



VIKRAMA VAHINI

INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY

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Rashmika Mandanna set to shine on the global stage as she attends the 10th Global Anime Awards in Tokyo on May 23, where she will present awards alongside international stars including The Weeknd, reflecting her growing global popularity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday strongly reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, stating that he would "leave no stone unturned" to implement the long-pending constitutional provision.



INSIDE

Good morning

Count your blessings daily; the more gratitude you radiate, the more blessings flow to meet you.

Govt Rules Out Fuel Price Hike

Government has ruled out any petrol and diesel price hike after the West Bengal elections, assuring adequate fuel stocks across the country despite global crude volatility and reports of panic buying at several fuel stations.

BRIEFS

Rahul Warns Fuel Prices May Rise After April 29

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday warned that petrol and diesel prices are likely to increase after the conclusion of ongoing Assembly elections on April 29. In a social media post, he alleged that the government had benefited from lower global crude oil prices but may now pass on the burden to the public as prices begin to rise.

He stated that "election relief" would end after April 29, and cautioned that fuel prices and other essential commodities could become more expensive thereafter.

The comments come amid ongoing political exchanges over inflation and fuel pricing ahead of key electoral developments.

He also urged the government to ensure that any changes in fuel prices do not further burden middle-class and low-income households already affected by inflation.

India Calls for Safe Passage via Hormuz at UN

Vikrama Vahini | New York
India has called for the immediate restoration of safe and unimpeded maritime passage through the Strait of Hormuz, condemning recent attacks on commercial shipping at the United Nations Security Council debate on maritime security.

India's representative Vojna Patel termed the incidents "unacceptable," highlighting threats to global trade, energy security, and the safety of seafarers. She stressed the need for international cooperation and adherence to maritime law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Polls End; Exit Polls at 6:30 PM

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The high-stakes second and final phase of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections will conclude on Wednesday, bringing an end to polling across the 294-seat state Assembly. Attention now shifts to exit poll projections, which will be released after 6:30 pm in accordance with Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines.

The second phase of voting covers the remaining constituencies in West Bengal, completing the electoral process for the state. Both the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) mounted intensive campaigns in the run-up to this final leg of polling, with both parties seeking to consolidate voter support across key regions.

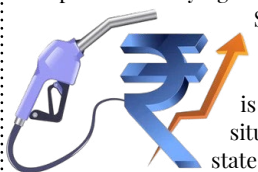
As per the Election Commission's regulations, the publication and broadcast of exit polls are prohibited until 30 minutes after the conclusion of voting in the final phase.

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The government on Tuesday dismissed speculation that petrol and diesel prices will be increased after the West Bengal elections, assuring that fuel supplies remain stable across the country despite global crude oil price volatility.

The clarification comes amid reports of panic buying in several regions, where over 400 fuel stations reportedly ran dry on Sunday due to a sudden spike in demand of nearly 30-33 per cent at some outlets.

Officials said there is no proposal under consideration to revise fuel prices after the polling concludes on April 29. They urged citizens not to believe rumours or engage in panic buying. Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said the government is closely monitoring the situation in coordination with state authorities.



PG2

AIRLINES SEEK GOVT RELIEF OVER ATF SURGE

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Indian airlines have sought immediate government intervention as rising aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices push the industry into severe financial stress, warning of possible shutdowns or suspension of operations.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), representing Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, has written to the Ministry of Civil Aviation seeking urgent relief in ATF pricing amid the ongoing West Asia crisis.

In its letter, the FIA requested temporary deferment of excise duty on ATF, reduction of VAT in key

Rising aviation fuel prices have pushed Indian airlines into severe financial strain, prompting urgent appeals to the government for relief measures. Industry leaders warn that soaring ATF costs, currency depreciation, and geopolitical tensions could make operations unsustainable, raising concerns over potential service disruptions.

states, and reinstatement of the crack band as per pre-agreed norms. It stated that the sharp rise in ATF prices—up by ₹73 per litre for international operations—has pushed fuel costs from 30-40% of operating expenses to 55-60%, making operations increasingly unviable.

The industry body also highlighted the depreciation of the rupee, which has further increased the financial burden. Jet fuel prices have now crossed ₹2 lakh per kilolitre for the

first time, surpassing earlier peaks seen during the 2022 global energy crisis following the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Crude oil prices surged by 45.5% in March due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, while domestic ATF prices rose by 9.2% in April. The government has recently updated fuel regulations to allow blending with synthetic hydrocarbons to promote sustainable aviation fuel development.



Gold Falls ₹1,800, Silver Slumps ₹6,500

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

Gold and silver prices witnessed a sharp decline on Tuesday in the national capital

as a renewed surge in crude oil prices and a stronger US dollar weighed heavily on global bullion markets.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity fell by ₹1,800, or 1.15 per cent, to ₹1,54,300 per 10

grams (inclusive of taxes). The precious metal had closed at ₹1,56,100 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Silver also recorded a steep fall, declining by ₹6,500, or nearly 3 per cent, to ₹2,44,000 per kilogram (inclusive of taxes).

It had settled at ₹2,50,500 per kilogram on Monday.



IRAN SEEKS HORMUZ OPENING: TRUMP



Vikrama Vahini | Washington

Former US President Donald Trump has claimed that Iran is in a "state of collapse" and has reportedly sought assistance from Washington to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, amid escalating tensions in the region.

Posting on his Truth Social platform, Trump said Iran conveyed that it was struggling with internal leadership challenges and urged the United States to restore maritime movement through the strategic waterway "as soon as possible."

He further stated that Iran was dealing with a "collapse situation"

while trying to manage its governance issues, adding that he believed Tehran would eventually resolve its internal problems.

The Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global oil shipping route, has been at the centre of geopolitical tensions following disruptions in maritime traffic and rising conflict in the region.

According to reports, Iran has also proposed steps to end the ongoing conflict, including restoring maritime traffic through the Strait while postponing key discussions on its nuclear programme to future negotiations.

UAE Quits OPEC, OPEC+ Over Oil Disputes

Vikrama Vahini | Abu Dhabi

The United Arab Emirates has announced its exit from OPEC and OPEC+, marking a major setback for global oil alliances led by Saudi Arabia.

The decision comes amid long-standing disagreements over production quotas and the UAE's push for greater autonomy in shaping its energy strategy. Officials said the move follows a "careful review" of current and future oil production policies.

UAE Energy Minister Suhail Mohamed al-Mazrouei said the decision was taken independently and not discussed with other member countries. He clarified that it was a policy choice aimed at aligning production levels with national economic priorities.

What are OPEC and OPEC+? OPEC, formed in 1960 by founding



members including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran and Venezuela, is a group of oil-producing nations that coordinate petroleum production to influence global oil prices and stabilize markets. The UAE joined the bloc in 1967.

In 2016, OPEC expanded cooperation with non-member oil producers, including Russia, forming OPEC+ to better manage global supply and stabilize prices after major market fluctuations.

Reasons behind UAE's exit While no official single reason was cited, analysts say the UAE has been

unhappy with production limits imposed by the group, seeking to maximize its output and reduce dependence on quota systems. The decision also reflects growing geopolitical tensions in West Asia, where energy security concerns have intensified due to ongoing regional conflicts, including the Iran-related crisis.

UAE officials have also expressed dissatisfaction with regional security cooperation. Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the UAE President, criticized the Gulf response to recent tensions, saying political and military coordination among regional blocs has been weaker than expected.

The development is expected to have significant implications for global oil markets, supply coordination, and pricing stability in the coming months.

However, US officials cited by international media said the proposal has not been accepted, with Trump reportedly dissatisfied as it delays resolution of nuclear-related concerns. No final decision has been

made on the proposal.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reiterated that the US maintains "clear red lines" regarding Iran, which have been communicated publicly and privately.

The development comes amid growing uncertainty over peace talks, which have reportedly slowed following the cancellation of a planned diplomatic visit involving senior US officials.

Phase Two Polls: High Stakes in Bengal & Tamil Nadu

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India's electoral landscape is heading into a decisive moment as the second phase of Assembly elections is set to take place tomorrow, with West Bengal emerging as the focal point of intense political competition. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu continues to witness political buzz following the completion of its polling. The outcome of these developments is expected to significantly influence the political direction of both states.

West Bengal Heads Into Crucial Final Phase

West Bengal is preparing for the second and final phase of polling, covering a large number of constituencies across the state. With over a thousand candidates in the fray, the contest reflects a deeply competitive political environment.

The ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, faces a strong challenge from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has intensified its campaign to expand its presence in the state. Several constituencies are witnessing high-profile battles involving senior leaders from major political parties.

High-Intensity Campaigning Ends on a Sharp Note

The campaign trail leading up to the second phase has been marked by aggressive political rhetoric and contrasting narratives. While the BJP's central leadership, including

India's Assembly elections enter a decisive phase as West Bengal prepares for its crucial final round of voting, while Tamil Nadu's completed polling continues to shape political discussions. With intense campaigning, high voter turnout, and closely watched contests between major parties, the outcomes are expected to significantly influence the political future of both states and have wider national implications.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, focused on governance, development, and law and order, the TMC emphasized welfare schemes and regional identity.

The exchange of allegations between parties added to the already charged political atmosphere, drawing significant public and

Extensive Security Arrangements in Place

The Election Commission of India has implemented stringent security measures to ensure peaceful and transparent polling. Voting will begin early in the morning and continue until evening under tight surveillance.

Thousands of security personnel have been deployed in sensitive areas. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and VVPAT systems have been secured after thorough checks, and voter facilitation measures have been strengthened across polling stations.

Tamil Nadu: Polling Complete, Political Heat Continues

In Tamil Nadu, polling across all 234 constituencies has already been completed in a single phase. However, political discussions remain active as parties assess voter sentiment.

The main contest between the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), along with participation from the BJP and other regional players, has made the election closely watched.

PG2



A general view of the stage during the stage opening of the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria.

Editorial
High Stakes Voting Day

As the second phase of Assembly elections unfolds today in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the nation watches with keen anticipation. Both states have witnessed intense campaigning over the past weeks, with political parties leaving no stone unturned to sway voters. The scale and complexity of conducting elections in these two major states pose a significant administrative challenge, yet the Election Commission of India has once again demonstrated its capability in ensuring preparedness for a smooth democratic exercise. From robust security arrangements to efficient logistical planning, the groundwork reflects the resilience of India's electoral machinery.

In West Bengal, the electoral contest has become particularly unpredictable. The backdrop of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and shifting political dynamics have made it difficult for analysts to forecast outcomes with any certainty. Traditional voting patterns appear to be in flux, and the fierce contest between major parties has only added to the suspense. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, the entry of actor-turned-politician Vijay into the political arena has introduced a new variable into an already competitive landscape. His party's debut has stirred voter curiosity and may influence electoral equations in unexpected ways, making predictions equally challenging in the southern state.

Taken together, these elections in two of India's most politically significant states have captured nationwide attention. They are not merely regional contests but indicators of evolving political narratives and public sentiment. As voters step out to exercise their franchise today, the collective hope remains that polling will proceed peacefully, without any untoward incidents. In a democracy as vast and diverse as India, the true strength lies in orderly and fair elections, and today's vote stands as yet another testament to that enduring principle.

-Editor

VST UNVEILS SMART FARM TECH

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

VST Tillers Tractors Ltd, a leading player in India's small farm mechanisation segment, unveiled a new range of advanced agricultural solutions at the FKCCI Global Agritech Summit 2026. Designed with a focus on fuel efficiency, performance, and versatility, the newly launched products aim to meet the evolving needs of small and medium farmers.

Following the inauguration of the summit, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visited the VST pavilion and reviewed the newly showcased products. Agriculture Minister N. Cheluvaryaswamy was also present during the visit.

At the summit, the company introduced its FEN series tractors, along with electric power tillers and electric power weeders, highlighting its commitment to sustainable and technology-driven agriculture.

The FEN series includes five key



models — 180, 224, 225, 929 EX, and 929 VX. With power outputs ranging from 19 to 30 horsepower, these tractors are available in both two-wheel and four-wheel drive options. Despite their compact size, they are engineered to deliver high productivity, operator comfort, and long-term reliability, making them suitable for diverse

farming conditions.

In a push towards sustainability, the company also showcased electric power tillers and weeders. These machines offer high efficiency with lower environmental impact and help reduce operational costs, marking a significant step toward eco-friendly farming practices.

HC Notice to CBI in Gowda Case

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has issued notice to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on criminal appeals filed by Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni and Chandrashekhar Indi seeking to set aside the life imprisonment sentence awarded to them in the Yogesh Gowda murder case.

A division bench comprising Justices Mohammad Nawaz and T. Venkatesh Naik heard the appeals filed by the convicts.

Senior advocate C.V. Nagesh, appearing for Vinay Kulkarni, argued that life imprisonment had been imposed despite lack of evidence. He submitted that several prosecution witnesses had turned hostile and sought suspension of the sentence and directions for submission of records.

Appearing for Chandrashekhar Indi, senior advocate M. Nagamuthu contended that there was no evidence against his client and that even the approver had turned hostile, seeking suspension of the sentence.



The bench observed that it would not examine the merits at this stage but issued notice to the CBI. It also granted liberty to seek urgent hearing before a vacation bench.

CBI counsel Rahul Krishnareddy requested time to file objections, noting that the trial court judgment runs into 680 pages. The court recorded the submission and adjourned the hearing.

As interim relief, the appellants have sought suspension of the life sentence and grant of bail.

In the 2016 murder case, a special court for elected representatives had, on April 15, 2026, convicted 17 accused and on April 17, 2026, sentenced 16 of them, including Kulkarni and Indi, to life imprisonment.

Phase Two Polls: High Stakes in Bengal & Tamil Nadu

From PG1

Reports of high voter turnout suggest strong public engagement.

Key Issues Shape Voter Sentiment

In West Bengal, governance, employment, and political stability are key concerns, while in Tamil Nadu, development, welfare policies, and regional identity dominate voter priorities.

Observers note significant participation from first-time voters, youth, and women, which could play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes in both states.

Broader Socio-Economic Impact

The elections have also created ripple effects beyond politics. A notable number of migrant workers from West Bengal have returned home to vote, temporarily impacting industrial activity in other regions, highlighting the importance of electoral participation.

With polling underway in West Bengal and completed in Tamil Nadu, attention now turns to the counting of votes.

The results are expected to provide critical insights into the political direction of both states and may influence national-level political strategies.

IGP Harsha P.S Awarded PhD by Kuvempu University

Vikrama Vahini | Koppal

Kuvempu University has announced the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree to Inspector General of Police Harsha P.S for his research in the field of wildlife and management. The degree will be formally conferred on May 6 during the university's convocation ceremony.

His doctoral thesis, titled "A Study on the Stability of Tiger Population in Nagarahole, Bandipur and BRT Tiger Reserves with Special Reference to Human-Tiger Conflict," is based on extensive fieldwork, including large-scale camera trapping and detailed analysis of conflict sites across these protected areas.



Harsha P.S carried out a five-year field-based study under the guidance of Professor Dr. Vijay Kumar from the Department of Wildlife and Management.

The university's syndicate has formally approved the award of the degree. The PhD certificate will be presented at the convocation ceremony scheduled for May 6, according to an official release.



Forest, Environment and Ecology Minister Eshwar Khandre inaugurates a media workshop on temperature variability and its impacts in Bengaluru, organised by the Karnataka Media Academy in collaboration with Asar Social Impact Advisors, at a private hotel on Tuesday. M.S. Divakar, Director of the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, Ayesha Khanum, Chairperson of the Karnataka Media Academy, and Brikesh Singh, Communications Head at Asar Social Impact Advisors, were present.

Ashok Slams DCM Over 'Brothers' Remark

Vikrama Vahini | B'luru

Leader of Opposition R. Ashok launched a sharp attack on Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, accusing him of making statements that allegedly downplayed serious security concerns.

In a post on social media platform X, Ashok referred to the Mangaluru cooker bomb blast case and said that earlier remarks by Congress leaders calling it "diversion politics" had now been contradicted by court findings. He cited the recent conviction of the accused in the case, stating that a special National Investigation Agency Court had awarded 10

years of rigorous imprisonment.

Ashok alleged that the ruling party was engaging in appeasement politics even on



issues of national security and claimed that such an approach prioritises vote-bank considerations over public safety. He urged the Congress leadership to refrain from making statements that could be interpreted as support for extremist elements.

The remarks have added to the ongoing political exchanges between the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP in the state over issues of security and governance.

Govt Rules Out Fuel Price Hike

From PG1

She added that supply to retail outlets is being prioritised to ensure uninterrupted availability of petrol, diesel, and LPG. "We are seeing some instances of panic buying. All outlets are being monitored, and there is adequate stock. There is no shortage and no price increase plan," she said.

According to the ministry, India

currently has sufficient reserves of fuel to meet national demand. Officials reiterated that retail prices remain stable and unchanged.

The concerns come amid a sharp rise in global crude oil prices, which have surged to around \$114 per barrel from nearly \$70 in recent months due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Despite this, domestic fuel prices have remained unchanged for nearly four

years.

State-run oil marketing companies are reportedly under financial pressure due to the widening gap between international crude prices and domestic retail rates, with estimated daily losses running into thousands of crores.

Authorities, however, maintained that there is no immediate risk of supply disruption and urged the public to rely only on official information sources.

NEWS

NHRC Announces Short Film Contest 2026

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), New Delhi, has invited online entries from citizens across the country for the 12th edition of its Human Rights Short Film Competition 2026.

The commission has been organising the annual competition since 2015 to promote awareness and sensitivity towards human rights issues.

Cash prizes of ₹2 lakh, ₹1.5 lakh, and ₹1 lakh will be awarded to the first, second, and third best films respectively. In addition, up to four films recommended by the jury will receive a cash of ₹50,000 each along with certificates and trophies.

The short films can be in Hindi or any Indian language but must include English subtitles. The duration should be a minimum

of 3 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. The last date for submission is June 30, 2026. Entries must be submitted online via Google Drive to nhrcshortfilm@gmail.com.

Detailed rules, terms, and the application form can be downloaded from the NHRC's official website.

The competition is open to the public without any age restrictions and aims to foster a culture of human rights awareness.

For further details, participants may contact the commission through the provided telephone numbers, according to a statement issued by Deputy Director (Media & Communication) Jaimini Kumar Srivastava.



YOGI ROADSHOW DRAWS MASSIVE CROWD IN BENGAL

Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

A massive roadshow led by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Bangalore south MP Tejasvi Surya in Kalyani, Banga district, drew huge crowds on Monday, signalling what party leaders described as signs of a political shift in West Bengal.

Addressing the gathering, Yogi Adityanath reiterated his commitment to building a safe and prosperous Bengal. According to BJP sources, his assurances received a strong response from the public.

Party leaders expressed confidence that the BJP would secure a majority in the upcoming elections scheduled on May 4, aiming to form a government that



would accelerate development and meet people's aspirations.

The roadshow witnessed enthusiastic participation from supporters, with party workers and local residents lining the streets and raising slogans in

support of the leaders. Security arrangements were tightened across the route, while local authorities managed traffic diversions to ensure the smooth conduct of the high-profile event.

Health And Lifestyle

Why Vitamin D Deficiency Is Higher in Dark Skin & Obesity

Vitamin D deficiency has become a widespread health concern, especially in urban populations. According to health experts, including Dr. Bhavuk Garg of AIIMS Delhi, the deficiency can lead to several health complications if left untreated, particularly affecting muscle function and immunity.

Vitamin D Works Like a Hormone

Experts explain that Vitamin D is not just a vitamin but also functions like a hormone in the body. It plays a crucial role in maintaining muscle strength, bone health, and immune system efficiency. Hence, deficiency should not be ignored.

Why Dark Skin and Obesity Increase Risk

Dr. Garg notes that individuals with darker skin contain higher levels of melanin, which reduces the skin's ability to absorb ultraviolet B (UVB) rays from sunlight. As a result, Vitamin D production in the body slows down, requiring longer sun exposure.

In obese individuals, Vitamin D tends to get stored in body fat, making it less available for bodily functions. This reduces effective absorption, increasing the risk of deficiency even with normal sunlight exposure.

Recommended Sun Exposure Time

Health experts suggest different durations of sun exposure based on skin type and body weight:

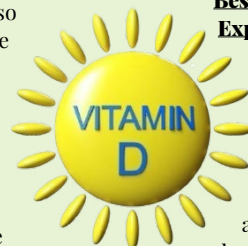
- Normal individuals: 15-20 minutes daily
- Dark-skinned individuals: 30-40 minutes daily
- Obese individuals: 35-45 minutes daily

Best Time for Sunlight Exposure

The most effective time to obtain Vitamin D from sunlight is between 10:30 AM and 2:30 PM, when UVB rays are strongest. Exposing arms, legs, and back during this period can help improve Vitamin D synthesis. Diet and Supplements Also Important

Doctors caution that in cases of severe deficiency, sunlight alone may not be sufficient. A balanced diet rich in Vitamin D and medical supplements, taken under doctor supervision, may be necessary.

Magnesium intake may also support better absorption and utilization of Vitamin D in the body. Health experts stress the importance of awareness and early intervention, especially among urban populations increasingly affected by lifestyle-related deficiencies.



SCIENCE & Technology

KitKat Unveils Wrapper to Block Phone Signals



Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

In a creative twist to promote digital detox, KitKat has unveiled an innovative concept called "Break Mode," an oversized wrapper designed to temporarily block mobile phone signals and encourage users to take a real break from their devices.

Developed by KitKat Panama in collaboration with Ogilvy Colombia, the campaign reimagines the brand's long-standing "Have a Break, Have a KitKat" slogan by turning it into a practical disconnection tool.

Wrapper Designed Like a Signal Blocker

At first glance, "Break Mode" resembles an oversized KitKat wrapper. However, it is engineered using Faraday cage technology, which can block electromagnetic signals when a phone is placed inside it, effectively cutting off connectivity.

The idea is to physically prevent distractions caused by constant phone usage, especially during periods of excessive scrolling or screen addiction.

A Real-World Take on Digital Detox

A campaign video shared by Ogilvy on social media explains the concept, stating that in a world where people are constantly connected, the brand aimed to transform its "take a break" message into a tangible experience by redesigning packaging itself.

GRIEVING COW REFUSES FOOD AFTER OWNER'S DEATH

> Vikrama Vahini | Balasore (Odisha)

In a heart-rending incident, a cow has reportedly stopped eating and drinking for the past 10 days, seemingly grieving the death of its owner in Balasore district.

The incident took place in Khusaliganj village under Remuna block, where Ramachandra Maharana and his wife Suniti Maharana were rearing five to six cows. About five years ago, the couple had lovingly raised a calf born in their cowshed.

Recently, a youth from the village requested the couple to give him a cow to rear.

Ramachandra agreed and gifted the cow he had raised for five years. However, while being taken away, the cow broke free



from its rope and ran back towards its owner.

In a tragic turn of events, the animal accidentally rammed into Ramachandra, who was standing by the roadside. He sustained severe injuries and later succumbed to hospital.

Since the day of his death, the cow has reportedly refused food and water, standing alone in one place and not allowing anyone to come near. Even after 10 days, the animal continues to show signs of deep distress, unable to recover from the loss of its owner.

Modi Kicks Off Football Fun with Kids

> Vikrama Vahini | Gangtok

Narendra Modi played football with children in Gangtok during his visit to Sikkim, sharing the moments on social media and calling it a joyful experience.

He is on a two-day visit after campaigning in West Bengal and will attend Sikkim's 50th Statehood Day closing ceremony while unveiling projects worth over ₹4,000 crore. He also held a roadshow in Gangtok, drawing large crowds.

Football enjoys immense popularity in both West Bengal and Sikkim, with Kolkata serving as a major hub for club football, while the sport remains widely played at the grassroots level across rural regions. The Prime Minister's interaction with children added a personal and engaging touch to his official visit.



No Anarchy in Religious Management: SC

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on Tuesday observed that there "cannot be anarchy" in the management of religious institutions, while hearing petitions related to alleged discrimination against women at places of worship, including the Sabarimala Temple.

A nine-judge Constitution bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, along with Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi, said that while religious bodies have the right to manage their institutions, such management must follow established norms and remain within constitutional limits.

The court emphasised that proper regulation is essential for the orderly functioning of religious institutions and that individual discretion cannot override structured practices.

It also made it clear that management rights cannot violate



The Supreme Court has asserted that religious institutions cannot function without structure, stressing that management rights must remain within constitutional limits. While allowing regulation for orderly functioning, the court made it clear that such powers cannot override principles of equality or justify discrimination.

constitutional principles, including equality and non-discrimination.

During the hearing, advocate Nizam Pasha argued that religious sites like dargahs hold deep spiritual significance in Sufi traditions and that regulating entry is part of institutional management.

However, the bench maintained

that such regulation must not transgress constitutional boundaries.

The court also noted the difficulty in defining what constitutes essential religious practices.

The issue stems from the landmark 2018 verdict, where a five-judge bench allowed entry of women of all age groups into the Sabarimala temple, declaring the earlier restriction unconstitutional. The ongoing hearings will determine whether that ruling will be upheld or revisited.

The observations come at a time when questions around the balance between religious freedom and fundamental rights are once again in focus, especially in matters involving gender equality at places of worship.

The ongoing hearings are expected to have far-reaching implications, not only for the Sabarimala issue but also for similar disputes across religious institutions in India, potentially shaping the legal framework governing faith, rights, and institutional authority.

BJP Sweeps All 15 Gujarat Civic Bodies

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a historic victory in the Gujarat local body elections, sweeping all 15 municipal corporations, according to early results and trends on Tuesday. The outcome is being seen as a major political boost for the party ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

Polling was held across 15 municipal corporations, 84 municipalities, 34 district panchayats, and 260 taluka panchayats, covering around 9,200 seats. Over 4.18 crore voters were eligible to cast their votes. The voter turnout stood at 55.1% in municipal corporations, while municipalities, district panchayats, and taluka panchayats recorded 65.53%, 66.64%, and 67.26% turnout respectively, as per the Election Commission of India.

Nine newly formed municipal corporations, including Navsari, Gandhidham, Morbi, Vapi, Anand, Nadiad, Mehsana, Porbandar, and Surendranagar, went to polls for the first time. The BJP maintained a strong lead across urban and rural local bodies, reinforcing its dominance in the state.

The elections witnessed a triangular contest between the BJP, the Indian National Congress, and the Aam Aadmi Party, along with participation from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), NCP, and several independents.

Ashok Seeks ₹10 Cr Per Seat for Water Crisis

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Leader of Opposition R. Ashok on Tuesday demanded that the state government allocate ₹10 crore to each Assembly constituency to tackle the worsening drinking water crisis amid drought conditions.

Addressing a press conference, Ashok criticised the Congress government, alleging that ministers were more focused on visits to Delhi than addressing ground realities. He claimed that internal differences within the ruling party were evident, pointing to the absence of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at a recent Cabinet meeting, and questioned the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Highlighting the severity of the drought, Ashok said people and livestock were struggling for water across the state. He urged the government to immediately release funds for borewell rejuvenation, tanker supply, and establishment of goshalas with adequate fodder. He also warned that deficient rainfall, as forecast by the Meteorological Department, could worsen the situation if urgent steps are

not taken.

The BJP leader alleged that no funds had been released so far for drinking water and claimed that even officials were unaware of any directives from the Finance Department.

He further criticised the government's claims on fixing potholes in Bengaluru, alleging irregularities and misuse of funds, and demanded a House Committee probe.

Ashok also raised concerns over recent controversies, including an incident at Krupanidhi College involving removal of a sacred thread, urging strict action and clearer policies. He opposed granting permission for any programme related to Umar Khalid, warning that it would send a wrong message. Additionally, he called for stricter punishment in a cooker bomb case, urging the government to appeal for enhanced sentencing in the High Court.

Overall, Ashok accused the state government of inaction on key issues and warned that failure to respond effectively could hamper development and public welfare.



Power Demand Hits 256 GW Again



> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

India's peak power demand surged to 255.85 GW on Monday, marking the second time within three days that it has touched record levels, driven by an intense heatwave across several parts of the country.

According to data from the Ministry of Power, the demand was slightly below the all-time high of 256.11 GW recorded on Saturday. The sharp rise has been attributed to increased usage of air-conditioners, desert coolers, and other cooling appliances amid extreme temperatures in northern, central, and western India. The spike reflects a significant increase in electricity consumption as households and businesses attempt to cope with the ongoing heatwave conditions, which continue to strain the power infrastructure.

BJP PROTEST OVER BOOK EVENT

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Youth Wing on Tuesday staged a protest near the Bangalore International Centre in Domlur opposing a proposed book release on Umar Khalid, who is currently lodged in Tihar Jail under UAPA in connection with the 2020 Delhi riots case.

The protest was organised against the state government's alleged permission for the event. Police detained several protesters during the demonstration.

BJP MP P.C. Mohan had earlier urged authorities not to allow the programme, questioning the need to "glorify" an accused in the Delhi riots case. He alleged that the event was an attempt to promote individuals facing serious charges related to the violence.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council N. Ravikumar also opposed the book release, stating that the BJP strongly objects to any attempt to project Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam positively. He urged the government to cancel the event, citing the seriousness of the allegations and ongoing legal proceedings in the case.

The BJP leaders further claimed that such programmes could hurt public sentiment and questioned the rationale behind organising events centred on individuals facing terrorism-related charges. They also demanded strict action from authorities to prevent such events in the future.

Police officials said the situation was brought under control and necessary action was taken to maintain law and order.



ENTERTAINMENT

Dhurandhar 2 Nears Baahubali 2 Record

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar 2 continues its extraordinary box office run, edging close to breaking the long-standing record of Baahubali 2 and creating new benchmarks in Indian cinema.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film has emerged as one of the biggest commercial successes in Indian film history. Since its release, Dhurandhar 2 has maintained strong momentum across domestic and international markets, crossing a global gross of over ₹1,700 crore.

The film is now just about ₹10 crore away from surpassing the lifetime collection of Baahubali 2, directed by S. S. Rajamouli, which earned approximately ₹1,790 crore worldwide and held the position of one of India's highest-grossing films for nearly nine years.

Trade analysts say the film is expected to officially overtake Baahubali 2 within the current weekend, depending on sustained audience turnout. Once it crosses the milestone, Dhurandhar 2 will become the second-highest-grossing Indian film globally, behind only Dangal, which continues to hold

the top spot.

The strong performance of Dhurandhar 2 has been attributed to positive audience response, wide theatrical release, and strong performance in multiplex circuits. Industry experts note that expanding screen availability and global distribution networks have played a major role in the film's record-breaking run.

The film features Ranveer Singh in the lead role, along with Sara Arjun, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, Sanjay Dutt, and R. Madhavan in key roles.

With its sustained box office strength, Dhurandhar 2 is being seen as a landmark in contemporary Indian cinema, signaling a new era of large-scale commercial filmmaking and global audience reach.

The film's impressive performance has also boosted confidence among trade circles, with exhibitors reporting consistently strong occupancy even in its third week of release. Analysts believe that if the current trend continues, Dhurandhar 2 may further widen its lead over previous blockbusters and strengthen its position in the all-time global box office rankings.



Sara Arjun Inspired by Alia, Deepika

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Actress Sara Arjun, who is currently enjoying growing popularity in Bollywood following the success of Dhurandhar and its sequel, has once again come into the spotlight after an old childhood interview clip resurfaced on social media.

The viral video shows a young Sara Arjun speaking about the actors she admired during her early years in the film industry. In the clip, she names Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone as her inspirations, praising their screen presence, performances, and versatility.

Admiration Without Imitation
While expressing admiration for both stars, Sara also displayed remarkable confidence for her age. She stated that although she looked up to them, she never wanted to imitate anyone and instead aimed to build her own identity in the film industry.

She further added that she hoped audiences would recognise her as Sara Arjun rather than compare her with other established actors.

Praise for Her Mature Perspective
Sara's response in the resurfaced video has drawn widespread appreciation online, with many users praising her clarity of thought and maturity at a young age. Social media users have highlighted her balanced approach of respecting senior actors while maintaining individuality.

Growing Career and Bollywood Breakthrough
Sara Arjun, daughter of actor Raj Arjun, began her career as a child artist appearing in advertisements before moving on to films across Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam cinema.

She received critical acclaim for her performance in A. L. Vijay's Tamil film Deiva Thirumagal, where her role was widely appreciated.

However, her recent success in Dhurandhar has been described as her major breakthrough in Bollywood, bringing her into the national

spotlight.

Upcoming Projects and Industry Buzz

Following her recent success, Sara is reportedly preparing for a major upcoming project, including a collaboration linked to acclaimed filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali. She is also said to be working on the film Madhubala, which is expected to mark another significant step in her rising career.

Industry observers believe Sara's combination of early experience and recent success positions her as one of the promising young talents in Indian cinema.



BUSINESS

RBI's New Credit Loss Rule Explained



> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it will implement the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) framework from April 1, 2027, a move that has already led to a decline in banking stocks, particularly among public sector banks, in recent trading sessions.

The new accounting framework is aligned with international standards and is expected to significantly change how banks assess and provision for potential loan losses.

What is the Expected Credit Loss Framework?
The Expected Credit Loss (ECL) system requires banks and financial institutions to make provisions for possible loan losses even before defaults occur.

Unlike the existing "incurred loss" model, which recognises losses only after a borrower defaults, the ECL approach is forward-looking and based on estimated risks.

Under this system, banks will calculate probability-weighted losses using historical data, current economic conditions, and future forecasts.

How Will Banks Assess Risk?
Banks will no longer wait for loans to turn non-performing (typically after 90 days of overdue payments). Instead, they will estimate potential losses using three key factors:

Probability of default by the borrower
Loss given default (extent of loss if default occurs)
Exposure at default (outstanding loan amount at the time of default)

The framework is expected to follow a three-stage model covering short-term expected losses, lifetime credit losses, and non-performing asset-related risks.

Impact on Different Types of Banks
Experts suggest that the impact will vary across institutions. Banks with higher exposure to home loans may benefit due to relatively stable repayment patterns. However, lenders with significant exposure to unsecured loans, auto loans, and microfinance segments could face higher provisioning requirements.

SPORTS

Vismaya, Srinivas Hit With Doping Ban

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Asian Games gold-medallist quarter-miler VK Vismaya has been handed a two-year suspension by the National Anti-Doping Agency's (NADA) Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel after testing positive for a banned substance, while sprinter Srinivas has received a four-year ban in a separate doping violation.

Vismaya, who was part of India's women's 4x400m relay team that won gold at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games, was provisionally suspended in 2024 after her urine sample tested positive for Clomiphene. The substance falls under the category of hormone and metabolic modulators and is prohibited at all times.

According to officials, Vismaya's sample was collected during an out-of-competition test conducted at her residence in Perumbavur near Kochi on August 15, 2024. She was informed of the adverse analytical finding the following month, leading to the disciplinary proceedings.

In its final ruling, the NADA panel imposed a two-year ban on Vismaya, confirming the violation under anti-doping regulations.

In a separate case, sprinter Srinivas has been handed a four-year suspension by the panel for violating anti-doping rules, though detailed findings of his case were not immediately disclosed.

The decisions highlight the ongoing strict enforcement of anti-doping norms in Indian athletics, as authorities continue to crack down on performance-enhancing substance use in competitive sports.

England Name Women's T20 World Cup Squad

> Vikrama Vahini | London
England have named a 15-member squad for the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, with all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunet set to lead the side. The same squad will also feature in the upcoming home series against India and New Zealand in May-June.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed that Sciver-Brunet will be making her seventh appearance at a global T20 tournament, underscoring her experience and leadership in the shortest format. The Indian women's cricket team will tour England for a series comprising three T20 Internationals followed by a one-off Test match at Lord's. The T20Is are scheduled for late May and early June, while the Test will be played from July 10 to 13, marking 50 years since the first England women's match at the iconic venue.

The squad also features new faces, including 18-year-old Surrey spinner Tilly Corteen-Coleman, who has earned her maiden T20 World Cup call-up. Warwickshire's Issy Wong and Durham's Lauren Filer have also been included in the World Cup squad.

The ECB stated that the selection reflects a blend of experienced campaigners and emerging talent as England aim to strengthen their title challenge in the upcoming global tournament. The series against India and New Zealand is also expected to serve as a key preparation phase for England ahead of the global tournament, helping the team fine-tune combinations and assess bench strength.

PM Pushes Women's Reservation Plan

> Vikrama Vahini | Varanasi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday strongly reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, stating that he would "leave no stone unturned" to implement the long-pending constitutional provision.

Addressing a women's conference in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi, the Prime Minister launched a sharp attack on opposition parties, accusing them of repeatedly obstructing the passage and implementation of the women's reservation bill in Parliament.

'Seeking Blessings for a Maha Yagya': PM Modi
Describing the implementation of women's reservation as a "maha yagya in the national interest," Prime Minister Modi said he had come



to the programme to seek the blessings of women for achieving this major goal.

"As the Member of Parliament from Kashi and as the Prime Minister of the country, I need your blessings to ensure reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies," he said.

Attack on Congress and Regional Parties
The Prime Minister alleged that parties such as the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP), Trinamool Congress (TMC), and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) have consistently blocked efforts to provide political reservation for women.

He said that despite repeated attempts by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the initiative was recently stalled in Parliament due to opposition from these parties.

"These 'parivarwadi' (dynastic) parties have betrayed women once again," Modi said, accusing them of preventing greater representation of women in legislative bodies for decades.

Criticism of SP's Past Governance
Specifically targeting the Samajwadi Party, the Prime Minister said that during its rule in Uttar Pradesh, women faced

restrictions on mobility and participation in public life.

"It was difficult for daughters to come out of their homes during SP rule," he remarked, adding that such conditions reflected the party's lack of commitment to women's empowerment.

Call for Women's Political Empowerment
Reiterating his government's commitment, Modi emphasized that ensuring women's representation in legislative institutions is a key priority. He said that empowering women politically is essential for the nation's overall progress and development.

The Prime Minister concluded by assuring the gathering that his government would continue working towards the implementation of women's reservation despite political challenges.

Family Cleans Ambulance, Victim Waits

> Vikrama Vahini | Katni
In a shocking incident exposing alleged negligence in the healthcare system, a family was reportedly forced to clean an ambulance while their injured relative lay in pain at a district hospital in Katni district. A video of the incident has gone viral on social media.

According to reports, the victim, Rahul Barman (32), a resident of Karela in the Barhi area, was injured in a road accident and brought to the hospital in a 108 ambulance. After initial treatment, he was referred to Jabalpur due to his critical condition.

It is alleged that during this time, an ambulance staff member identified as Mohit asked the patient's family to clean the ambulance within the hospital premises, delaying further medical transport. The viral video reportedly shows the staff member present while the family carried out the cleaning.

The incident has triggered outrage, raising serious concerns over the functioning of emergency services and the sensitivity of healthcare personnel. The 108 ambulance service, meant for saving lives, has come under scrutiny, with demands for strict action against those responsible.

BJP Starts Early 2027 Poll Preparations

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Even as polling continues in West Bengal, the Bharatiya Janata Party has already begun preparations for the 2027 Assembly elections in seven states, including Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

Party sources said BJP national president Nitin Nabin has initiated ground-level planning in these states under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Party leaders stated that organisational activities have been intensified even before the current election cycle concludes, reflecting the BJP's continuous electoral preparedness. They added that while opposition parties remain focused on ongoing polling, the BJP has already moved ahead with consolidation efforts in key states.

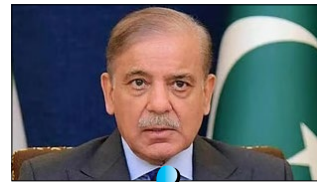
According to party insiders, the strategy involves strengthening organisational structure, reviewing past performance, and planning outreach programmes in preparation for the upcoming electoral battles.

Pak Court Grants Bail to PM Shehbaz's Kin in Graft Case

> Vikrama Vahini | Lahore
A Pakistani court on Tuesday granted interim pre-arrest bail to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's daughter Rabia Imran and her husband Imran Yousaf in a high-profile corruption and money laundering case.

The Special Central Court in Lahore, presided over by Judge Ashfaq Ahmed, approved the bail petitions and directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) not to arrest the couple until May 7. The court order provides temporary relief to the accused as the investigation continues.

According to court officials, Rabia Imran and Imran Yousaf appeared personally before the court along with their legal counsel after returning from the United Kingdom. Reports indicate that the couple had been residing in the UK since 2022 during the course of the investigation, which



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had been initiated by Pakistani authorities in connection with alleged financial irregularities.

The case pertains to serious allegations of corruption and money laundering, which are being probed by the FIA as part of a wider investigation into financial misconduct.

However, the accused have denied all allegations and sought legal protection against arrest.

The court has scheduled the next hearing for further arguments before deciding on the continuation or modification of the interim bail. The case remains under judicial scrutiny as investigations proceed.

The court's decision is seen as a temporary relief for the accused as legal proceedings continue in the case. Authorities are expected to present further evidence in the upcoming hearing scheduled for May 7.

Iran Praises Russia Ties After Talks With Putin

> Vikrama Vahini | Moscow
Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that cooperation between Iran and Russia is expanding amid growing regional uncertainty, following his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg.

Araghchi said he was "pleased to engage" with Russian leadership at the highest level and highlighted Moscow's support for Tehran at a time of shifting geopolitical dynamics and ongoing uncertainty over the second round of peace talks between Iran and the United States.

In a post on social media platform X, he said recent developments reflect the depth and strength of the strategic partnership between the two countries. He added that Iran welcomes Russia's solidarity and continued backing for diplomatic efforts. The Iranian minister also emphasised that bilateral relations are continuing to grow, with both sides seeking to further strengthen cooperation across key areas amid regional and global instability.

Araghchi further noted that the discussions also focused on enhancing economic, energy, and defence cooperation between the two countries. He said both Iran and Russia are committed to maintaining regular high-level consultations to coordinate positions on major international issues and promote regional stability.

Mumbai Stabbing Case: Lone Wolf Attack!

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai
A 31-year-old man, identified as Jabar Zubair Ansari, has been arrested after allegedly attacking two security guards in Mumbai's Naya Nagar area following a dispute over their religious identity.

According to police, the accused first approached the guards at an under-construction site near Wockhardt Hospital around 4 a.m., asking for directions.

He later allegedly returned, questioned their religion, and forced one of them to recite the Islamic Kalma. When they refused, he attacked both guards with a knife.

The injured guards, Rajkumar Mishra and Subroto Sen, were rushed to a nearby hospital. Mishra managed to reach the hospital on his own, while Sen was assisted by a local resident. Police arrested Ansari within about 90

minutes after reviewing CCTV footage from the area. A case has been registered against him under charges of attempted murder and promoting enmity between communities.

Suspected self-radicalisation Maharashtra
Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) officials said Ansari is a science graduate who had previously lived in the United States. After returning to India, he reportedly worked as an online chemistry tutor while living alone in Mira Road. Officials suspect he may have been "self-radicalised" through online content during this period of isolation.

During a search of his residence, police reportedly recovered handwritten notes expressing admiration for ISIS and describing the attack as a "first step" towards joining a terror organisation. His digital devices have been seized for forensic analysis.

Lone wolf terror angle
Security agencies are investigating the case as a possible "lone wolf" terror attack. Lone wolf attacks refer to acts of violence carried out by individuals acting independently without direct links to any organised terror group, making them difficult to detect in advance.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis stated that preliminary findings suggest the accused may have been influenced by online material and extremist literature.

The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) are jointly probing whether any external network was involved.

Investigations are ongoing to determine whether the incident was an isolated act or part of a larger radicalisation pattern.

Outrage Over Event Linked to Umar Khalid

Protests Intensify, Police Deny Permission Amid Event Row

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
A controversy has surfaced in the city over a programme titled "Umar Khalid and His World," proposed to be held at the Bangalore International Centre in Domlur.

The event has drawn objections from certain groups, who have criticised the programme citing the involvement of Umar Khalid, an accused in cases linked to the 2020 Delhi riots.

Members of the protesting groups stated that they submitted a formal representation to the Indiranagar Police Station and senior police officials, requesting cancellation of the event.

However, they alleged that instead of acting on their request, authorities denied them permission to hold protests and issued notices cautioning against any unlawful gathering.

The objectors expressed concern over what they described as a

"double standard" in granting permissions, claiming that other

A proposed event titled "Umar Khalid and His World" in Bengaluru has sparked controversy, with objections raised by certain groups citing concerns over public sentiment and law and order. While police have not confirmed any cancellation, the issue has triggered debate over freedom of expression versus public order.

events—particularly those organised by community or religious groups—often face stricter scrutiny, including requirements for detailed permissions, undertakings, and compliance conditions.

In contrast, they questioned why this programme was being allowed to proceed.

They further argued that events

linked to individuals facing serious allegations could potentially disturb public sentiment and affect social harmony.

The groups urged the state government to intervene and reconsider permission for the programme in the interest of maintaining law and order.

At the same time, there has been no official confirmation from the organisers or authorities regarding any cancellation or modification of the event.

Police sources indicated that decisions regarding permissions and restrictions are taken based on law and order considerations and prevailing circumstances.

The issue has triggered wider debate on freedom of expression, public order, and the balance between permitting events and addressing public objections, with developments being closely watched in the city.

PEOPLES PULSE
an ear to the ground

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2026

EXIT POLLS

29th April 2026 (Wednesday)
at 6.00pm Onwards

ASSAM
WEST BENGAL
TAMILNADU
KERALA
PUDUCHERRY