



**UK's Starmer faces latest test in tight-run local vote**

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**UIDAI partners Google to list Aadhaar centres on maps**

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## SC: JUDICIARY IS BLEEDING...

SC imposes blanket ban on NCERT class 8 textbook over 'judicial corruption'; issues show-cause notice to NCERT & Centre; CJI says it's a deep-rooted, well-planned, and orchestrated conspiracy.

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday imposed a blanket ban on circulation and production of a NCERT Class 8 Social Sciences textbook that contained references to "corruption in the judiciary" and warned of possible contempt action against the education council's chief. Meanwhile, the Centre has apologised for the controversial chapter and assured that those responsible would face action.

A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has imposed a blanket ban on any further publication or digital circulation of the Social Sciences textbook, Exploring Society: India and Beyond, Vol II. "Any attempt to bypass the order, including through electronic distribution or altered titles, will be treated as a willful breach and defiance of the court's directions," it said.

The NCERT judiciary chapter row escalated on Wednesday after the CJI sharply criticised the content in Chapter 4, 'The Role of Judiciary in our Society', as a grave matter, warning that the Supreme Court would not permit any attempt to defame or undermine the integrity of the judiciary.

Earlier during the hearing today, the CJI said that as "head of the judiciary, it is my duty to en-

sure accountability, heads must roll. I will not close these proceedings until there is some accountability. We want to know who the people behind this are."

He also expressed concern over the impact of the material, and said, "If you teach the entire teaching community and the students that the judiciary is corrupt — what message will go? Teachers will learn it, parents will learn it."

The CJI also noted that despite the government's claim that the publication had been withdrawn, it continued to circulate widely. In its order, the CJI directed that all copies of the book containing the chapter be immediately "seized."

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the government had taken serious note of the issue and moved swiftly once the objectionable material surfaced.

"The two people involved with this chapter will never be involved with any activity of this ministry in the future — even any other ministry," he told the court, stressing that the Centre was not taking an adversarial stand.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal said the PDF version of the chapter was already widespread.



**We would like to have a deeper probe. We need to find who is responsible and we will see who are there. Heads must roll! We will not close the case.**

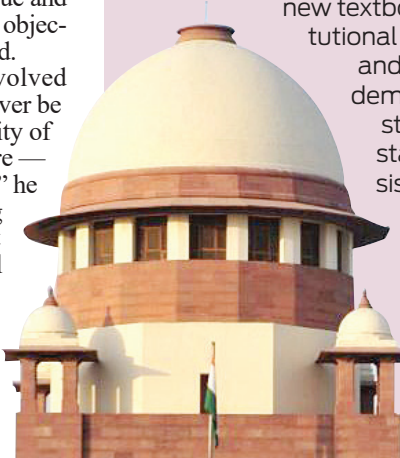
—Surya Kant, CJI

### ORDER IN A NUTSHELL

- Blanket ban on book
- Contempt of court notice to NCERT Director and Department of School Education
- Copies of the book, be it hard copy or digital, to be removed from public access
- Details of members of National Syllabi Board who wrote the offending chapter to be provided to SC.

### NCERT apologises

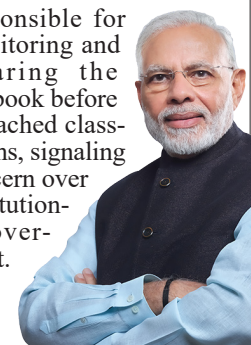
In the wake of the widespread backlash, the NCERT also apologised for what it described as a "purely unintentional" inclusion of 'inappropriate material.' "The error is purely unintentional and NCERT regrets the inclusion of inappropriate material in the said chapter. NCERT reiterates that the objective of the new textbooks is to strengthen constitutional literacy, institutional respect, and informed understanding of democratic participation amongst students," the council said in a statement. The NCERT emphasised that it holds the judiciary in the "highest esteem" as the guardian of the Constitution and protector of fundamental rights, adding that the objective of the new textbooks is to strengthen constitutional literacy and institutional respect among students.



### PM wants accountability fixed

NEW DELHI

"Accountability should be fixed", was the message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, amid an escalating row over the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Class 8 textbook chapter on "corruption" in the judiciary, as per government sources. Modi, who is in Israel, questioned both the appropriateness of introducing such sensitive issues at that stage of education and the approval process that allowed the content to be published. He also sought to know who was responsible for monitoring and clearing the textbook before it reached classrooms, signaling concern over institutional oversight.



ZURICH

World Economic Forum president and CEO Borge Brende said he was stepping down on Thursday, a few weeks after the forum launched an independent investigation into his relationship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Brende, who became president of the WEF in 2017, announced his decision in a statement following disclosures from the US Justice Department that showed the Norwegian had three business dinners with Epstein and had also communicated with the disgraced financier via email and text message.

"After careful consideration, I have decided to step down as President and CEO of the World Economic Forum. My time here, spanning 8-1/2 years, has been profoundly rewarding," Brende said. The statement made no mention of Epstein.

"I am grateful for the incredible collaboration with my colleagues, partners, and constituents, and I believe now is the right moment for the Forum to continue its important work without distractions," added Brende, a former Norwegian foreign minister.

Brende has said he was un-



### IN SHORT

- Norwegian had been WEF prez since 2017
- Brende has said he was unaware of Epstein's criminal past
- WEF's Alois Zwinggi will serve as interim president and CEO

aware of Epstein's past and criminal activities before first meeting him in 2018, and that he regretted not having investigated him more thoroughly.

In a statement, WEF co-chairs André Hoffmann and Larry Fink said of Brende's resignation: "We wish to express our sincere appreciation for Borge Brende's significant contributions to the World Economic Forum. His dedication and leadership have been instrumental during a pivotal period of reforms for the organisation, leading to a successful annual meeting in Davos. We respect his decision to step down."

### After DKS, now GP wants to be CM

BENGALURU

The power tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar has once again popped the question of a Dalit chief minister.

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday asserted that he was capable enough to be the chief minister.

Parameshwara, who was the KPCC chief between 2010 and 2018, said, "How many times should I prove my capability? I have worked as KPCC chief for eight years and brought the party to power twice. Did all this happen without my effort or calibre? I have served as deputy chief minister. So, no one should doubt my capability. I have proved beyond doubt that I am capable. It is only the circumstances and the party's decision that need to favour me," said the Koratageri MLA.

The demand for a "dalit CM" is once again gaining traction after the dalit ministers held a secret meeting recently. The ministers have been countering Shivakumar staking claim to the CM's post, citing hard work.

Congress MLA K N Rajanna poked Shivakumar, saying the Congress owed Parameshwara his "old dues" as he had served the party for eight years as the state president. "Shivakumar, who completes six years as party president (on March 30), is yet to break Parameshwara's record," Rajanna had taunted. Social Welfare Minister Dr H C Mahadevappa too made a cryptic c o m - ment that a dalit

would occupy the CM's chair in the state, much to the chagrin of Shivakumar.



## INDIA BACKS GAZA PEACE PLAN

Humanity must never become a victim of conflict: Modi

JERUSALEM

India and Israel on Thursday elevated their "time-tested" ties to a Special Strategic Partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi voicing strong support for the Gaza peace initiative and asserting that "humanity must never become a victim of conflict."

After wide-ranging talks with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, Modi said India's security interests are closely linked to peace and stability in West Asia and reaffirmed New Delhi's backing for efforts to end the conflict in Gaza.

He said a "path to peace has been created through the Gaza Peace Plan" and reaffirmed India's commitment to such diplomatic endeavours. "India's vision is clear that humanity must never become a victim of conflict. The Gaza



Peace Plan has opened a route to peace. India has supported such efforts. In future too, India will continue to cooperate and have dialogue with all nations," he said.

The two leaders underscored their shared position against terrorism, declaring that there is no place for it "in any form, in any expression." Modi said India and Israel

have consistently stood "shoulder-to-shoulder" in countering terrorism and its supporters and would continue to do so.

"Our relationship is founded on the strong bedrock of deep trust, shared democratic values, and human sensitivities. Our bond has stood the test of every trial of time," the Prime Minister said, announc-

ing the decision to elevate bilateral ties to a Special Strategic Partnership.

### INDIA-ISRAEL FTA: FROM TARIFFS TO TECH

While security and strategic issues dominated the talks, the two sides also signed a series of agreements aimed at expanding cooperation in trade, agriculture, energy, cyberspace and digital payments. Modi announced the establishment of an India-Israel partnership in critical and emerging technologies, covering areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and critical minerals.

The leaders also agreed to work towards an early conclusion of a "mutually beneficial" free trade agreement, as part of efforts to strengthen economic engagement alongside the expanding strategic and security partnership.

### AGREEMENT REACHED FOR USE OF UPI IN ISRAEL: MODI

PM Modi also added that an agreement has been reached for use of UPI in Israel. PM Modi further said, "We will soon give final shape to a mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement." "We have taken a historic decision to give our time-tested relationship the status of special strategic partnership. This is a reflection of the aspirations of both the nations," he said.

### INDIA-ISRAEL FTA: NEXT ROUND OF TALKS IN MAY: MINISTRY

After the first round of four-day talks in New Delhi, the Commerce Ministry on Thursday said that India and Israel would hold the next round of negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries in May. "Both sides also agreed to continue inter-sessional engagements virtually. The next round of in-person negotiations will be held in May 2026 in Israel," the ministry said.

### 100 MILLION STRONG!

## Modi beats Trump to be world's most followed leader on Insta

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has crossed the massive milestone of 100 million followers on Instagram, leaving US President Donald Trump far behind to grab the spot of the first ever politician and world leader to have accomplished this huge feat, officials said on Thursday.

Modi joined Instagram in 2014, and over the past decade, his account has evolved into one of the most engaging

digital spaces among global leaders.

Among major global leaders, Modi's follower count is more than double that of US President Trump, who holds the second position with 43.2 million followers.

PM Modi's whopping follower count has even left behind the combined followers of the next five major international leaders: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto (15 million); Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (14.4

million); Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (11.6 million) and Argentine President Javier Milei (6.4 million).

Notably, the combined follower count of the next five major world leaders remains lower than PM Modi's individual total, highlighting the scale of his digital reach and influence.

Observers point out that the Prime Minister's Instagram presence resonates strongly with younger audiences, both

in India and abroad, reflecting changing modes of political communication in the digital age.

The gap is equally striking within India's political landscape. Modi is far ahead of all other Indian political leaders on Instagram. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath occupies the second spot with around 16.1 million followers, while Congress leader Rahul Gandhi follows with approximately 12.6 million followers. The difference un-

derscores the PM's dominant position on social media platforms among domestic and international political figures. The milestone reflects a broader trend of leaders increasingly using visual and interactive platforms like Instagram to engage directly with citizens, bypassing traditional communication channels.

For PM Modi, social media has remained a key tool for outreach, governance messaging, and public engagement.

### Anil Ambani appears before ED in money laundering case

MUMBAI

Amid the ongoing probe into Reliance Group of Companies, Anil Ambani appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED), on Thursday for a second round of questioning in connection with an alleged bank fraud-linked money laundering case.

The 66-year-old businessman entered the federal probe agency's office in central Delhi around 10.30 am.

Officials said that his statement will be recorded under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He was first questioned by the ED in August 2025.

The ED arrested former RCOM president Punit Garg as part of this investigation in January. The alleged laundered funds were "diverted" through multiple foreign subsidiaries and offshore entities of RCOM, the agency claimed earlier.

A day earlier, ED provisionally attached Anil Ambani's luxury residence, 'Abode', valued at Rs 3,716 crore, as part of its ongoing probe.

The probe pertains to an alleged Rs 40,000 crore worth bank fraud by his group company, Reliance Communications (RCOM).

### Sunetra Pawar elected NCP prez month after Ajit Pawar's death

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra DyCM-Sunetra Pawar on Thursday was unanimously elected as the new national president of the NCP following a key decision taken at the party's executive meeting at the national convention. Addressing party leaders and delegates at the convention, senior NCP leader Praful Patel delivered an emotional speech, recalling the period of intense discussion and speculation within the party following changes in leadership after Ajit Pawar.

## QUICK READ



### One-Day Workshop on 12th Century Vachana Writers in Jayanagar

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

A one-day workshop on 12th-century Vachana writers will be held on February 28 at Sri Shivaratri Rajendra Chintana Mantapa in Jayanagar, organized jointly by the Karnataka Writers' Association and the All India Sharan Sahitya Parishad. Coordinator Mukta B Kagali said the event aims to highlight lesser-known Vachana writers, discuss the social and cultural relevance of their work, and engage the new generation. Sessions include a keynote by retired Hampi Kannada University Professor M Usha, followed by analyses from R Sunandamina, Sunanda Basappa, and Indira Shivanna on the literature and philosophy of these Vachanakarthis.



### Roundtable on VBSA Bill Scheduled in Bengaluru on Feb 28

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Indian Education Board will host a roundtable meeting on the Vikasita Bharat Shiksha Adishthan (VBSA) Bill on February 28 at 8:30 am at The Mythic Society, Nrupatunga Road. The discussion aims to bring together academics, university chancellors, directors, and researchers to deliberate on the bill's implications for education and policy. Organized in collaboration with The Mythic Society, the session will provide a platform for experts to exchange ideas, highlight potential challenges, and suggest improvements to the VBSA framework. The meeting is expected to foster meaningful dialogue on shaping India's educational landscape and policy reforms.

# Fare Hikes Push City Commuters Back to Private Vehicles

Making Metro travel expensive in Bengaluru, a city already notorious for traffic congestion, is driving commuters back to personal vehicles

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Frequent fare hikes and gaps in last-mile connectivity are undoing the gains of Namma Metro, once hailed as fast, safe, and affordable. Residents now perceive Metro commuting as costly and inconvenient, prompting a surge in two-wheelers and cars on city roads, especially during peak hours. Traffic police report slower flows and more congestion as a result.

Transport data shows Bengaluru has over 80 lakh registered two-wheelers in 2026. Officers warn that continued reliance on private vehicles will worsen travel times in coming months. Unni Krishna Menon, who previously com-



muted by Metro between Jalahalli and Indiranagar, has returned to using his car. "The Metro costs Rs 70 one way, plus Rs 30 for four hours of parking. I still need an autorickshaw or cab to reach Domlur. Filling my car with Rs 500 petrol lasts 2.5 days, which is

cheaper," Menon explained.

College student Jatin Polanki shared a similar story. "I used to take the Metro from Pattanagere to Majestic for Rs 30. After fare hikes and early morning classes, I switched to my bike. For Rs 100, I can go to college, roam around, and

return," he said.

Resident welfare groups caution that high user charges for essential services can be counterproductive. Christopher Cruz of NERWA emphasized, "Public transport is any city's lifeline and vital to decongesting Bengaluru. Revenue considerations should not compromise accessibility." Some commuters note that cost is not the only factor; convenience, speed, and connectivity also influence travel choices.

With fares climbing and first- and last-mile options limited, Bengaluru risks undoing years of investment in sustainable urban mobility, as more citizens return to cars and bikes, adding strain to already crowded roads.

## Primebook expands offline footprint through strategic partnerships with Sangeetha Mobiles and Pai International

**BENGALURU**

Primebook India, the home-grown technology company behind India's Android-based laptop ecosystem, has announced a major expansion of its offline retail presence through strategic partnerships with Sangeetha Mobiles and Pai International Electronics.

As part of this rollout, Primebook laptops will now be available across Sangeetha Mobiles stores in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, as well as at Pai International outlets in Hyderabad and Bengaluru. The expansion strengthens Primebook's omnichannel strategy, building physical retail access alongside its digital-first foundation.

While online retail is expanding rapidly, personal computing remains a category where Indian consumers invest significant time in evaluation before making a purchase. Industry estimates indicate that offline retail accounts for approximately 66 percent of the country's consumer electronics sales, underscoring the continued relevance of physical stores in high-consideration categories.

Consumers often prefer to experience a device physically before making a decision, especially in categories like laptops,



where performance, display quality, keyboard experience, and overall build influence buying confidence. As digital discovery increasingly blends with offline validation, physical retail continues to play a decisive role in shaping final purchase decisions. Primebook's offline expansion aligns with this evolving hybrid consumer journey. The retail rollout will feature Primebook 2 Pro at Rs 17,990 and Primebook 2 Max at Rs 19,990, supported by Zero Down Payment EMI offerings designed to lower entry barriers in the personal computing segment.

Commenting on the development, Chitranshu Mahant, Co-founder and CEO of Primebook, said, Primebook was built to reimagine personal computing for a new generation of users. Expanding into offline retail strengthens our commitment to accessibility, not just in pricing, but in pres-

ence. By partnering with established retail leaders like Sangeetha Mobiles and Pai International, we are ensuring that more consumers can experience our laptops firsthand before making a decision.

Anil Prabhas from the Management team of Sangeetha Mobiles added, "We are witnessing increasing demand for affordable and performance-driven computing solutions across our markets. Primebook introduces a differentiated Android-based laptop category that aligns well with evolving consumer needs, and we believe this partnership will deliver strong value to customers."

S Rajkumar Pai, Managing Director, Pai International, said, Hyderabad and Bengaluru continue to be important technology consumption markets with a growing base of digitally native consumers. Primebook brings an innovative and accessible computing proposition to our shelves, and we are confident it will resonate strongly with our customers. With expanded retail presence, competitive pricing, and flexible financing options, Primebook aims to accelerate the adoption of Android-powered laptops while strengthening its presence across key markets in India.

## Ex-BBMP Engineer Dies by Suicide after Corruption Case

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

RL Parameshwaraiah, a 63-year-old former chief engineer with the erstwhile BBMP, died by suicide at his Koramangala residence after being booked last month by the CBI in an old corruption case. Parameshwaraiah retired three years ago and lived with his family in Koramangala IV Block. He left a note in Kannada stating, "I am responsible for my death. Don't trouble anyone."

According to family sources, he was scheduled to appear before the CBI's anti-corruption bureau on Wednesday morning. An FIR under the Prevention of Corruption Act was registered against him on January 30.

The case traces back to December 2021, when Income Tax officials raided a civil contractor in Bengaluru and seized cash, gold, and land documents linked to Parameshwaraiah. Subsequently, a separate raid at his residence uncovered over Rs 86 lakh from a bank locker, whose key was reportedly held by his wife, along with documents for several land parcels and properties.

Authorities are investigating the matter, while family members are grappling with the shock of his sudden death.

## ESCOMS Seek Tariff Hike; KERC Reserves Decision Pending Review

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) reserved its orders on a review petition filed by Electricity Supply Companies (ESCOMS) seeking a revision in tariffs for commercial and industrial consumers. The petition cited a revenue shortfall of Rs 4,620 crore, largely due to subsidies extended to Irrigation Pump (IP) sets. While the state finance department has agreed to release Rs 2,362 crore, the utilities plan to cover the remaining gap through Rs 1,254 crore from tariff hikes on commercial and industrial users and Rs 1,107 crore from miscellaneous sources.

If approved, the revision could directly affect industries, traders, small businesses, and commercial establishments, with an indirect impact on consumers as higher operational costs may translate into increased prices of goods and services. ESCOMS argued that cross-subsidisation—where industrial and commercial users subsidise categories such as farmers—is an established feature of the power sector. They added that revising tariffs is critical to maintain financial stability and ensure uninterrupted elec-



**A proposed tariff revision by Karnataka's Electricity Supply Companies could raise costs for industries and commercial users, potentially affecting consumer prices.**

tricity supply.

Industry bodies voiced strong opposition. The Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) and the MSME Council of Mysuru stated that the financial burden should fall entirely on the government rather than being passed on to commercial consumers.

KERC Chairperson P Ravi Kumar heard arguments from all sides and reserved orders, with a decision expected within a month. The outcome will determine whether industrial users, and eventually consumers, face higher electricity-linked costs in the upcoming financial year.

## Karnataka HC Flags Misuse of Section 69 in Consensual Relationships

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka High Court has expressed concern over an increasing trend of criminal cases being filed under Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, which deals with inducing women into sexual intercourse by deceit, including false promises of marriage. Justice M. Nagaprasanna, hearing a petition filed by a man accused under the provision, noted that several cases involve consensual relationships being suddenly criminalised after years together.

The petitioner's counsel told the court that the relationship began through an online dating platform and was entirely consensual, with the complainant herself acknowledging the nature of the relationship and even composing a poem about it. Despite this, the government advocate argued that the matter involved a promise of marriage, which falls under Section 69.

Justice Nagaprasanna observed that the registration of such cases often results in immediate arrests, even though the alleged offence carries a maximum imprisonment of 10 years. "After two to three years of a consensual relationship, a crime is registered, and the man is taken into custody," he said.

Highlighting the rise of



**Justice Nagaprasanna observed that the registration of such cases often results in immediate arrests, even though the alleged offence carries a maximum imprisonment of 10 years.**

similar cases following the enactment of the new penal provision, the court described the matter as a "classic illustration" of misuse. Noting the potential for harassment and overreach, the High Court stayed further investigation into the petitioner's case until the next hearing.

Since the petitioner was in judicial custody, the court directed his release on bail, subject to conditions, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach in applying Section 69.

The order signals judicial awareness of the fine line between protecting women from deceit and penalising consensual relationships, indicating that courts may increasingly scrutinise how Section 69 is invoked in practice.

## HC Imposes Rs 10,000 Fine on Wife for Delaying Divorce Proceedings

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka High Court has imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on a woman for deliberately delaying her divorce proceedings, after she repeatedly filed interim applications and sought adjournments for over five years, despite having received Rs 27 lakh in alimony. The bench, led by Justice Dr Chilakurthi Sumalatha, also directed the trial court to remit the fine to the Soldiers' Welfare Fund within three weeks.

The ruling came during a petition filed by a woman from Kanakapura, Ramanagara district, challenging a Family Court order that dismissed her plea to postpone hearings or challenge witnesses. The High Court noted that the repeated adjournments requested by the wife were obstructing the judicial process and causing undue inconvenience to the petitioner and the court.

"Such a liberal policy of adjourning hearings cannot be followed. Court proceedings cannot be conducted according to the wishes of the parties," the bench observed. The court stressed that misuse of provisions under the Family Courts Act and the Code of Civil Procedure to delay hear-



ings undermines the efficiency of the justice system. "If such conduct is tolerated, no case can be resolved even in a decade," Justice Sumalatha noted.

The High Court also highlighted the wife's negligence and lack of cooperation in the continuous review of her applications. Her repeated delays prompted the Family Court to dismiss the interim plea, an order the High Court upheld, terming the Family Court's handling of the case as "highly commendable."

The bench further directed that future hearings should proceed only after the wife submits all relevant documents, ensuring that the case is disposed of without further obstruction. This verdict underscores the judiciary's intolerance for tactics that unnecessarily prolong litigation and serves as a warning to parties attempting to misuse legal procedures to delay justice.

## RTI Act Not Meant for Accessing Spouse's I-T Returns, Rules HC

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Karnataka High Court has clarified that the Right to Information (RTI) Act cannot be used to obtain a spouse's income-tax returns for personal litigation, emphasizing that the Act is designed to ensure public accountability, not to facilitate private disputes.

The ruling came after a woman from Mumbai sought details of her husband's income-tax returns from 2012 to 2017, including taxes paid and the names and addresses of banks linked to his fi-

nances. Justice Suraj Govindaraj held that such information should be sought through judicial proceedings, such as summoning documents from the Income Tax Department or under court directions, rather than the RTI framework.

The court noted that I-T returns, assessment details, and related financial information fall under "personal information" as per Section 8(1)(g) of the RTI Act, 2005, and are exempt from disclosure unless there is a larger public interest. The husband was

considered a "third party" under the Act, reinforcing that the information could not be released to the spouse.

Earlier, the Income Tax officer and Chief Public Information Officer had rejected the woman's RTI application, a decision upheld by the Joint Commissioner of Income Tax. She then approached the Central Information Commission (CIC), which in April 2019 directed the department to provide the information. The I-T Department challenged the CIC order before the High Court.

### HUMANITARIAN CONCERN

## Family Donates Teen's Organs, Grants Life to 3 Recipients

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In an extraordinary act of compassion, the family of 19-year-old Darshan from Mandya donated his organs, giving new life to three patients after he was declared brain dead. The organ retrieval took place at the Trauma & Emergency Care Centre (TECC) of Victoria Hospital, Bengaluru, where Darshan had been receiving treatment.

Darshan, the sole breadwinner for his family, is survived by his father and sister. He suffered a fall from his motorcycle near Chikka Mandya on February 22. Returning home,



he went to sleep without seeking medical attention. Observing unusual symptoms, his family admitted him to a local hospital, which referred him

to TECC Bengaluru after diagnosing a severe internal brain haemorrhage. Despite the medical team's best efforts, he was declared brain

dead upon arrival.

Counselled by Karnataka's State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) Jeeva Sarthake, the family consented to organ donation. Following this, Darshan's organs were transplanted to eligible recipients, prioritizing patients in government facilities. His liver was allocated to a 26-year-old male at the Institute of Gastroenterology and Organ Transplant (IGOT), one kidney to another 26-year-old male, and the second kidney to a 38-year-old male at the Institute of Nephro-Urology. His heart valves were distributed to an-

other hospital.

Darshan's body was returned to the family at 5 am on Wednesday. Medical officers at Victoria Hospital highlighted the courage and humanity shown by the family, noting that despite limited education and socio-economic challenges, they made a noble and selfless decision.

"We are deeply grateful to the family, who even in their moment of profound grief chose to serve society and brighten the lives of others," said Dr. Asima Banu, Special Officer at TECC, and Dr. S. Deepak, Medical Superintendent, Victoria Hospital.

## QUICK READ

**'Kala Spandana'**  
Classical Music and Dance  
Programme on Feb 28

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**  
Satish Hampiholi Music Foundation Trust and Alankrit Centre for Performing Arts will present the 'Kala Spandana' classical music and dance programme on February 28 at 5 pm at Sanatan Kalakshetra, 5th Block, Jayanagar. The evening will feature Kathak performances by G Sudeepa and Preeti Chaudhary. Hindustani classical vocal recitals will be rendered by Poorna Hebbar and Pragya Hebbar, with tabla accompaniment by Rohan Kumar. Organisers said the event aims to promote classical art forms and provide a platform for talented artists to showcase their skills before Bengaluru's cultural audience.

**Drama to Mark  
Sandhya Jana Sanskriti  
Trust Anniversary**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**  
Sandhya Jana Sanskriti Trust will celebrate its 8th anniversary with a music and drama programme on February 28 at the Akkamahadevi Auditorium, Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Chamarajpet. The event will begin at 4 pm with a musical performance by P. Rudrappa and team. This will be followed by the staging of the play Paschatap (Repentance) at 6.30 pm. The play is written and directed by Foto Venky. Organisers said the programme aims to promote cultural activities and theatre while bringing together artists and audiences to mark the trust's anniversary celebrations.

**Director Kidnapped,  
Assaulted Over  
Money Row; Actress  
Among 11 Arrested**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a shocking incident that has sent ripples through Sandalwood, director Aneesh of the Kannada film Jeevanada Bhashe was allegedly abducted, illegally confined and brutally assaulted over a financial dispute linked to the unreleased movie. The



Aduodi Police Station have arrested 11 accused, including actress Aishwarya, also known as Ash Melo, in connection with the case. According to police investigations, tensions had escalated between the film's investors and the production team as the movie's release remained uncertain. Amid mounting financial pressure, Aneesh reportedly decided to sell his car and is said to have shared this information with Aishwarya, who was associated with the project.

**Voter List Deadline Extended,  
Final Ward-Wise Roll on April 6**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In view of the upcoming Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections, the Karnataka State Election Commission has extended the deadline for publication of the final ward-wise electoral roll. The revised schedule confirms April 6, 2026, as the official date for releasing the final voter list.

The draft voter list was initially published on January 19, with the final roll earlier slated for March 15. Follow-

**575 Trees Face Axe for Reshme Bhavan Near Majestic**

Environmental activists have strongly opposed the proposal, expressing serious concern over shrinking urban green cover

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

A fresh environmental controversy has surfaced in Bengaluru after a proposal to fell 575 trees for the construction of 'Reshme Bhavan' near Majestic triggered widespread opposition. The project is planned on 4.2 acres of land belonging to the Silk Department in Okalipuram, located in the city's busy central zone.

According to official records, the proposed site falls under survey numbers 12, 14 and 17 of Muddenahalli vil-

lage, where the office of the Joint Director currently functions. The land is densely populated with 628 trees, including Silver Oak, Neem, Tabebuia, Mahogany, Jackfruit, Gulmohar, Rain Tree and Ashoka species. Of these, 575 trees are proposed to be cut, with only 53 slated for retention.

The Silk Department has described Reshme Bhavan as a prestigious government initiative and has sought an early No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Greater Ben-



galuru Authority (GBA). The project received Cabinet approval in 2024, and the Public Works Department (PWD)

has been entrusted with its execution.

However, as per forest regulations, tree felling within

Bengaluru requires prior approval from the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF). A committee of tree experts has already conducted a site inspection as part of the mandatory process. The Forest Department and GBA have invited public suggestions and objections, providing a 10-day window for citizens to respond.

Environmental activists argue that removing hundreds of mature trees in a congested area will aggravate air pollution, urban heat, and ecologi-

cal imbalance. Civic groups have questioned the rationale of locating such a large infrastructure project within the city limits, suggesting that shifting it to the outskirts could promote silk development without harming Bengaluru's fragile green ecosystem.

With objections mounting, the final decision now rests with authorities, turning the Reshme Bhavan proposal into a critical test of balancing urban development and environmental conservation in the city.

**Crackdown on Suspected Illegal  
Migrants, 11 Detained in East B'luru**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

A coordinated police operation targeting suspected illegal migrants led to the detention of 11 persons in K. Channasandra under the Ramamurthy Nagar police station limits. The individuals, suspected to be Bangladeshi nationals, were taken into custody for verification of their identity documents and travel records.

Police officials said the raid was conducted based on specific intelligence inputs. Authorities are currently examining passports, visas and other identification documents to determine whether the individuals are residing in the country legally. Further legal action will depend on the outcome of the verification process.

Responding to the development, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara stated that instructions have been issued to all district Superintendents of Police to identify foreigners who have overstayed their visas.



He noted that while many foreign nationals enter India legally, some remain in the country even after their visa validity expires.

The Minister expressed concern that certain individuals allegedly obtain local identity cards, complicating detection efforts. He directed officials to thoroughly verify such documents to check for misuse. Referring to the role of the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), he said that although records of foreign nationals are maintained, tracking becomes difficult if proper exit procedures are not followed.

Parameshwara recalled that

the issue was debated in the state Assembly, where opposition members claimed that a large number of illegal migrants were residing in Karnataka. He reiterated the government's commitment to take strict action against illegal stay, clarifying that the ongoing drive is not limited to Bangladeshi nationals but includes all foreigners residing unlawfully.

With intensified inspections and inter-departmental coordination, authorities aim to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure adherence to immigration laws across Bengaluru and the state.

**Mohammed Mohsin Conducts Surprise  
Inspection at Institute of Nephro-Urology**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Mohammed Mohsin, Additional Chief Secretary for Medical Education, conducted a surprise inspection at the Institute of Nephro-Urology located within the Victoria Hospital campus on Thursday afternoon.

Mohsin, who is spearheading key reforms in the Medical Education Department, held detailed consultations with doctors and staff to assess the hospital's infrastructure, patient services and overall functioning. He sought comprehensive information regarding treatment

facilities, availability of medical equipment and patient care standards.

During the visit, he instructed hospital authorities to ensure that patients do not face any inconvenience and that timely and appropriate treatment is provided to all. Emphasizing the government's commitment to accessible healthcare, Mohsin said that several reform measures are being implemented across the state and must be effectively executed at institutional levels.

Interacting directly with patients, he gathered feedback about their experiences. Ac-

cording to officials, several patients expressed satisfaction with the treatment and facilities available at the hospital. Mohsin noted that such feedback is vital in strengthening service delivery and improving healthcare outcomes.

He also made it clear that similar inspections will be conducted in government hospitals during his visits to various districts. The initiative, he said, aims to ensure accountability, enhance transparency and reinforce the government's resolve to provide quality healthcare services to all sections of society.

**MB Patil Pushes Fast-Track Clearances  
to Boost Ease of Doing Business**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Reaffirming the state government's commitment to creating an industry-friendly ecosystem, Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil directed officials to expedite the implementation of 28 pending services under the Single Window system to strengthen ease of doing business in Karnataka.

Chairing a high-level meeting of the Easy Business Culture and Single Window Committees at Vidhana Soudha on Thursday, Patil said Karnataka faces intense competition from neighbouring states and must offer a more efficient and transparent approval mechanism. Senior



officials from key departments were present.

He noted that 115 services across 20 departments have already been integrated under the Single Window Scheme, while the remaining 28 services—relating to Revenue, Forest, Home, Environment, Primary Education, Fire Services and Energy—have been prioritised for time-bound implementation. The goal, he said, is to attract investors without procedural delays.

Highlighting reforms, Patil said the time limit for Fire Department NOCs has been reduced from 60 days to 21 days. Electricity connection approvals will now be granted in 10 days instead of 25, while permission for lifts and escalators has been cut from 40 to 20 days. New water tap connections will be issued within 30 days instead of 42. The Labour Department will clear industrial plans, licences and boiler registrations within 14 days, down from 30.

Similarly, Pollution Control Board clearances and land-use conversion approvals in Bengaluru have been significantly streamlined, with the latter reduced from 120 days to 45 days.

**Progress of Village  
is Top Priority:  
ST Somashekar**

**BENGALURU**

MLA S T Somashekar said that continuous development is essential for the overall progress of villages and reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening rural infrastructure. He was speaking after inaugurating road construction and development works at Hosapalya village under Kumbalagod Gram Panchayat in the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency. He stated that when a Gram Panchayat develops comprehensively, all villages under its jurisdiction benefit from improved basic amenities and civic facilities. Somashekar emphasized that elected representatives must work honestly and fairly for the welfare of the people without party bias.

**Rowdy-sheeter Hacked to  
Death in Front of Mother  
by Helmeted Assailants**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a chilling late-night attack, 28-year-old rowdy-sheeter Pawan Kumar was brutally murdered in front of his mother at Amarajyothi Layout, Thanisandra, by six assailants wearing helmets, riding three two-wheelers. Police suspect the killing was a retaliation linked to a violent incident that occurred three years ago.

Pawan, who was under DJ Halli police jurisdiction, had been released from jail in May last year after serving time for the murder of fellow rowdy-sheeter Kapil. Following his release, he had opened a bakery just six weeks ago. The attackers allegedly executed the murder in a manner reminiscent of Kapil's killing, suggesting a premeditated act of vengeance. Several individuals, including Kapil's brother, are believed to be connected to the crime.

Speaking to the media, Pawan's mother, Komala, recounted the horror of witnessing her son's death. "My

son had just reopened his life, thinking he was safe. He told me he would return after closing the bakery. Then six men on three bikes came chasing him and stabbed him right at our gate.

"I couldn't save him," she said, describing how her son had previously faced threats

from a man named Prem and had been sent to stay with relatives for safety.

Police arrived at the scene immediately and have launched a search for the absconding attackers. Investigators are probing the possibility of longstanding enmity fueling the crime and examining connections to earlier incidents involving Pawan.

The murder has sent shockwaves through the local community, highlighting the dangers posed by ongoing feuds among criminal elements in the city. Authorities have called for any witnesses to come forward and provide information to aid in the swift apprehension of the perpetrators.

**POWER SHARE TUSSLE****CM's Residence Renovation Fuels Power-Shift Speculation**

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Amid continuing speculation over a possible power-sharing arrangement within the ruling party, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has triggered fresh debate by proceeding with renovation works at his official residence.

The Chief Minister had earlier undertaken renovation after assuming office. However, the decision to initiate another round of refurbishment—this

time focusing on the ground floor—has drawn attention due to its timing. With political circles abuzz over a potential leadership transition, critics and observers are questioning whether the move signals his intent to continue in office without compromise.

The power-sharing debate gained momentum after Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar stated that he and Siddaramaiah had discussed the matter and would act accordingly. His



remarks intensified speculation about a possible change in leadership midway through the

government's term.

Following Siddaramaiah's record tenure as Chief Minister and the presentation of his 17th state budget on March 6, rumours began circulating that a transfer of power could be imminent. Against this backdrop, the ongoing renovation has been interpreted by some as a political message.

While it is customary for official residences to undergo periodic maintenance, the timing of the current works has

sparked political chatter. Party insiders and officials alike are said to be uncertain about the broader implications of the move.

Political observers suggest that the renovation could be symbolic, reinforcing Siddaramaiah's position amid internal discussions. Whether it is routine upkeep or a strategic signal in the power-sharing equation remains a subject of debate within Karnataka's political landscape.

## QUICK READ

## Gadag District tour by Minister H.K. Patil

## Gadag

Dr. H.K. Patil will visit Gadag on February 27 as part of his district tour. He will depart from Hubballi at 6.30 am and reach Gadag by 7.30 pm. During the visit, he will participate in the Gadag district-level Janata Darshan program at the District Administration Building from 10 am to 5 pm. The minister will also stay in Gadag for the day. Officials said the program aims to address public grievances and ensure direct interaction between the minister and local citizens.

## Swethanaga Venugopal earns doctorate in history

## Ballari

Swethanaga Venugopal has been awarded a PhD by Kannada University. She completed her research in the Women's Studies Department of the Bhasha Nikaya, focusing on her thesis titled "Women under the Rule of the Kings of Surapura State." Her work was guided by mentor Dr. K. Venkatesh and co-mentor Dr. Shivananda S. Viraktamatha. The university highlighted that her study provides deep insights into the lives and roles of women during the Surapura State era, contributing valuable knowledge to historical and gender studies in Karnataka.

## Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya Jayanti in Haveri

## Haveri

The Sri Jagadguru Renuka Mandir (Nudina Math) will host the Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya Jayanti on March 1 at 11 am. The event is organized with the District Administration, District Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya Seva Samiti. Minister for Textiles Shivanand Patil will inaugurate the program in the presence of Union Minister Prahlad Joshi and Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti. Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai will preside, along with MLA and Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Manappa Lamani. Several ministers, MLAs, and officials will attend, marking a grand celebration of the spiritual leader's birth anniversary.

## Bhadravati Radio Gets Major Power Boost



## SHIVAMOGGA

The Bhadravati centre of All India Radio has received a major upgrade, increasing its FM transmitter strength from 1 KW to 10 KW. The new facility was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan on B.H. Road in Shivamogga, marking an important day for the district.

Speaking at the event, the minister said radio continues to play a key role in carrying government welfare schemes to the last person in society. He said the government led by Narendra Modi has allocated Rs 2,500 crore in the recent Union Budget to strengthen services under Prasar Bharati and improve broadcasting infrastructure across the country.

Murugan described All India Radio as a trusted and official source of information.

## Guarantee schemes alone not real development: HDK

The minister said the state struggles to fill vacancies, must provide employment, and criticized focus on internal matters over governance

## CHAMARAJANAGAR

Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy criticized the Karnataka government, saying that apart from its guarantee schemes, no major development is visible in the state.

Speaking to reporters after inaugurating the Shiva and Ganapati temple at Kadabur in Gundlupet taluk, Kumaraswamy said the Congress government came to power by making big promises. However, he alleged that after forming the government, it focused only on guarantee schemes and ignored other



development works. He claimed that the financial burden of these schemes has increased taxes on common people.

The minister said the state government is struggling to

fill vacant posts and many job aspirants are unhappy. Providing employment is the responsibility of the state, he said, adding that blaming the Centre will not solve the issue. He also accused the government of spending valuable time on internal matters instead of governance.

Referring to earlier allegations of a "40 percent commission," Kumaraswamy questioned what action the present government has taken. He claimed that contractors are facing serious difficulties and some are under heavy financial stress.

On his role in state politics, Kumaraswamy said he would actively campaign to remove what he called a "bad government" and work towards forming a better alternative. Speaking about the alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Janata Dal Secular, he said the partnership was formed with a clear purpose and would continue in future elections.

He expressed confidence that people would support the alliance in the coming polls and said there is no shortage of strong candidates in any constituency.

Officials were instructed to resolve project issues promptly, follow procedures for changes, and conduct taluk-level reviews for March 5 reporting

## Officials told to ensure quality work and timely completion

## MANDYA

Zilla Panchayat CEO Nandini K.R. has instructed officials to ensure that all development works are implemented on time and with proper quality so that government grants are not wasted. She spoke at a progress review meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat.

Out of 274 ongoing projects, 161 have been completed, while 88 works are in progress. The CEO emphasized that all in-progress projects must be completed urgently, and payments should be made by March 10. She directed engineers to submit requests in writing if extra time is needed, specifying exact durations, warning that extensions will not be granted otherwise.

Officials were told to immediately resolve any issues arising during project implementation. If a problem cannot be solved, proper procedures must be followed to



modify or change the project. Work-wise reviews are to be conducted at the taluk level under Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, and reports will feed into the next review meeting on March 5.

The CEO strongly warned that bills paid without completion or proper material supply, or grants released without checking work quality, will invite disciplinary action and criminal proceedings. No work should begin without proper approvals from competent authorities.

Specific instructions were given for key projects: the mother's milk bank should have remaining civil works completed with quality with-

in the set timeline, and the Midwifery Lead Care Unit construction has started with a 25-day deadline. The Medical Superintendent of Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences will oversee progress and report to the District Magistrate.

Other officials present included Zilla Panchayat Deputy Secretaries Shivalingaiah and Lakshmi P, Chief Planning Officer Dhanush S, Project Director Sundar Raj, and Executive Engineer Nagaraju, along with district and taluk level officers. All were instructed to maintain strict oversight to ensure timely, quality completion of all works.

## Haveri cancels licences of defaulting finance firms

## HAVERI

The district administration has cancelled the licences of 57 finance companies and pawnbrokers for failing to renew their permits within the prescribed time. The action was announced by the Assistant Registrar of Moneylenders and Pawnbrokers under the provisions of the Karnataka Pawnbrokers Act, 1961.

According to officials, these firms continued operations even after their licence period ended and did not submit renewal applications as required by law. They also failed to provide mandatory records, including Form No. 6 and Form No. 7, and did not submit annual audit reports related to their security deposits.

Authorities said repeated reminders were issued, but

the institutions did not respond within the given time-frame.

As a result, the district administration has decided not only to cancel their licences but also to initiate steps to forfeit the security deposits to the government.

The administration has given the concerned firms a final opportunity to submit their audit reports and explanations within seven days from the date of publication of the notice. If they fail to respond within this deadline, further legal action will follow.

Officials stated that the move aims to protect the interests of the public and ensure that only legally compliant financial institutions operate in the district. Strict monitoring will continue to prevent unauthorized lending activities.

## Seminar on SC/ST rights scheduled in Mandya

## MANDYA

The District Administration, Zilla Panchayat Social Welfare Department, and District Legal Services Authority of Mandya will organize a seminar and workshop on March 7 at 10 a.m. at the District Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan. The event will focus on the prevention of atrocities against Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities and the eradication of untouchability.

The program will feature prominent spiritual leaders, including Sri Nirmalanandanath Mahaswamiji, President of Sri Adichunchanagiri Maha Sansthan Math, Sri Basavamurthy Madar Chennaiyia Swamiji of Shivsharan Madar Chennaiyia Gurupeth, Chitradurga, and Sri Gyanprakash Swamiji of Urlingapeddishwara Maha Sansthan Math, Kalaburagi district.



## Mother's love beyond price, journalism must reflect villages: KVP

## GADAG

A mother's love cannot be measured in money, said K.V. Prabhakar, Media Advisor to the Chief Minister, while addressing the Matoshree Guruvva Shivalingappa Horatti Memorial Endowment Award function in Gadag. The program was organized by Avva Seva Trust in association with the Karnataka Working Journalists' Association and the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University.

Prabhakar said it is heart-breaking that many parents who sacrificed their comfort and dreams for their children are now living in old age homes. He praised Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti for keeping his mother's values alive through service. The award was presented to Tanuja Nayaka, whom he described as a sensitive writer who highlights women's emotions, family bonds, and social responsibility.

Speaking about rural journalism, Prabhakar recalled senior journalist P. Sainath and called his book Everybody Loves a Good Drought a guiding light for reporters.

Prabhakar lamented parents in old age homes, praised Speaker Basavaraj Horatti's values, and presented the award to Tanuja Nayaka for highlighting women, family, and social responsibility

He said real development is not just about city growth or rising stock markets, but about improving the lives of people in villages where nearly 70 percent of Indians live.

He noted that during demonetization and the Covid crisis, the rural economy and savings of village women protected many families. Journalism should focus on drinking water, health, education, and farmer issues. Reports on drought, crop disease, and contaminated water have pushed the government to act quickly. "If journalism is a mirror of society, villages must be clearly seen in it," he said, urging reporters to stand firmly with rural India and highlight its struggles and strengths.

## Mandya to distribute three-wheelers for disabled

## MANDYA

A special three-wheeler distribution program for the differently-abled will be held on March 27 at 11 am at the District Deputy Commissioner's office. The initiative is organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Labour Department, Disabled Welfare Department, and Transport Department, with support from corporate and private funds. Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy will be the chief guest, and Agriculture and District In-charge Minister N. Chaluvaryaswamy will inaugurate the event. Mandya MLA P. Ravi Kumar will preside over the program.



Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy will serve as the chief guest, while Agriculture and District In-charge Minister N. Chaluvaryaswamy will inaugurate the event. Honorary guests include Sri A.B. Ramesh Bandyopadhyay, Chairman of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation and MLA of Srirangapatna; State Pollution Control Board Chairman and Malavalli MLA P.M. Narendraswamy; and Dr. Murthy, Chairman of the State SC and ST Commission.

Mandya MLA P. Ravi Ku-

mar will preside over the seminar. Other dignitaries attending include Dinesh Gowda, M.S. Atmananda, Dr. H. Krishna, B.P. Prakash, Vijayalakshmi Raghunandan, C.D. Gangadhar, B. Nagendra Kumar, along with District In-charge Secretaries, Zilla Panchayat Administrative Officer Manoj Kumar Meena, and District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary and Senior Civil Judge Anand M.

The workshop aims to raise awareness and promote legal and social measures for SC/ST welfare in Mandya district.

## MAGNET EDUCATION INITIATIVE

## KPS schools to become magnet schools soon

## HASSAN

Hassan District In-charge Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the government will convert KPS schools into Magnet Schools to provide quality education for poor children. He was speaking at the KDP meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat Hoysala Hall in Hassan.

The minister said that in some villages only four or five children attend school, making it difficult to provide proper teaching. Because of low attendance and limited facilities, children are not get-



ting good education. To solve this problem, the government plans to strengthen existing KPS schools and upgrade

them into Magnet Schools with better infrastructure, skilled teachers and improved learning methods.

Officials informed the meeting that 15 KPS schools are currently functioning in the district and basic facilities have been provided. The minister also directed authorities to review concerns about the BPL card income limit, as many rural families may lose benefits due to the revised ceiling.

Krishna Byre Gowda stressed the need to create awareness about agriculture schemes and ensure support reaches needy farmers. He asked officials to promote soil testing and control crop diseases affecting maize and co-

conut. He also called for coordination between central, state and local laboratories.

MLAs raised issues related to revenue villages, road works, power shortages during summer and pending repairs in the district. The minister instructed departments to update government assets in official records and clear pending accounts quickly.

On questions about ministerial posts, he said everyone should get a fair opportunity and added there was nothing more to comment. Several officials and public representatives attended the meeting.

QUICK READ

Scholarship drive brings hope for students

**Tumakuru**  
A scholarship program will be held on Feb. 27 at 10.30 am at Kannada Sahitya Bhavan in Tumakuru city. The event is organized by BSS Sonata Micro Credit Limited to support deserving students. Additional District Superintendent of Police M.L. Purushottam will attend as the chief guest. Field Education Officer M. Hanumanthappa, Chief Operating Officer S. Panchakshari, State Head Jagadish H.V., and Head Pandit Gangadhar Patil will also be present. Organizers said the program aims to encourage education and provide financial help to students striving for a better future. Parents and teachers are expected to attend.

Deadline extended for textile SME proposal submissions

**Chikkaballapur**  
The Handloom and Textiles Department has extended the deadline for submitting proposals under the SME Scheme 2025-26 to March 5. The scheme provides a 75% investment subsidy and 5% annual interest subsidy for textile units, encouraging individuals, partnerships, companies, and cooperative societies from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to start small and micro enterprises. Applicants who have received approval from the District Level Single Window Approval Committee and bank loans are eligible. Proposals with complete documents should be submitted to the Deputy Director's office, Room No. SA-14, Second Floor, District Administration Building, Chikkaballapur. For details, contact 08156-277031 during office hours.

25,000 to receive revenue benefits: Prabhu

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**  
Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu said all preparations are complete for distributing revenue benefits to nearly 25,000 beneficiaries at the district headquarters. He urged citizens to attend the Revenue Services Guarantee Dedication Conference in large numbers. Speaking to reporters after inspecting the venue near Chokkahalli on the outskirts of the city, he said the event will cover distribution of Pouthi accounts, Darkhastu podi documents, monthly allowances and revenue village rights. The programme is expected to benefit thousands of families across the district. Prabhu said around 18,000 to 20,000 beneficiaries and residents are likely to attend the conference. To ensure smooth travel, buses have been arranged taluk-wise for participants. People's representatives and officials have

Udupi Set To Celebrate Spiritual Icons Jointly

**UDUPI**  
The Udupi district administration is all set to host a combined celebration of the birth anniversaries of Saint Renukacharya and Yogi Narayana Yatindra. This dual cultural event is scheduled to take place on March 3 at the District Collector's office court hall in Rajatadri. Organized in collaboration with the Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Kannada and Culture, the program aims to honor the profound spiritual contributions and timeless teachings of these two revered historical figures. Minister for Women and

been invited following official protocol.

He said the District In-charge Minister has already held meetings and issued directions for the successful conduct of the programme. The Minister is also scheduled to visit the venue and review the arrangements personally.

The Deputy Commissioner described the event as a historic moment for the district, made possible with the support of the District In-charge Minister and the Revenue

MYTHOLOGICAL DRAMA DRAWS THOUSANDS IN SIRA

TUMAKURU

A grand mythological play titled Kurukshetra Dharma Rajya Sukhi was staged as part of the Kadavigere Kariamma Devi Jatra Mahotsava in Sira taluk of Tumakuru district. The event was jointly organized by Parthasarathi Kala Sampada and the Kannada and Culture Department. The drama was inaugurated by the troupe's President B.V. Nagabhushan, who lit the ceremonial lamp and addressed the gathering. He said mythological theatre in the district is steadily growing, especially because of the strong support

Chitradurga Honors Saint Renukacharya with Grand Celebration

CHITRADURGA

The Chitradurga district administration is set to celebrate the birth anniversary of Shri Jagadguru Renukacharya on March 1. Organized alongside the Department of Kannada and Culture, the event will begin at 11:00 AM at the Deputy Commissioner's office. District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the ceremony, which will be presided over by MLA K.C. Veerendra Puppy. Prominent leaders, including MP Govind Karajol and several state board chairmen, will attend to honor the saint's spiritual legacy. To enrich the program, scholar Niranjana Devara Mane will deliver a special lecture on Renukacharya's life, while Aytola Virupakshappa's team will perform devotional songs. Assistant Director Dr. B.M. Gurunath has invited the public to join this cultural tribute, which aims to unite the community through the saint's timeless teachings of peace and harmony. This gathering highlights the region's deep-rooted respect for its rich spiritual heritage.



given to rural amateur artists. According to him, village theatre groups are becoming a guiding light for many people and keeping traditional art alive. Nagabhushan praised the

Magadi MLA promises regular revenue adalats

MAGADI

MLA H. C. Balakrishna said revenue and survey adalats will be held once every six months to solve land-related problems in the taluk. He spoke at a public grievances meeting at the Taluk Panchayat Hall after receiving petitions from residents. The MLA said the recent revenue and survey adalat was successful and many long-pending issues were cleared. He assured people that problems not solved earlier would be taken up again. In another month, the District Collector and Sub-Divisional Officer will be invited to the taluk office to address remaining cases. He warned that strict action would be taken against officials if laps-

Karnataka One franchise applications open now

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The state government has invited applications for setting up new Karnataka One Franchise Centres in Chikkaballapur district. These centres provide multiple government services un-

es are found.

Balakrishna directed officers not to allow illegal soil extraction from lakes or private lands. He said JCB machines and tractors involved in such activities must be seized and legal steps taken. Village Accountants and Revenue Inspectors were cautioned to act responsibly. He also asked forest officials not to trouble farmers who have been cultivating land near forest areas for years and have applied for

cultivation certificates. He assured support for genuine beneficiaries.

Referring to an incident in Kodipalya village, he suggested action against a surveyor who allegedly inspected a farmer's land without notice. He urged officials to respond quickly when farmers approach them with land issues and avoid creating fear.

Officials present included Tahsildar Sharath Kumar, EO Jayapalu, Inspector Srinivas and other department heads.

CHITRADURGA

The long-awaited direct railway line between Davanagere and Chitradurga is officially set to be completed by June 2027, fulfilling a decades-old dream for the region. Union Minister of State for Railways, V. Somanna, announced this deadline on Thursday after inspecting the ongoing construction work near Hampanuru village. During his visit, the Minister expressed significant dissatisfaction with the current pace of work, noting that only nine percent of the physical project in the district has been finished so far.

This ambitious project is a game-changer for local commuters, as it will reduce the travel distance between Davanagere and Bengaluru by nearly 80 kilometers. Minister Somanna strictly warned contractors and engineers to accelerate their efforts immediately, stating he would conduct monthly video conferences to monitor progress personally.

He emphasized that once operational, this vital route will significantly boost the economic and industrial growth of Central Karnataka's districts, creating new opportunities for trade and local employment.

The Minister also made a firm appeal to local farmers regarding land acquisition. While farmers were previously allowed to harvest crops on acquired land as a courtesy, Somanna clarified that this practice must end to avoid further construction delays. He directed district authorities to seek police protection if work is obstructed. Additionally, plans are finalized to build a major railway station near Lakshmisagara, incorporating suggestions from the Sirigere Seer to provide essential infrastructure for devotees. With 192 bridges planned along the route, the government remains determined to meet the 2027 deadline and finally open this essential transport link for the public.

resolve long-standing water scarcity issues that have plagued farmers in the tail-end regions of the canal system for several years.

During the inauguration ceremony held at Mallayana-doddi village, the MLA emphasized that providing a reliable water supply to every farmer is the government's top priority. He noted that once this construction is completed, water will reach the furthest fields within a single day, ensuring that no crop suf-

fers due to a lack of irrigation. This project stands as a testament to the administration's commitment to rural welfare and sustainable farming practices in the district.

Looking ahead, the MLA promised a renewed focus on lake rejuvenation and permanent irrigation solutions to transform the region's agricultural landscape. The event saw participation from prominent local leaders, including former Taluk Panchayat President Tyagaraju and various community members who welcomed the move. In a separate administrative development, the Mandya Urban Development Authority (MUDA) held a general meeting chaired by B.P. Prakash. Officials discussed urban planning and regional growth, highlighting a busy day of governance aimed at both rural and city development across Mandya.

Seven Nelamangala Councillors disqualified by collector

DEVANAHALLI

District Collector A. B. Basavaraju has disqualified seven members of the Nelamangala Municipal Council with immediate effect under the Karnataka Local Bodies (Prohibition of Defection) Act, 1987. The action was taken after the councillors allegedly violated the party whip during the election for the posts of president and vice-president held on February 13, 2025. According to the order, the members, who were elected under the Janata Dal Secular symbol, voted for candidates of another party instead of supporting their own party nominees. The disqualified councillors are Anandji, Padmanabha Prasanna, Dakshayani Ravikumar, Narasimhamurthy, Bharathibai, Sharada Umesh and Lata Hemanthakumar. The District Collector stated that the decision was made after examining the complaint and related documents. A complaint had been filed by district JDS president B.

Diploma student ends life in Turuvekere

TUMAKURU

Tragedy struck Turuvekere town when 19-year-old second-year Diploma student Dhanush from Goppenahalli village near Kondaji jumped into a water body behind the local Diploma College embankment, ending his life after posting a heartbreaking social media status: "You are happy, I am leaving the world." On Wednesday, February 25, Dhanush left home in the morning, telling his parents he was heading to college. He failed to return by evening and didn't answer their frantic calls. Alarmed family members launched a desperate search across town. Their hunt led them to the college rear embankment, where they discovered Dhanush's bag, slippers, and mobile phone abandoned near the water's edge. A chilling pre-suicide status on his

Direct Railway Line To Be Ready By 2027



regarding land acquisition. While farmers were previously allowed to harvest crops on acquired land as a courtesy, Somanna clarified that this practice must end to avoid further construction delays. He directed district authorities to seek police protection if work is obstructed. Additionally, plans are finalized to build a major railway station near Lakshmisagara, incorporating suggestions from the Sirigere Seer to provide essential infrastructure for devotees. With 192 bridges planned along the route, the government remains determined to meet the 2027 deadline and finally open this essential transport link for the public.

New Irrigation Project To Benefit Mandya Farmers

MANDYA

In a significant move to bolster the local agricultural sector, MLA P. Ravikumar Gowda officially launched the Vishweshwaraiya Branch Canal distribution work earlier today. The project, valued at five crore rupees, is designed to streamline water flow from Mallayanadoddi through B. Gowdagere, reaching all the way to Kannali. Executed by the Cauvery Neeravari Nigama, this initiative aims to



resolve long-standing water scarcity issues that have plagued farmers in the tail-end regions of the canal system for several years.

During the inauguration ceremony held at Mallayana-doddi village, the MLA emphasized that providing a reliable water supply to every farmer is the government's top priority. He noted that once this construction is completed, water will reach the furthest fields within a single day, ensuring that no crop suf-



Munegowda under Sections 3 and 4 of the Defection Act. He alleged that the councillors committed electoral misconduct by cross-voting in favour of Congress candidates, going against the official party direction.

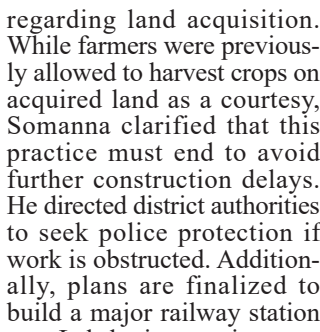
Based on the findings, the Collector exercised powers under Section 4(2)(iii) of the Act and ordered their removal from membership of the municipal council.

Such actions under the anti-defection law aim to maintain party discipline in local bodies. Similar cases have been reported in other districts where members were removed for violating party whips during internal elections. The order has brought major political attention to Nelamangala, and further developments are expected in the coming days.

Diploma student ends life in Turuvekere

Tragedy struck Turuvekere town when 19-year-old second-year Diploma student Dhanush from Goppenahalli village near Kondaji jumped into a water body behind the local Diploma College embankment, ending his life after posting a heartbreaking social media status: "You are happy, I am leaving the world." On Wednesday, February 25, Dhanush left home in the morning, telling his parents he was heading to college. He failed to return by evening and didn't answer their frantic calls. Alarmed family members launched a desperate search across town. Their hunt led them to the college rear embankment, where they discovered Dhanush's bag, slippers, and mobile phone abandoned near the water's edge. A chilling pre-suicide status on his

Direct Railway Line To Be Ready By 2027



regarding land acquisition. While farmers were previously allowed to harvest crops on acquired land as a courtesy, Somanna clarified that this practice must end to avoid further construction delays. He directed district authorities to seek police protection if work is obstructed. Additionally, plans are finalized to build a major railway station near Lakshmisagara, incorporating suggestions from the Sirigere Seer to provide essential infrastructure for devotees. With 192 bridges planned along the route, the government remains determined to meet the 2027 deadline and finally open this essential transport link for the public.

New Irrigation Project To Benefit Mandya Farmers

MANDYA

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## QUICK READ

## Unidentified vehicle kills young man Basavakalyan

A tragic accident occurred near Tadola village on National Highway-65, when an unidentified vehicle struck a young man, killing him. The deceased has been identified as Narsingh Metre, who had left home two days earlier. Authorities, including Basavakalyan CPI Alisab and a local police team, visited the site and conducted a thorough inspection. The incident has raised concerns over road safety and hit-and-run cases in the region. Police investigations are ongoing to identify the vehicle and ensure justice for the victim's family.

## KSOU opens admissions for 2025-26 academic year

**Chikkaballapur**  
Karnataka State Open University (KSOU) has started admissions for the 2025-26 academic year at its Chikkaballapur Regional Centre. Undergraduate courses include B.A., B.Com., B.B.A., B.C.A., B.L.I.S.C., B.Sc., and B.S.W., while postgraduate options include M.A., M.Com., M.B.A., M.C.A., M.L.I.S.E., M.S.W., and PG Diploma Certificate programs. Admissions can be completed online by paying the required fees. Eligibility follows UGC regulations, recognizing education from physical, regular, and open universities equally. Interested students can contact the Regional Centre at the Government First Grade College Campus, M.G. Road, Chikkaballapur, via phone numbers 9964690481, 8618821417, 9448860885, or 6361508799 for more details.

## Bagalkote protest demands action after stone pelting

## BAGALKOTE

Members of the Hindu Hitaraksha Samiti held a protest on Thursday morning in front of the district administration building at Navnagar. The demonstration condemned a stone-pelting incident that occurred during a recent Shivaji Jayanti procession.

The protest was attended by MPs P.C. Gaddigowda and Narayana Sa Bhande, MLA Arvinda Bellada, Vidhan Parishad member P.H. Pujara, and leaders from the Hindu Jagran Forum, including Vasant and Srikanta Hoskeri.

Protestors demanded strict action against the office bearers of the mosque management committee, alleging that stones were thrown from near the mosque during the procession. They also expressed frustration with the district administration and the state government, calling for stronger measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

The Samiti emphasized the need for security during public events and warned that peaceful festivals must not be disrupted by violence, urging authorities to ensure safety and justice for community members.



## Chikkaballapura hosts major revenue services event

## CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Revenue Department, District Administration, and Zilla Panchayat of Chikkaballapura will jointly organize a large-scale Revenue Services Guarantee Dedication Conference on February 27 at 11 am near Chokkahalli. The program aims to distribute 25,000 revenue service documents and launch the Special Revenue Village Campaign 2.0.

The event will be inaugurated by Higher Education and District In-charge Minister M. C. Sudhakar. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda will personally distribute the documents. MLA from Chikkaballapura Assembly constituency P.E. Pradeep Eshwar will preside over the programme.

Several prominent guests are expected, including MP Dr. K. Sudhakar, Chairpersons of Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation M. Malleash Babu, Karnataka State Warehousing Corporation Dr. B.C. Muddugangadhar, and Karnataka State Seed Corporation N. Sampangi. Other dignitaries include Anjinappa of

Karnataka State Cooperative Handloom Weavers' General Board, B.G. Ganesh, MLAs S.N. Subbareddy, B.N. Ravikumar, K.H. Puttaswamy Gowda, and Legislative Council members Chidananda M. Gowda, M.L. Anil Kumar, and D.T. Srinivas.

Officials from various state departments, including Additional Chief Secretary Rajender Kumar Kataria, Regional Commissioner Amlan Aditya Jasthas, Principal Secretary Munish Moudgil, and Revenue Commissioner C.N. Meena Nagaraj, will attend. Other participants include heads of the Social Security and Pensions Department, Disaster Management Authority, Survey and Land Records Department, and Atalji Janasnehi Directorate.

The programme will also see participation from all elected representatives, office bearers of government employee associations, and citizens across the district. It is expected to be a historic event, highlighting the government's commitment to delivering revenue services and ensuring citizen-friendly governance.

## Siddharamesh becomes Picard Bank Chairman

## LINGASUGURU

Siddharamesh Gowda was elected Chairman and Sivagyanappa as Vice Chairman of the Picard Bank Management Board in Lingasuguru, following the election. Their victory was backed by former minister Amaregowda Patil Biyapura, while the candidate supported by former MLA D.S. Hoolageri was defeated.

The election was a contest between the Biyapur and Hoolageri factions of the Congress party. The Biyapur faction secured a win, marking a significant development in the local cooperative banking leadership.

The Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development (Picard) Bank Board of Directors election was originally held on February 11. According to Rajendra Kumar, Returning Officer and Manager of the bank, there are 15 di-

rector positions, including nominated members. Both Siddharamesh and Sivagyanappa secured 8 votes each to win the posts of Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively.

Former Minister Amaregowda Patil Biyapura congratulated the newly elected leaders, highlighting their commitment to strengthening the cooperative banking system in the region.

The new leadership is expected to focus on improving services for local farmers and rural development, ensuring smooth operations of the bank, and addressing issues related to agricultural financing and community welfare in Lingasuguru and surrounding areas.

The election marks a notable political and administrative shift in the cooperative banking sector of Lingasuguru.

## Residents demand permanent PDO for Ambalaga village

## KALABURAGI

Residents of Ambalaga in Kamalapur taluk are urging authorities to appoint a permanent Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) as the post has been vacant for the last six months, causing a slowdown in village development.

The Ambedkar Yuva Sena submitted a formal request to the Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer, demanding the immediate posting of an officer. According to the organization, administration in the village has suffered severely due to the vacancy. Works under the NREGA scheme have



stalled, leaving laborers unemployed and unpaid for completed work.

Basic services such as drainage cleaning, drinking water supply, and street light maintenance have also been

halted. Villagers have reportedly faced repeated delays, as even minor work requires signatures that cannot be obtained without an official in the office.

The Ambedkar Yuva Sena

warned that if a permanent PDO is not appointed soon, they will launch a public struggle to address the issue.

On the occasion, leaders including Srikanta Talakeri, president, Vijayakumar Talakeri, vice president, Sharanu S., general secretary, along with Kartik Talakeri, Vidyananda Talakeri, Prajwal Talakeri, Praveena Talakeri, and Vishal Talakeri, were present and voiced their concern. The organization urged the administration to act promptly, highlighting that the lack of leadership at the panchayat level is directly affecting the welfare and daily lives of villagers.

## Preparations underway for Renukacharya Jayanti celebrations

## KALABURAGI

Officials and community leaders gathered at a preliminary meeting chaired by Assistant Collector Shiv Prabhu Hiremath to plan the grand celebration of Sri Renukacharya Jayanti on March 1. The program will begin at 1 pm at SM Pandit Theater, with participation from district leaders, officers, and cultural experts.

It was decided that the Jayanti would also be observed at 9 am in all government offices, schools, and colleges across the district. Expert lecturers will be invit-

ed, and musical performances and songs are planned to enrich the event. Officials were instructed to ensure cleanliness, hygiene, and drinking water arrangements at the venue.

All India Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha District President Sharankumar Modi will preside over the event. Basavaraja Mathapati Kamalapura has been chosen as the committee chairman, while Nagalingaiah Mathapati will serve as host. The Kannada and Culture Department will manage press invitations and program protocols.

## Second PUC exams to begin in Kalaburagi

## KALABURAGI

The second PUC annual examinations in Kalaburagi district will be conducted from February 28 to March 17, the Additional District Collector Rayappa Hunasagi announced. Exams will be held daily from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., he added.

A total of 30,514 students are expected to appear, including 24,914 regular students, 512 private candidates, 5,064 repeaters, and 24 students aiming to improve their results. The exams will take place across 51 centers in the district, with 25 in the city and 26 in taluk areas.

Strict rules have been set to maintain exam discipline. All students must wear identity cards, and CCTV footage will be recorded and stored for every day of the exam. Any interference with the footage will result in legal action. Around each examination center, a 200-meter restricted zone will be enforced, and Xerox shops, cyber centers, and computer centers in that area will remain closed during



the exam period.

Officials and staff present at the centers, except headmasters, have been instructed not to use mobile phones, smartwatches, or other electronic devices.

The announcement came during a preliminary meeting at the District Collector's office, organized in collaboration with the District Administration and Pre-Graduate Education Department. Present were D.C.P. Praveen Naik, Additional S.P. Mahesh Meghannavar, Deputy Director of Pre-Graduate Education Suresh K. Akkanna, principals of pre-degree colleges, and other district officials. Authorities urged students to follow rules and arrive prepared for smooth conduct of exams.



## Sapta Tulabhara music festival to light up Bhagyanagar

## BHAGYANAGAR

A grand musical event, Sapta Tulabhara and Swara Sangeetsava, will be held on February 28 at Pawara Garden Kalyana Mantapa in Bhagyanagar. The program is jointly organized by Sri Guru Puttaraja Gawai's Music and Fine Arts Institute and the Kannada and Culture Department to support blind and orphaned children of Veereshwara Punyashram in Gadag.

The festival will feature national and international artists performing in a variety of musical genres. Violinists include Pm Shankar Kabadi, Narayan Hire Kolachi, and Pm Rajendra Nakode on tabla, while vocalists such as Pm Somnath Maradur, Pm Kumar Maradur, Pm Sadashiva Aihole, and Pm Doddaiiah Gawaigalu will entertain audiences. Abhinava Gavisiddeshwara Mahaswamy and Pandit Kallayyajia will also perform, highlighting traditional classical music.

The event will be inaugurated by District In-charge Minister Shivaraj Thangadgi, with Bhagyanagar Town Panchayat President Ramesh Hatty as chairman. MLA K. Raghavendra Hital will inaugurate the Sapta Tulabhara program, while MP K. Rajashekar Hital will pay floral tribute to Puttaraja Gawai's portrait. Hemalatha Nayak, MLC, will also participate in inaugurating the music program.

Senior officials, including District Collectors, Superintendents of Police, Zilla Panchayat CEOs, and representatives from the Kannada and Culture Department, along with music enthusiasts, are expected to attend. Organizers appealed to the public to join in large numbers to make the festival a grand success. Rajyotsava Award winner Pandit Shankar Binnal was present at the press conference announcing the event.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, ANJU ANIL (old name), a resident of No 1452, 13TH MAIN ROAD, WEST OF CHORD ROAD, 2ND STAGE, SHANKAR MUTTA, RAJAJI NAGAR, BENGALURU - 560086 KARNATAKA, INDIA, have changed my name to ANJU ANIL JOHN (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 26-02-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, NINGOJI RAO K.Y. alias K.Y. NINGOJI RAO alias NINGOJI RAO K Y S/O K NYELLOJIRAO, R/o 200 3rd D Cross, 2nd Block, 3rd Stage, Near Ambedkar Stadium, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560079, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NINGOJI RAO YELLOJI RAO KOLEKAR.

## NAME CHANGE

I, FARHEEN, W/o Firoz, resident of No. 01, Old No. 48, Bowee Cherry, Seppings Road Cross, Nehru Puram. Bengaluru-560 001, have changed my Minor Daughter's name from ZAINAB TAZEEN to SYEDA HALIMA, and DOB is 13-02-2009 as per BBMP Birth Certificate, vide affidavit dated: 26.02.2026, before Notary V.RAJASHEKHARA, Bengaluru.



## Document Lost

This is to inform to General public that, I, NATESHA S/O NAGARAJANAYAKA, r/ at Gavadagere Village, Gavadagere Hobli, Hunsur Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka State, do hereby state as follows: I State on Oath, I have lost my Property "Sale Deed" Documents (HUN-1-02560-2011-12), on 1st day of January, 2026 01:53am in Gavadagere Village, Hunsur Taluk, there was a rush and by over sight I lost it after due diligent search I could not trace out "Sale Deed. This is fact. I have made this affidavit with the intention of publishing in the daily news paper that my property "Sale Deed" has been lost. Hence this Affidavit.

I do swear in the name of God that this is my name and Signature and the contents of this affidavit are true. 9845563620 Hunsur, Mysore Dist

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, LATHA L S alias L.S. LATHA alias LATHA N. RAO W/o NINGOJI RAOYELLOJI RAO KOLEKAR, R/o 200 3rd D Cross, 2nd Block, 3rd Stage, Near Ambedkar Stadium, Basaveshwara Nagar, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560079, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as LATHA NINGOJI RAO KOLEKAR.

## CHANGE OF NAME

It is for information that I, G N BABU S/o NARAYANA SWAMY, R/o 168/A, 1st Cross, Ningaiyanakere Road, Hebbal 1st Stage, Near Government Girls School, Metagalli, Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka-570016, declare that the name of my wife have been wrongly written as N.PANKAJA in my PPO No-20197350700035. The actual name of my wife is PANKAJA BABU, which may be amended accordingly.

## CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

## SURYODAY SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED

Regd. & Corp. office : 1101, Sharda Terraces, Plot 65, Sector - 11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614. CIN: L65923MH2008PLC261472.

## APPENDIX -IV [Rule 8(1)] Possession Notice (For Immovable Property) Under Section 13 (2) of The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

Whereas the undersigned is the Authorized officer of the M/s. Suryoday Small Finance Bank Ltd. ("SFBL") under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) to discharge in full their liability to the Company by making payment of entire outstanding including up to date interest, cost and charges within 60 days from the date of respective Notices issued and the publication of the Notice as given below and as way of alternate service upon you. As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to SSFBL by the said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) respectively.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 03-11-2025                      |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 227000003554             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                      |
| 1) Mrs SUJATHA W/O KUMARA                 | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 5,43,782/- as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mr. KUMARA S/O LATE SWAMYGOWDA         |                                 |                                 |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO.297, PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.152200300109600600, SITUATED AT BALKURU VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF LAKSHMIPUR GRAMA PANCHAYATH, K.R.NAGARA TALUK, MYSURU DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 17.3736 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 4.8768 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 84.75 SQ. METER BOUNDED ON: EAST: OWN SITE WEST: ROAD NORTH: HOUSE BELONGS TO DASHARATH SOUTH: HOUSE BELONGS TO UDAY.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 03-11-2025                      |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 227000005257             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                      |
| 1) Mr.RAVI B.V S/O VENKATESH              | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 9,21,090/- as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mrs. INDRAMMA W/O VENKATEGOWDA         |                                 |                                 |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING KATHA NO 308/214 PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.15210060200050351, SITUATED AT BINDHALI VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF CHINNAKURALI HOBLI, PANDUPURA TALUK, MANDYA DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 13.7160 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 9.144 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 125.423 SQ. METER, THEREON BUILDING MEASUREMENT 182.09 SQ. METERS BOUNDED ON: EAST: ROAD WEST: PROPERTY BELONGS TO ANANDA NORTH: HOUSE BELONGS TO RATHNAMMA SOUTH: HOUSE BELONGS TO SWAMYGOWDA.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 29-10-2025                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 259000105363             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                    |
| 1) Mr.Venugopal C.S/O Chandra G           | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 5,19,846 as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mrs. Rukmini/W/O Chandra G             |                                 |                               |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING OLD PROPERTY NO.228, KHATA PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.152200102625200140, SITUATED AT KENCHANAHALI VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF H.D.KOTE TALUK, MYSURU DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 18.288 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 8.2296 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 150.502924 SQ. METER, THEREON BUILDING MEASUREMENT 57.971490 SQ. METERS BOUNDED ON: EAST: ROAD WEST: PROPERTY BELONGS TO VILLAGE NORTH: ROADSOUTH: HOUSE OF THIMMAIAH.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 29-10-2025                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 249000124679             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                    |
| 1) Mr.SUNIL K.S/S/O SIDDALINGAIAH         | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 5,18,460 as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mrs. YASHODAMMA/W/O SIDDALINGAIAH      |                                 |                               |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING OLD PROPERTY NO.73/1, KHATA PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.151600504100220042, SITUATED AT KODIBELAGOLA VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF GOWDAGERE GRAMA PANCHAYATH, CHANNARAYAPATTANA TALUK, HASSAN DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 10.0584 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 6.4008 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 64.385 SQ. METER. BOUNDED ON: EAST: OWN CULTIVATION LAND WEST: CULTIVATION LAND OF SHANKARAIH NORTH: REMAINING PROPERTY AND ROADSOUTH: CULTIVATION LAND OF SHANKARAIH.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 03-11-2025                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 2390000065322            | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                    |
| 1) Mrs. Gayathri W/O Dinesha              | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 3,65,771 as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mr. Deenasha S/O Venkategowda          |                                 |                               |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING KATHA NO 249, 11B KHATA PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.152200402153020309, SITUATED AT YADAHALLI VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ANANDURU GRAMA PANCHAYATH,YELWALA HOBLI, MYSURU DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 4.572 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 10.0584 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 45.99 SQ. METER BOUNDED ON: EAST: ROAD WEST: HOUSE BELONGS TO SATHISH NORTH: GALLI AND HOUSE BELONGS TO RAVISOUTH: HOUSE BELONGS TO HARISH.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 29-10-2025                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 249000068982             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                    |
| 1) Mrs.Sannamma W/O Govindanayaka         | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 5,61,311 as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mr. Govindanayaka S/O Late Puttanayaka |                                 |                               |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING KATHA NO 89/89, PANCHAYATH UNIQUE NO.152200100905120032, SITUATED AT MUDIGERE VILLAGE, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF H.D.KOTE TALUK, MYSURU DISTRICT, MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 28.346400000000002 METERS, & NORTH-SOUTH: 14.630400000000001 METERS, TOTAL MEASUREMENT 414.72 SQ. METER, THEREON BUILDING MEASUREMENT 182.09 SQ. METERS BOUNDED ON: EAST: HOUSE OF KALANAYAKA WEST: ROADNORTH: ROADSOUTH: SOUTH OF ANKANAYAKA.

| Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Guarantor | Date of Demand Notice           | 03-11-2025                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 227000001705             | Date of NPA                     | 10-08-2025                    |
| 1) Mrs. Gaendra S/O Chowdappa H P         | Total Outstanding Amount in Rs. | Rs. 3,92,097 as on 15-10-2025 |
| 2) Mrs. Anitha Lakshmi W/O Gaendra        |                                 |                               |

DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSET(S) /IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES): ALL THE PEACE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BEARING SY.NO. 149/2, 150/1B3, 150/2B6, AND 151/1, SITE NO.86/1, SITUATED AT A.K.COLONY HALEKUNDADAVA, DAVANAGERE TALUK, DAVANAGERE DISTRICT,MEASURING: EAST-WEST: 14 FEET, & NORTH-SOUTH: 40 FEET BOUNDED ON: EAST: SITE NO. 86/2WEST: SITE NO. 85NORTH: SITE NO. 101SOUTH: ROAD.

If the said Borrower, Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) fails to make payment to SSFBL as aforesaid, SSFBL shall be entitled to take possession of the secured asset mentioned above and shall take such other actions as is available to the Company in law, entirely at the risks, cost and consequences of the borrowers.

The said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) are prohibited under the provision of sub section (13) of section 13 of SARFAESI Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise referred to in the notice without prior consent of SSFBL.

Place: Karnataka Date: 25-02-2026 Sd/- Authorized Officer, For Suryoday Small Finance Bank Limited



The said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) are prohibited under the provision of sub section (13) of section 13 of SARFAESI Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise referred to in the notice without prior consent of SSFBL.

**Sd/- Authorized Officer, For Surety Small Finance Bank Limited**

QUICK READ

FBI subpoenaed phone calls of Patel, Wiles during Trump probe

**Washington**  
The Federal Bureau of Investigation subpoenaed phone call records of Kash Patel and Susie Wiles when they were private citizens in 2022 and 2023, according to Patel. The action reportedly took place during the administration of President Joe Biden as part of a broader federal investigation into former President Donald Trump. Patel, who now serves as Director of the FBI, told Reuters that the records were obtained while federal authorities were probing Trump's alleged efforts to interfere with the 2020 presidential election and his handling of classified documents.

UK work visas .plunge by 19% amid immigration reforms

**London**  
The number of work visas issued by United Kingdom in the year ending December 2025 fell by 19% compared to the previous year, according to official government figures released on Thursday. The data highlights the continuing impact of stricter immigration policies introduced over recent years in an effort to curb legal migration. A total of 168,000 work visas were granted in 2025, marking a significant decline from 2024 levels and representing a 50% drop compared to 2023. The downward trend reflects successive policy changes aimed at tightening eligibility criteria, raising salary thresholds, and reducing the number of sectors able to recruit from overseas.

Hong Kong court overturns Jimmy Lai fraud conviction

**Hong Kong**  
A Hong Kong court on Thursday overturned the fraud conviction and prison sentence of pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai, in a surprise legal development that follows his recent 20-year jail term on a separate national security charge. The ruling was delivered by judges Jeremy Poon, Anthea Pang, and Derek Pang, who found that a lower court judge had "erred" in the original decision. In their ruling, the judges said they allowed the appeal brought by Lai and another defendant in the case, effectively quashing the earlier fraud conviction and sentence.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

US-UKRAINE MOOT POST-WAR REFORMS

The agenda includes talks on rebuilding Ukraine's economy & restoring critical infra damaged in the prolonged conflict.

KYIV

Ukrainian negotiators were scheduled to meet senior United States officials in Geneva on Thursday for discussions focused on post-war reconstruction and economic recovery, even as peace talks with Russia remain stalled.

The agenda includes deliberations on a proposed "prosperity package" aimed at rebuilding Ukraine's economy and restoring critical infrastructure damaged during the prolonged conflict.

A Ukrainian official confirmed that the discussions were expected to begin around lunchtime, and that the delegation would not address the media following the meeting, indicating the sensitive nature of the negotiations.

The US side is represented by Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, a senior adviser with extensive experience in diplomatic backchannel talks.

The meeting highlights Washington's intent to shift part of its engagement with Kyiv toward long-term stabilization and economic revival, alongside ongoing security and military assistance. Ukrainian officials view the prosperity package as essential for reviving in-



dustrial, supporting displaced populations, and attracting international investment once active hostilities subside.

On the same day in Geneva, Witkoff and Kushner are due to take part in a third round of indirect negotiations concerning Iran's nuclear program with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi.

These talks are being mediated by Oman, reflecting Muscat's continued role as a discreet diplomatic channel between Washington and Tehran. The parallel discussions underline the breadth of US diplomatic engagement in Geneva, where multiple geopolitical flashpoints are being addressed simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a conversation on Wednesday with US

President Donald Trump, during which both leaders agreed that the next round of trilateral talks involving Russia in March should pave the way for a leaders' summit. The proposed meeting would aim to resolve the most sensitive outstanding issues, including security guarantees, territorial disputes, and post-war arrangements.

Despite the current deadlock in peace negotiations with Russia, Ukrainian officials say engagement with international partners on reconstruction is vital to ensure readiness for recovery when conditions permit. Observers note that these Geneva discussions signal a cautious shift toward planning for Ukraine's long-term future, even as the conflict continues to shape the diplomatic landscape.

Iran signals flexibility in Geneva talks as US pressure mounts

TEHRAN

Iran pledged to show flexibility during indirect negotiations with the United States on Thursday as both sides reconvened in Geneva for a third round of talks aimed at addressing their long-running nuclear dispute.

The discussions come at a moment of heightened pressure on Tehran, with US officials warning that failure to reach a diplomatic understanding could lead to serious consequences, including the threat of military action.

The talks began on Thursday morning in Geneva, against the backdrop of a major US military buildup across the Middle East ordered by President Donald Trump.

The show of force is widely seen as an attempt to strengthen Washington's negotiating position and signal resolve to Tehran. Iranian officials, meanwhile, have sought to project openness to compromise on the nuclear file, even as they reject what



they describe as coercive diplomacy.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio sharpened Washington's stance on Wednesday, saying Iran's refusal to include its ballistic missile programme in the discussions was a "major problem" that would need to be addressed in due course.

Speaking to reporters in Saint Kitts and Nevis, Rubio argued that Iran's missile capabilities were designed to threaten the United States and destabilise the region, and that any sustainable agreement would ultimately have

to account for both nuclear and missile-related concerns.

Iranian negotiators have long maintained that their ballistic missile programme is purely defensive and non-negotiable, insisting that the current talks should remain narrowly focused on nuclear restrictions and sanctions relief.

Tehran also argues that linking missiles to the nuclear file risks derailing already fragile diplomacy. However, Western officials counter that the two issues are deeply intertwined, given the potential delivery systems involved and the broader regional security implications.

Observers say the Geneva talks represent one of the most consequential diplomatic openings in months. While expectations of a swift breakthrough remain low, even incremental progress could help de-escalate tensions and reduce the risk of confrontation. Failure, on the other hand, could harden positions on both sides.

Beijing tests deception tactics with mystery drone flights

BEIJING

A large Chinese long-endurance military drone has carried out regular flights over the South China Sea in recent months while transmitting false transponder signals that made it appear to be other aircraft, including a sanctioned Belarusian cargo plane and a British fighter jet.

Military attaches and security analysts monitoring the activity say the flights mark a significant escalation in China's so-called "grey-zone" tactics—coercive actions that fall short of open warfare but aim to test rivals' responses and surveillance capabilities.

As per open-source flight data reviewed by Reuters, at least 23 such flights have been

logged since August under the call sign YILO4200, which analysts identify as a known long-endurance Chinese military drone. However, the aircraft transmitted registration details linked to unrelated planes, including a Belarusian cargo aircraft and a British Typhoon fighter, masking its true identity while operating in contested airspace.

ESCALATING HOSTILITIES

UNICEF alarmed over Myanmar air strikes on civilians

UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, has expressed grave concern over reports of deadly air strikes carried out by Myanmar's military this week, as fighting continues to intensify across the country.

According to local media outlets and a rebel group, the attacks resulted in significant civilian casualties, including children. Reports from Myanmar-based news organisations, Myanmar Now and The Irrawaddy, stated that paramotors dropped bombs on a village in the central Sagaing region on

Monday. A day later, a fighter jet allegedly launched an air strike in Rakhine state, located about 320 kilometres west of Sagaing. Combined, the incidents reportedly claimed at least two dozen lives.

The Arakan Army, an armed group engaged in conflict with Myanmar's ruling junta in Rakhine state, claimed that 17 civilians were killed when a jet bombed a crowded village market.

Among the deceased were children, the group said, while at least 14 others sustained injuries in the attack. The reported strike on a busy marketplace

has intensified fears about the safety of non-combatants trapped in conflict zones.

Reuters stated it was unable to independently verify the claims regarding the air strikes and casualty figures. Efforts to obtain an official response from Myanmar's military government were unsuccessful, as a spokesperson did not respond to calls seeking comment.

In a strongly worded statement, UNICEF said it was "deeply alarmed" by the reported incidents and urged all parties involved in Myanmar's ongoing civil war to adhere to international humanitarian law.

'INF-banned missile firing raises alarm'

KYIV



Images of missile debris recovered from recent Russian strikes on Ukrainian territory have sparked renewed international concern over Moscow's alleged use of a cruise missile once prohibited under the now-defunct Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Two independent weapons specialists who examined high-resolution images of the fragments said the characteristics strongly indicate the use of a nuclear-capable cruise missile whose development was a central factor behind former U.S. President Donald Trump pulling the United States out of the INF Treaty during his first term.

According to experts, the fragments provided by Ukrainian law enforcement sources show design features and materials consistent with advanced long-range cruise missile technology. The images, shared with Reuters, represent the first publicly available visual evidence corroborating earlier reporting that Russia has fielded and used this particular class of missile in active combat. Analysts noted that the missile's size, engine

Debris from Ukraine suggests Russia deployed a controversial missile once banned by treaty.

opening the door to the renewed deployment of intermediate-range weapons in Europe. If confirmed, the operational use of such a missile in Ukraine could signal a dangerous escalation, not only because of the weapon's range and precision, but also due to its nuclear-capable design. While there is no indication that a nuclear warhead was used, experts warn that employing systems designed for nuclear delivery blurs critical deterrence lines and heightens strategic risks.

Ukrainian officials have called for deeper international scrutiny and stronger sanctions, arguing that the use of previously banned weapons underscores the urgency of reinforcing global arms control frameworks. Western governments are expected to review the evidence as part of broader assessments of Russia's evolving missile capabilities, amid growing concerns that the erosion of treaties like INF is accelerating a new arms race in Europe.

UK's Starmer faces latest test in tight-run local vote

LONDON

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces a significant political test on Thursday as voters in Manchester head to the polls to elect a new lawmaker in the closely watched Gorton and Denton by-election.

Opinion polls suggest the race is too close to call, with the governing Labour Party locked in a tight contest with Reform UK and the left-leaning Green Party of England and Wales.

The vote in Gorton and Denton, part of the Greater Manchester region in northwestern England, comes at a delicate moment for Starmer's leadership.

His judgment has recently been questioned following a series of policy U-turns that critics say have muddled Labour's messaging. The controversy surrounding the appointment of Labour veteran Peter Mandelson as ambassador to Washington has further fuelled debate within and beyond the party about strategic direction and political optics.

In a surprise appearance earlier this week, Starmer campaigned in the constituency to sharpen Labour's pitch, urging voters to see the contest



as a straight choice between Labour and Reform. Reform UK, led by Brexit figurehead Nigel Farage, has sought to capitalise on voter frustration over the cost of living, migration, and dissatisfaction with mainstream politics. Labour strategists fear that Reform's populist messaging could siphon off protest votes that might otherwise default to the governing party in a traditional Labour-leaning area.

At the same time, Labour has warned that a strong showing by the Greens could inadvertently help Reform. Party officials have argued that votes drawn away by the Greens' left-leaning platform—focused on living costs and support for Gaza—risk splitting the progressive vote and allowing Reform to gain ground.

The Greens reject this framing, insisting they offer a principled alternative for voters disillusioned with both Labour's compromises and Reform's rhetoric.



# MESSI Admits English Regret, Urges Children to Value Education

MIAMI

Lionel Messi has revealed a personal regret away from the football pitch, admitting that not learning English during his childhood makes him feel “half-ignorant” in certain situations.

The Argentine superstar said he often reflects on missed educational opportunities from his youth. “I regret many things. Not having learned English as a boy. I had the time to have at

least studied English, and I did not do it. I deeply regret it,” Messi said.

The eight-time Ballon d’Or winner explained that language barriers sometimes left him uncomfortable in conversations with global personalities. “I experienced situations where I was with incredible and spectacular personalities to be able to talk and have a chat, and you feel half ignorant. I always thought: ‘What an idiot, how I wasted my time,’” he added candidly.

Now playing for Inter Miami CF and preparing for the 2026

FIFA World Cup, Messi said his experiences have shaped the advice he gives his children. He encourages them to fully embrace the educational opportunities available to them — chances he feels he did not fully utilise.

Reflecting on his school days, Messi described his final year in Argentina as “a disaster,” as he already knew he would be moving to FC Barcelona’s famed academy, La Masia.

Though football brought him extraordinary success — including leading Argentina to World Cup glory in 2022 — he acknowledged that the journey also carried lessons beyond trophies.

Argentine legend reflects on missed lessons beyond football field

# World Cup 2026 Security Fears Cloud Mexico’s Hosting Role

BENGALURU

With just over 100 days remaining for the FIFA World Cup 2026, concerns over security in Mexico have cast a shadow over the tournament’s build-up. Mexico, one of the three co-hosts alongside the United States and Canada, is slated to stage 13 matches. Guadalajara — the epicentre of recent violence — will host four fixtures, including a marquee first-round clash between Uruguay and Spain.

The unrest erupted following the killing of drug lord Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes near Guadalajara, triggering retaliatory attacks and clashes that reportedly left over 70 people dead. The violence has sparked anxiety among fans and participating nations about safety arrangements



Security fears intensify as Mexico prepares to host World Cup.

ahead of the global showpiece scheduled from June 11 to July 19.

Gianni Infantino sought to calm fears, stating he was “very reassured” about Mexico’s preparedness. However, his optimism has not been universally shared. The Portuguese Football Federation confirmed it is “closely mon-

itoring” the situation before deciding on a proposed friendly in Mexico.

Infantino’s remarks have drawn criticism for appearing dismissive of the gravity of the unrest. Comparisons have resurfaced with the scrutiny faced by 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, which endured years of intense criticism before ultimately delivering a successful tournament.

While Mexico City and Monterrey remain unaffected by the recent clashes, the violence in Guadalajara underscores the broader security challenge. With billions in economic impact at stake and millions of fans expected to travel, FIFA faces mounting pressure to move beyond reassurances and demonstrate concrete measures to ensure player and spectator safety.

# Vaishnavi Adkar’s Quiet Confidence Powers W100 Breakthrough

BENGALURU

Vaishnavi Adkar showcased remarkable resilience at the KPB Trust ITF Women’s Open W100 in Bengaluru, propelling her ranking from 690 to 466 in the latest WTA list. The 21-year-old Pune native reached her maiden W100 final, defeating three higher-ranked opponents, including two in the top-150, over a grueling five-day campaign.

Adkar’s coach, Balachandran Manikkath of the Rohan Bopanna Tennis Academy, credited her breakthrough to belief, temperament, and willingness to embrace new ideas. “For Vaishnavi, the belief that she can beat these players will be a game-changer going forward,” he said. He highlighted that the ranking jump opens doors to higher-level tournaments, offering exposure to the physical and mental rigors of competing against top-200 players.

After an injury-hit 2025 and a slow start to the 2026 season, Adkar shifted to RBTA two months ago, showing early signs of improvement, particularly in her serve. Yet it is her quiet confidence and introspective approach that set her apart. “She is smart, intelligent and has this quiet confidence. As a player, she is very open to new ideas and willing to try them out,” Manikkath added.

Despite losing the final 0-6, 1-6 to Belgium’s Hanne Vandewinkel, Adkar displayed maturity in handling both the attention and disappointment. “It was tough to process all of it. But this is just the beginning of an unexplored path. The attention will always be there. I just have to learn to deal with it,” she reflected.



Global investors intensify race for stakes in IPL teams

# Blitzer Enters Bidding War for RCB, Other IPL Franchises

LONDON, MUMBAI

Billionaire investor David Blitzer has entered the high-stakes race to acquire a majority stake in an Indian Premier League franchise, holding talks with Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Rajasthan Royals, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Blitzer, co-founder of Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment and a senior executive at Blackstone Inc., is conducting due diligence on both teams.

Discussions reportedly value RCB, the reigning IPL champions, at around \$1.8 billion. Neither franchise nor Blitzer immediately commented.

His potential entry has intensified competition, with Avram Glazer — co-chairman of Manchester United F.C. and owner of the NFL’s Tampa Bay Buccaneers — also submitting initial bids.



Global investment firms including KKR & Co. and Blackstone are evaluating stakes, reflecting surging investor appetite for cricket’s richest league.

The IPL’s soaring valuation — estimated at \$18.5 billion last year — and rapidly growing revenues have drawn both international and domestic heavyweights. UK-based Diageo is reviewing its full ownership of RCB, while Rajasthan Royals are majority owned by London-based investor

Manoj Badale.

Indian tycoons are also in contention. Adar Poonawalla has publicly expressed interest in a strong bid for RCB, and businessman Ranjan Pai is reportedly exploring a stake.

With final bids due by mid-March and the new IPL season beginning March 26, any transaction will require approval from the Board of Control for Cricket in India, setting the stage for one of the most competitive franchise sales in global sport.

# LUIS ENRIQUE: PSG BATTLE-HARDENED FOR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE KNOCKOUTS

PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain F.C. coach Luis Enrique believes his squad has been rigorously tested to thrive in the later stages of the UEFA Champions League after advancing past AS Monaco FC.

PSG were held 2-2 at the Parc des Princes in the second leg of their knockout playoff but progressed 5-4 on aggregate.

Enrique admitted dissatisfaction with his side’s first-half performance, which saw them concede a goal, but praised their resilience in the second half.

“Did I like what I saw? No, no, I didn’t like it, but that’s football,” he said.



“We had an incredible schedule during the group stage, then continued with these playoffs against Monaco.”

That’s the competition of the Champions League — you have to accept it.”

PSG’s path to the last 16 has tested them against top-quality opposition, in-

cluding Atalanta BC, Barcelona FC, Bayer Leverkusen, Bayern Munich, Newcastle United FC, Sporting CP, and Tottenham Hotspur FC — all of whom have also reached the knockout stage.

“If there’s one team that has played against good teams and had the toughest group, it’s clearly us,” Enrique said. “We’re used to playing these kinds of matches against any team.”

Of course, we can improve, but tonight we faced a very high-level opponent.”

PSG now await the draw for the last 16, which will determine whether they face Barcelona FC or Chelsea FC.

Enrique remains confident: “But if there’s one team ready, it’s ours.”

# Dogra Downplays On-Field Altercation in Ranji Final

HUBBALLI

The Ranji Trophy final between Karnataka cricket team and Jammu and Kashmir cricket team witnessed dramatic scenes at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium after a heated altercation briefly halted play.

J&K skipper Paras Dogra was involved in a verbal exchange with Karnataka’s KV Aneesh that escalated when Dogra appeared to intentionally headbutt the substitute fielder stationed at silly point. The incident, which unfolded in the 101st over of Karnataka’s innings, delayed proceedings on a day already shortened by bad light, with only 69 overs bowled.

Despite the unsavoury episode, Dogra sought to downplay the confrontation, terming it a spur-of-the-moment reaction. “These things keep

going on. When you are playing a final, these things happen. It happened in the heat of the moment. It is all okay now,” he said at the close of play, insisting there were no lingering issues between the sides.

Former Karnataka captain Mayank Agarwal stepped in to support Aneesh, while current skipper Devdutt Padikkal was seen in discussion with on-field umpires Rohan Pandit and Ulhas Gandhe as tensions simmered.

Given the physical contact involved, Dogra could face scrutiny from match referee Narayan Kutty, who will assess the seriousness of the breach under the Code of Conduct. An official decision is expected after the conclusion of the final.

In a separate minor flare-up, J&K wicketkeeper Kanhaiya Wadhawan and Karnataka pacer Vyshak Vijaykumar were seen shoulder-barging during a verbal duel, underlining the high stakes and intensity of the summit clash.



# Gukesh Holds Niemann to Draw in Prague International Chess

PRAGUE

D. Gukesh survived a tense middle game to secure a hard-fought draw against Hans Moke Niemann in the first round of the masters section at the Prague International Chess Festival 2026. The Berlin Defense, which saw Niemann sacrifice a piece early on move 13, tested Gukesh’s composure despite having the white pieces. The draw was the only non-victory in a 10-player, nine-round tournament that saw all other games with white pieces ending in wins. Gukesh managed to hold Niemann’s advancing pawns and maintained equilibrium, showcasing the resilience expected from a world champion. Other notable results included defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram falling to Nodirbek Ab-

dusattorov after a Philidor Defense ended unfavorably in a rook-and-minor-piece endgame. Meanwhile, top-seeded Vincent Keymer was defeated by a resurgent Jorden van Foreest, who introduced a novel idea in the Berlin Defense, securing multiple pawns and a comprehensive victory. Other winners included Nodirbek Yakubboevorov, and local favorite David Navara’s section, women’s World Cup champion Divya Deshmukh drew from a strong position against top-seeded Benjamin Gledura Surya Shekhar Ganguly lost to Thomas Beerdse of the Netherlands. Gukesh’s steady handling of Niemann sets the tone for a competitive festival, with multiple upsets underlining the depth and unpredictability of elite chess in Prague this year.



# RAVINDRA HAILS SANTNER’S LEADERSHIP AFTER SEMIFINAL SURGE

COLOMBO

Rachin Ravindra heaped rich praise on skipper Mitchell Santner after New Zealand stormed into the semifinals of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 with a commanding 61-run victory over Sri Lanka national cricket team.

While Ravindra contributed 32 runs and claimed an impressive 4 for 19 to earn the Player of the Match award, he reserved special admiration for his captain’s all-round brilliance. Santner’s counterattacking 47 off just 26 balls lifted New Zealand from a precarious 84 for 6 to a competitive 168 for 7.

He then delivered a miserly spell of 1 for 19 in four overs as Sri Lanka were restricted to 107 for 8.

“Obviously we all know how chill he is, but also how his mind works — what ball to bowl from which end

— is fantastic,” Ravindra said at the post-match press conference. “More than anything, he leads through his performances and work ethic.” Ravindra described Santner as a leader who instills belief and confidence in his teammates. “He backs you and pumps your tyres a lot. It makes you feel ten feet tall and bulletproof every time you step onto the field. He’s just a great presence around the group,” he added.

Beyond motivation, Santner’s experience on subcontinental pitches has proved invaluable, particularly for the spin unit. Ravindra highlighted how having “one of the best white-ball spinners in the world” guiding the bowlers adds an extra layer of assurance. With momentum on their side and a captain leading from the front, New Zealand now head into the semifinals brimming with confidence and belief.





QUICK READ



Markets end on mixed note; healthcare, PSU banks outperform

MUMBAI

The Indian stock market ended a volatile trading session on a mixed note on Thursday, with healthcare and PSU bank stocks leading the gains while media and FMCG shares lagged behind. The benchmark Nifty closed marginally higher by 0.06 per cent, or 14.05 points, at 25,496.55. In contrast, the Sensex slipped 27.46 points, or 0.03 per cent, to settle at 82,248.61. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that a decisive close above 25,700 accompanied by strong volumes would be required to alter momentum meaningfully. Until then, selective dip-buying may continue as long as 25,400 holds as a structural base, an expert added.



India sees 6.8%-7.2% GDP growth for 2026-27

NEW DELHI

India's economy is projected to expand between 6.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent in FY27 as bilateral trade agreements with major economies are expected, along with the government's economic reforms, to counter the global uncertainties created by the US tariff turmoil, according to the latest EY Economy Watch report. In the background of India's extensive bilateral trade agreements with other major economies or economic groups, India's medium-term prospects have brightened up, EY India chief policy advisor D.K. Srivastava said. The analysis noted that achieving the government's long-term Viksit Bharat 2047 vision would require a sustained rise in the tax-to-GDP ratio.

India's GCC hiring grows 4-6% in Q3 despite AI skill gaps

HYDERABAD

Hiring across India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) grew 4-6 per cent quarter-on-quarter in Q3 FY2026, even as companies face acute skill shortages in high-demand areas such as AI and platform engineering, a new report said on Thursday. In its 'Quess GCC Talent Trends Q3 FY2026' report, Quess Corp highlighted that India currently has around 1,850-1,900 active GCCs with an expected workforce of nearly 2.5 million professionals. The report noted that while hiring remains steady, GCCs are now shifting their focus from large-scale recruitment to building deeper and more specialised capabilities. According to the findings, skill shortages have widened significantly in critical technology areas.

# UIDAI partners Google to list Aadhaar centres on maps

Citizens can soon locate authorised Aadhaar centres easily through Google Maps integration nationwide

NEW DELHI

In a significant step aimed at improving public access to essential identity services, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has partnered with US technology major Google to enable the display of authorised Aadhaar centres on Google Maps. The government announced the collaboration on Thursday, highlighting that the feature will be rolled out in the coming months.

The integration will allow citizens to easily identify verified Aadhaar centres while searching on Google Maps. Users will be able to distinguish centres based on the specific services they provide, including adult enrolment, child enrolment, or limited services such as address and mobile number updates. This classification is expected to reduce confusion and help residents choose the appropriate



ate centre based on their requirements.

According to an official statement issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, additional details about centre accessibility will also be made available wherever applicable. These include information about divyang-friendly infrastructure, availability of parking facilities, and operating hours. By providing such

comprehensive information, the initiative seeks to enhance transparency and improve the overall experience for Aadhaar number holders.

The collaboration is designed not only to enhance public convenience but also to combat misinformation related to unauthorised or fake Aadhaar service centres. With over 60,000 Aadhaar centres operating across the country, including state-of-the-art Aad-

haar Seva Kendras (ASKs), the integration will ensure that users are directed exclusively to verified and authorised facilities when conducting searches online.

Officials believe this move will significantly simplify the process of locating Aadhaar services, especially in urban areas where multiple centres operate in close proximity. It is also expected to benefit residents in semi-urban and rural regions by providing accurate directions and verified information.

Bhuvnesh Kumar, Chief Executive Officer of UIDAI, said the authority remains committed to enhancing the ease of living for Aadhaar holders. He stated that the collaboration with Google will make navigating authorised Aadhaar centres simpler, faster, and more transparent, thereby strengthening service delivery and citizen trust in the Aadhaar ecosystem.

## Centre accelerates industrial corridor development across states

NEW DELHI

The Centre's strategy to fast-track industrial development has gained significant momentum, with four National Industrial Corridors already completed and another four nearing completion. The progress follows the announcement of a ₹28,602 crore package in 2024-25 for the development of 12 such corridors, according to an official factsheet released on Thursday.

Further impetus has been provided in the Union Budget 2026-27, which earmarked ₹3,000 crore for the development of an integrated East Coast Industrial Corridor.

The project will feature a strategically located and well-connected node at Durgapur in West Bengal, aimed at strengthening industrial growth in the eastern region.

These industrial smart cities are envisioned as globally benchmarked manufacturing and investment hubs. Designed with plug-and-play infrastructure and a walk-to-work ecosystem, the projects

aim to create future-ready facilities that are developed ahead of demand. The approach is intended to ensure seamless operations for industries, attract investments, and generate employment opportunities across sectors.

Among the major projects underway is the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), a flagship initiative designed to boost manufacturing and logistics efficiency. Key nodes under this corridor include the Dholera Special Investment Region in Gujarat, Shendra Bidkin Industrial Area in Maharashtra, and the Integrated Industrial Township Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.

Southern India is also witnessing major developments, including the Krishnapatnam Industrial Area, Tumakuru Industrial Area, and Ponneri Industrial Area. In eastern India, the Raghunathpur Industrial Park is emerging as a key hub. Other states selected for corridor-based industrial development include Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh.



# YOGI ENJOYS 501 KMPH JAPAN MAGLEV RIDE

TOKYO

Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, shared with citizens his exhilarating experience of travelling at 501 kilometres per hour aboard Japan's advanced SC-MAGLEV train during his official visit to the country. An official statement on Thursday said the Chief Minister posted visuals of the onboard speed display panel as the train crossed the 501 kmph mark.

In a message shared on his official social media account, the Chief Minister wrote that he experienced Japan's next-generation high-speed SC-MAGLEV train in Yamanashi, describing it as a system that reaches speeds of up to 500 kmph and represents the future of clean, efficient, and precision mobility.

He highlighted the smoothness and remarkable stability of the ride, even at such extraordinary speeds.

The ride was smooth and remarkably stable even at ex-



The UP CM experiences ride on world's fastest train in Japan, calls journey 'smooth and stable at 501 kmph'

traordinary speed, reflecting Japan's commitment to innovation and long-term infrastructure excellence.

When technology moves at this speed, the future feels closer than ever, Adityanath stated, praising Japan's technological advancement and infrastructure capabilities.

The Chief Minister also shared photographs of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest peak and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Describing the iconic mountain as a timeless symbol of perseverance, discipline, and spiritual balance,

he said witnessing Mount Fuji on a bright and sunny day was a fortunate moment.

He thanked Japan for the warm hospitality extended during his visit.

During his stay in Yamanashi Prefecture, Adityanath interacted with local students who welcomed him warmly. In a post on his X handle, he expressed delight at witnessing their discipline, enthusiasm, and curiosity.

He remarked that their affection reflected the deep cultural connection between India and Japan and conveyed his heartfelt blessings for their future filled with knowledge, character, and success.

## India's engineering goods exports cross \$100 billion mark

NEW DELHI

Engineering goods exports from India grew by 4.52 per cent year-on-year to \$101.13 billion during the April-January period of 2025-26, crossing the \$100 billion mark for the first time in the current fiscal, EEPC India said on Thursday.

Driven primarily by copper, iron and steel, and motor vehicles, engineering goods exports recorded a 10.4 per cent (on-year) rise in January to \$10.40 billion even as shipments to the US recorded a decline during this period.

Engineering goods exports to the US, India's top market, however fell 6.8 per cent year-on-year to \$1.51 billion in January, as against \$1.62 billion in January 2025.

Favourable base was one of the major reasons behind the double-digit growth in January this year. Notably, Indian engineering exports also bounced back in most of the regions. This is very positive news, especially at a time when global trade is

going through realignments pushed by changing geopolitics, said Pankaj Chadha, Chairman EEPC India.

Indian engineering exports would continue to grow in the coming months and surpass \$120 billion in FY26, he added.

The recent schemes announced by the government, especially the Market Access Scheme, are estimated to be a big enabler of Indian exports. This is crucial at a time when more Indian exporters are eager to participate in global exhibitions and exhibit their products to global markets, Chadha noted.

Meanwhile, EEPC India also urged the government to reconsider its decision to reduce RoDTEP benefits by half, considering the ongoing challenges and uncertainties prevailing on the external front.

Among the top 25 key markets for Indian engineering goods, shipments to as many as 19 countries recorded positive growth, while in the case of six countries, the growth was negative.



## Big shake-up in mutual funds! SEBI scraps solution funds

MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday discontinued the solution-oriented mutual fund category, which includes children's and retirement funds, and announced a major overhaul of mutual fund categorisation rules to bring more clarity and transparency for investors. The markets regulator said that the solution-oriented category stands discontinued from the date of the circular.

Existing schemes under this segment will immediately stop accepting fresh subscriptions. These schemes will now be merged with other schemes that have similar asset allocation and risk profiles, subject to prior approval from SEBI. As of January 31, 2026, there were 15 schemes in the children's fund category and 29 schemes in the retirement fund category.

SEBI had first proposed changes in July 2025 as part of a broader review of mutual fund categorisation. The aim was to improve clarity, introduce new schemes and address the issue of portfolio overlap across different schemes. At that time, the regulator had said mutual funds should be allowed to offer different types of schemes in the solution-oriented category with varying mixes of equity and debt, provided the asset allocation was suitable for the scheme's stated objective.

# Private philanthropy to rise 9-11 pc through FY30

NEW DELHI

Private philanthropy in India is estimated to have reached Rs 1.43 lakh crore in FY25 and could grow at a 9-11 per cent compound annual growth rate through FY30, driven largely by family giving, a report said on Thursday. The report from Bain & Company and Dasra said that the momentum is led by family giving among ultra high net worth, high net worth, and

affluent families, driven by rising wealth, increasing formalisation, and episodic mega donations.

India's social sector funding has doubled to about Rs 27 lakh crore in FY25 and is projected to reach Rs 50 lakh crore by FY30, the report said. A structural funding shortfall of roughly Rs 16 lakh crore in FY25 is projected to widen to about Rs 18 lakh crore by FY30 underscoring the persistent mis-

match between India's development ambitions and the capital available, the report further said.

Public spending still accounts for around 95 per cent of total funding, especially in healthcare as policy momentum builds toward the 2.5 per cent of GDP target.

To bridge the gap, private philanthropy must grow at over 25 per cent annually, assuming public spending trajectories remain unchanged,

with scaled contributions from family philanthropy, retail giving, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), the firms said.

The real question is not whether capital is available, rather if it's structured to solve at scale. India's social sector has seen impressive funding growth as the report highlights, but the widening gap signals a deeper design challenge, said Bhavini Malhotra, Partner, Bain & Com-

pany. The report highlighted that philanthropy by Indian families account for about 42 per cent of private giving. CSR funding is expected to grow at 8-10 per cent supported by GDP expansion, rising compliance, and a widening corporate base crossing statutory contribution threshold. However, CSR funding remains concentrated in wealthier states, underscoring the need to redirect capital to underfunded regions.

GROWTH MOMENTUM

# India's lending AUM hits Rs 130 lakh Crore



MUMBAI

India's lending industry has demonstrated robust growth momentum, with total assets under management (AUM) reaching Rs 130 lakh crore as of December 2025, marking a strong 17% year-on-year increase.

The findings were revealed in a report released on Thursday by Experian, which highlighted sustained credit demand from both consumers and businesses.

According to the report, credit sourcing of new loans in the third quarter of FY26 surged 36 per cent year-on-year, a sharp acceleration compared to 7 per cent

growth recorded during the same period last year. The expansion reflects improving economic sentiment and growing appetite for borrowing across segments.

The report underlined that lending activity has been propelled by accelerated sourcing growth, increasing preference for secured lending, and improving asset quality. Notably, asset quality indicators showed positive trends, with payments overdue by 30 days or more declining from 3.9 per cent to 3.3 per cent year-on-year. This improvement signals better repayment behaviour and stronger credit discipline among borrowers.

Secured loans, including

gold, home, and vehicle loans, emerged as the primary growth drivers during the quarter. These categories recorded an impressive 42 per cent growth in Q3 FY26, compared to 20 per cent growth in the corresponding

period last year. Gold loans played a particularly significant role, especially in the small-ticket segment below Rs 3 lakh, reflecting rising borrower inclination toward asset-backed financing.

The shift toward secured

credit indicates a dual trend — borrowers seeking relatively lower interest rates and lenders focusing on risk-mitigated portfolios. Home loans and auto loans also maintained steady growth, supported by stable demand conditions and improving affordability levels.

On the unsecured side, personal loans and consumer durable loans witnessed increased traction, partly fuelled by festive season spending. However, credit card issuance slowed during the quarter, pointing to a more cautious approach by both lenders and consumers in that segment.

Overall, the report suggests that India's lending ecosystem

remains resilient, with balanced growth across secured and select unsecured segments, accompanied by strengthening asset quality indicators.

KEY POINTS

- India's Lending AUM Hits Rs 130 Lakh Cr, Asset Quality Improves
- AUM at Rs 130 lakh crore
- 17% YoY growth in assets
- Secured loans surge 42%
- Asset quality improves with lower delinquencies
- Gold loans drive small-ticket borrowing

NOW STREAMING ON NETFLIX

Accused, A Gripping Psychological Drama

**MUMBAI**

The boundaries of truth, perception, and judgment are tested in *Accused*, now streaming exclusively on Netflix. Directed by Anubhuti Kashyap and produced by Dharma Productions, the film follows Dr. Geetika Sen (Konkona Sen Sharma), a celebrated gynaecologist whose life unravels when allegations of sexual misconduct emerge.

As public scrutiny intensifies, the pressure seeps into her personal life, particularly her marriage to Meera (Pratibha Rannata), forcing both women to confront trust, doubt, and societal judgment. The film resists sensationalism, opting instead for ambiguity, emotional depth, and nuanced performances that leave viewers questioning the nature of truth.



Drishyam 3 Sets Overseas Records before Release

*Drishyam 3*, starring Mohanlal and directed by Jeethu Joseph, is creating huge buzz worldwide even before its release. The third part of the popular Malayalam franchise is set to hit theatres on April 2, 2026.

According to trade reports, the film has already become the biggest pre-release business deal in Malayalam cinema history. Even before post-production is completed, it has broken records in overseas markets.

The North America theatrical rights have reportedly been sold for a massive Rs 10 crore. Of this, the United States rights alone were sold for Rs 6 crore, while Canada rights fetched Rs 4 crore. This strong business deal shows the high demand for the thriller and points to a powerful opening weekend overseas.



Konkona Sen Sharma reflected on her role, saying, “Geetika is a woman used to control—of her work, her credibility, her space. What moved me was her internal collapse under scrutiny. I’m glad Netflix is bringing a story that trusts performance and silence over spectacle.” Pratibha Rannata added, “Playing Meera meant living in that messy space where you want to trust, but your

heart isn’t sure. I’m so glad Netflix tells these kinds of real, complicated stories about women.”

Told from the perspective of the accused, *Accused* challenges audiences to examine their own biases and sit with uncertainty long after the credits roll. A tense exploration of power, perception, and the cost of doubt, the film is streaming now, only on Netflix.

G.V. Prakash Skips Film Salary

Actor-director Ken Karunaas has revealed that music director G.V. Prakash agreed to work on the film and refused payment, a gesture that boosted Ken’s confidence. The film wrapped after 60 days of shooting, with dubbing starting on the last day of the year. Produced by Parvatha Entertainment and Street Boy Studio, *Youth* stars Anisma Anil Kumar, Meenakshi Dinesh, and others.



Sini Shetty Joins Dostana 2 Alongside Lakshya, Vikrant

*Dostana 2* is set to return with a fresh twist, featuring Sini Shetty as the female lead alongside Lakshya and Vikrant Massey. The film, directed by Advait Chandra, will stream as a Prime Video original under Dharmatic Entertainment, the digital wing of Dharma Productions.

Reports suggest the makers had three contenders for the role before finalizing Sini Shetty. By casting a former beauty pageant winner, the film continues the legacy of Priyanka Chopra, the female lead in the original *Dostana*. Shetty, hailing from Mumbai with family roots in Karnataka, holds a degree in accounting and finance and has formal training in Bharatnatyam. She is set to make her acting debut with this high-profile project. The sequel’s revamped script explores the chaos of sibling relationships entwined with romance, promising style, humor, and on-screen chemistry. Sini Shetty has also reportedly signed a small-budget thriller, though details remain under wraps. The project originally began in 2019 with Kartik Aaryan, Lakshya, and Janhvi Kapoor, but was paused after Kartik Aaryan exited following 20 days of shooting. The fallout between the actor and Karan Johar made headlines, though they later reconciled while collaborating on another film.

With a new cast and fresh script, *Dostana 2* aims to revive the beloved franchise for a digital audience while launching Sini Shetty’s career on a high note.

Rishab Shetty Silent on Rashmika Wedding Question

Actor and filmmaker Rishab Shetty avoided answering a question about the wedding of Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda during a recent spiritual visit.

The star of *Kantara* was attending the Guru Vaibhavotsava of Raghavendra Swamy at Mantralayam. He offered prayers and later spoke to the media about his upcoming projects. Shetty described the visit as a lucky and special moment in his life.

While talking to reporters, he happily shared details about his new film, *Jai Hanuman*, directed by Prasanth Varma. However, when asked about Mandanna’s reported wedding with Deverakonda, Shetty chose not to respond. He simply said



Thank you and walked away without any expression.

Shetty and Mandanna had worked together early in their careers. Because of this past association, many expected him to share his thoughts. Some believe he stayed silent due to his close friendship with Rakshit Shetty, who was once engaged to Mandanna. Social media users also called the topic sensitive and personal.

Meanwhile, reports say that Mandanna and Deverakonda are now officially married. The couple reportedly tied the knot in Udaipur, surrounded by the beautiful Aravalli hills. The wedding took place at ITC Hotels, Ekaaya, in a traditional Andhra ceremony around 8 am.

Kerala High Court Halts Kerala Story Release

The Kerala High Court has stayed the release of the film *Kerala Story 2* for 15 days. The order came on Thursday, just one day before the movie was set to hit theatres on Friday.

The film had already created strong debate because of its theme and the way it shows sensitive social issues. A group of petitioners moved the court, saying the movie could increase communal tension and disturb public peace in the state. After hearing their arguments, the court passed an interim order stopping its release for two weeks.

This decision is a major setback for the producers, who had spent heavily on promotions and theatre bookings. Advance ticket sales in many centres are now likely to be cancelled or refunded, leading to financial losses. Trade experts say that such last-minute court orders can badly affect a film’s earnings, especially when controversy plays a big role in publicity.

The court has not yet given a final judgment on the case. It said the matter needs further examination and will be heard in detail during the stay period.

The debate around *Kerala Story 2* is similar to the reaction faced by its earlier part. Supporters say filmmakers should have freedom to tell bold stories. Critics argue that creative freedom should not harm social harmony. In Kerala, both the Left parties and the Congress have openly opposed the film. For now, the film’s future depends on the court’s final decision.



Sree Vishnu Promises Full Entertainment in Compact Runtime

Actor Sree Vishnu has announced that his upcoming film *Vishnu Vinyasam* will have a run-time of 1 hour and 59 minutes. Directed by Yadunaath Maruthi Rao, the film promises strong entertainment despite its shorter length.

Sharing the update on X, Sree Vishnu wrote that while the film’s length may look like it is on a diet, the entertainment will feel like a full meal with extra dessert. He invited families to come to theatres, enjoy the film, and watch it again.

The film is produced by Sumanth Naidu G under the Sree Subrahmanyeshwara Cinemas banner, with Hema



VIN DIESEL PRAISES SINNERS AS YEAR’S BEST

Hollywood star Vin Diesel has called *Sinners* one of the best films of the year. The action hero shared his thoughts on Instagram, posting a heartfelt note praising the movie and its team.

Directed by Ryan Coogler, the horror drama has created history by receiving 16 Oscar nominations, the highest in the history of the Academy Awards. Reacting to the achievement, Diesel wrote that legendary actor Sidney Poitier would have been proud. He said what was once a door that had to be forced open has now become a grand stage where filmmakers of color are rewriting record books.

Diesel revealed that he first heard about *Sinners* from friends who excitedly described it as a vampire movie.



His curiosity grew because of his own love for fantasy stories. He shared that as a child he enjoyed playing *Dungeons & Dragons* and reading novels by Anne Rice. He also mentioned that he is currently developing a fantasy project about an immortal witch hunter with Lionsgate and exploring monster characters with Universal Pictures.

The actor said he watched the film with his family and connected deeply with its story, especially the portrayal of twin characters, as he himself is a twin. He also praised the film’s strong cultural themes and tribute to unsung heroes.

Diesel added that Coogler’s roots in Oakland, the hometown of his biological father, made the film even more special and meaningful to him.