the two countries. In a post on X, he noted that the FTA places bilateral ties on an accelerated growth path. He added that the pact was concluded in record time under the guidance



of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon,

reflecting shared ambition and strong political will. Earlier in the day, Prime

Minister Modi spoke to Prime Minister Luxon over the phone, during which both leaders jointly announced the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement. Modi said the deal, finalised in just nine months, highlighted the commitment of both nations to deepen economic engagement. He described the agreement as historic and said it would open new avenues for trade, investment and innovation.

The leaders also welcomed progress in defence cooperation, sports exchanges, educa-

tion partnerships and people-to-people ties. They agreed that negotiations, launched during Luxon’s visit to India in March 2025, had moved swiftly due to mutual trust and shared goals.

The FTA will expand market access, boost investments and deepen cooperation, benefiting farmers, MSMEs, youth and innovators. Leaders expect trade to double in five years. New Zealand said 95 per cent tariffs will ease, exports may rise USD 1.3 billion yearly, and USD 20 billion will be invested in India.



WB CM alleges errors in SIR, slams Election Commission

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday criticised the Election Commission of India over alleged gross errors in the Special Intensive Revision exercise in the state. She was speaking at a meeting of Trinamool Congress booth level agents at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata. Banerjee claimed the Special Intensive Revision was conducted in an unplanned manner and said observers were appointed without informing the state government. She alleged the Election Commission was acting on directions of the BJP and ignoring ground realities.

The Chief Minister said central officers appointed as micro observers lacked local language knowledge and proper training. She said many could not understand Bengali, Nepali or Lepcha and were unfit to conduct hearings. Banerjee also questioned changes in voter addresses, names and marital status during the revision process. She urged booth level agents to ensure no genuine voter faced trouble during verification hearings.

The Trinamool Congress chief alleged the BJP planned to remove nearly one point five crore voters from rolls. She claimed outsiders were being brought into Bengal to influence the upcoming elections. Banerjee accused the Centre of using the Election Commission to control and insult Bengal. She said such moves aimed to undermine the state culture and democratic traditions.

Jaishankar to visit Sri Lanka as PM’s envoy after Cyclone Ditwah

NEW DELHI

India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will visit Sri Lanka on December 23 as Prime Minister’s Special Envoy. His trip comes at a crucial time, with India extending strong humanitarian support to its neighbor after the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the visit reflects India’s “Neighbourhood First” policy and aims to strengthen ties with Sri Lanka’s leadership. It also highlights ongoing relief efforts under Operation Sagar Bandhu, launched to assist communities hit by the cyclone.

Last week, the Assistant High Commission of India in Kandy distributed dry ration packets to 86 affected families in Badulla District. Local parliamentarians and officials joined the effort, underscoring India’s commitment to helping Sri Lanka recover.

Medical assistance has also been a major part of India’s outreach. The Sri Lankan Army recently commended the Indian Army’s 60 Parachute Field Hospital for its



exceptional relief work. An 85-member medical team, led by Lieutenant Colonel Jagmeet Gill, was deployed in Mahiyanganaya, Uva Province, from December 2 to 12. The team provided medical, surgical, and dental care to more than 7,000 civilians impacted by the cyclone.

Jaishankar’s engagements are expected to reinforce bilateral cooperation and humanitarian coordination as Sri Lanka rebuilds. His visit symbolizes India’s solidarity with its neighbor during a difficult time, while also strengthening regional ties.

India’s continued support through food supplies, medical aid, and diplomatic outreach shows its resolve to stand by Sri Lanka as the country recovers from Cyclone Ditwah’s destruction.

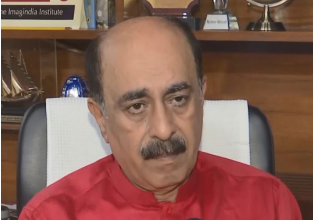
Concerns grow over Bangladesh India relations

NEW DELHI

Foreign affairs expert Robinder Sachdev on Monday expressed concern over recent remarks by Bangladesh’s Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Sachdev said statements made by Yunus at the funeral of slain activist Sharif Osman Hadi showed a troubling political direction. He pointed out that Yunus publicly pledged to carry forward Hadi’s political ideas, which Sachdev described as problematic for regional ties.

Quoting Yunus, Sachdev said the Chief Adviser promised future generations would follow Hadi’s political philosophy. He noted that Hadi’s central belief was that democracy in Bangladesh could not succeed unless the country distanced itself from India. Sachdev said such thinking was worrying, as India has long supported Bangladesh’s stability, development and security.



Remarks by Bangladesh’s interim leadership have raised concerns over ideology, stability and future India-Bangladesh relations

Yunus, while addressing mourners, said Hadi would remain part of Bangladesh’s political life and praised his style of respectful politics. He also said the leadership would act confidently on the global stage without bowing to pressure. Yunus described Hadi’s desire to contest elections as an example of democratic participation.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina strongly criticised the Yunus-

led interim government. In an interview, she said violence and lawlessness had increased after her removal and were harming Bangladesh’s image abroad. She warned that instability was straining relations with neighbouring countries, especially India.

Hasina alleged that minorities were unsafe and extremist forces were gaining influence under the interim government. She claimed convicted terrorists were released and radical groups allowed into public life. She said such developments should alarm India and others concerned about South Asian stability.

Osman Hadi was shot in Dhaka on December 12 and died on December 18, triggering protests and unrest. Hasina blamed the interim government for failing to control violence, protect minorities and safeguard diplomatic missions. Bangladesh remains tense amid protests, security concerns and scrutiny ahead of next year’s elections.

India leads in digital health, innovation, says Patel

NEW DELHI

India is at the forefront of digital health and innovative technologies, said Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Anupriya Patel, on Monday. Speaking at the seventh annual convocation of Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjung Hospital, Patel urged new doctors to maintain compassion and humanity in their medical practice. “As doctors, you have entered into a social contract, so that touch of humanity should not go anywhere,” she said.

Congratulating the graduating students, she highlighted the crucial role of public medical institutions in strengthening India’s healthcare system. She added that medical degrees represent not just academic achievement but also qualities like compassion, dedication, and perseverance that are vital in the profession.

Patel underscored the transformation in India’s healthcare over the past 11 years. More than 1.82 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs now provide comprehensive primary care. Secondary healthcare gaps are being addressed in CHCs and



district hospitals, while tertiary care facilities are expanding and medical education is being reimaged.

The number of medical colleges has grown from 387 to 819, AIIMS institutes from 7 to 23, undergraduate seats from 51,000 to 1,28,000, and postgraduate seats from 31,000 to 82,000.

She also highlighted Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY, which provides free health coverage up to Rs 5 lakh to over 62 crore people. Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana and Amrit Pharmacies offer medicines, devices, and surgical implants at discounted rates.

During the convocation, more than 393 students across undergraduate, postgraduate, and super-specialty courses received degrees, with 43 awarded medals for exceptional performance and dedication.

Kerala plans special drive to add new voters

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is set to launch a special voter enrolment drive after completing the house-to-house survey under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The enumeration phase ended on December 18, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on Tuesday. Election officials said the new drive will focus on adding first-time voters and eligible citizens whose names are missing from the rolls.

Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U. Kelkar said the drive mainly aims to include people who have turned 18 and others who are yet to be registered as voters. The effort is intended to ensure maximum voter inclusion before the next stage of the election process.

So far, officials have received 2.92 lakh applications through Form 6 for fresh enrolment. In addition, 15,157 applications were filed through Form 6A by overseas



voters. These applications will be verified and processed after the draft rolls are released.

Kelkar said digitisation of all enumeration forms was completed by 10 a.m. on December 18, marking full completion of the data entry work. However, many entries were marked uncollectable under the Absent, Shifted and Dead (ASD) categories.

A total of 24.81 lakh entries, or 8.91 per cent of voters, were flagged. This in-

cludes 6.49 lakh deceased voters, 6.89 lakh untraceable voters, 8.21 lakh shifted voters, 1.34 lakh duplicate entries and 1.86 lakh under other reasons.

The ASD list has been uploaded on the Chief Electoral Officer’s website and shared with political parties. A revised list will be published with the draft rolls on December 23. Claims and objections can be filed till January 22, 2026. Final rolls will be published on February 21.

VEDIC EDUCATION

MP plans to set up Gurukul schools to teach Sanskrit

BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has announced plans to set up new Gurukul-style schools that will teach Sanskrit, Vedas, Yoga, and later, education on cows. School Education Minister Uday Pratap Singh said the initiative aims to blend ancient Indian knowledge with modern learning, promoting holistic development.

Specialised schools are be-

ing developed in Rajgarh and Narsinghpur districts. Initially, students will study Sanskrit, Vedas, and Yoga. Later, lessons on cows will be introduced, focusing on their cultural, health, and scientific importance. Singh said cows inspire energy and well-being, adding that these schools will serve as centres of inspiration and research.

The minister explained that the move aligns with efforts to revive Vedic education and



cow conservation. He noted that similar to the Sandipani schools for Sanskrit in Indore

and Ujjain, these Gurukuls will be named after Adi Shankaracharya. If successful, more such schools will be opened across the state.

Alongside traditional subjects, the government is also working to reduce dropout rates by introducing vocational training. Singh said 3,367 higher secondary schools will include trades and job-role training. Agriculture has already been introduced in 690 schools, with plans to expand

further. Professional education has been added in 984 schools during 2025-26, raising enrolment from 4 lakh to 5.90 lakh students. The goal is full enrolment next year.

While mainstream science supports the nutritional value of cow milk and products, no peer-reviewed studies confirm cows as sources of “energy” or “inspiration.” However, traditional Ayurvedic texts highlight their revered role in purity and vitality.

NCDC, WHO India hold 2-day meet to boost influenza preparedness



NEW DELHI

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), in collaboration with WHO India, on Monday began a two-day meeting to strengthen influenza preparedness across the country.

The Chintan Shivir, titled “Strengthening Inter-ministerial and Intersectoral Convergence for Influenza Preparedness and Response,” is scheduled from December 22 to 23 in New Delhi. It provides a platform for key stakeholders to discuss ways to improve preparedness and response ahead of the upcoming influenza season.

Influenza continues to pose a major public health challenge in India and globally. The contagious respiratory disease affects the nose, throat, and lungs, causing periodic outbreaks with high morbidity and mortality, particularly among children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with chronic illnesses.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda, addressing the inaugural session virtually, highlighted the importance of aligning

preparedness and response activities, including surge capacities, for the forthcoming influenza season. He underlined the role of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) in monitoring seasonal influenza trends across States and Union Territories in real time.

The meeting stressed the need for coordination across sectors for surveillance, early warning, laboratory readiness, clinical care, and risk communication. Around 110 representatives from ministries, departments, and institutions participated, aiming to develop a practical preparedness checklist to assess readiness, identify gaps, and guide follow-up actions.

The Chintan Shivir also promoted One Health-based preparedness, linking human, animal, and environmental health systems. By encouraging whole-of-government coordination, the initiative strengthens India’s pandemic readiness and response, supporting national and global health security under the principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

QUICK READ

Nepali girl receives life-saving heart transplant

Thiruvananthapuram

A 23-year-old Nepali woman, Durga Kami, received a new heart in Kerala, bringing hope after months of waiting. Suffering from Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, a genetic heart condition, Kami lost her mother and sister to the same illness. The heart came from 47-year-old R Shibu of Kollam, declared brain dead after an accident. The transplant at Kochi's government hospital is the first district-level heart surgery in India. Shibu's other organs helped six patients. Kerala High Court granted Kami priority for the organ.

Delhi Police bust fake medicine packaging unit

New Delhi

Delhi Police on Monday busted a printing unit supplying wrappers for fake medicines and cosmetics, arresting two men. The action is part of an ongoing probe into spurious drug manufacturing. The accused, Anil Singh Rawat, who ran the Rama Road printing press, and Rahul Agarwal, who ordered the wrappers, allegedly helped Shree Ram produce and sell counterfeit medicines. Earlier, three others were arrested in the case. Police recovered dye frames used to print packaging for the fake products.

Stalin mocks AIADMK over electoral roll deletion

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on December 21 criticised the AIADMK and the BJP, alleging attempts to suppress votes in the state through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Addressing a Christmas event in Chennai, he claimed the SIR was a “shortcut” by the BJP to remove votes of minorities, women, and marginalised groups that usually support the DMK. Udhayanidhi mocked the main opposition party, saying, “AIADMK has become Amit Shah Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam,” pointing out its alignment with the BJP under leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami. He added that while the BJP promises protection for minorities, the opposition party should focus on safeguarding itself from central influence. Highlighting the impact of the SIR exercise, Udhayanidhi stated that approximately 97 lakh voters have been removed from Tamil Nadu's rolls, including about 14 lakh in Chennai. He urged citizens to check their names on the electoral list and said DMK representatives would assist people in submitting forms to restore their voter details, with a deadline of January 18. He also reiterated concerns over the New Education Policy, alleging that the BJP-led Centre aims to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu, despite financial incentives offered to the state.

Police likely to close drug case against Shine Tom

KOCHI

Police are expected to drop a drug case against Malayalam actor Shine Tom Chacko, after a chemical analysis found no traces of narcotics in his blood or hair samples, officials said on Monday. The case dates back to April, when the District Anti-Narcotic Special Action Force (DANSAF) raided a hotel in Kochi following a tip-off. Chacko allegedly fled the hotel upon seeing police. Ahmed Murshad of Malappuram, who was reportedly with him, was detained, and a case was registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. A few days later, Chacko voluntarily appeared before the police and provided blood and hair samples for testing. According to an officer from Ernakulam North police station, “No traces of drugs or narcotic substances were found in the samples. Hence, it would be difficult to proceed further with the investigation.” The case had also invoked Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 238 (causing disappearance of evidence) and NDPS Act Sections 27(b) and 29, covering drug consumption and criminal conspiracy. However, police said the absence of scientific evidence makes it hard to substantiate these charges.

Def Min facilitates DRDO-RRU MoU for defence research, training

Under the MoU, both organisations will jointly conduct research, training, and technology studies to strengthen India's defence and internal security

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday facilitated an MoU between DRDO and Rashtriya Raksha University for research, training, and technology support in defence and internal security. The agreement was signed by DRDO's Distinguished Scientist Chandrika Kaushik and RRU Vice Chancellor Bimal N Patel at South Block, with DRDO Chairman Samir V Kamat also present. The MoU aims to boost India's self-reliance in defence and internal security technologies, supporting the Aatman-



irbhar Bharat vision. It reflects a commitment to integrate technology, knowledge, and operational insight to strengthen national security and strategic autonomy. Rashtriya Raksha University, an institution of national importance under the Ministry of Home Affairs, offers academic, training, and policy expertise in internal security. DRDO contributes indigenous technologies and system-level expertise to meet Armed Forces and security agency requirements. Under the agreement, both organisations will collaborate on joint research projects, PhD

and fellowship programmes, and specialised training for security forces. The partnership will also cover emerging operational challenges, technology gap analysis, forecasting future requirements, and life-cycle management of DRDO-developed systems used by Central Armed Police Forces and other agencies under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This collaboration is seen as a step forward in combining academic research and practical defence technology, aiming to ensure that India stays at the forefront of innovation and preparedness in both defence and internal security sectors.

ISRO Chairman prays at Tirumala ahead BlueBird launch

TIRUPATI

ISRO chairman V. Narayanan visited the Tirupati temple on Monday to offer prayers ahead of the upcoming BlueBird Block-2 mission scheduled for December 24. The mission will use the LVM3-M6 launch vehicle to deploy the BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite, a project of the US-based AST SpaceMobile. Narayanan was accompanied by ISRO officials and carried a miniature replica of the launch rocket while performing the rituals, he said the mission will lift the heaviest satellite ever launched from Indian soil. “On 24 December, we are targeting the launch of BlueBird-2 using our Bahubali M6 rocket,” he stated. The BlueBird Block-2 satellite is designed to support 4G and 5G communication services. ISRO officials said the mission marks a major milestone in India's commercial space efforts, demonstrating the country's capability to launch heavy satellites and expand global communication infrastructure. Preparations for the mission have been ongoing for several months, including rigorous testing of the LVM3-M6 rocket and satellite systems. The launch is expected to strengthen India's position in international space services and commercial satellite deployment.

Nitish Kumar meets PM, discuss Bihar development

NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday at his official residence in New Delhi, along with Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh). The meeting focused on Bihar's development agenda, coordination with the Centre, and key political issues. Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary highlighted on social media that the meeting provided valuable guidance for Bihar's growth and aligned with PM Modi's vision of national progress. Sources said discussions covered ongoing and



upcoming development projects, including education, healthcare, rural development, and employment generation. Nitish Kumar reportedly presented his vision for transforming Bihar into a developed state, seeking support from the Union government for recently launched and proposed schemes. The interaction is seen as vital for strengthening Centre-state cooperation and paving the way for new initiatives. The meeting also carried political significance as it marked Nitish Kumar's first interaction with the Central leadership after NDA's decisive win in the Bihar Assembly elections. Leaders deliberated on the current political situation, administrative coordination, and upcoming policy initiatives for the state. Earlier in the day, Nitish Kumar also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah for nearly an hour to discuss administrative and political matters. Officials said these meetings underscore the importance of Centre-state collaboration for governance and development.

SURYODAY SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED			
Regd. & Corp. office : 1101, Sharda Terraces, Plot 65, Sector - 11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614. CIN: L65923MH2008PLC261472.			
Under Section 13 (2) of The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002			
Whereas the undersigned is the Authorized officer of the M/s. Suryoday Small Finance Bank Ltd. ("SSFBL") under Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) to discharge in full their liability to the Company by making payment of entire outstanding including up to date interest, cost and charges within 60 days from the date of respective Notices issued and the publication of the Notice as given below as and way of alternate service upon you. As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset (s) have been mortgaged to SSFBL by the said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) respectively.			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 237000001150		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR. KRISHNAMURTHY S S/O SHIVAJIPPA		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 3,38,347/- as on 15-10-2025
2) GEETA P K W/O KRISHNAMURTHY P S			
PAVAN KUMAR P K S/O KRISHNAMURTHY			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF BEARING PROPERTY PLOT NO.673, SY NO:910/A, ASSESSMENT NO /SY NO: 910/APLT NO 673, WRD NO 4, FORM NO: 3, UNIQUE NO: 4-5-552-543, MEASURING EAST TO WEST=6.09 mtr, NORTH TO SOUTH=9.144 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=55.74 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT RANEENNUR TOWN, RANEENNUR TOWN PANCYATH, RANEENNUR TALLUK, RANEENNUR DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: SITE NO 674, WEST BY: SITE NO 672, NORTH BY: SITE NO.668 SOUTH BY: ROAD			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 249000128158		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR. KUMAR S/O MADASETTY		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 5,40,651/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS. BHAVANI W/O KRISHNA SETTY			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.100/2, E-SWATHU, UNIQUE NO.150800203600300177 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=8.077 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH= 7.315 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=59.09 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT HIREBEGURU VILLAGE, KULAGANA GRAMAPANCHAYATH CHAMARAJANAGARA TALLUK, CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT KARNATAKA.BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER- EAST BY: STREET, WEST BY: HOUSE OF CHANNASSETTY, NORTH BY: HOUSE OF SAMPASETTY SOUTH BY: HOUSE OF CHIKKASIDASETTY			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 249000116452		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MRS. LAKSHMAMMA W/O RACHAIAH		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs.4,37,297/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MR. KUMARA S/O RACHAIAH			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OFRESIDENTIAL HOUSE BEARING PROPERTY NO.16/NI/24, FORM NO.9, UNIQUE NO.150800300300120344 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=9.144 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=12.192 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=111.48 BUILD UP AREA 51.10 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT KUNAGALLI VILLAGE, KUNAGALLI GRAMAPANCHAYATH KOLLEGALA TALLUK, CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: SITE NO.23 WEST BY: ROAD NORTH BY: SITE NO.37 SOUTH BY: ROAD			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	29-10-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.2270000002803		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR. NAGENDRA S/O SRINIVASAMURTHY		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs.5,47,257/- AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS. SUNDRI W/O NAGENDRA			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.708/678, WARD NO.19, NAMUNE-3, E-AASTHI PID NO.19- 2-506-87B, MEASURING EAST TO WEST=3.962408 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=6.705613 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=26.570258 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT NO.87B#T, 1ST CROSS, BLOCK-2, WARD NO.19, CHAMARAJANAGARA TOWN KARNATAKA BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: ROAD WEST BY: 19-2-506-87B NORTH BY: 19-2-506-87 SOUTH BY: 19-2-506-89B			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 239000003125		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR.RAMACHANDRA B.P. S/O PUTTA ARASAI AH		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs.4,46,797/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS. SIDDAGANGAMMA W/O B.P.RAMACHANDRAMMA			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.109, FORM-NO.9, UNIQUE NO.152500300201200109 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=5.4864 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=10.9728 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=60.20 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT NEGILALA VILLAGE, BUYDAGAVI GRAMAPANCHAYATH KORATAGERE HOBLI, TUMAKURU DISTRICT KARNATAKA BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: VACANT PROPERTY BOIMMANNA WEST BY: SITE BY N.C.SHIVANANDIAH NORTH BY: ROAD SOUTH BY: ROAD			
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor		Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 2590000066211		Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR.NAGENDRA S/O MAHADEVANAYAKA		Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs.503981/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS. MAHADEVAMMA W/O MAHADEVANAYAKA			
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.511, 11A KHATA, UNIQUE NO.150800100600400500 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=9.144 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=12.192 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=111.48 SQ.MTRS, SITUATED AT BADANAGUPPE GRAMAPANCHAYATH, CHAMARAJANAGARA TALLUK, CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT KARNATAKA BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: PROPERTY BELONGS TO JAVARANAYAKA WEST BY: PROPERTY KOTHIMADANAYAKA NORTH BY: PROPERTY BELONGS TO KENCHANAYAKA SOUTH BY: ROAD			

Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 259000022341	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MRS. NAGENDRA S/O SIDDARAJU A	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 3,78,232/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS.CHANDRAMMA W/O SIDDARAJU.		
3) MRS. SIDDARAJU S/O SIDAIAH		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.248, FORM NO.11B, UNIQUE NO.152100405300400250 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=6.705 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=12.19 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=81.75 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT DODDAKETAGERE VILLAGE, CHANDAGALU(B) GRAMAPANCHAYATH MANDYA TALLUK, MANDYA DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: OPEN SPACE AND ROAD WEST BY: ROAD NORTH BY: OPEN SPACE SOUTH BY: OPEN SPACE AND ANGANWADI KENDRA		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	29-10-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 249000071108	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MRS. SUNDRAMMA W/O RAMAIAH	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 2,92,403/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MRS.RAMAIAH S/O LATE KARIAIAH		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTYBEARING OLD PROPERTY NO.196/1, UNIQUE NO.152200606156000778, MEASURING EAST TO WEST=12.19 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=9.14 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=111.41 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT RAVANUDURU VILLAGE, PERIRYPATTANA TALLUKU, MYSURU DISTRICT. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: SMALL OF VASU WEST BY: ROAD NORTH BY: HOUSE NO-7 SOUTH BY: HOUSE OF RAMESHA		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	29-10-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 259000087001	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MRS. Y.M.RADHA W/O MAHESH	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 5,33,408/-AS ON 15-10-2025
2) MR. MAHESH S/O LATE PUTTASWAMY		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTYBEARING OLD PROPERTY NO.232, UNIQUE NO.150800102800600357, MEASURING EAST TO WEST=12.192 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=9.7536 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=118.92 SQ. MTR. SITUATED AT NAVILURU VILLAGE CHAMARAJANAGARA TALUK CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT:- 571124 BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: HOUSE OF BASAVEGOWDA WEST BY: ROAD NORTH BY: HOUSE OF MALLEGOWDA SOUTH BY: HOUSE OF NINGAMMA		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 237000001150	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR. BASAVARAJU N S/O NAGARAJU	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 4,27,890/- as on 15-10-2025
2) MR. NAGARAJU S/O DEVEGOWDA.		
3) SMT. RATHNAMMA W/O NAGARAJU		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OFBEARING PROPERTY NO.1024, FORM NO.9, UNIQUE NO.150800400500120287 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=9.75 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=4.50 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=18.58 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT YEALADURGA VILLAGE, GUMBALLI GRAMAPANCHAYATH CHAMARAJANAGARA TALLUK, CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: ROAD WEST BY: SITE FOR THIMMEGOWDA NORTH BY: SITE FOR KULLEGOWDA SOUTH BY: HOUSE BELONGS TO RAJESH		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 259000032737	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MRS. PARVATHAMMA W/O GOVINDIAH	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 5,03,598/-as on 15-10-2025
2) MR. GOVINDIAH S K S/O LATE SANNA KARENAIK.		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF BEARING PROPERTY NO.276, FORM NO.11B, UNIQUE NO.152500101000200410 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=15.544 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=19.81 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=307.97 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT SORALAMAVU VILLAGE, CHOWLAKATTE GRAMAPANCHAYATH CHIKKANAYAKANAHALLI TALLUK, TUMKUR DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: GALLI WEST BY: ROAD NORTH BY: PANCHAYATH SISTAN AND ROAD SOUTH BY: GALLI AND HOUSE OF LAKSHMAIAH		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 237000000200	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) RAVIKUMAR M.R. S/O RAMEGOWDA	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs.5,15,650/-as on 15-10-2025
2) RAMEGOWDA S/O LATE ELLEGOWDA		
3) SAKAMMA W/O RAMEGOWDA		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF BEARING JANJAR NO.200 PROPERTY NO.595/2, 11B KHATA, UNIQUE NO.152200601416500964, MEASURING EAST TO WEST=23.78 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=13.71 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=326.02 SQ.MTRS, BUILDING MEASURING=219.80 SITUATED AT MAKODU VILLAGE, MAKODU GRAMAPANCHAYATH, PERIYAPATTANA TALLUK, MYSURU DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: GOVERNMENT ROAD WEST BY: PROPERTY BELONGS TO SANNA NORTH BY: BYARAN MANGRI DASEGOWDA SOUTH BY: PROPERTY BELONGS TO RATHNAMMA		
Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of Demand Notice	03-11-2025
LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 259000131126	Date of NPA	08-10-2025
1) MR. K R R SHIVASHANKARA S/O RAJEGOWDA	Total Outstanding Amount in Rs.	Rs. 5,33,414/-as on 15-10-2025
2) MRS. GOWRAMMA W/O RAJEGOWDA		
3) MR. RAJEGOWDA S/O BASAVEGOWDA		
DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF BEARING PROPERTY NO.302,PROPERTY NO.313, FORM NO.11B, UNIQUE NO.151600501200200432 MEASURING EAST TO WEST=5.79 MTR, NORTH TO SOUTH=9.75 MTR, TOTAL EXTENT=56.48 SQ MTRS SITUATED AT KAREHALLI VILLAGE, KAREHALLI GRAMAPANCHAYATH CHANNARAYAPATTANA TALLUK, HASANA DISTRICT KARNATAKA. BOUNDARIES HERE UNDER:- EAST BY: LAND OF MANJUNATH WEST BY: HOUSE OF SHANKAREGOWDA NORTH BY: ANATI ROAD SOUTH BY: LAND OF SHANKAREGOWDA		
If the said Borrower, Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) fails to make payment to SSFBL as aforesaid, SSFBL shall be entitled to take possession of the secured asset mentioned above and shall take such other actions as is available to the Company in law, entirely at the risks, cost and consequences of the borrowers.		
The said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) are prohibited under the provision of sub section (13) of section 13 of SARFAESI Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise referred to in the notice without prior consent of SSFBL.		
Place: Karnataka Date: 20-12-2025		Sd/- Authorized Officer, For Suryoday Small Finance Bank Limited

QUICK READ

Sweden releases Russian freighter after customs inspection

Stockholm
Swedish customs released the Russian freighter Adler after inspecting the vessel, which had anchored near Hoganas due to engine trouble. Authorities boarded the ship over the weekend to check compliance with regulations. Prosecutors decided not to investigate possible sanctions violations, allowing the freighter to continue its journey north along Sweden's west coast. Adler and its owners, M Leasing LLC, are on European Union and U.S. sanctions lists for suspected weapons transport, though cargo details remain undisclosed. The ship had departed St. Petersburg on December 15 for an unknown destination.

South Korea lawmaker questioned over luxury gift

Seoul
Representative Kim Gi-hyeon of South Korea's opposition People Power Party appeared before a special counsel investigating bribery allegations involving former first lady Kim Keon Hee. Kim was questioned about a Roger Vivier clutch bag worth 2.6 million won, reportedly delivered by his wife in 2023. Authorities suspect the gift was linked to support from Unification Church members for Kim's party leadership bid. The lawmaker admitted the gift but denied wrongdoing. The probe, led by special counsel Min Joong-ki, also questioned former PPP leader Lee Jun-seok about election meddling and alleged collusion involving former President Yoon and the former first lady.

PTI workers protest Khan sentencing nationwide

Islamabad
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters staged rallies across Pakistan after courts sentenced party founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to 17 years in the Toshakhana-II case. Protesters waved flags, chanted slogans, and criticized the federal government and judiciary. PTI leaders called the verdict baseless and urged street protests, while Khan plans to challenge the ruling in Islamabad High Court. Over 1,300 police and security personnel, including Elite Force and anti-riot units, were deployed in Rawalpindi to maintain order.

Bus crash kills 16 on Indonesia's Java Island

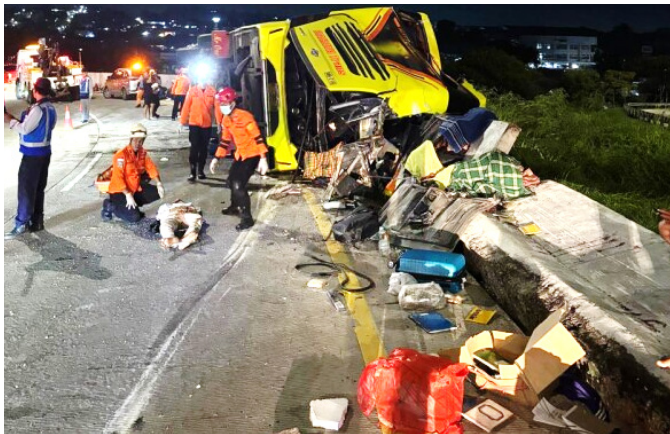
A Jakarta office fire killed 22, spreading quickly; firefighters controlled it after 3 hrs with extensive personnel and engines

JAKARTA

At least 16 people were killed when a passenger bus lost control and crashed on Indonesia's main island of Java shortly after midnight on Monday, officials said. The inter-provincial bus, carrying 34 passengers, was travelling from the capital, Jakarta, to the historic city of Yogyakarta when it hit a concrete barrier and overturned.

Budiono, chief of the local search and rescue agency, said several other victims were rushed to Semarang city for medical treatment. He confirmed that authorities were investigating the cause of the accident.

Transport accidents are common in Indonesia, where many vehicles are old, poorly maintained, and traffic rules are frequently ignored. In 2024, a collision between a car and a bus on a busy highway claimed 12 lives during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Earlier, in 2019, a bus crash in western Sumatra killed at least 35 people when the vehicle fell into a ravine.



The latest tragedy comes just two weeks after a fire tore through a seven-storey office building in Jakarta, killing at least 22 people. The blaze, which started on the building's first floor in the Kemayoran area, spread rapidly, sending black smoke into the sky and causing panic among workers

and nearby residents. Firefighters, aided by hundreds of personnel and 29 fire engines, managed to extinguish the fire after three hours.

Most victims in that incident died from smoke inhalation, while firefighters rescued 19 people with minor injuries. The repeated accidents highlight persistent safety concerns in Indonesia's transport and urban infrastructure.

China condemns US seizure of Venezuela-bound tanker

BEIJING

China strongly criticized the United States on Monday after a U.S. Coast Guard intercepted a China-bound oil tanker off Venezuela's coast, calling the action a serious violation of international law.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Lin Jian, said Venezuela has the right to develop relations with other countries and reaffirmed China's opposition to all "unilateral and illegal" sanctions. The tanker, named Centuries, was carrying about 1.8 million barrels of Venezuelan Merey crude oil and had been loaded under the false name Crag. Documents revealed that the oil was purchased through intermediaries by Sataou Tijana Oil Trading for delivery to Chinese refiners.

The interception followed U.S. President Donald Trump's recent announcement of a "blockade" targeting all sanctioned oil tankers entering or leaving Venezuela. A White House spokesperson described the vessel as "falsely flagged" and part of Venezuela's shadow fleet.

Venezuela condemned the interception, calling it a "serious act of international piracy." China is Venezuela's largest crude buyer, with imports from the country making up roughly 4% of its total oil purchases.

South Korea expands welfare for senior citizens

SEOUL

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Monday promised to expand welfare support for the country's senior citizens, recognising their contributions to economic growth and democracy. The announcement came during a luncheon with representatives of the Korean Senior Citizens' Association.

Lee highlighted that South Korea has officially entered a "super-aged society" this year, with over 20 per cent of the population aged 65 and above. "Policies for older adults are no longer just about seniors. They're policies for everyone," he said, stressing the government's commitment to ensuring seniors enjoy healthy and dignified lives.

He outlined plans to launch a nationwide, customised care system integrating medical, nursing, and caregiving services starting in March. Basic pension payments will also rise, and senior employment programs will be expanded to help older citizens remain active and socially engaged.

Additionally, the govern-

ment intends to gradually extend National Health Insurance coverage to include caregiving costs at nursing homes. "We will strengthen the welfare safety net while helping seniors put their experience and wisdom to use as valuable social assets," Lee added.

During the meeting, Lee thanked older citizens for their dedication in transforming South Korea from a war-torn country after the 1950-53 Korean War into a modern economic powerhouse and vibrant democracy. He also noted that this year marks a "watershed" as the nation overcame a democratic crisis following former President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed martial law attempt.

Lee emphasised that South Korea's achievements in politics, culture, and economy are built on seniors' sacrifices. "You walked with us through industrialisation and democratisation, and we are deeply grateful for your hard work," he said, underlining the government's pledge to provide stronger support and respect for the elderly population.

Russian General killed in Moscow car bomb

MOSCOW

Lieutenant General Fani Sarvarov, a senior Russian military officer, was killed on Monday when a car bomb exploded in Moscow, authorities confirmed. Sarvarov led the army's operational training directorate under the Russian General Staff and died instantly in the blast.

Russia's Investigative Committee said multiple scenarios are being considered, including the potential involvement of Ukrainian special services in planting the explosive device. Investigators have not provided further details, but the incident has sparked concerns about security for high-ranking officials in the capital.

The killing comes amid ongoing diplomatic efforts to end the nearly four-year conflict between Russia and



Ukraine. A Kremlin spokesperson said talks over a U.S.-backed proposal in Florida are progressing in a "constructive" manner, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the process as moving "quickly."

Despite diplomatic progress, violence continues in Ukraine. A recent Russian missile strike on port facilities in Odesa killed eight people and injured 27, according to Ukraine's emergency services. The incident highlights the ongoing volatility in the region, even

The killing occurs amid ongoing Russia-Ukraine peace talks, described as "constructive" by Kremlin and "quick" by Zelenskyy

as negotiations continue.

Sarvarov's death is likely to heighten tensions and may influence Russia's military and political response. Analysts note that the targeting of senior officials represents a significant escalation, raising questions about internal security measures in Moscow.

The attack underscores the persistent risks faced by military leaders during the conflict and adds urgency to diplomatic and security discussions between the two nations. As investigations continue, global attention remains focused on the implications for Russia-Ukraine relations.

Albanese's cabinet approved a 2026 legislative package to strengthen hate speech penalties

Australian PM condemns attack, apologises to Jewish community

CANBERRA

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday apologised to the nation's Jewish community following the deadly mass shooting at Bondi Beach. The attack, which occurred on December 14 during a Hanukkah celebration in Sydney, claimed 15 lives and shocked the country.

At a press conference in Canberra, Albanese expressed his sorrow, saying, "I'm sorry for what the Jewish community and our nation as a whole have experienced." He added that the government feels the "weight of responsibility" to protect Jewish Australians and prevent terrorists from dividing society. The attack was inspired by the Islamic State.

Albanese announced that his cabinet, which met for the second time since the tragedy, has approved a legislative package to combat hate speech. The proposed laws, to be introduced in 2026, aim to strengthen penalties for hate speech, make hate motivation a factor in sentencing, and give the Home Affairs Minister the power to cancel visas for people promoting violence

or displaying hate symbols.

The legislation will also introduce a new aggravated criminal offence for adults who try to radicalise children. Attorney-General Michelle Rowland highlighted the growing threat of youth radicalisation, noting that out of 33 people currently facing terrorism charges in Australia, 17 are minors. She stressed, "This unprecedented radicalisation of our youth must stop. We will not allow extremists to groom and brainwash our children into hate or terrorism."

Albanese confirmed that the government will consult across all federal parties to ensure that the laws are passed quickly and effectively. He emphasised that the new measures are intended to safeguard communities, prevent future attacks, and send a strong message that Australia will not tolerate hate or violence.

The Prime Minister's statement and the legislative push come amid heightened concern about domestic terrorism and the influence of extremist ideologies, reflecting a firm government response to a tragic event that has deeply affected the nation.



Japan set to restart largest nuclear plant

NIIGATA

Japan is preparing to restart the world's largest nuclear power plant, Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, nearly 15 years after the Fukushima disaster. On Monday, lawmakers in Niigata prefecture will vote on resuming operations at the plant, marking a key step in Japan's push to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, located about 220 km northwest of Tokyo, was one of 54 reactors shut after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami devastated the Fukushima Daiichi plant. TEPCO, which operated Fukushima, will manage the restart. If approved, the first of seven reactors could resume operations on January 20, boosting electricity supply to Tokyo by about 2%, officials said.

Despite government assurances, many locals remain wary. Around 300 protesters gathered outside the Niigata assembly, holding banners saying "No Nukes" and "Support Fukushima." Ayako Oga, a former Fukushima evacuee, voiced fears of repeating the past disaster. TEPCO pledged 100 billion yen (\$641 million) to the prefecture over the next decade to secure support, yet surveys show most residents



remain concerned about safety. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has backed the re-

start to strengthen energy security and counter high fossil fuel costs.

NORTHERN NIGERIA RELIEF

Freed Nigerian children to reunite with families

MINNA

The final group of 130 Nigerian schoolchildren freed by authorities on Sunday are set to reunite with their families in Niger State on Monday, ending a month-long ordeal that drew global attention.

The children were among over 300 students and 12 staff abducted from St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri, a remote hamlet seven hours from the state capital Minna, on November 21. This kidnapping was among the worst in recent years, raising concerns about worsening insecurity in northern Nigeria, where armed gangs frequently



target schools for ransom.

Earlier, 100 students were released on December 8, and 50 pupils escaped shortly after the initial abduction. Pres-

ident Bola Tinubu's office said the children would be brought to Minna on Monday to meet relatives in time for Christmas celebrations.

Presidency spokesperson Bayo Onanuga said the latest release followed a "military-intelligence-driven operation," without revealing further details. It remains unclear whether the children were freed through a security raid, negotiations, or ransom payments. Information about the kidnapped staff was not provided.

The Catholic Diocese of Kontagora thanked federal and state authorities, security agencies, and humanitarian partners for securing the children's freedom. "We are profoundly grateful... for their efforts and interventions," said Rev. Fr. Jatau Luka Joseph.

Mass kidnappings for ransom have become a grim reality in northern and central Nigeria, where armed gangs exploit weak security and vast rural areas. The phenomenon gained international attention after Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from Chibok in 2014. U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened military action, accusing Nigeria of mistreating Christians, while the government maintains that armed groups target both Muslims and Christians.

The safe return of the students offers relief to families and highlights ongoing challenges in curbing school abductions in the region.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

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 Yesterday's puzzle

QUICK READ



Hyundai Unveils AI Robotics Strategy, Atlas Robot

Seoul
Hyundai Motor Group announced it will reveal its AI robotics plan and debut a humanoid robot, Atlas, at CES 2026 in Las Vegas. The keynote on Jan. 5 will showcase AI technologies, human-robot teamwork, and a company-wide robotics ecosystem. Atlas will demonstrate real-world applications of Hyundai's AI robotics. The company also shared plans for a software-driven factory to combine robots and manufacturing. Separately, Hyundai is building a 111,000-square-meter battery R&D center in Anseong, South Korea, costing 1.2 trillion won. It aims to advance electric vehicle technology and become a global leader in battery research and innovation.

Neptune Logitec IPO lists with heavy losses

Mumbai
Neptune Logitec shares made a weak debut on BSE SME, opening at Rs 100, 26% below the IPO price of Rs 126. Selling pressure pushed the stock further down to Rs 95.80, causing investors to lose nearly Rs 30,200 per 1,000-share lot. The IPO, fully subscribed 1.61 times, raised Rs 46.62 crore for trucks, equipment, debt repayment, and corporate use. The company provides logistics services including freight forwarding, customs clearance, air cargo, and multimodal transport. Its asset-heavy model relies on owned trucks, maintenance facilities, and fuel setup. Market sentiment turned negative following the disappointing listing.



Institutional investments set new real estate records

MUMBAI
Institutional investments in Indian real estate are expected to cross 10 billion dollars in 2025, setting a fresh record for the second year in a row, according to a new JLL report. The report estimates investments of about 10.4 billion dollars through 77 transactions, a strong 17 per cent rise compared to 8.9 billion dollars recorded last year. The study also highlighted large platform commitments worth 11.43 billion dollars in 2025. These funds are expected to be invested gradually over the next three to seven years, showing long-term confidence in the sector. For the first time since 2014, domestic institutional investors have taken the lead, accounting for 52 per cent of the total investment market. This shift shows growing trust among Indian investors in stable, income-generating assets. Core asset purchases also doubled during the year, reflecting a clear move towards long-term wealth creation.



India New Zealand FTA promises zero duty exports

The minister noted the FTA will drive \$20 billion New Zealand investment in India, focusing on manufacturing, infrastructure, services, innovation, and jobs

NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday that the India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement will ensure zero duty on 100 per cent of India’s exports, bringing wide benefits across multiple sectors of the economy. Goyal said the agreement will strongly support farmers, MSMEs, workers, artisans, women-led enterprises and young entrepreneurs. Labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, leather and footwear are expected to gain significantly, along with engineering, automobiles, electronics, machinery, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. The minister also highlighted that the FTA will boost investment flows, with New Zealand committing to facilitate nearly 20 billion dollars



of foreign direct investment into India over the next 15 years. The investment focus will be on manufacturing, infrastructure, services, innovation and job creation. Sharing details on social media, Goyal said the agreement was concluded in a record nine months under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister Christo-

pher Luxon. He described the deal as a major milestone in strengthening bilateral relations. The FTA opens new market access for Indian agricultural products such as fruits, vegetables, coffee, spices, cereals and processed foods. Through partnerships in agricultural productivity, centres of excellence and access to advanced New Zealand technologies,

Indian farmers are expected to benefit from better yields, improved quality and higher incomes. At the same time, India has protected sensitive sectors. Products such as dairy, sugar, edible oils, precious metals, rubber goods and certain agricultural items have been safeguarded to protect domestic industries and farmers. The agreement also creates fresh opportunities for India’s services sector, including IT, finance, education, tourism and healthcare. Special provisions on student mobility, post-study work and temporary employment visas will help Indian professionals and students access global opportunities. Goyal said the FTA will deepen economic ties and support India’s long-term vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

The report warned that CPI and GDP base-year revisions in February 2026 may prompt MPC to act cautiously

RBI may cut repo rate

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India may reduce the policy rate by 25 basis points to 5 per cent in its upcoming Monetary Policy Committee meeting in February, according to a new report by Union Bank of India. The report said the central bank’s recent dovish signals, along with repeated references to comfortable inflation levels, suggest room for one final rate cut. The bank noted that the reduction could come either in February or April 2026, though predicting the exact timing remains difficult. Union Bank of India pointed out that inflation pressures appear subdued. When adjusted for around 50 basis points contributed by gold prices,

underlying inflation looks even more moderate. This gives the RBI space to consider easing rates further to support growth. However, the report also flagged uncertainty due to upcoming revisions in the base year for Consumer Price Index and Gross Domestic Product data, expected in February 2026. These changes may prompt the MPC to adopt a cautious approach and wait for clearer signals before making further policy moves. The RBI cut the repo rate by 25 basis points in December, bringing it down to 5.25 per cent. The next MPC meeting is scheduled to take place from February 4 to 6, 2026, where the rate decision will be closely watched by markets.

India capital market infrastructure sees strong revenue growth

NEW DELHI

India’s capital market infrastructure sector recorded revenues of over Rs 700 billion in the financial year 2024–25, driven by rising market activity and growing investor participation, according to a report by global brokerage Jefferies. The sector includes stock brokers, exchanges, depositories and registry and transfer agents, all of which benefited from higher trading volumes and a broader investor base. The report said the sector’s future growth will depend on faster expansion in select segments, entry into related businesses and the ability to adapt to regulatory changes. Mutual funds are expected to play a key role in this growth story. Jefferies projects mutual fund assets under management to grow at a strong annual pace of 16 per cent between FY26 and FY28, in-

creasing from Rs 67 trillion in FY25 to Rs 103 trillion by FY28. Trading activity is also expected to remain healthy. Cash market average daily turnover is projected to rise by 15 per cent, while futures and options premium turnover may grow by 12 per cent. This reflects some moderation in derivatives trading after recent regulatory steps. Investor participation is set to expand sharply. The number of demat accounts is forecast to rise from 192 million in FY25 to 304 million by FY28. Mutual fund folios are also expected to grow significantly, from 235 million to 377 million during the same period. In FY25, brokers generated nearly Rs 500 billion in revenue, while stock exchanges contributed around Rs 200 billion. Depositories and transfer agents accounted for the remaining share.

Asian shares rise, Yen weakens as bonds falter

SYDNEY

Asian shares rose on Monday, tracking tech-driven gains on Wall Street, while the yen hovered near all-time lows against the euro and Swiss franc amid higher Japanese interest rates pressuring government debt. Japan’s Nikkei surged 1.9%, extending Friday’s gains as a weaker yen boosts export earnings. The Bank of Japan raised rates to a 30-year high of 0.75%, signaling more hikes, sending 10-year JGB yields to 2.10%, their highest since 1999. The yen touched 184.90 versus the euro and 198.08 versus the Swiss franc, with authorities warning of possible intervention if declines continue. MSCI’s Asia-Pacific index (excluding Japan) added 0.8%, while South Korea jumped 1.7% on AI optimism. Chinese blue chips rose 0.8%,

Electronics sector boosts jobs for indian women: Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI

The electronics sector in India is creating large-scale blue-collar jobs for women, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday, highlighting a major shift in the country’s manufacturing landscape. The minister referred to recent reports on Taiwan-based Foxconn, which has hired nearly 30,000 employees at its new iPhone assembly facility in Bengaluru within just eight to nine months. Around 80 per cent of these workers are women, many of whom are entering the formal workforce for the first time. In a post on social media platform X, Vaishnaw said a women-led mega factory would have been unthinkable a decade ago. He added that the electronics sector is now creating skilled blue-collar jobs, especially for women, while also supporting technology transfer, empowerment and better living standards. Foxconn’s new facility is located in Devanahalli near Bengaluru. Most of the women employed at the plant are between 19 and 24 years old. By next year, the workforce at the factory is expected to grow to nearly 50,000 employees, making it one of the largest employment hubs in the sector. Trial production at the plant



The minister highlighted Foxconn’s Bengaluru iPhone facility hiring nearly 30,000 employees in under nine months, 80% women, many joining the formal workforce for the first time

begin earlier this year with the iPhone 16. The facility is currently assembling the latest iPhone 17 Pro Max models, with more than 80 per cent of production meant for export markets. Foxconn is investing around Rs 20,000 crore in the Bengaluru project. Spread across nearly 250,000 square feet, the facility will become the company’s largest manufacturing unit in India in terms of both production capacity and employment. The new plant is also expected to surpass Foxconn’s older iPhone factory in Tamil Nadu, which employs about 41,000 workers. In October, Foxconn announced an additional Rs 15,000 crore investment in Tamil Nadu, creating 14,000 high-value jobs. With operations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana, Foxconn’s expansion reflects India’s growing role as a global electronics manufacturing hub and highlights new employment opportunities for women across the country.

Deccan Gold Mines begins Kyrgyzstan production trials

NEW DELHI

Deccan Gold Mines Ltd has started initial production trials at its gold mining project in Kyrgyzstan. The pre-commissioning phase will process around 20,000–30,000 tonnes of ore. Gold recovered during these trials will be made into saleable concentrate or dore bars, helping the company test

and validate its production process. This step marks a key milestone before full-scale operations begin. The successful trials are expected to provide insights into efficiency and yield, setting the stage for progressive commissioning. The move reflects Deccan Gold Mines’ commitment to expanding gold and critical mineral production internationally.

Motilal Oswal backs Sensa Core with \$72 million

MUMBAI

Motilal Oswal Alternates has invested USD 72 million (around Rs 645 crore) in Hyderabad-based medical devices company Sensa Core Medical Instrumentation for a significant minority stake. The funding aims to boost product development and support global expansion, the company said on Monday. Founded in 2006, Sensa Core designs, develops, manufactures, and distributes specialised in-vitro diagnostic devices. Its electrolyte analysers are used in over 40,000 hospitals and labs across India and exported to more than 78 countries. The company also produces glucometers, haemoglobin meters, and has recently entered the arterial blood gas analyser segment.

TIER ONE OFFICE DEMAND

Majority of GCC bases operate from green centres

NEW DELHI

About 62 per cent of global capability centre (GCC) bases in India’s flex spaces operate from green-certified buildings, while 85 per cent function from premium grade-A centres, according to a new report by Vestian. Among the top seven cities, 42 per cent of flex centres are green-certified and 69 per cent are located in grade-A buildings. India currently hosts over 1,750 GCC companies with nearly 3,800 bases, creating demand for more than 40 per

cent of total office space in the past two years. Of the 1,400 flex centres across major tier-1 cities, over 475 host GCC operations. “Flex operators remain key partners, offering speed, flexibility, and enterprise-grade infrastructure that global companies need to scale efficiently,” said Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian. Peripheral Business Districts (PBDs) are increasingly preferred for expansion due to strong connectivity, competitive costs, scalability, and larger campuses. Currently,



77 per cent of flex space occupied by GCCs is in peripheral areas, compared with 61 per cent of overall flex stock.

Driven by GCC demand, India’s flex ecosystem now spans 82.3 million square feet across nearly 1,400 centres in

the top seven cities. The market is concentrated, with the top 10 operators controlling 67 per cent of total space. Bengaluru leads with 33.2 per cent share, followed by Delhi-NCR at 20.4 per cent and Pune at 14.7 per cent. Vestian projects India’s flex stock to exceed 100 million square feet in tier-1 cities by 2026, as operators expand and upgrade portfolios to meet the growing requirements of GCCs. This reflects a steady shift toward sustainable, high-quality infrastructure for global enterprises in India.



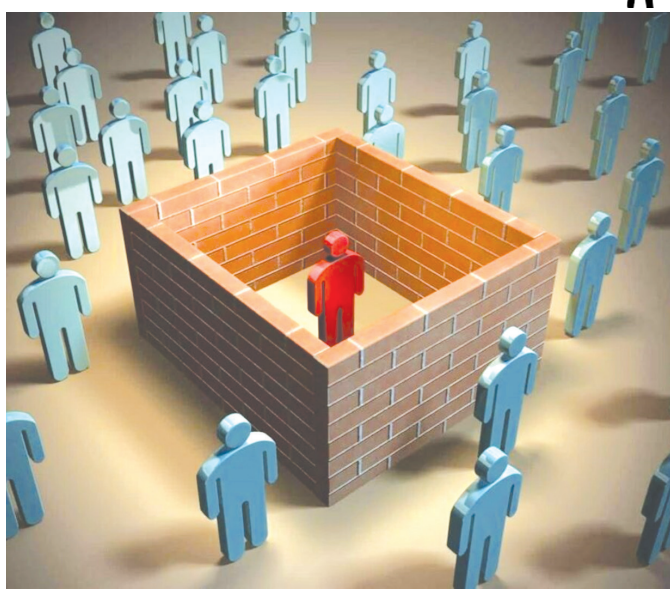
ABU SUFIYAN

India's promise to its children with intellectual disabilities is clear in laws and policies, yet their everyday reality still swings between care and cruelty, protection and neglect. The recent assault on a 16-year-old differently abled boy at a Bagalkot residential school has torn away any illusion that these children are safe simply because they are inside institutions meant to "help" them.

Horror in Bagalkot: Video shows abuse of disabled boy in Navanagar

At a residential special school in Navanagar, Bagalkot, a video surfaced showing a 16-year-old boy with disabilities being beaten with a belt and plastic pipe, his legs pinned down as he cried in pain while staff continued the assault. Chilli powder was allegedly thrown into his eyes as other adults watched, one of them recording and laughing instead of intervening, before the footage was shared and the boy's parents finally learned what their son had endured.youtube

Police have arrested the school's operators and staff, and an FIR has been registered, but the case has shaken parents of disabled children across Karnataka who trusted such institutions to be safe spaces. For child rights activists, the Bagalkot incident is not an exception but a symptom of deeper structural failures in monitoring, training, and accountability in facilities that work with intellectually disabled children.



Social stigma and emotional isolation

Beyond laws and policies, children with intellectual disabilities face a quieter, everyday violence—stigma. Families often hide them from public view due to shame or fear of ridicule, and communities see them more as objects of pity than as rights-bearing individuals. This stigma narrows their world: invitations to birthday parties or school outings shrink, classmates avoid sitting with them, and teachers may assume they can't learn, reinforcing stereotypes that they are "burdens" rather than

children with potential.

The psychological impact is profound. International studies have repeatedly linked exclusion and bullying with higher risks of anxiety, depression, and self-harm among children and adolescents. Children with disabilities are often overprotected at home in some respects yet under-protected in others—their mobility may be restricted, but their emotional needs and autonomy are overlooked, leaving them confused, lonely and dependent on people who may mistreat them.

Technology and inclusive learning

Digital tools carry the potential to transform learning for children with intellectual disabilities—if designed thoughtfully and made accessible. Educational apps with simplified interfaces, visual supports, local-language audio prompts, and step-by-step instructions can reinforce life skills and basic academic concepts at a pace the child can manage. For non-verbal children or those with limited speech, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and apps can help them express pain, discomfort, or preferences, reducing their isolation and improving their ability to report abuse or neglect.

During and after the pandemic, online learning highlighted both possibilities and limitations: while some urban



schools experimented with special online sessions and interactive tools, many disabled children in low-income families lacked devices, connectivity, or adult support to benefit from them. Bridging this digital divide requires targeted government investment in accessible devices, training for teachers and parents, and partnerships with NGOs and tech innovators to scale solutions beyond big cities.

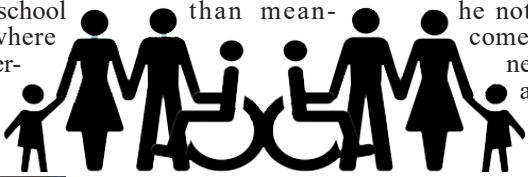
Safeguarding the Future: The Hidden Struggles of Intellectually Disabled Children in India

The invisible classroom: Many children with disabilities denied proper classroom access

Children with intellectual disabilities already live on the margins of India's education system, often denied even basic classroom access or pushed into poorly supervised hostels and "special schools". National data show that disability is closely linked with lower educational attainment, and many children with cognitive or communication difficulties remain out of school or sit in classrooms where their needs are not understood.

In mainstream schools, inclusive edu-

cation often stops at admission; children are enrolled on paper but left without resource teachers, individualized learning plans, or accessible teaching materials. Many special schools, especially in smaller towns and districts, run with limited trained staff and weak oversight, turning care work into custodial management rather



ingful education or life-skills training.

Child rights activist Nagasimha G Rao points out that for these children, "developing life skills itself constitutes a vital form of education," yet they frequently "fail to recognise or comprehend the violence and abuse inflicted upon them, and rarely confide in anyone about it." The result, he notes, is that many become "victims of parental neglect or indifference" and are deprived of their fundamental rights.

Healthcare: the missing link

Accessing healthcare and therapy remains another critical barrier. While India has expanded disability certification and welfare schemes, obtaining an accurate diagnosis, regular therapy, and mental-health support still depends heavily on geography and income. Families in districts and rural areas often travel long distances for assessments, only to face long waiting times, limited specialists, or services that are not adapted for children with intellectual disabilities.

Mental health, in particular, is neglected: children with developmental delays or behavioural issues are frequently labelled "stubborn" or "naughty" rather than being screened for emotional distress or co-occurring conditions. For many parents, the costs of regular occupational therapy, speech therapy, counselling, or psychiatric care are prohibitive, pushing them to rely on residential institutions or hostels that promise holistic care but may lack trained staff and proper oversight, as the Bagalkot incident tragically illustrates.

Families on the frontline

Behind every intellectually disabled child is a family negotiating daily battles—with systems, finances, and social attitudes. Parents, especially mothers, often give up paid work to become full-time caregivers, leading to economic strain and emotional burnout. Accessing certificates, schemes, reservations, or assistive devices means navigating multiple offices and paperwork, which can be overwhelming for families already stretched thin.

Rao stresses that parental neglect is not always deliberate cruelty; sometimes it is the exhaustion of caregivers who receive little structured support. When parents are not oriented to their child's rights, or when they are themselves stigmatized or misinformed, children may be left in the care of institutions without regular visits, questions, or oversight. Community-based support groups, respite care, and counselling for parents remain limited and uneven across Karnataka and the rest of India.

Abuse risk: highest where trust is deepest

Children with intellectual disabilities are most vulnerable where trust is deepest—at home, in schools, and in hostels or residential care. Global evidence shows that they face significantly higher risks of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, often from caregivers or family members. Their dependence for daily living tasks, challenges in communication, and difficulty in recognising inappropriate behaviour make them easy targets for abusers who assume they will not be believed or will not speak up at all.

National crime data show rising reporting of crimes against children, but cases involving disabled victims are likely still undercounted because classification and documentation of disability status are inconsistent. In institu-



tions, power hierarchies and the fear of being expelled or punished discourage staff or peers from reporting wrongdoing, which is why Rao argues that "children with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable, facing higher risks of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, often from caregivers or family members," and that many cases go unreported due to communication barriers and dependency on abusers.



K'taka's policies versus reality

Karnataka was among the early states to mandate explicit child protection frameworks within schools. As early as 2016, the state government issued a directive that every educational institution must adopt and implement a Child Protection Policy. The Karnataka State Child Protection Policy requires schools to form child protection committees, display grievance mechanisms, ban corporal punishment and ensure safe environments, with monitoring by authorities.

Rao notes that institutions that fail to comply should face serious consequences, including revocation of license and action under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 for teachers or staff who are cruel to children. Yet the Bagalkot case and earlier allegations from a speech and hearing school in Kollegala, Chamarajanagar, where a teacher is accused of sexually abusing children with communication disorders over years, show monitoring has been patchy at best.

In the Chamarajanagar case, survivors and advocates allege that the teacher exploited children who could not speak, with complaints emerging only years later, after an alumnus disclosed her experience at a school event and a formal case was finally registered under the POCSO Act.



Laws on paper, gaps on ground: laws aim to protect children with disabilities

India is not short of progressive legal frameworks. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 recognises intellectual disability and promises equality, non-discrimination, and reasonable accommodation in education, health and community life. Article 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child further obliges States to ensure special care, dignity, and full social inclusion for children with disabilities.

But the implementation gap is glaring. Research cited by global disability and child-rights agencies shows that violence against children with disabilities occurs at rates at least 1.7 times higher

than among their peers without disabilities, with many incidents never reported. In India, law enforcement capacity, child protection systems, and disability services rarely intersect effectively, leaving complaints to be handled case by case rather than through a systemic child protection lens.

Rao underlines this disconnect: despite strong laws, "the absence of effective monitoring and implementation has turned their protection into a persistent challenge," especially because children with intellectual disabilities struggle to report abuse or even recognise it when it happens around them.

‘Parameshi Prema Prasanga’ to be staged in city on Dec 24

BENGALURU

The theater troupe Rangavalli Mysore will be staging the comedy play 'Parameshi Prema Prasanga' at the Ranga Shankara theater in JP Nagar, Bengaluru, on Wednesday, December 24, at 7:30 PM. Written by the renowned theater director Srinivas Prabhu, this play is directed by Raviprasad.

About the Play
Parameshi, who's striving tooth and nail to woo Rashmi... Krishnoji, whose celibacy is being fiercely challenged by the eyes of Shantaladevi... Vyakularaya, who's adamant about becoming a poet, come hell or high water... Ambabai, who roasts and devours her husband (metaphorically, we hope!)... Bhoothanatha, who can't even recall his own name... Desai, the gluttonous foodie... Pundriklu, the former dacoit turned good guy... And Chenni, who swipes a necklace in the blink of an eye...

When all these characters assemble in one place, the resulting fountain of uncontrollable laughter is none other than 'Parameshi Prema Prasanga' (Parameshi's Love Affair)!

Written by: Srinivas Prabhu Directed by: Raviprasad



Inspired by the works of English writer P.G. Wodehouse, this romantic comedy is penned by Srinivasa Prabhu. The renowned designer H.K. Dwarakanath has crafted the stage design, while Madhu Ninasam has designed

the lighting, and Manju Mangala will operate music. Make-Up by - Saritha C.V. Hariprasad has designed the costumes. The play is directed by Ravi Prasad. An entry fee of ₹200 has been fixed for this play.



The Black Caps dominated at Bay Oval, winning 2-0 in the series and boosting their World Test Championship standing

NZ secure second place after Test victory

NEW DELHI

New Zealand moved up to second place in the ICC World Test Championship standings after a crushing 323-run victory over the West Indies in the third and final Test at Mount Maunganui. The win helped New Zealand overtake South Africa, with only Australia remaining ahead in the points table.

The Black Caps finished the match midway through the final session at Bay Oval, showing clear dominance throughout the series. The victory sealed a 2-0 series win and strengthened New Zealand's position early in the World Test Championship cycle. Left-arm seamer Jacob Duffy played a key role in the triumph. He took the final

wicket of the match and ended the West Indies' second innings with impressive figures of 5 for 42. Chasing a challenging target of 462 runs, the visitors were bowled out for just 138. Duffy's performance across the series was outstanding. He claimed 23 wickets and was named Player of the Series. During the match, he also broke a long-standing nation-

al record, surpassing Richard Hadlee's mark for the most wickets by a New Zealander in a calendar year. New Zealand's bowlers were well supported by strong batting performances. Openers Devon Conway and captain Tom Latham made history by becoming the first opening pair in Test cricket to score two centuries each in the same match.

Conway stood out with scores of 227 and 100, becoming the first New Zealander to achieve a double century and a century in one Test. He was named Player of the Match. New Zealand will next face England in a three-match Test series next year, while the West Indies remain ninth and will play Sri Lanka and Pakistan at home.



Dharam Singh launches Sansad Khel Mahotsav in Almora

ALMORA

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dharam Singh on Monday inaugurated the Sansad Khel Mahotsav at the Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Stadium in Almora, marking another step towards promoting sports and fitness across the state. The sports festival has been launched to support the vision of Fit India and Fit Uttarakhand, with a focus on encouraging young people to take up sports and physical activity. Union Minister of State Ajay Tamta was also present at the event, showing support for the initiative. Speaking after the inauguration, Chief Minister Dharam Singh said that a strong sports culture is taking shape in Uttarakhand under his government. He highlighted that sports infrastructure is being developed on a large scale and that new policies are helping identify and support talented athletes from across the state. The Chief Minister said the government aims to turn Uttarakhand into a sports hub. As part of this plan, a state-level sports league is being prepared. He announced

The Chief Minister announced plans to make Uttarakhand a sports hub, including 23 academies in eight cities training 920 top athletes and numerous other players

that 23 sports academies will be set up in eight major cities, where around 920 top athletes and many other players will receive high-quality training. Dharam Singh also shared plans to establish Uttarakhand's first sports university in Haldwani and the state's first women's sports college in Lohaghat. These steps, he said, will create better opportunities for young athletes, especially women. The Sansad Khel Mahotsav is part of a wider national effort to promote fitness, community participation and sportsmanship. Similar events have been organised in other parts of the country, including Jorhat, where large numbers of people took part in sporting activities like a half-marathon. The initiative aims to discover local talent, strengthen grassroots sports and build a healthier society through active participation.

Gill to lead strong Punjab Squad for Vijay Hazare

NEW DELHI

Punjab have announced an 18-member squad for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy, with star players Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma and Arshdeep Singh set to feature in the domestic one-day tournament. Punjab will begin their campaign against Maharashtra on December 24 and will play all seven of their league matches in Jaipur. The team reached the quarter-finals last season and will be aiming to go further this time with a strong mix of international players and young talent. Gill's inclusion comes after



a difficult phase in his international career. The Indian batter was recently dropped from the squads for the T20 World Cup and the New Zealand T20I series due to concerns over fitness and form. The Vijay Hazare Trophy will

offer him a chance to regain rhythm and confidence. Alongside Gill, Punjab have named Abhishek Sharma and left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, who was the team's leading wicket-taker in the previous edition. Arshdeep is expected to play a key role again if available for the full tournament. The squad also includes several aggressive batters and useful all-rounders such as Prabhsimran Singh, Anmolpreet Singh, Naman Dhir, Ramandeep Singh, Sanvir Singh and Harpreet Brar. The pace attack will be led by Gurnoor Brar and Krish Bhagat.

India eye better fielding in second T20I

NEW DELHI

The Indian women's cricket team will look to improve its fielding and strengthen its position when it faces Sri Lanka in the second Women's T20 International on Tuesday (today). India began the series with a comfortable eight-wicket win, marking their first international outing after a historic World Cup triumph last month. The bowlers did a solid job by restricting Sri Lanka to 121 for six, and the batters chased the target with ease. However, several dropped catches raised concerns about the team's fielding standards. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur openly admitted that fielding needs attention. She said the team is working hard to fix the issue and stressed that wet conditions cannot be used as an excuse. The skipper believes the side will show a better approach in the next match. The Indian players returned



to action after a well-earned six-week break following their World Cup success. They trained together at a week-long camp in Bengaluru, and some lack of sharpness in the field was expected. Harmanpreet feels the team will soon regain rhythm and confidence. India remain clear favourites against the Chamari Athapaththu-led Sri Lankan side. Jemimah Rodrigues continued her fine form, batting fluently and punishing loose

bowling in the opening game. Young left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma also impressed by conceding just 16 runs in her four overs, despite going wicketless. Shafali Verma will look for more consistency, while senior players such as Harmanpreet, Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma hope for tougher challenges. The series is seen as important preparation before India's demanding tour of Australia after the Women's Premier League.

Sakib Hussain joins SRH for fresh IPL challenge

NEW DELHI

Right-arm pacer Sakib Hussain is set for a new chapter in his Indian Premier League career after being picked by Sunrisers Hyderabad for his base price of Rs 30 lakh at the IPL 2026 auction. Hussain, who tasted title success with Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024 without playing a match, was at Bihar's Vijay Hazare Trophy camp in Patna when the news came. Hussain said the selection felt rewarding as he worked hard to improve on previous shortcomings and implement lessons from domestic cricket. He credited guidance from SRH bowling coach Varun Aaron and praised his time with KKR, where he learned strategies and mental skills from players like Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, and Rinku Singh.

Starc questions ICC role in DRS payment

ADELAIDE

Australian fast bowler Mitchell Starc has raised serious questions about the International Cricket Council's handling of Decision Review System costs, amid growing controversy during the ongoing Ashes series. Starc suggested that the ICC should pay for DRS technology in international cricket and ensure the same provider is used across all matches. He believes a centralised system would reduce confusion and bring more consistency to umpiring decisions. The debate has intensified after several disputed decisions involving Real Time Snicko during the Ashes. Tensions peaked in the Adelaide Test, where England lost a crucial wicket after a review issue. The ICC later reinstated England's review when the Snicko technology provider admitted an operator error that affected a decision involving Australian wicketkeeper Alex Carey. Another moment drew attention when Starc was caught on the stump microphone saying that Snicko "needs to be sacked," reflecting frustration shared by players and officials from both sides. Cricket Australia and the England and Wales Cricket Board are reportedly planning to approach the ICC to review its current protocols. At present, host broadcasters are responsible for paying for DRS technology, a system that has drawn criticism due to varying standards across countries. Speaking on the issue, Starc said the officials rely on the technology to make decisions, so the ICC should take responsibility for funding it. He added that using one provider worldwide could lead to fewer errors and less frustration for players, officials and fans.



Boochatham, Kanoh retire on winning note

BANGKOK

Thailand's women's cricket team marked an emotional milestone as Nattaya Boochatham and Rosanan Kanoh announced their retirements following a sixth straight gold medal at the Women's T20 event at the SEA Games Thailand 2025. Veteran all-rounder Nattaya Boochatham, 39, ended her international career after the final against Malaysia. A key figure in Thailand's rise, she represented the country at the 2020 ICC Women's T20 World Cup and played major roles in Asia Cup and Emerging Nations successes, finishing with over 100 T20I wickets. Rosanan Kanoh, 26, bowled out on a high, guiding Thailand to victory in the final with a calm, match-winning innings. Their departures close a defining chapter in Thailand women's cricket history.



Nepal announce training squad ahead of T20 World Cup

KATHMANDU

Nepal have named a 24-player group for a training camp as they begin preparations for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in India and Sri Lanka early next year. The selected players will attend an intensive camp that will help selectors decide the final 15-member squad for the global tournament, which begins on February 7. The larger group gives the team management a chance to assess form, fitness and combinations before trimming the squad. Nepal have shown faith in the core group that impressed earlier this year. Sixteen players from the squad that defeated the West Indies 2-1 in a T20I series during September and October have been retained. Their strong performances played a major role in Nepal's growing confidence in the shortest format. Along with the familiar faces, eight new players have been added to the group. Sher Malla, Binod Bhandari, Abi-



nash Bohara and Bashir Ahmed earned selection after strong displays in the recently concluded Nepal Premier League. Their inclusion adds depth and competition within the squad. Nepal qualified for the 2026 T20 World Cup after an unbeaten run at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia-Pacific Regional Final in Oman in October. This will be Nepal's second straight appearance at the tournament and their third overall, reflecting steady progress on the international stage. Nepal have been placed in Group C, where they will face

tough opponents including England, West Indies, Bangladesh and Italy. The tournament will feature 20 teams across eight venues over 29 days. Each team will play group matches between February 7 and 20. The top two teams from each group will advance to the Super Eights stage starting February 21. The best four teams from that phase will move on to the semi-finals, with the final scheduled for March 8. The training camp is seen as a crucial step as Nepal aim to compete strongly against top cricketing nations.



Schroder drilled a clutch overtime three, leading bench spark with 24 points, 10 rebounds, seven assists to win

Schroder late three lifts Kings past rockets

SACRAMENTO

Dennis Schroder delivered a dramatic finish as the Sacramento Kings edged the Houston Rockets 125-124 in overtime, snapping a five-game losing streak in thrilling fashion.

Schroder hit a clutch three-pointer with just 2.2 seconds left in overtime, sealing the win after the Kings staged a strong late comeback. Coming off the bench, he played a vital role and finished with 24 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists.

DeMar DeRozan led Sacramento with 27 points and nine assists, while Russell Westbrook added energy and toughness with 21 points and 13 rebounds. Keegan Murray chipped in with 26 points, and Maxime Raynaud recorded a solid double-double with 12 points and 14 rebounds.

Sacramento forced overtime after trailing late in regulation. With the

Rockets leading 112-107, DeRozan scored on a dunk and Westbrook followed with a corner three-pointer to tie the game and push it beyond regulation. The overtime period saw several lead changes and rising tension. Houston briefly went ahead when Jabari Smith Jr. made two free throws for a 124-122 lead. Moments later, DeRozan drove into the lane and calmly passed to an open Schroder in the left corner, who knocked down the winning shot.

For Houston, Alperen Sengun scored 28 points, Kevin Durant added 24 points and 10 rebounds, and Smith finished with 18 points. Durant had a final chance to respond but missed a jumper at the buzzer.

The Rockets started slowly but rallied strongly in the second quarter to take control before the Kings' late surge turned the game around and delighted the home crowd.

Bayern Munich end year strong with Heidenheim Rout

BERLIN

Bayern Munich ended the year firmly in control of the Bundesliga after a dominant 4-0 away win over bottom side Heidenheim, moving nine points clear at the top before the winter break.

Despite missing several senior players, coach Vincent Kompany's team controlled the match from the opening whistle. Bayern kept most of the possession, passed with confidence and forced Heidenheim to defend deep for long periods.

The visitors took the lead in the 15th minute when Michael Olise's corner was headed back across goal by Jonathan Tah, allowing Josip Stanisic to score from close range.

Bayern doubled their advantage in the 32nd minute. Goalkeeper Diant Ramaj failed to deal with a long ball, Hiroki Ito kept the move alive and Olise finished calmly to make it 2-0.

Heidenheim showed more fight after halftime and came close to scoring. Stefan Schimmer hit the crossbar with a header, while Arijon Ibrahimovic fired over the bar soon after. Bayern also created chances, with Harry Kane striking the post.



Heidenheim fought back after halftime, nearly scoring; Schimmer hit the crossbar, Ibrahimovic missed, while Bayern also threatened, with Kane striking the post in a tense contest

The match remained under Bayern's control as the visitors introduced young debutants and managed the tempo well. Luis Diaz added a third goal in the 86th minute with a header

from Stanisic's cross. Kane completed the scoring in stoppage time with his 19th league goal, marking his 100th Bundesliga goal contribution. Bayern now sit on 41 points from 15 matches. Heidenheim remain second from bottom on 11 points. Kane later said Bayern were strong early, slightly careless after the break, but deserved winners. The result underlined their title ambition and sent a clear warning to rivals before football pauses for winter weeks.

Fox powers spurs past Wizards in Washington



WASHINGTON

De'Aaron Fox powered the San Antonio Spurs to a 124-113 win over the Washington Wizards, scoring a game-high 27 points and hitting five three-pointers. The victory was San Antonio's sixth in seven games and its second over Washington in four days. Luke Kornet dominated inside with 20 points and 12 rebounds, while Stephon Castle contributed 18 points and 11 assists. Victor Wembanyama, easing back from a calf strain, finished with 14 points and 12 rebounds in under 22 minutes off the bench. The Spurs broke the game open in the second quarter, outscoring Washington 43-21 to build a 20-point halftime lead. Washington rested Alex Sarr and Khris Middleton, and although Bub Carrington scored 21 points, the Wizards never cut the deficit below nine. The loss was Washington's fourth straight at home, as San Antonio continued gaining momentum late in season.

Buyuktuncel triple-double powers Nebraska to big win

LINCOLN

Berke Buyuktuncel recorded an impressive triple-double as No. 15 Nebraska pulled away in the second half to defeat North Dakota 78-55.

Buyuktuncel finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists, guiding the Huskers after a slow shooting start in the opening half. The victory helped Nebraska improve to 12-0, marking the best start in

the program's history.

Nebraska struggled early and trailed for much of the first half, but the team responded strongly after the break. The Huskers opened the second half with a decisive 19-6 run, quickly changing the momentum of the game. Buyuktuncel gave Nebraska its first lead just over a minute into the half with a free throw.

Braden Frager provided a spark off the bench, leading

Nebraska with 17 points. Sam Hoiberg added 15 points, while Jamarques Lawrence contributed 13, including a key three-pointer that helped stretch the lead. Nebraska's balanced scoring proved too much for North Dakota to handle. North Dakota briefly regained the lead midway through the second half on a three-pointer by Garrett Anderson. However, Nebraska responded immediately.

Buyuktuncel, Lawrence and Hoiberg combined for 11 points during a 13-0 run that pushed the Huskers firmly ahead.

As the game progressed, Nebraska tightened its defense and controlled the boards, steadily increasing the gap. The Huskers built their largest lead at 25 points and never allowed North Dakota to mount a serious comeback. The visitors were unable to get closer than

10 points in the final nine minutes. Eli King led North Dakota with 13 points, while Marley Curtis added 10. Despite their effort, North Dakota struggled to keep pace once Nebraska found its rhythm. The win highlighted Nebraska's depth, composure and growing confidence. With strong teamwork and consistent defense, the Huskers continue to look like a serious force as the season moves forward.



McDavid shines as Oilers edge Golden Knights

EDMONTON

Connor McDavid led from the front with a goal and two assists as the Edmonton Oilers held on for a 4-3 win over the Vegas Golden Knights.

McDavid opened the scoring midway through the first period and later set up two power-play goals for Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. Zach Hyman also scored and added an assist, while Leon Draisaitl chipped in with two assists as Edmonton built a commanding early lead.

The Oilers came out with strong intent after a loss in Minnesota the previous night. They raced to a 4-0 advantage in the second period, putting heavy pressure on Vegas goaltender Carter Hart. Edmonton looked in full control at that stage, moving the puck quickly and taking advantage of special teams chances.

Goaltender Connor Ingram made his Edmonton debut and first NHL appearance of the season. He stopped 26 shots and remained calm despite late pressure from Vegas. Ingram last played in the league with Utah before entering the NHL Players Assistance Program earlier this year.

Vegas mounted a comeback attempt after Tomas Hertl scored on a power play in the second period. Hertl later assisted on goals by Mitch Marner and Pavel Dorofoev in the third, with Marner also scoring with the man advantage. Noah Hanifin registered three assists for the Golden Knights. Despite the push, Edmonton held firm in the final minutes to secure the victory. The win improved the Oilers' record to 18-13-6. They have now won three of their last four games and continue to show a strong trend when scoring first.

Vegas, meanwhile, suffered a third straight loss and will look to regroup quickly as the season moves forward.

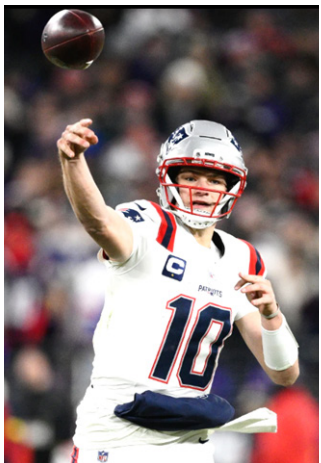
Maye sparks Patriots comeback to seal playoff spot

BALTIMORE

The New England Patriots are back in the NFL playoffs after a thrilling 28-24 comeback win over the Baltimore Ravens, led by quarterback Drake Maye's calm and confident performance.

Trailing by 11 points in the fourth quarter, the Patriots showed strong belief and sharp execution when it mattered most. Maye guided two crucial touchdown drives, turning the game around and crushing Baltimore's playoff hopes in front of their home crowd.

With New England down 24-13, Maye fired a 37-yard touchdown pass to Kyle Williams to bring life back into the contest. He then showed great awareness by completing a two-point conversion pass to Rhamondre Stevenson, cutting the gap to just three points with over nine minutes re-



maining. The comeback reflected the growing maturity of Maye, who finished with a career-high 380 passing yards and two touchdowns. His steady leadership has helped New England return to the postseason in just his second year as starting quarterback.

Head coach Mike Vrabel

praised his players after the game, saying the win belonged to the team and that the Patriots would now focus on chasing the division title.

This playoff return comes seven years after Tom Brady and Bill Belichick won their final Super Bowl together, and four years after the team last reached the postseason. While the names have changed, the winning feeling has returned to Foxborough.

Baltimore, meanwhile, suffered a major setback. The Ravens were unable to protect their late lead and now face serious pressure in the playoff race.

For New England, the victory confirmed what fans have begun to believe. With Maye in charge and confidence growing, the Patriots once again look ready for January football and bigger challenges ahead.

Morgan Rogers double lifts Aston Villa past United

BIRMINGHAM

Morgan Rogers scored two brilliant goals as Aston Villa beat Manchester United 2-1 at Villa Park, extending their winning run and strengthening their push near the top of the Premier League table.

The victory was Villa's seventh straight league win and their tenth in a row across all competitions. The result lifted the home side to third place with 36 points, keeping them firmly in the title race behind leaders Arsenal and Manchester City.

Villa were not at their best for much of the first half, but the match changed just before the break. In the 45th minute, John McGinn found Rogers with a precise pass. The 23-year-old showed great control, cut inside the box and curled a stunning shot into the top cor-



ner, giving Villa the lead. Manchester United responded quickly. After Matty Cash lost possession near his own

penalty area, Matheus Cunha struck the loose ball past Emiliano Martinez to level the score. However, United suf-

fered a big setback when captain Bruno Fernandes was forced off at halftime due to injury.

Fernandes was replaced by defender Lisandro Martinez, who pushed forward and tried to help United regain control. Despite a brief spell of pressure, Villa soon struck again. In the 57th minute, Rogers repeated his magic, curling another fine effort beyond the goalkeeper to restore Villa's lead.

United tried to find an equaliser late on. Shea Lacey tested Martinez, while Mason Mount sent a free kick over the bar. Villa stayed calm and defended well to secure the win.

Rogers, who has now scored seven league goals this season, praised the supporters after the match and even gave his shirt to a fan. Villa Park celebrated loudly as another famous win was sealed.

