



Wildlife photographer Sonal Monteiro, along with Sandalwood star couple Tarun Sudhir and Sonal Monteiro, embarked on a thrilling safari adventure, exploring the dense forest in a gypsy vehicle and capturing stunning moments of wildlife—including elephants and blackbucks—up close through their lenses.

The X (formerly Twitter) account of the satirical political collective Cockroach Janta Party has been withheld in India following a legal demand, its founder Abhijeet Dipke confirmed, just days after the campaign went viral online.



Good morning

A happy person is happy, not because everything is right in his life. He is happy because his attitude towards everything in his life is right.

BRIEFS

DCM Rejects CM Buzz, Denies Seeking Reward

> Vikrama Vahini | B'luru
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Thursday firmly dismissed speculation over a possible change in leadership, stating that he has "never asked for wages" for his work in the Congress party.

Sharp Response to Rajanna's Remarks Shivakumar's comments came in response to senior MLA K. N. Rajanna, who reportedly suggested that Home Minister G. Parameshwara deserved the Chief Minister's post ahead of Shivakumar, citing his long tenure as KPCC president.

Reacting strongly, Shivakumar questioned whether such statements implied that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah should step down.

"Have I ever said that the Chief Minister should be changed? I have never asked anyone for wages," he told reporters. **PG2..**

Rubio India Visit: Nuclear Energy in Focus

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit India from May 23 to 26 to strengthen cooperation in energy, trade, defence, and emerging technologies, with civil nuclear energy expected to be a key focus area.

Ahead of the visit, US and Indian delegations held discussions on expanding nuclear collaboration and investment opportunities, including small modular reactors and private sector participation in India's energy sector.

Officials said the visit will also advance broader strategic cooperation under initiatives covering AI, semiconductors, quantum technologies, and critical minerals.

Govt Assures Fuel Supply, Seafarers Safe

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Government has assured that sufficient stocks of petrol, diesel and LPG are available across the country despite evolving geopolitical tensions in West Asia, and confirmed that Indian seafarers in the Gulf region are safe.

Officials said all fuel outlets are operating normally with no shortage reported, while refineries and LPG production continue at full capacity to ensure uninterrupted supply.

The Government has also urged citizens not to panic buy fuel or LPG and warned against misinformation, stating that maritime operations remain stable and repatriation of Indian seafarers is ongoing.

SEAT ALLOTMENT BEGINS AMID NEET CONFUSION

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Amid ongoing controversy over alleged question paper leaks and continued uncertainty surrounding entrance examinations, the Karnataka government has decided to proceed with the seat allotment process for professional courses without waiting for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)-related timelines.

The decision has been taken to ensure that the academic calendar is not disrupted and that students are not left in prolonged uncertainty due to delays in national-level examination processes. Officials said the move is aimed at balancing urgency in admissions with administrative clarity



and regulatory requirements.

According to sources, the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will begin the counselling and seat

allotment process in a phased manner for engineering, medical, and other professional courses. The process will be carried out even as concerns

continue over fairness, transparency, and coordination in competitive examinations.

Education department officials said the state government is closely monitoring the situation following allegations of question paper leaks in various entrance tests across the country. These incidents have triggered wider demands for stricter monitoring systems, improved security measures, and reforms in examination conduct and evaluation mechanisms.

The decision is expected to impact thousands of students seeking admission to professional courses in Karnataka. Aspirants and parents have been awaiting clarity on counselling

schedules, seat matrix details, and admission timelines, which had been delayed due to overlapping national and state-level procedures.

Stakeholders in the education sector have also urged better coordination between central and state examination authorities to avoid repeated delays and confusion in admission cycles. They have emphasized the need for a streamlined system to ensure timely academic progression for students.

Officials indicated that the state government will soon release detailed counselling schedules, including eligibility criteria, cut-off ranks, and multiple rounds of seat allotment.

Iran Brings Permit Rule for Ships

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Iran on Thursday announced the creation of a regulated maritime control zone in the Strait of Hormuz under its newly formed Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), requiring all vessels to obtain prior approval before transiting the strategic waterway.

According to the authority, the supervision zone extends across key maritime points between Iran and the United Arab Emirates, effectively placing vessel movement through the strait under a coordinated permit system.

The PGSA said ships passing through the area must coordinate with the waterway management authority and secure transit permissions before entry into one of the world's most vital oil shipping routes.

The move comes amid ongoing tensions in US-Iran relations, with stalled negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme and broader regional security concerns.

Iran said the new system is aimed at improving maritime coordination and ensuring structured monitoring of commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy corridor.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- * Iran announces new regulated maritime zone in the Strait of Hormuz under the newly formed Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA).
- * All vessels must obtain prior approval and coordination before entering the strategic waterway.
- * The control zone spans key areas between Iran and the UAE, covering major shipping routes in the Gulf.
- * PGSA will manage vessel movement and issue transit permits through the Persian Gulf Waterway Management Authority.
- * Ships will receive operational instructions via email and must comply with all transit regulations.
- * Move comes amid ongoing US-Iran tensions and stalled nuclear negotiations.
- * Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most critical oil and energy shipping corridors.

Trump-Netanyahu Call Over Iran Diplomacy

> Vikrama Vahini | Washington

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a tense conversation over Iran, exposing sharp differences over how to handle the ongoing conflict, according to reports.

US Pushes for Diplomatic Resolution

The United States is reportedly focusing on securing a diplomatic agreement with Iran through ongoing negotiations, rather than immediate military escalation.

Netanyahu Favors Military Action

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is said to have pushed for renewed strikes aimed at weakening Iran's military infrastructure and strategic capabilities.

Tense Exchange Between Leaders

Citing sources, reports said the conversation reflected frustration on the Israeli side, while Washington maintained its preference for continued diplomatic engagement with Tehran.

Negotiations in Critical Stage

President Trump indicated that talks with Iran are in a crucial phase, adding that the outcome could lead either to an agreement or further escalation if diplomacy fails.

Nations back peace draft talks

Countries including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt are reportedly working to bridge differences and support a draft framework for renewed negotiations.



Iran Rejects Uranium Transfer Plan

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Amid continuing tensions with the United States, Iran has reportedly taken a firm position against transferring its enriched uranium stockpile abroad, marking a significant hardening of its nuclear policy in ongoing diplomatic negotiations.

According to reports, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has issued a directive stating that the country's near-weapons-grade enriched uranium must not be sent outside Iran under any circumstances. The decision directly challenges one of the key conditions being pushed by the United States in efforts to reach a broader agreement on Iran's nuclear programme.

The US has been pressing Iran to relocate or significantly reduce its enriched uranium stockpile as part of a proposed framework to de-escalate tensions and prevent further escalation in the Middle East. Israeli officials have also indicated that Washington has assured Tel Aviv that any future agreement would include strict provisions on Iran's uranium stockpile. **PG2**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while accepting the FAO Agricola Medal at FAO Headquarters in Rome, dedicated the honour to India's Annadatas—farmers, livestock keepers, fishers, scientists and innovators—for their vital role in ensuring food security, human welfare and sustainable development.

CM Reviews Electoral Roll Revision Plan

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday chaired a closed-door with senior ministers and party leaders to discuss the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, ahead of its formal consideration by the state Cabinet.

High-Level Participation

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, IT/BT and Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H. K. Patil, and MLA A. S. Ponnanna.

Focus on Electoral Roll Revision

This marks the first time the Congress-led government in Karnataka has formally deliberated on the SIR exercise

at the Cabinet level since it was announced by the Election Commission. The revision aims to ensure accurate and updated voter rolls ahead of future elections.

Concerns Over Implementation

The government reviewed concerns raised by party leaders and local representatives, particularly regarding voter verification timelines, enumeration procedures, and the possibility of exclusion errors during the process.

Large-Scale Verification Drive

The Election Commission has proposed a massive verification exercise covering nearly 55 crore electors across the state. Booth Level Officers will undertake door-to-door distribution and collection of enumeration forms as part of the process. **PG2....**



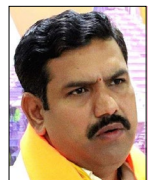
BJP Review Puts Vijayendra Under Lens

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The BJP central leadership has initiated a detailed organisational review of its Karnataka unit, placing state president Vijayendra Yediyurappa under increased scrutiny amid internal feedback and factional tensions, party sources said.

Central Observers Begin Ground Review

A team of observers appointed by



The BJP's Karnataka unit faces renewed internal scrutiny as the central leadership conducts a detailed review amid growing factional tensions and concerns over organisational performance.

the BJP high command is reportedly meeting legislators and senior leaders in Karnataka to assess the party's organisational strength and internal

functioning.

Internal Dissent Within State Unit

Party insiders said growing dissatisfaction among senior leaders

has triggered the review exercise, with concerns over organisational coordination, discipline, and decision-making patterns.

Factional Leaders Voice Concerns

Leaders including K.S. Eshwarappa, Basangouda Patil Yatnal, and Ramesh Jarkiholi are among those who have expressed dissatisfaction over state leadership and party functioning.

Electoral Performance Under Lens

Recent bypoll and local body election results have intensified discussions within the party, with critics attributing setbacks to organisational weaknesses.

Leadership Future May Depend on Report

The central leadership is expected to consolidate findings of the feedback exercise before deciding on possible organisational changes, including leadership restructuring if required.

Editorial

A Strategic European Leap

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent diplomatic missions to Italy and Norway mark a definitive turning point in India's foreign policy, effectively weaving together the threads of advanced technology, economic resilience, and green transition. At a time when global supply chains are undergoing radical realignment and the climate crisis demands urgent action, this dual-nation tour transcends routine bilateral optics. By anchoring engagements with Rome around advanced manufacturing and defense co-production, and aligning with Oslo on frontier renewable technologies, New Delhi has successfully positioned itself as an indispensable partner for Europe's leading economies. This calculated outreach serves notice that India is no longer just a massive consumer market, but an emerging hub for high-tech innovation and co-development.

The technological dividends from this tour are poised to provide a substantial boost to India's domestic industrial blueprints, particularly the 'Make in India' and semiconductor initiatives. Collaboration with Italy injects world-class automation, robotics, and industrial design expertise into India's expanding microchip and defense manufacturing ecosystems. Concurrently, the agreements signed with Norway offer a vital catalyst for India's ambitious 2070 net-zero targets. Access to Oslo's pioneering expertise in green hydrogen, offshore wind energy, and carbon capture technologies will significantly accelerate India's transition away from fossil fuels while fostering a sustainable blue economy across its vast coastline. This deliberate acquisition of critical technology bridges the gap between India's developmental needs and its ecological responsibilities.

Beyond commercial exchanges, the geopolitical resonance of this tour underscores India's elevated stature in the evolving global order. Strengthening ties with Italy—a core pillar of the European Union—injects fresh momentum into the long-awaited India-EU Free Trade Agreement, while aligning with Norway secures a vital foothold in the innovative Nordic bloc. By fostering these robust ties, New Delhi artfully balances its global partnerships, championing a rule-based international order and an open Indo-Pacific. As the global South looks for pragmatic leadership, India's ability to secure high-value technology transfers while advancing its strategic autonomy demonstrates a sophisticated brand of statecraft. The success of these pacts will now rest entirely on swift, bureaucratic-free implementation to translate diplomatic intent into tangible national progress.

-Editor

Siddaramaiah Slams Centre Over NEET Leak

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday held the Union government responsible for the alleged NEET question paper leak and demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, alleging failure in ensuring fairness and transparency in the examination system.

Addressing a Youth Congress protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah said the NEET system had "failed students across the country" and accused the Centre of avoiding accountability by postponing exams instead of addressing systemic issues.

He alleged that repeated paper leaks in the past decade have severely affected



students, particularly from rural, poor, Dalit, backward class, and minority communities, while benefiting those who can afford expensive coaching.

The Chief Minister reiterated his demand that states be allowed to conduct their own Common Entrance Tests (CET) for medical admissions, arguing that centralised exams

have created inequality in opportunities.

He also criticised the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Karnataka, citing past recruitment exam irregularities, and claimed that unemployment among youth aged 20–29 remains alarmingly high.

Siddaramaiah further said the Centre must compensate students who died by suicide due to NEET-related distress and called for strict punishment for those responsible for alleged irregularities, describing the issue as a "crime against students."

Senior Congress leaders including AICC General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, AICC Secretary Abhishek Dutta, and Youth Congress leaders attended the protest.



Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar was met in Bengaluru by Shivananda Tagadur, State President of the Karnataka Union of Working Journalists, along with Anand Devappa, President of the Bidar District Working Journalists' Association, and other office-bearers, who presented the honours of the recently held state conference in Bidar. Shivakumar conveyed his inability to attend the conference due to unavoidable reasons and congratulated the organisers on its success. The delegation also urged him not to discontinue special advertisements for newspapers in border districts, which play a vital role in preserving language, and to continue them as before. He assured that the matter would be examined.

CM Reviews Electoral Roll Revision Plan

From PG1

Political Reactions and Challenges

The SIR exercise has already sparked political debate, with opposition parties and civil society groups seeking clarity on safeguards, transparency, and grievance redressal mechanisms. The Cabinet is also expected to assess the administrative burden on local officials and the need for coordination with election authorities.

No official statement was issued immediately after the meeting. Officials indicated that further consultations are likely before final approval is granted for the implementation of the exercise.

BBMP to Host Dog Adoption Camp on May 24

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

In a bid to promote compassion towards animals and encourage their welfare, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will organise a special dog adoption camp on May 24 at Corporation Colony Grounds in Jayanagar.

The initiative, conducted under the leadership of the Bengaluru South zone of BBMP in association with the Jayanagar Canine Squad, aims at the protection and rehabilitation of street dogs (Indie breed).

Carrying the message "Adopt, Don't Shop," the camp will feature healthy and vaccinated puppies that are ready to find loving homes. Animal lovers and members of the public are encouraged to participate in the event and extend support by adopting these voiceless beings.

Organisers have also invited media representatives and photographers to cover the socially relevant initiative and contribute to its success.

BJP Slams Govt as Patient Travels 900 km for Care

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Karnataka government, alleging a breakdown in the public healthcare system after a patient reportedly travelled nearly 900 km in search of treatment.

Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka claimed that the patient spent "two days and one night" in an ambulance moving across districts before finally being forced to seek care at a private hospital due to the unavailability of an ICU bed at a government facility.

According to Ashoka, even after reaching Wenlock Hospital in Mangaluru, the patient could not secure an ICU bed, highlighting what he termed as the "grim reality" of the state's healthcare infrastructure under the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The BJP linked the incident to recent

Kanyakumari-B'luru Express Timings Revised

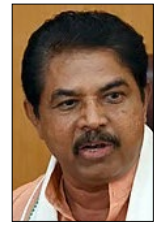
Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

South Western Railway has revised the timings of Train No. 16525 Kanyakumari-KSR Bengaluru Express with effect from May 26, 2026, due to operational requirements.

There is no change in timings between Kanyakumari and Tirupattur. However, revised arrival and departure timings have been introduced at several stations, including Kuppam, Bangarapet, Malur, Whitefield, Krishnarajapuram, and Bengaluru Cantonment.

The train will continue to reach KSR Bengaluru at 07:00 hrs as per schedule, railway officials said.

Passengers are advised to check updated timings before travel to avoid inconvenience.



cases, including the reported death of a patient from Ankola due to delayed treatment and a maternal death in Gauribidanur, alleging systemic failures in government hospitals across the state.

Ashoka also criticised Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, questioning whether the government was aware of the difficulties faced by patients, especially those from economically weaker sections, who are allegedly forced to travel long distances for medical care.

The opposition party accused the Congress-led government of neglecting public welfare and failing to provide adequate healthcare facilities, while claiming to run a people-centric administration. There was no immediate response from the state government or the Health Department regarding the allegations.

Karnataka on Alert Over Ebola Risk: Dinesh Gundu Rao

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has said that the state health department is fully prepared to contain any possible Ebola virus threat and will act in line with guidelines issued by the Central Government.

He said the Union Health Ministry has issued precautionary advisories following reports of rising Ebola infections in certain African countries, prompting heightened vigilance across the country, including Karnataka.

The minister added that the Directorate of Health Services has already issued advisories to travellers returning from high-risk countries,

providing detailed information about Ebola symptoms and necessary precautions.

He further stated that travellers returning from countries such as the

Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan who show symptoms like fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, or bleeding should immediately seek medical attention.

He added that surveillance mechanisms at airports and hospitals have been strengthened to enable early detection of suspected cases. The government has also directed health officials to maintain strict monitoring and awareness across all districts.

DCM Rejects CM Buzz, Denies Seeking Reward

From PG1

In a veiled attack, Shivakumar took a swipe at Rajanna, remarking that he had come to know "only today" that the MLA was the party's "high command," indicating displeasure over internal comments on leadership matters.

Shivakumar also said he would travel to New Delhi whenever called by the party leadership, amid indications that the Congress high command may soon intervene to address leadership and cabinet-related discussions in Karnataka.

Party sources suggest that both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar could be summoned to Delhi by the end of the month for consultations.

The latest exchange has once again highlighted the ongoing leadership buzz within the Karnataka Congress. Speculation over a possible leadership change and a rotational Chief Minister arrangement has persisted since the party came to power in 2023, though no official confirmation has been made so far.

NEWS

VIJAYENDRA SEEKS APOLOGY FROM RAHUL GANDHI

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

B. Y. Vijayendra, BJP State President and MLA, on Thursday demanded that Rahul Gandhi apologise to the people of the country over his recent remarks, warning that the party would launch a statewide agitation if he fails to do so.

Addressing the media at the BJP State Office, Jagannath Bhavan in Bengaluru, Vijayendra criticised Rahul Gandhi for his statements against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that such comments were "irresponsible" and unbecoming of a national leader. He said Gandhi should refrain from making derogatory remarks against the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Vijayendra highlighted that Modi, who comes from a backward community, has been elected Prime Minister for a third term and has led India to become one of the world's leading economies. He



BJP state chief B.Y. Vijayendra demands an apology from Rahul Gandhi over remarks on PM Modi, warning of protests, while outlining party plans and upcoming leadership visits in Karnataka.

questioned whether Gandhi's criticism stemmed from an inability to accept the country's progress under Modi's leadership.

Referring to national security issues, he said the Congress lacked the courage to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, a step taken by Amit Shah, and accused Rahul Gandhi of making unwarranted statements against

him. He also credited the Centre with taking strong action against Naxalism and ensuring corruption-free governance.

Turning his criticism towards the Congress leadership in Karnataka, Vijayendra alleged that several state leaders were making "irresponsible and uninformed" statements despite being in power for three years.

He also announced that BJP National President Nitin Nabin will visit Bengaluru on May 23, marking his first visit to the state after assuming office. Nabin is scheduled to participate in a training camp in Bengaluru North on May 24 and hold meetings with party MPs, MLAs, and MLCs.

Marking 12 years of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister, Vijayendra said the party would organise various programmes across the state, including celebrations for World Environment Day and International Yoga Day.

Iran Rejects Uranium Transfer Plan

From PG1

However, Iranian officials quoted in reports said the leadership and establishment are united in the view that keeping enriched uranium within the country is essential for national security. They argued that transferring the material abroad could expose Iran to greater strategic vulnerabilities and external pressure.

The development is likely to complicate ongoing diplomatic efforts involving the US and regional mediators. Countries including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt have been attempting to bridge differences and prepare a draft framework to

restart negotiations between Washington and Tehran.

Despite multiple rounds of indirect talks, both sides have failed to agree on key issues, including nuclear restrictions and sanctions relief. Recent discussions, including those mediated through regional partners, have not yielded a breakthrough, with both sides continuing to reject each other's proposals.

The latest Iranian stance is expected to further strain already fragile negotiations, even as international stakeholders continue to push for a diplomatic resolution to avoid wider conflict in the region.

Shivakumar on Mekedatu, Superstition Remark



Vikrama Vahini | Chamarajanagar

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Mekedatu project will be submitted to the Centre shortly, and the foundation ceremony will be held after receiving approval from the Central Government.

Speaking to reporters at Kollegal and later at the Madhyaranga temple, Shivakumar said the DPR has been finalised and preparatory steps, including identifying alternative land for forest areas likely to be submerged, are underway. He added that the Centre's clearance is awaited for moving ahead with the project.

Referring to the Cauvery water dispute, he said 177 TMC of water must be released to Tamil Nadu as per orders and discussions would be held on its implementation. He also noted that the Supreme Court has stated that Tamil Nadu cannot object to the Mekedatu project, and that the Central Water Commission will take a final decision.

Highlighting the government's performance, Shivakumar said the administration has completed three years in office and delivered on its promises, including the rollout of the Bhoos Guarantee scheme. He said efforts are ongoing to address drinking water issues and safeguard farmers in case of rainfall deficits.

Dismissing the belief that visiting Chamarajanagar leads to loss of power, Shivakumar termed it a superstition and described the district as a historic and sacred region with prominent religious sites. He also said the government is undertaking developmental initiatives in the region, including industrial growth and temple renovation works, and reiterated that commitments such as providing jobs to families affected by the oxygen tragedy have been fulfilled.

On the GBA elections, Shivakumar said the Election Commission is responsible for conducting the polls and assured full cooperation from the government.

SCIENCE & Technology

Scapia Raises \$63 Million for AI Travel Push

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Travel-fintech company Scapia has raised \$63 million (approximately ₹598.5 crore) in a fresh funding round led by General Catalyst, with participation from existing investors Peak XV Partners and Z47.

The company said the funds will be used to scale its operations across India, strengthen its product offerings, and accelerate the development of AI-driven travel and financial solutions.

Scapia, which positions itself as a travel-first financial platform for young Indians, has reported strong growth in recent months, with flight bookings increasing 5–6 times and hotel bookings rising nearly eightfold compared to last year. The company also noted growing demand from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

The platform aims to integrate travel planning, payments, and financial services into a single ecosystem, targeting younger users who increasingly prefer digital-first travel solutions.

Founder and CEO Anil Goteti said the investment validates the company's vision of building a comprehensive travel ecosystem powered by financial products at its core. He added that Scapia is focused on expanding its product suite, scaling its brand presence, and hiring talent to build an "AI-first" organisation.

A major portion of the funding will be directed toward strengthening Scapia's AI capabilities across engineering, product development, data science, and design.

The company said India's large Gen Z population presents both a strong user base and talent pool for AI-driven innovation.

BJP Starts MLA Performance Review for 2027

► Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has started an internal assessment of its MLAs as part of early preparations for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

Party sources said a "report card" is being prepared to evaluate legislators' performance, public connect, and grassroots presence. Two external agencies have been tasked with conducting field surveys across constituencies, gathering feedback from voters and assessing potential new candidates.

The exercise will also gauge public sentiment on the government led by Yogi Adityanath. Special focus is being given to regions like Moradabad, where the party's performance declined in 2022.

Meanwhile, other parties including Congress, Samajwadi Party, and BSP have also begun preparations, signalling an early political buildup to the 2027 elections.

Additionally, inputs from local leaders and organisational feedback will play a key role in candidate selection. The move indicates an early and aggressive strategy by the BJP to counter anti-incumbency and strengthen its electoral prospects.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah administered the Anti-Terrorism Day pledge at an event held at the Conference Hall of Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on the occasion of Anti-Terrorism Day.

SIT Re-enters Banglegudde Search in Dharmasthala Case

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged mass burial case in Dharmasthala has intensified its investigation, re-entering Banglegudde hill along with officials from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) and SOCO (Scene of Crime Organisation).

According to sources, the renewed operation follows scientific inputs, including FSL and DNA

reports, which indicate possible evidence of criminal activity at the site.

The SIT, which had slowed down its investigation in recent days, has now stepped up its search operations, raising renewed attention and speculation around the case. Officials said further forensic examination of recovered materials will be carried out to establish a clearer timeline of events.

K.V. PRABHAKAR TO HOLD MEDIA INTERACTION TODAY

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Marking the completion of three successful years as Media Advisor to the Chief Minister, K. V. Prabhakar will participate in a media interaction programme organised by the Karnataka Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ).

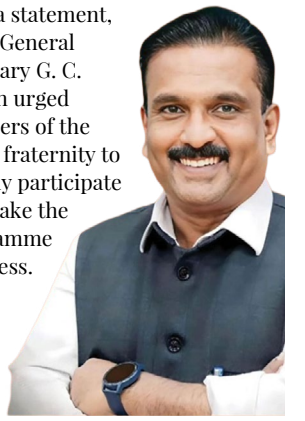
The event is scheduled to be held on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 11 AM at the KUWJ Hall, located on the third floor of Kandaya Bhavan on K.G. Road in Bengaluru.

The programme will be presided over by KUWJ State President Shivananda Tagadur, while Ayesha Khanum, Chairperson of the Karnataka Media Academy, will attend as the chief guest.

The interaction will focus on Prabhakar's contributions during

his three-year tenure, developments in the media sector, and other contemporary issues. Journalists, media representatives, and the public have been invited to attend in large numbers.

In a statement, KUWJ General Secretary G. C. Lokesh urged members of the media fraternity to actively participate and make the programme a success.



West Bengal Starts Land Transfer for Border Fencing

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

In a significant move to strengthen border security, the West Bengal government has begun transferring land to the Border Security Force (BSF) for long-pending fencing work along the India-Bangladesh border.

He announced that the process has formally commenced at Nabanna in the presence of senior BSF officials. The state government plans to hand over land covering a 27-km stretch within the next two weeks, of



which 18 km will be used for fencing and 9 km for BSF outposts and related infrastructure.

Adhikari criticised the previous administration for lack of cooperation on border security issues and emphasised that fencing is essential to curb infiltration, smuggling, counterfeit currency circulation, and other cross-border crimes.

The India-Bangladesh border spans nearly 4,000 km, with West Bengal accounting for about 2,200 km. While approximately 1,600

km has already been fenced, around 600 km still remains uncovered.

The Chief Minister also announced a new "detect, delete and deport" mechanism under which state police will identify and detain alleged illegal infiltrators and hand them over to the BSF for deportation, in coordination with Bangladeshi authorities.

He clarified that individuals covered under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), particularly those belonging to specified communities who entered India before the cut-off date, would not face detention or harassment.

Condemnation of Rahul Remarks

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Strongly condemning Rahul Gandhi's alleged derogatory remarks made in Raebareilly against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a senior leader said the statements were highly objectionable and irresponsible.

The leader said Rahul Gandhi's comments, terming constitutional authorities as "anti-national," reflect political frustration following electoral setbacks and amount to an insult to India's parliamentary democracy and millions of citizens.

He further said that the RSS, which has contributed to nation-building, should not be spoken about in a disrespectful manner, and that such language reflects a lack of political maturity and culture in public discourse.

Demanding an apology from Rahul Gandhi, he warned that if such statements continue, people will respond appropriately in a democratic manner. He

added that leaders must exercise restraint and responsibility while addressing sensitive national institutions and constitutional posts.



MEMORANDUM SEEKS CURBS ON ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AHEAD OF BAKRID

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Ahead of the upcoming Eid al-Adha (Bakrid) on May 28, members of the Hindu Rashtra Samanvaya Samiti submitted a memorandum to the State Government through the Bengaluru Deputy Commissioner, urging strict action against illegal cattle transportation, unlawful slaughter, and offering of namaz on public roads.

The memorandum was addressed to the Karnataka Home Minister and district authorities, calling for preventive measures to ensure law and order during the festival. Prominent members present during the submission included Sundresh Nargal, Naveen, M. L. Shivakumar, Santosh Kadthala, and Saraswati.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohan



Gowda, State spokesperson of the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, expressed concern over the possibility of illegal transportation of cows, buffaloes, and calves during the festival period. He noted that despite the enforcement of the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, incidents of illegal slaughter in roadside areas, residential localities, and temporary setups have been reported in

previous years. He also alleged that activists involved in cattle protection have faced false atrocity cases and urged the government to take such issues seriously.

Authorities have been urged to ensure strict monitoring to prevent any violations during the festival period. The organisation also appealed for swift action against those found violating existing cattle protection laws.

ENTERTAINMENT

KGF 3 on Hold, Salaar 2 Next: Prashanth Neel

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The much-anticipated 'KGF 3' has been put on hold for the time being, as filmmaker Prashanth Neel has confirmed that he has not taken any final decision regarding the next instalment of the blockbuster franchise. The announcement has disappointed fans who were eagerly awaiting updates on the continuation of the KGF saga.

Prashanth Neel, one of India's leading pan-India directors, clarified that

his immediate focus is on completing his current project 'Dragon', starring Jr NTR. The film is

scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on June 11, 2027, and is currently in production.

Speaking in a recent interview to a YouTube channel, Neel stated that he will begin work on 'Salaar 2' immediately after wrapping up 'Dragon'. The film, titled 'Salaar: Part 2 - Shouryaanga Parvam', will feature Prabhas and Prithviraj Sukumaran in lead roles and is among the most awaited big-budget sequels in Indian cinema.

His statement has provided clarity on the production timeline of his upcoming films, particularly at a time when speculation was growing around the status of both 'Salaar 2' and 'KGF 3'. Neel confirmed that there is no fixed timeline yet for his return to the KGF franchise.

Known for his dark, intense storytelling style, Prashanth Neel also hinted at a possible creative shift after completing 'Dragon'. He reportedly plans to explore a different cinematic direction, including a colourful mythological film series and a smaller-scale emotional family drama in the future.

The first part of the 'Salaar' franchise, 'Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire', featured Prabhas as Deva and Prithviraj Sukumaran as Varadaraja Mannar. The film revolved around themes of friendship, betrayal, and political power struggles, and performed strongly at the box office.

The upcoming sequel is expected to intensify the storyline, focusing on a larger conflict and a decisive battle for power between the central characters.

The film also boasts a strong supporting cast including Jagapathi Babu, Bobby Simha, Easwari Rao, Shruti Haasan, and Sriya Reddy in pivotal roles.

JAILER 2 RELEASE POSTPONED: WHAT'S THE REASON?

► Vikrama Vahini | Chennai

The release of superstar Rajinikanth's much-anticipated 'Jailer 2' has reportedly been postponed, even as expectations remain high following the massive success of its predecessor 'Jailer'.

The first instalment, directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, was a blockbuster hit and featured Rajinikanth in the powerful role of Tiger Muthuvel Pandian, along with a star-studded ensemble cast. The sequel has since generated strong anticipation among fans across South India and beyond.

Earlier reports suggested that 'Jailer 2' would hit theatres on June 12. However, the release date has now been changed, with new reports indicating a possible release on September 11. While there has been no official confirmation from the makers, the change is said to be a strategic decision aimed at maximising box office potential during the festive season.

According to industry buzz, the new release date has been planned to coincide with the Ganesh Chaturthi holiday period on September 14, which could offer a long weekend advantage of nearly four days. With public holidays expected across major states including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh, the makers are reportedly looking to capitalise on strong holiday footfalls.

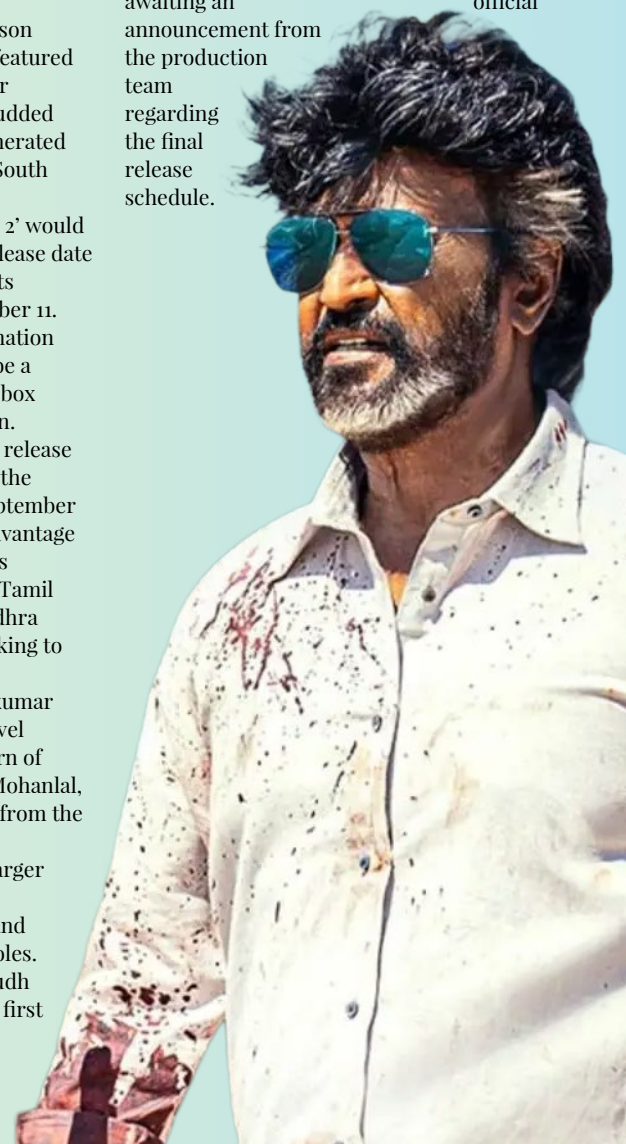
The film is directed by Nelson Dilipkumar and continues the story of Tiger Muthuvel Pandian. 'Jailer 2' also features the return of major stars such as Shivraj Kumar and Mohanlal, who are expected to reprise their roles from the first part.

The sequel is also said to include a larger ensemble cast, with names like Mithun Chakraborty, Vidya Balan, S.J. Suryah, and Kamal Haasan reportedly playing key roles. Music for the film is composed by Anirudh Ravichander, whose soundtrack for the first film received widespread acclaim.

There are also unconfirmed reports suggesting that Bollywood superstar

Shah Rukh Khan may appear in the film, although the makers have not officially confirmed this development.

The postponement has further heightened curiosity around the project, with fans eagerly awaiting an official announcement from the production team regarding the final release schedule.



BUSINESS

RBI Proposal: EMI Default May Lead to Phone Lock

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is reportedly considering a proposal that could allow lenders to remotely disable smartphones and tablets purchased on EMI in cases of loan default, according to revised draft recovery guidelines.

The proposal has been included in the draft amendments to loan recovery norms following requests from banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), which have expressed concern over rising cases of non-repayment of consumer electronics loans.

Under the proposed framework, financial institutions may be permitted to install special software at the time of financing devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops. This software could potentially allow lenders to restrict or disable the device if borrowers fail to repay EMIs on time.

Officials said the move is aimed at strengthening recovery mechanisms and reducing defaults in the retail loan segment, particularly for high-volume consumer electronics financing.

However, the proposal has also triggered concerns among privacy and digital rights observers, who caution that disabling smartphones could have serious consequences, as mobile devices are widely used for banking transactions, communication, and authentication services such as OTP verification.

Critics argue that sudden deactivation of devices could disrupt essential services for users and raise questions about data security and consumer rights.

The RBI had initially released draft amendments on February 12, 2026, and subsequently updated them on May 20 after consultations with financial institutions.

The central bank is currently reviewing feedback before finalising the guidelines, which could significantly reshape consumer lending and recovery practices in India's digital finance ecosystem.



SPORTS

RCB vs SRH: Final League Clash Time

Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad The final league match of IPL 2026 will see Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) take on Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in a high-stakes encounter at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on May 22 at 7 pm, with the toss scheduled at 6:30 pm. RCB currently lead the points table with 18 points, while SRH are placed third with 16 points. A win for RCB will confirm their top position and secure two chances to reach the final. For SRH, a victory is essential to break into the top two and keep their title hopes alive. The match will be broadcast live on the Star Sports Network and streamed on JioHotstar.

Key Match Context Both teams enter the contest with strong playoff implications, making it a virtual knockout for SRH and a top-table decider for RCB.

Squads Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH): Pat Cummins (c), Travis Head, Ishan Kishan, Heinrich Klaasen, Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Pat Cummins-led bowling unit among others.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB): Rajat Patidar (c), Virat Kohli, Phil Salt, Tim David, Josh Hazlewood, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Krunal Pandya, and others.

The match is expected to be a key decider for final standings heading into the playoffs.

₹481 Cr for FIFA Winners

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi The FIFA World Cup 2026 is scheduled to be held from June 11 to July 19, 2026, across Canada, Mexico, and the United States. For the first time in history, the tournament will be jointly hosted by three countries. A total of 16 cities will host matches—11 in the United States, three in Mexico, and two in Canada. The final will be played on July 19, 2026, at the New York–New Jersey stadium.

Expanded Tournament Format The 2026 edition marks a major expansion, with the number of participating teams increased from 32 to 48. The teams will be divided into 12 groups of four each. The top two teams from each group, along with the eight best third-placed teams, will advance to the Round of 32.

Record Prize Pool FIFA has significantly increased the prize money for the tournament. A total pool of US\$655 million (approximately ₹6,300 crore) will be distributed among participating teams, marking nearly a 50% increase compared to the previous edition.

Prize Distribution * Winners: ₹481 crore * Runners-up: ₹317 crore * Third place: ₹279 crore * Fourth place: ₹259 crore * 5th–8th place teams: ₹182 crore each * 9th–16th place teams: ₹144 crore each * 17th–32nd place teams: ₹105 crore each * 33rd–48th place teams: ₹86 crore each The expanded format and record prize pool are expected to make the 2026 edition one of the most competitive and commercially significant tournaments in FIFA history.



Dr. A. Ramya Ramesh, CEO of HMR Group of Institutions, has been appointed as a Syndicate Member of Maharani Cluster University. On the occasion, former MLA and Greater Bengaluru JD(S) President H. M. Ramesh Gowda, along with Dr. Ramya, met Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot at Lok Bhavan in Bengaluru and expressed their gratitude by presenting a bouquet.

MODI'S MUGA SILK GIFT TO MELONI DRAWS GLOBAL ATTENTION

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi showcased India's rich textile heritage on the global stage by presenting a traditional Muga silk stole from Assam to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during his recent visit to Italy.

The thoughtful gesture, made during bilateral engagements in Rome, highlighted India's cultural diplomacy and the global significance of Assam's iconic "Golden Silk." The meeting between the two leaders, marked by warm interactions and camaraderie,



also drew widespread attention on social media, with many referring to their rapport as the "Melodi" moment.

Muga silk, produced exclusively in Assam, is considered one of the rarest and most luxurious silks in the world. Known for its natural

golden sheen, durability, and unique texture, the fabric holds a Geographical Indication (GI) tag and is deeply rooted in Assamese culture and tradition.

Traditionally used in sarees, mekhela chadors, and ceremonial attire, Muga silk is regarded as a symbol of heritage and prestige.

Its production involves a meticulous and labour-intensive process, from silkworm rearing to handloom weaving by skilled artisans, primarily in districts such as Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, and Kamrup.

Officials noted that the gifting of Muga silk reflects India's effort to promote indigenous crafts and sustainable handloom traditions globally. Beyond a diplomatic exchange, the gesture underscored the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship while strengthening cultural ties between India and Italy.

Army Launches AI 'Kautilya' Platform for Faster Decisions

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi The Indian Army has launched 'Kautilya', an artificial intelligence-enabled digital platform designed to enhance real-time decision-making and improve operational efficiency.

The system integrates data from multiple Army platforms and enables tablet-based data entry, supported by AI dashboards and natural language processing tools for faster analysis and better situational awareness. Officials said the platform will streamline administrative processes and strengthen data-driven operational planning across the force. The platform is part of the Army's broader push towards digital transformation and adoption of advanced technologies in modern warfare.

Viral Satirical Party's X Account Blocked in India

Satirical campaign's rapid rise among youth continues despite X restriction, with Instagram growth and political messaging gaining traction

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

The X (formerly Twitter) account of the satirical political collective Cockroach Janta Party has been withheld in India following a legal demand, its founder Abhijeet Dipke confirmed, just days after the campaign went viral online.

A notice on the platform stated that the account was suspended "due to an order of law." However, the group's presence on Instagram remains active, where it has amassed over 12 million followers.

Launched on May 16, the campaign quickly gained traction among young social media users through sharp political satire and unconventional messaging focused on unemployment. According to Dipke, the movement has already recorded over six lakh registrations. Before being withheld, the group's X

handle had around 1.65 lakh followers.

The campaign was reportedly inspired by remarks attributed to Chief Justice Surya Kant, which sparked widespread debate. The collective has since positioned itself as a "digital protest movement," using humour and satire to highlight issues such as unemployment, political defections, and judicial accountability.

Interestingly, the group's Instagram following has surpassed that of the Bharatiya Janata Party on the platform, reflecting its rapid online growth. The rise of the Cockroach Janta Party underscores the increasing influence of political satire in India's digital space, particularly among younger audiences. Despite its growing popularity, neither X nor government authorities have issued an official statement explaining the reason behind the account's restriction.



India Showcases Special Ops Strength at SOF Week 2026, US

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi India highlighted its growing Special Operations capabilities at SOF Week 2026 held in Tampa, Florida, with a high-level Indian Armed Forces delegation participating in the global event.

Led by Lt Gen Pushendra Pal Singh, the delegation engaged in strategic discussions, bilateral

meetings, and defence demonstrations with counterparts from over 70 countries.

For the first time, an Indian capability demonstration team took part in live operational showcases, reflecting India's expanding role in global security cooperation and interoperability with partner nations.

IUML Joins Vijay Cabinet, Signals Major TN Realignment

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai In a significant political development, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has decided to join the Cabinet led by C. Joseph Vijay, marking a major post-poll realignment in Tamil Nadu.

The announcement comes soon after the Indian National Congress broke away from the DMK-led alliance and joined Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government, ushering in the state's first coalition-era governance in decades.

IUML State President K. M. Khader Moideen said the party accepted Vijay's invitation and would join the Council of Ministers. MLA A. M. Shahjahan from

IUML joins Vijay-led Cabinet in Tamil Nadu, following Congress, triggering a major post-poll political realignment and strengthening the state's emerging coalition government.

Papanasam is set to be sworn in as Minister for Minorities Welfare, while the party may later seek another Cabinet berth for Syed Farooq Pasha from Vaniyambadi. The move signals IUML's exit from the DMK-led front, where it had initially extended outside support, and follows the Congress' earlier entry into the Cabinet. Two Congress MLAs—S. Rajesh Kumar and P. Viswa

nathan—were inducted and allocated key portfolios.

The TVK has also invited the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) to join the Cabinet. The move is being seen as a major reshaping of Tamil Nadu's political alliances ahead of future electoral battles. Further Cabinet expansions are expected in the coming days as coalition talks continue.

Iran Speeds Up Drone Rebuild: US Intel

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi Iran is rebuilding its military capabilities faster than previously expected and has already resumed parts of its drone production during the recent ceasefire period, according to US intelligence assessments cited in media reports.

Sources familiar with the findings said Iran began restoring key defence

infrastructure during the six-week ceasefire that started in early April. This includes efforts to replace damaged missile sites, launchers, and production facilities affected by earlier US-Israeli strikes.

Officials indicated that Iran could fully restore its drone attack capability within as little as six months. A US official noted that the pace of reconstruction has

exceeded earlier intelligence estimates, raising concerns about the persistence of the threat in the region.

The rapid rebuilding has heightened worries among US allies in the Gulf, as drones remain a critical component of Iran's military strategy. Analysts warn that if hostilities resume, Iran could quickly scale up missile and drone operations targeting Israel and neighbouring countries.

Air India Flight Grounded After Tail Strike

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi An Air India flight from Delhi to Bengaluru carrying 179 passengers was grounded after a tail strike during landing on May 21, 2026.

The airline confirmed that all passengers and crew were safe and deboarded without incident. The aircraft, operating as Al2651, has been grounded for a detailed technical inspection in coordination with aviation authorities.

Due to the incident, the return flight Al2652 from Bengaluru to Delhi was also cancelled. Air India said alternative arrangements are being made for affected passengers.

The airline has launched an investigation into the incident as per standard safety procedures. Air India said passenger safety remains its top priority and regrets the inconvenience caused. Technical teams are assessing the aircraft for potential structural damage before it is cleared for further operations.

Pulwama Mastermind Hamza Burhan Killed in POK

Vikrama Vahini | Muzaffarabad Hamza Burhan, one of the alleged masterminds of the 2019 Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, has been reported killed by unidentified attackers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK).

Burhan, a designated terrorist listed by India's Union Home Ministry in 2022, was attacked in Muzaffarabad and sustained fatal injuries, according to reports.

Originally from Ratnipora in Pulwama, he had gone to Pakistan in 2017 and later joined a banned terror outfit, rising to a commander rank.

He was later accused of radicalising youth in South Kashmir and expanding terror networks across Pulwama and Shopian.

Security agencies have alleged that he played a key role in supplying explosives used in the Pulwama attack carried out by Jaish-e-Mohammed in 2019. He was also linked to other terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir.

Further details about the attackers are yet to be confirmed.

Tamil Nadu Row Over State Song Order at Vijay Cabinet Event

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai A controversy has erupted in Tamil Nadu after the Tamil invocation song Tamil Thaaai Vaazhththu was sung after the national song and the national anthem during the cabinet expansion ceremony of Chief Minister Joseph Vijay.

The swearing-in event at Lok Bhavan saw 21 TVK MLAs and two Congress MLAs inducted into the Cabinet by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

Several political parties objected to the sequence, stating that the state song should have been given priority.

Opposition leaders, while clarifying they respect the national song and anthem, said due importance must also be accorded to Tamil Thaaai Vaazhththu at official functions.

The issue has sparked a political debate in the state, coming shortly after similar concerns were raised during the Chief Minister's earlier swearing-in ceremony.

INDIA'S FIRST BULLET TRAIN. FIRST TRAIN IN INDIA TO RUN UNDER SEA AND PASS THROUGH MOUNTAINS. SPEED 320 km per hour, DISTANCE 508 km, TRAVEL TIME Just 2 Hours (127 Minutes), COMMENCEMENT DATE 15 August, 2027, PROJECT COST ₹1.25 Lakh Crore, COST PER KM ₹212.44 Crore. KEY HIGHLIGHTS: 1. First train in India to run under the sea and pass through mountains. 2. Travels underground for 21 km. 3. India's first undersea rail tunnel of 21 km (7 km under seabed). PROJECT PROGRESS: All 8 stations in Gujarat completed, Work in progress in Thane, Virar & Boisar (Maharashtra), Excavation at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) nearly complete, 4.8 km stretch between Gansoli and Shilphata completed, Out of 25 river bridges, 17 completed, Work progressing rapidly towards 15 August, 2027 deadline. FASTER. SMARTER. STRONGER. A NEW ERA OF TRAVEL IN INDIA.