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SC stays Unnao rape convict's suspension of life sentence

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday halted the Delhi High Court's order that had suspended the life sentence and granted bail to expelled BJP leader and Unnao rape convict Kuldeep Singh Sengar. The stay came while the court was hearing a petition filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation challenging the High Court's decision.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices JK Maheshwari and AG Masih, issued notice to Sengar and observed that the case raises significant legal questions regarding the High Court's approach in suspending the sentence. The apex court questioned whether the Delhi High Court had adequately examined Sengar's conviction under Section 376(2)(i) of the IPC while granting him relief.

Stating that the matter required detailed consideration, the bench clarified that although the general rule is to hear a person already released on bail before reversing such relief, Sengar remains in custody in another case. The court also remarked that amendments under the POCSO Act enhanced punishment rather than creating a new offence, emphasizing that judicial scrutiny is vital as "even the finest judges may err."

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, argued that the case involves the rape of a minor girl, and the conviction was based on findings that the survivor was 15 years and 10 months old. The Delhi High Court had suspended Sengar's life sentence on December 23, imposing strict bail conditions, including restrictions on movement and weekly reporting to police.

Reacting to the order the activist Yogita Bhayana said the order had wider implications. "This is not a fight of one victim alone, but of all girls. The Supreme Court itself noted that while stays are not usually granted, this case stands on a different footing," she said.

'Will not rest until he is hanged': Unnao rape survivor

The Unnao rape survivor on Monday expressed satisfaction in the Supreme Court order which stayed the Delhi High Court order suspending the life sentence of convict and former BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar. "I am very happy with this decision. I have got justice from the Supreme Court. I have been raising my voice for justice from the very beginning," the survivor said. He added, "I will not rest until he is hanged. I will keep fighting. Only then will my family and I get justice."

QUICK READ

IIP growth hits 25-month high at 6.7% in Nov 2025

NEW DELHI: India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) surged 6.7% in November 2025, marking a 25-month high, driven by manufacturing and capital goods. Manufacturing grew 8%, while infrastructure and construction expanded 12.1%, their fastest pace since October 2023. The capital goods sector rose 10.4%, and mining climbed 5.4%, recovering from recent contractions. Only electricity contracted, down 1.5%.

SIR Special Roll Observer faces public ire

KOLKATA: Election Commission's Special Roll Observer (SRO) C. Murugan faced public anger during a SIR hearing at Magrahat in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. A crowd, mostly women, blocked his vehicle, hitting its bonnet and windows, leaving the driver-side handle nearly torn off. Protestors at Shirakol High School alleged "unplanned implementation" of the SIR exercise, forcing the elderly, and pregnant to attend hearings.

Supreme Court stays its own order on defining Aravalli

Supreme Court stays November 20 Aravalli ruling, reopening definition, mining rules review, forming expert committee for ecological assessment

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed its own November 20 judgment that had limited the definition of the Aravalli range to hill formations rising at least 100 metres above surrounding terrain. The court said the matter requires deeper scrutiny and decided to reopen the issue to comprehensively reconsider what constitutes the Aravalli hills and how mining activities should be regulated across the region.

A bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices JK Maheshwari and AG Masih, passed the interim order while taking up the matter suo motu. The court stated that

the earlier ruling would remain "in abeyance" until a detailed examination, assisted by domain experts, is completed. It also proposed forming a high-powered expert committee to study ecological continuity, height-based classification, and permitted mining operations.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta welcomed the development, stating that several misconceptions surrounded the November judgment, though it was originally based on an expert panel report and provided for further planning and

public consultations.

The bench expressed concern that restricting the Aravallis only to formations above 100 metres could shrink protected areas, create regulatory gaps, and fragment the ecologically sensitive mountain system. The court has issued notices to the Union government, concerned states and stakeholders, seeking their inputs on the proposed expert panel. Until further orders, the mapping and mining plans based on the earlier definition are likely to remain on hold.

Welcome SC order on Aravallis: Yadav

NEW DELHI: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision. He said, "I welcome the Supreme Court directions introducing a stay on its order concerning the Aravalli range, and the formation of a new committee to study issues. We stand committed to extending all assistance sought from MOEFCC."



KOGILU EVICTION ROW

Govt to give alternate housing for eligible families, says CM

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the state government has decided to arrange alternative housing for eligible families affected by the demolition of illegal sheds in Kogilu Layout. He stated that he has sought detailed information from the Deputy Commissioner and the BBMP Commissioner on who was residing in the demolished structures, and the list will be verified within two days.

Addressing a joint press conference with the Deputy Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah clarified that 167 illegal sheds had been removed after prior notices were issued, as the land belongs to the government. He warned that in future, officials themselves will be held responsible if illegal constructions are allowed to come up. Action has

also been decided against revenue and civic officials who failed to identify the encroachments earlier.

The Chief Minister said temporary housing arrangements will be made for displaced families at Baiyappanahalli, where 1,187 houses are available. The government is considering allocating ₹11.20 lakh per house and providing separate assistance schemes for various categories, including SC/ST beneficiaries.

He added that AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal discussed the situation with him and the Deputy Chief Minister, and they assured him that suitable rehabilitation would be ensured. Siddaramaiah reiterated that relocation at the same site is not possible since it is government land, but eligible beneficiaries will definitely be provided alternative accommodation.

'Is K'taka being ruled from Kerala?' Ashoka attacks Cong govt

UDUPI: BJP leader R. Ashoka accused the Congress government of surrendering Karnataka's authority to outside political forces, following controversy around Kogilu Layout demolition. Ashoka questioned why Congress leader K.C. Venugopal sought a report on the incident and why a delegation of Kerala legislators visited Bengaluru. "Is Karnataka being ruled by its elected government or by leaders from Kerala?" he asked.

Ashoka slams govt, says state run by drug mafia

UDUPI

BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R. Ashoka on Monday alleged that the state is being run by an organised drug mafia, accusing the Congress government of failing to control the narcotics trade.

Addressing reporters in Udupi, Ashoka referred to recent operations by Maharashtra Police in Bengaluru, where drugs worth crores of rupees were seized. "Why should police from another state come and expose drug networks here? Why did Karnataka Police and intelligence fail?" he questioned.

Ashoka said the seizures exposed the collapse of the state's intelligence system and criticised the Home Department for inaction. "Does the Home Minister have any accountability? For every issue, the response is that a report is awaited," he said.

Claiming that drugs worth ₹500-600 crore had entered Karnataka, Ashoka alleged police complicity in the distribution network. "Instead of celebrating the New Year, the state is witnessing drug celebrations," he remarked.

Ashoka accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of being distracted by internal power struggles within the

JDS demands Parameshwara's resignation over drugs seizure

The JD(S) launched a strong attack on the Karnataka government after Maharashtra Police seized drugs worth crores in Bengaluru, demanding Home Minister G Parameshwara's resignation. In a post on X, the party alleged that under Congress misrule, the state's intelligence and policing systems have collapsed. JD(S) said Karnataka, once peaceful, is turning into a drug hub, with Maharashtra Police even uncovering three drug manufacturing units in Bengaluru, exposing Karnataka Police's failure.

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Congress party and criticised the party's central leadership, including Rahul Gandhi.

Warning of a deteriorating law-and-order situation, Ashoka said the state risked becoming dependent on other states' police forces to maintain security. "When outsiders protect our law and order, it reflects the complete failure of this government," he said.

DAC approves ₹79,000 cr defence procurement proposals

NEW DELHI

The defence ministry on Monday approved procurement of long range rockets, missiles, radar systems and military platforms worth Rs 79,000 crore to bolster the military's combat prowess. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, green-lighted the proposals.

The DAC approved procurement of loiter munition systems for the Army's artillery regiments.

It also cleared acquisition of low level lightweight radars, long-range guided rocket ammunition for Pinaka rocket system and integrated drone detection



Indian Navy

- BP Tugs (Bollard Pull Tugs)
- Software Defined Radio (HF SDR):
- HALE RPAS (Lease)



Air Force

- Astra MK-II Missile
- SPICE-1000 Guidance Kit
- Full Mission Simulator
- Automatic Take-Off Landing Recording System

Indian Army

- Low Level Light Weight Radars
- Pinaka MRLS
- Drone Detection System



and interdiction system (Mk-II) for the Indian Army, the defence ministry said.

Loiter munition will be used for precision strike of tactical targets, whereas low level lightweight radars will detect and track small size,

low flying unmanned aerial systems, it said.

It said long range guided rockets are being procured to enhance the range and accuracy of Pinaka rocket systems for effective engagement of high value targets. Integrated drone

detection and interdiction system (Mk-II) with enhanced range will protect the vital assets of the Indian Army in tactical battle area and hinterland.

The central government has taken a major strategic decision aimed at taking the oper-

ational capabilities and combat effectiveness of the Indian Armed Forces to new heights. The approvals primarily focus on future battlefield needs, such as drone technology, precision strike capabilities and advanced radar systems.

India rejects Pakistan claims on minority attack

NEW DELHI

India on Monday firmly rejected Pakistan's comments on the treatment of minorities in the country, stating that Islamabad has no moral ground to raise such allegations given its own "abysmal" human rights record. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Pakistan's "horrific and systemic victimisation" of minorities belonging to various faiths is widely documented, and no amount of criticism aimed at India can conceal that reality. Jaiswal's remarks came in

response to statements by Pakistan foreign ministry spokesperson Tahir Andrabi, who claimed that minorities in India face persecution and cited incidents reported during recent Christmas celebrations, as well as alleged actions targeting Muslims. Andrabi also appealed to the international community to take note of these developments and safeguard the rights of vulnerable groups. Rejecting these claims, India reiterated that Pakistan routinely indulges in politically motivated statements while ignoring its long history of discrimination.



QUICK READ



Thugs Vandalise Pawn Shop in Bengaluru

Bengaluru
More than 10 thugs attacked a pawn shop in Kathriguppe, Banashankari III Stage, allegedly over a trivial dispute. The attackers barged into the pawn shop owned by Bashir, smashed liquor bottles and unleashed violence using maces and long sticks. The incident occurred on the busy main road, creating panic among residents and shopkeepers in the area. After vandalising the premises and assaulting Bashir, the assailants fled the scene. The attack took place under the jurisdiction of the Channamanakere Achukattu police station. Police have registered a case and launched a hunt to identify and nab the accused based on CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts.

Cylinder Explosion Triggers Panic in Bengaluru Suburb

Bengaluru
A cylinder explosion caused by gas leakage was reported at Balaji Enclave Layout on Nagaroor Road in Nelamangala, triggering panic among residents on Monday. The incident occurred at the rented house of Amaresh, owned by Kiran Kumar, in Balaji BGS Layout. Fire officials said the explosion was caused by accumulated gas due to leakage in the cylinder. Fortunately, no casualties were reported, though household articles were damaged in the blast. Gas dealers and officials reiterated the need to strictly follow safety guidelines, including switching off regulators when leaving home and placing cylinders in well-ventilated areas.

Drug Mafia Exploits Legal Loopholes, Runs Racket in Secluded Areas

Bengaluru
The master plan of a drug racket designed to evade police surveillance has come to light, revealing how accused exploited legal and jurisdictional loopholes to operate freely. According to sources, the accused deliberately chose deserted locations on the outskirts falling between the limits of Avalahalli, Bagalur and Kothanur police stations. The illegal drug manufacturing unit was set up within a three-kilometre radius shared by the three jurisdictions, making routine monitoring difficult. By operating in a secluded zone with unclear jurisdictional control, the accused managed to manufacture drugs without fear of immediate detection. Police are now examining lapses in coordination to prevent similar rackets.

Magadi MLA’s wife accused of grabbing ₹54 cr govt land

BENGALURU
Serious allegations have emerged over the alleged encroachment of government land worth about ₹54 crore in Kurubarahalli village of Tavarakere hobli in Bengaluru South taluk. BJP leader N.R. Ramesh has accused Radha Balakrishna, wife of Congress Magadi MLA H.C. Balakrishna, of illegally grabbing public property spread across Survey Nos. 233, 234, 235 and 236. In a press release, Mr. Ramesh urged the authorities to

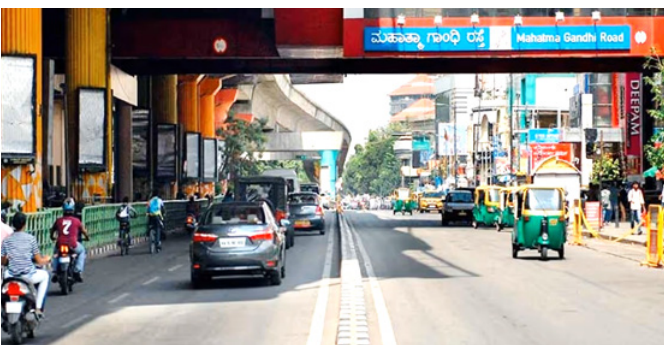
Traffic Curbs Announced on MG Road for NY Celebrations

Police impose vehicle restrictions, diversions to ensure safety and smooth movement

Continued from page 1

With thousands of revellers expected to gather in the Central Business District to usher in the New Year, Bengaluru Traffic Police have issued detailed traffic guidelines and restrictions for MG Road and surrounding areas. The measures will be in force from the night of December 31 till the early hours of January 1 in the interest of public safety and smooth vehicular movement. As in previous years, large crowds of motorists and pedestrians are expected on MG Road, Brigade Road, Residency Road, St. Mark’s Road

and Church Street. To manage the surge and prevent congestion, the police have announced traffic restrictions from 8 pm on December 31 to 2 am on January 1. During this period, entry of all vehicles—except police and emergency service vehicles on duty—will be prohibited on key stretches. These include MG Road from Anil Kumble Circle to Residency Road Junction near Mayo Hall; Brigade Road from Cauvery Emporium Junction to Opera Junction; Church Street from Brigade Road Junction to Museum Road Junction; and Residency Road from



Aashirvadam Junction to Mayo Hall Junction. Restrictions will also apply on Museum Road from MG Road Junction to Old Madras Bank Road (SBI) roundabout, Rest House Road from Museum

Road Junction to Brigade Road Junction, and Residency Cross Road from Residency Road Junction to MG Road Junction towards Shankar Nag Cinema. In addition, parking of all ve-

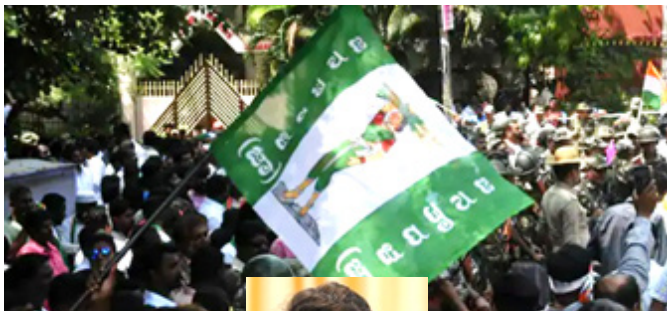
hicles, except those of police and emergency services, will be strictly prohibited on MG Road, Brigade Road, Church Street, Rest House Road, Museum Road and Residency Road. Violators will face strict action, police warned. To facilitate smooth traffic flow, alternative routes have been suggested. After 8 pm, vehicles heading towards Ulsoor and beyond from Queen’s Circle on MG Road should take a left at Anil Kumble Circle, proceed via Central Street and BRV Junction, turn right onto Cubbon Road and rejoin MG Road near Webb’s Junction. Vehi-

cles travelling towards Cantonment from Ulsoor should take a right turn at Trinity Circle and continue via Halasuru Road and Dickenson Road to Cubbon Road. Parking will be permitted on Kamaraj Road between Cubbon Road Junction and Commercial Street Junction. Vehicles coming from Ejipura have been advised to turn right near India Garage, turn left at the ASC Centre and proceed towards Trinity. Police have urged the public to cooperate, plan their travel in advance and strictly follow the guidelines, cautioning that any violation will be dealt with seriously.

Drug Seizure Sparks Row, JDS Demands HM’s Resignation

Continued from page 1

The Janata Dal (Secular) on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Congress-led Karnataka government following the seizure of drugs worth crores of rupees in Bengaluru by the Maharashtra Police, demanding the immediate resignation of Home Minister G. Parameshwara. Reacting to the development on social media platform X, the JDS alleged that the continued exposure of drug rackets by police forces from outside the State had exposed serious lapses in Karnataka’s intelligence and policing systems. The party accused the Congress government of weakening the law-and-order machinery and allowing the city to turn into a hub for narcotics manufacturing and trafficking. “The dignity of the Karna-



taka Police has been undermined under Congress misrule. The incompetent Home Minister should take moral responsibility and resign,” the JDS said, adding that the State’s intelligence apparatus had failed to detect and dismantle drug networks operating openly in and around Bengaluru. The criticism follows recent raids by Maharashtra’s Anti-Narcotics Task Force

(ANTF), which reportedly unearthed three drug manufacturing units in the city and seized narcotics worth around ₹55–56 crore. JDS leaders claimed that Bengaluru, once known as a peaceful and cosmopolitan city, had now become a “drug den” due to administrative failure. The party also recalled an earlier incident in July, when the Mumbai Police raided an illegal drug factory in Mysuru

district—Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s home district—and seized 192 kg of methedrone valued at nearly ₹390 crore. According to the JDS, repeated interventions by Maharashtra Police highlight the erosion of Karnataka’s internal surveillance and enforcement capabilities. In a separate statement, JDS youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy vowed to intensify the party’s agitation against the government. He alleged that the Congress administration was indirectly supporting drug traffickers and warned of a sustained political fight to expose what he described as official apathy. The JDS maintained that despite repeated intelligence inputs and seizures, the drug menace continues unabated in Bengaluru, raising serious concerns over public safety and governance.

BWSSB announces full interest waiver under one-time settlement

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced a major relief for consumers with long-pending water bill dues by offering a 100% waiver on interest and penalty amounts under a One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme. The benefit will be available to consumers

who clear the principal amount of their outstanding bills in one payment. The scheme has received approval from the State government, with the Urban Development Department issuing an official order following directions from Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar. BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar said the ini-

tiative has been introduced with a customer-friendly objective to help consumers settle old dues without additional financial burden. The OTS scheme will be open for a period of three months — January, February and March — giving ample time for consumers to take advantage of the waiver. Officials expect the move to significantly reduce pending arrears while improving revenue collection for the Board. To ensure transparency and prevent involvement of middlemen, BWSSB has enabled direct registration through its official website. Consumers can apply and make payments online without visiting BWSSB offices. The Board is also developing a dedicated mobile application for easier access.

NY celebrations: City Police issue guidelines

BENGALURU

The City Police Department on Monday issued detailed guidelines for New Year celebrations, placing special emphasis on the safety of women and young adults as Bengaluru prepares to welcome the New Year. Addressing a press conference, City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said

comprehensive security arrangements had already been put in place across the city. He noted that Central Business District (CBD) areas such as MG Road, Brigade Road, Koramangala, Indiranagar, Electronic City and major mall zones were likely to witness heavy crowds on New Year’s Eve and would therefore be under heightened surveillance.

The Commissioner stressed that public peace and order must be maintained at all costs. He warned that strict legal action would be initiated against anyone attempting to disturb law and order. Hotels, pubs, clubs and resorts will be permitted to function only within prescribed time limits on New Year’s Day and loudspeaker use have been allowed subject to restrictions.

Officials inspect Kogilu Layout demolition site

BENGALURU

A 20-member team of officials from the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Scheme visited Kogilu Layout on Monday to inspect the site where sheds were recently demolished. The officials are verifying whether around 180 people were residing in the area at the time of the demolition. The team is collecting detailed information from the affected families to assess eligibility for alternative housing. Officials are preparing a comprehensive list of those who lost their homes by gathering Aadhaar cards, voter identity cards and GPS-tagged photographs as part of the verification process.

‘Cabinet to discuss job reservation for Kannadigas’

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said the State government would hold detailed discussions in the Cabinet on the long-pending demand for reservation in jobs for Kannadigas and take an appropriate decision at the earliest. He asserted that the government would not compromise on issues related to Kannada land, water and language. Addressing a public function organised by a consortium of



various people’s organisations at the Palace Grounds, the Chief Minister said he was always prepared to raise his voice in favour of Kannada and the interests of Kannadi-

gas. He also expressed displeasure over the delay in the Mahadayi drinking water project, attributing it to the lack of environmental clearances.

REBUILDING BOOK CULTURE

Book Culture Rooted in Sensitivity: Baraguru Ramachandrappa

BENGALURU

Thinker and cultural critic Baraguru Ramachandrappa on Sunday said that true book culture is deeply rooted in sensitivity, while the publishing industry demands rigorous editing, and only a rare few are able to successfully combine both. He noted that this rare balance is exemplified by Prakash Kambathalli and his wife of Ankitha Prakashan. He was speaking at the release ceremony of Dakshi-



nayana, the 1,000th work of senior journalist and writer Jogi, held at Wadia Hall to mark the 30th anniversary of the book’s publication. Re-

flecting on the evolving challenges faced by the publishing world, Ramachandrappa said the central question today is how to strike a balance be-

tween entrepreneurship and cultural sensitivity. “If there is no profit in publishing and selling books, the industry cannot survive. Books too have become an industry. But if publishing is reduced only to profit-making, the taste for books will deteriorate and there will be no space for changing literary sensibilities,” he warned. He added that an excessive focus on profit inevitably alters the mindset of publishers and readers alike. Drawing parallels with oth-

er media, Ramachandrappa observed that films, newspapers and books have all turned into industries. “When all forms of media have become industries, the challenge before us is how to rebuild and sustain book culture,” he said. He also explained the difference between industrialisation and globalisation, noting that while industries were once regulated under a mixed economy, free trade policies have placed control in private hands, changing societal values and priorities.

QUICK READ

Sports Scholarship: Applications Invited

Vijayapura

The Sports Scholarship is now open for applications from children of serving and retired armed forces personnel who have participated in national and international level sports competitions held between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025. Interested candidates can submit the required documents to the office of the Deputy Director, Soldier Welfare and Rehabilitation Department. For more details, applicants may contact the office at 08352-250913, as informed in an official notification by the Deputy Director of Soldier Welfare and Rehabilitation Department.

Lizard Found in Midday Meal at Surpur School

Yadgir

A Lizard was discovered in the midday meal served at the Government Lower Primary School in Waddar Oorni, Surpur town, causing panic among the students. The incident occurred while the children were eating their lunch. On learning about it, parents rushed to the school and expressed their anger towards the teachers and cooking staff. The school has a total of 42 students. As a precautionary measure, all the children were immediately taken to Hasnapur Primary Health Centre for initial check-up. Later, they were admitted to Surpur Taluk Hospital for further examination and treatment. Speaking to the media, Taluk Health Officer Dr. R.V. Nayak said that only one child experienced vomiting, while the rest showed no symptoms. He confirmed that the health condition of all the children is currently stable. Preliminary investigations suggest that negligence by the cooking staff during food preparation may have contributed to the incident. However, the exact cause is still under investigation. The authorities are taking strict measures to ensure the safety and hygiene of school meals to prevent such incidents in the future.

New Year Special Train Between Mumbai and Hyderabad

KALABURAGI

On the occasion of the New Year, Central Railway has introduced a special train service between Mumbai and Hyderabad for the convenience of passengers. The train runs via Kalaburagi and Wadi.

The Hyderabad-LTT Mumbai Special Train (07458) departed from Hyderabad on December 28 in the evening. It travels through Begumpet, Lingampalli, Vikarabad, Tandur, Wadi, Kalaburagi, Solapur, Pune, and Kalyan, and reaches Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (Mumbai) at 10:40 am the next day.

Agricultural Fair from Jan 4 to 6

VIJAYAPURA

An agricultural fair will be held from January 4 to 6 at the Agriculture College campus in Vijayapura, jointly organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad-Vijayapura, and various agriculture-related government departments. The fair will be inaugurated on January 4 at 11 am by Agriculture Minister and UAS Dharwad Co-Vice Chancellor N. Chaluvarayaswamy. Vijayapura District In-charge Minister and Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Basic Infrastructure Development Dr. M.B. Patil will inau-

Viraloka Book Fair to Be Held in Bidar from January 24 to 26

Gurubasava Pattadevaru urged support to organize an impressive Bidar book fair

BIDAR

The Viraloka Book Fair will be held in Bidar city on January 24, 25, and 26 with the aim of preserving and promoting book culture.

Speaking at a preparatory meeting, Gurubasava Pattadevaru, head of the Hiremath of Bhalki, urged people to actively participate in the fair. The event is being organized with the support of the District Kannada Sahitya Parishat, under the guidance of the Hiremath.

He spoke at the meeting held at Dr. Channabasava Pattadevaru Prasada Nilaya in Vidyanagar, Bidar. Gurubasava Pattadevaru said he had visited the Bengaluru Book Fair and was impressed by its organization and success. He expressed a strong desire to organize a book fair in Bidar that would be even better and called upon devotees of the math, Kannada lovers, and the public to support the event.



Speaking on the occasion, Gurunath Rajageer, one of the organizers of the Bidar book fair, invited publishers from Bidar and the Kalyana Karnataka region to participate in large numbers by displaying and selling their books. He also announced that writers from the region who wish to release their books will be provided with a platform and guests at the Viraloka Book Fair.

He added that the three-day fair will feature not only book exhibitions and sales

but also various seminars, discussions, and cultural programs every evening, including Vachana singing, light music, folk songs, and ghazals. More than 30 stage programs are planned.

District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Suresh Channashetty said over 100 writers from across Karnataka, including Bengaluru, will participate in reader-writer interactions.

He expressed hope that nearly one lakh people would attend the fair and urged lo-

cal organizations, Kannada groups, and educational institutions to cooperate.

Senior writer and researcher Dr. Santosh Hanagal highlighted the impact of the Bengaluru Book Fair and said a similar cultural movement should begin in Bidar with the leadership of the Bhalki Hiremath.

Several writers, publishers, cultural figures, and community leaders attended the meeting and shared suggestions to ensure the success of the Viraloka Book Fair.

Focus on Holistic Development of Children: Shaini Gunti

BIDAR

Parents must prioritize the all-round development of their children, said Shaini Pradeep Gunti, State Project Coordinator of Akk Payee, during the inauguration of the annual day celebrations at Naveen Public School on Chitta Road, Bidar. She stressed that parents should motivate their children to achieve their goals, build self-confidence, and equip them to face the challenges of today's competitive world.

Dr. Neeta Shailendra

Beldale added that alongside academic education, children should also be nurtured with strong moral values. These values are essential in shaping them into responsible, ethical, and well-rounded individuals.

School President Kamashetti Chikkabase highlighted that Naveen Public School provides students with a cultural and competitive learning environment. This approach has helped students excel in various examinations and develop a balanced personality.

Other dignitaries present at



Scientific Conference: Superstition Holds Us Back, Says Minister Darshanapur

YADGIRI

Small Industries and Public Enterprises Minister Sharanabasappa Darshanapur said that while the world is moving forward with science and technology, superstitions are holding our society back.

He was speaking after inaugurating the 5th State-level Scientific Conference organized by the Karnataka State Council for Science and Research at the district sports ground on Monday. He said people still spend heavily on rituals and temple activities but neglect education. Many blindly follow what others say and even take loans to spend

lakhs of rupees on religious practices, while failing to educate their children. He stressed that society must move in the same direction as the world to achieve success.

The minister said some forces misuse people's beliefs for their own benefit and make the poor spend unnecessarily. He stated that no god harms humans; instead, humans harm each other. Science and technology have the power to overcome such negative influences and help society progress.

He expressed hope that the conference would increase scientific awareness among youth and assured govern-

ment support and funding for such programs in the future.

Scientist Dr. A.S. Kiran Kumar, chief patron of the council, said scientific knowledge must reach all children in the state. He added that for India to reach the top globally, growth in science is essential. He urged the state government to allocate ₹5 crore in the budget for scientific awareness programs.

Council founder president Hulikal Nataraj also requested government funding for the conference.

Several religious leaders, ministers, MLAs, scientists, officials, and community leaders attended the event.

Massive Protest Demanding ST Status for Koli and Kabbaliga

KALABURAGI

Thousands from the Koli, Kabbaliga, Ambiga, Bestha, and Barik communities held a large-scale protest on Monday, demanding their inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list.

The demonstration began at Jagat Circle, where participants first garlanded the statues of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Basavanna. The protest march was formally flagged off by Shantabhishta Choudaiya Swamiji of Haveri, under the guidance of community leaders, and proceeded to the Deputy Commissioner's office.

Speakers at the event emphasized that these communities have been seeking ST status since 1996. Although proposals to include the Gangamatha community and its sub-castes have repeatedly been sent to the central government, they have consistently been returned. Protesters urged the state government to submit the proposal again with complete documentation.

Protestors demanded ST status since 1996, urging the state government and Minister Kharge to act responsibly

citizens, not paid agitators.

The protestors also criticized the state government, stating that even after being in power for two years, the Congress government, which claims to support backward communities, has not forwarded their proposal to the central authorities. They specifically called on district in-charge minister Priyank Kharge, a senior cabinet minister, to take responsibility and ensure their demand is met.

The protest drew participation from several religious leaders, elected representatives, and community heads. Thousands of people from villages and towns across Kalaburagi and Yadgiri districts, including Afzalpur, Aland, Jewargi, Chittapur, Chincholi, and Kalagi taluks, joined the demonstration.

The protest highlighted the long-standing demand for ST status, showing the strong unity and determination of these communities in seeking recognition and justice from both the state and central governments.



Kuvempu Spread the Message of Universal Humanity - VEERAYYA SALIMATH

VIJAYAPURA

National poet Kuvempu conveyed the message of Vishva Manava (Universal Humanism) to the world through his writings, said Veerayya Salimath, Deputy Director of the School Education Department.

He was speaking at the World Humanism Day program held on Kuvempu's birth anniversary at the Deputy Commissioner's office hall. The event was organized jointly by the district administration, district panchayat, and the Department of Kannada and Culture.

Salimath said Kuvempu brought great honor to Karnataka by becoming the state's first Jnanpith Award winner and by receiving the Central Sahitya Akademi Award. Kuvempu lived and wrote with deep love for Kannada, concern for nature, and strong belief in universal human values. He believed that the progress of a land depends on the progress of its people and shared this idea of harmony through his works.

He explained that humans

are born as universal beings, but divisions and restrictions make them narrow-minded. By practicing universal human values in daily life, people can spread true humanism and develop a broader outlook.

Kuvempu's literature reflects Kannada pride, environmental awareness, equality, and the influence of Basavanna's philosophy. Salimath urged young people to understand the deeper meaning and values in Kuvempu's writings.

Guest speaker Jambunath Kanchyani described Kuvempu as a great genius and a Rasa Rishi. He said Kuvempu's ideas on social change remain relevant today. His epic Sri Ramayana Darshanam carries spiritual and meaningful thoughts needed even now.

Kuvempu served as a professor, principal, and later Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University, shaping it into a model institution. His contribution to Kannada literature is immense, and his thoughts continue to guide humanity like a guiding light.

SPORTS BUILD DISCIPLINE

Annual Sports Meet Held at Channabasaveshwara Public School

BHALKI

Sports play a vital role in fostering discipline and overall development among students, said Nadoja Dr. Basavalinga Pattadevaru, President of the Basavakalyana Anubhava Mantapa. He spoke while presiding over the annual sports meet organized by the Hiremath Institution Vidyapeetha Trust at Channabasaveshwara Gurukul Public School on Monday.

Dr. Pattadevaru highlighted that participation in sports significantly enhances students' physical and mental growth. Sports cultivate cour-



age, determination, focus, and a competitive spirit, while also promoting unity, teamwork, and brotherhood. He advised students to handle both success and failure gracefully and to strive for excellence in all areas of life.

Bengaluru-based advocate Santosh Nagarale also addressed the gathering, emphasizing that sports are essential for maintaining physical fitness, boosting mental resilience, and building self-confidence among students.

"The annual sports meet is not just about competition, but a strong platform for the overall development of students."

—Nadoja Dr. Basavalinga Pattadevaru, Hiremath Institution, Bhalki

The event was conducted under the guidance of Mahalinga Swamiji, Secretary of the Hiremath Institution. Several dignitaries and school officials were present, including Administrator Mohan Reddy, Principal Basavaraj Molakire, and Public School Principals N. Raju and Ran-

gareddy. Teachers Jayakka Gaonkar, Jayalakshmi, Veerashetty, Roopadevi Anandure, and others were also in attendance.

The annual sports meet served as a platform for students to showcase their athletic abilities and develop important life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Through active participation, students gained not only the joy of competition but also the lessons of perseverance, cooperation, and leadership—qualities that are invaluable for their personal and academic growth.

QUICK READ

ASI dies of heart attack after returning from work

Chamarajanagar

A tragic incident was reported from Chamarajanagar where an Assistant Sub-Inspector lost his life after suffering a sudden heart attack. Naganayak, an ASI attached to the Santhamarahalli Police Station, had just returned home early in the morning after completing his night duty. Shortly after reaching his residence at the Police Quarters, he unexpectedly collapsed. Family members and colleagues rushed him to the hospital, but he passed away before receiving medical treatment. His sudden death has deeply shocked the police department and local community. Authorities and fellow officers expressed grief over the untimely demise of the dedicated officer, who was known for his disciplined service and commitment to duty.

Kudroli Jamia Masjid holds annual general meeting

Mangaluru

The fifth annual general meeting of Kudroli Jamia Masjid was held on Sunday, December 28, at the mosque's lower-level auditorium in Mangaluru. Following the meeting, a new committee was elected for the next three years. Former MLC and former Chief Whip of the Karnataka Government, Al Hajj K.S. Mohammed Masood, was unanimously re-elected as President for the fifth consecutive term. Haji Maqbool Ahmed was elected Vice President, while Haji S.A. Khalil will serve as Secretary, with Asif Sarfuddin as Joint Secretary. Sheikh Tajmul Hussain has been appointed Treasurer. Committee members Dr. Mohammed Arif Masood, S. Saleem, Abdul Khaliq S., Ashfaq Ahmed, Zahid M.S., and Akhtar Hussain were also elected.



Youth Cong protests against rail fare hike

SHIVAMOGGA

Youth Congress workers staged a protest at the railway station against repeated increases in train fares, highlighting the financial burden on ordinary citizens. HC Yogesh and other leaders condemned the central BJP government for implementing frequent fare hikes, calling it an attack on people's daily lives. They stressed that railways are the lifeline of millions of Indians, and despite its massive operations, the government continues to raise fares unnecessarily.

Javali Nigam President Chetan Gowda criticized the second fare hike within a year, terming it highly objectionable. The protesters highlighted that while the government claims to offer benefits to citizens, it simultaneously raises prices of essential commodities. Diesel and petrol prices have risen from ₹60 to ₹90-105 per liter, LPG cylinders from ₹450 to nearly ₹1,000, and daily-use electronics and fertilizers have become more expensive, further straining public finances. Rising medicine costs also impact people's health.

KARWAR WILL GET A SUPER-SPECIALTY HOSPITAL: DCM

Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar assured Karwar residents that setting up a super-specialty hospital will be the government's top priority

KARWAR

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar announced that establishing a super-specialty hospital in Karwar is one of the government's foremost commitments, fulfilling a long-pending demand of the people of the region. Speaking at the Karavali Utsav held on Sunday night at the Rabin-dranath Tagore Beach in Karwar, he assured residents that the government stands firmly with them in improving healthcare facilities.

He said MLA Satish Sail had strongly emphasized that people from Karwar should

not be forced to travel to Goa, Udupi, or Mangaluru for advanced medical treatment, and highlighted the urgent need for a world-class hospital locally. Responding to this, Shivakumar affirmed that the government will ensure this promise is met.

Expressing gratitude to the people of Uttara Kannada district, he noted that the support of five MLAs from the district has strengthened the government, enabling it to implement five guarantee schemes successfully. He also announced plans for a dedicated tourism policy for the region to boost employment, prevent



youth migration, and create jobs at people's doorsteps. A public meeting is scheduled to be held in Mangaluru on January 10 in this regard.

Praising the natural beauty and cultural richness of the coastal belt, Shivakumar described the Western Ghats, beaches, traditions, language, and heritage as the pride of the region. He also appreciated MLA Satish Sail for reviving the Karavali Utsav after seven years and providing opportunities for local artists and talents. Emphasizing action over criticism, he said critics may speak, but meaningful work leaves a lasting impact. He urged people to continue strengthening the government in the future by electing more representatives from the region.



Farmers protest demanding higher price for tur dal

KANAKAGIRI

Farmers' organizations staged a strong protest in Kanakagiri demanding an increase in the support price for tur (pigeon pea). Members of the Karnataka Farmers' Association and various units of the Hasiru Sene gathered at the Valmiki Circle on Monday and symbolically poured heaps of tur dal on the road to express their anger and frustration. Later, a memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was submitted through Tahsildar Vishwanath Murudi.

Speaking at the protest, Kalyana Karnataka regional president of the farmers' association, Pampanna Naik, condemned the state government for purchasing tur at the Central Government's fixed support price of ₹8,000 per quintal. While he welcomed the opening of procurement centers in the district, he insisted that merely adhering to the Central price was unacceptable. He urged the state government to offer at least ₹8,500 per quintal to provide fair compensation to farmers.

Farmer leader Sharanappa Doddamani alleged that both the Central and State governments were neglecting farm-

Farmers in Kanakagiri protested demanding higher tur support price, incentives, irrigation relief and loan waivers, submitting a memorandum to Chief Minister

ers' interests. He raised concerns over the delay in installing crest gates at the Tungabhadra Dam and questioned what meaningful guarantees the government had provided to farmers. He demanded an additional incentive of ₹4,000 per quintal for tur procurement.

Protestors also pressed for permanent government buildings for agriculture department offices currently operating from rented premises. They demanded loan waivers and assured irrigation for second-crop cultivation, warning that lack of water had increased farmer suicides and forced many to migrate for livelihood. Several farmers, including Ganesh Reddy, Suresh, Virupanna Kamali, Basavaraj, Somanna, Manjunath Godinal, Malingarayya, Hanumesh Huggi, Yankappa, Kanakappa Naik, and Hanumanth, participated in the agitation.

Madivalara Welfare Association felicitates achievers

BHATKAL

The Bhatkal Taluk Madivalara Welfare Association held its monthly meeting along with a felicitation ceremony for achievers at the Hadimas-ti Temple Hall in Shirali. Association President Ramesh Madival presided over the programme.

During the event, several talented youths were honoured for their outstanding accomplishments. Kumari Sinchana Thimmappa Madival, who secured the 6th rank in the B.Sc. examinations conducted by Karnataka University, Dharwad for the year 2025, was felicitated. Pavitra Raghuram Madival, who was selected to the Karnataka University Kabaddi team and earned the prestigious University Blue recognition, was also honoured. In addition, Nagraj Ganesh Shirali re-



ceived recognition for securing the fourth place at the state level in a painting competition conducted by the Karnataka Examination Authority.

Educational leaders and association mentors, including K.B. Madival, Headmaster of Alvekodi Durgaparameshwari High School, and Mamatha Bhatkal, Headmistress of Srivali High School, Chitrapur, addressed the gathering and praised the achievements of

the students.

The programme was attended by Association Honorary President Venkatesh Madival Shirali, Secretary Nityananda Teerthahalli, Treasurer Rajesh Madival, other office bearers, and community members. Financial advisor Krishnananda Madival welcomed the gathering, while teacher Raghavendra Madival compered the event, making it a meaningful and inspiring occasion for the community.

Youth injured in knife attack after drunken brawl

CHIKKAMAGALURU

A drunken brawl inside a bar led to a violent incident in Shaktinagar on the outskirts of Chikkamagaluru, where a youth was stabbed. The injured youth, Anil Kumar from Mooguthihalli village, has been admitted to the Hassan Government Hospital for treatment.

The clash reportedly began as a minor argument between two groups over a cigarette, which soon escalated into a fight. During the scuffle, one of the youths suddenly attacked Anil Kumar with a knife. Police have taken the accused into custody. CCTV footage from the bar has captured the quarrel and stabbing incident. A case has been registered at the Chikkamagaluru Town Police Station, and further investigation is underway.



Honouring Kannada poet G.S. Shivrudrappa

SHIVAMOGGA

Dr. G.S. Shivrudrappa, widely acclaimed as a master poet who elevated the beauty of Kannada literature to a divine level, was remembered at a commemorative event titled "GSS: A Remembrance" organized at the Patrika Bhavan under the aegis of Rasthrakavi Dr. G.S. Shivrudrappa Foundation and Karnataka Working Journalists' Association, District Unit. Speaking at the event, poet and journalist N. Ravikumar (Telex) highlighted that G.S.S. critically explored the aesthetic essence of Kannada poetry from folk traditions to the Pampa and Navodaya eras, blending literary beauty with spiritual depth. His research work "Soundarya Sameeksha", developed under the guidance of his mentor Kuvempu, remains an invaluable contribution to Kannada literary criticism.

Ravikumar emphasized that G.S.S. transcended caste, religion, and social divisions in his writings, weaving univer-

sal humanism into his poetry. Through works on Sankranti, Muharram, and Christ, he propagated a message of inclusivity and interfaith harmony. His poems, rooted in the richness of life, revealed philosophical insights from devotional hymns to spiritual prayers.

Dr. Basavaraj T.N., lecturer at Kamala Nehru Women's First Grade College, said in an era where humanity is increasingly neglected, G.S.S. stands as a beacon, nurturing global human consciousness akin to Kuvempu. Dr. Rajendra of Shiralkoppa Kadam First Grade College added that G.S.S.'s vision and literary contributions continue to inspire moral and social values in society.

Prof. Kiran Desai, president of the G.S. Shivrudrappa Foundation, chaired the programme, and K.S. Ishwarappa delivered the introductory remarks. Speakers noted that poetry, as a powerful medium, can rebuild humane society and promote love and equality.

Ramanagara celebrates Kuvempu's literary legacy



RAMANAGARA

A programme marking the birth anniversary of renowned Kannada writer Kuvempu was organised in Ramanagara at Patel English School near Kempegowda Circle on Magadi Road, jointly by the District Negilayogi Social Service Trust and the school. Paying floral tributes to Kuvempu's portrait, the school's founder-secretary Patel C. Raju said Kuvempu remains a towering symbol of Kannada language and literature. Born on December 29, 1904, at Kuppalli near Thirthahalli in Shivamogga district, Kuvempu (Kuppalli Venkatappa Puttappa) emerged as one of India's greatest literary figures, writing poetry, plays, novels and children's literature that enriched Kannada culture.

He recalled that classic poetry collections such as Kola-lu Panchajanya, Prema Kashmir, and Pakshikashi, along

with plays like Jalagara, Yamana Solu and Beralge Koral, showcased his creative brilliance. Notable children's poems like Bommanahalliya Kindari Jogi and Modannana Thamma are still cherished, while novels including Malegalalli Madumagalu and Kanooru Heggaditi hold a special place in Kannada literature. Kuvempu's magnum opus Sri Ramayana Darshanam earned him the prestigious Jnanpith Award, bringing great pride to Karnataka. He was also honoured with the Pampa Award, Central Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Vibhushan and many other recognitions.

Patel Raju said Kuvempu gave Kannada literature a unique global identity and stood among the foremost Jnanpith recipients in the state. Remembering his legacy, he stressed that Kannada speakers must preserve and promote the language.

CHILD RIGHTS AWARENESS

Awareness workshop on child rights and protection

MANGALURU

A lack of proper information is depriving many eligible children—especially children with disabilities—of their rightful benefits and protection, said Dr. Tippetwamy K.T., member of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. He was speaking after inaugurating an awareness workshop on child rights and child protection for rural and urban rehabilitation workers of Dakshina Kannada at the Netravati Hall of the Zilla Panchayat.

He noted that last year's review meetings revealed significant gaps among con-

cerned departments regarding awareness of child rights. To address this, a statewide training programme has been launched, already completed in 20 districts, and will cover the remaining districts within the next ten months. The main objective is to ensure that constitutional entitlements reach every deserving child without delay.

Dakshina Kannada district has identified 954 children with disabilities, he said, stressing that officials working with children must understand their responsibilities in handling abuse cases and know whom to approach in emergencies. Child Protection



Committees, earlier limited to gram panchayats, are now mandated in all urban local bodies as well. Special gram sabhas for persons with disabilities must be held annually, he added, appreciating

coastal districts for better implementation of child protection initiatives.

Presiding over the programme, senior civil judge and district legal services authority secretary Zaibunnisa

emphasized that providing special protection to children with disabilities is the duty of all government systems. She said violations of child rights often occur even in schools, making awareness among teachers crucial. Children must be educated in stages about their rights, mutual protection, and legal remedies when rights are violated.

The programme was jointly organized by the State Child Rights Commission, district administration, legal services authority, disability and senior citizens' department, child helpline, and child protection unit, with officials and resource persons participating.



QUICK READ

Stray Dog Found Carrying Infant's Body

Vidisha

Locals were shocked when a stray dog was seen carrying a newborn's body near Parashari cremation ground in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh. People alerted the police, who identified the infant as about four to five months old. Police officer Manoj Dubey said animals sometimes unearth bodies buried near cremation grounds, possibly explaining the incident. The newborn's body was buried by authorities, and an investigation has been launched. Similar cases have been reported in the district earlier in 2025.

Actor Jayasurya, Wife Questioned In ED Case

Kochi

Malayali actor Jayasurya and his wife appeared before the Enforcement Directorate on Monday in a money laundering probe linked to a cheating case. The ED recorded their statements under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The investigation follows four FIRs filed by Thrissur police over an online investment app, 'Save Box'. ED sources said some funds from the scheme were allegedly diverted to the film industry, including payments to Jayasurya for endorsing it. No immediate comment came from the couple.

Ex-TDB Member Arrested In Sabarimala Gold Case

Thiruvananthapuram
Former Travancore Devaswom Board member N Vijayakumar was arrested on Monday in connection with the Sabarimala gold loss case. Vijayakumar, who served during former president A Padmakumar's tenure, was questioned by the Special Investigation Team in Thiruvananthapuram before his arrest. The case relates to gold plates handed for electroplating in 2019, which went missing from the Sreekovil and Dwara-palaka idols. He is the tenth accused arrested in the probe. Vijayakumar will be produced before the Kollam Vigilance Court.

Nine arrested in Rs 12 crore Gurgaon realty fraud



GURGAON

In a shocking real estate scam, a woman was cheated of Rs 12.04 crore after being promised a luxury flat at DLF Camellias in Gurgaon at nearly half the market price through a fake bank auction deal, police said. The fraud dates back to August 2024, when the woman was looking for a house in an upscale society. She met Abhinav Pathak, a medicine distributor, who claimed he could get her a premium flat at a discounted rate via a bank auction. Pathak, along with representatives of M/s MG Leasing & Finance, allegedly showed forged sale certificates, auction receipts, and letters, purportedly from the State Bank of India. Believing the documents, the woman transferred Rs 12.04 crore through RTGS and demand drafts between August and October 2024. The scam was exposed when the bank

Amit Shah Alleges Congress Uses Infiltrators as Vote Bank

Amit Shah claims Congress treats Bangladeshi infiltrators as vote bank in Assam

ASSAM

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday claimed that the Congress party considers Bangladeshi infiltrators as a vote bank, threatening Assam's people, culture, and identity. Speaking at a public rally, he said the Centre would identify all illegal immigrants, not only in Assam but across India.

Shah inaugurated the Rs 227 crore redevelopment of Bata-drava Than in Nagaon, the birthplace of Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardeva. He described it as historic, stating that the site has been freed from encroachment. The Home Minister praised the state government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sar-



ma, for reclaiming over one lakh bighas of land from infiltrators. "Give the BJP another five years to ensure infiltrator-free Assam," he urged the crowd. Shah emphasized that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked to protect Assamese cultural identity while promoting overall development. He linked Modi's efforts to Sankardeva's call of 'Ek Bharat', highlighting peace and development in As-

Home Minister Amit Shah opens the largest auditorium in Northeast India

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated 'Jyoti-Bishnu Antarjatik Kala Mandir' in Guwahati, Assam, the North East's largest auditorium. Built at Rs 291 crore, it accommodates 5,000 people on a 14.85-acre campus. The complex includes a convention centre, VIP suites, 450-car parking, advanced audio-visual systems, and runs on solar energy. Shah will also felicitate 1,000 Congenital Heart Disease programme beneficiaries.

sam as tangible outcomes.

The Home Minister also reminded people that the BJP has signed peace accords with various militant outfits over the last 11 years, fulfilling 92 percent of the agreement clauses. He reiterated that the government is committed to maintaining security, develop-

ment, and cultural preservation in the state. Shah's comments came amid ongoing debates about illegal immigration and Assam's demographic concerns, underscoring the government's focus on addressing these issues while reinforcing political narratives ahead of elections.

Delhi High Court grants interim relief to Akasa Air operator against recruitment scams misusing brand

Delhi HC grants interim protection to Akasa Air operator

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted interim protection to SNV Aviation Private Limited, the operator of Akasa Air, against alleged recruitment scams using its brand and trademarks. A single-judge Bench of Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora passed the order in a commercial suit filed by the airline. The court noted that defendants were falsely representing themselves as Akasa Air, offering jobs, and demanding "process fees," though the airline does not follow such recruitment practices. Justice Arora observed that these acts amounted to misrepresentation, deception, and passing off, and continuing such activity could



cause irreparable harm.

SNV Aviation, operating under its trademarks "AKASA" and "AKASA AIR" since 2021, reported external turnover of Rs 4,582.7 crore for 2024-25 so far. The airline claimed that defendants colluded to run scams by using similar marks like "AKASHA" and "AKAASA," registering infringing domain names, and contacting job seekers through emails and calls to

extract money.

The court restrained the defendants from using the airline's trademarks or similar marks on documents, domain names, email addresses, or other material. It directed domain registrars like GoDaddy and Hostinger to suspend infringing domains and asked MeitY, DoT, NPCI, and banks to disclose KYC details, block mobile numbers, bank accounts, and UPI IDs linked to the defendants.

Justice Arora ordered compliance within one week and listed the matter before the Joint Registrar on February 3, 2026, and before the Bench on May 22, 2026, emphasizing that the injunction is necessary to protect the general public from fraudulent activity.

Cyber scam dupes woman of Rs 3.71 crore digitally

MUMBAI

A 68-year-old woman from Andheri West, Mumbai, lost Rs 3.71 crore in a sophisticated "digital arrest" scam, police said. One accused was arrested from Surat, Gujarat, while investigations continue to track the masterminds abroad.

The cyber criminals posed as Colaba police officers and central agency personnel. They even staged a fake online court hearing, where one accused introduced himself as "Justice Chandrachud". The fraudsters claimed the victim's bank account was involved in money laundering and kept her under constant digital surveillance.

The scam began on August 18 when the victim received a call from a person claiming to be officer SK Jaiswal. He threatened her against disclosing the matter and extracted her bank details. She was made to write an essay about her life and later appeared on video before the fake judge. Believing the process to be



real, she transferred Rs 3.75 crore into multiple accounts over two months.

The victim realised she was cheated when the calls stopped and reported the case to West Region Cyber Police Station. Investigators found the money routed through several mule accounts, one traced to Surat. The arrested man had opened a fake company account to park Rs 1.71 crore, earning Rs 6.4 lakh as commission.

Police revealed that two main masterminds of the racket are currently abroad. Digital arrest scams, where fraudsters pose as law-enforcement officers to intimidate victims, are rising in India. The Supreme Court recently directed the CBI to conduct a unified national probe into such cases.

Raj Thackeray urges MNS workers to unite with Sena

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray on Monday urged his party workers to set aside differences and work together with Shiv Sena (UBT) to "save Mumbai" and ensure the alliance succeeds in the upcoming Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections on January 15.

Addressing party functionaries at Rangasharda auditorium, Thackeray warned that some forces are planning to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra. Quoting him, senior leader Bala Nandgaonkar said, "This dream of breaking Mumbai must be destroyed. Mumbai belongs to Marathi manooos and Maharashtra. No fight is bigger than Maharashtra."

Thackeray stressed the importance of alliance dharma, asking MNS workers to actively support Shiv Sena (UBT) and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) candidates in the civic polls.



Parliament Panel Reviews MGNREGA Transition Challenges

XXXXXX

A parliamentary panel on Monday discussed various aspects of the UPA-era rural job guarantee law, MGNREGA, and the transition to the Narendra Modi government's new VB-G RAM G Act. Members focused on ensuring a smooth shift in the next six months, including payments to beneficiaries, budget allocation, and enrolment issues. Most members noted that enrolment under MGNREGA was only around 50 per cent in several states.

No member opposed the new law, though concerns were raised about implementation time, as it will start only after rules are framed. Opposition members suggested considering earlier committee recommendations, such as extending working days from 100 to 150. BJP MPs highlighted the need for the VB-G RAM G Act to address current rural infrastructure and employment challenges, noting underutilisation of MGNREGA funds in many states.

The panel also reviewed employment data: MGNREGA

Parliamentary panel examines MGNREGA shortcomings and plans for smooth implementation of the new VB-G RAM G Act over six months

covers 741 districts, 2.69 lakh gram panchayats, and over 26 crore beneficiaries, with women making up 57 per cent, SC/ST workers 36 per cent, and 4.81 lakh persons with disabilities employed.

Committee Chairman and Congress leader Saptagiri Ulaka said the panel examined MGNREGA in detail and discussed steps for a smooth transition. A briefing by the Ministry of Rural Development helped members understand the new framework. Ulaka added that discussions would continue in the Budget Session to finalise implementation and ensure all states comply with the new act. The meeting emphasized maintaining employment and infrastructure objectives while implementing the VB-G RAM G Act effectively across rural India.

Overloaded truck crushes SUV, one dead



RAMPUR

A tragic accident on the Delhi-Nainital highway in Rampur claimed one life on Sunday evening when an overloaded truck carrying wood shavings lost balance, mounted a road divider, and toppled onto a Bolero SUV, police said.

The SUV, used by the Uttar Pradesh electricity department, was turning at a highway cut near Pahari Gate crossing when the incident occurred. Video footage showed the truck swerving to avoid the SUV, climbing the divider, and falling directly onto the vehicle, crushing it within seconds. The SUV driver, identified as Firasat Khan of Gujar Tola, was trapped inside and died instantly. Rescue teams used cranes and bulldozers to retrieve his body, which was stuck in the steering wheel.

The Bolero, bearing a UP

government plate, was a contract vehicle for Sub-Divisional Officer Nagendra Kumar at the Khod sub-station. Kumar described Khan as a responsible driver and expressed grief over the loss, adding that compensation would be provided by the contractor or through insurance.

Rampur Superintendent of Police Vidyasagar Mishra said the accident caused a nearly two-kilometre traffic jam for about three hours, with diversions in place during rescue operations. The truck driver sustained injuries and was hospitalised.

Police and fire services from multiple stations managed the rescue, traffic, and inquest proceedings. The SUV driver's body was sent for post-mortem, and legal action is expected after formalities are completed. Authorities are examining all angles to ensure proper investigation.

RABIES ALERT

Buffalo Milk Incident Sparks Rabies Vaccinations

BUDAUN

Nearly 200 residents of Piprauli village in Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, received rabies vaccinations last week after consuming raita made from the milk of a buffalo that later died. The buffalo had been bitten by a dog and passed away on 26 December, showing clear symptoms of rabies three days after the bite.

Fearing potential infection, villagers immediately rushed to the Ujhani Health Centre for precautionary anti-rabies shots. Chief Medical Officer



Dr Rameshwar Mishra confirmed that the buffalo displayed signs of rabies before its death. He said, "Prevention

is better than cure. Everyone who had doubts was vaccinated. Normally, boiled milk is safe, but we chose to take pre-

cautions to ensure no risk to anyone."

Health officials acted promptly, urging all residents who had consumed the "tainted" raita to receive the vaccine. Vaccination services were kept open through Saturday and Sunday to ensure that anyone seeking treatment could be attended to immediately. Authorities are also closely monitoring the village to prevent the spread of rumours and unnecessary panic among residents.

Local resident Dharmpal said the buffalo became sick

and died due to the dog bite. Since its milk had been used in a yoghurt dish served to guests at a funeral, villagers opted to get vaccinated as a safety measure.

So far, no cases of rabies or illness have been reported, and the situation in the village remains stable. The health department continues to monitor the area closely, ensuring public safety and preventing misinformation from spreading. Authorities have praised the community for cooperating with the vaccination drive and taking timely precautions.

Date: 30th December 2025 | Place: KARNATAKA Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd



QUICK READ

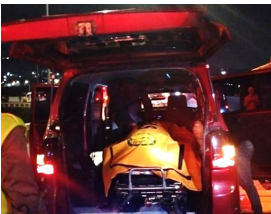


Tarique Rahman Files Nomination for Dhaka Seat

Dhaka
Bangladesh Nationalist Party Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman's nomination papers were filed on Monday for the Dhaka-17 seat in the next national election. Party leaders submitted the papers at the Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office. The election is due in February 2026. Rahman returned to Bangladesh on December 25 after 17 years in exile. He recently registered as a voter in Dhaka-17 and said he wants to build an inclusive and safe country.

Man Missing After Security Operation

Panjur
A man has reportedly gone missing after being detained during a security operation in Balochistan's Panjur district. Local residents said security forces conducted searches and took valuables from homes in Gawargo Fateh Ali. One resident, Naimatullah, was taken into custody and has not been seen since. His family said his name is not in any official records and appealed to authorities for information. Meanwhile, protests over missing persons continue in Quetta.



Sixteen Killed in Manado Nursing Home Fire

Jakarta
At least 16 people were killed after a fire broke out at a nursing home in Manado, the capital of Indonesia's North Sulawesi province, on Sunday. The fire started around 8:36 pm at the Panti Werdha Damai nursing home and was brought under control within an hour. Police said victim identification is underway at a local hospital. Survivors were shifted to nearby hospitals, while authorities have begun an investigation to find the cause of the blaze.

Zelenskyy details Trump's 20 point peace plan

Ukraine's leader shared details of talks with Donald Trump, pushing for lasting security guarantees for Ukraine

WASHINGTON

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday that United States President Donald Trump briefed him on a twenty-point peace proposal discussed earlier with Russian President Vladimir Putin. He spoke after meeting Trump at the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida, on Sunday, December twenty-eight, where both leaders talked about ways to end the war that began with Russia's full-scale invasion and is nearing

four years.

Zelenskyy said he asked for firm security guarantees lasting fifty years and stressed that any talks with Moscow would happen only after Trump and European leaders agreed on clear written commitments. Trump said he also held a long phone call with Putin, describing it as productive and friendly, as the conflict approaches its fourth anniversary on February twenty-four.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine wants national security advi-

ers from Ukraine, the United States and Europe to meet soon to shape the plan and timelines. He added that guarantees should begin the moment a final agreement is signed by all sides. He said the plan should carry signatures from Ukraine, the United States, Russia and Europe, and may need a technical group to manage steps and checks.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is open to talks with Russia and suggested a national referendum after a ceasefire of at least

sixty days. He said monitoring rules would be part of the guarantees, and talks would also cover plans for a free economic zone in the Donbas region.

Speaking later, Trump called Zelenskyy brave and said Putin wants the war to end, adding he prefers a deal without travel, while saying peace efforts must move fast and carefully. Officials said more details are expected soon as talks continue amid heavy fighting and humanitarian pressure across eastern Ukraine.



PTI Insists On Protests Before Any Talks

LAHORE

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will not hold talks with the government without first launching street protests, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi said on Monday. He made the statement after spending three days in Lahore mobilising party workers amid internal divisions within PTI.

Afridi said sections of the party were pushing for dialogue, while others were following jailed founder Imran Khan's call for street agitation. He said he had been tasked with leading the protest movement and arrived in Lahore with ministers and lawmakers to begin the campaign.

Afridi said talks without resistance would weaken the party's position. He said protests would continue until the government recognised the opposition as an equal partner. Responding to criticism over past protests, he said PTI would focus on practical action instead of big claims.

Afridi questioned the government's offer of dialogue, saying real talks were possi-



KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi says PTI will continue street protests and reject dialogue until the government accepts opposition demands and authority.

ble only if people with actual power were involved. He said he could not align with the establishment due to policy differences and claimed the current rulers had failed to take Pakistan forward.

He accused the ruling parties of corruption and poor economic management, add-

ing that protests would not be limited to Islamabad or fixed timelines. He also announced plans to take the movement to Karachi.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said dialogue could begin only after agreement on basic principles. He said the government wanted PTI to stay silent on alleged election fraud, Imran Khan's detention, and institutional interference. After the media talk, Afridi was stopped from entering Lahore cantonment, where he planned to meet families of jailed party leaders.

AIMJ Chief Urges Muslims To Avoid New Year Celebrations

BAREILLY

Maulana Mufti Shahabuddin Razvi Bareilly, President of the All India Muslim Jamaat (AIMJ), has urged Muslims in India to avoid celebrating the New Year, citing Islamic law. Razvi said activities like singing, dancing, alcohol consumption, and other festive behaviors on December 31 are haram, or forbidden, under Sharia, the Islamic legal and moral code. He explained that New Year celebrations often involve chaos, misbehavior, and immoral acts, which are prohibited for Muslims.

KP Governor Calls For Support To Military Operations

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has urged the provincial government to fully support military operations to deal with rising militancy and worsening security in the region, he said development projects cannot move forward without peace and stability. The governor said insecurity has damaged the social and economic life of the people and warned that business and investment cannot grow in an unsafe environment. He stressed that lasting peace is essential for progress in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Jamaat-i-Islami Criticises PIA Privatisation

KARACHI

Jamaat-i-Islami leader Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Monday criticised the government's decision to privatise Pakistan International Airlines, calling the move a grave mistake, he said PIA was a strategic national asset and a symbol of national pride that should not have been sold.

He said PIA did not become unprofitable on its own. According to him, successive governments including PML-N, PPP, PML-Q and PTI were responsible for its decline over the past three to four decades. He alleged that corruption, political appoint-

ments, poor oversight and mismanagement weakened the airline badly.

Rehman said some military officials appointed to run the airline also failed to improve its performance. He argued that instead of fixing responsibility and punishing those involved, the government chose to sell the airline.

He said PIA was split into two entities before privatisation, with most losses shifted to PIA Holdings. The remaining airline later showed a profit of about ten billion rupees between January and June, he added.

The JI leader questioned the sale price, saying a single



used Airbus A320 costs nearly ten billion rupees, yet the entire airline was sold for a similar amount. He said claims of one hundred thirty five billion rupees were misleading, as most of it was meant for private reinvestment.

Rehman said PIA owns seventy eight international landing rights, including in Europe, and its value was far higher than the sale price. He questioned the role of the Fauji Foundation, asking whether privatisation was real.

TAIWAN DRILLS

China Launches Justice Mission Drills Around Taiwan

BEIJING

China on Monday launched large-scale joint military drills around Taiwan, asserting its claim over the island, which it calls an inseparable part of its territory.

The exercise, named Justice Mission 2025, is being carried out by the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command and involves ground, air, naval, missile, and support units.

Military officials said the drills include air and sea patrols, simulated strikes, port



blockades, and deterrence operations in nearby areas.

Aircraft and warships are moving around Taiwan from multiple directions, while forces practice rapid deploy-

The command also released a poster titled "Shield of Justice, Smashing Illusion".

Fighter jets, bombers, drones, and long-range rocket units are testing precision strike abilities against mobile targets. Beijing said the drills aim to protect sovereignty and national unity.

The move follows a recent United States decision to approve an arms package for Taiwan. Washington said the proposed sales are worth about 11.1 billion dollars and include missiles, howitzers, and drones. China condemned

the deal, saying it violates the one-China principle.

Beijing has announced sanctions on United States defence companies and executives linked to arms supplies.

The foreign ministry said the measures take effect immediately.

Taiwan criticised the drills as an irrational provocation that harms regional peace.

Its defence ministry said forces are on high alert and conducting response exercises to protect the island and its people from any threat or pressure.

Ex Home Minister Faces Probe Over Gen Z Protests

KATHMANDU

Former Nepal home minister Ramesh Lekhak appeared before a high level inquiry commission on Monday to give his statement on alleged atrocities during the Gen Z protests held in September.

Lekhak was serving as home minister during the protests, which erupted on September eight and nine, when young people took to the streets against government mismanagement and rising corruption.

The demonstrations later turned violent, leaving seventy seven people dead and many others injured, according to official records.

The high level commission, headed by former judge Gauri Bahadur Karki, is examining whether excessive force was authorised by senior officials at the time. Lekhak arrived at the commission's office on Monday afternoon after being formally summoned as part of the final stage of the investigation.

The panel, which has received a one month extension, is also preparing to question former prime minister KP Sharma Oli next week.

Investigators have already recorded statements from senior security and administrative officials, including former chief secretary Eknarayan Aryal, former home secretary Gokarna Mani Duwadi, army chief Ashokraj Sigdel, and police chief Chandra Kuber Chapung.

Earlier, a government assessment confirmed that seventy seven people were killed during the protests, while two thousand four hundred twenty nine were injured.

Among the injured, seventeen were children under thirteen, and one thousand four hundred thirty three were aged between thirteen and twenty eight. The report estimated total physical damage at eighty four point four five billion rupees, affecting thousands of buildings, vehicles, public offices, and private property across the country. Officials said findings will guide accountability measures and legal action in the coming weeks after the report is finalised.



SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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

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

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

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



WINTER FOG: Understanding the Dangers and Staying Safe on the Roads

Every winter, a silent danger descends upon roads and highways across the world. It arrives without warning, transforming familiar routes into treacherous corridors of uncertainty. This danger is fog, and while it may appear ethereal and beautiful from a distance, it becomes one of the most hazardous weather conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike. Dense fog reduces visibility to mere feet, creates optical illusions, and has been responsible for some of the most devastating multi-vehicle accidents in transportation history. Understanding the nature of winter fog and learning how to navigate it safely can mean the difference between arriving home safely and becoming another tragic statistic.

The Science Behind WINTER FOG

Winter fog forms under specific atmospheric conditions that are particularly common during the colder months. When the air temperature drops near or below the dew point, water vapor in the atmosphere condenses into tiny water droplets that remain suspended in the air, creating the cloudy appearance we recognize as fog. During winter, several factors contribute to particularly dense and persistent fog formation.

Radiation fog, one of the most common types in winter, develops on clear, calm nights when the ground loses heat rapidly through radiation. As the earth's surface cools, it chills the air directly above it. If this air contains sufficient moisture and cools to its dew point, fog forms. This type of fog is especially thick in valleys and low-lying areas where cold air settles and accumulates. It typically develops after sunset and can persist well into the morning, coinciding perfectly with rush hour traffic.

Advection fog occurs when warm, moist air moves over a cold surface, such as snow-covered ground or frozen bodies of water. The temperature difference causes the moisture in the air to condense. This type of fog can be particularly persistent and widespread, sometimes lasting for days under the right conditions. In regions near large bodies of water or in areas with significant snow cover, advection fog creates hazardous driving conditions that can affect entire metropolitan areas simultaneously.

Steam fog, though less common, appears when cold air moves over relatively warmer water. This creates the dramatic effect of fog rising from the water's surface like steam. While visually striking, it can create dangerous conditions near rivers, lakes, and coastal areas.

The Hidden Dangers of Fog-Related Accidents

The statistics surrounding fog-related accidents are sobering. According to traffic safety data, fog is a contributing factor in thousands of accidents annually, many of them involving multiple vehicles and resulting in serious injuries or fatalities. What makes fog particularly dangerous is not just the reduced visibility, but the human psychology and decision-making that accompanies it.

When visibility drops below 100 feet, as it often does in dense fog, drivers lose the ability to perceive distance accurately. The fog creates a white-out effect that eliminates depth perception and makes it nearly impossible to judge the speed and position of other vehicles. Tail lights appear suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, giving drivers mere seconds to react. This compressed reaction time is the primary cause of the chain-reaction pile-ups that characterize major fog-related accidents.

One of the most infamous examples occurred in December 1990 on Interstate 75 in Tennessee, where dense fog contributed to a series of collisions involving 99 vehicles. The accident resulted in 12 deaths and 42 injuries, demonstrating how quickly a fog situation can escalate into tragedy. Similar incidents occur with disturbing regularity on highways around the world, particularly during winter months when fog is most prevalent and drivers may also be contending with icy roads.

The psychological aspect of driving in fog adds another layer of danger. Many drivers experience a phenomenon called velocitization, where they unconsciously increase their speed because the lack of visual reference points makes them feel like they're moving slower than they actually are.

Others experience anxiety and panic, leading to sudden braking or erratic movements that catch following drivers off guard. Some motorists pull over but leave their vehicles partially on the roadway, creating stationary obstacles that other drivers cannot see until it's too late.

Fog also affects pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists disproportionately. These vulnerable road users are harder to see in the best of conditions, and fog makes them nearly invisible. Pedestrians crossing streets in foggy conditions may not be visible to drivers until they're within striking distance, while cyclists and motorcyclists lack the bright tail lights and larger profiles of passenger vehicles.

Essential Safety Measures for Driving in Dense Fog

Surviving a drive through dense fog requires a combination of proper vehicle preparation, defensive driving techniques, and the wisdom to know when not to drive at all. The single most important decision you can make is whether to travel. If fog is severe and your journey is not essential, postponing travel is always the safest option. No appointment, event, or convenience is worth risking your life or the lives of others.

However, if you must drive in foggy conditions, or if you encounter fog during your journey, implementing the following safety measures can significantly reduce your risk of an accident.

Slow Down Significantly: Speed is the enemy in fog. Reduce your speed well below the posted limit, adjusting it according to visibility. A useful rule of thumb is that you should be able to stop within the distance you can see clearly. If you can only see 50 feet ahead, you should be traveling at a speed that allows you to stop within 50 feet. This typically means speeds of 20-30 mph or less in dense fog, regardless of what the speed limit sign says.

Use Your Low-Beam Headlights: This is perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of fog safety. Many drivers instinctively turn on their high-



beam headlights in fog, thinking more light will help them see better. This is dangerously wrong. High beams reflect off the water droplets in fog, creating a glare that actually reduces visibility. Low-beam headlights aimed downward provide better illumination of the road immediately in front of you and make your vehicle more visible to others. If your

vehicle has fog lights, use them in conjunction with low beams.

Never Use Hazard Lights While Moving: While it might seem logical to use your hazard lights to increase visibility, doing so is dangerous and illegal in most jurisdictions while a vehicle is in motion. Hazard lights prevent you from signaling

ing turns or lane changes, and they can confuse other drivers about your intentions. Save hazard lights for when you're stopped and pulled completely off the road.

Increase Following Distance Dramatically: In clear conditions, maintaining a three-second following distance is recommended. In fog, this should be increased to at least eight to ten seconds or more. Remember, you need time to perceive a hazard, react to it, and bring your vehicle to a stop. When visibility is compromised, you need exponentially more distance to accomplish this safely.

Use the Right Edge of the Road as a Guide: Rather than following the tail lights of the car ahead, which can lead you into a collision if that driver stops suddenly or makes an error, use the painted edge line or roadside markers as your guide. This helps you maintain proper lane position without fixating on other vehicles.

Avoid Passing: Resist any temptation to pass other vehicles in foggy conditions. Passing requires excellent visibility and predictability, neither of which exists in fog. Even if another driver is moving frustratingly slowly, stay behind them at a safe distance.



Be Prepared to Stop: Keep your foot covering the brake pedal without pressing it, a technique called covering the brake. This shaves precious fractions of a second off your reaction time. Also, be aware of your surroundings and identify escape routes, such as a shoulder where you could steer if traffic ahead stops suddenly.

If You Must Pull Over, Get Completely Off the Road: If conditions become too dangerous to continue, or if you need to stop for any reason, pull as far off the roadway as possible, ideally beyond the shoulder into a parking area. Turn off all lights except your hazard flashers to avoid attracting other vehicles toward your position. If possible, exit the vehicle and move far away from the roadway, as parked cars are frequent collision targets in heavy fog.

Use Windshield Defrosters: Fog inside your vehicle compounds the visibility problem. Use your defroster and air conditioning to keep your windshield clear.

The Importance of Patience and Perspective

cisely, and we become frustrated when circumstances slow us down. Fog demands that we abandon these expectations and embrace patience.

When visibility drops and you find yourself crawling along at a fraction of normal highway speed, remember that arriving late is infinitely preferable to not arriving at all. The frustration you feel in the moment is nothing compared to the lasting consequences of a fog-related accident. Give yourself extra time

when fog is forecasted, communicate with those expecting you that you may be delayed, and approach the situation with the understanding that safety trumps all other considerations.

Dense winter fog transforms the everyday act of driving into a potentially deadly endeavor. The ethereal beauty of fog-shrouded landscapes belies the very real dangers it presents to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. By understanding how fog

forms, recognizing its dangers, and implementing proven safety measures, we can dramatically reduce the risk of fog-related accidents.

The key principles are simple but require discipline to follow: reduce speed dramatically, use low-beam headlights, increase following distance, stay alert, and be willing to delay or cancel travel when conditions are severe. These measures, combined with proper vehicle maintenance and awareness of

weather conditions, create multiple layers of protection against one of winter's most persistent hazards.

As winter approaches and fog begins to settle over our roads and highways, remember that the choices you make in those low-visibility conditions echo far beyond the duration of your drive. They determine whether families remain whole, whether parents return home to their children, and whether the statistics of fog-related accidents



increase or decrease. Drive with wisdom, patience, and caution, and encourage others to do the same. In the fog, visibility may be limited, but our commitment to safety should be crystal clear.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of fog safety is the psychological component. Modern life conditions us to expect speed and efficiency. We calculate our travel times pre-

McDonald Defends MCG Curator amid Pitch Controversy

Australia coach urges patience, backs traditional pitch preparation

MELBOURNE

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald has come out strongly in defence of Melbourne Cricket Ground curator Matt Page, who has faced intense criticism following the dramatic conclusion of the fourth Ashes Test against England. The match ended inside two days, with England clinching a four-wicket victory on a surface that offered significant assistance to fast bowlers.

Page and his ground staff were targeted after leaving around 10 millimetres of grass on the wicket, which produced pronounced seam movement and bounce. Batting proved extremely challenging for both sides, contributing to the unusually short Test and sparking debate over pitch standards at



Australia's most iconic venue.

The early finish has also had financial repercussions. Cricket Australia is estimated to have suffered a revenue loss of about Aus\$10 million (US\$6.7 million), as tickets for days three, four and five had to be refunded. The incident has prompted calls from some quarters for greater

oversight of pitch preparation.

McDonald, however, urged restraint, praising Page's long-term work and warning against administrative interference. He said the curator had done an "outstanding" job over many years and argued that Australia's batsmen must also take responsibility for their lack of runs.

"We have had Test matches as well — this Test we weren't at our best," McDonald said. "Sometimes these things can happen. We support him in what he's done and are really proud of the evolution of the MCG. He's found a nice balance for a long period of time."

The pitch is still under scrutiny, with ICC match referee Jeff Crowe yet to submit his official report. An "unsatisfactory" rating would result in a demerit point for the venue.

While Cricket Australia will conduct its own end-of-season review, McDonald reiterated his opposition to tailoring surfaces for commercial reasons, stressing that Australian curators have traditionally operated independently of captains and administrators.

Shan Masood Smashes Fastest First-Class Double Century

KARACHI

Pakistan Test captain Shan Masood etched his name into the record books by scoring the fastest double century by a Pakistani batter in first-class cricket, surpassing a milestone that had stood for more than three decades. Masood reached the landmark in just 177 balls while representing Sui Northern Gas against Sahar Associates in the President's Cup departmental tournament.

The 36-year-old left-hander remained unbeaten on 212 from 185 deliveries at the close of play on day one, producing a dominant display of stroke-making that left bowlers with little answer. His innings broke the previous Pakistani record held by batting great Inzamam-ul-Haq, who had scored a double hundred off 188 balls during a tour match in England in 1992.

Masood's knock was marked by controlled aggression and relentless scoring, as he combined classical shot selection with modern-day

Pakistan Test captain rewrites domestic record books with breathtaking President's Cup innings



tempo. Batting conditions may have been favourable, but the authority and pace of his innings underlined his rich form and experience at the top level.

While Masood now holds the national record, the overall benchmark for the fastest double century by a visiting batter in first-class cricket remains with India's Virender Sehwag, who reached the mark in 182 balls during the Lahore Test in 2006.

The record-breaking effort comes at a significant stage in Masood's career. Earlier this year, he reportedly declined an offer from the Pakistan Cricket Board to take up a full-time role as Director of International Cricket and Players Relations. The PCB had been keen for Masood to transition into administration

after appointing him as a consultant, but the opener chose to focus on his playing career and Pakistan's campaign in the World Test Championship.

Masood's latest innings reinforces that decision, highlighting his continued hunger for runs and leadership by example in domestic cricket.

Gus Atkinson Ruled Out of Final Ashes Test as England's Injury Woes Deepen

SYDNEY

England's fast-bowling resources have taken another blow with Gus Atkinson ruled out of the fifth and final Ashes Test in Sydney after suffering a hamstring injury. The setback adds to England's growing list of pace casualties in a series already marked by fitness concerns.

Atkinson pulled up while bowling on the second morning of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. Subsequent scans conducted on Monday confirmed a hamstring injury in his left leg, forcing England's team management to sideline the seamer for the remainder of the series.

The injury compounds England's problems, with express quicks Mark Wood and Jofra Archer already ruled out. Wood was sidelined earlier with a knee issue, while Archer suffered a side strain, significantly depleting En-



gland's original pace plans for the tour. As a result, 27-year-old Matthew Potts is expected to be drafted into the XI for the Sydney Test starting January 4, alongside Brydon Carse and Josh Tongue.

Carse now stands as the only fast bowler remaining from the quartet that began

the series in Perth, where England entered the Ashes confident their pace attack could unsettle Australia's batting. Instead, England lost the series inside 11 days following two heavy eight-wicket defeats.

Atkinson featured in those losses in Perth and Adelaide before being dropped for Tongue for the third Test in Adelaide. He was later recalled to replace the injured Archer for the Boxing Day Test, which England won to snap a 14-year winless streak in Australia. Across his appearances, Atkinson finished the series with six wickets at an average of 47.33.

England captain Ben Stokes and spin-bowling allrounder Will Jacks remain available as additional bowling options, while specialist spinner Shoaib Bashir, yet to feature in the series, is also in contention as England look to piece together a balanced attack for the final Test.



Doping Scandals Jeopardize India's 2036 Olympic Bid

BENGALURU

India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics faces credibility challenges due to persistent doping violations. In 2024, WADA again ranked India among the worst offenders, with high positivity rates across athletics, wrestling and weightlifting. Although officials report improvement in 2025 and expanded testing and education, concerns remain over grassroots doping, minors testing positive, weak domestic oversight and easy access to banned substances. Experts warn that without stronger governance, faster sanctions and broader education, India's Olympic ambitions may lose global trust.

Sen, Satwik-Chirag Shine as Youth Signals Hope amid Transition



NEW DELHI

Indian badminton endured a challenging and often uneven 2025, marked by injuries, fluctuating form and limited success at the elite level, but flashes of brilliance from Lakshya Sen, the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, and an impressive rise of young talent offered cautious optimism in a year of transition.

The season felt more like a period of reassessment than consolidation, with several established players struggling to find rhythm due to recurring fitness setbacks. Against that backdrop, Lakshya Sen's triumph at the Australian Open Super 500 stood out as India's most significant individual achievement. The title marked a return to form after a difficult post-Paris Olympics phase and was his first Super 500 crown since 2023. Sen also reached the Hong Kong Open final, signalling renewed consistency at the top level.

In an otherwise stop-start year, Satwik and Chirag reaffirmed their status as India's premier men's doubles pair despite battling injury and illness early in the season. Their bronze medal at the World Championships in Paris, finals appearances at the Hong Kong Open and China Masters, and a historic knockout-stage finish at the BWF World Tour Finals underscored their resilience and class.

Joe Root Calls It 'Silly' to Change England Management after Ashes Defeat

MELBOURNE

England batting great Joe Root has dismissed calls for a shake-up in the team's management following the loss of the Ashes, saying it would be "silly" to consider changes when players remain fully committed to the current leadership group.

England surrendered the coveted urn inside just 11 days, suffering heavy eight-wicket defeats in Perth and Brisbane, followed by an 82-run loss in Adelaide. The series unravelled rapidly, with criticism mounting over England's understated preparations and reports of excessive drinking during a mid-series break in Noosa.

However, England salvaged pride with a dramatic four-wicket victory in Melbourne, snapping an 18-match winless streak in Australia. The win eased pressure on head coach Brendon McCullum, captain Ben Stokes and managing director of men's cricket Rob Key, all of whom have expressed their desire to continue in their roles.

"In terms of the playing group, we're absolutely committed to the management," Root, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer, told media. "Yes, we can be better and there are certain areas we'll keep working at, but the management work extremely hard."

Root acknowledged that McCullum and Stokes operate differently from past regimes but credited them for driving progress. "They might do things in a slightly different way, but we've made great strides as a group, and a big reason for that is the guys we have behind us," he said.

Another victory in the fifth Test in

Sydney, starting Sunday, would further strengthen the management's position. Root was England captain during the disastrous 2021–22 Ashes tour, when a 4–0 loss led to the departures of coach Chris Silverwood and director Ashley Giles. Reflecting on that period, Root said the current team has clearly evolved. "Every single player has improved individually. This team has improved," he said. "For the amount of hard work done, it would be silly to consider change."

Victory in Melbourne was Root's first in Australia in over a decade, and he stressed the importance of building momentum. "It would be better if we win next week as well," he said, eyeing progress ahead of England's next tour in 2029–30.



It Was Special to Be Part of That Amazing Group: Swimmer Dhinidhi Desinghu

BENGALURU

For Dhinidhi Desinghu, the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar ceremony was an unforgettable experience — not just for the honour she received, but for the inspiring company she found herself in. The 15-year-old swimmer from Karnataka was among 20 young achievers from across the country who were felicitated on December 26 at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas. "I was amazed to witness so many talented children in our country from various fields," Dhinidhi said after the ceremony. "To know that I was part of that group is something really special. There were children as young as seven and nine receiving awards for bravery. It was inspiring, and I'm so happy I got to be part of it."

Training at Dolphin Aquatics in Bengaluru under renowned coach Nihar Ameen, Dhinidhi is no stranger to achievement. She was the youngest member of the Indian contingent at both the Paris Olympics and the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, milestones that underline her rapid rise in Indian swimming. Over the past five years, she has consistently dominated domestic competitions, setting the pool ablaze with her performances.



Despite an already impressive resume, Dhinidhi is acutely aware that the road ahead will be far more demanding. With a packed competitive calendar looming, the teenager remains focused on steady improvement rather than instant results.

"Compared to last year, this year was very different in terms of my swimming performance," she said. "This year was all about training and focusing on specific competitions. The outcome wasn't exactly what we wanted, but all my timings have improved. That makes me very excited about next year."

Balancing academics with elite sport remains another challenge. Currently preparing for her Class 10 examinations, Dhinidhi has pre-board exams starting January 1, followed by board exams in mid-February. Once that phase is over, her attention will shift fully to major international events.

"After my exams, there are many important competitions like the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and Youth Olympics," she said. "The goal will be to qualify and make it to the finals."

Grounded yet ambitious, Dhinidhi Desinghu continues to chase excellence — in the classroom and the pool — with quiet confidence and remarkable maturity for her age.





Arsenal stay top as City, Villa close in and Liverpool surge

Title race tightens as contenders surge, setting up gripping Premier League finale

MANCHESTER

Arsenal clung to the Premier League summit after a hard-fought 2-1 win over Brighton, but Manchester City and Aston Villa remain firmly in pursuit as the title race tightened to a three-point spread between first and third.

Mikel Arteta's side briefly felt the pressure after Manchester City moved top earlier in the day with a 2-1 victory at Nottingham Forest. Arsenal responded later by reclaiming pole position, opening a two-point cushion over City, while Villa sit just a further point back in third.

At the Emirates, Martin Odegaard set the tone with an early opener before Brighton's Georginio Rutter inadvertently turned a Declan Rice corner into his own net early in the second half. Brighton rallied late through Diego Gomez and nearly snatched an equaliser, but a superb David Raya save ensured Arsenal's grip on top spot. Remarkably, it was the fourth consecutive league game in which Arsenal benefited from an opponent's own goal.

City's momentum continued at the City Ground, where Rayan Cherki struck decisively in the 83rd min-

ute to seal a sixth straight league win. The French forward also set up Tijjani Reijnders' earlier goal as Pep Guardiola's men extended their overall winning run to eight matches, underlining their readiness to reclaim the crown.

Aston Villa enhanced their title credentials with a dramatic 2-1 comeback at Chelsea. Introduced from the bench, Ollie Watkins inspired the turnaround by scoring twice, extending Villa's winning streak to 11 games in all competitions. Unai Emery's side now head to Arsenal on Tuesday knowing victory would

draw them level on points at the turn of the year.

Liverpool's resurgence also gathered pace as they climbed to fourth with a 2-1 win over Wolves. Florian Wirtz scored his first Premier League goal to cap a fourth straight victory, stretching the defending champions' unbeaten run to seven games.

Elsewhere, Kevin Schade's hat-trick powered Brentford to a 4-1 rout of Bournemouth, Fulham edged West Ham 1-0, and Burnley and Everton played out a goalless draw — but the spotlight remains firmly on a thrilling three-way title chase.

Lamine Yamal unfazed by Ronaldo comparisons, focuses on forging own path

BARCELONA

Teenage prodigy Lamine Yamal shrugged off comparisons with football legends like Cristiano Ronaldo, emphasizing the importance of carving out his own identity in the sport.

At just 18, Yamal has already become one of the most talked-about players in world football, combining skill, maturity, and an eye for decisive moments. This season, he has scored seven goals and provided six assists in La Liga, playing a pivotal role in Barcelona's surge to the top of the table.

The year-end accolades have mirrored his impact. Yamal was named Best Forward and received the prestigious Maradona Award at the Globe Soccer Awards, cementing his status as one of the brightest young talents globally. He also finished second in this year's Ballon d'Or and clinched the Kopa Trophy for the second consecutive season. Despite the comparisons to icons like Ronaldo, Yamal insists on forging his own path. "It's best not to compare yourself to anyone. Players like Cristiano Ronaldo did what they did because they wanted to be themselves and not compare themselves to others. I want to build my own path," he said, as reported by Fabrizio Romano on X.

On the field, Yamal closed the year in style, combining with Raphinha to secure a 2-0 win over 10-man Villarreal. The duo celebrated in unison, keeping Barcelona four points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

For Yamal, the focus remains on growth rather than emulation, demonstrating that even in football's high-pressure spotlight, the most important measure is building a unique legacy rather than chasing shadows of the past.



Building India's Sporting Future: Beyond Bids and Medals

NEW DELHI

For a nation with India's talent, ambition and demographic strength, sport must rise far beyond episodic celebration. As India steps forward to host major international events — including the 2030 Commonwealth Games — a fundamental question confronts us: do bids alone build a sporting nation? The answer is clear. Bidding is not the culmination of progress; it is only the beginning. Hosting global events offers opportunity, not shortcuts. No country has transformed its sporting culture merely by staging a spectacle. However, well-planned hosting can act as a catalyst, forcing systems to evolve. Infrastructure upgrades, sports science, governance reforms and athlete welfare often gain urgency under international scrutiny. But without a long-term vi-

sion, such investments risk becoming hollow monuments. Stadiums do not create champions — strong grassroots programmes, school competitions, scholarships and coach education do.

Medals, too, are not forged in ceremonies. They are produced by continuity, care and patient athlete development. Hosting can enhance the environment in which athletes train by improving facilities, exposure and officiating standards, but excellence emerges only when these benefits are sustained long after the spotlight fades. History shows that sporting success often follows hosting cycles, not coincides with them. India's successful bid for the 2030 Commonwealth Games reflected this understanding. It was built on unity and credibility rather than extravagant promises.

Mahrez Penalty Sends Algeria Marching Into AFCON Last 16

RABAT

Algeria secured their place in the last 16 of the Africa Cup of Nations as captain Riyad Mahrez's first-half penalty earned a tense 1-0 victory over Burkina Faso. The decisive moment came midway through the opening half at the Moulay El Hassan Stadium, where Algeria then showed resilience and discipline to close out a bruising contest.

Mahrez converted from the spot in the 23rd minute after Rayan Ait-Nouri was bundled over inside the penalty area. The Algerian skipper made no mistake, adding to the brace he scored in the opening 3-0 win over Sudan to take his tally at this tournament to three goals.

The win lifts Algeria to a perfect six points from two matches in Group E, with no goals conceded so far. African champions in 1990 and 2019, Vladimir Petkovic's side have lived up to their billing as pre-tournament favourites and are now guaranteed to finish top of the group, regardless of their final match against



Captain's calm spot-kick seals hard-fought win as Algeria book knockout berth

Equatorial Guinea.

Burkina Faso and Sudan remain locked on three points each and will contest the second qualifying spot when they meet in the final round of group games on Wednesday.

Algeria, meanwhile, will play their last-16 tie in Rabat on January 6.

"We were expecting a very tough match," said man-of-the-match Ibrahim Maza. "We fought very hard and the most important thing is that we won. Now we are qualified and that was the main goal."

The physical nature of the encounter was evident throughout, with Burkina Faso pressing hard in search of an equaliser. Pierre Landry Kabore came close with a header from a corner, while late efforts from Georgi Minounoug and others were narrowly off target.

Algeria also had chances to extend their lead, with Mahrez creating opportunities for Mohamed Amoura and Maza missing two good openings in the second half.

Appearing at his sixth AFCON, Mahrez now has nine goals at the tournament, an Algerian record. The match unfolded in a vibrant atmosphere, watched by 18,522 fans, with France legend Zinedine Zidane among those in attendance as his son Luca guarded Algeria's goal.



Tottenham Deliver Big Win for Frank as Calvert-Lewin Denies Sunderland

LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur ground out a much-needed Premier League victory as Archie Gray's first senior goal sealed a 1-0 win over Crystal Palace, easing the pressure on under-fire manager Thomas Frank. Elsewhere, Dominic Calvert-Lewin continued his fine scoring run to earn Leeds United a 1-1 draw at Sunderland, denying the hosts a place in the top five.

At Selhurst Park, Gray proved an unlikely hero, heading home Richarlison's flick-on from a corner to secure Spurs' second league win in nine games. The goal came after Richarlison had twice seen efforts ruled out for offside, highlighting Tottenham's continued struggles for fluency in attack.

Nevertheless, Frank's side showed resilience to cling on against a Palace team showing signs of fatigue after a demanding run of fixtures.

"In the end we got over the line," said Frank. "The team showed great resilience today. The desire beat the details."

Crystal Palace dominated possession after the break but lacked cutting edge in the final third. Justin Devenny blazed over from close range, while Maxence Lacroix headed wide. Spurs survived another scare when Richarlison again found the net, only for VAR to intervene. The win lifts Tottenham to 11th, just a point behind ninth-placed Palace, and offers temporary relief to Frank amid growing scrutiny.

ISL Clubs Seek Further Clarity on Costs and Structure

BENGALURU

The long-delayed Indian Super League (ISL) season is inching closer to a possible resolution, with clubs broadly aligned with the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) proposed 20-year roadmap. However, major questions remain unanswered, particularly over who will bear the operational costs estimated at over ₹70 crore for running the league.

AIFF's suggested revenue-sharing formula — a 10-50-40 split between the federation, clubs and commercial partners — along with a standard annual participation fee of ₹1 crore per club, has found acceptance among most franchises. Yet, clubs are uneasy about the lack of clarity on securing a commercial partner, especially after AIFF's earlier tender failed to attract bidders due to what was widely seen as an overly ambitious financial model.

Club representatives, led by Mohun Bagan Super Giants CFO Vinay Chopra, have stressed the need for AIFF to first identify how the league's operational expenses will be funded before finalising the structure for the upcoming season. "Nothing is more important than where the ₹70-80 crore required to host the league will come from," a senior club official said on condition of anonymity.

Finish Line 2025: The Year of Bidding for Indian Sport

CHENNAI

As 2025 draws to a close, Indian sport finds itself at an intriguing crossroads. On the field, the country continues to struggle for consistency at the Olympics. Off it, India has never been more ambitious, securing the 2030 Commonwealth Games and formally entering dialogue with the International Olympic Committee for the 2036 Olympics. The contrast between performance and aspiration defines the year.

India's Olympic journey over the past decade tells a mixed story. After the high of six medals at London 2012, hopes soared heading into Rio 2016, only for disappointment to follow with just two medals. Tokyo 2021 offered renewed belief with seven medals, including Neeraj Chopra's historic gold, but Paris 2024 again saw stagnation, with six medals and no top podium finish. Heavy investment in coaching, foreign expertise and infrastructure has



yet to translate into sustained upward momentum, pointing to systemic gaps.

Yet, in the realm of hosting, India has surged ahead. Ahmedabad was confirmed as the host city for the

2030 Commonwealth Games, a bid marked more by unanimity and credibility than competition. India was the sole contender, stepping in after others withdrew over rising costs. Parallely, India's intent to

host the 2036 Olympics was publicly articulated at the IOC Congress in Mumbai, signalling long-term ambition.

Hosting, however, remains a high-stakes affair. The 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games left behind upgraded facilities but also corruption scandals, cost overruns and underutilised venues. Global studies increasingly show that mega events rarely make economic sense, with cities like Athens, Rio and Victoria bearing heavy financial scars.

Experts argue that hosting can still be transformative — if aligned with long-term athlete development, governance reform and sustainable infrastructure. Without that alignment, bids risk becoming façades. As India looks ahead to 2030 and possibly 2036, the challenge is clear: hosting must accelerate sporting progress, not distract from it. The true finish line is not winning the bid, but building a genuine sporting powerhouse.

