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Change of guard, finally?

Top leadership reportedly asks Siddaramaiah to step down as CM, offers RS seat, likely to resign soon; DKS frontrunner for top post

NEW DELHI

Karnataka may be headed for its biggest political reset since the 2023 Assembly elections, with reports claiming Siddaramaiah has been asked by the party high command to step down as the Chief Minister, move to Delhi as Rajya Sabha member, and take up a larger national role ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

The dramatic behind-the-scenes push unfolded through nearly seven-hour meeting in Delhi on Tuesday, even as senior Congress leaders publicly denied any discussion on change of guard and insisted that talks were restricted to the upcoming Rajya Sabha and Karnataka Legislative Council elections.

But behind the official denials, sources described intense negotiations, persuasion attempts and a carefully crafted political offer aimed at convincing the veteran leader to vacate the CM seat without triggering open rebellion in the party state unit.

As per sources, Siddaramaiah was told by the Congress leadership that the party now needed him in Delhi as one of its most prominent OBC faces, particularly at a time when Rahul Gandhi has aggressively sharpened the Congress's social justice and caste census pitch nationwide. "He was told that he is a major OBC face and the party wants him to play a much bigger role nationally in the run-up to the 2029 Lok Sabha elections," as per sources.

The leadership assured Siddaramaiah that "all other things and his issues will be taken care of" if he agreed to move to Delhi through the Rajya Sabha route, sources added. The proposal, however, has not yet received Siddaramaiah's approval.



Cautious move!

Sources said the Congress leadership wants to proceed cautiously to avoid factional unrest, as Siddaramaiah continues to command strong support among MLAs, particularly from backward classes, Dalits and minorities, who view him as the party's most influential mass leader.

Siddu seeks more time?

Sources said Siddaramaiah did not give a definitive answer during the meetings and instead sought more time. Soon after returning from Delhi, the CM reportedly went into a huddle with close ministers and trusted aides as consultations over the Congress proposal intensified.

Inside the marathon meetings

The series of meetings stretched for almost seven hours and involved multiple rounds. One key one-on-one interaction reportedly included Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, where Siddaramaiah was directly told that the party wanted him to end his tenure as CM and shift to a larger organisational role at the Centre. Another broader meeting at the Congress headquarters was attended by Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar, KC Venugopal and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Surjewala.

Cong denies change of guard

Speaking after the meeting, KC Venugopal dismissed reports of a Karnataka leadership reshuffle.

Siddu set to resign?

Siddaramaiah is expected to resign on Thursday or Friday, as per sources. However, he is yet to be convinced about a Rajya Sabha nomination and is currently in a huddle with close ministers. Shivakumar is likely to be the new CM, sources added.

RS polls add pressure?

The timing of the meeting is important as nominations for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls are expected to begin soon. Karnataka is set to elect 4 RS members, with Cong expected to win 3 seats based on current Assembly strength. However, the party appears to be moving cautiously, with Siddaramaiah yet to give any final approval on Delhi move.

DKS at centerstage

The latest developments have once again brought DK Shivakumar to the centre of Karnataka politics. For nearly two years, supporters of Shivakumar have maintained that a power-sharing understanding existed when the Congress formed the government in 2023, with Siddaramaiah taking over first and Shivakumar expected to eventually succeed him. The discussions intensified again after the Siddaramaiah govt completed around half of its tenure earlier this month.

Congress' 2029 calculation

The Congress's outreach to Siddaramaiah also reflects its broader political recalibration ahead of 2029. Rahul's repeated focus on OBC politics and social justice has increasingly shaped the Congress's national messaging.

Panel to study 'unnatural demographic shifts'

NEW DELHI

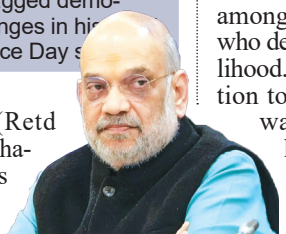
The Union government has moved to institutionalise a nationwide review of 'unnatural demographic shifts' linked to illegal immigration and other causes, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday announcing the formation of a high-level committee tasked with studying population changes that the Centre says could impact national security, sovereignty, and social stability.

In an X post, he said infiltration and other factors contributing to "unnatural demographic change" pose a serious challenge to both the present and future of the nation. The panel would be headed by Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar (Retd). It will also include Census Commissioner, Durga Shankar Mishra (Retd IAS), Balaji

Panel and its role

- Retired Supreme Court judge Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar will head the panel with five other members.
- The panel will analyse abnormal population shifts among religious and social communities.
- It will recommend planned, time-bound solutions.
- The panel has been given a deadline of one year to submit the report.
- Modi first flagged demographic changes in his Independence Day s

Srivastava (Retd IPS) and Dr Sharmika Ravi as members.



'Reject Karnataka's DPR for Mokedatu Project'

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday expressed surprise over the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the CWC entertaining Karnataka's proposal for the Mokedatu Project, without considering Tamil Nadu's plea.

He also requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to instruct officials concerned to reject the DPR prepared by Karnataka, as it contravened the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and also the Supreme Court judgment. Also, PM should advise the Karnataka government not to take up any new project without getting the concurrence of co-basin states and not to violate the apex court judgment, he said.

In a letter to the PM, Vijay said the announcement for the 'Bhoomi Puja' of the Mokedatu reservoir across Cauvery river and utterances of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar have caused a lot of concern among the lakhs of farmers of Tamil Nadu, who depend on the Cauvery river for their livelihood. "You may be well aware that a solution to the sensitive Cauvery water dispute was obtained after a long legal battle, lasting about three decades, and the judgment dated February 16, 2018, is under implementation," he said.

Polls to 7 Council seats in K'taka, 9 in Bihar on June 18

BENGALURU: The Election Commission on Tuesday announced the schedule for the biennial polls to nine seats of the Bihar Legislative Council and seven seats of the Karnataka Legislative Council.

In Karnataka, the term of BK Hariprasad, Naseer Ahmed, Govinda Raju, N Nagaraju (MTB), Pratap Simha Nayak K, Thippannappa, and Sunil Valyapur will end on June 30.

Schedule

- Issue of poll notification: June 1
- Last date for filing nominations: June 8
- Scrutiny of nominations: June 9
- Last date for withdrawal of nominations: June 11
- Voting: June 18
- Counting of votes: June 18



Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) triumphed over Gujarat Titans (GT) in the IPL 2026 Qualifier 1, clinching their spot in the finals, at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala on Tuesday.

GUARANTEE HABBA

Stepping into the 4th year



Gruha Lakshmi

₹2,000 per month
to woman head of the family

Over the past three years, Guarantee Sarkara, through the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, has empowered women heads of families with ₹2,000 every month, enabling them to support household needs, start small businesses, and move towards financial independence

₹69,783 Crore

Direct financial assistance has been transferred to women heads of families, strengthening economic security across households

Siddaramaiah

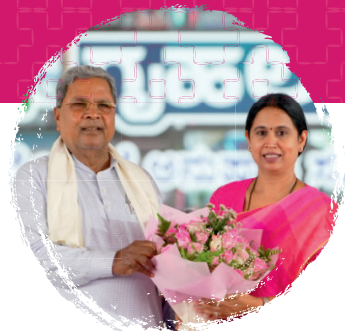
Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

1.24 Crore Women

are benefiting under the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, helping build stronger and more secure futures for their families

D K Shivakumar

D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister



Hon'ble Minister Smt. Lakshmi Hebbalkar welcoming Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah during the inauguration ceremony of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme

Shakthi Anna Bhagya
Gruha Jyothi Yuva Nidhi



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karnataka information

QUICK READ

Transport wage talks postponed to June 10

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Conciliation talks between transport workers' unions and management representatives of Karnataka's state-run transport corporations ended without a breakthrough, forcing the Labour Commissioner to defer discussions to June 10. The meeting followed an earlier round on May 18 that had also remained inconclusive. Managing directors of KSRTC, BMTC, KKRTC and NWKRTC attended on behalf of the management, while union leaders represented employees. The unions reiterated their demand for wage revision with effect from January 1, 2024, retention of the four-year settlement cycle, a higher wage increase than the proposed 12.5 per cent, and clearance of arrears.

23 arrested in IPL betting crackdown by CCB police

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested 23 people for their alleged involvement in illegal gambling and betting activities linked to the IPL T20 cricket tournament. The arrests were made during simultaneous raids conducted by the Special Investigation Team of the Bengaluru City CCB across multiple police station jurisdictions in the city. Police registered 17 separate cricket betting cases during the operation. Authorities seized seven mobile phones worth ₹1.10 lakh, cash amounting to ₹1,06,433, and betting chips valued at ₹13.37 crore. The total value of seized property is estimated at ₹13.39 crore. Further investigation is underway to identify the masterminds behind the betting network.

Christian Mahasabha seeks repeal of anti-conversion law

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The All India Christian Mahasabha has urged the Karnataka government to withdraw the Prohibition of Conversion Act, alleging that it is being misused against members of the Christian community. Addressing a press conference on Monday, Mahasabha National President S. Prajwalswamy claimed that the legislation was affecting social harmony and was being used to target Christian prayer meetings and priests. He alleged that women, Dalit and Adivasi Christians were facing harassment and attacks. Criticising the Congress-led government for not repealing the law, he demanded protection of religious freedom and equal justice for all communities in the state.

Rising Wage Costs Trigger Steep Menu Price Hike Warnings

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Dining out in Bengaluru could soon become significantly more expensive, with hotel and restaurant associations warning that menu prices may rise by as much as 60 per cent in the coming months due to higher labour costs and increasing input prices.

The warning comes as the Karnataka government considers revising minimum wages for workers, a move that hospitality industry representatives say will sharply increase operating expenses for eateries across the state. From neighbourhood darsh-

June mayhem: School reopening set to worsen traffic around dug-up CBD roads

Students return as civic works threaten gridlock across Bengaluru roads

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's central business district is bracing for severe traffic congestion as schools and colleges prepare to reopen in June while major road excavation and sewage pipeline replacement works continue across key stretches.

Commuters, parents and students are expected to bear the brunt of the disruption, with ongoing infrastructure projects on major roads such as Richmond Road and Lavelle Road likely to trigger long delays and peak-hour bottlenecks in some of the city's busiest corridors.

One of the most significant traffic choke points is expected near Lavelle Road, where the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSB) has undertaken sewage pipeline replacement work on the stretch leading towards Richmond Road. Vehicular



movement has already been restricted as underground drainage infrastructure is being upgraded.

According to BWSSB officials, work along the roadside has been completed and crews have now moved to replacing ageing pipelines beneath the carriageway. Engineers estimate that the project will require another six weeks for completion.

The timing of the work has become a major concern for residents. The area is surrounded by several prominent schools and colleges, making it a crucial route for thousands of students travelling daily. With educational institutions reopening after the summer break, traffic volumes are expected to rise sharply.

Another major excavation

is under way on Richmond Road near HDFC Bank, where nearly 400 metres of roadway has been dug up for sewer infrastructure upgrades. BWSSB officials said the project is expected to continue for around 60 days. Owing to the heavy traffic density in the central business district, contractors have been permitted to carry out work primarily during night hours.

However, the presence of multiple schools and colleges directly opposite the work zone is likely to complicate traffic movement. School buses, private vehicles and public transport services will have to navigate narrowed road space and diversions.

Beyond these arterial roads, civic works are also under way in Shantinagar, Langford Road and Kamaraj Road. Authorities have announced alternative traffic arrangements, but motorists fear that simul-

taneous projects across multiple locations will push vehicles onto smaller residential roads, creating congestion in neighbourhoods not designed for heavy traffic.

Shivajinagar MLA N A Haris said more than 2.5 lakh students commute through central Bengaluru every day, covering educational clusters around Richmond Road, Residency Road, Vittal Mallya Road, Shantinagar and Langford Road.

"I understand there will be traffic chaos due to the high concentration of schools in the area. However, these sewage pipe changes are important and unavoidable for the larger good," Haris said.

With school reopening just days away, commuters can expect challenging journeys as the city attempts to balance critical infrastructure upgrades with rising traffic demand.

Fuel price surge boosts Karnataka revenues as calls grow for VAT cut

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Rising fuel prices are generating a significant revenue windfall for Karnataka, but growing public and political pressure to reduce Value Added Tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel is placing the state government in a difficult position.

Despite demands from opposition parties, industry representatives and consumer groups, the Siddaramaiah government is unlikely to announce any immediate reduction in fuel taxes, citing fiscal constraints and increasing expenditure commitments.

According to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), Karnataka currently levies 29.84 per cent sales tax on petrol and 21.17 per cent on diesel. The state follows an ad valorem taxation system, under which VAT is calculated as a percentage of the fuel's base price, including dealer margins and central excise duty. As fuel prices rise, state tax collections increase automatically.

Officials estimate that the recent increase in fuel prices and corresponding tax collections could generate an additional ₹3,000 crore to ₹4,000 crore annually for the state exchequer.

Finance department sources

Mohandas Pai joins VAT debate

Former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai criticised the state government for benefiting from higher fuel prices while simultaneously blaming the Centre. "At least reduce VAT on the ₹7.5 increase and continue your political protest," Pai said, adding to calls for immediate tax relief for consumers.

said the government is reluctant to forgo this revenue at a time when it faces mounting financial obligations. Apart from slowing revenue growth, the state is also shouldering an annual expenditure of around ₹51,000 crore on its flagship guarantee schemes.

Officials pointed out that taxes on fuel and liquor continue to be among the most important sources of revenue for states, alongside GST compensation and tax devolution from the Centre.

While Karnataka's fuel taxes have drawn criticism, retail fuel prices in the state remain lower than in several others. Telangana imposes VAT of 35.2 per cent on petrol and 27 per cent on diesel, among the highest in the country. Kerala levies more than 30 per cent sales tax along with additional cess and surcharge components. Tamil Nadu follows a hybrid taxation structure that combines a percentage-based levy with a fixed per-litre

charge.

Political analyst Sandeep Shastri said the state government faces a difficult balancing act between public expectations and financial realities.

"The state already faces a financial crunch. At the same time, the government would like people to believe that the responsibility for providing relief lies primarily with the Centre," he said.

The issue has increasingly become a political flashpoint. Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka recently urged the government to reduce VAT, arguing that rising fuel prices were placing an additional burden on middle-class families and farmers.

Industry bodies have also weighed in. Some members of the state Dealers' Association have suggested that the Centre direct states to temporarily cap VAT at five per cent for three to six months to protect consumers from further price shocks.

cautioned that distractions and temptations in modern society were affecting the success and growth of young people.

Urging parents to play an active role in shaping their children's future, he said education and values must go hand in hand. "Parents should guide their children on the right path and help them build a bright future. The future of children is largely in the hands of their parents," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Siddalinga Swamiji stressed that talent alone was insufficient and that students should

Tata Power Bid Challenges Karnataka ESCOM Monopoly

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A proposal by Tata Power to enter Karnataka's electricity distribution sector could pave the way for competition in a space long dominated by state-run Electricity Supply Companies (ESCOMs), potentially transforming how power is supplied and priced across the state.

Tata Power has applied to the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) for a licence to distribute electricity in areas currently served by government-owned utilities. The move has triggered strong opposition from employee unions, which fear privatisation of the sector and possible impacts on existing public utilities.

The Federation of Karnataka Electricity Board Employees' Union has warned of statewide protests if the application is approved.

According to a public notice issued in connection with the application, Tata Power plans to operate in 15 districts spread across four ESCOM jurisdictions. These include Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapur, Kolar, Ramanagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga under BESCOM; Mysuru, Hassan and Chamara-

janagar under CESCO; Be-

lagavi, Dharwad and Uttara Kannada under HESCOM; and Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Shivamogga under MESCOM.

The company is expected to focus primarily on urban centres, including city corporations and municipal areas.

Energy sector experts said the proposal could mark a major shift in Karnataka's power sector by introducing consumer choice. Under the existing system, consumers are tied to a single distribution company based on their location. If multiple distributors are allowed to

operate in the same area, consumers could potentially select their electricity supplier without requiring changes to the transmission infrastructure already connected to their homes and businesses.

Independent analysts have largely welcomed the development, arguing that competition could improve service standards, reduce outages and encourage greater operational efficiency.

Tata Power already distributes electricity in cities such as Mumbai and parts of Delhi, Ajmer and Odisha. Industry observers note that its distribution operations have reported lower technical and commercial losses compared to many state-run utilities.



Money dispute ends in murder, auto driver buried near lake

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 25-year-old auto driver was allegedly murdered by his friends over a financial dispute and buried in a deserted area near Ramasandra Lake in Kumbalagodu on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

The deceased has been identified as N. Rakshit, a resident of Udaya Layout in Tavarekere. Police have arrested one accused, Mohin Pasha, while efforts are on to trace another suspect, Hasan, who is believed to have been involved in the crime.

According to police, Rakshit, who drove a passenger auto-rickshaw, had lent money to Mohin Pasha, a resident of Kambipur. On May 24, Rakshit left home around 6 pm after informing his family that he was going to collect the money. However, he did not return.

Concerned over his disappearance, Rakshit's mother visited Kambipur on May 25 and questioned Mohin Pasha about her son's whereabouts. During interrogation, Mohin allegedly confessed that he and another associate had quarrelled with Rakshit over the financial issue.

Police said the accused allegedly attacked Rakshit by smashing stones on his head, killing him on the spot. They then buried the body near Ramasandra Lake in an attempt to conceal the crime and abandoned his auto-rickshaw near Gnanabharathi to mislead investigators.

Based on a complaint lodged by Rakshit's mother, Kumbalagodu police registered a case and launched an investigation. During questioning, Mohin Pasha reportedly led police to the burial site.

The body was subsequently exhumed in the presence of officials and sent for postmortem examination to determine the exact cause of death. Police said evidence collected from the scene and the accused's statement helped establish the sequence of events.

Investigators are continuing their search for Hasan, who remains absconding. Police are also examining the circumstances leading to the dispute and verifying whether others were involved in the crime.

State launches intensive school inspections ahead of reopening

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a statewide inspection drive to assess school preparedness, infrastructure, enrolment and learning standards ahead of the 2026-27 academic year.

In a circular issued on Monday, the Commissioner of School Education directed officials to conduct surprise visits and review teaching-learning readiness before schools reopen on June 1.

District- and taluk-level teams led by deputy directors, block education officers and other officials will carry out inspections throughout the academic year. Special attention will be given to schools identified as lagging in learning outcomes.

Officials have been instructed to assess student enrolment and attendance, classroom readiness, bridge course im-

plementation, incentive schemes and safety measures, particularly in view of recent heavy rains.

Each inspection team will visit three schools daily — two primary schools and one secondary school — based on route maps prepared at the district and taluk levels.

Schools recording poor academic progress will be placed under continued monitoring and provided remedial support to improve performance.

The department has also directed schools to complete all cleaning and repair works before reopening. Special focus has been placed on buildings affected by rain damage, fallen trees and electrical hazards.

Schools have been instructed to ensure the availability of safe drinking water, functional toilets and adequate infrastructure to provide a safe learning environment for students when classes resume.

BURDEN FOR CONSUMERS

QUICK READ

Students can complain against excess fee collection: Chairman

CH NEWS, BENGALURU Students who are asked to pay fees higher than those prescribed by the government for professional courses can file complaints with the Fee Control Committee, its chairman Justice B. Srinivasa Gowda has said. In a statement, he said the committee's office functions on the ground floor of the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) building at 18th Cross, Malleswaram. Justice Gowda noted that government quota seats in professional courses offered by private colleges and universities, including aided, unaided and minority institutions, are allotted through KEA. No institution is permitted to collect fees beyond those fixed by the government for such courses. Students seeking admission as well as those already admitted can approach

592 drunk driving cases booked during special traffic drive

CH NEWS, BENGALURU Bengaluru Traffic Police registered 592 cases of drunk driving during a week-long special enforcement drive conducted across the city from May 18 to May 24. The operation was carried out by personnel from all 53 traffic police stations as part of efforts to improve road safety and curb reckless driving. According to official data, police checked 37,829 vehicles of various categories during the drive, focusing primarily on drunken driving violations. Following inspections and breathalyzer tests at checkpoints across the city, 592 motorists were booked for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Pension demands: Retd transport employees to stage protest

CH NEWS, BENGALURU Members of the EPS-95, BMTC and KSRTC Retired Employees' Association will stage a protest at the Regional Provident Fund Office premises near Richmond Circle on May 27, demanding fulfilment of long-pending pension and welfare demands. The demonstration is scheduled to begin at 10.30 am. The association is seeking a minimum monthly pension of Rs 7,500 along with dearness allowance, medical facilities and other benefits for retirees. Association president Nanjunde Gowda said retired employees not covered under the EPS scheme should be provided a pension of Rs 5,000 per month. He alleged that many pensioners had suffered due to delays in implementing court orders and demanded.

BNCC issues guidelines for feeding street dogs

Caretakers asked to identify safe feeding spots without affecting public movement.

CH NEWSBENGALURU

The Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) has issued detailed guidelines for feeding street dogs within its jurisdiction, seeking to strike a balance between animal welfare and public safety. The directions have been framed in accordance with Supreme Court orders, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023. In a press release, BNCC Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar said feeding street dogs is not prohibited in urban areas. However, courts

have made it clear that the practice should not inconvenience the public, create unhygienic conditions, obstruct traffic movement or pose risks to children, senior citizens and other residents. The corporation has requested animal lovers, volunteers, organisations and caretakers to identify suitable locations for feeding dogs and bring them to the notice of the respective zonal offices or the Animal Husbandry Department. The proposed locations should not interfere with public movement or create traffic bottlenecks. Officials clarified that feed-



ing of dogs should not take place on public roads, footpaths, bus stops, market areas, schools, colleges, hospitals, anganwadis, religious places, sports clubs, playgrounds, children's parks or other locations with heavy public footfall.

Corporation authorities will conduct spot inspections before approving any location as an official feeding spot. Approval will be granted only after evaluating factors such as public convenience, safety of children and senior citizens, hygiene standards, traf-

fic impact, views of local residents, dog behaviour and maintenance of public order. The guidelines also specify that feeding should be carried out only during designated hours at approved locations. Caretakers have been instructed to remove leftover food, plastic covers and other waste immediately after feeding to ensure cleanliness. Feeders must ensure that dogs do not congregate in large numbers and create fear or inconvenience for the public. Feeding near schools during class hours, close to hospitals or during peak traffic and pedestrian movement

hours has been discouraged. At the same time, the corporation reminded citizens that cruelty towards animals is prohibited under law. Feeders have also been advised not to engage in arguments with members of the public and to strictly follow directions issued by the corporation and police authorities. The Commissioner appealed to resident welfare associations, animal welfare groups and citizens to cooperate in implementing the guidelines to ensure harmony between public health, safety and animal welfare across the city.

Vegetable prices remain steady despite fuel hike, traders expect rise later

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru consumers have received temporary relief from rising food costs, with vegetable prices remaining largely stable despite the recent increase in fuel prices. Traders, however, caution that the respite may be short-lived as higher transportation costs are eventually expected to push up retail rates. According to market sources, good pre-monsoon showers over the past 10 days have improved vegetable arrivals and eased supply concerns that had emerged during the peak summer months. Prices of several vegetables had risen sharply from mid-April due to extreme heat conditions that affected crop yields and disrupted supplies. Heat-sensitive vegetables were among the worst affected. However, with rainfall



improving growing conditions across producing regions, prices have started declining gradually. "Beans, for example, had crossed Rs 100 per kg a few weeks ago but are now selling at around Rs 70. As rainfall improves and fresh supplies enter the market, prices are expected to ease further," said Sreedhar M, a representative of the Electronics City Vegetable Vendors' Association. Onion prices have also remained stable despite rising fuel costs. Traders at the Yeshwantpur Agricultural Pro-

duce Market Committee (APMC) yard said strong production in northern Karnataka has helped keep prices under control.

"Large quantities of onions are arriving from Vijayapura, where the crop has performed well this season. Even though transportation costs have increased, the abundant supply has prevented any major rise in prices," said trader Ravi Shankar. However, market participants warned that the impact of the fuel price hike has not yet fully reached consumers. Transportation operators are expected to revise freight charges in the coming weeks, which could increase the cost

of moving vegetables from farms and wholesale markets to city retailers. "Lorry operators will eventually increase their rents to offset higher fuel expenses. Once transportation costs rise, vegetable prices will also go up. The effect may become visible in the market soon," Ravi Shankar said. Some traders believe prices may remain stable for a little longer if fuel costs do not rise further. They said transporters appear to be absorbing the initial impact for now, but prolonged increases in operating costs would inevitably be passed on to consumers. With the monsoon season approaching, traders expect improved arrivals to help moderate prices, though the combined impact of fuel costs and logistics expenses remains a concern for the coming weeks.

High Court fines company for delaying bank loan recovery process

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Expressing strong displeasure over repeated attempts to delay bank recovery proceedings without clearing outstanding dues, the Karnataka High Court has dismissed a petition filed by a private company and imposed a cost of Rs 15,000 on it. The order was passed by the Dharwad Bench of Justice Ravi V. Hosamani while hearing a petition filed by Huchappa S. Kumbhar, director of Sangappa Kumbhar Private Limited, based in Siddapur village of Bilagi taluk in Bagalkot district. The court observed that the petitioner had repeatedly approached judicial forums to stall recovery proceedings initiated by the bank despite failing to honour commitments made earlier before the court.

Referring to various Supreme Court judgments, the bench noted that such petitions were aimed at delaying the recovery process and did not merit any sympathy. The court dismissed the petition and directed the petitioner to deposit Rs 15,000 with the Karnataka High Court Legal Services Committee at the Dharwad Bench. According to case records, the company had availed a loan from the Teggi branch of Karnataka Gramin Bank. The petitioner contended that the Covid-19 pandemic had affected the company's ability to repay loan instalments, resulting in financial difficulties. After the loan account turned irregular, the bank initiated recovery proceedings under the SARFAESI Act. Challenging the action, the company had earlier approached.

Karnataka government functioning from Delhi, alleges Araga Gnanendra

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Senior BJP leader and former minister Araga Gnanendra on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government in Karnataka, alleging that the state administration had become ineffective and was being run from New Delhi amid ongoing discussions over leadership issues within the ruling party. Reacting to reports of a continuing debate over the chief minister's post and the presence of several senior Congress leaders in Delhi, Gnanendra said Karnataka appeared to be functioning without an active government. He remarked that the state government had "shifted to Delhi" and claimed that the administration was in a pitiable condition. The former minister alleged that despite being in power for nearly three years, Congress leaders were more focused on internal power struggles than governance. According to him, public attention was being diverted by discussions over who should occupy the chief minister's chair and for how long.

Silver-only thieves caught after jewellery shop heist, mastermind on run

CH NEWSBENGALURU

In a burglary that left even seasoned investigators surprised, a gang of thieves broke into a jewellery shop in Bengaluru and stole only silver ornaments while leaving gold untouched. Police have now arrested three members of the gang and recovered 36 kg of stolen silver worth nearly Rs 1 crore. The theft took place at MB Jewellers on Hesaraghatta Main Road in the early hours of April 27. According to police, the accused gained entry into the shop by breaking through a wall. Once inside, they headed directly to the silver section and stole several kilograms of silver ornaments and articles within minutes before fleeing the scene. When the shop owner arrived the next morning, he found the premises ransacked. However, what stood out was that all the gold ornaments in the store remained untouched. Only the silver stock had been targeted and stolen. The unusual nature of the crime initially puzzled investigators. CCTV footage showed the burglars moving swiftly

through the shop and deliberately avoiding the gold section despite having easy access to valuable jewellery. Police investigations later revealed that after committing the theft, the gang travelled to Hyderabad, where they allegedly sold a portion of the stolen silver. They then moved to Rajasthan in an attempt to evade arrest. Bagalgunte police launched an extensive investigation using CCTV footage, mobile phone location data and travel records to track the suspects. Their efforts eventually led them to Rajasthan, where coordinated raids resulted in the arrest of three accused identified as Jat Suresh, Dhanram and Nemi Chand. During the operation, police recovered 36 kg of silver believed to be part of the stolen property. Officials estimated the value of the recovered silver at around Rs 1 crore. Investigators said the gang appears to have specifically targeted silver because it is easier to dispose of in bulk without attracting attention compared to gold jewellery, which often carries identifiable markings and documentation.

Couple held for allegedly stealing gold and cash from elderly friend

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Rajarajeshwari Nagar police have arrested a couple for allegedly betraying the trust of an elderly woman and stealing gold ornaments and cash worth several lakhs under the guise of caring for her. The accused, identified as Sharmila and her husband Ganesh Kumar, were arrested following a complaint filed by 66-year-old Padmaja Rao. Police said they recovered 230 grams of gold ornaments worth around Rs 35 lakh from the couple. Further investigation is under way to trace the remaining valuables and cash allegedly taken from the victim. According to police, Padmaja Rao had been living with her daughter in Banashankari after the death of her husband. She had been suffering from severe vision impairment for nearly three decades due to a retinal condition. Investigators said Sharmila, a long-time friend of Padmaja, had offered to take care of her while she was facing personal difficulties. Trusting her friend, Pad-



maja moved into a rented house in BMML Layout about eight years ago and stayed there under Sharmila's care. Police said that in 2024, Padmaja withdrew around 530 grams of gold ornaments from a bank locker with plans to shift them to another locker. She allegedly stored the ornaments along with Rs 49 lakh in cash in a locker located at the residence where she was staying and kept the key with her. Later, she discovered that both her debit card and the locker key had gone missing. She reportedly informed Sharmila about the matter and sought help in getting a duplicate key made. Over time, Padmaja alleged that Sharmila and her husband became increasing-

ly distant and neglected her. When Padmaja eventually opened the locker with the assistance of others, she found that the gold ornaments and cash were missing. According to the complaint, when confronted, Sharmila allegedly admitted to taking the jewellery, claiming she had done so because she needed money and had pledged the ornaments. The elderly woman further alleged that when she repeatedly demanded the return of her valuables, the couple refused and later abused and assaulted her when her daughter and son-in-law questioned them. Based on the complaint, police registered a case and arrested the couple. Both have been remanded to judicial custody.

SETBACK FOR VINAY KULKARNI

High Court defers hearing on Vinay Kulkarni plea until after vacation

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has postponed the hearing on petitions filed by former Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni and others seeking suspension of their sentence and conviction in the 2016 murder case of BJP leader Yogesh Gowda. The matter will now be taken up after the court's summer vacation. A division bench comprising Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav and Justice S. Rachaiah was hearing petitions filed by

Kulkarni and co-accused Chandrashekhara Indi challenging the life imprisonment awarded to them by the Special Court for MPs and MLAs. During the hearing, counsel for the petitioners pointed out that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which investigated the case, had not yet filed its objections to the plea seeking suspension of sentence. The petitioners also sought urgent consideration of the matter, arguing that Kulkarni had already lost



his membership of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly following his conviction. The petitioners further requested that any move to-

wards conducting a by-election to the vacant seat be kept in abeyance until the court considered their plea. Responding to the submissions, the CBI counsel

informed the bench that objections to the application had been prepared and would be filed shortly. After hearing both sides, the bench observed that the matter would be taken up for detailed consideration only after the vacation and adjourned the proceedings. The development comes as a setback for Kulkarni, who is seeking immediate relief from the conviction that led to his disqualification as an MLA under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act,

1951. The case relates to the murder of BJP leader Yogesh Gowda in Dharwad in 2016. Following a prolonged trial, the Special Court for MPs and MLAs on April 15, 2026, convicted 17 accused in the case. On April 17, the court sentenced 16 of them, including Kulkarni and Chandrashekhara Indi, to life imprisonment. Subsequently, an official notification was issued declaring Kulkarni disqualified from the Assembly with

effect from the date of conviction. Under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, an elected representative stands disqualified upon conviction in a criminal case carrying a sentence of two years or more. Legal experts note that if the High Court or the Supreme Court stays the conviction, the disqualification order could be set aside, potentially restoring Kulkarni's eligibility to contest elections. Until then, however, the disqualification remains in force.



QUICK READ



Bhatkal bans liquor during Bakrid festival

CH NEWS, Karwar In Bhatkala, the District Administration has ordered a complete ban on the sale and transport of liquor during Bakrid festival to maintain law and order. According to the order issued by District Magistrate K. Lakshmi Priya, all liquor shops will remain closed from May 28 at 5 am to May 29 at 12 midnight in Bhatkala town under the police station limits. Officials said the decision has been taken to ensure peace and prevent any disturbance during the festival period, and strict action will be taken against those violating the prohibition order in the region for public safety.

Road accident claims 2 lives in Hassan

CH NEWS, Hassan A tragic road accident in Hassan district claimed the lives of a mother and her seven year old son when an auto overturned near Honnavalli Kudige in Alur taluk. They were travelling to obtain a transfer letter for the child's school admission when the driver allegedly drove at high speed and lost control of the vehicle causing it to flip on the road. Priyanka aged 28 and her son Vinith aged 7 died on the spot while auto driver Abbas aged 52 and another boy Sagar aged 13 suffered injuries and were shifted to Alur Taluk Hospital for treatment. Police visited the accident spot conducted inspection and registered a case at Alur police station. They have started investigation into the incident and have urged drivers to follow traffic rules and avoid overspeeding to prevent such tragic accidents on rural roads in future period warning.

Karnataka leaders honor legacy of H S Doreswamy

BENGALURU

Dr. Manmohan Singh Bangalore City University, Dr. H.S. Doreswamy Memorial Foundation, Mahatma Gandhi Study Centre, Dr. M.S.BCU in association with Gowri Media Trust, Karnataka Gandhi Memorial Fund paid tribute to freedom fighter Late H.S. Doreswamy on Tuesday. The memorial was held to commemorate his memory and to discuss the challenges we face today. The chief guests of the event were Mrs. Teesta Setalvad, Human Rights Activist from New Delhi, Dinesh Gundurao, Honorable Health Minister, Government of Karnataka, Dr. M.C. Sudhakar, Honorable Higher Education Minister, Govern-

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh offers prayers at Chamundi Hills

MYSURU

Bollywood actor and ‘Dhuranthar’ fame, Ranveer Singh on Tuesday visited the revered Chamundeshwari Temple atop Chamundi Hills in Mysuru and offered special prayers to Goddess Chamundeshwari, following directions issued by the Karnataka High Court in connection with allegations that he insulted a sacred ritual portrayed in the film Kantara Chapter-1.

Temple sources confirmed that Singh arrived quietly like a common devotee and participated in the rituals without any fanfare. Wearing a mask and avoiding attention, the Bollywood actor reportedly entered the temple premises around 7.15 am through the regular devotees’ queue. Before entering the sanctum, he first offered prayers to Lord Ganesha at the temple en-



trance and later performed special puja to Goddess Chamundeshwari. Sources said the actor spent some time seated inside the temple premises in silent prayer after the rituals.

According to M.J. Roopa, Secretary of the Chamundeshwari Development Authority, Ranveer Singh reached Chamundi Hills around 7.30 am

like an ordinary devotee and sat on the right side of the temple while performing the rituals.

Temple authorities also welcomed him ceremonially with a garland during the visit. After offering the Pooja, he left the place without giving any hint to his fans.

The controversy dates back to November 28, 2025, during the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival held in Goa. While speaking at the event, Ranveer Singh allegedly mocked the sacred “Daiva Kola” tradition depicted in Kantara.

According to the complaint, the actor imitated the divine expressions associated with Panjurli/Guliga Daiva — revered spiritual entities worshipped in the coastal regions of Karnataka — in a manner considered offensive and disrespectful. It was alleged that he referred to the sacred spirit as a “ghost,” triggering outrage among devotees and followers of the tradition.

Complainants argued that the ritual portrayed in Kantara represents deeply rooted spiritual beliefs and is closely as-

sociated with the worship of Goddess Chamundeshwari and regional traditions. They alleged that the actor’s remarks hurt Hindu religious sentiments and insulted long-standing cultural practices. The complaint further stated that such comments made by a celebrity on an international platform caused anger, emotional distress, resentment among devotees, besides potentially disturbing communal harmony.

FIR, Apology and High Court Direction

Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered against Ranveer Singh at the High Grounds Police Station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Seeking quashing of the FIR, Ranveer Singh later approached the Karnataka High Court.

India’s first TAVI procedure performed successfully in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

Narayana Health in Bengaluru achieved a major milestone in cardiac care by successfully performing India’s first Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation for pure aortic regurgitation using a dedicated TAVR device. The procedure was led by Dr. Suraj Narasimhan and marked an important breakthrough for high risk heart patients.

The announcement was made during an event held at Chancery Pavilion in Bengaluru. Doctors explained that aortic valve disease mainly includes stenosis and regurgitation. In regurgitation, the valve fails to close properly and blood flows backward into the heart. This condition is becoming more common among elderly people across the world.

Earlier, pure aortic regurgitation was difficult to treat without open heart surgery because there was no calcified structure to support the artificial valve. The specially designed HANCHOR valve solved this problem and im-

proved the success rate of the procedure from nearly sixty seven percent to about ninety five percent.

Doctors said the devices are manufactured in China and imported through Hong Kong with special approval from government authorities. Narayana Health imported the device for two high risk patients including an eighty year old man and a sixty nine year old patient who could not safely undergo traditional surgery.

The minimally invasive procedure was performed through the femoral artery in the thigh without major surgical cuts.

Both patients recovered well and were discharged within forty eight hours after observation.

Doctors said the treatment cost around fifteen lakh rupees including import charges. Patients thanked the medical team and especially Dr. Suraj Narasimhan for providing advanced treatment and improving their quality of life through successful heart procedures in Bengaluru.

VVCE to host 24-Hour National Hackathon “FUSION X 1.0”

MYSURU

The Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering is set to host a 24-hour national-level hackathon titled “FUSION X 1.0” on May 29 and 30, drawing enthusiastic participation from students across the country.

A total of 111 teams have registered for the event so far, with nearly 70 percent of the participants coming from outside Karnataka. Students from states including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are expected to take part, reflecting the growing national recognition of the institution’s academic standards and innovation-driven initiatives. The hackathon aims to provide students with a platform to develop research-oriented and practical solutions to real-world technical challenges. Participants will work continuously for 24 hours, collaborating in teams to design innovative projects and demonstrate their technical expertise, creativity and problem-solving abilities. Speaking about the initiative, Principal Sadashi ve Gowda said the objective of organizing the national-level hackathon is to encourage creativity, technical excellence and innovation among students. He described the participation of students from various parts of the country as a matter of pride for the institution. Gopala Reddy K, Professor and Head of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, is serving as the coordinator of the hackathon.

The inaugural ceremony will be held on May 29 at 10 am at the college sports ground. Mysuru-Kodagu Member of Parliament Yacharaj Krishnaiah Chamaraja Wadiyar will inaugurate the event. President of the Vidyavardhaka Sangha Gundappa Gowda will preside over the programme.

FKMO presses Cong to give RS seat to Muslim candidate

BENGALURU

The Federation of Karnataka Muslim Organisations (FKMO) has urged the Congress party to allocate at least one Rajya Sabha seat to a Muslim candidate from Karnataka in the upcoming elections.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, the Federation stated that the tenure of four current Rajya Sabha members from Karnataka is nearing completion and elections for these seats are expected soon. The Congress party is likely to comfortably win three of these seats, it stated and demanded that at least one winning seat be given to a representative from the Muslim community. It appealed to

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC president DK Shivakumar to take special interest in the matter.

According to the Federation, out of the 12 Rajya Sabha members representing Karnataka, only one currently belongs to the Muslim community. It also stated that while there were at least two Muslim Lok Sabha MPs from Congress in the past, Karnataka currently does not have a single Muslim Lok Sabha MP. It further claimed that the number of Lok Sabha tickets given by Congress to Muslim candidates has reduced to just one and representation in the Rajya Sabha is also limited to one member.

Federation opposed law, boycotted cattle fairs, demanded removal of unauthorized banners, urging authorities for immediate action

Hassan Muslim Federation backs cattle slaughter ban

HASSAN

The Hassan District Muslim Federation announced that it has decided not to slaughter cattle during Bakrid this year in the district, aiming to promote peace and social harmony among communities.

Speaking at a press conference, leaders said the Karnataka Cattle Slaughter and Traffic Prohibition Act 2020 is being misused for political gain and they described it as an attack on constitutional and religious rights. The federation stated that until the governme

nt withdraws the law community leaders have unanimously decided not to participate in cattle slaughter or cattle fairs across Hassan district. They also demanded immediate removal of unauthorised banners placed in localities which they said were creating tension and urged district administration police and municipal authorities to take action.

Leaders present at the press conference included Anshad-e-Palya Yusuf Khan Amir Jan Imran Pasha (lawyer) Naeem Shakir and Suhail and they reiterated that the decision

was taken voluntarily to maintain peace and communal harmony in the district and they appealed to the government and citizens to understand their stand as a step towards social unity and to avoid misunderstandings or provocative actions during the festival period and they further said that cooperation from all sections is essential for maintaining law and order and peaceful celebrations during Bakrid period this year and also requested all communities to continue mutual respect and avoid any rumours or misinformation circulation messages online.

Avadhoota Datta Peetham launches Sanskrit education courses

MYSURU

Marking the 84th birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swamiji, the Avadhoota Datta Peetham in Mysuru, a series of new Sanskrit education courses has been launched in Mysuru on Tuesday.

The programmes have been introduced jointly by the Peetham’s key educational wings — SGS Vedanidhi Academy and Masters Institute — in collaboration with the Central Sanskrit University. The newly launched courses are open to anyone



interested in learning Sanskrit, scriptures and related traditional subjects. This is a simple six-month or one-year course designed to provide foundational knowledge in spoken Sanskrit, grammar

and Indian culture. A two-year pre-university level programme intended for students who have completed Class 10 and above. The course serves as a bridge for those aspiring to pursue B.A.

and M.A. degrees in Sanskrit studies. Specialized higher-learning programmes in Advaita Vedanta, Puranic history and Sanskrit grammar have also been introduced for serious scholars. Professional Yoga Course

The yoga programme extends beyond physical postures and includes human anatomy, Ayurveda and modern medical perspectives, making it a comprehensive professional training course. This postgraduate programme is specially designed for individuals aged 40 to 50 years and above who wish to pursue self-knowledge and

deeper understanding of Hindu philosophy and traditions. A unique course tailored for Vedic scholars who wish to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and interpretations of Vedic mantras. Students enrolled in B.A. and M.A. degree programmes can pursue self-study from anywhere, but examinations must be taken at the Mysuru Ashram campus. However, diploma and certificate course students have been granted special flexibility by the university, enabling them to write examinations online from anywhere in the world through internet-based protocols.

One held for attempting to sell Grey Francolins

MYSURU

The CID Forest Mobile Unit police arrested a man for allegedly attempting to sell two grey francolin birds illegally near the public playground at Rammanahalli on the Mysuru–Mahadevapura Road in Mysuru on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, the police team rushed to the spot around 10.30 am and found a person carrying a cage containing two grey francolins and allegedly trying to sell them.

The police immediately

conducted a raid and arrested one accused, while another person managed to escape from the scene.

The arrested accused has been identified as Shivanna, 50, son of late Karishetty, an agriculturist and residing on Hanchya Road in Rammanahalli of Mysuru taluk.

Police seized two grey francolin birds and a cage in which the birds were being kept illegally.

A case has been registered and further legal action has been initiated against the accused.

QUICK READ



Residential sports schools open fresh selection process

CH NEWS, Chikkaballapura The Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports has announced special admissions for Sports Residential Schools and hostels for the year 2026-27. A special selection process will be held for candidates who could not participate earlier, giving them another opportunity across Karnataka. It includes sports coaching selection and a sports science test conducted by experts. Eligible students studying in Class 7 for 8th admission and PUC candidates up to 18 years can apply. Those who missed earlier selection rounds may also participate in the process.

Chitradurga city to face power cut today

CH NEWS, Chitradurga Due to emergency maintenance work in Chitradurga city and nearby areas, electricity supply will be disrupted on May 27 from 10 am to 6 pm. Areas including IUDP Layout, Saraswati Puram, Government Diploma College, Kote Road, Kamana bava Baran gay, Jogimatti Road, Karuvinakatte Circle, District Hospital, District Pancharayat, Science College, Arts College, LIC Office and Taluk Panchayat. The BESCOM Nagar Sub Division Assistant Executive Engineer said the shut down is needed for safety and requested public cooperation during the maintenance period.

Deputy Collector highlights digital land records benefits

CHITRADURGA

Deputy District Collector B T Kumaraswamy said that the government's new digital land records system is bringing a quiet revolution through the Bhoo Suraksha software, which is helping citizens access land documents easily at home. He was speaking at a one day workshop on Importance of Records Preservation Maintenance and Public Records Act 2010 and Rules 2013 organized by District Administration and Karnataka State Gazetteer Department at Zilla Panchayat Hall. He said the system is digitizing pahanı mutation and grant documents by scanning and verifying authenticity so people no longer need to visit offices. Records are now accessible on mobile phones through integrated land technology improving transparency and efficiency. Officials emphasized that maintenance and preservation of files is essential in govern-

MLA D S Arun supports HC bench proposal

MLA invited delegation to Delhi to present the issue directly before central govt authorities for consideration

SHIVAMOGGA

Leaders and lawyers in Shivamogga renewed their demand for establishing a High Court bench in the city during a public meeting held. Speakers said Shivamogga has developed rapidly over the years and is now well connected through roads and communication facilities, making it a suitable place for a regional High Court bench.



MLA D. S. Arun said he would strongly support the proposal at the national level and raise the issue with the Union

Law Minister and the Department of Justice. He assured the gathering that he would stand with the people and lawyers in

their struggle until the demand is fulfilled. He also invited a delegation from Shivamogga to visit Delhi so the matter could be presented directly before central authorities. The MLA said Shivamogga is centrally located and covers four nearby districts within a hundred kilometre radius. He added that the number of pending cases in the region meets the required criteria for estab-

lishing a High Court bench. He urged people to continue the movement without political differences and work together for success. Bar Association President Raghavendra Swamy and honorary struggle committee president K. Basappa Gowda explained the progress of the campaign and appealed for united efforts. Several public representatives, lawyers and com-

munity leaders attended the meeting and expressed support for the long pending demand. Leaders present at the programme said the bench would help people from nearby districts receive quicker justice without travelling long distances to Bengaluru. They said the movement would continue until demand and establishes the High Court bench in Shivamogga.

Officials said awareness campaigns and door-to-door visits will improve waste segregation, reduce dumping and strengthen governance

District Collector calls for waste management awareness

MANDYA

District Collector Dr Kumar said that scientific disposal of solid waste is the responsibility of every citizen and public awareness is essential. District Urban Development Cell and Municipal Council organized a one day workshop on Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 at Mandya University Hall for municipal councilors and officials. Dr Kumar said new rules classify waste into green waste dry waste sanitary waste and special waste and citizens must separate waste at source. Local bodies must collect transport and process waste scientifically and segregate recyclables through MRF units while penalties should be imposed for violations. We must change public mindset and create a clean healthy society and officials should use training to educate citizens through demonstrations in wards. Officials said proper waste management is essential for health and sustainable development and urged all departments to implement rules effectively. P Narasimha Murthy

Project Officer explained that waste should be separated into wet dry sanitary and special care waste including batteries bulbs medicines and paint cans and processed scientifically. Authorities said violations of rules will lead to penalties and stressed that cleanliness improves public health and reduces economic burden on society. District officials police officers engineers and civic workers attended the programme and were urged to implement the rules in all local bodies effectively. Workshop concluded with message that scientific waste management is essential for clean and healthy society in Mandya district. Experts said public cooperation and strict enforcement are necessary for success of Solid Waste Management programme. Segregation at source reduces pollution and helps recycling units manage materials efficiently in urban and rural areas. Officials said awareness campaigns and door to door visits will improve public compliance over time. Every household must participate in segregation and proper waste disposal without irresponsible

dumping. Such initiatives will strengthen governance and reduce health risks ensuring sustainable development. Training programmes help officials understand rules and implement them effectively in departments. Stakeholders expressed commitment to maintain cleanliness and ensure proper waste management across Mandya district going forward. Officials urged citizens to follow rules strictly so that Mandya remains clean healthy and environmentally sustainable for future generations. Officials highlighted that scientific waste management under new rules is a key step towards improving urban living standards in Mandya district. They said that coordinated efforts between local bodies, citizens and government departments are required to ensure effective implementation. Proper segregation, collection and disposal will reduce pollution and protect public health. The initiative is expected to create cleaner surroundings, better hygiene and sustainable development across all towns and municipalities in the district.

“Bengaluru: An Environmentally Dead City”

RASHIDA AAMIR

Bengaluru, once known as “the garden city of India” is now being called “an environmentally dead city” due to the drastic decline of its green cover in the recent decades. Research from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) highlights that the city has lost up to 93% of its original green cover and 60% lake bodies to concrete since 1970. This juxtaposition has happened due to the large-scale cutting down of trees for infrastructure, new transportation, and wider roads. Joseph Hoover, an environmentalist and wildlife conservative challenges the promises made by new transportation and wider roads in exchange of deforestation, aimed to promote public transport and reduce/control traffic with the statistic that the number of private vehicles has increased tenfold. Bengaluru's private vehicle population has crossed 1.2 crore with the average of 2,100 new vehicles hitting the road everyday.



Bengaluru's upcoming major infrastructure projects include Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Ltd's (BMRCL) Namma Metro Phase 3, set to clear 6,868 trees. And Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP), set to clear 32,572 trees. For each tree cut, BMRCL and BSRP have promised to plant 10 saplings. Hoover counterargues with this by saying, “The saplings you plant today, it will take 20-30 years to give us some ecological value. The existing tree that you cut down, which has been sequestering carbon for all these years and has been giving us oxygen, you can't replace it. When you cut an existing tree, the carbon that is sequestered is released back into the atmo-

sphere.” He adds that the alternative of preserving trees by transplanting them has a success rate of only 10%, it fails due to severe root loss and causes irreversible water stress, hormonal imbalances, and a fatal condition known as transplant shock. “There should be some balance between development and preserving your ecosystem. What are we leaving behind for our future generations?” Hoover draws concern from pollution levels getting higher and Bengaluru's summers getting hotter – India Meteorological Department (IMD) marked the highest temperature in Bengaluru city in 2026 as 36.6%. Hoover demands we shouldn't wait until “our taps run out of water” to take action and stand up against the government and say ‘we have had enough.’ Bengaluru has suffered enough, we need to move forward with caution or else in the future we will have the best metropolitan cities but no life left to use them.

Arebhashe festival celebrated in Kodagu

MADIKERI

Madikeri MLA Dr Mantar Gowda inaugurated Arebhashe village festival at Maragodu Gowda Samaj premises and said efforts must continue for learning and development of Arebhashe language. He said Arebhashe culture and Sahitya Akademi programmes are reaching village level and preserving the language will also strengthen Kannada. Children and youth should learn the language without hesitation. Sadananda Mavaji said academy is publishing books and quarterly Hingara magazine and urged families to read and promote semi language development through reading habits. Speakers said Arebhashe language has grown through associations, Yakshagana, drama and seminars and stressed need to protect culture and encourage speaking in daily

life. Former officials and writers said language reflects culture and urged more studies, documentation and promotion of Arebhashe traditions across Kodagu and coastal regions. Books were released and local achievers were honoured during the event and organisers said unity and cultural pride will help preserve the language for future generations. Many participants including local leaders academicians community heads and cultural activists attended the programme and supported efforts to strengthen Arebhashe language and culture in Kodagu region. They said language and tradition are closely linked and must be preserved through education cultural programmes and public participation in villages and schools. Organisers said workshops book releases and cultural events will continue and will help younger gen-

eration understand the importance of semi language and its heritage. They added that unity among Gowda community members and cooperation from government bodies will ensure survival and growth of Arebhashe language for future generations. A book titled Rsu and Prime Minister Story was released and several books were donated to Maragodu Gram Panchayat during the programme. The event also honoured landholders and cultural contributors and included prayers and cultural performances by local artists and groups. Speakers said such festivals help protect identity and encourage children to learn language and maintain cultural pride in Kodagu and neighbouring regions. Officials said continued support will be given for similar programmes in schools and villages to promote language preservation.

Challakere: Tobacco control raids conducted

CHITRADURGA

Tobacco control teams conducted raids in Challakere city of Chitradurga district to prevent youth from falling into tobacco addiction under the COTPA 2003 Act. They inspected shops near the bus stand and public hospital and caught several violations. Officials from the District Tobacco Control Cell conducted awareness drives and warned shop owners and

youth about rising deaths due to tobacco use. They also instructed shops to display mandatory warning boards as per rules. During the operation, 21 cases were registered and fines were collected under Sections 4, 6A and 6B of the COTPA Act. Authorities imposed penalties of rupees 1500 and 600 in different violations. District officials including health officers and police personnel participated in the in-

spection drive. They said strict enforcement will continue to protect public health and youth. Officials said tobacco control drives will be intensified across Chitradurga district to reduce illegal sales and create awareness among students and young people in future inspections across all towns and villages without delay moving forward with strict monitoring measures system.

DRINKING WATER URGENCY

CEO orders urgent steps for drinking water supply

MANDYA

CEO KR Nandini told officials to take urgent steps to prevent drinking water shortage in villages during summer season. She spoke at District Water and Sanitation Committee meeting held at Zilla Panchayat hall in Mandya. Officials were instructed to ensure continuous water supply and carry out emergency works based on priority and need in every village. There should be no difference in water quality or quantity and all villages must



receive minimum supply without interruption. Officials were asked to prepare action plans showing problems solutions and estimated costs for villages facing water

shortage issues. The meeting discussed borewell failures pipeline repairs electricity issues and falling groundwater levels across several taluks in the district.

Officials directed drilling of new borewells repairing pumps and supplying water through tankers in areas where needed urgently. A special helpline has been set up to receive complaints and resolve drinking water issues quickly for citizens. Officials reviewed Jal Jeevan Mission works and ordered speedy completion of delayed rural water supply projects. Water quality testing campaigns will be conducted in villages with participation of staff and local community workers.

Officials said coordinated efforts between departments will ensure better service delivery and reduce shortages in rural areas. Administration assured that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure safe and uninterrupted drinking water supply during summer. CEO Nandini concluded that the administration is committed to solving water problems across Mandya district and ensuring supply. Officials said village level monitoring will be strengthened and regular inspections will be conducted to

prevent any disruption in water supply during peak summer months. Authorities emphasized that public cooperation is essential for sustainable water management and urged citizens to use water carefully, avoid wastage, and support government efforts to maintain clean and safe drinking water in all rural and urban areas of Mandya district for long term sustainability and better living conditions effectively in all regions ensuring long term water security for all citizens homes.

Health Officials Warn Public About Dog Bites

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Dog bite cases are common in Chikkaballapura and officials have warned that they can become dangerous if not treated quickly because rabies is a deadly disease that spreads through infected animal bites and has no cure once symptoms appear. Health experts said early symptoms include fever, headache, pain or itching at bite site, fatigue, nausea, sore throat and difficulty sleeping, while advanced stages may cause hydrophobia, fear of water, fear of air, anxiety, hallucinations, excessive drooling, muscle spasms and paralysis.

QUICK READ



Fish truck overturns after tyre burst

CH NEWS, Udupi

A fish-laden lorry overturned near Ambagilu in Udupi on Tuesday after a sudden tyre burst caused the driver to lose control of the vehicle. The truck was transporting fish from Mangaluru when the accident occurred on the roadside. The driver, who was alone in the vehicle, escaped with minor injuries. Local residents rushed to the spot and assisted him immediately after the mishap. The lorry suffered considerable damage in the accident. Police visited the scene, conducted an inspection and later cleared the vehicle from the road. Traffic movement in the area was disrupted briefly following the incident.

District to observe Menstrual Hygiene Day with awareness

CH NEWS, Mangaluru

Dakshina Kannada district will mark International Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28 with a series of awareness programmes across rural areas to encourage healthy discussions on menstruation and hygiene practices. The Karnataka government's Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department has instructed all taluk and gram panchayat offices to organise events on the occasion. Participants will wear bracelets containing 23 white beads and five red beads, symbolising the 28-day menstrual cycle.

Police educates NCC cadets on cybercrime and drugs

CH NEWS, Udupi

Around 600 National Cadet Corps students at St Francis Xavier English Medium School in Udyavara attended an awareness session on cybercrime and drug abuse conducted by Udupi Police constable Pavan Kumar. During the programme, the officer explained safety measures to prevent cyber frauds such as hacking, fake job offers, fraudulent loan schemes and so-called digital arrest scams. Students were advised to remain alert while using online platforms and avoid sharing personal information with unknown sources. The session also focused on the dangers of narcotic drugs and the legal consequences under the NDPS Act. Cadets were encouraged to make responsible choices and spread awareness among their peers and communities.

CHITRADURGA

Health Education Officer B. Moogappa has advised the public to undergo a blood test for any kind of fever, stating that early diagnosis is the only way to properly identify diseases like dengue and chikungunya. He said there is no specific direct treatment without proper testing.

He was speaking during a community health education programme held at Prashanta Nagar under Budhnagar Health Centre as part of Dengue Awareness Day activities.

Officials urged to speed up minority schemes

Mandya has 64 minority Anganwadi centres with 4,300 children; officials urged to address dropout causes

MANDYA

Karnataka State Minorities Commission Chairman U Nisar Ahmed said that there should be no negligence in implementing the Prime Minister's 15 point minority welfare programme and all departments must ensure timely delivery of benefits.

He presided over a progress review meeting with district level officials at the district collector office and reviewed implementation of the new 15 point programme for minorities in Mandya district.



The Prime Minister's 15 point programme aims at comprehensive development of minority communities including Muslim Jain Christian Sikh Parsi and Buddhist groups across welfare education and employment sectors.

Officials were instructed to

ensure Anganwadi enrolment of minority children under six years and to prevent dropouts through door to door awareness campaigns in villages.

There are 64 minority Anganwadi centres in Mandya district with over 4300 children enrolled and officials

were told to identify reasons for dropouts and take corrective action.

He also directed officials to promote self employment schemes including PM Swanidhi micro credit loans youth fund programmes and skill development training for minority youth across the district.

Lead Bank Manager Arun Kumar informed that 477 minority beneficiaries have received education loans while government welfare schemes are being implemented through banks at low interest rates.

District Collector Dr Kumar

said implementation of minority welfare schemes is satisfactory and assured that all eligible beneficiaries are being covered under government programmes.

Officials including Zilla Panchayat CEO KR Nandini and other district officers attended the meeting and stressed the need for effective coordination and monitoring of welfare schemes.

We need to ensure strict implementation of all minority welfare programmes in Mandya district by improving coordination between departments

and increasing field level monitoring. The government is also focusing on education skill development financial inclusion and awareness generation among minority communities to ensure equal opportunities and social justice. Officials were instructed to conduct regular inspections of schools and Anganwadi centres and submit progress reports on time. Community leaders also expressed support for the schemes and requested faster delivery of benefits to eligible families across rural and urban areas.

Activists condemn the state government for shielding rioters while urging strict measures against lawbreakers

SDPI protest condemns vigilantism and case withdrawals

MANGALURU

Members of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) staged a protest near the Clock Tower, strongly opposing the Karnataka government's decision to withdraw cases registered against rioters. The demonstration was organized jointly by the party's city and rural district units in Mangaluru and witnessed participation from party workers, leaders, and members of the public.

Protesters raised slogans against the government and accused it of encouraging forces that disturb communal harmony by withdrawing cases against individuals involved in violent incidents. They demanded immediate action to stop assaults, attacks, and vigilantism carried out in the name of cow protection. Demonstrators also called for strict punishment against those taking the law into their own hands.

Addressing the gathering, Riyaz Farangipete criticized the BJP and Sangh Parivar or-



ganizations, alleging that they act against constitutional principles and spread misinformation through social and political platforms. He claimed that secular political parties had failed to effectively challenge such narratives, allowing the BJP to strengthen its influence across the country.

Farangipete also alleged that in some cases police personnel assist groups involved in stopping cattle transport vehicles, filing cases against transporters while failing to act against those engaged in violence and vigilantism. He questioned the legitimacy of moral policing activities and accused authorities of protecting troublemakers instead of maintaining law and order. State Secretary Riyaz Kadam also expressed disappointment over what he de-

scribed as unfulfilled election promises made by the Congress government. He referred to assurances regarding restoration of hijab rights, reimplementation of 2B reservation, and other public welfare measures that had gained significant support from Muslim voters during elections. Rural District President Anwar Sadath Bajatturu said the withdrawal of cases against pro-Kannada leaders such as Vatal Nagaraj was welcome, but criticized the withdrawal of cases against individuals accused of hate speech, including Pramod Muthalik and Chaitra Kundapura.

Several party leaders and representatives attended the protest, including state committee member Ashraf Agnadi, city district general secretary Jamal Jokatte, secretary Nisar Valavoor, rural district secretary Shakir Alakemajalu, and members of the Women India Movement. The programme was compered by rural district secretary Ashraf Talapady.

Udupi administration tightens vigilance ahead of Bakrid

UDUPI

The district administration in Udupi has intensified precautionary measures ahead of Bakrid celebrations to ensure peaceful observance of the festival and maintain communal harmony. A key district-level committee meeting was chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, with participation from senior officials representing various government departments and law enforcement agencies. During the meeting, authorities discussed measures to prevent unauthorized slaughter activities and illegal transportation of livestock during the Eid al-Adha period. Officials emphasized that strict vigilance would be maintained across the district while ensuring that lawful religious practices are carried out without disruption.

MADIKERI

Kodagu district in-charge secretary Dr. N.V. Prasad has called for necessary precautions and preparedness as early signs of the monsoon have begun in the district. He spoke at a meeting held on Tuesday during a capacity building programme of Ponnampet Taluk Panchayat and reviewed preparedness measures across departments.

Dr. Prasad directed officials to take special care in vulnerable and flood prone areas and ensure that families living in such regions are regularly updated about safety instructions. He also instructed authorities to

Kadirenahalli underpass gets drainage plan

BENGALURU

Additional Commissioner Dr. Naveen Kumar Raju of Bengaluru South City Corporation conducted a surprise inspection at Kadirenahalli underpass after reports of rainwater logging



strengthen facilities at relief and care centres so that essential services are available during emergencies.

He stressed the need to complete repair works of dilapidated school and Anganwadi buildings to prevent accidents during heavy rains. He also reviewed drinking water supply projects and asked officials to complete pending works under the Jal Jeevan Mission at the earliest. The secretary advised the Agriculture Department to guide farmers on availability of fertilizers, seeds, urea and

machinery so that the sowing season is not affected by monsoon conditions. District officials said a monsoon helpline centre has already been set up and nodal officers have been appointed to monitor rainfall related issues. District Collector S.J. Somashekhar said all necessary precautionary measures are in place to handle monsoon challenges.

The meeting also discussed progress in animal husbandry and horticulture departments. Senior officials from revenue, forest and panchayat departments attended and reviewed preparedness plans for the upcoming rainy season across Kodagu district.

disrupted traffic movement in the area.

He inspected the underpass along with waste transfer points near Kadirenahalli Cross and Yalachenahalli Lake. Officials informed him that recent heavy rains had exposed weak drain-

age systems, leading to water accumulation and inconvenience to commuters.

Dr. Raju instructed engineers to immediately design and implement a permanent drainage solution to ensure smooth rainwater flow.

CNC honors Codava martyrs at memorial ceremony

MADIKERI

A delegation from the Codava National Council led by Chairman N.U. Nachappa Codava visited the Devattparamb Codava Genocide Memorial Site on 26 May 2026 to pay monthly tribute to Codava ancestors who lost their lives while defending their homeland and community. Members of the delegation offered floral tributes and conducted prayers in remembrance of the victims. During the ceremony, the organisation recalled the tragic events of 12 December 1785, when thousands of

unarmed Codava men, women, and children were allegedly massacred at Devattparamb. According to the CNC, forces of the Mysore Sultanate and soldiers associated with the French East India Company invited Codavas to what was presented as a peace gathering before carrying out the killings. The delegation stated that the attack followed repeated military campaigns by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan to gain control over Codava territory, which was strategically important because of its access to the Malabar Coast and its valuable spice trade.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS ALERT

Health Officer urges blood test for every fever case



Government nursing college students also participated in spreading awareness in Anganwadi centres. Officials explained that dengue and chikungunya are caused by Aedes

mosquitoes, which breed in clean stagnant water and usually bite during the daytime. Common symptoms include sudden fever, eye pain and joint pain, while severe cases may

lead to bleeding, low consciousness and even life threatening conditions if not treated on time. Health experts advised people to maintain clean surroundings, avoid water stagnation, properly dispose of waste and take precautions against mosquito bites. They also urged households to clean water storage areas weekly to prevent mosquito breeding.

Senior Health Inspector T. Sreenivasamurthy appealed for public cooperation during door to door health surveys and larva inspection drives. He said community participa-

tion is essential for preventing mosquito borne diseases and maintaining hygiene in residential areas.

Nursing instructor Lavanya and students demonstrated awareness activities using pamphlets to educate the public. Anganwadi workers and local residents participated in the programme and supported the awareness drive aimed at reducing mosquito borne diseases in Chitradurga district through better hygiene and timely medical testing practices for all fever cases in the region.

Messi suffers hamstring fatigue concern ahead of Argentina WC campaign

MIAMI

Inter Miami and Argentina superstar Lionel Messi has been diagnosed with a left hamstring issue after being forced off during his club's Major League Soccer match against the Philadelphia Union, raising concerns just weeks before Argentina begins its FIFA World Cup title defence.

Inter Miami confirmed on Monday that medical tests revealed "an overload associated with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring." The club did not disclose the exact nature of the examination, although such assessments typically involve imaging scans to determine the extent of the problem.

The MLS stadiums stated that Messi's return to action would depend on his recovery and medical progress.

"The timeline for his return to physical activity will depend on his clinical and functional progress," the club said in an official statement.

Messi was substituted in the 73rd minute of Inter Miami's thrilling 6-4 victory over the Philadelphia Union on Sunday night. The Argentine forward appeared uncomfortable moments earlier and was seen reaching toward the back of his left leg before signalling that he could not continue.

Despite the concern, Messi walked off the field without assistance and headed directly to the dressing room. Before his departure, he had played a key role in the match, providing two assists during the first half. The injury scare comes at an important time for Argentina, which is scheduled to begin preparations for the upcoming World Cup in the United States. The reigning champions will play warm-up matches against Honduras on June 6 in Texas and Iceland on June 9 in Alabama before the tournament begins.

Argentina has been drawn in Group J, where it will face Algeria, Austria and Jordan in the group stage. The team will be hoping its captain is fully fit before the campaign gets underway. Weather conditions during Sunday's match may also have contributed to the concern. Heavy rain fell throughout the second half, making the playing surface slippery, although Inter Miami has not linked the injury to the conditions. Messi remains one of the most influential figures in world football. The 38-year-old has appeared in five World Cups and famously led Argentina to the title in 2022.



Inter Miami star withdrawn after discomfort, recovery timeline remains uncertain

French Open hit by intense heat as temperatures soar

PARIS

A rare early-summer heat wave has gripped the French Open, forcing players and spectators to adapt to unusually high temperatures that are transforming conditions at Roland Garros and creating fresh challenges during the season's second Grand Slam.

Temperatures during the opening two days of the tournament have climbed to around 33 degrees Celsius, significantly above average for late May in Paris. Forecasts indicate that the hot spell is likely to continue throughout the first week, raising concerns about player welfare while also affecting the nature of competition on the clay courts.

Several players compared the conditions to those experienced during the Paris Olympics in 2024, which took place in the peak summer months of July and August. Four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek noted that the intense heat had altered the behaviour of the ball and the speed of the courts, making this year's tournament



Unseasonal Paris heat creates faster courts and testing conditions throughout

feel markedly different.

The soaring temperatures have prompted players to take extra precautions. Many have been seen placing ice towels around their necks during changeovers, while spectators have sought relief under sprinklers and water hoses used to maintain the clay surfaces between sets.

Australian player Daria Kasatkina described the conditions as among the hottest she had experienced at Roland Garros, saying the heat made concentration and energy management crucial factors in determining match outcomes.

The extreme weather has already had a visible impact on the tournament. Canadian player Gabriel Diallo cited the heat as a major reason for retiring from his opening-round match. Elsewhere, both Andrey Rublev and Ignacio Buse required medical attention during a lengthy encounter, while a ball girl also needed assistance after appearing af-

ected by the conditions.

Tournament organisers have implemented an extreme weather protocol similar to those used at the Australian Open and US Open. Cooling breaks can be introduced when heat-stress readings exceed specific thresholds, while play can be suspended if conditions become dangerous. Not all competitors are unhappy with the weather. Australian star Alex de Minaur said the heat favours an aggressive style of play by making the ball travel faster through the air. American player Alex Michelsen echoed that view, suggesting the quicker conditions suit power hitters.

As temperatures continue to soar, adapting to the heat may prove just as important as adapting to the clay in determining who advances deep into the tournament.

President says country welcomes arrangement after United States raises concerns

Mexico agrees to host Iran team base during FIFA World Cup 2026

MEXICO CITY

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has confirmed that Mexico will host Iran's national football team during the FIFA World Cup 2026 after the United States reportedly declined to accommodate the squad throughout the tournament.

Sheinbaum said Mexican authorities had no objections when approached by FIFA regarding alternative arrangements for the Iranian team. The decision means Iran will now establish its tournament base in the border city of Tijuana while continuing to play its group-stage matches in the United States.

"The United States doesn't want the Iranian national team to stay overnight in the United States," Sheinbaum told reporters. She added that FIFA subsequently contacted Mexico to explore the possibility of hosting the team.

"Can they stay overnight in



Mexico? And we said, 'Yes, no problem. We have no issue with that,'" she said.

The change comes amid continuing geopolitical tensions involving Iran, the United States and Israel. Iran's football federation had earlier announced that its originally planned base in Tucson, Arizona, would be shifted to Tijuana because of the prevailing circumstances. FIFA later confirmed the adjustment to

the team's World Cup preparations.

Iran is scheduled to play all three of its Group G matches in the United States despite being based in Mexico. The Asian side will open its campaign against New Zealand national football team in Inglewood, California, on June 15. It will then face Belgium national football team on June 21 at the same venue before taking on Egypt national football team in Seattle on June 26.

The arrangement highlights the unique logistical challenges

associated with the expanded FIFA World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada. Teams are expected to travel extensively across North America during the tournament, making base camp planning a critical component of preparations.

Sheinbaum said Mexican authorities continue to work closely with FIFA to finalise operational and security arrangements ahead of the competition.

The 2026 edition will be the first World Cup to feature 48 teams, expanding from the traditional 32-team format. With matches spread across three host nations, organisers face unprecedented logistical demands as they prepare for what is expected to be the largest World Cup in history.

Iran's relocation to Tijuana is one of the first major operational adjustments linked to the tournament, underlining the complex political and practical considerations surrounding the global event.



Iniyan Panneerselvam claims double gold at Commonwealth Chess Championship

NEW DELHI

Indian Grandmaster Iniyan Panneerselvam delivered a dominant performance at the Commonwealth Chess Championship in Sri Lanka, clinching gold medals in both the Rapid and Blitz categories to emerge as one of the tournament's biggest stars.

The Tamil Nadu player showcased remarkable consistency across both formats, scoring 6.5 points from seven rounds in each event to secure the top podium position. His double triumph highlighted India's continued strength in international chess and added another significant achievement to his growing list of accomplishments.

In the Rapid section, Iniyan finished ahead of fellow Indian Grandmaster Srihari L R, who secured the silver medal. Grandmaster Mitrabha Guha completed an Indian sweep of the podium by taking bronze.

The Blitz competition saw Iniyan maintain his impressive form. He once again topped the standings with 6.5 points, while Grandmaster Rohith Krishna S claimed the silver medal. Srihari added another medal to his tally by finishing third and securing bronze in the fast-paced format.

While Iniyan dominated the Rapid and Blitz events, the Classical title went to Mitrabha Guha, who produced a strong performance over the

longer format of the game. Sri Lankan player Ranindu Liyanage finished second to claim the silver medal, while Srihari continued his impressive tournament by securing bronze.

The championship was held from May 16 to 26 and attracted a strong international field from across the Commonwealth. Players from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Mauritius, Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malaysia, Singapore, Scotland and Canada participated in the event. A total of 96 players competed in the Open section, with contests held across Classical, Rapid and Blitz formats.

Indian-origin golfer Manav Shah reaches US Open

NEW DELHI

Indian-origin golfer Manav Shah has completed a remarkable journey from aspiring medical student to major championship competitor after securing a place in the 2026 US Open, one of golf's most prestigious tournaments.

The 34-year-old will make his debut at the US Open next month after producing an impressive performance in the demanding 36-hole final qualifying event at Dallas Athletic Club. Shah finished five-under-par overall to book his place in the championship, which will be held at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club from June 18.

Born in California to parents who emigrated from India in the 1980s, Shah grew up in a Gujarati family where medicine was viewed as the preferred profession. Like many in his extended family, he was expected to pursue a career in healthcare and initially enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, as a pre-med student.

However, his passion

for golf eventually proved stronger than his interest in medicine.

"My extended family are in medicine. That was always the Gujarati line of work in our household," Shah said. "But I realised medicine probably wasn't going to be my thing when ev-

eryone after class went to the library and I was going to the golf course."

That decision led him onto a challenging professional path. Since turning professional in 2015, Shah has competed across various tours and qualifying events, steadily working toward the opportunity to play in one of golf's four major championships.

A key part of his development came through competing on the Asian circuit and in the Indian Golf Premier League, experiences that helped him reconnect with his cultural roots.

Shah said interacting with players from India and spending more time within Indian golfing circles strengthened his confidence and sense of identity. Although raised in the United States, he has maintained strong ties with India through regular visits to Gujarat and Mumbai, where his family originates.

"I've always been tied to the motherland," he said, describing India as a place that remains deeply important to him.

Looking ahead, Shah also voiced support for maintaining multiple pathways into professional golf amid ongoing debates surrounding the sport's structure and the divide between established tours and emerging circuits.



Spain WC squad named without Real Madrid players

MADRID

Spain have announced their 26-man squad for the FIFA World Cup 2026, with coach Luis de la Fuente naming a youthful but experienced group and, notably, excluding any players from Real Madrid for the first time in the tournament's history.

Teenage Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal has been included despite a hamstring injury, with the coach confident he will recover in time.

Veteran striker Alvaro Morata and midfielder Fermin Lopez miss out due to fitness concerns.

Key players include Rodri, Pedri, Gavi, Dani Olmo, Nico Williams, Mikel Oyarzabal and goalkeeper Unai Simon.

Defensive absences such as Dani Carvajal and Dean Huijsen highlight the lack of Real Madrid representation.

Spain, ranked second in the world, are placed in Group H with Cape Verde, Saudi Arabia and Uruguay.

They begin their campaign on June 15 against Cape Verde in Atlanta. Spain aim to win a second World Cup title in 2026 again strongly.

Yashas P storms to historic 400m hurdles gold at Federation Cup

RANCHI

Karnataka hurdler Yashas P produced a career-defining performance at the National Athletics Federation Cup, clocking the second-fastest time ever by an Indian in the men's 400m hurdles to strengthen his case for selection to the Commonwealth Games squad.

The 24-year-old won gold on the final day of the competition with a stunning effort of 49.00 seconds, becoming the fastest active Indian in the event. Only national record holder Dharun Ayyasamy, who ran 48.80 seconds in 2019, has gone faster among Indian athletes.

Yashas' performance came just a day after he breached the Commonwealth Games qualification standard, underlining his excellent form heading into a crucial phase of the season. He edged longtime rival Santhosh Kumar T of Tamil Nadu, who claimed



silver with a time of 49.06 seconds. Both athletes remain in contention for Commonwealth Games selection, pending approval from the Athletics Federation of India's selection committee.

The achievement is particularly noteworthy given that Yashas was overlooked for the Karnataka government's Target Olympic Podium programme, which provides selected athletes with annual financial support of ₹10 lakh through the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics cycle.

Karnataka enjoyed a productive final day overall. Distance runner Shivaji Parashu-

ram bounced back impressively to win the men's 5000m gold medal in 14 minutes and 14.43 seconds. The victory came after a difficult start to the competition, where he fainted after the 10,000m race and was later disqualified for a lane infringement.

In the women's 400m hurdles, Karnataka's Sinchal Kaveramma secured silver with a time of 57.77 seconds behind national star Vithya Ramraj, who won gold in 56.61 seconds. However, both athletes fell short of the Commonwealth Games qualifying mark.

QUICK READ



SEBI explores DLT tokenisation for corp bond market

New Delhi

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has launched a pilot project to explore tokenisation of corporate bonds using distributed ledger technology (DLT), according to chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey. The initiative aims to test whether blockchain-based systems can improve liquidity, efficiency, and settlement speed in India's debt markets. SEBI said corporate bonds already trade on existing platforms, but DLT could enable near-instant settlement and better coordination among stakeholders. The regulator will assess operational and technological challenges before wider adoption. The Reserve Bank of India has issued draft guidelines, with final norms expected soon. SEBI and exchanges are preparing for implementation once regulatory clearance is granted. Pandey also noted AI-driven sectors are influencing global market valuations and valuation trends.

AI jobs apocalypse fears unlikely says Altman now

New Delhi

Sam Altman CEO of OpenAI said fears of an AI-driven jobs apocalypse have so far been overstated, speaking at a Commonwealth Bank of Australia conference in Sydney. He said entry-level white-collar job losses after ChatGPT in 2022 have been less severe than expected. He added that earlier predictions about social and economic disruption were wrong, even if AI progress has been roughly accurate. Companies including HSBC, Amazon, and Standard Chartered have noted AI is reshaping roles. He said human interaction remains essential in many jobs and cannot be fully replaced by machines, citing his Slack and email experiment. Altman emphasized careful optimism about AI's economic impact going forward in global markets.

DoT introduces QR login reforms under PM-WANI

New Delhi

The Department of Telecommunications has introduced QR-based login reforms under the PM-WANI framework to expand public Wi-Fi access. The system enables QR authentication for secondary devices and offers short-duration plans of 15, 30, and 60 minutes. Hotspot naming has also been standardised to improve usability and trust. Officials said implementation will be completed within eight weeks. Under the guidance of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Minister of State Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, the reforms aim to boost adoption of PM-WANI networks across transit hubs and public spaces. The initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi vision for affordable digital connectivity nationwide digital inclusion goals achieved.

Quad nations expand indo-pacific trade, energy ties

Quad nations strengthened Indo-Pacific cooperation on trade, energy security, and maritime stability through new joint initiatives announced

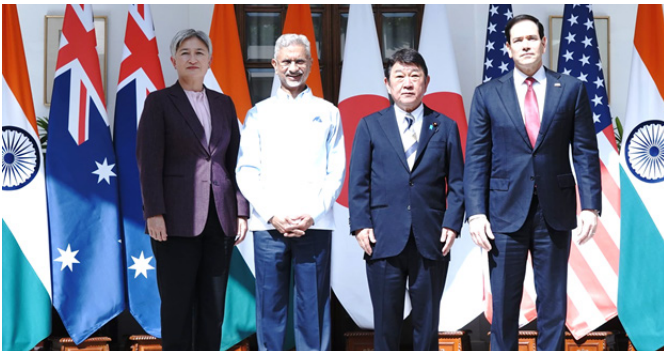
NEW DELHI

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue announced a series of new initiatives focused on trade, maritime cooperation and energy security, signaling a stronger push toward practical economic collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region.

The meeting was hosted by India in New Delhi as part of its current chairmanship of the grouping.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar joined US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi during the discussions.

The four-member grouping unveiled five major initiatives covering maritime surveillance, port infrastructure, re-



gional maritime coordination, critical minerals and energy security. The announcements reflected the Quad's growing emphasis on operational co-operation and regional economic resilience.

Speaking at the meeting, Jaishankar said the Indo-Pacific region would play an increasingly vital role in global trade, maritime commerce

and energy transportation in the coming years. He also underlined the importance of collective efforts against terrorism, stressing that democratic nations must adopt a zero-tolerance approach toward terror threats.

The leaders discussed the importance of strengthening supply chains and ensuring uninterrupted maritime routes

amid rising geopolitical tensions and global energy concerns. Rubio described the Quad as a "partnership of action" focused on delivering practical outcomes instead of remaining only a discussion platform.

Penny Wong highlighted concerns over instability in West Asia and its potential impact on energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for global oil transportation. Motegi reaffirmed the Quad's commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific amid shifting global dynamics.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue has steadily expanded cooperation across trade, technology, infrastructure and maritime security as the Indo-Pacific gains greater strategic significance.

Weak monsoon forecast for FY27 raises concerns over inflation, rural incomes, agricultural output, and overall demand recovery outlook

Weak monsoon forecast raises rural demand concerns

NEW DELHI

The upcoming monsoon outlook for FY27 is raising caution over India's rural economic recovery, with forecasts pointing to below-normal rainfall.

According to a report cited by investment platform smallcase, the India Meteorological Department has projected rainfall at around 92 per cent of the long-period average, signalling a weak monsoon season ahead.

A weaker monsoon could directly impact agricultural output and rural incomes, especially in regions dependent on rain-fed farming. Nearly 55 per cent of India's cultivated land relies on rainfall, making monsoon performance a critical driver of crop

production, food supply chains, and rural consumption trends.

The report warned that erratic rainfall patterns could increase food inflation pressures, particularly for vegetables and essential commodities. Since food accounts for nearly 46 per cent of the Consumer Price Index basket, any supply disruption may quickly translate into broader inflationary stress across the economy.

The impact of rainfall variability is expected to be significant for key crops such as rice, pulses, sugarcane, soybean, and oilseeds. Delays or uneven distribution of rainfall during sowing periods could reduce productivity and affect farm incomes, further slowing rural demand recovery.



The report also highlighted that rising climate variability is making rainfall patterns less predictable, increasing risks for agriculture-dependent sectors. While total rainfall levels remain important, the timing and geographic

distribution of monsoon showers are becoming even more crucial for economic stability.

On the macroeconomic front, higher food inflation could complicate the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy outlook, especially as markets expect gradual rate easing. Inflationary pressures could limit policy flexibility in the coming quarters.

Despite these concerns, agriculture still contributes around 15-16 per cent to India's GDP and supports nearly 45 per cent of the population. A good monsoon typically boosts rural demand, supports FMCG sales, strengthens tractor and two-wheeler markets, and improves earnings across rural-focused industries.

Eid rush surges across Kashmir markets

SRINAGAR

Markets across Srinagar and other towns of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed an extraordinary festive rush as residents flocked to shops and markets ahead of Eid al-Adha celebrations.

From early morning, busy commercial hubs remained packed with shoppers purchasing food items, clothes, bakery products, toys, and sacrificial animals for the upcoming festival.

The heavy footfall in markets resulted in traffic congestion on several roads in Srinagar, with vehicles moving slowly through crowded areas. People carrying shopping bags and essential supplies were seen navigating through packed streets while vendors tried to manage the swelling crowds. Temporary roadside stalls and pavement shops added to the festive atmosphere, although they also reduced pedestrian



space in many parts of the city.

Bakery shops, poultry outlets, butcher shops, and hosiery stores witnessed long queues throughout the day. Toy markets also attracted large numbers of children accompanying their parents for Eid shopping. Traders reported brisk business as families completed last-minute purchases before the festival.

Livestock markets remained among the busiest locations, with sheep and goats brought from regions such as Poonch and Rajouri, along with animals transported from Delhi and Rajasthan. Buyers

carefully inspected animals before making purchases for traditional Eid sacrifices.

Authorities deployed market inspection teams to monitor prices and ensure the quality of food products being sold during the festive season. Officials said there was no shortage of essential commodities in the Valley and warned traders against overpricing goods during the increased demand.

Eid al-Adha, also known as Bakr Eid, is celebrated by Muslims worldwide as a symbol of sacrifice, devotion, and compassion.

India launches investor portal to boost semiconductor growth

NEW DELHI

The government has strengthened its semiconductor strategy under the India Semiconductor Mission by launching a new "Investors Support" portal aimed at improving transparency, coordination, and investor confidence in the sector.

According to the Ministry of Electronics & IT, the initiative comes under the broader Semicon India Programme, which has already approved 12 fabrication or packaging projects and 24 semiconductor design projects across India.

The new digital portal, accessible through the official ISM platform, provides investors with consolidated information on government schemes, policy frameworks, approved projects, and regulatory requirements. It is designed as a single-window

system to streamline communication between investors and government authorities.

Officials said the platform will allow companies to register grievances or queries, which will be addressed through a structured coordination mechanism involving nodal officers from central ministries, state governments, and approved project partners. The system is expected to ensure time-bound resolution of investor concerns.

The ministry stated that the portal will act as a secure, role-based interface to simplify engagement between domestic and international investors and government agencies. It is intended to reduce procedural delays and improve clarity on approvals and compliance requirements.

Amitesh Kumar Sinha highlighted the importance of ac-

tive facilitation and handholding of investors, particularly foreign companies, to build a strong semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem in India. He urged all stakeholders to play a proactive role in addressing investor issues.

The launch event included a detailed walkthrough of the portal's features, onboarding process, and coordination structure. It also outlined the responsibilities of nodal officers and participating organizations involved in project implementation and investor support. India's semiconductor push is part of a broader strategy to develop a resilient and sustainable electronics manufacturing ecosystem. The government has been promoting policy incentives and strategic partnerships to attract global chipmakers and strengthen domestic capabilities.



Techno Electric shares fall after weak profit decline

MUMBAI

Shares of Techno Electric and Engineering Company witnessed a sharp decline of nearly 13 per cent during intra-day trade on Tuesday after the company reported a fall in its fourth-quarter profits for FY26.

The stock fell as much as 12.8% on the BSE to an intra-day low of around ₹1,194 per share before recovering slightly later in the session. It was still trading about 11.8% lower at ₹1,208.8 per share around mid-day.

The decline followed the company's financial results announced after market hours on Monday. Techno Electric and Engineering Company reported a consolidated net profit of ₹114.51 crore for the quarter ended March 2026. This represents a 15% drop compared to ₹134.64 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year.

Despite the fall in profit, the company posted strong revenue growth. Revenue from operations rose 23.8% year-on-year to ₹1,010.04 crore, compared to ₹815.79 crore in the corresponding period last year.

Market participants reacted cautiously to the mixed set of numbers, with profit pressure outweighing revenue gains. The stock movement reflected investor concerns over margin pressure and earnings quality in the near term.

Techno Electric and Engineering Company is a well-established player in India's power infrastructure sector,

Techno Electric shares fall sharply after weak Q4 profit despite strong revenue growth, triggering cautious investor sentiment and market selling pressure

IN SHORT

- Techno Electric shares drop nearly 13% after Q4 results
- Profit declines 15% year-on-year in March quarter
- Revenue rises 23.8% despite fall in earnings
- Market reacts negatively to weak quarterly performance
- Stock partially recovers during intraday trading session

OIL RESERVE TIMING

South Korea weighs oil release amid supply risks

SEOUL

South Korea is carefully evaluating the timing of releasing crude oil from its strategic reserves amid growing concerns of a potential global supply crunch expected around August.

The move comes under an agreement among International Energy Agency member countries to stabilize oil markets following earlier geopolitical disruptions.

The country had earlier committed to releasing 22.46 million barrels of oil by June 9 as part of a coordinated plan involving 32 member nations

of the International Energy Agency. The initiative was designed to cushion market shocks caused by tensions in the Middle East earlier in the year.

However, South Korean officials now say the release will be treated as a last-resort measure. Industry ministry representatives noted that while earlier concerns over supply disruptions have eased slightly, risks remain if shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz face prolonged instability.

Deputy Minister for Trade, Industry and Resources Security Yang Ghi-wuk said the



government is closely monitoring global oil market conditions and will decide on the timing cautiously. He added that although oil inventories are tightening globally, South

Korea has secured alternative supply sources to reduce immediate risk.

According to the industry ministry, about 85 per cent of South Korea's crude oil re-

SYNOPSIS
• South Korea monitors oil
• Considers strategic release timing
• IEA warns supply risks
• Diversified crude imports rising
• Middle East tensions impact

quirements for July have already been secured. The country has also diversified its import sources significantly, reducing reliance on the Middle East.

Data shows that oil imports from North and South America have increased substantially, along with higher shipments from Asia and Africa.

This diversification is seen as a key factor supporting short-term supply stability.

Despite current stability, global agencies including the International Energy Agency have warned that oil inventories are depleting rapidly, raising the possibility of tighter markets later in the year. Some analysts caution that conditions could worsen if geopolitical tensions escalate again.

For now, South Korea maintains that it will align with international commitments while prioritizing domestic energy security and market stability.

Sooryavanshi eyes historic T20 double ton, Gayle record

NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals' teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has set himself an ambitious target after a record-breaking IPL season, declaring his intention to become the first cricketer to score a double century in T20 cricket and surpass West Indies legend Chris Gayle's highest-ever T20 score of 175 not out.

The 15-year-old prodigy made the bold statement during an appearance on former England captain Kevin Pietersen's YouTube show The Switch. When asked about celebrating personal milestones such as half-centuries, Sooryavanshi made it clear that he has his sights set on much bigger achievements.

"I want to score 200 in T20s. I want to break Gayle's record," he said.

Gayle's unbeaten 175 for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Pune Warriors India in

IPL 2013 remains the highest individual score in T20 cricket. The explosive knock came off just 66 balls and included 13 fours and 17 sixes. His century in 30 balls is still the fastest in IPL history.

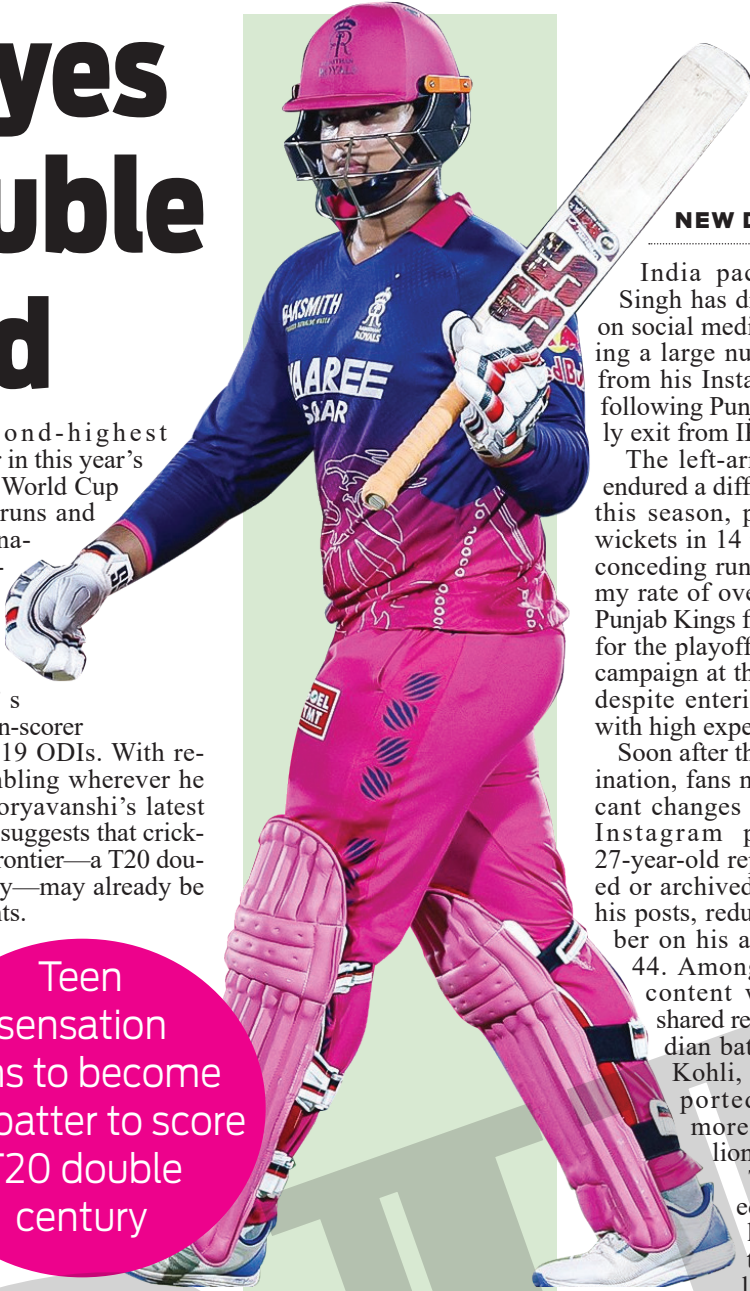
Sooryavanshi's confidence is backed by an extraordinary run of form. The left-hander has enjoyed a sensational IPL 2026 campaign, amassing 583 runs in 14 matches at an average of 41.64 and a remarkable strike rate of 232.27. His tally includes one century and three half-centuries, while his 53 sixes are the most by an Indian in a single IPL season.

The youngster has already shattered several age-related records. Last year, he became the youngest IPL player and later the youngest T20 centurion after smashing a 35-ball hundred against Gujarat Titans. He also holds the record for the fastest IPL century by an Indian.

Beyond the IPL, Sooryavanshi has dominated youth cricket. He finished as

the second-highest run-scorer in this year's Under-19 World Cup with 439 runs and set a tournament record with 30 sixes. He is also India's leading run-scorer in Under-19 ODIs. With records tumbling wherever he plays, Sooryavanshi's latest challenge suggests that cricket's next frontier—a T20 double century—may already be in his sights.

Teen sensation aims to become first batter to score T20 double century



Arshdeep wipes Instagram posts after PBKS exit

NEW DELHI

India pacer Arshdeep Singh has drawn attention on social media after removing a large number of posts from his Instagram account following Punjab Kings' early exit from IPL 2026.

The left-arm fast bowler endured a difficult campaign this season, picking up 14 wickets in 14 matches while conceding runs at an economy rate of over 10 per over. Punjab Kings failed to qualify for the playoffs, ending their campaign at the league stage despite entering the season with high expectations.

Soon after the team's elimination, fans noticed significant changes to Arshdeep's Instagram profile. The 27-year-old reportedly deleted or archived a majority of his posts, reducing the number on his account to just 44. Among the missing content was a widely shared reel featuring Indian batting star Virat Kohli, which had reportedly garnered more than 15 million views.

The reel, posted in December last year, captured a light-hearted exchange between the two cricketers. Arshdeep had jokingly told Kohli that a larger target might have allowed him to score another

century, to which the former India captain responded with a playful remark about the impact of dew conditions on bowlers.

The removal of the reel and several other posts has sparked speculation among fans, although neither Arshdeep nor his representatives have offered any explanation for the social media clean-up.

The development comes amid reports that stricter guidelines have been introduced regarding social media content involving Punjab Kings players. According to media reports, videos and promotional content featuring members of the squad may now need to be created and published exclusively through the franchise's official social media channels.

A team source was quoted as saying that players would be briefed about the new regulations and advised to comply with the guidelines issued by

the BCCI. However, the source clarified that no individual player was being specifically targeted.

While the reason behind Arshdeep's Instagram activity remains unclear, the move has become a talking point among cricket followers during the IPL off-season. With India's international assignments approaching, the pacer will be hoping to put a challenging IPL campaign behind him and regain his best form on the field.



India pacer sparks speculation after deleting posts following disappointing season

Pacer says missing campaign was not entirely his personal choice

YASH DAYAL DISPUTES RCB EXPLANATION OVER ABSENCE FROM IPL 2026 SEASON

NEW DELHI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru pacer Yash Dayal has broken his silence on his absence from IPL 2026, stating that the decision to miss the season was not entirely his own and offering a different perspective from the one previously shared by the franchise.

Ahead of the tournament, RCB Director of Cricket Mo Bobat had said that Dayal would not be available for the defending champions due to a "personal situation." However, the left-arm pacer suggested that the circumstances surrounding his absence were more complex than that explanation indicated.

Dayal said he continues to feel strongly connected to the Bengaluru franchise de-



spite not featuring this season. "Obviously, when you are sitting outside and watching the matches on television, it is difficult. But it is still my team. They retained me and did not bring in a replacement, which shows they value me as an important part of the squad," Dayal said.

He then addressed the rea-

son for his absence, saying the decision was not solely his own.

"The other thing is that my opting out of this season was not my personal decision. The decision is always made by the authority. I do not know what the exact reason behind RCB's decision was. I miss the team a lot," he said.

Despite not being part of the playing group this year, Dayal stressed that communication with the franchise remains intact. He revealed that he has been in regular contact with members of the management, including team mentor Dinesh Karthik, coaches and senior officials.

"There is no communication gap. Everything is clear and sorted. We stay in touch at intervals and the connection has not broken," he added.

Dayal's absence comes amid ongoing legal proceedings involving allegations against him. Authorities have registered separate cases, including one under provisions related to alleged sexual exploitation and another under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The cricketer has not publicly addressed the merits of the allegations, and the matters remain under investigation.

For now, Dayal remains on RCB's retained list, with the franchise yet to announce any change to his status. While he watches from the sidelines, the pacer has made it clear that he still considers himself an integral part of the Bengaluru setup and hopes to return to competitive cricket in the future.

Parag's airport remark leaves Sooryavanshi momentarily stunned

MULLANPUR

A light-hearted exchange involving Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag and teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has gone viral on social media ahead of the IPL 2026 Eliminator against Sunrisers Hyderabad. Rajasthan Royals secured the fourth and final playoff berth with an impressive 30-run victory over Mumbai Indians in their last league-stage match. Following the win, the team travelled from Mumbai to Mullanpur, where they are set to face Sunrisers Hyderabad in a high-stakes knockout clash on Wednesday.

Upon arriving at the airport, players were greeted by photographers and fans eager to

catch a glimpse of the Royals squad. Much of the attention was focused on 15-year-old Sooryavanshi, whose remarkable performances this season have made him one of the most talked-about young cricketers in the tournament.

In a video that quickly gained traction online, photographers requested Parag and Sooryavanshi to pose together for pictures. However, the Royals skipper politely declined the request and responded with a humorous comment. "We aren't film stars," Parag said while walking away.

The remark appeared to catch Sooryavanshi off guard, with the teenager briefly displaying a puzzled expression before continuing to pose for

photographs. The moment has since been widely shared across social media platforms, with fans amused by Parag's candid response and Sooryavanshi's reaction.

Despite the playful incident, Parag has been one of Sooryavanshi's strongest supporters within the Rajasthan Royals setup. The captain has consistently backed the young batter, who has emerged as one of the breakthrough stars of IPL 2026 with a series of explosive innings.

The Royals enter the Eliminator with momentum on their side after sealing qualification in dramatic fashion. Against Mumbai Indians, they posted a challenging 205 for eight before restricting their opponents to 175 for nine.



Wasim Jaffer backs captaincy change at MI after poor season

MUMBAI

Former India opener Wasim Jaffer has suggested that Hardik Pandya should not continue as captain of the Mumbai Indians next season, following the franchise's disappointing IPL 2026 campaign.

Mumbai Indians endured one of their worst seasons in recent memory, finishing ninth in the 10-team standings with just eight points. Their campaign ended with a 30-run defeat to Rajasthan Royals, marking their 10th loss in 14 league matches and triggering discussions about the team's leadership and direction.

Hardik, who returned to lead the five-time champions, also struggled individually. The all-rounder managed only 146 runs in eight innings and picked up just three wickets, failing to make the impact expected from one of India's premier cricketers.

Jaffer said Mumbai Indians should retain Hardik as a key player but allow him to focus solely on his cricket rather than the added responsibility of captaincy.

"I will not make him the captain, but he will surely be retained. I want him to open up and get the best out of him," Jaffer said.

The former batter, however, admitted that identifying a replacement captain would not be straightforward. "At this stage, it would be hard to pick a captain," he added.

Despite the criticism, Mumbai Indians' batting coach Kieron Pollard defended Hardik after the team's early exit, insisting that the season's failure should not be placed solely on the skipper's shoulders.

"From a leadership perspective on Hardik, yes, it has not gone as well as he would have wanted as an individual. It might not have gone how we would have wanted as a management staff," Pollard said after the final league match.

He stressed that Mumbai's disappointing campaign was the result of collective shortcomings rather than individual mistakes.

"No one is going to sit here and point fingers. When you lose, you have to look at it from a collective perspective," Pollard added. While Mumbai Indians are yet to make any decisions regarding leadership for IPL 2027, Jaffer's remarks are likely to fuel debate over whether a change at the top could help the franchise bounce back after a forgettable season.



ASHWIN'S WARNING ON SPLIT HOME VENUES RETURNS AFTER PUNJAB KINGS COLLAPSE

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Kings' failure to qualify for the IPL 2026 playoffs despite a dominant start to the season has revived debate over the franchise's decision to split its home matches between two venues, a strategy former captain Ravichandran Ashwin had previously criticised.

Punjab appeared destined for a top-four finish after winning six of their first seven matches and spending 22 days at the top of the points table. However, a dramatic collapse saw the team lose six consecutive matches, ultimately finishing fifth with 15 points and extending its

long wait for a playoff appearance.

The disappointing end to the campaign has prompted renewed scrutiny of the franchise's decision to host matches at both Mullanpur and Dharamsala. While the move is often seen as a way to broaden a team's commercial reach and engage supporters in different regions, Ashwin had warned earlier in the season that changing home venues could disrupt a team's rhythm and ability to adapt to playing conditions.

Punjab enjoyed considerable success at their primary home ground in Mullanpur, winning three of their first four matches there. Their

only defeat at the venue came against Rajasthan Royals in late April. In contrast, the team struggled badly in Dharamsala, losing all three matches played at the picturesque hill venue. Ashwin argued that the differing pitch characteristics required significant adjustments from players who had become comfortable with conditions in Mullanpur.

"Punjab are not playing in Mullanpur; they are playing in Dharamsala, where the wicket is not that good to bat first on. The ball stays a little low in the first half, so it will take time for them to adapt," Ashwin had said during the season.

He also noted that changing venues could affect batting output, with players often needing time to understand new conditions.

The former Punjab skipper rejected the suggestion that the team's slump was simply another example of the franchise faltering under pressure. Instead, he pointed to the challenges created by moving away from their established base during a crucial stage of the tournament.

While several IPL franchises remain committed to a single home venue, others continue to divide matches across locations to expand their fan base and commercial footprint.