



**Kicheha Sudeep Stands Up for 'KD' Heroine Reeshma Nanaiah at Press Meet, Highlights Respect for Women Artists Sudeep questioned the media for ignoring her and ensured she was given space to speak during the interaction.**

**India and New Zealand on Monday signed a long-awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA), aimed at significantly enhancing bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two nations.**



INSIDE

Good morning

A beautiful life begins with peace within and love toward others.

## BRIEFS

### Shariq Gets 10-Year Jail Term

**> Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Special Court on Monday sentenced the prime accused in the Mangaluru cooker bomb blast case, Mohammed Shariq, to 10 years of imprisonment.

The incident occurred on November 19, 2022, near Kankanady in Mangaluru, when a cooker bomb exploded inside an autorickshaw. Both Shariq and the driver were injured in the blast.

Initially, Shariq had pleaded innocence. However, in 2025, he reportedly submitted a plea before the court admitting the charges against him.

According to the prosecution, the explosion took place due to a technical error in the timer setting, causing the device to detonate inside the vehicle before reaching its intended target.

The court's verdict marks a key development in the high-profile terror-related case investigated by the NIA.

### Delhi Schools Halt Outdoor Activities

**> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has issued strict guidelines suspending outdoor physical activities in schools as temperatures rise and a heatwave warning is issued by the IMD.

Schools have been directed to conduct assemblies only in indoor or shaded areas, while outdoor classes and sports activities have been completely prohibited to ensure student safety.

The guidelines also include a "water bell" every 45-60 minutes to ensure hydration, along with availability of clean drinking water, awareness sessions on heatwave precautions, and immediate medical support in schools.

### LPG Rules May Change from May 1

**> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

Significant changes are likely in LPG cylinder booking rules and pricing from May 1, 2026, amid ongoing global energy disruptions, according to reports.

The proposed revisions may include price changes, making OTP-based delivery permanent, and altering the current booking lock-in period of 25 days.

The government is also focusing on strengthening supply systems and promoting PNG connections.

LPG prices have already seen multiple hikes in recent months due to international market pressures, with both domestic and commercial cylinder rates increasing across major cities.

Officials said supply of domestic LPG, PNG, and CNG has been maintained at 100 per cent despite geopolitical tensions.

Authorities are also prioritising deliveries for hospitals and essential sectors, while expanding Aadhaar-based verification and eKYC compliance for beneficiaries.

# Iran Weighs US Talks Request

## - STRAIN CONTINUES AS HORMUZ DISRUPTION IMPACTS GLOBAL OIL SUPPLY -

**> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran**

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday indicated that Tehran is actively considering a request from the United States for negotiations, raising hopes of a possible thaw in long-frozen Iran-US relations.

Speaking to Russian media via his official Telegram channel, Araghchi said Iran has withstood sustained pressure, including a prolonged military confrontation and naval blockade, without conceding its core objectives. He added that this resilience has prompted Washington to seek dialogue.

"It is clear that Iran has stood up against the world's greatest

superpower, and they have not achieved even one of their goals. This is why they have requested negotiations, and we are currently considering it," Araghchi stated.

**US "Requests Talks" After Failed Pressure Campaign**

Araghchi's remarks come amid heightened geopolitical tensions and stalled diplomatic efforts.

According to him, the United States has failed to achieve its objectives despite sustained pressure over a 37-day conflict period and maritime restrictions.

Iranian officials view the current situation as a strategic shift, with Washington now seeking engagement after earlier



*Iran has signalled possible openness to talks with the United States, with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stating that Tehran is considering a US request for negotiations amid ongoing geopolitical tensions. While Washington's earlier pressure campaign is said to have failed in achieving its objectives, recent diplomatic signals suggest a cautious shift toward dialogue. However, uncertainty remains as key developments, including cancelled US delegations and disruptions in regional maritime routes, continue to complicate efforts for a breakthrough.*

attempts to exert military and economic pressure.

**Trump Cancels Delegation Visit, Signals Direct Contact Only**

The development also follows

US President Donald Trump's decision to cancel a planned visit by American delegates to Islamabad for ceasefire-related discussions.

Trump, speaking to Fox News,

stated that Washington would not send senior officials for long-distance negotiations and suggested direct communication instead.

"If they want to talk, they can come to us, or they can call us. We are not sending people to travel 18 hours to meet," Trump said.

**Uncertainty Over Ceasefire Talks in Islamabad**

The cancellation was widely interpreted as a setback for ongoing diplomatic efforts, especially after expectations had built around a second round of talks in Islamabad.

Araghchi's abrupt movements between Islamabad and Oman in recent days have further added to

diplomatic uncertainty, with analysts suggesting shifting backchannel communications between the two sides.

**Strained Situation Continues, Hormuz Route Impacted**

Despite renewed signals of possible dialogue, tensions remain high. The Strait of Hormuz continues to face disruption, affecting global oil supply routes and contributing to volatility in energy markets.

Diplomatic observers say that while Araghchi's remarks indicate openness, the path to formal negotiations remains uncertain and dependent on further political signaling from both Tehran and Washington.

## PM Modi Appeals for Trust in Open Letter to Bengal Voters

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday concluded his election campaign for the second phase of polling in West Bengal with an open letter and an audio message appealing to voters to support the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and usher in a phase of development and trust in the state.

With the second phase of voting scheduled for April 29, the Prime Minister urged citizens to participate in large numbers, describing the electoral process as a "festival of democracy" and expressing confidence in a political shift in Bengal.

In his letter addressed to the people of West Bengal, PM Modi said he experienced a "unique energy" during his campaign, adding that rallies and roadshows felt like a "pilgrimage." He thanked supporters across sections of society, including youth, women, farmers, workers, and traders, for what he described as

overwhelming affection and support.

The Prime Minister stated that he felt inspired by the aspirations of Bengal's youth and women, who seek greater opportunities, safety, and progress. He said the time had come for change and development, adding that "there has been enough fear; now people need trust."

Expressing confidence in the BJP's prospects, Modi said he looked forward to forming a government in the state and working towards building a "developed Bengal." He also reiterated that serving Bengal and ensuring its security remained his responsibility and commitment.

In his closing remarks, the Prime Minister called for unity in development and urged voters to support a new direction for the state, concluding with the slogan "Vande Mataram."

The final phase of polling in West Bengal will take place on April 29, while counting of votes is scheduled for May 4.



## Dinesh Trivedi Named India's Envoy to Bangladesh

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Former Union minister Dinesh Trivedi has been appointed as India's next High Commissioner to Bangladesh, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Monday, as both countries move to repair strained bilateral relations.

According to an official statement, Trivedi is expected to assume charge of his new diplomatic assignment shortly. The appointment comes at a sensitive juncture when New Delhi and Dhaka are working towards rebuilding trust and strengthening cooperation after a period of diplomatic unease.

India's decision to post a senior political leader and experienced parliamentarian to Dhaka is being seen as a calibrated move aimed at injecting greater political depth into bilateral engagement. Trivedi's experience in governance and public affairs is expected to support ongoing diplomatic outreach efforts. Relations between India and Bangladesh have faced strains in recent times under the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus, prompting both sides to explore renewed engagement.



## Shivakumar Defers Leadership Call

**> Vikrama Vahini | Belgauru**

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Congress state president DK Shivakumar on Monday reiterated that both Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and he would abide by any decision taken by the party high command on the issue of leadership and Cabinet matters.

Speaking to reporters after returning from Delhi, Shivakumar said he has "full faith" in the Congress leadership, which would take an appropriate decision at the right time. His remarks come amid ongoing speculation over possible leadership changes and Cabinet reshuffle in the state following May 4, when key electoral results are expected.

Without revealing details of his discussions in Delhi, Shivakumar maintained a cautious stance on internal deliberations, saying he would not comment on political matters before the media. **PG2**



## 3 LAKH VISIT CHAR DHAM

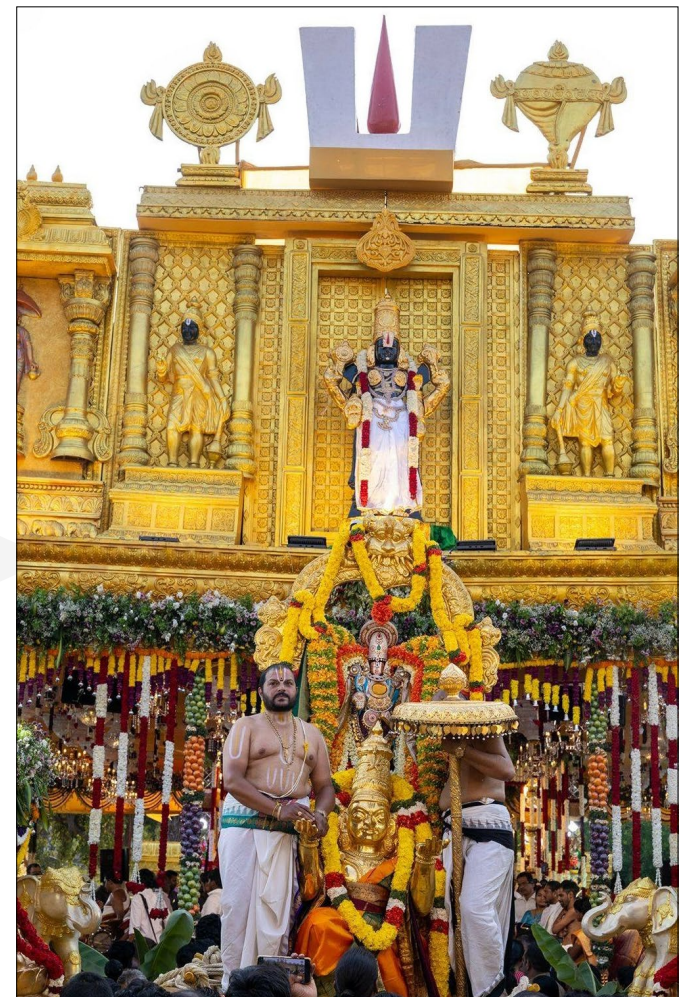


**> Vikrama Vahini | Dehradun**

Nearly three lakh pilgrims have visited the Himalayan shrines of Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath since the Char Dham Yatra began on April 19, officials said on Monday. According to official data, a total of 2,98,048 devotees reached the four sacred shrines by 7 pm on April 26, marking a strong start to the annual

pilgrimage season.

Authorities noted a steady rise in daily footfall, with the number of pilgrims increasing from 9,800 on the opening day to 59,458 on Sunday, reflecting growing enthusiasm among devotees. Arrangements have been strengthened across routes to manage the increasing influx and ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.



**Padmavathi Parinayotsavam Concludes at Tirumala at Monday**

## PMK Calls to Postpone CMA Meet Over Mekedatu Row

**> Vikrama Vahini | Chennai**

PMK president and Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss on Monday demanded that the upcoming Cauvery Management Authority (CMA) meeting scheduled for April 29 in New Delhi be deferred until new governments assume office in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.

In a statement, he alleged that the Karnataka government is attempting to push discussions on the Mekedatu dam project across the

Cauvery river, which Tamil Nadu strongly opposes, stating it could adversely impact several districts dependent on Cauvery water. He said the 50th CMA meeting has been scheduled to discuss water release to Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

However, he objected to holding the meeting at a time when member states do not have fully empowered governments following elections. Dr. Anbumani said that while discussion on Cauvery

**PG2**



# HC Slams Police Over Selective FIR Registration

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka High Court on Monday strongly criticised the state police for allegedly failing to act on genuine criminal complaints while pursuing other types of cases, and questioned delays in registering FIRs in serious matters.

The remarks came during the hearing of a petition filed by M.K. Doddammamma and others from Channapatna in Ramanagara district, seeking quashing of a theft case registered against them.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna heard the matter and expressed concern over what he termed as misuse of police machinery in delayed and questionable prosecutions.



**Court Questions Delay in FIR**

The case pertains to an alleged incident of cattle theft reported in 2024, but the FIR was registered only in 2026 against members of a single family. The allegation involves the theft of two cows, which were reportedly tied for grazing and later found missing.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the case was registered after an

**The Karnataka High Court has strongly criticised the state police over alleged selective and delayed registration of FIRs, questioning why genuine complaints are often ignored while other cases are pursued. The court made the observations while hearing a petition seeking quashing of a two-year-old cattle theft case, and has stayed further investigation, terming it a possible misuse of criminal process.**

unexplained delay of nearly two years, despite repeated complaints. The counsel further stated that the matter was being improperly projected as a criminal offence without proper investigation.

**'Misuse of Police Machinery'**

Expressing strong displeasure, the court observed that if such delayed and unsubstantiated cases are allowed to proceed, it could amount to misuse of

the legal process.

The court questioned whether proper investigation had been carried out before registering the case.

The judge also remarked that police often appear to focus excessively on certain categories of cases while neglecting serious criminal complaints, leading to repeated visits by complainants to police stations.

**Earlier Observations Recalled**

The court referred to its earlier remarks criticising the state police, including comments made during hearings involving other matters where it had observed that law enforcement agencies were allegedly prioritising certain cases over genuine crimes.

The judge had earlier also commented on the handling of sensitive cases and the need for balanced and effective investigation practices.

**Interim Relief Granted**

In the present case, the High Court stayed further investigation into the theft case, observing that allowing the probe to continue at this stage could lead to misuse of criminal proceedings.

Editorial

Scorching Summer Crisis

India is reeling under an intense wave of heat, with soaring temperatures and relentless hot winds disrupting daily life across the country. The impact is especially severe on vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, for whom prolonged exposure poses serious health risks. Hospitals are already reporting rising cases of heat exhaustion and dehydration, while outdoor workers struggle to cope with extreme conditions. This early and aggressive onset of summer underscores a worrying pattern of climate variability that is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

Adding to the concern is the warning from the Indian Meteorological Department about the likely influence of a "Super El Niño" this year. Such a phenomenon could delay the monsoon, intensify heat conditions, and potentially lead to drought-like situations in several regions. A delayed or weak monsoon would not only affect agriculture but also strain water resources, power supply, and food security. The cascading effects could be far-reaching, impacting both rural livelihoods and urban sustainability.

In light of these developments, governments at both central and state levels must act with urgency and foresight. Ensuring adequate availability of drinking water, strengthening public health systems, and preparing contingency plans for drought management are critical. Public awareness campaigns on heat safety, efficient water use, and community-level preparedness can also play a key role in mitigating the crisis. This is not merely a seasonal challenge but a reminder of the broader climate realities demanding proactive governance and collective responsibility.

-Editor

NU Super Specialty Hospital Opens on Mission Road

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

A state-of-the-art super specialty hospital by the NU Group will be formally inaugurated on Mission Road in the city this Wednesday, marking a significant addition to Bengaluru's healthcare infrastructure.

The new facility will be inaugurated by Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao. The event will also be attended by noted cardiologist and Member of

Parliament Dr. C.N. Manjunath, renowned actor Ramesh Aravind, and Director General of Police Dr. M.A. Saleem, along with several other dignitaries.

The NU Group of Hospitals is known for offering advanced treatments in kidney transplantation, urology, nephrology, and fertility care, leveraging cutting-edge technology while maintaining uncompromising quality standards.

With a strong emphasis on

ethical medical practices, the NU hospitals have carved a niche for themselves in the healthcare sector and have earned the trust of patients. The institution is regarded as one of the fastest-growing healthcare providers, known for reliability in both diagnosis and treatment.

The new hospital will be dedicated to public service at a function scheduled for 10 AM on Wednesday, in the presence of senior doctors and distinguished guests.

Shivakumar Defers Leadership Call

From PGI

He dismissed suggestions of internal discord and asserted that the party remains united.

On speculation regarding leadership change as the government approaches the three-year mark, Shivakumar said neither he nor the Chief Minister had made any public statements on the matter and confirmed that they would accept whatever decision the party takes.

HC SLAMS CASE OVER WOMEN'S PRIVACY VIOLATION

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court on Monday refused to quash a criminal case against an Instagram page operator linked to "Metro Chicks," strongly criticising the alleged recording and uploading of women's images without consent.

Justice M. Nagaprassanna questioned the practice of filming women in the Metro and posting such content online, observing that women must be able to feel safe in public spaces. The petition filed



by B.K. Diganth seeking quashing of the case registered at Banashankari Police Station was dismissed. The court said technical arguments cannot justify privacy violations. The case involves allegations of stalking and objectionable online content under provisions of the IT Act and BNS.

Train Services Hit by Cancellations, Diversions

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Railway authorities have announced partial cancellation and diversion of select train services owing to yard remodelling work at Channasandra Railway Station.

Partial Cancellation:

Train No. 20687 SSS Hubballi-KSR Bengaluru Express, running from April 29 to May 1, 2026, will be partially cancelled between Yesvantpur Junction and KSR Bengaluru City Junction. The train will terminate at Yesvantpur.

Similarly, Train No. 20688 KSR Bengaluru-SSS Hubballi Express, operating from April 30 to May 2, 2026, will be partially cancelled between KSR Bengaluru and

Yesvantpur, and will originate from Yesvantpur instead of KSR Bengaluru.

Diversion:

Train No. 12785 Kacheguda-Ashokapuram Express, from April 29 to May 2, will be diverted via Yelahanka Junction, Yesvantpur, and KSR Bengaluru, skipping Bengaluru East Railway Station and Bengaluru Cantonment Railway Station.

Train No. 12786 Ashokapuram-Kacheguda Express, from April 30 to May 2, will also be diverted via KSR Bengaluru, Yesvantpur, and Yelahanka, skipping Bengaluru Cantonment station.

Passengers have been advised to take note of the changes and plan their journeys accordingly.



RPF DG REVIEWS SECURITY AT BENGALURU STATIONS

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Director General of Railway Protection Force (RPF) Sonali Mishra on Monday conducted a comprehensive security inspection of major railway stations in the Bengaluru Division, focusing on passenger safety, crowd management, and infrastructure readiness ahead of the summer rush.

The inspection began at Bengaluru

Cantonment station, where she was accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour. She later visited KSR Bengaluru, Krishnarajapuram, and SMVT Bengaluru stations to review operational preparedness and passenger holding arrangements.

Review of Security Systems

During the visit, the DG inspected CCTV surveillance systems, baggage scanners, and the Integrated CCTV Command Centre at KSR Bengaluru station. She reviewed live monitoring



capabilities and directed officials to further strengthen surveillance infrastructure.

At SMVT Bengaluru, she assessed crowd management systems and RPF deployment at entry and exit points, while at Krishnarajapuram she reviewed security arrangements at the key junction handling long-distance train traffic.

Focus on Technology and Welfare

Addressing RPF personnel during a 'Sainik Sammelan', Mishra stressed the use of advanced

Asia's Largest SCADA Centre Ready for Launch

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The state-of-the-art Integrated Intelligent Water and Sewerage Management Centre (SCADA), a key component of the Cauvery Stage 5 project, is ready for inauguration in the city. The project is being implemented with financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar inspected the facility and reviewed final preparations. The centre will soon be inaugurated by Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar.

Located at Shimsha Bhavan, the integrated command centre is among the largest in Asia and is designed to manage the city's drinking water and sewerage systems under a single platform using advanced technology.

The SCADA centre will monitor and



manage the 775 MLD Cauvery Stage 5 water supply covering 110 villages, while also overseeing the entire city's water distribution and sewerage network in real time. Leveraging artificial intelligence, the system will forecast water demand, detect pipeline leakages, and reduce water loss.

It is also integrated with major water treatment plants and ground-level reservoirs to continuously monitor water quality parameters such as chlorine, pH, TDS, and turbidity. In case of contamination, instant alerts

will be issued to ensure safe drinking water supply.

The centre incorporates IoT-based predictive maintenance systems, integrating public borewells, GIS, and smart meters to provide early warnings for equipment failures, thereby reducing operational costs and improving efficiency.

Officials said the intelligent SCADA system is expected to bring greater transparency and mark a major technological leap in Bengaluru's water and wastewater management.

PMK Calls to Postpone CMA Meet Over Mkedatu Row

From PGI

water allocation based on tribunal and Supreme Court orders would not be an issue, any attempt to include the Mkedatu dam project would be unacceptable. He also claimed that Karnataka may use the current situation to press for consideration of its Detailed

Project Report (DPR) on the project.

He further argued that Tamil Nadu officials attending the meeting have not been given clear instructions on the Mkedatu issue due to the post-election situation, warning that any improper decision could harm the interests of Cauvery delta farmers.



Monday road show led by UP CM Sri Yogi Adityanath Ji at Kalyani, Bargaon District was an indication of this change. Yogi Ji's promise of a safe and prosperous Bengal resonated with all. People have anger towards the TMC. Hope towards the BJP. People are waiting for May 4th - when a full majority BJP Govt will give wings to their aspirations.

NEWS

DIVINE WISDOM GLOBAL LAUREATE HONOUR

Vikrama Vahini | Hosur

Renowned thinker and literary scholar Dr. Ravindra A. Kushtagi has been conferred the prestigious "Divine Wisdom Global Laureate" award by the Asia International Culture Academy in recognition of his outstanding contributions to spiritual literature.

The award was presented at a

**Renowned thinker and literary scholar Dr. Ravindra A. Kushtagi has been conferred the prestigious "Divine Wisdom Global Laureate" award by the Asia International Culture Academy for his outstanding contributions to spiritual and Bhagavata-based literature. The honour recognises his distinguished work in blending spirituality with literary expression and making philosophical concepts accessible to a wider audience.**

held in Hosur in the presence of Dr. Krishnamurthy Mahaswamiji, President of Sri Kshetra Dharmadhwa Pratishtana, and Dr. B. M. Ballari of Swami Vivekananda Educational Institution. Organisers stated that the honour recognises Dr. Kushtagi's multifaceted achievements, particularly his work in Bhagavata-based spiritual writings.

Born on November 15, 1957, in Kalaburagi, Dr. Kushtagi was



raised with strong values instilled by his parents, Late Anantacharya Kushtagi and Late Seethabai. He completed his schooling in Raichur and Shahabad before graduating with distinction in Mechanical Engineering in 1980.

He served for nearly 35 years in reputed organisations such as Larsen & Toubro and Integrated Electric Company, retiring in 2016 as Chief Purchase Manager.

Known for his integrity and professional excellence, he built a distinguished career in the engineering field.

Post-retirement, Dr. Kushtagi devoted himself to literary and spiritual pursuits inspired by deep study of the Srimad Bhagavata. Since 2020, he has authored notable works including Krishna Kathamruta, Srimad Bhagavata in Saptaha Tradition, and Harivamsha, the latter published under Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams in 2024.

His writings are widely appreciated for making complex philosophical concepts accessible

to common readers. By translating his works into English, he has taken Indian Sanatana philosophy to a global audience, earning recognition for clarity and depth in his presentations.

Dr. Kushtagi has received several honours over the years, including recognition from Atmashree Kannada Cultural Foundation (2023), an honorary doctorate from the Yoga University of the Americas, Florida (2024), the Sri Tyagaraja Ratna Award (2025), and multiple literary and cultural accolades in 2025 and 2026.

In 2025, he also had the rare opportunity to present his English works to legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan, a moment he considers among the most memorable in his life.

Guided by the philosophy "Bhagavata is my breath, Bhagavata is my soul," Dr. Kushtagi continues to inspire readers through his dedication to spirituality, literature, and cultural values.

Health And Lifestyle

WORK STRESS KILLS 8.4 LAKH A YEAR: ILO

A new and alarming report released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva has revealed that excessive work-related stress is contributing to more than 8.4 lakh deaths globally every year. The findings highlight how modern workplace conditions, marked by long working hours, job insecurity, and increasing pressure to perform, are becoming a major threat to both mental and physical health.

Mental Health Crisis in Workplaces

The report states that psychosocial risks at the workplace are emerging as a serious global concern. These risks are primarily driven by excessive workload, constant pressure to meet targets, fear of job loss, and prolonged working hours without adequate rest. According to the ILO, such conditions are severely affecting mental well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, suicidal tendencies.

Experts note that workplace stress does not remain limited to mental health alone. It significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases and stroke, making it a dual threat to overall human health.

Work Environment Plays a Key Role

The ILO report emphasizes that the mental health of employees is closely linked to the work environment. It identifies three key factors that determine workplace well-being. The first is the design

of work processes and whether employees are able to achieve targets without excessive strain. The second is interpersonal relationships within the workplace, including interactions with colleagues and supervisors. The report notes that strained relationships can further aggravate stress levels.

The third factor is organizational policy, including access to paid leave, health benefits, and insurance coverage. Supportive workplace policies, according to the report, can significantly reduce mental stress and improve employee productivity.

Five Major Risk Factors Identified

The study identifies five primary risk factors contributing to stress-related deaths. These include excessive workload, inadequate compensation for work performed, job insecurity, lack of rest due to long working hours, and poor working conditions.

Data Based on Global Studies

The ILO compiled this report in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study. The data presents a comprehensive global picture of how occupational stress is evolving into a major public health challenge.



SCIENCE & Technology

Meta Plans Space Solar Power for AI Data Centres

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Meta has announced two major energy partnerships aimed at meeting the rising power demands of its artificial intelligence (AI) data centres, including plans for space-based solar energy and ultra-long-duration energy storage.

In a blog post dated April 27, 2026, the company said it will collaborate with Overview Energy to explore up to 1 GW of space solar power and with Noon Energy for up to 1 GW/100 GWh of storage capacity capable of holding clean energy for more than 100 hours.

Meta said the initiative is part of its strategy to ensure reliable and continuous power supply for rapidly expanding AI infrastructure, which requires significantly higher energy consumption.

Overview Energy's system involves satellites placed in geosynchronous orbit, about 35,400 km above Earth, which would collect continuous solar energy and transmit it to ground-based solar farms using near-infrared light.

The company said this could enable solar power generation even during nighttime.

Meanwhile, Noon Energy's technology focuses on long-duration energy storage using advanced solid oxide fuel cells and carbon-based systems, designed to supply power for several days compared to conventional battery systems that last only a few hours.

Meta said it has already secured over 30 GW of renewable energy and additional nuclear energy partnerships as part of its broader clean energy push.

## 'YOU ARE MY FAMILY': MODI'S EMOTIONAL BENGAL PITCH

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi struck an emotional and personal chord during his final campaign rally in West Bengal, telling supporters in Barrackpore that he shares a deep bond with the people of the state.

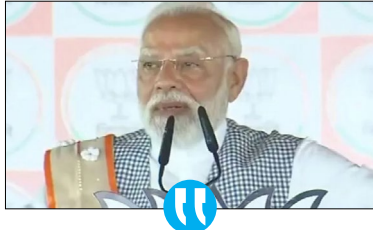
Addressing a large gathering, Modi rejected allegations that he is an "outsider," asserting that his connection with Bengal goes beyond politics. "The day I left home, I felt I came to stay with you. You are my family," he said, drawing loud cheers from the crowd.

### Personal Reflections and Spiritual Connect

Spending a significant part of his speech reflecting on his life and spiritual journey, Modi described his campaign in Bengal as akin to a "pilgrimage."

He said the state holds a special place in his spiritual life and recalled his experience during the consecration of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya in January 2024.

He also shared personal anecdotes, including an incident from a previous rally where he could not meet a woman supporter, expressing regret and appreciation for the affection shown by people, particularly women.



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his final campaign rally in Barrackpore, West Bengal, struck an emotional tone by describing his bond with the people as that of "family." Rejecting claims of being an outsider, he reflected on his personal and spiritual journey, while also expressing confidence in the BJP's electoral prospects. Modi highlighted Bengal's historical and cultural significance, stressed eastern India's development, and launched a sharp attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress over governance issues.**

### Confidence in BJP's Prospects

Calling the Barrackpore rally his last before the elections, Modi expressed confidence in the Bharatiya Janata Party's performance, saying he would return for the swearing-in ceremony.

He highlighted Barrackpore's historical significance in the 1857 uprising and described it as a symbol of change, asserting that the upcoming elections would reshape not only West Bengal but also the future of eastern India.

Focus on Eastern India's Growth Positioning Bengal at the centre of regional development, the Prime Minister stressed the need to strengthen eastern India for the country's overall progress.

He invoked nationalist leaders like Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, linking their vision to the BJP's agenda.

### Sharp Attack on TMC

Turning to politics, Modi launched a strong attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. He accused the party of failing to deliver on its slogan "Maa, Mati, Manush," alleging neglect of women's safety, farmers, and youth employment.

### Closing Message

Concluding his address, Modi said the election would determine Bengal's future and restore its cultural identity. "We want Kolkata to be Kolkata again. The City of Joy must become the City of Truth," he said.

## KCET Key Released, Objections Till Apr 30

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has released the provisional answer key for the Common Entrance Test (KCET) conducted last week.

Candidates can raise objections, if any, against the answer key until April 30 through the official online link provided by KEA. The authority has directed applicants to clearly mention details such as question number, version code, and other required information while submitting objections. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

KEA has stated that objections will be reviewed by subject experts and their decision will be final. Candidates can download the KCET 2026 answer key PDF from the official website.

The KCET examination was conducted on April 22 (Kannada language test) and April 23-24 for other subjects. The results are expected to be announced in May 2026.



**Members of Vipra Paraspara Sahaya Samiti including Honorary President Illya Aavar Swamiji, Convener B.S. Sunderesh, Co-convener and Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha State Joint Secretary S. Ranganath, State Executive Member M.S. Prashanth, N. Vishwanath, and members Veena, Lakshmi, Mahesh, and Nagabhushan submitting a memorandum to Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Laxmikant Reddy, demanding strict legal action over allegations of students being forced to remove or cut the sacred thread (Janeu) during the CET examination held on April 23, 2026 at Krupanidhi School, Koramangala and Nagarjuna Education Society examination centres in Bengaluru.**

## BJP Opposes Event Linked to Umar Khalid

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka BJP has opposed a proposed book release event related to Umar Khalid, who is currently in jail under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Chief Whip of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar said the party strongly objects to any attempt to "glorify" an accused in a serious

criminal case and demanded cancellation of the event scheduled for Tuesday.

He stated that Khalid has been in judicial custody since 2020 and argued that such public programmes are "unacceptable and condemnable," reiterating BJP's stand against any event that projects individuals facing serious charges in a positive light.



## 'CAAL' Launches Agro-Legal Website



**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Centre for Agricultural and Allied Laws (CAAL), Bengaluru, formally launched its official website on Sunday at an event.

The newly launched website (www.caal.in.net) was inaugurated and made public by Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav, Judge of the High Court of Karnataka.

In his inaugural address, Justice Yadav stressed the importance of integrating farmers' welfare, ecological balance, and sustainability into the core vision of agri-business enterprises. He noted that while striving for growth and quality production, the agricultural sector must ensure that environmental responsibility and farmer

interests remain central priorities.

The judge also appreciated CAAL's initiative in establishing what he described as a first-of-its-kind agro-legal training centre. He lauded the efforts of the team behind the initiative, particularly Mr. B. Venkataramanappa and Nitin Ramesh, for their vision in bridging agriculture and legal education through structured training programmes.

The event marked a significant step towards promoting legal awareness in the agricultural and allied sectors, with CAAL aiming to strengthen capacity building, policy understanding, and compliance frameworks within the agri-business ecosystem.

## PM Modi's Surprise Gift to Raichur Couple

**> Vikrama Vahini | Raichuru**

A wedding in Kanihaal village of Sindhanur taluk has drawn national attention after Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a personalized letter blessing the newly married couple.

The groom, Rajesh Chidamanappa Kurli, who married Savitha on April 13, had sent a wedding invitation to the Prime Minister's Office. To the family's surprise, they received a response from PM Modi wishing the couple a happy, peaceful and healthy married life.

The gesture has been widely appreciated in Raichur district, with the family expressing gratitude and calling it a moment of pride and honour. Rajesh's father, Chidanandappa Kurli, a BJP leader from Maski constituency, said the letter has brought immense joy to the family. The letter is now being widely shared on social media and has become a topic of discussion across the region.

## NO ISSUES IN ALLIANCE: HD KUMARASWAMY

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar**

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday said the BJP-JDS alliance remains strong and there are no internal issues, adding that minor differences, if any, are always resolved through discussions.

Speaking to the media at Malur, Kumaraswamy said every political party faces internal challenges and it is nothing new. Responding to questions on alleged differences in the alliance, he said there is no confusion or conflict and the partners are working together smoothly.

### 'No Leadership Crisis in BJP'

Dismissing questions on leadership issues within the BJP, he said the party has several experienced leaders and a strong organisational structure. Any internal matters, he added, are handled by the party high command. On reports of political developments within the Congress in Karnataka, he remarked that leadership competition has been ongoing for years and suggested that



the situation should be observed over time. Attack on State Government Kumaraswamy launched a sharp attack on the state government, alleging financial mismanagement and administrative failure. Citing remarks made by MLA B.R. Patil, he said even ruling party legislators have acknowledged the financial crisis.

He claimed that the government lacks funds for conducting local body elections and providing basic services such as drinking water supply in rural areas.

### Remarks on Welfare and Administration

Commenting on welfare schemes and government claims, he said public dissatisfaction with the administration is increasing due to poor financial condition and lack of effective governance. He questioned the state's fiscal management and criticised recent announcements on funding allocations.

### On Minister D. Sudhakar's Health

Responding to a question on the health of Minister D. Sudhakar, Kumaraswamy said it would be inappropriate to comment at this stage and urged restraint, noting that the situation should not be politicised.

## ENTERTAINMENT

## Ranbir, Aditya Kapur Spark Sequel Buzz in Mumbai

**> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Actors Ranbir Kapoor and Aditya Roy Kapur have set social media abuzz after being spotted together in Mumbai, triggering speculation about a possible sequel to the 2013 hit film Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani.

The two stars, who famously portrayed close friends in the film, were seen interacting casually during an All Stars Football Club event in Mumbai. Their relaxed appearance and friendly conversation quickly went viral, drawing widespread attention from fans across platforms.

### Viral Reunion Revives Nostalgia

Clips of the actors walking and talking together have been widely shared online, with fans instantly associating them with their iconic on-screen characters. The film, which also starred Deepika Padukone, continues to enjoy strong popularity more than a decade after its release in 2013.

friendship between "Bunny" and "Avi" remains one of the most memorable aspects of the film, and their real-life reunion has reignited nostalgia among audiences.

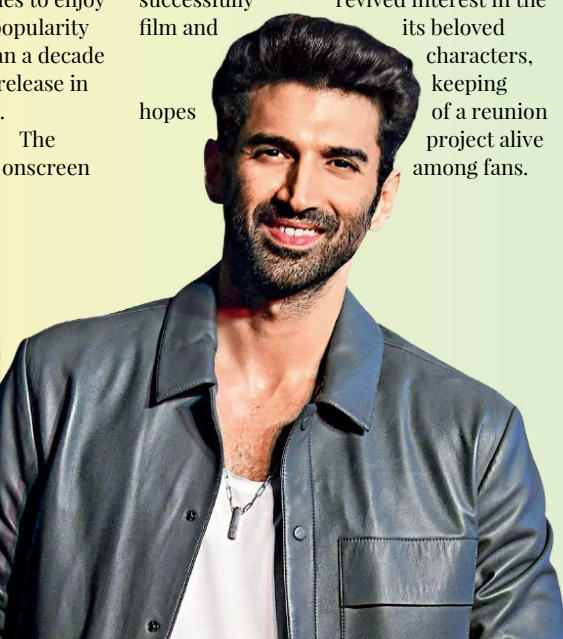
### Fans Demand 'YJHD 2'

Following the viral footage, social media platforms were flooded with comments and posts urging filmmakers to consider a sequel. Many fans expressed excitement at seeing the duo together again and called for Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani 2, despite no official announcement from the makers. The overwhelming response highlights the lasting impact of the film and its continued cultural relevance among younger audiences.

### No Official Confirmation Yet

While the reunion has fuelled speculation, there has been no confirmation regarding any sequel or joint project featuring the actors. Industry sources have also not indicated any current plans for a follow-up film.

Nevertheless, the viral moment has successfully revived interest in the film and its beloved characters, keeping hopes of a reunion project alive among fans.



## PREITY ZINTA HITS BACK AT "TROPHY" REMARK

**> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

Actor and Punjab Kings co-owner Preity Zinta has responded sharply yet humorously to a social media comment referring to her as a "trophy" of the IPL franchise, saying that women cannot be objectified or owned.

During an interaction on X (formerly Twitter), Zinta addressed the remark and clarified that such comparisons are inappropriate. While acknowledging the compliment, she firmly rejected the label.

"Thank you, that's very sweet, but honestly speaking, no woman wants to be a trophy. Trophies are owned; women are not," she wrote. She further added, "Trophies are kept in glass cupboards, and a woman's place is in your life and in your heart," adding a light-hearted tone while reinforcing her message on respect and equality.

The actor's response was widely appreciated online for its strong stand against objectification and its balanced tone.

### Upcoming Film Projects

On the professional front, Zinta also shared updates about her upcoming projects. She will next be seen in Lahore 1947, a period drama directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and starring Sunny Deol. The film is expected to release on August 13, 2026.

She also spoke about another project titled Vibe, describing it as a lighter, entertaining film after the intense narrative of Lahore 1947. She said the project offered a refreshing change in tone.

### Praise for Shreyas Iyer

Zinta also praised

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer, describing him as calm, intelligent, and a strong leader. She added that her children fondly refer to him as "Shreyas Bhaiya."

### Career Background

Preity Zinta made her Bollywood debut with Dil Se in 1998 and went on to star in several successful films including Kal Ho Naa Ho, Veer-Zaara, and Koi... Mil Gaya. She married Gene Goodenough in 2016 and became a mother to twins in 2021 through surrogacy.



## BUSINESS

## US Imposes 123% Duty on Indian Solar Exports



**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The United States has imposed a steep anti-dumping duty of 123.5% on solar products exported from India, a move that is expected to significantly impact India's renewable energy export sector.

The decision comes after US authorities concluded that Indian solar manufacturers were selling products in the American market at prices below fair market value, allegedly harming domestic producers.

### What Led to the Decision

According to the US Commerce Department, several Indian companies, including Mundra Solar PV, Mundra Solar Energy, and other photovoltaic manufacturers, were found to be exporting solar cells and panels at artificially low prices.

Washington has argued that government subsidies provided to Indian solar manufacturers enable them to offer lower prices, creating unfair competition for US-based solar firms.

### What is Anti-Dumping Duty?

Anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff imposed when a country exports goods at prices lower than their domestic market value. It is intended to protect local industries from unfair pricing practices and ensure fair competition in the importing country.

### Wider US Action

The United States has also initiated similar trade measures against solar imports from other countries, including Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, as part of a broader effort to strengthen its domestic solar manufacturing industry.

### Impact on India

The US is a major export market for Indian solar products. With the new tariff, Indian solar goods are expected to become significantly more expensive in the American market, potentially reducing export volumes and affecting profit margins of domestic manufacturers.

SPORTS

## RCB Beat DC to Avenge Earlier Defeat

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Royal Challengers Bengaluru produced a commanding all-round performance to defeat Delhi Capitals by nine wickets in the 39th match of IPL 2026 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday.

In what was billed as a revenge match after their earlier defeat to DC in the season, RCB turned the contest completely one-sided, bundling out the home side for just 75 runs before comfortably chasing down the target in just 6.3 overs.

### DC collapse for 75 runs

Batting first after losing the toss, Delhi Capitals struggled from the outset as RCB bowlers maintained tight lines and relentless pressure. The DC batting line-up failed to build partnerships and kept losing wickets at regular intervals, eventually collapsing for a mere 75 runs.

The lack of resistance from the DC batting order meant they never gained momentum, handing RCB a strong advantage early in the match.

### RCB chase made easy

In response, RCB made light work of the chase. Despite losing one wicket, the Bengaluru side raced to the target in just 6.3 overs, finishing the match in a completely dominant fashion.

The quick finish underlined RCB's superiority in both batting and bowling departments on the day.

### Revenge for earlier defeat

The victory also served as a redemption moment for RCB, who had lost to Delhi Capitals in their previous meeting earlier in the season. Monday's result ensured they settled the score emphatically on DC's home ground.

### Sixth win of the season

With this win, RCB registered their sixth victory of IPL 2026, boosting their position in the league table and improving their momentum as the tournament progresses.

The comprehensive nature of the win will further strengthen RCB's confidence going forward in the season.

## DC Collapse to Record Low IPL Total vs RCB

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Delhi Capitals endured one of the most embarrassing collapses in IPL history after being restricted to just 13 runs for the loss of six wickets in the powerplay against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Only two days after setting a record total of 264 against Punjab Kings at the same venue, DC suffered a dramatic batting collapse, unable to withstand RCB's disciplined pace attack.

Opting to bat first after losing the toss, Delhi lost wickets at regular intervals and were left reeling at 7 runs within the first three overs, including a boundary from Tristan Stubbs. Apart from Stubbs' brief contribution, most of the top-order batters failed to trouble the scorers.

Debutant batter Sahib Parakh was bowled for a duck by Bhuvneshwar Kumar, while experienced opener KL Rahul managed just one run. Sameer Rizvi also fell without scoring, while Stubbs (5), Nitish Rana (1), and skipper Axar Patel all failed to make an impact, with three of them dismissed for zero.

As a result, Delhi Capitals finished the powerplay at 13/6, registering the lowest-ever score by a team in the IPL powerplay with more than five wickets lost.

## India-New Zealand FTA to Boost Trade & Investment

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India and New Zealand on Monday signed a long-awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA), aimed at significantly enhancing bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two nations.

The agreement was signed by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and New Zealand's Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon termed the deal a "once-in-a-generation" agreement.

### Boost to Trade and Investments

The FTA aims to double bilateral trade by reducing or eliminating customs duties on a wide range of goods. Both countries have agreed to remove key trade barriers and facilitate smoother two-way commerce in goods and services, along with promoting investments.

### PM Modi Calls It a Landmark Moment

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the agreement, stating that it would benefit farmers, youth, women, MSMEs, artisans, startups, students, and innovators. He noted that the pact would open new growth avenues and deepen cooperation across sectors.

### Long Negotiation Journey

Negotiations for the FTA began in 2010 but stalled in 2015 after nine rounds. Talks

India and New Zealand have signed a long-awaited Free Trade Agreement aimed at boosting bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation. With reduced tariffs, expanded market access, and new opportunities for professionals and businesses, the pact is set to open fresh avenues for growth in both countries.

resumed in March 2025, with both sides re-engaging in December 2025. The agreement was successfully concluded on April 27, 2026.

The FTA consists of 20 chapters covering areas such as trade in goods, services, rules of origin, customs facilitation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers, dispute settlement, and legal provisions.

### Key Benefits for India

New Zealand has committed to invest around USD 20 billion in India over the next 15 years. It will also remove import duties on several Indian goods, including textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, marine products, gems and jewellery, handicrafts, engineering goods, and automobiles.

India has also secured access in high-value sectors such as IT, professional services, education, financial services, tourism, and construction, opening up new opportunities for skilled professionals.

A new Temporary Employment Entry Visa pathway will allow up to 5,000 Indian professionals at a time to work in New

Zealand for up to three years.

### Market Access and Tariff Changes

Indian exports of wine and spirits will face no import duty in New Zealand. Meanwhile, New Zealand wines entering India will be subject to concessional duties, which will be gradually reduced over a 10-year period.

Benefits for New Zealand

India will provide duty-free access to 54.11 per cent of New Zealand exports from the first day of implementation. Key products include sheep meat, wool, coal, and forestry goods.



## Rajya Sabha Merger Buzz Triggers Political Storm

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Intense political speculation over a possible realignment in the Rajya Sabha has triggered debate in political circles, though no official confirmation has been issued regarding any large-scale defection or merger.

Unverified reports suggested a possible shift involving Members of Parliament from the Aam Aadmi Party, including senior leader Raghav Chadha. However, neither the AAP nor the Bharatiya Janata Party has confirmed any such development.

### No Change in Rajya Sabha Numbers

As of now, there has been no official change in the numerical strength of parties in the Rajya Sabha. Parliamentary records and the Chairman's office have not indicated any approved merger or split under anti-defection provisions.

Under constitutional rules, any merger requires the support of at least two-thirds of a party's members and formal approval

from the Chair to be valid.

### Political Impact of Speculation

Analysts note that even speculation about shifts in numbers highlights the importance of the Rajya Sabha in shaping key legislation. A change in strength could potentially influence the passage of major bills and the overall balance of power in the Upper House.

However, experts emphasise that without formal confirmation, such reports should not be treated as fact.

They add that the final composition of the House can only be considered changed once officially notified by parliamentary authorities.

### Awaiting Official Clarity

With no statement from either party or the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, the situation remains unclear.

Political observers say any genuine development, if it occurs, will be communicated through proper institutional channels, ensuring transparency in parliamentary proceedings.



## DELHI SCHOOLS SUSPEND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Schools across Delhi have begun scaling down outdoor activities and adopting precautionary measures as temperatures continue to rise, aiming to protect students from heat-related illnesses.

Several schools have suspended outdoor games and shifted morning assemblies indoors, while also adjusting dispersal timings and increasing hydration measures for students. Some institutions are also considering early closure for

junior classes if the heatwave conditions persist.

Schools are increasingly moving activities such as assemblies and sports to indoor spaces, with arrangements for regular hydration breaks and provision of ORS to students.

Sudha Acharya, principal of IITL Public School in Dwarka, said that all outdoor activities, including morning assembly and sports, have been shifted to the school's multipurpose hall as a precautionary step.



## Iran Slams Pakistan's Mediation Role in US Talks

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Iran has raised serious doubts over Pakistan's credibility as a mediator between Tehran and Washington, with a senior lawmaker publicly questioning Islamabad's neutrality in the ongoing diplomatic process.

Ebrahim Rezaei, a parliamentary spokesperson, stated that Pakistan "does not have the necessary credibility for mediation," alleging that Islamabad tends to align with the interests of the United States.

His remarks come at a time when diplomatic efforts between Iran and the United States remain fragile.

Allegations of Bias Rezaei accused Pakistan of failing to maintain impartiality, a key requirement for any mediator. While describing Pakistan as a "good friend and neighbour," he asserted that it is "not a suitable intermediary" for negotiations.

He further claimed that Pakistan has not held Washington accountable on key issues, including alleged commitments related to

- KEY HIGHLIGHTS**
- \* Iran has questioned Pakistan's credibility as a mediator between Tehran and Washington.
  - \* Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei accused Pakistan of lacking neutrality and leaning towards US interests.
  - \* Tehran says Pakistan is "not a suitable intermediary" despite being a friendly neighbour.
  - \* Iran claims Pakistan failed to respond to a proposed 10-point negotiation framework shared with

- Army Chief Asim Munir.
- \* Concerns raised over Pakistan not pressing the US on issues like frozen Iranian assets and regional commitments.
- \* Iran-US diplomatic talks remain indirect and fragile, with no direct negotiations underway.
- \* Former US President Donald Trump reportedly expressed frustration over stalled mediation efforts.
- \* Pakistan's role as a regional peace broker is under increasing scrutiny amid growing mistrust.

Lebanon and Iran's frozen financial assets. According to Rezaei, a mediator must be willing to present facts and concerns from both sides without bias.

### Unanswered Proposal Raises Concerns

A major point of contention is a reported 10-point negotiation

framework that Iran says was handed to Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir during his visit to Tehran. Iranian officials claim the proposal was meant to be conveyed to the United States, but no response has been received so far. Analysts in Iranian media have also expressed concern over the lack of

acknowledgment or feedback, further deepening mistrust in the mediation process.

### Strained Diplomatic Backdrop

The developments come amid heightened tensions following recent regional conflicts and stalled diplomatic engagement.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has ruled out direct talks with Washington, maintaining that communication has largely been indirect.

Meanwhile, former US President Donald Trump signalled frustration over the stalled process, indicating that Washington is unlikely to pursue mediation through Islamabad in the near future.

### Pakistan's Position Under Scrutiny

Pakistan has projected itself as a potential peace broker in the region, but Iran's latest remarks cast doubt on its effectiveness in that role.

Efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to maintain diplomatic momentum have been met with scepticism in Iranian circles.

## LIVE-IN ROW: SC QUESTIONS RAPE CLAIM AFTER CONSENT

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on Monday observed that merely walking out of a live-in relationship does not amount to a criminal offence, while underlining the complexities and risks associated with such arrangements in the absence of marriage.

The observation came from Justice B. V. Nagarathna during the hearing of a petition filed by a woman who accused a man of rape, assault, and exploitation, alleging that he had promised to marry her but later deserted her.

Justice Nagarathna emphasised the need to distinguish between consensual live-in relationships and criminal sexual offences. She noted that when two consenting adults choose to live together without marriage, the relationship may carry inherent risks.

Referring to the case, the court pointed out that the



**The Supreme Court has clarified that exiting a live-in relationship does not by itself constitute a criminal offence, highlighting the need to distinguish between consensual relationships and allegations of sexual assault. The court stressed that the nature of consent must be carefully examined, especially in long-term relationships that later lead to legal disputes.**

couple had lived together for a long period and even had a child, raising questions about how such a consensual relationship could later lead to allegations of sexual assault.

## Hezbollah Rules Out Talks with Israel

> Vikrama Vahini | Beirut

Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem has ruled out any direct negotiations with Israel, stating such talks are "out of the question" and reaffirming continued resistance.

Qassem said the group remains prepared for confrontation and will not compromise despite ongoing tensions. He also listed conditions for any future engagement, including a halt to Israeli attacks and withdrawal from occupied areas.

He further claimed that despite months of military action, Israel, even with backing from the United States, has failed to weaken Hezbollah's capabilities. He described the group's actions as a "legitimate response" to continued violations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, accused Hezbollah of breaching the ceasefire and destabilising the region, warning that Israel would respond strongly to any further aggression.

## LeT Aide Sheikh Yusuf Afridi Killed in Pakistan

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Sheikh Yusuf Afridi, a close aide of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed, was killed in a targeted attack by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, officials and media reports said.

Afridi was reportedly shot dead without warning when armed attackers opened fire and fled the scene immediately after the assault. Local residents reached the spot soon after, but the assailants had already escaped into the rugged terrain.

Security sources described Afridi as a senior LeT commander involved in operational coordination and logistics along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

He was considered a close associate of Hafiz Saeed and an important part of the group's organisational structure.

He was also believed to have played a role in recruitment, training, and operational planning of militants, including efforts linked to activities against India. His killing is expected to impact the group's operational network in the region.

The incident adds to a growing series of targeted killings of militant leaders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**PEOPLES PULSE**  
an ear to the ground

# EXIT POLL

ASSAM • WEST BENGAL • KERALA  
TAMIL NADU • PUDUCHERRY

**29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026**

**6:00 PM ONWARDS**

[www.peoplespulse.in](http://www.peoplespulse.in)