



Radhika Pandit enjoys a summer getaway in Kodagu with her children Aira and Yatharv, spending quality time amidst nature while husband Yash is busy with film promotions. The family is seen exploring coffee plantations, with Radhika sharing joyful moments and even striking stylish poses during the trip, which has caught the attention of fans.

The Karnataka High Court has disposed of a petition filed by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh seeking quashing of a private complaint and FIR registered against him over alleged derogatory remarks about divine characters in Kantara Chapter-1.



INSIDE

Good morning

When

You see something beautiful in someone, tell them. It may take a second to say, but for them, it could last a lifetime.

### BRIEFS

## IMD Warns Severe Heatwave in North India

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**  
The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a severe heatwave alert as temperatures continue to soar across North and Central India, with several regions recording dangerous highs.

Banda in Uttar Pradesh reported the season's highest temperature at 47.4°C, while Delhi crossed 44°C in multiple areas, including Ridge at 44.5°C and Ayanagar at 44.3°C.

IMD has warned that there will be no immediate relief for the next 48-72 hours, with temperatures expected to remain 4-6°C above normal across Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Punjab. A "yellow alert" has been issued for the national capital.

However, weather models indicate a possible drop in temperatures from April 28 due to an incoming western disturbance, which may bring light rain or thunderstorms to parts of North India.

Authorities have advised residents to avoid outdoor exposure during peak afternoon hours, stay hydrated, and take necessary precautions amid the extreme heat conditions.

## Bengal Polls See Record 93% Turnout

**Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
The first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections recorded a historic voter turnout of 93.19 per cent, the highest ever in the state, the Election Commission said on Saturday.

Polling for the first phase was held on April 23 across 152 assembly constituencies in 16 districts. Out of 3.61 crore eligible voters, 3.36 crore people exercised their franchise. According to the Commission, 1.65 crore women voters and 1.71 crore men voters participated in the polling.

## Kavitha Launches TRS Party

**Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad**  
Telangana Jagruthi President Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Saturday announced the launch of a new political party, "Telangana Rashtra Sena (TRS)," at a public meeting in Medchal-Malkajgiri district. Kavitha said the party aims to fulfil the "unfulfilled aspirations" of the Telangana movement and ensure social justice, constitutional values, and people-centric governance. She emphasised welfare priorities such as free education and healthcare, along with empowerment of women, youth, and marginalised communities.

Criticising both the Centre and the state government, she alleged neglect of Telangana's interests and failure to address public issues effectively.

She stated that the new party would work to build a "just and inclusive Telangana" and carry forward the legacy of the statehood movement.

# AAP Moves Against Rebel MPs; Leaders Hit Back

**Vikrama Vahini | Chandigarh**

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday announced that it will seek the disqualification of its seven Rajya Sabha members who defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), triggering a major political confrontation.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh said the party would approach the Rajya Sabha Chairman, arguing that the anti-defection law does not recognise splits or factions in Parliament.

## BJP Targets Kejriwal, Mann

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

A day after multiple defections from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a fresh political row erupted over AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal's new residence in Delhi, with BJP leaders dubbing it "Sheesh Mahal Part 2" controversy intensifies further. **PG2**

## Chadha Targets Kejriwal Over 'Sheesh Mahal 2'

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

In his first major attack after joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Saturday criticised his former party Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), alleging that the controversy surrounding "Sheesh Mahal" played a key role in its 2025 Delhi Assembly election defeat.

Chadha accused AAP chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of continuing a "lavish lifestyle," referring to what he called "Sheesh Mahal Part Two." He said the earlier "Sheesh Mahal" issue—linked to alleged expensive renovations of the Chief Minister's residence—was a major factor behind the party's loss in Delhi.

"Now, 'Sheesh Mahal Part Two' has surfaced, and



questions will be raised by the public. The party must introspect," Chadha said while speaking to reporters.

The remarks came amid fresh allegations by BJP leaders, including Delhi minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, who accused Kejriwal of constructing another lavish residence at Lodhi Estate. The BJP also claimed that private funds were used for high-end amenities at the bungalow.

The AAP has strongly denied the allegations, calling the claims and photographs "fake" and politically motivated.

Chadha's exit marks a significant political shift, ending his long association with AAP, as he joined the BJP along with six other Rajya Sabha MPs, dealing a major blow to the party.

## MALIWAL ALLEGES ASSAULT BY KEJRIWAL, JOINS BJP

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Swati Maliwal on Saturday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a day after resigning from AAP along with six other Rajya Sabha MPs, in a major political setback for the party.



Speaking to the media, Maliwal alleged that AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal had her assaulted by a "goon" at her residence and later pressured her to withdraw the FIR. She said she had worked closely with Kejriwal since 2006 but decided to quit due to growing differences and personal grievances.

The development comes amid a mass exit from AAP, with leaders including Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Sandeep Pathak, Harbhajan Singh, Vikram Sahney, and Rajinder Gupta joining the BJP. **PG2**

## Trump Cancels Pak Visit for Iran Talks

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

US President Donald Trump on Saturday announced that American negotiators would not travel to Pakistan for scheduled talks with Iran, stating that Washington holds a strong position in the ongoing diplomatic standoff.

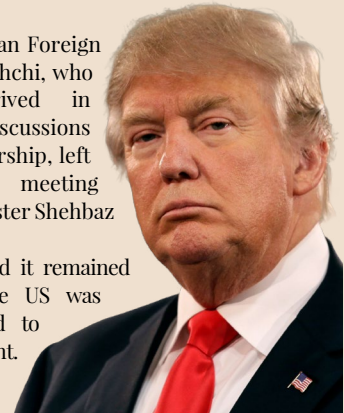
Speaking to Fox News, Trump said it was not necessary for the US delegation to undertake an 18-hour flight to Islamabad, adding that the Iranians could reach out whenever they were ready to engage.

"I've told my people... you're not making an 18-hour flight to sit around talking about nothing. We have all the cards. They can call us anytime," Trump said. US officials Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner were expected to travel to Islamabad for a second round of discussions after earlier talks failed to produce any outcome. However, Trump later confirmed the cancellation, citing time constraints, internal confusion within the Iranian leadership, and lack of progress.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump reiterated that too much time was being wasted on travel and meetings without results. He further claimed there was "tremendous infighting" within Iran's leadership and said the US remained in a stronger negotiating position.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who had already arrived in Islamabad for discussions with Pakistani leadership, left for Oman after meeting Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He reportedly said it remained unclear whether the US was genuinely committed to diplomatic engagement.



## CET Row: Janivara Allegation in Chintamani

**Vikrama Vahini | Chintamani**

A controversy has erupted over allegations that a sacred thread (janivara) worn by a student was cut and discarded during entry checks at a CET examination centre in Bengaluru outskirts, raising serious concerns and public outrage.

The incident reportedly involves K.R. Supreeth, a student from a private college in Chintamani, who went to write the Common Entrance Test (CET) at Nagarjuna PU College on Saturday. It is alleged that during routine security verification, staff at the examination centre cut his sacred thread and threw it into a dustbin, stating that he would not be allowed to write the exam unless



he removed it.

According to the student, he was forced to comply under pressure in order to enter the examination hall. After completing the exam and returning in the evening, he reportedly

Allegations of a student's sacred thread being cut at a CET exam centre near Bengaluru have sparked outrage and demands for inquiry. While the student's family claims distress and coercion, officials deny the charges, triggering a wider debate on dress codes and religious sensitivity.

searched the dustbin and retrieved the sacred thread, later presenting it to express his distress.

The student's mother, Vani, expressed deep anguish over the incident, stating that the sacred thread

had been tied only eight days earlier after his upanayana ceremony. She alleged that the act has caused severe emotional distress to her son, adding that he has become mentally disturbed. She has also appealed for grace marks for her son, citing the distressing circumstances.

However, the examination centre's uniform code officer, Dodda Eerappa, has strongly denied the allegations. He stated that all procedures were conducted strictly as per Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) guidelines and that no sacred thread was cut, removed, or discarded by the staff. He further said that he does not understand why such allegations are being made against the centre.



For the 20th year, Time Magazine has named who it considers to be the 100 most influential people of the year.

## Waqf Lands Cannot Be Sold

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India has ruled that lands granted as "seva inams" for religious or charitable purposes are Waqf properties and cannot be sold or transferred. The court overturned an earlier order of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, restoring the decision of the Waqf Tribunal.

A bench comprising Justices M.M. Sundaresh and A.G. Masih delivered the verdict while hearing an appeal filed by the Andhra Pradesh Waqf Board. The court held that such lands, once dedicated for religious or charitable use, become part of a public trust and are not subject to private ownership or sale.

The case pertained to a dispute over three acres of land in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh. The key issue was whether the land, linked to a mosque and classified as a "seva inam," could be treated as private property. While the original claimant cited sale deeds from 1985 and 1996, the Waqf Board argued that the land was historically granted for religious purposes and thus inalienable.

The Waqf Tribunal had earlier dismissed the claimant's suit, but the High Court reversed that decision, citing lack of proof of ownership by the Board. The



The Supreme Court of India has ruled that "seva inam" lands linked to religious purposes are Waqf properties and cannot be sold, over turning the Andhra Pradesh High Court order. The verdict reinforces that such properties are public trust assets, setting a key precedent for resolving similar Waqf land disputes nationwide.

Supreme Court, however, found that a 1945 partition document clearly identified the land as a service grant tied to a mosque, reinforcing its Waqf status.

Citing its earlier ruling in the Syed Ali case, the apex court reiterated that properties dedicated for religious or charitable purposes do not confer absolute ownership on individuals and must be treated as trust assets.

The judgment is expected to have far-reaching implications, providing legal clarity in similar disputes involving Waqf lands across the country and guiding courts in resolving pending cases of a similar nature.

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Panchatantra Stories

# Action and Destiny

Once there lived a skilled cloth weaver named Somilaka, known for producing the finest fabrics reserved for kings and princes. Despite his exceptional talent, he earned very little and struggled to meet his daily needs. In contrast, other weavers in his town became wealthy despite weaving inferior quality cloth.

Frustrated, Somilaka decided to leave his hometown in search of better opportunities. His wife was reluctant, fearing uncertainty, but he was determined. In a new city, his craftsmanship was soon recognized, and his work became highly sought after. Within three years, he earned three hundred gold coins and decided to return home.

During his journey through a forest, he heard two mysterious voices—one named Action and the other Destiny. They spoke about how wealth is determined by effort and fate. When Somilaka checked his bag, he found his coins missing. Heartbroken, he returned to the city and worked even harder. Within a year, he earned five hundred gold coins and set out again.

Once more, the same voices spoke in the forest, and again his wealth disappeared. Deeply distressed, he nearly ended his life when a divine voice appeared, revealing itself as Destiny. It offered him a boon for his perseverance.

Somilaka asked for more wealth, but Destiny instructed him to first observe how wealth is enjoyed by others. He visited two merchants—one rich but miserly and disrespectful, and another modest yet generous and content. He realized that happiness did not depend on wealth alone.

He chose to receive only as much money as he could truly enjoy. His wish was granted, and he returned home with moderate wealth, which brought happiness to his wife and contentment to his life.

The wise say: Action and destiny are two sides of a coin. One must work sincerely but accept destiny with humility, and remain satisfied with what life offers.

# Somanna Lays Stone for Tumakuru Subways



**Vikrama Vahini | Tumakuru**  
Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, Shri V. Somanna, on Saturday laid the foundation stones for two pedestrian subways at Maruthinagar and Old Level Crossing No. 36 near Kyatsandra Railway Station in Tumakuru.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the subways would ensure safer and more convenient crossing facilities for the public while helping to prevent trespassing on railway tracks, thereby improving safety in the region.

The pedestrian subway at Old LC No. 36 near Kyatsandra Railway Station is being constructed at an estimated cost of ₹5.5 crore, while another subway at Maruthinagar, located between Tumakuru and Kyatsandra stations, will cost about ₹3.5 crore. Both projects are scheduled for completion by January 2027.

Shri Somanna also announced several major railway infrastructure initiatives for the region. He said a Mega Coaching Terminal is planned at

Yelahanka, while an Integrated Container Logistics Terminal will be developed at Thimmarajanahalli in Tumakuru, expected to generate significant employment opportunities.

He further informed that the quadrupling of the Bengaluru-Tumakuru railway line will be undertaken soon. A new MEMU train service between Yelahanka and Arsikere via Yesvantpur and Tumakuru will also be introduced shortly.

The Minister added that the 207-km Rayadurga-Tumakuru new railway line project is progressing rapidly and is likely to be completed by December 2027. Work on the Tumakuru-Davanagere-Chitradurga new railway line is also advancing steadily.

Tumakuru City MLA G.B. Jyothi Ganesh and Tumakuru Rural MLA B. Suresh Gowda addressed the gathering. Additional Divisional Railway Manager of Bengaluru Division, Shri Praveen Kataraki, along with senior railway officials, were present.

# AAP Moves Against Rebel MPs; Leaders Hit Back

From PG1

He termed the MPs' move "unconstitutional and illegal."

The crisis follows the exit of seven AAP MPs—including Raghav Chadha, Swati Maliwal, Harbhajan Singh, and others—who merged with the BJP. Most of the defectors are from Punjab.

Hitting back, the rebel MPs accused the party leadership of corruption and ideological decline. Chadha said the leaders quit not out of fear but due to "disappointment, disengagement and disgust," alleging that the party had deviated from its founding principles.

Maliwal also criticised AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, claiming the party is now associated with "lies, corruption and hooliganism."

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is expected to meet President Droupadi Murmu to present the party's position on recalling the MPs. Mann also accused the BJP of attempting to destabilise the AAP government in Punjab through inducements and political pressure.

The political row has intensified with BJP leaders launching fresh attacks on Kejriwal over his official residence, while AAP leaders dismissed the allegations as baseless. The developments have sparked intense political debate, with more exits from AAP not being ruled out.



Dr. M. Mahadevamma from Bengaluru donates 7 gold medals weighing 753 grams, valued at ₹94.80 lakh, to Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala. The donation was formally handed over at the Srivari temple Ranganayakula Mandapam in the presence of TTD Executive Officer Mudda Ravichandra and Additional Executive Officer C.H. Venkayya Chowdhury. According to the Chief Public Relations Officer of TTD, the devotee presented the gold medals as an offering to Sri Venkateswara Swamy at Tirumala.

# Muniyappa Welcomes Internal Reservation Split

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Minister and Karnataka Madiga Mahasabha President K.H. Muniyappa has welcomed the state Cabinet's decision to implement internal reservation, calling it a historic step towards social justice.

He said the move—allocating 5.25% each to Group A and B, and



4.5% to Group C—is the result of decades of struggle and fulfills the long-pending demand of 101 Scheduled Caste communities, including the Madiga community.

Muniyappa said the decision reflects the Congress party's commitment to its election promises and social justice, crediting Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and

other senior leaders for its implementation.

Calling it a milestone in the journey towards equality, he urged unity among communities and stressed the need to focus on education and opportunities for youth upliftment.

He added that the decision marks the beginning of a new phase in strengthening social justice in the state.

# BWCC Hosts Stray Dog Adoption Drive

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

To promote harmonious human-animal coexistence and reduce human-animal conflict, the Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC) organised a special indigenous puppy adoption fair at the Jnanabharathi campus today. The event also marked the celebration of World Veterinary Day.

## Commissioner Highlights Benefits of Native Dogs

BWCC Commissioner Dr. K.V. Rajendra stated that indigenous dogs are better adapted to local conditions and possess higher disease resistance compared to other breeds. He encouraged citizens to adopt native dogs and also urged that they be referred to as "Bhairava."

The Commissioner released a short film on "Bhairava" and appreciated its emotional narration.

## Key Highlights of the Programme

The adoption fair aimed at encouraging responsible pet adoption of indigenous puppies. The event featured the "Walk with Bhairava" programme,



where participants walked alongside adopted dogs to celebrate companionship.

Free anti-rabies (ARV) and combined vaccination camps were conducted for indigenous dogs. Awareness sessions were also held on civic animal welfare schemes, responsible adoption practices, and dog behaviour.

A live demonstration on safe dog capture using trap cages was also conducted. In addition, trained Indian breed dogs were showcased in collaboration with partner organisations.

## Recognition for Animal Welfare Efforts

During the event, 14 prospective adopters, 18 individuals who have already

adopted over 35 dogs collectively, and 3 advocates who have promoted adoption of more than 300 dogs were felicitated. The Commissioner also highlighted his own experience as a dog adopter and praised the humane efforts of pet parents.

## World Veterinary Day Observed

World Veterinary Day was meaningfully observed, with veterinarians from BWCC and four other city corporations administering rabies and combined vaccines to all dogs present at the event.

## Use of Trap Cages for Humane Capture

BWCC has initiated the use of trap cages for the safe and humane capture of stray dogs in large areas, recognising its importance in effective animal management.

The event was attended by Dr. Manoranjana Hegde, Head of Health Department; Dr. Chandraya, Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry Department; Basavaraj, President of the Residents' Welfare Association; Chief Veterinary Officer Dr. Venkatesh; and Dr. Srirangaraju, among others.

# BJP Targets Kejriwal, Mann

From PG1

Delhi Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma launched a sharp attack, referring to Kejriwal as "Delhi ka Rahman Dakait" and alleging that the former Chief Minister is now living in another lavish bungalow at Lodhi Estate.

He claimed to have documents detailing the layout and interior design of the residence, describing it as a high-end property with customised furnishings and premium amenities.

Verma also made remarks about Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, alleging that he was under pressure and "feeling suffocated" within the party, hinting at internal tensions in AAP.

Responding to the allegations, senior AAP leader Atishi Marlena dismissed the claims as false, stating that the images

circulated by the BJP were fake and not related to Kejriwal's residence.

She challenged BJP leaders to open their own homes for public scrutiny if questions of luxury were being raised.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal confirmed that he has moved into a Type-VII government bungalow at Lodhi Estate, allotted by the Centre following court directions, stating that the allotment was made considering his role as AAP's national convener.

The controversy has intensified the political battle between AAP and BJP, with both sides trading sharp accusations over lifestyle, transparency, and governance.

The row is expected to escalate further in the coming days, with both parties likely to raise the issue aggressively in political and public forums.

NEWS

# B'LURU SOUTH FORMS EXPERT PANEL FOR CITY DEVELOPMENT

Vikrama Vahini | B'luru

South City Corporation Commissioner Shri K.N. Ramesh held a special consultation meeting with leading experts from various fields to strengthen infrastructure and improve the quality of civic life in the city.

The Commissioner stated that, as announced in the civic budget, an expert advisory committee is essential for addressing urban challenges and guiding development initiatives.

## Experts Participating in the Meeting

The meeting was attended by Shri Parthasarathy (Information Technology expert), Shri Ashwin Mahesh (Urban Design and Transport expert), Smt. Padmashree (Solid Waste Management expert), Dr. Shanti (HSR Layout Citizens' Forum representative), and Shri



Prasanna Rao (Urban Design and Architecture expert).

## Key Suggestions

The experts suggested the need for a structured urban governance system with efficient communication mechanisms.

They emphasized the importance of a comprehensive data-driven planning system covering roads, lakes, parks, drainage systems, and commercial establishments.

On waste management, they recommended enhanced monitoring during the monsoon season, increasing garbage collection frequency to two or

three times a day, setting up "waste kiosks," and making it mandatory for bulk waste generators to establish their own processing systems.

They also stressed the need for regular internal assessments and strengthening human resources within the civic body.

## Commissioner's Key Remarks

Commissioner K.N. Ramesh reiterated the corporation's commitment to inclusive urban development and highlighted the importance of citizen and expert participation, including Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), in sustainable city growth.

# BWSSB RWH Offer to Cut Penalty

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced a new initiative to promote rainwater harvesting (RWH) in the city by offering to install advanced systems at the homes of willing customers.

**BWSSB has launched a new initiative to promote rainwater harvesting by offering installation of advanced third-generation systems at willing customers' homes. The scheme aims to reduce dependence on Cauvery water and groundwater, with installation costs adjusted against existing penalties, promising better water conservation and lower bills for residents.**

BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar said the move comes in view of the Meteorological Department's forecast of a deficit monsoon, with the aim of increasing groundwater levels and reducing dependence on Cauvery water and borewells.

Under the scheme, the Board will



install modern, space-efficient third-generation rainwater harvesting systems in residential buildings, especially for those who have not yet complied with RWH requirements.

The technology is designed to be installed in minimal space and delivers high-quality filtered water using a 60-micron purification system, enabling over 90% recovery through gravity-based filtration. Officials said the system includes SS316 anti-choke mesh, a streamlined design to increase water flow velocity, and an automatic waste expulsion mechanism that ensures clean output water suitable for use.

# MALIWAL ALLEGES ASSAULT BY KEJRIWAL, JOINS BJP

From PG1

Chadha claimed that more than two-thirds of AAP's Rajya Sabha MPs had merged with the BJP.

Maliwal further accused the party leadership of suppressing her voice in Parliament and termed the party's functioning "anti-women."

She also raised concerns about governance in Punjab, alleging issues such as illegal sand mining, rising drug

use, and misuse of power against dissenters.

Praising Narendra Modi, she said her decision to join the BJP was voluntary and driven by her faith in his leadership. She also highlighted key policy decisions and called on others to join the party for "constructive politics."

The developments have intensified the political crisis within AAP, with more defections not being ruled out.

# US Doctor Loses ₹1 Crore Jewellery at Wedding Hall

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

A US-based doctor has reportedly lost gold jewellery worth nearly ₹1 crore during a wedding reception at a marriage hall in the city.

The complainant, Dr. Sirivella Sridevi, lodged a complaint on Thursday afternoon stating that she had arrived in Bengaluru on April 18 to attend her nephew's wedding. She had brought her gold ornaments with her and was staying at her brother's residence in Gangangar, Ballari Road.

On Wednesday, she attended a wedding ceremony at SDM Palace on Old Madras Road, Bidarhalli. According to the complaint, around 6.30 pm, her brother handed over a box containing gold ornaments at the venue.

Dr. Sridevi stated that she kept some jewellery with her and left the remaining ornaments in a locked room inside the wedding hall before attending the reception. However, upon returning to the room between 7.30 pm and 11.30 pm, she found the jewellery missing.

She further told police that a housekeeping staff member had reportedly entered the room while she was getting ready for the reception. The missing ornaments are said to weigh around 725 grams and are valued at approximately ₹1 crore.

Police said the room key was in the possession of the complainant, and therefore the involvement of someone known to her or her family cannot be ruled out. Investigators are examining CCTV footage and questioning individuals who had access to the room.

# SCIENCE

& Technology

# Meta Taps AWS Graviton for AI Scale-Up

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Meta Platforms has entered into a major multi-year agreement with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to significantly expand its artificial intelligence infrastructure using millions of Graviton CPU cores.

Under the deal, Meta will deploy tens of millions of Graviton processors in the initial phase, making it one of the largest adopters of AWS's in-house chip technology. The move comes as AI workloads grow increasingly complex, particularly with the rise of agentic AI systems capable of executing multi-step tasks autonomously.

Graviton processors, developed by AWS since 2018 and manufactured by Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), are designed to deliver high performance at lower cost for cloud computing. AWS stated that its latest generation, Graviton 5, offers up to 25% better compute performance compared to earlier versions.

Meta said the infrastructure will primarily support CPU-intensive AI workloads, helping improve efficiency and scalability. "Diversifying our compute sources is a strategic imperative as we scale our AI ambitions," said Santosh Janardhan, Meta's head of infrastructure.

The partnership also highlights AWS's growing push into custom silicon as it competes in the AI infrastructure space alongside chipmakers like Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices. AWS has also been working with Arm Holdings to develop its CPU architecture.

IRREGULARITIES ALLEGED IN MINORITY COACHING TENDER

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Allegations of irregularities have surfaced in the tender process for providing NEET and KCET coaching to students from minority communities. In this regard, Prime Law Association has issued a legal notice to the Karnataka government.

The notice states that the tender conditions require participating organisations to have had an Android application on the Google Play Store for at least three years, with marks being awarded based on app downloads. It argues that these criteria have no relevance to the quality of offline coaching.

The petition alleges that the conditions appear to favour existing contractors and are structured in a way that may prevent new eligible organisations from participating. It further claims that the tender

Allegations of irregularities have emerged in the Karnataka government's tender process for NEET and KCET coaching for minority students, with claims that the criteria favour existing contractors. A legal notice has been issued seeking suspension of the tender and a probe into alleged violations and procedural lapses.

process has been designed to benefit previous contractors.

Serious allegations have also been made that Section 10 of the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTPP) Act has been violated, which requires separation of the authority issuing tenders and the authority approving them. The notice claims this rule has not been followed in the present case.

It is also alleged that despite bringing the issue to the attention of Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, no action has been taken so far. The legal notice has made several demands, including

immediate suspension of the ongoing tender process, blacklisting of bidders involved in alleged irregularities, and a full independent investigation into the entire process. It also calls for scrutiny of alleged lapses in the tender evaluation committee and a probe into possible fabrication of staff recruitment records and student performance data.

The controversy has once again brought the minority welfare department's tender process under scrutiny, with attention now focused on the government's next course of action.



Goddess Sri Manchamma at Mantarayama is adorned with a grand floral decoration on Saturday, as devotees visiting for Sri Raghavendra Swamy darshan first seek blessings of Goddess Yellamma before proceeding for the saint's darshan.

TTD Releases Service Schedule for Devotees

Vikrama Vahini | Tirupati

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has released details of various services available for devotees and the schedule for online bookings.

In May, tickets will be available for the Sri Srinivasa Divyanugraha Special Homam along with Tirumala darshan under the Alipiri Saptagopradakshina route. TTD will also open quota bookings for local temple services.

In June, the online quota for general Srivari Seva at Tirumala and Tirupati, along with Navaneetha Seva and Parakamani Seva, has been released. In July, online booking for darshan and



accommodation for trust and scheme donors will be made available.

TTD stated that general Sevaks must report for both Tirupati and Tirumala services on the same day of their booking. Other Sevaks are required to report a day prior to their scheduled service between 2 pm and 4 pm at Tirumala.

RBI Cancels Paytm Bank Licence; Refund Soon Expected

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL), triggering concern among customers, although both the regulator and the bank have assured that all deposits remain safe and fully refundable.

The RBI had earlier restricted the bank from accepting fresh deposits in January 2024 due to compliance issues, leading many customers to withdraw funds in anticipation of further regulatory action. The latest move marks a major step towards the bank's closure.

In its statement, PPBL said it has sufficient liquidity to repay all customer deposits, including balances in savings accounts, current accounts, wallets,



FASTags, prepaid instruments, and NCMC cards. "Your money is safe... we will communicate further steps in time," the bank said.

The RBI also confirmed that the bank has enough liquidity to meet its entire deposit obligations during the winding-up process, assuring full repayment to customers.

RBI has cancelled Paytm Payments Bank's licence over compliance concerns, but both the regulator and the bank have assured customers that all deposits remain safe and fully refundable. While a refund timeline is yet to be announced, officials say detailed procedures will be issued soon, and funds will be returned in a phased manner.

While the exact refund timeline has not been announced, officials indicated that detailed procedures and schedules are expected to be released in the coming weeks.

Industry experts say the RBI's action highlights the growing regulatory scrutiny on digital payment banks, especially regarding compliance, risk management, and deposit handling norms. The development is expected to

impact customer confidence in small finance and payments banks in the short term. Meanwhile, financial advisors have urged customers not to panic and to wait for official communication regarding refunds. They also noted that funds in regulated banking channels remain protected under existing RBI guidelines, and the transition process is likely to be completed in a phased and orderly manner.

Karajol Questions Rejection of Nagamohan Das Report

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karajol on Saturday criticised the Karnataka government's decision on internal reservation, questioning whether the report by Justice Nagamohan Das was rejected as "unscientific."

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state office, Jagannath Bhavan, Karajol asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to clarify whether the government had instead accepted the report prepared under Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh. He

said that although the Nagamohan Das report recommended 17% reservation, the government reduced it to 15%, raising questions about its intent.

Taking a dig at the decision, Karajol said it was like "digging a mountain to find a mouse," accusing the Chief Minister of projecting the move as a major achievement. He questioned the government's commitment to social justice and alleged that several earlier reports, including those by Kemparaj, Jayaprakash Hegde, and

Madhusudhan Nayak, had been sidelined.



Karajol launched a sharp attack on Siddaramaiah, accusing him of misleading the public and lacking commitment towards backward and marginalised communities. He also cited statements by leaders such as Satish Jarkiholi and K.N. Rajanna to question the Chief Minister's credibility. Alleging that the government ignored multiple reports and even court directions, Karajol said the decision on reservation could not be accepted.

Protest held at Freedom Park by Narishakti Forum against Congress and allied parties over blocking the Nari Shakti Vandan Women's Reservation Bill. Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, BJP State Women's President C. Manjula, district president Saptagiri Gowda, former mayors, leaders Gautam Kumar, actors Malavika Avinash and Roopa Iyer, Dr. Punyavati C. Nagaraj, and several BJP women workers participated.

Rajeev Alleges Injustice to 101 SC Communities

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

BJP State General Secretary P. Rajeev has accused the Karnataka government of failing to ensure justice for 101 Scheduled Caste communities, alleging irregularities in reservation policy and recruitment processes.



Speaking in Bengaluru on Saturday, Rajeev claimed that the government is deliberately delaying recruitment to over 50,000 posts and misleading youth by citing court orders. He also alleged that no budgetary provision

has been made for salaries despite recruitment announcements.

He criticised the state for reducing reservation from 17% to 15% and questioned its commitment to social justice. Rajeev further alleged that key commission reports were ignored and earlier reservation frameworks were reversed.

Meanwhile, BJP MLA Manappa Vajjal also opposed the government's decision, stating that it would adversely affect several SC and ST communities and warned of statewide protests.

ENTERTAINMENT

HC ORDERS CHAMUNDI HILL VISIT FOR RANVEER

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has disposed of a petition filed by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh seeking quashing of a private complaint and FIR registered against him over alleged derogatory remarks about divine characters in Kantara Chapter-1.

The court directed that he should visit the Chamundi Hill temple in Mysuru within four weeks. The case relates to allegations that Ranveer Singh, during the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) held in Goa on November 28, 2025, made remarks and enacted expressions referring to the divine representations in the film Kantara Chapter-1.

He was accused of portraying the Karavali deities Panjurli and Guliga in a disrespectful and humorous manner and referring to Chamundi Daiva in an offensive way, which allegedly hurt religious sentiments.

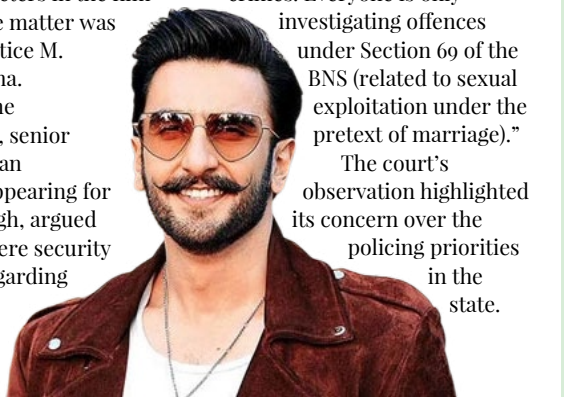
Following a private complaint filed by Prashanth Methal before a magistrate court, the Chief Judicial Magistrate had directed police investigation on January 23, 2026. Subsequently, the High Grounds police registered an FIR under Sections 196, 299, and 302 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for allegedly promoting enmity between groups and hurting religious sentiments.

Seeking relief, Ranveer Singh moved the High Court for quashing of the FIR. During the hearing before Justice M. Nagaprasanna, senior advocate Sajjan Poovayya, representing the actor, submitted that an unconditional apology affidavit had been filed and that Ranveer Singh was willing to visit the temple, though no specific date

The Karnataka High Court has strongly criticised the state police, observing that they are focusing on cases related to live-in relationships and marital disputes instead of investigating real crimes.

The remarks were made during the hearing of a petition filed by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh seeking quashing of a case related to alleged disrespect towards divine characters in the film Kantara. The matter was heard by Justice M. Nagaprasanna.

During the proceedings, senior advocate Sajjan Poovayya, appearing for Ranveer Singh, argued that there were security concerns regarding the actor's proposed visit to



had been fixed. Counsel for the complainant, C.G. Malayil, argued that words have serious impact and emphasized that such matters cannot be taken lightly, stressing the sensitivity of religious beliefs. He urged the court to issue a strong warning to prevent similar incidents by public figures.

The court observed that it had refrained from staying the proceedings earlier due to the sensitivity of the issue. It noted that since an undertaking had been given by the actor to visit the temple, a time frame must be fixed.

The court directed that Ranveer Singh shall visit the Chamundi Hill temple within four

Chamundi Hill. At this point, the complainant's counsel, C.G. Malayil, began to argue that Karnataka Police are capable and would provide protection. However, the court interrupted and remarked sharply: "Wait a minute. Karnataka Police are so strong that they are after live-in relationships and couples. They are not investigating real crimes. Everyone is only investigating offences under Section 69 of the BNS (related to sexual exploitation under the pretext of marriage)."

The court's observation highlighted its concern over the policing priorities in the state.

weeks. It also accepted the affidavit of apology submitted by the actor and disposed of the petition.

The prosecution informed the court that prior intimation regarding the actor's visit should be provided to ensure security arrangements. The court observed that Ranveer Singh, being a responsible citizen, is expected to comply with the directions.

The incident stems from controversy surrounding Ranveer Singh's remarks at the IFFI closing ceremony in Goa, where his comments about Kantara Chapter-1 allegedly hurt religious sentiments and led to protests and legal action.

OTT: 'Xerox' Tops Releases

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

A new set of films and web series has arrived on various OTT platforms this week, offering viewers a mix of Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and international content. The lineup includes drama, thriller, action and comedy titles released across major streaming services such as ZEE5, Amazon Prime Video and JioHotstar.

The major highlight from the Kannada industry is the web series "Xerox", featuring actors Nagabhushan, Om Prakash Rao and several other performers. The series presents an unusual and imaginative concept revolving around human "copying" and identity-related themes. It has been released on ZEE5 and is expected to attract attention for its unique storyline and local star cast.

From the Malayalam industry, actor Nivin Pauly's political thriller "Prathichaya" has begun streaming on JioHotstar. The film revolves around a politically sensitive narrative in which the son of a Chief Minister attempts to clear his father's name from serious allegations. The film combines political drama with suspense elements.

In the Tamil-Telugu space, GV Prakash Kumar-starrer "Happy Raj" has been released on Amazon Prime Video. The film is a light-hearted comedy-drama focusing on the

emotional relationship between a father and son, highlighting generational differences and family bonding.

An action-packed Hindi web series starring Anil Kapoor has also premiered on JioHotstar this week. The series follows a high-stakes storyline where the protagonist races against time to prevent a major terrorist attack while simultaneously protecting his family. The show blends action, suspense and emotional drama.

Internationally, the Hollywood film "Marty Supreme", starring Timothée Chalamet, has been released on Amazon Prime Video. The film, which had earlier received multiple Oscar nominations for 2026 in several categories, is a thriller that has generated global interest due to its critical acclaim and awards recognition.

Meanwhile, the controversial film "The Kerala Story 2", which was released in theatres earlier this year, has now made its OTT debut on ZEE5.

Despite facing mixed box office response and debates surrounding its theme, the film has been made available for digital streaming, drawing renewed attention online.

With this week's releases spanning multiple languages and genres, OTT platforms continue to offer a wide range of content catering to diverse audience preferences.



BUSINESS

Jan Dhan Deposits Cross ₹3.07 Lakh Crore

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India's flagship financial inclusion scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), has entered a new phase of active usage, with total deposits crossing ₹3.07 lakh crore as of April 2026.

According to data shared by BLS E-Services, one of the country's largest Business Correspondent (BC) networks, the total number of Jan Dhan accounts has risen to 58.06 crore as of April 8, 2026. This marks an increase from 55.28 crore in 2025 and 52.01 crore in 2024, indicating steady expansion along with higher account activity.

Deposits under the scheme have grown consistently from ₹2.34 lakh crore in April 2024 to ₹2.62 lakh crore in April 2025, before reaching the current level of ₹3.07 lakh crore.

The data highlights the growing role of BC networks in extending last-mile banking services, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, enabling customers to deposit, withdraw, and transfer money without visiting bank branches.

State-wise data shows Uttar Pradesh as the top contributor with 10.32 crore accounts and deposits of around ₹64,000 crore, accounting for nearly 18% of the total PMJDY base. Bihar and West Bengal follow with deposits of about ₹30,000 crore each, while Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh are also key contributors.

Other states, including Karnataka, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Gujarat, have shown steady growth, reflecting wider financial inclusion across regions.

Public sector banks, led by the State Bank of India, continue to hold a significant share of Jan Dhan accounts and have strengthened their BC networks to deepen outreach at the grassroots level. BLS E-Services Limited, operating over 45,800 BC outlets and 1.5 lakh touchpoints nationwide, said a large share of deposits is coming from rural and small-town customers, where access to formal banking remains limited.

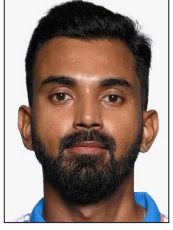
Experts say the BC ecosystem, comprising around 16 lakh correspondents across India, is playing a crucial role in financial inclusion by facilitating direct benefit transfers, micro-insurance, pensions, and small loans.

SPORTS

## Rahul's 152 Shatters Records for Delhi Capitals

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
In a high-scoring clash in Indian Premier League 2026, Delhi Capitals posted a record 264 runs against Punjab Kings, powered by a sensational innings from KL Rahul.

Opening the innings, Rahul remained unbeaten on 152 off just 67 balls, smashing 16 boundaries and 9 sixes. His explosive knock marked his sixth IPL century and stands as the highest individual score by an Indian in IPL history, surpassing Abhishek Sharma's previous record of 145.



Rahul reached his century in just 47 balls and anchored the innings till the end, playing a crucial role in Delhi's highest-ever IPL total. His innings now ranks third among the highest individual scores in IPL history, behind Chris Gayle (165) and Brendon McCullum (158\*).

The innings was marked by relentless stroke play, with Rahul dominating the bowling attack on a batting-friendly pitch, setting up a massive total for his team.

His innings also provided strong momentum to Delhi Capitals' campaign, boosting their net run rate and confidence in the tournament. The aggressive approach taken by Rahul set the tone early, putting Punjab Kings under pressure throughout the match.

With this performance, Rahul has once again underlined his stature as one of the most consistent and explosive batters in the league, further strengthening his case as a key player for both franchise and national duties.

## 36-Ball Ton, 12 Sixes: Sooryavanshi Stuns SRH

**> Vikrama Vahini | Jaipur**  
In a stunning display of power-hitting, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi delivered a historic performance in Indian Premier League 2026, scoring a blistering century for Rajasthan Royals against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Opening the innings, Sooryavanshi reached his second IPL hundred in just 36 balls, finishing with 103 runs off 37 deliveries. His explosive knock included 5 boundaries and a remarkable 12 sixes, with 92 runs coming purely from boundaries. He had earlier raced to his half-century in just 15 balls.

With this innings, Sooryavanshi climbed to the top of the run-scorers list and claimed the Orange Cap. Notably, he brought up his century with a six on the 36th delivery, marking one of the fastest hundreds in IPL history.

The young batter also etched his name in the record books as the fastest Indian to score an IPL century and became the first player to hit two centuries in 36 or fewer balls in the tournament's history. He had previously scored a 35-ball century in the 2025 season.

In another milestone, Sooryavanshi smashed 12 sixes in the innings—the highest by an Indian in a single IPL innings—surpassing the previous record of 11 held by Murali Vijay.

Among the fastest IPL centuries, Chris Gayle still holds the overall record with a 30-ball ton, followed by Sooryavanshi's 35-ball (2025) and 36-ball (2026) centuries, placing him firmly among the league's most explosive batters.



## 12.65 Lakh Indians Return Amid Middle East Crisis

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Saturday said that around 12.65 lakh passengers have returned to India from the Gulf and West Asia region since February 28 amid the ongoing Middle East crisis.

The government stated that it is closely monitoring the situation, with a strong focus on the safety, security, and welfare of Indian nationals abroad. Indian embassies and missions across the region are operating 24x7 helplines and providing continuous assistance to citizens.

According to the MEA, missions are regularly issuing advisories, coordinating with local authorities, and engaging with Indian community groups to ensure timely support.

Air connectivity between India and affected countries is gradually improving, with several airlines resuming or increasing operations from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Iraq. Limited cargo and charter flights are also operating in some regions.

The government has also advised Indian nationals to avoid travel to Iran and urged those already present to exit through land routes with assistance from the Indian Embassy, which has helped over 2,400 citizens return safely.

## Iran FM in Islamabad, US Signals Talks

**> Vikrama Vahini | Islamabad**  
Islamabad is emerging as a potential venue for a second round of high-level diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran, as both sides signal renewed but cautious efforts to explore dialogue.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has arrived in Islamabad as part of a regional diplomatic tour that includes discussions with Pakistani leadership on security and bilateral issues, before heading to Moscow.

Meanwhile, the United States has indicated that its envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner will travel to Islamabad on Saturday for what Washington describes as direct peace talks with Iran.

US Vice President JD Vance is also on standby and may join the discussions if progress is made.

The White House has stated that it has "seen some progress" from the Iranian side. However, Tehran has publicly downplayed expectations, saying no direct meeting with US officials is planned and that its position will instead be conveyed through Pakistani mediators.

Pakistani officials have described the situation as cautiously optimistic, suggesting that even if direct talks do not occur, the presence of both sides



in the same city could help advance indirect diplomacy.

Iranian state media, including Tasnim and Nournews, have reiterated that no formal talks with the US are scheduled.

However, diplomatic signals from both sides suggest ongoing backchannel communications and informal exchanges through intermediaries.

This latest diplomatic effort follows earlier rounds of mixed messaging between Washington and Tehran, including claims of progress and subsequent denials. Despite this, reports indicate continued behind-the-scenes contacts through technical teams and informal channels.

In recent weeks, regional mediators, including Pakistan and Oman, have played an increasingly

active role in facilitating indirect communication between Washington and Tehran. Diplomatic sources suggest that these third-party channels have helped prevent a complete breakdown in dialogue, even amid sharp political rhetoric and mutual distrust.

Analysts note that while both sides continue to maintain firm public positions, the decision to keep diplomatic options open in Islamabad reflects a broader interest in avoiding further escalation in the Middle East.

However, significant gaps remain on key issues, and the success of any potential talks will depend on whether both sides agree to move beyond preliminary exchanges to structured negotiations.

## Vaishnav Opens 'Aditya' Rail Complex in B'luru

**> Vikrama Vahini | B'uru**  
Union Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, visited the BEML Thippasandra campus in Bengaluru today and inaugurated the specialised 'Aditya' complex dedicated to the manufacturing of high-speed rail coaches.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that high-speed rail technology involves highly complex and advanced engineering, and its indigenisation marks a significant milestone for India's engineering capabilities.

The newly inaugurated 'Aditya' complex has been designed for the development of B-28 coaches, which are part of the country's next-generation high-speed rolling stock programme.

Highlighting the transformative potential of high-speed rail, Shri Vaishnav noted that such systems would significantly reduce travel time between major cities, effectively integrating them into a larger



urban network. He cited that travel between Chennai and Bengaluru could be reduced to just 75 minutes in the future.

The Minister also shared updates on strengthening rail connectivity between Mumbai and Bengaluru, including the introduction of a new Mail/Express service via Hubballi with LHB coaches. He further announced that the Vande Bharat Sleeper Express is expected to be launched soon.

To enhance regional connectivity, he confirmed that a Vande Bharat service between Mangaluru and Bengaluru will be introduced shortly. He added that extensions to other coastal cities, including Madgaon, are

also under consideration. The completion of electrification on the Hassan-Mangaluru section and the deployment of Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) systems in challenging coastal terrains have helped overcome technical constraints, he said.

Commending the engineering capabilities at the Thippasandra facility, the Minister stated that their contribution to next-generation rolling stock development will play a crucial role in building a developed India. He reiterated the government's commitment to balancing large-scale infrastructure development with environmental protection and public awareness.

## Minor Abuse & Conversion Case Shocks

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
A case involving alleged sexual assault, exploitation, and forced conversion of a minor girl has surfaced in Bengaluru, triggering outrage and calls for a detailed probe.

Police have arrested the accused, identified as Mohammed Anas, who allegedly lured victims with job offers and later blackmailed them. A case has been registered under the POCSO Act.

Several organisations have demanded a comprehensive investigation, suspecting a larger network behind the incident, while police have assured a thorough probe.

Representatives of various groups visited the Jeevan Bheema Nagar Police Station and submitted a memorandum seeking strict action and a deeper investigation into possible accomplices and financial links.

They have urged authorities to examine call records, bank transactions, and other technical evidence to uncover the full extent of the alleged network.

## Special Train Between Bengaluru & Belagavi

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
To manage the increased passenger rush during the summer vacation season, the South Western Railway has announced a special express train service between SMVT Bengaluru and Belagavi.

Train No. 06503 Special Express will depart from SMVT Bengaluru at 7:00 pm on April 30, 2026 (Thursday) and arrive at Belagavi at 7:35 am the next day (Friday). In the return direction, Train No. 06504 Special Express will leave Belagavi at 5:30 pm on May 3, 2026 (Sunday) and reach SMVT Bengaluru at 5:00 am the following day (Monday). Both services will operate as one-time special trips.

The train will halt at several stations in both directions, including Chikkabanavara, Tumakuru, Arsikere, Birur, Davanagere, Harihar, Haveri, Hubballi, Dharwad, Londa, and Khanapur, among others.

The special train will have a total of 19 coaches, comprising 2 AC 2-tier, 4 AC 3-tier, 7 sleeper class, 4 general second class, and 2 SLRD coaches.

Passengers have been advised to make use of this special service during the peak travel period.

## Russian Drone Strikes on Ukraine Kill 4, Injure 21

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kyiv**  
A Russian drone and missile attack on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro has left at least four people dead and 21 others injured. The casualties were confirmed after bodies were recovered from the debris of destroyed residential buildings following overnight strikes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that 11 of the injured are currently receiving treatment in hospitals across Dnipro.

According to officials, Russian forces carried out sustained overnight attacks on Dnipro as well as several other cities and communities, triggering widespread fires across the city. Multiple apartment buildings and residential complexes were reportedly damaged or destroyed in the strikes.

In a separate incident, two people were injured in a drone attack on the Odesa region during the same wave of overnight assaults.

## Iran Internet Blackout Hits 57 Days

**> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran**  
Iran's nationwide internet shutdown has entered its 57th consecutive day, marking what is being described as the longest internet disruption in the world. According to the monitoring organization NetBlocks, digital services in the country have remained suspended for eight weeks since the start of the conflict.

The watchdog reported that the prolonged blackout has had a severe impact, with over 1,344 hours of connectivity disruption recorded so far. The shutdown has left Iranian citizens unable to communicate with family and friends, while also causing significant economic damage.

Reports suggest that internet access was cut following joint military action by Israel and the United States on February 28. Since then, large-scale restrictions on digital and communication services have been enforced, effectively isolating the Iranian population from the global digital network during a period of regional instability. Observers note that such an extended internet shutdown is unprecedented during times of conflict, and appears to exceed previous state-imposed restrictions aimed at controlling information flow.

The current blackout also follows earlier communication restrictions imposed by Iranian authorities in January, amid accusations that the measures are being used to suppress information about internal unrest.

Amid the digital isolation, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Islamabad.

## Don't Be Used by Politicians, Unite: Narayanaswamy

**> Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**  
Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, on Saturday called upon the community to remain united and not allow political leaders to "use and throw" them for vested interests.

Addressing members of the Chalavadi community and the Right section among Scheduled Castes at NGO Bhavan in Bengaluru, he stressed the need to shun selfishness and work collectively for the upliftment of the community. He said true progress can be achieved only



through grassroots efforts rather than mere speeches and resolutions. Narayanaswamy defended adding 'Chalavadi' to his name, stating it reflects identity and pride. Declaring himself a committed follower of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, he said he proudly represents his community.

He also urged Dalit organisations to stay united and follow the path shown by Dr. Ambedkar, instead of changing directions frequently.

Outlining his "Vision 2036," he proposed long-term measures for economic upliftment, including allocation of 5 to 10 acres of land in

**Chalavadi Narayanaswamy urged community unity and warned against political exploitation, calling for grassroots efforts toward upliftment. He highlighted identity pride, Ambedkar's ideals, and outlined "Vision 2036" focusing on education, entrepreneurship, and community development.**

each district for community halls, coaching support for civil services aspirants, and encouraging youth to take up entrepreneurship.

## IRAN WALKS OUT, US TALKS FAIL IN PAKISTAN

**> Vikrama Vahini | Islamabad**  
A planned diplomatic engagement between Iran and the United States suffered a setback after an Iranian delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi left Islamabad without holding talks with US representatives.

According to reports, the Iranian team departed on Saturday without meeting the American delegation, resulting in what is being seen as a diplomatic embarrassment for both the United States and Pakistan, which had hosted the negotiations.

**Iran's diplomatic engagement with the United States collapsed in Islamabad after a delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi left without holding talks with US representatives. The move has been seen as a setback for US diplomacy and a diplomatic embarrassment for Pakistan, which hosted the negotiations amid tight security.**

The meeting, arranged in Islamabad under tight security, was intended to facilitate indirect discussions amid ongoing

tensions in the Middle East.

However, the talks collapsed before they could begin.

Iranian officials had already made it clear ahead of the visit that they would not engage in direct talks with the United States.

The US delegation, reportedly led by officials including Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, arrived in the region after the Iranian team had already left.

Sources indicate that Iran objected to recent US naval restrictions imposed on its ports, calling them a violation of ceasefire understandings.



**Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar attends the 56th Foundation Day and Symposium on Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) and Urban Invest Window (UIWIN) at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, highlighting Karnataka's readiness with 1,082 urban infrastructure projects worth ₹1.25 lakh crore and urging enhanced central support for urban development.**