



# VIKRAMA VAHINI

COMMONWEALTH DAY

₹2

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Actress Rukmini Vasanth clarifies that viral bikini photos and videos circulating online are deepfake creations, warns of legal action against offenders, and urges the public not to share or believe such misleading content.

In a major development in the Bitcoin-linked money laundering case, a special court in Bengaluru on Friday remanded accused Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, Sunish Hegde, and Robin Khandelwal to 14 days of judicial custody until June 5.



## Good morning

If you can see the positive sides of everything, you'll be able to live a much richer life than others.

## BRIEFS

### Fuel Prices Rise for Third Time in 10 Days

Fuel prices were increased for the third time in less than 10 days on Saturday, with petrol rising by 91 paise per litre and diesel by 87 paise per litre amid global crude supply disruptions. In Delhi, petrol is now priced at ₹99.51 per litre while diesel costs ₹92.49 per litre. In other metro cities, petrol prices stand at ₹110.64 in Kolkata, ₹108.49 in Mumbai, and ₹105.31 in Chennai. Diesel rates are ₹97.02 in Kolkata, ₹95.02 in Mumbai, and ₹96.98 in Chennai.

The latest revision comes after earlier hikes on May 15 and May 19, marking a continuous upward trend in fuel prices. CNG prices were also increased by ₹1 per kg in Delhi, taking the rate to ₹81.09 per kg.

Officials attributed the price hike to global crude oil supply disruptions linked to ongoing tensions in West Asia and concerns over supply through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy route.

### "RSS Role Key in End of Emergency"

Senior RSS leader Ram Lal on Saturday claimed that large-scale participation of RSS workers in the "Satyagraha" against the Emergency played a crucial role in compelling the Indira Gandhi-led government to announce general elections in 1977.

Speaking at the concluding session of a meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Konkan division in Mumbai, Ram Lal said that without the widespread involvement of RSS volunteers in the protest movement, the government would not have agreed to hold the general elections.

### Naxal Arms Cache Busted

In a major anti-Naxal operation, Gadchiroli police in Maharashtra have recovered and destroyed equipment used for manufacturing weapons that was secretly buried in a forest area, an official said on Saturday.

According to police, items including lathe machines, drilling machines and pipes were seized during the operation carried out in the forest area of Pomkeng Binagunda.

A police release stated that on May 21, under the guidance of Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police M. Ramesh, special teams from Gadchiroli and Pranhita, along with six combined detachments and two Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad teams, were deployed to search the designated forest area. Officials confirmed that the recovered materials were destroyed on the spot as part of the operation.

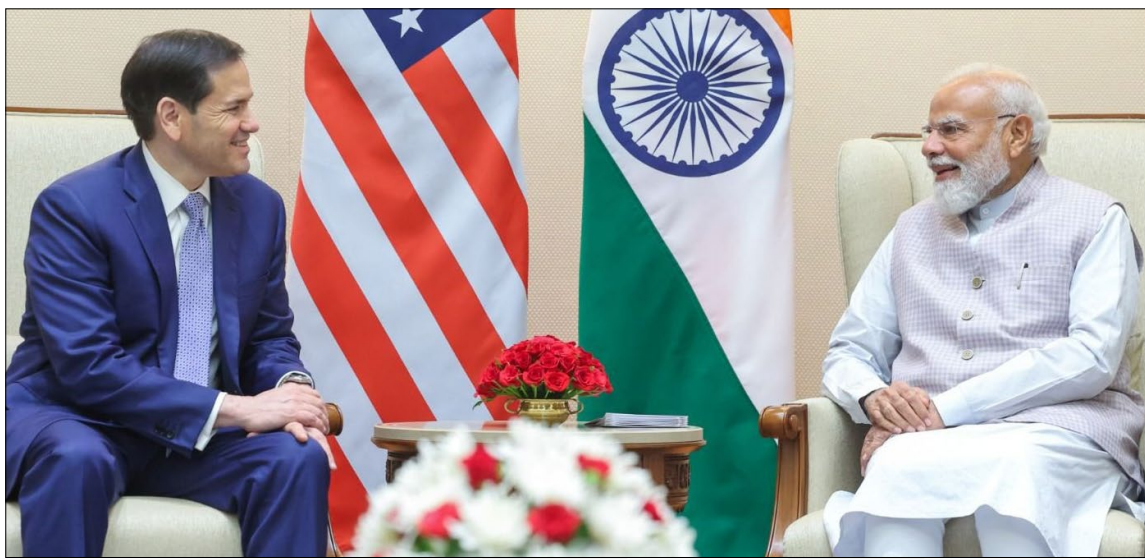
## BJP Claims Foreign Links to CJP Online Trend

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday alleged that nearly half of the social media followers of the so-called "Cockroach Janta Party" (CJP) originate from Pakistan, while only a small fraction are from India. Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar claimed that around 49% of the CJP's online followers are from Pakistan and only about 9% are from India. He described the trend as a matter of concern, suggesting it reflects coordinated online activity. The controversy comes amid growing political debate around the CJP, a social media-driven

trend that emerged recently and quickly went viral through memes and commentary on issues such as unemployment, education policy, and alleged examination paper leaks. Kerala BJP President Rajeev Chandrasekhar also termed the CJP a "classic cross-border influence operation," alleging that it is aimed at targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and destabilising India. In a post on social media platform X, he said that modern tools such

as bots and artificial intelligence are being used to manufacture seemingly organic narratives. He further alleged that India's rising global profile under Prime Minister Modi has led to increased external opposition and attempts to influence public opinion. Chandrasekhar added that despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and economic disruptions, the

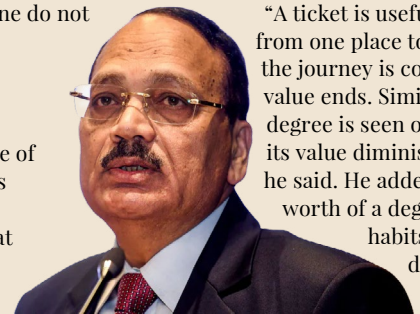
government has ensured stability and resilience in the country. He asserted that no "foreign vested interest" or political opposition could derail India's development journey. The "Cockroach Janta Party" trend reportedly gained traction after a controversy linked to remarks made during a Supreme Court hearing, and has since been associated with a campaign demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during their meeting in New Delhi. The leaders discussed progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on regional and global peace and security, reaffirming continued cooperation for global stability and shared prosperity.

## BUILD CHARACTER, GAIN KNOWLEDGE: CJI

**Vikrama Vahini | Bhiwani**  
Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday called upon the youth of the country to cultivate strong character, acquire knowledge and become responsible citizens, stating that India's future depends on today's students. Addressing the 5th convocation ceremony of Chaudhary Bansi Lal University, Justice Kant said that academic degrees alone do not define success. He emphasised that true success is achieved through discipline, diligence, effective use of time and a continuous willingness to learn. He further said that education must go



beyond employment opportunities and should focus on building character, self-confidence and moral values. "Students' success should not be measured only by examination results, but by the kind of citizens they become," he said, adding that integrity, sensitivity and a spirit of service are as important as academic knowledge. "A ticket is useful only for travel from one place to another; once the journey is complete, its value ends. Similarly, if a degree is seen only as a ticket, its value diminishes over time," he said. He added that the true worth of a degree lies in the habits of mind it develops.

## INDIA EYES MEGA PIPELINES AMID FUEL CRISIS

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**  
Amid rising global fuel uncertainty driven by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, India is revisiting several long-pending mega pipeline projects aimed at strengthening long-term energy security and reducing crude import dependence. The ongoing conflict and disruptions in key maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, have pushed global oil prices higher and raised concerns over supply stability. While India has so far managed to shield domestic consumers from sharp price hikes, experts warn that prolonged instability could pose significant risks due to heavy import reliance. India currently imports nearly 85-90% of its crude oil requirements, making it highly vulnerable to international supply shocks.

Policy discussions have once again turned towards major pipeline projects considered crucial for future energy security. Key proposals include the Oman-India Deepwater Multipurpose Pipeline, a 1,600-km undersea project connecting Oman's Ras Al Jifan to Porbandar in Gujarat for natural gas supply. Another is the India-Sri Lanka cross-border oil pipeline linking Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka's Trincomalee and Colombo, aimed at strengthening regional energy cooperation. The third project is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, which seeks to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to South Asia, though it continues to face geopolitical and security challenges.

## INDIA'S PIPELINE PUSH FOR ENERGY SECURITY

3 MEGA PROJECTS FOR A STRONGER, SELF-RELIANT FUTURE

<b>GLOBAL FUEL UNCERTAINTY RISING</b> Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and disruptions in key routes have pushed up crude prices and threatened global supply stability.	<b>INDIA'S HIGH IMPORT DEPENDENCE</b> India imports nearly 85-90% of its crude oil needs, making it highly vulnerable to international supply shocks.	<b>SHORT-TERM RESPONSE</b> Fuel conservation measures, emergency stock releases and alternative fuel authorizations ensure immediate pressure management.	<b>LONG-TERM SOLUTION REVISITED</b> India is reviving key pipeline projects to ensure long-term energy security, reduce import dependence and strengthen regional cooperation.	<b>GOAL</b> Reduce reliance on vulnerable sea routes and build a resilient, diversified and secure energy future.
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## Parameshwara Hints at CM Ambition

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Saturday triggered fresh political speculation by stating that he is capable of handling "any responsibility", including the post of Chief Minister, if entrusted by the party leadership. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Parameshwara said he has served as Home Minister for nearly eight years and is satisfied with his current role. "Even if the Chief Minister's post is given, I can manage it. I have that capability," he said, while clarifying that he has not sought any change in portfolio.



Responding to questions on cabinet reshuffle and MLA demands for ministerial posts, he said aspirational politics among legislators was natural, but final decisions rest with the party high command within constitutional limits. He also said the police decision to deny permission for a proposed rally by the so-called "Cockroach Janta Party" was purely administrative, based on law and order considerations. Parameshwara said the police would act appropriately on any security-related requests, including those from the Waqf Board during Bakrid. He added that the Congress party follows equal treatment of all communities.

## Nitin K'taka Visit Boosts BJP Drive

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Karnataka BJP on Saturday witnessed a renewed organisational drive as newly appointed BJP National President Nitin Nabin made his first visit to the state after assuming office, with State President Vijayendra Yediyurappa describing it as a significant step in strengthening the party's structure. In a statement, Vijayendra said the visit has brought fresh energy and direction to the organisation under the new national leadership. He added that party workers across Karnataka are "energised and motivated" by Nabin's leadership style, which has boosted

cadre confidence at all levels. He further said the Karnataka unit remains aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and is focused on expanding organisational reach at the booth and district levels as part of its long-term strategy. Party sources said Nabin held detailed discussions with state leaders and core committee members, focusing on strengthening booth management, improving district-level coordination, and enhancing grassroots training programmes for workers. The discussions also emphasised expanding digital outreach, improving internal communication systems, and strengthening the party's presence in both urban and rural constituencies through sustained cadre engagement. The visit comes at a politically sensitive time for the state unit following recent bypoll results that did not favour the party. However, leaders have described the exercise as part of a broader organisational restructuring and revival effort.

## BYV Set to Retain K'taka BJP Post

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is in the final stages of deciding its Karnataka unit leadership, with incumbent president Vijayendra Yediyurappa emerging as the frontrunner for a second consecutive term following consultations with the party's central leadership. According to party sources, central observers Bajjayant Jay Panda and Shiv Prakash recently held a series of meetings with senior Karnataka BJP leaders before returning to New Delhi to submit their report to the party high command. Nearly 33 senior leaders were consulted during the exercise, with discussions focusing



on organisational stability, caste equations and electoral preparedness. Two leaders reportedly could not participate as they were abroad. The leadership review comes amid internal differences within the state unit and differing opinions on the party's future strategy following recent electoral results. Party insiders said the process is also linked to preparations for the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections. Sources added that Vijayendra, son of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, continues to enjoy strong backing from influential sections of the party, particularly among Lingayat leaders, who argue that his continuation would ensure stability and organisational continuity.

Panchatantra Stories

The Tale of the Three Fishes

In a quiet pond surrounded by greenery lived three fishes named Anagatavidhata, Pratyutpannamati, and Yadbhavishya, along with many others. The pond had always been a safe and peaceful home for generations of fish.

One afternoon, as the sun was setting, a group of fishermen passed by the pond. They paused, observed the water, and noticed the abundance of fish swimming within. Since they had already made a good catch elsewhere, they decided not to fish immediately. Instead, they planned to return the next morning.

"This pond is full of fish, and many of them are large," one fisherman said. "Let us come back tomorrow morning and cast our nets."

The three fishes happened to be near the surface and overheard the conversation. Alarmed by what he heard, Anagatavidhata quickly gathered the other fish and warned them of the impending danger.

"The fishermen will return tomorrow," he said anxiously. "If we stay here, we will surely be caught. I am leaving this pond tonight with my family. I advise all of you to do the same."

Pratyutpannamati agreed immediately. "You are right," he said. "It is unwise to ignore such a warning. I too will leave with you."

However, Yadbhavishya laughed at them. "Why panic over mere words?" he said confidently. "This pond has been our home for generations. Nothing has ever harmed us here. Why abandon it based on a possibility?"

He continued, "Fate decides life and death. If death is destined, it will come wherever we go. I would rather stay and face whatever comes than run away in fear."

The fishes were divided. Some trusted the wisdom of Anagatavidhata and Pratyutpannamati and decided to leave. That very evening, they slipped through a narrow channel that connected the pond to another water body and found a safer place.

But many others, convinced by Yadbhavishya's words, chose to remain. They mocked those who left, calling them fearful and foolish.

The next morning, the fishermen returned as planned. Without delay, they cast their nets across the pond. The fishes that had stayed behind were trapped. No matter how hard they struggled, they could not escape.

By the end of the day, not a single fish remained in the pond. The fishermen were delighted with their catch and left with baskets full of fish.

Meanwhile, those who had acted wisely and left early were safe in their new home. This tale teaches a timeless lesson: when danger is foreseen, wise individuals act promptly rather than ignore the warning.

Success Needs Patience, Calmness and Listening: K.V. P

Three Years as CM Media Advisor: No Curbs on Press Freedom

SIDDARAMAIAH GOVT ROLLS OUT SCHEMES FOR JOURNALISTS' WELFARE

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Chief Minister's Media Advisor K. V. Prabhakar said that patience, composure, and the ability to listen are the key qualities required to achieve excellence in any field, adding that he imbibed these values from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He was speaking at a "Media Interaction" programme held at the Karnataka Working Journalists' Association (KUWJ) hall on K.G. Road in Bengaluru.

Recalling his journey, Prabhakar said he joined the Chief Minister's team in 2013 after being invited to handle media coordination and has since spent over a decade working closely with him.

Sharing his experience, he said he initially had doubts about handling the responsibility but remained committed to supporting Siddaramaiah through both challenging and successful times. He expressed gratitude to journalists across the state and the people of Kolar district for their support throughout his



Prabhakar said that upon assuming the role of media advisor again in 2023, he focused on addressing the concerns of journalists rather than merely holding official responsibilities. He highlighted initiatives such as bus pass facilities

and the Chief Minister's health scheme for journalists, stating that these efforts brought him personal satisfaction.

In a lighter moment, he recounted how a journalist congratulated him on completing three years as media advisor, which he had initially not realised, drawing laughter from the audience.

KUWJ State President Shivanand Tagadur praised Prabhakar's contribution, describing him as a humble leader who understands the struggles of journalists.

He noted that Prabhakar played a key role in bridging gaps between the government, legislators, and the media, and in facilitating welfare measures for journalists, including insurance and recognition awards.

The programme was attended by association office-bearers, including State Treasurer Vasudeva Holla, and journalists, editors, and media professionals from across Karnataka. Prabhakar and Ayesha Khan were felicitated on the occasion by the association.

Funds for Alma Mater Bring Joy

Chief Minister's Media Advisor K.V. Prabhakar shared his journey from a small-town background—where he once distributed newspapers on a bicycle—to reaching a key position in government, reflecting on his experiences over the past three years.

He recalled that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah often reminded him that "power is not permanent, but the good work done while in power is lasting." Prabhakar said this principle has guided him



throughout his tenure. He also highlighted that after assuming office, he visited his school and college in Kolar, where several development requests were raised. With the support of Minister Satish Jarkiholi, many of those demands were fulfilled. He expressed satisfaction and pride in being able to contribute to such meaningful initiatives while in office.

Ad Policy Soon

Chief Minister's Media Advisor K.V. Prabhakar announced that a long-pending advertisement policy has now been finalised and will be implemented soon. He stated that the policy has been carefully structured after addressing various concerns and speculations. Prabhakar emphasised that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has a strong commitment towards supporting small newspapers.

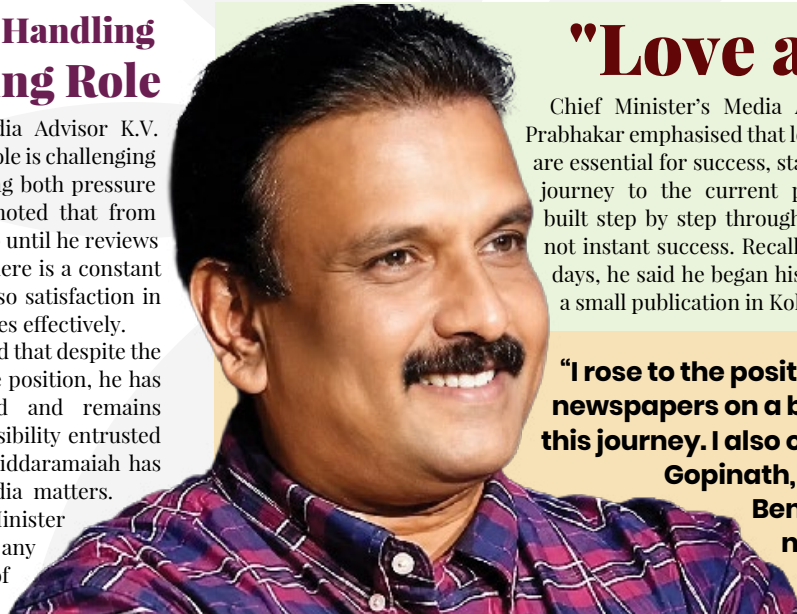
The new policy aims to provide greater benefits and support to publications that strive to reach readers through consistent effort.



Satisfied After Handling a Challenging Role

Chief Minister's Media Advisor K.V. Prabhakar said that his role is challenging every single day, bringing both pressure and responsibility. He noted that from the moment he wakes up until he reviews the day's newspapers, there is a constant sense of concern, but also satisfaction in managing these challenges effectively.

Prabhakar emphasised that despite the demanding nature of the position, he has never felt disillusioned and remains content with the responsibility entrusted to him. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has never interfered in media matters. "Not once has the Chief Minister asked me to act against any media report critical of him."



"Love and Trust Key to Success"

Chief Minister's Media Advisor K.V. Prabhakar emphasised that love and trust are essential for success, stating that his journey to the current position was built step by step through hard work, not instant success. Recalling his early days, he said he began his career with a small publication in Kolar, where he

even distributed newspapers on a bicycle and grew within that environment like a family member. He credited senior journalists such as Vasudev Holla and Gopinath Mallesh for guiding him and helping him move to Bengaluru.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has ever interfered with media freedom. He said that while attempts are made to clarify facts, critical reports about the Chief Minister continue to appear in electronic media, and no effort has been made to block or suppress such coverage.

"I rose to the position of Chief Minister's Media Advisor from delivering newspapers on a bicycle in Kolar, and I credit Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for this journey. I also owe my growth to senior Kolar journalists Vasudev Holla, B.V. Gopinath, and the late Mallesh, who guided me and helped me move to Bengaluru. I began my career at Kolaravani newspaper, where I not only worked but grew up like a member of the family, distributing newspapers on a bicycle," said K.V. Prabhakar.

NEWS

CASE WITHDRAWAL SPARKS SECURITY CONCERNS: R. ASHOK

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Leader of Opposition R. Ashok on Saturday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of indulging in vote-bank politics by withdrawing cases against those allegedly involved in communal violence in Kalaburagi, warning that the move could threaten the state's security.

Addressing reporters, Ashok alleged that cases against nearly 150 individuals, including those accused of attacking police near the Lade Mashak Dargah in Aland and damaging a minister's vehicle, have been withdrawn. Ashok also raised concerns about alleged infiltration by Bangladeshi nationals and increasing incidents of communal unrest, accusing the government of failing to take firm action.

Anekal Stadium Project Criticised

The BJP leader also criticised the proposed construction of an international cricket stadium in Anekal, claiming it is being undertaken to inflate surrounding



Leaders and workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Bengaluru North District, during the two-day Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Mahabhiyan-2026 training programme, inaugurated by Opposition Leader R. Ashok, who lit the ceremonial lamp and addressed party workers. Also seen are Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, former Chief Minister D. V. Sadananda Gowda, district BJP president S. Harish, MLAs S. R. Vishwanath, Bairathi Basavaraj, K. Gopalaiah, along with other party leaders and office-bearers.

land prices and facilitate commissions.

He questioned the necessity of a new stadium when the existing M. Chinnaswamy Stadium is used only a few times a year.

According to him, the project has not been demanded by local sportspersons and appears to be financially motivated rather than aimed at promoting sports development.

Fuel Price Hike and Tax Concerns

On rising fuel prices, Ashok stated that while international crude price hikes are responsible for increased petrol and diesel rates, the state government stands to gain nearly ₹7,000 crore annually through taxes. He urged the government to reduce the tax burden on citizens instead of blaming the Centre.

Remarks on Political Issues

Ashok also criticised recent political developments, including alleged appeasement policies and statements against the judiciary.

He emphasised that court verdicts must be respected and cautioned against actions that could undermine democratic institutions.

The remarks have added to the ongoing political tensions in the state, with sharp exchanges between the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP over governance and policy decisions.

SCIENCE & Technology

Google Glitch Sparks Buzz Amid AI Search Rollout

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Google recently found itself at the centre of online chatter after an unusual glitch affected its search results on May 22, coinciding with the rollout of its new AI-powered search experience.

Users who searched for the word "disregard" were met with an unexpected response. Instead of the usual dictionary definition and list of links, the search engine displayed a chatbot-style reply: "Understood. Let me know whenever you have a new prompt or question." The response resembled an AI assistant rather than a traditional search engine output.

The incident occurred as Google began introducing a revamped search interface that prioritises AI-generated summaries. These summaries appear at the top of the results page, pushing conventional blue links further down.

The change marks a significant shift in how users interact with search results, blending search functionality with conversational AI.

However, the glitch highlighted potential inconsistencies in the system, where simple keyword queries were mistakenly interpreted as conversational prompts.

Users reported that the issue was not limited to the word "disregard." Searches for terms like "forget" and "shut" also triggered chatbot-like replies.

In some cases, the responses appeared interactive, offering to assist with new queries or suggesting creative ideas—further blurring the line between search engine and AI assistant.

Screenshots of these unusual responses quickly circulated across social media platforms, sparking curiosity, humour, and criticism among users.

No Need to Panic Over Ebola: Dinesh Gundu Rao

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has urged the public not to panic over Ebola concerns, assuring that the state government has taken all necessary precautionary measures.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, the minister said that health department officials are in constant touch with central authorities and are closely monitoring the situation. He clarified that no Ebola cases have been reported in India so far, nor in neighbouring countries.

As a precaution, individuals arriving from African nations such as Uganda and Congo will be kept under surveillance for 21 days. Authorities have been instructed to act

immediately if any symptoms are detected. The minister appealed to the public not to believe or spread rumours, adding that both the state and central governments have issued necessary guidelines.

Meanwhile, Rao criticised the Centre's economic policies, warning that the country could face serious challenges in the coming days. Referring to earlier remarks by Rahul Gandhi, he said concerns about economic distress had been raised months ago.

He blamed ongoing global conflicts for the current situation but alleged that the central government had failed to respond effectively. Rao accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of delaying solutions while advising citizens to

cut fuel use, avoid gold purchases, and postpone travel.

Comparing the situation with the tenure of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Rao said that fuel prices had previously been managed without burdening citizens, whereas current policies have led to repeated price hikes.

He further alleged that the Centre is prioritising electoral gains over public welfare, stating that rising fuel prices and economic strain are affecting common people.

On the issue of entrance examinations, Rao said that Karnataka is ready to conduct the NEET exam at the state level if permitted by the Centre. He criticised repeated lapses in the conduct of NEET, stating that they have caused distress to students and parents.



# Special DCs Face Allegations, Govt Calls Appointments Legal

## CONTROVERSY DEEPENS OVER SPECIAL DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS' ROLE IN LAND DISPUTES

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Serious allegations have emerged that Special Deputy Commissioners (SDCs) in Karnataka have been functioning beyond their jurisdiction and issuing orders favoring influential private individuals accused of encroaching government land, forest land, grazing land, and lakes. It has been alleged that despite lacking authority under Section 136(3) of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964, the Special Deputy Commissioners have continued to exercise powers beyond their legal mandate. Critics claim that this has resulted in orders being passed in favour of influential encroachers, raising concerns over administrative misuse of power. According to a writ petition (No. 51551-52/2013 KLR RES-PIL), the High Court, in its judgment dated August 26, 2014, had observed that Special Deputy

Commissioners do not have authority under Section 136(3) of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964. Despite this, allegations state that they continue to exercise such powers. A complaint regarding this issue was reportedly filed in 2023 by one Suresh Chandra Babu with the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms. In his complaint, he cited instances where KAS officers including S.N. Gangadharayya, C. Mohammad Kaleemullah, G.V. Seenappa, G. Radhakrishna, M. Omkar Murthy, and Anil Kumar, who served as Special Deputy Commissioners, allegedly exceeded their jurisdiction. He also questioned the legality of appointing IAS officers as Special Deputy Commissioners for the North and South divisions of Bengaluru Urban district, calling the move unlawful. However, the government has now defended the appointments, stating



that they are legally valid. The Revenue Department, in its clarification issued on May 4, 2026, has rejected the allegations and maintained that the appointments are in accordance with law. The department stated that under Section 9 of the Karnataka Land

Revenue Act, 1964, the government has the power to designate officers to perform functions of the Deputy Commissioner at district or divisional levels. It further clarified that the creation of the post of Special Deputy Commissioner-2 was done legally and in accordance with statutory provisions. The clarification added that the Special Deputy Commissioners function under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner and the Regional Commissioner. It also noted that amendments to the Act clearly define the hierarchical structure and administrative control. The department further stated that the roles assigned to Special Deputy Commissioners, including those previously held by IAS and KAS officers, are within the framework of Section 9 of the Act and are not ultra vires. The government also clarified that provisions under the Karnataka

Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, and related laws do not override Section 9 of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act. Additionally, the department explained that appellate powers under the Inam Abolition Act were later modified and transferred to tribunals, and that Special Deputy Commissioners do not have authority to decide certain land grant matters as per Supreme Court rulings. On allegations seeking prosecution of officials under various provisions of the IPC, the department stated that complaints must clearly specify the name of the officer, period of service, and specific offences. Generalised allegations against all officers without specific details were deemed not legally sustainable. The clarification has sparked further debate, with critics arguing that it leaves room for ambiguity in administrative accountability.

# Centre Unveils Draft Rules to Replace MGNREGA

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Central Government has released draft rules for the proposed Vikasit Bharat Guarantee for Employment and Livelihoods Mission (Rural) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G), which is expected to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from July 1 across all states and Union Territories. The draft rules have been issued under Section 33 and other relevant provisions of the Act and have been placed in the public domain to invite feedback before finalisation. The proposed rules outline a detailed transitional framework to ensure a smooth shift from MGNREGA to the new scheme. This includes provisions for the continuation of ongoing projects, settlement of pending liabilities, and transfer of administrative records. The draft also retains the validity of e-KYC-verified job cards and includes safeguards to protect workers' entitlements during the transition period until states formally adopt the new system. Institutional Mechanism Proposed



According to the draft, key institutional structures will be established, including a National Level Steering Committee and a Central Rural Employment Guarantee Council. These bodies will oversee implementation, monitoring, and coordination of the scheme at the national level. The rules also detail provisions related to administrative expenditure, grievance redressal mechanisms, wage and unemployment allowance payments, and financial management, including provisions applicable to Union Territories without legislatures. Officials from the Ministry of Rural Development stated that the draft rules aim to create a comprehensive institutional, administrative, financial, and governance framework for the effective implementation of the new Act.



**Inauguration of Sri Suguna School for children, Mahila Vidyapeetha for Vipra women, and Sandhya Vidyapeetha for Vipra men at the Basavanagudi branch of Sri Puthige Math, in the presence of Sri Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji and Sri Vidyeshtha Theertha Swamiji of Sri Bhandarakere Math, along with Karnataka Samskrit University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mrs. Ahilya Sharma and Brahmin Development Authority Chairman Asagodu Jayasimha.**

## AZAM KHAN GETS 10-YEAR JAIL TERM IN PAN CARD CASE

**> Vikrama Vahini | Rampur**  
Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan has suffered a major legal setback after the MP-MLA Sessions Court in Rampur increased his jail term to 10 years in the two PAN card cases while also enhancing the fine imposed on him. The court, while hearing an appeal seeking stricter punishment, raised Azam Khan's sentence from seven years to 10 years. The fine imposed on him was also increased from ₹50,000 to ₹5 lakh. His son, Abdullah Azam Khan, who is also an accused in the case, saw his jail

term of seven years remain unchanged. However, his fine was enhanced from ₹50,000 to ₹5.5 lakh. According to reports, the verdict was delivered on Saturday by the MP-MLA Sessions Court, marking a significant development in the long-running legal battle involving the father-son duo. Following the judgment, BJP MLA Akash Kumar Saxena described the ruling as "historic," stating that it is rare for a court to enhance a sentence upon appeal and called it an unprecedented decision.

# Coimbatore Girl Kidnapped, Killed; Two Arrested

**> Vikrama Vahini | Coimbatore**  
A 10-year-old girl was found dead near Kannampalayam lake in the Sultur area of Coimbatore on Friday, after reportedly being abducted while she had stepped out of her house to buy groceries. Police have arrested two individuals in connection with the case. According to police, the child had gone to a nearby shop on Thursday evening when she was allegedly kidnapped. The accused, identified as Karthik and Mohan Raj, are said to have abducted the girl on a two-wheeler before killing her and dumping the body near the lake. The incident has triggered widespread outrage in the area, with the victim's family and locals staging protests outside the Sultur police station, alleging delay in police action. Protesters blocked the Sultur Road from Friday night until early Saturday morning, demanding swift justice.



Senior police officials, including Inspector General of Police (West Zone) R.V. Ramya Bharathi, visited the protest site and assured action. TVK MLA N.M. Sukumar also met the protesters and promised strict measures against those involved. In a post on social media platform X, he expressed deep grief and assured that strict action would be taken against the accused. Following the incident, the victim's family reportedly refused to accept the body or proceed with the funeral until they received a direct assurance from the Chief Minister regarding strict punishment for the accused.

## ENTERTAINMENT

# Randeep Hooda on Rejecting Aurangzeb Role

**> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**  
Actor Randeep Hooda has opened up about turning down the role of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in the historical drama Chhaava, starring Vicky Kaushal. The role later went to Akshaye Khanna, whose performance was widely appreciated. Hooda said the decision was made during a challenging phase in his personal and professional life, following his intense preparation for Swatantrya Veer Savarkar.

**'Physically and Emotionally Exhausted': Hooda**  
Speaking in an interview, Hooda revealed that he had undergone a drastic physical transformation for his

previous role, which left him extremely lean and with a shaved head. He said this made it difficult to immediately take on another demanding historical character. He explained that director Laxman Utekar had approached him soon after he completed work on Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, but he was not in a condition—physically or mentally—to commit to another intense role. **Concerns Over Emotional and Legal Stress**  
Hooda also cited personal stress and ongoing legal issues at the time as key reasons for stepping away from the project. He stated, "I was going through an IP court case and I had so much Hindu-Muslim thing going on in the whole narrative and I just did not want to go down that street," explaining that the surrounding sensitivities influenced his decision. **'Respect for the Team': Actor Chooses Another Project**  
Despite declining the role, Hooda said he holds respect for filmmaker Laxman Utekar and the team behind Chhaava. He later chose to work on another project titled Eetha, which he felt was better aligned with his mindset at the time.

Chhaava went on to become one of the major Hindi film successes in recent years, earning strong audience response for its scale and storytelling. **Personal Life and Recent Work**  
On the personal front, Hooda is currently in a happy phase. He and his wife, Lin Laishram, welcomed their first child, a baby girl named Nyomica Hooda, on March 10. Professionally, the actor was recently seen in the second season of Inspector Avinash, which premiered on JioHotstar on May 15.

# OTT Bonanza This Week

**> Vikrama Vahini | B'loru**  
A diverse lineup of films across Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and international content has arrived on OTT platforms this week, offering audiences a wide mix of action, comedy, drama, and socially relevant themes. The latest releases have further intensified competition among major streaming platforms including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, JioHotstar, Sun NXT, Sony LIV, and ZEE5. One of the prominent releases is Dhurandhar, starring Ranveer Singh and directed by Aditya Dhar. The 2025 action film, which initially premiered on Netflix, has now been made available on JioHotstar.

According to platform updates, the OTT version is expected to include additional sequences that were not part of the theatrical release, drawing renewed interest from fans of the action genre. In the Kannada segment, Out of Syllabus has premiered on Sun NXT. The film marks Pradeep Doddiah's dual role as both director and lead actor, alongside Hrithika Srinivas. The supporting cast includes Yogaraj Bhat, Achyuth Kumar, and others. The film revolves around youthful themes and academic pressures, blended with emotional and light-hearted storytelling. A Telugu comedy film that had earlier seen a moderate theatrical run has now been released on Amazon Prime



Video. The film features Tharun Bhascker in the lead role alongside Faria Abdullah, with Sree Vishnu appearing in a cameo. The film has been noted for its humorous narrative style and situational comedy elements that appeal to urban audiences. The crime drama Warrant, now streaming on ZEE5, presents a hard-hitting narrative about a common man who becomes a police officer and is drawn into a system marked by corruption and moral challenges. The film highlights internal conflicts within law enforcement and the personal cost of confronting systemic wrongdoing. On Sony LIV, the Malayalam film Madhuvu has been released, combining comedy with a strong social message. The storyline revolves around a humorous yet sensitive situation that arises when a Hindu family and a Christian family enter into a matrimonial alliance, leading to cultural

clashes and misunderstandings presented in a light-hearted manner. Amazon Prime Video has also released Jack Ryan: The Ghost War, an action thriller inspired by the popular global franchise. The film continues the legacy of high-stakes espionage storytelling, focusing on covert operations and international threats. Adding to the lineup, a new courtroom drama featuring actors Jyothika and Sonakshi Sinha has also premiered on Amazon Prime Video. The film addresses social inequalities and systemic irregularities through a legal battle narrative, highlighting the struggles of individuals seeking justice within the judicial system. With this wide range of releases across genres and languages, OTT platforms continue to expand their reach, catering to varied audience preferences and strengthening their presence in the digital entertainment space.

## BUSINESS

# Forex Reserves Drop \$8 Billion in a Week

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a sharp decline of \$8.09 billion during the week ending May 15, 2026, falling to \$688.89 billion from \$696.98 billion the previous week, according to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The decline comes amid global economic pressures, including a strengthening US dollar and geopolitical tensions linked to the ongoing West Asia crisis, which have impacted currencies worldwide. **Major Fall in Foreign Currency Assets**  
The biggest drop was recorded in foreign currency assets (FCAs), which fell by \$6.48 billion to \$545.90 billion. FCAs form the largest component of India's forex reserves and include major global currencies such as the US dollar, euro, pound, and yen. **Gold Reserves and Other Components Decline**  
India's gold reserves also saw a dip, decreasing by \$1.54 billion to \$119.32 billion. Additionally, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) declined by \$49 million to \$18.82 billion, while India's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fell by \$25 million to \$4.85 billion. **Impact of Global Factors**  
Experts attribute the decline to rising global uncertainties, including supply disruptions and increased demand for the US dollar. The government has also been urging reduced consumption of imported commodities such as fuel, gold, and edible oils to manage dollar outflow. **Concerns Over Currency Stability**  
Foreign exchange reserves are a key indicator of economic strength, helping manage imports, external debt, and currency stability. A sustained decline could put pressure on the Indian rupee.

Economist and 16th Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya cautioned that defending the rupee aggressively could further deplete reserves, suggesting that currency depreciation may eventually be inevitable. The decline has raised concerns over external stability amid ongoing global economic uncertainty.



SPORTS

**RCB Skipper Patidar Hits 100 Sixes, Creates IPL Record**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) skipper Rajat Patidar created history in IPL 2026 by completing 100 sixes in his career, becoming the fastest Indian to achieve the milestone in terms of balls faced.

Returning from injury, Patidar played a crucial knock of 56 runs off 39 balls against Sunrisers Hyderabad. His innings, which included six boundaries and a six, helped RCB stay in contention despite suffering a 55-run defeat.

Patidar reached the 100-sixes mark in just 933 deliveries, making him the fastest Indian batter to achieve the feat in IPL history. Overall, he stands third on the list of quickest players to reach the milestone.

The record for the fastest 100 sixes is held by Andre Russell (657 balls), followed by Nicholas Pooran (884 balls). Patidar surpassed several big names, including Chris Gayle, Sunil Narine, and Shivam Dube, to enter the elite list.

Among Indian players, Patidar broke the previous record held by Shivam Dube, who had reached the milestone in 992 balls.

Despite the loss, Patidar's performance stood out as a major highlight, reinforcing his importance to the RCB lineup in the ongoing season.

**Vinesh Phogat Cleared for Asian Games Trials**

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
In a major relief for star wrestler Vinesh Phogat, the Delhi High Court on Friday directed the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to allow her to participate in the upcoming Asian Games selection trials, effectively clearing the way for her return to competitive wrestling.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice D. K. Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia strongly criticised the WFI's selection policy, describing it as "exclusionary" and lacking discretion to consider exceptional athletes such as Phogat, particularly in cases involving maternity breaks.

The court observed that motherhood cannot be used as a ground to deny opportunities to women athletes and termed the federation's approach "vindictive" and "retrograde." It also questioned the Sports Ministry's silence on the issue.

"The policy and circular are clearly exclusionary in nature as it does not give any discretion to consider iconic players like the appellant in view of her maternity break," the court said in its order. It further directed that Phogat be permitted to participate in the trials scheduled for May 30-31. The court also instructed that the selection trials must be video-recorded, with independent observers from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) present to ensure transparency.

Phogat had approached the High Court challenging the WFI's revised eligibility criteria, which restricted participation in the trials to reigning national champions and medal winners. The changes were introduced shortly before her return to competition, effectively making her ineligible.

**THAILAND ENDS 60-DAY VISA-FREE ENTRY FOR INDIANS**

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Thailand has scrapped its 60-day visa-free entry facility for citizens of 93 countries, including India, following concerns over violations of immigration rules and misuse of the visa system.

Under the revised policy, Indian travellers will now be eligible for a 30-day visa-free stay, in line with earlier bilateral arrangements.

The Thai government announced that the decision was taken due to increasing cases involving foreign nationals in drug-related offences, sex trafficking, and illegal business activities, including running hospitality



ventures and schools without proper permits. Authorities stated that some visitors were overstaying and misusing visa exemptions.

In an official post on social media platform X, Thailand's government said the revised rules are aimed at "tighter security screening and cracking down on overstays," adding that visa policies will now be reviewed on a country-by-country basis.

Officials also clarified that the move is not targeted at any specific nation but is part of a broader effort to curb transnational crime and strengthen immigration control.

Tourism authorities noted that while tourism contributes over 10% to Thailand's GDP, the government is balancing economic interests with national security concerns and efforts to restore order in the post-pandemic travel environment.

**Bengal Dismantles Controversial Football Statue**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
The newly formed BJP-led government in West Bengal has removed a controversial football-themed sculpture installed outside the Salt Lake Stadium, marking a significant change in the stadium's entrance aesthetics as part of a planned infrastructure overhaul.

The installation, originally placed during the tenure of former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, had stood at the VVIP gate area of the stadium since 2017.

The sculpture was created in 2017 as part of beautification efforts ahead of the FIFA U-17 World Cup hosted in India. It featured a distinctive design consisting of oversized footballer legs merging into the Biswa Bangla logo, with the word "Joyi" inscribed on a football element.

While intended as a symbolic installation celebrating football culture in the state, the structure soon became a subject of debate over its artistic interpretation.

State Sports Minister Nisith Pramanik strongly criticised the sculpture, describing it as visually unappealing and lacking artistic merit.

He stated that the installation did not align with the planned

**The BJP-led West Bengal government has removed a controversial football-themed sculpture at Salt Lake Stadium, originally installed during Mamata Banerjee's tenure. The move, part of a broader infrastructure revamp, has reignited debate over public art and political legacy in the state.**

redevelopment vision for the stadium complex and questioned its aesthetic relevance. According to officials, the decision to remove the structure was taken as part of a broader upgrade plan aimed at modernising the sports facility.

The sculpture was dismantled on Saturday during ongoing changes around the Salt Lake Stadium premises. Authorities indicated that the removal is part of a larger infrastructure improvement initiative designed to enhance the stadium's appearance and functionality.

Officials added that the revamp project will focus on upgrading public spaces, improving visitor experience, and aligning the stadium with modern international standards.



**CHINA COAL MINE BLAST KILLS 90, SEVERAL MISSING**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Beijing**  
At least 90 people have died and several others are missing after a massive explosion at the Liushenyu coal mine in Qin yuan County, China, late Friday night, according to official reports.

More than 200 workers were present at the site when the blast occurred, triggering a large-scale rescue operation. Emergency teams are continuing search and rescue efforts to locate those still trapped inside the mine.

Authorities have not yet confirmed the cause of the explosion, though such incidents in coal mines are often linked to gas leaks or flooding. Officials have launched a detailed investigation into the disaster.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has directed rescue agencies to intensify operations and ensure that all missing workers are found. He also called for strict accountability, saying those responsible for safety lapses must be held accountable.

Premier Li Qiang has also ordered priority to rescue efforts and a thorough probe into the incident. Authorities described the tragedy as one of the deadliest mining accidents in recent years.



**Sri Vidya Vallabha Madhava Theertha Swamiji, Pontiff of Sri Man Madhava Theertha Matha Performed 108KG Madhu Abhisheka to Sri Seeta Lakshmana Sametha Sri Ramachandra Devaru which was worshipped by Sri Kambaluru Ramachandra Theertha Sripadaru and to Sri Mukhya Prana Devaru and Sri Raghavendra Swamigala Brundavana in Mattikere Sri Raghavendra Swami mutt, Bengaluru on 23rd May 2026.**

**Final Deal in Sight to End US-Iran Conflict**

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The United States and Iran are reportedly moving closer to a draft agreement aimed at ending their nearly three-month-long conflict, following intensive international mediation efforts led by Pakistan, according to diplomatic sources.

Officials in Washington, Tehran and Islamabad are said to have made significant progress through round-the-clock negotiations, with a potential framework for a long-term peace deal taking shape.

The development follows high-level backchannel talks involving Pakistani and Qatari facilitators.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, speaking during an official visit to New Delhi, expressed cautious optimism, stating that "some progress has been made" and a formal update could be expected within days.

Pakistan has played a key mediating role in the talks, including recent engagements in Tehran involving senior Iranian officials and Pakistan's military leadership.

The discussions are reported to have focused on resolving economic and security tensions that contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

However, key disagreements remain over a proposed 14-point framework, including the status of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which has been a major point of contention due to its importance for global energy supplies.

**Bitcoin Scam Accused Sent to 14-Day Judicial Custody**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
In a major development in the Bitcoin-linked money laundering case, a special court in Bengaluru on Friday remanded accused Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, Sunish Hegde, and Robin Khandelwal to 14 days of judicial custody until June 5.

The order was issued by the Principal City Civil and Sessions Court, following earlier

Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody for interrogation in connection with alleged laundering of proceeds from multiple cybercrimes, including theft from the government e-procurement portal and hacking of gaming websites.

The ED is also probing the conversion of illicit funds into cryptocurrency routed through foreign

channels. Earlier searches were conducted at the residence of Mohammed Harris Nalapad, an associate of Sriki.

The case is being investigated by multiple agencies, including the ED, CID, and a Special Investigation Team (SIT), as legal proceedings continue in various related cases before the Karnataka High Court.



**Terror Operatives Attend Funeral in Islamabad**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Islamabad**  
A high-profile funeral of Al-Badr commander Hamza Burhan, also known as Arjumand Gulzar Dar alias "Doctor," in Islamabad has drawn international attention after visuals showed the presence of several globally wanted terrorists and senior operatives.

Burhan was shot by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on Thursday and later succumbed to injuries. He was buried in Islamabad a day later.

According to visuals circulating on social media, Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin—designated as a

**The funeral of Al-Badr commander Hamza Burhan in Islamabad has sparked global attention after several wanted terrorists were seen attending. Burhan, allegedly linked to the Pulwama attack, was shot dead in PoK, raising fresh concerns over terror networks operating from Pakistan.**



terrorist by the United States—and Al-Badr chief Bakht Zameen Khan were among those present at the funeral. Reports also indicated the presence of individuals linked to Pakistan's intelligence establishment.

Security at the funeral was reportedly heavy, with armed personnel carrying assault rifles deployed around senior attendees.

operations in Jammu and Kashmir, including links to the 2019 Pulwama attack that killed over 40 CRPF personnel.

Reports suggest that Burhan had been residing in PoK under a different identity and was working as a principal at a private college in Muzaffarabad prior to his death.

He was reportedly attacked while leaving the institution on Thursday morning. Pakistani officials said he sustained multiple gunshot wounds to the head and was taken to hospital in critical condition. Authorities have arrested one suspect in connection with the killing and recovered the weapon used in the attack.

**COCONUT WASTE NOW A PROFITABLE BUSINESS**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar**  
If you are using coconut in your daily cooking, you can soon be rich, sounds funny, no its true. You can earn money by selling the hard shells of coconut, which hitherto you were discarding it as trash.

Yes, some traders from Tumkuru district are moving around in Kolar by announcing that they would purchase the shells of the coconut on kilogram basis.

According to one the trader, they are moving around in all parts of State purchasing the shells from the door steps of the people. He said they would take back the same to their place and convert the same to charcoal by subjecting it in a kiln.

Once the charcoal is ready it would be sold to buyers from Kerala and Chennai who come down to Tumkuru and other places to purchase the same. According to Satish one of the trader, the coconut shells would be converted to charcoal in various units located in Tumkuru and later it would sold to Kerala buyers.

The Kerala buyers in turn would be exporting the processed charcoal to foreign for using the same as raw material for manufacturing activated carbon used in water and air purifiers.

The charcoal is also used in cosmetic industry including skin protecting creams. Of late some researchers have found that the charcoal can be used in the production of anti-bacterial agent.



Kiran, another trader said they would purchase the same at around Rs. 10 per kilogram and sell the same at around Rs. 30 per kilogram to charcoal units in Tumkur.

He said equally broken shells will fetch more money as they would be preparing serving bowls in ice cream industry and also used to make designed diyas which would sole during Deepavali festival.

He said since Tumkuru district has large number of coconut grooves, many charcoal industries have come up and small buyers purchase the shells from hotels, bakery and other eatery houses.

He further said if the seller wishes to deliver their shells to the buyer they would be purchasing the same at around rupees 25 per kilogram. Traders convert coconut waste into charcoal and industrial products, creating new rural income opportunities.

**"Police Alone Took Decision on CJP Rally"**

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Saturday clarified that the state government had no role in the Bengaluru Police decision to deny permission for a proposed rally by the "Cockroach Janta Party" (CJP) in the city.

The CJP had planned a public gathering near Town Hall in Bengaluru on Sunday, but police refused permission citing law and order considerations, leading to political and online reactions.

Parameshwara said decisions on granting or denying permission for public events are taken solely by the police based on security assessments. "The police examine crowd size, purpose of the event and law and order concerns. The decision is entirely theirs," he said, adding that the government does not interfere in operational matters.

"If permission has been denied, there must be valid reasons. Police will do their job and politicians will do theirs," he said.

The CJP has recently gained attention through its social media campaigns and satirical political messaging.

On other issues, Parameshwara dismissed rumours regarding alleged suicide attempts by jailed Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, terming them baseless. He said police had confirmed no such incident had occurred.

**Save Fuel, Cut Gold, Delay Travel: Govt Urges Economic Caution**

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Amid rising global uncertainty due to the ongoing West Asia crisis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged citizens to adopt a disciplined approach similar to that followed during the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard India's economy. In a public appeal, the Prime Minister called on people to reduce fuel consumption, postpone gold purchases, and delay non-essential foreign travel. He emphasised that these steps are crucial to conserve the country's foreign exchange reserves and maintain economic stability during a period of global volatility.

Highlighting the impact of geopolitical tensions, Modi noted that disruptions in supply chains have led to a surge in prices of key commodities such as petrol, diesel, and fertilisers. As India relies heavily on imports—particularly crude oil—any rise in global prices increases pressure on the country's forex reserves and weakens the rupee.

To address these challenges, the Prime Minister suggested practical measures including increased use of public transport like metro rail services, carpooling, adoption of electric vehicles, and greater reliance on railways for goods movement. He also



encouraged companies to consider work-from-home arrangements to reduce daily fuel consumption.

The government's advisory against gold purchases is also linked to economic concerns. India is one of the world's largest importers of gold, and higher demand during uncertain times leads to increased dollar outflow, further straining forex reserves.

By reducing unnecessary imports and conserving foreign exchange, the government seeks to protect the rupee, control inflation, and ensure long-term economic resilience.

The Prime Minister stressed that during global crises, collective responsibility and prudent economic behaviour are essential to keep national interests above all else and minimise the impact of external pressures on the country's economy.