



VIKRAMA VAHINI

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY DAY

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Fans express disappointment after morning shows of Suriya and Trisha-starrer 'Karuppu' were cancelled at the last minute despite special permission from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the revised dress code implemented in schools and colleges across the state is in line with the constitutional principle of equal respect for all religions, and accused opposition leaders of politicising the issue.

Good morning

Appreciate life as it happens. Moments will soon pass, and you will wish you had treasured them more.

BRIEFS

India Backs Palestine Two-State Plan

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
India on Thursday reiterated its support for a two-state solution to the Palestine issue at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in the capital. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar expressed concern over ongoing tensions in West Asia, warning that threats to maritime traffic and disruptions to energy infrastructure, including those linked to the Strait of Hormuz, were affecting regional stability. He said the situation in several countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Libya, highlighted the need for sustained diplomatic engagement and international cooperation.

Z-Plus Security Plea: HC to Centre

Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow
The Allahabad High Court has directed the Centre to take a decision within three weeks on a plea seeking Z-plus security cover for Karnataka BJP worker Vignesh Shishir. The Lucknow bench observed that Shishir had already submitted a representation before the Centre and said it should be decided expeditiously. The order was issued by a bench of Justices Shekhar B. Saraf and A.K. Chaudhary on Thursday.

SC Reserves Sabarimala Verdict

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on the Sabarimala reference case after 18 days of hearings before a nine-judge Constitution Bench. The case concerns key constitutional questions involving Articles 25, 26 and 14, and the scope of judicial review in matters of religious practices. The reference arose from petitions seeking reconsideration of the 2018 Sabarimala judgment that allowed entry of women of all ages into the Lord Ayyappa temple. The Court had framed seven questions for consideration by the larger Bench.

TTD Urges Online Room Booking

Vikrama Vahini | Tirupati
TTD has urged devotees visiting Tirumala and Tirupati to use its online booking system for accommodation to ensure transparent and hassle-free allotment. It said most rooms across its major complexes are available only through advance booking and appealed to pilgrims to vacate facilities promptly after darshan for better crowd management. The temple body said the move aims to improve efficiency and ensure smoother accommodation access for the increasing number of pilgrims.

India-Bound Ships Cross Hormuz

Vikrama Vahini | Tehran
Two India-bound LPG tankers crossed the strategically important Strait of Hormuz in the last 24 hours amid ongoing tensions in West Asia and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's visit to India for the BRICS Summit. According to ship-tracking data, Marshall Islands-flagged Symi and Vietnam-flagged NV Sunshine became the first India-bound LPG vessels to transit through the waterway in nearly two weeks. Both ships are headed to Gujarat's Kandla Port, carrying fuel cargo from Qatar and the UAE respectively. India has reportedly remained in constant diplomatic contact with Iran to ensure the safe movement of Indian and India-bound vessels following disruptions in the region and recent attacks on commercial ships. Meanwhile, an Indian mechanised sailing vessel, Haji Ali, came under attack in Omani waters during its voyage from Somalia to Sharjah earlier this week. The vessel caught fire and later sank, though all 14 crew members were safely rescued by the Omani Coast Guard. Shipping and energy analysts said the resumption of tanker movement could help ease concerns over fuel supply disruptions in the region. Officials said India is closely monitoring the situation in the Strait of Hormuz due to its importance for the country's energy imports and maritime trade routes.

UP Storm Toll Hits 104



Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow
At least 104 people lost their lives in Uttar Pradesh after heavy rains, thunderstorms and lightning strikes battered several districts on May 13, officials said. The state government has announced compensation for the families of the deceased and directed authorities to complete relief distribution within 24 hours. According to officials, the weather-related incidents were reported from

multiple districts, including Bhadohi, Fatehpur, Budaun, Chandauli and Sonbhadra, with Bhadohi reporting the highest number of casualties. The storms also caused widespread damage, including uprooted trees, damaged houses and disruption of electricity supply in several areas. **Relief Measures Announced**
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed district officials to ensure immediate relief and compensation for affected families. The government has stated that compensation will be provided within 24 hours of verification. **Weather Expected to Turn Dry**
Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a shift in weather conditions from May 14, stating that Uttar Pradesh is likely to witness predominantly dry conditions in the coming days. **PG2**

Satheesan to Lead Kerala

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Congress party on Thursday announced VD Satheesan as the new Chief Minister of Kerala, ending days of speculation over the leadership choice following the recent Assembly election results. The announcement came nearly 10 days after the election results were declared, in which the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) secured a total of 102 seats, with the party itself winning 63 of them. Satheesan, 61, is the former Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly and emerged as the party's consensus choice for the Chief Minister's post, reportedly edging out senior leaders KC Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala. The Congress victory in Kerala marked a setback for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, which failed to secure a third consecutive term in the state. Reacting to the announcement, senior Congress leader KC Venugopal said he fully accepted the party's decision, stating that he would support the high command's choice. The delay in announcing the Chief Minister in Kerala drew parallels with similar post-poll discussions within the party in Karnataka, where leadership negotiations reportedly took time following the Congress victory.



Trump, Xi Hold High-Level Talks

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping held a high-level meeting on Wednesday, focusing on economic cooperation, trade access and energy security amid ongoing global tensions. According to a White House statement, the two leaders discussed measures to strengthen economic ties, including greater market access for American companies in China and increased Chinese investment in US industries. The meeting was also attended by executives from several major American companies. Both sides discussed cooperation to curb the flow of fentanyl precursors

into the United States and enhance Chinese purchases of American agricultural products. On energy security, the leaders agreed that the Strait of Hormuz must remain open to ensure uninterrupted global energy supplies. Xi reportedly opposed militarisation of the strategic waterway and any move to impose transit tolls. The White House also said Xi expressed interest in purchasing more American oil to reduce China's dependence on the Strait of Hormuz in the future. Both leaders further agreed that Iran should not possess nuclear weapons. The meeting comes amid rising tensions in West Asia and continuing economic rivalry between Washington and Beijing.



NEET Leak: TN CM Seeks Scrapping Exam

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay has renewed the demand to abolish the NEET examination and replace it with admissions based on Class 12 board examination results, following the cancellation of NEET 2026 amid a reported paper leak. The Chief Minister stated that the latest incident highlights structural flaws in a national-level entrance examination system and reiterated that states should be allowed to conduct medical admissions based on board exam performance. **NEET 2026 Cancellation Sparks Political Debate:** The demand comes after NEET 2026 was cancelled following allegations of a question paper leak. The development has triggered fresh political debate, particularly in Tamil Nadu, where opposition to NEET has been longstanding across party lines. **PG2**

Pick of the Day



Red carpet fashion from the opening night of the 79th Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday.

FUEL PRICE MAY HIKE ON WEST ASIA CRISIS

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra has indicated that fuel prices may be revised upward if the ongoing crisis in West Asia continues for a prolonged period, amid concerns over global energy supply disruptions. Speaking at a conference in Switzerland on Tuesday, Malhotra reportedly noted that rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East could eventually lead to a pass-through of higher fuel costs to consumers in India. The remarks come against the backdrop of continued instability in the region, which has impacted global oil and gas supply routes, including key shipping channels. The situation has raised concerns over inflationary pressure and energy security, with India heavily dependent on crude oil imports to meet its domestic demand. According to reports, there has been no revision in retail petrol and diesel prices since late February, despite fluctuations in global crude oil markets. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had urged citizens to adopt austerity measures, including reduced fuel consumption and energy-saving practices, to help manage foreign exchange pressures. Officials and experts suggest that any prolonged disruption in West Asian supplies could further strain the domestic fuel pricing system and broader economic stability.

Delhi Pushes Fuel-Saving Measures

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Delhi government on Thursday announced a series of austerity and fuel-conservation measures under its "Mera Bharat, Mera Yogdaan" campaign following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce fuel consumption amid the ongoing West Asia crisis. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said government offices would implement work-from-home arrangements for two days a week wherever feasible. Private companies will also be encouraged to adopt similar systems, with the Labour Department monitoring implementation in the private sector. The government will also introduce staggered office timings for government and civic offices to reduce traffic congestion and fuel usage. **Restrictions on Vehicle Purchases and Foreign Travel**
As part of the fuel-saving initiative, the Delhi government has suspended disruption in West Asian supplies could further strain the domestic fuel pricing system and broader economic stability.



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Editorial
Safeguarding Electoral Integrity

More than 75 years after Independence, India continues to strengthen its democratic foundations through periodic reforms and institutional corrections. One such essential exercise is the revision of electoral rolls, a process necessary to maintain the credibility and transparency of elections. Over the decades, voter lists have undergone repeated updates to include newly eligible citizens and remove the names of deceased individuals. In a democracy as large and diverse as India, such revisions are not merely administrative formalities but a constitutional necessity. Accurate voter rolls ensure that the electoral process remains fair, representative and free from manipulation. In recent years, concerns over illegal infiltration from neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan have added a new layer of urgency to this responsibility.

Several investigations conducted across different parts of the country have revealed instances of undocumented migrants illegally obtaining identity documents and attempting to integrate into the electoral system. Such developments pose not only a legal challenge but also a serious threat to national security and sovereignty. There have been repeated warnings from security agencies regarding the possible involvement of illegal infiltrators in anti-national and extremist activities. In this context, the Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls becomes both timely and necessary. The objective of the exercise is not to target any community or genuine citizen, but to ensure that only eligible Indian citizens participate in the democratic process. Electoral integrity forms the backbone of parliamentary democracy, and any compromise on this front weakens public trust in institutions.

Therefore, the ongoing SIR exercise should be viewed as a constructive and nationally significant initiative rather than a political controversy. Political parties and civil society must rise above partisan interests and support measures that strengthen democratic credibility. At the same time, the Election Commission must conduct the revision process with fairness, transparency and professionalism to avoid inconvenience to genuine voters. A balanced approach — combining strict verification with administrative sensitivity — is essential. Protecting the sanctity of the electoral system is not the responsibility of institutions alone; it is a collective national duty shared by citizens, political leaders and constitutional bodies alike.

-Editor

ECI Launches SIR Phase III to Revise Voter Rolls

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Election Commission of India has announced the launch of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) - Phase III, a nationwide voter verification exercise aimed at enhancing the accuracy, transparency, and integrity of India's electoral rolls.

The large-scale initiative will be carried out across 16 States and 3 Union Territories, including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Punjab, and Odisha, among others.

The Special Intensive Revision marks a significant departure from routine annual revisions conducted over the past two decades. As part of the exercise, extensive door-to-door verification will be undertaken to ensure comprehensive updating of voter records.

The process is expected to include the addition of newly eligible voters, removal of duplicate entries, deletion of names of deceased or permanently shifted individuals, and overall improvement of the electoral database to strengthen its



credibility.

Conducted under the constitutional mandate of Article 324 and the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the exercise reflects the commitment of the Election Commission of India to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections.

Officials noted that the alignment of the SIR schedule with the ongoing Census house-listing operations is likely to improve administrative efficiency and coordination on the ground. In a state like Karnataka, which has a large and digitally active voter base, the updated and inclusive electoral roll is expected to further strengthen democratic participation and ensure that every eligible citizen is able to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Train services restored to normal schedule

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Several long-distance train services between Bengaluru and eastern India have been restored to their original schedules following the completion of yard remodelling work at Rupsa Yard in the Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway.

According to railway officials, the earlier announced rescheduling and en-route delays have been cancelled, and trains will now operate as per their regular timetables.

The restored services include Train No. 12245 Howrah-SMVT Bengaluru Express, Train No. 12246 SMVT Bengaluru-Howrah Express, and Train No. 12551 SMVT Bengaluru-Kamakhya Express.

These trains were previously rescheduled or regulated due to operational work but will now run on time from their respective journey commencement dates in May 2026.

Railway authorities have advised passengers to check updated timings through official railway enquiry systems for accurate travel planning.

Railway officials said the restoration follows the successful completion of maintenance and yard remodelling works at Rupsa Yard.

BWSSB USES ROBOTS TO AVOID ROAD DIGGING



> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
In a major relief for commuters, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has deployed robotic technology to inspect and repair underground pipelines, preventing road digging at 399 locations across the city over the past six months.

The initiative, launched in November by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, aims to address water leakage and sewerage issues without disrupting traffic flow in Bengaluru's busy roads.

According to BWSSB officials, robotic units were inserted into underground pipeline networks to detect faults with precision, eliminating the need for large-scale excavation.

32 km of Pipeline Inspected
Officials said the robotic systems surveyed over 32.66 km of

underground infrastructure, identifying 394 defects that were subsequently repaired through targeted intervention.

Faster Complaint Redressal
Out of 404 public complaints received during the period, 399 were resolved, while the remaining cases are being addressed on priority, the board said.

Focus on Non-Invasive Infrastructure Maintenance
BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar said the technology has significantly reduced traffic disruptions caused by road digging, a long-standing issue in the city.

He added that the board plans to expand the use of robotic systems further to ensure faster, citizen-friendly, and less disruptive infrastructure maintenance across Bengaluru.

COUNTDOWN FOR CONGRESS EXIT BEGINS: VIJAYENDRA

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra on Thursday said that the "countdown to the exit" of the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government has begun, alleging that public dissatisfaction with the administration is growing.



Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Vijayendra claimed that the people are disillusioned with the

government due to what he described as "poor performance" and "anti-people policies," and alleged that there is widespread anger against the ruling party. He further alleged that public resentment is also linked to what he termed "minority appeasement politics," adding that the government would be voted out at the earliest

opportunity. Criticising the Congress party, Vijayendra described it as having a "negative attitude" and said it has opposed several decisions of the Central government, including policies related to the Election Commission of India, NRC, EVMs, farm laws, SIR, and CAA. He added that the BJP will intensify its campaign against the state government in the coming days.

NEET Leak: TN CM Seeks Scrapping Exam

> From PG1
In a post on social media platform X, CM Vijay referred to earlier incidents of alleged paper leaks and stated that repeated irregularities expose serious weaknesses in the examination system. He also cited the recommendations of a high-level expert committee led by former ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, which had suggested reforms after earlier controversies.

State's Opposition to NEET
Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed NEET since its introduction, arguing that the exam disadvantages rural students, government school students, and those from Tamil-medium and economically weaker backgrounds. The Chief Minister reiterated that

admissions to MBBS, BDS, and AYUSH courses should be conducted based on Class 12 marks under state quota systems.

Legal and Policy Battle Continues
The Tamil Nadu government has previously challenged the Centre's stance on NEET, including after the President declined assent to the state's NEET exemption legislation passed by the Assembly.

Earlier, Tamil Nadu had been allowed to admit students based on Class 12 marks before NEET became mandatory in 2017, a change that has remained a major point of contention between the state and Centre. The issue continues to remain politically sensitive in Tamil Nadu, with several parties demanding exemption from NEET for the state.

UP Storm Toll Hits 104

> From PG1
Authorities have also advised residents in vulnerable areas to remain alert as isolated rain and lightning activity may continue in some districts. Officials said temperatures are expected to rise again, with heatwave-like conditions likely in parts of western Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand. Lucknow is expected to record a maximum temperature of around 39°C, while Bundelkhand could see temperatures rising up to 45°C.

IMD scientists said the recent storm activity was triggered by the interaction of cyclonic circulation over northwest Uttar Pradesh, easterly winds from Rajasthan, and westerly winds in the middle troposphere. Authorities have urged residents to remain cautious as weather conditions transition from storms to intense summer heat.

Srinivaspur Set for Busy Mango Season



> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar
Srinivasapur in Karnataka's Kolar district is preparing for the start of the annual mango trading season from May 15, with large-scale commercial activity expected across the region over the next three months.

Known as the "Mango Capital," Srinivasapur is one of the country's major mango-growing hubs, with cultivation spread across nearly 65,000 acres. The seasonal trade supports thousands of farmers, traders, labourers and transport workers every year.

The region is famous for premium mango varieties including Badami, Mallika, Baneesh, Imam Pasand, Pasha Pasand and Kesar, which enjoy strong demand in domestic and international markets.

Truckloads of mangoes are transported daily during the peak season to major states such as Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Large quantities are also supplied to fruit processing units in Chittoor and Madanapalle

for pulp and juice production. Export demand continues for varieties such as Badami, Mallika and Baneesh, which are shipped to countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

The mango season has also encouraged several small-scale household industries in Srinivasapur, particularly pickle-making and value-added fruit processing activities.

Preparations at the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) yard and private trading centres are nearing completion. According to APMC Secretary G. Srinivas, around 130 to 140 mango trading shops are expected to function this season.

Women workers are actively involved in sorting and packing operations, while transport, packaging, hospitality and retail sectors are also expected to witness increased business during the season. Despite concerns over weather fluctuations affecting yield in some varieties, growers and traders remain optimistic about a successful season for Srinivasapur's mango industry.

NEWS

B'luru-Mumbai Bi-Weekly Express Approved

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Ministry of Railways has approved a new bi-weekly express train service between Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal, Bengaluru, and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, Mumbai, aimed at strengthening connectivity between Karnataka and Maharashtra.



The service is expected to benefit passengers travelling between Bengaluru, the Hubballi-Dharwad region, Belagavi, Pune and Mumbai, catering to growing passenger demand across the route.

An inaugural one-way special train (Train No. 06557) will

operate from SMVT Bengaluru on May 17, 2026, departing at 10:00 hrs and arriving at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus at 10:30 hrs the next day. The train will halt at key stations including Davangere, Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, Miraj, Pune, Lonavala and Thane, among others.

Regular operations of Train No. 16553/16554 will begin from May 23, 2026, from Bengaluru, and May 24, 2026, from Mumbai.

The Bengaluru-Mumbai train will run twice weekly on Saturdays and Tuesdays, while the return service from Mumbai will operate on Sundays and

Wednesdays. The train will consist of 17 LHB coaches, including AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, sleeper class, general second class coaches, and dedicated luggage-cum-brake vans with Divyangjan-friendly facilities.

Railway officials said the new service will improve connectivity between major business, education and tourism hubs, while also enhancing access to key cities across North Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Passengers can check detailed schedules and booking information through the official Indian Railways website and the National Train Enquiry System (NTES).

Hubballi-Rishikesh Train Regularised

> Vikrama Vahini | Hubballi
The Railway Board has regularised the SSS Hubballi-Yog Nagari Rishikesh-SSS Hubballi Weekly Express, converting it from a special service into a permanent weekly train with revised train numbers.

The service will now operate as Train No. 17363/17364 with effect from July 2026, providing enhanced long-distance rail connectivity between Karnataka and Uttarakhand, covering key states including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

Service Schedule

Train No. 17363 will depart from SSS Hubballi at 19:45 hrs every Monday and reach Yog Nagari Rishikesh at 23:30 hrs on Wednesday. In the return direction, Train No. 17364 will depart Rishikesh at 06:15 hrs on Thursday and arrive in Hubballi at 06:30

hrs on Saturday.

Key Route Connectivity

The train will halt at major stations including Dharwad, Belagavi, Pune, Itarsi, Bhopal, Jhansi, Agra, Delhi (Hazrat Nizamuddin), Meerut, Roorkee and Haridwar, among others.

Train Composition

The service will consist of 16 LHB coaches, including AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, sleeper class, general second class coaches, and luggage-cum-brake vans with Divyangjan-friendly facilities.

Railway officials said the regularisation will significantly benefit passengers travelling for pilgrimage, business and tourism across northern and southern India. Railway officials said the move will provide improved year-round connectivity and greater travel convenience for long-distance passengers across the route.

SCIENCE & Technology

IMD LAUNCHES AI MONSOON FORECAST PLATFORM

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has launched two artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled weather forecasting products aimed at providing hyper-local and impact-based weather services across the country.

Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh announced the rollout of the new systems developed under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). The initiative includes the IMD's first AI-driven monsoon forecasting system and a high-resolution rainfall prediction model for Uttar Pradesh.

The pilot projects have been jointly developed by the IMD, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).

According to officials, the AI-based monsoon forecasting system will provide probabilistic predictions of monsoon progression up to four weeks in advance, with weekly updates. The system has been designed to support farmers across 16 states and more than 3,000 sub-districts.

The second product offers rainfall forecasts at a fine spatial resolution of 1 km for Uttar Pradesh, with predictions extending up to 10 days ahead.

Officials said the new systems mark a shift from traditional forecasting to impact-based forecasting, enabling



The IMD has launched two AI-powered weather forecasting systems to deliver hyper-local and impact-based predictions, including an advanced monsoon forecast model and a high-resolution rainfall prediction tool for Uttar Pradesh, aimed at improving early warnings and supporting farmers, disaster management, and public planning.

more precise, location-specific, and actionable weather information for farmers, disaster management authorities, and the general public.

Over the past decade, India's weather forecasting infrastructure has expanded significantly, including a major increase in Doppler Weather Radars and the development of advanced computing and observation systems under initiatives such as Mission Mausam.

The new AI-enabled platforms are expected to further enhance early warning systems and strengthen India's disaster preparedness and agricultural planning capabilities.

Dhruva Space Gets Grant for Project Garud

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Hyderabad-based NewSpace startup Dhruva Space has secured ₹105 crore in funding under the Research, Development and Innovation Fund (RDIF) of the Government of India to develop its indigenous satellite platform "Project Garud".

The project aims to build a modular, mass-producible 500 kg-class satellite platform designed for constellation-scale missions. The system is intended to support a range of applications, including telecommunications, Earth observation, national security, and other data-driven services.

According to the company, the platform is being developed as a standardized, production-oriented spacecraft that can enable faster deployment cycles and improved manufacturing scalability.

The "flat-pack" design will allow easier stacking for launch integration and more efficient production processes.

Dhruva Space said Project Garud is designed to bridge the gap between small experimental satellites and larger traditional satellite systems, offering improved payload capacity, scalability, and multi-mission adaptability.

The company is among the first set of firms to receive support under the RDIF initiative, which aims to strengthen India's space technology ecosystem and promote indigenous innovation.

Company officials said the programme will help transition satellite manufacturing from custom-built missions to a repeatable, high-volume production model, positioning Dhruva Space as a global competitor in spacecraft manufacturing.

Forces Dominated Escalation Matrix: CDS Chauhan

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan on Thursday said the Indian armed forces demonstrated superior situational awareness and battlefield transparency during Operation Sindoor, asserting that they "dominated the escalation matrix on all four days" of the conflict.

Speaking at the 'Kalam & Kavach' defence conclave held at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi, Gen Chauhan reflected on India's operational preparedness and evolving defence doctrine.

His remarks came days after the armed forces marked the first anniversary of the military operation conducted last year.

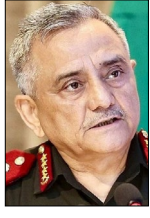
He said the success of Operation Sindoor highlighted the growing

synergy among the three services and their ability to respond effectively in a complex and fast-changing battlefield environment.

According to him, enhanced coordination and improved information-sharing mechanisms played a key role in maintaining operational advantage throughout the conflict period.

Gen Chauhan also elaborated on the JAI framework—jointness, atma nirbharta (self-reliance) and innovation—which he described as central to India's long-term defence transformation.

He said these pillars are essential for building a modern, integrated and technologically advanced military capable of addressing future challenges.



Karnataka Set for Two More Bypolls

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka is set to witness by-elections in two more Assembly constituencies — Hiriyur in Chitradurga district and Dharwad — following recent vacancies in the seats.

The Hiriyur seat fell vacant after the death of Congress MLA and Minister D. Sudhakar, while the Dharwad constituency requires a bypoll after Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni lost his membership following conviction in the Yogish Gowda murder case.

Political activity has intensified in both constituencies even before the Election Commission announces the poll schedule. Both Congress and BJP leaders have begun internal discussions over possible candidates and election strategies.

In Dharwad, speculation is strong over the Congress fielding Vinay Kulkarni's wife Shivalila Kulkarni, while the BJP is considering several aspirants including former MLA Amrut Desai and other local leaders.

UTTARAKHAND FIRST HALALA CASE UNDER UCC

> Vikrama Vahini | Haridwar
Uttarakhand has reported its first Halala case under the newly implemented Uniform Civil Code (UCC), with police in Haridwar registering a complaint against nine individuals, including the husband of the complainant.

The case is set to go for trial in court after the filing of a charge sheet.

According to police, the case was registered at Buggawala police station following a complaint filed by a woman identified as Shaheen, who alleged that she was subjected to dowry harassment, physical assault, and forced to undergo Halala by her husband and in-laws.

The complainant stated that she faced continuous mental and physical abuse after her marriage. She further alleged that she was pressured into accepting Halala, a controversial marital practice, and was beaten and driven out of her matrimonial home when she resisted.

The complaint, filed on April 4, 2026, also names eleven witnesses.

Following investigation, police registered a case against nine accused, including her husband Mohammad Danish, father-in-law Saeed, mother-in-law Gulshana, and several other relatives.

Investigators stated that statements from the victim and

witnesses were recorded, along with medical reports and inspection of the crime scene.

The police charge sheet cites provisions under Sections 32(i)(ii) and 32(i)(iii) of the Uniform Civil Code, along with charges related to dowry harassment and mental cruelty.

Officials confirmed that the case will now proceed to court, where charges will be framed and evidence examined. If a prima facie case is established, the accused will face trial.

This marks the first reported Halala case under the UCC in Uttarakhand since its implementation, highlighting the law's application in a sensitive social matter and its emerging legal implications.

KOLAR JOINT FAMILY KEEPS TRADITION ALIVE

> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar
In an era where nuclear families have become increasingly common, a 16-member joint family in Kolar is drawing attention for continuing to live together under one roof, preserving the values of unity and shared living.

Popularly known as the "Anur Family," the household in Gowripet consists of four brothers, their wives and children, who live in a specially designed home featuring 16 rooms for individual privacy while maintaining a common kitchen that serves as the centre of family life.

Business Legacy Spanning Five Decades
The family's roots trace back to 1970, when patriarch Sathyanarayana Setty started a small hardware business in Kolar after working in a cement pipe manufacturing unit. Over the years, the business expanded significantly under the efforts of his four



sons — Nagaraj, Subramanyam, Lakshminarayana and Raghavendra — growing into a strong presence in the building materials sector with multiple establishments across the city.

Family Roles and Responsibilities
Eldest brother Nagaraj oversees overall business operations and future planning, while Subramanyam manages customer relations.

CM Defends Dress Code, Attacks Centre Over NEET Issue

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the revised dress code implemented in schools and colleges across the state is in line with the constitutional principle of equal respect for all religions, and accused opposition leaders of politicising the issue.

In a detailed statement, the Chief Minister said those attempting to divide society on the basis of caste and religion were "disturbed" by the implementation of the uniform dress code and should "introspect".

He also criticised the Centre over the cancellation of the NEET examination following a reported question paper leak, alleging that neither Prime Minister

Narendra Modi nor Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had responded adequately to what he termed a serious issue affecting students.

Siddaramaiah alleged that irregularities in the examination system had impacted lakhs of students across the country and questioned the silence of BJP leaders on the matter, while contrasting it with their earlier protests over state-level examinations.

Referring to past controversies over dress code and religious symbols in educational institutions, the Chief Minister accused the BJP of double standards and attempting to spread communal tension.

He also reiterated the state government's opposition to the NEET

system, stating that it has affected students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds and reduced the autonomy of state education systems.

Holding the Centre responsible for the alleged examination lapses, Siddaramaiah demanded an apology from the Prime Minister and called for the removal of the Union Education Minister.

The Chief Minister further said that educational institutions must promote constitutional values such as equality, secularism, and rational thinking. He added that the state government's revised guidelines would allow limited traditional or faith-based symbols, provided they are compatible with the prescribed uniform and do not disrupt classroom discipline or public order.



PRAHARI Parade Ordered for Monsoon Readiness

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Bengaluru, May 14: Greater Bengaluru Administration (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed all City Corporation Commissioners to immediately organise PRAHARI vehicle parades across their jurisdictions as part of monsoon preparedness measures in the city.

Chairing a coordination meeting at the GBA Head Office, Rao instructed officials to ensure that all emergency response systems and rain-related equipment are fully operational to handle flooding, waterlogging and



other monsoon-related challenges. He directed officials to inspect all PRAHARI vehicles, tree-cutting machinery and emergency equipment and submit a detailed preparedness report within a week.

The Chief Commissioner also asked commissioners to review

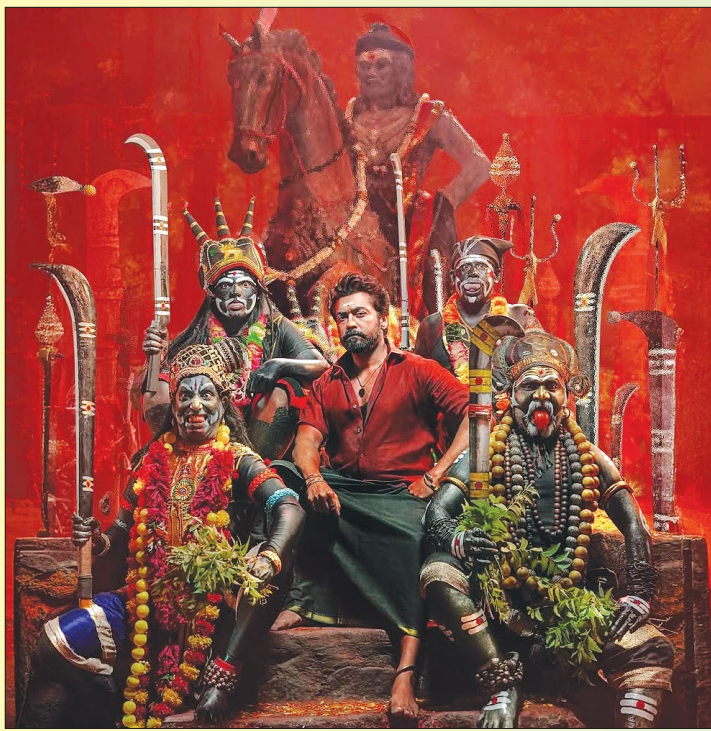
control rooms and ensure adequate staffing and emergency arrangements during heavy rains. Special attention was given to flood-prone railway low-lying areas, where joint inspections will be conducted by Railway officials and City Corporation authorities to address waterlogging and pending infrastructure works. Strict action was ordered against unauthorised road cutting activities without prior permission, while officials were instructed to monitor waterlogging-prone areas periodically and implement preventive measures proactively.



Karnataka Tourism Minister H.K. Patil visits the National Museum in New Delhi and inspects over 150 rare artefacts belonging to the historic Lakkundi region of Gadag district. The priceless collection, originally handed over to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 16, 1976, by D.K. Hebboor and H.K. Patil includes ancient weapons, rare gold and silver coins, intricately carved ornaments and historic manuscripts. The minister said efforts would be initiated with the National Museum, the Central Government and the Archaeological Survey of India to display the artefacts in a separate gallery in Delhi and eventually bring them back permanently to Karnataka, particularly Lakkundi.

ENTERTAINMENT

Karuppu X Review: Netizens React to Suriya-Trisha Film



> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The much-awaited Tamil fantasy action film Karuppu, starring Suriya and Trisha Krishnan, has finally released in theatres, drawing strong reactions from audiences and netizens on social media.

The film, which marks the on-screen reunion of Suriya and Trisha after nearly two decades, opened to significant buzz and high expectations. Directed by RJ Balaji, the fantasy-action entertainer has been widely discussed online, with viewers sharing mixed to positive reactions. Several moviegoers took to social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to post their reviews, praising the film's performances, background score, visual presentation, and action sequences. One user described the

lead performance as a "career-best" and highlighted the interval block and mass action scenes, while also appreciating the film's cinematography and music.

However, the film's release saw initial hurdles, with the scheduled early morning 9 am special show on May 14 reportedly cancelled due to "unavoidable reasons," according to producer SR Prabhu. Despite the setback, the film was later released in theatres as planned. The film's release has added to the excitement among fans, with discussions continuing online as audiences share their opinions on the fantasy drama.

Further box office performance and critical reception are expected to become clearer in the coming days as the film completes its opening run.

Dhurandhar OTT Release: Global Premiere, India Waits

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Ranveer Singh's blockbuster spy thriller Dhurandhar: The Revenge is set to make its OTT debut globally on May 14, 2026, following a successful theatrical run.

However, Indian audiences will have to wait longer to stream the film due to platform licensing agreements.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film will reportedly premiere internationally on Netflix with an extended "raw & undekha" version, featuring an additional runtime of nearly 3 hours and 52 minutes. The OTT edition is expected to include previously unseen and uncensored footage not shown in theatres.

While global audiences will gain early access, the film will not be available immediately in India on the same platform. According to reports, this delay is due to an exclusive digital streaming agreement with JioHotstar, which holds the official streaming rights for the Indian market.

Industry sources suggest that this arrangement means Indian viewers may have to wait for the film's OTT release despite its global rollout on other platforms. The film continues the storyline of the first installment, following Indian spy Jaskirat Singh Rangī, also known as Hamza, who operates undercover in Pakistan.

The narrative tracks his mission through Karachi's underworld and his efforts to dismantle terrorist networks. The film features an ensemble cast including Ranveer Singh, Sara Arjun, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, Akshaye Khanna, R. Madhavan, and others.

Dhurandhar: The Revenge had an exceptional theatrical run, reportedly grossing over ₹1,795 crore worldwide. Of this, ₹1,143 crore came from domestic box office collections, while overseas earnings stood at ₹426.62 crore.

Further details regarding the Indian OTT release date are expected to be announced by the streaming platform in the coming weeks. The film's OTT rollout is expected to further boost its global reach, especially among international audiences who missed its theatrical release.

Industry experts believe the extended version may attract strong viewership due to additional content and uncensored scenes.



BUSINESS

SEBI Plans Bond Distributor Network

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai
The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is planning to introduce a dedicated "bond distributor" model on the lines of mutual fund distributors to encourage greater retail participation in the country's bond market.

Speaking at the FICCI Financial Products Distribution Summit in Mumbai, SEBI Whole-Time Member Amarjeet Singh said the proposed framework aims to simplify bond investments for ordinary investors by providing assistance in KYC formalities, documentation and transaction processes.

According to SEBI, the debt market is currently dominated by institutional investors, and the regulator wants to make bond investments more accessible to retail participants through an organised distribution network.

Singh noted that changes in taxation rules for debt-oriented mutual funds in recent years had reduced retail investor interest, making it necessary to create simpler investment avenues in the bond market.

He also cautioned against the spread of misinformation through digital platforms as the number of distributors increases. Investments, he said, should be driven by informed decisions and long-term planning rather than social media trends or online influence.

The SEBI official further warned companies against exaggerating their technological capabilities in the name of artificial intelligence, a practice often referred to as "AI washing."

India's mutual fund industry assets under management (AUM) reached ₹1 trillion by March 2026, with nearly 54 per cent of investments routed through distributors. SEBI now aims to replicate a similar distribution-driven growth model in the bond market as well.

Officials said the proposed model is expected to improve financial inclusion and deepen India's corporate bond market by attracting more small investors.

SPORTS

Kohli's Century Rewrites 11 Records

► Vikrama Vahini | Raipur

Virat Kohli produced a historic performance in IPL 2026 by smashing a brilliant century against Kolkata Knight Riders and rewriting multiple records in T20 and IPL cricket.

The Royal Challengers Bengaluru star remained unbeaten on 105 runs in the 57th match of the tournament, leading his side to victory while scripting a remarkable comeback after registering ducks in his previous two matches.

With this innings, Kohli registered his ninth IPL century, extending his record for the most hundreds in IPL history. He moved ahead of players like Jos Buttler and Chris Gayle in the all-time list.

Kohli also became the first Indian batter and only the sixth player in world cricket to cross 14,000 runs in T20 cricket. He achieved the milestone in just 409 innings, surpassing Chris Gayle's previous world record of 423 innings.

The match also marked Kohli's 279th IPL appearance, making him the player with the most matches in IPL history, overtaking MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma.

Another major milestone came as Kohli completed his 12th IPL season with over 400 runs, becoming the only batter to achieve the feat consistently across so many seasons.

The century was also Kohli's third hundred while chasing in the IPL, equalling Jos Buttler's record. Overall, it marked his 10th century in T20 cricket, making him the first Indian batter to score double-digit centuries in the format.

Kohli further equalled Rohit Sharma's record of 21 Player of the Match awards in IPL history. Against Kolkata Knight Riders specifically, he registered his ninth score of 50 or more, surpassing the records held by Rohit Sharma and David Warner against a single opponent.

RCB Face Crucial Playoff Tests

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Royal Challengers Bengaluru moved to the top of the IPL 2026 points table after defeating Kolkata Knight Riders by six wickets in the 57th match of the season, but their playoff qualification is still not officially secured.

With 16 points, RCB are now in a strong position to enter the playoffs, while the defeat ended Kolkata Knight Riders' campaign in the tournament. However, RCB still face a challenging road ahead as their remaining two league matches could determine whether they finish in the top two or risk depending on other results.

RCB will next face Punjab Kings on May 17, followed by a crucial clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad on May 22. Both matches will be away fixtures and are expected to be highly competitive, as Punjab and Hyderabad are also fighting for playoff qualification.

The Bengaluru side needs at least one win from the remaining two matches to strengthen its playoff chances. Winning both matches would almost certainly guarantee a top-two finish, which offers an additional opportunity in the playoffs. However, defeats in both matches could leave the team dependent on net run rate and results from other fixtures.

Punjab Kings currently sit fourth on the points table with 13 points from six wins and still have three league matches remaining. The team is under pressure after a string of recent defeats and must beat RCB to remain strongly in contention for the playoffs.

DELHI BUS GANGRAPE CASE: TWO ARRESTED

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

A woman was allegedly gangraped inside a bus in West Delhi's Rani Bagh area, in a shocking case of crime against women reported from the national capital. Police have arrested two persons, identified as the driver and conductor of the bus, in connection with the incident.

According to police, the survivor, a factory worker residing in Pitampura and employed in Mangolpuri, was returning home on the night of May 11 when the incident occurred.

The woman stated in her complaint that she was waiting at the Saraswati Vihar bus stop when a sleeper bus stopped. She



approached the vehicle to inquire about the time, where a man standing on the footboard allegedly pulled her inside the bus.

The accused then reportedly drove the vehicle towards Nangloi, where she was sexually assaulted by two persons inside the

bus. The victim later managed to escape and approached the police.

A medical examination confirmed allegations of rape, police said.

Following the complaint, police arrested the driver and conductor of the bus and seized the vehicle involved in the crime. Investigations are currently underway.

Officials said the survivor is married and has three children. Further inquiry is being conducted from all possible angles.

The incident has once again drawn attention to women's safety in the national capital, recalling past cases of sexual violence reported in the city.



Jagadguru Sri Shivaratri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji of Suttur Mutt released the book 'Avishrantha Dhyeyajeevi' on RSS Bhisma M.C. Jayadeva in Bengaluru. The event was held on Thursday evening at Puttanna Chetty Town Hall, Bengaluru, where RSS Sah-Sarkaryavah Shri Dattatreya Hosabale addressed the gathering. The programme was attended by author Dr. Babukrishnamurthy, Beluru Sudarshan, Rashtriya Swyam sevak Sangh President M.P. Kumar, along with several dignitaries and admirers.

Kumaraswamy Slams Bidadi Township as 'Land Mafia'

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Bengaluru, May 14: Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Thursday criticised the Karnataka government over the proposed Bidadi Township Project, alleging that it was attempting to acquire farmers' land for real-estate purposes.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Kumaraswamy demanded immediate withdrawal of the project and warned of an agitation if the government proceeded with land acquisition.

He alleged that fertile agricultural land in eight villages was being targeted despite



opposition from farmers and accused the Congress government of functioning like a "real-estate broker."

The Union Minister also criticised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and district officials, claiming that farmers' concerns were being ignored.

Kumaraswamy said the project would adversely affect agriculture and dairy activities in the region and questioned the government's revenue-driven approach toward land development. Kumaraswamy further alleged that the proposed township project would threaten the livelihood of hundreds of farming

families dependent on horticulture, vegetable cultivation and dairy farming in the region. He said the affected villages were agriculturally productive areas and questioned the need to convert fertile land into urban real-estate projects.

He also accused the state government of failing to hold proper consultations with local farmers before initiating the proposal. Stating that public opposition to the project was growing, the Union Minister said the JD(S) would stand with the farmers and intensify protests if the government did not reconsider the project immediately.

India Bans Sugar Exports Till September

► Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

India has imposed a ban on sugar exports until September 30, 2026, in a move aimed at ensuring adequate domestic supply and stabilising prices, the government announced on Wednesday.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, issued the order stating that the restriction applies to raw, white and



refined sugar. The decision takes effect immediately. Earlier, sugar exports were placed under the "restricted" category; however, the latest notification has moved it to the "prohibited" category, effectively halting overseas shipments.

WHOLESALE INFLATION JUMPS TO 8.3% ON FUEL COSTS

► Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

Wholesale inflation surged to 8.3% in April, sharply up from 3.86% in March, driven by rising prices of crude oil, natural gas, metals and manufactured products, according to government data released on Thursday.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation reading marks the highest level in the current series and reflects mounting cost pressures amid global energy disruptions linked to the ongoing geopolitical conflict in West Asia.

Officials said the sharp increase was primarily due to higher prices of mineral oils, crude petroleum and natural gas, basic metals, and other non-food manufacturing items.

In contrast, retail inflation remained significantly lower at 3.48% in April, while food inflation stood at 3.87%, indicating that price transmission to consumers has so far been partially contained.

However, energy-related categories saw steep spikes, with fuel and power



inflation rising to 24.71% in April from 1.05% in March. Crude petroleum and natural gas inflation surged 67.18%, while high-speed diesel inflation rose to 25.19%.

LPG prices also recorded a sharp increase of 10.92% in April, compared to a contraction of 1.54% in March.

Officials noted that despite global crude oil prices rising significantly, domestic petrol and diesel prices have largely remained unchanged so far. However, prices of LPG cylinders and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) have been increased.

The government has also reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹10 per litre to cushion the impact on consumers and control retail inflation.

Experts, however, caution that prolonged global conflict and sustained high crude prices could eventually force upward revisions in fuel prices, increasing inflationary pressure in the coming months.

Prolonged volatility in global crude markets may keep inflationary pressures elevated in the coming months. Economists say energy prices will remain a key driver of both wholesale and retail inflation trends.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

INDIA'S NEW IT RULES HELP REMOVE NON-CONSENSUAL INTIMATE IMAGES WITHIN 2 HOURS

Social media platforms in India are now removing most non-consensual intimate images within two hours of complaints being filed, following updated IT Rules 2026. The stricter rules also apply to deepfakes, morphed media, impersonation, and explicit content targeting women and children.

FASTER TAKEDOWN RULES NOW IN EFFECT

- Around **75%** of reported non-consensual intimate content is removed within 2 hours.
- New rules came into effect on **February 20, 2026**.
- Applicable to deepfakes, morphed media, impersonation, and sexually explicit content targeting women and children.
- **Aim:** Minimise emotional and reputational harm caused by viral content.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES UNDER PRESSURE

- Rules apply to Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) with over **5 million** registered users in India.
- Almost all major platforms are now adhering to the revised 2-hour takedown timeline after complaints via the government's portal.
- Government aims to curb online abuse faster and prevent harmful content from going viral.

NCRB DATA SHOWS ONGOING CYBERCRIME CONCERNS

- In 2024, **3,288** cybercrime cases against women were reported across India.
- Slightly lower than **3,678** cases in 2023.
- Most reported abuses:



COMPANIES FLAG TECHNICAL AND LEGAL CHALLENGES

- **False positives:** Genuine content may be wrongly flagged.
- **Jurisdiction issues:** Content created outside India can delay action.
- Human review still required in many cases, which adds to response time.
- Automated hash-matching technology helps detect and remove clearly illegal content like child sexual abuse material quickly and efficiently.

STRONGER RULES. FASTER ACTION. SAFER DIGITAL INDIA.
The new IT Rules 2026 mark a major step towards protecting women and children online and ensuring accountability of social media platforms.