

IN BRIEF
Two tankers gutted after petrol-laden vehicle catches fire

BENGALURU: A petrol-laden tanker caught fire after crashing into a tree on Thursday, and the blaze spread to a milk tanker, gutting both vehicles, police said. The accident occurred at around 9.45 am near Doddaballapura in Bengaluru Rural district, they said. According to police, the petrol tanker crashed into a tree before catching fire, and the flames quickly spread to a nearby milk tanker. Both vehicles were completely gutted in the blaze. Police are investigating the exact cause of the accident and trying to ascertain whether the petrol tanker hit the tree while attempting to avoid a head-on collision with another truck that was reportedly reversing. Both drivers escaped unhurt after jumping out of their respective vehicles, police said. Fire and Emergency Services personnel rushed to the spot and doused the flames, bringing the situation under control. A case has been registered at Doddabellavangala police station, and further investigation is underway.

Choice International's strategic investment

BENGALURU: Choice International Ltd has announced a strategic partnership with South Korea's NH Investment & Securities (NHIS), with the global financial major investing Rs 9,000 million (Rs 900 crore) in Choice Equity Broking Pvt. Ltd., the broking and wealth management arm of the company. The investment will be made through Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS), strengthening Choice's expansion plans in India's rapidly growing capital markets.

NBC hospital promises treatment at 30-40% lower cost

BENGALURU: A newly launched cancer care facility in Bengaluru has announced that it will provide comprehensive oncology treatment at 30-40 per cent lower cost than corporate hospitals, aiming to make quality cancer care more affordable while reducing treatment dropouts caused by financial constraints. Speaking at the launch of ARC Cancer Hospital, Founder and Chairman Dr. Dinesh Mavinahalli Gangaiah said the hospital has been established to bridge the gap between expensive private hospitals and government institutions by offering integrated, protocol-based cancer treatment under one roof. He said patients often discontinue treatment midway because of escalating costs and the need to visit multiple hospitals for surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other specialised services.

Relaxo footwear expands presence

BENGALURU: Relaxo Footwears Ltd., India's largest footwear manufacturer, has strengthened its retail footprint in south India by opening four new Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) in Bengaluru at JP Nagar, Attibele, Channasandra and Magadi Road, taking its nationwide store count to 429. The new stores were inaugurated by actor Adah Sharma, who also interacted with customers during the launch event. The expansion is part of the company's strategy to enhance its retail presence and deliver a more seamless shopping experience.

MG Group Unveils 'Starz' Premium Coach

BENGALURU: MG Group, one of India's leading bus and coach manufacturers, has unveiled its next-generation premium coach platform, 'Starz', at Pravaas 2026, reinforcing its focus on safer, smarter and sustainable passenger mobility. Developed through extensive customer feedback and market insights, the new platform combines contemporary design, advanced engineering, enhanced passenger comfort and improved operational efficiency.

Complaints filed with Lokayukta on misuse of Rs 2,000 cr meant for road infra

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THE Bengaluru NavaNirman Party (BNP) has formally filed two separate complaints with the Karnataka Lokayukta, demanding a thorough investigation into the irregular allocation and diversion of public money meant for the development of road infrastructure in the city. This follows the party's expose that revealed serious irregularities in how the funds were used across 28 constituencies. In its complaint, BNP has demanded a comprehensive,

transparent audit of the Rs 2,000 crore package and the immediate rollback of the unequal fund distribution. "We believe that a formal complaint with the Lokayukta was the next logical step towards forcing accountability from the authorities. We officially recorded our dissatisfaction that large sums from the Rs 2,000 crore package meant for road development has been channelled into the construction of MLA offices, name boards, and multi-purpose buildings that have nothing to do with road safety. Bengaluru has become

the deadliest metropolitan city for deaths due to civic negligence, primarily due to short term responses taking precedence over the root cause. "Every single day, citizens are suffering, navigating hazardous potholes, severe waterlogging, and crumbling infrastructure that put lives at risk. The government needs to be empathetic to the daily struggles of the public and prioritize basic human safety over political manoeuvring. It is unacceptable that funds explicitly meant for road upgrades are being callously

diverted to disconnected political projects." Both complaints highlight a systemic misuse and partisan distribution of public funds earmarked for road development in Bengaluru. Specifically, the complaints allege that the Rs 2,000 crore allocation across 28 constituencies was pushed through without any disclosed objective formula, resulting in disproportionately higher funding being allocated to Congress run constituencies compared to opposition run constituencies. The complaints further state that over 30% of the Rs 2,000 crore Action Plan (Rs 662 crore) includes projects



with substantial non-road components with approximately Rs 274 crore has been allocated to 60 standalone projects that are entirely un-

'Blood protest' intensifies against Bidadi Township

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THE agitation against the proposed Bidadi Township project intensified on Thursday as farmers in Bhairamangala village of Bengaluru South district launched a symbolic "blood protest," declaring they were willing to shed blood but not part with their agricultural land. The protesters pricked their fingers and dropped blood on the township layout map, raising slogans of "We will give our blood, not our land." Farmers and women participants demanded that the state government immediately withdraw the township proposal, warning that they would intensify the agitation if their concerns were ignored.

Justice Santosh Hegde backs farmers



The protest received a major boost with the participation of former Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde, who expressed solidarity with the agitating farmers. At the protest venue, he drafted and submitted a memorandum urging the government not to acquire agricultural land forcibly in the name of development. Addressing the gathering, Justice Hegde said he had ignored medical advice to stay indoors because he could not remain silent while farmers were protesting on the streets. He stressed that no development was possible without protecting agriculture.

"Artificial Intelligence cannot feed people. If agriculture declines, the country will face serious consequences in the future," he said. Hegde also criticised the destruction of lakes and green spaces for urban expansion, questioning the government's valuation of mature trees at Rs 40,000 without considering the decades required to grow them. "Governance means understanding the pain of farmers. Taking away their livelihood and asking them to do some other work is not development," he said. He assured the protesters that he would continue supporting their movement and urged the government to protect farmers and fertile agricultural land before pursuing large-scale development projects.

Yogish Gowda murder case
HC reserves verdict on Kulkarni's appeal against life sentence

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THE Karnataka High Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on the appeal filed by former Karnataka minister and Congress leader Vinay Kulkarni challenging the life imprisonment imposed on him by a Special Court for People's Representatives in the 2016 murder of BJP leader Yogish Gowda. The Division Bench, comprising Justice Mohammed Nawaz and Justice G. Basavaraja, concluded hearing arguments from both sides and reserved its judgment. Kulkarni has sought the suspension of his conviction and life sentence, along with bail pending disposal of his appeal. The outcome of the High Court's order is expected to have significant legal and political implications, including on the continuation of his membership in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

Appearing for Kulkarni, senior counsel argued that the former minister had no role in the conspiracy or execution of the murder and contended that he had been falsely implicated due to political rivalry. The defence maintained that the trial court had erred in appreciating the evidence and urged the High Court to suspend the sentence and grant him bail while the appeal is heard. Opposing the plea, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) submitted that Kulkarni had allegedly used his political influence to orchestrate the conspiracy behind the murder of Yogish Gowda. The agency argued that the conspiracy extended beyond the killing itself and included attempts to shield the real assailants by arranging for fake accused to surrender before the court, thereby misleading the investigation. The CBI contended that the gravity of the offence and the evidence on record did not warrant suspension of sentence or grant of bail. The case dates back to June 15, 2016, when BJP Zilla Panchayat member Yogish Gowda was hacked to death inside a gym in Dharwad. The investigation was initially conducted by the Dharwad Sub-Urban Police, which later filed a B-report. However, Gowda's family alleged that the investigation was inadequate and accused influential persons of attempting to derail the probe.

Bengaluru's second airport to come up in south of city: CM

Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Wednesday said the city's second airport, planned to decongest Kempegowda International Airport, will come up in South Bengaluru. He said officials have been asked to submit a proposal to the central government after considering a location where land cost is low, which is technically feasible, and not too hilly. The CM chaired a meeting with Minister for Infrastructure Development M B Patil and top officials regarding the second airport near Bengaluru. "Regarding the airport, we discussed what happened in the past. We asked to ensure that no villages are disturbed and villagers should not be displaced," Shivakumar told reporters after the meeting. "We asked officials to submit a proposal to the central government after considering a location where the land cost is low, which is technically feasible, and not too hilly," he added. The CM said no specific site had been named yet,



but it would be in the South, as were the previously proposed sites. "We asked them to look for a location where land prices are low, so it doesn't burden the state government, and where no villages need to be displaced. A few scattered houses are not an issue, as they can be compensated, but villages should not be shifted for the project," he added. In the state budget presented in March, then Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had said that to decongest Kempegowda International Airport, which has emerged as the country's third-largest airport, a second airport would be developed in Bengaluru, for which a feasibility report would be prepared after obtaining technical advice from the Airports Authority of India. AAI officials have already visited the three sites that were earlier shortlisted for Bengaluru's second international airport. The state government had shortlisted three locations: two on Kanakapura Road near Harohalli (South Bengaluru) and one on Kunigal Road in Nelamangala (to the west of the city).

Alliance University welcomes MBA cohort 2026-28 with an inspiring inaugural ceremony

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ALLIANCE University inaugurated its MBA Batch of 2026-28 with a grand inaugural ceremony at its Central Campus on Thursday, welcoming a new cohort of future business leaders. The programme reflected the University's vision of nurturing innovation-driven, socially responsible, and globally competent professionals equipped to lead in an evolving business landscape. The ceremony commenced with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by the University Invocation Song, symbolising the beginning of the students' academic journey. The event was attended by the University's leadership, distinguished industry experts, faculty members, and the newly admitted MBA students. Welcoming the gathering, Dr. Ray Titus, Pro Vice-Chancellor - Innovation and Incubation and Dean, Alliance School of Business, traced the remarkable growth of the School of Business and reaffirmed its commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and strong industry engagement. Speaking about

the rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence, he observed that while technology will continue to reshape industries, the future will belong to individuals who demonstrate originality, creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to solve complex business challenges. Delivering the inaugural address, Abhay G. Chebbi, Pro Chancellor, Alliance University, highlighted India's emergence as a global innovation powerhouse, pointing to landmark initiatives such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the country's thriving startup ecosystem. Encouraging students to maximise every learning opportunity, he urged them to move beyond classroom education, embrace experiential learning, and develop into ethical leaders and responsible citizens capable of creating meaningful impact in society. Addressing the students, Dr. B. Priestly Shan, Vice-Chancellor, Alliance University, described the MBA programme as a transformative two-year journey that extends beyond academics. He encouraged students to cultivate curiosity, resilience, discipline, and a problem-solving mindset while leveraging the University's transdisciplinary ecosystem spanning research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry collaboration. He also highlighted the institution's vibrant startup ecosystem and its continued commitment to supporting entrepreneurial aspirations. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Jai Advani,

CEO's notices to 35 BLOs prove SIR irregularities: HDK

BENGALURU

UNION Minister H D Kumaraswamy on Thursday said the Karnataka CEO's decision to issue notices to over 35 BLOs was itself proof that irregularities had taken place during the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls in the state. He also accused the state government of attempting to divert attention from the issue. Kumaraswamy recalled that senior leaders from both the BJP and JD(S) had recently met the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukumar as well as the central Election Commission and submitted representations highlighting the ground realities during the Special Intensive Revision implementation. "We provided sufficient material for the EC to take action and issue directions to the BLOs and district magistrates," the union minister for Heavy Industries & Steel told reporters here. Following the representation, Kumaraswamy said the EC had assured that it would take necessary action if required. "Therefore, we are not worried. Several illegal activities are taking place, and that is precisely the issue we raised before the EC," he claimed. He said the Karnataka CEO has issued notices

to more than 35 booth-level officers. "Why were notices issued to 35 BLOs? Because there were irregularities. That itself shows the irregularities are real. However, due to interference from the state government, despite several mistakes and illegal activities committed by BLOs, attempts are being made to divert the issue by talking about something else," he claimed. Commenting on the Cauvery river-sharing issue with neighbouring Tamil Nadu, the minister said the dispute has to be fought legally and requested the leaders of all parties in Tamil Nadu to cooperate. "We have to

fight it legally. I would like to request the leaders of all parties in Tamil Nadu — we are like brothers and sisters. Whatever water God gives us, we should share fairly from the reservoirs. For that, they must cooperate with us," he said. Claiming that the farming community has been neglected, the minister urged the state government to immediately take care of farmers' interests. "This government is currently facing two kinds of disasters — floods on one side and drought on the other. In both situations, the farming community has been neglected," he alleged. Pointing out that there

is no agriculture minister in the cabinet at present, Kumaraswamy said the responsibility rests with Chief Minister D K Shivakumar. "He (the CM) should issue immediate directions to all deputy commissioners to protect the interests of farmers," he said. Kumaraswamy urged the Karnataka government to immediately release water from the Krishna Raja Sagar reservoir to protect standing crops in Mandya district, saying the crops are drying up. He said the government had earlier not released water to farmers, citing insufficient storage in the KRS reservoir. However,

with inflows into the reservoir increasing now, there is a need to release water for irrigation, he said. "There was no need to neglect the interests of Karnataka's farmers. Water can be released to Tamil Nadu after the reservoir fills up, and any surplus water will naturally flow downstream. At present, the priority should be to release water into the canals for farmers," he said. On the Hindustan Machine Tools land row, the union minister hit out at former Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, claiming that the HMT land has no connection whatsoever with the forest department and



that the department has no rights over the property. He said those making allegations should first verify the official records. Strongly objecting to Minister Khandre's remarks regarding a notice issued by a forest official over the HMT land, Kumaraswamy said the former forest minister appeared to have an "unusual interest" in the HMT property and questioned the reason behind it.