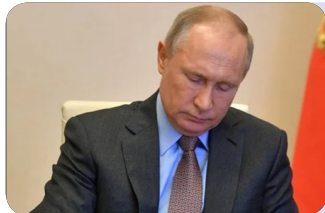


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Putin Praises India On 77th Republic Day

P8

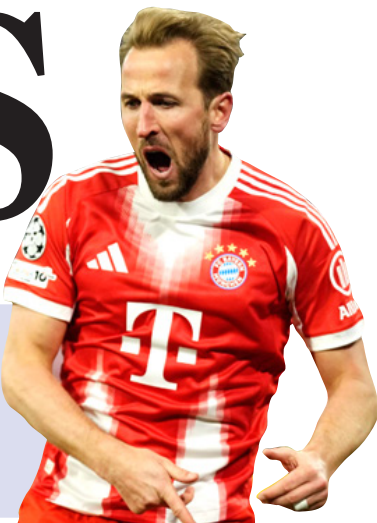


India-EU sign major security-defence deal

P9

Bayern Munich Opens Contract Talks with Harry Kane

P11



Historic! India-EU seal ‘Mother of All Deals’

The Free Trade Deal unveils strategic shield against global turbulence; PM Modi calls it New Delhi's biggest trade deal ever.

NEW DELHI

India and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday finally shook hands on a free trade agreement that had been stuck in negotiations for nearly two decades. The FTA, being called ‘Mother of all deals’, marks a major moment for India’s trade strategy at a time when the global economic order is in flux. The landmark deal will see EU cut tariffs on 99.5% goods traded over seven years, with tariffs to be cut to zero on Indian marine

goods, leather and textile products, chemicals, rubber, base metals and gems and jewellery. The deal is expected to double EU exports to India by 2032 by reducing tariffs in 96.6% of traded goods by value, helping the European companies save upto 4 billion euros (\$4.75 billion) in duties. One of the biggest shifts is in automobiles. India is opening up its long protected domestic car industry and has agreed to bring tariffs on European cars down to as low as



10%. This could eventually open the Indian market to brands that were earlier priced out. The chief executives of Volkswagen, BMW and Mercedes welcomed the trade agreement and described it as a "major opportunity for Germany’s export-driven economy". Terming the deal “extremely important” for Germany, BMW CEO Oliver Zipse said, as per agencies, that the agreement underscored the country’s commitment to re-

maintaining a strong export nation. “We are very pleased that things are now moving quickly, that we are expanding multilateral relations rather than cutting them off,” Zipse said. For New Delhi, the timing matters with the United States increasingly unpredictable on trade and China flooding global markets with low-cost goods. The India-EU deal offers India a chance to diversify its economic partnerships and secure stable access to the world’s largest trading bloc.

WHAT GETS CHEAPER FOR INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS?

For Indian households, the impact is likely to be felt in everyday purchases. The deal lowers steep duties on European agri-food and consumer goods such as wines, olive oil, breads, chocolates, confectionery and processed food. These products have traditionally carried a heavy price tag in India because of high import taxes.

List of EU goods that will get tariff cut benefits		
Product	Current tariffs (%)	Future tariffs (%)
Wine	150%	20% (premium range) 80% (medium range)
Spirits	Up to 150%	40%
Beer	110%	50%
Olive oil, margarine and other vegetable oils		Up to 45%
Kiwis and pears	33%	10% in-quota
Fruit juices and non-alcoholic beer	Up to 55%	0%
Processed food (breads, pastries, biscuits, pasta, chocolate, pet food)	Up to 50%	0%
Sheep meat	33%	0%
Sausages and other meat preparations	Up to 110%	50%

List of EU industrial goods that will see a tariff cut			
PRODUCT	2024 EXPORTS	CURRENT TARIFFS	FUTURE TARIFFS
Machinery and electrical equipment	€16.3 billion	44%	0% for almost all products
Aircraft and spacecraft	€6.6 billion	Up to 11%	0% for almost all products
Optical, technical and surgical equipment	€3.4 billion	Up to 27.5%	0% for almost all products
Plastics	€2.2 billion	Up to 16.5%	0% for almost all products
Pearls, precious stones and metals	€2.1 billion	Up to 22.5%	0% for products of that nature
Chemicals	€3.2 billion	Up to 110%	0% for almost all products
Motor vehicles	€1.6 billion	Up to 25%	10%*
Iron and steel	€1.5 billion	Up to 22%	0% for almost all products
Pharmaceuticals	€1.1 billion	Up to 110%	0% for almost all products

Quota of 250k = 2,50,000 vehicles

I thank all European leaders: Modi

After the signing of ‘mother of all deals’, PM Modi took to X and wrote that the India–EU free trade agreement marks a significant milestone in the relations between Europe and India. “I thank all European leaders over the years for their constructive spirit and commitment, which helped make this possible. This agreement deepens economic ties, creates opportunities for our people, and strengthens the India-Europe partnership for a prosperous future,” he posted in Estonian, Dutch and Finnish and French.



Delivered ‘Mother of All’ deals with India: EU chief

New Delhi: India-EU Summit LIVE Updates: India and Europe have concluded the ‘mother of all’ trade deals, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Tuesday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top EU leadership held summit talks to elevate the two-way ties to jointly navigate geopolitical turbulence and trade disruptions. Prime Minister Modi hosted von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa at the summit. The long-awaited free trade agreement is expected to significantly expand the overall trajectory of two-way engagement, as it will open up new opportunities for cooperation in diverse areas.



Why is the India-EU FTA crucial?

This trade pact is of major significance as it will impact economies that together represent nearly 2 billion people. The goal is to increase trade between India and the EU at a time when global trade is under pressure, especially due to the US tariffs. India is currently facing 50% tariffs from the US and once the FTA comes into effect, it is expected to help Indian exporters diversify their shipments, and also help reduce the country’s dependence on China. So the timing is really crucial for India. The EU had recently suspended the Generalized System of Preferences benefits for India which allowed Indian products to enter Europe at lower taxes. The new FTA is expected to fill that gap and help Indian exporters remain competitive in the European market. Under the deal, both sides plan to lower their import duties.

CITIZENS BODY URGES PM, CM TO SPEED UP BSRP

BENGALURU

A citizens’ organisation has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to personally intervene to expedite Corridor-1 of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP), citing severe delays. The BSRP, commissioned in 2020, aims to connect Bengaluru with its suburbs and satellite towns through dedicated rail corridors, similar to suburban rail systems in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The project, estimated to cost Rs 15,767 crore, was originally scheduled for completion by December 2025. However, the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) (K-RIDE) has now revised the deadline to March 2030. Citizens for Citizens (C4C) said the delay is most alarming in Corridor-1, the Majestic–KIA stretch, which is considered the most critical corridor

and is expected to benefit nearly two crore people. In a letter to Modi and Siddaramaiah, C4C founder Rajkumar Dugar noted that despite the Karnataka government holding a 51% stake in K-RIDE, the project has fallen far behind schedule. The group recalled that when BSRP was sanctioned in October 2020, Corridor-1 was prioritised for completion within 36 months, a plan endorsed by the Directorate of Urban Land Transport. However, even 63 months after sanction, no on-ground work has begun. The latest completion target of March 2030 would mean the corridor takes 113 months to finish, nearly triple the original timeline. C4C has sought strong budgetary allocation, faster land acquisition and directions to complete Corridor-1 within 24 months, expressing confidence that commissioning by January 2028 is achievable with direct intervention.

Cong holds ‘Lok Bhavan Chalo’ for roll back of VB-G-RAM-G Act

BENGALURU

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Labour Dept forms gig workers’ welfare board

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Labour Department on Tuesday formed a 16-member welfare board to provide social security for gig workers, making way for aggregators to deposit their share of welfare fee with the board. All aggregators will have to pay a welfare fee in the range of 1-1.5%. The Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers Welfare Board is being set up as mandated in the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers’ (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025. The board comprises five members from the government - Labour Minister (currently Santosh Lad) will be the ex-officio chairperson, senior officials of Labour, IT and Commercial Taxes Departments, and Chief Executive Officer of the Board, who will be the ex-officio member secretary.

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‘Trying to defame Dalit minister’: DKS on excise scam

BENGALURU: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday dismissed demands for the resignation of state Excise Minister Ramappa Timmapur made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that alleged “scam involving more than Rs 6,000 crore”, saying that the opposition party in the state was trying to defame a Dalit minister. “It is all bogus. Nothing is there. What they are telling is politically motivated. They are just trying to defame a Dalit Minister. That’s all,” Shivakumar told reporters here.

SC CRACKS THE WHIP

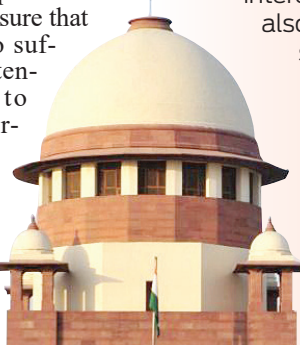
SC calls for harsher approach in acid attack cases

NEW DELHI

Taking strong note of acid attack cases, the Supreme Court on Tuesday asked all states and Union territories to provide a slew of information, including the year-wise details of the number of such cases and their status in courts, besides the rehabilitation measures to support the victims. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi asked states and UTs to provide information about the number of cases in which charge sheets are filed in trial courts. They will also have to provide information about the number of cases de-

cided or pending at the trial court levels. Seeking the details in four weeks, the bench asked them to also provide information about the number of appeals filed in appellate courts, including the high courts, in such cases. The bench asked them to also provide brief particulars of each victim, her academic qualification, employment and marital status and the medical treatment and the expenses incurred or to be incurred. It also asked states and UTs to provide details about the rehabilitation scheme for such victims. The bench also asked them to provide details of the cases where victims are forced to ingest acid. The CJ asked the

Centre to mull changes in law to ensure that convicts are awarded “extraordinary” punishment for indulging in acid attacks. The bench was hearing a PIL filed by Shaheen Malik, who herself is an acid attack survivor. Malik is seeking expansion of the definition of disabled persons under the law to ensure that the victims who suffered life-threatening damages to their internal organs due to forced ingestion of acid get adequate compensation and other reliefs, including medical care.



Unrequited love: Girl hospitalised after acid attack; relative held

East Champaran: A young woman suffered severe burns after an acid attack in Bihar’s East Champaran district, allegedly carried out by a distant relative who had been harassing her over a one-sided romantic interest. The attack, which took place late at night, also left the woman’s mother injured, as she was sleeping beside her at the time of the assault. The accused, Priyanshu Kumar, allegedly entered the house, switched off the lights and threw acid on the woman’s face before fleeing. Her screams alerted family members, who rushed her to a private hospital, where she is undergoing treatment. Doctors treating the victim informed the Chhauni police station, prompting an immediate response.

Only Mamata truly countering BJP in India: Akhilesh

KOLKATA

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday hailed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the only opposition leader in entire India who is “effectively countering the BJP”, and said that the saffron camp is now aiming for a “respectable defeat” in the upcoming state elections. Yadav, accompanied by his party’s senior leader Kiranmoy Nanda, met Banerjee at the state secretariat Nabanna amid a charged political atmosphere in the poll-bound state over the controversial SIR exercise, and lauded the TMC supremo for her “courage in countering the BJP’s onslaughts”.



“If in the entire country, someone is effectively countering the BJP, it is West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. And the BJP can only be truly opposed by the way she is doing it,” the former Uttar Pradesh CM told reporters after the meeting, which lasted for about 40 minutes, with Banerjee standing next to him.

QUICK READ



Interaction with Central Cooperation Minister

BENGALURU

The CEO of Hoskote Town Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Cooperation Society S Narayana Sharma who was selected by Central government to participate in the Republic Day function at Red Fort, New Delhi, interacted with Central Minister of State for Cooperation Muralidhar Mohol. Narayana Sharma was among the 13 Primary Agricultural Cooperative society of state who have been selected. The Minister congratulated the delegation for their achievements.

Ticketless travel, BMTC collects Rs 6.5L fine in Dec

BENGALURU

Line-checking officials of Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) imposed penalties totalling Rs 6.3 lakh on passengers travelling without tickets on city buses in December. During the month, inspection squads checked over 18,400 bus trips and detected 2,801 passengers without valid tickets. Cases were also registered against 1,748 conductors for various lapses. Officials additionally fined 250 male passengers for occupying seats reserved for women, collecting Rs 25,000 under sections 177 and 94 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. In all, BMTC collected Rs 6,59,865 in fines from 3,051 passengers across the city during December 2025. In a press release, BMTC urged passengers to carry valid tickets, day passes or monthly passes while travelling on its buses to avoid penalties.

TT vehicle overturns, passengers escape unhurt

BENGALURU

In a shocking incident, a TT vehicle overturned on a gravel scattered on the road and the TT vehicle overturned on a CCTV camera. The incident took place near Gerahalli village in Nelamangala taluk and 12 people in the Tempo Traveler vehicle miraculously escaped. The driver, Yatish, sustained minor injuries and is undergoing treatment at a local hospital. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Rural police station.

4 out of 5 civic bodies seek Rs 6,600 cr budgetary support

City corporations will table their budgets only after state govt presents its own; all five have invited suggestions from citizens and resident welfare associations.

BENGALURU

The first independent budgets submitted by four of the five new city corporations of Bengaluru to the state government see the civic bodies mapping their financial needs and prioritising development.

In their budgets submitted to the state's Finance Commissioner, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) sought a grant of Rs 2,047 crore, East - Rs 1,685 crore, South - Rs 1,675 crore, and North - Rs 1,210 crore.

This clearly indicated that the newly-formed corporations will continue to rely heavily on state government support in their initial years. The West city corporation is also expected to place a similar demand as its budgeting process gathers momentum.

Mareshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) said, the budgetary exercise is being positioned as a shift towards decentralised urban governance. As part of their preparations, all five corporations invited suggestions from



citizens, resident welfare associations, and organisations before framing their 2026-27 budgets.

According to officials involved in the process, the focus is on identifying local priorities in areas such as infrastructure, public health, safety, environmental protection, and social welfare.

Rajendra Cholan, Commissioner, Central corporation, said, our primary focus is the development of basic infrastructure in and around the central business district, for which about Rs 500 crore is proposed to be earmarked. About Rs 200 crore is pro-

posed to be allocated for the development of basic infrastructure in slums, and the rest of the amount for solid waste management, lakes and horticulture, among others.

In North corporation, about Rs 500 crore is needed for major drain works, and Rs 500 crore for the construction of new roads. There is a special need of Rs 25 crore for the relocation of stray dogs, as the huge population of such canines is in our jurisdiction, said Pommala Sunil Kumar, commissioner, North corporation.

In South corporation, the major focus is on parks,

roads, and waste management. Last year, GBA's predecessor BBMP presented a budget of Rs 19,930 crore. The allocation was later increased to Rs 20,440 crore in the revised estimate.

The state government released substantial grants for city development, enabling the rollout of large projects such as tunnel roads, white-topping, elevated corridors, flyovers, and the development of stormwater drains. A dedicated agency, B-Smile, was also set up to handle the implementation and maintenance of these mega projects, Rao told.

GBA oversight panel set up, but move casts doubts on new corporations' autonomy

BENGALURU

The state government has constituted a new empowered panel under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to oversee development works in the city and ensure effective implementation of projects undertaken by the five newly formed municipal corporations.

However, the move has raised questions about possible infringement on the autonomy of the new civic bodies. The panel was approved by the cabinet earlier this month, following the cessation of BBMP and the split of the city's civic administration into five corporations.

With the restructuring, the govt cited the presence of multiple committees, independent agencies and the absence of a single oversight mechanism for development works across Bengaluru. While GBA, chaired ex officio by the chief minister, has been vested with powers for overall planning and coordination, the newly constituted panel has been tasked with handling day-to-day affairs, including inspection, supervision and approval of tenders.

This includes projects taken up by the five corporations as well as independent agencies operating across the city. Two major agencies functioning outside the jurisdiction of the five corporations are Bengaluru



ru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), responsible for lifting and disposal of all types of solid waste generated in the city, and Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure (B-Smile), which handles large-scale infrastructure projects.

A govt note justifying the panel stated, in the backdrop of all these developments, it is felt necessary to revise the empowered committee constituted under the chairmanship of the additional chief secretary to the govt, urban development department... to carry out inspection and supervision and to accord approvals to all types of tenders with regard to work/projects implemented under the state and central govt grants, state and central finance commission grants, own funds and other grants by five corporations, B-Smile and BSWML coming under the jurisdiction of GBA.

The panel has been described as a mechanism to en-

able speedy implementation of projects and works keeping with the vast scope and complex system of Bengaluru. The empowered committee will have 23 members, including the commissioners and chief engineers of the new corporations. It will also include the chief engineers of GBA, managing directors of BSWML and B-Smile, public works department secretary, finance (expenditure) secretary and other senior officials.

The committee will oversee tenders called for projects across Bengaluru. However, the govt has not clarified whether the panel's role will overlap with or influence the independent functioning of the five corporations and the decisions taken by their elected political heads.

GBA House Committee chairperson Rizwan Arshad maintained that the autonomy of the corporations cannot be diluted.

'ELCITA is public authority liable to disclose info'

BENGALURU

In a significant ruling strengthening transparency in urban governance, the Karnataka State Information Commission (KSIC) held that the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA) is a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, and is therefore bound to disclose information sought under the law. It directed ELCITA to appoint a public information officer, an assistant public information officer, and a first appellate authority as mandated under the Act.

The commission, while hearing an appeal by M Ganesh Kumar, a resident of Doddahoguru, traced the origin of Electronics City to 1970, when the state government established it to promote electronic industries.

Spread over more than 900 acres now, the area was developed by the Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation (KEON-ICS), which handed over its management to ELCITA in 1997. However, the commission noted that governance of the township rests with ELCITA, a statutory body constituted under the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964, through a govt notification issued in March 2013. The commission observed that ELCITA performs core municipal and governmental functions, including the provision of roads, water supply, sanitation, and the collection of property taxes. State Information Commissioner Rudranna Harthikote ruled that ELCITA is a self-governing statutory authority exercising municipal powers, even though it does not have an elected body.



Flower expo on Tejaswi's life earns Rs 2.85 cr

BENGALURU

The flower exhibition, which was held at the Lalbagh Glass House from January 15 on the occasion of Republic Day, was opened on Monday and was viewed by a total of 8.10 lakh people, including children.

Officials from the Horticulture Department have informed that a total of Rs 2.74 crore has been collected, including Rs 2.46 lakh from entry to Lalbagh to view the flower exhibition and Rs 28 lakh from various stalls set up at the exhibition.

Viewed by 2.93 lakh children: The Phalapushpa exhibition on Tejaswi's life was viewed by 85 thousand children, including 2.08 lakh school children, and 2.93 lakh children viewed the exhibition, thereby making an effort to develop children's awareness of Kannada literature and scientific thinking.

13 thousand books sold: Tejaswi, who was also a scientific writer, has written many books. The novel Karvolo, written on the back of a flying fox, has a scientific basis. The books Abachurina Post Office, Tabarana Kathe and Kirugurin Gayyaligalu have been made into films. Thousands of Kannada literature lovers and film lovers had come to the exhibition

On Monday, the final day of the flower and flower exhibition on Tejaswi, Kuvempu's daughter Tarani and son-in-law Chidananda Gowda, second daughter Indukala's daughter, Tejaswi's KP Susmita and KP Ishanya couple and children viewed the area with their families.

on Tejaswi. As a result, his books were sold at the exhibition.

More than 3200 copies of Tejaswi's science fiction novel Karvolo have been sold in a single book, and it was out of stock for the last two days. Many people returned home empty-handed after reading the Karvolo book, Dr. M. Jagadish, Additional

2.08 lakh school children participated in the flower show on Tejaswi's life and 2.93 lakh children watched the show.

Director, Horticulture Department, informed ETV India.

2 tons of garbage collected : A complete ban was imposed on the use of plastic in the current sea-

son's flower show. Paper bags, banana leaves, and areca strips were also used in the stalls. Due to this, only organic waste was found in the park, and more than 2 tons of waste was collected. He explained that if this waste is mixed with soil, it will be converted into fertilizer and can be used in the park.

Free parking for cycles in 9 metro stations

BENGALURU

To promote cycling as a last-mile option to Metro stations, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BM-RCL) has decided to offer free bicycle parking at nine stations across the city, two on the Purple Line, three on Green Line, and four on the newly commissioned Yellow Line.

The waiver was announced through a recent tender floated by BMRCL for operating parking facilities. Bids can be submitted until Feb 9, after which the agency is expected to finalise an operator.

At present, cyclists are charged Rs 1 an hour for parking at Metro stations, with a maximum daily fee of Rs 10. Our connectivity team identified these stations as the ones most frequently used by cyclists, which is why they have been chosen for free bicycle parking, a BMRCL official said.

The waiver, the official clarified, will apply only to these nine stations for now,

and parking charges will continue at all other stations.

While BMRCL believes the move will send a positive signal to commuters, cyclists say improving infrastructure at Metro stations is equally important. I don't mind paying even Rs 10 to park my bicycle; it's not about the fee, said Sathya Sankaran, popularly known as Bengaluru's bicycle Mayor. Except for a few stations, there is no dedicated space for bicycles, and at many places cyclists are shoed away. Providing proper parking facilities at all stations is the real way to promote cycling as a last-mile option, he said.

Another regular cyclist, Biju Cherayath, welcomed the initiative but highlighted the lack of basic infrastructure such as anchoring points. Most cyclists don't mind paying as long as their bicycles are secure, he said. At several stations, there is no pole or bar to lock the cycle. Even simple support structures would make a big difference.



Dr SUSHILAMMA, THE ROLE MODEL

The path to Padma Shri: All began with just Rs 15!

BENGALURU

It was a time. I had only 15 rupees in my hand. I had no building of my own, no resources, no hopes. All I had in mind was the welfare of the poor, orphans, homeless children, providing education to the underprivileged children and providing them with an opportunity to live with dignity. Dr SG Sushilamma's 50-year journey of social service, which began with this vision in 1975, has now been awarded the Padma Shri.

When I got the message that I had been awarded the Padma Shri, I couldn't believe it at first. It took us by surprise for a few moments. But then I was happy to know that this award was a recognition of the social service we were doing. Our social service began quietly without any ex-



pectation of money, plans or recognition. We didn't expect anything, said Dr SG Sushilamma.

Recalling her career of service that began with just three children and has spanned nearly five decades, Sushilamma said, This honour has further increased our responsibility. Now people expect even more service from us. We must continue our work with the same sincerity."

We started Seva Ashram in

1975 with just 15 rupees for the poor, orphans, homeless children and women of the country. Over the years, the name of the organization became well-known. It can be said to be a miracle of sorts. Because we did not have any money or property. We started providing services with the money we received like pouring water from a lake into a lake.

What started with just three children gradually grew into a

large ashram and social organization. We carried out dozens of service works through the ashram, including running primary health centers, implementing housing projects, and promoting environmental sustainability. Like a divine miracle, in a short period of time we received support from the public, dozens of private organizations, and many companies, including the state and central governments. This further increased the interest in service. The ashram helped expand its activities beyond shelter to education, health, and livelihood support, she explained.

My desire is to continue this journey of service with the same honesty, dedication and compassion as it began 50 years ago. This award has increased our responsibility, she said.

Man kills brother for insurance money: High Court upholds life sentence

BENGALURU

The High Court has upheld the life sentence awarded by the trial court to the accused who, out of greed for a large sum of money, had taken out an insurance policy worth Rs 45 lakh in his brother's name, paid the outstanding insurance premiums and then committed murder, and then burnt the body in a fire contrary to tradition to destroy evidence.

The order was passed by a bench of Justices HP Sandesh

and T Venkatesh Naik, who were hearing a petition filed by the deceased's brother, Amatekoppada Kumar of Shikaripura taluk, challenging the life sentence awarded by the trial court.

The petitioner, accused Kumar, brought his younger brother Umesh, the deceased Umesh, who was disabled, to his mother-in-law's house, promising to take care of him. He obtained the deceased's Aadhaar card and voter ID card. Although he had taken

out an insurance policy of Rs 20 lakh in the name of the deceased in 2012, it had not been paid after one instalment. However, the accused himself paid all the outstanding instalments four months before his death.

He also took out another insurance policy in the name of the deceased and opened an account in a bank. All this process was carried out in the first week of January, and the murder took place four months later.

Only constitutional courts have power to award life sentence: HC

The High Court, clarifying that only constitutional courts have the authority to impose life sentences, has ordered life imprisonment instead of imprisonment for life

BENGALURU

The High Court has clarified that only the constitutional courts (High Court and Supreme Court) have the power to impose life imprisonment till death.

Rudresh (28) had filed a criminal appeal in the High Court seeking quashing of the order of the 5th Additional District and Sessions Court, Shivamogga, which had sentenced him to life imprisonment (imprisonment) till death in the case of murdering a three-and-a-half-year-old child. The appeal was partially allowed by a division bench headed by Justice H.P. Sandesh and the Sessions (Subordinate) Court, which sentenced Rudresh to life imprisonment. Only the

constitutional courts, the High Court and the Supreme Court, have the power to award life imprisonment in lieu of death penalty without any exception. However, the bench clarified that the Sessions Court does not have that power.

The High Court has upheld the order of the Sessions Court dated November 27, 2017, convicting Rudresh of the crime of murder and kidnapping, as it was proved

with evidence that he had later killed the child, and has modified the order of the Sessions Court, which had sentenced the accused Rudresh to life imprisonment till death. The High Court has ordered life imprisonment instead of imprisonment till death.

B a c k -

ground of the case: Rudresh, a resident of Hosamane village in Shivamogga, was working in a monastery in Hosanagar. The mother of the murdered child (the complainant in the case) was a devotee of that monastery. She used to visit the monastery regularly. The complainant and her mother used to advise Rudresh in the affairs of the monastery. Rudresh had developed enmity towards the complainant

over this issue. On April 10, 2017, the complainant attended a program at the monastery with her three-and-a-half-year-old husband and family members. That night, she had dinner at the monastery and slept. When she woke up at 5.30 am, the child was not with her. Later, the child was found dead. When the Hosanagar police investigated the matter, it was revealed that Rudresh had kidnapped and murdered the child. The Sessions Court had convicted Rudresh in the murder and kidnapping case on November 27, 2017, and sentenced him to life imprisonment until death on November 30. The convict had filed a criminal appeal in the High Court seeking the quashing of this order.



GP offices in state to be named after Mahatma Gandhi: DKS

BENGALURU

Around 6,000 Panchayat offices in the state will be named after Mahatma Gandhi. This is the decision of the Congress party, said Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

Shivakumar, who is also the KPCC President, spoke at the Raj Bhavan Chalo Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Bachao Sangram protest programme held at Freedom Park on Tuesday.

KPCC Vice President Ugrappa and KPCC office bearers have written to us regarding this issue. A request has been made to the Chief Minister regarding this. Through this, work will be done to perpetuate the name of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi ji's resolve was that there should be a school, a cooperative society and a panchayat in every village, he said.

We are fighting for the right to employment of the poor. It was the Mannohan Singh government led by Sonia Gandhi that provided employment to the unemployed. The world had noticed our employment guarantee scheme. The World Bank had praised this scheme in 2013 as a very excellent scheme. There are 5700 panchayats and every year Rs 6 thousand crores were spent on this scheme in our state, he said.

Previously, panchayats used to decide what work and development work should be undertaken. Union Minister CP Joshi, on the direction of

'Through this, work will be done to perpetuate the name of Mahatma Gandhi'

Sonia Gandhi, had formulated this scheme to give those who were reluctant to go to work on other people's land the opportunity to work on their own land and earn wages. Such a historic decision was taken by the UPA government. Wages were given for construction of shelter homes, Indra Awas homes, cattle sheds, and agricultural-related work, he explained.

The central government is taking away the rights of farmers and workers and the power of the panchayats. Our fight is against this. In the coming days, a 5 km walk will be taken out at the taluk level, including NREGA workers, in every panchayat. This walk should be led by the district in-charge minister, MLAs and council members, he said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, they have changed the Raj Bhavan to Lok Bhavan without asking us. I call it Raj Bhavan, we will go to Raj Bhavan. There is a court order, not everyone can go. We will go by bus, he said. State Congress in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala, Ministers MB Patil, Lakshmi Hebbalkar, Dinesh Gundurao, Chaluvaryaswamy, Bosaraju, former Deputy Chief Minister Lakshman Savadi, MLC BK Hariprasad participated.

QUICK READ

Miscreants set haystack on fire in Nelamangala

BENGALURU

Two stacks of hay were set ablaze by miscreants at Bommanahalli village in Nelamangala taluk. A stack of straw worth Rs 2 lakh belonging to Sakamma was gutted in the fire. Grass was collected for fodder for the cows during the summer season. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Rural police station.

SC/ST Lawyers' state conference in April

BENGALURU

The state-level convention of the Karnataka State Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Lawyers' Association will be organized in the city in April, said M Muniyappa, president of the association. He spoke at a pre-meeting for the second anniversary held in the city. There is no reservation in the Bar Council elections, we have to fight for it.

Techie murder: Accused breaks down during interrogation

BENGALURU

The techie Sharmila (34) murder case in Subramanya Layout under Ramamurthynagar police station has taken a turn, with the accused revealing the truth during interrogation. The Ramamurthynagar police station arrested Colonel Kurai (18), a resident of Arasur in Virajpet town of Kodagu district, a resident of the house next to where Sharmila lived, and took him into custody for questioning. Initially, he had said that he had not abused techie.

AEROSPACE PARK Farmers fume as KIADB sets deadline for voluntary land contribution

BENGALURU

Farmers in Devanahalli are up in arms again as Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) has issued a fresh notice giving them three months to voluntarily offer land for the proposed Aerospace Park near Kempegowda International Airport. Landowners have been asked to express their willingness to part with their property by April 30. The state govt had earlier scrapped acquisition of 1,777 acres in Channarayana hobli following strident farmer protests but kept the door open for voluntary contributions. Last week, KIADB issued a public notice stating that willing farmers would receive compensation determined by a committee. Interested landowners must submit their consent at KIADB's office in Aravind Bhavan on Nuprunga Road.



The move has angered farmers, who were preparing to press for a full withdrawal of the acquisition process. We condemn KIADB's notice and will decide a course of action soon, said Karahalli Srinivas, a farmer activist. In July last year, chief minister Siddaramaiah announced that his govt will not pursue acquisition of land for the park. The announcement was formalised by a govt order on Dec 6, 2025. The state also declared the 1,777 acres a permanent

special agricultural zone, prohibiting any land use conversion and requiring the land to be used solely for agriculture.

This too had angered farmers. Srinivas said farmers will discuss what he described as double standards of the government with pro-farmer organisations and other like-minded organisations. We will get the government to drop its decision of designating the area as a permanent special agricultural zone and stop the acquisition process completely, he said.

Local planning authorities, including Bangalore International Airport Area Planning Authority (BIAAPA) and the Satellite Town Ring Road Planning Authority (STRPA), were directed to reflect the zoning in their masterplans. The designation was also recorded in column 11 of the RTC (Records of Rights, Tenancy and Crops), a key land record.

Excise scam: MLA Vijayendra seeks probe by a sitting judge or CBI

BENGALURU

A proper investigation must be conducted into the excise scam involving more than Rs 6,000 crore. The investigation must be carried out either by a sitting High Court judge or by the CBI, demanded BJP State President and MLA BY Vijayendra.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, he said that BJP and JD(S) are jointly staging a protest near the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha against the corrupt Congress government. He stated that Opposition Leader R. Ashok, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, JD(S) leaders Suresh Babu, Bhogewad, along with MLAs and MLCs from both parties, are participating in the protest. He added that the entire country has witnessed how Congress goons behaved in a hoo-

ligan-like manner towards the Hon'ble Governor inside the Assembly.

Vijayendra said that even the name of the Excise Minister himself is being mentioned in the excise scam, and that names of the minister's family members are also surfacing. Despite this, the Chief Minister is not allowing discussion on the issue in the Assembly, he alleged.

He accused the state government of attempting to turn Karnataka into a state of alcoholics. I have been repeatedly saying this. Liquor is being sold even in grocery shops in rural areas, he said. He alleged that over the last two-and-a-half years, the government has increased excise targets by 35 percent to fill the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's treasury and to fund the so-called guarantees. He claimed that it has become

impossible for excise department officials to get postings without paying crores of rupees in bribes.

As a result of all this, the government has allowed liquor sales even in rural grocery stores and permitted illegal liquor sales. He said the government has enabled this just to fill its coffers. Karnataka has never seen such a shameless and disgraceful government in its history, he remarked.

He said people are cursing the government. Instead of thinking about public welfare, the Chief Minister is repeatedly talking about guarantees and destroying the lives of poor rural families, which he termed unfortunate. He said protests are being held on multiple issues and demanded the resignation of the Excise Minister and a proper investigation into the matter.

Action as per law in Shidlaghatta case: Min

BENGALURU

The government will not protect Congress leader Rajiv Gowda in the case of threatening the civic body in Shidlaghatta. He will be punished according to the law, said Minister Byrathi Suresh.

BJP member Bharathi Shetty asked a question in the Legislative Council. There is a rule for putting up banners in the Municipal Administration Department. It is said that permission can be taken and put up. In Shidlaghatta, Rajeev Gowda abused a woman officer. He spoke badly on the phone. That officer shed tears. The woman officer has filed a personal case. Rajeev Gowda has threatened to do so.



Girls should come into mainstream of society: DC

BENGALURU

Let the girl child always shine like the Nanda Dipa of the house. Save the girl child, teach her, and enlighten her. A house where a girl child lives is like a Nanda Gokula, girls should also have equal opportunities in society, and they should take advantage of the opportunities and come into the mainstream of society, said Bangalore City Deputy Commissioner G Jagadish.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the programme organized by the District Health and Family Welfare Department at the District Commissioner's of-

fice premises on Tuesday by releasing a pamphlet on the occasion of National Girl Child Day.

The freedom and equality of the country should be available to every girl child, and in this society, girls are progressing in all fields. From drivers to pilots, they are progressing on an equal footing with men.

In the current times, women have been given many facilities and they should take advantage of them and come forward. The government has implemented several programs for the empowerment of women. He said that when women live independently,

Poster pasting case: MLA draws govt's attention in House, seeks protection

BENGALURU

The case of a poster pasted at the house of senior BJP MLA Suresh Kumar made headlines in the Assembly on Tuesday. The MLA, who has drawn the government's attention, has appealed for protection.

Suresh Kumar, who spoke during Zero Hour, said that Congress workers had put up posters at his house and threatened him. I had taken back the statement I made to Byrathi Suresh that he was born seven months later. I had taken back the statement then, it was also removed from the file.

However, Congress workers came to my house and put up posters and took selfies. I need protection. It is not right to put up posters for an issue that has been resolved in the House. They have also filed a complaint, they have cried.

Meanwhile, R Ashok rushed to support Suresh Kumar, saying that even the court cannot question him because he is in the House. However, a complaint has been filed with the police against Suresh Kumar.

This is not right and he has demanded that strict action be taken in this matter. Home Minister G Parameshwar clarified that it is my responsibility to ensure that MLA Suresh Kumar does not face any trouble.

I will personally monitor this case. I will find out why a complaint has been filed against Suresh Kumar. It is not right to put up a poster at his house. I also condemn this. He has promised to take action against the accused in the poster-putting case.

'Mark St. John's land, start work to install 5 portal piers for flyover'

BENGALURU

The Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), Maheshwar Rao instructed officials to mark the required land at St John's and immediately begin work to install five portal piers for the Ejipura flyover.

He spoke at a meeting held on Tuesday with officials from the Traffic Police Department and St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences regarding the Ejipura flyover project.

pura flyover is currently progressing at a fast pace. On the left side while moving from Central Sadan towards Ejipura, a small portion of land belonging to St. John's is required to install five portal piers.

The portal piers need to be constructed along the footpath and adjoining the compound wall of St. John's. In this regard, discussions were held today with the St. John's management, who have agreed to permit the use of the required land. Accordingly, the Chief Commissioner instructed the



engineers and contractors to mark the area and commence the work immediately.

He also directed that barricades be installed as a safety measure while the work on

the five portal piers is in progress. Further, space should be provided for storing construction materials until the work is completed, and the compound wall should be recon-

structed immediately after the completion of the work.

Regarding the land to be acquired for constructing the ramp in the St. John's area, he instructed officials to expedite the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) process, take possession of the land at the earliest, and carry out the work swiftly.

Chief Engineer Dr Raghavendra Prasad informed that the construction of the 2.38 km long flyover on Ejipura Main Road is being carried out at a rapid pace. A total of 762 segments are required to

be cast for the flyover, out of which 645 segments have already been cast. The remaining 117 segments are yet to be cast. So far, 490 segments have already been erected.

On the occasion, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy, Deputy Commissioner of Police of the South Division, Director of St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Rev Fr R Jesudas, Associate Director (Finance), Rev Fr Tony, Executive Engineers, and other concerned officials were present.

QUICK READ

Woman Voices Anger Over Easy Availability of Liquor in Rural Areas

RAICHUR

A sharp criticism of the prevailing social conditions in rural areas came to the fore when a woman in Raichur openly expressed her anger over the easy availability of liquor in villages, while basic necessities remain uncertain. Her remark in rural areas, you never know whether you'll get tea in the morning, but liquor is always available has sparked discussion on social priorities and governance lapses. Speaking during a public interaction in the district, the woman highlighted the everyday struggles faced by rural families, especially women. She said that while access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, healthcare facilities.

Special Panchamrita Abhisheka Performed to Pranadevaru

RAICHUR

Madhva Navami, marking the sacred occasion associated with the Dvaita philosophy tradition, was observed with great devotion and spiritual enthusiasm at Mantralaya, where a special Panchamrita Abhisheka was performed to Pranadevaru. Devotees from Raichur district and neighbouring regions gathered in large numbers to take part in the religious celebrations and seek blessings. On the occasion, priests conducted elaborate rituals in accordance with traditional customs. The special Panchamrita Abhisheka was performed using milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar, accompanied by the chanting of Vedic hymns and devotional songs.

BJP Yuva Morcha Stages Protest at Ambedkar Circle

RAICHUR

Members of the Bharatiya Janata Party Yuva Morcha staged a protest at Ambedkar Circle in Raichur on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of senior Congress leader B.K. Hariprasad over his recent statements and alleged remarks, which the protesters termed as irresponsible and objectionable. Raising slogans and holding placards, the demonstrators accused Hariprasad of making comments that, according to them, hurt public sentiments and undermined democratic values. The protest was led by local leaders of the BJP Yuva Morcha, who said such statements from senior political leaders were unacceptable and warranted immediate accountability. Speaking to the media, Yuva Morcha leaders said Hariprasad's remarks had created unnecessary controversy and reflected a disregard for public responsibility.

Education Key to Social Progress, Says Additional Deputy Commissioner

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy highlighted education as the strongest driver of Savita community upliftment calling upon parents to prioritise higher education

CHITRADURGA

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday emphasised that education remains the most powerful tool for the social and economic upliftment of the Savita community, calling upon parents to prioritise higher education for their children. Speaking at a programme organised in the Deputy Commissioner's office auditorium to mark Savita Maharshi Jayanti, he said that although the Savita community may be economically and socially backward, sustained progress is possible only through education and modern thinking. After offering floral trib-

utes to the portrait of Savita Maharshi, Kumaraswamy urged families to ensure that their children pursue studies at least up to the degree level. He advised the community to fully utilise government facilities such as scholarships, hostel accommodations and reservation benefits to access quality education.

Stressing the importance of dignity of labour, he said there should be no inferiority complex associated with traditional occupations, but professionalism and innovation must be introduced to transform them into successful enterprises.

Kumaraswamy highlighted that the Savita communi-



ty is not merely a social group but a collective of hardworking individuals who contribute beauty, hygiene and discipline to society. By adopting modern technology, innovative styles and entrepreneurial ap-

proaches, he said, youth from the community should aim to generate employment for others and achieve financial self-reliance. He further appealed to members of the community to take advantage of various government

loan schemes and welfare programmes to strengthen their economic standing and integrate into the social mainstream.

Kannada Sampige daily editor T. Tippeswamy, delivering the keynote address, described the Savita community's service as sacred and deeply embedded in human life. He noted that the community's role spans the three major stages of life birth, marriage and death, making its contribution indispensable. From rituals associated with a child's early life to final rites that symbolise the journey towards liberation, the services of the Savita community remain integral, he said.



One Lakh Tree Plantation Campaign to Be Held at Srishaila

BIDAR

A major environmental initiative titled the One Lakh Tree Plantation Campaign will be organised at Srishaila on February 6 and 7, along with the Akka Mahadevi National Award presentation ceremony. The invitation letter for the programme was formally released in Bidar city by district in-charge secretary Eshwar Khandre.

Speaking on the occasion, organisers said the campaign is being conducted in the name of Mata Karunadevi, who dedicated her life to the welfare of the world. They described it as a matter of pride and satisfaction that a massive plantation drive involving one lakh saplings, along with awareness activities, is being undertaken in her honour. The campaign aims to promote environmental protection, ecological balance and public awareness about the importance of trees.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Rajshekhar Shivacharya of the Bemalkhed Hiremath Institution said that under the inspiration of Shivayya Swami, the campaign has already been successfully carried out over the past eight months from villages to cities. He noted that the initiative has made a significant contribution towards environmental conservation and has received encouraging public support across regions.

It was informed that the main programme at Srishaila will include both the plantation drive and the Akka Mahadevi National Award ceremony, during which women achievers will be honoured for their outstanding contributions in various fields. The organisers said the event will serve as a platform to recognise social service, cultural achievements and commitment to environmental causes.

District-Level State Government Employees Sports Meet to Be Held

CHITRADURGA

The district-level State Government Employees Sports Meet and Cultural Competitions for the year 2025-26 will be organised on January 29 and 30 at the Veeravanite Onake Obavva Sports Stadium in the city. The two-day event is being jointly organised by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, and the Karnataka State Government Employees Association.

Providing details at a press conference held at the city press club on Tuesday, Karnataka State Government Employees Association district president Malatesh Muddajji said the annual sports and cultural meet aims to promote physical fitness, cultural bonding and unity among government employees across the district. He said this year the registration process has been made completely online, and only those who have registered online will be allowed to participate in the competitions. Muddajji informed that around 2,045 government em-



ployees have already registered online to take part in various sports events and cultural competitions. He clarified that no spot or direct registrations will be permitted on the days of the event. Registered participants will be provided with special T-shirts and caps, and they must compulsorily carry their departmental identity cards along with Aadhaar cards during the event.

He further stated that only those government employees who have completed online registration and actively participate in the sports meet will be eligible for a special two-day leave facility. This provision, he said, has been made to encourage greater participation while ensuring proper

planning and smooth conduct of the event.

Highlighting a special attraction, Muddajji announced that, for the first time in the history of the district government employees association, a unique entertainment programme titled Sankranti Sambhrama - Suggina Siri will be organised on January 29 at 6 pm. The programme is being planned to coincide with the harvest festival celebrations and to offer a festive experience to employees and their families.

The cultural evening will feature a musical extravaganza by noted singer Kambada Rangaiah and his troupe, known for their performances on Zee Kannada's Sa Re Ga Ma Pa.

Blood Donation Camp Achievements Highlighted

HAVERI

The significant achievements of a recently organised blood donation camp and the consistent efforts in blood collection across the district were highlighted during a special felicitation programme held in the city, where District Medical Officer Dr Basavaraj Talwar was honoured by a voluntary organisation for his dedicated service to public health.

Speaking at the programme, members of the organisation said that the success of blood donation initiatives in the district was the result of coordinated efforts between the health department, voluntary groups and socially conscious citizens. They noted that under the guidance and leadership of Dr Talwar, blood donation camps have been conducted in a systematic manner, ensuring adequate availability of blood for emergency medical needs, surgeries and treatment of patients suffering from chronic illnesses.

The organisers explained that the recent blood donation camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from youths, social organisations, govern-

ment employees and members of the general public. Hundreds of units of blood were collected, contributing significantly to strengthening the district blood bank reserves. The initiative, they said, played a crucial role in addressing seasonal shortages and ensuring timely support for government hospitals and private healthcare facilities alike. Honouring Dr Basavaraj Talwar, the organisation praised his commitment to promoting voluntary blood donation as a social responsibility. They highlighted his continuous awareness campaigns, coordination with educational institutions and encouragement to NGOs, which helped build trust and awareness about the importance of safe blood donation. His proactive approach in improving blood collection mechanisms and maintaining quality standards was also appreciated.

In his address after receiving the honour, Dr Talwar expressed gratitude to the organisation and dedicated the recognition to healthcare workers, volunteers and blood donors who selflessly contribute to saving lives.

Aided High School Headmasters' Association Honours Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha National President Khandre

BIDAR

The Aided High School Headmasters' Association organised a special felicitation programme in the city on Tuesday to honour Khandre, the national president of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha, in recognition of his contribution to social service, education and community leadership.

The programme was held in a dignified manner with the participation of senior educationists, headmasters, community leaders and well-wishers. Members of the association said the honour was a mark of respect for Khandre's consistent efforts in strengthening educational values and promoting social harmony through constructive initiatives. Speaking on the occa-

sion, office-bearers of the Aided High School Headmasters' Association highlighted the role played by Khandre in supporting educational institutions, especially aided schools, which cater to students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. They said such institutions form the backbone of the education system by providing affordable and quality education, and leaders who understand and support their challenges deserve public recognition. The speakers also noted that Khandre has been actively involved in advocating for the rights and welfare of teachers and students, while encouraging reforms aimed at improving academic standards. His leadership in the Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha, they said, has helped



bring together social, cultural and educational organisations on a common platform for the larger good of society.

In his address after receiving the honour, Khandre expressed gratitude to the Aided High School Headmasters' Association for the recognition. He said teachers and headmasters play a vital role in shaping the future of the nation by nurturing young minds with knowledge, discipline and values. Describing education as a powerful tool for social transformation, he

called upon educators to continue their dedicated service despite challenges.

Khandre also emphasised the need for unity and cooperation among various sections of society to address issues related to education, employment and social justice. He assured the gathering that the Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha would continue to support initiatives aimed at strengthening education and empowering communities through awareness and inclusive development.

School Leadership Excellence Award 2026 Conferred at B'luru Ceremony

BIDAR

The School Leadership Excellence Award 2026 was conferred during a prestigious ceremony titled Shala Mukhandara Prashasti Sammelana 2026, held recently at the Bayers Souharda Bhavan in Bengaluru. The event brought together educationists, administrators and policymakers to recognise exemplary service and leadership in the field of school education.

The award was presented in recognition of dedicated service in the field of wisdom management and institutional leadership. The honour was bestowed upon Muhammad Salahuddin Phahad, a key functionary associated with Wisdom Management Services, for his significant con-

tributions towards strengthening educational institutions and promoting quality-driven school administration.

The award ceremony witnessed the presence of several eminent personalities from the education and public life. The chief guests included senior leaders and office-bearers associated with minority education institutions at both the central and state levels.

Their presence added prominence to the event and highlighted the growing emphasis on leadership, governance and innovation in school education.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries stressed that effective school leadership plays a crucial role in shaping students' futures and ensuring inclusive, value-based education.

SHIVAYOGI SIDDARAMESHWARA JAYANTI

SHIVAYOGI SIDDARAMESHWARA REMEMBERED AS KAYAKA YOGI

KOPPAL

Shivayogi Siddarameshwara, who combined social reform with tireless community service, is rightly remembered as a Kayaka Yogi, said Aravind S. Vaddar, Kannada professor at S.S. Bhoomareddy College, Gajendragad. He was delivering a special lecture during the Shri Shivayogi Siddarameshwara Jayanti programme organised on Tuesday at the Sahitya Bhavan in Koppal city.

The event was jointly organised by the district admin-

istration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Koppal City Municipal Council. Speaking on the occasion, Vaddar said that before the 12th century, society was deeply affected by superstition, social inequality and exploitation under rigid caste structures and oppressive state systems. Against this backdrop, the 12th-century movement led by Basavanna and other Sharanas gave rise to the historic Kalyana Revolution, one of the greatest social reform movements in the world. He explained that

the revolution resulted in the emergence of vachana literature, through which many Sharanas illuminated society with progressive ideas. Shivayogi Siddarameshwara emerged as one of the distinguished vachana poets at Basavanna's Anubhava Mantapa and played a key role in spreading values of equality, dignity of labour and social justice. Vaddar described Shivayogi Siddarameshwara as a renowned social worker who practised what he preached. By engaging in his traditional occupation, he contributed to

the construction of tanks and lakes, demonstrating that no work is inferior when done with self-respect. He urged people, especially the younger generation, to understand the importance of education in present times and to ensure that their children receive quality education. Taking inspiration from Siddarameshwara and other great reformers, he said, educated individuals must work towards the development of their communities and make meaningful contributions to society.

Presiding over the pro-

gramme, Jagadguru Immadi Siddarameshwara Mahaswamiji of the Bagalkote and Chitradurga Bovi Gurupeetha said the concept of kayaka was deeply rooted in the Bovi community, which has historically contributed to building homes, temples, monasteries and palaces, thereby shaping both physical structures and human values. He noted that Shivayogi Siddarameshwara had mastered 64 forms of knowledge and emphasised that education remains the most powerful weapon to address social problems.



QUICK READ



Goat Rearing Training Programme Organised for Farmers

CHITRADURGA

With the objective of enhancing livestock productivity and improving farmers' income through modern practices, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services has organised a two-day scientific sheep and goat rearing training programme for farmers. The training will be conducted on January 30 and 31 at the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Training Centre located within the veterinary hospital premises near the main post office in Chitradurga city. According to an official release issued on Tuesday, the training programme is designed to equip farmers with scientific knowledge and practical skills related to sheep and goat farming. Participants will be trained in key aspects such as breed selection, housing management.

Initiative to Promote Awareness of Digital Registration

CHITRADURGA

In a move to ensure the effective implementation of the paperless registration system, the district administration has organised a series of training programmes at sub-registrar offices across all taluks of Chitradurga district. The initiative is aimed at familiarising document writers, advocates, service centre staff and the general public with the new digital registration process. According to a press release issued by District Registrar Kariyamma T.K.O., the training programmes will be conducted at designated sub-registrar offices on different dates and times to ensure maximum participation and convenience for stakeholders. The workshops are intended to create awareness and build technical capacity among those directly involved in property registration and related documentation.

Ranganath R. Earns PhD from Davangere University

CHITRADURGA

Ranganath R., a native of Haleyalanadu village in Hiriyur taluk of Chitradurga district, has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree by Davangere University for his outstanding research contribution in Kannada studies. He is the son of Rajamma and Rangaswamy, a couple from Haleyalanadu village, and his academic achievement has brought pride to his family and the region. Ranganath completed his doctoral research under the guidance of Professor Dr Jayaramayya V. of the Department of Kannada Studies. His research thesis, titled Chitradurga's Palegar Inscriptions: A Cultural Study, offers an in-depth analysis of historical inscriptions associated with the Palegar period of Chitradurga, shedding light on their cultural, social and administrative significance.

Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad Honoured with Reality Book of World Records

Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad of Mainahalli was honoured with a world record award for 38 years of service

KOPPAL

Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad, a native of Mainahalli village in Koppal taluk, has been honoured with the prestigious Reality Book of World Records award in recognition of his outstanding and sustained contributions across multiple fields over a period of 38 years. The honour was conferred during a grand programme organised as part of the 77th Republic Day celebrations at the Lalithakala Auditorium, Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru.

The award ceremony was jointly organised by Kannada Kahale Ragarangini, Mysuru, and PRK Samskruthika Vedike, Karnataka. Dr Shanmukhayya was recognised for his remarkable service and

achievements in literature, theatre, television, cinema, legal practice and social service. The organisers said his multi-dimensional contribution to society over nearly four decades made him a deserving recipient of the international-level recognition.

The award was formally presented by Pushpa R., Co-ordinator of the Reality Book of World Records, New Delhi, in the presence of distinguished guests and cultural dignitaries. Speakers at the event highlighted that Dr Shanmukhayya's journey reflects dedication, creativity and social commitment, making him an inspiration for the younger generation. They noted that his work has left a lasting impact not only in cultural and literary circles but



also in the field of social service and law.

The programme was presided over by Anandkumar, State President of Kannadasiri, who, in his address, praised Dr Shanmukhayya's versatil-

ity and consistent efforts in promoting Kannada language, culture and social values. He said individuals like Dr Shanmukhayya serve as cultural ambassadors who bridge tradition with contemporary ex-

District Secures 3rd Place for Outstanding Performance

VIJAYAPURA

Vijayapura district has secured third place at the state level for its outstanding performance under the Bhoomi Scheme, marking a significant administrative achievement. The recognition was conferred by the Revenue Department's Bhoomi Monitoring Cell, which issued a letter of appreciation acknowledging the district's efficient implementation and timely disposal of applications.

According to officials, the achievement is based on the district's performance during December 2025, when a total of 14,060 applications submitted by the public were processed and disposed of within the stipulated time frame. The swift and systematic handling of applications played a crucial role in elevating Vijayapura district to third position among all districts in the state. During the same period, the district recorded a sigma value of 5.52, resulting in a Disposal Index of 4.58766. Officials said this performance clearly reflects the effective and result-oriented implementation of the Bhoomi Scheme in the district. The Disposal Index is considered a key indicator of efficiency, measuring how



Vijayapura district achieved third place at the state level for its exceptional performance under the Bhoomi land records scheme.

promptly and effectively land-related applications are resolved. The Bhoomi Monitoring Cell stated that this notable achievement was possible due to the committed guidance of district-level officers and the dedicated efforts of all concerned officials and staff. Their coordinated work, accountability and focus on public service delivery were identified as the main reasons behind the success.

The Bhoomi Scheme plays a vital role in providing citizens with transparent, reliable

and timely land record services. Efficient disposal of applications not only reduces delays but also enhances public trust in the revenue administration. Officials said Vijayapura district's performance stands as a model for other districts striving to improve service delivery under the scheme.

Congratulating the district administration, the Bhoomi Monitoring Cell extended its appreciation to the Deputy Commissioner and all revenue officials and staff involved in implementing the scheme. The letter of appreciation noted that such achievements demonstrate how effective teamwork and adherence to timelines can significantly improve governance outcomes.

Residents Honour Additional B.T. Kumaraswamy for Excellence

CHITRADURGA

Residents of the Davalagiri locality on Tuesday felicitated B.T. Kumaraswamy, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Chitradurga district, in recognition of his exemplary service in the conduct of elections. The honour was conferred following his selection for the state-level Best Election Management Award presented by the Election Commission of India. The felicitation programme was organised by local residents as a mark of appreciation for Kumaraswamy's commitment, integrity and efficiency in discharging election-related responsibilities. Speaking on the occasion, the residents said that free, fair and transparent elections form the foundation of democracy, and officers who work tirelessly to uphold this principle deserve public recognition.

They noted that Kumaraswamy played a key role in ensuring the smooth conduct of electoral processes, including voter awareness initiatives, coordination with various departments, and strict implementation of the Model Code of Conduct. His efforts, they said, helped ensure peaceful polling, high voter participation and efficient grievance redressal during elections held in the district. The residents recalled that election duties often involve long hours, pressure and constant vigilance, especially in sensitive situations. Despite these challenges, Kumaraswamy maintained professionalism and transparency, earning the trust of citizens as well as the administration.



Temple Donation Box Theft Reported in Rampura Village

RAMANAGARA

Ramanagara district witnessed an incident of theft targeting a temple donation box in Rampura village, causing shock and anger among devotees and villagers. According to local sources, unidentified miscreants broke into the temple premises during late night hours and stole the hundi (donation box), which contained offerings made by devotees over several days. The theft came to light early in the morning when temple priests and villagers arrived for routine worship and noticed the donation box missing. The matter was immediately brought to the attention of local residents, who gathered at the temple and expressed strong resentment over the incident. Many devotees described the act as an insult to religious sentiments and demanded swift action from the authorities. Preliminary information suggests that the thieves may have taken advantage of the quiet surroundings during the night to carry out the crime. While the exact amount of money stolen is yet to be ascertained, villagers believe the hundi contained a significant sum.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ESMAIL JABIULLA B E** @ **ESMAILJABIULLA B E** S/o ELIVAZ BASHA @ ILEAS BASHA, resident of Hale Peresandra, Mandikal Hobli, Chikaballapur Taluk and District-562104. I have Changed my name from **ESMAILJABIULLA B E** to **ESMAIL JABIULLA B E**, my Father name from **ILEAS BASHA** to **ELIVAZ BASHA**, my mother name from **SYEDA BEGUM** to **SAIDHA BEGAM P S** & My wife name from **SHERIN TAJ B** to **SHEERIN TAJ B** for all the purposes. Sworn before **K H Venkatappa**, Advocate & Notary, Chikaballapura vide affidavit dated: 30/12/2025.

NAME CHANGE
I, **DILIP KUMAR MANJUNATH**, S/o. Manjunatha Dodyallappa, resident of No. 345, Gunjur Palya Road, Near Vinayaka Temple, Gunjur, Bangalore-560087, have changed my name to **DILIP KUMAR GUNJUR MANJUNATH**, vide affidavit dated: 27.01.2026, before Notary **A.M RAJASEKAR**, Bangalore

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi
No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-2/TENDER/2025-26/6224 **DATE:23/01/2026**
E-Tender Notification
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise e-Tenders from Registration in KPWD Department authorized by Karnataka Government for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 1 work under head of account 8443-Deposit Contribution amount put to tender is Rs. 67.74 Lakhs.
Calendar of events:
1) Last date for queries & clarifications : 11-02-2026 up to 5.30 PM, 2) Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 13-02-2026 up to 5.00 PM, 3) Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 16-02-2026 at 4.30 PM, 4) Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 5) If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.
For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in & departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept., Division Chikkodi during working hours.
Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikodi.
DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1703/KSMCA/2025-26

PUBLIC GRIEVANCE HEARING
MP Dr C.N. Manjunath Listens to Public Grievances at ZP Office

RAMANAGARA

Ramanagara witnessed an important public outreach initiative when Member of Parliament Dr C.N. Manjunath visited the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) office to personally receive grievances from citizens. The programme, aimed at strengthening direct communication between the public and their elected representative, drew a steady stream of people from different taluks of the district.

From early morning, residents gathered at the ZP office with written petitions and verbal complaints, hoping for swift intervention in long-pending issues. The grievances raised covered a wide range of civic and developmental concerns, including drinking water shortages, road repairs, sanitation problems, delays in welfare scheme benefits, land-related disputes, health services, and employment opportunities for youth.

Dr Manjunath patiently listened to each complainant, taking notes and seeking clarifications wherever necessary. He assured the public that their issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner through coordination with concerned departments. Officials from various line departments, including rural development, health, public works, and social wel-

fare, were present during the programme to provide immediate responses and collect details for follow-up action.

Addressing the gathering, the MP said such grievance redressal meetings are essential to understand ground realities and bridge the gap between administration and citizens. He stressed that development should reach every section of society and that governance becomes more effective when people are given a direct platform to voice their concerns. Dr Manjunath also instructed officials to treat public complaints with seriousness and sensitivity. He emphasized that delays in resolving basic issues erode public trust and directed department heads to regularly review

pending cases. In several instances, he issued on-the-spot directions to officials to conduct field inspections and submit reports within stipulated timelines. Many citizens expressed satisfaction over the initiative, stating that it gave them an opportunity to directly interact with their MP without intermediaries. Some beneficiaries of government schemes highlighted procedural hurdles, while farmers raised concerns related to irrigation, crop damage compensation, and access to agricultural support services.

Only the Name of NREGA Scheme Has Changed, Says MP Dr C.N. Manjunath

RAMANAGARA

Ramanagara Member of Parliament C. N. Manjunath remarked that only the name of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) scheme has changed, while its core objectives and benefits continue to remain the same. He made the statement while addressing a gathering during an interaction programme in Ramanagar district. Speaking to beneficiaries, officials, and local representatives, the MP said that the scheme, now widely referred to as MGNREGA, was originally designed to provide guaranteed employment to rural households and strengthen village-level infrastructure. The intention behind the programme has always been to ensure livelihood security for the rural poor. While governments may change names or introduce minor modifications, the foundation of the scheme remains intact, he said.

Dr Manjunath highlighted that the employment guarantee programme continues to play a crucial role in supporting rural families, especially during periods of economic distress,

drought, and agricultural uncertainty. He noted that thousands of households in Ramanagar district depend on the scheme for supplementary income and urged officials to ensure its effective implementation without delays.

The MP expressed concern over complaints related to delayed wage payments, lack of sufficient workdays, and procedural hurdles faced by workers. He directed concerned officials to address these issues promptly and ensure transparency in job allocation, attendance records, and wage disbursement. The scheme is meant for the people at the grass-roots, and any administrative lapses defeat its very purpose, he said. Emphasising accountability, Dr Manjunath asked Panchayat Development Officers and other implementing authorities to regularly monitor works taken up under the scheme. He stressed that projects such as water conservation, road improvement, desilting of tanks, and afforestation should be prioritised, as they not only generate employment but also contribute to long-term rural development.



Date: 28th January 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA | Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

QUICK READ



Public anger flares after Pakur bus accident

Pakur
Anger erupted in Jharkhand's Pakur on Tuesday after a school bus ran over a delivery boy near Gandhi Chowk. Mridul Saha, 18, from Talwadanga village, died on the spot after sustaining severe head injuries. Hundreds of residents blocked major roads and closed markets in protest, keeping the body on the street and demanding action. Locals blamed poor traffic management and negligence, saying buses often ignored no-entry rules. Police faced difficulties in sending the body for post-mortem due to public unrest.

MMRDA flyover faces online criticism, mockery

Mumbai
A newly built flyover in Mira-Bhayandar, Mumbai, has sparked online criticism after a video showed it narrowing from four lanes to two midway. Social media users mocked the unusual design, calling it unsafe and confusing. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), which built the double-decker flyover in Bhayander East, said the narrowing was due to space constraints and not a design error. Authorities assured the public that the flyover remains safe for commuters despite the lane reduction.

Fire breaks out at Chennai Airport terminal

Chennai
A minor fire broke out on Tuesday in the departure area of Terminal 2 at Chennai International Airport near airline offices, officials said. Airport emergency teams quickly brought the blaze under control. No injuries were reported, and flight operations continued as scheduled. Authorities confirmed that the fire was confined to a small area and did not affect passenger zones or critical infrastructure. Safety protocols were immediately activated, ensuring normal terminal functioning. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

India-EU free trade deal marks historic economic leap: Yogi

‘This strategic trade deal connects India with 27 European nations, giving preferential market access to over 99 per cent of Indian goods’

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has welcomed the successful conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union (EU), calling it a “historic leap” in India’s economic growth.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister said the agreement opens export opportunities worth nearly ₹6.41 lakh crore, especially for labour-intensive industries.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this strategic trade deal connects India with 27



European nations, giving preferential market access to over 99 per cent of Indian goods. CM Yogi said it will benefit farmers, boost micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), strengthen manufacturing and services, and create more jobs for

skilled professionals.

The India-EU FTA is designed as a modern, rules-based partnership that addresses global economic challenges while promoting closer market integration between India and the EU, the world’s fourth and second largest economies. Together, these markets represent over ₹2,091.6 lakh crore (USD 24 trillion), offering huge opportunities for trade, innovation, and economic growth.

The agreement provides India preferential access across 97 per cent of tariff lines, covering 99.5 per cent of trade value. Seventy per cent of these lines will have immedi-

ate duty removal for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, tea, coffee, spices, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, and selected marine products. Another 20 per cent of tariff lines will gradually reach zero-duty over three to five years for items including processed food, arms, and some marine products.

CM Yogi described the FTA as a blueprint for shared prosperity, a self-reliant India, and a stronger position in the global economy. Analysts say the agreement could transform trade relations and support India’s long-term growth ambitions.



MP signs power agreements for 4000 MW

BHOPAL

In a significant boost to the state’s energy sector, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav witnessed the signing of power supply agreements for 4,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity at Samatva Bhawan in Bhopal on Tuesday.

The new power plants will be developed in Anuppur district under the DBFOO model, which stands for Design, Build, Finance, Own, and Operate. CM Yadav highlighted that this initiative will bring direct investment of approximately ₹60,000 crore and generate employment for over 8,000 people, including 3,000 direct and nearly 5,000 indirect jobs.

Madhya Pradesh Power Management Company Limited (MPPMCL) invited bids for 3,200 MW of power from upcoming plants through a tariff-based competitive bidding process. A Green Shoe option allowed for the addition of another 800 MW, bringing the total capacity to

Attracts ₹60,000 crore investment and helps creat over 8,000 jobs, with new power plants set for Anuppur district

4,000 MW.

Under the bidding results, 800 MW was allocated to Hindustan Thermal Projects Limited, 1,600 MW to Torrent Power Limited, and 800 MW to Adani Power Limited. The extra 800 MW under the Green Shoe option was also allocated. Power Supply Agreements have been signed with Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) formed by these developers for all allocated capacities.

CM Yadav said the new power plants will not only meet Madhya Pradesh’s growing energy demands but also give a strong push to industrial development. Power supply under these agreements is expected to begin in 2030, promising a more reliable and sustainable energy future for the state.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the EC and BJP of harassing people in West Bengal

Yadav accuses EC BJP harassing WB

HOWRAH

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that the Election Commission of India (ECI), along with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was using the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise as a cover to conduct the National Register of Citizens (NRC) drive, harassing common people in West Bengal.

Yadav said the SIR drive

was being conducted exclusively in West Bengal ahead of assembly polls expected in the first half of 2026. “The responsibility of EC is to increase voter participation, but for the first time, it is being seen that EC and BJP, under the guise of SIR, are conducting NRC and harassing people to cut votes,” he said.

Yadav lauded Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, claiming she is the main competitor to BJP nationally. He ex-

pressed confidence that the people of West Bengal would re-elect her. “In Bengal, they are harassing CM Mamata Banerjee in the name of SIR. I am confident she will become CM again. People of Bengal will defeat BJP,” he said.

Mamata Banerjee also criticized the EC, alleging it was “snatching away” voters’ rights and harassing people over supposed discrepancies in voter lists. She claimed the

commission was acting at the behest of BJP, causing undue stress, especially to elderly and physically challenged citizens. She said the pressure led to deaths and suicides, calling the actions “unprecedented torture.”

Both leaders accused the EC of undermining democratic rights and secular principles, arguing that its actions were politically motivated and designed to intimidate voters ahead of the elections.

Delhi police recover stolen jewellery worth Rs 20L

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police successfully solved a theft case and recovered a jewellery bag containing valuables worth around Rs 20 lakh, officials said on Tuesday.

An FIR under Section 303 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered on January 22 at Kashmere Gate Metro Police Station following the complaint. The stolen bag contained gold jewellery and other items valued at approximately Rs 20 lakh.

Investigators examined CCTV footage from Chandni Chowk Metro Station, which showed a woman in a pink jacket and black pants allegedly taking the bag and boarding a train toward Millennium City Centre. Further CCTV review at Barakhamba Metro Station traced her journey to Noida Sector-52 Metro Station, where she exited through Gate No. 2.

The woman was also carrying a shopping bag from “Radhika Collection” in



Chandni Chowk Market. Police contacted the shopkeeper, who helped identify and track the accused. She was apprehended and questioned.

The woman claimed she had mistakenly picked up the jewellery bag while shopping for her cousin’s wedding and did not realize it belonged to someone else. However, she failed to explain why she did not return it after discovering the mistake.

Following her apprehension, the jewellery bag was recovered in safe condition. Police confirmed full recovery of all gold jewellery and valuables worth about Rs 20 lakh. The accused has no prior criminal record, and legal action will be taken under relevant law provisions.

AYODHYA

Ayodhya GST Commissioner Prashant Kumar Singh resigned on Tuesday amid a controversy involving the Uttar Pradesh government and Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand. Singh said his resignation was in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, after being hurt by what he called baseless allegations against them over the last two days.

Singh said, “In favour of the government and to oppose Swami Avimukteshwaranand, I have resigned. I have certain moral responsibilities toward the government that pays my salary. When I saw that my CM and PM were being insulted, I sent my resignation to the Governor.”

The controversy erupted during Mauni Amavasya at the Magh Mela, where Swami Avimukteshwaranand was reportedly stopped from taking the holy dip with his palanquin. The seer has since been protesting outside his camp.

This follows the earlier resignation of Bareilly city magistrate Alankar Agnihotri, who criticised government policies and alleged an “anti-Brahmin campaign” in Uttar Pradesh, citing mistreatment of Swami



Avimukteshwaranand and his disciples. Agnihotri described

incidents where elderly monks and disciples were allegedly beaten during the Magh Mela.

BJP leader Uma Bharti also weighed in, saying that demanding proof of Swami Avimukteshwaranand’s Shankaracharya title was improper. She clarified her comments were not against

CM Yogi Adityanath and called for a positive resolution between the seer and the government.

The resignations and controversy have highlighted tensions between religious authorities, government officials, and administrative protocols during major religious events in Uttar Pradesh.

Uma Bharti slams UP government notice to Shankaracharya

NEW DELHI:



Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and BJP leader Uma Bharti on Tuesday said that demanding proof from Swami Avimukteshwaranand regarding his Shankaracharya title was a violation of propriety. She clarified that her remarks were not meant to show any disrespect toward Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In an X post, Bharti wrote, “Don’t harbour illusions against Yogi; my statement is not against Yogi ji. I hold respect, affection, and goodwill toward him. However, demanding proof of someone’s status as Shankaracharya is a violation of propriety. Only the Shankaracharya or the scholarly council has the right to do that.”

She further urged the government and Swami Avimukteshwaranand to reach a positive resolution. “I believe a positive resolution will emerge, but the administration demanding proof of his status crosses its limits. This right belongs solely to the Shankaracharyas and their council,” she said.

Her comments come after an alleged attempt to stop the Swami from taking a holy dip at the Sangam during the Magh Mela. The Prayagraj administration denied the allegations, stating that the Shankaracharya arrived without prior permission with around 200 followers amid heavy crowding.

Earlier, BSP supremo Mayawati criticized political interference in religious events across the country, citing the Prayagraj dispute as an example. She called for quick resolution through mutual consensus and warned against linking religion with politics for narrow gains.

Bharti’s remarks underline concerns over administrative overreach and the need to respect religious authorities’ traditional rights in Uttar Pradesh.

Centre approves smart fishing harbor in Andaman

NEW DELHI

The Union Department of Fisheries has approved a proposal by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to develop a smart and integrated fishing harbour at Mayabunder with an investment of Rs 199.24 crore.

The project, supported fully under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), will be developed in line with the Blue Port Initiative and equipped with the latest technology, including IoT-enabled systems.

The harbour will provide safe landing and berthing facilities for 430 fishing vessels and cater to an annual fish landing of around 9,900 tonnes. It will also integrate sustainable fisheries management, energy-efficient systems, enhanced fish-handling capacity, improved operational safety, and digital



traceability. Officials said the project is expected to generate employment opportunities, increase stakeholder incomes, strengthen livelihoods, and help combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing while supporting India’s progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands have a vast marine resource base, covering six lakh sq. km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and an estimated 60,000 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species, including 24,000 tonnes of Yellowfin and

2,000 tonnes of Skipjack tuna. To attract investment, the Department of Fisheries held an Investors Meet on November 14, 2024, at Swaraj Dweep, highlighting opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture. A tuna cluster has also been notified to strengthen infrastructure, training, investor partnerships, and global competitiveness.

India’s fisheries sector has seen robust growth, with public investments of over Rs 39,000 crore. Fish production has more than doubled in the last decade to around 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, while seafood exports have reached Rs 62,408 crore, supplied to nearly 130 countries. The Mayabunder harbour is expected to unlock the Islands’ fisheries potential and support India’s goal of one lakh crore seafood exports by 2030-31.

Heavy snowfall: Srinagar-Jammu highway closed

UDHAMPUR

The strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) was closed in both directions on Tuesday due to heavy snowfall near the high-altitude Navvug Tunnel and continuous rainfall across Udhampur district. The suspension of traffic has left hundreds of vehicles stranded at multiple locations, with a major buildup reported at the Jakhani check naka in Udhampur.

Officials said slippery roads in the Banihal sector and snowfall near the Navvug Tunnel made travel unsafe, prompting authorities to halt vehicular movement to prevent accidents. Persistent rainfall in the lower reaches of



Udhampur worsened driving conditions.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Udhampur, Pankaj Sudan, told that Kashmir-bound vehicles were being stopped beyond Jakhani due to the ongoing

weather situation in Banihal. Authorities advised the public to postpone travel and check road conditions with official traffic units to avoid inconvenience or gridlock.

Traffic DTI Banihal Ajaz Mirza said fresh snowfall

and icy roads made driving extremely risky. Police and concerned departments were deployed to manage the situation. Heavy to moderate snowfall was also reported in Gandoh-Bhalesa area of Doda district. SDM Gandoh warned residents not to venture into high-altitude areas due to avalanche risks.

Meanwhile, Srinagar Airport canceled several flights due to bad weather. As of 9 AM, six Indigo, two Air Akasa, and three Air India Express flights were canceled.

Meteorological Department officials predicted snowfall would continue in the region until January 29, urging travelers to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary travel in hilly areas.

QUICK READ



North Korea Fires Missiles Towards Sea Of Japan

Seoul

North Korea fired two ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on Tuesday, officials from Japan and South Korea said. Japan confirmed the missiles landed outside its economic zone, while South Korea detected a projectile towards the East Sea. This is Pyongyang's second launch this month. Analysts say the tests aim to improve strike capabilities, challenge allies, and possibly sell weapons abroad. The launches come ahead of a major ruling party congress and expansion of missile production.

Saudi Arabia Halts Mukaab Megaproject Construction

Riyadh

Saudi Arabia has paused work on the Mukaab, a massive cube-shaped skyscraper in Riyadh, sources said. The 400-meter metal cube with a giant AI-powered dome is part of the New Murabba development. Officials are reviewing financing and feasibility. The halt reflects a shift from costly futuristic projects under Vision 2030 toward more urgent, profitable plans. Focus is now on World Expo 2030, the 2034 World Cup, Diriyah cultural zone, and Qiddiya tourism megaproject, insiders added.

'Nihilist' Penguin Walks Alone Into Mountains

Antarctica

A lone penguin walking away from its colony has gone viral online. The clip, from Werner Herzog's 2007 documentary Encounters at the End of the World, shows the bird waddling toward mountains about 70 km from the ocean. Social media users call it the "Nihilist Penguin" due to eerie music and captions highlighting its solitary journey where survival is impossible. The footage captures the penguin leaving food and company behind, sparking fascination and discussions about nature and life.

Brazil Seeks Stronger Trade Ties With India Strategically

Brazil opened a business office in India to boost trade, diversify exports, and strengthen political and economic ties

SAO PAULO

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will lead a high-level delegation to India from February 19 to 21, aiming to strengthen trade, attract investment, and build strategic partnerships. This visit reflects Brazil's plan to reduce reliance on traditional partners like the US and China while boosting ties with emerging economies. Nearly 150 business leaders will join the mission, highlighting growing corporate interest in India's market.

The visit comes after Vice President Geraldo Alckmin



and Defence Minister Jose Mucio Monteiro visited India in October 2025. Talks then focused on defence cooperation, trade expansion, and the Mercosur-India Preferential Trade Agreement. Political engagement has also in-

creased, with Lula and Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently discussing UN reforms and international collaboration.

Brazil recently opened a business office in India to diversify exports, which are heavily focused on crude oil. India is now Brazil's tenth-largest export destination and sixth-largest import source. Bilateral trade grew strongly in 2025, with exports rising 30.2% and imports increasing 21.9%, though Brazil recorded a USD 1.5 billion trade deficit. Agriculture will also be highlighted, with technical cooperation in family

farming included in the delegation's agenda.

Preparations are intensive, with Brazil renting a 500-seat auditorium in India to meet business leaders and showcase investment opportunities. Officials say the visit will not only boost the economy but also reinforce President Lula's image as a global leader asserting Brazil's interests on the world stage. The mission marks one of the largest overseas delegations of the current administration, signaling the country's commitment to expanding international partnerships beyond traditional alliances.

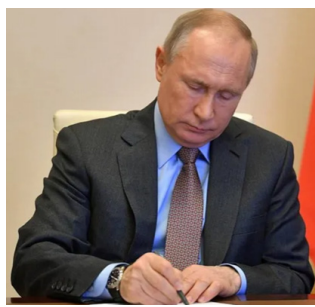
Putin Praises India On 77th Republic Day

MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent warm greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on India's 77th Republic Day. He praised India's achievements in social, economic, scientific, and technical fields, saying the country "rightfully occupies its place among the leading world powers" and commands high respect internationally.

Recalling his December 2025 visit to India, Putin noted that discussions with Indian leaders reaffirmed the growth of the special and privileged strategic partnership between Moscow and New Delhi. He expressed confidence that bilateral co-operation would continue to strengthen across all sectors and that both countries would work together on regional and global issues, supporting a fair multipolar world order.

In December, PM Modi met Putin at Hyderabad House, where they discussed boosting ties in economy, defence, and trade. Modi highlighted the enduring strength of India-Russia relations, thanking Putin for his consistent friendship and commitment. He recalled milestones in their partnership, including the establishment of the strategic partnership 25 years ago and its



Russian President Putin congratulates India on its 77th Republic Day, highlighting its global achievements and strong India-Russia strategic partnership

elevation to a Special Privileged Strategic Partnership in 2010.

Putin concluded his message wishing good health and happiness to the people of India. Both leaders emphasized that their nations' long-standing relationship remains a model of cooperation, guided by mutual respect, shared interests, and a vision for global stability and development.

The greetings come as India continues to strengthen its international presence, with Russia recognizing its role as a leading power on the global stage and reaffirming the importance of strategic collaboration between the two countries.

Balochistan Observes Genocide Remembrance Day With Seminars

QUETTA

People across Balochistan and Baloch-populated areas observed January 25 with seminars, vigils, and awareness campaigns to mark "Baloch Genocide Remembrance Day," organised by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC). The day honours victims of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and other alleged human rights abuses.

In Quetta, a seminar focused on the 2014 discovery of mass graves in Tootak, Khuzdar, considered a symbol of suffering for families of forcibly disappeared persons. Relatives shared testimonies about years of uncertainty, psychological distress, and financial hardship. Family members of detained BYC leaders accused authorities of using the law to suppress peaceful dissent. Speakers highlighted arrests of activists, including Dr. Mahrang Baloch, Beebow Baloch, Gulzadi Baloch, Shaji Baloch, and Beebarg Baloch, noting a worsening human rights climate. The seminar concluded with a call for international attention and continued resolve against persecution.

In Taunsa, Koh-e-Sulaiman, a peaceful demonstration commemorated victims of alleged state-backed projects, uranium mining, and environmental degradation. Photographs of cancer victims were displayed with flowers and candles, highlighting concerns about nuclear-related activities and limited healthcare. Participants noted the region's lack of hospitals, schools, and essential services.

The US has indicated Ukraine's security guarantees could depend on agreeing to a peace deal ceding Donbas

US Security Guarantees Linked To Donbas Peace Deal

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration has reportedly signaled that US security guarantees for Ukraine may be linked to Kyiv agreeing to a peace deal likely requiring the country to cede control of the Donbas region to Russia, familiar with the discussions. Washington also suggested it could provide additional weapons to strengthen Ukraine's peacetime army if Kyiv withdraws forces from eastern areas it currently controls.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that a US document on security guarantees is "100 per cent ready," but the country is still awaiting a date and location for signing. Zelenskyy has emphasized that any



peace agreement must uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity. A senior Ukrainian official expressed concerns that Washington has been slow to finalize guarantees, saying the US "stops each time the security guarantees can be signed."

Kyiv wants security guarantees confirmed before conceding any land, but the US reportedly views the Donbas as central to ending the war

and is not pressuring Russia to change its position. White House deputy press secretary Anna Kelly denied that the US is forcing territorial concessions, stating the US role is to help both sides reach an agreement. A source familiar with Washington's stance added that security guarantees would depend on both parties agreeing to a peace deal.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin reaffirmed that territory remains a key issue in ending the conflict, following talks in Abu Dhabi. As discussions continue, uncertainty remains over whether Ukraine can secure US guarantees without making territorial compromises, highlighting the complexity of negotiating a lasting resolution to the war.

Washington State Senate Officially Honours India Republic Day

WASHINGTON

In a special session, the Washington State Senate adopted Resolution Number 8674 on January 26, 2026, celebrating India's 77th Republic Day. The resolution was introduced by Indian American Senator Manka Dhingra and supported by Senator Vandana Slatter, along with other senators praising India as the world's largest democracy and emphasizing strong India-US friendship.

The Senate session began with verses from the Taaitareeya Upanishad and concluded with a luncheon hosted by the Indian Consul General in Seattle. The event featured addresses by senators and a Bharatnatyam dance recital by artist Anvesha Das commemorating 150 years of Vande Mataram.

Earlier, South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden extended greetings to India, proclaiming January 26, 2026, as "Republic Day of India" and ex-



pressing confidence that India-US ties will grow stronger. Similarly, Washington Governor Bob Ferguson and Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy officially recognized the day, encouraging residents to honour Indian and Indian American communities and the enduring bonds with India.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also extended his greetings, highlighting the historic partnership between India and the United States. He noted ongoing cooperation in defence, energy, critical minerals, and emerging technologies. Rubio emphasized the multi-layered engagement through the Quadrilateral Se-

curity Dialogue (QUAD) and said the partnership has delivered significant benefits for both countries and the Indo-Pacific region. He expressed eagerness to advance shared objectives in the coming year.

The celebrations in the United States reflect deepening bilateral ties and the recognition of India's achievements and contributions globally. From legislative sessions and gubernatorial proclamations to cultural performances, officials across multiple states joined in celebrating India's Republic Day, highlighting the enduring friendship between the US and India.

Balochistan Employees Protest Demands Disparity Reduction Allowance



QUETTA

Government employees in Balochistan held protest rallies in Quetta and Khuzdar on Tuesday, demanding the grant of the long-pending Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA). Workers from the Balochistan Employees Grand Alliance (BEGA) marched from Bacha Khan Chowk to the City Police Station in Quetta, where they staged a sit-in and raised slogans against the government for not meeting their demands. Police said 11 participants voluntarily presented themselves for arrest.

In Khuzdar, a separate rally was led by BEGA district leaders, including Aslam Notani, Manzoor Naushad, Aslam Zahri, Rashid Ahmed Ghulamani, and Rashida Zahri. Employees from various government departments joined, expressing frustration over delays in implementing their demands. Protests have disrupted work in many offices in recent days. Authorities had blocked the Red Zone in Quetta, set up road barriers, and suspended mobile internet to prevent the gathering.

Earlier on January 22, the Unemployed Pharmacists' Action Committee (UPAC)

criticised the government for announcing only limited vacancies for over 2,000 unemployed pharmacists. UPAC General Secretary Qasim Aziz Mengal called the move "unacceptable" and urged merit-based recruitment and the creation of more positions. He accused the health department of favouring certain candidates through walk-in interviews and highlighted the absence of pharmacy departments in private hospitals.

The recent unrest follows the arrest of dozens of employees on January 20, when police blocked a sit-in in the Red Zone. Despite heavy security, protesters continued gathering outside the Quetta Press Club, demanding fair implementation of allowances and transparent recruitment processes.

The protests reflect growing dissatisfaction among Balochistan's government employees over delayed allowances, limited job opportunities, and perceived lack of transparency in recruitment, highlighting tensions between authorities and public sector workers in the province.

EBOLA MUTATION

Chinese Scientists Discover Critical Ebola Virus Mutation

BEIJING

Chinese researchers have identified a key mutation in the Ebola virus that increased its infectivity during the 2018–2020 outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This outbreak, the second-largest in history, caused over 3,000 infections and more than 2,000 deaths.

Published in the journal Cell, the study analyzed 480 complete Ebola virus genomes. Researchers found a mutation in the viral glycoprotein, called GP-V75A, which emerged early in the

epidemic. This variant rapidly replaced the original strain, closely matching the rise in cases, suggesting it gave the virus a transmission advantage.

Professor Qian Jun of Sun Yat-sen University said real-time genome surveillance and evolutionary analysis are essential during outbreaks. "It helps warn of changes in transmission risk and assess the effectiveness of drugs and vaccines," he explained. Experiments confirmed that GP-V75A increased the virus's ability to infect different host cells and mice.



The study also revealed that the mutation reduced the effectiveness of some antiviral antibodies and entry inhibitors, raising concerns about potential drug resistance. These findings highlight the

need for ongoing monitoring of viral evolution during outbreaks.

Professor Jun emphasized that understanding how viral mutations drive transmission can help authorities adjust

control strategies in advance. He added that insights from such research are crucial not only for Ebola but also for preparing for future emerging infectious diseases.

The study underscores the importance of global genomic surveillance, rapid response, and the development of broad-spectrum therapies to counter evolving viral threats. By identifying dangerous mutations like GP-V75A, scientists aim to improve epidemic preparedness and guide the design of more effective vaccines and treatments for Ebola and other viral diseases.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

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

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

QUICK READ

EU Luxury Cars to Become Cheaper in India

New Delhi

European luxury cars like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Rolls-Royce, and Bentley are set to become cheaper in India. This follows the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement announced at the 16th India-EU Summit on Tuesday. Under the deal, India will gradually reduce tariffs on EU cars to 10% within a quota system. The agreement aims to benefit consumers, support domestic manufacturing, and promote "Make in India" projects and future car exports to Europe.

Adani, Embraer Collaborate on Aircraft Manufacturing

New Delhi

Adani Group and Brazil's Embraer have announced a strategic partnership to assemble regional transport aircraft in India. The collaboration aims to improve air connectivity to Tier 2 and 3 cities and promote technology transfer, skill development, and a strong supply chain. A Final Assembly Line for regional jets, seating up to 150 passengers, will be set up. The venture marks India's push for self-reliance in aircraft manufacturing and strengthens Adani's presence in the civil aviation sector.

Airfloa, Janatics Team Up for Rail Doors

Chennai

Airfloa Rail Technology has joined hands with Janatics Industrial Automation to develop Automatic Door Systems for modern trains, including Freight EMU and Vande Bharat coaches. The doors will include double-leaf and single-leaf plug doors, pocket sliding doors, and fire barrier doors. Airfloa will handle tenders, customer engagement, and project execution. The partnership strengthens Airfloa's expertise in key rail systems, supports future railway programs, and boosts the modernisation of India's rail coaches.



Nationwide Bank Strike Demands Immediate Five-Day Week

Bank employees across India went on a nationwide strike on Tuesday demanding the immediate implementation of a five-day work week. The strike, called by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), disrupted banking services including cash deposits, withdrawals, cheque clearances, and other routine transactions. Employees in Gujarat's Vadodra, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Chandigarh joined the strike in large numbers. Protesters said their demand has been pending since 2015 and was repeatedly delayed despite memoranda and agreements with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). Over 25,000 employees participated in Raipur, 10,000 in Ghazipur, and thousands more across other districts, causing major inconvenience to customers and businesses.



INDIA-EU SIGN MAJOR SECURITY-DEFENCE DEAL

The partnership to boost cooperation in Indo-Pacific, counterterrorism, and defence industry collaboration.

NEW DELHI

India and the European Union (EU) signed a historic Security and Defence Partnership, aiming to enhance cooperation on security, defence, and global challenges.

EU Vice President Kaja Kallas said the agreement will launch an annual dialogue, deepen collaboration on maritime security, cyber issues, and counterterrorism, and explore India's participation in European defence initiatives.

MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called the 16th India-EU Summit a landmark event. Leaders discussed trade, clean energy, digital technologies, AI, infrastructure, mobility, research, and security. The two sides concluded negotiations for a landmark India-EU Free Trade Agreement, adopted a joint strategic agenda "Towards 2030," and signed a mobility cooperation MoU.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized greater cooperation with EU nations.



The two sides also launched negotiations on an India-EU Security of Information Agreement to enable sharing of classified information and support closer defence ties. Existing Security and Defence Consultations will now become an annual EU-India Security and Defence Dialogue to institutionalize high-level engagement. Both parties will consult on defence initiatives and explore India's participation in EU defence programmes. To boost defence industrial collaboration, an industry-led India-EU Defence Industry Forum will be established, involving businesses and EU member states, to identify opportunities in defence manufacturing, technology, and innovation.

Kallas noted that partnerships like these strengthen global peace and security and are part of the EU's Strategic Compass to engage key global partners.

With this deal, India becomes the third Asian country, after Japan and South Korea, to sign such an EU security and defence pact.

Shares of top Indian carmakers fell sharply after reports suggested planned tariff cuts on European imports

Indian Carmakers Drop On European Tariff Cut Report

NEW DELHI

Shares of India's leading carmakers dropped sharply on Tuesday following reports that the government is set to slash tariffs on European car imports under a potential India-EU free trade deal. Mahindra & Mahindra shares fell as much as 5.1 percent, reaching their lowest level since August 2025, while Maruti Suzuki and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles fell 2.95 percent and 2 percent respectively. The Nifty Auto Index was down 2.2 percent.

According to sources, India plans to reduce import duties on EU cars from up to 110 percent to 40 percent. The cut will initially apply to cars with an import price above 15,000 euros (\$17,739). The move would benefit European automakers such as Volkswagen, Renault, Stellantis, and luxury brands Mercedes-Benz



and BMW.

Indian manufacturers have opposed the cuts, arguing that lower tariffs would make imports more competitive and discourage investment in local production. Currently, European carmakers hold less than 4 percent of India's 4.4-million-unit annual car market, which is dominated by Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra, and Tata, together accounting for about two-thirds of sales.

The potential tariff reduction highlights the government's push to strengthen trade ties with Europe, but it has rattled domestic carmakers who fear increased competition from foreign brands. Analysts say the move could reshape India's automotive market, creating opportunities for European players while challenging homegrown manufacturers to enhance competitiveness and innovation.

India Aims To Lead Global Semiconductor Industry

NEW DELHI

India is making rapid strides in semiconductor development through the India Semiconductor Mission. Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, said the country will create its own Intellectual Property (IP) in six critical systems: compute, RF, networking, power, sensor, and memory.

Speaking on the mission's progress, Vaishnaw highlighted that 10 projects are under construction, production will begin for four projects this year, and 24 startups have already designed semiconductor chips. Around 315 educational institutions have trained students in chip design. He said access to Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools



under C-DAC has been crucial in helping India's chip designers move from theory to practical, working projects.

The Minister set a 24-month target for developing simpler standard IPs like USB and PCIe and suggested a 36-month timeline for analog IPs, critical for real-world and strategic applications. Vaishnaw emphasised that India has the talent, including

India is set to develop its own semiconductor Intellectual Property in six key areas, aiming to become a major global chip nation by 2035, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

experts from the diaspora, to achieve this. He also proposed creating a repository for standard IPs under the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme, which could be mandated for chips used in India.

Vaishnaw said India is on track to become a major semiconductor player by 2029 and one of the world's most important semiconductor nations by 2035, marking a significant leap in the global chip industry.

Trump Threatens Higher Tariffs on South Korean Goods

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump threatened to increase tariffs on South Korean goods, including automobiles, lumber, and pharmaceuticals, claiming Seoul had not honoured a previous trade pact with the United States. The announcement was made on Trump's Truth Social platform, stating tariffs would rise from 15 percent to 25 percent. He said South Korea's legislature had not enacted the "historic trade agreement," calling it a failure to live up to the deal.

Seoul's Presidential office said it had not been informed about the proposed hike in advance. Trade Minister Kim Jung-kwan, currently in Canada, is expected to travel to Washington for discussions with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

The announcement follows a trade and security agreement signed in October between Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, which included South Korean investment commitments and reduced U.S. tariffs on vehicles, auto parts, and pharmaceuticals. The agreement has not yet been fully implemented in Seoul, though officials maintain it does not require parliamentary approval.

The auto sector accounts for nearly 27 percent of South Korea's exports to the U.S., which takes almost half of its total car exports. Analysts warn that raising tariffs could hurt South Korea's competitiveness against countries such as Japan and the EU. So far, the Trump administration has not formally issued notices to implement the tariff changes.



Silver and Gold Hit Record Highs on Strong Demand

NEW DELHI

Silver futures jumped to a record Rs 3.59 lakh per kilogram on Tuesday, while gold touched an all-time high of Rs 1.59 lakh per 10 grams, driven by strong investor demand amid persistent geopolitical and economic tensions.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), March silver contracts rose Rs 25,101, or 7.5 percent, after last week's 16.3 percent surge that first breached Rs 3 lakh per kilogram. Gold futures for February delivery gained Rs 3,783, or 2.42 percent, continuing a sharp rally of 9.5 percent over the previous week.

Analysts said the spike in bullion prices reflects a rush toward safe-haven assets, as global markets are rattled by trade tensions, geopolitical risks, and concerns over fiscal and policy credibility. Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities, noted that investors' confidence in sovereign bonds and currencies is weakening, pushing them toward gold and silver.

Market watchers are also closely monitoring the upcoming Union Budget 2026, which may influence bullion sentiment through changes in import duties and fiscal measures.

In overseas trade, Comex silver futures fell 6.27 percent to USD 108.26 per ounce, while gold slipped 0.51 percent to USD 5,096.05 per ounce, after both touched record highs in the previous session. Investors continue to weigh global central bank policies and uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's next steps.

The trend shows a clear shift of funds from bonds and currencies into tangible assets as investors hedge against market volatility and economic uncertainty.

Asian Paints Q3 Profit Falls amid Exceptional Costs

MUMBAI

Asian Paints reported a 4.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit for the quarter ended December 31, 2025. Net profit fell to about Rs 1,074 crore, down from Rs 1,128 crore in the same quarter last year. The company's revenue grew nearly 4 per cent year-on-year to Rs 8,867.02 crore, reflecting higher sales despite profitability being affected by certain exceptional costs of Rs 157.61 crore.

The exceptional items mainly included labour code provisions and an impairment loss following the acquisition



of Obgenix Software Private Limited, also called White Teak. On an operational basis, Asian Paints performed well. Profit before depreciation, interest, tax, other income, and exceptional items (PBDIT) rose 8.8 per cent to Rs 1,781

crore. PBDIT margin improved to 20.1 per cent from 19.2 per cent a year ago. Profit before depreciation, interest, tax, other income, and exceptional items (PBDIT) rose 8.8 per cent to Rs 1,781

EU INVESTMENTS INDIA

Over 95 Percent EU Firms Plan Expansion India

NEW DELHI

Over 95 per cent of European Union (EU) businesses in India plan to expand their operations in the next five years, according to a survey by the Federation of European Business in India (FEBI). Companies cited strong domestic demand and sales growth as key reasons for expansion. Around 35 per cent of EU firms intend to invest €50 million or more each, reflecting broad-based investment across sectors.

Ninety per cent of respon-

dents view India as a major driver of growth, offering opportunities as a market, a hub for research and development (R&D), and a production centre for exports. European companies are increasingly interested in both traditional manufacturing and emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, digital technology, sustainability, and R&D. About 40 per cent are earmarking funds for Global Capability Centres, while 35 per cent plan to strengthen supply chains and sourcing in India.

Positive factors attracting



EU investment include political stability (64%), skilled manpower (54%), and cost-competitive manufacturing (70%). However, businesses highlighted challenges including regulatory approv-

als (71%), cumbersome customs (54%), complex taxation (41%), local content rules (39%), and quality control orders (37%). Proactive state governments were noted as key to attracting further for-

eign investment.

The announcement of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Tuesday marks a historic milestone. The deal is expected to boost bilateral trade and investment, strengthen supply chains, and promote sustainable growth. India's goods trade with the EU reached ₹11.5 lakh crore (USD 136.5 billion) in 2024-25, while trade in services stood at ₹7.2 lakh crore (USD 83.1 billion). With the FTA and rising investments, India is becoming a central hub for European business growth in Asia.





Fruits And Berries For Better Health

Fruits and berries are among the most popular health foods worldwide. They are naturally sweet, colorful, and packed with nutrients. Apples are especially valued because they contain fiber, vitamin C, and powerful antioxidants. They are filling and make a convenient snack between meals. Avocados stand out from most fruits due to their high healthy fat content. They are creamy, rich in fiber, potassium, and vitamin C, and can replace less healthy spreads or dressings. Bananas are known for potassium and vitamin B6, offering quick energy and easy portability. Blueberries are small but powerful, offering antioxidants that support overall health. Oranges are famous for vitamin C and also provide fiber and protective plant compounds. Strawberries are low in calories yet rich in vitamin C, fiber, and manganese, making them a nutritious dessert option. Other beneficial fruits include cherries, grapes, kiwi, mangoes, pears, pineapples, and raspberries, each contributing valuable nutrients.



Vegetables Packed With Essential Nutrients

Vegetables are among the most nutrient-dense foods available. Eating a wide variety of vegetables, especially in different colors, helps ensure a broad intake of vitamins and minerals. Asparagus is low in calories and rich in vitamin K. Bell peppers, available in several colors, are sweet, crunchy, and high in vitamin C and antioxidants. Broccoli provides fiber, vitamins C and K, and more protein than many vegetables. Carrots are sweet, crunchy, and rich in fiber, vitamin K, and carotene antioxidants. Cauliflower is versatile and can be roasted, added to curries, or eaten raw. Cucumbers are refreshing, low in calories, and mostly water, helping with hydration. Garlic adds strong flavor and contains compounds with antioxidant and antimicrobial effects. Kale is high in fiber, vitamins C and K, and adds texture to dishes. Onions contain bioactive compounds linked to health benefits. Tomatoes, though technically fruits, are commonly eaten as vegetables and provide potassium and vitamin C. Other vegetables such as cabbage, mushrooms, squash, and zucchini also offer valuable nutrients.

Tubers And Simple Healthy Additions

Tubers such as potatoes and sweet potatoes are filling and nutrient rich. Potatoes provide potassium, vitamin C, and fiber when eaten with the skin. They are less energy dense and can support weight management. Sweet potatoes are rich in antioxidants, beta carotene, and vitamin A and can be prepared in many ways. Apple cider vinegar is often used as a salad dressing and may help regulate blood sugar levels when consumed with meals, though more research is needed. Dark chocolate contains flavonoid antioxidants that may support heart health, but it should be enjoyed in moderation mainly for pleasure rather than health benefits. Together, these foods demonstrate that healthy eating does not require complexity or extreme restrictions. Choosing a wide range of natural, whole foods and enjoying them in balanced portions can support long-term health, energy, and well-being for people everywhere.



Balance Diet & Healthy Living



Eggs And Lean Meats Benefits

Eggs are another highly nutritious food that has gained renewed appreciation. Once feared for cholesterol content, eggs are now recognized as a valuable protein source with many benefits. They provide essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals that support muscle strength, brain function, and overall health when eaten in moderation. Lean, unprocessed meats can also fit into a healthy diet. Lean beef provides high-quality protein and iron that the body absorbs easily. Chicken breast is low in fat and calories but rich in protein, potassium, and B vitamins, making it a favorite for balanced meals. Lamb and mutton, often grass-fed, contain beneficial omega-3 fatty acids that support heart health.



Nuts And Seeds For Health

Nuts and seeds are small but powerful foods. Though high in calories, they contain healthy unsaturated fats that may lower the risk of heart disease and other conditions. They are filling, require little preparation, and add flavor and texture to meals. Almonds provide vitamin E, magnesium, fiber, and antioxidants that support heart health and digestion. Chia seeds are extremely nutrient dense, offering fiber, calcium, magnesium, and other minerals in small amounts. Coconuts supply fiber and medium-chain fats that can support energy needs. Macadamia nuts are rich in monounsaturated fats and have a smooth taste. Walnuts provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals and pair well with salads. Brazil nuts are especially rich in selenium, supporting thyroid health.



Fish And Seafood For Health

Fish and seafood are important sources of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and iodine. Regular consumption of oily fish is linked to improved heart and brain health. Salmon is rich in protein, omega-3 fats, and vitamin D. Sardines are small but packed with calcium, vitamin D, and other nutrients. Shellfish like clams and oysters are nutrient dense and should be sourced carefully. Shrimp is low in fat, high in protein, and provides zinc. Trout is similar to salmon in taste and nutrition. Tuna is low in calories, high in protein, and useful for those managing weight, especially when low-mercury varieties are chosen.



Grains Breads And Legumes Benefits

Whole grains play an important role in a healthy diet by providing carbohydrates, fiber, and micronutrients. Brown rice is more nutritious than white rice, offering fiber, magnesium, and vitamin B1. Oats contain beta-glucans, fibers that help lower cholesterol and support gut health. Quinoa is a nutrient-rich grain that provides fiber, magnesium, and complete plant-based protein. Whole grain breads are generally healthier than refined white bread. They contain more fiber and nutrients and less added sugar. Ezekiel bread, made from sprouted grains and legumes, is a popular choice. Homemade low-carb or gluten-free breads allow better control over ingredients and can suit special dietary needs. Legumes are excellent plant-based protein sources that also provide iron and fiber. Proper preparation improves digestion and nutrient absorption. Green beans can be eaten as a side dish or added to salads. Kidney beans are rich in fiber and nutrients but must be cooked thoroughly. Lentils are high in fiber and protein and are widely used in many cuisines. Peanuts, though technically legumes, are rich in nutrients and antioxidants and may support weight management when eaten mindfully.

COMMON TYPES OF UNHEALTHY FOODS



Not all unhealthy foods are obvious. Many are marketed as “quick snacks” or “energy boosters,” but they are often high in calories and low in nutrients. Some examples include:

- **Sugary Beverages:** Drinks like sodas, packaged fruit juices, and energy drinks contain high amounts of added sugar. A single can of soda may have up to 40 grams of sugar, exceeding the daily recommended limit. These beverages cause blood sugar spikes and can contribute to insulin resistance over time.
- **Fried Foods:** Foods like samosas, French fries, and pakoras are deep-fried in oils high in trans fats. Trans fats increase bad cholesterol (LDL) and lower good cholesterol (HDL), raising the risk of heart disease. Regular consumption of fried foods can also lead to weight gain.

- **Processed Meats:** Bacon, sausages, and ham are rich in nitrates, salt, and preservatives. Eating these meats frequently is linked to a higher risk of heart disease and certain cancers, making them a food group to limit.
- **Refined Grains:** White rice, white bread, and pastries are stripped of fiber and micronutrients during processing. These foods digest quickly, causing rapid blood sugar fluctuations and leaving you hungry sooner.
- **Packaged Snacks:** Instant noodles, potato chips, and flavored popcorn often contain excessive salt, refined oils, and artificial flavorings. Frequent consumption may negatively affect heart and digestive health.
- **Sugary Desserts:** Cakes, doughnuts, and ice creams combine added sugar and trans fats. Over time, these

- foods can increase the risk of insulin resistance, obesity, and fatty liver disease.
- **Fast Foods:** Burgers, pizzas, and fried chicken are high in calories, sodium, and unhealthy fats. Eating fast food regularly contributes to obesity, high blood pressure, and other metabolic disorders.
- **Highly Processed Dairy Products:** Cheese spreads and whipped creams often contain high sodium, stabilizers, and saturated fats, which can raise cholesterol levels.
- **High-Sugar Breakfast Cereals:** Some cereals marketed as healthy contain more sugar than desserts and very little fiber, making them poor choices for regular consumption. Each of these foods contributes extra calories without providing essential nutrients, often replacing healthier options in daily meals.

Health Risks of Eating Unhealthy Foods

- Eating unhealthy foods regularly can affect both physical and mental well-being. The major risks include:
- **Obesity and Weight Gain:** High-calorie, low-fiber foods encourage fat storage, especially around the abdomen. Over time, this can lead to obesity and associated health problems.
 - **Heart Disease:** Saturated and trans fats contribute to plaque buildup in arteries, raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.
 - **Type 2 Diabetes:** Excess sugar intake can cause insulin resistance, making it harder for the body to regulate blood sugar.
 - **Digestive Issues:** Refined and processed foods often lack fiber, leading to constipation, bloating, and poor gut health.
 - **Fatty Liver Disease:** Diets high in added sugars and refined oils can cause fat accumulation in the liver, increasing the risk of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).
 - **Weakened Immunity:** Nutrient deficiencies from poor diets reduce the body’s ability to fight infections effectively.
 - **Cognitive Decline:** Diets high in processed foods have been linked to memory problems and an increased risk of cognitive decline.
 - **Depression and Anxiety:** Unhealthy foods can disrupt the gut-brain axis and serotonin production, affecting mood and energy.

Dental Decay: Sugary foods feed bacteria in the mouth, leading to enamel erosion and cavities. Long-term consumption of unhealthy foods can contribute to lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and even some cancers.

Unhealthy Foods That Harm Your Body And Health

Unhealthy foods are items that provide a lot of calories but very few essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They are usually processed and contain added sugars, refined flour, saturated or trans fats, artificial colors, and preservatives. These additives can disrupt the body’s natural metabolic processes and lead to various health problems over time.



Unlike natural foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, unhealthy foods often replace nutrient-rich choices in our daily diets. Some of the most common unhealthy foods include soft drinks, chips, instant noodles, bakery desserts, and fast food. These foods can overstimulate the brain’s reward system, increasing cravings and encouraging habitual consumption.

Regular intake of these items can lead to overeating, weight gain, and deficiencies in essential nutrients. They may also increase the risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and fatty liver. Experts recommend that added sugars should not exceed 10% of total daily calories, emphasizing the importance of replacing these foods with natural, whole options to maintain balanced energy levels and overall health.



Ex-FIFA president Sepp Blatter joins calls for boycott of US World Cup

Concerns grow over travel bans, immigration policies, political climate ahead tournament

WASHINGTON

Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has added his voice to growing international calls for a boycott of World Cup matches scheduled to be held in the United States, questioning the country's suitability as a host under President Donald Trump's administration.

Blatter, who led world football's governing body from 1998 to 2015, expressed his support for a proposed fan boycott in a post on X. He endorsed remarks made by Swiss anti-corruption expert Mark Pieth, who last week urged supporters to avoid travelling to the United States for the tournament.

"I think Mark Pieth is right



to question this World Cup," Blatter wrote, quoting Pieth's comments. Pieth, a white-collar crime specialist, chaired FIFA's Independent Governance Committee during reform efforts a decade ago.

Pieth advised fans to stay away, warning that visitors

could face harsh treatment by US authorities. "If they don't please the officials, they'll be put straight on the next flight home," Pieth said, adding that fans would be better off watching the tournament on television.

The United States is set to

co-host the World Cup alongside Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19. However, concerns within the international football community have intensified due to the Trump administration's domestic and foreign policies, including strict immigration enforcement, aggressive handling of protests, and an expansionist posture on issues such as Greenland.

Recent travel bans have further fuelled criticism. Earlier this month, the US announced restrictions that would effectively prevent fans from Senegal and Ivory Coast from travelling to follow their teams unless they already hold valid visas. The administration cited "screening and

vetting deficiencies" as the reason. Supporters from Iran and Haiti, both World Cup qualifiers, are also barred under earlier iterations of the ban.

Oke Göttlich, a vice-president of the German Football Association, told last week that the time had come to seriously consider a boycott.

Blatter's intervention is significant, given his long association with FIFA, despite his resignation in 2015 amid corruption investigations. His comments add weight to a debate that could intensify as the tournament draws closer, potentially overshadowing preparations for one of football's showpiece events.



Spain to host 2030 WC final, federation president asserts confidently

MADRID

Spain will host the final of the 2030 World Cup, according to Spanish football federation president Rafael Louzán, who expressed confidence that the tournament's showpiece match will be played on Spanish soil despite FIFA yet to make an official announcement.

Speaking to reporters at a media event, Louzán said Spain would take the lead role in the World Cup co-hosted by Spain, Portugal and Morocco, adding that the final would be staged in his country. He did not specify the city or stadium that would host the title clash.

"Spain will lead the World Cup and the final will be held here," Louzán said, without offering further details.

FIFA has so far refrained from confirming the venue for the final of the expanded tournament, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the World Cup. Spanish media have long touted Real Madrid's recently renovated Santiago Bernabeu Stadium as the most likely host for the final, given its modern infrastructure and global profile.

However, there had been

Spanish football chief claims decisive match will be staged in country, despite FIFA silence.

growing speculation in recent months that Morocco could stage the final at the under-construction Hassan II Stadium near Casablanca. The venue, expected to be completed in 2028, is designed to hold up to 115,000 spectators, making it the largest football stadium in the world.

Morocco's hopes may have been dented by organizational issues surrounding the recent Africa Cup of Nations final, which drew criticism and raised concerns about readiness for hosting a World Cup final. Those issues reportedly weakened Morocco's bid for the tournament's decisive match. Barcelona could also enter the race, having completed major renovations to the Camp Nou, one of Europe's most iconic stadiums.

The 2030 World Cup will be unique in its geographic spread, with Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay each hosting one match to commemorate the centenary of the inaugural 1930 World Cup, which was held in Uruguay.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Gauff Defends Racquet Smash, Questions Its Broadcast

MELBOURNE

Coco Gauff defended her post-match racquet smash after a heavy 6-1, 6-2 quarter-final defeat to Elina Svitolina at the Australian Open, saying it was necessary to release frustration but expressed disappointment it was caught on camera.

The world number three, 21, left centre court visibly dejected after the loss. Television images showed her repeatedly smashing her racquet in a stadium corridor. "I just took the minute to go and do that. I don't think it's a bad thing. I need to let out that emotion, otherwise I'm snappy with people around me," Gauff said.

She added she had tried to avoid cameras, noting, "I tried to go somewhere where I thought there wasn't a camera... maybe some conversations can be had because I feel like at this tournament the only private place we have is the locker room."

Despite her defeat, Gauff



praised Svitolina, saying, "Credit it to her because she forced me to play like that... bad days are often caused by your opponent. She did well."

Gauff, a two-time major winner, reflected on past incidents, mentioning a racquet break in the French Open's round of 16, and said she tries to avoid displaying such emotions publicly, especially in front of children.

Svitolina, seeded 12th, will face world number one Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals on Thursday, with Gauff emphasizing the importance of crediting opponents for their performance while managing personal frustration.



ISL: From Manipur to Madras, Chennaiyin FC sign Imran Khan

CHENNAI

Two-time Indian Super League (ISL) champions Chennaiyin FC have strengthened their Indian contingent by signing seasoned attacker Imran Khan until the end of the ongoing season. The 30-year-old Manipur-born forward brings with him a wealth of top-flight experience as the Marina Machans gear up for the new campaign beginning February 14.

Imran has made over 130 appearances across various levels of Indian football since making his professional debut in 2013. He has previously plied his trade with ISL clubs Jamshedpur FC and FC Goa, establishing himself as a reliable performer known for his work rate, tactical intelligence and adaptability.

Usually deployed as a left-winger, Imran is capable of operating across multiple positions in the attacking third. His ability to contribute both offensively and defensively has made him a valuable asset in different tactical systems over the years, earning him a reputation as a de-

pendable team player.

Expressing his delight after signing the contract, Imran said he was excited to begin a new chapter with Chennaiyin FC and reunite with head coach Clifford Miranda. "I'm thrilled to be part of this new project and to add a new chapter in my career with the Marina Machans. I've worked with Clifford Sir before and I'm really looking forward to working with him again," he said.

Head coach Clifford Miranda welcomed the signing, highlighting Imran's experience and left-footed ability as key factors. "Imran had a very good season last year and played a decisive role in his team's run to the semifinals. His inclusion strengthens our squad, especially on the wings, and gives us more attacking options from half spaces," Miranda said.

By securing Imran Khan's services, Chennaiyin FC have further bolstered their Indian core ahead of the season. The attacker is expected to join the squad immediately as the club continues preparations for the upcoming ISL campaign.

Sabalenka beats 18-year-old Jovic to reach Australian Open semifinals; Zverev advances

World number one powers on as heat-hit Melbourne witnesses contrasting quarterfinal battles

MELBOURNE

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka continued her dominant run at the Australian Open, brushing aside 18-year-old Iva Jovic 6-3, 6-0 to reach the semifinals on a scorching Day 10 in Melbourne, while Alexander Zverev also advanced to the final four with a hard-fought win over rising American Learner Tien.

Sabalenka's quarterfinal was the only one played outdoors before extreme heat forced matches under cover. Temperatures soared past 42 degrees Celsius, but the Belarusian showed little discomfort as she asserted control early against the 29th-seeded Jovic, who was making her first Grand Slam quarterfinal appearance. The two-time defending champion



Red Bull Parts Ways with Christian Horner after 20 Years

ENGLAND

Red Bull Racing announced the departure of longtime team principal Christian Horner, ending a remarkable 20-year tenure that saw the team secure eight drivers' titles and six constructors' championships. The team did not provide a reason for the

decision but expressed gratitude, saying Horner would "forever remain an important part of our team history."

Horner, who led Red Bull since the team entered Formula 1 as a full constructor in 2005, guided Sebastian Vettel to four titles and Max Verstappen to four more. Despite these successes, Red Bull's recent per-

formance has dipped, with McLaren dominating the season and Red Bull placed fourth in the constructors' standings. Verstappen currently sits third in driver standings, with his future at the team still uncertain.

Laurent Mekies, currently of sister team Racing Bulls, will assume Horner's role as Red Bull's chief executive.

Extreme temperatures force roof closures and disrupt play at Melbourne Park

Australian Open triggers maximum heat warning amid 45°C forecast in Melbourne

MELBOURNE

The Australian Open was hit by severe weather disruption on Tuesday after tournament organisers activated the highest level of their heat stress scale, with temperatures forecast to soar to a blistering 45 degrees Celsius. The extreme conditions prompted officials to close the roof at Rod Laver Arena and suspend play on outdoor courts as player and spectator safety took priority.

The Melbourne major reached level five — the maximum on its heat stress rating — for the second time in just four days. The scale is designed to protect players, fans and officials from dangerous heat exposure during the tournament. Under the protocol,

matches scheduled on show courts are played indoors with retractable roofs closed, while all outdoor play is halted.

As a result, Rod Laver Arena, which is hosting all four quarter-final matches of the day, was sealed off from the oppressive heat. However, the opening quarter-final between world number one Aryna Sabalenka and teenager Iva Jovic had already begun under clear skies and blazing sunshine.

Sabalenka went on to secure victory, but the match concluded in punishing conditions, with the temperature still hovering around 38°C.

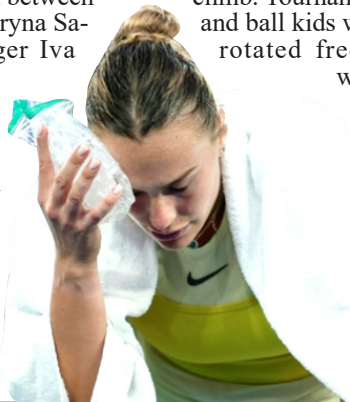
Players were given extended breaks, ice towels and additional hydration as officials closely monitored their wellbeing.

All matches scheduled on outside courts, including junior boys' and girls' events, were suspended indefinitely as temperatures continued to climb. Tournament staff and ball kids were also rotated frequently, while fans

were advised to seek shade and use water misting stations set up across Melbourne Park.

Saturday had already offered a preview of the heat's impact, when temperatures reached 40°C and play on outdoor courts was paused for nearly five hours. With forecasts again predicting extreme heat, organisers remain on high alert and prepared to enforce further delays if conditions worsen.

The Australian Open is known for its challenging summer conditions, but this year's tournament has tested the limits of its heat management protocols, underscoring the growing challenges major sporting events face amid increasingly extreme weather patterns.



Bayern Munich Opens Contract Talks with Harry Kane amid Stellar Form

FRANKFURT

Bayern Munich has confirmed it has begun discussions to extend the contract of England captain Harry Kane, who joined the Bundesliga giants from Tottenham in 2023. Kane's current deal runs until the end of next season.

The 33-year-old striker has thrived in Germany, helping Bayern win the Bundesliga last season — Kane's first major trophy — and finishing as the league's top scorer twice since his arrival. This season, he has already netted 21 goals in 19 Bundesliga games and is on course to challenge Robert Lewandowski's single-season record of 41 goals.

Bayern board member for sport Max Eberl said, "We're talking and it's clear to everyone that there has to be a de-

cision at some stage... We're talking with Harry." Kane has scored 119 goals in 126 games for Bayern and 34 in 30 matches across all competitions this season, cementing his status as one of the club's most prolific forwards.

Chief executive Jan-Christian Dreßen suggested the negotiations could proceed at a measured pace, stating, "Harry has a lot of trust. He feels very good in Munich. We have absolutely no reason to hurry."



Kane's consistent form, leadership qualities, and record-breaking goal-scoring feats have made him a pivotal figure in Bayern's attack. An extension would secure the England captain's services for the foreseeable future as the club aims to maintain domestic dominance and pursue European glory.

With contract talks underway, Bayern fans will be hoping for a swift agreement, ensuring Kane remains the centerpiece of the team that has revitalized his career since leaving the Premier League.



Devdutt Padikkal replaces Mayank Agarwal as K'taka captain

BENGALURU

Karnataka selectors have made a decisive leadership change ahead of a crucial Ranji Trophy encounter, appointing Devdutt Padikkal as captain in place of Mayank Agarwal for the team's must-win Elite Group B match against Punjab, beginning January 29 in Mohali.

The decision follows Karnataka's defeat to Madhya Pradesh, a result that pushed the traditionally strong side to the brink of elimination despite entering the latter stages of the group phase as favourites. While Karnataka topped the table in the first phase, inconsistency across formats this season appears to have prompted the selectors to act.

Under Agarwal's captaincy, Karnataka won just two of their seven matches in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and exited the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the semifinal stage. With Agarwal's batting also failing to reach expected standards, the selection committee felt a change was necessary to free him from additional pressure.

"We feel that Mayank gets very involved in the team, and the captaincy responsibility is taking a toll on his batting," chief selector Amit Verma said. "He is a big-match player and very crucial for us at the top of the order."

Agarwal remains part of the squad and will continue to open the batting. Verma confirmed that the decision was communicated to Agarwal, adding that the opener is "in a good place" mentally.

Abhishek Sharma: India's 'cheat code' for T20I WC

NEW DELHI

To smash 68 runs off 28 balls is impressive. To do it without playing a single dot ball is almost unheard of. Abhishek Sharma achieved exactly that in the third T20I against New Zealand in Guwahati, delivering a statement knock that underlined why he is increasingly seen as India's ultimate T20I weapon.

Walking out after Sanju Samson fell for a golden duck, the left-hander showed instant intent, stepping out to loft his very first ball for six. What followed was carnage. Abhishek raced to a 14-ball half-century — India's second-fastest in T20Is — and reduced a 153-run chase to a formality, with India sealing victory inside 10 overs. His 20-ball stay included 12 boundaries, five of them towering sixes.

Such brutality has become Abhishek's calling card since he took over the opening slot following Rohit Sharma's retirement in 2024. Since debuting shortly after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the Caribbean, the Punjab batter has redefined powerplay batting. He became the fastest to 1,000 T20I runs in terms of balls faced and boasts a staggering strike rate of 195.22, coupled with a healthy average touching 38.

His impact has gone beyond flat tracks. On sluggish UAE surfaces during the Asia Cup, Abhishek amassed 314 runs at a strike rate of 200, giving India decisive starts as others struggled. The team went on to lift the title unbeat-



Fearless opener's explosive starts give India decisive edge in high-pressure chases.

en, despite misfiring tournaments from several senior batters.

Abhishek's rise was foreshadowed in the IPL, where back-to-back 400-plus run seasons at strike rates exceeding 190 made his India call-up inevitable after Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli stepped away from T20Is. Initial inconsistency gave way to maturity in 2025, aided by close work with mentor Yuvraj Singh, as he averaged 42 with five fifties and a century.

Aware of the risks inherent in his style, Abhishek accepts that failure will come. But with over 5,000 T20 runs already and a World Cup at home approaching, India's 'cheat code' seems perfectly timed to tilt matches — and tournaments — in their favour.

"Some time away, but when it's time, it's time": KL Rahul on retirement

India batter says perspective, family and injuries shape his calm outlook on future

NEW DELHI



Bradman cap fetches record price at auction

SYDNEY

A baggy green cap worn by Australian batting great Sir Donald Bradman has fetched a record price at public auction, underlining the enduring fascination with cricket's most revered figure. The cap sold for A\$460,000 at an auction in Melbourne, with the final amount rising to A\$535,900 once a buyer's premium was added, making it the most expensive Bradman cap ever sold.

The sale eclipsed the previous record set in 2024, when another baggy green from the same 1947-48 home series against India was purchased for A\$479,700, including the buyer's premium. Both caps date back to the final Test series Bradman played on Aus-



tralian soil.

The cap auctioned this week was worn by Bradman during the 1947-48 Test series and later gifted by him to Indian all-rounder Sriranga Wasudev 'Ranga' Sohoni. Inside the cap are the handwritten inscriptions "D.G. Bradman" and "S.W. Sohoni", adding to its historical and sentimental value. Sohoni's family preserved the cap for decades after his death in 1993, before deciding to put it up for auction.

The buyer has requested anonymity, but auctioneers con-

3,360 runs in 94 ODIs at 50.9, and 2,265 runs in 72 T20Is at an average of 37.75 with a strike rate of 139.

The stylish right-

hander said he does not see himself as a superstar or indispensable, a mindset he feels will make the retirement decision easier. "Cricket in our country will carry on. Cricket in the world will carry on. There are more important things in life," he said, adding that becoming a father has further reshaped his outlook.

Rahul also spoke candidly about the mental toll of recurring injuries, describing it as the "hardest battle" he has faced. He noted that repeated setbacks can sap motivation, making the psychological fight tougher than the physical pain. Rahul is set to represent Karnataka in a must-win Ranji Trophy match against Punjab in Mohali on Thursday.

Najmul Islam's return fuels unrest within B'desh camp

DHAKA

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to reinstate controversial director M. Najmul Islam as head of finance has intensified discontent within the national team. Najmul was earlier removed on January 18 after senior players objected to his derogatory remarks, including comments on remuneration and criticism of former captain Tamim Iqbal. His swift reappointment, days after Bangladesh's removal from the T20 World Cup, drew sharp reactions from players, with one sarcastically calling it "good news," highlighting growing frustration and stress within the squad.

With B'desh out of T20 WC, ICC reworks travelling media application process

NEW DELHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is reworking the media accreditation process for Bangladeshi journalists seeking to cover the T20 World Cup in India following Bangladesh's withdrawal from the tournament, citing security concerns.

The move comes amid complaints from several Bangladesh-based journalists that their accreditation requests had been rejected by the ICC. Sources indicated that the governing body is reassessing applications due to a changed competitive landscape and altered schedules after Bangladesh opted out.

"There is a reworking of the process since there is a change in the number of requests and the schedules. The accreditation lists are being worked out accordingly," ICC sources told.

Around 80 to 90 Bangladeshi journalists had applied for accreditation to cover the global event. However, sources clarified that even when a national team participates in an ICC tournament, not all media applications from that country can be accommodated.

"If you go by country quota, you can't exceed the number beyond 40. The ICC goes by the recommendations of the home board and accordingly takes a call on applications," the sources added.

Bangladesh Cricket

Withdrawal triggers review of accreditation norms amid revised schedules, quotas concerns.

Board (BCB) media committee chairman Amjad Hossain said the issue has been taken up with the ICC. "The decision came only yesterday and we have sought to know the details. An explanation has been requested. This is an internal and confidential matter, but to summarise, we wanted to know why this was done," Hossain told reporters in Dhaka.

It is learnt that Bangladeshi journalists will now have to submit fresh applications, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis under the revised process. The ICC has not yet provided a definitive timeline for completing the re-assessment.

A senior Bangladeshi journalist expressed surprise at the development. "I have covered eight to nine ICC World Cups. This is the first time my application was rejected. We are awaiting clarity from the BCB before re-applying," he said.

According to the ICC's own assessment, the Bangladesh cricket team did not face a specific security threat in India. However, the BCB decided against travelling, prompting the ICC to replace Bangladesh with Scotland for the tournament, which begins on February 7.



Scotland hopeful of Indian visas ahead of T20 WC opener

NEW DELHI

Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade is confident that the national team will secure Indian visas in time for the T20 World Cup, despite heightened scrutiny for Pakistan-origin applicants. Scotland were drafted into the tournament following Bangladesh's withdrawal, even as the ICC maintained that there were no security threats in India. The Scots are scheduled to open their campaign against West Indies in Kolkata on February 7.

Lindblade said visa pro-

cessing has been the board's primary focus over the past two days, with all players currently submitting applications.

"The visa piece is always slightly unknown, but we are working closely with the ICC and expect to be on the ground in India as quickly as possible," she said.

One of the key concerns involves pacer Safyaan Sharif, who has Pakistani heritage, a factor that can lengthen processing time. Lindblade said the ICC and BCCI have assured support within their areas of control.

Bengaluru FC likely to play SC Delhi in Indian Super League opener

BENGALURU

Bengaluru FC are set to begin their Indian Super League campaign against debutants SC Delhi at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, with the fixture tentatively scheduled for a 7:30 pm kick-off on February 15.

According to a provisional fixture list circulated by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to potential commercial and broadcast partners, the match will be played on the second day of the much-delayed ISL season. The opening game of the sea-



son is expected to see champions Mohun Bagan take on Kerala Blasters at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on February 14, with a 5 pm start. On the same day, FC Goa are slated to host newcomers Inter Kashi at the Fatorda Stadium in a 7 pm kick-off. The fixtures remain subject to approval and possible

changes by the participating clubs, with the AIFF clarifying that the schedule shared is tentative in nature.

For Bengaluru FC, who finished runners-up last season, the home calendar features several high-profile clashes. The Blues are expected to host defending champions Mohun Bagan on March 14 in a marquee encounter under the floodlights at Kanteerava. Southern rivals Kerala Blasters are scheduled to visit Bengaluru on April 11, with both matches pencilled in for 7:30 pm kick-offs.

India eye sparkling outing from spinners in 4th T20I against NZ

VISAKHAPATNAM

With the five-match series already in the bag, a rampant India will look to iron out lingering bowling concerns when they take on New Zealand in the fourth T20I here on Wednesday, with particular focus on their underperforming spinners.

India's commanding 3-0 lead has largely been shaped by an explosive batting unit led by Abhishek Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan. Their relentless strokeplay has often rendered the bowling effort secondary, masking the below-par returns from frontline spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravathy.

Kuldeep has managed two wickets in two matches but has appeared far from his



threatening best. The left-arm wrist spinner has conceded runs at 9.5 an over and endured a particularly expensive spell in the previous game, leaking 32 runs in three overs despite India restricting New Zealand to 153 for nine. His modest returns

mirror his ODI series form, where he picked up just three wickets in as many matches at an economy of 7.28.

Chakravathy, rested for the third T20I, has had a different challenge. He bowled in high-scoring encounters where New Zealand posted

190 and 208, but the mystery spinner too has lacked his usual sharpness. The break may help him regain rhythm, prompting the team management to consider whether to persist with Ravi Bishnoi, who impressed with figures of 4-0-18-2 in Guwahati, and

possibly rest Kuldeep.

India will also monitor Axar Patel's fitness closely, with the all-rounder sidelined since the opening match due to a finger injury.

While bowling combinations remain a work in progress, India's batting has been breathtaking. Abhishek's strike rate has soared past 300, with Suryakumar and Kishan hovering around 230, as India chased 363 runs across the last two matches in just 25.2 overs.

New Zealand, meanwhile, have struggled to counter India's onslaught. Their bowlers have been expensive across the board, and unless they find answers quickly, another difficult evening awaits. The hosts, however, will hope their spinners step up to complete a near-perfect outing.

