

QUICK READ



School bus brake failure sparks scare; students safe

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
A school bus belonging to National Public School met with an accident near Mahalaxmi Layout on Monday after reportedly suffering a brake failure. The vehicle rammed into an electric pole, triggering panic in the area. Fortunately, the 8 to 10 children on board escaped without injuries, averting what could have been a major tragedy. Officials from the Malleshwaram Traffic Police rushed to the spot and conducted an inspection. Local MLA Gopalai-ah also visited the site and stressed the need for strict maintenance checks on school buses to prevent such incidents.

Friend misuses account details, ₹7 cr siphoned in cyber fraud

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
A shocking case of cyber fraud involving the transfer of ₹7 crore through a student's bank account has come to light in Bengaluru. The accused, identified as Ayush, allegedly conspired with others to cheat the student, who had been his friend for over a year. According to the complaint, Ayush claimed that his own bank account was blocked and requested the student's help. Trusting him, the victim handed over his pass-book, ATM card and mobile SIM linked to the account. Soon after, the student received a call from the bank informing him that ₹7 crore had been transferred through his account in a suspected cyber fraud. The account was immediately frozen. A case has been registered at the North Division Cyber Police Station, and further investigation is underway.

Dairy Secy assaulted after rejecting substandard milk

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A routine milk quality inspection at Goravigere village turned violent after a group of suppliers allegedly assaulted and threatened the secretary of the local Milk Producers' Cooperative Society. The injured secretary, Thulasamma, lodged a complaint with Avalahalli police accusing Siddesh, Vijay Kumar, Naveen Kumar, Mahesh and Babu of attacking her during the morning collection process. According to the complaint, the incident occurred between 8 am and 8.20 am when Thulasamma was checking milk brought for procurement. She reportedly found the quality to be below prescribed stan-

Activists decry amended lake buffer law

Environmentalists say reduced lake buffers threaten fragile urban ecosystems

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's lake conservation activists have strongly criticised the state government's notification of the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (Amendment) Act, 2025, which revises the uniform 30-metre buffer zone around lakes and replaces it with graded limits based on size. Under the amendment,

tanks above 100 acres will retain a 30m buffer. Lakes between 25–100 acres will have a 24m buffer; 10–25 acres, 12m; 1–10 acres, 6m; and 0.1–1 acre, just 3m. The revised law also permits construction of roads, bridges, water supply lines and high-tension towers within buffer areas, subject to conditions that the original water-holding capacity is not reduced.

Sandeep Anirudhan, convenor of Bengaluru Town Hall, criticised the timing of the notification, noting that the matter is pending before the National Green Tribunal, which has taken suo motu cognisance and issued notices to the government. He argued that the amendment impacts not only Bengaluru but nearly 45,000 lakes across Karnataka. According to Anirudhan, buffer zones serve as protec-

tive barriers against contamination and unchecked development. "Reducing them will, over time, render lakes unusable and trigger food and livelihood crises, especially affecting agriculture and fisheries," he warned, alleging that the move benefits real estate interests. Madhuri Subbarao, co-founder of Friends of Lakes, questioned the scientific basis of scaling down

buffers for smaller lakes. She pointed out that small lakes fill up faster during intense rainfall and rely on wider buffer zones as safety shields against flooding and breaches. "Reducing buffer zones purely based on size is neither hydrologically sound nor environmentally responsible," she said. A senior official from the Bengaluru Central City Corporation noted that only four lakes fall within its jurisdic-

tion — Ulsoor (106 acres), Kaggadasapura (47 acres), Kelagina Byrasandra (12 acres) and Chickpet Byrasandra (15 acres). Of these, only Ulsoor will retain the 30m buffer, while the others will see reduced limits under the new framework. Activists have urged transparent public consultation and science-based policy decisions to safeguard the city's fragile lake systems.

B'luru–Chennai Expressway set for early 2027 completion after delays

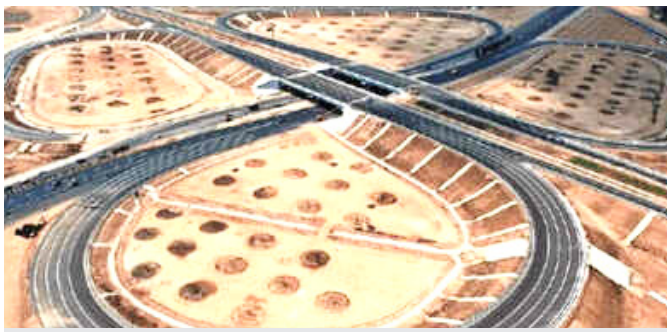
CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The long-awaited Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway, envisioned as a high-speed corridor linking Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, has been pushed back yet again, with full completion now expected in early 2027.

Originally slated for 2024 and later revised to June 2026, the project has faced multiple hurdles, including pending forest clearances, land acquisition challenges and financial stress faced by contractors.

Currently, the 72-km Karnataka stretch between Hoskote and KGF is fully operational and has been open for nearly a year. However, progress in the other two states remains incomplete. The 85-km Andhra Pradesh segment is about 92 per cent complete, while the 106-km Tamil Nadu portion stands at roughly 80 per cent completion.

A key bottleneck is the 25.5-km Arakkonam–Kancheepuram stretch in Tamil Nadu, where work has



As per a recent court directive, senior lenders have proposed substituting the concessionaire through a letter dated January 20, 2026. Being a greenfield corridor, the expressway can be commissioned only after completion of all packages, including the stalled Arakkonam–Kancheepuram section, the Minister clarified.

come to a standstill since May 2025 due to financial constraints of the concessionaire. In Parliament, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed the Lok Sabha that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has initiated steps to terminate the contract.

Once completed, the greenfield expressway is designed for speeds up to 120 kmph and is expected to reduce travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai from six to seven hours to just over two hours. At present, commuters travel along the conventional 340-km route via Hosur, Krishnagiri, Vellore and Kancheepuram.

Expectations had risen sharply after Gadkari inspected the project site in Hoskote in January 2023 and announced an ambitious completion target. However, seamless high-speed connectivity across the three states remains a year away.

Student alleges gang rape after being drugged

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 19-year-old private college student has alleged that she was gang-raped after being administered drugs by two acquaintances she had met through social media. Based on her complaint, the Amruthahalli police have registered a case against Dixon Sandra and Nikhil. The survivor, a native of Tamil Nadu studying in Ben-

galuru, stated that she became acquainted with Dixon, a resident of West Bengal, through Instagram. In her complaint, she alleged that Dixon expressed love for her and invited her to a villa in Jakkur on February 14. She went there along with a friend. At the villa, Dixon and Nikhil allegedly forced her to consume a pill. The complainant alleged that after she became semi-conscious, the two sex-

ually assaulted her. She further claimed that they threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the incident to anyone. Shocked and traumatised, she later informed her brother and approached the police to file a complaint. Following the complaint, police registered a case and initiated an investigation. Medical examination and other legal procedures are under way.

Bengaluru drives housing boom; 8.7 L homes lined up

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka's residential real estate sector is witnessing robust growth, driven largely by employment expansion in Bengaluru and rising urbanisation across the state. Nearly 8.7 lakh housing units, covering about 7,000 lakh sq ft of carpet area, are currently in the pipeline across 4,452 projects registered with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).

The state ranks fourth nationally in terms of the number of residential units under development, reflecting sustained buyer confidence and formal market participation. Industry experts say the increase in both unit count and carpet area indicates that more homebuyers are opting for slightly larger homes in the post-Covid era.

CH Ramachandra, Joint Secretary of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) National Chapter, said housing demand remains strong as financial growth from industrial and infrastructure sectors eventually flows into residential markets. However, he cautioned that project timelines of four to six years can still be impacted by labour shortages, market fluctuations and delays in approvals or utility connections.

He pointed out that improved connectivity, such as the Outer Ring Road in



Bengaluru and similar infrastructure in cities like Hyderabad and Mumbai, has significantly boosted real estate growth. Increasing demand from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities is also contributing to the expansion.

Bhaskar T Nagendrappa, President of the CREDAI-Karnataka chapter, attributed Karnataka's strong position to Bengaluru's thriving tech ecosystem, pleasant climate and robust connectivity. While Bengaluru continues to dominate the apartment market, cities such as Mangaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi and Belagavi are also witnessing growing acceptance of apartment living, even though plotted developments remain popular in many areas.

Builder associations across India note that residential growth is primarily driven by urbanisation, job creation and rising purchasing power. Like Maharashtra's expansion beyond Mumbai, Thane and Pune, Karnataka is now seeing similar momentum in Mysuru and Mangaluru, with experts emphasising the need to further boost employment in these emerging urban centres.

Ambulance stopped after grazing car, driver abused near Anekal

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An ambulance rushing to attend to a critically ill patient was allegedly stopped and its driver abused after the vehicle grazed a car near Alliance University at Anekal in Bengaluru Rural district, triggering public outrage. Based on a complaint filed by ambulance driver Gnanendra, police registered a case and detained two persons — Vasanth from Anekal and Bharath from Hosur in Tamil Nadu — for questioning. The incident occurred when a 108 Arogya Kavacha ambulance set out from Anekal with its siren on. While navigating a narrow stretch of road in front of the university campus, the ambulance reportedly brushed against a car that was either moving slowly or partially obstructing the roadside. Instead of allowing the emergency vehicle to proceed, the car driver, allegedly joined by a few students, stopped the ambulance and entered into a heated argument. Despite the driver repeatedly explaining that he was responding to a medical emergency, the vehicle was blocked for nearly 10 to 15 minutes. The driver was also allegedly subjected to verbal abuse. Police personnel arrived at the spot and brought the situation under control. A video of the incident shows the ambulance driver urging the car owner to take photographs and file a complaint later, but the argument continued, delaying the ambulance. Under traffic regulations, motorists are legally required to give free passage to emergency vehicles, including ambulances and fire engines. Obstructing them can invite penalties and legal action.

Ordered iPhone, got a dud; Jalahalli man wins ₹1.3 lakh refund

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A Jalahalli resident who ordered a premium smartphone online but received a used and allegedly fake device has won a full refund after approaching the consumer court.

Ashoka Bhat, 39, placed an order for a black iPhone 14 Pro Max worth Rs 1.3 lakh on Amazon. However, Bhat claimed the device inside appeared used and did not look original. Shocked by the condition of the phone, he immediately sought a refund.

Initially, Amazon asked him to wait for three days before initiating further action. Later, the company apologised and arranged for a return pickup. However, Amazon and the sell-

er, Appario Retail, later contended that Bhat had returned the wrong product.

After his legal notice allegedly went unanswered, Bhat filed a complaint before the First Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, seeking a full refund.

In its defence, Appario Retail stated that the product was delivered through Amazon's authorised logistics partner and argued that the grievance related to delivery, over which it had no direct role. Amazon maintained that the sale transaction was strictly between Bhat and Appario, pointing out that the tax invoice was issued by the seller and that payments were routed to Appario through

a separate nodal account.

Amazon further claimed that an internal enquiry showed Bhat had returned a different product. After examining records and hearing both sides, the Commission observed that neither company produced evidence proving that the delivered product matched the one ordered. It noted that Amazon failed to examine the delivery personnel or provide cogent proof to counter the complainant's claim.

The Commission, comprising President Syed Anser Kaleem and member Shara-vathi SM, directed Amazon and Appario to jointly refund Rs 1.3 lakh to Bhat, along with Rs 2,000 towards litigation costs.

Bengaluru North tightens segregation rules

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru North City Corporation and Bengaluru Central City Corporation have launched parallel initiatives to strengthen waste management and improve urban cleanliness through stricter enforcement and large-scale field action.

Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pom-mala Sunil Kumar has made segregation of waste at source mandatory, aiming to reduce reliance on landfill sites and prevent recurring protests near dumping yards. Under the new directives, wet waste from households will be processed for composting, while dry waste will be diverted to recycling units and

waste-to-energy plants. Setting a firm target, the commissioner instructed Assistant General Managers (AGMs) and Deputy General Managers (DGMs) to achieve 65–70 per cent segregated waste collection by March 2026. Health inspectors, link workers, marshals and pourakarmikas have been tasked with meeting this goal. Officials were also directed to actively cooperate in Swachh Survekshan 2025–26, with the first phase of a special cleanliness drive scheduled from March 1 to 8. The corporation aims to eliminate all garbage vulnerable points, commonly known as black spots, and has mandated strict penalties against public urination and spitting near skywalks and other public areas.

TECHNOLOGY REDUCES CRIME

AI Boost for City Police: Robbery Down 47%, Chain Snatching Drops 53%

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into city policing has yielded significant results, with major crimes witnessing a sharp decline over the past year, according to city police records.

A comparison of crime data from 2023, 2024 and 2025 shows a marked reduction in several key offences. Robbery cases dropped by 47 percent, chain snatching by 53 percent, house break theft at

night by 20 percent, motor vehicle theft by 19 percent, molestation by 20 percent and rape cases by 30 percent.

City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh attributed the decline primarily to the introduction of AI-driven systems in police operations.

He said many of the crimes that fell were typically committed at night. Earlier, emergency calls made to the police control room (112) were handled manually. A command

centre official would receive the call, note the complaint, identify the jurisdictional police station, trace the Hoysala patrol vehicle attached to it, and then communicate the assignment. The process consumed valuable time.

With AI integration, the response system has become automated. When a caller contacts the control room, the system instantly traces the caller's location. AI then identifies the nearest Hoysala patrol unit and assigns the task



directly to officers through a message on their tablet devices. This automation saves at

least two minutes per call, significantly improving response time.

Faster deployment enables Hoysala personnel to reach the spot quickly, preventing escalation of incidents such as fights, mob clashes or riots. Citizens can also alert police about incidents in other areas by sharing precise locations or mobile numbers for swift verification and action.

Singh noted that Hoysalas now play a more proactive role, especially during night hours. Earlier, patrol vehicles responded mainly after receiving calls. Now, in the ab-

sence of emergency calls, they conduct regular patrols alongside jurisdictional police teams.

The enhanced night patrolling has helped police detect suspicious activity, detain miscreants and deter potential offenders. Officials believe this visible and rapid policing presence is a key factor behind the noticeable drop in robbery, chain snatching, night house break thefts and vehicle theft cases across the city.



QUICK READ

Haveri hosts five-day industrial exhibition fair

Haveri
Haveri district will host a five-day industrial exhibition and sale fair from February 28 to March 4 at the District Guru Bhavan, organized by the District Panchayat Rural Industries Department. The fair will showcase handicrafts, bamboo decor, terracotta items, khadi, handloom textiles, food products, embroidered sarees, dolls, bags, artificial ornaments, and more, made by rural artisans, self-help groups, and small industries. Officials urged the public, especially women and children, to attend, support local artisans, and purchase high-quality indigenous products. For details, visitors can contact 08375-249065. The event aims to promote cottage industries and local entrepreneurship.

Workshop boosts MSMEs under Khanap scheme

Gadag
A workshop under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance scheme was held at Royal Palace, Gajendragad. The program aimed to support local MSMEs through Business Development Service Providers guidance. It was organized by the District Industrial Centre, Gadag along with the Industries and Commerce Department and Ranatak State Marketing Communication and Advertising Ltd., Bengaluru. Dr. Santosha M.V., Lead Bank Manager of SBI Gadag, Joint Director Prashanth P. Barigida, and Manjunath Hiremani attended. Resource person S.S. Marthi delivered a detailed presentation. Many entrepreneurs actively participated and welcomed the initiative warmly.

Excise seizes liquor tankers worth Rs. 90 lakh

Karwar
The Excise Department carried out a major seizure near the Dharwad-Goa National Highway in Ramanagara, Zoida taluk, confiscating two tankers carrying large quantities of alcohol worth nearly Rs 90 lakh. On February 21, following specific intelligence, authorities intercepted a Tata tanker (MP-09 HH-1908) carrying 30,000 litres of denatured rectified spirit from Davangere Sugar Company to Goa. Another tanker (KA-48 A-2218) transporting 20,000 litres of ethanol using fake documents from Davangere was also seized. The alcohol was tested by a chemist on-site and confirmed as Extra Neutral Alcohol.

Heated argument erupts during dharwad review meeting

The disagreement arose over Social Welfare issues, with Jakkappanavar highlighting neglect of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities

DHARWAD

A tense exchange took place between minister Santosh Lad and MLC F. H. Jakkappanavar during a district progress review meeting held in Dharwad.

The third-quarter KDP review meeting was organised at the Zilla Panchayat hall under the leadership of Minister Santosh Lad. Officials from several departments and elected representatives attended the session to review development work in the district.

The disagreement began while discussing issues related to the Social Welfare Department. Jakkappanavar raised concerns that the needs of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities were



being neglected in the district. He said he was speaking to highlight the problems faced by these communities.

During the discussion, a verbal argument broke out between the minister and the MLC. Jakkappanavar alleged that he was not being given

enough opportunity to speak during the meeting. Responding to this, Lad said that everyone present was being allowed to express their views and there was no need for confrontation.

As the exchange continued, Jakkappanavar said he would

walk out of the meeting. Lad replied that he had not asked him to leave and that he was free to do so if he wished. Other officials and leaders present intervened and helped calm the situation. After the brief disruption, the meeting continued with discussions on various departmental issues, including the functioning of the Social Welfare Department and ongoing development works. Later, Minister Lad also instructed district officials to take strict action regarding water supply issues in the district. He directed Deputy Commissioner Snehla to file a criminal case against Larsen and Toubro for failing to supply water properly and warned officials to ensure there is no shortage during summer.



State sets big target to build bridges

KARWAR

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi said the state government has set a target to construct 120 new bridges this year to improve connectivity and help people travel safely during all seasons.

He spoke after laying the foundation stone for a new bridge at Kalabhaga in Kumta taluk on Monday. The minister said many places, especially in coastal and Malnad regions, face serious travel problems during the rainy season. Roads and crossings get cut off, making it difficult for students, workers and villagers to reach schools, colleges and workplaces.

To solve this issue, the government has already built about 400 foot bridges in 12 districts. More such bridges will be taken up on priority in the coming months so that people can travel safely even during heavy rains.

The minister said several bridges have already been constructed in parts of Uttara Kannada district, including Siddapur, Kumta and Honnavar. Officials have also been told to identify places where

The minister stated bridges in Siddapur, Kumta, and Honnavar are built, officials are identifying more sites, and old bridges are swiftly inspected and approved for reconstruction

more bridges are required. Old and damaged bridges are being inspected and approvals are being given quickly for rebuilding them.

He also spoke about the problems faced by farmers when salt water from the sea mixes with river backwaters and enters fields. To prevent this and support agriculture, the government is constructing barrages in suitable locations.

Local MLA Dinakar Shetty said the bridge was a long-standing demand of the people in the area. He thanked the minister for quickly approving funds and agreeing to widen the bridge from three metres to nine metres.

Several officials and local leaders attended the event and inspected the ongoing work near the Aghanashini river.

Jarkiholi said he spoke against the issue despite not belonging to that community, highlighting suppression of leaders politically

Jarkiholi alleges conspiracy against Dalit MLA

BELAGAVI

Former minister and Ramesh Jarkiholi alleged that a conspiracy has been carried out against MLA Chandru Lamani because he belongs to the Dalit community.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, the Gokak MLA claimed that Lamani, who is educated and active in politics, has been deliberately targeted. He said a person from the same community was allegedly used in the conspiracy, leading to Lamani's imprisonment.

Jarkiholi said he was raising his voice against the issue despite not belonging to the same community. According to him, such incidents show how certain leaders are being suppressed in the political system.



He stated that the oppression of Dalit MLAs has been happening for many years and leaders must speak openly about it. At the same time, he clarified that he was not making any comments about corruption allegations or the investigation process.

The MLA also said questions should be asked about why leaders from specific

communities repeatedly face such situations. He added that similar incidents had happened in the past as well.

During the press conference, Jarkiholi also referred to the internal situation within political parties. He said confusion within the Bharatiya Janata Party should be resolved quickly, otherwise the party could face difficulties in the future.

He also commented on discussions within the Indian National Congress, saying internal issues should be addressed there as well.

Jarkiholi said he plans to meet Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah along with other leaders to seek a proper inquiry into the matter. He expressed hope that the government would ensure justice after examining all aspects of the issue.

Bomma calls bribery allegations political conspiracy attempt



HAVERI

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that both taking and giving bribes are serious crimes under the law. Speaking to reporters in Haveri on Monday, he claimed that the controversy involving Chandru Lamani was part of a planned conspiracy.

Bomma said there were attempts to force money on the MLA and damage his public image. According to him, some audio clips were circulated, but no money was actually found with Lamani. He added that a hospital is a place where many people visit, and facts should be carefully examined before making conclusions. The Karnataka Lokayukta has already registered a case and is investigating the matter.

He stressed that the truth must come out through a fair inquiry. Bommai said the law clearly states that offering a bribe is also an offence, not just accepting one. He called for a detailed investigation from all angles and warned against destroying someone's public life through planned allegations.

During the interaction, Bommai also criticized the Indian National Congress government. He said several contractor associations had earlier accused the government of corruption. Because of this, he argued that the party had no moral right to question others. He further targeted Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, saying he must answer questions raised by backward communities and Dalits. Bommai stated that leadership positions should not be treated as charity but as rightful opportunities.

Minister warns firms over farmers land issues

KOPPAL

Karnataka Minister Shivaraj S. Thangadgi directed wind energy companies to carry out their projects without creating problems for farmers and rural communities in the district.

He spoke during a review meeting held at the District Collector's office to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Karnataka Renewable Energy Policy 2022-27. Officials and representatives of wind energy companies attended the meeting.

The minister said several complaints have been received from farmers about damage to their lands and village roads due to heavy vehicles used for transporting wind turbine equipment. Vehicles weighing up to 60 to 70 tonnes are moving through rural roads, causing serious deterioration, he noted.



Thangadgi stressed that companies must respond quickly to the concerns of local residents. He said renewable energy projects are important, but they should not be carried out at the cost of farmers' livelihoods.

The minister instructed officials to collect detailed information about the number of wind turbines approved and those already being installed. He also directed the formation of taluk-level committees involving officials from departments such as revenue, public works, police,

forest and electricity supply agencies to monitor the work. The committees will also review whether damaged roads are being repaired properly using corporate social responsibility funds. Another meeting will be held soon to review complaints received from farmers and the action taken. During the meeting, Kushtagi MLA Doddanagouda Patil said roads in several villages have been badly damaged, making it difficult even for ambulances to pass.

BAGALKOT UNDER RESTRICTIONS

Prohibitory orders extended after Bagalkot violence

BAGALKOT

Following the recent stone-pelting incident during the Shivaji Jayanti procession, prohibitory orders in Bagalkot city have been extended until February 28, said District Superintendent of Police Sid-dharth Goyal.

Speaking to the media at the District Administration Building on Monday, the SP said the restrictions will cover a 4-kilometer radius around Bagalkot city. Navanagar will not be included under these orders. No protests, public



gatherings, or ceremonies are allowed during this period. Violating the orders under Section 163 may invite strict legal action, he warned.

Goyal said that those involved in the stone-pelting case have been identified and action has been taken based on solid evidence. He emphasized that the investigation is impartial, without considering caste or organization.

Deputy Commissioner San-gappa added that meetings have been conducted with Muslim leaders, MPs, ministers, and current and former MLAs to ensure communal harmony. He reminded the public that the second PUC examinations will begin on February 28 and the Holi festival is scheduled from March 4. People are urged to celebrate peacefully.

The stone-pelting occurred on February 19 during the 396th birth anniversary procession of Shivaji Maharaj. The procession started from Ambabhavani temple in the fort and moved through Basaveshwara Circle, Val-labhbhai Chowk, in front of Panka Masjid, and ended at the fort. Miscreants threw stones, creating tension and prompting immediate prohibitory orders.

Authorities imposed restrictions under Section 163 of the Indian Civil Safety Code in 2023 in Bagalkote city, Navanagar, and Vidyagiri to maintain law and order.

Gadag athletes selected for state sports meet

GADAG

The divisional-level cultural and sports meet of the Social Welfare Department staff from seven districts was held in Belgaum from February 21 to 22. The event showcased various competitions, including Bhavgeeta, women's throwball, and men's cricket.

Under the guidance of Deputy Director Srikanth Haranahunasi, the best performers were chosen to represent the department at the upcoming State Level Social Welfare Department Sports Meet in Bangalore. The selected athletes demonstrated remarkable skill and teamwork, earning

their spot through dedication and consistent performance during the divisional meet. Deputy Director Dr. Nanda Hanabharatti, along with district managers Mrs. Manjula Somakkanavara and Vidayamati Kurahatti, congratulated the athletes. Assistant Directors Gopal Lamani, B.V. Badigera, Mrs. Geetha Alur, and Udhayakumar Yaliwala, along with office superintendents Manjula N. Muthanna Sankanur, and Chandrappa Madara, also extended their best wishes. The community expressed pride in the athletes' achievements and hopes for strong performances at the state meet.

QUICK READ

**Gadag district
schedules Janata
Darshan on Feb 27****Gadag**

Gadag district will hold a Janata Darshan program on February 27 at the District Administration Building, chaired by District In-charge Minister H.K. Patil. The program allows citizens to submit grievances and receive compensation under government rules. Applications have been accepted since February 16 at all taluk Tahsildar offices and the District Administration office. Daily submissions from taluk offices will be sent to the District Commissioner. Officials will ensure necessary documents and compensation are provided during the meeting. District Collector C.N. Sridhar urged the public to participate and benefit from this opportunity.

**Free bus
travel for PUC
students announced****Gadag**

Students appearing for the second PUC examinations from February 28 to March 17 will receive free bus travel across the district. The North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation announced that candidates can use city, suburban, regular, and express buses without paying any fare. By showing their official admit card, they may travel from their homes to assigned examination centres and return after completing each paper. Officials said the step aims to reduce stress on families and ensure students reach centres on time. Authorities urged students to carry valid hall tickets during every journey for smooth and safe travel experience daily.

**Gadag taluk to hold
monthly guarantee
meeting****Gadag**

A taluk-level monthly Pancha Guarantee meeting will take place on February 26 at 11 am at the Gadag Zilla Panchayat Sabha Bhavan. The meeting will be chaired by Ashok Mandali, President of the Gadag Taluk Level Panchayati Projects Implementation Authority. Taluk Panchayat executive officers said the session focused on reviewing ongoing projects and ensuring timely implementation of development schemes in the taluk. Officials emphasized monitoring progress closely and addressing any pending issues to benefit local residents. The meeting also provides a platform for officers to discuss challenges, share updates, and plan for smoother execution of government programs in Gadag.

JDS backs bandh over factory expansion

Chandrashekhar criticized elected representatives, alleging Rajashekar and Raghavendra Hitnal failed to address the issue

KOPPAL

The Janata Dal (Secular) has extended support to the Koppal-Bhagyanagar bandh called to protest the expansion of industrial units near the city.

Addressing a press conference, party state core committee member C. V. Chandrashekhar said the protest was organised after residents raised concerns about pollution and health problems caused by growing industrial activity around Koppal.

He said local groups had already staged an indefinite protest near the Municipal Corporation office after studying the environmental impact of factories. According to him, the bandh aims to draw wider attention to the issue and push authorities to take action.

Chandrashekhar criticised elected representatives for not raising the matter strongly in legislative forums. He alleged



that Member of Parliament Rajashekar Hitnal and MLA Raghavendra Hitnal had not effectively discussed the issue either in Parliament or the state assembly.

He said industries that were expected to bring development should not harm the environment or public health. The leader also claimed that the region has seen rapid industrial growth in recent years.

According to available data, Koppal district has around 200 industrial units, including medium and large-scale factories. Several of these units are

involved in iron, steel, cement and fertiliser production. Many of them are located within a short distance of Koppal city, forming what is now being described as an industrial corridor.

Chandrashekhar said people living in nearby areas such as Ginigera, Munirabad and other villages have expressed concern over pollution and related problems. The party therefore decided to support the bandh. Local JDS leaders and workers were also present at the press conference and said they would participate in the protest.

Shri Prashanth P. Barigida and other dignitaries, including Shri Raju Olekara, Shri Doddappa Valmiki, and Shri Mahadeva Badami, encouraged entrepreneurs at the event

MSME workshop strengthens small businesses in Gadag

GADAG

The District Industrial Centre in Gadag has announced that a special workshop was successfully conducted under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance scheme for the year 2025-26. The event aimed to support and guide micro, small and medium enterprises in the district.

The programme was organized by the District Industrial Centre, Gadag, along with the State Marketing Communication and Information Office. The workshop took place at Shigli village of Gadag district. Many local entrepreneurs and small business owners attended the session.

Shri Prashanth P. Barigida, Joint Director of the District Industrial Centre, was present at the event. Other dignitaries,



including Shri Raju Olekara, Shri Doddappa Valmiki and Shri Mahadeva Badami, also participated and encouraged the entrepreneurs.

The main speaker of the workshop, Shri S.S. Marthi from Bangalore, delivered a detailed presentation using slides. He explained important aspects of enterprise strengthening measures and

shared practical guidance to help small businesses grow and improve their performance.

Officials said the workshop received a positive response from MSMEs in Shigli village. Participants actively took part in discussions and appreciated the efforts made by the department to support local industries.

STUDENTS URGED TO UNDERSTAND GENDER EQUALITY

HULKOTI

A special awareness programme on gender sensitivity was held at K. H. Patil Government First Grade College, where speakers highlighted the need for equality and respect among all genders.

The programme was organised by the college's Women's Unit and featured Nalini Bengeri, former principal of Government First Grade College Dharwad, as the resource person. She explained that gender roles are often formed through expectations created during the

socialisation process.

Dr. Bengeri clarified the difference between sex and gender. She said sex refers to biological differences between men and women, while gender relates to roles and responsibilities shaped by society and culture. Because of these social expectations, discrimination and stereotypes continue to exist in many areas of life.

She said gender sensitivity means creating awareness, empathy and respect so that everyone receives equal opportunities. According to her, such awareness is important to address problems

like inequality in education, violence, social injustice and discrimination.

Dr. Bengeri noted that the family is the first place where children learn values. Parents therefore have a major responsibility in teaching equality and fairness from an early age. She also said schools, colleges and voluntary organisations must actively promote inclusive education and awareness programmes.

Women's Unit coordinator Sarika Patil introduced the theme and encouraged students to question whether true equality exists today.



Gadag launches chariot campaign against child marriage

GADAG

In a strong move to end child marriage, the "Child Marriage Free Chariot" was launched at the Gadag District Administration Building. The program was inaugurated by District Collector Shri C.N. Sridhar and Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, Shri C.S. Shivanagoudra, who flagged off the awareness procession.

Sushila from Spandana Association explained that the chariot awareness jatha will travel across Gadag, Lakshmeshwar, and Shirahatti taluks over five days. Staff members will accompany the procession to educate communities about the harms of child marriage.

The District Collector

The District Collector noted Gadag ranks sixth in child marriage cases, urging all departments' action, while Shri Shivanagoudra affirmed strict enforcement of Karnataka's Child Marriage Prohibition Act

highlighted that Gadag ranks sixth in the state for child marriage cases and called for coordinated action by all departments to make the district and state free from child marriage. Shri Shivanagoudra emphasized that the Child Marriage Prohibition Act is strictly enforced in Karnataka, declaring that any child marriage conducted is legally null and void.

The program was attended

by District Child Protection Officer Mrs. Rafika Hallur, Labour Department Officer Mr. Srishail Somanakatti, Women and Child Development Officer Mrs. Radha Mannur, and representatives from multiple departments. Officers and staff from Social Welfare, Child Labour, Childline, Police, and Women and Child Development departments actively participated in the jatha. The procession focused on raising public awareness about the negative impacts of child marriage, legal provisions, and children's rights. Participants expressed a firm commitment to eradicate child marriage, emphasizing education, awareness, and community engagement as key tools in protecting children's futures.

Cooperative leaders to gather for key training

GADAG

Gadag District Cooperative Union Ltd. has announced a major training and review meeting for Chief Executives of Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies in the district. The programme to be held on February 24, Tuesday, at the Chamber of Commerce meeting hall in APMC Yard, Gadag. The event is being organized jointly by the Cooperative Department, Karnataka State Cooperative Mahamandal Ltd., K.C.C. Bank Ltd. and the district union. The meeting aims to strengthen cooperative societies and improve their working systems.

KCC Bank President Shivakumar Gowda S. Patil will inaugurate the programme. Union President C.M. Patil

will preside over the function. Several directors and senior officials from cooperative and banking departments will attend as chief guests. Experts will deliver special lectures during the training workshop. Chetana Patil, Joint Director of Agriculture, Gadag, will speak on sales management of fertilizers. Basavaraj M. Muchukannavar will explain ERP software and system audit in cooperative societies. Pramod Kusubi will share details about Yashaswini Yojana, while tax consultant Kiran Bileeli will guide participants on GST registration. Chief Executive Officer Chandrashekar S. Kariappa said the workshop will help cooperative leaders improve management, financial discipline, and farmer services across Gadag district.

Tension erupts over Ambedkar flag at fair

KOPPAL

A local fair in Halvarthi village, Koppal, turned tense on Sunday as clashes broke out between Dalits and upper caste residents over hoisting the Ambedkar flag. What began as a verbal disagreement quickly escalated into a physical confrontation, disturbing the peaceful celebrations of the Beeralingeshwara fair. Reports say that upper caste individuals allegedly entered the house of a Dalit youth, Gavisiddappa Hosamani, causing damage to the main entrance and front door. The incident has left the village in a state of anxiety, with many residents worried about further unrest. Police intervened promptly, registering a complaint at Koppal Rural Police Station.

Training program urges action to save daughters

KOPPAL

A joint training program on the law against sex selection was held at the district hospital to spread awareness and responsibility. The event was organized by several departments working together in the district to protect unborn girls and support families. The program was inaugurated by Mahantesh Darga from the District Legal Services Authority in Koppal.

He explained that the PCPNDT law strictly bans checking a baby's sex before or after conception. The law aims to stop female foeticide and im-



prove respect for girls. He warned that people who break the law can face prison, fines, and strict legal action. Doctors and families were asked to follow rules and report illegal tests. Health experts also spoke about medical scans

done during pregnancy to check the baby's growth. They said these tests must never be misused to learn the child's sex. Speakers stressed that society must value daughters equally and end old attitudes that prefer sons.

RESIDENTS DEMAND ROADS

Hombalanaka colony awaits roads after 40 years

**GADAG**

Residents of Hombalanaka Janata Colony in Ward No. 16 are still waiting for basic amenities, including proper roads, after four decades of neglect. Krishna H. Hadapada, president of the colony's Development Service Association, expressed concern over the ongoing hardships faced by the poorest families in the area.

Hadapada said that without proper roads, emergency services like ambulances and fire brigades cannot reach homes in time. The colony also lacks

sewerage, a park for children, and a community hall for public gatherings. "For 40 years, people here have lived in fear and deprivation. We dream of having facilities like other modern cities," he said.

Shri Krishna Gowdra Patil, son of Minister H.K. Patil, recently visited the colony to review the situation. Following his instructions, the Gadag-Betageri Municipal Corporation's Assistant Executive Engineer, Lakshman Jogdandakara, prepared a report and allocated a Rs. 45 lakh grant for road construc-

tion. However, work has yet to begin, with delays blamed on administrative issues or unknown obstacles.

Hadapada appealed for Krishna Gowdra Patil's immediate visit, saying it would motivate officials to start the work and finally address decades of neglect. "His presence will give strength to the authorities and end the 40 years of suffering in our colony," he added. Residents remain hopeful that with proper action, the colony will soon have the basic infrastructure it desperately needs.

Police arrest man for firing at festival

YELABURGA

Yelaburga police swiftly solved a dangerous case after a man fired a pistol in the air during a public festival, creating panic among attendees. The incident took place on January 28, around 11 a.m., during the commencement of the palanquin festival near Sridhar Muradi Hiremath in the town. The sudden gunfire caused fear among the crowd, disturbing the peace.

Following monitoring on social media, authorities registered Case No. 30/2026 at

Yelaburga Police Station under IPC Section 125 and the Arms Act. A special team led by CPI Mauneshwar Malipatil, along with PSI Vijaypratap and other officers, traced the accused, 58-year-old Maningappa Gowda Patil, a contractor from Sindagi now residing in Meenakshi Nagar.

A black six-chamber revolver, five fired cartridges, and six live bullets were seized. Patil confessed to the act, and the District Superintendent of Police praised the team for resolving the case within 24 hours.

QUICK READ

Women entrepreneurs can now register online

Chikkaballapura
The Karnataka State Women Development Corporation has launched the Gruhalakshmi Digital Marketing App to support women entrepreneurs. Since January 9, women can register for free on gruhalakshmidigital.org by uploading personal details and photos of the products they produce or trade. The platform allows entry of name, address, product details, email ID, and phone number to help expand business reach and increase transactions. The Deputy Director of Women and Child Development Department stated that women can also contact Development Inspectors at the District Administration Building in Chikkaballapura for guidance.

Skill training applications invited for SC/ST entrepreneurs

Chikkaballapura
The Tourism Department invites applications for a one-month skill development training under the SCSP/TSP scheme for 2025-26. The program aims to support small entrepreneurs from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in starting mobile canteens with subsidy assistance. Eight SC and five ST candidates will be selected. Eligible participants must have passed at least 10th class, be aged between 20 and 45, and complete training at state or central government institutions. Applications must be submitted by March 13, 2026. For details on qualifications, documents, or clarifications, candidates can contact the Assistant Director, Tourism Department, Chikkaballapura, at 08156-277041.

Ayurveda gains global recognition says MP

CHITRADURGA
Member of Parliament Govinda M. Karajol said that India's traditional Ayurveda system of medicine has now earned strong credibility and recognition across the world. He was speaking at a two-day free Ayurveda health check-up and treatment camp organised in Challakere town. The camp was jointly arranged by the District AYUSH Department of the Karnataka government, the AYUSH Medical Officers Association district unit, Bapuji Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, and the Narahari Seva Trust at the premises of the Narahari Temple. Karajol praised the organisers for conducting the programme and spreading awareness about the benefits of Ayurveda among the public. He said such initiatives help people understand traditional Indian systems of health and encourage natural ways of living. District AYUSH Officer Chandrakant Nagasamudra said the department has been

BLOOMS AND HERITAGE

Fruit flower expo highlights district heritage

CHITRADURGA
The three-day fruit and flower exhibition held in the city successfully highlighted the rich history, culture and literary heritage of the district, said MLA T. Raghumurthy. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the 33rd Fruit and Flower Exhibition organised at the District Horticulture Office premises in V.P. Baroda area of the city. The event attracted farmers, students, women and visitors from different parts of the district. Raghumurthy said the exhi-

JOSHI SLAMS CONGRESS MISSTEPS AT AI SUMMIT

In Bengaluru, Joshi said Congress leaders, including Margaret Alva and Akhilesh Yadav, criticized the party's inappropriate summit behavior

BENGALURU

Union Minister Prahlad Joshi sharply criticised the Congress party on Monday for its conduct at the AI Summit, calling it "shocking and regrettable." He urged Congress leaders to apologise to the nation and act responsibly at international forums. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Joshi said even Congress leaders like Margaret Alva and Akhilesh Yadav had expressed concern over the party's behaviour. He said Congress ignored established protocols and acted inappropriately during the summit attended by 29 countries, 45 ministers, top industry fig-



ures, and AI experts. Joshi also criticised internal conflicts within Karnataka Congress over the Chief Minister and Deputy CM posts, claiming that such power struggles have overshadowed governance and slowed development. He said corruption, unscientific schemes, and internal divisions have harmed the state's progress. On the issue of a "Dalit CM" narrative, Joshi alleged it is a political tactic, not a sign of real concern for governance. He claimed party leaders prioritise personal in-

terests over public welfare, leaving basic civic issues like water scarcity and poor roads unaddressed, especially in northern Karnataka. Regarding the Chandru Lamani case, Joshi called for a proper investigation into recently surfaced audio clips, urging clarity on whether the incident was a deliberate trap. He further lamented that Karnataka's culture of industrial growth and development has weakened under the current government, describing its claims of "development" as largely illusory. Joshi stressed that the state needs focus on governance and public welfare rather than political posturing.

The MP urged rail authorities to expedite overbridge plans at Origaon and Kamasamudra, addressing residents' traffic safety concerns

Push for bridges and railway workshop gains

KOLAR

Member of Parliament M. Mallesh Babu held discussions with railway officials regarding major infrastructure works planned across Kolar district. The meeting took place with Ashutosh Kumar Singh, Divisional Railway Manager of the South Western Railway Bengaluru Division. During the meeting at the DRM office, several long-pending proposals were reviewed, especially the construction of railway overbridges at busy level crossings in the district. Officials discussed the need for bridges near Kalyani on Tekal Road in Kolar city, near the Sanatorium area on Bangarpet Road,



close to SN Resorts in Bangarpet, and near the Deshihalli crossing. The MP also urged railway authorities to speed up plans for overbridges at Origaon in Kolar Gold Fields and Kamasamudra in Bangarpet taluk. Residents have long demand-

ed safer road connectivity in these areas due to heavy traffic and frequent railway gate closures. Mallesh Babu also submitted a request regarding a major development project for the region. He handed over a letter asking railway authorities to send a proposal to the Union Mines Ministry to allocate nearly 500 acres of land belonging to Bharat Gold Mines Limited. The land is proposed for establishing a railway service workshop in KGF, which could create jobs and support railway maintenance in the region. According to the MP, officials responded positively to the proposals during the meeting. He expressed confidence that the pending projects would move forward soon after necessary approvals. Additional Divisional Railway Manager and other senior railway officials also attended the review meeting and discussed the technical aspects of the works and future development plans.

Balakrishna backs Shivakumar amid leadership debate

RAMANAGARA

Congress MLA H. C. Balakrishna has strongly supported Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, saying the senior leader has sacrificed much for the party and remained loyal despite many challenges.

Speaking in Magadi, Balakrishna said Shivakumar dedicated his entire political life to the Indian National Congress. He pointed out that Shivakumar even faced jail during political struggles but still stayed committed to the party. Balakrishna remarked that if Shivakumar had compromised with the Bharatiya Janata Party like some leaders, his political position might have been very different today. His comments come at a time when discussions are continuing in political circles about leadership roles in the state. He said party workers believe Shivakumar deserves an opportunity and appealed to the Congress high command to consider the sentiments of leaders and supporters. According to him, if Shivakumar becomes Chief Minister, it could bring more development to the Ramanagara region. Balakrishna also spoke about reports of senior leader G. Parameshwara meeting



Balakrishna remarked that Shivakumar's political position could have been different if he compromised with the Bharatiya Janata Party, amid ongoing state leadership discussions

Union minister H. D. Kumaraswamy. He said such meetings should not always be given political meaning, as leaders often meet each other at public events, offices or social gatherings. Meanwhile, minister Satish Jarkiholi recently said that Siddaramaiah will continue as Chief Minister for now, adding that any further decision on leadership will be taken by the party high command. Balakrishna said party leaders regularly travel to Delhi to meet senior leadership and discuss organisational matters and political developments in the state.

KDP review meeting scheduled for Mar 2

CHITRADURGA

The quarterly KDP progress review meeting will continue on March 2 at 10:30 am at the Zilla Panchayat Hall in the city. The earlier meeting held on January 19 remained incomplete as several departments could not finish presenting their reports. Officials said the session will now review pending matters and discuss plans for implementing the NREGA scheme in the coming financial year. Planning and Statistics Minister and District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar will preside over the meeting. Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. S. Akash confirmed the schedule and urged concerned officials to attend without fail.

Chikkaballapur ready for smooth second PUC exams

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu directed officials to make full preparations to conduct the Second PUC Examination-1 smoothly and maintain the sanctity of the examination process. He spoke during a preparatory meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office on Monday. A total of 24 examination centres have been set up across the district for the exams scheduled from February 28 to March 17. These include six centres in Chikkaballapur taluk, three in Bagepalli, five in Gouribidanur, three in Shidlaghatta, one in Gudibande and six in Chintamani. Altogether, 12,986 students will appear for the examinations this year. The Deputy Commissioner said hall tickets have already been issued online to colleges. Chief superintendents of examination centres have been given full responsibility to conduct the exams ac-



cording to rules without any lapses. Seating arrangements must be clearly displayed on notice boards so students can easily find their places. Officials were instructed to remain alert against rumours about question paper leaks on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp. Strict action will be taken against those spreading false information. Question papers and answer sheets will be handled under tight security and monitored by responsible officers. Exams will be conducted under CCTV surveillance with webcasting arrangements. Electronic gadgets

such as mobile phones, pen drives, smart watches, Bluetooth devices and earphones are strictly banned inside examination halls for students as well as staff. Proper lighting, seating, drinking water and toilet facilities must be ensured at all centres. Police support has been arranged, and prohibitory orders will be enforced within 200 metres of examination centres to avoid crowding. Students have been advised to follow instructions on their admit cards and reach the centres at least thirty minutes before the exam.

Chikkaballapur hosts phone-in program for SSLC students

CHIKKABALLAPUR

To help students prepare confidently for the SSLC Annual Examination-1 (2025-26), the School Education Department has organised a special phone-in programme titled "Ask Questions and Solve Problems." The session will be held from 3 pm to 4 pm through Google Meet and will offer expert guidance on exam preparation. The district has 306 high schools — 111 government, 40 aided, 129 unaided, 22 residential and 4 Maulana institutions — with 15,021 stu-

dents registered for the SSLC exam. This includes 7,007 students from government schools, 2,616 from aided schools and 5,398 from unaided schools. Subject experts in six core subjects will interact with students during the programme in the presence of District Collector G. Prabhu and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Y. Naveen Bhat. Students can seek clarity on the syllabus, exam strategy, permitted materials in the examination hall and ways to manage stress, including concerns related to webcasting.

QUICK READ

Entrance exam date announced for Janaseva Admission

Gadag

The entrance examination for admission to Janaseva Vidyakendra for the 2026-27 session has been scheduled on March 8, 2026. The exam is for Class 5 Kannada medium and Class 8 Kannada and English medium students. Scheduled Caste candidates seeking admission to Janaseva Vidyakendra, Channanahalli Sri Ramakrishna Model School, must submit their applications along with required documents to the Social Welfare Department office by March 2 to be eligible for the exam. The Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department urged students to complete the process on time to secure a chance for admission.

Alternative route arranged for Sampige-Mijaru bridge

Mangaluru

Due to reconstruction work on the Sampige-Ashwaththapura-Neerkere-Mijaru bridge in Mangaluru taluk, Dakshina Kannada district, all vehicle movement on this road is banned from February 23, 2026, to February 22, 2028. Vehicles from Neerkere to Sampige should use alternative routes via Manjanakatte-Muchhur-Niddodi on State Highway 70 or via Manjanakatte-Edapadavu-Handel. Vehicles travelling from Sampige to Neerkere must stop at Sampige and use routes through Manjanakatte-Mukhur or Handelu-Edapadavu-Manjanakatte. The City Police Commissioner issued the notification to ensure smooth traffic and safety during the long-term bridge work. Motorists are advised to follow these diversions carefully.

JOURNALISTS URGED TO REFLECT IN CHANGING MEDIA

Prabhakar likened conferences to motor racing pit stops, where journalists refresh ideas and sharpen skills in fast-paced news environments

BIDAR

Media advisor to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, K. V. Prabhakar, called for a serious discussion on the technical and ethical challenges facing journalism while speaking at the 40th Working Journalists' Conference event in Bidar.

He spoke after launching the conference website at the District Journalists' Association building. Prabhakar said the media world is moving very fast and journalists must pause and think about the direction of their work.

According to him, development-oriented reporting is slowly disappearing while statement-based news is becoming more common. This



trend, he said, is unhealthy for society. The conference should therefore become a platform where journalists rethink their role and responsibilities.

Prabhakar compared such conferences to "pit stops" in motor racing. Just as racing cars stop to refuel and change tyres, journalists also need time to refresh their ideas and sharp-

journalists must update their skills and learn how to handle risks. Newsrooms should train reporters to identify deepfake content and carefully verify information from social media.

Prabhakar also warned that corporatisation and modern technology are creating fresh ethical questions for the media. The conference, he said, should encourage meaningful discussions on these issues.

He added that the Chief Minister has always supported journalists and expressed hope that the community will receive positive announcements in the upcoming state budget. Leaders and journalist representatives attended the event.

Students learn metal protection at SSIT symposium

MARLUR

A two-day international symposium on metal protection, 'AOUKHASO-2026', concluded at the G.P. Nexus Auditorium of Sri Siddhartha Institute of Technology (SSIT) in Marlur. The event was organized by the Mechanical Engineering Department, OPP India Chapter, and OPP SSIT Student Chapters. The program focused on preventing metal oxidation and creating awareness among students and industry experts.

Chief guest Ravi K. Padmanabhan explained the challenges faced by industries in protecting metals and encouraged students to learn practical methods.

Manohar Rao N, former Executive Director of HPAI and symposium chairman, spoke about the event's objectives and highlighted the opportunities for SSIT students, including industrial visits and

first-priority hiring at his organization.

SSIT Principal M. M. Narakatti addressed the gathering and emphasized the importance of learning corrosion management. He said such symposiums help students understand real-world problems and prepare them for careers in engineering and research.

The event saw about 80 students, including undergraduates, postgraduates, and research scholars from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka districts like Hassan, Udupi, and Tumkur. They presented 31 research papers over six sessions. Each session included guidance from resource persons, keynote speeches, and interactive question-and-answer segments. The best eight papers were honored during the concluding ceremony.

The program was supported by SSIT faculty members including Dr. Jayaprakash.

Ballari Para Swimmer wins historic silver medal

BALLARI

Ballari's para swimmer Gopichand has made history by winning an international silver medal at the World Para Swimming Championship held in Australia from February 16 to 21, 2026. Competing in the 4x100 meter medley relay, he secured second place, marking the first international medal ever for a para swimmer from the district.

Gopichand trained under the guidance of coaches Rajni Lakka and Sharath Gaikwad, whose dedication helped him reach this milestone. His achievement has been widely

appreciated by the district administration, including Ballari Rural MLA B. Nagendra, Ballari City MLA Nara Bharat Reddy, Deputy Commissioner Nagendra Prasad K., District Superintendent of Police Dr. Suman D. Pannekar, Zilla Panchayat CEO Mohammed Haris Sumer, and Assistant Director K. Gracy of the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department.

The district congratulated the entire team for this outstanding performance, praising Gopichand's perseverance, skill, and inspiring contribution to para sports in Ballari.

Ballari Bans Liquor Ahead, Invites Franchisees

BALLARI

Ahead of the Sidibandi Rathotsava at Sri Kanaka Durgamma Temple in Ballari city, District Magistrate Nagendra Prasad has ordered a complete ban on the sale, transport, and opening of liquor shops, bars, and restaurants within a one-kilometer radius of the temple. The ban will be in ef-

fect on February 24, from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM, aiming to ensure public safety and prevent illegal activities during the festival. The order does not affect stock disposal at KSBCCL depots across the state.

In another update, the district administration has invited online applications for the appointment of franchisees



Madiga community demands governor sign reservation bill

MANDYANAGAR

Members of the Madiga community held a protest in Mandyanagar on Monday, urging the state government to implement full internal reservation and requesting the Governor to immediately sign the internal reservation bill. The protest aimed to ensure fair representation for Scheduled Castes as intended by the Constitution.

Protesters began a rally from Sanjaya Circle, raising slogans against the state government and Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa. The demonstrators demanded that internal reservation be properly shared among the Scheduled Castes, with Madigas classified as Category-A for caste certificates.

N.R. Chandrashekhar, State Vice President of the Karnataka Madiga Internal Reservation Struggle Committee, said that internal reservation should apply not only in direct recruitment but also in promotions, backlog positions, KIADB and BDA jobs, and government contracts. He stressed that SCP/TSP grants should be distributed in a 6:6:5 ratio and that political internal reservation should be en-

sured in upcoming Gram Panchayat, Taluk, and Zilla Panchayat elections.

Chandrashekhar also demanded funds of Rs. 2,000 crore each for the Adijambava Development Corporation, Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Development Corporation, and Safai Karmachari Development Corporations to support social and economic upliftment of Scheduled Castes.

Key leaders present at the protest included CK Papaiah, Bin Kantaraju, B. Krishna, H.M. Puttaraju, former GP President Kumar, Chamana-halli Manju, Balehonniga Kumar, Kannali Kempaiah, Govindaiah, Shambhunahalli Ravikumar, Chikkalingaiah, B.G. Pura Manju, Puttaraju Kadaba, Narasimha Murthy, Ranjith, Chandrasekhar MP, Huliwana Ambuji, Basaralu Srinivasa, Hampapur Shivabara, Prasanna, C.B. Boraiah, Rachaiiah, Mallesh, Chandru, Suresh, Umesh, and Shiva-kumar.

The protest ended peacefully, with leaders calling for immediate action from the Governor and the state government to implement the bill and strengthen internal reservation for the Madiga community across all sectors.

Deputy Lokayukta to tour Udupi district soon

UDUPI

Honorable Deputy Lokayukta of Karnataka, Justice B. Veerappa, will visit Udupi district from February 26 to 27. On February 26, he will arrive in the morning and hold hearings at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Auditorium, District Collector's Office Complex, Manipal Rajatadri, from 10 am to 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm to 5 pm, addressing complaints and pending cases in the presence of complainants and respondents. He will stay at the Circuit House overnight. On February 27, hearings continue from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, followed by site visits between 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm, before returning to Bangalore by night train.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFCAT DODDABALLAPURA
C.MISC. NO. 1174/2025
PETITIONERS: 1.SMT.Anjanamma D/o Late munjanappa, Aged about 42 years, Rlat #33, Somnappanahalli village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.
VS
RESPONDENT: Registrar of Birth and Death The Tahshidar Doddaballapur Taluk, Doddaballapur.
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
It is hereby notified to the public that the above petitioner, in the Hon'ble Court, his father Sri. Late MUNIANJANIPPA S/o Late ANJINAPPA died on 16-08-2020 Somnappanahalli village,Kasaba Hobli,Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, and since there are no official records of his death, she has filed application to register the death of dead in the Register of Births and Deaths, 1969. Therefore, if the public has any objection, we hereby inform you to appear before the above court on 08.04.2026 at 11 AM. Failing that, the case will be disposed of unilaterally in his absence. The publication is dated: 23.02.2026 with the signature and seal of the court.
By order of the court
Chief Ministerial Officer, Ptl Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura
Advocate for petitioner: Ambareesha C, Opp court, Roijpura Doddaballapur.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
C.MISC.No. 0002/2025
Petitioner: Sri.Sampathkumar.K.S. S/o Late Siddachar Aged about 37 years, Rlat Opp to Siddeshwara Temple, Kithaganahalli, K Palasandra Post, Guluru Hobli, Tumakuru Taluk, Tumakuru District-572118.
VS
Respondent: Registrar of Birth and death The Tahshidar Doddaballapura Taluk, Doddaballapura.
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 Of Registration Of Births And Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the Grandmother of petitioner by name LATE SIDHAMMA W/O LATE SIDALINGAPPA who died on 08.10.1947 at Kadathippuru Village, Doddaballavangla Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 24.03.2026
In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex parte order.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 23.02.2026
By Order of the Court
Chief Ministerial Officer Ptl Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura
Advocate: Venkatachala.B, Opp to Court complex, Roijpura, Doddaballapur Town.

Peps opens new sleep store in Vijayapura City

VIJAYAPURA

Peps Industries, a leading Indian mattress and sleep solutions brand, has launched a new Great Sleep Store in Vijayapura at Hanamshetty Complex, Gurukul Road, partnering with Sangam Ventures. The inauguration was attended by Dr. M. B. Patil, Karnataka Industries Minister, former minister Appasaheb Pattanashetty, Peps MD G. Shankar Ramm, and RBM Ramesh T. The modern store offers spring, memory foam, and coir mattresses, pillows,



protectors, and accessories with hands-on experience for customers. The launch marks Peps' 20th-year milestone and

strengthens its retail presence in North Karnataka, bringing premium sleep solutions closer to local buyers.

Minister orders no drinking water problems districtwide

KOPPAL

Minister for Backward Classes Welfare, Kannada and Culture Department, and Koppal District In-charge Shivraj S. Thangadgi on Monday urged officials to ensure that residents face no drinking water problems in the district as summer approaches. He made these remarks while reviewing the progress of the Amrutha 2.0 project, Jaljeevan Mission works, and multi-village drinking water projects at the Zilla Panchayat J.H. Patel Hall.

The minister directed Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, Junior Engineers, and Assistant Water Supervisors to visit all areas under their jurisdiction and collect information in advance to identify potential water shortages. "People often call us about water issues. There should not be any water problem in towns or villages across the seven taluks," he said.

He stressed that any taluk expected to face a shortage should immediately report to the Zilla Panchayat CEO through the local MLA. Kushtagi and Yelaburga taluks al-

ready receive water from the Krishna River, and current works are sufficient to meet needs. "Once all drinking water projects are completed, the district will have no water issues," he added.

The minister also warned contractors who delay work. "Those not completing work on time should be fined. If necessary, officials should assign work to other contractors who can perform efficiently," he said. Karnataka Legislative Assembly Chief Whip and Kushtagi MLA Doddanagouda Patil, Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Hittal, Legislative Council member Hemalatha Nayak, District Collector Dr. Suresh B. Itnal, Zilla Panchayat CEO Varnit Negi, Assistant Commissioner Kya. Mahesh Malagitti, Deputy Secretary T. Krishnamurthy, and officials from all taluks, including JEs and contractors, attended the meeting.

The minister concluded by stressing vigilant monitoring and timely completion of all water projects to ensure uninterrupted supply for all residents throughout Koppal district.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SANJANA RAJPAL**, aged about 21 years, D/o Rajesh R Rajpal, No.12, Flat No. 002, Naksha Prime Square, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, Swasti Main Road, Lakshmi Road Cross, Shanti Nagar, P O Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027. I wish to inform you that my name has been changed from **SANJANA RAJPAL** to **SANJANA RAJESH RAJPAL** and the said names belongs to one & the same person. Affidavit dated 11th January 2026, before Notary Smt. Hemalatha. P

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **AYISHA V W/o Y ABDUL RAHIMAN**, R/o 1-382, Valavoor Umanagudde House, Thumbe Post And Village, Bantwal, Farangipet, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka-574143, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **SHALAVOOR ASIYA**.

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for information that I, **RAMKRIPAL GUPTA S/o MOTI LAL GUPTA**, R/o No 1, Trg Bn (AT), ASC Centre (North), Bangalore, Karnataka-560007, declare that the name of mine has been wrongly written as **RAMKIRPAL GUPTA** in my service records. The actual name of mine is **RAMKRIPAL GUPTA**, which may be amended accordingly.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **BRAMHANANDAN S S/o N V SHRADHANANDACHAR**, R/o 307, k N S Apartments, B H Road, Behind Vijaya Bank, Mutthaiah Layout, Nelamangala, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka-562123, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **NS BRAMHAARYA**.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **GUNDA NEELIMA** (old name), a resident of **FLAT NO B4 1801, ELITA PROMENADE, J P NAGAR 7TH PHASE, Bengaluru, 560078**, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to **MANNE NEELIMA CHAUDHARY (NEW Name)** vide affidavit dated 23-02-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SANTOSH KUMAR KARABASAYYA HIREMATH** (old name), a resident of **NO 68/1, DOOR NO 304, 3RD FLR, 2ND MAIN, 8TH CRS, VENKATAPURA 1ST BLK, KORAMANGALA, Bengaluru, 560034**, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to **SANTOSH KUMAR HIREMATH (NEW Name)** vide affidavit dated 23-02-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

DOCUMENT LOST

This is to inform to General public that my client Smt.Amreen Naj W/o/ Syed Ajay, Residing at Dr/ Jakeer Husain Mohalla,Srinivasapura Town and Taluk, Kolar District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Sale Deed for taken Digital copy ,have lost following Documents of property pertaining to below Mentioned property Situated at: Dr/ Jakeer Husain Mohalla,Srinivasapura Town and Taluk, Kolar District, had published the factum of loss of her Original Regd Sale Deed, Dated:- 15-06-2012.Executed by Sri, G.Thammireddy s/o Govindareddy, and T.R.Venkateshreddy s/o Chikkaramayya, in favour of Smt.Jareena Begum W/o Naseemkhan.In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.SVP-1-00609/2012-13, in CD No.SVPD56, In regd before the SRO Srinivasapura, in respect of Property Bearing Y.P.Katha Demand Register no.1548, Property no.21, in Measuring 34 x24 Feets,police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no.2076451/2026, DATED:-23-02-2026, and complaint dated:-23-02-2026, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address. Place:-Chintnamani, Date:-23-02-2026.

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



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

QUICK READ



Three killed in MP road mishap

Narsinghpur

Three people were killed and seven others injured after a pick-up truck overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Narsinghpur district on Monday. The accident took place around 11 am near Barman police station on a National Highway stretch. All the victims were daily wage labourers from Sur-la Khapa village in neighbouring Chhindwara district. They were travelling to Narsinghpur for road construction work. According to Additional SP Sandeep Bhuria, two labourers died on the spot, while the third died during treatment at a hospital.

12 Tamil Nadu fishermen held by Sri Lanka

Chennai

Tension rose in the Palk Strait after the Sri Lankan Navy arrested 12 fishermen from Pamban on Monday and seized their mechanised trawler for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters. Officials of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department said the fishermen had left on Sunday in a boat owned by a Pamban resident near Rameswaram. The vessel was intercepted between Katchatheevu and Mannar. The fishermen were expected back by noon on Monday, but did not return, causing worry among their families.

SRCC GBO Diploma upgraded to master's programme

NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Global Business Operations (PGDGBO) at Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) will be upgraded into a full-fledged Master's degree. The announcement came during Yugantar '26, the annual management conclave of SRCC's GBO programme, held at the Shridhar Shriram Auditorium. The move is aimed at enhancing academic standards, aligning the programme with National Education Policy (NEP) reforms, and incorporating deeper research and innovation components.

Addressing students and faculty, Pradhan urged higher education institutions to "exit the Macaulay doctrine" and realign academic priorities with the vi-

JHARKHAND MUNICIPAL VOTING ENDS AMID CLASHES

RANCHI

Voting for mayor-chairperson and ward councillor elections in 48 municipal bodies across Jharkhand concluded at 5 p.m. on Monday, amid reports of clashes, disruptions, and allegations of bogus voting. The State Election Commission has yet to release final turnout figures, but preliminary estimates suggest voter participation ranged between 45 and 60 per cent.

Polling began at 7 a.m. for nine municipal corporations – Ranchi, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Adityapur, Chas, Medininagar, Hazaribagh, Giridih, and Mango – along with 20 municipal councils and 19 nagar panchayats. A total of 4,304 polling sta-



tions were set up, with long queues observed at several booths throughout the day. Prominent leaders, including Governor Santos Kumar Gangwar, Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Defence Minister of State Sanjay Seth, and MP Mahua Maji, were seen standing in queues to cast their votes in Ranchi.

However, voting was disrupted in several areas. In Bokaro's Chas, DSP Praveen Singh was injured during clashes between police and candi-

date supporters. In Bhojpur Colony, three women were detained for fraudulent voting, causing brief tension. In Dhanbad's Ward 27, a scuffle broke out between rival supporters, while Ward 22 saw an attempted booth looting and assault on a candidate's family member. Giridih's Ward 18 witnessed a road blockade over disputes, and unrest was also reported in Ambedkar Nagar (Gumla), Jugsalai (Jamshedpur), Hindipuri (Ranchi), and Sahibganj, where a Home Guard jawan's accidental rifle discharge triggered panic.

Voters raised complaints about being assigned different polling booths from family members and delayed notifications about booth changes.

India-Guyana V-Ps discuss deepening ties

Indian and Guyanese Vice-Presidents met in New Delhi to explore stronger cooperation across multiple sectors

NEW DELHI

Vice-President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan, on Monday held talks with his Guyanese counterpart, Vice-President Bharat Jagdeo, in New Delhi to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral relations. The discussions focused on enhancing cooperation across various sectors, including digital governance, financial inclusion, and education.

Dr. Jagdeo praised India's rapid progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, particularly in implementing the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and other digital initiatives. Both leaders explored possibilities of adapting similar programs for Guyana, while also showing interest in India's e-Migrate platform and the ITEC programme, aimed at technical and educational cooperation.

The two Vice-Presidents also reaffirmed their commitment to amplifying the voice of the Global South at international



platforms such as the United Nations Security Council and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Beyond formal talks, they shared a mutual passion for cricket and acknowledged Guyana's contribution to the sport.

Dr. Jagdeo arrived in New Delhi last week to participate in the AI Impact Summit hosted by India from February 16-20. He was welcomed at the airport by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai. The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted that his visit would further strengthen the historic and

multifaceted partnership between India and Guyana.

Last month, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali extended warm greetings to India on its 77th Republic Day, emphasizing the shared democratic values and the enduring bonds of friendship between the two nations. President Ali noted that India's freedom struggle inspired the developing world and praised India's continued advocacy for developing nations globally. He described the India-Guyana partnership as strong, historic, and grounded in mutual respect across multiple sectors.

BJP launches 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' ahead of Assam polls

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will begin its 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' in Assam on February 28 as part of a statewide mass outreach campaign ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. The yatra will traverse all Assembly constituencies, aiming to strengthen the party's connection with citizens and highlight developmental and welfare initiatives implemented by the Central and Assam state governments.

According to senior party sources, key leaders participating in different phases of the yatra will include BJP state president Nitin Nabin, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with other prominent central and state leaders. The campaign will feature public meetings, roadshows, and community interactions to showcase achievements in infrastructure, governance reforms, welfare schemes, and economic growth. Party representatives will also seek feedback from the public and communicate future development priorities. BJP leaders believe the Jan Ashirwad Yatra will serve as a key platform to engage directly with citizens, reinforce public trust, and generate momentum ahead of the Assembly polls. The initiative is expected to highlight the party's governance record and strengthen grassroots support across Assam.



PM Modi highlights 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called upon citizens to attend the 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan, marking the unveiling of a bronze bust of C. Rajagopalachari, which replaced the bust of British architect Edwin Lutyens. The event highlights Rajaji's remarkable contributions as a freedom fighter, scholar, and India's first and only Indian Governor-General.

"Rajaji Utsav is a wonderful initiative, showcasing the diverse contributions of Rajaji to our nation. I urge everyone to visit and get inspired," PM Modi said in a social media message. Earlier, on his radio programme "Mann Ki Baat," he emphasized that the country is moving away from symbols of slavery to celebrate icons rooted in Indian culture.

President Droupadi Murmu, while unveiling the bust, noted that the replacement symbolizes India's broader effort to honor national leaders who shaped the country's history and to move beyond colonial-era legacies. The exhibition, running from February 24 to March 1, 2026, presents Rajaji's

Prime Minister Modi urged citizens to visit 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan, celebrating C. Rajagopalachari's legacy and India's cultural pride while moving beyond colonial-era symbols

life, work, and vision, reflecting his ideals of mental decolonization and pride in India's heritage.

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan highlighted that this move is part of an ongoing transformation across governance, education, law, and culture. He said PM Modi's vision of "Gulami ki Mansikta se Mukti" is being implemented through initiatives like transforming Raj Bhavans into Lok Bhavans, renaming the Central Secretariat as Kartavya Bhavan, installing a statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose near India Gate, and constructing the National War Memorial.

"These steps are more than symbolic; they demonstrate India's commitment to embracing its culture, heritage, and the spirit of Sewa Bhavna," the Vice-President added.

Mamata condemns targeting of Bengali speakers

KOLKATA

A day after International Mother Language Day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed strong concern over what she described as efforts to label Bengali-speaking residents as "ghuspaithiya" (illegal infiltrators). She called these actions both humiliating and unconstitutional, warning against attempts to divide communities on linguistic grounds.

In a statement on X, Banerjee said she was "deeply pained" that certain divisive elements were allegedly ma-

ligning Bengali speakers, subjecting them to harassment and persecution. Though she did not name any political party, her comments appeared aimed at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has frequently raised concerns over illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya migration in the state and their inclusion in electoral rolls.

The chief minister asserted that any effort to undermine Bengal's cultural identity or heritage for political gain would be firmly resisted. "Such actions strike at the very heart of constitutional values. We



shall never allow Bengal's culture, heritage or identity to be undermined by intolerance," she said.

Highlighting India's rich linguistic and cultural diversity,

Banerjee noted that while Bengalis cherish their mother tongue, they respect other languages spoken in the country. She listed Hindi, Urdu, Nepali, Kurukh, Kurmali, Rajbanshi, Santali, Kamtapuri, and Sadri as part of West Bengal's social fabric.

Reiterating that unity in diversity remains India's greatest strength, Banerjee emphasised her commitment to defending the state's linguistic and cultural ethos against divisive narratives, urging citizens to stand together in preserving Bengal's heritage and inclusive values.

2 sisters die hours before wedding

JODHPUR

Two sisters in Rajasthan's Jodhpur allegedly died by suicide just hours before their double wedding ceremony on Saturday, police said, while a relative has alleged possible foul play. The deceased have been identified as Shobha (25) and Vimla (23), daughters of Deep Singh, both employed as teachers at a private school. Preliminary reports suggest they may have consumed poison, but officials said the exact cause will be confirmed only after the post-mortem. "It would be premature to ascertain the reason for their deaths at this stage," a police officer said.

The sisters' health reportedly deteriorated in the early hours of Saturday, prompting family members to rush them to a private hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival. Police later took custody of the bodies for post-mortem before handing them back to the family.

**ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD**
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinita, Wakdevadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)
The undersigned being the authorized officer of Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd., (ACHFL), Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"), Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has taken symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersede of powers conferred upon him under Sub-section(4)of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ACHFL for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

Name of Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) / Loan A/c No.
1. Shashikumar N (Borrower) 2. Nagaraj N (Co-Borrower) 3. Venkatasamma (Co-Borrower) Lan No: 1312020100022
Description of Secured Asset
All that piece and parcel of property bearing V.P. Katha No. 139, E-Katha No. 151900200100420043, Situated at Nathabele Village, Budikote Hobli, Bangarpete Taluk, Kolar District, presently comes under Alambadi, Jyothinahalli Village Panchayath, Measuring East to West 10.688000000000001 Meters or 35 feet and North to South 9.7536 Meters or 32 Feet in all measuring 104.05 Square Meters along with a Building constructed thereon and Bounded on: East: House belongs to Satish, West: Property belongs to Srinivas. South: Property belongs to Rajappa. North: Road.
Date of Demand Notice and Amount
09.07.2025 / Rs. 8.88.200/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Only) NPA Date - 29.06.2025 Date of Possession : 20.02.2026
STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS/ CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS
Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction/tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6.8 & 9 of Security (Interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.
Place : Kolar, Karnataka Date : 24.02.2026
Sd/- Authorized Officer Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

**BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED**
Reg. Office: 30/1, 1st & 2nd Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Millers Tank Bund Area, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru- 560051

No. DGM-3/BSWML/PR/787/2025-26 Date: 23.02.2026

Notification for Inviting Expression of Interest (EOI)

Under the DAY-NULM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission) scheme, as part of Component 2.0, applications are invited from eligible Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for the selection of 5 SHGs under the IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities related to sanitation, solid waste management, and awareness creation. Interested SHGs registered under DAY-NULM and actively involved in sanitation-related activities should submit their applications online through the BBMP website: www.bswml.karnataka.gov.in by 5:00 PM on 02.03.2026. Applications should be submitted to the following address: #30/1, 3rd Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Millers Tank Bund Area, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru – 560051. Details such as the Terms of Reference (TOR), Template for submission of TOR, and Endorsement Form are available on the BBMP website: www.bswml.karnataka.gov.in

The SHGs are expected to: 1) Identity proof, 2) Address proof, 3) Documents proving registration in the eligibility list, 4) Educational qualification & 5) Support the DAY-NULM team in their related activities. All interested SHGs are requested to read the instructions carefully and submit the required documents within the specified deadline.

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.	ವಿವರ	ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಹತೆ
1.	ಸಮುದಾಯ ಸಂಘಟಕರು (Community Mobilizer)	(1) ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಎಲ್.ಸಿ. / 10ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತೀರ್ಣರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷಾ ಜ್ಞಾನದ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಕೆಲಸ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುವವರಿಗೆ ಅನುಕೂಲತೆ. (2) ಬೃಹತ್ ಮೆಗಟೌನ್ ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ Day-NULM ತಾಪೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಸದಸ್ಯರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು (SHG) (3) ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರು MS Office ಮತ್ತು MS Excel ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ಸಾಕ್ಷರತೆಯನ್ನು ಕನ್ನಡ ಅಥವಾ ಆಂಗ್ಲ ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು. (4) ಐ.ಎ.ಸಿ. ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಭವವಿರುವ ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿನ ನಗರ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಅಥವಾ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಸಂಘಟಾಯತ್‌ಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಂವಹನ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ಅನುಭವ ಇರುವವರಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು. (5) ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಾರ್ಡ್ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸವಿರುವ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-3, BSWML.

DIPR/CP/5833/SSC/2025-26

QUICK READ



Tamil Nadu releases final voter list

Chennai

The Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, Archana Patnaik, on Monday released the final voter list after completing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. The state now has 5.67 crore voters, down from 6.41 crore earlier. Over 74 lakh names were removed under various categories. At the same time, 7.40 lakh new voters aged 18–19 were added. The revision was carried out from October 27, 2025, to February 23, 2026, as directed by the Election Commission of India.

Bihar IG arrested in custody case

Patna

An Inspector General (IG)-rank officer of Bihar Police was arrested on Monday by Andhra Pradesh Police in connection with an alleged custodial torture case from 2021. Sunil Kumar Naik, a 2005-batch IPS officer currently serving as IG, Fire and Homeguards, was taken into custody from his official residence in Patna. The case relates to an incident in Guntur district when Naik was posted as DIG (CID). The complaint was filed by senior TDP leader K. Raghu Rama Krishna Raju, who is now Deputy Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly.

Shirtless stir: Delhi cops arrest 5th accused

Gwalior

The Delhi police have arrested Jitendra Yadav from Gwalior in connection with the Youth Congress protest at Bharat Mandapam, on Monday. This marks the fifth arrest in the ongoing investigation into the demonstration held during the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Prior to Yadav's arrest, four other leaders — Krishna Hari, Kundan Yadav, Ajay Kumar and Narasimha Yadav — were apprehended and remanded to five days of police custody by the Patiala House Court. According to Delhi Police, the officials have recovered T-shirts and posters that were used in the Indian Youth Congress's protest at the AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam from Indian Youth Congress leader Krishna Hari's car.

AKHILESH SLAMS CENTRE, FLAGS VOTER CONCERNS

CHANDIGARH

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday criticised the Centre over a recent Youth Congress protest and alleged voter roll manipulation, while reaffirming unity within the INDIA opposition alliance.

Speaking to reporters in Chandigarh, Yadav said the government failed to anticipate the protest and blamed intelligence and law enforcement agencies for lapses. "What happened should not have happened. It is the Government of India's mistake," he said.

He stressed that the INDIA alliance remains united and focused on defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party in upcoming elections, especially in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Yadav said the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls would play a key role in shaping national politics ahead of the 2029 general elections.

India-France overhaul double tax pact to cut ambiguity

The move aims to improve tax clarity and encourage more cross-border co-op

NEW DELHI

India and France have signed an amending protocol to update their Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), aligning it with global standards and strengthening economic ties. The agreement was signed during the recent visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India, the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

Under the new protocol, capital gains from the sale of shares will now be taxed in the country where the company is based. The agreement also removes the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause



from the earlier tax treaty, resolving long-pending issues linked to it.

The protocol changes the tax on dividends. Instead of a single 10 per cent rate, a new split system has been intro-

duced — 5 per cent tax for investors holding at least 10 per cent of a company's capital and 15 per cent for others.

It also updates the definition of 'Fees for Technical Services' in line with the In-

dia-US tax treaty and expands the scope of 'Permanent Establishment' by including Service Permanent Establishment.

The agreement strengthens rules on exchange of information and adds a new provision on assistance in tax collection, following international standards. It also includes relevant provisions of the BEPS Multilateral Instrument already adopted by both countries.

The government said the changes will provide greater tax certainty, promote investment, technology sharing, and movement of skilled professionals, further deepening economic cooperation between India and France.



MEA hosts UN envoys to boost global ties

NEW DELHI

Jaishankar stressed reformed multilateralism, stronger global cooperation, and deeper partnerships with key countries during high-level diplomatic meetings in the national capital.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar hosted the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations from seven countries in New Delhi. The envoys represented the Democratic Republic of Congo, Greece, Guyana, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said it was a pleasure to host the diplomats and underlined that reformed multilateralism is more important than ever. He added that discussions were held on technology and development, highlighting the need for stronger global cooperation. Earlier, Jaishankar met Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is on a State Visit to India. He appreciated Lula's guidance in strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries and expressed confidence that the President's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi would give fresh momentum to bilateral ties.

Last week, Jaishankar also spoke at the inauguration of

The European Legal Gateway Office is not just a facilitation for entry into Europe; it is a bridge between our societies, says Jaishankar

KEY POINTS

■ Hosted UN envoys from 7 nations

■ Met Brazilian President Lula da Silva

■ Inaugurated European Legal Gateway Office

■ Emphasized reformed multilateralism

the first European Legal Gateway Office in India. He said the office would not only help professionals explore opportunities in Europe but also act as a bridge between societies.

Highlighting global economic changes, he said countries must manage talent movement with legality, transparency, and fairness. He noted that shifting supply chains, rapid technological change, and demographic differences are reshaping the global workforce.

Jaishankar said initiatives like the European Legal Gateway Office reflect trust and shared commitment to building a skilled, mobile, and resilient global workforce.

Stalin seeks diplomatic steps to free fishermen

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin on Monday asked External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to take immediate diplomatic steps to secure the release of 12 fishermen detained by the Sri Lankan Navy. He also sought action to free 104 other fishermen and 259 fishing boats from the state that remain in Sri Lankan custody.

In a letter, Stalin referred to the latest incident in which a mechanised boat from Ramswaram, carrying 12 fishermen, was caught by the Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday night. The fishermen had left



from the Pamban Fish Landing Centre in Ramanathapuram district.

He said that with this incident, a total of 116 Tamil Nadu fishermen are now in Sri Lankan custody. Stalin described the repeated arrests as a serious concern, stating that coastal families are living in

fear and uncertainty as their livelihood depends on fishing.

The Chief Minister urged the Union Government to take up the matter through proper diplomatic channels to prevent further arrests and ensure the early release of all detained fishermen and their boats.

The latest detention took place in the Gulf of Mannar between Dhanushkodi and Thalaimannar. The incident led to tension in Pamban, where many boats had gone out to sea. The issue of frequent arrests has remained a long-standing concern between India and Sri Lanka, especially for fishing communities in Tamil Nadu.

7 militants killed in Kishtwar operation

JAMMU

The Indian Army on Monday confirmed that seven heavily armed militants were killed after a year-long high-altitude operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district.

The White Knight Corps, operating from its Nagrota headquarters, described the 326-day mission in the Chatroo region as one of the longest and toughest counter-terror operations in the area. The operation was carried out jointly with the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force.

According to the Army, forces faced extreme cold, heavy snowfall and difficult mountainous terrain. Troops used strong intelligence inputs and advanced technology such as drones, satellite images, unmanned aerial vehicles and secure communication systems to track the militants.

The militants were linked to the Pakistan-based group Jaish-e-Mohammad. The group was led by commander Saifullah, who was killed along with his associates.

SC QUESTIONS PLEA SEEKING PASMANDA QUOTA

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought detailed data while hearing a PIL seeking a separate quota for Pasmanda Muslims under the OBC category.

A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked the petitioner to explain how Pasmanda Muslims alone could be identified for a 10 per cent reservation. The plea, filed by Mohd Waseem Saifi, seeks sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) based on the Ranganath Misra Commission report.

The court questioned whether Pasmandas are the only backward group among Muslims. "What about other Muslim OBCs?" the bench asked, noting that OBC status is based on both social and economic factors. The Chief Justice said the court needs clear data on how many Muslims fall under backward categories before considering such a demand.

Senior advocate Anjana Prakash, appearing for the petitioner, said she would submit a detailed note answering the court's queries. The bench then adjourned the matter for four weeks. Prakash also requested that the case be tagged with another pending matter related to 4 per cent reservation for Muslims in Andhra Pradesh under the socially and educationally backward classes category. That issue is currently being examined by a Constitution Bench, which is hearing the state government's appeal against a 2005 Andhra Pradesh High Court judgment striking down the law granting reservation to Muslims.

The petitioner argued that Pasmanda Muslims are economically and socially weaker sections and deserve specific quota benefits. The court, however, indicated that it must carefully examine the broader impact on other backward Muslim communities before taking a decision.

Guj teacher duped in 'digital arrest' scam

GANDHINAGAR

A 65-year-old retired school teacher from Gandhinagar was allegedly cheated of Rs 99 lakh after being kept under a month-long "digital arrest" by cyber fraudsters posing as central agency officials. According to police, the woman from Sector 8 received a call on January 16 claiming that a SIM card issued in her name was being used for illegal activities. She was later contacted through a video call by a man who identified himself as an officer of the Central Bureau of Investigation and warned her of arrest in a money laundering case.

The fraudsters also pretended to be officials from the Department of Telecommunications.

Kerala needs 'right' government: Rijiju

KOCHI

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said Kerala lacks the "right government" to take the state towards greater prosperity.

Speaking after inaugurating the NDA office in Kochi ahead of the Assembly elections, Rijiju said the state needs a government that can effectively implement the initiatives of the Narendra Modi-led Centre. He claimed that

only a limited number of central schemes are reaching Kerala due to the absence of a supportive state government.

Rijiju said Kerala has long been ruled alternately by the LDF and the UDF, and people are now looking for a change. He expressed confidence that the National Demo-

cratic Alliance (NDA) can offer a strong alternative and fulfil the aspirations of the people. Calling the office inauguration a "good beginning," he said better and brighter days are ahead for Kerala. BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar and other NDA leaders were present at the event.



SC DEFERS HEARING ON WANGCHUK DETENTION PLEA

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday postponed the hearing on a plea challenging the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk under the National Security Act (NSA) to February 26.

The plea was filed by his wife, Gitanjali J. Angmo. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P. B. Varale adjourned the matter as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta was not available to argue the case.

Earlier, the court had asked the Centre whether it could reconsider Wangchuk's detention, especially in view of his

health condition. The Centre and the Ladakh administration have defended the action, saying Wangchuk was detained for allegedly instigating people in a sensitive border area.

The government told the court that violence broke out in Leh on September 24 last year, leading to four deaths and injuries to 161 people. It claimed Wangchuk had tried to provoke protests and even referred to movements similar to the Arab Spring.

The National Security Act allows the Centre or state governments to detain a person for up to 12 months to prevent actions considered harmful to

national security. The government said all legal procedures were followed while ordering his detention.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Angmo, argued that the police relied on selective videos and "borrowed material" to justify the detention. Angmo has called the action illegal and a violation of Wangchuk's fundamental rights. Wangchuk, currently lodged in Jodhpur Central Jail, has denied all allegations. He said he never called for violence and had instead condemned the clashes in Leh, describing the day as the "saddest" of his life.

RELIEF FOR DISASTER-STUCK

Wayanad rehab township opening moved to March 1

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The inauguration of the first phase of houses at the Wayanad rehabilitation township has been postponed to March 1 from the earlier date of February 25.

The Chief Minister's Office informed departments about the change in schedule. However, no official reason has been given for postponing the function. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was earlier scheduled to inaugurate the township and distribute title deeds at Elstone Estate in Kalpetta.



The rescheduling has reportedly affected the travel plans of Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi, who had planned

to attend the event. Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is expected to reach Kerala on

February 25 to hold discussions with Congress leaders on preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections.

The township has been developed to rehabilitate survivors of the Mundakkai-Chooralmala disaster that struck Wayanad on July 30, 2024. The tragedy, caused by landslides and flash floods after heavy monsoon rains, killed over 200 people, left 32 missing, and destroyed several villages.

The government plans to build 410 houses under the project. In the first phase, 178

houses have been completed for families who lost their homes. Each single-storey house, built to suit Wayanad's terrain and climate, covers around 1,000 square feet and includes multiple rooms, a kitchen, storage space, and a reinforced foundation for a future additional floor.

Once completed, the township will provide shelter to more than 1,600 affected people. The project also includes roads, a health centre, an anganwadi, a market, and community facilities to support long-term rehabilitation.

QUICK READ



6.1 magnitude quake hits Bering Sea

An earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale struck the Bering Sea on Monday, according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS). The quake occurred at a depth of 45 km at 10:41:52 IST. The central Bering Sea usually sees very little seismic activity. However, its northern part lies along a seismic zone stretching from western Alaska to eastern Russia. The southern boundary is marked by the Aleutian Arc, known for frequent earthquakes due to ongoing tectonic activity.

Indefinite curfew imposed in Birgunj

Authorities have imposed an indefinite curfew in parts of Birgunj Metropolitan City in Nepal's Parsa district after clashes between two youth groups on Sunday evening. The order came into effect at 9:45 am on February 23, 2026. The curfew has been enforced under Section 6(a) of the Local Administration Act, 2028. Residents are barred from moving outside, holding gatherings, rallies, protests, meetings, or demonstrations in the affected areas. The restrictions cover Bypass Road in the east, Sirsia River in the west, Gandak Chowk in the north, and Shankaracharya Gate in the south.

Pak spends \$980 million on pulse imports

Agriculture experts have raised concern over the steady fall in Pakistan's pulse production, saying the country now spends about \$980 million each year on imports to meet local demand. Rana Muhammad Tayyib, President of the Punjab Pulses Importers Association, said Pakistan was once a leading pulse exporter before 1998. An export ban during the Musharraf era reduced farmers' interest in growing pulses. He said annual demand stands at 1.62 million tons, with around 1.07 million tons imported. Climate change and lack of improved seed varieties have further hurt domestic production.

Iran-US nuke talks set to resume in Geneva on Feb 26

The US will hold a third round of nuclear talks with Iran in Geneva, amid concerns over the risk of conflict between the long-time adversaries

TEHRAN

The US and Iran are set to resume talks Thursday in Geneva, Omani mediators said, extending the search for a diplomatic solution to the latest standoff over Tehran's nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said he expects to meet US special envoy Steve Witkoff for the talks and reiterated that Iran won't be pressured by a US military buildup in the region.



"I believe that still, there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution which is based on a win-win game and a solution is at our reach," Araghchi said Sunday on CBS' Face the Nation.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said on X that the US-Iran negotiations "are now set for Geneva this Thursday, with a positive push to go the extra mile towards finalizing the deal." After talks last week, a US official said Iran was expected to return with proposals in two weeks to bridge remaining gaps.

The US has orchestrated a massive military buildup in the Middle East including two aircraft carriers as President Donald Trump presses Tehran

for a new nuclear deal. Trump said on Friday he's considering limited strikes on Iran, risking another destabilizing conflict.

Araghchi reiterated on Sunday that Iran is working on a proposal for an agreement that meets the needs of both parties. "I believe that when we meet, probably this Thursday, in Geneva again, we can work on those elements and prepare a good text and come to a fast deal. This is my understanding. I see it quite possible," he said.

North Korea's Kim re-elected as Workers' Party chief

PYONGYANG

The Congress has decided to reappoint Kim as party chief, citing the "unshakeable" support of party members, citizens and the military, as per agencies.

The decision was taken on Sunday, the fourth day of the multi-day meeting, which sets major policy goals for the next five years.

State media praised Kim for strengthening the country's nuclear deterrence and building armed forces capable of responding to any threat. It said North Korea's nuclear-based defence system has been significantly improved despite international sanctions



and other challenges.

Party secretary Ri Il-hwan said only Kim could lead the country's development and guide it towards prosperity. He added that North Korea has become a strong and recognised power despite pressure from outside forces.

The congress also adopted

revised party rules, though no details were shared. New members were elected to the party's central committee, while some senior officials were absent from the list, suggesting possible leadership changes.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said the meeting focused mainly on strengthening Kim's leadership and gave limited attention to foreign policy issues.

The Ninth Party Congress, which began last week, is North Korea's highest decision-making body and the first since 2021. New economic, defence and diplomatic policies are expected to be announced soon.



BNM report flags rights crisis in Baloch

QUETTA

The human rights wing of the Baloch National Movement (BNM), Paank, has released its January 2026 report, claiming that serious human rights violations continue in Balochistan.

According to the report, 82 cases of enforced disappearances were recorded during the month. Out of these, 44 people were later released, reportedly after facing physical and mental torture. Paank also documented 12 cases of alleged extrajudicial killings in the same period.

The group said most incidents took place in Kech district, which recorded 26 cases. Shaal reported 16 cases, while Gwadar had 15. Other affected districts included Kharan, Panjgur, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Dera Bugti and Nushki. Two cases were also reported in Karachi. Paank alleged that many people were picked up during home raids without warrants and were held at unknown locations.

The organisation said such incidents have created fear and uncertainty in the region and claimed that enforced disappearances have become common practice. It called for independent investigations and strict action against those responsible.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said after a recent visit that enforced disappearances are increasing public anger and political instability in the province.

Pakistani authorities have repeatedly denied involvement in such cases, calling the allegations politically motivated.

Yogi holds talks with Singapore leaders

SINGAPORE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held discussions with Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan on Monday during his official visit to the country. The talks focused on strengthening cooperation between Uttar Pradesh and Singapore under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

According to Yogi, the discussions covered investment opportunities, infrastructure collaboration, skill development and partnerships in the digital economy. He reaffirmed India's commitment to deepening ties with Singapore under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Earlier in the day, Yogi met Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. Their talks also centred on boosting investment, infrastructure projects, skill development and digital initiatives between Uttar Pradesh and Singapore.



The Chief Minister also met business leaders in Singapore. He held discussions with Sumit Nanda, Chairman and Managing Director of Golden State Capital Pte. Ltd., regarding investment prospects in infrastructure, emerging technologies and data centre projects in Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi also witnessed the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with

Universal Success Enterprises Limited (USEL). The agreements relate to group housing, a logistics park and a hyperscale data centre park in Uttar Pradesh. These projects are expected to generate employment and strengthen the state's infrastructure.

Yogi Adityanath is on an official visit to Singapore from February 22 to 24 as part of his broader tour of Singapore and Japan.

Dalai Lama attends long life prayer

DHARAMSALA

The 14th Dalai Lama attended a special Long Life Prayer ceremony at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala on Monday. The prayer was organised by former Tibetan political prisoners and mem-

bers of the Lhasa Boys Association from across the world.

The 14th Dalai Lama, who is 90 years old and will turn 91 in July 2026, received prayers and blessings from participants who travelled from at least 17 countries, including Australia.

One participant said the ceremony was very important as it was organised mainly by former political prisoners and their families. She said it was a rare opportunity to offer prayers directly in the presence of the spiritual leader, and everyone felt excited.

Putin has started WW3 and must be stopped: Zelenskyy

KYIV

Nearly four years after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin "has already started" World War III.

In posts on X summarising his interview with the BBC, Zelenskyy said opinions differ on whether the conflict amounts to a third world war. However, he believes the process has already begun. According to him, Ukraine is standing on the frontline to stop the war from spreading further across the world.

He said the key question is not just about preventing Russia from winning, but about stopping Moscow from reshaping the global order and forcing its way of life on others. Zelenskyy added that Ukraine is acting as an "outpost" to block a wider global conflict.

His remarks came just before the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022. Zelenskyy also highlighted Ukraine's urgent



Ukraine's President says Russia's invasion has already triggered World War III and urges stronger global support to protect Ukrainian skies and stop the conflict from spreading further.

need for stronger air defence systems. He expressed disappointment that international partners have not granted licences for Ukraine to produce advanced systems like the US-made Patriot missiles or manufacture missiles locally.

He stressed that closing Ukraine's skies is crucial to protect civilians, keep schools and businesses running, and support the economy. According to him, stronger air defence would directly help Ukraine's military efforts in the ongoing war.

Indian Embassy issues advisory in Mexico

MEXICO CITY

The Indian Embassy in Mexico has asked Indian nationals to remain indoors and stay cautious after violence erupted following the killing of a senior drug cartel leader.

Mexican authorities confirmed that security forces killed Nemesio Oseguera, one of the most wanted drug traffickers in Mexico and the United States. After the operation, reports of armed clashes, roadblocks and flight disruptions emerged from several areas.

In an advisory issued on Monday, the Embassy urged Indians living in Jalisco State — including Puerto Vallarta, Chapala and Guadalajara — along with those in Tamaulipas (including Reynosa), and parts of Michoacan, Guerrero and Nuevo Leon, to move to safe locations immediately.

Nationals have been advised to avoid areas where law enforcement operations are underway, stay away from large gatherings and restrict unnecessary travel. The Embassy also recommended closely following local news and strictly obeying directions issued by local authorities.

In emergencies, citizens should dial 911. The Embassy further encouraged Indian nationals to regularly update

Canada issues travel advisory for Mexico

TORONTO: Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand has said the safety of Canadians abroad remains the government's top priority, as Ottawa issued a travel advisory for parts of Mexico following violence in Jalisco State. In



a post on X, Anand said Canada is closely monitoring the serious and fast-changing security situation in and around Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta. She expressed concern over reports of armed clashes, roadblocks and vehicles being set on fire after a major security operation.

family and friends about their safety through phone calls, messages or social media.

A dedicated helpline number, +52 55 4847 7539, has been shared for assistance.



US-CHINA TRADE

China urges US to drop unilateral tariff hikes

BEIJING

China on Monday urged the United States to cancel all unilateral tariffs after the US Supreme Court struck down most of former President Donald Trump's sweeping trade measures.

According to source, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said Beijing has always opposed unilateral tariff hikes. The spokesperson stressed that there are no winners in a trade war and that protectionism does not benefit



any country.

The comments came after the US Supreme Court ruled 6-3 against Trump's use of the 1977 International Emergency

Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose wide-ranging tariffs on imports from many US trading partners. Chief Justice John Roberts, writing

for the majority, said the law does not give the President authority to levy tariffs, as it contains no clear reference to such powers.

China's commerce ministry said the US measures, including reciprocal and fentanyl-related tariffs, violated international trade rules and even US domestic law. It added that such actions fail to serve the interests of any party.

The spokesperson called for stronger cooperation between the two countries, saying past experience shows that coop-

eration benefits both sides while confrontation harms both.

Beijing also warned that it would closely monitor any alternative steps by Washington, such as new trade investigations, and would firmly protect its own rights and interests.

Meanwhile, Trump announced plans to raise the existing 10 per cent global tariff to 15 per cent within legal limits. A White House official also confirmed that Trump is scheduled to visit China from March 31 to April 2.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

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

FC Barcelona Pounces on Madrid Slip to Reclaim La Liga Summit

Catalans respond emphatically to rivals' defeat with commanding home victory

MADRID

FC Barcelona capitalised on Real Madrid's surprise stumble to return to the top of La Liga with a convincing 3-0 win over Levante UD.

Goals from Marc Bernal, Frenkie de Jong and Fermin López ensured Barcelona ended a two-game losing streak and moved one point clear of Madrid, who were beaten 2-1 by Osasuna on Saturday after an eight-match winning run.

Eighteen-year-old Bernal set the tone early at Camp Nou, finishing from close range just four minutes into



the contest to settle any nerves following recent defeats to Girona in the league and Atlético Madrid in the Copa del Rey. The youngster's strike injected confidence into Hansi Flick's side, which had struggled defensively in recent weeks.

Barcelona doubled their advantage in the 32nd minute when De Jong calmly converted from inside the box after a flowing move. López then sealed the result with a spectacular long-range effort in the 81st minute, the ball crashing in off the post to cap a dominant display.

Levante goalkeeper Mathew Ryan prevented a heavier defeat with a pair of late saves, denying Raphinha and López in quick succession.

The win also marked a milestone for Lamine Yamal, who celebrated his 100th official victory for Barcelona at just 18 years old, becoming the youngest player to reach the landmark.

Levante slumped to a fourth straight defeat and remain deep in relegation trouble, while Barcelona's timely response restored belief in their title charge ahead of a crucial stretch in the campaign.



ISL: Football returns to Kochi but Blasters fall short

KOCHI

The roar returned to the stands of the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium in Kochi, but the result did not favour Kerala Blasters FC. In front of their home supporters after months of uncertainty, the Blasters went down 0-1 to Mumbai City FC, marking their second successive defeat of the season.

The decisive moment came just after the break when India international Lallianzuala Chhangte struck in the 47th minute, silencing an otherwise buoyant crowd in Kaloor. Despite a lacklustre first half, the contest sprang to life as both teams pushed forward in search of goals.

Mumbai had a golden opportunity in the 26th minute when they were awarded a penalty. However, goalkeeper Arsh Anwer Sheikh emerged as the hero for the hosts, pulling off a stunning save to deny Jorge Diaz from the spot and

Fans return to Kaloor, but hosts stumble again at home

ignite the stadium. Chhangte later came close with a dangerous cross that skimmed past the left post.

Kerala's best chance of the opening half came from Spanish forward Victor Bertomeu, whose well-struck freekick was punched away by the Mumbai goalkeeper. Another set-piece from Bertomeu early in the second half deflected off the wall as the hosts struggled to carve out clear openings.

Late pressure saw the Blasters win three corners in stoppage time, but none yielded an equaliser. Though the result added to the growing frustration for the 'Yellow Tuskers', the sight of fans back in the stands — cheering relentlessly despite adversity — signalled that football's heartbeat has truly returned to Kochi.

Chennaiyin coach stresses unity, growth and sharper attacking edge

ISL: Miranda champions shared leadership as Chennaiyin seek revival

CHENNAI

For Chennaiyin FC head coach Clifford Miranda, success is built on collective responsibility as much as individual brilliance. The former India international underlined the importance of teamwork — not just among players, but within the coaching staff.

Miranda's philosophy was evident during Chennaiyin's narrow 0-1 defeat to Mumbai City FC, where assistant coach Anthony Fernandes and goalkeeping coach Rajat Guha frequently took charge of instructions from the touchline. Rather than centralising authority, Miranda believes in empowering those around him.

"I am not a superhero who can do everything by myself.



I have people around me who help me, the team, and the players. At the same time, I want to grow and I want everyone around me to grow," Miranda said on Sunday.

Roles within the backroom staff are clearly defined. Anthony oversees attacking set-pieces, while Guha manages defensive organisation,

particularly during dead-ball situations. Miranda views this distribution of duties as a natural extension of their preparation on the training ground.

Despite controlling possession in promising areas against Mumbai, Chennaiyin lacked the cutting edge in the final third. Miranda acknowledged that improving chance conversion remains a priority as the league progresses.

"We did create chances, but those were not very clear. It is the most difficult part, and I know that we have to improve as the league goes on," he admitted.

With the season entering a decisive phase, Chennaiyin will look to translate their structured teamwork into tangible results and get their campaign back on track.

Floyd Mayweather ends retirement, eyes pro return after Tyson exhibition

NEW DELHI

Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. has announced a stunning retirement U-turn, confirming his intention to return to professional boxing following his upcoming exhibition bout against Mike Tyson. Mayweather, who retired in 2017 with a flawless 50-0 professional record after defeating Conor McGregor via 10th-round TKO, has since remained active through high-profile exhibition contests. However, the 48-year-old now appears ready to step back into sanctioned competition. The exhibition clash with Tyson, tentatively scheduled for April 2026 in Congo, will bring together two of boxing's most iconic names. Tyson, 59, and Mayweather have continued to command global attention long after their competitive peaks, and the bout is expected to generate significant commercial interest.



Mayweather's most recent outing came in August 2024 in Mexico against John Gotti III, a fight that maintained his public profile but did not affect his unbeaten professional record. While exhibitions have kept him in the spotlight, Mayweather has made it clear that he is targeting more than spectacle. "I still have what it takes to set more records in the sport of boxing," Mayweather said in a statement. "From my upcoming Mike Tyson event to my next professional fight afterwards — no one will generate a bigger gate, have a larger global broadcast audience and generate more money with each event — than my events. And I plan to keep doing it."

University of Canberra marks hat-trick year of UC Cricket Challenge in India

BENGALURU

The University of Canberra has announced the return of its flagship UC Cricket Challenge in Bengaluru for a third consecutive year, strengthening India-Australia ties through sport, education and youth development.

Delivered in partnership with Cricket ACT, the governing body for cricket in the Australian Capital Territory, the tournament has evolved into a distinctive platform blending competitive school-level cricket with academic exposure and cross-cultural exchange.

The 2026 edition will feature inter-school T10 matches in Bengaluru, alongside engagement activities introducing students to interna-



Leaders from the University of Canberra and Cricket ACT come together to launch the UC Cricket Challenge, fostering new education opportunities for young cricketers.

tional education pathways and high-performance sporting environments. Since its inception, the initiative has provided promising young Indian cricketers with opportunities to connect with Australia's sport-led education

ecosystem while competing at an elite level.

Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister Andrew Barr said the programme reflects Canberra's focus on innovation, opportunity and partnership. He noted that

the Challenge strengthens international education links and positions Canberra as a destination where talent is nurtured both on the field and in the classroom.

Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Bill Shorten de-

scribed the initiative as an embodiment of the university's values of aspiration and global connection. He emphasised the creation of 'study and play' pathways enabling students to pursue sporting excellence alongside academic ambition.

Cricket ACT CEO Olivia Thorton added that the tournament demonstrates cricket's power to build bridges between India and Australia while opening global opportunities for emerging talent.

Further details regarding dates, venues and participating schools will be announced soon, as the University of Canberra deepens its long-term engagement with India through sport-led education initiatives.

Lalbiaknia cancels Sánchez strike as Bengaluru, NEUFC share spoils

BENGALURU

A spirited contest at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium saw Bengaluru FC and NorthEast United FC battle to a 1-1 draw in the Indian Super League.

Coming off a confident 2-0 win over Sporting Club Delhi in their opener, Bengaluru began on the front foot in front of their home supporters. The breakthrough arrived in the 20th minute when Argentine midfielder Braian Emmanuel Sánchez finished off a well-worked move with precision, calmly slotting the ball past the goalkeeper to hand the Blues the lead.

Ryan Williams proved influential across the pitch, contributing both defensively and in attack. He came agonisingly close to doubling the advantage, only to see his powerful strike crash against the crossbar.

NorthEast United, coached by Juan Pedro Benali, responded with determination. The visitors grew stronger af-



ter halftime and tested the Bengaluru defence repeatedly. Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu stood tall, producing a key save to deny Asheer's header and preserve his side's slender lead. The equaliser came in the 68th minute through substitute Lalrinzuala Lalbiaknia, who marked his impact with a composed finish. His strike — his first in the ISL — capped a determined comeback from the Highlanders.

Benali later revealed that his

side targeted perceived vulnerabilities in Bengaluru's backline, particularly in handling aerial deliveries and set-pieces. The absence of defender Rahul Bheke due to a knee injury appeared to unsettle the hosts at crucial moments.

Despite animated reactions from senior figures like Sunil Chhetri on the sidelines, head coach Renedy Singh expressed satisfaction with the overall display as both teams settled for a point apiece.

IGPL secures \$100 million franchise boost across 10 cities

NEW DELHI

The Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) on Monday announced a landmark \$100 million capital commitment from ten franchise partners, marking the largest private investment in Indian golf history.

Each franchise has pledged approximately \$10 million over a ten-year period, signalling strong long-term confidence in the league's vision to professionalise and democratise golf in India. The ten-city format spans Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Goa, Bengaluru, Punjab and Gurugram, ensuring a broad national footprint across established and emerging markets.

Beyond operational funding, franchise partners have collectively committed an additional \$250 million toward infrastructure development.

Brock Lesnar returns as WrestleMania season heats up on WWE Raw

ATLANTA

The road to WrestleMania 42 gathers momentum as WWE Raw heads to the State Farm Arena with major developments expected ahead of the Elimination Chamber premium live event.

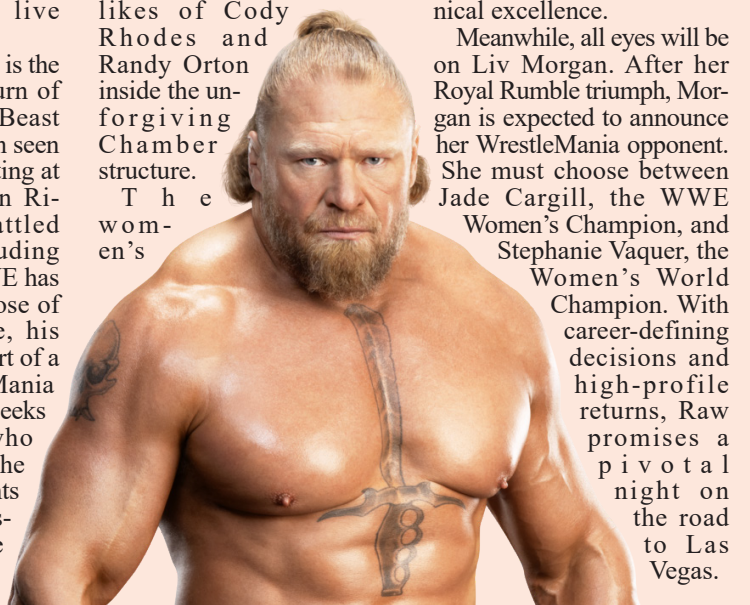
The biggest headline is the much-anticipated return of Brock Lesnar. "The Beast Incarnate" has not been seen since his explosive outing at the Royal Rumble in Riyadh, where he battled emerging stars including Oba Femi. While WWE has not revealed the purpose of Lesnar's appearance, his timing suggests the start of a blockbuster WrestleMania storyline. Whether he seeks revenge on those who eliminated him from the Rumble or sets his sights on a new rival, his presence is certain to shake up the red brand.

The final men's Elimination Chamber qualifying match will also take centre stage. Bronson Reed, Jey Uso and El Grande Americano will clash in a high-stakes Triple Threat bout, with the winner joining the likes of Cody Rhodes and Randy Orton inside the unforgiving Chamber structure.

The women's

division will determine its final entrant as IYO SKY, Kairi Sane and Raquel Rodriguez collide in another crucial Triple Threat contest. With championship implications looming, the bout promises intensity and technical excellence.

Meanwhile, all eyes will be on Liv Morgan. After her Royal Rumble triumph, Morgan is expected to announce her WrestleMania opponent. She must choose between Jade Cargill, the WWE Women's Champion, and Stephanie Vaquer, the Women's World Champion. With career-defining decisions and high-profile returns, Raw promises a pivotal night on the road to Las Vegas.



QUICK READ



Government earns Rs 4,405 crore from scrap

New Delhi
The government has earned Rs 4,405.28 crore from the sale of scrap under the Swachhata campaign from 2021 to January 2026. In December 2025 and January 2026 alone, Rs 200.21 crore was collected. According to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, 81,322 lakh files were removed in 5,188 offices during January. Cleanliness drives were held at 5,188 locations, freeing around 4.34 lakh square feet of space. The Ministry of Coal and Ministry of Heavy Industries were among the top contributors. In January, Rs 115.85 crore was earned from scrap disposal.

Markets rally on US tariff relief ruling

Mumbai
Indian stock markets started the week on a strong note on Monday, supported by positive global signals after the US Supreme Court struck down former President Donald Trump's tariffs. At 9.25 am, the Sensex was up 563 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 25,741. Broader markets also gained, with the Nifty Midcap 100 rising 0.12 per cent and the Nifty Smallcap 100 climbing 0.86 per cent. Most sectoral indices traded higher, except IT and chemicals. PSU banks led the rally, followed by metal and auto stocks. Analysts said India's decision to delay trade talks with the US was timely.

Young Koreans buying fewer new cars

Seoul
New car purchases by young people in South Korea fell to a 10-year low in 2025, industry data showed. According to auto data tracker Carisyou, people in their 20s registered 61,962 new cars last year, making up 5.6 per cent of total sales. This share has dropped steadily from 8.8 per cent in 2016. Those in their 30s bought 209,749 cars, or 19 per cent of total registrations, down 6.9 percentage points over the past decade. In contrast, older buyers increased their purchases. People in their 60s accounted for 18.5 per cent of new cars, while those in their 70s made up 4.6 per cent.

Gold, silver demand not at 'alarming' levels: Sitharaman

Government says gold prices stable despite festival surge, monitoring closely

NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government is keeping a close watch on gold prices but they have not crossed "certain limits."

She noted that gold often sees higher demand during festival seasons as many households treat it as a safe investment.

Speaking after the customary post-Budget meeting with the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Sitharaman said price movements are being monitored carefully. However, she



stressed that the current rise is within acceptable levels.

On concerns related to IDFC First Bank, the Finance Minister said there is no systemic issue. She added that as a policy, the government does not comment

on individual companies.

Sitharaman also said the RBI has adequate liquidity in the system and enough credit availability for the next five years to meet the country's needs. Commenting on the US tariff situa-

tion, she said the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is reviewing developments and that it is too early to make detailed remarks.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said that although gold prices have increased, the total value of gold imports has not risen significantly in recent months. He reiterated the central bank's commitment to providing enough liquidity for productive sectors of the economy.

On foreign investments, he said gross FDI inflows remain strong, with healthy growth last year and this year, supported by sufficient foreign exchange reserves.



India growth fuels wealth demand

MUMBAI

Speaking at the Portfolio Managers' Conclave in Mumbai, Tuhin Kanta Pandey said India continues to be one of the fastest-growing major economies and is on track to become the world's third-largest economy. He noted that this strong growth will change the country's wealth pattern and lead to a rise in affluent investors.

Pandey said this new group of high-net-worth individuals will look for professionally managed investment options instead of standard products. They are expected to seek more advanced and customised strategies for managing their money.

To address this shift, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is reviewing several rules, including LODR, settlement norms and Portfolio Management Services (PMS) regulations. He said the review aims to simplify and update rules based on feedback from investors and industry participants. A consultation paper on pro-

India's rapid economic growth is expected to create more wealthy investors and increase demand for professional wealth management services, SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday

posed changes to PMS rules will soon be released for public comments.

On market safety, Pandey said SEBI is exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence to detect market wrongdoing in real time, instead of only reacting after violations occur. He clarified that the PMS review is still in progress and its final scope has not yet been decided.

Pandey also said SEBI and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are jointly working to develop a corporate bond index and related products that can be traded on stock exchanges. He added that SEBI will also examine concerns raised by brokers regarding RBI rules on collateral and bank guarantees.



Amended 'BharatNet' to strengthen AP connectivity

NEW DELHI

The Amended BharatNet programme will expand high-speed broadband access to every village in Andhra Pradesh, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday.

Jyotiraditya Scindia said the \$16.9 billion (Rs 1.39 lakh crore) publicly funded programme aims to lay optical fibre cable (OFC) and provide broadband connectivity to all villages across India. He described it as a step towards democratising technology and giving citizens better digital opportunities.

A memorandum of cooperation was signed between Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), the Department of Telecommunications and the Andhra Pradesh government to speed up the rollout of the Amended BharatNet Programme in the state. Minister of State for Communications Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar said the agreement offers a clear and accountable framework for faster implementation under a state-led model. He added that the partnership will improve last-mile connectivity, expand 4G coverage and ensure reliable and affordable digital services for rural citizens.

Under the arrangement, the state government will help with Right of Way permissions, infrastructure access and coordination support. Most of the funding will come from DBN, with additional support from the state government as agreed.

The Centre has approved financial assistance of Rs 2,432 crore for the project in Andhra Pradesh. The programme is expected to provide over five lakh rural home fibre connections and boost digital governance, online education, digital payments and telemedicine in remote areas.

Firms favour performance-based pay, raising variable rewards and widening gaps, with bonuses increasingly linked to ESG goals

India's salary hike projected at 9.1% in 2026

NEW DELHI

India's average salary increase is expected to slow slightly to 9.1 per cent in 2026, with Global Capability Centers leading growth at 10.4 per cent.

Overall salary hikes are projected at 9.1 per cent in 2026, down from 9.3 per cent in 2025. The report by Ernst & Young (EY) said companies are becoming more careful with spending but continue to reward key talent.

Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are expected to see the highest salary growth at 10.4 per cent, supported by strong global demand and shortage of digital skills. The Financial Services sector may see hikes of around 10 per cent, followed by E-commerce at 9.9 per cent and

Lifesciences and Pharmaceuticals at 9.7 per cent.

Traditional sectors such as Engineering, Manufacturing, Automotive and Infrastructure are likely to see lower increases due to cautious investments and pressure on margins.

The report said companies are moving away from uniform pay hikes. Instead, they are focusing on performance-based rewards, skill premiums and targeted corrections. Top performers may receive 1.5 to 1.6 times higher increments than average employees.

Variable pay is also rising. In 2025, average variable pay increased to 16.1 per cent of fixed salary, up from 14.8 per cent in 2024. For senior executives, variable pay reached 27.5 per cent, while individu-



al contributors received around 11 per cent. The gap in payouts has widened, with top performers earning 120 to 150 per cent of their targets, while average performers received 60 to 80 per cent. About 35 per cent of large firms have now linked leadership bonuses to ESG-related targets. Companies said their main challenges include attracting talent and managing workforce changes due to AI and automation.

India-France amend tax avoidance pact

NEW DELHI

India and France have signed an Amending Protocol to update their Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

The agreement was signed during the recent visit of the French President to India. Ravi Agrawal, Chairperson of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, signed the Protocol on behalf of their governments.

According to the Finance Ministry, the revised pact gives full taxing rights on capital gains from the sale of

shares to the country where the company is a resident. It also removes the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause from the earlier protocol, resolving related issues.

The amendment changes dividend taxation by replacing the earlier single 10 per cent rate with a two-tier structure — 5 per cent for shareholders holding at least 10 per cent equity, and 15 per cent in other cases.

The definition of "Fees for Technical Services" has been aligned with the India-US tax treaty. The scope of "Permanent Establishment" has also been widened to include Service Permanent Establish-

ment.

Further, the Protocol updates rules on exchange of information and introduces a new article on assistance in collection of taxes, in line with global standards. It also incorporates relevant provisions of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Multilateral Instrument already adopted by both countries.

The changes will take effect after both sides complete their internal legal procedures. The government said the updated treaty will provide greater tax certainty and help boost investment, technology exchange and economic cooperation between India and France.

Cement sector outlook positive on capex boost

NEW DELHI

The outlook for India's cement sector remains positive, supported by steady demand, improving prices and higher capital expenditure allocation in the FY27 Budget, according to a report by Nuvama Institutional Equities.

The report said cement demand and prices improved in January 2026, showing stronger momentum in the sector. This came despite a sharp fall in capital expenditure by the

central government and central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), which declined about 25 per cent and 40 per cent year-on-year, respectively, in January. However, state government capital expenditure remained supportive, rising around 15 per cent year-on-year in December 2025. Between April and December 2025, both central and state government capex grew about 15 per cent year-on-year, while CPSE capex fell marginally by 2 per cent. Real estate activity



remained weak, with housing launches declining 9 per cent year-on-year in calendar year 2025, after a 7 per cent fall in 2024. Despite this slowdown, the report said overall cement demand is expected to stay strong.

EXPORT BOOM

India's iPhone exports hit \$23b in 2025: Report

NEW DELHI

Apple's iPhone emerged as India's most valuable single export item in 2025, with shipments worth about \$23 billion, according to industry data.

The strong growth in exports was mainly driven by higher local production and government support under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme. Industry sources said Apple also expanded manufacturing in India as part of its strategy to reduce dependence on China. Smartphones became India's top export category for



the first time, crossing \$30.13 billion in total exports between January and December 2025. This pushed automotive diesel fuel to second place. Apple alone accounted for around 76

per cent of total smartphone exports from the country. The company's five-year PLI scheme is set to end in March 2026. Apple currently has five iPhone assembly plants in In-

dia. Three are operated by Tata Group companies and two by Foxconn. These plants are supported by nearly 45 suppliers, including many MSMEs that provide components for both domestic and global markets.

India has now become the world's second-largest mobile phone producer. More than 99 per cent of smartphones sold in the country are now made locally, showing a strong shift in manufacturing capabilities.

Consumer trends have also changed. According to Counterpoint Research, the iPhone 16 base model was the top-sell-

ing smartphone in India in 2025. Buyers are increasingly moving away from budget phones to premium devices.

During the December quarter, Apple recorded its highest-ever revenues in regions including the Americas, Europe, Japan and Asia Pacific. Apple CEO Tim Cook said the company saw strong double-digit growth in India and set quarterly revenue records for iPhone, Mac and iPad, along with a record in services. Apple is set to open another retail store in Mumbai on February 26.

India to lead APAC office supply

NEW DELHI

Grade-A office space supply in the Asia Pacific region is set to reach a record 61.3 million square feet in 2026, with India expected to contribute around 40 per cent, according to a CBRE report.

The 2026 Asia Pacific Real Estate Market Outlook by CBRE said total supply will rise 10.8 per cent from 55.3 million square feet in 2025. India and mainland China together are projected to account for more than 75 per cent of the total new supply next year.

Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO — India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa at CBRE, said India's strong demand drivers and large talent pool continue to attract global occupiers.

Among the top five cities

for new office supply in 2026, three are from India. Bengaluru is expected to lead with 12.1 million square feet, followed by Shanghai at 10 million square feet and Delhi-NCR at 7.1 million square feet. Growth in Bengaluru will be supported by Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

Despite record supply, the report noted that many developed markets may still face tight availability of quality office space. Companies are focusing more on premium buildings in prime locations, especially as stricter office attendance policies return.

CBRE's 2026 Asia Pacific Investor Intentions Survey showed that office assets have become the most preferred investment option in the region, overtaking industrial and logistics for the first time in six years.

Gavaskar Slams ‘Overconfident’ India After Heavy Defeat to SA

Batters failed to adapt, ego cost India dearly, badly



AHMEDABAD

Sunil Gavaskar believes India’s batters paid the price for overconfidence and a refusal to adapt to conditions in their crushing 76-run loss to South Africa in the T20 World Cup. The defeat ended India’s 12-match unbeaten streak in the tournament as South Africa outplayed the defending champions in all departments.

Gavaskar said India should have taken cues from the way South Africa rebuilt after early setbacks. After losing quick wickets, David Miller and Dewald Brevis stitched together a decisive 97-run partnership to guide the Proteas to 187/7. In contrast, India crumbled under pressure and were bowled out for 111 in 18.5 overs. India’s top order faltered inside the powerplay, slipping to 26/3 after the dismissals of Ishan Kishan (0), Abhishek Sharma (15) and Tilak Varma (1). Gavaskar criticised the reckless approach, saying the required rate was manageable and did not demand desperate stroke-

play. “You don’t have to score 70 in the powerplay every time. Even 55-60 would have been a solid platform,” he remarked, adding that batters needed to shed their ego and assess tricky surfaces better. Looking ahead to the clash against Zimbabwe, Gavaskar suggested recalling Axar Patel to strengthen the balance, possibly at the expense of Washington Sundar. While he praised Arshdeep Singh for his rhythm, he felt Sundar had not been utilised effectively. Gavaskar insisted that adaptability, not aggression alone, defines successful T20 cricket.

Hanne Vandewinkel Outclasses Vaishnavi 6-0, 6-1 to Lift KPB Trust ITF W100 Crown

BENGALURU

Hanne Vandewinkel delivered a masterclass to dismantle India’s Vaishnavi Adkar 6-0, 6-1 in just 56 minutes and clinch the KPB Trust ITF Women’s Open W100 title at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium. The 21-year-old Belgian, ranked 124 in the world, entered the final wary of Vaishnavi’s giant-killing run. The Indian wildcard had stunned higher-ranked opponents including Mai Hontama, Taylah Preston and Lanlana Tara-udee en route to becoming the first Indian woman to reach an ITF W100 final. But Vandewinkel left no room for an upset. A second-year medical student at the University of Leuven, she combined high-octane serving with razor-sharp groundstrokes to neutralise Vaishnavi’s potent backhand. Mixing sliced returns with controlled aggression, the Belgian dictated rallies from the outset. Vaishnavi, ranked 690, struggled to find rhythm and failed to hold serve in the opening set, which vanished in just 20 minutes. Encour-



aged by mentor Rohan Bopanna from the stands, the Pune player briefly sparked hope by holding serve early in the second set and earning three break points in the following game. However, Vandewinkel swiftly extinguished the challenge, reeling off five consecutive points to steady herself before cruising through the

remaining games. Her agility, court coverage and tactical clarity proved overwhelming for the home hopeful. While Vaishnavi’s fairytale run ended short of the trophy, Vandewinkel’s ruthless display underlined her rising stature on the international circuit as she lifted the prestigious W100 crown in commanding fashion.

Eileen Gu Makes History With Olympic Freeski Halfpipe Gold

LIVIGNO, ITALY

Eileen Gu soared to victory in the women’s freeski halfpipe final at the 2026 Winter Olympics, becoming the most decorated freestyle skier in Games history. The 22-year-old posted 94.75 at Livigno Snow Park to win gold ahead of China’s Li Fanghui (93.00), while Britain’s Zoe Atkin took bronze with 92.50. After managing just 30.00 on her opening run, Gu rebounded with 94.00 before sealing gold with a near-flawless final effort. Her sixth Olympic medal — three gold and three silver — moves her past Mikael Kingsbury and Xu Mengtao in the all-time freestyle standings.



UNITED STATES DEFEAT CANADA FOR GOLD

MILAN

The United States clinched men’s Olympic ice hockey gold for the first time in 46 years as Jack Hughes scored a dramatic overtime winner to seal a 2-1 victory over Canada. Hughes struck just 1 minute and 41 seconds into three-on-three overtime at the Santagiulia Arena, delivering the Americans their first Olympic crown since the iconic 1980 “Miracle on Ice” triumph over the Soviet Union in Lake Placid. The high-stakes clash began in a charged atmosphere, with a largely Canadian crowd booing the U.S. team during warm-ups. However, chants of “USA, USA” soon echoed around the arena, growing louder when Matt Boldy opened the scoring in the first period. Boldy weaved past two defenders before beating goaltender Jordan Binnington to give the Americans a 1-0 lead. U.S. netminder Connor Hellebuyck produced a string of saves, stopping his first 24 shots before finally being beaten by Cale Makar’s wrist shot in the second period. The Americans nearly regained the lead late in regulation when Brock Faber’s slap shot struck both posts but stayed out. In overtime, Hughes applied the finishing touch, sparking wild celebrations among teammates and supporters. After the win, U.S. players honoured late NHL star Johnny Gaudreau by holding up a jersey bearing his name and number 13.

MS Dhoni Available But May Not Play All Games for Chennai Super Kings

AHMEDABAD

The familiar question surrounding MS Dhoni’s Indian Premier League future has resurfaced ahead of the 2026 season, with sources confirming his availability for Chennai Super Kings but hinting he may not play every league match. The 44-year-old stalwart, who will turn 45 later this year, has informed the franchise of his readiness for the upcoming campaign. However, with marquee recruit Sanju Samson joining the CSK ranks, the team management is unlikely to deploy Dhoni across all fixtures. A senior franchise source confirmed that Dhoni will report to Chennai before the season begins. Yet, the presence of multiple wicketkeeper-batters offers CSK flexibility. Samson is expected to take over the gloves in matches where Dhoni is rested. The squad also includes Urvil Patel and highly-rated youngster Kartik Sharma, who is being groomed as a finisher alongside Shivam Dube. Over the past two editions, the Impact Player rule has reduced the physical burden on Dhoni, limiting his batting appearances to situational cameos. Nonetheless, the rigours of wicketkeeping, combined with his recurring knee and back concerns, make selective participation a practical approach. What appears certain is Dhoni’s presence in most home games at Chepauk, where his bond with the Chennai faithful remains unmatched. Even a brief appearance from the legendary former India captain is enough to electrify the atmosphere. While speculation about his swansong continues, Dhoni’s availability — even in a limited capacity — strengthens CSK’s leadership core and keeps fans eagerly anticipating another chapter in his storied IPL journey.



David Miller Reveals Proteas’ Plan to Dismantle Varun

AHMEDABAD

David Miller said clarity of thought and calculated aggression were central to South Africa’s plan to neutralise India’s mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy in their T20 World Cup Super Eight clash. South Africa stunned the defending champions with a commanding 76-run victory after posting 187/7. Chakravarthy, who had enjoyed a strong record against the Proteas before this contest, was expected to play a decisive role. Instead, he conceded 47 runs in four overs as Miller (63 off 35 balls) and Dewald Brevis (45 off 29) attacked him with authority. Miller explained that the team discussion centred on showing intent if the spinner erred in length. “If he bowls a bad ball, we’ve got to put it away. It wasn’t spinning too much, so we could trust the line,” he said, adding that once they sensed limited as-



Still mind, sharp intent helped counter mystery spin threat

sistance from the surface, the decision was clear: take him down before he settled. The 36-year-old’s innings, studded with seven fours and three sixes, was his first major contribution of the tournament. He credited disciplined basics — limited movement, still head position, controlled breathing and hard running — for

thriving under pressure. Miller also stressed that beating India was about execution rather than emotion. “India are beatable. They are an incredible team, but we focused on staying in our lane and doing the simple things well,” he noted. With a seasoned core that has played together for years, South Africa demonstrated composure in high-stakes moments. For Miller, it was proof that smart planning and fearless intent can dismantle even the most potent bowling threats.

Ranji Trophy Final: Star-Studded Karnataka Hold All Aces Against Gritty J&K



HUBBALLI

Eight-time champions Karnataka will start overwhelming favourites against first-time finalists Jammu and Kashmir when the Ranji Trophy final begins on Tuesday, but the underdogs’ remarkable journey promises a compelling contest. Karnataka’s tag as favourites is rooted in a season of consistency, depth and resilience. After a slow start against Saurashtra, they surged past heavyweights like Mumbai and Uttarakhand with authority. The batting core — KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Devdutt Padikkal and Ravichandran Aspinall — has been prolific throughout the campaign. Rahul has amassed 457 runs in just three matches, while Karun and Devdutt have anchored crucial victories. Smaran’s monumental 950-run season underscores Karnataka’s

dominance with the bat. Despite a middling run for Mayank Agarwal, the leadership transition to Padikkal has been seamless, with the young captain blending tactical clarity with personal form. However, Jammu and Kashmir arrive with belief, having stunned Bengal and Madhya Pradesh en route to their maiden final in 67 years. Spearheading their charge is pacer Auqib Nabi, whose 55 wickets make him the season’s standout bowler. On a surface expected to aid seamers early, Nabi’s duel with Karnataka’s top order could shape the contest. Karnataka’s bowling, led by Prasidh Krishna and bolstered by the all-round brilliance of Shreyas Gopal, adds further balance. Gopal’s 46 wickets and 442 runs highlight his match-winning influence. While Jammu and Kashmir rely on veteran captain Paras Dogra to steady nerves, Karnataka can draw on players seasoned in past title triumphs. Experience may tilt the scales, but J&K’s fearless spirit ensures the final will be anything but predictable.



Gambhir, Coaches Signal India’s Top-Order Changes

AHMEDABAD

The Indian team think-tank is set to deliberate on dropping at least one out-of-form batter and revisiting its left-heavy top-order template after a 76-run thrashing by South Africa in the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage. While head coach Gautam Gambhir did not speak directly, his deputies Ryan ten Doeschate and Sitanshu Kotak admitted that changes are under serious consideration ahead of must-win games against Zimbabwe and West Indies. The spotlight is firmly on Abhishek Sharma (15 runs in four matches) and Tilak Varma (107 runs in five matches at a strike rate of 118), whose struggles have hurt India’s starts. Designated finisher Rinku Singh has also endured a torrid run, aggregating just 24 runs off 29 balls at a strike rate of 82.75. Kotak conceded the team has reached a point where it must assess whether to persist with the same combination or attempt something different. Ten Doeschate was more forthcoming, hinting that bringing in Sanju Samson could offer tactical balance as a right-hander in a predominantly left-handed top order.

Eberechi Eze’s Derby Double Gets Arsenal Title Bid Back on Track

LONDON

Eberechi Eze struck twice as Arsenal thrashed Tottenham Hotspur 4-1 in a pulsating North London derby, easing Premier League title nerves and moving five points clear at the summit. Eze, who had not found the net since his hat-trick in the reverse fixture in November, rediscovered his scoring touch at the perfect time. The



forward, who nearly joined Tottenham last August, opened the scoring in the 32nd minute with a crisp volley that ignited the Emirates. Spurs responded swiftly, however, as Randal Kolo Muani capitalised on a rare error by Declan Rice to equalise just two minutes later. The contest tilted decisively after the break. Viktor

Gyokeres restored Arsenal’s advantage with a sublime curling effort before Eze tapped in his second to give the hosts breathing space. Gyokeres then completed his brace in stoppage time to seal an emphatic victory. The win lifted Arsenal to 61 points from 28 games, five ahead of second-placed Manchester City, who have a game in hand. Tottenham, meanwhile, remain 16th under new manager Igor Tudor, just four points above the relegation zone. For Arsenal, the statement derby triumph not only reasserted their supremacy in North London but also reinforced belief that their title charge remains firmly on course as the season enters its decisive phase.

