AYUSHMAN BHARATH DIVAS

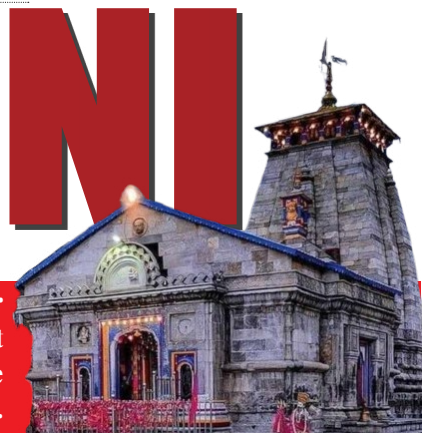
VIKRAMA VAHINI

₹2

30 April, 2026 I Thursday I Shukla Paksha I Chaturdashi I Vikrama Samvata I Bengaluru I Volume: 09 I Issue: 49

Pooja Hegde, who has recently been facing a lull in her film career, is rumoured to be dating actor Rohan Mehra, son of late Vinod Mehra. The duo has reportedly been spotted together at several events, sparking speculation, though neither has confirmed the relationship.

The Kedarnath Yatra 2026 witnessed a major controversy after a misleading video went viral on social media, prompting swift action from the district administration, which confirmed that the footage was fake and unrelated to the ongoing pilgrimage.



Exit Polls: Bengal Shift, Kerala Gain

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Exit poll projections for the 2026 Assembly elections across West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry indicate major political shifts, with a mix of expected incumbency retention and power changes, according to multiple survey agencies including C-Voter, Matrize, Chanakya, P-Marq, and Peoples Pulse.

Voting across the four states and one Union Territory concluded on Wednesday, with West Bengal recording a high turnout of 91.62%. The Election Commission of India will announce the official results on May 4.

West Bengal: Tight Contest, BJP Projected Edge in Some Surveys

Exit polls for West Bengal suggest a highly competitive race between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). While some projections indicate a narrow BJP lead, others continue to show TMC retaining strength.

Poll of Polls suggests BJP ahead with 137–157 seats, while TMC is projected at 131–151 seats. Other surveys, however, including Peoples Pulse and Matrize, show TMC in a stronger position, indicating a close and uncertain contest.

Tamil Nadu: DMK Set to Retain Power

In Tamil Nadu, most exit polls indicate that the DMK-led alliance under Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is likely to retain power. However, the entry of actor-politician Vijay's TVK appears to have influenced vote dynamics.

Axis My India projects DMK+ at 92–110 seats, while other agencies such as Matrize and Chanakya give the alliance a stronger range of up to 160 seats. Opposition AIADMK-led alliances are projected significantly lower across surveys.

Kerala: UDF Likely to End LDF Rule

In Kerala, exit polls suggest a possible change of government with the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) likely to dislodge the Left Democratic Front (LDF) after a decade in power.

Most surveys project UDF crossing the majority mark in the 140-member Assembly. Peoples Pulse predicts 75–85 seats for UDF compared to 55–65 for LDF, indicating a clear advantage for the opposition alliance.

Assam: BJP Projected for Hat-Trick Victory

In Assam, exit polls strongly indicate a continuation of BJP rule under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The party is projected to secure a comfortable majority and return to power for another term.

Axis My India estimates BJP+ at 88–100 seats, while other agencies also show the party leading comfortably ahead of the Congress-led opposition.

Puducherry: NDA Likely to Retain Power

In Puducherry, exit polls suggest that the AINRC-led NDA alliance is likely to retain power. Projections from multiple agencies indicate the alliance maintaining a lead over Congress, with BJP allies forming the core of the expected winning combination.

While exit polls suggest significant political developments across states, analysts caution that these are only projections and actual results may vary when the Election Commission announces official outcomes on May 4.

WEST BENGAL EXIT POLL RESULT 2026 LIVE

TOTAL SEATS: 294 | MAJORITY MARK: 148

SOURCE	TMC	BJP	OTHERS
Chanakya Strategies	130-140	150-160	6-10
Peoples Pulse	177-187	95-110	1-4
JVC	131-152	138-159	2
Matrize	125-140	146-161	6-10
P-Marq	118-138	150-175	2-6
Axis My India	0	0	0

NOTE: EXIT POLL RESULTS ARE PREDICTIONS AND NOT THE OFFICIAL RESULTS.

SOURCE: VARIOUS POLLSTERS

TAMIL NADU EXIT POLL RESULT 2026 LIVE

TOTAL SEATS: 234 | MAJORITY MARK: 118

SOURCE	DMK+	AIADMK+	OTHERS
Chanakya Strategies	145-160	50-65	18-26
Peoples Pulse	125-145	65-80	20-30
JVC	0	0	0
Matrize	122-132	87-110	10-18
P-Marq	122-145	65-85	16-32
Axis My India	92-110	22-32	98-120

NOTE: EXIT POLL RESULTS ARE PREDICTIONS AND NOT THE OFFICIAL RESULTS.

SOURCE: VARIOUS POLLSTERS

KERALA ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2026 EXIT POLL PREDICTIONS

TOTAL SEATS: 140 | MAJORITY MARK: 71

POLLSTER	LDF (LEFT DEMOCRATIC FRONT)	UDF (UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT)	OTHERS (INCL. NDA)
Chanakya Strategies	58-64	72-80	3-7
Peoples Pulse	55-65	75-85	0-3
JVC	52-61	72-84	3-7
Matrize	60-65	70-75	5-9
P-Marq	62-69	71-79	1-4
Axis My India	49-62	78-90	0-3

Note: Exit poll results are predictions and not the official results.

Source: Various Pollsters

ASSAM EXIT POLL RESULT 2026 LIVE

TOTAL SEATS: 126 | MAJORITY MARK: 64

SOURCE	BJP	INC	OTH
Chanakya Strategies	88-98	22-32	3-5
Peoples Pulse	68-72	22-26	07-15
JVC	88-101	23-33	2-5
Matrize	85-95	25-32	6-12
P-Marq	82-94	30-40	1-5
Axis My India	88-100	24-36	0-3

NOTE: EXIT POLL RESULTS ARE PREDICTIONS AND NOT THE OFFICIAL RESULTS.

SOURCE: VARIOUS POLLSTERS

PUDUCHERRY EXIT POLL RESULT 2026 LIVE

TOTAL SEATS: 30 | MAJORITY: 16

SOURCE	INC+	NRC+	TVK	OTH
Axis My India	6-8	16-20	-	3-7
JVC	11-13	15-17	1-2	-
PMARQ	-	-	-	-
People's Pulse	6-8	15-18	-	1-12
MATRIZE	-	-	-	-
People's Insight	-	-	-	-

NOTE: EXIT POLL RESULTS ARE PREDICTIONS AND NOT THE OFFICIAL RESULTS.

SOURCE: VARIOUS POLLSTERS

Bengal Records Historic 92% Turnout in Phase 2

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**

West Bengal witnessed record voter participation as the overall turnout across the first two phases of polling reached 92.12 per cent, marking the highest electoral participation in the state since Independence, according to data released by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The second phase of polling, held on Wednesday across 142 Assembly constituencies in Sout Bengal, recorded a turnout of 92.52 per cent till 9 pm. The first phase, covering 152 seats in North and Southwest Bengal on April 23, had registered a turnout of 91.78 per cent.

With both phases combined, voter participation crossed historic levels, reflecting strong public engagement in the ongoing electoral process. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar praised the turnout, stating that West Bengal had achieved its highest-ever polling percentage in both phases since Independence, describing it as a moment of pride for the state. PG2

Good morning

When life brings reasons for sorrow, answer with even more reasons to smile.

BRIEFS

IMD Issues 4-Day Rain Alert

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**

The Meteorological Department has issued a Yellow Alert for several districts across Karnataka, forecasting rainfall activity over the next four days. Widespread showers accompanied by thunderstorms and strong winds are expected from April 29 to May 2, affecting Bengaluru and multiple districts across coastal, north interior, and south interior regions. Isolated heavy rainfall is also likely in some areas during this period, the IMD said.

Officials have advised the public to remain cautious, especially in low-lying and flood-prone areas, as intermittent heavy spells may lead to waterlogging and traffic disruptions in urban centres including Bengaluru.

Good Pre-Monsoon Rains Likely in May

SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA:

Isolated thunderstorms accom panied by light to moderate rain are likely over Davanagere, Vijayanagara, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, and Chikkaballapur districts during evening and night hours. Under favourable atmospheric conditions, Mysuru, Mandya, Ramanagara, and Bengaluru districts may also experience scattered rainfall. Weather conditions indicate that thunderstorm activity is likely to continue across South Interior Karnataka until May 1.

COASTAL KARNATAKA:

Kasaragod, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada districts are expected to experience hot and humid conditions during the day. However, light to moderate thunderstorms with rain are likely in isolated places of Kasaragod, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi during evening, night, and early morning hours. In Uttara Kannada, rainfall activity is expected in areas bordering Belagavi and Dharwad districts from evening hours. Over the next three days, good rainfall with thunderstorms is likely in Kasaragod, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi, while Uttara Kannada may receive scattered light rain.

MALNAD REGION:

Kodagu, Hassan, Chikkamagaluru, and Shivamogga districts are likely to witness isolated evening and night thunderstorms with rain. Rainfall activity is expected to continue in the Malnad region for the next three days.

NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA:

Belagavi, Dharwad, Haveri, Gadag, and Ballari districts may experience isolated evening thunderstorms with light rain. Other districts are likely to remain mostly dry with hot, sunny, and partly cloudy conditions. Scattered light rain may continue in parts of North Interior Karnataka.

8 Die in B'luru Wall Collapse

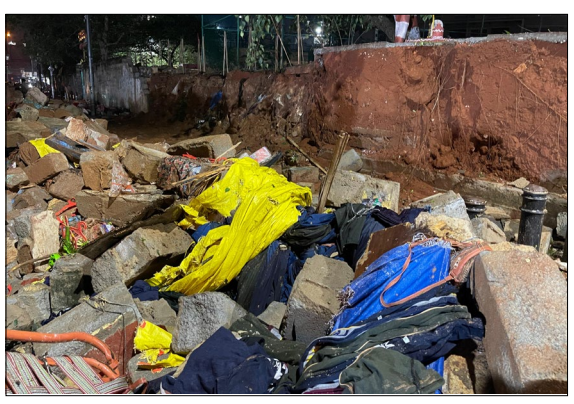
➤ **Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**

A tragic incident struck the city on Wednesday evening when a wall near the mortuary of Bowring Hospital in Shivajinagar collapsed during heavy rain, killing eight people, including two children.

The victims, mostly roadside vendors, were reportedly selling items such as bedsheets, fruits, and toys along the road near the hospital premises. As sudden rain accompanied by thunder lashed the area, they had stayed back to protect their goods when the weakened wall collapsed on them.

The incident occurred at a time when the city was experiencing its first major rainfall of the season, bringing relief from heat but turning into tragedy within moments.

Fire and emergency services personnel, along with police teams, rushed to the spot and carried out rescue operations in the rain, pulling out victims trapped under the debris.



Authorities are expected to investigate the condition of the wall and the circumstances leading to the collapse. Preliminary reports suggest that continuous rainfall may have further weakened the structure.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered prayers at Vishwanath Temple at Kashi, seeking happiness, prosperity, and good health for all citizens; the darshan of Maa Annapurna and Maa Ganga brought a sense of peace and positivity.

Editorial

Bengaluru Rains Demand Urgent Action

Heavy rains that lashed Bengaluru on Wednesday evening have once again exposed the city's fragile urban infrastructure, leading to multiple tragedies and the loss of more than seven lives. With the India Meteorological Department warning of continued rainfall into the first week of May, the situation demands immediate and proactive intervention. Flooded roads, fallen trees, and weakened structures are not new concerns, yet their recurring nature points to systemic gaps in preparedness and response.

The responsibility now rests squarely on the state government and the Greater Bengaluru Authority to shift from reactive governance to preventive action. Too often, official responses are limited to site visits and compensation announcements after lives are lost. This approach must change. Identifying and removing dangerous trees, securing dilapidated buildings, and reinforcing vulnerable compounds should be treated as urgent priorities. Urban disaster management cannot remain a post-event ritual; it must become a continuous, data-driven exercise focused on risk mitigation.

Equally critical is the readiness of emergency services. Personnel must be on high alert, equipped and deployed strategically across the city to respond swiftly to any crisis. Coordination between civic agencies, disaster response teams, and local authorities should be seamless and efficient. Bengaluru's citizens deserve more than assurances—they deserve safety and foresight. Preventing loss of life is not just an administrative duty; it is a moral obligation. As the rains continue, decisive and timely action will determine whether the city can weather this challenge without further tragedy.

–Editor

First RWA Meet on Disaster Preparedness: Commissioner Ramesh

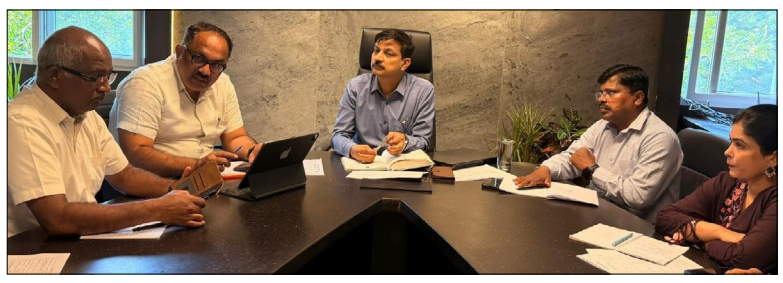
➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, Bengaluru South City Municipal Corporation Commissioner and Chairman of the Disaster Management Authority, K.N. Ramesh, held a video interaction with Resident Welfare Association (RWA) representatives to review pre-monsoon flood preparedness and mitigation measures.

The meeting focused on assessing potential flood situations ahead of the monsoon and gathering feedback from residents. The Commissioner informed participants about the precautionary steps already undertaken by the civic body and assured that public grievances and suggestions would be addressed on priority.

Focus on Flood-Prone Areas

During the interaction, several flood-prone localities such as Bannerghatta Main Road, Puttenahalli-



Sarakki Lake Road, Vajrahalli, Bilekahalli Ranka Colony, HSR Layout 7th Sector, Koramangala 1st Block, Silk Board Junction, Junnasandra, Ambalipura, and Trinity Circle were discussed. Officials assured that necessary preventive measures would be taken in these areas.

RWA representatives highlighted key concerns including desilting of stormwater drains, waterlogging issues, traffic disruptions, and improper solid waste disposal in drains.

Multi-Department Coordination

The Commissioner stated that multiple pre-monsoon review meetings have already been conducted with departments such as Traffic Police, Fire and Emergency Services, BESCOM, Forest Department, and Engineering teams. Joint inspections have also been carried out in vulnerable areas to assess preparedness.

Authorities have been instructed to identify flood-prone zones and remain prepared to handle emergency situations effectively.

Drain Cleaning and Road Repairs

Immediate desilting of drains and shoulder drains has been prioritised, with instructions to ensure quick disposal of removed silt. Officials have also been directed to expedite pending road repair works to prevent waterlogging during heavy rains.

Tree Safety and Disease Prevention Measures

The Forest Department has been tasked with identifying and removing hazardous dry trees and branches to prevent accidents during the monsoon. In coordination with the Health Department, measures are being taken to prevent the spread of waterborne and vector-borne diseases such as dengue, chikungunya, cholera, and malaria. Steps include monitoring stagnant water, ensuring cleanliness in hotels, and improving waste management systems.

Control Rooms for Public Grievances

To address public complaints promptly, control rooms have been set up in Jayanagar (Zone-1) and Bommanahalli (Zone-2), with dedicated phone and mobile numbers. Additional control rooms are also being established at division and sub-division levels for emergency response.

More Meetings Planned

Commissioner Ramesh stated that regular meetings with officials and residents will continue to ensure effective implementation of flood mitigation measures during the monsoon season.

RWA representatives and local residents appreciated the initiative, noting that direct engagement with the Commissioner and officials would help improve disaster management and response efforts.

Senior officials, including

Additional Commissioner (Development) Dr. Naveen Kumar Raju, Chief Engineers Basavaraj Kabade and K.V. Ravi, and Disaster Management Consultant Dr. Vinuta, were present during the meeting.

Cabinet Reshuffle Buzz; MLAs Head to Delhi

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Speculation over a possible cabinet reshuffle in the state has intensified, with several ministerial aspirants preparing to approach the party high command in Delhi.

Speculation over a cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka has gained momentum, with Assembly Chief Whip Ashok Pattan indicating that consultations with the Congress high command are underway. He said he plans to visit Delhi on May 6 or 7 to meet senior AICC leaders, following earlier discussions with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and state in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala.

Amid this political activity, Assembly Chief Whip Ashok Pattan has announced plans to travel to Delhi again. Speaking to reporters at Vidhana Soudha, he said he is likely to visit the national capital on May 6 or 7 to meet senior leaders of the All India Congress Committee (AICC).

Meetings with Central Leadership Pattan revealed that he had earlier met senior Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and state in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala to present his demands.

Push for New Faces

He also indicated that discussions are underway regarding a major overhaul of the cabinet, with a focus on inducting new faces. According to Pattan, Surjewala had hinted at replacing a majority of the existing ministers.

Highlighting the aspirations of legislators, he said nearly 40 MLAs who have been elected four times are expecting ministerial positions. He added that the demand for representation will continue until their aspirations are addressed.

Political Activity Intensifies

The renewed push for cabinet reshuffle has triggered heightened political activity within the ruling party, as leaders and aspirants step up efforts to secure positions in the state government.

Karnataka BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra conducts a detailed inspection of the preparations for the upcoming grand felicitation programme marking 50 years of public and political service of farmer leader B.S. Yediyurappa in Chitradurga. During the visit, Vijayendra reviewed the venue arrangements and coordination efforts ahead of the event. State General Secretary Tammesh Gowda, Chitradurga District BJP President, and several senior party leaders were also present during the inspection.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visits the injured in the Bowring Hospital wall collapse incident.

Yathindra Sparks CM Row

Karnataka Legislative Council member Yathindra Siddaramaiah has stirred a political debate by stating that demands for a Dalit Chief Minister may rise if Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is replaced. His remarks come amid ongoing speculation over leadership changes and a possible cabinet reshuffle within the state Congress.

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Karnataka Legislative Council member Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Wednesday triggered a fresh political debate within the ruling Congress by stating that demands for a Dalit Chief Minister would intensify if Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is replaced.

Amid ongoing speculation over a possible leadership change in Karnataka, Yathindra, who is also the son of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said the party high command must carefully consider social justice factors before taking any decision on the state leadership.

He reportedly pointed out that Karnataka has never had a Chief Minister from the Dalit community and cautioned that any move to replace Siddaramaiah could lead to renewed internal pressure within the party to elevate a leader from the Dalit community to the top post.

The remarks come at a time when discussions within the Karnataka Congress have gained momentum over a potential cabinet reshuffle and leadership transition.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar is also being seen as a key contender in the ongoing political speculation.

Congress leaders, however, have consistently maintained that any decision regarding leadership changes rests solely with the party high command and will be taken at an appropriate time.

Yathindra has been a vocal supporter of Siddaramaiah's continuation as Chief Minister and has earlier stated that he expects his father to complete a full five-year term in office.

The statement has further intensified political discussions within the state Congress unit. Political observers say the remarks could add a new dimension to the already sensitive leadership debate within the ruling party.

NEWS

CET Religious Symbols Row

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A controversy has erupted over alleged removal of Hindu religious symbols at CET examination centres, with the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti submitting a memorandum to the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) in Malleswaram, demanding immediate action against those responsible.

In the petition, the organisation strongly condemned an incident reported on April 24 at a CET centre in Krupanidhi College, Madiwala, where students were allegedly forced to remove their janivara (sacred thread) during frisking. It was further alleged that students who resisted were threatened with denial of entry, and in some cases, staff reportedly removed the sacred thread and discarded it.

The group stated that such actions hurt religious sentiments and amount to a violation of fundamental rights. It emphasised that yajnopavita holds deep spiritual significance in Hindu tradition and cannot be treated as a mere accessory.

Objections Over Treatment of Women's Religious Symbols The memorandum also raised concerns over married Hindu women allegedly being asked to remove symbols such as mangalsutra, toe rings, nose rings, earrings, and kumkum. These, the organisation said, are not ornaments but symbols of cultural identity and marital status, and forcing their removal amounts to disrespect.

Violation of Constitutional Rights Alleged

Citing Article 25 of the Constitution, the group argued that every citizen has the right to practice and profess their religion, and such restrictions at examination centres infringe upon these rights.

It also pointed out that similar incidents had been reported in Bidar and Shivamogga in 2025, following which the Karnataka High Court had taken note and issued notices to authorities. The recurrence of such incidents, the group alleged, reflects administrative negligence.

Meat Sale Ban in Bengaluru for Buddha Purnima

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Greater Bengaluru Authority has announced a complete ban on animal slaughter and sale of meat across the city on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

According to the Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry, all slaughterhouses will remain closed and meat shops will not be permitted to operate on Friday, May 1, in observance of the festival.

The order has been issued to ensure compliance with traditional and cultural practices associated with Buddha Purnima. Authorities have directed

strict enforcement of the ban within the jurisdiction of the civic body.

Officials also stated that detailed guidelines have been circulated, and action will be taken against any violations during the specified period.

Bengal Records Historic 92% Turnout in Phase 2

➤ **From PG1**

The second phase is being viewed as a crucial test for the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), as voting covered several of its strongholds in South Bengal and Kolkata. The phase also included key constituencies such as Bhabanipur and Tollygunj.

Overall, more than 2.22 crore voters were eligible in the second phase, including over 1.64 crore male and 1.57 crore female voters.

In the 2021 Assembly elections, the TMC had won 123 of the 142 seats that went to polls in this phase, giving it a strong advantage in the region.

While the TMC aims for another decisive mandate under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is attempting to expand its urban and community-based support in the state.

The counting of votes is scheduled for May 4.

Rain Complaints to Be Cleared in 3 Hours

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

In the wake of heavy rainfall and wind-driven disruptions across the city, GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to resolve all rain-related complaints within three hours, as civic agencies remain on high alert.

Several parts of the Central City Corporation, including Cottonpet, Binnypet, Subhash Nagar, Jagajeevanram Nagar, and K.R. Market, recorded intense rainfall of up to 77.6 mm, while other zones experienced moderate showers. The city witnessed an average rainfall of around 60 mm accompanied by hail in some areas.

Officials have been deployed on-site to clear waterlogging, remove debris, and ensure smooth traffic flow. Drain gratings are being cleaned, and fallen trees across major roads are being removed on a priority basis. The Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) continues to operate round-the-clock, coordinating complaint redressal across departments.

According to official data, the Central zone reported 19 waterlogging complaints, followed by South (29), West (12), East (5), and North (3), totalling 68 cases. A total of 170 incidents of fallen trees and 408 cases of fallen branches have also been recorded, with clearance operations underway.

The rain also led to multiple tragic incidents. A compound wall collapse near Bowring Hospital in Shivajinagar claimed seven lives and left several injured. In a separate incident near Bannerghatta Road, a 35-year-old man died due to electrocution.

Authorities, including senior police, fire, and civic officials, inspected the Bowring Hospital site and supervised rescue operations.

SCIENCE & Technology

Google Exits $100M Pentagon Drone Project

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Google has withdrawn from a $100 million Pentagon-sponsored project aimed at developing voice-controlled autonomous drone swarm technology, despite having advanced in the initial stages of the programme.

While the company officially cited "resource prioritisation" as the reason for stepping away, people familiar with the matter said the decision followed an internal ethics review and growing concerns among employees over the use of artificial intelligence in military applications.

The project, part of a broader US Department of Defense initiative, sought to develop systems enabling coordinated drone swarms controlled through voice commands. The Pentagon has been encouraging greater private-sector participation to accelerate innovation in autonomous defence technologies.

However, Google has faced long-standing internal opposition to defence-related AI work. Over the years, hundreds of employees and researchers have reportedly raised objections to military applications of artificial intelligence, leading to earlier policy debates within the company.

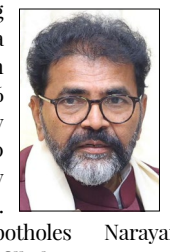
GBA 'Daylight Robbery' Charge

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy has accused the Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA) of large-scale financial irregularities in pothole repairs and solid waste management tenders, alleging "daylight robbery" in the execution of civic works.

Addressing reporters at the party's state headquarters, Narayanaswamy claimed that the civic body has shown expenditure of up to ₹1 lakh for filling a single pothole, despite the actual cost being significantly lower. "Simple patchwork that may not cost even ₹5,000 is being shown as ₹1 lakh. This is nothing but daylight robbery," he alleged.

The Opposition leader pointed to specific areas to highlight discrepancies. In Rajajinagar, he said, the GBA reported filling 232 out of 250 potholes at a cost of ₹60,344, while in another instance, 366 potholes were reportedly repaired at a cost of ₹1.80 crore, averaging nearly ₹49,000 per pothole. Similarly, in Jayanagar, 382 potholes were claimed to have been filled at approximately ₹47,000 each.



He questioned the variation in rates across localities, calling it "irrational, illogical, and unscientific," and likened the process to a "real estate-style pricing system."

Narayanaswamy also criticised the GBA's claim that no deaths had occurred due to road accidents linked to poor road conditions in Bengaluru. He termed the statement "irresponsible and unrealistic," arguing that it reflected insensitivity towards public safety concerns.

Raising objections over a proposed solid waste management (SWM) tender, Narayanaswamy alleged that the government was awarding contracts for a seven-year period despite having a remaining tenure of only two years.

He further claimed that the tender value had been increased by 14 per cent, pushing the annual cost to ₹544 crore, with an additional burden of around ₹62 crore. "This is a clear case of a 'loot-and-scoot' approach," he said.

Muniyappa Seeks End to Karnataka CM Row

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**

Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa on Wednesday called on the Congress high command to bring clarity to the ongoing uncertainty over the Chief Minister's post, stating that a clear decision is essential for both party stability and governance.

Call for Clarity Amid Speculation

Muniyappa noted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is functioning effectively, but emphasised that any decision regarding leadership change rests solely with the party high command. He expressed confidence that the leadership would take a final call in the coming months.

Mahadevappa Opposes Leadership Change

Meanwhile, Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa, considered a close associate of Siddaramaiah, also met Kharge in Delhi. Sources said he urged the party leadership not to make any changes to the Chief Minister's position.

Leaders Lobbying for Cabinet Berths

Several Congress leaders and aspirants for ministerial positions are currently in Delhi, engaging with the high command. Among them are senior leader Salim Ahmed, former minister Basavaraj Rayareddy, and senior MLA Hampanagouda Badarli, who are reportedly lobbying for inclusion in the Siddaramaiah Cabinet.

High Command Yet to Decide

As internal discussions continue, the Congress high command faces the challenge of balancing competing interests within the party. A final decision on the leadership issue is awaited, even as political activity intensifies in the national capital.

Bengaluru Congress Leader Booked Under POCSO

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A senior Congress leader in Bengaluru has been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act following serious allegations of physical abuse against minor children of a woman with whom he was reportedly in a relationship.

Anand Naidu, General Secretary of the Bengaluru North District Congress Committee (DCC), is accused of assaulting the children after they questioned his relationship with their mother.

According to the complaint filed by the children's father, Naidu had been involved with the woman for the past three to four years.

Allegations of Brutal Assault

The complaint alleges that the situation escalated into violence when the children confronted Naidu. He is accused of physically assaulting them using an iron rod, causing injuries to their hands, legs, and other parts of the body. The complaint also claims that he bit the children during the incident.

Investigators said the minors have corroborated the allegations during questioning, describing repeated instances of abuse linked to their objections over the relationship.

Case Registered Under POCSO and IPC

police have registered a case against Naidu under relevant sections of the POCSO Act and the Indian Penal Code. Officials said the investigation is focused on ensuring the safety and welfare of the children while gathering evidence related to the alleged assault.

Property Transfer Allegations Also Under Probe

Apart from the assault case, the complainant has also alleged that Naidu, in collusion with the children's mother, was involved in the unauthorised transfer of family property without his consent. Police confirmed that this aspect is also being examined as part of the ongoing investigation.

Investigation Underway

Police officials stated that a detailed probe is underway into all allegations, including physical abuse and financial misconduct. "We are investigating the matter comprehensively based on the statements and evidence available," a police spokesperson said.

The Congress party has not yet issued an official statement regarding the allegations against the leader.

Tirumala Marks Narasimha, Vengamamba Jayanthi

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Tirumala**

The sacred occasions of Narasimha Jayanthi and the birth anniversary of revered devotee Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba will be observed with religious fervour in Tirumala on April 30.

The Narasimha Jayanthi celebrations coincide with Swathi Nakshatram in the Vaisakha month. On the occasion, special Abhishekam will be performed to the Mula Murthi of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy in the temple. In honour of Tarigonda Vengamamba, floral tributes (Pushpanjali) will be offered at her memorial in Tirumala.

As part of the celebrations, the Utsava Murthies of Sri Malayappa Swamy along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi will be taken in a ceremonial procession to the Narayanagiri Gardens in the evening. The traditional Unjal Seva (swing service) will be performed, followed by devotional and cultural programmes, adding spiritual significance to the festivities.

AHINDA Card Sparks Karnataka Congress Power Battle

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The internal power struggle within the Karnataka Congress has reached a critical stage, with rival factions intensifying efforts in the national capital as speculation grows over a possible leadership transition in May 2026.

With Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the centre of the contest, the battle for the top post has triggered high-level political manoeuvring, placing the party high command in a delicate position.

AHINDA Leaders Step In

In a strategic move, senior leaders Satish Jarkiholi and H.C. Mahadevappa have rushed to Delhi to engage with the Congress high command, invoking the influential AHINDA (Minorities, Backward Classes, and Dalits) bloc.

The faction emphasised that AHINDA, originally shaped by former Chief Minister Devaraj Urs and later strengthened by Siddaramaiah, has been the party's core support base for decades. Leaders asserted that any leadership decision must take the interests of this social coalition into account.

Demand for Dalit Chief Minister

Adding a new dimension to the leadership debate, senior Congress leader K.N. Rajanna has publicly called for a Dalit Chief Minister if Siddaramaiah steps down.

Karnataka Congress is witnessing an intense internal power struggle as factions rally in Delhi ahead of a possible leadership change in May 2026. With AHINDA leaders demanding social representation and the D.K. Shivakumar camp pushing for a transition, the party high command faces a crucial decision that could reshape the state's political future.

Stating that prolonged uncertainty is affecting governance, Rajanna said that while Siddaramaiah would abide by the high command's decision, the demand for a Dalit successor reflects the aspirations of a significant section within the party.

Shivakumar Camp Eyes Leadership Change

Meanwhile, supporters of D.K. Shivakumar have intensified their push, citing an alleged power-sharing understanding reached during the party's 2023 Assembly election victory.

The faction expects a leadership transition in May, viewing it as Shivakumar's turn to assume the Chief Minister's role.

Disciplinary Actions Add to Tensions

The situation has been further complicated by recent disciplinary actions against some minority leaders within the party. Moves against figures such as K. Abdul Jabbar, Naseer Ahmed, and B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan have sparked internal debate.

Shivakumar, however, has denied any involvement, stating that the decisions were taken by the party high command based on internal reports and stressing that maintaining party discipline remains a priority.

High Command Faces Tough Call

With AHINDA leaders pushing for social representation and the Shivakumar camp pressing for a leadership change, the Congress high command faces a challenging balancing act.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has maintained a cautious silence amid the developments, even as his supporters continue to lobby in Delhi.

All Eyes on May

As May approaches, Karnataka's political landscape is poised for a significant shift. The outcome of the ongoing internal tussle is expected to shape not only the state leadership but also the Congress party's strategy moving forward.

ENTERTINMENT

Yash's 'Toxic' Delayed for Global Release Push

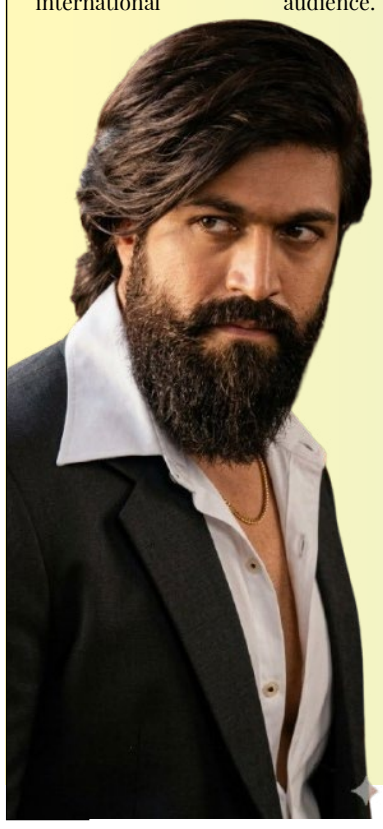
➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The makers of Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups have officially rescheduled the film's release, aiming for a wider global rollout following strong international response at CinemaCon.

The film, starring Yash, was initially slated to hit theatres on June 4, 2026, but will now release on a new date to be announced soon.

CinemaCon Response Prompts Strategic Shift

The decision comes after the film received widespread appreciation at CinemaCon, where it impressed global distributors and industry leaders. The positive reception has encouraged the makers to expand their release strategy to cater to a larger international audience.



Producers KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations said the move is aimed at aligning the film's release with its growing global appeal.

Focus on Worldwide Distribution

Although the film is complete, the team is currently working on finalising international distribution deals and partnerships. The goal is to ensure a simultaneous, large-scale global release across key markets.

Yash on the Film's Global Vision

Speaking about the decision, Yash described Toxic as a deeply personal project. He said the response at CinemaCon reaffirmed the need to present the film on a global scale.

"There are films you make, and then there are films that remind you why you fell in love with cinema. Toxic has been that journey for us," he said, adding that the team is committed to delivering a cinematic experience that reflects the film's international potential.

Star Cast and Multi-Language Release

The film features a star-studded ensemble cast including Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Rukmini Vasanth, and Tara Sutaria.

Shot in Kannada and English, Toxic will also be released in dubbed versions across Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam, further strengthening its pan-India and international reach.

New Release Date Awaited

While the original release date has been dropped, the makers have assured that the new date will be announced soon as part of a globally unified launch plan.

With heightened expectations and expanding global interest, Toxic is now positioned as one of the most anticipated Indian films aiming for a major international impact.

'Raja Shivaji' Set for Pan-India Box Office Push

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Actor-filmmaker Riteish Deshmukh's upcoming historical epic Raja Shivaji is emerging as one of the most ambitious projects in Marathi cinema, with strong advance bookings and growing expectations of a record-breaking opening.

Positioned as a grand tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the film stands out for its масштаб production scale, expansive cast, and high visual quality, marking a significant milestone in the regional film industry.

Strong Advance Bookings Signal Massive Opening

Early trade trends indicate a robust response from audiences, with advance bookings showing higher initial interest compared to recent big-ticket releases like Spirit and Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups. Reports suggest that ticketing platforms have already recorded significant traction, pointing towards a strong opening day.

The film is slated for release on May 1, coinciding with Maharashtra Day, a strategic move expected to boost turnout across the state.

Pan-India Appeal with Multi-Language Strategy

While the film is rooted in Marathi culture, the makers are aiming for a broader reach through dubbed versions in Hindi and Telugu. Industry experts believe this approach could help Raja Shivaji expand its footprint beyond Maharashtra and attract a nationwide audience.

Comparisons are already being drawn with earlier historical successes such as Tanhaji and Chhaava, both of which performed strongly at the box office.

High Expectations in Trade Circles

Trade analysts remain optimistic about the film's prospects, noting that it has the potential to surpass previous benchmarks in Marathi cinema. The film has reportedly secured strong pre-release business, including digital rights valued at around ₹150 crore, ensuring a solid financial base even before release.

Film analyst Akshaye Rathi observed that while the Hindi market performance is yet to be assessed, the film's subject and scale justify its pan-India ambitions.

Star Power and Ensemble Cast

Another major highlight is the film's ensemble cast, including appearances by Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, whose reunion is expected to generate additional interest among wider audiences.

A Landmark Moment for Marathi Cinema

With its масштаб vision, strong early response, and strategic release planning, Raja Shivaji is being viewed as a landmark project that could redefine the scale and reach of Marathi films.

If audience reception matches early expectations, the film could set new benchmarks and establish itself as one of the biggest successes in regional cinema history.

BUSINESS

UAE OPEC Exit: India May Gain on Oil, LPG

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) planned exit from the OPEC+ alliance by May 1, 2026, could reshape global crude oil dynamics and potentially benefit India by easing oil import costs, according to analysts.

The UAE, one of the key oil producers in the Gulf region with output of around 4.8 million barrels per day, has long been reported to be considering a more independent production strategy. Market observers say the move reflects its growing investments in expanding oil production capacity and a desire for greater output flexibility beyond OPEC quotas.

Experts believe that post-exit, the UAE may increase crude oil production, which could help soften global oil prices over time. This, in turn, may reduce India's oil import bill, given that the country is heavily dependent on crude imports to meet domestic energy demand.

India and the UAE share strong energy and trade relations. The Gulf nation has been a major supplier of crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to India, alongside deepening investment partnerships in the refining and petrochemical sectors involving Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum with UAE-based firms such as ADNOC.

The bilateral trade relationship has also strengthened significantly after the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed in May 2022, with trade nearly doubling from $43.3 billion in FY 2020–21 to $83.7 billion in FY 2023–24. Meanwhile, global oil markets remain volatile, with crude futures recently trading above $99 per barrel amid supply concerns and geopolitical tensions.

Analysts warn that developments such as disruptions in key shipping routes and shifting OPEC dynamics continue to add uncertainty to global energy prices.

If the UAE increases output after its exit, analysts say India could emerge as one of the key beneficiaries through more stable supply and potentially lower crude and LPG prices in the medium term.

SPORTS

RCB Ready for Gujarat Clash; Match Timing Revealed

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Ahmedabad**

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) are set to face Gujarat Titans (GT) in Match 42 of IPL 2026 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad in what promises to be a high-voltage mid-season clash between two top contenders.

This will be the second meeting between the two sides in the ongoing season. In their earlier encounter at Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, RCB registered a comfortable victory and will now look to complete a double over Gujarat Titans. On the other hand, GT will aim to settle scores and return to winning ways on home turf.

RCB currently occupy second place on the points table with six wins from the season so far, reflecting strong form and consistency. Gujarat Titans are placed fifth with four wins and are pushing to move up the standings as the tournament progresses, making this fixture crucial for both teams in the playoff race.

The match is scheduled to begin at 7:30 PM IST, with the toss set for 7:00 PM. Cricket fans can catch the live telecast on the Star Sports Network, while live streaming will be available on JioHotstar.

RCB are expected to rely on key players such as Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, and Phil Salt in the batting unit, supported by all-round options like Krunal Pandya and Tim David, along with a strong bowling attack featuring Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

MI Make 4 Changes After Winning Toss vs SRH

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Mumbai Indians (MI) registered a notable tactical shift by making four changes to their playing XI after winning the toss against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in Match 41 of IPL 2026 at the Wankhede Stadium.

MI captain Hardik Pandya opted to bat first, putting SRH into the field. The decision comes as Mumbai look to break a poor home run, having lost three consecutive matches at the Wankhede this season. SRH, on the other hand, aim to extend their winning momentum.

A major talking point of the match was the absence of Quinton de Kock due to injury, with Ryan Rickelton replacing him in the XI. Mumbai also included Robin Minz, along with other changes aimed at strengthening their batting and balance.

Captain Hardik Pandya confirmed multiple team adjustments at the toss. Sunrisers Hyderabad made one change to their playing XI as both teams finalized their combinations ahead of the crucial encounter.

In head-to-head history, SRH hold a slight advantage over MI, having won 19 of the 34 matches played between the two sides, while Mumbai have won 15. Playing XIs: Mumbai Indians: Ryan Rickelton (wk), Will Jacks, Naman Dhir, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya (c), Robin Minz, Trent Boult, Jasprit Bumrah, AM Ghazanfar, Ashwani Kumar. Impact Players: Mayank Rawat, Raghu Sharma, Shardul Thakur, Krish Bhagat, Raj Bawa.

Exit Poll Storm: TMC Holds Bengal, DMK Dominates TN, UDF Set for Comeback in Kerala, NDA Surges in Assam & Puducherry

A comprehensive exit poll by People's Pulse Research Organisation paints a decisive political picture across five key states, indicating strong incumbency advantages in some regions and clear shifts in others.

West Bengal: TMC Cruises to Comfortable Victory

The ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) is set to return to power with ease, projected to secure 177–187 seats in the 294-member Assembly with a 46.5% vote share. The BJP is expected to remain the principal opposition with 95–110 seats and 41.5% vote share, while Congress and the Left continue to struggle on the margins.

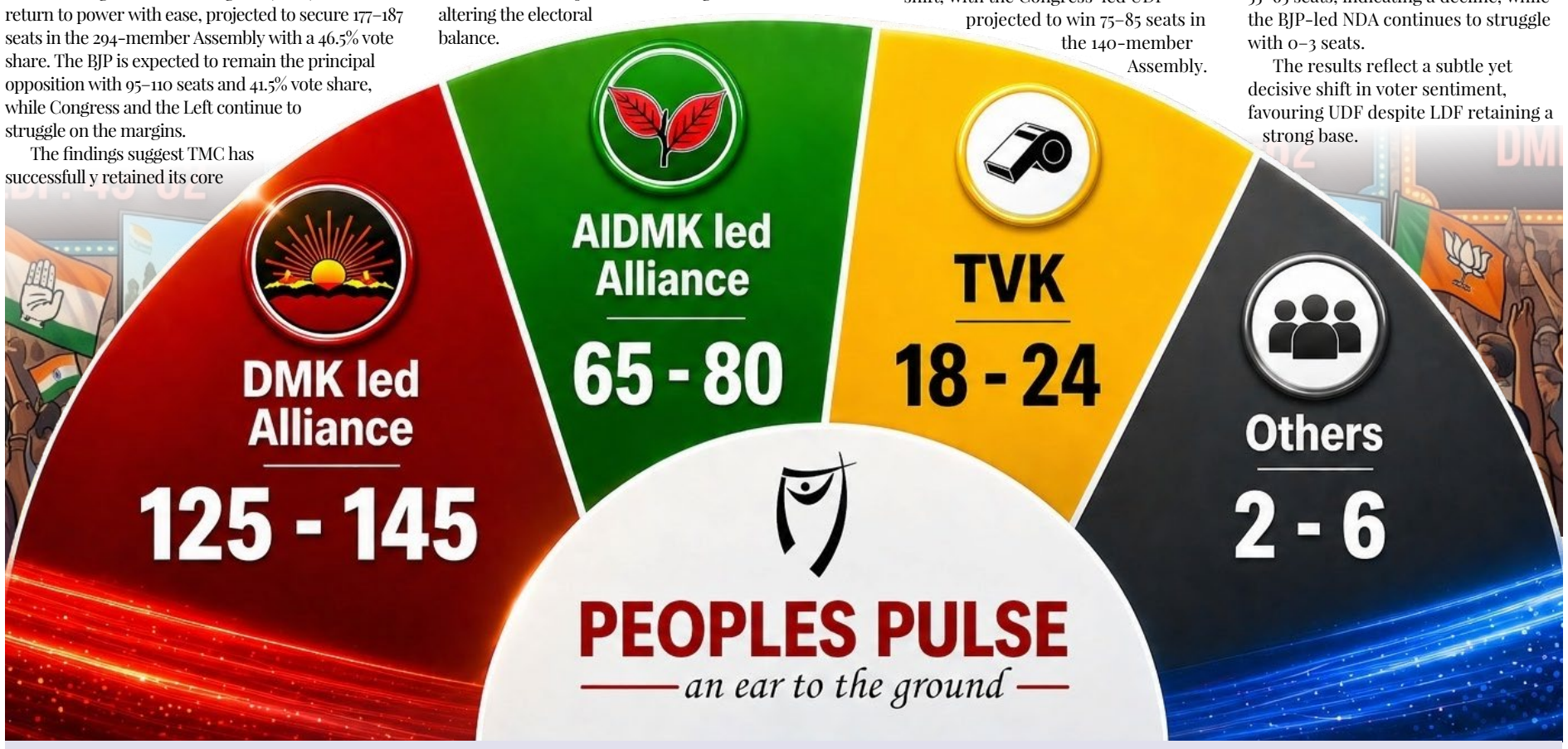
The findings suggest TMC has successfully retained its core voter base, while BJP's incremental gains fall short of altering the electoral balance.

Kerala: UDF Gains Edge, LDF Faces Voter Fatigu

Kerala appears headed for a political shift, with the Congress-led UDF projected to win 75–85 seats in the 140-member Assembly.

The ruling LDF is likely to secure 55–65 seats, indicating a decline, while the BJP-led NDA continues to struggle with 0–3 seats.

The results reflect a subtle yet decisive shift in voter sentiment, favouring UDF despite LDF retaining a strong base.

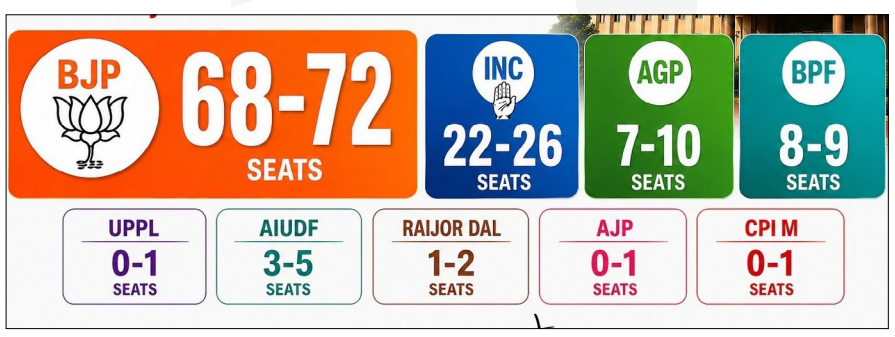


Tamil Nadu: DMK Alliance Set for Second Straight Term

The DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance is poised for a comfortable return, projected to win 125–145 seats, crossing the majority mark of 118 in the 234-member Assembly.

The AIADMK-led NDA may secure 65–80 seats, while actor Vijay's TVK emerges as a significant disruptor with 18–24 seats.

A split in anti-incumbency votes between AIADMK and TVK appears to have worked decisively in DMK's favour, despite a high voter turnout of over 84%.



Assam: BJP Set for Dominant Third Term

Assam is witnessing a decisive mandate in favour of the BJP-led alliance, with the party projected to win 68–72 seats in the 126-member Assembly.

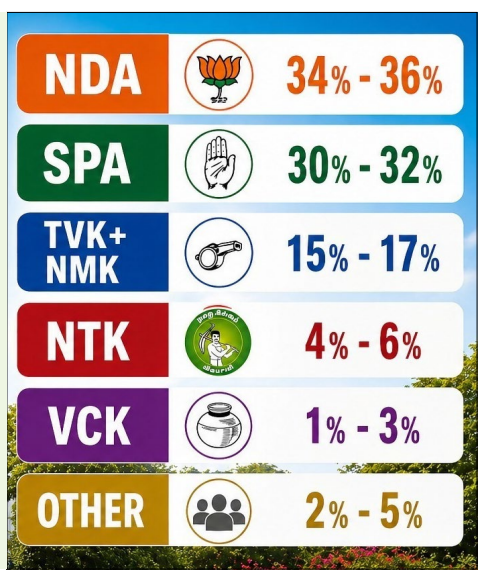
The Congress is expected to trail far behind with 22–26 seats, highlighting BJP's continued dominance driven by leadership appeal and governance perception.

Puducherry: NDA on Course for Government Formation

In Puducherry, the NDA is projected to form the government with 16–19 seats, ahead of the SPA's 10–12 seats.

The survey suggests a clear advantage for the NDA, with N. Rangasamy likely to return as Chief Minister.

Vote share estimates place NDA in the lead with 34–36%, followed by SPA at 30–32%.



Sarala Kaveri Extended: EMI Water Push

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | B'luru**

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has extended the 'Sarala Kaveri' scheme until further orders, aimed at providing Cauvery water connections through easy instalment (EMI) options, said BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar.

The decision follows the direction and commitment of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar to ensure access to clean and safe Cauvery water for every citizen of Bengaluru, he said while chairing a review meeting with officials at the BWSSB head office.

The scheme, originally launched in May 2025, has received an "unprecedented positive response" from the public, prompting its extension to support economically weaker sections, middle-class families, apartment associations, and non-domestic consumers who face difficulty paying prorata charges in a lump sum.

Under the scheme, owners of small sites up to 600 sq. ft. can obtain a Cauvery water connection by paying an initial amount of just ₹1,000, with the remaining balance payable in easy instalments.

For apartment complexes, the facility allows payment of 20% of the total Demand Notice amount upfront, with the remaining 80% payable within 12 months under an EMI plan. The scheme has also been extended to commercial and non-domestic consumers, enabling wider access to Cauvery water connections across the city.

Dr. Manohar stated that the initiative is part of BWSSB's broader commitment to citizen-friendly water management and equitable distribution.

He urged the public to make maximum use of the scheme, highlighting it as a major financial relief measure for households and institutions struggling with upfront connection costs.

BWSSB officials said the extension will further strengthen water supply coverage in Bengaluru as part of ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable and safe drinking water access across the city.

Complaint Over Alleged Religious Remarks

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A complaint has been filed with the cyber crime division alleging that a private educational institution in Thanisandra, Bengaluru, violated government orders and made provocative religious remarks during lectures. The complainant has sought action over alleged objectionable content and claims of anti-religious statements circulated on social media. Authorities had earlier issued directions restricting activities at the institution following similar complaints.

A complaint has been filed with the cyber crime division seeking action against alleged religiously provocative content and violation of government orders at a private educational institution in Thanisandra, Bengaluru.

The complaint was lodged by N. Revanna, vice president of the Karnataka AHINDA Organisational Forum and father of a student studying in the institution, before the Mysuru Cyber Crime Division. He has demanded an investigation into alleged anti-Hindu remarks reportedly available on YouTube and urged immediate action against those responsible.

According to the complaint, certain religious instructors at the Jamiya Muhammadiya Mansoor Educational Institution are alleged to have made objectionable statements during lectures, including claims about the origins of Hindu society and derogatory remarks about Hindu beliefs and deities. The complaint further alleges that such statements were intended to provoke religious sentiments and create disharmony among students.

The complainant stated that instead of imparting ethical education, the institution is allegedly engaging in activities that hurt religious sentiments and spread misinformation. He has called for strict action against those involved.

Earlier, a separate complaint was reportedly filed at Kothanur Police Station by Abdul Rahim regarding alleged religiously sensitive activities at the institution.

Following this, the Deputy Director of School Education, Bengaluru South District, had issued official directions restraining any activities on the premises.

The complainant has also alleged violation of government orders and demanded strict legal action against those responsible for continuing such activities despite official instructions.

Vikrama Vahini English Daily, #204, Forest Layout, Jnanabharathi, Bangalore-95
Printed by B.N. Murali Prasad, Published by Swarna Latha B.N., and Printed at Swarna Graphics, Forest Layout, Jnanabharathi, Bangalore -560059 and Published at Bangalore, Editor: B.N. Murali Prasad., Volume:9, Issue : 49,