



Director Nag Ashwin has dismissed speculation over Alia Bhatt and Sai Pallavi joining Kalki 2, saying no casting decision has been officially announced yet. He confirmed that Sumathi's character will remain a key part of the sequel, with an official update expected soon.

The United States has announced that the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) will revert to its earlier name, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), restoring its historical designation used for over seven decades.



INSIDE

Good morning

The world settles for mornings that are bearable, at best. We can choose mornings that we love, mornings that are truly beautiful, by choosing gratitude.

BRIEFS

India-UK Deal: 3.78 Lakh Cars Allowed at Lower Duty

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
India will permit the import of 3.78 lakh conventional-engine passenger cars from the UK at reduced customs duty over the first 15 years of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), according to official documents released on Wednesday.

Under the agreement, tariffs on automotive imports will be reduced from about 10 per cent to 10 per cent, along with quota-based limits on both sides.

The pact also provides India access to the UK's electric, hybrid and hydrogen passenger vehicle segment, allowing duty-free exports from the sixth year.

The quota in this segment is expected to peak at 88,000 units from the 15th year onward and continue thereafter.

Man Shot Dead in Delhi; 4 Held

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
A 42-year-old man was shot dead in south Delhi's Sangam Vihar area on Wednesday, allegedly over an old family rivalry, police said. Four accused have been arrested in connection with the case.

The deceased, identified as Hridayesh Mishra alias Bhura, was engaged in construction work and lived with his family in the locality. According to police, the incident took place around 5 am near a temple when Mishra had gone with his younger brother to move a mini truck parked at the spot. An argument reportedly escalated, leading to the shooting.

Police have launched further investigation into the incident.

1 Lakh Cyber Fraud Victims Get Relief: Amit Shah

Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that nearly one lakh citizens have benefited from the Money Restoration and Grievance Redressal mechanism aimed at recovering funds lost in cyber fraud cases.

Chairing a review meeting, Shah directed officials to regularly monitor the newly launched Money Restoration Module (MRM) and Grievance Redressal Module (GRM) under the Comprehensive Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFRMS).

He stressed the need for effective implementation at the state level to ensure timely resolution of complaints and faster restoration of money to victims.

Modi's G7 Trade Boost

India-UK, Canada, EU Trade Progress at G7

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's participation at the G7 Summit has resulted in significant diplomatic and economic gains, with major progress reported in India's trade negotiations with the United Kingdom, Canada and the European Union, underscoring the effectiveness of India's multi-alignment foreign policy approach.

India-UK Trade Deal to Come into Force in 2026

During high-level bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit, India and the United Kingdom announced that the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will come into force on July 15, 2026. Officials said the agreement is expected to significantly boost bilateral trade by expanding market access and improving investment opportunities across key sectors such as services, technology, manufacturing and renewable energy.

India-Canada CEPA Talks Show Strong Progress

In discussions with Canada, both sides expressed satisfaction over the steady progress in negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). A joint statement highlighted that talks have moved forward constructively, with both nations aiming to conclude the agreement in 2026.

India-EU Free Trade Agreement Gains Momentum

Talks with European Union leadership also



witnessed renewed momentum, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to advancing economic ties. The European Commission and European Council stated that, following a broad framework understanding, efforts are now focused on finalising a Free Trade Agreement by the end of this year.

Once concluded, the agreement is expected to strengthen India-EU trade relations and enhance economic cooperation in a rapidly evolving global trade environment.

Multi-Alignment Strategy Yields Global Economic Gains

Officials and analysts noted that these developments highlight the effectiveness of India's multi-alignment diplomacy, which enables engagement with multiple global partners simultaneously while advancing national economic interests. The outcomes at the G7 are being seen as a reflection of India's growing role in shaping global trade architecture.

PM Modi at the G7 Summit in France

Prime Minister Modi attended the G7 Summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, as a guest nation leader. The G7 includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, along with the European Union. The summit serves as a key platform for discussions on global economic stability, geopolitical challenges and coordinated international responses.

Prior to the summit, the Prime Minister also completed a two-day official visit to Slovakia as part of India's broader diplomatic outreach to Europe.

DHARMASTHALA ROW: PROBE SOUGHT ON PRAKASH RAJ

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Hindu organisations have intensified their demand for a thorough investigation into the Dharmasthala controversy, alleging a coordinated attempt to defame the revered temple town. The groups have specifically called for scrutiny of actor Prakash Raj's alleged involvement in the case, following developments in the Karnataka High Court.

The issue gained momentum after a writ petition filed by C.N. Chinnayya, an accused in the case, alleged the existence of a larger conspiracy aimed at tarnishing the image of Dharmasthala and its administration. The petition reportedly named several individuals, including Prakash Raj, and sought directions to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations. The Karnataka High Court has since sought a status report from the SIT.

Hindu organisations have claimed that the controversy surrounding the alleged mass burial case was part of an organised effort to target Dharmasthala, one of Karnataka's most prominent and sensitive religious centres. They have demanded that all individuals named in the petition be investigated and that accountability be fixed if any conspiracy is established.

Leaders of various Hindu groups have also alleged that repeated accusations against the temple have hurt the sentiments of devotees and damaged the reputation of the shrine administration.



Some organisations have further demanded an inquiry into alleged funding sources and coordination behind campaigns they claim are aimed at discrediting the temple.

Meanwhile, actor Prakash Raj has denied all allegations linking him to any conspiracy, stating that he has no involvement in the matter. He has dismissed the claims as baseless and said he would respond appropriately, urging the public not to draw conclusions without evidence.

The Dharmasthala controversy has remained a politically sensitive issue in Karnataka since allegations of mass burials surfaced in 2025, prompting the state government to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT). The case has since triggered widespread political and social debate across the state.

With the Karnataka High Court continuing to monitor proceedings and the SIT preparing its status report, further developments are expected in the coming days.

Party Launch by July on Track

Vikrama Vahini | Chennai

Former Tamil Nadu BJP president K. Annamalai on Wednesday said that his "We the Leaders" movement is progressing on schedule and is expected to be converted into a political party by July, with a membership target of 50 lakh.

Speaking in a video interaction on social media, Annamalai said the movement has already attracted around 18 lakh members, who have joined "without any expectations." He added that membership enrolment is taking place both online and through direct public outreach across the state.

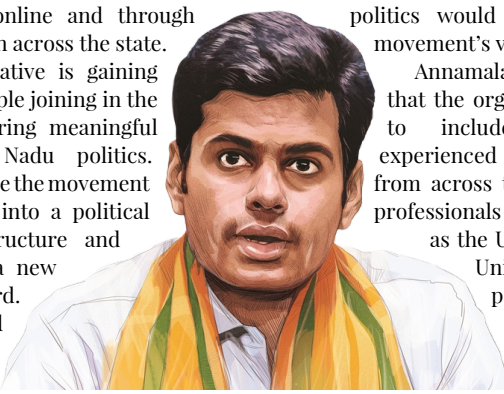
He said the initiative is gaining momentum with people joining in the belief that it will bring meaningful change in Tamil Nadu politics. According to him, once the movement formally transitions into a political organisation, its structure and activities will take a new form from July onward.

Annamalai stated that the long-term objective is to

convert the initiative into a people-driven political platform that actively raises issues affecting the state. He specifically highlighted concerns such as drug abuse among youth, saying these issues will be taken up as part of a broader mass public movement.

He further said that the proposed political structure would focus on reforms in governance, including introducing accountability measures and term limits for political leaders. He added that leadership change and the idea of continuous renewal in politics would be central to the movement's vision.

Annamalai also emphasized that the organisation would aim to include educated and experienced Tamil individuals from across the world, including professionals from countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, to participate in shaping the political discourse in the state.



Bengal Transfers 128 WBCS Officers

Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

The West Bengal government on Wednesday transferred 128 West Bengal Civil Service (Executive) officers in a major administrative reshuffle across districts and state departments.

The Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department issued notifications assigning new postings to officers working in district administrations, the state secretariat and other government bodies. The reshuffle

includes changes in postings of additional district magistrates, sub-divisional officers and other senior officials holding key administrative positions. The move is aimed at improving administrative efficiency across the state.

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CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES AND REGISTRATIONS

FOR MATRIMONIAL MEET AND SRINIVASA KALYANOTSAVA
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Smt. Indumathi Subrahmanya
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Smt. Yashodhara
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VIKRAMA VAHINI

A Premium English Daily of Karnataka

Editorial

Development Needs Public Trust

The proposed township project in Bidadi has rapidly emerged as one of the most debated issues in Karnataka's political landscape. Following the recent administrative changes linking neighbouring Ramanagara more closely with Bengaluru's growth corridor, the state government has now set its sights on developing a large-scale township by acquiring thousands of acres of land in and around Bidadi. The government views the project as a step towards planned urban expansion and long-term economic development. However, the proposal has triggered strong resistance from farmers, many of whom fear the loss of fertile agricultural land that has sustained their livelihoods for generations. The issue has also gained political momentum, with opposition parties extending support to the protesting farmers and questioning the necessity of acquiring productive farmland for urban development.

At the heart of the controversy lies a fundamental question: can development be justified if it comes at the cost of displacing farming communities and reducing agricultural land? Farmers argue that the project threatens not only their livelihoods but also the region's agricultural heritage. They have raised concerns that commercial and real-estate interests may be driving the proposal more than genuine public need. On the other hand, the government maintains that a substantial majority of landowners have expressed willingness to part with their land and that the project will generate employment, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. While both sides present their respective claims, the absence of complete public clarity has contributed significantly to suspicion and mistrust surrounding the project.

For a project of such magnitude, transparency is not merely desirable—it is essential. If the township is truly intended to serve a broader public purpose, the government must place all relevant details before the people, including the rationale, projected benefits, rehabilitation measures, and long-term impact on agriculture and local communities. Public consultations and meaningful stakeholder engagement should precede any major acquisition process. Attempting to push through the project without addressing legitimate concerns could deepen public resentment and fuel wider farmer unrest across the state. Development initiatives succeed not through administrative authority alone, but through public confidence and consensus. In sensitive matters involving land and livelihoods, transparency and dialogue remain the strongest foundations for sustainable progress.

-Editor

Rahul Urged to Step Into Bidadi Row

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Bidadi township land acquisition issue has escalated into a major political confrontation in Karnataka, with BJP and JD(S) leaders seeking the intervention of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the proposed Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT) project.

Opposition leaders have urged Rahul Gandhi to step in and review or halt the acquisition of nearly 500 acres in the first phase of the project, which is part of a larger 7,400-7,500 acre township plan spanning Bidadi and Harohalli.

They allege that the project is being pushed forward without proper consent from farmers and in violation of land acquisition norms. Farmers from more than two dozen villages have been protesting for over a year, claiming that fertile agricultural land is being taken for urban expansion

without adequate consultation or rehabilitation measures.

Protesters have also cited provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, alleging violations related to consent, compensation, and rehabilitation safeguards.

The political row has intensified with BJP and JD(S) stepping up attacks on the Congress government, describing the project as a "state-backed land grab" and writing to Rahul Gandhi seeking his intervention.



Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has also criticised the project, alleging large-scale displacement of farming families. The BJP has raised concerns over procedural lapses and the lack of effective public consultation.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, however, has defended the project, stating that it is essential for Bengaluru's long-term

expansion and decongestion. He also claimed that a majority of farmers have agreed to the acquisition process.

Government sources said compensation packages, reportedly exceeding ₹2 crore per acre along with alternative developed land options, are being structured under the township model. Officials added that objections raised during the notification stage have been addressed as per rules.

The proposed "AI City" township is being projected as a major infrastructure initiative aimed at creating a new urban growth corridor for Bengaluru.

However, opposition parties and farmer groups continue to warn of large-scale displacement, loss of farmland, and environmental concerns.

Protests in affected villages are continuing, with the issue emerging as one of the most politically sensitive land disputes in the state.

HDK Seeks Relief for Mango Growers

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has urged Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to extend immediate relief to Karnataka's mango growers, who are facing severe losses due to a sharp fall in market prices.

In a letter, Kumaraswamy requested the Centre to provide support under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) and implement the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) to ensure remunerative prices for farmers during the 2026-27 season.

He noted that Karnataka, one of India's largest mango-producing states, cultivates mangoes on nearly 1.45 lakh hectares with an estimated production of 10 lakh metric tonnes this season. However, falling prices and adverse weather have left growers in financial distress.

The Union Minister highlighted that thousands of farmers in Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Ramanagara, Bengaluru



Rural, Dharwad, Tumakuru and Haveri depend on mango cultivation for their livelihood. He said the current market prices are well below the estimated production cost of ₹3,951 per quintal, causing heavy losses.

Kumaraswamy urged the Centre to process the proposal in coordination with the Karnataka Government and provide timely financial support to safeguard the income of mango growers.

DHARMASTHALA ROW: PROBE SOUGHT ON PRAKASH RAJ

> From PG1

Authorities have not yet confirmed any direct evidence linking the named individuals to the alleged conspiracy, and the SIT is expected to examine all claims based on available records and testimonies.

Meanwhile, the High Court's intervention has added fresh legal scrutiny to the case, with observers noting that the outcome of the SIT report could play a crucial role in determining the future course of the investigation. The SIT is also likely to review digital evidence, financial transactions, and communication records as part of its ongoing investigation to establish whether there was any coordinated campaign behind the allegations.

Nodal Officers Appointed to Boost SIR Voter Awareness

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Bengaluru District Election Officer and Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to appoint nodal officers in each municipal corporation under the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA) to implement SVEEP awareness programmes for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.

Chairing a virtual meeting, Rao instructed officials to conduct extensive voter awareness campaigns through rallies, marathons, social media, educational institutions and mass media. He said Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will begin door-to-door visits with identity cards from June 30 to assist



voters during the revision process.

He also directed officials to organise special outreach programmes for senior citizens, women, persons with disabilities, tribal communities and migrant voters, while ensuring that all SVEEP activities and updates are regularly uploaded to the official election website.

SPECIAL LOK ADALAT TO CLEAR GOVT CASES

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Chief Secretary Dr. Shalini Rajneesh has directed all Karnataka government departments to make full use of the "Samadhan Samaroh" Special Lok Adalat being organised by the Supreme Court from August 21 to 23 to resolve long-pending cases involving the State Government.

Chairing a meeting of departmental secretaries at Vidhana Soudha on Wednesday, Dr. Rajneesh said the Special Lok Adalat provides a valuable opportunity to settle disputes pending before the Supreme Court through mutual consent,

thereby reducing prolonged litigation and saving public resources.

She instructed departments to review pending cases in detail and identify matters that could be amicably resolved. Departments were also asked to create awareness among litigants about the benefits of the Lok Adalat and hold preliminary discussions through legal representatives to facilitate settlements.

The Chief Secretary reviewed department-wise data on

pending Supreme Court cases and noted that the Supreme Court has already identified several matters suitable for settlement. She directed officials to submit additional eligible cases for consideration after consulting the concerned advocates.

Dr. Rajneesh observed that many of the pending cases relate to service matters involving government employees and land acquisition compensation. She instructed departments to prepare a list of such cases and register them for



the Special Lok Adalat.

She further directed departments to coordinate with the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, the concerned ministers, the Chief Minister, and the Finance Department wherever financial implications are involved before proceeding with settlements.

The meeting was attended by the Advocate General, senior officials of the Legal Services Authority, Additional Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, and senior officials from various government departments.

Bengal Transfers 128 WBCS Officers

> From PG1

Officials said the reshuffle is part of the routine administrative exercise undertaken to ensure better coordination between district and state-level departments. It is also intended to streamline governance and improve field-level performance.

Sources indicated that several officers who had been serving in the same postings for a considerable period were among those transferred.

The new postings are expected to bring fresh administrative inputs to key districts and departments.

The order is effective immediately, and all concerned officers have been instructed to take charge of their new responsibilities without delay, according to departmental notifications.

NEWS

Eshwarappa Escalates RSS Clash with Kharge

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The political row over the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) intensified on Wednesday after former Karnataka minister K.S. Eshwarappa launched a sharp attack on Home Minister Priyank Kharge, escalating tensions between the BJP and the Congress government.

Eshwarappa, reacting to Kharge's recent remarks seeking details on the RSS' legal status and functioning, described the minister in strong terms and dismissed his statements as publicity-driven.



"He is 'kasa' (garbage). He does not deserve any response," Eshwarappa said, criticising Kharge for questioning the organisation and its operations.

He further challenged the Home Minister to take legal action if he believed the RSS had violated any law, instead of making public statements.

Eshwarappa also defended the RSS, stating that its affiliated trusts and organisations are properly registered and comply with legal requirements when approached by authorities.

On RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's security, he said protection was necessary due to perceived threats arising from his position.

The controversy follows Kharge's recent demand for details regarding the RSS' registration, legal standing, and accountability, which has triggered strong reactions from BJP and RSS leaders.

Ashok Opposes Bidadi Township

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok on Tuesday urged the Karnataka government to abandon the proposed Bidadi Township project, alleging it would destroy fertile agricultural land and displace thousands of farmers and dairy producers.

After meeting protesting farmers in Bidadi, Ashok said the region is one of the state's most productive agricultural belts, producing nearly six lakh litres of milk daily and generating significant income through sericulture and horticulture.

He questioned the government's decision to acquire such fertile land for urban development.

Ashok also criticised Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and the Congress government, accusing them of ignoring farmers' interests while advocating environmental protection elsewhere. He called on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to visit Bidadi and witness the situation firsthand.

He claimed there was no need for a new township

when lakhs of residential sites and flats remain unsold in Bengaluru.

Ashok asserted that a future BJP-JD(S) government would scrap the project and vowed to continue opposing its implementation.

The proposed Bidadi Township project has triggered strong opposition from local farmers, dairy producers and residents, who fear the acquisition of fertile agricultural land will affect their livelihoods and the region's rural economy.

Protesters have urged the government to withdraw the proposal and hold consultations with stakeholders before taking any further steps.

The state government has maintained that the township is aimed at meeting Bengaluru's growing housing and infrastructure needs. However, the project is expected to remain a politically contentious issue, with opposition parties vowing to intensify protests and support farmers until the proposal is reconsidered.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

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MAKE IT MORE NUTRITIOUS!

- Add Lemon
- Add Ginger
- Add Apple

Tip: People with kidney stones or diabetes should consult a doctor before consuming.

SCIENCE & Technology

JWST Spots Extreme Heat Spike on Distant Exoplanet

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has observed an extreme temperature surge on a distant exoplanet, HD 80606 b, a "Hot Jupiter" located about 215 light-years from Earth in the constellation Ursa Major.

According to scientists, the gas giant—about four times the mass of Jupiter—shows one of the most dramatic climate variations ever recorded. The planet follows a highly elliptical 111-day orbit, causing it to swing extremely close to its host star before moving far away again.

Observations revealed that the planet's temperature rises by over 600°C as it approaches its star, creating intense atmospheric changes within a short period. Researchers said such rapid heating and cooling provides rare insights into cloud formation and chemical processes in gas giant atmospheres.

The findings were presented at the 248th meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Pasadena, California. Scientists used JWST's Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI) to track the planet before, during and after its closest approach to the star, known as periastron. The planet also passed behind its host star during the observation period, allowing a secondary eclipse measurement.

Researchers noted that the complex orbit required years of planning due to limited observation windows. The data also revealed stronger atmospheric signals than earlier measurements from the Spitzer Space Telescope, including signatures of methane and carbon dioxide.

Scientists say the findings will help improve models of exoplanet atmospheres, particularly for gas giants with unusual orbits. Analysis of the full dataset is still underway.

Dalit Panel Seeks Appointment Cancellation

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
A federation of Dalit organisations has demanded the immediate cancellation of the appointments of the Chairperson and Members of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, alleging that the selection process violated statutory rules and eligibility norms.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Federation President N. Venkataswamy, along with leaders K.V. Balakrishna, Manjunath, H.C. Somashekhar and Basavaraju, alleged that the appointments were made without adhering to the prescribed qualifications.

Speaking at the press meet, Keshava Murthy, President of the Karnataka Civil Rights Awareness Committee, said Commission Chairperson Santosh Kumar is an industrialist, while members Satyanarayana Shetty and Jagannath Halamadagi are owners of educational institutions.

He alleged that none of them



possess the mandatory ten years of experience in the field of child rights, as required under the amended rules governing the Commission.

He further pointed out that the law provides for the appointment of six members, whereas the government has appointed only three, raising serious questions about the legality of the process.

The organisations also alleged corruption in the selection process, claiming that ineligible candidates were appointed under pressure from private educational institutions.

They demanded that the

government revoke the appointments, appoint qualified individuals, and initiate an inquiry against officials allegedly responsible for the irregularities.

The leaders warned that if the government fails to take corrective action, they would launch a statewide protest.

They also expressed concern over the plight of Dalit and Adivasi children, stating that many continue to suffer from malnutrition and child labour, and warned that they would approach the courts if adequate measures are not taken to safeguard children's rights.

₹1.25 Lakh Fine in Plastic Drive



> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Greater Bengaluru Authority's Solid Waste Management Department imposed ₹1.26 lakh in fines and seized over 240 kg of banned single-use plastic during a citywide enforcement drive. Raids were conducted across South, North and West Bengaluru, with the highest seizure reported from Kammanahalli. Officials inspected shops, warehouses and commercial establishments for violations of the single-use plastic ban. Authorities warned that similar surprise inspections will continue, urging traders and businesses to strictly comply with the ban to protect the environment and avoid penalties.

Vijayendra Attacks Govt on Bidadi, Guarantees Row

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress-led state government, accusing it of prioritising real estate interests over farmers and mismanaging its welfare commitments.

Speaking to reporters ahead of his visit to Bidadi, Vijayendra opposed the proposed Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT) project, alleging that agricultural land is being acquired to benefit real estate interests. "The government's priority is real estate, not farmers," he alleged, adding that cultivators' issues were being sidelined in favour of township development.

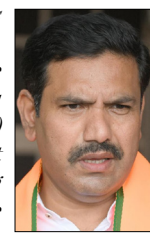
He also criticised the state's guarantee schemes, questioning their implementation and alleging

that restrictions were being imposed due to financial pressure. Taking aim at Home Minister Priyank Kharge, he objected to the demand for details regarding the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), calling it unnecessary and a diversion from law-and-order issues.

He further accused Congress leaders of targeting constitutional institutions and raised questions over issues related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, while defending the Election Commission's exercise.

Vijayendra also alleged that the government had failed to address issues related to housing, farmers' distress, and the dairy sector, despite its welfare promises.

The Congress government has not yet responded to the allegations.



HDK BLASTS DKS OVER POSTER ROW

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Thursday accused Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar of orchestrating a political smear campaign through posters targeting him and his family amid the ongoing controversy over the proposed Bidadi township project.

Addressing reporters outside his Bengaluru residence, Kumaraswamy alleged that posters carrying false claims about his family's land holdings had been put up in the Bidadi region while he was raising the concerns of local farmers. He said personal attacks would not deter him and instead would strengthen his resolve to continue his political fight.

Kumaraswamy claimed that despite assuming the office of Chief Minister, Shivakumar had not abandoned what he described as "old political tactics" of character assassination and poster campaigns. He alleged that the posters even featured photographs of his wife and family members in an attempt to malign their reputation.

Rejecting the allegations, the Union Minister clarified that he owns only 46 acres of land purchased nearly four decades ago through legitimate means. He added that his wife, Anita Kumaraswamy, owns around 36 to 37 acres, and challenged his political opponents to produce evidence supporting claims that he owns 100 acres.

Reviving the long-standing Benniganahalli denotification controversy, Kumaraswamy accused Shivakumar of having a questionable land record and alleged that the Chief Minister had benefited from irregular land transactions in the past. He said a person occupying the State's highest executive office should uphold higher



"My life is an open book. I have nothing to hide and I will not be intimidated by poster campaigns or personal attacks. Our struggle for farmers and the people will continue."
Kumaraswamy said.

standards of public conduct instead of encouraging political mudslinging.

The Union Minister further alleged that similar poster campaigns had earlier targeted BJP leaders R. Ashoka, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy and B.Y. Vijayendra. If there were any genuine allegations against political leaders, the government should order a lawful investigation instead of resorting to anonymous propaganda, he said.

Referring to previous political controversies, Kumaraswamy also alleged that attempts had been made to tarnish his image through fabricated accusations, including a purported honey-trap conspiracy, but maintained that none of those claims were substantiated.

Reiterating his position on the Bidadi township project, Kumaraswamy said the proposal had originally been conceived during his tenure as Chief Minister but was withdrawn after local residents opposed it.

Opposition Slams Telegram Ban

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
A temporary restriction on Telegram ahead of the NEET-UG re-exam on June 21 has sparked a political row, with opposition leaders Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal questioning the government's approach to tackling alleged paper leaks.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has restricted access to Telegram in India until June 22, a day after the scheduled re-exam. The agency said the move was aimed at preventing fraudsters from circulating false claims of leaked question papers and extorting money from students and parents.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi questioned the effectiveness of the ban and asked whether similar action would be taken against other platforms in the future. He said millions of students have long used Telegram for academic resources and accused the government of "optics over solutions."

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also criticised the move, calling it ineffective in stopping paper leak networks. He alleged that paper leaks are part of a larger corruption racket and claimed that such measures would not address the root cause of the problem.

Former BJP leader K. Annamalai also expressed concern, stating that strict measures around the re-exam could increase stress among students.

Defending the decision, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh said fraudsters were using Telegram to mislead students and demand money by falsely claiming access to leaked papers.



Complaint Against Mahadevappa Amid Cabinet Buzz

A corruption complaint has been filed with the Karnataka Governor against senior Congress MLA H.C. Mahadevappa, alleging irregularities in Social Welfare Department projects. Mahadevappa has dismissed the charges as politically motivated and welcomed a lawful investigation.

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka's political circles were stirred on Wednesday after a corruption complaint was submitted to Governor Thawarchand Gehlot against senior Congress MLA and close Siddaramaiah associate H.C. Mahadevappa.

The complaint, filed by a Bengaluru resident, alleges irregularities during Mahadevappa's tenure as minister, including misuse of official position, alleged tender manipulation, and violations in eligibility norms in projects under the Social Welfare Department.

It further cites institutions such as the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) and the Ambedkar Development Corporation, claiming that tenders were awarded based on allegedly forged documents and selective approvals. The complainant has sought a time-bound, independent probe and recovery of public funds if wrongdoing is established.

The development comes at a politically sensitive time, as discussions on a possible cabinet reshuffle and expansion are underway within the ruling Congress, adding to speculation about internal factional dynamics.

Mahadevappa, however, strongly denied the allegations, calling them "baseless" and "ridiculous" in a post on social media platform X. He asserted that he has always acted within the framework of law and welcomed any lawful investigation.

He also alleged that the complaint is politically motivated in the context of ongoing cabinet-related discussions, and urged the public to view the charges in perspective.

Officials from the Governor's office have not yet commented on whether an inquiry will be initiated. The issue is expected to draw further political attention as cabinet negotiations continue within the state government.



ENTERTAINMENT

Sharmila Mandre to Tie the Knot

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Popular Kannada actress and producer Sharmila Mandre is all set to begin a new chapter in her life as she prepares to marry Tamil film producer Sudhan Sundaram. The couple's engagement has been scheduled for June 25 and will be held in the presence of close family members and friends. The wedding is expected to take place later this year.

Sudhan Sundaram is a well-known producer in the Tamil film industry and heads Passion Studios, a production and distribution company. He gained widespread recognition for producing the blockbuster Tamil film Maharaja. He has also co-produced the recently successful Tamil film Thug Life and has backed several other projects, including Benz and Iraivan.

Sharmila, who has established herself as a prominent actress across Kannada, Telugu and Tamil cinema, will now become part of a family deeply connected to the Tamil film industry. The engagement marks the culmination of their relationship, with wedding preparations expected to begin soon.

The actress made her acting debut in Kannada with Sajini in 2007 and has since featured in several successful films across South Indian languages. Over the years, she has earned appreciation for her performances and has built a strong fan following.

Apart from acting, Sharmila has also ventured into film production. She is currently producing the Kannada film Dasara while also backing the Tamil project Kadhah Konjam Thookala. As an actress, she is presently working on the Tamil film Adrishtasali alongside her Kannada commitments.

The announcement of Sharmila's engagement has delighted fans and members of the film fraternity, with many extending their wishes to the couple as they prepare to embark on their married life.

Alia Bhatt Unleashes 'Alpha' Power

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai
The makers of Alpha, the latest instalment in Yash Raj Films' popular Spy Universe, unveiled the film's action-packed trailer on Tuesday, generating significant excitement ahead of its theatrical release on July 3.

Starring Alia Bhatt in the lead alongside Sharvari, Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor, the film promises to introduce a new chapter in the blockbuster franchise.

The trailer introduces Alia Bhatt as Seeta, a highly trained and fearless operative raised for combat. As the story unfolds, Seeta confronts her own mentor, played by Bobby Deol, setting the stage for an intense battle filled with high-octane action sequences, daring chases and espionage.

Sharvari also features prominently as a fellow agent whose role remains shrouded in mystery, although she appears to join forces with Seeta against the main antagonist.

One of the biggest surprises in the trailer is the appearance of Hrithik Roshan, reprising his popular role as intelligence agent Kabir from the War franchise.

His special appearance strengthens the connection between Alpha and the expanding YRF Spy Universe, which includes blockbuster films such as Ek Tha Tiger, Tiger Zinda Hai, Tiger 3, Pathaan, War and the upcoming War 2.

Anil Kapoor also returns as intelligence chief Vikrant Kaul, a character believed to have links with the mysterious 'Alpha Program' that forms the backbone of the film's storyline. His presence hints at a larger conspiracy that could shape future instalments of



the spy franchise.

Although set in a modern espionage backdrop, the trailer draws heavily from the symbolism of the Ramayana. Alia Bhatt's character describes herself as a modern-day Sita, declaring that this time it is Sita who has come to burn Lanka.

The powerful dialogue, combined with emotionally charged visuals and action-packed sequences, has become one of the trailer's biggest highlights.

Directed by Shiv Rawail, son of veteran filmmaker Rahul Rawail, Alpha is based on a story by Uday Chopra, with the screenplay written by Soumil Shukla and Shridhar Raghavan.

With a female-led narrative, large-scale action and connections to the larger Spy Universe, the film is among the most anticipated Bollywood releases of the year.

The trailer has received an enthusiastic response on social media, with fans praising Alia Bhatt's transformation into an action hero and expressing excitement over Hrithik Roshan's return.

Expectations are now high for

BUSINESS

Gold, Silver Prices Slip

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Gold and silver prices witnessed a modest decline on Tuesday, offering some relief to jewellery buyers and investors. The fall was reflected in both the retail market and the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), with precious metals trading lower amid weak global cues.

In the retail market, gold prices dropped by ₹610 to ₹1,52,790 per 10 grams, while silver declined by ₹1,040 to ₹2,50,560 per kilogram. Market experts attributed the fall to subdued international trends and cautious investor sentiment.

The futures market also mirrored the weakness. On the MCX, August gold futures slipped 0.36 per cent to ₹1,52,543 per 10 grams, while July silver futures fell 0.31 per cent to ₹2,49,323 per kilogram. Investors are closely monitoring global economic developments and currency movements for further price direction.

Among major cities, 24-carat gold was priced at ₹15,110 per gram in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Kerala, while Chennai recorded the highest rate at ₹15,337 per gram. Delhi's price stood at ₹15,125 per gram.

Silver prices varied across cities, with Chennai, Hyderabad and Kerala reporting the highest rate of ₹2,74,900 per kilogram. Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad and Vadodra recorded silver prices of ₹2,65,000 per kilogram.

Bullion dealers said the recent correction could encourage fresh buying from consumers ahead of the upcoming festive and wedding season, although future price movements will continue to depend on global market trends, geopolitical developments and central bank policies.

Market analysts said bullion prices are likely to remain volatile in the coming days as investors await key global economic data and signals on interest rates from major central banks. They advised buyers to monitor price movements closely before making large purchases, while long-term investors may view the recent dip as an opportunity to accumulate precious metals.



SPORTS

India Equals SA's 400-Run Record

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India scripted another milestone in One-Day International cricket by posting a massive 402 runs against Afghanistan in the second ODI of the three-match series on Wednesday, equalling South Africa's world record of scoring 400 or more runs in an ODI on eight occasions.

Captain Shubman Gill led from the front with a magnificent century, while Ishan Kishan also reached three figures to power India to the imposing total. Veteran opener Rohit Sharma chipped in with a brisk 48, providing the ideal platform for the hosts to cross the 400-run mark with ease.

With this achievement, India moved level with South Africa at the top of the list for the most 400-plus totals in ODI history. England, which has recorded seven such scores, now slips to third place. The feat also marks India's first 400-plus ODI total since the 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup, when they smashed 410 against the Netherlands.

India's highest-ever ODI score remains 418/5, registered against the West Indies in Indore in December 2011. The team has consistently demonstrated its batting dominance over the years, recording scores of 414 against Sri Lanka (2009), 413 against Bermuda (2007 World Cup), 410 against the Netherlands (2023), 409 against Bangladesh (2022), 404 against Sri Lanka (2014), and 401 against South Africa (2010).

The latest batting masterclass once again underlined the depth and firepower of India's top order. Gill and Kishan combined aggression with composure, punishing the Afghan bowlers throughout the innings and maintaining a healthy scoring rate. Their partnership laid the foundation for one of India's finest ODI batting performances in recent years.

Shreyanka Patil Suffers Serious Injury, Leaves Field in Tears

► **Vikrama Vahini | London**

India suffered a major setback during the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup after star spinner Shreyanka Patil sustained a serious leg injury while fielding against the Netherlands in England. The Karnataka cricketer was unable to walk and had to be stretchered off the field in tears before being taken to a hospital for further evaluation.

The injury occurred on the first ball of the sixth over of the Netherlands' chase of India's 209-run target. While attempting to field a return shot near the pitch, Shreyanka appeared to lose her balance, twisting her right leg awkwardly. Team officials said the extent of the injury will be known only after scan reports, raising concerns over her availability for the remainder of the tournament.

The incident has sparked concern within the Indian camp, with teammates visibly shaken as medical staff rushed onto the field. Shreyanka, who has been a key figure in India's spin attack throughout the tournament, was seen receiving immediate support from team physios before being carefully taken off for further medical attention.

Modi Hails 12 Years of Defence Growth

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday highlighted India's transformation in the defence sector over the past 12 years, stating that the country has

significantly strengthened its military capabilities through self-reliance, technological innovation and indigenous manufacturing.

In a series of posts on social media platform X under the hashtag #12YearsOfSurakshitBharat, Modi said India has enhanced its defence preparedness across air, land and sea while reducing dependence on foreign suppliers.

He said the government's focus on Atmanirbhar Bharat has boosted domestic defence production, modernised the armed forces and strengthened national security.

The Prime Minister also pointed to

progress in the development of indigenous fighter aircraft, missile systems, naval platforms, drones, artillery and advanced surveillance technologies. He said policy reforms promoting local manufacturing and private sector participation have contributed to increased defence production and exports.

Modi said a strong and self-reliant defence ecosystem is vital for safeguarding national security and positioning India as a global defence manufacturing hub. The outreach is part of the government's campaign marking 12 years of the Modi administration and highlighting achievements across key sectors.

NEET Claims Another Life

► **Vikrama Vahini | Dehradun**

A 24-year-old NEET aspirant allegedly died by suicide in Dehradun on Tuesday, just days before the scheduled NEET re-examination on June 21. Police have recovered a suicide note in which she apologised to her father and stated that no one else was responsible for her death.

The deceased, identified as Riya Kumari, was residing with her family in the Patel Nagar area of Dehradun. She was preparing for the NEET re-test while also pursuing studies at a local college. Her father is a retired Army personnel.

According to police, the incident came to light when her

mother found her room locked from inside on Tuesday morning. After repeated attempts to get a response, the family broke open the door and found her hanging from a ceiling fan. She was declared dead at the scene. Police were informed around 11:30 am.

Investigators said a suicide note was recovered, in which she reportedly wrote, "I love you, Papa; I am sorry. This is not due to anyone's fault; this is due to my incompetence."

Officials added that the family declined a postmortem examination and the body was later cremated on Tuesday. Police are continuing inquiries to determine whether the student

was under academic or emotional pressure.

Riya had reportedly scored 97 per cent in her Class 12 examinations and was preparing for multiple competitive exams, often spending long hours studying.

In a separate incident, another NEET aspirant, 18-year-old Renu Meena from Rajasthan's Alwar district, allegedly died by suicide in Delhi.

She had moved to the capital with her siblings to prepare for the medical entrance exam. Her family said she had been under severe stress following the cancellation of the original NEET examination held on May 3 amid allegations of irregularities and a paper leak.

NEET Students Get 50% Travel Concession in UP

► **Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced a 50% bus fare concession for students appearing in the NEET-UG re-exam scheduled on June 21.

The announcement was made during a review of International Yoga Day preparations. He also reviewed statewide Yoga Day arrangements and issued directives on public grievance redressal and administrative appointments.

The state government has also issued guidelines for peaceful observance of Muharram, restricting loud music and emphasizing discipline.

US Drops 'Indo' Tag, Map Sparks Row

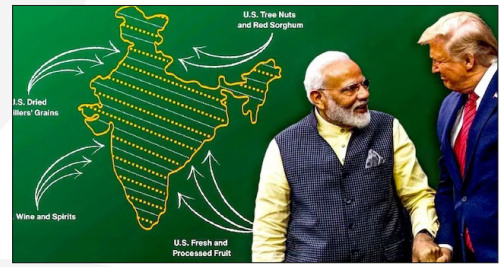
► **Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

The United States has announced that the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) will revert to its earlier name, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), restoring its historical designation used for over seven decades.

According to the Pentagon, the name change does not alter the command's geographic area of responsibility, which continues to span from the U.S. West Coast to the western borders of India.

The command, originally established in 1947, is considered the oldest and largest of the U.S. unified combatant commands. Officials said the restoration of the USPACOM name is intended to reflect its legacy and historical identity.

However, the announcement has drawn attention after an official map displayed on the US Department of Defense website appeared to show Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as part of Pakistan and depicted Aksai Chin separately from India. A boundary line on the map also appeared to



divide operational zones between different U.S. commands.

The depiction has raised concerns in India, where Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are considered an integral part of the country.

The Indo-Pacific Command name was adopted in 2018 to reflect growing strategic linkages between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Despite the reversion in nomenclature, the Pentagon clarified that the operational scope of the command remains unchanged.

DKS CM Row Behind Bidadi Protest: BALAKRISHNA

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bidadi**

Magadi MLA H.C. Balakrishna on Tuesday alleged that BJP and JD(S) leaders are opposing the proposed Bidadi Township project only because they cannot accept Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar becoming Chief Minister. He

claimed the project was initiated during previous governments and questioned why BJP and JD(S) did not scrap it when they were in power.

Balakrishna said former Chief Ministers



B.S. Yediyurappa and H.D. Kumaraswamy had opportunities to withdraw the project but failed to do so. He also questioned why Opposition leader R. Ashok did not raise the issue in the Assembly

despite representations from farmers.

Defending the project, the MLA said the government has offered compensation well above the market value and has also provided farmers the option of receiving 50 per cent developed land instead of cash.

DEFENCE OUTPUT HITS RECORD HIGH

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India's annual defence production has reached an all-time high of ₹1.78 lakh crore in the financial year 2025-26, marking a major milestone in the country's drive towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

According to the Ministry of Defence, defence production grew by 15.6 per cent from ₹1.54 lakh crore in FY 2024-25. Over the last five years, production has more than doubled from ₹84,643 crore recorded in FY 2020-21, reflecting an impressive growth of nearly 110 per cent. Compared to FY 2013-14, indigenous defence production has increased almost fourfold from ₹43,746 crore.

Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and other public sector units contributed around 76 per cent of the total production, while the private sector accounted for the remaining 24 per cent. The private sector registered its highest-ever contribution of nearly ₹42,000 crore, highlighting its growing role in India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

The surge in domestic production has also strengthened the country's export performance. Defence exports touched a record ₹38,424 crore during FY 2025-26, underlining India's emergence as a significant global defence supplier.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh



India's defence production has touched a record ₹1.78 lakh crore in FY 2025-26, driven by indigenous manufacturing, strong private sector participation and policy reforms. Defence exports also hit an all-time high of ₹38,424 crore, reinforcing India's rise as a global defence manufacturing hub.

attributed the achievement to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, praising the Department of Defence Production, public sector undertakings and private industries for their collective efforts in achieving the milestone.

The Ministry of Defence said sustained policy reforms, increased private sector participation and a strong focus on indigenous manufacturing have laid the foundation for continued growth. With expanding production capabilities and rising exports, India is steadily positioning itself as a global hub for defence manufacturing.

PM Modi Flags Seafarers' Safety with Trump

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised concerns over the safety of Indian seafarers during his meeting with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France. Highlighting the risks faced by Indian crew members working in global shipping, Modi stressed the need to ensure freedom of navigation and stronger maritime security.

He said lakhs of Indian sailors working across international waters play a key role in global trade and their safety must be prioritised. The issue gained urgency amid recent attacks on commercial vessels in Gulf waters.

Responding to Modi's concerns, Trump assured cooperation with India on maritime security and acknowledged the challenges faced by seafarers operating in conflict-prone regions.



EV Push Gets HDK Boost

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday chaired a high-level stakeholders' consultation on India's electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem at HMT Bhawan in Bengaluru, bringing together manufacturers, technology providers, testing agencies and industry bodies to discuss measures for accelerating electric mobility.

Industry representatives sought policy support for easier EV financing, a robust payment security mechanism for electric buses and commercial vehicles, expansion of charging infrastructure, and faster testing and certification of emerging EV technologies by agencies such as ARAI and ICAT.

Addressing the meeting, Kumaraswamy reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070.

He assured participants that the Ministry of Heavy Industries would examine the



suggestions and take necessary steps to strengthen India's EV manufacturing ecosystem.

The Union Minister also invited manufacturers of EV components, battery packs, advanced chemistry cells, charging equipment and other ancillary products to invest in Mandya, highlighting its potential as an emerging electric mobility manufacturing hub.

Several industry representatives responded positively and expressed interest in exploring investment opportunities in the district.

The consultation forms part of the Centre's ongoing efforts to promote innovation, localisation, domestic value addition and global competitiveness in India's fast-growing electric vehicle sector.

Pani Puri Scare: 20+ Kids Hospitalised in Telangana

► **Vikrama Vahini | Rajanna Sircilla**

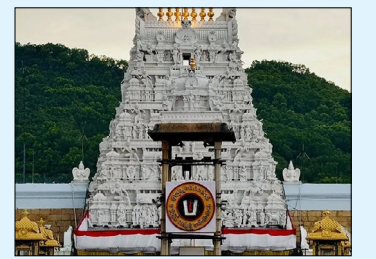
More than 20 children were hospitalised in Telangana's Rajanna Sircilla district after they reportedly fell ill following the consumption of pani puri from a local street vendor.

According to officials, the children developed symptoms including stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhoea on Tuesday morning after consuming the street food on Monday evening. Parents rushed the affected children to the District Government Hospital and nearby private hospitals for treatment.

Health authorities said most of the children are in stable condition and are under observation.

Health officials have launched an investigation into the incident and collected food samples for laboratory testing. A detailed probe is underway to determine whether the illness was caused by contaminated ingredients, water, or unhygienic preparation practices.

TTD Speeds Up Children's Hospital Work in Tirupati



► **Vikrama Vahini | Tirupati**

TTD Joint Executive Officer (JEO) Dr. A. Sharath on Wednesday directed officials to expedite the construction of the Sri Padmavathi Children's Hospital in Tirupati and ensure its completion within the stipulated timeline.

During a review meeting held at the project site, Dr. Sharath instructed engineering officials to maintain high construction standards while ensuring timely progress of the works. He also stressed that medical infrastructure and other supporting facilities should be developed simultaneously to enable early commissioning of the hospital.

The JEO said that weekly review meetings and regular site inspections would be conducted to closely monitor progress and ensure quality is not compromised at any stage. Senior officials from the engineering, hospital, and forest departments participated in the review meeting.

Oman Strike: 2 Indians Brought Home

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The mortal remains of two Indian seafarers killed in a US military strike on a merchant vessel in the Gulf of Oman have been brought back to India, while efforts continue to repatriate the third victim.

The incident occurred last week when the MT Sete Bello, a commercial cargo ship sailing through the Gulf of Oman, came under attack amid escalating tensions in West Asia. Three Indian crew members lost their lives, triggering diplomatic concern and raising questions over the safety of civilian vessels in conflict zones.

Following sustained diplomatic efforts by the Ministry of External Affairs, the bodies of two seafarers were flown back to India on a special aircraft. Family members received the remains at the airport, where scenes of grief were reported.

The Indian Embassy in Oman expressed condolences, identifying the deceased as Aditya Sharma and Shivamand Chaurasia, and said efforts are underway to bring back the third body.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also raised the issue during bilateral discussions with US President Donald Trump at the G7 Summit in Evian, stressing the need to ensure the safety of Indian seafarers operating in global maritime routes.