



# VIKRAMA VAHINI

IN 2014, NARENDRA MODI BECAME THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA FOR THE FIRST TIME

26 May, 2026 | Tuesday | Shukla Paksha | Ekadashi | Vikrama Samvata | Bengaluru | Volume: 09 | Issue: 71

**Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's Cannes red carpet appearance in a blue gown sparked widespread online debate, drawing praise for her elegance as well as criticism over her styling, while Kangana Ranaut strongly defended her against trolling.**

**With the arrival of the monsoon, health experts have issued an advisory highlighting the increased risk of seasonal illnesses due to sudden climatic changes, high humidity, and contamination of food and water.**



### 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

## US-Iran Deal May Reopen Hormuz Soon

**> Vikrama Vahini | Moscow**  
The United States and Iran have reached an in-principle agreement to reopen the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz within 30 days, according to media reports.

The proposed framework also includes extending the current ceasefire by 60 days to allow further negotiations, though formal approval from Iran is still pending. Discussions on Tehran's nuclear programme have been deferred, with both sides prioritising de-escalation and maritime security.

Reports suggest the deal is nearly final, with minor details yet to be resolved. The agreement, if confirmed, could ease tensions and stabilise global oil supply routes following months of conflict and disruption.

## AIADMK Rebels Quit, Join TVK; Horse-Trading Row

**> Vikrama Vahini | Chennai**  
The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam faced a setback on Monday as three rebel MLAs resigned from the party and joined the ruling Tamil Vetti Kazhagam, triggering sharp political reactions across Tamil Nadu.

The resignations, involving legislators aligned with senior leaders C. Ve. Shanmugam and S. P. Velumani, led to allegations of "horse-trading" from both the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and AIADMK. However, the ruling party rejected the claims, with the MLAs asserting that their decision to join TVK was voluntary.

## Mother's Jibe at Mamata After Meet with CM Adhikari

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**  
BJP MLA Ratna Debnath, mother of the RG Kar rape-murder victim, on Monday met Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari and reiterated her demand for justice in the case that had sparked nationwide outrage.

After the meeting at the state secretariat, Debnath took a swipe at former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, contrasting her personal loss with Banerjee's political defeat, stating that while she lost her daughter, Banerjee had lost her position.

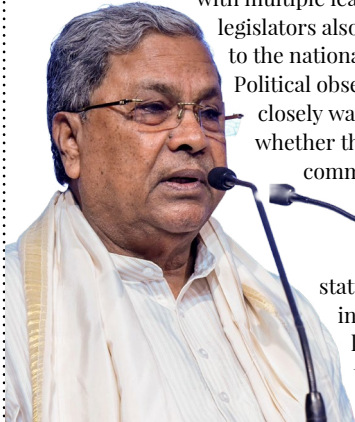
The case pertains to the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor at R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in August 2024, which triggered widespread protests and allegations of evidence tampering.

The Calcutta High Court has ordered a CBI-led special investigation team to probe the case, while the state government has assured that the investigation will be expedited.

# Leadership Change or Cabinet Expansion? Decision Expected Today

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Amid intensifying speculation over a possible leadership change in Karnataka, significant developments have taken place within the state Cabinet, even as the political focus shifts to New Delhi. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar have been summoned by the party high command and are set to travel to Delhi separately, fuelling fresh debate over the future leadership of the state.

The ongoing power tussle within the Indian National Congress in Karnataka appears to have reached a crucial stage, with multiple leaders and



legislators also heading to the national capital. Political observers are closely watching whether the high command will intervene to maintain status quo or initiate a leadership transition. **PG2**

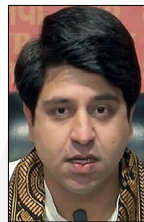
## SIDDARAMAIAH KEEPS KEY PORTFOLIOS

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday retained control over several key portfolios as the Karnataka Cabinet underwent a minor reshuffle, signalling a calibrated administrative adjustment within the government. According to an official notification issued by the Cabinet Affairs and

Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department, Siddaramaiah will continue to handle crucial departments including Finance, Cabinet Affairs, Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Intelligence, Information, Youth Services, Sports, Scheduled Tribes Welfare, and Co-operation. The Co-operation portfolio, however, has been redefined to **PG3**

## "Kharage 'Nominal', Cong Leadership Exposed"

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
The ongoing political uncertainty in Karnataka has triggered fresh criticism of the Indian National Congress, with the Bharatiya Janata Party intensifying its attack on the party's leadership structure. BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla on Monday alleged that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage holds only a "nominal" position, claiming that real decision-making power lies with the party's central leadership.



Referring to the leadership discussions in Karnataka, Poonawalla said key decisions, including those related to the Chief Minister's post, are taken by the high command. The BJP leader also criticised the Congress for focusing on internal power struggles rather than governance. The remarks come amid heightened speculation over leadership equations in Karnataka, involving leaders like Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, keeping the political atmosphere charged.

# "not learnt their lessons" SC Seeks Reply on NEET Leak

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Supreme Court of India on Monday sought responses from the Centre, the National Testing Agency (NTA), and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) over a plea concerning the recent NEET paper leak and the functioning of the exam-conducting body.

A bench comprising Justices P. S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhadhe heard multiple petitions calling for structural reforms, including replacing the NTA and shifting the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to a computer-based format.

Expressing concern, the court remarked that authorities appeared to have "not learnt their lessons," noting that similar issues had reached the court earlier. It referred to recommendations made by a monitoring committee in the past and directed the NTA to file an affidavit detailing steps

taken to implement those suggestions. The notice was issued in response to a petition filed by the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), which has sought the establishment of an autonomous body to conduct NEET. The association argued that repeated paper leaks have violated students' fundamental rights.

FAIMA also urged the court to appoint a high-powered monitoring committee until a new system is in place. It proposed that the panel include a retired Supreme Court judge, a cybersecurity expert, and a forensic scientist to ensure the integrity of future examinations.

The NEET examination, conducted by the NTA on May 3 for admissions to medical colleges, was cancelled on May 12 following allegations of a paper leak. Several arrests have been made in connection with the case.



# Karnataka Trio Receives Padma Honours

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
In a moment of pride for Karnataka, three eminent personalities from the state have been selected for the prestigious Padma Awards in recognition of their exceptional contributions to art, literature, and social service.

Renowned scholar and Avadhana exponent R. Ganesh has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan for his outstanding contribution to classical arts. Social contributors Ankegowda M and Dr. S. G. Sushilamma have been selected for the Padma Shri for their remarkable service in the fields of knowledge preservation and social welfare respectively. These awards recognise lifelong dedication to preserving India's cultural heritage, promoting education, and uplifting marginalised communities.

The honour has been widely welcomed across Karnataka, with cultural organisations and social groups praising the selection of these distinguished personalities. R. Ganesh's work has significantly enriched classical literature and revived interest in traditional scholarly practices among the youth.

Ankegowda M's lifelong commitment to building and sharing a vast repository of books has made knowledge accessible to thousands of readers and researchers. Dr. S. G. Sushilamma's tireless efforts in social service have transformed the lives of countless women, children, and underprivileged communities. **PG2**

## Ankegowda M – The Man Behind a 20-Lakh Book Treasure (Padma Shri)



Ankegowda M., a humble yet extraordinary figure from Mandya district, has devoted his entire life to collecting and preserving books, creating one of the largest private libraries in India. Honoured with the Padma Shri, his contribution to knowledge preservation is both unique and inspiring.

Born on January 8, 1949, in Chinnakurali village of Pandavapura taluk, Ankegowda pursued a postgraduate degree in Kannada literature. He worked as a time officer in a cooperative sugar factory for over three decades before taking voluntary **PG2**

## R. Ganesh – Torchbearer of Classical Avadhana Tradition (Padma Bhushan)



Dr. R. Ganesh, widely regarded as one of India's foremost Avadhana scholars, has made an extraordinary contribution to the preservation and revival of classical Indian intellectual traditions. Avadhana, a rare and complex literary art that tests memory, creativity, and multitasking abilities, found renewed life in Karnataka largely due to his relentless efforts.

Born on December 4, 1962, in Kolar district, Dr. Ganesh is a polymath with academic qualifications in mechanical engineering, materials science, Sanskrit, and Kannada **PG2**

## Dr. S. G. Sushilamma – A Lifelong Mission for the Underprivileged (Padma Shri)



Dr. S. G. Sushilamma, a veteran social worker from Bengaluru, has been honoured with the Padma Shri for her five decades of selfless service to the underprivileged. Fondly known as "Amma," she has transformed countless lives through her compassionate initiatives.

Born on May 24, 1939, she left her professional career to dedicate herself entirely to social service. In 1975, she founded the Sumangali Seva Ashrama, an institution aimed at providing shelter, education, and healthcare to vulnerable **PG2**

## FROM PAPER BOY TO BODYBUILDER

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar**  
International bodybuilder A. V. Ravi addressed students at the annual day programme of the Government Boys College held in Kolar on Monday, sharing his inspiring journey from humble beginnings to global recognition.

Speaking to the students, Ravi recalled his childhood days when he worked as a newspaper distributor for Kolar Vani at a wage of just ₹15.

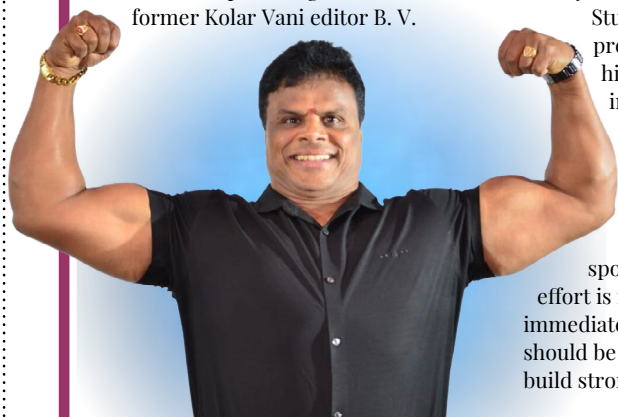
He said discipline and hard work during those early years laid the foundation for his success in bodybuilding.

He also expressed gratitude to former Kolar Vani editor B. V.

Narasimhamurthy, acknowledging his guidance and encouragement in shaping his career. Ravi said the support he received from the newspaper and its editor played a key role in helping him reach national and international levels in bodybuilding.

"From a newspaper delivery boy to an international bodybuilder, my journey has been shaped by struggle and support," he told students, urging them to stay committed to their goals. Students and faculty members present at the event appreciated his achievements and were inspired by his motivational address.

Ravi further encouraged students to make use of every opportunity available to them in academics and sports, stressing that consistent effort is more important than immediate success. He said setbacks should be treated as lessons that help build stronger character and discipline.



# VIKRAMA VAHINI

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WHERE YOUR SUCCESS MAKES HEADLINES

Editorial

Honouring Silent Heroes

India once again celebrated the spirit of selfless service as the Union Government conferred the prestigious Padma Awards on distinguished personalities from various fields across the nation. The grand ceremony held at the historic Rashtrapati Bhavan was not merely an award function; it was a reminder that true nation-building often happens away from the spotlight. Among this year's recipients were three eminent personalities from Karnataka — R. Ganesh, M. Ankegowda and S.G. Sushilamma — whose tireless contributions to society earned them national recognition. Their journeys stand as shining examples of dedication, humility and unwavering commitment to public welfare.

The Padma Awards have always carried significance beyond titles and medals. They represent the nation's gratitude towards individuals who quietly transform communities through service, innovation and compassion. In an era dominated by instant fame and fleeting recognition, honouring grassroots achievers sends a powerful message to society. The achievements of R. Ganesh, M. Ankegowda and S.G. Sushilamma remind us that meaningful change is often driven by perseverance rather than publicity. Their work in social service reflects the enduring values of empathy, sacrifice and responsibility that form the backbone of a progressive nation.

"Vikrama Vahini" daily proudly congratulates all Padma Award recipients and especially the achievers from Karnataka who have brought pride to the state. Such recognitions must inspire younger generations to look beyond personal success and contribute meaningfully to society. Awards attain greater value when they motivate collective social responsibility and encourage citizens to emulate noble ideals. The life, conduct and service of Padma awardees deserve wider attention so that the world may understand the strength of character behind their accomplishments. India's future will shine brighter when more individuals choose the path of service over self-interest.

-Editor

FILM AWARDS IN JUNE: K.V.P

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka State Film Awards, including the prestigious Karnataka Ratna, which have been pending, will be presented in June, Chief Minister's Media Advisor K.V. Prabhakar announced.

He was speaking after inaugurating a seminar titled 'Sandalwood: Past, Present and Future', organized by the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce at the Artists' Association in Chamarajpet on Sunday.

Prabhakar noted that films in the past served as platforms for language, farmers, and labor movements, reflecting real-life issues rather than merely functioning as entertainment.

"Today, instead of focusing only on box office earnings, filmmakers must introspect on how many people they have reached," he said.

Actor Ramesh Aravind emphasized that the film industry must respect audiences and create content aligned with their tastes.



He added that Kannada cinema has expanded its horizons, with films like KGF and Kantara taking the language to a global stage. "While this success is commendable, it has also brought new challenges, which the industry must address collectively," he said.

On the occasion, a delegation led by Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce

President Jayamala submitted a memorandum to Prabhakar, highlighting seven key demands. These included an increase in subsidies, housing schemes for film artists, and the creation of a dedicated OTT platform for Kannada content.

Later, a panel discussion on the current state of the film industry was held under the leadership of filmmaker P. Sheshadri.

Siddu Called to Delhi Amid CM Uncertainty

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has been summoned to New Delhi by the Congress high command amid renewed speculation over the state's leadership dynamics.

Siddaramaiah confirmed that he has been invited for a meeting on May 26, following a call from senior party leader K. C. Venugopal, though he said he was unaware of the agenda.

Sources indicate that the meeting, likely to be attended by Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, may focus on key issues including upcoming Rajya Sabha elections and internal coordination within the Karnataka unit.

The development comes amid continuing discussions over the leadership equation between Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, along with pending Cabinet reshuffle decisions.

The Delhi meeting is expected to address organisational and governance concerns, with political observers closely watching for clarity on the state's leadership structure.



Streetlight Helplines in West Bengaluru

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has urged residents in West Bengaluru to report streetlight maintenance issues through designated helpline numbers for quicker resolution.

The civic body stated that citizens living in Rajarajeshwari Nagar (Zone 1) and Malleswaram (Zone 2) can register complaints related to non-functional or poorly maintained streetlights by contacting the respective phone

numbers assigned to their areas. According to BBMP, the initiative aims to improve response time and ensure better maintenance of street lighting infrastructure across key localities in the western part of the city.

The helpline numbers for various Assembly constituencies are as follows:

\* Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Yeshwanthpur, Dasarahalli: 8073918395, 9611899159

\* Mahalakshmiapuram, Malleswaram, Rajajinagar: 9900408003, 7391048464

\* Padmanabhanagar, Basavanagudi, Vijayanagar, Govindarajanagar: 8001038330, 9686196776

BBMP officials appealed to the public to make use of these contact numbers to promptly report issues, helping authorities ensure proper street illumination and enhance public safety in the city.



Aralumallige Parthasarathy Guruji was the chief guest at the Aryabhata awards celebrations at Ravindra kalakshethra on 23rd may. His lecture on Aryabhata had a tremendous impact and became memorable for the enlightened audience.

Ankegowda M – The Man Behind a 20-Lakh Book Treasure (Padma Shri)

From PGI

retirement in 2005 to dedicate himself fully to his passion for books.

Over nearly 50 years, he has collected more than 20 lakh books across multiple languages including Kannada, English, Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu.

His collection spans literature, history, philosophy, science, arts, and spirituality, making it a priceless repository of knowledge.

His residence, popularly known as "Pustaka Mane" (House of Books), functions as a free public library. Students, researchers, and knowledge seekers from all backgrounds are welcome to access the collection without any cost.

Despite the absence of formal institutional support, Ankegowda manages the vast collection with the help of his family, reflecting his deep commitment to education and public service.

Recognised earlier with the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award and a place in the Limca Book of Records, the Padma Shri acknowledges his unparalleled contribution to the culture of reading and knowledge sharing. His life stands as a testament to the power of individual dedication in preserving intellectual heritage.

R. Ganesh – Torchbearer of Classical Avadhana Tradition (Padma Bhushan)

From PGI

literature. His intellectual range spans poetry, philosophy, linguistics, and aesthetics. Fluent in multiple languages including Kannada, Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Greek, and Latin, he represents a rare blend of traditional scholarship and modern academic excellence.

Dr. Ganesh has performed over 1,300 Ashtavadhanas and five Shatavadhanas, demonstrating unparalleled mastery in simultaneous literary composition, memory recall, and improvisation. His contribution goes beyond performance—he has introduced innovative forms such as Kavya-Chitra-Geeta-Nritya, combining poetry, painting, music, and dance, and Ekavyakti Yakshagana, a solo adaptation of the traditional theatre form.

An accomplished author, he has written more than 70 books across Kannada, Sanskrit, and English, including poetry, essays, and critical works. His lectures on Indian culture and philosophy, spanning over 15,000 hours, are widely accessed by students and scholars.

Dr. S. G. Sushilamma – A Lifelong Mission for the Underprivileged (Padma Shri)

From PGI

sections of society, including orphaned children, distressed women, tribal communities, and the elderly.

Under her leadership, the ashram has established multiple welfare programmes such as residential homes for orphaned girls, schools offering free education, short-stay homes for women in crisis, and old-age care centres. Thousands have benefited from these initiatives through access to shelter, education, vocational training, and healthcare services.

Dr. Sushilamma has also been actively involved in rural development, women's empowerment, and environmental conservation. Through initiatives like self-help groups, literacy campaigns, and microfinance support, she has enabled women to achieve economic independence. Her "Vriksha Mahadasaha" movement has led to the planting of over 40 lakh saplings across Karnataka.

A recipient of numerous national and state awards, including the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Award and Basavashree Award, her work continues to inspire generations.

Leadership Change or Cabinet Expansion? Decision Expected Today

From PGI

In the midst of these developments, key changes have been made in the Cabinet. Following the recent demise of Minister D. Sudhakar, the Planning and Statistics portfolio has been assigned as an additional charge to Animal Husbandry and Sericulture Minister K. Venkatesh.

The official notification in this regard has been issued by the Raj Bhavan.

Meanwhile, portfolios that fell vacant after the resignations of K.N. Rajanna and B. Nagendra—including Cooperation, Youth Affairs and Sports, and Scheduled Tribes Welfare—have not been reassigned. Instead, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has retained these departments along with several key portfolios such as Finance, Parliamentary Affairs, Personnel and Administrative Reforms, and Information.

The developments come amid growing demands from legislators for a Cabinet reshuffle. While speculation continues over possible changes, the allocation of additional responsibilities to K. Venkatesh has added a new dimension to the political narrative, leaving uncertainty over whether a full-scale reshuffle will take place or be deferred for now.

NEWS

BJP Yuva Morcha Leader Held in Rape Case

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Police have arrested a BJP Yuva Morcha leader and advocate, B. S. Bharath, in connection with an alleged rape case reported from Shivamogga district, officials said on Monday.

The case was registered at the Paper Town Police Station in Bhadravati town after a 23-year-old woman accused the youth leader of sexually assaulting her and issuing threats.

According to police, the accused went absconding soon after the complaint was filed, prompting a search operation. Acting on credible information, a police team traced him to a friend's residence in Bengaluru and arrested him late Sunday night.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused was known to the victim's husband and had reportedly become acquainted with the woman through Instagram. He was also a

frequent visitor to the grocery shop run by the couple.

The complainant alleged that the accused sexually assaulted her at her residence on April 11 when her husband was away. She further claimed that he threatened to defame her if she revealed the incident. The accused is also alleged to have returned later in the month and attempted to sexually harass her again at the couple's shop.

Police said the incident came to light after the victim's husband noticed that the accused had been blocked on Instagram while checking her phone. Upon questioning, the woman reportedly disclosed the assault.

Following this, the couple confronted the accused through WhatsApp messages before lodging a formal complaint with the police.

A case has been registered and further investigation is underway.



"PAKNALLI DHURANDHARARU," written by Sr. D. V. Guru Prasad, Retd. IPS officer, was unveiled at Sapna Book House, Mysuru, by Smt. Seema Latkar, Commissioner of Police. Smt. Renuka Manjunath, Shri Jayaprakash Puttur, DSP Gajendra Prasad, Prasanna Santhekadur, Nanjangud Mohan, along with others, were present at the event. The book has evoked considerable interest among readers.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Monsoon Health Advisory

With the arrival of the monsoon, health experts have issued an advisory highlighting the increased risk of seasonal illnesses due to sudden climatic changes, high humidity, and contamination of food and water.

Causes of Monsoon Diseases

The transition from intense summer heat to cold and wet weather weakens the body internally, especially the digestive system. Increased moisture and environmental acidity affect food, water, and overall immunity, leading to ailments such as indigestion, loose motion, and joint pain. Contaminated drinking water during rains further increases the risk of infections.

Recommended Diet During Rainy Season

Experts advise consuming light, warm, and easily digestible food. Items with mildly sour, salty, bitter, and pungent tastes are considered beneficial, while overly sweet, oily, stale, and unhygienic food should be avoided.

Old grains like rice and wheat, pulses such as green gram and lentils, and vegetables like bottle gourd and okra are recommended. Boiled and filtered water, buttermilk with spices, and limited use of oil help maintain digestive balance.

Foods to Avoid

People are cautioned against consuming leafy vegetables in excess, stale food, overly greasy sweets, and food exposed to houseflies. Excess intake of liquids and contaminated water sources such as river

water should also be avoided.

Precautionary Measures

Maintaining hygiene is crucial during the monsoon. Experts recommend using warm water for bathing, avoiding wet clothes, and not staying in damp places. People should protect themselves from rain exposure and ensure proper sanitation at home to prevent infections.

Controlling Mosquitoes and Houseflies

The rainy season creates favourable conditions for mosquito and fly breeding. Natural remedies such as burning neem leaves, garlic peels, and herbal mixtures can help reduce their presence. Keeping surroundings clean and dry is also essential.

Improving Digestive Health

Reduced appetite is common during monsoon and can lead to digestive issues. Experts suggest eating only when hungry, opting for light meals, and considering occasional fasting. Simple remedies like ginger mixtures, spiced buttermilk, and herbal preparations can help improve digestion.

Additional Health Advice

Regular oil massage, light exercise, and adequate rest are recommended to maintain body balance. During brief dry spells within the monsoon, when heat increases, people should avoid spicy and oily foods to prevent bile-related disorders. Health experts emphasise that a balanced diet, clean surroundings, and disciplined lifestyle are key to preventing illnesses and staying healthy during the rainy season.



SCIENCE & Technology

'-ai' Trick Removes Google AI Overviews

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Users of Google Search who prefer traditional results over AI-generated summaries can use a simple workaround by adding "-ai" at the end of their search queries. The method helps remove AI Overviews from the results page, allowing users to view standard blue-link results without the AI summary box. While not an official feature, the trick works as a search operator and offers a quick way to bypass AI-generated content for specific queries.

To use the feature, users can type their normal search and simply add "-ai" (without quotes). For example, typing tips for avoiding heatstroke -ai will display results without the AI Overview section.

Google has clarified that AI Overviews are a core part of Search, similar to Featured Snippets and Knowledge Panels, and there is currently no permanent option to disable them entirely. As a result, users must manually include "-ai" in each query where they wish to avoid AI summaries.

Despite this limitation, the trick is proving useful for those who prefer direct source links, particularly while searching for news, financial information, or detailed research topics. However, experts note that such workarounds may not always remain reliable, as search platforms frequently update how results and features are displayed. Users may therefore experience variations in how effectively the "-ai" operator filters AI Overviews.

At the same time, the growing use of AI in search engines reflects a broader shift toward AI-assisted browsing, even as a section of users continues to prefer conventional result formats for clarity and source transparency.

## SIDDARAMAIAH HITS OUT AT PM OVER FUEL 'LOOT'

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over rising fuel prices, alleging that repeated hikes in petrol, diesel, and LPG rates were "looting" common citizens and fuelling inflation.

Addressing a press conference, Siddaramaiah said frequent revisions in fuel prices in recent weeks had placed an additional burden on salaried employees, farmers, and middle-class families. He noted that the impact was being felt across sectors, particularly in transportation and essential commodities.

In a strong remark, the Chief Minister accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union government of "looting the country" through continuous price hikes.

He said rising fuel costs had led to increased transportation expenses, which in turn pushed up the prices of essential goods, thereby raising the overall cost of living. Siddaramaiah added that the middle class and economically weaker sections were bearing the brunt of inflation.

Comparing current fuel prices with previous years, he claimed that petrol, diesel, and LPG were more affordable



earlier and that recent increases had significantly strained household budgets.

The remarks come amid ongoing political exchanges between the Karnataka government and the Centre over inflation and economic policies. Siddaramaiah said his comments reflected growing public concern over rising living costs and fuel price volatility.

The statement adds to the continuing political debate between the state and Centre over inflation and public welfare policies.

## Hideout Busted, Explosives Seized in Baramulla

> Vikrama Vahini | Srinagar

In a major counter-terror success, security forces busted a terrorist hideout and recovered a large cache of explosives in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Saturday.

The operation was carried out in the Nilsar Kandi area of Chandooma by Jammu and Kashmir Police in coordination with the 52 Rashtriya Rifles, CRPF's 53 Battalion, and SSB's 2 Battalion, following specific intelligence inputs.

During the joint operation, forces uncovered a concealed militant hideout containing significant quantities of war-like stores. The recovered materials included 14



Soviet-made OG-7V fragmentation rounds meant for rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and nine PG-7P propellant charges concealed in plastic containers and tubes.

Police officials stated that the recovery averted a potential threat and marked a significant achievement in ongoing anti-terror operations in North Kashmir.

The operation lasted nearly six hours, with forces thoroughly sanitising the area to eliminate any remaining danger. The seized explosives were later examined by the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) and safely destroyed at the site following standard safety procedures.

A case has been registered at Chandooma Police Station under relevant sections of the Explosive Substances Act and Arms Act, and further investigation is underway.

## Ashok Slams Congress on Fuel VAT

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka on Sunday accused the Congress government of earning an additional ₹6,000 crore annually through increased petrol VAT and using it to fund guarantee schemes, while avoiding tax relief for citizens.

Speaking at a press conference, Ashoka alleged that the state government is benefiting from fuel price hikes instead of reducing taxes and is shifting the blame to the Centre. He said petrol prices in Karnataka were

significantly higher compared to several other states and claimed that the state alone was responsible for the increase.



He further demanded that the government publicly disclose the additional revenue generated from fuel taxes, alleging a lack of transparency.

Ashoka also criticised the state government over law and order issues, claiming that action was not being taken against certain extremist elements and calling for stricter enforcement, including invoking the Goonda Act

where necessary. He also demanded accountability from the Home Minister.

On governance, he alleged mismanagement of finances, unpaid dues in waste disposal systems, rising garbage issues, and delayed payments under civic contracts. He also accused the government of increasing taxes while simultaneously running large-scale welfare guarantee schemes.

The BJP leader also raised concerns over administrative issues in ration distribution, voter list revisions, and alleged financial strain on the state exchequer.

## CET 'Manthana' Draws 10,000 on Day 1

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) said its CET seat allocation awareness programme "Manthana" received an encouraging response on the first day, with over 10,000 students and parents participating across 64 colleges in the state. KEA Executive Director H. Prasanna said around 13,000 candidates had registered for the programme, which is aimed at guiding aspirants through the counselling and option-entry process for engineering, medical and dental seats. The sessions were held in two shifts, with trained resource persons and KEA officials addressing queries and clarifying doubts related to the admission process.

## B'LURU TO SEE WEEKLONG RAINS: IMD

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast cloudy skies, light rainfall, and thunderstorms across Bengaluru throughout the coming week, beginning May 25.

According to IMD scientists, the city is expected to experience generally warm weather along with pre-monsoon showers. The maximum temperature is likely to hover around 31°C, while the minimum temperature will remain close to 22°C.

The weather department has issued a yellow alert for Bengaluru, warning of intermittent rainfall and possible thunderstorms. Similar conditions are expected across Karnataka, with widespread pre-



monsoon activity anticipated in several regions.

Weather conditions are expected to remain largely unchanged until May 29, with consistent chances of showers and thunderstorms. Bengaluru has already been experiencing heavy rainfall over the past few days, causing disruptions to daily life. Incidents of power outages, fallen trees, and impacts on metro services have been reported due to the inclement weather.



BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B. L. Santosh paid respects at the site at the holy place Sathya Sai Ashram in Puttappathi to the Smruti Sthal of Bhagwan Sathya Sai Baba. The place, full of devotion, service, and health facilities, witnesses millions of bhakts from across the globe every year.

## SIDDARAMAIAH KEEPS KEY PORTFOLIOS

> From PG

exclude Agriculture Marketing, while Planning and Statistics and other unallocated subjects remain under the Chief Minister's purview, further consolidating his administrative oversight

As part of the reshuffle, Cabinet Minister K. Venkatesh has been given additional charge of the Planning and Statistics department along with his existing portfolios of Animal Husbandry and Sericulture.

Though officially termed a routine adjustment, political observers view the move as a reaffirmation of centralised control over key governance and financial functions.

## Citizen Inputs Boost Waste Management Plan

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

A key review meeting on solid waste management was held under the chairmanship of Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) Commissioner K. N. Ramesh, focusing on long-term solutions to garbage-related issues within the civic limits.

The meeting was attended by representatives of citizen forums, RWAs, and voluntary organisations, along with BSWML ambassador and actor Aniruddha Jatkar. Discussions centred on improving waste collection systems and strengthening citizen participation in cleanliness drives.

Participants highlighted successful initiatives such as 100% waste segregation in JP Nagar led by Women of Wisdom (WOW), and recommended making strict



segregation mandatory in apartments and PG accommodations across the city.

Suggestions were also made to install CCTV cameras at garbage blackspots and introduce evening waste collection to prevent illegal dumping. Citizen groups further stressed the need for Waste Management Learning Centres in every ward to build awareness among students and the public.

The meeting also proposed greater use of Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) funds to develop composting units, shredding machines, waste collection vehicles, and ward-level infrastructure. Officials were urged to ensure land allocation and permissions for decentralised waste management systems.

To improve efficiency, participants recommended making GPS tracking mandatory for all waste collection vehicles and strengthening enforcement against misuse of civic resources.

### ENTERTAINMENT

## Padma Awards 2026 Honour Film, Music Icons

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu will confer Padma Awards on 66 distinguished personalities at the first civil investiture ceremony for 2026, to be held at the Ganatantra Mandap of Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday (May 25).

The prestigious ceremony will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other senior leaders and dignitaries.

For 2026, the President has approved a total of 132 Padma Awards, comprising 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri honours.

These awards, among the highest civilian recognitions in the country, are presented annually to individuals for exceptional and distinguished service across diverse fields such as art, literature, education, public affairs, science and engineering, sports, medicine, and social work.

This year's list features several prominent names from the film, music, and entertainment industries. Veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra will be honoured posthumously with the Padma Vibhushan, recognising his immense contribution to Indian cinema over several decades. Known for iconic films such as Sholay, Chupke Chupke, and Dream Girl, Dharmendra remains one of the most celebrated actors in Indian film history.

In the Padma Bhushan category, Malayalam cinema legend Mammooty will be recognised for his outstanding body of work and influence in Indian cinema.

A three-time National Award winner, Mammooty has delivered several critically acclaimed performances across genres. Acclaimed playback singer Alka Yagnik will also receive the Padma Bhushan for her remarkable contribution to Indian music. With a career spanning decades, she has lent her voice to numerous chart-topping songs across



Hindi cinema.

The Padma Shri honours will include popular actor R. Madhavan, known for his versatility and performances in films such as Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mein, 3 Idiots, and Rocketry: The Nambi Effect. Bengali cinema stalwart Prosenjit Chatterjee will also be recognised for his significant contribution to regional cinema.

Additionally, the late Satish Shah will be honoured posthumously for his memorable roles in films and television, including the popular sitcom Sarabhai vs Sarabhai.

The Padma Awards not only celebrate excellence in cinema and music but also recognise contributions in various other domains, including grassroots social work, innovation, public service, and cultural preservation.

The honours aim to acknowledge individuals who have made a lasting impact on society through dedication, talent, and service.

The investiture ceremony marks a significant occasion in India's annual honours calendar, celebrating achievements that reflect the nation's cultural richness and diversity.

The Padma Awards 2026 also place a strong emphasis on recognising unsung heroes from across the country who have

made extraordinary contributions at the grassroots level.

From traditional artisans and folk performers to environmentalists and social reformers, many awardees represent the spirit of silent service and dedication beyond the limelight.

Officials noted that a significant number of this year's recipients come from rural and remote regions, highlighting the government's continued focus on inclusive recognition.

These individuals have played a crucial role in preserving indigenous knowledge systems, promoting sustainable practices, and uplifting marginalised communities.

The ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan is expected to be conducted with traditional dignity and grandeur, reflecting the prestige associated with the Padma Awards. Each awardee will receive a medallion and a citation signed by the President, marking national acknowledgement of their lifetime achievements.

With representation across diverse fields and regions, the Padma Awards 2026 once again underscore India's rich talent pool and the importance of honouring individuals whose work has left a lasting impact on society and inspired future generations.

### BUSINESS

## Ranveer Breaks Silence After 'Don 3' Ban

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has broken his silence following reports of a ban imposed on him by the film workers' body amid the ongoing controversy surrounding the film Don 3.

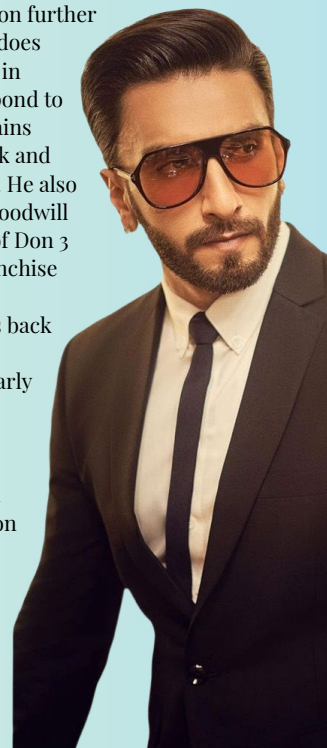
The development comes after the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) reportedly issued a non-cooperation directive against the actor. The move followed a complaint filed by filmmaker Farhan Akhtar after Singh's sudden exit from the much-anticipated project.

According to the federation, multiple notices were sent to Singh asking him to appear for discussions, but he allegedly failed to respond, prompting disciplinary action.

Responding to the controversy, Singh's official spokesperson issued a statement emphasising that the actor holds deep respect for the film industry and all those associated with the Don franchise. The statement noted that Singh had chosen to remain silent in recent weeks to maintain dignity and professionalism amid ongoing developments.

The spokesperson further said that the actor does not wish to engage in speculation or respond to rumours, and remains focused on his work and upcoming projects. He also conveyed Singh's goodwill towards the team of Don 3 and wished the franchise success.

The issue traces back to a complaint reportedly filed nearly five months ago by Akhtar regarding Singh's withdrawal from the film. With the non-cooperation call now in place, industry observers are watching closely to see how the situation impacts Singh's future projects.



## Oil Demand to Persist Despite Rise of Green Energy and EVs

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Despite the global shift towards green energy, solar power, and electric vehicles (EVs), demand for crude oil is expected to remain strong in the coming decades, experts say. While many countries are reducing dependence on fossil fuels to combat climate change, oil continues to play a critical role beyond transportation.

Historically, access to natural resources—particularly oil—has been a major driver of global conflicts. From World War II strategies to conflicts in the Middle East, including the Iraq-Kuwait war and tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Russia, control over oil reserves has often shaped geopolitical dynamics.

However, even as EV adoption increases and fuel consumption patterns change, crude oil remains indispensable to modern life. It is not merely a source of fuel but a key raw material used in thousands of everyday products through petrochemicals.

According to recent estimates by the International Energy Agency (IEA), over 12 percent of global oil demand is currently driven by the petrochemical sector. This share is expected to grow as demand for plastics, chemicals, and synthetic materials continues to rise, even if fuel demand stabilises or declines.

Petrochemicals derived from crude oil are essential in manufacturing a wide range of products. Nearly 99 percent of plastics used globally originate from petroleum. Similarly, synthetic fibres like polyester, nylon, and acrylic used in clothing are petroleum-based. Bitumen, a by-product of oil refining, is widely used in road construction. In the pharmaceutical industry, petrochemicals are used in medicines, capsules, and vitamins.

Agriculture also depends significantly on oil, as fertilizers and pesticides are largely derived from petrochemical processes. In addition, everyday consumer products such as cosmetics, detergents, paints, candles, and lubricants contain petroleum-based components.

SPORTS

## RCB to Field 6-2-3 Combo

**> Vikrama Vahini | Dharamshala (HP)**  
The stage is set for the first Qualifier of IPL 2026, with Royal Challengers Bengaluru set to face Gujarat Titans at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on May 26. The winner of this high-stakes encounter will secure a direct berth in the final.

RCB are expected to field a strong playing XI, likely adopting a 6-2-3 combination comprising six batsmen, two all-rounders, and three specialist bowlers. The Dharamshala pitch is known to favour batting, prompting the team to strengthen its top order.

Opening duties are likely to be handled by Virat Kohli and Phil Salt. Devdutt Padikkal is expected to bat at number three, followed by captain Rajat Patidar at number four. Tim David is likely to strengthen the middle order, while Jitesh Sharma is set to take on wicketkeeping responsibilities.

In the all-rounder department, Krunal Pandya and Romario Shepherd are expected to feature. The bowling attack may include Josh Hazlewood, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, and Rasikh Salam.

For the Impact Player role, RCB could choose between Venkatesh Iyer as a batting option or Suyash Sharma as a bowling reinforcement, depending on match conditions. With a balanced squad and favourable pitch conditions, RCB will aim to capitalise on their strengths and secure a place in the IPL 2026 final.

## Cricketer Dies on Field in Karnataka

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
In a shocking incident, former Karnataka cricketer S. L. Akshay (39) passed away after suffering a heart attack while playing in a KSCA Division match in Bengaluru on Monday.

Akshay, a member of Karnataka's 2014-15 Ranji Trophy-winning team, collapsed on the field during a match between Sapphire CC and Bharat CC at the SLS Ground in Bommasandra. He had bowled a few overs before complaining of chest pain. Though he was rushed to a nearby hospital, doctors declared him dead on arrival. A right-arm pacer known for his swing bowling and calm demeanour, Akshay had represented Karnataka in first-class, List A, and T20 formats. He had taken 18 wickets in six first-class matches, with best figures of 4/40. He was also an active player in the Karnataka Premier League (KPL), representing teams like Bijapur Bulls, Bellary Tuskers, Mysuru Warriors, and Mangaluru United.

After stepping away from professional cricket, Akshay remained deeply involved in the sport as an NCA-certified coach, mentoring several young cricketers in Karnataka's junior ranks. Former India cricketer Dodda Ganesh expressed grief over Akshay's sudden demise, calling it a huge loss to the cricketing fraternity.



## TUNGNATH DRAWS 47,000 DEVOTEES IN 35 DAYS

**> Vikrama Vahini | Dehradun**

The revered Tungnath Temple, known as the third Kedar in Char Dham Yatra, has witnessed an overwhelming response from pilgrims this season, with over 47,000 devotees visiting the shrine within just 35 days of its opening.

Nestled in the Himalayan region near Ukhimath in Uttarakhand, the temple has become a vibrant centre of faith and activity. Pilgrims undertake a 3.5-km trek from Chopta to reach the sacred shrine, where daily rituals such as Rudrabhishek and special prayers are performed amid chants dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Beyond its spiritual importance, Tungnath is also attracting nature



lovers and trekking enthusiasts. Many visitors extend their journey to the nearby Chandrashila peak, known for its panoramic views of the Himalayas.

The surge in footfall has significantly boosted tourism and

in guiding services, horse and mule operations, and hospitality.

Temple authorities noted that the shrine is currently witnessing a deeply devotional atmosphere, with thousands of visitors arriving daily. Meanwhile, local stakeholders have urged the government to enhance infrastructure along the route, including parking, sanitation, drinking water, and waste management facilities to better accommodate the growing number of pilgrims.

The rising popularity of Tungnath highlights a strong blend of faith, tourism, and economic growth, positioning it as a key pilgrimage and travel destination in Uttarakhand.

## Youth Empowerment Under Modi Leadership: BJP Leader

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is achieving new milestones in sectors such as semiconductors, startups, digital innovation, and skill development, creating unprecedented opportunities for the country's youth, said BJP national leader Nitin Naveen.

He was speaking at a programme titled "Dialogue with Young Minds" organised by Youth for Nation in Bengaluru on Monday, where discussions were held on the role of youth in realising the vision of a developed India and the importance of youth leadership. Naveen said India's rapid progress in emerging sectors

is directly benefiting young people by opening up new avenues for employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation. He highlighted that the government's focus on technology-driven growth is shaping a strong foundation for future generations. Criticising the Karnataka Congress government, he alleged that it had "betrayed the aspirations of youth" and accused it of corruption and misgovernance. According to him, such governance reflects a lack of vision for the future of India's young population.

The event was attended by MLA and BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra, BJP Yuva Morcha national president Tejasvi Surya, and other senior leaders.



## SITHARAMAN CALLS FOR FOCUS ON '3F' ECONOMY

**> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday urged Indian citizens and policymakers to focus on what she termed the "3F" priorities—Fuel, Fertiliser, and Foreign Exchange—amid rising global economic uncertainties.

Speaking in Mumbai, Sitharaman said that India must carefully manage these three critical sectors to safeguard the economy from external shocks, particularly in the wake of ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East that have disrupted global energy supplies and pushed up crude oil prices.

Her remarks come shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for economic prudence, including energy conservation, stronger foreign exchange management, and

reduced discretionary spending such as gold purchases for a year, in order to cushion the impact of global instability. The Finance Minister supported the Prime Minister's call, stressing that conserving foreign exchange reserves is crucial for

maintaining India's macroeconomic stability. Sitharaman's comments come at a time when India is facing volatility in crude oil markets following tensions in the Middle East, including disruptions linked to the

Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil shipping route. Experts warn that prolonged instability in the region could impact India's import bill and inflation trajectory, making the government's emphasis on energy security and fiscal discipline increasingly significant.



## India-US Ties Gain Momentum; Trade Deal Soon

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India and the United States have signalled renewed momentum in their expanding strategic partnership, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressing confidence that a bilateral trade agreement could be finalised soon.

Following wide-ranging talks in New Delhi, Rubio and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted deepening cooperation across key sectors including trade, defence, energy, critical minerals, technology, and counter-terrorism—reflecting the growing importance of ties for both regional and global stability.

"We hope to seal a trade agreement with India soon," Rubio said, emphasising that India remains one of Washington's most significant strategic partners. He dismissed suggestions that the relationship required a reset, stating that both countries were building on an already strong and enduring foundation.

Describing the partnership as unique, Rubio pointed to shared democratic values and converging long-term interests. "We are the two largest democracies in the world, and that

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- India and US signal renewed momentum in bilateral ties after high-level talks in New Delhi.
- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio says trade deal could be finalised "soon."
- Both sides highlight growing cooperation in trade, defence, energy, technology, and counter-terrorism.
- India described as a key strategic partner with strong global influence.
- EAM S. Jaishankar stresses India's "multi-alignment" foreign policy approach.
- Focus on strengthening supply chains and critical mineral cooperation.
- Progress reported on interim trade agreement and defence partnership framework.
- Discussions also cover Iran, Strait of Hormuz, and regional security issues.
- US assures immigration policy changes are not India-specific.
- Both nations reaffirm commitment to deepen long-term strategic cooperation.

alone is a baseline for incredible cooperation," he said, adding that India is among a select group of nations with the capacity to influence global outcomes.

Jaishankar, meanwhile, underlined India's foreign policy approach of "multi-alignment," stressing that New Delhi maintains strong relations with multiple global power centres, including the US, Europe, Russia, West Asia, and others. "We do not view global affairs as a zero-sum game. We have to manage multiple

partnerships simultaneously," he said.

Both sides noted increasing efforts to strengthen economic engagement, particularly as global supply chains undergo realignment. Rubio highlighted cooperation in energy security and critical minerals, describing resilient supply chains as essential for the 21st century. On counter-terrorism, Rubio pointed to shared concerns over global terror networks, noting that both countries have faced threats and are closely aligned in tackling them.

## Rubio Warns Iran Over Talks Failure

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The United States will pursue a strong agreement with Iran or "deal with it another way" if ongoing negotiations fail, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday, underscoring the fragile nature of the current ceasefire between the two nations.

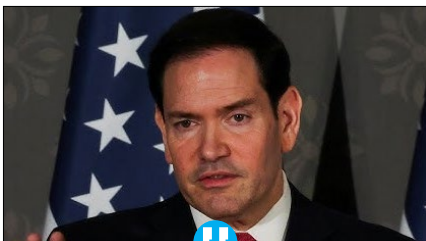
Speaking during his visit to India, Rubio indicated that progress is being made toward a broader agreement aimed at ending the ongoing conflict. However, he cautioned against reading too much into the timing of developments, stating that negotiations are still underway.

Iran and the US have been observing a ceasefire since April 8. While the truce has largely held, tensions persist, particularly around strategic areas such as the Strait of Hormuz, where both sides have imposed blockades at various points.

Efforts are ongoing to expand the ceasefire into a comprehensive agreement that could halt military hostilities involving the US and its allies, including Israel.

Rubio noted that a "solid" proposal is on the table, particularly concerning the reopening of critical maritime routes like the Strait of Hormuz, which is vital for global oil supply.

His remarks come a day after US President Donald Trump stated that the US blockade would remain in force until a formal agreement is reached, certified, and



**US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington will either secure a strong agreement with Iran or "deal with it another way" if talks fail, highlighting the fragile ceasefire and ongoing tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, even as negotiations continue for a broader peace framework.**

signed. He emphasized the need for both sides to proceed carefully in finalizing a deal.

There has been no immediate response from the Iranian government to the latest statements. Despite the reduction in large-scale fighting, the ceasefire remains temporary and uncertain. Key issues such as Iran's nuclear programme, control over the Strait of Hormuz, and its regional influence continue to pose challenges to a lasting resolution.

The ongoing diplomatic efforts aim to prevent a return to open conflict while addressing long-standing geopolitical disputes in the region.



**Sringeri Jagadguru Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Mahaswamiji visited the historic Ram Mandir located about one kilometre southwest of the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal, and offered prayers and had darshan of the deity.**

## Coimbatore Woman's House Attacked Over Rejected Proposal

**> Vikrama Vahini | Coimbatore**

A woman's residence in Kalikkanaickenpalayam near Thondamuthur was allegedly targeted with petrol bombs by a gang after she reportedly rejected a man's marriage proposal, police said on Monday.

According to police sources, the

victim, a second-year college student, had befriended a man from Chennai on social media. The man is said to have developed one-sided affection towards her over time.

The situation escalated after the woman recently came to know about multiple criminal cases against him and decided to end contact. Angered

by this, the accused allegedly arrived at her house along with associates on Saturday evening.

The gang reportedly hurled at least two petrol bombs at the house's entrance and porch before fleeing the scene. Fortunately, no injuries were reported in the incident. Police from Thondamuthur have

registered a case and launched an investigation to trace and arrest the accused.

Security has been tightened in the locality following the incident to prevent further unrest.

Police are also examining CCTV footage from nearby areas to identify the suspects involved.

## Mekedatu Row: Setback for TN CM Vijay

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

In a setback to the Tamil Nadu government, the Supreme Court of India has dismissed its plea seeking a review of an earlier judgment related to the proposed Mekedatu Project, dealing a blow to its efforts to stall the project.

The review petition had challenged the 2025 verdict in which the apex court had refused to entertain Tamil Nadu's request to halt Karnataka's plan to construct a balancing reservoir across the Cauvery River at Mekedatu.

A bench led by Justice Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi, observed that there was no merit in revisiting the earlier judgment after examining the submissions and documents presented by the Tamil Nadu government.

The ruling is seen as a setback for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, who had recently directed officials to intensify legal efforts to oppose the project, citing concerns over farmers' interests and water rights.

The Mekedatu project, proposed by the Karnataka government, remains under consideration by expert bodies, including the Cauvery Water Management Authority. With the court declining intervention at this stage, the issue is expected to continue as both states pursue their respective positions.

## Metro Blue Line O&M May Go Private

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Namma Metro Blue Line project has sparked controversy as the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited is considering outsourcing its operations and maintenance to a private company.

The proposed Blue Line, connecting Central Silk Board to Kempegowda International Airport via KR Puram, spans 58.19 km with 30 stations and is being developed at an estimated cost of ₹14,788 crore.

The line is expected to be operational by December this year.

BMRC officials stated that the move is in line with models followed in cities like Delhi and Chennai, where certain metro services are outsourced.

The plan includes handing over operations such as train running, station management, signalling, electricity, lifts, and escalators to a private operator.

However, the proposal has drawn sharp criticism from commuters, who fear that privatisation could affect service quality, safety, and cleanliness.

Many passengers have warned of protests if the entire management is handed over to private entities.

## KGF Sports Glory Set for Revival

**> Vikrama Vahini | Kolar**

Historic sports infrastructure in the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) region is being revived after years of neglect, marking a renewed push for sporting activities in the "golden land," officials said.

The century-old Gymkhana Football Stadium, once a prominent venue that nurtured several athletes and hosted high-profile visits, had fallen into disuse following the closure of the gold mines. The campaign, led under the "Save KGF" movement and backed by local leaders including MP Mallesha Babu, has resulted in cleaning and partial restoration of the stadium, paving the way for the resumption of sports activities.