



Priyanka Chopra Returns in 'Citadel' Season 2: Action-Packed Trailer Out Ahead of May 2 Premiere on Prime Video. The new season promises high-octane action, global espionage, and intense drama as Nadia Sinh and Mason Kane reunite.

The Narasimha Jayanti Mahotsava will commence at the Sri Abhaya Lakshmi Narasimha and Sri Pattabhirama Temple in Thyagarajanagar, Bengaluru, from April 26.



INSIDE

Good morning

Life is not qualified by fluent English, branded clothes or a rich lifestyle. It is measured by the number of faces who smile when they hear your name!!!

BRIEFS

Iran halts execution of 8 women: Trump

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
US President Donald Trump has announced that eight Iranian women, who were reportedly facing execution for their involvement in January protests, will no longer be killed. According to Trump, four of them will be released immediately, while the remaining four will serve one month in prison.

Calling it "very good news," Trump said Iran and its leadership respected his request ahead of upcoming diplomatic negotiations.

He urged Iranian authorities to ensure the women are not harmed and described the decision as a positive step toward future talks. Iranian officials have not officially confirmed the development.

High-Stakes Polls Today in TN, Bengal

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
Voting is underway in high-stakes Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal on Thursday, with key regional leaders aiming to retain power amid strong challenges from the BJP.

In Tamil Nadu, polling is being held for all 234 seats, where Chief Minister M. K. Stalin and the DMK-led alliance are seeking a second term. The contest, traditionally between DMK and AIADMK, has turned more competitive with the entry of actor Vijay's party.

In West Bengal, voting is being conducted for 152 seats in this phase, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee aiming for a fourth consecutive term. The BJP is mounting a strong challenge, with Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari playing a key role.

The Election Commission of India has seized over ₹1,000 crore worth of cash and inducements in both states, as it works to ensure free and fair polls amid allegations from political parties.

IAF Shows Combat Readiness on Expressway Drill

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday carried out an emergency landing drill on the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district to test wartime readiness. A range of aircraft, including fighter jets and transport planes, successfully performed takeoff and landing operations on the highway airstrip.

The exercise demonstrated the IAF's ability to operate in the absence of conventional runways and highlighted coordination between the Air Force, local administration, and UPEIDA. Traffic on a stretch of the expressway has been diverted as a precaution during the drill period.

Iran Seizes Gujarat-Bound Ship

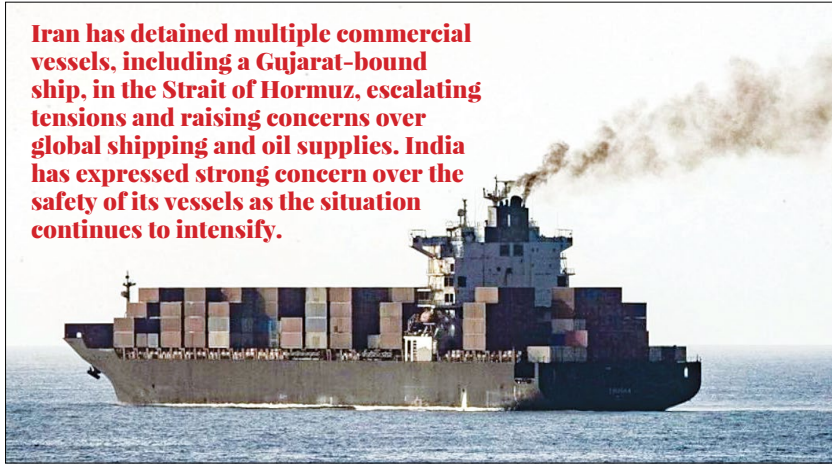
> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran
Tensions in the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz escalated further on Wednesday after Iranian forces reportedly attacked and detained multiple commercial vessels, including a ship bound for Gujarat's Mundra Port.

According to Iranian state television, two ships — Panama-flagged MSC Francesca and Liberia-flagged Epaminodes — have been taken into custody by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Maritime data indicates that the Epaminodes was en route to India from Dubai, raising concerns in New Delhi over the safety of shipping routes.

> Multiple Vessels Targeted
In addition to the detained ships, a Greek-owned vessel, Euphoria, was also reportedly attacked in the same region. Earlier, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations had confirmed that at least three commercial vessels were targeted in the waterway.

Iran has defended its actions, claiming that the vessels lacked "required

Iran has detained multiple commercial vessels, including a Gujarat-bound ship, in the Strait of Hormuz, escalating tensions and raising concerns over global shipping and oil supplies. India has expressed strong concern over the safety of its vessels as the situation continues to intensify.



authorisation" and had allegedly manipulated navigation systems, thereby posing a risk to maritime safety.

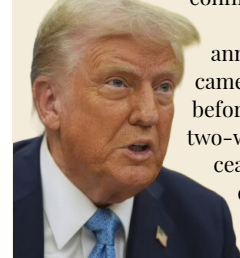
> Strategic and Economic Concerns
The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most vital oil transit chokepoints, and any disruption in the region has immediate global implications. Following Iran's increased control over

the waterway amid ongoing geopolitical tensions, oil supplies have been impacted, leading to a surge in crude prices worldwide.

> US-Iran Standoff Intensifies
The latest developments come against the backdrop of heightened tensions between Iran and the United States. Recently, US forces seized two

Iran Ceasefire Extended Amid Peace Push

> Vikrama Vahini | Washington
US President Donald Trump has extended the ceasefire with Iran indefinitely, following a request from mediator Pakistan, in a move aimed at allowing Tehran's leadership more time to present a unified proposal to end the ongoing seven-week conflict.



The announcement came just hours before the initial two-week ceasefire, declared on April 8, was

set to expire. The extension has also resulted in the postponement of a planned visit by a US delegation led by Vice President J.D. Vance to Islamabad, where peace discussions with Iranian representatives were expected.

According to the statement, the ceasefire extension is conditional and temporary, with Washington emphasizing that it will refrain from military action only until Iran presents a consolidated and coherent negotiating position.

However, President Trump clarified that existing economic pressure on Iran will continue. **PG2**

SC SLAMS MAMATA OVER I-PAC RAID

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Supreme Court of India on Wednesday strongly criticised West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over alleged interference during an Enforcement Directorate (ED) search operation at the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC in Kolkata earlier this year.

> Court Flags 'Threat to Democracy'
A Bench comprising Justices P.K. Mishra and N.V. Anjaria termed the situation in West Bengal as "extraordinary" and observed that a sitting Chief Minister cannot act in a manner that puts democracy in peril. The court remarked that such conduct cannot be justified under the guise of a State versus Union dispute.

"This is not a dispute between the

The Supreme Court has pulled up West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over alleged interference in an ED raid at the I-PAC office, warning actions could put democracy at risk. The court termed the situation "extraordinary" and will continue hearing the matter.



State and the Union. A Chief Minister cannot walk into an ongoing investigation and jeopardise democratic processes," the Bench noted during the hearing.

> ED Seeks CBI Probe
The observations came while the court was hearing petitions filed by the Enforcement Directorate under Article 32, seeking a probe by the Central Bureau

of Investigation against Banerjee and other officials.

According to the ED, the searches conducted on January 8 at the I-PAC office and the residence of its director were part of a money laundering investigation. The agency alleged that Banerjee entered the premises during the raid and removed certain documents

and electronic devices.

> CM's Stand
Banerjee, however, has maintained that the seized materials contained information related to the Trinamool Congress's campaign strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections, and not evidence linked to any financial wrongdoing.

> 'Extraordinary Situation' in Bengal
The Bench underscored the gravity of the situation, stating that courts cannot ignore the prevailing ground realities in the State. It also referred to recent incidents indicating challenges to law and order and institutional functioning.

"This is an extraordinary situation. You may argue abstract legal principles, but we cannot shut our eyes to the practical realities," the judges observed,



Christina Aguilera, Anne Hathaway, Salma Hayek and more stars on the red carpet at the 2026 Breakthrough Prize gala in Los Angeles.

7 Convicted in Bengaluru Jail Radicalisation Case

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
In a significant ruling, a special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday sentenced seven accused, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative T. Naseer, to seven years of rigorous imprisonment in the 2023 Bengaluru prison radicalisation case.

Seven accused, including Lashkar-e-Taiba operative T. Naseer, have been sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment in the 2023 Bengaluru prison radicalisation case. An NIA special court also imposed fines after finding them guilty of plotting terror recruitment and conspiracy inside Parappana Agrahara Central Prison.

Apart from Naseer, the convicted include Syed Suhail Khan, Mohammed Umar, Zahid Tabrez, Syed Mudassir Pasha, Mohammed Faisal Rabbani, and Salman Khan. The court also imposed a fine of ₹48,000 on each of them under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Arms Act, and Explosive Substances Act.

According to the NIA, all seven accused had pleaded guilty to the charges. The case pertains to a terror conspiracy allegedly orchestrated inside Parappana Agrahara Central Prison in Bengaluru by T. Naseer, who is a key LeT

operative. The conspiracy involved recruitment, indoctrination, training, and radicalisation of inmates with the aim of carrying out terror activities in India.

The investigation began in July 2023 after the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch (CCB) seized arms, ammunition, and digital devices from habitual offenders, uncovering early indications of a larger terror network operating within the prison system.

Subsequent investigations by the NIA revealed that the accused were allegedly planning terror strikes in Bengaluru in line with the anti-India agenda of the banned LeT outfit.

The probe also exposed a wider conspiracy to facilitate the escape of T. Naseer, a life convict in multiple terror cases, while he was being transported from prison to court.

Naseer was earlier facing trial in connection with the 2008 Bengaluru serial blast cases and was lodged as an undertrial prisoner at the time of the conspiracy.

The NIA later filed chargesheets against 11 arrested accused and one absconding suspect, identified as Junaid Ahmed. One of the accused, Salman Khan, was extradited from Rwanda following coordinated efforts

between Indian authorities and international agencies.

The NIA said efforts are continuing to trace and apprehend the absconding accused as part of the ongoing investigation.



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Editorial

Pahalgam Must Not Be Forgotten: India Needs Relentless Resolve Against Terror

One year after the brutal killings in Pahalgam, the memory remains a stark reminder of the persistent threat of terrorism targeting India and its people. Such attacks are not isolated incidents but part of a larger, well-orchestrated strategy aimed at destabilizing the nation and deepening communal fault lines. India's response through Operation Sindoor signaled strength and intent, but symbolic retaliation alone cannot be the endpoint. Justice for victims must translate into a sustained, uncompromising national security doctrine that prioritizes prevention, intelligence, and accountability.

India cannot afford complacency. Terror networks thrive not only on external support but also on internal enablers—those who provide logistics, propaganda, or ideological cover. Addressing this challenge requires a calibrated approach rooted in law, intelligence coordination, and institutional strength, not rhetoric alone. The dismantling of Naxalism in several regions demonstrates that a determined and multi-pronged strategy can yield results. The same clarity of purpose must now be applied to eliminate terror ecosystems that draw backing from across the border, particularly from Pakistan-based elements that have historically fueled unrest.

At the same time, safeguarding sovereignty must go hand in hand with upholding democratic values and the rule of law. Any dilution in resolve risks emboldening hostile forces and repeating tragedies like Pahalgam. India's fight is not merely against acts of terror, but against the conditions that allow such violence to take root. The message must be clear: there will be zero tolerance for terrorism in any form, and no compromise when it comes to national security. Only a vigilant, united, and decisive India can ensure that such dark chapters are never repeated.

-Editor

BJP SEEKS EC ACTION OVER KHARGE 'TERRORIST' REMARK ON PM

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
A BJP delegation on Wednesday met the Election Commission of India (ECI) demanding strict action against Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge over his alleged remark referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "terrorist."

BJP has approached the Election Commission seeking strict action against Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge over his alleged "terrorist" remark on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling it inappropriate and a violation of democratic norms. The Congress leader later clarified that his statement referred to "intimidation politics," not a literal allegation.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Union Minister Kiren Rijju said the BJP has urged the poll body to take immediate action and seek an apology from Kharge, calling the statement "deeply disrespectful" and "against democratic values."

Rijju said the matter is not a political issue but a "national concern," adding that no party has

ever used such language against a sitting Prime Minister. He alleged that such remarks undermine democratic institutions and standards of political discourse.

The BJP also submitted a formal complaint to the ECI, claiming that Kharge's statement violated the Model Code of Conduct and had the potential to influence the electoral atmosphere.

Rijju stated that the Commission has taken cognisance of the complaint and assured appropriate action.

"The public will respond to such statements politically, and under the leadership of PM Modi, action against terrorism will continue," Rijju said.

The controversy stems from Kharge's speech during the Tamil Nadu election campaign, where he criticised the AIADMK's alliance with the BJP and made remarks referring to Modi as a "terrorist" who does not believe in equality," which triggered strong political reactions.

Kharge later clarified that his comments were aimed at criticising what he described as "intimidation politics" and said he intended to convey that the Prime Minister was "terrorising political opponents," not literally calling him a terrorist.

Ashok Slams Kharge Over PM 'Terrorist' Remark

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Opposition Leader R. Ashok on Tuesday demanded an unconditional apology from Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge over his alleged remarks referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "terrorist," and said Kharge was "not fit" to continue as party president.

Addressing reporters, Ashok said Prime Minister Modi has been serving the country for the longest tenure and questioned the use of such language against him.

Ashoka alleged that Congress leaders were making such statements out of fear of electoral defeat. "These remarks come from frustration that Congress will not return to power," he said, adding that Kharge should apologise to the nation immediately.

He further stated that the BJP would hold a protest in front of Vidhana Soudha on Thursday against the remarks.

> Allegations against Congress

leaders

Ashok also made a series of allegations against the Congress, claiming that certain incidents in the past had not been adequately addressed by the party leadership.

He referred to previous statements by Congress leaders and accused them of not condemning certain controversial slogans and incidents.

> Elections and political claims

He also predicted electoral setbacks for the Congress in several states and claimed that the BJP was gaining strength in regions such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam, and West Bengal.

> Governance criticism

Launching an attack on the Karnataka government, Ashok alleged widespread corruption, including in civic services such as e-Khata processing, and accused

officials of taking bribes. He further claimed that administrative delays had stalled BBMP elections due to internal differences within the government leadership.

He also alleged rising public burden due to price hikes and claimed that essential services were being affected due to financial mismanagement linked to welfare guarantee schemes.

> Other remarks

Ashok also referred to issues such as cricket betting-related incidents, claiming it was affecting families, and urged ministers to set a responsible example. He further commented on national security matters, referring to the Pahalgam terror attack and stated that India had responded strongly through military action, asserting that Pakistan should be held accountable for cross-border terrorism.



Bengaluru Water Supply Disrupted Due to Technical Fault



> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced a temporary disruption in water supply to parts of the city today due to a technical snag at a key power installation supporting Cauvery water supply.

According to BWSSB Chairman Dr. V. Ram Prasath Manohar, a technical fault was detected at a 220 kVA power station in Tataguni, which supplies electricity to the Cauvery water pumping system. Following the issue, emergency repair work has been taken up immediately by the board's technical team. As a result, Cauvery water supply across Bengaluru city will be affected between 12:30 pm and 3:00 pm on April 22, 2026, the statement said.

The BWSSB has expressed regret over the inconvenience caused to residents and assured that restoration work is being carried out on a priority basis to resume normal supply as soon as possible.

Officials said alternative arrangements are being reviewed to minimise inconvenience to residents during the repair period. Citizens have been advised to store sufficient water in advance and use it judiciously until normal supply is fully restored.



Leaders attend the BJP's South India Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Mahabhiyan held in Bengaluru on Wednesday, with senior party functionaries including B.L. Santhosh, V. Satish, Tarun Chugh, B.Y. Vijayendra, N. Ramchandra Rao and P.V.N. Madhav present.

Iran Seizes Gujarat-Bound Ship

> From PG1

Iranian-flagged cargo ships near the Gulf of Oman as part of its naval blockade operations. Diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation have also hit a roadblock after Iran declined to participate in a proposed second round of talks, following US President Donald Trump's announcement regarding the blockade of the Strait.

> India Registers Protest

India has expressed serious concern over the developments. The Ministry of External Affairs recently summoned the Iranian envoy following earlier incidents involving attacks on Indian-flagged vessels in the region.

In an official statement, the ministry conveyed its "deep concern" over the safety of Indian ships and reiterated the need for ensuring

secure maritime navigation in international waters.

> Situation Under Watch

With a Gujarat-bound vessel now in Iranian custody, authorities are closely monitoring the situation. The developments are expected to have wider implications for regional stability, global trade routes, and India's maritime interests in the Persian Gulf region.

Experts have warned that continued escalation in the region could disrupt key global shipping lanes and significantly impact oil supplies, leading to volatility in international markets.

They have also urged all parties involved to exercise restraint and pursue diplomatic dialogue to ensure the safety of maritime trade and regional stability.

Iran Ceasefire Extended Amid Peace Push

> From PG1

The blockade on Iranian ports, part of ongoing sanctions and restrictions, will remain in place despite the ceasefire extension.

The decision comes amid continued tensions in the region, with diplomatic efforts being led through third-party mediation, including Pakistan's involvement as a key facilitator. The

development marks a critical pause in hostilities, though uncertainty remains over the future of negotiations and whether a lasting peace framework can be achieved.

Further diplomatic engagement is expected in the coming days as global stakeholders closely monitor Iran's response and the next phase of talks.

Water Crisis Protest: Women Block Minister's Car

> Vikrama Vahini | Koppal

Severe drinking water shortage triggered protests in parts of Koppal on Wednesday, as a group of women blocked the car of district in-charge minister Shivaraj Tangadagi, demanding immediate action.

The incident took place in Sankanala village of Kanakagiri taluk, where women, carrying empty pots, staged a sudden protest while the minister was on his way to lay the foundation stone for development works. The

protesters stopped his vehicle and expressed anger over the acute water scarcity in the region.

With soaring temperatures worsening the situation, several districts across Karnataka are facing a severe drinking water crisis, leaving residents struggling for basic needs.

The minister was briefly taken aback by the protest and later attempted to pacify the agitating women, assuring them of necessary measures to address the issue.



NEWS

K'TAKA MAN SETS WIFE ABLAZE OVER DRESS DISPUTE

> Vikrama Vahini | Belagavi

In a shocking incident, a 34-year-old man allegedly set his wife on fire following a domestic dispute over her choice of clothing, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Nandgad village of Khanapur taluk on Tuesday night. The accused, identified as Krishna Patil, allegedly took the extreme step after objecting to his 32-year-old wife Manjula Patil wearing a nightdress instead of a sari at home.

According to police, the couple

A 34-year-old man has been taken into custody for allegedly setting his wife on fire in Nandgad village of Khanapur taluk following a domestic dispute over her attire. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation, while the victim is undergoing treatment.

had been frequently quarrelling over the issue. The argument on Tuesday night reportedly escalated, after which the accused allegedly attacked his wife and set her ablaze at their residence.

Locals alerted authorities following the incident, and the victim was rushed for medical treatment. Her condition has not

been officially disclosed at the time of filing this report.

Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the matter. Further details, including the exact sequence of events leading to the attack, are being verified.

Officials said the accused has been taken into custody and is being questioned.

Nalapad attack, No politics: Nikhil

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Wednesday criticised Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge over his remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying such statements do not suit a senior leader and damage his public image.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Nikhil said senior leaders should act with dignity and set an example for the younger generation, adding that personal attacks in politics were inappropriate.

Responding to questions on ED raids, he said central agencies function independently and should not be given a political colour. On internal party and coalition matters, he said discussions were underway at the leadership level and clarity would emerge soon.

On allegations of black magic against the Chief Minister, Nikhil said he does not believe in such practices and trusts in divine faith. He also commented on political representation of minorities, stating that internal differences were visible within the "AHINDA"



bloc.

He further alleged inconsistencies in ministerial changes and ticket distribution, saying some communities were not adequately represented, and accused the government of selective decisions. He added that governance should focus on development rather than controversies.

He also urged leaders to maintain restraint and avoid statements that could create unnecessary political tensions.

SPIRITUAL

Narasimha Jayanti from 26

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Narasimha Jayanti Mahotsava will commence at the Sri Abhaya Lakshmi Narasimha and Sri Pattabhirama Temple in Thyagarajanagar, Bengaluru, from April 26, and will continue with a series of religious and cultural events culminating on May 1 with a special ritual, according to the temple's chief priest Vadiraj Acharya.

A unique highlight of the annual celebrations is the Phala Panchamrita Maha Abhisheka to the Narasimha deity's pillar on May 1. The ritual will feature an elaborate ceremonial bath using juice extracted from various fruits, turmeric and kumkum, sacred substances, and holy water collected from multiple rivers. Following the abhisheka, devotees will participate in the traditional Chakra Snana ritual.

The festivities will begin on April 26, Sunday, with Sri Lakshmi Narasimha and Srinivasa Kalyanotsava, followed by cultural programmes and the Surya

Mandala Utsava in the evening.

On April 27, a Sudarshana Homa will be performed at 9 am, followed by cultural events and the Chandra Mandala Utsava in the evening.

On April 28, the rituals include Sri Narasimha Taraka Homa in the morning, Rahu Kala Homa in the afternoon, and special chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama with Shatakamtha archana during the cultural programme.

The day will also feature Hanuman Utsava in the morning and Gajendra Moksha Utsava in the evening.

On April 29, Sri Ashwattha Kubera Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy will be offered Maha Abhisheka and coin abhisheka at 9 am. In the evening, a thousand-voice rendition of Sri Narasimha Suladi will be presented by the Nada Shrunga team.

The grand Brahma Rathotsava of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Jayanti Mahotsava will be held on April 30, marking one of the most significant events of the celebrations.



SCIENCE & Technology

MeitY Tightens AI Label Rules, Extends Consultation Deadline

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has proposed stricter regulations for AI-generated content under its draft amendments to the IT Rules, aiming to curb deepfakes and misinformation online.

According to the revised proposal, digital platforms will now be required to ensure continuous and clearly visible labelling of AI-generated content throughout its display. This replaces the earlier guideline that only mandated "prominent visibility," making the compliance requirement significantly stricter.

Under the new rule, AI labels must remain visible for the entire duration of any content—whether image, video, audio, or text—on screen, preventing labels from appearing only briefly.

Alongside the proposed changes, MeitY has also extended the deadline for public consultation and stakeholder feedback on the draft amendments to May 7, from the earlier deadline of April 29.

The draft amendments were originally issued on March 30 under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The government stated that the extension is intended to allow stakeholders adequate time to review and respond to the additional changes introduced during the consultation process.

Fake Silver at Vaishno Devi, Cadmium Risk Flagged

> **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Concerns have been raised over the authenticity of silver offerings made by devotees at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in Jammu and Kashmir, after a government mint found that a large portion of the material contained cheap and potentially harmful metals.

According to officials cited in a report, the mint recently processed around 20 tonnes of accumulated silver offerings sent by the Shrine Board. Preliminary assaying revealed that the so-called silver items contained only about 5-6% genuine silver, while the remaining composition included metals such as cadmium and iron.

The Shrine Board had reportedly expected to recover silver worth around ₹500-550 crore based on market rates. However, initial estimates suggest the actual value of silver content may be closer to ₹30 crore.

Officials warned that cadmium, a toxic and carcinogenic metal,



poses serious health risks when melted, releasing harmful fumes that can affect the lungs and kidneys. Cadmium closely resembles silver in appearance, making it difficult to distinguish without scientific testing. Iron and other low-cost metals are also reportedly used as fillers to increase weight in such articles.

The government mint initially refused to process the material due to safety concerns but later proceeded after adopting specialised precautions to handle

the toxic elements. The issue has been formally flagged to the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor's office and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

In a recent instance, a batch of 70 kg of silver offerings was found to contain only around 3 kg of actual silver after detailed processing.

Officials have urged immediate action to curb the circulation of such adulterated religious offerings, citing both financial deception and public health risks.

US Tourist Raped at Kodagu Homestay; Two Arrested

> **Vikrama Vahini | Kodagu**

A 40-year-old woman tourist from the United States was allegedly raped and confined at a homestay in Karnataka's Kodagu district, police said on Wednesday. Two people, including the homestay owner and a staff member, have been arrested in connection with the incident.

According to police, the assault took place inside the victim's room at the homestay located in a popular tourist destination, about a week ago. The accused have been remanded to judicial custody till May 3.

Investigators said one of the accused is a worker at the homestay originally from Jharkhand, while the other is the owner of the facility. Following the assault, the victim was allegedly confined for three days, during which her mobile phone was seized and she was threatened against reporting the crime. The woman later managed to travel to Mysuru, where she reported the incident to authorities with assistance from the US Embassy. Based on inputs received, Karnataka Police registered a case and launched an investigation.

Police officials said the case is being probed further to establish the sequence of events and any additional involvement.

El Niño Warning: Weak Monsoon Fears Rise

> **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has indicated the possible onset of El Niño conditions, raising concerns over a weaker southwest monsoon and a potential drop in rainfall across the country, which could increase the risk of drought-like conditions.

El Niño is a climatic phenomenon in which the surface temperature of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean rises above normal levels. This disrupts wind patterns and reduces atmospheric moisture, often leading to below-normal monsoon rainfall in India.

Experts warn that a deficient monsoon could further intensify summer heat and adversely impact agriculture. Reduced rainfall may affect food production, raise concerns over food security, and lead to increased prices of essential commodities.

The Maharashtra government has reportedly begun discussions on precautionary measures. Meanwhile, several states have taken steps to protect students from extreme heat. Schools in nine districts of Odisha have been closed due to high temperatures, while Uttar Pradesh has revised school timings to



IMD has warned of a possible El Niño impact, raising fears of a weak monsoon, reduced rainfall, and drought-like conditions, with states already taking precautionary measures amid rising heat.

morning hours between 7:30 am and 1:30 pm. Similar measures have been implemented in Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

In Karnataka, the Meteorological Department has forecast thunderstorms with gusty winds along coastal regions on April 22. Interior districts are likely to experience thunderstorms with winds reaching 30-40 kmph between April 21 and April 25. Lightning and thunderstorms are also expected in coastal areas from April 23 to April 25.

SSLC RESULTS: DATE FIXED AMID CONFUSION

> **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examination results for 2026 will be on April 23 at 12 noon, Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa announced on Wednesday after meeting Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The announcement comes amid ongoing confusion over the evaluation of the Hindi language paper. Earlier, the state had decided to award grades instead of marks for the third language. However, following directions from the Karnataka High Court, the government has now decided to award marks instead of grades.

> **Court Order to Be Followed**

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Bangarappa said the government will comply with the court's directive while releasing the results. The meeting was attended by senior education department

officials and the Advocate General, where key decisions regarding result declaration were finalised.

> **Marks Instead of Grades**

Officials confirmed that although evaluation for all subjects had already been completed, the department will now issue marks for the third language in line with the High Court's order. Detailed clarification on grading, grace marks, and other aspects will be provided during the result announcement.

> **Chance for Improvement**

The government is also considering giving students an opportunity to improve their marks in the third language through a second examination. Sources said the department is planning to allow students to appear for the improvement exam free of cost, ensuring that no additional financial burden is placed on them.



Amravati Accused Paraded in Sex Scandal Case

> **Vikrama Vahini | Amravati**

In a controversial move, police in Amravati paraded the main accused in a sexual exploitation case through city streets on Wednesday, drawing widespread attention.

The identified as Ayan Ahmed Tanveer, was allegedly taken across

key areas to make the public aware of his identity. Officials said the action was intended to inform citizens about the involved in the case.

The incident is linked to a sexual exploitation case reported from Paratwada in Maharashtra, which has taken a serious turn in recent

days. During the investigation, police seized luxury cars, a large amount of cash, and high-end electronic gadgets from the accused, indicating possible wider links.

Authorities said the probe is ongoing, and further details are expected as the investigation progresses.

Protest Petition Seeks Cancellation of Umar Khalid Event

> **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Hindu Rashtra Samanvaya Samiti has approached the Indiranagar Police Station seeking immediate cancellation of a programme titled "Umar Khalid and His World", scheduled to be held on April 28 at the Bangalore International Centre in Domlur.

> **Allegations Against the Event**

In its petition, the organisation alleged that the programme is being to glorify Umar Khalid, who is an accused in the 2020 Delhi riots case. The Samiti claimed that such an event could hurt public sentiments and undermine the seriousness of cases linked to national security.

> **Details of the Programme**

According to the organisers, the event is scheduled from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM and is being hosted by civil rights groups. However, the petitioners argued that the subject matter is sensitive and may lead to unnecessary tension in society if allowed to proceed.

> **Presence of Organisation Members**

Several members of Hindu organisations were present during the submission of the petition, including

representatives from the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and Sri Rama Sene. They expressed concerns over maintaining public order and communal harmony.

> **Key Demands Raised**

The Samiti has urged authorities to revoke the permission granted for the programme and called upon the venue and organisers to refrain from hosting what it termed as controversial events. It also requested the police to take necessary legal action to prevent such gatherings in public spaces.

> **Police Response**

Officials at the Indiranagar Police Station confirmed that the petition has been received and said the matter is currently under review. Further action will be taken based on legal provisions and assessment of law and order implications.

Authorities are likely to assess the situation based on security inputs before taking a final decision on the event. Meanwhile, police have urged all parties to maintain peace and avoid spreading misinformation regarding the programme.

ENTERTAINMENT

BHOOT BANGLA 2 IN THE WORKS?



> **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Akshay Kumar's recently released horror-comedy Bhoot Bangla may be heading towards a franchise expansion, with early discussions reportedly underway for a possible sequel following strong audience response and positive critical reviews.

According to media reports, the makers are currently exploring the idea of Bhoot Bangla 2. However, there has been no official confirmation yet, and the project is said to be in its initial planning stage.

> **Sequel speculation gains momentum**

Reports suggest that producer Ektaa Kapoor is actively interested in developing the horror-comedy universe further. She is reportedly keen on expanding the storyline with new

narratives set in the same fictional world. Industry sources indicate that while the idea is being seriously considered, a formal announcement is still awaited.

> **About the film's storyline**

Bhoot Bangla follows the story of Arjun, played by Akshay Kumar, who inherits a haunted ancestral palace in the fictional village of Mangalpur. What begins as preparations for his sister's wedding soon turns into a series of supernatural disturbances linked to a mysterious demon and an ancient underground temple.

As Arjun investigates, he encounters frightened villagers and a trapped spirit, gradually uncovering the dark history of the property.

> **Box office performance**

The film has performed well at the box office despite competition from other releases. It opened with ₹12.25 crore and has reportedly earned ₹86.21 crore in India within five days. Globally, the film's total collection stands at approximately ₹117.71 crore.

> **Cast and crew**

Directed by Priyadarshan, the film features Akshay Kumar alongside Wamiqa Gabbi, Mithila Palkar, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Tabu, Jisshu Sengupta, Manoj Joshi, and the late actor Asrani. The film was released in theatres on April 17, 2026.

While discussions around a sequel continue, fans are now eagerly awaiting official confirmation on whether Bhoot Bangla will officially become a new franchise.

BUSINESS

Sensex Falls 757 Points, Snaps 3-Day Rally



> **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Benchmark equity indices ended lower on Wednesday, snapping a three-day winning streak, as heavy selling in IT stocks and rising crude oil prices dragged markets nearly 1 per cent down.

The BSE Sensex declined 756.84 points, or 0.95 per cent, to close at 78,516.49. During intra-day trade, it fell as much as 831.03 points to touch 78,442.30.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 198.50 points, or 0.81 per cent, to settle at 24,378.10.

> **IT stocks lead sell-off**

The downturn was largely driven by profit booking in information technology shares, which came under pressure amid global cues and valuation concerns. Weakness in heavyweight IT counters weighed heavily on overall market sentiment.

> **Crude oil adds pressure**

Adding to investor concerns, crude oil prices edged higher in the global market, raising fears of inflationary pressure and increased input costs for industries such as transport, manufacturing, and aviation.

> **Market outlook**

Analysts noted that the sharp fall indicates cautious sentiment among investors after recent gains, with global factors continuing to influence domestic market direction. Traders are expected to closely watch crude price movements and global economic signals in the coming sessions. The broader market also mirrored the weakness, with most sectoral indices closing in the red.

Broader markets also witnessed selling pressure, with mid-cap and small-cap indices ending lower for the session. Market participants said volatility may continue in the near term amid global uncertainty and crude oil fluctuations.

Don 3 Row: Ranveer May Refund ₹10 Crore

> **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Actor Ranveer Singh has reportedly offered to return his signing amount of ₹10 crore to filmmaker Farhan Akhtar after his exit from the much-anticipated film Don 3, according to media reports. The development comes amid ongoing speculation of a dispute between the actor and Excel Entertainment.

As per a report, Ranveer Singh has also allegedly agreed to compensate the production house for expenses incurred during pre-production and has even proposed offering a stake in his upcoming film, tentatively titled Pralaay. However, the exact financial terms have not been officially confirmed.

> **Background of the dispute**

The controversy reportedly began after Ranveer Singh stepped away from Don 3 following the success of Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar. The sudden exit is said to have disappointed the film's producers, Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani of Excel Entertainment.

> **Reports suggest that Excel**

Entertainment approached the Producers Guild of India, claiming that nearly ₹40 crore had already been spent on pre-production and that the script had been approved by the actor at various stages. Ranveer Singh, however, is said to have maintained that the project was delayed due to shifting production plans and alleged changes in his professional commitments. He also reportedly expressed disagreement over the film's direction and scheduling.

The Producers Guild of India is believed to have advised both parties to resolve the matter amicably rather than proceed with legal action.

> **Industry reactions**

Speculation around the dispute also

linked several industry figures to mediation efforts, including rumours of actor Aamir Khan's involvement. However, Khan has reportedly denied any role in resolving the issue.

> **About the Don franchise**

The Don franchise is one of Bollywood's most iconic film series. The original Don (1978), starring Amitabh Bachchan, is considered a cult classic. It was later rebooted by Farhan Akhtar in 2006 with Shah Rukh Khan in the lead role, followed by Don 2 in 2011.

As of now, there has been no official confirmation from either Ranveer Singh or Excel Entertainment regarding the reported settlement offer.



SPORTS

From Hero to Zero: Miller's IPL Swing

> Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad
David Miller delivered a tale of two extremes in consecutive matches, shining brilliantly against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) before falling for a golden duck against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH).
At Bengaluru, Miller played a match-winning cameo for Delhi Capitals, smashing three boundaries in the final over against Romario Shepherd to seal a thrilling chase of 176 runs. His explosive finish, including two sixes and a four, turned the game in Delhi's favour.
However, at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad, Miller failed to replicate the heroics. Chasing a massive target of 242 set by SRH, he was promoted to No. 5 but was dismissed for a golden duck, bowled by Ishaan Malinga on the very first ball he faced.

LSG vs RR: Both Teams Field Strong XIs



> Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow
In Match 32 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, Lucknow Super Giants took on Rajasthan Royals at the Ekana Cricket Stadium, with LSG captain Rishabh Pant winning the toss and opting to bowl first. Rajasthan Royals will bat first in what is expected to be a closely contested encounter, as both teams are coming into the match on the back of defeats in their previous outings.

> Head-to-Head Advantage for RR
Historically, Rajasthan Royals have had the upper hand in this fixture. Out of six meetings between the two sides, RR have won four matches, while LSG have managed just two victories.
> Strong Line-ups for Crucial Clash
Both teams have fielded strong playing XIs in a bid to return to winning ways.
Lucknow Super Giants Playing XI: Mitchell Marsh, Ayush Badoni, Rishabh Pant (C), Nicholas Pooran, Aiden Markram, Mukul Choudhary, Mohammed Shami, Mohsin Khan, Prince Yadav, Digvesh Singh Rathi, Mayank Yadav.
Rajasthan Royals Playing XI: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel, Riyan Parag (C), Shimron Hetmyer, Donovan Ferreira, Ravindra Jadeja, Jofra Archer, Ravi Bishnoi, Brijesh Sharma, Nandre Burger.

Abhishek Sharma Scripts Historic T20 Record

> Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad
Abhishek Sharma created history in IPL 2026 with an unbeaten 135 off 68 balls for Sunrisers Hyderabad against Delhi Capitals at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.
His knock, featuring 10 fours and 10 sixes, made him the only player in IPL history to score 130+ runs twice in separate innings. Sharma had earlier scored 141 against Punjab Kings in IPL 2025.
With this feat, he also set a new T20 world record for the most 130+ scores (four times), surpassing Chris Gayle, who had achieved it three times.

Pahalgam Attack: Family Still in Trauma

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
A year after the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, including Intelligence Bureau officer Manish Ranjan, his family continues to struggle with grief and trauma, saying they are "only surviving, not living."
Ranjan, a native of Aruhi village in Bihar's Rohtas district, was among 25 tourists and one local pony operator killed in the April 22 attack at Baisaran meadow in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.
Speaking from the family's ancestral home, Ranjan's aunt said the tragedy has left a



A year after the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people including IB officer Manish Ranjan, his family says they are still living in trauma and have received no meaningful support, as grief continues to haunt their daily lives.

permanent emotional scar. "Not a single day has passed without remembering him. Our life has stopped; we are just surviving," she said, adding that the family continues to relive the incident repeatedly.
She described Ranjan as a highly talented officer who had previously cleared several government job examinations

before joining the Intelligence Bureau. "He was the eldest son and the pillar of our family," she said.
Recalling the family's trip to Kashmir that turned tragic, she said terrorists "snatched away their happiness in an instant." She also mentioned that Ranjan's father and uncle, both of whom have undergone bypass surgeries,

remain deeply affected and emotional.
Ranjan's wife is also reportedly struggling to recover from the shock. The family said that although assurances were made regarding employment support for her, no concrete assistance has materialised so far.
The family further alleged that no government representative or official has visited them in the past year to enquire about their condition.
"We are left with only memories. The pain has not reduced even after a year," the aunt added.

MALEGAON BLAST CASE: HC QUASHES CHARGES

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai
Nearly two decades after the 2006 Malegaon blasts that killed 37 people and injured over 100, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday quashed charges against all four accused, effectively halting the prosecution in the case.
A bench comprising Chief

Justices Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Shyam Chandak allowed the appeals filed by Lokesh Sharma, Dhan Singh, Rajendra Choudhary, and Manohar Narwaria against a 2025 special court order that had framed charges against them.
The court's decision brings to a pause the National Investigation Agency (NIA) prosecution, at least for now.
During the hearings, the defence argued that the case lacked crucial evidence, including eyewitness testimony and material recoveries linking the accused to the crime. They also pointed to procedural lapses, including a Test Identification Parade conducted more than six years after the incident, raising concerns over reliability.
The NIA itself informed the court that there were no eyewitnesses in the case. The defence further argued that soil samples collected from Madhya Pradesh, where explosives were allegedly prepared, showed no traces of RDX, weakening the prosecution's claims.
The blasts occurred on September 8, 2006, at a Muslim cemetery in Malegaon in Maharashtra's Nashik district, killing 37 people and injuring over 100.

Nearly 20 years after the 2006 Malegaon blasts that killed 37 people, the Bombay High Court has quashed charges against all four accused, citing lack of evidence and procedural lapses, effectively pausing the NIA prosecution for now.

The case was initially probed by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), which arrested nine Muslim men. The matter was later transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2007, and subsequently taken over by the NIA, which arrested four different accused and filed charges against them.
The High Court had earlier granted bail to the accused, and the latest ruling has now quashed the charges framed against them.

Nearly 8,000 Migrants Dead or Missing in 2025: UN

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
Nearly 8,000 migrants died or went missing on major migration routes worldwide in 2025, according to a report released on Tuesday by the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).
The report, compiled under the IOM's Missing Migrants Project, recorded at least 7,900 deaths and disappearances last year. Officials cautioned that the actual number is likely higher due to widespread underreporting.
It noted that increasingly dangerous and restricted migration pathways are exposing people fleeing conflict, poverty, and climate-related hardships to heightened risks.
The Mediterranean Sea remained the deadliest route, accounting for the highest number of fatalities. Thousands attempting to reach Europe from North Africa reportedly died or went missing after boats capsized or disappeared at sea. Overcrowded vessels and unsafe smuggling operations were cited as key contributing factors.
Other high-risk routes



included crossings through the Sahara Desert, where extreme heat and lack of water proved fatal, as well as migration paths through Central America and the US-Mexico border. The report also highlighted rising deaths in parts of Asia, including routes used by Rohingya refugees.
The IOM urged governments to expand safe and legal migration channels, warning that stricter border controls are pushing migrants toward more dangerous routes controlled by traffickers. It also called for improved data collection and stronger search-and-rescue operations.
"The numbers are a stark reminder that people risk everything when they have no safe alternatives," the report said, stressing the need for coordinated international action to address the growing humanitarian crisis.

Tiger Jumps Into Crowd at Circus

> Vikrama Vahini | Russia
A shocking incident unfolded at a circus in Russia when a tiger broke through a safety net and leapt towards the audience, causing panic among spectators.
The dramatic moment, captured on camera, has since gone viral on social media, raising fresh concerns about safety standards in circuses. The video shows the safety net tearing apart as the tiger suddenly jumps out of the performance area toward the front rows.
According to reports, the act involved three tigers and a trainer. As the animal lunged toward the crowd, spectators were instructed to remain calm and avoid sudden movements. The trainer quickly intervened and managed to bring the tiger under control, preventing any serious injuries. Authorities are expected to review safety measures following the incident, which has reignited debate over the use of wild animals in entertainment.

Nepal Govt Jolt: Home Minister Quits in 26 Days!

> Vikrama Vahini | Kathmandu
In a major political setback for the government led by Balen Shah, Nepal's Home Minister Sudhan Gurung resigned just 26 days after assuming office, citing the need for a fair investigation into allegations related to his financial assets.
Gurung has been facing scrutiny over alleged business links with entrepreneur Deepak Bhatta and suspected investments in insurance firms.
Bhatta is reportedly under investigation for money laundering, further intensifying the controversy.
The resignation comes in the wake of widespread protests across Nepal, with students, political groups, and citizens taking to the streets in Kathmandu and other cities. Demonstrations have also spread to Singha Durbar, the country's administrative hub.
In a statement shared on social media, Gurung said he stepped down to avoid any conflict of interest and to ensure an impartial probe. "For me, ethics are above position."



His Excellency Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, inaugurates the newly renovated library at Alliance Francaise de Bangalore on Wednesday, April 22. Seen with him are Gregor Trumel, Director, Institute of France in India; M. Jean Francois Hans, Foundation, Alliance Francaise; Chinmaya Chigateri, President, Alliance Francaise de Bangalore (to his left); Marc Lamy, Consul General of France in Bangalore; and Emilie Jacament, Co-ordinator, Alliance Francaise network in India.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

SHRI ADI SHANKARACHARYA (c. 788-820 CE)

• Unified diverse Vedic traditions
• Preached Non-Dualism: Brahman (Ultimate Reality) and Atman (Self) are one.
• Motto: Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya.

- 1. PROPAGATION OF ADVAITA VEDANTA**
- 2. COMMENTARIES (BHASHYAS) ON PRASHTHANA TRAYI**
Wrote profound commentaries on the three foundational texts:
A) UPANISHADS
B) BRAHMA SUTRAS
C) BHAGAVAD GITA.
- 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF CHATURAMANAYA MATHAS**
Founded four main Mathas to consolidate and perpetuate the Advaita philosophy across India.
NORTH: Jyotirmath (Badrinath)
WEST: Dwarka (Sharada Peetham)
EAST: Puri (Govardhana Matha)
SOUTH: Sringeri (Sharada Peetham)
- 4. EXTENSIVE HYMNS (STOTRAS) & LITERARY WORKS**
Composed numerous devotional hymns and Prakarana Granthas (philosophical texts). Examples:
A) BHAJA GOVINDAM
B) VIVEKACHUDAMANI
C) SOUNDARYA LAHARI.

SUMMARY OF LEGACY

- Consolidated Advaita Vedanta
- Revived Sanatana Dharma
- Integrated Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana margas
- Established enduring monastic and teacher traditions.

IRAN THREATENS GLOBAL INTERNET, INDIA ON EDGE

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran
Amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, Iran has issued a strategic warning that it could target undersea data cables passing through the Strait of Hormuz, raising fears of a major disruption to global internet connectivity.
According to reports linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a detailed map of submarine cable networks and Gulf-based data centres has been highlighted, suggesting their potential vulnerability. International observers have interpreted this as a warning that Iran could extend its response beyond oil routes to the global digital infrastructure.
> Digital Highway Under Threat
The Strait of Hormuz is not only a critical transit route but also a key "digital highway," with at least 17 major undersea cable systems passing through it.
These cables connect regions across Asia, Europe, and Africa, supporting global communication and data flow. Countries such as the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi



Arabia could face severe disruptions to their digital economies if these cables are damaged.
> Impact on India
India could also face significant consequences, as nearly 60% of its international data traffic passes through the Hormuz and Red Sea routes. Any disruption could slow internet speeds, affect banking services, and disrupt financial transactions reliant on global networks.
Key cable systems impacted may include AAE-1, Europe-Persia Express Gateway (EPEG), and SeaMeWe-5, which are crucial for connecting India to Europe and other regions.

> Risks to Banking and IT Services
Global financial systems, including SWIFT banking operations, depend heavily on these cables. Disruptions could affect stock markets, cross-border transactions, and online services.
Additionally, many Indian IT firms rely on data centres in Gulf countries such as Dubai and Bahrain, which could further impact cloud services like those offered by Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.
> Repair Challenges and Global Impact
Repairing damaged undersea cables in conflict zones is complex and risky, requiring specialised ships and stable conditions. Experts warn that any damage could take weeks or even months to fix, prolonging disruptions.
While alternative routes exist, a complete internet shutdown is unlikely. However, users in India and across the world may experience slower connectivity and delays in accessing international services if tensions escalate further.