



# VIKRAMA VAHINI

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LIGHT

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**Chaitra J Achar filed a complaint with Bengaluru Police after allegedly receiving obscene messages from a police personnel on social media. The actress shared screenshots of the messages online and demanded strict action against online harassment targeting women.**

**The Supreme Court on Friday observed that actor Darshan may seek bail again if there is no significant progress in the trial of the Renukaswamy murder case within the next one year.**



### Good morning

A beautiful life does not just happen. It is built daily by perseverance, humility, sacrifice, and love.

### BRIEFS

#### Bengal Plans Action on Illegal Madrasas: BJP MLA

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
BJP leaders have claimed that the West Bengal government is preparing to take action against unaided and allegedly illegal madrasas across the state, along with moves to restrict public namaz in open spaces. BJP MLA Sajal Ghosh said the proposed action is part of a broader plan to shut down institutions operating without proper approval. He clarified that the move is not directed against the Muslim community, but against illegal educational institutions. He also stated that such institutions do not contribute to professional education outcomes and argued that only legally recognised institutions should function.

#### New Ebola Outbreak in Congo Raises Alarm

**> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**  
A new Ebola outbreak has been confirmed in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ituri province, with health authorities reporting 246 suspected cases and 65 deaths so far. The Africa CDC said most cases are concentrated in the Mongwala and Rwampara health zones, with a few laboratory-confirmed fatalities reported. Genetic testing is underway to identify the strain of the virus. Emergency coordination efforts have been launched with neighbouring countries to strengthen surveillance and contain the spread. Ebola, which spreads through direct contact with infected bodily fluids, is highly fatal and requires rapid isolation and contact tracing to control outbreaks. Congo, which has faced repeated Ebola outbreaks since 1976, is dealing with its 17th recorded occurrence of the disease.

#### Google May Reduce Free Storage to 5GB

**> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**  
Google has reportedly revised its free cloud storage policy, with some new users receiving only 5GB instead of 15GB unless they link a phone number during account creation. According to user reports and updates on Google's support pages, full 15GB storage now appears to be available only after phone verification. The earlier "15GB free storage" claim has also been changed to "up to 15GB," indicating conditional access. The change has not been officially announced, but users have shared screenshots showing prompts to unlock additional storage via phone verification. Industry observers say the move may be aimed at preventing misuse of free accounts and reducing infrastructure costs, though it has raised privacy concerns among users. **PG2**

## ₹1 Cr Foreign Funds Linked to Noida Protest Case

**> Vikrama Vahini | Noida**  
Gautam Buddh Nagar Police on Thursday alleged that more than ₹1 crore in foreign currency was deposited into the bank account of an accused linked to the violent labour protests in Noida last month. Police said the funds, received in dollars, pounds and euros, were credited to the account of accused Satyam Verma. Authorities have also

initiated action under the National Security Act (NSA) as part of the ongoing investigation. **Violent Protests on April 13**  
According to police, the unrest took place on April 13 under the Gautam Buddh Nagar Police Commissionerate, where around 40,000 to 45,000 workers and labourers gathered across more than 80 locations, causing large-scale disruption.



Officials said the situation escalated when certain groups allegedly resorted to violence and arson at two locations.

including Sector 63 and near the Motherson company premises. **Allegations of Organised Role**  
Police claimed that while personnel attempted to control the situation with restraint, protesters allegedly blocked roads and disrupted traffic movement across multiple areas. In a statement, police said investigations have revealed "startling facts" about the accused, adding that Satyam Verma and another

accused, Akriti, played a key role in organising and escalating the protests. **Financial Links Under Scrutiny**  
Investigators are now examining financial transactions and organisational links to determine whether foreign funds were used to support or influence the protests. The probe is ongoing, and further action is expected as authorities continue to analyse digital and banking evidence.

## Fuel Hike: Freight Costs Rise

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Transport operators across the country on Friday said the latest increase in petrol and diesel prices could push freight costs up by around 3%, even as fuel rates were revised sharply across major metro cities. Industry representatives also urged the government to ensure that traders do not pass on disproportionate price increases to consumers under the pretext of higher fuel costs. **Sharp Fuel Price Rise Across Metro Cities**  
Fuel prices witnessed significant increases across major cities. Kolkata recorded the steepest hike, with petrol rising to ₹108.74 per litre and diesel to ₹95.13 per litre. Delhi saw petrol priced at ₹97.77 per litre and diesel at ₹90.67. In Mumbai, petrol now costs ₹106.68 per litre, while diesel stands at ₹93.14. Chennai reported petrol at ₹103.67 per litre and diesel at ₹95.25.



**Transporters Expect Limited but Broad Impact**  
According to All India Transporters' Welfare Association joint secretary Sunil Agarwal, the increase was expected given global geopolitical conditions. He said freight costs could rise by about 3%, though the overall impact on transport expenses would remain limited. However, he urged authorities to monitor market behaviour to prevent unjustified price increases in essential goods. **Calls for Tax Relief on Fuel**  
Transporters also appealed to state governments to reduce local levies on fuel to ease the burden on the logistics sector, which is already facing financial pressure. **Delayed Revision After Global Oil Shock**  
Officials noted that state-run oil marketing companies had kept fuel prices unchanged for several weeks despite rising global crude costs triggered by geopolitical tensions in West Asia. The recent revision, they said, reflects only a partial adjustment of accumulated under-recoveries, suggesting that further changes in fuel prices cannot be ruled out in the coming weeks.

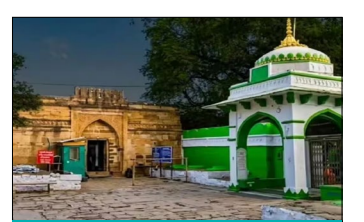


## UAE Pledges \$5 Billion for India

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
India and the United Arab Emirates on Friday signed a series of agreements covering defence cooperation, energy security, and infrastructure investment during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Gulf nation. The agreements were exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, marking a significant step in strengthening bilateral ties. **UAE Announces \$5 Billion Investment in India**  
The UAE announced investments worth \$5 billion in India, including funding for infrastructure projects and financial institutions such as RBL Bank and Samman Capital. The move is seen as a major boost to India's economic and investment landscape. **PG2**

## MP HC Declares Bhojshala Temple, Bars Namaz

**> Vikrama Vahini | Dhar(MP)**  
In a significant ruling on the long-standing Bhojshala Complex dispute, the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday declared the disputed site as a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati and barred the offering of namaz within the premises. The verdict was delivered in the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque case, which has seen competing claims from Hindu and Muslim groups over the nature and usage of the site. **Court Calls Site a Temple. Dedicated to Goddess Saraswati**



The Madhya Pradesh High Court declared Bhojshala a Saraswati temple and barred namaz at the site, ending the earlier shared prayer arrangement in the long-standing dispute. The court's ruling marks a major shift in the management of the disputed religious site.

A division bench comprising Justices Vijay Kumar Shukla and Alok Awasthi observed that the site is a place of worship dedicated to Goddess Saraswati. Based on its findings, the court upheld the Hindu claim over the premises. The court also set aside earlier arrangements that had permitted both communities to offer prayers at the site under regulated conditions. **Muslim Side Asked to Seek Alternative Land**  
During the hearing, the High Court observed that members of the Muslim community may approach authorities for alternative land to establish a mosque. The ruling effectively restricts religious practice inside the disputed structure for the Muslim side, marking a major shift in the management of the site. **Earlier ASI Arrangement Replaced by Court Order**  
The Archaeological Survey of India had implemented a regulated arrangement in 2003, under which Hindus and Muslims were allowed

to offer prayers at the site on Tuesdays and Fridays respectively. However, the High Court's latest order overrides this arrangement, following petitions seeking exclusive worship rights at the location. **Petition Sought Exclusive Worship Rights**  
The Hindu side had approached the court demanding exclusive rights to worship at the site, arguing historical and religious significance. The court's ruling has now granted legal backing to that claim while restricting access for opposing claims within the premises. The decision is expected to have wider legal and social implications, as the dispute over Bhojshala has been a sensitive issue in the region for decades. The verdict is likely to intensify debate around the long-standing Bhojshala dispute and its future legal trajectory.

## IMD ISSUES HEAVY RAIN ALERTS ACROSS KERALA

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued orange and yellow alerts across several districts of Kerala, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next five days. The weather agency also indicated that the southwest monsoon may reach Kerala earlier than usual, around May 26.

### Monsoon Expected Early This Year

The IMD said the southwest monsoon is likely to arrive over Kerala on May 26, with a possible variation of four days. The normal onset date is around June 1. Last year, the monsoon reached Kerala on May 24, marking an early arrival compared to the long-term average.

**Heavy Rain Alerts Across Districts**  
The IMD issued an orange alert for Idukki and

Malappuram on May 15, indicating very heavy rainfall. A yellow alert has been issued for several

Kasaragod. For May 16 and May 17, yellow alerts continue in multiple districts, signalling the possibility of sustained heavy rainfall ranging between 64.5 mm and 115.5 mm. **Authorities Issue Safety Advisory**  
The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has urged people in landslide-prone, flood-prone and erosion-prone areas to move to safer locations if instructed. **PG2**

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Editorial

Cost of Conflict

The ongoing tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran have cast a long shadow over the global economy. Even though a temporary ceasefire appears to have reduced immediate military escalation, the economic consequences of the conflict continue to intensify across the world. Crude oil prices remain volatile, international markets are under pressure and investor uncertainty has pushed precious metals such as gold and silver to record highs. For countries dependent on energy imports, the crisis has become particularly severe. India, which relies heavily on imported crude oil to meet its growing energy demands, finds itself exposed to the ripple effects of this geopolitical instability.

One of the most damaging aspects of the conflict has been the attacks on critical oil infrastructure in the Middle East during the early stages of the war. Although tensions around the strategically significant Strait of Hormuz may have temporarily eased, experts believe the reconstruction of damaged crude oil facilities could take at least two to three years. This prolonged disruption threatens to keep global fuel prices elevated for an extended period. It is in this context that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to citizens to embrace the principle of "frugality" and responsible consumption. At a time when India aspires to transition from a developing nation into a developed economy, an externally triggered conflict has emerged as a major economic obstacle that cannot be ignored.

Under these circumstances, difficult policy decisions become unavoidable. While an increase in petrol and diesel prices may be economically necessary, the Union government has attempted to ensure that the burden on ordinary citizens remains manageable. Fuel price hikes inevitably affect transportation and essential commodities, thereby influencing the broader cost of living. Political criticism over rising fuel prices is expected in any democracy, but national interest must prevail during extraordinary global crises. In times shaped by war and economic uncertainty, every responsible citizen has a duty to stand with the nation, support prudent economic measures and contribute towards maintaining stability and resilience.

-Editor

FUEL PRICE HIKE, INFLATION, RUPEE FALL: ECONOMIC PRESSURE MOUNTS

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Rising petrol and diesel prices, higher inflation, and a weakening rupee are collectively increasing pressure on India's economy and the common man, financial expert CA Vikas Kumar Tiwari has said.

Speaking on the impact of macroeconomic trends, Tiwari noted that fuel price hikes directly push up transportation and essential commodity costs, affecting household budgets. He said a weak rupee further increases import costs, especially for crude oil, electronics, and machinery, thereby intensifying inflationary pressure.

Inflation Raising Cost Burden

Tiwari said rising retail and wholesale inflation is forcing consumers to cut spending on non-essential goods, while businesses face higher production costs and shrinking profit margins. He added that sustained price pressure may lead to tighter monetary policy, including possible interest rate hikes by the



Reserve Bank of India.

Rupee Depreciation Impact

According to him, a falling rupee increases costs for imports and overseas education, while benefiting export-oriented sectors such as IT and pharmaceuticals. He said stability in the currency depends on strong macroeconomic fundamentals and capital inflows.

RBI Policy Outlook

On the upcoming RBI monetary policy, Tiwari said the central bank is likely to maintain a balanced approach between inflation control and growth support. While a repo rate hike could help control inflation and support the rupee, it may also slow consumption and investment, he added.

IMD ISSUES HEAVY RAIN ALERTS ACROSS KERALA

> From PGi

Residents have been advised to avoid crossing rivers, entering water bodies, and unnecessary travel to hilly, coastal and waterfall regions.

Officials also warned against risky behaviour such as standing on bridges during rising water levels.

Emergency Preparedness Strengthened

District control rooms have been made fully operational round the clock. Emergency assistance can be accessed through toll-free numbers 1077 and 1070, officials said.

Authorities have also cautioned residents living in structurally weak houses to take precautionary measures due to the likelihood of strong winds and heavy rain. Authorities urged people in vulnerable areas to remain alert and strictly follow safety advisories issued by disaster management teams.

NSG Mock Drill at KSR Bengaluru Station



> Vikrama Vahini | Bluru

A large-scale inter-agency mock security drill was conducted at KSR Bengaluru Railway Station under the leadership of the National Security Guard to assess preparedness against potential security threats.

The exercise involved the Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police, Garuda Special Force, and Karnataka Police. Officials said the drill tested rapid response, coordination, passenger evacuation, and real-time communication during

simulated emergency situations. Authorities stated that the exercise helped strengthen security preparedness and inter-agency coordination at major railway stations. The mock operation included simulated hijack and hostage-like scenarios, with specialised teams carrying out tactical assault and building clearance exercises as part of the high-intensity training programme. Officials said such drills are essential to improve emergency preparedness and ensure passenger safety at crowded public transport hubs.

Man Dies After Underage Wedding Halted

> Vikrama Vahini | Chintamani

Tension prevailed near Batlahalli Police Station in Chintamani taluk on Friday after a 47-year-old man allegedly died following the cancellation of his underage son's marriage.

The deceased, identified as Venkataramanappa of Byrebande village, reportedly became distressed after officials stopped the wedding on grounds that the groom

A 47-year-old man died after authorities halted his underage son's marriage in Chintamani, triggering protests by villagers who accused police of harassment. Police denied the allegations, saying officials only acted to enforce child marriage laws.

had not yet attained the legal marriageable age of 21 years.

According to police, officials first visited the marriage hall after receiving information about the proposed underage marriage. While

the family produced an Aadhaar card showing the groom's age as 23, verification of SSLC records reportedly revealed that he was still below the legal age.

Police later revisited the venue

following another complaint and warned the family against conducting the marriage, stating that legal action could follow.

Later that night, Venkata ramanappa reportedly collapsed and was declared dead at a nearby hospital.

Following the incident, villagers staged a protest outside the police station, accusing police of mentally harassing the deceased.

Google May Reduce Free Storage to 5GB

> From PGi

Experts say the revised storage policy could significantly affect users who depend on free cloud space for personal files, photos, and documents, especially in developing markets where paid subscriptions are less common. They also noted that stricter verification measures may help reduce fake or spam accounts, but could raise concerns over data privacy and increased reliance on mobile-linked identity checks.

UAE Pledges \$5 Billion for India

> From PGi

Defence Cooperation Agreement Signed

A key outcome of the visit was a framework agreement on a strategic defence partnership between India and the UAE. The pact aims to deepen cooperation in defence manufacturing, security collaboration, and regional stability.

Energy Security and Fuel Supply Deals

Both countries also signed agreements related to strategic petroleum reserves and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply.

These deals are expected to enhance India's energy security amid ongoing global supply disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

PM Modi Calls for Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts

During the visit, PM Modi thanked the UAE leadership for its

support to the Indian community and appreciated their "family-like" care. He also expressed concern over the ongoing West Asia conflict, stressing the need for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve regional tensions peacefully.

The visit further reinforced India-UAE ties across defence, energy, and strategic sectors, reflecting a shared commitment to long-term cooperation and regional stability.

Officials from both sides said the new agreements will also open fresh opportunities for joint investments and technology sharing, particularly in critical infrastructure and energy diversification projects.

They added that the partnership is expected to strengthen supply chain resilience and support long-term economic cooperation between the two countries.

Forgery Allegations Rock Sahithya Parishath

> Vikrama Vahini | Bangalore

Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Mahesh Joshi has reportedly lodged a police complaint alleging that a conspiracy was hatched against him by creating forged documents with the intention of tarnishing his reputation.

The complaint has been registered at the VV Puram Police Station in Bengaluru against former in-charge manager Parshvanath, first division assistant B. Ravikumar, and former administrator K.M. Gayathri of the Parishat.

An investigation

had earlier been initiated into an alleged misappropriation of ₹7 crore involving Mahesh Joshi and others in the Parishat, and the matter is currently under judicial consideration.

In his complaint, Joshi alleged that the administrators and managers of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat misused their authority by involving office staff in an attempt to revoke the membership of himself and other office-bearers. He further accused them of engaging in forgery, criminal conspiracy, manipulation of records, and other serious offences. The VV Puram police have accepted the complaint and begun a preliminary inquiry.

According to the complaint, Parshvanath, who had served as

the in-charge manager of the Parishat, submitted files to the administrators seeking the cancellation of Mahesh Joshi's membership even after his retirement from service.

Although a file number was mentioned in the submission, no date or official file reference was recorded in the note.

Parshvanath had officially retired on January 31. Despite this, the note was allegedly forwarded through first division assistant Ravikumar to former administrator Gayathri for approval. Joshi has claimed that this was part of a deliberate conspiracy carried out by the three individuals with malicious intent against him and other office-bearers.

NEWS

AID TO DIFFERENTLY-ABLED MARKS DCM BIRTHDAY

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

On the occasion of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President D. K. Shivakumar's birthday, a social service programme was organised at Maurya Hotel Hall, where financial assistance was distributed to blind children, differently-abled persons, and students.

Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy attended the event and extended birthday greetings to Shivakumar. He also participated in a cake-cutting ceremony with visually impaired children and distributed aid to institutions supporting differently-abled individuals.

The programme was organised as part of the birthday celebrations of D.K. Shivakumar, featuring support initiatives for underprivileged groups. Several party leaders and workers were present during the event.



Speaking on the occasion, Ramalinga Reddy described D.K. Shivakumar as a strong organisational leader and credited him as a key figure behind the Congress party coming to power in the state. He also expressed confidence that the Congress party would return to power in the 2028 and 2033 Assembly elections.

Reddy criticised the Centre over issues related to fuel price hikes and alleged misuse of power, stating that the BJP-led government had

increased petrol and diesel prices after elections. He also commented on electoral processes, suggesting that a fresh voter list should be prepared instead of the current system.

The programme was attended by KPCC General Secretary and MEI Chairman S. Manohar along with several party leaders including A. Anand, G. Janardhan, Prakash, Chandrashekar, Kushal Aruve Gowda, Puttaraju, and other Congress workers.

ORR to Get Bus Priority Lane

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bengaluru Traffic Police and Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) are preparing to reintroduce a redesigned priority lane system on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) to ease severe traffic congestion in the city's busiest IT corridor.

Officials said the move aims to improve the movement of Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses and encourage the use of public transport in heavily congested stretches such as Iblur, Bellandur, and Marathahalli.

The ORR currently carries nearly 2.5 times its

designed capacity, leading to frequent traffic bottlenecks, especially during peak hours. Authorities believe prioritising bus movement will reduce travel time and improve overall traffic flow.

A dedicated priority corridor for buses was earlier implemented on the ORR but was later discontinued due to operational challenges. The new plan, officials said, will be redesigned for better enforcement and smoother implementation.

Traffic police have already held discussions with BMTC and GBA officials, and initial feedback from commuters has been positive, according to sources.

Muthalik Opposes Hijab Move



> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar

Pramod Muthalik on Friday alleged that allowing hijabs in educational institutions while the matter is still pending before the Supreme Court would amount to contempt of court, and said legal action would be initiated against the government.

Addressing a press conference at the District Collector's office in Kolar, the Sri Rama Sene leader criticised the state government's reported move to permit hijabs in schools and colleges. He termed the stand of Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa "unwise" and said school uniform policies were introduced to promote equality among students.

Criticism Over Religious Symbols

Muthalik also reacted to arguments supporting the use of religious symbols such as janivara and rudraksha, questioning why traditional Hindu practices should require official approval.

Allegations in Child Trafficking Case

Referring to a recent child trafficking case in Bangarapet, Muthalik alleged that Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan had influenced police officials in connection with the release of 42

minor Muslim boys allegedly being transported illegally from Bihar to Haveri.

He said a complaint had been submitted to the district administration seeking legal action under relevant sections.

Remarks on Madrasa Activities and NEET Leak

Muthalik further claimed that similar cases involving minors had surfaced in Bengaluru and Tumakuru and accused the state government of remaining silent on alleged illegal activities linked to some madrasas. He also demanded strict action against those involved in the NEET examination paper leak case.

Tension at DC Office

Following the submission of the complaint, Muthalik and his supporters held a press conference inside the DC office premises. During the event, Additional Deputy Commissioner S.M. Mangala reportedly questioned police officials for permitting the press interaction within the office complex. He warned that public protests would be organised across the state if the government proceeds with any policy decision permitting hijabs in educational institutions.

SCIENCE & Technology

xAI Launches Grok Build to Rival Claude

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Elon Musk-led xAI has launched its first AI-powered coding agent, "Grok Build," as the company intensifies competition in the fast-growing artificial intelligence software development sector.

The tool, currently in early testing, is available to paid subscribers and is designed to assist developers with complex coding tasks through text-based prompts. Industry observers view the launch as xAI's direct challenge to Anthropic and its widely used Claude AI models, which have gained popularity among software developers.

Focus on AI Coding Competition

The AI coding segment has emerged as one of the most competitive areas in the technology industry, with companies racing to build systems capable of writing, debugging, and managing software efficiently.

Reports indicate that xAI is working to close the gap with leading competitors in coding performance. Company executives are reportedly pushing teams to improve Grok Build's capabilities to match or surpass existing AI coding platforms in the coming months.

Expansion and Restructuring at xAI

The launch also comes amid internal restructuring at xAI as the company expands operations and strengthens partnerships. The firm recently announced collaboration efforts with coding platform Cursor to improve coding infrastructure and computing systems.

At the same time, xAI has witnessed several high-profile exits, including senior researchers and engineering leaders, even as it continues aggressive hiring and expansion in the artificial intelligence sector.

GOVT CAPS DUTY-FREE GOLD IMPORTS AT 100 KG

**Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
The Centre has tightened rules for duty-free gold imports, setting a cap of 100 kilograms per Advance Authorization licence as part of measures to curb gold imports and support the Indian rupee. The move comes a day after the government raised import duties on gold and silver from 6% to 15%, further tightening controls on precious metal inflows. **Stricter Norms for Exporters Under DGFT Rules**  
The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has revised norms for gems and jewellery exporters under the Advance Authorization (AA) scheme. The updated rules limit duty-free gold imports to 100 kg per licence. First-time applicants will now be



and preventing misuse of the scheme. The changes have been incorporated into the Handbook of Procedures 2023 and apply immediately to all relevant norms in the gems and jewellery sector. **Record Gold Imports Despite Restrictions**  
India's gold imports rose sharply in FY26, increasing by over 24% to reach \$71.98 billion, even though import volumes fell by 4.76% to 721.03 tonnes due to higher global prices. Switzerland remained the largest supplier, accounting for nearly 40% of imports, followed by the UAE and South Africa. Officials said the rising import bill has prompted tighter regulatory measures amid efforts to manage foreign exchange outflows and stabilise the currency.

known each other since their coaching days in Sikar, where they were preparing for medical entrance examinations, and that the relationship allegedly evolved into an organised cheating network. The CBI is probing how several members of the family secured admission to government medical colleges after NEET-2025 results were declared. These include Vikas Biwal, Pragati, Gunjan, Sania and Palak. Despite varied academic records, all five reportedly secured medical seats, prompting investigators to review their performance patterns and exam scores. Investigators further allege that arrangements were being made for NEET-2026 as well, including plans to provide leaked papers to another family member. The CBI is also examining financial transactions worth crores of rupees, suspected to have been used for property and luxury vehicle purchases. Following arrests, a Delhi court has remanded several accused to custody, while searches have led to the recovery of documents, bank records and alleged examination materials.

NEET Scam: Jaipur Family Under Scanner

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the NEET-2026 paper leak case has widened, with investigators now examining possible irregularities in NEET-2025 as well. Officials suspect the same network may have been involved in leaking question papers across multiple exam cycles. A Jaipur-based family is under intense scrutiny in the case, with key accused identified as Vikas Biwal, his father Mangil Biwal, and uncle Dinesh Biwal. Several other family members are also being probed for allegedly benefiting from leaked examination papers. Investigators are also examining the role of Gurugram-based alleged middleman Yash Yadav, who is suspected of supplying question papers to the group. CBI sources claim that a deal worth around ₹25 lakh was struck ahead of NEET-2025. It is alleged that the question paper was provided a few days before the exam, which was then circulated among family members for preparation. Officials said the accused had

known each other since their coaching days in Sikar, where they were preparing for medical entrance examinations, and that the relationship allegedly evolved into an organised cheating network. The CBI is probing how several members of the family secured admission to government medical colleges after NEET-2025 results were declared. These include Vikas Biwal, Pragati, Gunjan, Sania and Palak. Despite varied academic records, all five reportedly secured medical seats, prompting investigators to review their performance patterns and exam scores. Investigators further allege that arrangements were being made for NEET-2026 as well, including plans to provide leaked papers to another family member. The CBI is also examining financial transactions worth crores of rupees, suspected to have been used for property and luxury vehicle purchases. Following arrests, a Delhi court has remanded several accused to custody, while searches have led to the recovery of documents, bank records and alleged examination materials.



SC Relief for Darshan in Murder Case



**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
The Supreme Court on Friday observed that actor Darshan may seek bail again if there is no significant progress in the trial of the Renukaswamy murder case within the next one year. A bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi heard Darshan's plea seeking bail on grounds of delay in trial proceedings. The court directed the trial court to ensure speedy examination of 60 key witnesses within a year and suggested conducting day-to-day hearings if necessary. It also stated that unnecessary adjournments should be avoided. During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi argued that only 10 witnesses had been examined in the past seven months and sought consideration for bail if the trial continued to be delayed. The Karnataka government informed the court that there are 272 witnesses in the charge sheet and maintained that the trial is progressing. The prosecution also alleged that delays were partly due to lengthy cross-examinations by defence lawyers. The Supreme Court directed prison authorities to provide all facilities available to undertrial prisoners as per jail rules and disposed of the plea, allowing Darshan to approach the court again if the trial does not progress substantially within a year.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

## FUEL PRICE HIKE ACROSS INDIA

**PETROL** | **DIESEL** | **CNG**

**PETROL** Crosses ₹110 per litre in some states  
**DIESEL** Crosses ₹100 per litre in Andhra Pradesh  
**CNG** Delhi CNG now costs ₹79.09 per kg (₹2 hike)

**CNG PRICE HIKE**

FUEL TYPE	LOCATION	OLD PRICE	NEW PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
CNG	DELHI	₹77.09 per kg	₹79.09 per kg	₹2 per kg

Mumbai Metropolitan Region also saw a hike of ₹2 per kg

**PETROL PRICES IN METRO CITIES & STATE CAPITALS**

CITY	PETROL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
New Delhi	₹97.77 per litre	₹3.00
Kolkata	₹108.70 per litre	₹3.25
Mumbai	₹106.68 per litre	₹3.14
Chennai	₹103.67 per litre	₹2.87
Gurgaon	₹98.47 per litre	₹3.17
Noida	₹97.78 per litre	₹3.04
Bangalore	₹106.21 per litre	₹3.25
Bhubaneswar	₹104.19 per litre	₹3.22
Chandigarh	₹101.21	₹2.97
Hyderabad	₹110.89 per litre	₹3.30
Jaipur	₹107.97 per litre	₹2.94
Lucknow	₹97.55 per litre	₹2.82
Patna	₹108.55 per litre	₹3.01
Thiruvananthapuram	₹110.58 per litre	₹3.20

Every ₹3 per litre hike means ₹120 extra on a 40-litre tank

**DIESEL PRICES IN METRO CITIES & STATE CAPITALS**

CITY	DIESEL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
New Delhi	₹90.67 per litre	₹3.00
Kolkata	₹95.13 per litre	₹3.11
Mumbai	₹93.14 per litre	₹3.11
Chennai	₹95.25 per litre	₹2.86
Gurgaon	₹90.94 per litre	₹3.17
Noida	₹91.02 per litre	₹3.21
Bangalore	₹94.10 per litre	₹3.11
Bhubaneswar	₹95.74 per litre	₹3.19
Chandigarh	₹92.50	₹2.85
Hyderabad	₹98.96 per litre	₹3.08
Jaipur	₹93.23 per litre	₹2.74
Lucknow	₹90.82 per litre	₹2.96
Patna	₹94.63 per litre	₹2.85
Thiruvananthapuram	₹99.35 per litre	₹3.09

**STATE-WISE PETROL PRICE LIST**

STATE / UT	PETROL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	STATE / UT	PETROL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
Andaman & Nicobar	₹84.99	₹2.53	Karnataka	₹106.21	₹3.25
Andhra Pradesh	₹113.03	₹3.29	Kerala	₹110.58	₹3.20
Arunachal Pradesh	₹93.88	₹3.21	Ladakh	₹106.05	₹2.88
Assam	₹101.21	₹2.97	Lakshadweep	₹103.51	₹2.76
Bihar	₹108.55	₹3.01	Madhya Pradesh	₹109.71	₹3.30
Chandigarh	₹97.27	₹2.97	Maharashtra	₹106.68	₹3.14
Chhattisgarh	₹103.56	₹3.11	Manipur	₹102.28	₹3.13
Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu	₹95.33	₹2.89	Meghalaya	₹98.86	₹2.60
Delhi	₹97.77	₹3.00	Mizoram	₹102.11	₹2.56
Goa	₹99.76	₹3.19	Nagaland	₹99.97	₹2.28
Gujarat	₹97.95	₹3.35	Odisha	₹103.19	₹3.22
Haryana	₹98.95	₹3.00	Puducherry	₹99.25	₹2.99
Himachal Pradesh	₹98.31	₹2.93	Punjab	₹101.19	₹2.90
Jammu & Kashmir	₹99.83	₹3.34	Rajasthan	₹107.97	₹2.94
Jharkhand	₹100.84	₹2.98	Sikkim	₹106.50	₹3.05
			Tamil Nadu	₹103.67	₹2.87
			Telangana	₹110.89	₹3.39
			Tripura	₹103.61	₹3.08
			Uttar Pradesh	₹97.55	₹2.82
			Uttarakhand	₹96.23	₹2.68
			West Bengal	₹108.70	₹3.25

**STATE-WISE DIESEL PRICE LIST**

STATE / UT	DIESEL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	STATE / UT	DIESEL PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
Andaman & Nicobar	₹80.64	₹2.59	Karnataka	₹94.10	₹3.11
Andhra Pradesh	₹100.71	₹3.14	Kerala	₹99.35	₹3.09
Arunachal Pradesh	₹83.28	₹3.06	Ladakh	₹90.95	₹2.73
Assam	₹92.50	₹2.84	Lakshadweep	₹96.54	₹2.83
Bihar	₹94.63	₹2.85	Madhya Pradesh	₹94.88	₹3.08
Chandigarh	₹85.25	₹2.80	Maharashtra	₹93.14	₹3.11
Chhattisgarh	₹96.55	₹3.16	Manipur	₹88.15	₹2.92
Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu	₹90.91	₹2.97	Meghalaya	₹90.12	₹2.40
Delhi	₹90.67	₹3.00	Mizoram	₹90.80	₹2.22
Goa	₹91.49	₹3.16	Nagaland	₹91.36	₹2.54
Gujarat	₹93.73	₹3.46	Odisha	₹95.74	₹3.19
Haryana	₹91.41	₹3.01	Puducherry	₹89.39	₹2.92
Himachal Pradesh	₹90.28	₹3.04	Punjab	₹90.97	₹2.88
Jammu & Kashmir	₹88.52	₹3.19	Rajasthan	₹93.23	₹2.74
Jharkhand	₹95.76	₹3.14	Sikkim	₹93.40	₹2.85
			Tamil Nadu	₹95.25	₹2.86
			Telangana	₹98.96	₹3.26
			Tripura	₹95.50	₹2.95
			Uttar Pradesh	₹90.82	₹2.96
			Uttarakhand	₹91.35	₹2.91
			West Bengal	₹95.13	₹3.11

**WHY FUEL PRICES HAVE GONE UP?**

- Global crude oil prices have surged due to the Iran-US conflict and the Strait of Hormuz crisis.
- India had held back price hikes earlier, but oil marketing companies faced heavy under-recoveries.
- Now, the entire fuel basket - petrol, diesel and CNG - has become costlier across the country.

Railway Drama Contest Held in Mysuru

**Vikrama Vahini | Mysuru**  
The South Western Railway Mysuru Division organised an Inter-Department Drama Competition to promote cultural activities and encourage employees to showcase their artistic talents. Divisional Railway Manager Mudit Mittal highlighted the importance of such programmes in promoting creativity, teamwork, and personal growth among staff members. Five teams from different departments participated in the event. The Commercial Branch won the Overall Best Team and Best



Drama awards, while the Engineering Department finished runner-up. The competition was judged by theatre personalities Ramaswamy and Nagendrakumar. Officials said the event witnessed enthusiastic participation from employees, with performances reflecting social themes, humour, and teamwork. The audience appreciated the efforts of the participating teams and encouraged similar cultural initiatives in the future.

ENTERTAINMENT

RANBIR KAPOOR BUYS AYODHYA LAND AHEAD OF 'RAMAYANA'

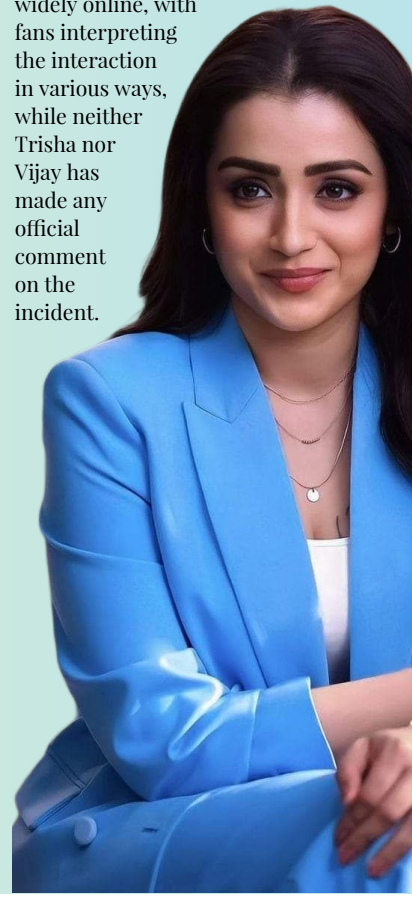
**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Actor Ranbir Kapoor has purchased a land parcel in Ayodhya ahead of the release of his upcoming film Ramayana, marking a notable investment in one of India's most prominent spiritual and real estate destinations. The actor has acquired a 2.134 sq ft plot in the premium development project "The Sarayu" by The House of Abhinandan Lodha (HoABL). The land is valued at approximately ₹3.31 crore. With this purchase, Kapoor becomes the second major Bollywood personality to invest in Ayodhya real estate, following veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan. **Kapoor Calls Investment 'A Calling from Ayodhya'**  
In a statement, Ranbir Kapoor described the purchase as a deeply personal decision, saying, "I believe Ayodhya has chosen me, and I have just answered this calling." He added that Ayodhya holds deep cultural and historical significance and said the land would form part of his family legacy. He also praised the digital and transparent

process offered by HoABL. **Luxury Development with Spiritual Focus**  
The "The Sarayu" project is designed as a premium residential and lifestyle development combining spiritual heritage with modern infrastructure. It is expected to feature a clubhouse, over 35 amenities, and a five-acre vegetarian luxury hotel operated by The Leela group. Developers say the project aims to position Ayodhya as a global destination blending spirituality, tourism, and modern urban planning. **Ayodhya Emerging as Investment Hub**  
Real estate activity in Ayodhya has surged in recent years, driven by infrastructure development and rising tourism following major religious and cultural developments in the city. Industry experts say high-profile investments are further boosting confidence in the region's long-term growth potential. **Connection to 'Ramayana' Film**  
Kapoor is set to portray Lord Ram in director Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming epic Ramayana, one of the most ambitious Indian film projects in production. The film features a star-studded cast including Yash as Ravana, Sunny Deol as Hanuman, Ravi Dubey as Lakshman, and Sai Pallavi as Sita. The project is reportedly being made on a massive budget of around ₹4,000 crore and will be released in two parts. The development has sparked renewed interest in Ayodhya's luxury real estate market, with developers expecting increased participation from high-net-worth individuals and institutional investors in the coming months. Analysts say such high-profile investments could further accelerate the city's transformation into a major spiritual and tourism-driven economic hub, alongside ongoing infrastructure expansion and connectivity projects. The investment highlights Ayodhya's growing appeal as a blend of spirituality and premium real estate development.

Trisha Blushes as Vijay Mention Goes Viral

**Vikrama Vahini | Chennai**  
A video featuring popular South Indian actor Trisha Krishnan reacting shyly when fans mentioned actor and politician Vijay has gone viral on social media, triggering widespread discussion among fans and film circles. The incident reportedly took place during the screening of the big-budget film Karuppu at Rohini Silver Screens in Chennai on Friday (May 15), where Trisha attended the event and interacted briefly with fans gathered outside the theatre. As she was leaving the venue, fans surrounded her car, requesting photographs and videos. During the interaction, one of the fans jokingly mentioned Vijay's name and asked her to convey a message to him. The moment immediately drew attention as Trisha broke into a smile, appeared visibly shy, and responded with a light "definitely," before lowering her head in embarrassment. Inside the car, she was seen continuing to smile and engaging briefly with her phone while fans outside kept cheering and calling her name. The clip has since spread rapidly across social media platforms, with users sharing and reacting to her expression and behaviour, further fuelling speculation about the nature of her reported rapport with Vijay. **Earlier Public Appearance Adds to Speculation**  
The viral moment comes days after Trisha's appearance at Vijay's political swearing-in ceremony in Tamil Nadu on May 10. She attended the event wearing a blue and gold saree and was seen interacting warmly with Vijay's mother, Shobha. She was also seated in the front row alongside Vijay's family members, including his parents, which drew significant public attention and online

commentary. **Background of the Actors**  
Trisha Krishnan is one of the leading actresses in South Indian cinema with a career spanning over two decades. She was previously engaged to businessman Varun Manian in 2015, but the engagement was called off the same year. Vijay is a leading Tamil film actor who entered politics in recent years and has been actively involved in public and political engagements. He married his longtime fan Sangeetha in 1999, and the couple has two children. The viral video continues to trend widely online, with fans interpreting the interaction in various ways, while neither Trisha nor Vijay has made any official comment on the incident.



BUSINESS

ITR Filing 2026: I-T Dept Releases ITR-1, ITR-4 Utilities

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Income Tax Department on Friday released Excel utilities for ITR-1 and ITR-4 for Assessment Year 2026-27, officially marking the beginning of the income tax return filing season for Financial Year 2025-26. The offline utilities are now available for download on the department's e-filing portal, enabling eligible taxpayers to begin filing their returns. **Early Start Aimed at Reducing Last-Minute Rush**  
Officials said the early release will help salaried individuals, pensioners, small business owners and professionals under presumptive taxation schemes start the filing process in advance and avoid last-minute congestion ahead of the July 31 deadline. **What is an ITR?**  
An Income Tax Return (ITR) is a form used by taxpayers to declare income, deductions and tax liabilities to the government. There are seven types of ITR forms, and the applicable form depends on the taxpayer's income category and sources of earnings. **Who Can File ITR-1 and ITR-4**  
ITR-1 is applicable to resident individuals earning up to ₹50 lakh annually, including income from salary, pension, one house property and interest income. It also allows limited capital gains and small agricultural income. ITR-4 applies to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and eligible firms with income up to ₹50 lakh under presumptive taxation schemes. It covers income under Sections 44AD, 44ADA and 44AE, along with specified capital gains limits. The department said more utilities will be released in a phased manner as the filing season progresses. Taxpayers are advised to download the utilities from the official e-filing portal and begin preparation early to ensure smooth and timely submission.

SPORTS

## IPL 2026 Makes History with Centuries by All 10 Teams

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Indian Premier League created a historic milestone this season as players from all 10 franchises scored centuries, marking the first such feat in the tournament's history.  
With only a few league-stage matches remaining before the playoffs, IPL 2026 has witnessed explosive batting displays, multiple 200-plus totals, and several successful high-scoring run chases.  
The landmark was achieved after Virat Kohli smashed a century for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Kolkata Knight Riders. The knock marked Kohli's ninth IPL hundred and completed the rare record of every franchise registering at least one century in the same season.

**Century Makers Across Teams**  
For Chennai Super Kings, Sanju Samson scored two centuries, while Mumbai Indians saw hundreds from Quinton de Kock, Tilak Varma, and Ryan Rickelton.  
Sai Sudharsan scored for Gujarat Titans, while Abhishek Sharma registered a century for Sunrisers Hyderabad.  
Fifteen-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi starred for Rajasthan Royals with a stunning 36-ball century, becoming one of the youngest centuries in IPL history.  
Mitchell Marsh scored for Lucknow Super Giants, while KL Rahul hit a century for Delhi Capitals.  
Young Australian batter Cooper Connolly scored for Punjab Kings, and Finn Allen registered a century for Kolkata Knight Riders.

The season has been widely regarded as one of the most batting-dominated editions in IPL history, with fans witnessing record-breaking run-scoring throughout the tournament.

## CSK Add Kuldeep, RCB Rope in England Pacer

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have announced key mid-season replacements ahead of the IPL 2026 playoffs, strengthening their squads for the crucial final phase of the tournament.

CSK have brought in Indian spinner Kuldeep Yadav as a replacement for injured pacer Khalil Ahmed, who has been ruled out of the remainder of the season. Kuldeep joins the franchise at a base price of ₹30 lakh, adding experience and variety to CSK's bowling attack at a decisive stage of the competition.

Meanwhile, RCB have signed England fast bowler Richard Gleeson as a replacement for Sri Lankan pacer Nuwan Thushara, who failed to clear fitness tests and was ruled out of the season. Gleeson has been acquired for ₹1.6 crore and is expected to bolster RCB's pace unit ahead of the playoffs.

CSK have struggled with multiple injuries this season, with several key players already sidelined. The inclusion of Kuldeep Yadav is seen as a strategic move to stabilize their bowling department as they aim for a playoff push.

RCB, who have played 12 league matches so far, are looking to strengthen their squad depth as they prepare for the knockout stage. Gleeson previously represented CSK and Mumbai Indians in limited appearances and brings valuable T20 experience.

With the league stage nearing its conclusion, both teams are expected to rely heavily on their new additions as the competition intensifies.

## Further Fuel Price Hikes Likely: Analysts

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
Oil marketing companies have increased retail prices of petrol and diesel by over ₹3 per litre effective Thursday (May 15), but analysts say the hike may still fall short of covering rising under-recoveries, with further increases likely if the situation in the Strait of Hormuz remains unresolved.  
The latest revision comes amid heightened global oil market volatility linked to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, which have disrupted crude supply routes and pushed up import costs for India.  
**Analysts Warn of Additional Price Pressure**  
Experts believe that the current hike may not fully offset the financial strain faced by oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited.

According to analysts, if shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz continue to face disruption, additional fuel price hikes could be implemented in the coming weeks to balance rising crude import costs.  
They also noted that the recent increase appears insufficient compared to market expectations and ongoing cost pressures.  
**Rising Crude Costs and Currency Pressure**  
Experts pointed out that the landed cost of crude oil in India has surged significantly due to higher global crude prices and a weakening rupee against the US dollar, increasing overall import expenses.  
Market analysts said the fuel price adjustment reflects only a partial correction of losses being

incurred by oil marketing companies on every litre sold.  
**"Half-Hearted Measure", Say Experts**  
Some analysts described the hike as a cautious or "partial" move, suggesting that further revisions may follow if geopolitical tensions persist. They added that the government may allow time for consumers and markets to absorb the current increase before implementing any further adjustments.  
**Broader Economic Impact**  
Crude oil remains India's most expensive import item, followed by gold, making the economy highly sensitive to global oil price fluctuations. Analysts warn that sustained high crude prices could keep inflationary pressures elevated in the coming months.



## CM Demands Modi's Resignation Over Fuel Hike

**Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah slammed the Centre over the ₹3 fuel price hike, calling it anti-people and demanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi resign over inflation and economic mismanagement.**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday strongly criticised the Centre over the hike in petrol and diesel prices and demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging failure in economic management and inflation control.

In a statement, Siddaramaiah termed the ₹3 per litre increase in petrol and diesel prices as "anti-people" and described it as a direct attack on the daily lives of common citizens. He urged the Centre to immediately withdraw the decision.

**Criticism Over Economic Management:** The Chief Minister alleged that the Centre was forcing the burden of economic mismanagement, inflation, and foreign policy failures onto the public. He said the government was failing to protect the interests of ordinary citizens while increasing financial pressure on households.

**Impact on Common People**  
Siddaramaiah said fuel price hikes would trigger increases in

transportation costs and essential commodities, including vegetables, fruits, milk, and other daily-use items. He stated that workers, farmers, small traders, women managing households, and middle-class families would be the worst affected.



### Remarks on Crude Oil Prices

The Chief Minister further alleged that when global crude oil prices were low, the Centre did not pass on the benefits to consumers and instead collected higher taxes. He accused the government of shifting the full burden of rising fuel prices onto the public during difficult economic conditions.

He also criticised the Centre over inflation, the falling value of the rupee against the US dollar, and overall economic governance, calling the fuel price increase a reflection of policy failure.

He warned that continued fuel price hikes would further burden the common man and negatively impact the country's overall economy.

## IRAN SEES INDIA KEY TO WEST ASIA PEACE

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Abbas Araghchi on Friday said India enjoys a good global reputation and can play a constructive role in promoting peace and stability in West Asia.  
During his visit to India, Araghchi stressed the importance of Iran-India relations and expressed Tehran's interest in strengthening cooperation in trade, diplomacy, and energy sectors.



He also said Iran is keen to revive oil exports to India and assured safe passage for Indian vessels through the Strait of Hormuz despite regional tensions.  
The Iranian minister also thanked India for its humanitarian support and solidarity during the recent conflict, while reiterating that Tehran remains open to diplomatic dialogue if negotiations are conducted seriously and fairly.

## 3 cops Suspended in RG Kar Case

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The West Bengal government on Friday suspended three police officers over alleged lapses in the investigation into the RG Kar rape and murder case and ordered a departmental inquiry against former Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and other officials.

The case relates to the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in August 2024, which had triggered nationwide protests by doctors and medical students.

According to officials, the suspended officers are accused of mishandling the initial investigation, holding an unauthorised press conference, and allegedly attempting to offer money to the victim's family.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari said the departmental proceedings



would examine administrative lapses and would not interfere with the ongoing criminal investigation being conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Meanwhile, the victim's mother, recently elected as a BJP MLA from Panihati, said her entry into politics was part of her continued fight for justice for her daughter.

She recalled participating in protests following the incident and said the case had become a symbol of demands for better safety and accountability in healthcare institutions.

## Science Meets Spirituality

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
In an age defined by data, logic and rapid scientific advancement, a growing number of people are turning inward to seek deeper meaning and purpose beyond material explanations.

Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa, President of Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir, has shared insights on how modern science and spiritual philosophy intersect, particularly through the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.

Recalling his early academic journey as an engineering student, he said his foundation in physics and mathematics strengthened his appreciation for logical thinking.

However, he felt that while science explains how the universe functions, it does not address deeper existential questions.

He pointed to questions such as the origin of consciousness and the purpose of human existence as areas where scientific explanations often fall short, leading him to explore spiritual texts.

His transition began when a friend introduced him to Srila Prabhupada's commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. He described the experience as transformative, noting that the text offered structured and reasoned explanations rather than blind belief.

According to him, this intellectual approach to spirituality resonated with his scientific background and marked the beginning of his inner journey.

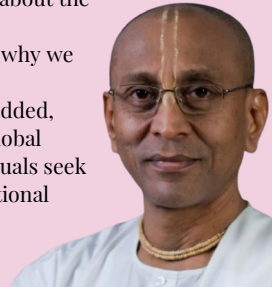
Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa said his decision to take monastic vows was not a rejection of

science but an expansion of understanding.

He explained that while science explores external laws of nature, spirituality focuses on internal awareness and consciousness. He frequently engages with students and young professionals, particularly from technical fields, encouraging them to explore both dimensions of knowledge.

"Science tells us about the universe," he noted, "spirituality tells us why we are in it."

His journey, he added, reflects a broader global trend where individuals seek balance between rational inquiry and inner reflection.



## 12.6 LAKH VISIT CHAR DHAM; 40 DEATHS REPORTED

**> Vikrama Vahini | Dehradun**  
The Char Dham Yatra 2026 has witnessed massive participation, with over 12.6 lakh devotees visiting the four Himalayan shrines of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri since the pilgrimage began.

According to official data, a total of 12,60,478 pilgrims have undertaken the journey so far, with Kedarnath emerging as the most visited shrine, recording 5,23,582 devotees. Badrinath saw 3,24,081 pilgrims, while Yamunotri and Gangotri received 2,07,390 and 2,05,425 devotees respectively.

**Heavy Rush Despite Improved Connectivity**  
Authorities said improved road infrastructure, including the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, has made access easier, leading to a surge in pilgrim numbers. However, the heavy influx has also posed challenges in crowd management and safety arrangements across the Himalayan route.

**40 Pilgrims Die, Mostly Due to Health Issues**  
Despite the spiritual enthusiasm, 40 pilgrims have died during the yatra so far. Of these, 22 deaths were reported in Kedarnath, 7 in Badrinath, 6 in Yamunotri and 5 in Gangotri.



Officials said most deaths were caused by heart attacks, altitude sickness and exhaustion, with many pilgrims reportedly ignoring medical advisories before undertaking the journey.

**Medical and Emergency Arrangements in Place**  
The state administration has deployed medical camps, ambulances and oxygen facilities along the route. Helicopter services have also been arranged for emergency evacuations, though capacity remains limited

given the scale of the pilgrimage.  
Pilgrims are being advised to undergo mandatory health check-ups before beginning the yatra and to follow safety guidelines strictly.  
Experts have raised concerns over overcrowding and inadequate regulation, warning of increased risks to elderly pilgrims. Environmental groups have also flagged concerns about pressure on the fragile Himalayan ecosystem due to rising tourist inflow.

## Doctor Saves Newborn, Wins Praise for Life-Saving Act

**> Vikrama Vahini | Saharanpur**  
In a remarkable act of presence of mind and humanity, a doctor at the Nanota Community Health Centre in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district saved the life of a newborn baby who had stopped breathing immediately after birth.

The incident occurred after a woman delivered a baby at the health centre, but the newborn failed to breathe, creating panic among the medical staff. The situation worsened when the oxygen machine at the facility reportedly failed.

In a critical moment, Dr. Ruma stepped in and began emergency life-saving efforts. She performed chest compressions and provided mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to the newborn, adhering to emergency protocols in the absence of functioning equipment.

After continuous efforts, the baby began to cry, bringing relief and emotional joy to everyone present in the room. The cry was seen as a sign of survival after a life-threatening situation.

Medical officials and locals have praised Dr. Ruma's quick thinking and dedication, calling it an inspiring example of humanity and medical commitment beyond routine protocol.

## SC Goes Virtual Twice Weekly to Save Fuel

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation, the Supreme Court of India has decided to conduct hearings exclusively through video conferencing on Mondays and Fridays.

From Tuesday to Thursday, the court will follow a hybrid system, allowing lawyers and litigants to appear either physically or virtually.

The apex court also said judges would encourage car-pooling to support fuel-saving efforts. In addition, up to 50 per cent of registry staff will be allowed to work from home for two days a week, subject to operational requirements.

The move comes amid rising global crude oil prices linked to tensions in West Asia.

Legal experts said the move could help reduce travel expenses and traffic congestion while also promoting wider use of digital technology in the justice delivery system. However, physical hearings will continue where personal presence is considered necessary.

## Rahul to Be INDIA Bloc PM Face: Revanth



**> Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad**  
A. Revanth Reddy on Friday announced that Rahul Gandhi would be projected as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the INDIA alliance in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking at the Way2News Conclave 2026 in Hyderabad, Revanth Reddy said the Congress would first officially declare Rahul Gandhi's candidature and later seek support from alliance partners within the INDIA bloc.

He said Rahul Gandhi's focus was to bring the Congress back to power and claimed that he had personally urged him to accept the responsibility of leading the country.

The Telangana Chief Minister also praised Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, describing the Gandhi family as deeply committed to the nation.

Revanth Reddy further expressed confidence that the Congress-led alliance would remain in power at the Centre from 2024 to 2034 and said he aimed to continue serving as Telangana Chief Minister until 2034 while working towards increasing the state's contribution to the national economy.

## NEET Scam Kingpin Arrested

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested the alleged mastermind in the NEET UG question paper leak case, identifying him as chemistry professor P.V. Kulkarni, who ran a coaching centre in Pune.

According to officials, Kulkarni was involved in the question paper preparation process for the National Testing Agency (NTA) and allegedly misused his access to leak papers to select students through his private coaching classes.

Investigators said Kulkarni distributed question papers and answers to students during coaching sessions, where he dictated questions and solutions that later matched the actual NEET UG paper. He is also accused of selling papers to agents for a large sum of money, who further circulated them across Maharashtra.

The CBI stated that Kulkarni worked with another accused, Manisha Waghmare, to prepare students in advance. The leaked material was allegedly used for special training sessions conducted in Pune before the exam.

So far, eight people have been arrested in connection with the case across Jaipur, Gurugram, Nashik, Pune and Ahilyanagar. Five of the accused have already been sent to police custody, while the remaining are being produced for transit remand before being shifted to Delhi for further investigation.