



Sreeleela's Bollywood debut faces delays as Anurag Basu's romantic film with Kartik Aaryan slows down amid extended production schedule and uncertainty over release timeline.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has warned that the ongoing conflict in West Asia and related supply chain disruptions could pose challenges to the domestic economy through higher energy costs, rising input prices, trade flow disturbances, and financial market volatility.



### Good morning

Success is a tasty dish. Patience, intelligence, knowledge and experience are its 'Ingredients'. But "Hard work" is that little salt that makes it 'Delicious'.

### BRIEFS

#### Iran Begins Hormuz Toll Revenue Amid Tensions

Iran has begun collecting transit tolls from ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, with officials confirming the first revenue under the newly introduced system. The move has raised global concerns, as the strait is a critical route for nearly 20% of the world's oil and gas trade.

#### Lenskart Dress Code Row Sparks Protest Over Religious Symbols

A controversy has erupted around Lenskart over alleged restrictions on religious symbols in its workplace dress code. Claims circulating on social media suggested that employees were barred from wearing tilak, bindi, or sacred threads, sparking public outrage.

#### DCM 'Secret Talks' Remark Sparks Political Buzz

D. K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said he had held discussions with senior party leaders during his visit to Delhi, but declined to reveal details of the meetings, triggering fresh political speculation within the Indian National Congress.



Speaking to reporters at Karnataka Bhavan, Shivakumar said he had not travelled to Delhi "for leisure" and confirmed that he met certain party leaders to discuss organisational matters. However, he maintained that it would not be appropriate to disclose whom he met or the specifics of the discussions.

# Record Turnout in Bengal, T N

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi | Chennai  
Voter participation reached remarkable levels in two major states on Thursday, as Phase 1 of the West Bengal Assembly elections and the single-phase Tamil Nadu Assembly polls recorded high turnout, reflecting strong public engagement in the democratic process.

Record voter turnout in West Bengal Phase 1 and Tamil Nadu Assembly polls reflects strong public participation, with Bengal touching 91.78% and Tamil Nadu recording a historic 84.69%, signalling heightened political engagement across both states.

In West Bengal, a record 91.78 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 5 pm in the first phase, according to the Election Commission of India. Polling was held across 152 of the state's 294 constituencies, covering 16 districts and involving 1,478 candidates.

Voting began at 7 am and continued steadily throughout the day across 44,376 polling booths, including nearly 3,000 auxiliary booths. Of these, 5,444 booths were managed entirely by women, while 207 were designated as model polling



JUP and TMC workers engage in a stone pelting fight in Murshidabad West Bengal as central forces try to control the situation, and open lathi charge.

District-wise data showed Dakshin Dinajpur recording the highest turnout at 95.15 per cent, followed by Cooch Behar (92.07 per cent) and Birbhum (91.55 per cent). Other districts also reported strong participation, including Murshidabad (91.36 per cent), Paschim Medinipur (90.70 per cent), Jhargram (90.53 per cent), Malda (89.56 per cent), Purbo Medinipur (88.55 per cent), and Paschim Bardhaman (86.89 per cent). Among constituencies, Raghunathganj recorded the highest turnout at 95.64 per cent.

However, isolated incidents of tension were reported in parts of Murshidabad, including Nowda, where clashes between political workers and a crude bomb incident were reported.

The second phase of polling in West Bengal is scheduled for April 29, covering key regions including North and South 24 Parganas, Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, and Purba Bardhaman.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu recorded a historic voter turnout of 84.69 per cent across all 234 Assembly constituencies, marking the highest since the state's first elections in 1952.

The turnout surpassed the previous high of 78.29 per cent recorded in 2011, highlighting a significant increase in voter participation. An estimated 4.71 crore voters exercised their franchise in a single-day polling process conducted across the state.

District-wise, Karur led with the

### KEY CONSTITUENCY-WISE VOTING TRENDS

Constituency	Turnout (%)
Edappadi constituency	89.09%
Perambur constituency	86.72%
Tiruchy East constituency	79.32%
Kolathur constituency (Chief Minister)	83.58%
M.K. Stalin	83.58%
Karaikudi constituency (Seeman)	71.88%

Turnout Trends Over the Years  
Tamil Nadu has seen fluctuating voter turnout in past Assembly elections:

Year	Turnout (%)
2021	73.63%
2016	74.81%
2011	78.29%
2006	70.82%
2001	59.07%
1996	66.95%
1991	63.84%
1989	69.69%
1984	73.47%
1980	65.42%
1977	61.58%
1971	72.10%
1967	76.57%

High Turnout Recorded Across Key Tamil Nadu Constituencies

highest turnout at 89 per cent, while Chennai recorded 81.34 per cent. Kanniyakumari reported the lowest turnout at 73.44 per cent. Key constituencies also witnessed strong participation, including Edappadi (89.09 per cent), Perambur (86.72 per cent), Tiruchy East (79.32 per cent), Kolathur (83.58 per cent), and Karaikudi (71.88 per cent). Election officials ensured smooth polling arrangements, particularly in urban areas like Chennai, where voters arriving at polling stations before the 6 pm deadline were issued tokens and allowed to vote even beyond scheduled hours.

# Trump Orders Navy to Destroy Mine-Laying Boats

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi  
In a sharp escalation of tensions in West Asia, Donald Trump has ordered the United States Navy to "shoot and kill" any vessel found laying mines in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, intensifying security operations in one of the world's busiest oil shipping routes.

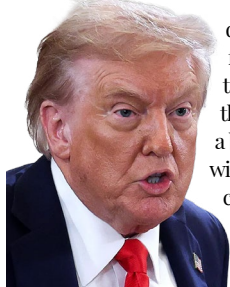
The directive comes amid ongoing uncertainty over a ceasefire with Iran and fragile diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation.

Trump, in a post on Truth Social, said US naval forces have been instructed to act without hesitation against any mine-laying boats, while mine-clearing operations in the region are already underway and being ramped up significantly.

Tensions remain high despite an announcement that the ceasefire with Iran has been extended indefinitely at Pakistan's request.

However, Iran has not officially confirmed agreeing to the extension, and reports suggest fresh hostilities, including firing on vessels and seizures in the Strait.

Diplomatic prospects also remain uncertain. While Trump indicated that a second round of US-Iran talks could take place soon, Iran has stated that no final decision has been made regarding participation in further negotiations.



# US Seizes Iran Vessel After Hormuz Attacks

Vikrama Vahini | Tehran  
The United States has seized an Iran-linked vessel in the Indian Ocean on an overnight operation, a day after Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) reportedly attacked two commercial ships in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.

According to US defence officials, the vessel identified as Majestic X, suspected of involvement in Iranian oil smuggling, was intercepted between Sri Lanka and Indonesia in the Indian Ocean. Ship-tracking data indicated the vessel was operating in a region previously linked to similar

### MEA REACTS TO TRUMP'S 'HELLHOLE' REMARK

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi  
Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday reacted cautiously to controversial remarks by Donald Trump referring to India and China, stating only that it had "seen reports" and declining further comment.

The remarks, made in a reshared transcript on immigration, sparked criticism internationally, with Iran condemning the statement and calling India and China "cradles of civilisation."

However, India chose not to escalate the issue, maintaining diplomatic restraint. The controversy arose after Trump shared excerpts from a talk show discussion that included comments on US birthright citizenship and immigration trends.

Despite the growing reactions globally, Indian officials refrained from issuing any strong response or formal protest, signalling a measured approach. Sources indicated that New Delhi is closely monitoring the situation but prefers to avoid unnecessary escalation in bilateral discourse.

# TRUMP U-TURN ON INDIA REMARK

### Backlash Grows as Trump Softens 'Hellhole' Remark, Praises India

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi  
United States President Donald Trump on Thursday described India as a "great country" led by a "very good friend," just hours after controversy erupted over a reposted transcript that referred to India and China as a "hellhole on the planet."

The clarification came amid growing backlash following Trump's post on his Truth Social platform, where he had shared excerpts from a conservative talk show hosted by Michael Savage. The remarks in the transcript, which touched upon US birthright citizenship, included controversial comments about immigrants from countries such as India and China.

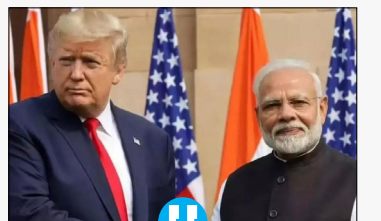
Praise After Controversy  
As criticism mounted, a spokesperson from the US Embassy in New Delhi conveyed Trump's positive remarks about India, highlighting his friendly ties with the country's leadership. Trump stated that India is a "great country" and emphasised his personal rapport with its leadership, attempting to soften the earlier controversy.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) refrained from issuing a direct response to the remarks. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the ministry had "seen the reports" but declined to comment further during a weekly press briefing.

Row Over 'Hellhole' Remark  
The controversy began after Trump reshared the transcript in which Savage questioned the relevance of US constitutional provisions on citizenship in the modern era. The discussion included remarks suggesting that immigrants arriving late in pregnancy gain automatic citizenship for their children, followed by broader criticism of immigration trends.

The comments triggered sharp reactions, with critics terming them offensive and inappropriate, particularly in reference to countries like India. The episode has added to ongoing debates around immigration policies and political rhetoric in the United States.

Despite the initial backlash, Trump's subsequent praise for India appears aimed at easing tensions, though the incident has sparked wider discussion on diplomatic sensitivities and public statements by global leaders.



Amid backlash over a controversial "hellhole" remark, Donald Trump praised India as a "great country" led by a "very good friend," while Ministry of External Affairs maintained a restrained response, avoiding direct comment on the issue.

# TCS Nashik Case: Obscene Passwords Alleged

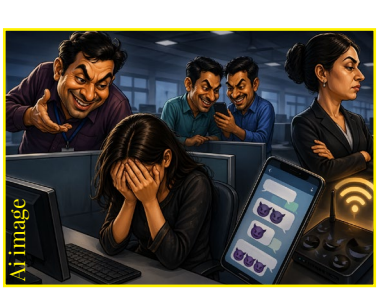
### HARASSMENT CLAIMS ESCALATE; VULGAR MESSAGES SHOCK WORKPLACE

Vikrama Vahini | Nashik  
Shocking details have emerged in the ongoing investigation into allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious intimidation at the Nashik BPO unit of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), with victims alleging the use of vulgar office passwords and obscene messages on official WhatsApp groups.

Harassment Allegations Surface During Probe  
A complainant, in her statement before the Maharashtra State Women's

Commission, alleged that the harassment began during her training period and continued for several months. She accused an employee of repeatedly calling her to his cabin and making sexually explicit remarks along with comments that hurt her religious sentiments.

The victim further claimed that despite informing her immediate manager, no action was taken, and the harassment allegedly continued and intensified. She also alleged that two



Other accused engaged in digital stalking and spread false rumours against her. Obscene Messages and Offensive

Passwords Alleged  
According to police investigations, the alleged misconduct extended into workplace systems. Officials found that a group leader allegedly circulated obscene messages in official WhatsApp groups on a regular basis.

Investigators also reported that Wi-Fi passwords were frequently changed using vulgar or offensive terms, allegedly aimed at insulting the religious sentiments of female employees, contributing to a hostile work environment.

Seven Employees Arrested  
Police have arrested seven individuals in connection with the case, including HR head Ashwini Chainani and employees identified as Danish Sheikh, Tausif Attar, Raza Rafiq Memon, Shahrulkh Qureshi, Shafi Sheikh, and Asif Aftab Ansari. One accused, Nida Khan, is currently absconding.

Following the arrests, all accused employees have been suspended by the company as the investigation continues.

Editorial

High Voter Turnout in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal Reflects Both Electoral Strength and Continuing Democratic Concerns

The recent Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal witnessed record voter turnout, underlining the resilience and vibrancy of India's democratic framework. A significant share of the credit goes to the proactive measures adopted by the Election Commission of India, including stricter monitoring mechanisms and steps aimed at ensuring fear-free polling. Elections in a democracy are often described as a festival of the people, and the enthusiastic participation across regions reinforces this sentiment.

However, the electoral process in India has not always been free from controversy or concern. There have been instances in the past where elections were marred by allegations of intimidation, violence, and malpractice, raising questions about the integrity of the system. Persistent doubts over Electronic Voting Machines, despite repeated technical validations and judicial scrutiny, continue to be voiced by sections of the political spectrum. While skepticism is an integral part of a healthy democracy, the continued politicization of such issues, even after clarifications, risks eroding public trust in institutions.

Similarly, recent debates surrounding electoral roll revisions and verification drives have triggered legal and political contestation, with some stakeholders approaching the courts. Concerns over inclusion, exclusion, and the potential misuse of such exercises reflect the delicate balance between maintaining electoral integrity and ensuring fairness. While allegations of vote-bank politics and illegal voting often dominate the narrative, it is equally important to ensure that such claims are addressed through transparent processes and credible evidence. In navigating these complexities, the Election Commission's role remains pivotal—not only in conducting elections efficiently but also in sustaining public confidence in the democratic process.

-Editor

Complete road works at the earliest: Dr. Rajendra K.V

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Bengaluru West City Corporation Commissioner Dr. Rajendra K.V. has directed officials to expedite and complete the road development works covering a stretch of 3.55 km from Sadashivanagar Police Station to Outer Ring Road.

Inspection at New BEL Road

During a morning inspection in the New BEL Road area under the Mattikere Sub-Division of the Malleshwaram Zone, the Commissioner reviewed ongoing infrastructure works. He noted that the delay in asphaltting was primarily due to BWSSB pipeline-related works.

He instructed officials to complete the pipeline installation



by May 10, 2026, and immediately commence asphaltting thereafter without further delay.

Action Against Unauthorized Commercial Activities

Dr. Rajendra K.V. directed officials to identify commercial establishments operating without valid trade licenses. He ordered strict enforcement measures, including penalties and necessary legal action against violators.

Strict Measures for Solid Waste

Management

Emphasizing better urban cleanliness, he instructed the Solid Waste Management Department to create public awareness against dumping waste into stormwater drains. He also called for strict action against offenders.

Key Directions Issued During Inspection

Completion of road works from Chikkamaranahalli to Outer Ring Road at the earliest

Removal of encroachments on footpaths to ensure pedestrian safety

Clearance of privately laid tiles on footpaths and proper maintenance

Action against bulk waste generators responsible for dumping waste on roadsides

Removal of unauthorized cables

Development of BEL Road as a model road with improved infrastructure standards

Officials Present  
The inspection was attended by Chief Engineer Basavaraj Kabade, Superintendent Engineer Jayashankar, and other executive and assistant executive engineers of the concerned divisions.

Spandana Scores 606 Marks, Congrats

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Spandana Rao S.H., a student of Mahila Mandala Educational Institution, N.R. Colony, Basavanagudi, has brought laurels to her college by scoring 606 out of 625 in the recently announced second-year Pre-University examination results. The college management and teaching staff have congratulated her on the achievement.



Spandana scored 125 in Sanskrit, 99 in English, 100 in Kannada, 99 in Mathematics, 94 in Science, and 89 in Social Science. She also secured 'A' grade in Physical and Health Education, Work Experience, and Arts Education.

Her parents expressed pride over her outstanding academic performance, while the institution praised her as a consistent and dedicated student who has made the college proud.

YEDIYURAPPA ON 50-YEAR POLITICAL JOURNEY

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Preparations have begun for a grand "Abhimana Utsava" marking former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa's 50-year-long political journey, with a bhoomi pooja scheduled at the event venue on April 26 at 10 am, said former Deputy Chief Minister and MP Govind Karjol.

Bhoomi Pooja for Event Arrangements

Speaking at a press conference held at the BJP state office "Jagannath Bhavan," Karjol said the bhoomi pooja will mark the beginning of arrangements such as pandals, stage construction, and other infrastructure works for the programme.

BJP State President and MLA B.Y. Vijayendra has been invited to participate in the ceremony. Several leaders including MPs, former MPs, MLAs, former MLAs, Legislative Council members, and opposition leaders R. Ashoka and C.T. Ravi are expected to attend.

Grand Celebration in Chitradurga on May 9

Karjol announced that the main Abhimana Utsava will be held in Chitradurga on May 9. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the event and felicitate Yediyurappa.



On May 8 evening, a "pura pravasha" (grand entry procession) will be held at 6 pm. The organisers expect over 10 lakh people to attend the celebration, and special teams have been formed for event management.

Leaders, Saints and Public to Participate

The programme will see participation from seers of various mutts, former Chief Ministers, ministers, public representatives, artists, writers, and people from all walks of society. Farmers and supporters from across the state are also expected to attend in large numbers.

Chitradurga Chosen as Central Location

Responding to questions, leaders said Chitradurga was chosen due to its central location in Karnataka. They described Yediyurappa as a mass leader who built and strengthened the BJP in the state.

Vijayendra on Yediyurappa's Legacy

BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra said the celebration marks recognition of Yediyurappa's five-decade-long political contribution.

He said the event would be a historic gathering with participation from supporters across Karnataka.

He added that the celebration is being planned as a grand and meaningful event, highlighting Yediyurappa's contributions to farmers, social justice, and state development.

Massive Participation Expected

Vijayendra said people from all parts of the state will attend in large numbers, making it a historic public event. The programme logo was also released during the press conference.

Senior leaders including Prabhakar Kore, Govind Karjol, S. Ramulu, Harish Poojja, Anil Benake, Sharanu Tallikeri, and Aruna Shahapur were present.

Organisers said elaborate arrangements are being made for crowd management, security, and transportation to ensure smooth conduct of the mega event.

Special cultural programmes and tributes highlighting Yediyurappa's political journey are also being planned as part of the celebrations.



Yuvanidhi: Dinesh Urges Registration

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government's flagship "Yuvanidhi" scheme, which provides financial assistance to unemployed degree and diploma holders, has completed three years. Authorities have urged 2025-26 graduates to register under the scheme without delay.

State Vice President of the Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority and MLA Dinesh Gooligowda said the initiative has become a key support system for job-seeking youth. He added that the scheme reflects the Congress government's commitment under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

So far, over ₹950.57 crore has been disbursed through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), benefiting more than 4.22 lakh registered candidates across the state.

Eligible youth who completed their degree or diploma between 2022 and 2026 and remain unemployed for six months can apply. Degree holders receive ₹3,000 per month, while diploma holders get ₹1,500.

Applicants can register through the Seva Sindhu portal or approach district employment exchanges for assistance.



GBA Warns of WhatsApp Fraud in Officials' Names

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has issued a public alert over WhatsApp frauds being carried out using fake accounts impersonating the Chief Commissioner and city corporation commissioners.

Officials said miscreants are sending messages seeking financial help by misusing names, designations, and photos of senior authorities. Multiple cybercrime complaints and FIRs have been registered between April 15 and April 23.

Authorities have identified several Indian and international numbers linked to the scam and warned the public not to respond or transfer money to such requests. Citizens have been urged to



report such incidents to the nearest police station or call the GBA helpline 1533. Strict legal action has been assured against those involved.

Officials also advised government staff to verify any such requests directly through official channels before taking action.

The GBA reiterated the need for public awareness to prevent cyber fraud and ensure timely reporting of suspicious activity.

NEWS

SSLC Record: 94% Pass, 7 Full Marks

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka SSLC examination results for the academic year 2025-26 have been announced, recording a historic pass percentage of 94.01%. Education officials said students have delivered an excellent performance despite challenges this year.

A total of 7,24,794 students have passed out of 7,70,209 candidates who appeared for the examination. Over 9 lakh students had registered, while more than 8 lakh students appeared for the exam conducted across 2,870 centres between March 18 and April 2.

The results have been published on the official website (https://karresults.nic.in/) and also shared through SMS and WhatsApp, Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa said.

Seven Students Achieve Perfect Score

In a remarkable achievement, seven students scored a perfect 625 out of 625 marks.

The toppers are:

- ▶ Bharat (Davanagere)
- ▶ Brinda (Chikkamagaluru)
- ▶ Dhanush (Bengaluru North)
- ▶ Preetham (Udupi)
- ▶ Prarthana (Chikkodi)
- ▶ Sovjanya (Vijayapura)
- ▶ Sukhdev (Raichur)
- ▶ District-wise Performance
- ▶ Dakshina Kannada Tops State
- ▶ Dakshina Kannada secured the first position with an outstanding 98.40% pass rate, followed by:
- ▶ Udupi - 98.18% (2nd)
- ▶ Uttara Kannada - 98.09% (3rd)
- ▶ Hassan - 97.51% (4th)

Top Performing Districts

- ▶ Mandya - 97.45% (5th)
- ▶ Sirsi - 97.21% (6th)
- ▶ Haveri - 96.87% (7th)
- ▶ Kodagu - 96.70% (8th)
- ▶ Shivamogga - 96.56% (9th)
- ▶ Vijayanagara - 96.39% (10th)
- ▶ Other District Rankings
- ▶ Bengaluru Rural - 95.84% (11th)
- ▶ Dharwad - 95.59% (12th)
- ▶ Kolar - 95.50% (13th)
- ▶ Bagalkot - 95.42% (14th)
- ▶ Bengaluru North - 95.34% (15th)
- ▶ Gadag - 95.24% (16th)
- ▶ Chikkamagaluru - 94.99% (17th)
- ▶ Belagavi - 94.75% (18th)
- ▶ Davanagere - 94.64% (19th)
- ▶ Mysuru - 94.50% (20th)
- ▶ Raichur - 94.41% (21st)
- ▶ Vijayapura - 94.17% (22nd)

- ▶ Chikkodi - 94.09% (23rd)
- ▶ Ballari - 93.36% (24th)
- ▶ Koppal - 93.10% (25th)
- ▶ Ramanagara - 92.83% (26th)
- ▶ Chitradurga - 92.25% (27th)
- ▶ Bidar - 92.18% (28th)
- ▶ Tumakuru - 92.04% (29th)
- ▶ Chamaraajanagar - 91.89% (30th)
- ▶ Yadgir - 91.89% (31st)

No Third Exam This Year

Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa clarified that no third SSLC examination will be conducted this year due to the improved overall results.

However, the second examination is scheduled from May 18 to May 25. Officials said the improved pass percentage reflects better academic preparation and student performance across the state.

Health And Lifestyle

ORAL CANCER RISING IN B'LURU YOUTH

A concerning rise in oral cancer cases among young adults in Bengaluru has alarmed medical experts, who say the disease is increasingly being detected in people aged 30 to 40. While oral cancer was traditionally associated with older age groups, doctors now report a shift linked to lifestyle habits, tobacco use, and delayed diagnosis.

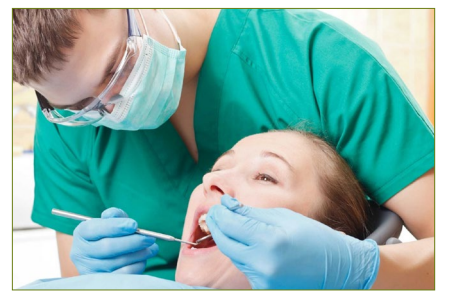
Changing Pattern of Oral Cancer in Young Adults

Medical specialists have observed that oral cancer is no longer confined to older populations. According to oncologists, a growing number of young patients are being diagnosed at relatively advanced stages due to a lack of awareness and delayed medical consultation.

Medical oncologist Dr. Rajeev Vijayakumar noted that tobacco consumption remains the leading cause, but is now compounded by modern lifestyle factors.

Experts say several interconnected factors are contributing to the rise of oral cancer among younger individuals:

- ▶ Tobacco and related product consumption continues to be a major risk factor
  - ▶ Increased intake of highly processed foods
  - ▶ Deficiency of essential micro-nutrients
  - ▶ High levels of stress in urban lifestyles
  - ▶ Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infections
- Head and neck surgery specialist Dr. Narayana Subramaniam pointed out that a major concern is the misconception that cancer is unlikely in younger people, which leads to delayed diagnosis and treatment.
- Early Symptoms Often Ignored**  
Doctors warn that early-stage oral cancer



symptoms are usually painless, making them easy to overlook. Patients often mistake them for minor dental issues or temporary oral conditions.

Key warning signs include:

- ▶ White or red patches inside the cheeks or mouth
- ▶ Loose teeth without clear dental cause
- ▶ Persistent mouth ulcers or tooth-related pain that does not heal

Radiation oncologist Dr. Lithika Lavanya stated that nearly 50-65% of patients reach hospitals at advanced stages because the early phase is symptomless and easily ignored.

Do Not Mistake It for a Dental

Dr. Sakshi Hinduja advised that persistent oral problems should not be ignored and must be properly investigated if they do not heal with routine dental care.

Doctors Urge Early Screening and Awareness

Medical professionals emphasize that early detection significantly improves treatment outcomes in oral cancer cases.

They recommend regular oral check-ups, especially for individuals with tobacco habits or persistent mouth-related symptoms. Prompted renewed calls for public awareness campaigns, early screening programs, and lifestyle changes to reduce preventable risk factors.

Grocery Kits Distributed to Auto Drivers at GBA Office

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

At the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) central office, a relief programme was held at Dr. Rajkumar Glass House, where grocery kits were distributed to auto drivers facing hardship due to disruptions in auto gas supply caused by geopolitical tensions linked to the Iran-Israel situation.

The initiative was jointly organised by the Greater Bengaluru Authority - Officials and Employees Welfare Association and the Shirdi Sai Baba Dwarkamai Development Board. The kits containing essential food and grocery items were handed over to beneficiaries



during the programme.

The distribution was carried out by Deputy Legal Officer Jayachandra Reddy, GBA Officials and Employees Welfare Association President A. Amrut Raj, and Sai Shankar.

Speaking on the occasion, representatives of the welfare association said the organisation has been actively engaged in promoting culture, literature, and social welfare activities.

They highlighted several past initiatives, including supplying 1 lakh litres of drinking water to Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala during scarcity, distributing grocery kits during floods in Kodagu, North Karnataka and Kerala, and extending financial assistance to families affected by tree-fall accidents as well as large-scale relief work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ASUS Launches AI-Powered ExpertBook Ultra, Expands Business-Focused P Series in India



### Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Global technology leader ASUS has unveiled its flagship AI-powered business laptop, the ExpertBook Ultra, while also expanding its ExpertBook P series portfolio in India. The launch highlights ASUS's focus on delivering "worry-free business" solutions designed for professionals and enterprises operating in an AI-driven environment.

The new lineup combines high-end performance, enterprise-grade security, durability, and mobility, supported by a robust service network across India.

Durability, Security, and Partnerships Both the ExpertBook Ultra and P series meet US MIL-STD 810H military-grade durability standards and feature ASUS's ExpertGuardian multi-layered security system. The company's service network spans over 15,500 pin codes in India, along with international warranty coverage in more than 80 countries.

To improve accessibility, ASUS has partnered with Flipkart, leveraging its digital reach to bring enterprise-grade devices closer to Indian consumers.

ASUS Global Co-CEO Samson Hu said the launch marks a new benchmark in business computing, while Intel India executive P P Sunil Acharya emphasized the role of co-engineering in delivering AI-powered performance.

With this launch, ASUS aims to strengthen its position in India's fast-growing business laptop segment.

### ExpertBook Ultra: Performance Meets Portability

The ExpertBook Ultra is tailored for CXOs and high-level professionals who demand uncompromised productivity. Weighing just 0.99 kg, the laptop features a lightweight magnesium chassis, making it both portable and durable.

Powered by the latest Intel Core Ultra Series 3 processors, the device integrates a Neural Processing Unit (NPU) for advanced AI capabilities.

It also includes high-speed 9600 MT/s DDR5 memory and a Gen 5 SSD delivering speeds up to 14,090 MB/s, ensuring seamless performance.

The laptop offers a 14-inch 3K OLED touchscreen with a 120Hz refresh rate and up to 1400 nits brightness.

A six-speaker Dolby-certified audio system enhances the multimedia experience, while a 70Wh battery supports up to 26 hours of usage. Security is reinforced with hardware protection compliant with NIST SP 800-193 standards.

### Expanded P Series for Business Needs

ASUS has also expanded its ExpertBook P series with the introduction of P3 and P5 models. These devices cater to a wide range of users, from startups to large enterprises.

Available in 14-inch and 16-inch variants, the P series supports Intel Core Ultra Series 3 and Series 2 processors. With up to 64GB DDR5 RAM and dual SSD storage, the laptops offer strong scalability. The P3 model is available in both plastic and premium metal chassis options, providing flexibility based on budget and requirements.



## BJP ESCALATES KHARGE ROW

### Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) show-cause notice to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has triggered a major political confrontation in Karnataka, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) escalating the issue into a statewide campaign demanding his unconditional apology and resignation from party leadership.

### EC Issues Notice Over Alleged Remarks

The ECI issued a notice to Kharge following a complaint by BJP leaders over his alleged remarks referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "terrorist" during an election speech. The Commission stated that the comment appears to violate the Model Code of Conduct and sought an explanation within a strict deadline, warning of further action if no response is received.

### BJP Leaders Launch Sharp Attack

Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R. Ashoka led the BJP's attack, calling the remarks "a disgrace to the Congress Party" and accusing Kharge of political opportunism.

He said the Congress was already facing setbacks nationally and claimed internal leadership ambitions were influencing such statements.

Ashoka also said the ECI's intervention was "fully justified" given the election-sensitive environment.

### Demand for Apology and Resignation

State BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra intensified the pressure, urging Kharge to issue a public apology immediately. He accused the Congress of being unable to accept Prime Minister Modi's popularity and attempting to divert attention through controversial remarks.

Vijayendra clarified that while the BJP was not involved in the ECI's decision, it fully supports the constitutional body's action.

### Allegations of Provocative Statements

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje further escalated the criticism, alleging that Kharge had a pattern of making provocative statements and accused him of remarks that could deepen social and political divisions. She termed the comments "deeply irresponsible" and warned against attempts to polarise public sentiment.

### Political Row Intensifies in Karnataka

With senior BJP leaders united in their demand, the ECI notice has now evolved into a broader political

### Vijayendra Slams Kharge, Demands Apology



### Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

BJP State President and MLA B.Y. Vijayendra has demanded that AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge apologise to the nation, alleging that his remarks referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "terrorist" have hurt public sentiments and drawn nationwide condemnation.

### "Congress Cannot Tolerate Modi's Popularity": Vijayendra

Speaking at a protest organised near the Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha, Vijayendra said the entire world acknowledges Prime Minister Modi's leadership, and claimed that Kharge's comments reflect Congress's inability to accept his growing global stature.

He noted that over 25 countries have honoured PM Modi with their highest civilian awards and insisted that Kharge should tender an unconditional apology to the people of India.

He also criticised the state government over delayed salary payments in several departments, including the police, calling it an indicator of Karnataka's worsening financial condition.

### BJP Leaders Escalate Attack on Congress

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje alleged that Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, have been making "anti-national statements," accusing them of

acting like foreign agents and echoing the interests of individuals such as George Soros.

Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka called Kharge's remarks an "unpardonable offence" and an insult to the nation. He alleged that Congress leaders have previously remained silent on issues involving pro-Pakistan slogans and terrorism-related incidents.

### Questions Raised Over Leadership Influence

Legislative Council Opposition Leader C.T. Ravi questioned whether Kharge's remarks were influenced by senior Congress leadership, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

He accused Congress leaders of consistently targeting nationalist organisations and the Prime Minister.

### "Congress Will Face Public Backlash": BJP Leaders Warn

Former Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol alleged that Kharge's statements were made to please the Congress high command and warned that such remarks would lead to strong public backlash against the party.

Several BJP MPs, MLAs, and MLCs participated in the protest, intensifying the party's statewide campaign demanding an apology from Kharge and strong action over the issue.

confrontation in Karnataka.

The BJP has warned of continued protests unless Kharge apologises and steps down from his party position, placing the Congress leadership under mounting political pressure.

Congress leaders, however, have pushed back against the BJP's campaign, alleging that the issue is being politically amplified ahead of elections.

They maintained that Kharge's comments are being misinterpreted and insisted that the party will respond

appropriately to the Election Commission notice within the stipulated time frame.

Meanwhile, political observers note that the controversy has further deepened the already charged atmosphere in Karnataka politics, with both ruling and opposition parties engaging in sharp exchanges.

The matter is expected to continue dominating the political discourse in the coming days as the ECI reviews Kharge's response.

## ENTERTAINMENT

## Akshay, Vidya Reunite for New Film

### Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar on Thursday announced that he will once again share screen space with actor Vidya Balan in a new film directed by Anees Bazmee.

The actor shared the news on social media, expressing excitement about collaborating with Vidya Balan on the upcoming untitled project. While further details about the film's storyline and release date have not yet been disclosed, the announcement has already generated interest among fans.



Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan have previously worked together in several successful films, including Heyy Babyy, Bhoole Bhooley, and Mission Mangal. Their on-screen pairing has been well received by audiences, adding to expectations around the new collaboration.

The upcoming project will be directed by Anees Bazmee, known for his work in the comedy and commercial entertainment genre. The film is expected to bring together humour and strong performances, in line with Bazmee's signature style.

More details regarding the cast, production schedule, and release timeline are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

Industry insiders suggest that the film could mark a return to the light-hearted, family entertainer space, a genre where both actors have delivered notable hits in the past. With Anees Bazmee at the helm, expectations are high for a blend of comedy, drama, and engaging storytelling. The reunion of Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan is also being seen as a strategic move to tap into audience nostalgia while offering fresh content, making the project one of the most anticipated upcoming Bollywood releases.

## Aadinath Kothare Hails 'Ramayana' Film

### Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Actor Aadinath Kothare, who plays the role of Bharat in filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari's ambitious film Ramayana, has said that the project has the potential to elevate Indian cinema on a global platform.

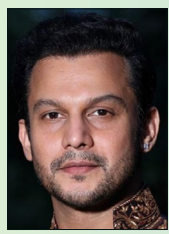
The film, described as a large-scale cinematic event, features Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram, Yash (of KGF fame) as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Goddess Sita, Sunny Deol as Lord Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey as Lord Lakshman. Kothare, a well-known actor in Marathi cinema with notable films such as Paani, Zapatlela, Majha Chakula, and Avatarachi Goshta, expressed deep admiration for the project and its execution.

He said the film is "one of the most honestly, passionately and ambitiously made cinema on Indian soil," adding that he feels proud to be part of it. He further described Ramayana as "the most honest film ever made" and praised its script as one of the finest he has read.

The actor also highlighted the scale and vision of the project, stating that such films have the power to bring Indian storytelling to a wider global audience and set new benchmarks for the industry.

Ramayana is currently one of the most anticipated Indian film projects, drawing attention for its star cast, scale, and mythological subject matter.

The film is also expected to leverage cutting-edge visual effects and high-end production design to recreate the grandeur of the epic, with reports suggesting extensive pre-production work and detailed world-building. Industry observers believe that if executed successfully, Ramayana could set a new benchmark for mythological storytelling in Indian cinema and open doors for more large-scale adaptations of classical texts for global audiences.



## RAJAMOULI'S 'VARANASI' TO SHINE AT CCXP MEXICO

### Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli's highly anticipated pan-India epic Varanasi is set for an international showcase at the Comic Con Experience Mexico (CCXP Mexico), scheduled to be held on Friday.

The organisers of the three-day pop culture convention announced on Thursday that Rajamouli's son and producer S.S. Karthikeya will present a special preview of the film, along with never-before-seen behind-the-scenes footage for fans.

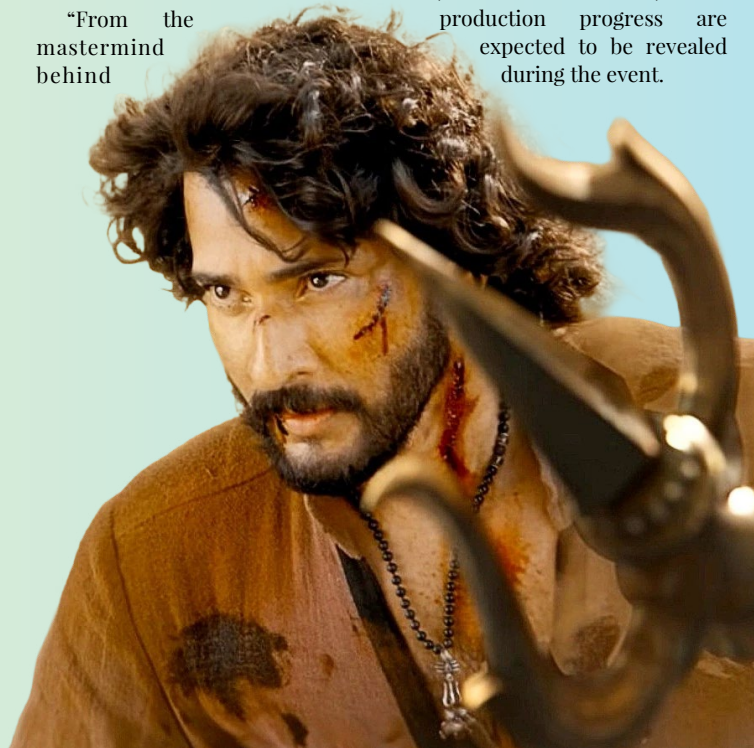
The official CCXP Mexico social media handle described the event as an exclusive panel featuring Varanasi, calling it the next major cinematic venture from the director behind the global blockbuster RRR.

"From the mastermind behind

the global phenomenon 'RRR'! The greatness of Indian cinema comes to CCXP Mexico 2026 with an exclusive panel on 'Varanasi'. Come discover the next epic adventure of visionary director S.S. Rajamouli and immerse yourself in the power of this massive production," the post read.

The international showcase is expected to build global anticipation for Varanasi, which is being positioned as one of Rajamouli's most ambitious projects yet. The film continues the director's trend of large-scale storytelling that blends Indian mythology, action, and cinematic spectacle aimed at a worldwide audience.

Further details regarding the cast, release timeline, and production progress are expected to be revealed during the event.



## BUSINESS

## India, Qatar Eye Trade Boost Amid West Asia Crisis

### Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India and Qatar on Thursday held discussions on ways to boost bilateral trade and strengthen supply chain resilience amid disruptions caused by the ongoing West Asia crisis.

The meeting took place between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sayed in a virtual interaction.

Goyal said both sides discussed enhancing trade and investment ties while improving supply chain stability. He added that India looks forward to deepening its strategic partnership with Qatar in the coming years.

Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at around USD 14 billion in 2024-25, with both nations aiming to double it by 2030. The two sides are also exploring a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to further strengthen economic relations.

India has also been holding similar discussions with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait, as part of ongoing free trade agreement negotiations.

The developments come amid disruptions in global shipping routes due to the West Asia conflict, affecting cargo movement and exports to the Gulf region, which remains a key trading partner for India.

Officials also indicated that both countries are exploring new areas of cooperation such as energy security, digital trade, infrastructure investment, and food supply chains to further diversify their economic engagement. Emphasis was placed on building more resilient logistics networks and reducing dependency on vulnerable transit routes, especially in light of recent geopolitical tensions.

SPORTS

### NGT Notices Six Stadiums Over Water Use Issues

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices to six cricket stadiums across the country, including the Arun Jaitley Stadium in the national capital, seeking explanations over the source of water used for maintaining pitches and grounds.

The tribunal has asked the stadium authorities to clarify why their operations should not be restricted for failing to disclose details regarding water usage, particularly in relation to ground maintenance activities.

According to the NGT, the concerned stadiums were earlier directed to submit complete information on water sourcing to the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), which is currently compiling and reviewing the data provided by them.

The issue came under judicial scrutiny following a petition challenging the use of groundwater and fresh water for maintaining cricket grounds instead of treated water from sewage treatment plants (STPs). The plea also raised concerns over the lack of proper rainwater harvesting systems for groundwater recharge, storage, and sustainable water management.

The tribunal has taken note of environmental concerns linked to large-scale water consumption in sports infrastructure and is expected to further examine compliance with water conservation norms before passing any final directions.

The matter highlights growing judicial focus on sustainable water usage and environmental accountability in urban sports facilities across the country.

### RCB Must Play Brave, Aggressive Cricket: Bobat

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) Director of Cricket Mo Bobat has emphasized that the team must continue to play aggressive and fearless cricket in the IPL 2026 season, while praising captain Rajat Patidar for successfully implementing this approach.



Speaking ahead of RCB's upcoming clash against Gujarat Titans, Bobat said the team's identity is built on playing bold cricket, especially in pressure situations.

"I want us to play aggressive cricket. I want us to be brave—brave when those moments really require bravery. When the game is on the line or things get a little bit difficult, if we're aggressive and brave through every phase, I think we'll play the way we want to play," Bobat said.

Under the leadership of Rajat Patidar, RCB secured their maiden IPL title last season and have carried forward their strong form into the current campaign. The team has won four of its first six matches this season and currently sits third on the points table.

Bobat also lauded Patidar's leadership qualities, stating that the captain has fully embraced the team's aggressive philosophy and has been instrumental in maintaining consistency in performance.

RCB will look to continue their winning momentum as they prepare for a crucial fixture against Gujarat Titans, aiming to strengthen their position in the league standings.

## PM MODI TARGETS TMC OVER 'JHALMURI' ROW

**Vikrama Vahini | Krishnanagar**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a sharp dig at the Trinamool Congress (TMC) during an election rally in Krishnanagar, West Bengal, linking a recent "jhalhuri" episode to political reactions within the ruling party.



PM Narendra Modi took a jibe at TMC during a West Bengal rally, linking his "jhalhuri" street food moment to political reactions in the state. As BJP and TMC trade sharp allegations over the incident, the episode has added fresh heat to the ongoing election campaign.

**"Jhalhuri Affected TMC, Not Me": PM Modi**  
Addressing a massive public gathering, PM Modi said he had "seen a wave of change" in West Bengal and claimed that people in the state were seeking transformation. He added that fear was being replaced by hope among voters.

snack—during a campaign stop, the Prime Minister remarked: "Jhalhuri maine khaayi lekin jhal TMC ko lagi hai" (I ate jhalhuri, but it is the TMC that felt the sting).

He further added that celebrations would be held on May 4 with BJP's victory in Bengal, where sweets and jhalhuri would also be shared.

The remarks came during campaigning for the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections, which saw polling in 152 constituencies.

PM Modi also thanked the Election Commission for conducting what he described as largely peaceful voting.

**TMC's Allegations of 'Scripted Event'**  
The controversy began after visuals of PM Modi eating jhalhuri from a roadside vendor in Jhargram on April 19 went viral. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee later questioned the authenticity of the event, calling it "scripted" and raising concerns over the presence of cameras.

She also criticised BJP-ruled states over cultural food restrictions, while alleging that the Prime Minister's unscheduled stop was pre-arranged and staged.

## West Asia Crisis: India Holds Briefing

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Amid the evolving situation in West Asia, the Government of India on Thursday held an inter-ministerial briefing at the National Media Centre, outlining measures across energy security, maritime safety, fuel supply management, and protection of Indian nationals in the region.



Officials from the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and External Affairs briefed the media on steps being taken to maintain stability in essential services and safeguard citizens and seafarers.

**Fuel Supply Stable Despite Global Disruptions**  
The Petroleum Ministry said adequate stocks of petrol, diesel and LPG are being maintained despite geopolitical tensions. It urged citizens not to indulge in panic buying and rely on official advisories.

Authorities confirmed that domestic LPG, PNG and CNG supplies are fully maintained, while priority allocation has been ensured for hospitals, agriculture, and essential industries.

Since April 1, over 17 lakh 5-kg LPG cylinders have been sold, and more than 52 lakh domestic cylinders were delivered in a single day recently.

**Retail Fuel Prices Stable**  
Despite rising global crude oil prices, retail fuel prices remain unchanged at PSU outlets. The government has also reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel to protect consumers.

**Maritime Safety: Indian Seafarers Safe**  
The Shipping Ministry confirmed incidents of firing on foreign-flagged vessels in the Strait of Hormuz involving Indian crew, but stated that all seafarers are safe.

local authorities.

Around 12.12 lakh Indians have returned to India from the region since February, with continued evacuation and assistance measures underway.

**Supply Chain and Energy Measures**  
The government said supply chain disruptions due to the West Asia crisis are being closely monitored, with steps taken to ensure uninterrupted fuel and LPG availability.

Alternate fuels, increased refinery output, and expanded PNG connections are being promoted to reduce dependence on imported LPG.

**Nationwide Preparedness Strengthened**  
States have been directed to monitor supply, curb hoarding, and issue timely public advisories. Control rooms and enforcement teams have been activated across all states and union territories.

In addition, senior officials emphasised that continuous coordination is being maintained between central ministries, state governments, and key industry stakeholders to ensure a swift response to any emerging challenges. They noted that contingency plans are in place to handle potential disruptions in fuel logistics, maritime trade routes, and evacuation operations. The government also reiterated its commitment to closely monitor global developments and take timely policy decisions to safeguard India's economic stability and the well-being of its citizens both at home and abroad.

## BJP to Protest CA Site Allotments to Congress Bhavans

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
BJP MLC D.S. Arun has alleged large-scale irregularities in the allocation of civic amenity (CA) sites to Congress Bhavans across the state and announced that the party will launch a protest against the issue.

He has been allotted to Congress Bhavans using public tax money. He further alleged that despite officials objecting to such allocations, the Cabinet overruled them and approved the sites at 5% of the guidance value, which is significantly below market rates.

**HC Raps Government, Says Allocation Under Question**  
Speaking to the media at the BJP state office "Jagannath Bhavan" in Bengaluru, Arun said the High Court has reportedly pulled up the state government over the issue.

He termed the decision "illegal and arbitrary," alleging that the Cabinet misused its authority to regularise irregular allocations.

He added that the allocation of CA sites to political parties is legally not permitted, yet such allotments were made in violation of norms.

**Demand for Cancellation of Allotments**  
Arun questioned under what legal provision political parties were granted CA sites and demanded details on pricing, number of sites, and financial loss to the state exchequer.

He said the issue was raised earlier in the Assembly, but the Urban Development Minister had given an unsatisfactory response.

He insisted that CA sites cannot be permanently allotted to political parties and said they are typically given to organisations only for specific public purposes.

**Allegations of 21 CA Site Allotments**  
Arun claimed that around 21 CA sites

have been allotted to Congress Bhavans using public tax money.

## Sensex Slumps 850 Points on Oil Price Surge

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Indian equity markets ended sharply lower on Thursday, tracking rising crude oil prices, sustained foreign fund outflows, and weak global cues.



The BSE Sensex dropped 852.49 points (1.09%) to close at 77,664, while the Nifty declined 205.05 points (0.84%) to settle at 24,173.05. Broader indices such as the Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 ended largely flat.

**Market Capitalisation Drops**  
The cumulative market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell to just above ₹466 lakh crore, down from over ₹460 lakh crore in the previous session.

**Sectoral Pressure Broadens**  
Out of 16 major sectoral indices, 12 ended in the red. Key losers included:

- \* Auto index down 1.3%
- \* PSU Bank index down 2.19%
- \* Private Bank index down 1.31%
- \* Bank Nifty down 1.43%
- \* Financial Services index down 1.42%
- \* Pharma stocks, however, gained 2.3% on expectations of steady growth.

slipped 2.5%, and SBI Life Insurance dropped 3%.

On the gainers' side, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Cipla, Jio Financial, Adani Enterprises, and Apollo Hospitals supported selective buying.

**Rupee Weakens Further**  
The Indian rupee extended losses for the fourth straight session, weakening by 34 paise to 94.12 against the US dollar.

**Stock-Specific Action**  
Jio Financial Services rose 4% after announcing an agreement with Allianz Group, while L&T Technology Services declined nearly 3%.

**Global Oil Price Surge Adds Pressure**  
Brent crude oil prices climbed around 2%, crossing USD 103 per barrel, amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the United States and Iran, adding further pressure on global markets.

**VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS**

### SRI DURGA PARAMESHWARI TEMPLE, MANDARTHI

**A SACRED CENTRE OF TRADITION, RITUALS & YAKSHAGANA HERITAGE**

**ABOUT THE TEMPLE**

- Located 13 km east of Brahmar in Udipi district, along the Barakur-Kokkarne-Hebri route.
- Presiding Deity: Sri Durga Parameshwari
- Associated Deities: Naga Subrahmanya, Veerabhadra, Kallu Kuttiga, Kshetrपाला, Vyaghra (Tiger Deity), Bobbarya and Nandeeshwara.
- Famous for unique rituals like Kendasava & Rathotsava.
- A rare shrine that integrates Bhuta worship with mainstream Hindu traditions.

**UNIQUE FEATURES**

- Despite having a flag post, there is no flag hoisting ritual.
- Rangapuja is performed, but no daily Bali ritual.
- Naga worship holds special importance in all rituals.
- Primary offering tradition is Yakshagana - the 'Light Service' or Bayalata performances.
- Yakshagana troupes begin their season with prayers at Sri Barali Ganapati Temple, wear geje (ankle bells) and then perform at Mandarthi.

**MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGINS**

- Five celestial sisters - Devarathi, Nagarathi, Charurathi, Mandarathi and Neelarathi - were born to serpent king Shankachooda.
- They wished to marry Lord Subrahmanya and went to Kailasa, but were cursed by Nandi, the gatekeeper, turning them into serpents.
- Sage Vyaghrapada cursed them further to remain in bamboo groves, but prophesied liberation through a royal figure.
- King Devavarma of Avanti rescued them from a forest fire. One by one, they entered anthills and were liberated.
- Where Mandarathi entered the anthill, became Mandarthi, a sacred forest shrine.

**FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS**

- FIRST SERVICE (YAKSHAGANA RITUAL OPENING)**
  - Ganapati installation & worship at Barali Ganapati Temple.
  - Ganahoma & special pujas at Mandarthi.
  - In the evening, Geje Seva marks the start of Yakshagana season. Artists offer their anklets to the deity and perform ritually.
  - Performances continue all night till early morning by four Yakshagana troupes.
- NAVARATRI FESTIVAL**
  - Daily Chandika Homa, Vedic rituals & special pujas for 9 days.
  - Evening offerings by 8 priestly households.
  - Cultural programs including Yakshagana & theatre performances.
  - Grand Yakshagana presentation by all four troupes on the final day.
- SHASHTI MAHOTSAVA**
  - Purification rituals and Naga Pradhana with nine kalashas.
  - Mahamangalarti and prasada distribution.
  - Community feast for devotees.

**MAJOR ANNUAL CELEBRATIONS**

- KUMBHA MONTH (KUMBHA SANKRAMANA) - 3 DAYS**
- DAY 1**
  - Kumbha Sankramana
  - Night Kenda Seva
  - Subrahmanya ritual offerings
  - Rangapuja & Dakkebali
- DAY 2**
  - Grand Chariot Festival (Maharathotsava)
  - Evening Mantapa rituals
  - Shayanotsava
  - Kavata Bandhana
- DAY 3**
  - Ganahoma & Kavata Visarjane
  - Lakshmi Mantapa worship
  - Tulabhara offerings
  - Palaki Utsava
  - Suragi Katte puja
  - Lake lamp festival
  - Concluding rituals

**OTHER ASSOCIATED SHRINES & OBSERVANCES**

- SRI CHAMUNDI TEMPLE**  
Mari Puja during Kumbha month.
- SRI KALLU MALINGESHWARA TEMPLE**  
Deepotsava in Kartika month, Rudrabhisheka during Maha Shivaratri & Yakshagana service performances.
- SRI BARALI GANAPATI TEMPLE**  
The starting point of all Yakshagana performances with Ganapati worship & Geje Seva.

Vikrama Vahini English Daily, #204, Forest Layout, Jnanabharathi, Bangalore-95

Printed by B.N. Murali Prasad, Published by Swarna Latha B.N., and Printed at Swarna Graphics, Forest Layout, Jnanabharathi, Bangalore -560059 and Published at Bangalore, Editor: B.N. Murali Prasad., Volume:9, Issue : 44,