



**Bollywood couple Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra were expected to face a box-office clash with their upcoming films, but reports suggest Sidharth's 'One' may be postponed, giving Toxic a solo theatrical run.**

**The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Karnataka Congress government of irregularities in the formation and functioning of newly created "guarantee committees" at the gram panchayat level.**

INSIDE

### Good morning

Every sunrise is a gentle reminder that anything is possible.

### BRIEFS

#### Starmer Resigns as UK PM

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi/London

UK Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Keir Starmer has resigned from office, just two years after leading Labour to a landslide general election victory.

In his resignation statement outside 10 Downing Street, Starmer said his decisions in office were guided by putting the country first and thanked his family, especially his wife Vic, whom he called his "rock".

His exit comes amid growing internal dissent within the Labour Party over policy direction, economic challenges, rising living costs and concerns over immigration and public services. The resignation has triggered political uncertainty in the UK, with discussions expected to intensify over Labour's future leadership and direction.

#### India Eyes BrahMos Deal with UAE

► Vikrama Vahini | Delhi

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are reportedly in early-stage discussions over the possible export of key Indian defence systems, including the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and the Akashteer air defence system, according to media reports.

The UAE is said to be seeking to boost its defence preparedness amid regional tensions and diversify its military suppliers. BrahMos is a joint Indo-Russian project and would require additional approvals for export clearance.

India's defence exports have been rising steadily in recent years, crossing USD 4 billion in the latest financial year, with growing international interest in Indian-made defence platforms.

#### TMC Rebels Elevate Arup Roy, Suspend Abhishek

► Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

The internal crisis in the Trinamool Congress deepened on Monday after a rebel faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee appointed senior MLA Arup Roy as chairperson of a parallel "real" TMC and announced the suspension of national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

The faction also declared the formation of a new national working committee, claiming support from around 60 MLAs and several councillors. The meeting, held in New Town, saw leaders from multiple districts participate and adopt resolutions asserting control over the party's organisational structure.

The official TMC camp dismissed the move as "comical" and politically irrelevant, insisting that Mamata Banerjee remains the sole leader of the party. The developments mark a major escalation in the ongoing leadership struggle within the party following its electoral setbacks.

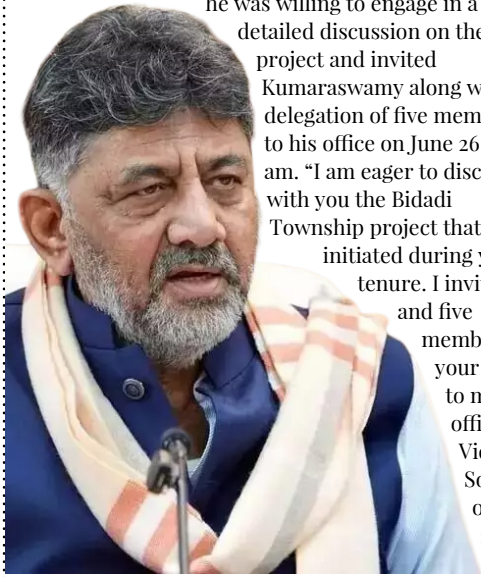
# Bidadi Township Showdown: DKS Takes Up HDK's Challenge

**The Bidadi Township controversy has intensified in Karnataka after CM D.K. Shivakumar agreed to a formal discussion with Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, replacing his call for a public debate. The issue, involving land acquisition and farmers' protests, has now turned into a major political flashpoint between the Congress and JD(S), with both leaders firmly defending their positions.**

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has accepted Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's challenge for a public debate on the Bidadi Township project, but has instead invited him for a formal discussion at Vidhana Soudha, escalating the political face-off over the controversial land development plan.

In a letter issued on Monday, Shivakumar said he was willing to engage in a detailed discussion on the project and invited Kumaraswamy along with a delegation of five members to his office on June 26 at 11 am. "I am eager to discuss with you the Bidadi Township project that was initiated during your tenure. I invite you and five members of your team to my office in Vidhana Soudha on June 26 at 11 am.



for a detailed discussion," the Chief Minister stated.

The exchange follows Kumaraswamy's public challenge to Shivakumar, where he demanded an open debate at Bhairamangala and alleged that the state government was proceeding with the project despite sustained opposition from farmers.

He had also accused the government of favouring vested interests and claimed that farmers, women and senior citizens had been protesting for over 450 days against the proposal.

Kumaraswamy further warned of legal action and said a legal team had been constituted to move court within days.

He maintained that while the township proposal originated during his tenure as Chief Minister, it had not progressed beyond initial stages and was later dropped in the larger interest of farmers.

Shivakumar's response marks a shift from a public debate challenge to an official government-level discussion, which is expected to be closely watched by political observers as it comes amid heightened tensions between the ruling Congress and the JD(S).

The Bidadi Township issue has now become a major political flashpoint in Karnataka, with both leaders continuing to defend their respective positions over land acquisition, urban planning and farmers' concerns.

## HDK's Open Debate Challenge to CM

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar over the proposed Bidadi township project, citing Assembly records from 2007 to accuse Congress leaders of changing their stance.

**"Opposition in Assembly, support in office," says HDK**

Kumaraswamy said leaders including D.K. Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah and Mallikarjun Kharge had strongly opposed the township project in the Assembly in 2007, but were now supporting similar proposals. He termed it a contradiction and accused the government of ignoring farmers' interests.

Challenge for public debate in Byramangala

The Union Minister challenged the Chief Minister to a public debate at Byramangala, where farmers have been protesting for over 500 days. He claimed he was ready to present facts on the ground situation and verify whether genuine farmers were involved in the agitation.

**Allegations of land misuse and "township lobby"**



Kumaraswamy also alleged that the project was being pushed through a real estate lobby and claimed irregularities in land-related processes. He further accused the government of bypassing official channels and handling decisions from private locations.

**Farmers' opposition and political clash intensifies**

Reiterating that 80-90% of farmers oppose the project, he said thousands of objections had been filed without proper response from authorities. The issue has now escalated into a major political confrontation between JD(S) and the Congress government in Karnataka.

## 13 INDIANS KILLED IN QATAR GAS BLAST

► Vikrama Vahini | Doha

At least 13 people, including Indian and Pakistani nationals, were killed and 66 others injured in a massive explosion at the Barzan gas processing plant in Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City on Sunday night.

According to Qatari authorities, the blast was reportedly triggered by a gas leak while workers were attempting to restart the facility after it had remained shut for several months. The explosion sparked a major fire, causing extensive damage



to the plant and nearby structures.

The injured were shifted to hospitals in Doha, including Hamad General Hospital, with several reported to be in critical condition.

Officials fear the death toll could rise.

The Indian Embassy in Doha has expressed concern over the incident and activated emergency helplines

to assist affected Indian nationals and their families. Embassy officials are working with Qatari authorities to identify the Indian victims and provide necessary support.

The government has ordered a detailed investigation into the cause of the explosion and possible safety lapses at the facility.

The Barzan gas plant processes nearly 1.4 billion standard cubic feet of natural gas daily, supplying fuel for Qatar's power generation and water desalination systems.

## 6 UBT MPs Join Shinde Camp

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Six Members of Parliament from the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) faction joined Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena on Monday, dealing a significant political setback to the Uddhav Thackeray-led group ahead of key political developments in the state.

The MPs' shift had been widely speculated over the past few days, with reports indicating internal unease within the UBT faction. **PG2**

## KSRTC, BMTC Push for Heavy Fare Revision

**Bus travel in Karnataka may soon become more expensive as KSRTC and BMTC have proposed fare hikes of up to 44%, citing soaring diesel prices, rising operational costs and mounting financial losses. The state government is expected to take a final decision soon.**

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Public transport in Karnataka is likely to become costlier soon, with KSRTC and BMTC officially proposing a steep hike in ticket fares citing rising diesel prices and mounting financial losses.

According to the proposal submitted to Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, KSRTC has sought a 33% fare increase, while BMTC has proposed a 44% hike in ticket prices. The move comes in the backdrop of severe financial stress faced by the state-run transport corporations due to escalating fuel and operational costs.

### Rising fuel cost burden

Officials said diesel price hikes have placed a heavy burden on the transport utilities. Between May 25 and recent weeks, diesel prices reportedly increased multiple times, resulting in an overall rise of ₹7.81 per litre. The four transport corporations together consume over 13 lakh litres of diesel daily, leading to an estimated additional monthly burden of ₹40 crore and nearly ₹480 crore annually.

### Financial stress on transport corporations

Transport officials have warned that without immediate revision in fares, the



corporations could face deeper financial distress. They have also cited increasing operational

costs, staff salary revisions, and the impact of the state's 'Shakti' free bus travel scheme as key factors contributing to the financial strain.

### Government decision awaited

The state government had last revised bus fares in January 2025, increasing ticket prices by 15%. With the new proposal now under consideration, the final decision rests with the Chief Minister and the state cabinet.

Officials said the situation demands urgent attention to ensure the financial sustainability of the transport corporations, while balancing public affordability concerns.

If approved, the proposed fare revision is expected to affect millions of daily commuters, including office-goers, students and rural passengers who rely heavily on KSRTC and BMTC services. Commuter organisations have urged the government to balance the financial needs of transport corporations with the burden on the general public.

The state government is expected to review the proposal in the coming days after consultations with transport department officials and other stakeholders. A final decision on the fare hike is likely to be announced after cabinet approval.



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Editorial

NEET Failure, Students Punished

The re-conduct of NEET after allegations of question paper leaks is not merely an administrative lapse; it is a reflection of a system that has failed the very students it is meant to serve. For millions of young aspirants, NEET is more than just an examination—it is a gateway to their dreams and years of hard work. Yet, instead of providing a fair and secure platform, authorities have allowed controversy, uncertainty, and anxiety to dominate the process. The need for a re-examination itself is a damning indictment of the mechanisms responsible for protecting the integrity of one of India's most important entrance tests. Even more disappointing has been the absence of a clear and convincing explanation from those entrusted with safeguarding the future of the nation's students.

What has angered many parents and students is the contrast between institutional failure and official rigidity. Authorities who could not prevent the leakage of question papers displayed remarkable efficiency in policing candidates. Students who reached examination centres just a few minutes late were turned away without mercy. Others were asked to remove religious and cultural symbols such as sacred threads, nose pins, and earrings in the name of security checks. Rules are undoubtedly necessary, but fairness demands consistency. Can a sacred thread help a student cheat? Can a nose pin compromise the integrity of a national examination? The zeal shown in enforcing these restrictions would have been far more meaningful had it been applied to preventing the very irregularities that forced students to sit for the examination again.

The fundamental question is one of accountability. When a student arrives five minutes late, punishment is immediate and uncompromising. But when an entire examination system fails, who bears responsibility? Students have paid the price through stress, uncertainty, and emotional trauma. Some have even suffered severe psychological consequences because of the controversies surrounding the examination process. Discipline is important, but justice is equally important. An education system that punishes students for minor lapses while failing to hold officials accountable for major failures sends a troubling message. The government and the education authorities owe the nation an answer: why are students being made to suffer for mistakes that are clearly not their own? Until that question is honestly addressed, public confidence in the examination system will remain deeply shaken.

-Editor

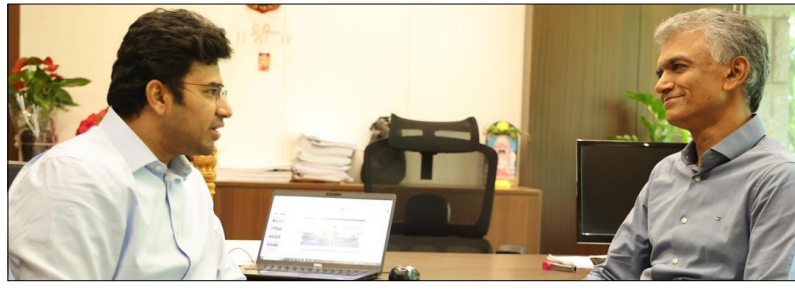
DKS Shifts Public Meetings to Krishna

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has announced that all his public meetings, including interactions with members of the public, legislators, party leaders and party workers, will henceforth be held exclusively at his home office, 'Krishna'.

In a media statement issued on Monday, Shivakumar said that, due to unavoidable reasons, he will no longer meet visitors at his residence in Sadashivanagar.

He appealed to the public, elected representatives, party leaders and workers to cooperate with the new arrangement and requested them not to visit his Sadashivanagar residence for official meetings.

Shivakumar also urged everyone to respect his decision and assured that all official public interactions would continue at his home office, 'Krishna'.



Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya called on Minister Krishna Byre Gowda to congratulate him and assured full support for his efforts to improve Bengaluru's infrastructure and the quality of life for its residents.

6 UBT MPs Join Shinde Camp

**> From PG**  
Welcoming the development, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde described the move as a major boost to his faction. "Not one, but six tigers are with me today. We have hit a six," he said, calling it a continuation of the political realignment that began with the 2022 Shiv Sena split. The shift is being seen as politically crucial as it strengthens the

Shinde camp's numbers in the Lok Sabha and meets the two-thirds requirement under party rules, reducing the scope for anti-defection action.

The development is expected to further weaken the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction while consolidating Shinde's control over the party's organisational and political structure, deepening the ongoing divide within the Shiv Sena.

CM ORDERS SPACE FOR 20L BOOK COLLECTION

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday directed officials to identify suitable space and develop a well-equipped facility for Padma Shri awardee M. Ankegowda's vast collection of over 20 lakh books.

The direction was issued after Ankegowda, known as a passionate book collector, met the Chief Minister at Vidhana Soudha and sought government support for preserving and housing his extensive library collection.

**CM reviews rare collection**  
Shivakumar instructed Additional Chief Secretary Tushar Girinath to explore options for establishing a proper building and infrastructure to safeguard the collection, which is considered one of the largest personal libraries in the country.

The Chief Minister also felicitated Ankegowda during the meeting.



**Vision for knowledge centre**  
Ankegowda, who runs the "Ankegowda Gyan Pratishthana" in Pandavapura of Mandya district, said the collection could serve as a major knowledge centre for students if provided proper infrastructure. He added that the library contains

rare and valuable books of significant historical importance.

**Rare collectibles displayed**  
During the interaction, Ankegowda also showcased his collection of rare coins and postage stamps to the Chief Minister, who viewed them with interest and curiosity.

Railways Hike Penalty for Ticketless Travel

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Indian Railways will implement revised penalty provisions for ticketless travel and related offences from July 1, 2026, under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, following a government notification.

The amendments modify certain provisions of the Railways Act, 1989, particularly Sections 137 and 138, which deal with travelling without a valid ticket and travelling beyond the authorised distance.

Under the revised rules, the minimum penalty for ticketless travel has been increased from ₹250 to ₹500. The same revision applies to excess fare charges for travelling without a

**Indian Railways will revise penalties for ticketless travel and other violations from July 1, 2026, under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Act. The minimum fine for travelling without a valid ticket will rise from ₹250 to ₹500, while stricter penalties will also apply for offences like unauthorised hawking, smoking in trains, and misuse of reserved coaches.**

proper ticket or beyond permitted distance. While the minimum penalty has been raised, the maximum punishment remains unchanged, including imprisonment of up to six months, or a fine up to ₹1,000, or both, as decided by a competent court.

Penalties are collected on the spot during inspections, while court action applies in cases of non-payment or refusal. The Act also specifies penalties

for other violations, including ₹2,000 for unauthorised hawking, ₹2,500 for men travelling in women's reserved coaches, and ₹2,000 for smoking in prohibited areas of trains or railway premises. Indian Railways has urged passengers to travel with valid tickets and adhere to rules, stating that the revised provisions aim to improve discipline, reduce violations, and safeguard railway revenue.

SWR Boosts Monsoon Safety Measures

**> Vikrama Vahini | Hubballi**  
South Western Railway (SWR) has said it is fully prepared for the 2026 monsoon season with enhanced safety and monitoring systems to ensure safe and uninterrupted train operations across its network.



SWR stated that the monsoon period is observed from June 1 to October 31 in most sections, with extended monitoring up to mid-November in select areas of Bengaluru and Mysuru divisions based on local weather conditions. The railway has installed Water Level Monitoring Instruments at 15 critical bridges and identified 48 vulnerable

Road Under Bridges prone to waterlogging, where preventive measures such as desilting, signage, and monitoring have been implemented.

It has also strengthened coordination with the India Meteorological Department, with rainfall data from 52 gauge stations being monitored regularly.

JD(S) Claims "Payment Quota" in Cabinet Expansion

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Union Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy on Sunday alleged that a "management quota" and "payment quota" system is being followed in the proposed expansion of the Karnataka Cabinet, triggering a fresh political row in the state.



Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Kumaraswamy claimed that intense lobbying is underway among MLAs aspiring for ministerial berths in the cabinet headed by Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and alleged that some positions are being secured through monetary influence.

He alleged that funds are being collected from ministerial aspirants under the pretext of being sent to the party high command. Kumaraswamy further claimed that a portion of cabinet berths is being treated as a "management quota" while the remaining are linked to a "payment quota."

He also remarked that only those who can afford such "payments" are likely to become ministers, suggesting this as a reason for the delay in cabinet expansion.

Drawing a comparison

with educational admissions, Kumaraswamy said that just as institutions have government and management quotas, a similar system appears to have emerged in cabinet formation.

He alleged that such practices point to unregulated collection of money and questioned the transparency of the ministerial selection process.

The Karnataka government has not yet responded to the allegations.

He further demanded that the Chief Minister and party leadership clarify the criteria being followed for cabinet selection, stating that the issue raises serious concerns about ethics in public life.

Meanwhile, political observers noted that the remarks are likely to intensify tensions between the ruling Congress and JD(S)-BJP alliance, especially at a time when discussions on cabinet reshuffle are already underway within the ruling camp.

NEWS



Former Minister and MLA Dinesh Gundu Rao participated in a free notebook distribution programme for students of government schools in the Gandhinagar Assembly constituency, organised in association with the Jain Yuva Sanghatana.

JD(S) Raises Mokedatu Issue, Questions Kharge

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
Union Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday raised sharp questions over Karnataka's representation in Parliament on water issues, while urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the long-pending Mokedatu dispute.



Speaking to reporters, Kumaraswamy questioned Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, asking what steps he had taken in Parliament to protect Karnataka's interests in river water-sharing matters, including Cauvery and other irrigation projects.

**Mokedatu project under focus**  
He said the Mokedatu balancing reservoir project, aimed at ensuring drinking water supply to Bengaluru and

surrounding areas, has remained stalled due to opposition from Tamil Nadu. He stressed that the project would not alter existing water-sharing arrangements but help regulate and store water more effectively.

Kumaraswamy said Karnataka's elected representatives must more strongly articulate the state's case at the national level instead of focusing only on state-level politics.

**Appeal to Prime Minister**  
Urging the Centre to take a proactive role, the JD(S) leader said only the Prime Minister could provide a lasting solution to inter-state river disputes. He said the issue affects drinking water, irrigation, and the welfare

of millions of people. He also claimed that water-related concerns had been discussed at the Union Cabinet level and that the Prime Minister had expressed concern over future water stress.



**Reference to past leadership**  
Kumaraswamy cited former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's handling of the Narmada water dispute as an example of effective central intervention in resolving inter-state issues.

**Political escalation**  
His remarks are expected to intensify political debate between the ruling Congress and the JD(S)-BJP alliance, with Mokedatu once again emerging as a key issue in Karnataka politics and Centre-State relations.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Does Ragi Roti Really Strengthen Bones?

Ragi (Finger millet) is widely regarded as one of the most nutritious traditional foods in India. It is rich in calcium, iron, fiber, and essential nutrients, making it beneficial for people of all age groups—from children to the elderly. Health experts say it has long been part of the Indian diet due to its overall health benefits.



**Does ragi roti really strengthen bones?**  
Experts confirm that regular consumption of ragi roti may help strengthen bones due to its high calcium content. Calcium plays a key role in improving bone density and dental health, and may also help reduce the risk of osteoporosis when included as part of a balanced diet.

**Key health benefits of ragi**  
Ragi is also rich in dietary fiber, which helps improve digestion and prevents constipation. It promotes a feeling of fullness, which can support weight management by reducing unnecessary food intake. Its iron content helps in reducing the risk of anaemia.

It has a low glycaemic index, which helps regulate blood sugar levels, making it suitable for people with diabetes. It is also considered beneficial for heart health and provides sustained energy throughout the day.

**Who should consume ragi with caution?**

Although ragi is healthy, certain groups should consume it in moderation. People with kidney stones

should be careful due to its oxalate content. Those with thyroid disorders, especially hypothyroidism, are advised to limit intake as it may interfere with thyroid function. Individuals with digestive issues may experience bloating or gas due to high fibre content and should start with small quantities. Those trying to gain weight should not rely solely on ragi, as it promotes fullness.

In recent years, nutritionists have increasingly recommended ragi as a part of daily diet due to its dense nutrient profile and easy availability. It is especially popular in rural and semi-urban regions, where it is often consumed in the form of roti, porridge, or malt drinks. Experts also highlight that traditional grains like ragi are regaining importance as people shift towards healthier and more natural food choices.

However, health specialists also emphasize that ragi should not be seen as a "superfood cure" for all conditions. Its benefits are best realized when combined with a balanced diet, regular physical activity, and proper medical care when needed.

SCIENCE & Technology

WhatsApp Block Check: Hidden Encryption Trick Surfaces

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
A little-known WhatsApp encryption verification feature is reportedly being explored by users as a possible way to check whether they have been blocked, without sending a message. The platform does not officially notify users when they are blocked, making it difficult to confirm directly.

Traditional signs often unreliable  
Users typically rely on indirect signs such as missing profile pictures, single grey ticks, or inability to call a contact. However, these indicators are not definitive, as they can also occur due to privacy settings, number changes, or temporary account deactivation.

According to reports, WhatsApp's automatic encryption verification system—designed to ensure end-to-end security—may fail to complete in certain blocked chats. This has led some users to believe it could act as an indirect indicator of a block, although WhatsApp has not confirmed this use case.

Each WhatsApp chat is protected by unique encryption keys, which are automatically verified within the app. Users can check this by opening a contact's chat info and selecting the "Encryption" option, where the system attempts automatic verification in the background.

Earlier, users had to manually verify security codes or QR codes, but the process has since been automated for convenience.

Reports suggest that if automatic verification fails and alternative verification is requested, it may indicate restricted communication. However, WhatsApp has not officially linked this behaviour to blocking, and experts caution that results may not be conclusive.

## Ram Mandir Scam: 40 Staff Removed, SIT Report Today

► Vikrama Vahini | Ayodhya

A major controversy has erupted over alleged irregularities in the handling of donations and valuables at the Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, with accusations of misuse of cash and jewellery offerings made by devotees.

As part of the ongoing investigation, around 40 staff members involved in donation counting have been removed from duty with immediate effect. The temple trust has reportedly deployed new personnel and tightened supervision over cash and jewellery accounting procedures.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT), which conducted a six-day probe at the

temple premises, is set to submit its preliminary report to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today.

The three-member SIT has examined CCTV footage, donation records, cash handling procedures and purchase-related documentation linked to the temple trust.

More than 100 individuals, including temple trust officials, priests, bank representatives and cash-handling staff, have been questioned as part of the inquiry.

The probe is not limited to donation counting irregularities but also extends to alleged financial misconduct in procurement of construction materials and other temple-related purchases.



## CT RAVI SLAMS CONGRESS OVER "ANTI-HINDU" CHARGE

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

BJP MLC and former national general secretary C.T. Ravi on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, accusing the party of "turning anti-Hindu" and undermining constitutional values, further intensifying the political confrontation in Karnataka.

Reacting to recent criticism of the BJP at a Bengaluru rally, Ravi alleged that senior Congress leaders, including former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, and KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad, made "baseless and politically motivated" remarks during a recent public event.

**Congress accused of distorting BJP's image**

Ravi claimed that the Congress was attempting to portray the BJP as anti-democratic while failing to defend its own governance record. He further alleged that Congress leaders were themselves "opposed to the spirit of the Constitution," calling it a "misleading narrative" against the ruling party.

**Remarks on Hindutva and constitutional debate**

Strengthening his ideological stand, Ravi said Indian civilisation respects all faiths but asserted that Hindutva remains central to India's identity.

He cited judicial interpretations describing Hindutva as a "way of life" and accused the Congress of misrepresenting its meaning for

political advantage.

He also referred to constitutional symbolism, stating that references to Lord Ram, Lord Krishna and Gautama Buddha reflect India's spiritual heritage, and said leaders like Buddha and Basavanna represent unity and social harmony.

**Attack on constitutional amendments and Emergency era**

Ravi alleged that the Congress has frequently amended the Constitution for "political convenience" and referred to what he said were 106 amendments, most carried out under Congress-led governments.

He also accused the party of misusing power during the Emergency by suspending civil liberties and imprisoning opposition leaders.

He further claimed that the inclusion of the words "socialist" and "secular" in the Constitution was not adequately debated, and alleged that Dr B.R. Ambedkar had opposed such changes.

**Sharp political comparison**

Drawing a direct political contrast, Ravi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi represents leadership shaped by public mandate and struggle, while Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, he alleged, represents dynastic politics.

Concluding his remarks, Ravi accused the Congress of pursuing "anti-Hindu politics" and claimed that its electoral setbacks in several states reflect public rejection of its approach.



## IMD PREDICTS HEAVY RAIN ACROSS KARNATAKA

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread rainfall across Karnataka over the next week, with coastal, Malnad, and southern interior districts expected to receive heavy showers.

Coastal districts including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada are likely to witness heavy to very heavy rainfall between June 21 and 27, with peak intensity expected from June 24 to 27, raising concerns over possible flooding of rivers and streams.

In the Malnad region, districts such as Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, and Kodagu are likely to experience heavy rainfall on June 22 and 23, with warnings of landslides, road disruptions, and waterlogging in low-lying areas.

## BJP Slams K'taka Govt Over NEET Traffic Chaos

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

A political controversy erupted in Karnataka on Monday after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accused the state government of mismanagement during the NEET UG re-test, alleging that political rallies contributed to severe traffic congestion in Bengaluru that disrupted students' access to examination centres.

Reports indicated that heavy traffic snarls across key city routes during exam hours left several NEET candidates stranded, with at least a few reportedly missing their exams due to delays.

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi criticised the Congress-led government, alleging that students' futures were affected due to "avoidable mismanagement" and questioned why restrictions were not imposed on public gatherings during the examination window. The BJP also claimed that the government failed to ensure smooth traffic flow despite prior knowledge of the exam schedule.

Responding to the allegations, Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge said Bengaluru's traffic issues are long-standing and well known. He

stated that traffic advisories were issued in advance and helplines were activated to assist students.

Kharge maintained that most candidates reached their centres on time and said isolated incidents should not be politicised.

Senior Congress leader B.K. Hariprasad expressed regret over the inconvenience faced by some students but rejected the BJP's allegation that a party rally was solely responsible for the disruption. He said multiple factors contributed to exam-day delays and accused the opposition of politicising the issue.

The incident occurred during the NEET UG re-test conducted nationwide for around 22 lakh candidates following cancellation of the earlier exam. In Bengaluru, peak-hour congestion worsened commuting challenges, creating panic among students and parents.

The episode has now escalated into a wider political confrontation between the BJP and Congress, with both sides trading blame over governance priorities and student welfare.



## KSIIIDC Pays ₹143 Cr Dividend to Govt

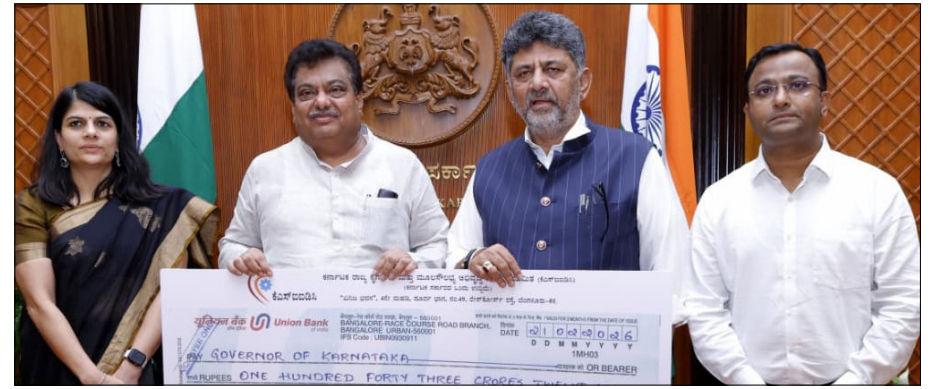
► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIIDC) on Monday handed over a dividend cheque of ₹143.12 crore to the State Government. The cheque was presented to Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar by Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil at Vidhana Soudha. On the occasion, KSIIIDC also contributed ₹3 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

**Profit details shared**

Minister M.B. Patil said KSIIIDC recorded a net profit of ₹188.41 crore for the financial year 2024-25 after tax. The corporation also earned an additional ₹19.34 crore as special dividend income in 2025-26.

He noted that, as per government norms, 30 per cent of the dividend has been transferred to the state exchequer.



**Strong performance by PSU**

The minister said the income was generated through investments in enterprises such as KAMCO, KATCO, MSIL and HGML. He added that public sector enterprises have

been performing strongly and maintaining consistent profitability over the past three years. KSIIIDC Managing Director Khushboo Goel and Executive Director Chidanand were present during the event.

## R. Ashok Slams Congress Over NEET Chaos

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R. Ashok on Sunday alleged that the Congress government has prioritised "commission-driven politics" over development, and criticised it for causing hardship to NEET aspirants due to a political event in the city.

Speaking to reporters in

Padmanabhanagar, Ashok said that several development-related concerns and suspicions have emerged since the Congress came to power, including questions over major infrastructure projects.

He alleged that a Congress programme at Palace Grounds led to severe traffic

congestion across Bengaluru, causing inconvenience to thousands of NEET candidates and their parents.

He claimed the situation could have been avoided if the event had been rescheduled.

Referring to a recent Congress event attended by AICC

President Mallikarjun Kharge, Ashok alleged that Kharge was not given due respect on stage and questioned the party's internal coordination and discipline.

On reported cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections, Ashok said a detailed investigation is underway and that findings will be submitted to the party leadership for further action.



### ENTERTAINMENT

## Ram Charan's 'Peddi' OTT Release Date Buzz Builds

► Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad

Ram Charan's pan-India blockbuster Peddi is reportedly gearing up for its digital release following a highly successful theatrical run, with industry sources indicating that the film may begin streaming on Netflix from July 2.

The film, which has allegedly grossed over ₹400 crore worldwide, continues to remain in the spotlight even after its box office success. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, Peddi has emerged as one of the biggest commercial hits of the year, generating strong anticipation for its OTT debut.

According to industry reports, Netflix has secured the digital streaming rights for the film at a significant price. The movie is expected to release simultaneously in multiple languages, including Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi, ensuring a wide nationwide reach.

Peddi stars Ram Charan in the lead role, alongside Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor. The film also features veteran Kannada actor Shivarajkumar in a key role, along with Jagapathi Babu, Boman Irani, and Divyendu Sharma in

important supporting characters. The film is produced by Vridhhi Cinemas and has music composed by A.R. Rahman, with cinematography handled by Rathnavelu.

Following the film's success, director Buchi Babu Sana has received praise for his storytelling and commercial filmmaking style, though the film has also received mixed responses from certain sections of the audience.

Meanwhile, industry buzz suggests that Buchi Babu Sana may collaborate with superstar Mahesh Babu for his next project, further increasing excitement within the Telugu film industry. Mahesh Babu is currently working on his upcoming film Varanasi, adding to the anticipation surrounding his future projects.

Industry analysts say Peddi's strong box office performance has further strengthened Ram Charan's position in the pan-India market. The film's success across multiple regions is being seen as another example of the growing reach of Telugu cinema, which continues to attract audiences beyond its traditional base.

Meanwhile, the OTT release is expected to give the film an additional boost in viewership, especially among global audiences who may have missed its theatrical run. Trade experts believe that t

## Kichcha Sudeep Eyes Malayalam Debut?

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Kannada superstar Kichcha Sudeep, who has long been recognised as a pan-India actor, is reportedly set to make his debut in the Malayalam film industry, according to media reports.

Sudeep, who has acted in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films, has built a strong fan base across India and abroad. However, he has not acted in a Malayalam film so far. Reports now suggest that the actor may appear in a Malayalam project titled Uiyir.

Malayalam media outlets claim that Sudeep has already completed work on the film, which is said to be a murder mystery thriller based on real-life incidents. The film reportedly features Roshan Mathew in the lead role, along with Biju Sopanam, Shruti Menon, Vineeth Thattil, and other prominent actors.

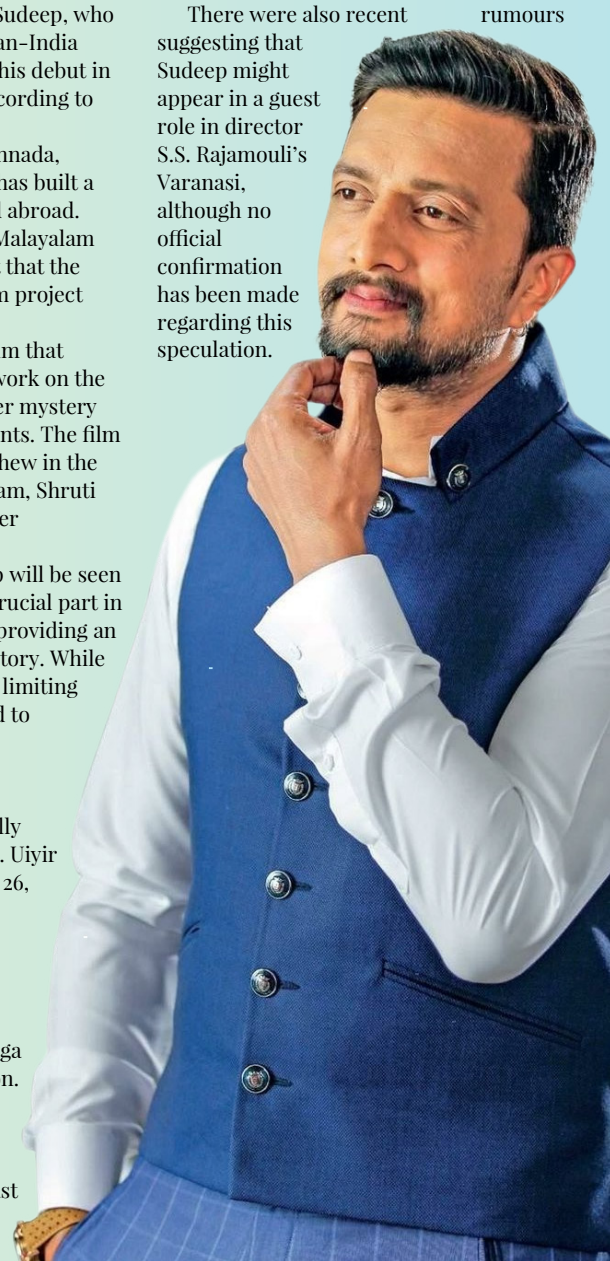
According to reports, Sudeep will be seen in a key guest role that plays a crucial part in the film's narrative, potentially providing an important turning point in the story. While Malayalam cinema is known for limiting cameo appearances, Uiyir is said to feature Sudeep in a significant supporting role.

The film is directed by Padmakumar, known for critically acclaimed works such as Joseph. Uiyir is scheduled for release on June 26, and if confirmed, it would mark Sudeep's official entry into Malayalam cinema.

Meanwhile, Sudeep remains busy with multiple projects. His much-anticipated film Billa Ranga Baasha is currently in production. He is also expected to collaborate with KRG Productions for another upcoming film, along with at least two more projects in the

pipeline. There were also recent rumours

suggesting that Sudeep might appear in a guest role in director S.S. Rajamouli's Varanasi, although no official confirmation has been made regarding this speculation.



### BUSINESS

## US Approves \$482M Defence Deal for India

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The United States has formally notified a proposed USD 482.2 million defence deal for India, covering long-term sustainment support and equipment for Apache helicopters and M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers, in a move aimed at strengthening Indo-Pacific security and bilateral strategic ties.

According to the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which oversees the Foreign Military Sales programme, the notification was published in the Federal Register on June 17.

The support package is intended to enhance operational readiness and extend logistical and technical assistance for equipment already inducted by India under earlier US defence procurement agreements.

India had earlier acquired the M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers under the Foreign Military Sales route to improve artillery capabilities, particularly in high-altitude and mountainous regions.

The newly proposed package includes spare parts, repair and return services, training, technical assistance, field support representatives, depot-level capability and other logistics-related support, valued at around USD 230 million.

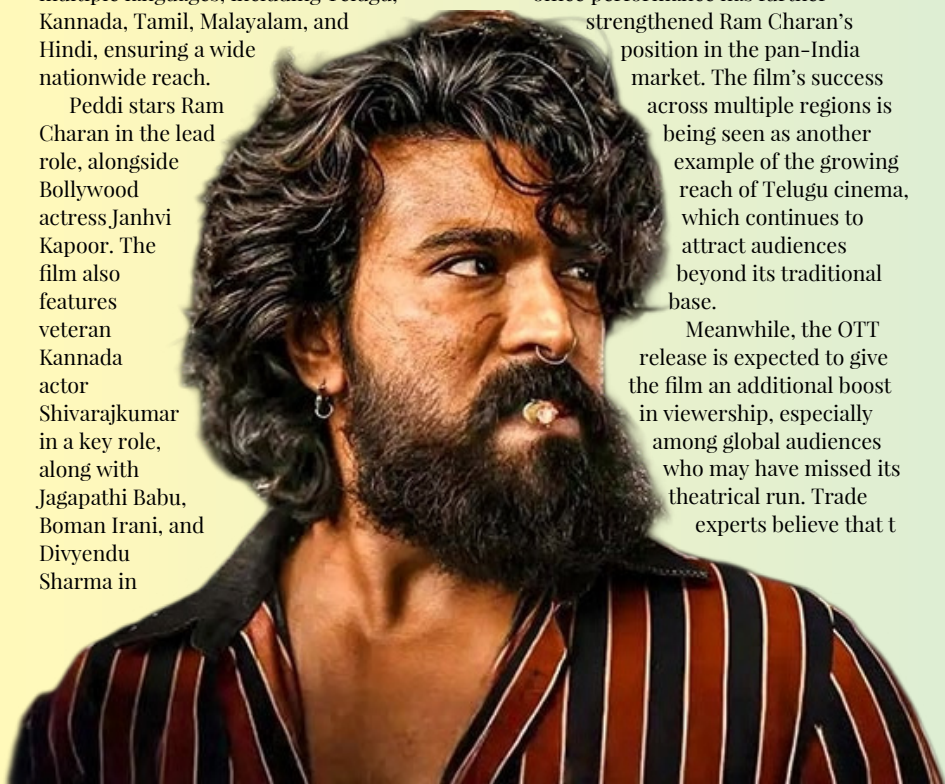
In a parallel request, India has also sought extended sustainment and engineering support for its fleet of AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. This includes technical data, training for personnel, contractor-led maintenance support and broader logistical assistance, with the Apache-related package estimated at USD 198.2 million.

US authorities said major contractors involved in the programme include Boeing and Lockheed Martin for Apache support services, while UK-based BAE Systems is expected to handle aspects of the M777 howitzer sustainment programme.

The US Department of Defence said the proposed sale aligns with American foreign policy and national security objectives by strengthening the defence partnership with India, a key strategic ally in the Indo-Pacific region.

It added that the deal would enhance India's ability to meet current and future security challenges while contributing to regional stability and deterrence.

Officials also noted that India is expected to integrate the proposed support services without difficulty into its existing military systems.



SPORTS

## Two More Indian Cricketers Appointed DSPs

► Vikrama Vahini | Patna

Bihar government has appointed Team India fast bowlers Akash Deep and Mukesh Kumar as Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) under the sports quota, following a cabinet decision, officials said on Monday.

With this induction, the number of Indian cricketers holding DSP positions has risen to eight. The move comes as a recognition of their achievements in Indian cricket and their contributions at the international level.

According to officials, the General Administration Department has prepared the proposal and forwarded it to the Home Department for implementation. The appointments were cleared after approval in the state cabinet meeting.

Both players have represented India across formats, with Mukesh Kumar featuring in Tests, ODIs and T20 Internationals, while Akash Deep has played Test cricket for the national side and made a mark with consistent performances. Akash Deep has also played in the Indian Premier League for Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The duo was part of India's strong performances in recent multi-sport and international events, earning recognition for their sporting achievements. Their selection under the sports quota is part of Bihar's policy to support and reward outstanding sportspersons with government roles.

DSP posts in Bihar are gazetted positions under Pay Level 9 of the Seventh Pay Commission, with a starting basic salary of around ₹53,100 along with allowances, housing, medical and other benefits. Following their appointment, both cricketers will serve in the Bihar Police Department.

## RR-MI Trade Talks: Hardik Pandya Swap Rumours Heat Up

► Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Mumbai Indians are reportedly considering a major squad reshuffle ahead of the next IPL season after a disappointing campaign under Hardik Pandya's captaincy.

According to reports, the franchise is exploring a potential trade deal with Rajasthan Royals that could see Hardik Pandya moving out in exchange for explosive young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal.

The discussions are said to be part of Mumbai's broader plan to rebuild their batting core and strengthen their future lineup.

The team management is believed to be looking at Jaiswal as a long-term opening option, potentially replacing Rohit Sharma, who is nearing the final phase of his career.

Reports suggest that talks between Mumbai Indians and Rajasthan Royals have reached an advanced stage, with both franchises exploring a player exchange arrangement. If finalised, the deal could mark one of the biggest trades in IPL history.

## 18 DEAD, TOLL MAY RISE; CM YOGI VISITS SITE

► Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow

At least 18 people were killed and several others injured after a massive fire broke out in a coaching-cum-commercial building in Aliganj, Lucknow, officials said on Monday. Authorities warned that the death toll could rise further.

The fire, which erupted around noon, quickly engulfed the three-storey building housing a coaching centre, animation unit, pet shop, clinic and pharmacy. Several students reportedly jumped from windows to escape the blaze, sustaining injuries.

**Rescue operation completed**  
Officials confirmed that the



search and rescue operation has been completed and no persons remain trapped inside the building. Firefighters used ladders and broke through adjacent walls to reach the site, while heavy smoke was cleared using exhaust equipment.

Eyewitnesses said panic

spread rapidly as flames blocked the only exit point, leading to chaos inside the building.

**CM Yogi visits site and hospital**  
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the fire site after cutting short his Aligarh tour and later met the injured at King George's Medical University

(KGMU) in Lucknow. Senior officials, including the District Magistrate and DGP, also reviewed rescue and relief operations.

**Probe ordered, compensation announced**

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said a detailed inquiry will determine the cause of the fire and assured strict action against those found responsible. He added that full support is being extended to affected families. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences and announced ex gratia compensation of ₹2 lakh for the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.

## India-US Deal Progress Slowed by 50% Tariff Issue

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The India-US trade agreement is taking longer to finalise due to the earlier 50 per cent tariff imposed on Indian goods, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday.

Speaking at a media conclave, Goyal said India is seeking preferential market access under the proposed trade pact with the United States.

**High-level negotiations planned**

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal are scheduled to hold two-day discussions on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA). The US delegation had earlier visited India from June 1 to 4 for detailed negotiations on the interim pact.

The talks are part of ongoing efforts to advance the broader India-US BTA, covering areas such as market access, non-tariff barriers, customs facilitation, investment promotion and economic security cooperation.

**Continued engagement between both sides**

India and the US had earlier agreed on a framework for an interim trade deal in a joint statement issued on February 7, reaffirming



commitment to a comprehensive bilateral agreement.

Subsequent rounds of discussions were held in Washington, D.C., from April 20 to 23, focusing on strengthening trade ties and resolving key issues.

**Expanding economic cooperation**

During a recent visit to India, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio noted that India had committed to purchasing goods worth \$500 billion from the US over the next five years, with emphasis on energy, technology and agriculture sectors. The ongoing negotiations are expected to further define the structure of the interim agreement and strengthen economic ties between the two countries.

## Police Shoot, Nab Bhima Killings Accused

► Vikrama Vahini | B'uru

In a major breakthrough in the Bhima coast mass murder case involving the killing of seven persons, police shot and arrested the prime accused, who was later admitted to a local hospital with a gunshot injury to his right leg.

The accused, identified as Mahesh Talawar, was traced early morning around 5:30 am near Ittingihal village, about 1 km from the area where he was reportedly hiding, police said.

Acting on credible information, a police team led by Chadchan Circle Inspector Parashuram Mangoli, along with staff members, reached the spot to apprehend him.

According to police, the accused allegedly attacked the team with stones and attempted to escape. Despite repeated warning shots fired in the air,

he continued his assault, following which the inspector fired in self-defence, injuring him in the leg.

During the incident, police personnel Shekhar Pawar and Vijaykumar Banasode sustained injuries and are undergoing treatment at a district hospital.

The accused is linked to a gruesome murder case in Govindapur village on May 29, where six members of a family were killed along with another person. Police said the killings were carried out on a contract basis for ₹15 lakh, and the accused had been absconding for the past 23 days before being apprehended.

Police said the accused was receiving treatment under custody and would be interrogated further to trace other members involved in the crime network.

## BJP Flags Irregularities in Guarantee Panels

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Karnataka Congress government of irregularities in the formation and functioning of newly created "guarantee committees" at the gram panchayat level.

Leader of Opposition R. Ashok alleged in the Legislative Assembly that the committees were being misused to accommodate party workers and leaders using public funds instead of serving citizens. He questioned whether the bodies were meant for public welfare or had become "centres of political patronage."

Ashok further claimed that irregularities had been reported in the implementation of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, including allegations that benefits were extended to deceased beneficiaries.

He also accused the government of diverting attention from development work due to its focus on committee structures.

He said a shortage of funds had stalled development projects, with complaints of lack of textbooks, uniforms, and basic infrastructure in

government schools, along with delays in student welfare support.

The BJP leader also raised concerns over pending support price payments for ragi farmers, alleging that farmers were being forced to make repeated visits to government offices.

He criticised senior minister Krishna Byre Gowda, referring to him as the "reels minister," and accused the government of focusing on publicity rather than governance.

Highlighting civic issues in Bengaluru, Ashok cited a reported drinking water contamination incident in HSR Layout, claiming over 60 families fell ill and that laboratory tests detected high levels of coliform bacteria.

Raising concerns over waste management, he claimed that Bengaluru generates about 1,775 tonnes of unprocessed garbage daily, leading to accumulation on streets and drains.

Ashok questioned the government's "Brand Bengaluru" initiative, asking whether it meant citizens must live with polluted water and garbage issues.

## Shiv Sena Split Deepens as 6 MPs Join Shinde Camp

► Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

In a major setback for Uddhav Thackeray, six Lok Sabha MPs from Shiv Sena (UBT) officially joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Sunday.

The switch, dubbed "Operation Tiger," boosts Shinde's party strength in the Lok Sabha from seven to 13 MPs, while the UBT faction is reduced to just three.

The six MPs joined the Shinde camp in Mumbai after meeting the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and later announced their decision at a joint press conference.

Since the defecting MPs constitute more than two-thirds of the UBT parliamentary party, they are protected from disqualification under the anti-defection law, marking a significant political blow to Thackeray.

Political observers say the development could reshape the balance of power in the state's ruling alliance dynamics. The Uddhav Thackeray camp is expected to explore legal and political options in response to the mass defection.

## New Aadhaar App Hits 31 Million Downloads

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Centre's new Aadhaar app has crossed 31 million (3.1 crore) downloads within just five months of its launch, reflecting its growing popularity across the country.

According to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the app allows users to update their mobile number and address, download Aadhaar, book appointments at Aadhaar centres, and lock or unlock biometric data with a single click. Around 4 million users have updated their mobile numbers, while 850,000 have changed their addresses using the app.

The ministry said the app also supports face authentication, QR code-based identity verification, and digital identity sharing, making Aadhaar services faster, safer, and more convenient.



## Fertiliser Supply Boost via Hormuz Route

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India's fertiliser supply chain has received a significant boost as four cargo vessels carrying urea, Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), and sulphur successfully crossed the Strait of Hormuz last week and are en route to Indian ports, the government said.

According to official data, India's total fertiliser inventory as of June 22 stands at 196.08 lakh tonnes, up from 168.67 lakh tonnes in the same period last year. This includes 81.44 lakh tonnes of urea, 20.92 lakh tonnes of DAP, 55.91 lakh tonnes of NPKs, 12.68 lakh tonnes of MOP and 25.13 lakh tonnes of SSP. The government said fertiliser sales between March 1 and June 21, 2026, reached 153.4 lakh tonnes, reflecting a year-on-year increase of 13.2 lakh tonnes. Urea, NPK and DAP accounted for major consumption during the period. Domestic production has also been scaled up, reaching 133.12 lakh metric tonnes, while imports stood at



43.69 lakh metric tonnes to maintain balanced supply and avoid shortages.

India has also secured 17.70 lakh metric tonnes of urea through the latest global tender, taking total tied-up supplies of urea and phosphatic-potassic fertilisers to over 90 lakh tonnes for the ongoing season.

The Department of Fertilizers said it is coordinating with states and distribution agencies to ensure smooth availability across the country, while maintaining diversified import sources from countries including Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United States and several others.

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