

## IN BRIEF



### India's First DIY electrolyser for lab-grown diamonds

MANGALURU: Move over, imported tech—Mangaluru's HYDGEN is stealing the spotlight! This weekend, the startup celebrated a massive milestone by dispatching its first-ever indigenously built electrolyser, tailor-made for the booming lab-grown diamond scene. The big reveal happened on November 2 at the Sahyadri Campus, with Dakshina Kanadana MP Capt. Brijesh Chowta cutting the ribbon on the shiny new HYDGEN DIA-S 5 kW PEM electrolyser. This little powerhouse churns out super-pure hydrogen (99.9995% pure!) at 1 Nm<sup>3</sup> per hour, perfect for Surat's diamond factories using Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD). It's a game-changer for India's \$12 billion lab-grown diamond industry, where the country ranks as the world's second-largest producer. And guess what? It's all green energy, baby—lining up with India's plan to pump out 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030! Behind this cool innovation are co-founders Dr. Manipaddy Krishna Kumar and Dr. Ramya Krishnakumar, who traded Singapore labs for Mangaluru vibes. With a fresh \$5 million in their pockets, they're scaling up their anion exchange membrane (AEM) tech to make hydrogen cheap and eco-friendly. Capt. Chowta couldn't stop raving, saying, "These guys are proof Mangaluru can be the next big innovation hub—let's get more talent #BackToOoru!" From R&D to real-world action, HYDGEN is showing the world that India can ditch pricey foreign tech and lead the green revolution.

### 12 school students hospitalised due to 'food poisoning'

BELAGAVI: Twelve students of a residential school in Belagavi district fell ill due to suspected food poisoning, police said on Monday. According to police, the students of the Morarji Desai Residential School at Hirekodi village of Chikkodi taluk, complained of vomiting and stomach pain after dinner on Sunday and were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Their condition is stated to be stable. The incident occurred just days after a local judge had visited the same institution and reprimanded the warden and staff over hygiene and management issues, sources said. A case has been registered and investigation is on.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
UDUPI

ADI Udupi APMC yard lessees have brazenly chopped down trees and razed government-funded interlock pavements to erect storage facilities on four plots, claims Vijay Kodavoor, head of APMC Rakshana Samithi, igniting fresh outrage over alleged administrative malfeasance.

In a media interaction, Kodavoor alleged that officials illicitly doled out 54 cents of prime yard real

estate on a lease-cum-sale basis at a paltry ₹1.65 lakh per cent, versus prevailing ₹10 lakh valuations, bypassing the elected board's sole prerogative for such allocations. The controversy traces to 2023, when the parcel was subdivided into 11 plots amid protests and assigned to bidders despite outcries.

"This is a blatant undervaluation, especially in land-scarce Udupi where public tracts are scarce," Kodavoor fumed, urging retribution of government holdings over hasty handovers.



### Land scandal in Udupi APMC ?

## Activists allege illegal lease and tree felling for traders' godowns

On October 27, traders allegedly felled foliage and demolished pavements laid via state grants, ignoring a prior alert to Udupi Range Forest Officer (RFO) and APMC on October 21. "No equipment seizure by forestry; it's a free pass for destruction," he lamented, noting a pending suit contesting the allotments.

Kodavoor vowed to petition Udupi SP for enforcement against violators and stage demonstrations, extending the Samithi's 2 years 8 months resistance

to perceived favouritism. The episode amplifies longstanding gripes over APMC mismanagement, where officials allegedly prioritise private gains over public utility, eroding rural market infrastructure in a district with limited state-owned expenses.

As the court battle looms, the fallout threatens broader trader accountability, with calls for probes into undervalued deals mirroring encroachments cleared elsewhere in Udupi, like Kodavoor beach in March 2025.

## CM vexed by queries on Shivakumar succession

MYSURU

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday expressed visible anger when a group of reporters repeatedly questioned him about deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar potentially replacing him as the head of the state government, terming the speculation as media-driven.

CM Siddaramaiah, responding to queries about leaders of the Bihari community in Bengaluru expressing a desire to see Shivakumar as the next Chief Minister, retorted sharply, asking the reporter if there was no other subject to discuss.

"It does not matter what people say. Anyone may say anything. Tell me, who is the high command?" he said in an irritated tone.

"It is Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge. Have they said anything on this? Then why raise it? You (media) are dragging the matter and bringing it up again and again. It is not what people say, it is you in the media who are giving it attention,"

### Cabinet reshuffle likely after Bihar polls



he retorted. "What was the need to raise this question? The decision rests with the high command. No other remark carries any weight," he said. This marks the second instance in recent weeks where the Chief Minister has shown irritation over questions regarding a potential leadership change as the Congress government approaches the halfway mark of its term, amid persistent infighting within the state unit.

Regarding a possible Cabinet reshuffle, Siddaramaiah confirmed that he would

discuss the matter with party leaders immediately after the conclusion of the Bihar elections, scheduled to be held in two phases on November 6 and 11. The exchange follows Shivakumar's public appeal to Biharis in Bengaluru on Sunday to vote for the Mahagathbandhan in the upcoming Bihar elections. Speaking to reporters after addressing the Bihar Association at Coffee Board Layout in North Bengaluru, he remarked that although many had said he deserved a larger role, what mattered more to him was their support for the alliance

in Bihar. He observed that Nitish Kumar was nearing the end of his political career and noted that Tejashwi Yadav had already been named the coalition's chief ministerial candidate.

On October 30, Siddaramaiah lost his temper when questioned about the prospect of Shivakumar succeeding him. When asked whether a change in leadership might take place in November as the Congress government completes half its term, he appeared irritated and asked who had made such statements and where they had been recorded.

When reporters pointed to media reports, he challenged them to identify the publication, stating that he reads all newspapers.

Earlier in the day, Siddaramaiah refused to comment on the deadline for filling Bengaluru's potholes, which lapses at midnight on Friday, and directed journalists to approach Shivakumar, who heads the Bengaluru Development portfolio. The CM's remarks come at a time when talk of internal discord within the Congress continues.

## Two wild elephants electrocuted in Khanapur taluk, farmer arrested

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BELAGAVI

IN a tragic incident highlighting the growing human-wildlife conflict in Karnataka, two wild elephants were electrocuted after coming into contact with a live electric fence near Sulegali village in Khanapur taluk of Belagavi district on Sunday afternoon. According to forest officials, the elephants — a male and a female — died instantly after touching an illegally electrified fence installed around a farm.

Preliminary investigations revealed that Ganapati Sateri Gurav, a local farmer, had drawn a power connection from his house to the fence in an attempt to prevent wild animals from entering his agricultural land. Forest officials arrested Ganapati Gurav for violating wildlife protection laws and causing the deaths of the elephants. He has been remanded to judicial custody, while his son Shivaji Gurav, who was also allegedly involved, is currently absconding.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre expressed strong displeasure over the incident and directed officials to conduct a thorough probe. He has instructed the department to submit a detailed report within five days. A team led by RFO Shivanand visited the site, collected evidence, and initiated an in-depth investigation.

The carcasses of the elephants were subjected to post-mortem examination this morning, following which the forest department conducted the cremation as per protocol. Authorities have also issued notices to concerned power department officials, citing negligence that may have contributed to the illegal



### Rogue elephant caught after two-day operation

KARKALA

AN elephant that had killed two farmers in the Kerekatte area of Kudremukh National Park was successfully captured on Sunday after a two-day operation by the Forest Department.

The tusker, which had taken shelter in the forest near Bhagavathi Nature Camp, was tranquilised and captured under the supervision of officers from the Mangaluru Forest Division and Kudremukh Wildlife Range. Expert teams and five trained elephants from Sakrebail (Shivamogga), Dubare (Kodagu), and Nagarhole camps assisted in the effort.

To track the elephant in the hilly and dense forest terrain, officials used drones to conduct extensive surveillance. The animal was spot-



ted early in the morning near the Bhagavathi camp and was captured by evening after a coordinated effort involving more than 50 forest personnel.

The elephant had recently attacked and killed two farmers — Harish Shetty (44) and Umesh (48) — near Kerekatte in Kerekatte, leading to widespread protests by local residents demanding its capture and adequate compensation for the victims' families. According to forest officials, the elephant will receive necessary medical care before a decision is taken regarding its relocation to a suitable habitat.

## Reduce safari activities in forest areas of Mysuru: CM

MYSURU

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said he has directed officials to scale down safari activities in the forest areas of Mysuru following the deaths of three farmers in October within a span of two weeks. He said the growing human activity in forest zones and the search for water and food have been driving wild animals into human settlements. "What

has happened is that people's movement in the forest region has increased, and resorts are coming up," Siddaramaiah told reporters here.

"Further, safari activities have increased—that's one reason. Then, they (wild animals) come for water and food to the villages," he added. "Yesterday, there was a meeting with forest officials. I will convene another soon. We will take action against illegal resorts, and



I have directed officials to reduce safari activities in the forest," the chief minister further said.

## SC stays HC order asking multiplexes to maintain records of tickets

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Monday stayed the Karnataka High Court's order asking multiplexes to maintain a comprehensive and auditable record for every movie ticket sold. The high court's division bench had passed the direction on September 30 while hearing a plea against an order of its single judge that had granted an interim stay on the Karnataka Cinemas (Regulation) (Amendment) Rules, 2025, which sought to cap cinema ticket prices at Rs 200.

A plea challenging the division bench order came up for hearing on Monday before a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta. "This should be fixed," the bench said, while observing that multiplexes were charging Rs 100 for a water bottle.

"As it is, the cinema is declining. Make it more reasonable for people to come and enjoy. Otherwise, the halls are empty," the bench said, adding, "We are with the division bench that it should be Rs 200." The bench agreed to hear the plea filed by Multiplex Association of India and others.



It issued notice to the Karnataka State Film Chamber of Commerce and others seeking their responses on the plea within four weeks. "In the meantime, the effect and operation of the impugned order shall remain stayed," the bench said.

The top court said it would be open for the single judge to proceed with the matter. The single judge had passed

the order on September 23 on the pleas challenging the Karnataka Cinemas (Regulation) (Amendment) Rules, 2025, which capped the ticket price at Rs 200.

The single judge had granted an interim stay on the amendment until further orders. When the matter came up before the division bench, it said an interim arrangement was required to be made to protect the

financial interests of all concerned, pending final adjudication of the petition.

It passed directions, including that multiplexes would maintain comprehensive and auditable records for every ticket sold and the records must include the date and time of sale, mode of booking, mode of payment, amount collected and the GST component.

"Digitally traceable receipts must be issued for all cash transactions, and daily cash registers must be countersigned by the manager-in-charge of the multiplex," it said. The division bench said that for cash-based ticket sales, multiplexes must issue numbered, time-stamped receipts to the consumers. It posted the matter for further hearing on November 25.

### "Monkey Fever"

## Health Minister chairs meeting to address forest disease outbreak

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to address the rising incidence of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), also known as "monkey fever", in the districts of Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, and Uttara Kanadana. The meeting focused on implementing measures to control the spread of the tick-borne viral disease and gathering input from officials and public representatives.

According to the minister, a total of 4,080 samples have been tested, with 103 individuals confirmed positive for KFD. Tragically, two people have succumbed to the disease. The meeting outlined several guidelines to manage the situation in the affected districts, including strengthened human and monkey death reporting, enhanced tick surveillance, and the recruitment of staff on a contract basis to address shortages in the health department.

Other measures include the release of daily bulletins detailing KFD tests, positive cases, discharges, and deaths. Designated referral hospitals—KFC Manipal, SIMS Shivamogga, and KRIMS Karwar—have been identified to handle cases. Immediate hospitalisation of confirmed KFD cases is mandatory, with free treatment provided under the ABARK scheme. Additional support includes free ambulance services for patient transfers, adequate stocking of IV infusions and IV paracet-



amol at primary health centres and hospitals, and the extension of tele-facilities for KFD patients. The public is also receiving free distribution of DEPA, a tick repellent, to reduce exposure. Administrative responsibilities for controlling KFD have been delegated to the DCMO-VDL Shivamogga, who will oversee efforts across all affected districts. The minister highlighted ongoing discussions with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Indian Immunologists to pursue full-time research aimed at developing a permanent vaccine. Although no specific treatment exists for KFD, authorities are closely monitoring the situation and remain optimistic about curbing its spread.

District in-charge ministers and officials participated in the meeting, which was documented through photographs showing the attendees at the discussion table. The measures reflect a coordinated effort to manage the disease, which remains a public health challenge in the Western Ghats region.