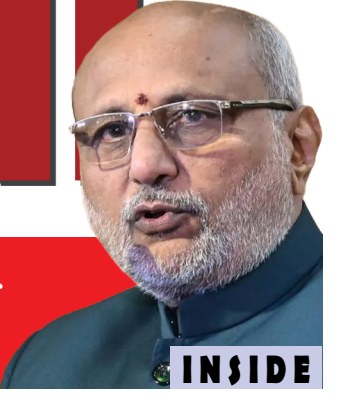




Actress Keerthy Suresh, who initially declined a key role in Kalki 2898 AD, later joined the film as the voice of the AI character "Bujji," adding a unique and memorable touch to the Prabhas-starrer.

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan on Sunday said that every life lost to drug abuse represents a loss of national potential, calling for a nationwide "Nasha Mukta Bharat" movement to eradicate substance abuse.



INSIDE

## Ram Mandir donation theft: raids intensify financial probe

**Vikrama Vahini | Ayodhya**

Police carried out coordinated raids at seven locations linked to six accused in the Ram Mandir donation theft case on Sunday, intensifying efforts to trace the financial trail and recover alleged misappropriated funds.

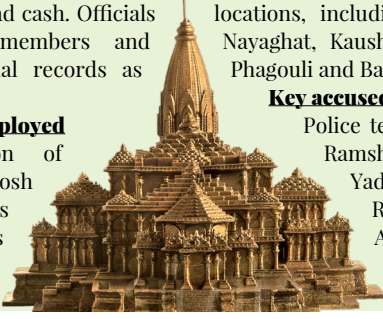
### Raids target financial records and assets

Teams searched the residences of the accused and examined documents related to property, investments, bank accounts, credit

and debit cards, jewellery and cash. Officials also questioned family members and collected copies of financial records as evidence.

### Multiple police teams deployed

Under the supervision of Ayodhya Circle Officer Ashutosh Tripathi, six police teams conducted simultaneous searches at different



locations, including Swargadwar Mohalla, Nayaghat, Kaushalpuri Colony, Thakuran Phagouli and Basawan village in Milkipur.

### Key accused under scrutiny

Police teams visited the homes of Ramshankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav, Manish Yadav, Ramashankar Mishra, Avinash Shukla, Anukalp Mishra and Lavkush

Mishra. Jewellery, documents and some cash were reportedly seized from certain locations, while detailed records of assets are still being compiled.

### Family members questioned

During the searches, relatives and neighbours were questioned. Some family members denied involvement and claimed innocence of the accused, while police continued collecting statements and verifying

property details.

### Investigation continues

Officials said the investigation is focused on tracking the money trail linked to alleged theft of temple donations. Further analysis of seized documents and digital records is underway as the accused remain under custody.

Investigators said further forensic and financial analysis will be conducted to uncover the full extent of the alleged scam.

Good morning

Take life challenges day by day and be grateful for the little things.

### BRIEFS

## Cops raid 8 accused in Ram Mandir theft case

**Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

Uttar Pradesh Police on Sunday conducted simultaneous raids at the residences of eight accused in the alleged Ram Mandir donation theft case in Ayodhya, as investigators intensified efforts to trace the money trail and recover misappropriated funds.

Officials carried out searches at the homes of all accused, along with local magistrates and revenue officials acting as independent witnesses. Police also questioned family members as part of the ongoing investigation into alleged financial irregularities linked to temple donations.

The eight accused were arrested last week after CCTV footage allegedly showed their involvement in the embezzlement of cash collected from donation boxes at the Ram temple. All of them were responsible for counting and handling temple offerings. **PG2**

## Iran Tightens Grip on Hormuz

**Vikrama Vahini | Tehran**

Iran has announced that it will maintain full control over the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz for the next 30 days, warning against any foreign intervention amid rising tensions in the Middle East.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, during a visit to Iraq, said the waterway would remain under Iran's control and cautioned that any challenge to its authority could escalate regional tensions.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) stated that it has assumed responsibility for the security and movement of vessels through the Strait during this period and will closely monitor all maritime traffic.

Iran also warned that any attempt by the United States or its allies to interfere in the region or challenge its sovereignty would be met with a firm response.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy routes, carrying over 20 per cent of global crude oil shipments.

Iran's announcement has raised concerns over possible disruptions to global oil supplies and renewed fears of escalating military tensions in the Persian Gulf. **PG2**

# PM gets Seychelles environmental honour

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred Seychelles' highest environmental honour, "Guardian of the Blue Horizon", during his state visit to the island nation, in recognition of his contributions to climate action, sustainable development and the Blue Economy.

### Highest environmental honour

The award was presented during Seychelles' Golden Jubilee National Day celebrations. The citation recognised PM Modi's efforts in promoting climate resilience, sustainable development and international cooperation, particularly with Small Island Developing States.

Bilateral talks with Seychelles leadership PM Modi received the honour during his meeting with Seychelles President Patrick Herminie in Victoria. The two leaders discussed strengthening cooperation in maritime security, ocean resource management and development in the Indian Ocean region. Modi was also accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour during the visit.

### Strengthening maritime cooperation

As part of the visit, India handed over a Made-in-India Fast Patrol Vessel, along with six ambulances, 10 utility vehicles and five laser radial boats to Seychelles. The assistance aims to enhance Seychelles' maritime surveillance and support its development needs.

### Recognition for global environmental leadership

The award adds to PM Modi's list of international honours, including the UN



Champions of the Earth Award, the Seoul Peace Prize and the FAO's Agricola Medal, highlighting his global recognition in sustainability and environmental initiatives.

## Ulta Palta director N.S. Shankar no more

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Veteran Kannada filmmaker, journalist and writer N.S. Shankar, known for his landmark film Ulta Palta, passed away in Bengaluru on Sunday after a brief illness. He was 76.

Shankar, a prominent intellectual voice in Kannada cinema and journalism, had been unwell for the past few days. He is survived by his family; his wife had passed away earlier in January this year.

Originally a journalist, Shankar worked with several leading Kannada publications and was closely associated with Lankesh Patrike, where he was known for his sharp and critical writing. Over the years, he became a strong voice in cultural movements and progressive literary circles.

Shankar made a significant mark in Kannada cinema with his debut film Ulta Palta (1997), a comedy inspired by William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors.

The film is widely regarded as a milestone that broke the boundaries between commercial and parallel cinema in Sandalwood and inspired a new wave of experimental storytelling.

He later directed films including Mane and was also active as a writer, having authored more than 20 books on cinema, politics, culture and society. In recent years, he was involved in anthology film projects and served as a jury member at the Bengaluru International Film Festival.

In recognition of his contribution to arts and literature, the Karnataka government honoured him with the Rajyotsava Award in 2024.

The film industry, journalists and literary circles have expressed deep condolences, describing his passing as the loss of a strong critical voice in Kannada culture and cinema.



# SHIVAKUMAR LAUNCHES HEBBAL TUNNEL PROJECT

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the Hebbal twin tunnel project aimed at easing severe traffic congestion in one of Bengaluru's busiest corridors.

### Tunnel project to ease traffic

The proposed three-lane twin tunnel will connect the Hebbal Flyover area with the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) campus. It will also link Hebbal Junction to the UAS Staff Quarters through the KVAFSU campus, improving traffic flow in the northern part of the city.

### Focus on key mobility corridor

Officials said the project is designed to reduce heavy vehicular congestion in the Hebbal area, a crucial junction connecting the airport and several major parts of Bengaluru. The corridor currently experiences high traffic pressure throughout the day.

### Criticism from civic groups

The project has drawn criticism from urban planners and civic activists, who have termed it an avoidable expenditure and questioned its long-term effectiveness in solving Bengaluru's traffic problems.

### Government defends project

The state government defended the initiative, stating that the proposal was finalised after consultations with a private traffic consultancy and



the Bengaluru Traffic Police, both of which supported the tunnel as a viable solution for decongestion.

### Part of broader infrastructure push

Officials added that the project is part of the government's wider plan to strengthen Bengaluru's road infrastructure and address rising traffic challenges in the rapidly growing metropolitan city.

The project is expected to be implemented in phases, with authorities indicating that detailed engineering work and environmental assessments will be completed before major construction begins. Once completed, the tunnel is expected to significantly reduce travel time between key northern Bengaluru hubs and improve airport connectivity.

## Tejasvi Surya Slams Bengaluru Tunnel Project

**Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya launched a sharp attack on the state government over the inauguration of Bengaluru's first tunnel road project, alleging that the initiative marks the "end of scientific urban planning" in the city.

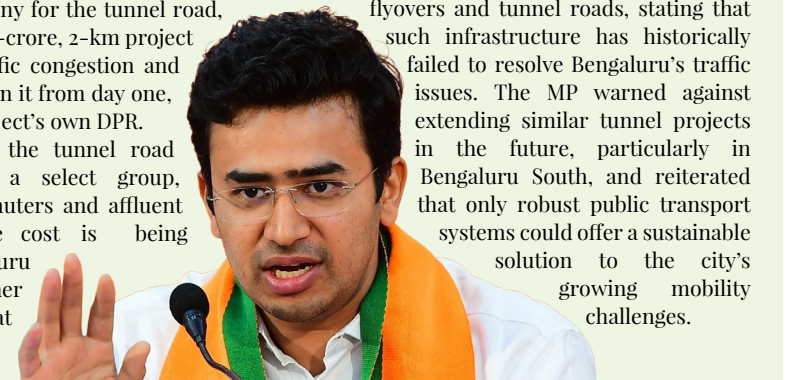
Reacting on social media after Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar performed the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the tunnel road, Surya said the ₹1,139-crore, 2-km project would not ease traffic congestion and would instead worsen it from day one, according to the project's own DPR.

He alleged that the tunnel road primarily benefits a select group, including VIP commuters and affluent sections, while the cost is being borne by Bengaluru taxpayers. He further claimed that

contractors would be the main beneficiaries of the project.

Surya argued that the government should instead prioritise expanding metro connectivity, improving bus services and strengthening suburban rail systems for a long-term solution to traffic congestion.

He also questioned the effectiveness of flyovers and tunnel roads, stating that such infrastructure has historically failed to resolve Bengaluru's traffic issues. The MP warned against extending similar tunnel projects in the future, particularly in Bengaluru South, and reiterated that only robust public transport systems could offer a sustainable solution to the city's growing mobility challenges.



## India rejects Pakistan terror claims over Karachi attack

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India on Sunday strongly rejected Pakistan's allegations linking it to the recent terrorist attack on the Sindh Rangers headquarters in Karachi, calling the claims baseless and urging Islamabad to focus on dismantling terror networks operating within its own territory.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India had no role in the Karachi incident and categorically rejected the accusations made by Pakistani media reports. **PG2**

## India's healthcare sees major growth under Modi rule

A government booklet highlights major improvements in India's healthcare sector over the past 12 years, including expanded insurance coverage, better maternal health indicators, rapid growth in medical colleges, increased access to affordable medicines, and large-scale digital health initiatives.

**Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India's healthcare system has witnessed a major transformation over the past 12 years under the Narendra Modi government, according to an official document released on Wednesday highlighting expanded insurance coverage, improved maternal health outcomes and rapid growth in medical infrastructure.

### Expansion of health insurance and treatment access

The booklet titled 'Lok Seva Mein Pradhan Sevak



Ke 11 Varsh' stated that over 43 crore Ayushman cards have been issued under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). The scheme provides annual health cover of up to ₹5 lakh per family and has benefited more than 12 crore patients, generating savings of over ₹1.25 lakh crore.

### Maternal and child health improvements

The report said over seven crore antenatal check-

ups were conducted under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan. Maternal mortality ratio declined from 130 per one lakh live births in 2014 to 88 in 2026, marking a 32 per cent reduction.

### Affordable medicines and dialysis support

Under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, more than 15 lakh people access low-cost medicines daily, while over four crore free dialysis sessions have been provided under the National Dialysis Programme. **PG2**

SPIRITUAL

Can Rudraksha and Gemstones Be Worn Together?

Rudraksha beads and gemstones are widely regarded in Vedic astrology and spiritual traditions as powerful tools for improving well-being, balancing energies, and enhancing positive influences in life. While gemstones are mainly associated with planetary energies and astrological remedies, rudraksha beads are considered sacred objects linked to Lord Shiva and are often used for spiritual growth and mental peace.

Astrologically, gemstones are believed to strengthen or balance specific planetary influences in a person's horoscope. For instance, blue sapphire is associated with Saturn and is said to enhance discipline and focus, while yellow sapphire is linked to Jupiter and is believed to bring wisdom and prosperity. Rudraksha, on the other hand, is believed to carry divine energy, with different mukhi (faces) offering different benefits such as emotional stability, clarity of mind, and spiritual awareness.

A common question among spiritual seekers is whether rudraksha and gemstones can be worn together. Experts suggest that they can be combined, but only with proper understanding and guidance. When chosen correctly, the combination may complement each other and offer balanced benefits. However, an unsuitable pairing may lead to imbalance in energies, according to some astrologers.

Certain combinations are considered more harmonious. For example, yellow sapphire paired with a five-mukhi rudraksha is believed to strengthen Jupiter's positive influence, promoting knowledge and prosperity. Similarly, blue sapphire combined with a seven-mukhi rudraksha is thought to enhance Saturn's beneficial effects while reducing obstacles. Pearl and two-mukhi rudraksha are often recommended together for emotional stability and peaceful relationships.

Experts advise that choosing the right combination requires proper astrological analysis. A certified astrologer can evaluate planetary positions and recommend suitable combinations based on personal needs such as career growth, health, financial stability, or spiritual progress. In conclusion, rudraksha and gemstones can be worn together, but their effectiveness depends on correct selection and astrological compatibility. When chosen wisely, this combination is believed to bring harmony between material success and spiritual growth in daily life.

Drug-Laced Pan Masala, Gutka Face Ban: CM

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday issued a stern warning that the Karnataka government would ban the sale of all forms of pan masala, gutka and chewing tobacco products if they are found to contain even the slightest amount of banned intoxicating substances.

Addressing the 31st Foundation Day celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) and the 'Drug-Free India Conclave' at Kanteerava Stadium, the Chief Minister said the government had received reports that intoxicating substances were being mixed with pan masala, gutka, areca nut and similar products to create a drug-like "high."

"If it is confirmed that intoxicating substances are being mixed into these products and the practice is not stopped immediately, the sale of all types of pan masala, gutka and chewing tobacco products will be banned in Karnataka," he warned.



Reiterating the government's commitment to eliminating drug abuse, Shivakumar said the objective was to build a drug-free Karnataka through coordinated efforts involving the government, educational institutions and society.

Drawing an analogy between a tap and a bucket, he stressed that state-level enforcement alone would not be sufficient to curb drug trafficking unless the country's borders were effectively secured.

"As long as the tap at the border remains

open, no matter what action is taken locally, the bucket will continue to fill. A drug-free Bharat is impossible without strong border security," he said.

The Chief Minister noted that Karnataka had established a dedicated Anti-Narcotic Task Force (ANTF) in 2025 to dismantle drug trafficking networks but said greater national coordination was essential to eradicate the menace.

Calling upon students to become ambassadors of the anti-drug movement, Shivakumar urged them to ensure that the younger generation does not fall prey to addiction. "Preventing drug abuse is everyone's responsibility. You have chosen a profession dedicated to saving lives, and I congratulate you for that," he said.

Addressing medical and paramedical students, he cautioned that even a single conviction under the NDPS Act could permanently destroy a professional career. "A drug conviction can lead to arrest, a permanent

criminal record, and the end of a medical career before it even begins. No licence, no registration and no practice," he said.

He advised students to develop the courage to refuse drugs despite peer pressure. "Drugs take you to hell disguised as heaven.

Be high on life, not on drugs," he remarked, urging them to remain vigilant and protect the future they had worked hard to achieve.

Highlighting Karnataka's achievements in medical education, the Chief Minister said the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences is the largest health sciences university in the country and thanked former Chief Minister Veerappa Moily for establishing the institution.

Shivakumar said Karnataka has 70 medical colleges, the highest among all states, and has emerged as the country's medical capital due to its world-class healthcare infrastructure.

He also announced that RGUHS would be shifted to a new campus in Bengaluru South district.



CM D.K. Shivakumar inaugurates the state-level Pulse Polio programme by administering polio drops to children at his residence in Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru, on Sunday. The Health Minister was also present.

Cops raid 8 accused in Ram Mandir theft case

From PG1

Investigators are now compiling details of properties, bank deposits, jewellery and other assets acquired by the accused and their families over the past four years. Officials are also examining reports of sudden financial improvements and purchases of vehicles and land.

Sources said investigators estimate the missing amount to be around ₹7 crore to ₹7.5 crore, though the figure is yet to be officially confirmed. So far, ₹79.85 lakh has been recovered from the accused.

The case was registered after a Special Investigation Team (SIT) submitted its preliminary report to the Uttar Pradesh government. The accused face charges including theft by servant, criminal breach of trust, conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. They remain in custody as further investigation continues.

INDIA REJECTS PAKISTAN TERROR CLAIMS OVER KARACHI ATTACK

From PG1

He said Pakistan should stop making unfounded claims against other countries.

Jaiswal urged Pakistan to take credible action against terrorist organisations operating from its soil. "Pakistan would do better to look inwards, take credible action against the terror infrastructure on its territory and rid itself of its proclivity to rely on terrorism as an instrument of state policy," he said.

Karachi attack on Rangers facility

The statement comes after militants attacked the Sindh Rangers' Bhattai Wing headquarters in Karachi's Gulistan-e-Jauhar area. Security officials said attackers rammed a vehicle into the gate before launching grenades and engaging in a 90-minute gun battle with security forces.

Casualties reported

Pakistani authorities said six militants were killed and one was captured alive, while four Rangers personnel also died in the attack. Special forces later joined the operation and secured the area.

Militant group claims responsibility

The attack was claimed by Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a faction linked to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has previously targeted security installations in Pakistan.

Authorities have launched a full-scale investigation into the incident.

Following the attack, security agencies in Pakistan have intensified operations in and around Karachi, conducting search operations to identify possible support networks and safe houses used by the militants. Checkpoints have been strengthened across sensitive zones.

Officials said preliminary investigations suggest the attackers were well-trained and may have received logistical support, prompting further scrutiny of cross-border terror links and internal security lapses.

The incident has further escalated diplomatic tensions in the region, with renewed calls for coordinated counter-terrorism efforts, even as both countries continue to exchange sharp statements over allegations and responsibility.

India's healthcare sees major growth under Modi rule

From PG1

More than seven crore citizens have also benefited from Amrit Pharmacies.

Growth in medical education and infrastructure

The number of medical colleges has increased from 387 in 2014 to over 800 in 2026. MBBS seats have risen to 1,28,976, postgraduate seats to 85,822, and AIIMS institutions have grown from eight to 23.

Digital health and disease control progress

The report noted over 87 crore ABHA IDs created for digital health records, more than 220 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses administered, and a 21 per cent decline in tuberculosis incidence between 2015 and 2024.

Increased health spending and future plans

Government health spending has risen significantly, with allocations increasing from ₹35,163 crore in 2014 to ₹1,06,530 crore in 2026.

The Centre also plans to set up day-care cancer centres in district hospitals and expand HPV vaccination coverage nationwide.

Officials also said that the expansion of healthcare infrastructure has improved access to medical services in rural and semi-urban areas, reducing the burden on major city hospitals and strengthening primary healthcare delivery across the country.

NEWS

Shoe attack on MLA: 4 held, probe on 150

Vikrama Vahini | Chikkaballapur

Four people have been arrested in connection with the incident of shoe-throwing and chaos that disrupted MLA Pradeep Eshwar's speech during the Kempegowda Jayanti programme. According to Superintendent of Police Kushal Chouksi, around 100 to 150 people were reportedly involved in the disturbance, and investigations are continuing to identify others using video evidence.

Police said that a detailed probe is underway to determine whether those involved were linked to

any political party or acted as independent individuals. The SP stated that irrespective of affiliations, all those responsible for the incident will face strict legal action.

Authorities further confirmed that adequate police security arrangements were in place for the event.

Dismissing allegations of security lapses, the police said the incident appeared to be a deliberate attempt to disrupt the programme and insult the legislator. They assured that action will be taken against everyone involved based on evidence.



DCM VISITS KOLLUR TEMPLE, OFFERS PRAYERS

Vikrama Vahini | Udipi

Deputy Chief Minister and Revenue Minister Dr. G. Parameshwar, along with his wife, visited the Kollur Sri Mookambika Temple on Sunday morning and offered special prayers. He also took part in the Chandika Homa performed at the temple.

After the rituals, the temple administration honoured the Deputy Chief Minister by presenting prasadam and a memento. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar said a master plan has been prepared for the development of facilities for devotees, including improved darshan arrangements, parking, and accommodation, which will be implemented in phases.

He also stated that instructions have been issued to officials to clear all



encroachments on temple lands belonging to the Muzrai Department. District administrations have also been directed to take necessary action to ensure proper protection and management of temple properties.

Parameshwar also reviewed ongoing infrastructure facilities at the temple premises and interacted with officials regarding crowd management measures, especially during peak pilgrimage seasons and major

festivals. He said the government is committed to preserving the sanctity of major temples while ensuring that devotees do not face inconvenience due to lack of basic amenities or administrative delays.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited nearby pilgrim facilities and instructed authorities to expedite pending works to enhance cleanliness, safety, and overall visitor experience at the shrine.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Dry Fruits: Eat the Right Way for Better Health

Dry fruits are widely considered a healthy food due to their rich nutritional value. Almonds, cashews, walnuts, dates and similar dry fruits are packed with protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals. However, experts in Ayurveda caution that improper consumption may lead to health issues such as acidity, indigestion and increased body heat.

Health specialists suggest that while dry fruits are beneficial, the method and quantity of intake play a crucial role in deriving their full benefits safely.

Best way to consume dry fruits

According to Ayurvedic guidelines, dry fruits should ideally be soaked in water overnight and consumed in the morning, especially during summer. Soaking helps reduce phytic acid, making nutrients easier to absorb and also helps in reducing their heat-producing effect on the body.

It is also advised not to exceed 20-30 grams of dry fruits per day. Eating them directly without soaking during hot weather may lead to digestive discomfort or excess body heat.

Dry fruits that generate more body heat

Certain dry fruits are known to increase body heat

when consumed excessively or without soaking. These include dried dates, walnuts, unsoaked almonds and pistachios. Overconsumption may lead to problems such as stomach burning, acne and indigestion.

Experts recommend consuming these in moderation and preferably after soaking, particularly in warm climatic conditions.

Healthier and cooling options

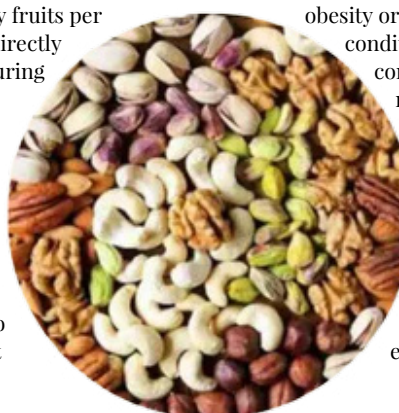
Soaked almonds, raisins, soaked cashews and dates can be consumed in controlled quantities for better health benefits. Fox nuts (makhana) are especially considered cooling in nature and serve as a healthy snack alternative.

Moderation is key

Dry fruits should not be completely avoided as they offer significant health benefits. However, they must be consumed in the right way, according to the season and in moderate quantities. Individuals with diabetes,

obesity or other health conditions are advised to consult medical or nutritional experts before regular consumption.

Eating dry fruits wisely ensures maximum health benefits without unwanted side effects.



SCIENCE & Technology

Cuttack to Launch AI Traffic Cameras, E-Challans from July

Vikrama Vahini | Cuttack

Cuttack is set to introduce AI-powered smart traffic cameras at 22 major junctions from July to automatically detect traffic violations and issue e-challans, marking a major upgrade in the city's traffic enforcement system.

The new technology will identify offences such as speeding, signal jumping, riding without helmets and illegal parking, reducing the need for manual intervention by traffic police.

According to officials, the installation work is in its final stage and the system will soon become operational. The cameras will be integrated with artificial intelligence, radar technology and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to detect violations in real time.

Once a violation is recorded, details of the vehicle along with evidence will be sent to the Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) control room, which will automatically generate and issue e-challans to offenders.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Jayant Kumar Dora, said the initiative aims to improve road safety and ensure transparent enforcement of traffic rules.

"The system will help make commuters safer by monitoring violations effectively and ensuring timely action," he said.

The system will be deployed at busy intersections such as Madhupatna, Badambadi and Khannagar, where over 30,000 vehicles pass daily. The move is expected to ease congestion and improve discipline among road users in the city.

# CONGRESS WILL RULE KARNATAKA IN 2028, CENTRE IN 2029: DKS

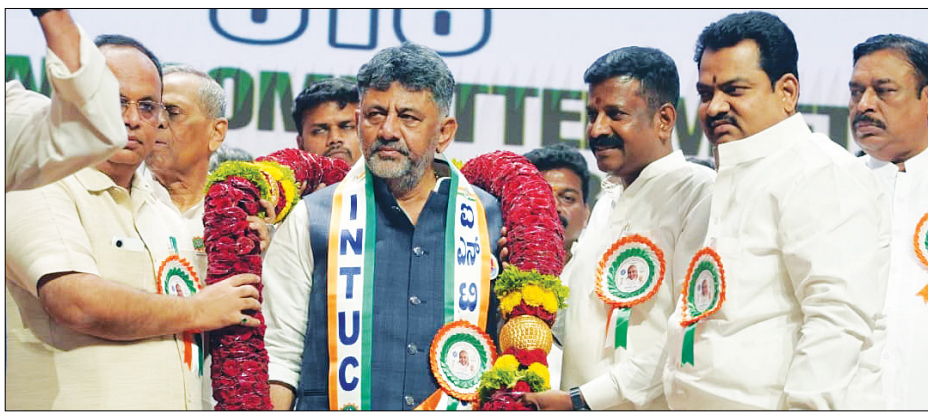
► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday expressed confidence that the Congress would return to power in Karnataka in the 2028 Assembly elections and form the government at the Centre after the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. He said the party's success would depend on the support of workers, labourers and the common people, and called upon Congress leaders to strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level.

Speaking at the 36th All India Executive Committee meeting of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) held at Bharat Jodo Hall in the KPCC office, Shivakumar said the Congress has always drawn its strength from labourers, farmers and ordinary citizens. **INTUC has strengthened the Congress movement**

Shivakumar said INTUC has played a crucial role in protecting the rights of workers and strengthening the Congress organisation over the decades. He recalled that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had described INTUC, NSUI, Youth Congress and Mahila Congress as the four pillars of the party.

He said his own political journey began through student politics, giving him first-hand experience of the importance of organisational strength and disciplined party workers in achieving electoral success.



**Workers are the backbone of the economy**

Highlighting the contribution of labourers to national development, Shivakumar said no society or economy can progress without the efforts of farmers, teachers, soldiers and workers.

He stressed that industries can flourish only when workers are empowered and treated fairly. "Development is possible only when employers and workers move forward together with mutual trust and cooperation," he said.

**Appeal to safeguard voters during SIR**

Referring to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls beginning on June 30, Shivakumar alleged that the BJP was attempting

to remove the names of workers and economically weaker sections from the voters' list.

He urged Congress workers to remain vigilant during the revision process and ensure that no eligible voter loses the right to vote. He said protecting democratic rights should be a priority for every party worker.

**Guarantee schemes introduced for people's welfare**

Defending the state government's five guarantee schemes, Shivakumar said they were designed to support women, labourers and economically weaker families during a period of rising prices.

He said the Karnataka government is

spending more than ₹50,000 crore every year on these welfare programmes. According to him, many leaders who had initially criticised the guarantee schemes are now introducing similar welfare measures elsewhere.

**Pays tribute to Congress labour leaders**

Shivakumar praised senior Congress leaders, including Oscar Fernandes and Mallikarjun Kharge, for introducing several reforms benefiting workers during their tenure as Labour Ministers.

He said the establishment of ESI hospitals and expansion of medical education opportunities for workers' children significantly improved the welfare of labour families. These initiatives, he added, transformed the lives of thousands of workers across the country.

**Congress has shaped modern India**

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Congress has played a historic role in building the nation since Independence under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and subsequent leaders.

He stated that the party has consistently protected constitutional values, ensured equal rights for citizens and worked towards social justice for every section of society.

**Karnataka remains India's growth engine**

Speaking on the economy, Shivakumar said Karnataka continues to remain one of India's

strongest economic contributors through taxes, industrial growth and technology.

He noted that Bengaluru has emerged as India's global technology capital, employing nearly 2.5 million IT professionals, which exceeds the technology workforce in several international innovation hubs.

**Calls for unity ahead of future elections**

Concluding his address, Shivakumar urged party leaders, trade union members and workers to remain united and strengthen the Congress organisation.

He expressed confidence that with the support of workers and the people, the Congress would regain power in Karnataka in 2028 and form the government at the Centre in 2029.

Shivakumar said the Congress had successfully overcome several political challenges over the past few years through unity and collective leadership.

He urged party workers to stay connected with the people at the grassroots and work tirelessly to address public issues, stating that a strong organisation was the foundation of electoral success.

Emphasising the importance of the labour movement, Shivakumar appealed to INTUC members to continue safeguarding workers' rights while contributing to the country's economic progress.

## VP CALLS FOR DRUG-FREE INDIA CAMPAIGN

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan on Sunday said that every life lost to drug abuse represents a loss of national potential, calling for a nationwide "Nasha Mukta Bharat" movement to eradicate substance abuse.

**Drug abuse a threat to nation-building**

Addressing the Nasha Mukta Bharat Conclave organised by Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) in association with the Narcotics Control Bureau and Disha Bodh Foundation, the Vice President said drug abuse impacts health, education, productivity and social stability.

**Call for collective action**

He urged educational institutions, families, healthcare professionals, law enforcement agencies and civil society to work together to combat drug addiction, stressing that the movement must begin at the individual level and expand into a national campaign.



**Role of students and research**

Radhakrishnan called upon students, especially those in medical and health sciences, to act as ambassadors of awareness in prevention and treatment efforts. He also emphasised the need for research in addiction medicine, mental health and community-based interventions.

**Focus on awareness and rehabilitation**

The Vice President said a drug-free society is not just about eliminating substances but also about promoting healthy lifestyles, informed decision-making and strong community support systems.

**Dignitaries present**

Earlier, he participated in the National Pulse Polio Drive and honoured former vice-chancellors of RGUHS, Karnataka Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Chief Minister D.K.

Shivakumar, and several ministers were present at the event.

## Bidadi Township Row: Appiko Protest Intensifies

► Vikrama Vahini | Ramanagara

Protests against the proposed Bidadi Township project continue as farmers intensify their agitation, adopting a unique "Appiko" movement to oppose land acquisition. In Bannigiri village, protesters embraced areca and coconut trees to symbolically highlight environmental conservation and the need to protect agricultural land.



The agitation has now taken a political turn, with Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy challenging Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar over the project. Kumaraswamy alleged large-scale irregularities involving thousands of crores of rupees in the Bidadi Township plan. He is reportedly strategising to expand the local protest into a statewide farmers' movement, escalating the political confrontation over land acquisition issues. The controversy has further intensified the Congress-JD(S) political rivalry in the state.

## SIR Roll Revision: Siddaramaiah Warns Congress Workers

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka will begin the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls from June 30, prompting a strong political response from the Congress, which has launched a statewide awareness campaign alleging misuse of the process by the BJP.

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad and Minister Yatindra Siddaramaiah addressed a public awareness convention in Mysuru, urging party workers to remain vigilant during the voter list revision exercise.

The Congress has alleged that the BJP is attempting to remove the names of poor and eligible voters under the guise of the revision process. Party leaders said they are mobilising workers to ensure that no eligible voter is excluded from the list.

Siddaramaiah warned party workers to take the process seriously, stating that negligence could have serious political

consequences. He urged them to closely monitor the revision exercise and protect voter rights.

Addressing the gathering, Siddaramaiah said Congress workers must not be careless during the SIR process, warning that failure to act cautiously could lead to major political losses.



He alleged that the BJP often comes to power through indirect means and accused it of undermining democratic institutions.

He further claimed that constitutional bodies in the country are not functioning independently and criticised the BJP for what he called authoritarian tendencies and declining public trust.

KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad said his party does not oppose voter roll revision in principle but objected to any removal of names based on religion or caste. He said duplicate entries should be corrected, but no eligible voter should be excluded.

### ENTERTAINMENT

## Welcome To The Jungle Box Office Soars 31%, Nears ₹60 Crore Globally



► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Akshay Kumar's latest release Welcome To The Jungle continues its strong run at the box office, registering a healthy growth in collections on its second day. The comedy entertainer, also referred to as Welcome 3, has nearly touched the ₹60 crore mark globally within 48 hours of release.

Strong jump in domestic collections: Directed by Ahmed Khan, the multi-starrer comedy collected around ₹20 crore (net) in India on Saturday, marking a 31.1% rise compared to its opening day earnings of ₹15.25 crore. Including Thursday's paid previews, the film's total domestic net collection has reached approximately ₹39 crore.

Crosses ₹50 crore mark in India: According to trade tracker Saenilk, the film continued its momentum on Sunday as well, earning an estimated ₹12.21 crore (net) by afternoon across India. With this, the total domestic net collection stands at around ₹51.21 crore, while the gross collection has climbed to ₹61.21 crore.

Global earnings near ₹60 crore: On the international front, Welcome To The Jungle has collected approximately ₹59.40 crore (gross) worldwide so far. With steady weekend performance, the film is expected to further strengthen its global numbers.

Audience response despite mixed reviews:

Despite receiving mixed critical reviews, the film has found strong traction among family audiences and mass viewers. Its situational humour and nostalgic connection to the popular Welcome franchise have contributed to steady footfalls in theatres.

The film recorded around 33% theatrical occupancy on Saturday across more than 10,000 shows, reflecting consistent audience interest.

Ensemble cast adds to the appeal: The third installment of the franchise features a large ensemble cast including Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal, Raveena Tandon, Johnny Lever and Rajpal Yadav, among others.

Director Ahmed Khan described managing the extensive cast as "like organising a massive music concert every day," highlighting the scale of production.

Cast reacts to audience love: Actor Raveena Tandon expressed happiness over the film's reception, saying the overwhelming audience response has been encouraging for the entire team. "Everybody has been calling after watching the film. It's great that audiences are appreciating the effort in such a big comedy," she said.

Weekend outlook: With Sunday expected to bring in strong numbers, trade analysts predict that Welcome To The Jungle could cross the ₹75 crore worldwide gross mark by the end of its opening weekend.

## LOCK UPP 2: AKANKSHA ON NO-RETAKE SHOW

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Lock Upp: Sach Ya Sazaa contestant Akanksha Chamola has opened up about her debut in the reality television space, expressing excitement over the show's raw and unscripted format, where participants are constantly under surveillance without retakes or scripted sequences.

Speaking about her decision to join the show, Akanksha said the platform itself was a major attraction for her. "The moment I heard it was Netflix, saying no was never really an option. It's a platform I've always admired, and being part of a show of this scale feels incredibly exciting," she said.

The actor, who will be seen alongside participants including Shivangi Joshi and Sunita Ahuja, said she is looking forward to meeting and interacting with fellow contestants. She added that it would be interesting to understand personalities beyond their public image and praised the distinct presence of some of her co-contestants.

Describing her experience of entering a fully unscripted environment, Akanksha admitted to feeling a mix of excitement, nervousness and curiosity. She highlighted that the absence of retakes makes the format unique, saying every emotion, reaction and decision will be captured in real time and presented to viewers as it happens.

She also acknowledged the psychological challenge of living under constant observation in a confined space but said the unpredictability of the

format is what makes it appealing.

The actor further revealed that she has little tolerance for lack of cleanliness, stating that hygiene issues in a shared living environment could be a major point of discomfort for her during the show.

Akanksha said she sees the reality show as an opportunity for audiences to see her true personality beyond her acting roles and public perception, adding that she hopes her journey inspires viewers to break stereotypes and build their own identities.



### BUSINESS

## SCSS vs FD vs RBI Bond: Which Gives Better Returns?

► Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

Senior citizens looking for safe investment options with steady income often consider the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS), five-year bank fixed deposits (FDs), and RBI Floating Rate Savings Bonds. These debt instruments are widely preferred for their capital safety and regular interest payouts.

The Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS) currently offers an interest rate of 8.2% per annum, making it one of the most attractive options for retirees. Interest is paid quarterly, and individuals can invest up to ₹30 lakh. For an investment of ₹10 lakh, SCSS generates around ₹20,500 every quarter, translating to an average monthly income of about ₹6,833. However, the interest rate is revised every three months by the Union Finance Ministry.

The five-year senior citizen fixed deposit offered by banks such as the State Bank of India currently provides an interest rate of around 7.05% per annum. A ₹10 lakh investment in such an FD yields approximately ₹17,625 per quarter, or about ₹5,875 per month on average. The key advantage is that the interest rate remains fixed at the time of investment, ensuring predictable returns regardless of market fluctuations.

RBI Floating Rate Savings Bonds offer an interest rate currently around 8.05% per annum, linked to the National Savings Certificate rate and revised every six months. The bond has a maturity period of seven years, with options for premature withdrawal for senior citizens. An investment of ₹10 lakh generates about ₹80,500 annually, or roughly ₹6,708 per month, with interest paid semi-annually.

Among the three options, SCSS currently provides the highest regular monthly income for senior citizens within the ₹30 lakh investment limit. However, RBI Floating Rate Bonds may benefit investors who prefer variable returns linked to interest rate changes, while bank FDs remain a stable and predictable option. Financial experts advise investors to choose based on income needs, risk preference and investment horizon.

SPORTS

IND vs IRE: Rain Disrupts Practice Ahead of 2nd T20

> Vikrama Vahini | Belfast

Persistent rain in Belfast has cast serious doubts over the second T20 International between India and Ireland, scheduled to be played on Sunday evening. The match is set to begin at 6 pm IST, but continuous showers and a wet outfield have already disrupted preparations, forcing both teams to cancel their practice sessions.

Heavy rain has left the ground conditions unsuitable for training, leading to the complete cancellation of the practice session on the eve of the match. Weather forecasts suggest that rainfall is likely to continue on match day as well, raising concerns over a possible washout.

According to the UK Met Office, there is a high probability of rain during key hours of the match. At the scheduled toss time (around 5:30 pm IST), the chance of rainfall is estimated at nearly 70%. The likelihood of showers remains significant during the first hour of play as well.

While conditions are expected to improve later in the evening, around 8:30 pm IST, intermittent rain may still impact play, increasing the possibility of a reduced-overs game.

India had already lost the first T20 of the series, making this a must-win encounter to stay alive in the contest. A washout in the second match would result in India losing the series 0-1, handing Ireland a historic series win against a major cricketing nation.

Kate Cross Slams ICC Over Semi-Final Rule

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

England cricketer Kate Cross has strongly criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC), accusing it of "prioritising India" in the ongoing Women's T20 World Cup 2026 by structuring the semi-final schedule in a way that appears to favour the Indian team.

Cross termed the decision "absolutely ridiculous" after it emerged that India would be placed in the first semi-final slot if they qualify for the final four, regardless of their position in the group stage standings.

Under the tournament format, the standard rule is that the top team from Group A faces the second-placed team from Group B, while the Group B topper plays the Group A runner-up in the semi-finals.

However, the ICC has reportedly fixed the first semi-final slot for India if they qualify, pairing them with the Group B runner-up. If India fail to qualify, the schedule will adjust accordingly, with match-ups reshuffled.

The ICC has said the scheduling decision was made considering broadcast timings to maximise viewership from Indian audiences. The first semi-final is scheduled for 2:30 pm local time (7 pm IST), while the second semi-final will be played later in the evening.

Speaking on the podcast No Balls: The Cricket Podcast, Cross questioned the fairness of the arrangement, calling it "absolutely ridiculous" and "mental", and criticised the governing body for what she described as prioritising one team for commercial reasons.

SWADESHI IS INDIA'S GREATEST STRENGTH: PM

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India's greatest strength lies in Swadeshi and emphasised that the country's march towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat is gaining strong momentum with active public participation. He was addressing the 135th edition of his monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat.

Modi highlighted major developments in indigenous defence manufacturing, noting that the induction of INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak and INS Agraya marked a significant milestone in India's naval capabilities. He said all aspects of these ships, from design to construction, were fully indigenous, strengthening India's defence self-reliance.

He also mentioned the maiden flight of the Made-in-India C-295 transport aircraft, with 40 such aircraft currently being manufactured in India, creating jobs and boosting the MSME and aerospace sectors. The Prime Minister further referred to the successful test of an indigenous long-range

land-attack cruise missile developed by DRDO and industry partners.

"From the seas to the skies, India is becoming increasingly secure and self-reliant," he said.

The Prime Minister also praised India's performance at the International Day of Yoga events held across more than 2,500 global locations and congratulated athletes for their success at the World Yogasana Championship in Ahmedabad.

He thanked citizens for supporting his appeal to reduce discretionary consumption and adopt cost-saving measures during global uncertainty, including limiting gold purchases, using public transport, and opting for carpooling.

Modi also highlighted several examples of community service and innovation, including a family in Maharashtra that arranged accident insurance for thousands of villagers during a wedding, and grassroots environmental efforts such as plastic-to-eco-brick initiatives in Madhya Pradesh.

He urged citizens to support eco-friendly

practices during Ganesh Utsav by choosing clay idols made by local artisans, reinforcing the "Vocal for Local" initiative.

The Prime Minister also spoke about conservation efforts such as Meghalaya's living root bridges and initiatives to revive traditional knowledge systems alongside modern technologies like artificial intelligence.

Concluding his address, Modi said India's progress is driven by collective effort and public participation, and urged citizens to continue contributing towards nation-building and environmental conservation.



Akhilesh-Yogi Clash Over Ram Mandir Case

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

A political confrontation has intensified in Uttar Pradesh after allegations of embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya triggered a sharp exchange between Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.



irregularities could occur at a highly sensitive religious site under close supervision.

Responding to the remarks, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked Akhilesh Yadav to visit Ayodhya and seek blessings of Ram Lalla. He accused the Samajwadi Party of opposing Hindu traditions while attempting to take political advantage of developments in Ayodhya. The Chief Minister also referred to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and suggested similar efforts for the liberation of Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi, further escalating the political war of words.

The SP chief further alleged that the BJP had prioritised donations over public welfare and predicted that the party would lose the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. He also questioned the administration over how such alleged

₹1.5 Crore TET Leak Plot Busted

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)-2026, scheduled to be held on Sunday, was postponed following the alleged leak of the examination question paper. The development has triggered a major investigation, with Bhiwandi Police arresting three persons in connection with the case.

The arrested accused have been identified as Rajeev Shah (45) from Bihar, Akash Kumar (30), and Dheeraj Kumar (28) from Haryana. Police have registered a case against them under Sections 318(4), 316(5), and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The alleged mastermind of the racket is reportedly absconding, and efforts are underway to trace him.

Question papers allegedly meant for ₹1.5 crore deal

According to investigators, the accused had brought four sets of the TET question papers from Delhi and were planning to sell them for ₹1.5 crore.

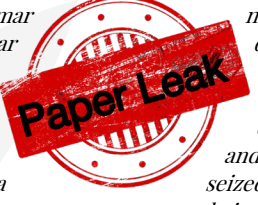
Police are probing who the

intended buyers were and where the papers were to be delivered.

Officials said the arrests were made following specific intelligence inputs before the examination could be conducted, helping prevent the leaked papers from being circulated widely among candidates.

Probe widened Police have launched a wider investigation to identify others involved in the paper leak and determine whether it has links to previous examination fraud cases. Digital devices and other evidence seized from the accused are being examined.

The incident has once again raised concerns over the security of competitive examinations, coming soon after recent controversies surrounding national-level entrance tests. Authorities have assured candidates that strict action will be taken against everyone involved and that a fresh date for the TET examination will be announced separately.



West Bengal Public Safety Bill on Crime

> Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

The West Bengal government is preparing to introduce a stringent new law aimed at cracking down on syndicate operations, extortion, land grabbing and organised criminal activities across the state.

The proposed West Bengal Public Safety and Control of Anti-Social Activities Bill is scheduled to be tabled in the Assembly on Monday and, if passed, will grant extensive powers to law enforcement

agencies to act against individuals and networks involved in organised crime.

The bill targets not only those directly involved in criminal activities but also individuals accused of sheltering or assisting offenders. Those found helping accused persons evade detention or legal action may face criminal proceedings, with punishment of up to two years' imprisonment and fines. The legislation also

formally defines the term "goonda" as a person habitually involved in anti-social activities individually or as part of a gang or syndicate.

Offences under the proposed law would be classified as cognisable and non-bailable, allowing police to arrest without warrants and limiting immediate bail options.

The bill also includes preventive detention provisions, empowering senior officials

including Police Commissioners, District Magistrates and DIG-rank officers to detain individuals for up to 12 months if they are deemed a threat to public safety.

Officials said the existing legal framework has been inadequate in dealing with organised crime networks, prompting the need for stronger legislation. However, political observers have noted that the bill could spark debate over the extent of administrative powers and concerns regarding possible misuse.



Iran Strikes US Bases in Gulf, Warns of Retaliation

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Iran on Sunday claimed responsibility for a large-scale missile and drone operation targeting US military installations in Kuwait and Bahrain, warning that any further American attacks would be met with a "crushing response" and threatening to halt diplomatic engagements under a recently signed ceasefire framework.

IRGC claims coordinated strikes on multiple bases: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said its Navy and Aerospace Force jointly carried out strikes between 2 am and 3 am local time, targeting eight US military facilities across the Gulf region.

These reportedly included the Ali Al Salem Airbase in Kuwait and the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet at Salman Port in Bahrain.

US strikes precede Iranian retaliation: The strikes followed US Central Command (CENTCOM) operations earlier in the day, in which American forces reportedly targeted Iranian surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defence sites, drone storage facilities and minelaying capabilities near the Strait

of Hormuz.

Warnings of escalation: In a statement, the IRGC said any future aggression would face a stronger response and warned that diplomatic processes could be completely suspended if violations continue.

Air defence activated in Gulf states: Kuwait's military said its air defence systems intercepted hostile targets overnight and confirmed that explosions heard were due to interception activity. In Bahrain, air raid sirens sounded twice, with authorities directing residents to take shelter.

No confirmed US casualties: According to reports from US officials cited by international media, there were no American casualties or significant damage to military infrastructure in either Kuwait or Bahrain.

Rising tensions in Strait of Hormuz: The latest escalation comes amid ongoing tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil shipping route, raising concerns over regional stability and global energy security.

Iran has warned that any future violations of the ceasefire framework will lead to broader retaliation and further escalation in the region.

9 Injured in Vaishno Devi Bus Crash

> Vikrama Vahini | Reasi

Eight personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and a civilian driver were injured after a bus carrying security personnel overturned near the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Sunday.

The accident occurred on the Tarakote route when the vehicle reportedly went out of the driver's control and overturned while returning to the CISF camp after personnel completed their duty at the shrine.

Officials said three CISF personnel sustained serious injuries and were identified as Head Constables Sammy Kumar and M.M. Dubey, and Constable P.K. Traya. They were shifted to Narayana Hospital for advanced medical treatment.

The remaining injured, including a CISF Sub-Inspector and the bus driver, Virender Singh, were admitted to a health facility in Katra. Doctors said their condition is stable.

Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the accident. Rescue teams responded promptly and shifted the injured to nearby hospitals.

SpaceX Recovers First Starfall Capsule

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

SpaceX has successfully recovered its newly developed "Starfall" reentry capsule after its first orbital demonstration mission, marking a major step in reusable space logistics technology.

The capsule was launched on June 23, 2026, from Cape Canaveral and was recovered in the Pacific Ocean on June 25, following a short test mission in low-Earth orbit.

The company said the mission demonstrated a new approach to automated cargo return from space, aimed at supporting manufacturing, scientific experiments and future space-based logistics systems.

Starfall is a disc-shaped orbital platform designed for controlled atmospheric reentry without independent propulsion for deorbiting. Instead, it relies on the launch vehicle to place it on a reentry path, while onboard nitrogen cold-gas thrusters help maintain orientation during descent. During its first mission, the capsule carried biological samples, including brewing yeast, to study the effects of microgravity.

SpaceX also tested communication systems designed to transmit data through the



plasma blackout phase that occurs during reentry.

The capsule successfully deployed a sequence of parachutes before splashdown, after which the carbon-fibre heat shield was detached just prior to water landing. Recovery operations were carried out by a vessel that retrieved the capsule approximately 1,300 kilometres off the US west coast before transporting it to the Port of Long Beach for analysis.

According to SpaceX, the Starfall system is designed to support high-frequency space operations by enabling efficient return of materials from orbit, potentially accelerating research and industrial applications in space. SpaceX said the successful recovery of Starfall marks a key step toward scalable, reusable space return systems that could support future commercial and scientific missions.

Iran-UAE to Resume Tehran-Dubai Flights

> Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Iran and the United Arab Emirates have issued permissions to resume flights on the Tehran-Dubai route from July 1, according to Majid Akhavan, spokesperson for Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation.

He said both countries' aviation authorities had granted the necessary approvals to restart commercial air services between the two cities, as reported by ISNA.

Iran had earlier closed parts of its western airspace in June due to escalating regional tensions. However, authorities have now begun gradually restoring air travel operations.

The development comes amid broader diplomatic and security-related discussions involving Iran and the United States, including a recently signed memorandum aimed at de-escalating military tensions and addressing issues related to the Strait of Hormuz and nuclear negotiations.

Further talks between the concerned parties are expected within 60 days, with discussions likely to focus on sanctions relief and long-term regional stability.

Ram Temple theft probe: suspects' assets surge, data wiped

> Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow

Police investigating the multi-crore theft case at Ayodhya's Ram Temple have found that the accused allegedly attempted to destroy key digital evidence by deleting WhatsApp chats, call records and location data from their mobile phones before or soon after the crime. Forensic experts have been roped in to recover the deleted data.

Officials suspect the theft could not have been carried out without internal support, as it reportedly took place in a highly secure zone of the temple premises. The role of security personnel and possible insiders is now under scrutiny.

Investigators are also probing the whereabouts of stolen jewellery, donation money and other valuables, and are questioning the accused to trace any possible buyers or hidden storage locations. Sources said multiple angles are being examined, including lapses in security arrangements and the role of individuals linked to the temple trust.

Student Bus Pass Refund Begins

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government has announced the refund of bus pass fees paid by students, offering fresh relief after introducing the free student bus pass scheme. Official orders have been issued to all four state-run transport corporations to reimburse the amount collected from eligible students.

Although the government had declared free bus passes for students, transport corporations had collected fees during the application process under the existing system. The government has now directed the KSRTC, BMTC, NWKRTC, and KKRTC to refund the fees already paid.

The refund application process will begin on June 29, and eligible students must submit their applications through the Seva Sindhu portal.

Applicants will be required to complete OTP-based verification and provide accurate bank account details while submitting their applications. After verification by the authorities, the refund amount will be transferred directly to the students' bank accounts through NEFT or RTGS within seven days.

Officials have advised students to ensure that all banking details are entered correctly to avoid delays in receiving the refund.

Officials said the refund initiative is aimed at ensuring that no student bears the financial burden after the introduction of the free bus pass scheme.

Students have been advised to submit their applications well before the deadline and regularly check the status of their applications on the Seva Sindhu portal to ensure timely processing of their refunds.