



VIKRAMA VAHINI

NATIONAL BUTTERMILK BISCUIT DAY

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Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt meets Formula One driver Carlos Sainz Jr. during the opening day of the Cannes Film Festival 2026 in France, a moment that quickly went viral on social media as fans celebrated the unexpected Bollywood-F1 crossover.

Star batter Virat Kohli created history during the IPL 2026 clash between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Kolkata Knight Riders by becoming the player with the highest number of appearances in IPL history.



INSIDE

Good morning

Life will never provide Warranties & Guarantees
It can only provide Possibilities & Opportunities to convert them into Success.

BRIEFS

ATS Raids Over Pakistan-Based Gang Link

Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai
The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Wednesday carried out around 40 raids across multiple cities in the state as part of a major crackdown on individuals allegedly linked to Pakistan-based gangster Shalvaz Bhatti and the Dogar gang.

Raids were conducted in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik, Jalgaon, Akola, Nanded, Nalaspada, and Mira Road, targeting suspects reportedly in contact with foreign-based criminal networks.

According to ATS officials, the operation aims to identify and dismantle networks allegedly using social media to recruit and radicalise youth by offering financial incentives for logistical support and violent activities.

Bay Low Pressure Signals Early Monsoon

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai
The low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal has intensified into a well-marked system, creating favourable conditions for the onset of the Southwest Monsoon around May 16, according to the Meteorological Department.

Officials said rainfall was recorded at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, while most areas of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal experienced dry weather.

Maximum temperatures also dropped by 2-3°C in some parts of Tamil Nadu. The weather office noted that conditions are becoming favourable for the advance of the monsoon over the south Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea and Andaman & Nicobar Islands around May 16, which is significantly earlier than the normal onset period of end May or early June.

Congress to Name Kerala CM on Thursday

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Congress party will announce its choice for the next Chief Minister of Kerala on Thursday after days of suspense, intense lobbying, and marathon discussions within the party.

The decision was taken following a nearly 40-minute meeting between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge at Kharge's residence. Party General Secretary Jairam Ramesh confirmed that the announcement will be made on Thursday.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) secured a two-thirds majority in the Kerala Assembly elections, the results of which were declared on May 4.

5 Held in NEET Leak Probe

NATIONWIDE PROTESTS OVER PAPER LEAK SCANDALS

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested five persons in connection with the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case and launched raids across multiple cities as part of its nationwide probe into the alleged examination malpractice.

Arrests made in multiple cities
According to officials, three accused were arrested from Jaipur, one from Gurugram and another from Nashik. Several other suspects are currently being questioned, and further arrests are likely.

One of the accused, identified as 30-year-old Shubham Khairnar from Nashik, is being brought to Delhi after a local court granted transit remand to the CBI.

Digital devices seized during raids
The agency conducted searches at



A protester scales the barricade as Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) members stage a protest against the National Testing Agency (NTA) in New Delhi.

several locations after formally taking over the investigation. Officials said multiple mobile phones, laptops and electronic gadgets were seized and sent for forensic examination to trace communication channels allegedly used

to circulate the leaked question paper.

The CBI is also coordinating with Rajasthan Police's Special Operations Group (SOG), which had earlier carried out a preliminary investigation into the case.

CBI team visits NTA headquarters

A CBI team on Wednesday visited the headquarters of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and collected documents related to the NEET-UG examination. Officials associated with conducting the exam were also questioned.

The NEET-UG 2026 examination, scheduled on May 3 across 51 cities in India and 14 overseas centres, was later cancelled following allegations of a paper leak. Nearly 23 lakh students had registered for the examination.

Leak allegations under investigation

According to the NTA, reports of malpractice surfaced on May 7 and were

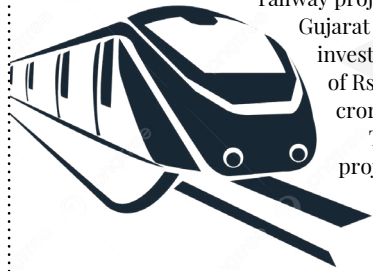
immediately shared with central agencies. Rajasthan Police's SOG had earlier claimed that a "guess paper" circulated before the exam allegedly matched around 120 questions that appeared in the actual test.

The alleged leak and subsequent cancellation of the examination have triggered widespread concern among students and parents across the country, with many demanding strict action against those involved and greater transparency in the conduct of national-level entrance tests.

Officials said the CBI is now examining financial transactions, call records and digital communication patterns of the accused to identify the larger network behind the alleged paper leak and determine whether organised groups were involved in manipulating the examination process.

Cabinet Clears ₹20,667 Cr Gujarat Rail Project

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Ahmedabad (Sarkhej)-Dholera semi-high-speed double-line railway project in Gujarat with an investment of Rs 20,667 crore.



The project aims to

improve connectivity between Ahmedabad, Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), the upcoming Dholera Airport and the Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex.

The proposed rail corridor will reduce travel time and enable same-day return travel between Ahmedabad and Dholera.

According to the government, the 134-km railway project will enhance connectivity for around 284 villages with a population of nearly five lakh people.

The project is also expected to boost employment opportunities and regional development. **PG2**

Gold, Silver Duty Hiked



Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Centre has increased import tariffs on gold and silver to 15% from 6%, aiming to curb overseas purchases and reduce pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves. The revised duty structure includes a 10% basic customs duty and a 5% Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC). **PG2**

VIJAY WINS TRUST VOTE WITH 144 MLAS

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay on Wednesday won the trust vote in the State Assembly with the support of 144 legislators, successfully crossing the majority mark in his first major test after assuming office.

Vijay's party, TVK, had emerged as the single-largest party in the 2026 Assembly elections with 108 seats, ending the decades-long dominance of the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu politics.

The confidence motion was passed after the DMK staged a walkout during voting, while sections of the AIADMK abstained. A total of 22 AIADMK legislators voted against the motion. **PG2**



Alliance support boosts TVK

To secure a majority, TVK formed a post-poll alliance with Congress and smaller parties, including CPI, CPI(M), VCK and IUML, taking the coalition strength beyond the required majority mark.

Vijay also held discussions with alliance leaders and opposition factions ahead of the floor test to consolidate support. **PG2**

Shivakumar CM Poster Sparks Buzz

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
A large poster projecting Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar as the next Chief Minister has been displayed outside the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) office in Bengaluru, intensifying speculation over leadership dynamics within the ruling Congress party.

Leadership speculation resurfaces
The development comes amid renewed discussions within the party after Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi indicated that the Congress high command would soon focus on Karnataka after completing organisational matters in Kerala. This has revived talk of a possible cabinet reshuffle and internal



power balance. **Poster seen as symbolic political messaging**

The prominently displayed poster has been interpreted in political circles as projecting Shivakumar as a potential Chief Minister face, although there has been no official endorsement from the party leadership.

Its placement outside the KPCC office, the party's key organisational hub, has added to its symbolic significance.

No official attribution, but strong signal

Reports suggest the poster may have been put up by supporters, as there is no official party communication linked to it. However, it has triggered

internal discussions within Congress circles and attracted attention from party workers and visitors.

Siddaramaiah-Shivakumar equation under focus

The poster has also reignited speculation over the ongoing leadership equation between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, which continues to shape internal political narratives since the Congress came to power in 2023.

Party remains silent

Congress leaders have not issued any formal response to the development. Meanwhile, the poster continues to draw attention at the KPCC premises, reflecting ongoing leadership buzz within the state unit.

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Editorial

Frugality in Crisis

The escalating tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran have once again reminded the world that wars are never confined to battlefields alone. Even without a full-scale world war, the ongoing Middle East conflict has already begun reshaping global economic realities, especially in the energy sector. History shows that every major conflict leaves behind hard-earned lessons. The Second World War pushed nations towards industrialisation to overcome poverty, unemployment and hunger. Likewise, the present geopolitical crisis is delivering a new lesson to humanity — the importance of disciplined consumption and economic prudence. With crude oil prices rising sharply due to uncertainty in the oil-rich Middle East, countries heavily dependent on imports are facing severe financial pressure.

For a nation like India, which imports a substantial portion of its crude oil requirement, the impact can be immediate and far-reaching. Rising fuel prices affect transportation, manufacturing, agriculture and household budgets alike. Since oil purchases require massive foreign exchange reserves, economic caution becomes unavoidable during such uncertain times. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has therefore appealed to citizens to adopt temporary austerity measures, including limiting unnecessary foreign travel, avoiding excessive gold purchases and increasingly depending on public transportation. These suggestions are not merely symbolic; they are aimed at protecting the country's economic stability at a time when global markets remain volatile and unpredictable.

Predictably, opposition parties have criticised the Prime Minister's appeal, but such reactions appear politically motivated rather than practical. The conflict in the Middle East is beyond India's control, and any government in power would have faced similar challenges under such global circumstances. More importantly, the call for restraint has not been imposed only on ordinary citizens. The Prime Minister himself has reportedly initiated expenditure-control measures within the government machinery, including reductions in the use of official and security vehicles. Such steps indicate that the message of "frugality" is intended as a collective national responsibility rather than a one-sided burden. In difficult global times, responsible consumption, financial discipline and national cooperation become essential safeguards for economic resilience.

-Editor

GBA POLLS AS PER COURT ORDER: DCM

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said that elections to the five corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will be conducted as per court directions.



Speaking to reporters at the GBA office, he said the government would follow legal instructions regarding the timing and conduct of the elections.

Responding to questions on GBA revenue expectations, Shivakumar said it was too early to comment on figures. "We are not focusing on revenue right now. Our priority is to protect people who are

affected by price rise. In these difficult times, when citizens are being advised to cut expenses, avoid gold purchases, reduce fuel consumption and foreign travel, conditions should improve for the public," he said.

Commenting on the NEET question paper leak controversy, the Deputy Chief Minister termed it a "serious insult to the nation" and demanded accountability from Union Ministers and MPs. "If such an incident had occurred in our state, there would have been severe criticism. Students and parents who worked hard and had high expectations are deeply affected," he said.

Karnataka Cong Reshuffle Buzz Returns

► Vikrama Vahini | Belagavi Speculation over a possible cabinet reshuffle and leadership clarity in Karnataka Congress has resurfaced after PWD Minister Jarkiholi indicated that the party high command would take up state-related issues after completing organisational matters in Kerala.



Jarkiholi said issues related to power-sharing, cabinet restructuring and coordination within the state government require clear direction from the party leadership, reviving internal discussions on governance balance in Karnataka.

The remarks have reignited focus on the leadership equation between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, a key political narrative since the Congress came to power in 2023.

While the party officially maintains that there is no immediate change in leadership, continued discussions over portfolio distribution and pending ministerial representation have kept speculation alive about a possible reshuffle once the high command turns its attention to Karnataka.

Vijay Wins Trust Vote With 144 MLAs

► From PGI AIADMK split surfaces Political tension intensified after divisions surfaced within the AIADMK camp. Though the party leadership had issued a whip directing MLAs to oppose the motion, a section of rebel legislators reportedly backed the TVK government. The rebels argued that supporting Vijay was necessary to uphold the legacy of former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa.

Ahead of the trust vote, the Madras High Court barred TVK MLA R Seenivasa Sethupathy from participating due to an election dispute, slightly reducing the ruling alliance's effective strength.

Karnataka Pushes State NEET Exams

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru Karnataka's political leadership on Wednesday stepped up its criticism of the Union government over the cancellation of NEET UG-2026 following alleged question paper leaks and irregularities, demanding greater autonomy for states in conducting entrance examinations.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar termed the move a "huge disgrace," saying it had damaged student confidence and disrupted years of preparation, while also questioning the silence of BJP leaders on the issue.

State ministers including MC Sudhakar, S Madhu Bangarappa and Sharanaprakash R Patil also criticised the national-level examination system, arguing that states were better positioned to conduct entrance tests and calling for reforms, transparency, and a fresh examination process.

GOVT UNVEILS 400-POINT SC ROSTER

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru The Karnataka government has released a 400-point roster list for Scheduled Caste internal reservation following the recent Cabinet decision on SC quota classification. Under the revised structure, the government has allocated 5.25 per cent reservation each for Category 'A' and 'B', and 4.5 per cent for Category 'C'. The Category 'C' quota also includes nomadic communities, for whom 20 per cent representation within the category has been earmarked. The government has identified specific roster points for nomadic communities and initiated recruitment for 56,432 posts under the new system.

According to the order, if candidates from a particular SC sub-category are unavailable during recruitment, the posts will be treated as "SC General" to ensure vacancies do not remain unfilled. The roster details have been published in two annexures, including identification of internal reservation points applicable for large-scale recruitment. Meanwhile, Karnataka Rajya Yuva Samooha welcomed the move and termed it a historic step towards social justice. Organisation president Dr S. Sangamesh urged the government to implement the reservation system transparently and ensure no community faces injustice during recruitment.

Ravi Targets Cong Over 'Muslim Appeasement'

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru Karnataka BJP leader and Opposition Chief Whip in the Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government over its decision to withdraw the 2022 order banning hijab in educational institutions.



In a statement, Ravi Kumar alleged that the Siddaramaiah government was engaging in "Muslim appeasement" and warned that the Congress could face political consequences similar to those faced by the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal.

He pointed out that the Karnataka High Court had earlier upheld the 2022 government order banning hijab in educational

institutions, citing the need for uniform dress codes in schools and colleges. Ravi Kumar criticised the state government for reversing the earlier decision despite the court verdict, calling the move politically motivated.

According to him, the Congress government was attempting to regain support from sections of the Muslim community ahead of the Davanagere by-election. He alleged that the ruling party had become "rattled" after facing discontent among minority voters.

The BJP leader further claimed that public dissatisfaction with the Congress government was increasing and predicted a major political shift in Karnataka in the coming years.

Gold, Silver Duty Hiked

► From PGI taking the total import tax on the precious metals to 15%. The move comes amid global bullion price volatility and rising geopolitical tensions, with the government also reiterating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to citizens to reduce gold purchases to help conserve foreign exchange reserves.

India imports nearly all of its gold requirements, and the higher duty is expected to impact domestic jewellery prices, investment demand, and overall consumption. Officials said the step could also help narrow the trade deficit and support the rupee.

Following the announcement, gold and silver futures witnessed a sharp rally on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Silver futures for July 2026 delivery surged by ₹16,743 to ₹2,95,805 per kg, while gold futures for July 2026 delivery rose by ₹9,206 to ₹1,62,648 per 10 grams. Jewellery prices likely to rise further across domestic markets.

214 Bullets Found Under Village Bridge



► Vikrama Vahini | Bangarapete Panic gripped residents after a large quantity of ammunition was found beneath a bridge near Dasaramalla village under Kamasamudra police station limits in Bangarapete taluk on Tuesday evening.

According to police, villagers noticed metallic objects under a canal bridge near the Tamil Nadu border and alerted local authorities. Police later recovered three ammunition belts used for SLR or machine guns containing 214 bullets, including 135 live rounds and several spent or misfired bullets. Forensic and internal security teams inspected the spot. Preliminary investigation revealed that the bullets were manufactured in Maharashtra in 1969 and were likely dumped there several years ago. Officials suspect the ammunition surfaced now as the canal had dried up completely.

NEWS

ASHOK ON ST QUOTA, BIDADI LAND ROW

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru Opposition Leader R. Ashok on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government, accusing it of "betraying" the Scheduled Tribes (ST) community by reducing their reservation and alleging large-scale land acquisition plans in Bidadi.

Addressing a press conference, Ashok claimed that the Congress government under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had reduced ST reservation back to 3%, calling it an injustice to the community. He alleged that during the previous BJP government led by Basavaraj Bommai, SC and ST reservations were increased based on population, and the current changes amounted to a rollback of those benefits.

He accused the Congress of implementing "internal reservation" in a manner that has harmed Dalit and tribal communities and warned of a statewide people's movement against the decision. "The ST community has been the worst affected. Ashok also criticized Congress leaders for

not raising objections within the government, adding that the BJP would support protests and hold consultations with community leaders before launching an agitation.

Shifting focus to land issues, he alleged that the state government was planning to develop housing projects on around 9,600 acres of land in Bidadi and Kanchagana Halli, calling it an attempt to "loot government land." He claimed that a significant portion of the land included fertile agricultural areas and warned it could lead to food security concerns and increased civic burden on Bengaluru.

He further alleged irregularities in civic planning and waste management costs under the Greater Bengaluru authority, questioning the government's financial decisions.

Criticizing the Congress leadership, Ashok also referred to national-level political issues, including NEET exam irregularities, BBMP elections, and governance practices, accusing the government of mismanagement and inconsistent policies.

CET Janivara Case: Staff Get Bail

► Vikrama Vahini | B'loru A city court in Bengaluru has granted bail to three private college staff members arrested in connection with the CET examination "janivara removal" incident, noting that prolonged custody in such cases could create fear among examination authorities and affect the conduct of public exams. The LXII Additional City Civil and Sessions Court granted bail to the accused,

who were in judicial custody for over 15 days after a complaint that a student was asked to remove his sacred thread before entering the exam hall at a Koramangala centre on April 23.

The court observed that the case did not involve serious violence or misconduct and criticised the manner of arrest and remand procedures, citing established legal principles, including the Armesh Kumar judgment. It

also noted that alternative measures to custody were not adequately considered.

The ruling has provided relief to the accused while raising wider questions on examination protocols and sensitivity in handling cultural practices during competitive examinations.

The court also stressed the need for greater sensitivity and clarity in examination procedures involving religious and cultural practices.

Foxconn Confirms Cyberattack Amid Data Theft Claims

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi Apple supplier Foxconn has confirmed a cyberattack on several of its North American facilities after a ransomware group claimed it had stolen large volumes of sensitive data, including alleged files linked to Apple and other major global technology companies.



The hacker group, identified as Nitrogen, reportedly claimed to have accessed over 8TB of data and more than 11 million files, including confidential documents allegedly related to Apple, Nvidia, Intel, Google and Dell. Foxconn, however, has not verified the authenticity of the claimed data breach.

have activated emergency response measures and that affected operations are gradually being restored.

It added that production and delivery processes have been stabilised, though investigations are still ongoing.

The company said its cybersecurity teams

According to reports, the ransomware

DELHI HC FLAGS OBSCENE APPS, ORDERS ACTION

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi The Delhi High Court has directed Google and Apple to take strict action against mobile applications allegedly hosting obscene, pornographic and unlawful content on their app stores, and to ensure compliance with IT Rules, 2021.



Hearing a Public Interest Litigation, a Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia observed that app store intermediaries have a "vital responsibility" to exercise due diligence even before allowing applications to be uploaded on their platforms.

The Court noted allegations that certain apps on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store were linked to activities such as prostitution, trafficking, substance abuse and other organised crimes. It stressed that such platforms cannot act only after receiving complaints but must proactively monitor content.

The Bench directed Google, Apple and the

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) to ensure strict implementation of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The Court further ordered the submission of an action taken report by the next hearing scheduled in July.

The PIL, filed by petitioner Rubika Thapa, alleged that some apps are generating substantial revenue through illegal activities.

The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, supported the need for strict regulatory action, stating that the menace must be curbed effectively.

SCIENCE & Technology

Bermuda Rock Layer Solves Mystery

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi Scientists have discovered a massive 20-km-thick buoyant rock layer beneath Bermuda, solving a long-standing geological mystery behind the island's elevated position despite no active volcanic activity for millions of years.

Using seismic analysis, researchers identified an unusually thick underplated mantle layer beneath the island that provides enough buoyancy to support Bermuda's height above the Atlantic seafloor.

The findings challenge earlier theories linking such uplift only to active mantle plumes.

The study, published in Geophysical Research Letters, suggests that ancient volcanic processes continue to shape Bermuda's geology even after volcanic activity ceased around 30–35 million years ago.

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SANATANA ROW: DURGA STALIN AT KOLLUR TEMPLE

Vikrama Vahini | Kollur

A set of photos showing Durga Stalin, wife of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, visiting the renowned Kollur Mookambika Temple in Udupi district has gone viral on social media, sparking renewed political discussion.

According to available information, Durga Stalin visited the temple on March 8, where she took part in religious rituals and offered prayers to Goddess Mookambika.

Temple authorities and devotees reportedly extended a warm welcome to her during the visit. She is said to have spent some time within the temple premises after performing special pujas and also interacted briefly with temple officials.

Following the visit, security arrangements were reportedly tightened in and around the temple premises to ensure smooth movement of devotees. However, routine worship



Stalin, who had earlier sparked controversy with statements calling for the eradication of "Sanatana Dharma." His comments had triggered strong reactions from political and religious groups across the country.

While political discussions continue online, Durga Stalin's temple visit is being viewed independently by many as a routine religious and cultural engagement, similar to visits made by several political families and public figures to prominent spiritual centres across South India. The Kollur Mookambika Temple, one of Karnataka's most significant spiritual destinations, attracts thousands of devotees from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and other parts of the country every year. It is a prominent pilgrimage site, especially popular among devotees from Tamil Nadu. Several political leaders, film personalities, and public figures regularly visit the shrine to seek blessings of the goddess.

and darshan for the public were not significantly disrupted, sources said.

The photos from the visit have resurfaced recently and are now widely circulating on social media, drawing attention in the context of ongoing political debates surrounding comments made by Tamil Nadu leaders on Sanatana Dharma.

The renewed attention comes in the backdrop of remarks made by Tamil Nadu Minister Udhayanidhi

Naidu Backs PM's Austerity Appeal

Vikrama Vahini | Vijayawada

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday urged citizens to follow austerity measures suggested by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stressing the need for collective responsibility amid global uncertainties.

Addressing a programme, Naidu said rising geopolitical tensions require citizens to protect the country's economic interests by reducing unnecessary expenditure. He said the "My Nation-My Responsibility" spirit should be adopted by all.

The Chief Minister called for reduced consumption of petrol and diesel, encouragement of work-from-home practices, and curbs on wasteful spending, including large vehicle convoys and excess security deployments.

He also urged people to limit foreign travel and gold purchases, suggesting that tourism within Andhra Pradesh be promoted instead of overseas trips. An action plan to implement austerity measures will be announced soon.

Vijay Withdraws Astrologer Appointment Amid Row

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay on Wednesday revoked the appointment of his close aide and astrologer Rickey Radhan Pandit Vetrivel as Officer on Special Duty (Political), following strong criticism from opposition parties. An official government circular confirmed the withdrawal of the appointment issued a day earlier.

The order stated that the earlier notification appointing Vetrivel as OSD (Political) to the Chief Minister has been formally cancelled.

The decision came after opposition parties objected to the appointment, arguing that personal beliefs should not influence administrative or governance decisions. The controversy escalated soon after the initial government order was issued.

As per the earlier notification,



Vetrivel was expected to assist the Chief Minister in political coordination and advisory roles within the Chief Minister's Office.

He is known in political circles as an astrologer and close associate of Vijay, and has also been involved in party communication activities.

Following the formation of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), Vetrivel had been appointed as one of its spokespersons and has frequently appeared in media debates defending the party.

Political observers describe him as part of the Chief Minister's inner circle, noting his continued involvement in both political and organisational matters.

Smart Surveillance at KSR Station

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

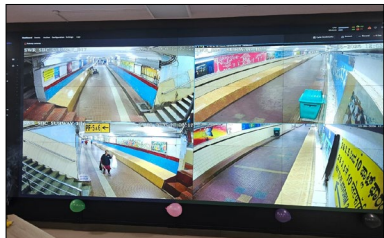
A state-of-the-art Video Surveillance System (VSS) has been commissioned at KSR Bengaluru City Railway Station, marking a significant upgrade in railway security infrastructure and passenger safety through advanced monitoring technology.

The system provides comprehensive surveillance coverage across key areas of the station, including entrances and exits, platforms, concourses, booking and reservation offices, waiting halls, subways, and foot overbridges, enabling round-the-clock monitoring of passenger movement and activities.

As part of the project, 168 high-definition IP-based CCTV cameras compliant with RDSO specifications have been installed to ensure high-quality and continuous surveillance across the premises.

The system is integrated with a Video Management System (VMS) and Video Analytics (VA) capabilities, enabling intelligent monitoring, automatic detection of predefined security alerts, and faster response to abnormal activities.

In a major security enhancement, Facial Recognition Software (FRS) has also been integrated with the system. A database of 1,086 criminal records has been uploaded to support identification and monitoring of suspicious



individuals.

A 20 ft x 9 ft video wall has been set up at the monitoring centre for real-time surveillance by Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel, allowing centralized and efficient oversight of station operations.

Authorities said the entire system has undergone a cybersecurity audit by STQC Bengaluru and has received a Zero Vulnerability certification, ensuring compliance with national cybersecurity standards. All network components have also been cleared through the Telecom Trusted Portal in line with Government of India guidelines.

Officials said the commissioning of the upgraded surveillance system represents a major step towards modern, intelligent, and safer railway operations at one of the country's busiest stations. The system is expected to significantly enhance real-time threat detection, improve crowd management, and ensure faster emergency response at the station.

RUSSIAN SHIP NUCLEAR CARGO ROW REPORT

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

A Russian cargo vessel that sank off the coast of Spain last year may have been secretly transporting nuclear reactor components to North Korea, according to a CNN investigation report that has raised concerns over covert military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang.

The ship, identified as MV Ursa Major, reportedly sank in the Mediterranean Sea in December 2024 following a series of unexplained explosions onboard.

A Russian cargo ship that sank off Spain in 2024 may have been secretly carrying nuclear reactor components to North Korea, according to a CNN investigation. The report has raised fresh concerns over covert military and nuclear cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang amid growing global tensions.

The vessel had departed from St. Petersburg and was officially en route to Vladivostok, but investigators suspect its actual destination may have been North Korea.

According to the report, distress signals were sent after multiple

explosions were heard while the ship was near Spain's southeastern coast. Spanish rescue teams responded to the incident, while Russian military vessels later took control of the situation.

The investigation claims the ship may have been carrying components

related to nuclear submarine reactors. Spanish authorities are said to have identified reactor housings similar to Soviet-era submarine designs. The ship's captain reportedly acknowledged that the cargo included components for two nuclear reactors, though it remains unclear whether nuclear fuel was onboard.

The report further states that specialized US surveillance aircraft were deployed over the wreck site after the sinking.

Bhoo Guarantee Bonanza for Bengaluru

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday announced a series of major citizen-centric initiatives for Bengaluru under the government's new "Bhoo Guarantee" programme aimed at simplifying property documentation and urban development.

Addressing a press conference at the Greater Bengaluru Authority headquarters, Shivakumar said the "Nanna Khata, Nanna Hakku" campaign would begin from May 16 and run every Saturday for three months across 50 locations in the city to assist citizens with e-Khata services.



As part of the initiative, owners converting B-Khata properties to A-Khata will get a 60% concession in fees if payments are made within 100 days. The government also increased the building violation exemption limit from 5% to 15%, allowing eligible property owners to obtain Occupancy Certificates after paying penalties.

Shivakumar further said 18,000 sites would be allotted to landowners under the Shivaram Karanth Layout project from May 15. He also unveiled the "Green Bengaluru" initiative under which 15 lakh saplings will be planted across the city on June 27.

In addition, the BDA will invite applications for 1,900 newly built apartments in Whitefield from May 15.

ENTERTAINMENT

'Dhurandhar 2' Nears ₹1,800 Cr Mark

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Several films across genres are continuing their successful run at the box office, with Dhurandhar: The Revenge, Raja Shivaji and Bhoot Bangla emerging as major crowd-pullers in theatres.

'Dhurandhar 2' closes in on Rs 1,800 crore

Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar: The Revenge continues to dominate the global box office nearly two months after release. According to trade tracker Sacnilk, the film earned Rs 40 lakh on its 57th day and is now nearing the Rs 1,800 crore worldwide collection mark.

The film has reportedly collected Rs 1,143 crore net in India across all languages, while the total India gross stands at Rs 1,368.98 crore. Overseas collections are estimated at Rs 426.62 crore, taking the worldwide total to around Rs 1,795 crore. Directed by Aditya Dhar, the spy-thriller has emerged as one of the biggest commercial successes of the year.

'Raja Shivaji' scripts Marathi cinema milestone

Riteish Deshmukh's historical drama Raja Shivaji is also witnessing a strong theatrical run. The film has crossed the Rs 20 crore

mark and is steadily moving towards becoming one of the highest-grossing Marathi films of all time.

The film has drawn praise for its grand scale and portrayal of the life and legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

'Bhoot Bangla' nears Rs 250 crore worldwide

Akshay Kumar's horror-comedy Bhoot Bangla, directed by Priyadarshan, continues to attract audiences. The film collected Rs 1.60 crore on day 26 and has so far earned Rs 161.70 crore net in India.

Its India gross collection stands at Rs 191.78 crore, while worldwide earnings have reached nearly Rs 245 crore.

Hollywood films also perform strongly

Among international releases, Devil Wears Prada 2 has emerged as a major success globally. Starring Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway, the film has grossed around USD 433 million worldwide within 12 days of release, surpassing the lifetime collection of the original 2006 film.

Meanwhile, Mortal Kombat II also opened strongly with an estimated USD 63 million worldwide collection during its opening weekend.

'Avatar: Fire and Ash' OTT Release on June 24

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

James Cameron's sci-fi epic Avatar: Fire and Ash is set for its OTT release on June 24, six months after its successful theatrical run worldwide.

The film will begin streaming on JioHotstar, giving audiences another opportunity to experience the visually spectacular third installment in the globally acclaimed Avatar franchise.

The announcement was made through the film's official social media handle, which confirmed the digital premiere with a promotional poster.

Third chapter in the Avatar saga

Released in theatres on December 19, 2025, Avatar: Fire and Ash continued the story of Jake Sully, Neytiri and their family on Pandora.

The film explores the aftermath of personal loss and introduces a new conflict involving the aggressive "Ash People" clan led by Varang.

The story focuses on the growing tensions between different Na'vi tribes and the renewed threat posed by the human RDA forces. As the conflict intensifies, Jake Sully struggles to protect his family while Pandora moves closer to a larger war.

Star-studded cast returns

The film features Sam Worthington as Jake Sully and Zoe Saldana as Neytiri in lead roles. Sigourney Weaver, Stephen Lang, Kate Winslet, Cliff Curtis and Britain Dalton also reprise their roles from previous films.

New additions include Oona Chaplin as Varang, leader of the Ash People, along with performances from Jack Champion, Trinity Jo-Li Bliss, Bailey Bass, Filip Geljo, David Thewlis and Eddie Falco.

Massive global box office success

Avatar: Fire and Ash emerged as one of the biggest box office successes of 2025, collecting nearly USD 1.49 billion worldwide. The film became the third highest-grossing film of the year and entered the list of the highest-grossing films of all time.



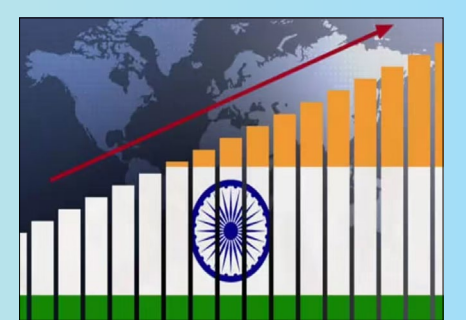
The Avatar franchise remains one of the most successful in cinema history. The original Avatar released in 2009 collected around USD 2.9 billion globally, while its sequel Avatar: The Way of Water earned over USD 2.3 billion after its 2022 release.

The OTT release is expected to attract massive viewership from fans who missed the theatrical experience as well as loyal followers of the franchise eager to revisit Pandora's immersive world and cutting-edge visual effects.

Industry analysts believe the digital release could further boost the global popularity of the Avatar series, especially among younger streaming audiences, while strengthening JioHotstar's premium international content lineup.

BUSINESS

India Growth Forecast Raised to 6.7%



Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Global financial services firm Morgan Stanley has revised India's economic growth forecast upward to 6.7% for FY27, up from its earlier estimate of 6.2%, despite ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

The report also revised its crude oil price outlook downward to \$87.5 per barrel for FY27, compared to earlier projections of \$95 per barrel, stating that global oil prices are expected to peak by June 2026 before gradually stabilising.

According to the note authored by Morgan Stanley economists, India's GDP growth is expected to remain resilient at 6.7% in FY27 and rise to 7% in FY28, with a temporary slowdown to around 6.5% during mid-2026 due to elevated commodity prices and supply chain pressures.

The report said external demand may remain uneven, depending on geopolitical developments and progress in global trade agreements, including India-US discussions.

It also warned that prolonged tensions could impact exports through higher freight costs and weaker global demand.

Meanwhile, Moody's Ratings has lowered India's growth forecast for 2026 to 6%, citing higher energy costs, weaker private consumption, and slower industrial activity. It estimated a possible growth loss of up to 0.8 percentage points due to global uncertainties. Moody's added that rising fuel and fertilizer prices could affect government finances, though higher agricultural export prices may offer partial support. It noted that India's heavy reliance on coal for electricity generation makes it sensitive to global energy price fluctuations.



SPORTS

Sindhu, Srikanth Enter Last 16

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Indian badminton stars PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the round of 16 at the Thailand Open 2026 after registering comfortable wins in their opening matches on Wednesday, while young shuttler Ayush Shetty suffered an early exit.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu defeated Chinese Taipei's Tung Ciou-Tong 21-9, 21-12 in straight games, completing the match in just 33 minutes. The sixth seed dominated throughout and will next face Denmark's Amalie Schulz in the round of 16.

Former world No.1 Kidambi Srikanth also impressed, defeating Singapore's eighth seed Loh Kean Yew 21-14, 21-15 in 30 minutes. Srikanth will next take on Chinese Taipei's Su Li Yang in the pre-quarterfinals.

In contrast, Ayush Shetty bowed out in the opening round after losing 21-13, 17-21, 21-4 to Japan's sixth seed Kodai Naraoka despite a fighting second game.

In other results, India's Unnati Hooda and Anmol Kharb exited the women's singles first round, while Lakshya Sen began his campaign with a 21-16, 21-17 win over Indonesia's Jason Teh.

IPL 2026: Kohli Scripts History Against KKR

► Vikrama Vahini | Raipur

Star batter Virat Kohli created history during the IPL 2026 clash between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Kolkata Knight Riders by becoming the player with the highest number of appearances in IPL history.

The landmark came during the 57th match of the season held at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium. The match, delayed due to rain, began at 8:45 pm after RCB captain Rajat Patidar won the toss and elected to bowl first.

The game marked Kohli's 279th IPL appearance, helping him surpass Rohit Sharma and MS Dhoni, who are tied with 278 matches each. Both players, however, have an opportunity to equal the record in their next appearances.

Kohli has been part of RCB since the inaugural IPL season in 2008 and also holds the record for playing the most matches for a single franchise in the tournament's history.

The batting icon remains the highest run-scorer in IPL history with over 9,000 runs, becoming the only player to achieve the milestone. No other batter has crossed the 8,000-run mark so far.

Kohli also leads the charts for the most centuries and half-centuries in IPL history, with eight centuries and 66 fifties to his name, underlining his remarkable consistency and dominance in the league over the years.

With this milestone, Virat Kohli has once again underlined his extraordinary longevity and unmatched consistency in the IPL. His ability to maintain peak fitness and performance across 18 seasons has set a benchmark for both current and upcoming cricketers.

Cricket experts and fans alike continue to regard him as one of the most influential figures in the league's history, with expectations remaining high for his performances in the matches ahead.

Mango Grove Funds School

► Vikrama Vahini | Srinivasapura

A government lower primary school at Avalakuppa village in Srinivasapura taluk has continued a unique tradition of supporting students through income generated from its mango grove. The school, which has classes up to the fifth standard, earned Rs. 1.55 lakh this year through the auction of mango crops grown on its 10-acre orchard.

The mango grove has a history spanning over six decades. According to Headmaster Shankar, the land along with mango saplings was donated to the school in 1965 by Chikkasiddappa, a resident of the village, through a registered gift deed. The donor had specified that the income from the mango harvest should be utilised exclusively for the welfare of schoolchildren.

For several years, the orchard



was nurtured by Narayanappa of the same village, who developed the plantation into a productive grove. At present, his son Mulavagilappa oversees the maintenance of the orchard and protection of the crop.

As stipulated in the gift deed, the mango crop is auctioned annually in an open and transparent manner in the

presence of education department officials, village elders and local residents. One-third of the auction amount is credited to the school fund, while the remaining share is paid to Mulavagilappa towards upkeep of the orchard and safeguarding the crop.

This year's auction, conducted on Monday, witnessed

participation from 11 bidders. Nayaz, a fruit trader from Srinivasapura, secured the rights over the crop with the highest bid of Rs. 1.55 lakh.

The school authorities utilise the proceeds to provide uniforms, shoes and other essentials to students besides organising educational excursions. Shankar said nearly Rs. 4 lakh is presently available in the joint bank account operated by the Headmaster and the SDMC president. However, the headmaster noted that this year's mango yield was significantly affected by the intense summer heat prevailing across the district.

The production is estimated to be only around 30 per cent of the normal yield, leading to a sharp decline in auction revenue compared to last year, when the crop had fetched over Rs. 5.20 lakh.

PM Hails Pokhran-II Resolve

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday recalled the 1998 Pokhran-II nuclear tests, saying they demonstrated India's unwavering resolve and sent a clear message to the world that the nation "cannot be bent under pressure."

Marking the anniversary of the tests in a post on social media platform X, the Prime Minister said India had faced intense international pressure following the operation but stood firm in its decision. He said the tests

reflected the country's strong determination and strategic autonomy.

Pokhran-II, also known as Operation Shakti, was conducted



on May 11 and May 13, 1998 at the Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan under the leadership of then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The series of underground nuclear tests established India as a declared nuclear weapons

state. The tests included both fission and thermonuclear devices and led to widespread global reactions,

including sanctions and diplomatic pressure from several countries. However, the government at the time maintained that the decision was necessary for national security.

Over the years, Pokhran-II has been regarded as a landmark moment in India's defence and strategic history, shaping its nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence and no-first-use policy. Prime Minister Modi has often referred to the tests in his speeches, highlighting them as a symbol of national strength, self-reliance, and strategic independence.

₹2,384 Cr GST Scam Busted, 2 Arrested

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Commercial Taxes Department has busted a ₹2,384 crore fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) fraud network in Bengaluru.

Officials said the accused created fake companies and issued bogus invoices without actual supply of goods or services to evade taxes.

Two key kingpins have been arrested following a joint operation by the Enforcement Wing and Intelligence Division.

Investigations are continuing, and authorities have warned of strict action against similar tax fraud networks.

CBSE Class 12 Result Out; 85.20% Pass

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday declared the Class 12 board examination results for 2026, recording an overall pass percentage of 85.20%.

Students can access their scorecards through the official websites — cbsereults.nic.in and results.cbse.nic.in — as well as through DigiLocker and the UMANG mobile application. To view results, students must enter their roll number, school number, and admit card ID.

Soon after the announcement, several students reported slow website access due to heavy traffic. Officials advised candidates to retry after some time in case of delays.

The CBSE Class 12 examinations were conducted between February and April 2026 across India and abroad for Science, Commerce, and Humanities streams.

Following the declaration of results, students can proceed with undergraduate admissions in universities and colleges, many of which are expected to begin their admission processes soon.

Rangasamy Sworn in as Puducherry CM Again

► Vikrama Vahini | Puducherry

AINRC founder N. Rangasamy was on Wednesday sworn in as the Chief Minister of Puducherry for the fifth time, marking the second consecutive term of the NDA government in the Union Territory.

Lt Governor N. Kailashanathan administered the oath of office and secrecy at a simple ceremony held at Raj Nivas. Along with Rangasamy, two MLAs—one each from AINRC and BJP—were also sworn in as Cabinet Ministers.

The ministers include BJP Legislature Party leader A. Namasivayam from Mannadipet and AINRC MLA Malladi Krishna Rao from Yanam region.

Senior BJP leaders, including party president Nitin Nabin and Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, along with NDA alliance partners AIADMK and IJK leaders, attended the ceremony.

The NDA secured 18 of the 30 Assembly seats in the recent elections, with AINRC winning 12 seats, BJP four, and AIADMK and IJK one each. The opposition INDIA bloc won six seats.

NIA EXTRADITES HIZBUL-LINKED SHERA FROM PORTUGAL

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

In a major breakthrough in the fight against narco-terrorism, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has extradited and arrested wanted Hizbul Mujahideen-linked operative Iqbal Singh alias Shera from Portugal.

Shera, absconding since 2020, was brought to India on Wednesday after completion of legal proceedings in Portugal. An NIA team took him into custody at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi.

According to the NIA, Shera was allegedly running a major narco-terror network in Punjab with links to Hizbul Mujahideen operatives based in Pakistan and Kashmir.



Linked to heroin smuggling network Investigators said Shera was involved in smuggling heroin from Pakistan into Punjab and distributing it through a local network. The proceeds from the narcotics trade were allegedly routed through hawala channels to finance terror activities linked to Hizbul

Mujahideen.

The case originated after Punjab Police arrested Hilal Ahmed Shergojri, an alleged overground worker of Hizbul Mujahideen, from whom Rs 29 lakh linked to drug trafficking was recovered.

NIA crackdown and Red Notice Subsequent NIA raids led to the seizure of another Rs 32 lakh from members of the Punjab-based network. Shera was later declared a wanted accused, and a non-bailable warrant was issued against him in October 2020. An Interpol Red Notice was also issued against him in 2021, leading to international efforts for his extradition.

Hijab Allowed, Saffron Shawls Banned

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government has issued a new order allowing students in schools and PU colleges to wear religious symbols such as hijab, janivara, rudrakshi, shivadara, turban and headscarves, while continuing the ban on saffron shawls.

School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa said the 2022 uniform restriction order has been withdrawn and revised guidelines have been issued under the Karnataka Education Act.

The order applies to government, aided and private institutions across the state.

The decision follows the recent CET controversy in Bengaluru where



a student was allegedly asked to remove his sacred thread before entering the exam hall.

The government clarified that no student should be denied entry to classrooms or exams for wearing permitted religious symbols. The revised rules will come into effect from the current academic year.

The move has triggered fresh political debate over dress code policies in educational institutions across Karnataka.

Nations Cut Fuel Use Amid Iran War

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

As the ongoing conflict involving Iran continues to disrupt global oil and gas supplies—particularly through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz—countries around the world are introducing emergency measures to curb fuel consumption and contain rising inflation.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), more than 60 countries have implemented nearly 200 policy measures aimed at reducing energy demand and mitigating the economic impact of supply disruptions.

Sharp increases in crude oil prices have triggered widespread concerns over fuel availability and cost stability. Several nations have introduced work-from-home advisories, reduced working days, fuel purchase limits, and export controls as part of broader energy-saving strategies. In some



regions, governments have also imposed travel restrictions and encouraged public transport usage to ease pressure on fuel consumption.

In South Asia, countries such as Pakistan and the Philippines have introduced four-day work weeks and partial remote working arrangements.

Pakistan has also temporarily closed educational institutions in certain regions due to rising fuel prices.

Bangladesh has imposed fuel purchase limits and strengthened

security at oil depots, while Nepal has introduced LPG rationing measures to manage shortages.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnam has reduced fuel taxes and curtailed some flights due to jet fuel shortages, while Thailand has withdrawn diesel subsidies following depletion of support funds. Major economies have also taken strategic steps to stabilise supplies. China has restricted exports of refined fuels and fertilisers, while Indonesia has halted LNG exports and expanded biodiesel blending.

In Europe, countries including Germany and Italy have delayed the shutdown of coal-fired power plants to secure alternative energy sources.

Experts warn that prolonged disruption in the Hormuz could further intensify global economic slowdown, forcing more countries to adopt strict energy conservation measures.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

TOP 10 REFRESHING INDIAN DRINKS

THAT KEEP YOUR BODY COOL IN SUMMER

Beat the heat naturally with these traditional Indian drinks. Stay cool, hydrated & healthy all summer long!

<p>1 AAM PANNA Made with raw mangoes, mint, roasted cumin, and black salt. It prevents dehydration, aids digestion & protects from heatstroke.</p>	<p>2 CHAAS (MASALA BUTTERMILK) Made with curd, water, cumin, mint & black salt. It improves digestion, boosts gut health & keeps the body cool and hydrated.</p>
<p>3 NIMBU PANI Fresh lemon juice with sugar, black salt & chilled water. Rich in vitamin C, it restores electrolytes & gives instant refreshment.</p>	<p>4 JALJEERA Made with cumin, mint, tamarind, lemon & black salt. It improves digestion, boosts appetite & cools the body instantly.</p>
<p>5 SATTU SHARBAT Made with roasted gram flour, lemon, cumin & black salt. It is protein-rich, keeps you full longer & prevents dehydration.</p>	<p>6 LASSI A creamy curd-based drink, sweet or salty. It cools the stomach, aids digestion & provides hydration and energy.</p>
<p>7 BAEL SHARBAT Made from wood apple pulp with water & jaggery. It cools the body, improves digestion & keeps you naturally hydrated.</p>	<p>8 KOKUM SHERBET Made with kokum fruit, sugar, cumin & chilled water. It reduces body heat, improves digestion & is perfect for hot summers.</p>
<p>9 SUGARCANE JUICE (GANNE KA RAS) Naturally sweet & rich in minerals. With lemon, mint & ginger, it restores energy & fights summer fatigue.</p>	<p>10 TENDER COCONUT WATER Rich in electrolytes like potassium & magnesium. It hydrates, supports digestion & naturally cools the body.</p>