

## IN BRIEF



## VTU signs pact with Dortmund University

BENGALURU: Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) has decided to enter into an academic agreement with Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany, in the coming academic year. On Monday, a delegation from Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts visited the VTU Regional Office at Nagarbhavi. Prof. Dr. Stephan Weyers - Vice-Rector for Teaching, Studies & International Affairs, Prof. Dr. Vinod Rajamani, Professor of Vehicle Dynamics and Vice Dean met VTU Vice-Chancellor Dr. S. Vidyashankar and discussed several matters.

Speaking on the occasion, VTU Vice-Chancellor Dr. S. Vidyashankar said, "Already, Dortmund University has signed academic agreements with two private colleges in Karnataka and is conducting certificate courses. In the same model, VTU will enter into an academic agreement in the upcoming academic year for research and development. This will give our students the opportunity to go to Germany and learn."

Vice Rector Prof. Stephan Weyers said, "We are eager to sign an agreement with VTU. This will allow us to introduce a twinning program. It will be very beneficial for students, as they will be able to come to Germany and study."

Present on the occasion were VTU Regional Office Director Dr. H. R. Sudarshan Reddy, VTU Executive Committee Member Prof. K. N. Subrahmanya, Special Officer Dr. Ajith Padyana, Director of Research and Development in Aerospace and Defense Dr. Commander Devendra Singh, Dr. C. M. Rakshitha, and from Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Dr. Thilo Groll, Prof. Marcel Marbuger among others.

## Plumbex India 2026 from April 16-18

BENGALURU: The Indian Plumbing Association (IPA) announced that Plumbex India 2026, the nation's premier exhibition for water, sanitation, and plumbing products and technologies, will be held from April 16-18 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), Bengaluru.

Plumbex India 2026 is supported by two key Ministries of the Government of India - the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) - reinforcing its alignment with national priorities on water security, sanitation, and sustainable urban development. The Plumbex India continues its legacy as a leading industry platform that brings together manufacturers, developers, architects, consultants, policymakers, contractors, and innovators under one roof to shape the future of India's building services ecosystem.

## Minister launches Amazon's 10th corporate office in state

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

MINISTER for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil on Monday inaugurated Amazon's newly constructed, fully equipped corporate main office spread across 11 lakh square feet (1.1 million sq.ft.) at Vinayaka Nagara near Yelahanka.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "This is Amazon's 10th corporate office in the State. The company, which has shared a two-decade association with Karnataka, plans to invest 35 billion dollars in India over the next four years. This investment



An artist performs as employees look on during the inauguration of Amazon's new office campus by Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil in Bengaluru on Monday

is expected to support 15 million small businesses and generate lakhs of employment opportunities. Karnataka will receive a significant

share of this investment." He pointed out that Karnataka has an annual per capita income of over ₹3.80 lakh, ranking highest in



the country. The State also stands second in annual GST contributions to the national exchequer, contributing ₹1.6 lakh crore. Bengaluru has

climbed to the 21st position globally in the Global Innovation Index and is the only Indian city to feature among the top 30 in the Tech-Cities

Index. Last year, the city recorded 14.6 million square feet of industrial leasing, the highest in the country, he noted.

Of the 900 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India, nearly 35 per cent are located in Karnataka. The State also leads in infrastructure required for e-commerce operations, with warehousing capacity of 42.48 lakh tonnes and 233 cold storage units. Correspondingly, e-commerce transactions in the State are growing at 11 per cent annually, he said.

To further promote industrial growth, projects such as dedicated freight rail

corridors, multimodal logistics parks, dry ports and truck terminals have been planned, Patil urged Amazon and other global companies to leverage Karnataka's industry-friendly ecosystem by enhancing their investments in the State, manufacturing here and exporting to global markets.

The event was attended by S. David Zapolsky, Senior Vice President, Global Public Policy, Amazon; Chetan Krishnaswamy, Vice President; Sameer Kumar, Vice President; and Sean Lee, Vice President, Global Real Estate, Amazon, among others.

## Dalit CM decision rests with high command, says Parameshwara

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday dismissed the ongoing political debate over the "Dalit Chief Minister" slogan as opposition-driven speculation, asserting that any such decision would rest solely with the Congress high command.

Speaking to reporters near his Sadashivanagar residence, Parameshwara said, "Dalit CM must be made by the Congress party. Who else will do it? When the appropriate time comes, the high command will take a decision." He accused opposition parties of raising the issue to divert attention from their own shortcomings.

Reacting to the allegations that the slogan was being used amid internal power tussles, he said, "All this is the handiwork of the opposition. They are making baseless allegations to cover up



their own issues. Is the Chief Minister not governing? For the past 12 days, he has been holding extensive discussions with ministers and officials regarding the Budget."

Parameshwara strongly defended Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, stating that social justice has always been the foundation of his politics. "The Chief Minister's political base itself is social justice. There is nothing new in this. He has always been committed to social justice and continues to be so," he said.

On law and order during the upcoming Ramzan

and Holi festivals, the Home Minister issued a stern warning. "No one will be allowed to take the law into their hands. Festivals must be celebrated peacefully. Strict instructions have been given to officials to ensure that there are no disturbances," he said.

Addressing the issue of mobile phone usage in educational institutions, Parameshwara said the government is examining the possibility of banning mobile phones for students below 16 years. "There is concern that giving mobile phones to children under 16 is af-

fecting their studies. Several countries have imposed bans after conducting studies. The Chief Minister has also expressed concern. We will study the pros and cons before taking a decision," he added.

He also revealed that the Internal Security Division has been put on alert following the arrest of illegal Bangladeshi migrants allegedly involved in unlawful activities. "For the past month, operations have been underway in every district to identify illegal migrants. We have issued strict instructions to all district Superintendents of Police to act at the police station level," he said.

On the issue of student elections in universities and colleges, Parameshwara said there is growing pressure to reconsider the earlier ban imposed due to campus clashes. "We will have to review the matter. Ultimately, the Cabinet will decide," he stated.

## Mobile ban for students under discussion; pressure from parents too: Shivakumar



HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

STATING that there was pressure from parents to ban mobile use for students, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar today said that the ban is still under discussion. Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "We have banned mobile phones in our schools too. We can't disclose how mobiles are being mis-

used. Mobiles in schools are banned in many other countries too. Hence a similar ban is being discussed here too."

Asked about Minister H C Mahadevappa's statement on Dalit CM, he said, "He is our national leader. I salute him." When his attention was drawn to a report on non-potability of water in Bengaluru lakes, he said, "The government has nowhere said that water of Bengaluru lakes are fit for bathing and

drinking. This water is meant to recharge the ground water. Thippagondanahalli water is being treated by BWSSB."

Asked about VBGRAMG, he said, "The Centre has not given any clarity on VBGRAMG. It has not even released wages for the past work. The scheme is defunct now and it is an assault on the poor. We are waging a fight to save this scheme. We are holding a protest in Chikballapura today.

## Congress targeting Banjara community, says Vijayendra

BENGALURU

BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Monday accused the ruling Congress of "indulging in politics of hatred" against the Banjara community following the arrest of party MLA Chandru Lamani by Lokayukta police for "taking a bribe" from a contractor.

Vijayendra said the party would face the Lokayukta case involving its MLA legally. Responding to questions from reporters here about Chandru Lamani's arrest, Vijayendra said he had followed the developments through the media but alleged that the issue was being viewed in a larger political context.

"But one thing is certain - this Congress government is doing politics of hatred against the Banjara community. There is no doubt about that," he said. Vijayendra claimed that since Siddaramaiah assumed office, the Banjara community had been unfairly targeted. Referring to an incident in Surgundankoppa during a programme attended by Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, he alleged that Banjara youth who raised demands were instead booked.

On the Chandru Lamani case, he said the matter was under investigation and before the court, and the party would not interfere. "I am not giving a caste colour to corruption. I have already said that in the Chandru Lamani case, the matter is in court and under Lokayukta investigation. The truth must come out. Let the investigation proceed, and a decision be taken. We are not interfering in that," he said.

At the same time, Vijayendra questioned the Congress' moral authority to speak on corruption, citing the alleged

Valmiki Development Corporation scam and demanding accountability. He said senior Congress leaders have no locus standi to lecture the BJP on probity.

On the state budget, Vijayendra made an appeal to the Chief Minister to allocate more funds to backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

"At least in this budget, allocate a minimum of Rs 2,500 crore to 3,000 crore to backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes," he said, noting that during the tenure of his father and former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, Rs 550 crore had been earmarked.

He also flagged pending compensation for shepherd families affected by the death of sheep and goats across the state, claiming that relief of Rs 45 crore was yet to be released despite repeated demands.

## Valentine's Day horror

## Two, including boyfriend, gang-rape classmate

BENGALURU

IN a sordid tale of betrayal and bestiality, a 19-year-old private college student in Bengaluru has alleged that she was drugged and gang-raped by her boyfriend and his friend earlier this month.

A case has been registered at the Amruthahalli Police Station, and an investigation is underway. Police have booked the accused under Sections 64 (repeat rape offence), 70(1) (gang rape), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) read with Section 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

According to the complaint, the victim, who hails from Tamil Nadu, is pursuing journalism and psychology at a reputed college in Bengaluru. She had been staying at a PG hostel with a female friend for the past five months.

The first accused, identified as Dickson Sandra, a resident



of Bengaluru, allegedly got in touch with the victim through Instagram in January 2026. The two began chatting daily. Later, Sandra reportedly expressed his love for her and asked to meet. She agreed and met him at a cafe in Koramangala. They met twice again at the same place, and during one of the meetings, he proposed to her, which she accepted.

The victim stated in the FIR that they continued to chat and speak over the phone every day. On February 14, Valentine's Day, she went to college at 10 a.m. as usual. Af-

ter classes ended at 12.50 pm, she returned to her PG hostel. Later that evening, at around 8.30 p.m., she went out for dinner to a restaurant in Banashankari.

In her complaint, she stated that Sandra called her and asked her to come to a villa in Jakkur. She went there with her friend at around 1.15 a.m. The second accused, Nikhil, also a resident of Bengaluru, was present there and was introduced to her.

They allegedly sat together for some time, had snacks and chatted. The victim has alleged that Sandra and Nikhil then

forcibly put a rose-coloured tablet into her mouth. Within 10 minutes, she said her body began to feel hot, she started sweating, her head began spinning, and her vision became blurred. She alleged that Sandra then took her to a room, made her lie down on a bed and left the room, saying he was going out for a smoke. She subsequently lost consciousness. When she regained consciousness, she found herself partially clothed. Nikhil was lying beside her with his hand on her chest. Shocked, she pushed him away, covered herself with a bedsheet and asked about Sandra. Nikhil allegedly went out and returned with him while she was still in a semi-conscious state.

The victim has alleged that Sandra then forcibly removed her clothes and sexually assaulted her. Police said further investigation is in progress, and appropriate action will be taken as per the law.

## Australian Cricket Challenge initiative back for the third consecutive year

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

Aim is to nurture emerging talent and create meaningful 'study and play' pathways that allow students to pursue sporting excellence alongside academic ambition

THE University of Canberra's (UC) Cricket Challenge is back for a hat-trick year, marking the tournament's third consecutive edition and reinforcing the University's long-term commitment to strengthening its India-Australia engagement through sport, education and youth development.

Delivered in partnership with Cricket ACT, the governing body for cricket in the Australian Capital Territory, the UC Cricket Challenge has steadily evolved into a distinctive international platform that integrates competitive school-level cricket with academic exposure, cultural exchange and future-ready education pathways.

Since the tournament's inception, promising young

cricketers from schools across India have enjoyed unique opportunities to engage with Australia's sported education ecosystem while competing at a high-performance level.

Talking about the unique initiative, Andrew Barr, MLA, Chief Minister, Australian Capital Territory, Australia, said, "The University of Canberra Cricket Challenge represents exactly what Canberra stands for - innovation, opportunity and partnership. This program strengthens our international education relationships, opens new pathways for young athletes, and showcases Canberra as a global destination where talent is nurtured both on the field and in the classroom. We are proud to support an



initiative that builds futures, deepens global connects and reflects the very best of our community."

The UC Cricket Challenge is the realisation of the shared vision between UC and Cricket ACT to nurture emerging talent and create meaningful 'study and play' pathways that allow students to pursue sporting excellence alongside academic

ambition. The initiative reflects UC's broader focus on employability, industry integration and real-world learning.

Building on the success of the previous two editions, the 2026 UC Cricket Challenge will feature inter-school T10 matches in Bengaluru, complemented by a range of engagement activities designed to expose

students to international education opportunities, high-performance sporting environments and cross-cultural learning experiences. Further details regarding dates, venues, participating schools and programme elements will be announced in due course. Prof. The Hon. Bill Shorten, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Canberra, said the UC

Cricket Challenge represents the values that define the University of Canberra - opportunity, aspiration and global connection.

"Sport has a unique ability to bring people together. Through this initiative we are creating pathways for young talent to thrive both on the field and in the classroom," he said.

"As we mark the third consecutive year of the Challenge in India, we will focus on building enduring partnerships, strengthening people-to-people ties between India and Australia, and positioning Canberra as a destination for students looking to combine education with sporting excellence."

Speaking about the legacy being created by this flag-

ship tournament, Olivia Thornton, Chief Executive Officer, Cricket ACT Australia, said, "The UC Cricket Challenge demonstrates how cricket can bring India and Australia closer while creating meaningful education and sport pathways for young people. Cricket ACT is proud to support an initiative that connects communities and opens global opportunities for emerging talent."

The tournament also reflects the growing role of sport as a bridge between education systems and international collaboration. Through its partnership with Cricket ACT, UC continues to strengthen links between schools, sporting bodies and higher education institutions, supporting talent development, coaching

excellence and future leadership in sport.

As part of UC's wider engagement with India, the UC Cricket Challenge complements the university's broader initiatives across student recruitment, school outreach, training and development programmes, and collaborative partnerships. Together, these efforts underscore UC's commitment to India as a key strategic market and partner in its global vision.

The hat-trick edition of the UC Cricket Challenge further reinforces UC's belief that sport-led education can play a powerful role in shaping globally minded, career-ready graduates while fostering deeper cultural and institutional ties between nations.