



Janhvi Kapoor set to make her Tamil debut in director Pa. Ranjith's upcoming women-centric film, marking her first-ever non-glamorous role in South Indian cinema.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the country's monsoon preparedness amid concerns over the impact of El Niño and the possibility of below-normal rainfall in July



INSIDE

Good morning

All the problems are stuck between 'Mind' and 'Matter'. If you don't 'Mind', it doesn't 'Matter'.

BRIEFS

Fake QR code found in Ram donation scam

> Vikrama Vahini | Lucknow
Investigators probing the alleged Ram Temple donation theft have recovered a fake "Ramrajya Kosh" donation box and a counterfeit QR code from the rented residence of prime accused Avinash Shukla during an SIT raid. Police suspect the accused used fake UPI IDs resembling the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust to divert donations from devotees into personal bank accounts. Electronic devices, bank records and digital payment data have been seized for forensic examination. Officials are also investigating the possible role of outsourced banking personnel and tracing assets allegedly purchased using the misappropriated funds. Further arrests are likely as the probe expands.

Monsoon Session from July 20?

> Vikrama Vahini | Delhi
The Monsoon Session of Parliament is likely to be held from July 20 to August 13, with an official announcement expected shortly from the Centre. The four-week session is expected to witness discussions on several key legislations and national issues. Sources said the government may reintroduce the Constitutional Amendment Bill for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, along with the related delimitation proposal, after the measures failed to secure the required majority in the previous special session. The session is also expected to see political developments over separate group claims by rebel MPs from the Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT), while the NDA enters the session with increased strength in the Rajya Sabha following recent elections.

Red Alert: Schools Shut

> Vikrama Vahini | Mangaluru
The Dakshina Kannada district administration has declared a holiday for all schools and colleges on July 2 after the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a Red Alert forecasting extremely heavy rainfall. The holiday applies to all government, aided and private educational institutions from Anganwadi centres to II PUC. Deputy Commissioner Darshan H.V. said the decision was taken as a precaution to ensure students' safety. Authorities have advised residents to avoid unnecessary travel and remain alert in low-lying, riverbank and landslide-prone areas. A Red Alert has also been issued for Udupi district on July 2 and 3, with fishermen advised not to venture into the sea due to rough conditions.

TN moves SC against cow slaughter ban

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Tamil Nadu government has approached the Supreme Court challenging the Madras High Court's recent order imposing a complete ban on the slaughter of cows and calves across the state, including during Bakrid and other occasions.

The appeal has been filed through the Secretary of the State's Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department.

The government has argued that the High Court exceeded the scope of the original petition,



which was limited to preventing cow slaughter in public places in Coimbatore during Bakrid. According to the petition, the High Court

went beyond the issues raised in the case by extending the restriction to the entire state and effectively imposing a blanket ban on cow slaughter.

The state contended that such a direction was outside the jurisdiction of the original proceedings.

The Tamil Nadu government further submitted that the Tamil Nadu Animal Preservation Act, 1958, the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998, and other relevant laws regulate the slaughter of cattle under specified conditions but do not provide for a complete

prohibition.

The petition also objected to the High Court's observations on religious issues, including whether cow sacrifice is an essential practice in Islam, arguing that such discussions were unnecessary and unrelated to the matter before the court.

Seeking urgent relief, the state has requested the Supreme Court to set aside the High Court's order and grant an interim stay on its implementation until the matter is finally decided. The appeal has been filed through advocate Jayashree Narasimhan.

Call to End Hostility

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Over 100 prominent citizens from India and Pakistan have jointly appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to end hostilities and revive dialogue, peace and cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

The appeal was made through an open letter issued by the Centre for Peace and Progress, signed by 117 prominent personalities from both nations. The signatories called for confidence-building measures, restoration of diplomatic engagement and renewed people-to-people contact.

The signatories stressed that sustained engagement between the two nations is essential to reduce mistrust and promote long-term stability in the region.

They also urged both governments to take immediate steps to restore normal diplomatic channels, including the reinstatement of High Commissioners in New Delhi and Islamabad. According to them, such measures would help rebuild mutual trust.

The appeal further called for the resumption of visa services and increased people-to-people exchanges, particularly in trade, education and cultural ties, to strengthen bilateral relations at the grassroots level.

Call for Peace and Diplomacy

The letter urged both governments to reinstate High Commissioners in New Delhi and Islamabad, resume normal visa services, and restart bilateral dialogue on all outstanding issues. It stressed that sustained engagement remains the only practical path to reducing tensions and promoting regional stability.

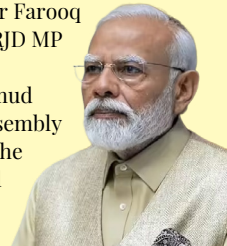
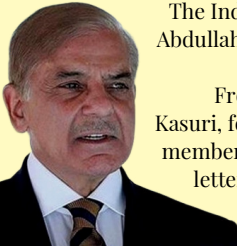
Focus on Regional Stability

The signatories said India and Pakistan together account for nearly one-fifth of the world's population and that decades of hostility have imposed heavy social, economic and human costs.

They called for discussions on all pending issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, while advocating demilitarisation, de-escalation and stronger regional cooperation. They urged continued dialogue to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Leaders Among Signatories

The Indian signatories include National Conference leader Dr Farooq Abdullah, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, RJD MP Manoj Jha and AJUP leader Humayun Kabir. From Pakistan, former Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, former diplomat Ashraf Jehangir Qazi and National Assembly member Ispahanyar Bhandara were among those who signed the letter. The letter reflects support from prominent political and diplomatic voices across both countries.



₹35 crore offer to topple Vijay govt?

> Vikrama Vahini | Chennai

A major political controversy has erupted in Tamil Nadu after the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) alleged an attempt to topple the government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay by offering huge sums of money to its MLAs. The allegations have triggered an investigation, with three persons arrested in connection with the case.

According to officials, the arrests were made following a complaint filed by TVK MLA N. Ilayaraja from Uthangarai constituency. One of the accused was arrested in Chennai, while two others were apprehended in Karur.

Police said further investigations are underway to identify others allegedly involved in the conspiracy.

The complaint alleges that an individual associated with a consultancy firm

offered the MLA ₹35 crore to support a no-confidence motion against the TVK leadership and warned him not to disclose the proposal. Authorities are examining the alleged money trail and possible political links.

During the investigation, officials reportedly found connections between the accused and DMK MLA Senthil Balaji. Media reports, citing sources, claimed that one of the arrested individuals is a close associate of Senthil Balaji and his brother Ashok. However, no official statement has been issued by the DMK regarding the allegations.

Reacting strongly, TVK minister C.T. Nirmal Kumar accused the DMK of attempting to destabilise the Vijay-led government.

He alleged that several TVK legislators had been approached with offers ranging from ₹10 crore to ₹50 crore to switch allegiance. **PG2**



India on Dengue Alert

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India has stepped up preventive measures against dengue following a sharp rise in cases in neighbouring Sri Lanka, where the outbreak has crossed 50,000 cases and claimed 29 lives so far this year. Health authorities have intensified surveillance, particularly in southern coastal states, amid concerns that the disease could spread during the ongoing monsoon season.

Sri Lanka Faces Major Outbreak

According to reports, Sri Lanka is recording 600-700 new dengue cases daily, with more than half of the infections reported from the western region, including Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara. The outbreak worsened after heavy rains and flooding triggered by Cyclone Dithva and the southwest monsoon created ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. **PG2**

₹77.85 lakh seized in Ram Mandir donation case

> Vikrama Vahini | Ayodhya

Police investigating the alleged theft of donations from the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Temple have seized cash and foreign currency worth over ₹77.85 lakh from the accused, officials said. The recoveries include ₹77.85 lakh in cash and 1,121 US dollars, along with silver and gold ornaments and other valuables allegedly linked to the misappropriated temple donations.

According to police records submitted before the court, the money was recovered from seven accused arrested in connection with the case. The largest recovery was made from



Avinash Shukla, from whom officials seized ₹20.39 lakh in cash, 1,121 US dollars, silver articles and gold ornaments. Other accused, including Karunesh Pandey, Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra, Ramankar Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav and Ramshankar Yadav, were also found in possession of substantial amounts of cash. **PG2**

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SPIRITUAL

Amarnath Yatra 2026 Begins Tomorrow

> Vikrama Vahini | Jammu & Kashmir
The annual Amarnath Yatra, one of the most significant pilgrimages for devotees of Lord Shiva, is set to commence on July 3 and will continue till August 28, 2026. Lakhs of pilgrims from across the country are expected to undertake the arduous Himalayan journey to the holy cave shrine.

Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha has already performed the traditional Pratham Pooja on the occasion of Jyeshtha Pournami, formally marking the spiritual commencement of the pilgrimage preparations.

With the yatra date approaching, authorities have urged devotees to ensure thorough preparation due to extreme and unpredictable weather conditions in the high-altitude terrain. Sudden temperature drops, heavy rainfall, and low oxygen levels make the journey physically demanding.

Authorities have advised pilgrims to carry adequate warm clothing, including thermal innerwear, woollen sweaters, gloves, caps, mufflers, and waterproof jackets. Extra woollen socks, raincoats, and windproof clothing are also recommended to protect against harsh weather conditions.

A basic medical kit is mandatory, especially for those with chronic conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes, or asthma. Essential medicines, first-aid supplies, and emergency drugs for fever, pain, and nausea should be included.

Pilgrims must also carry necessary documents such as yatra registration slips, Compulsory Health Certificates (CHC), valid government photo ID proof, and emergency contact details in both physical and digital formats.

Other useful items include sunglasses, sunscreen lotion, lip balm, torchlight, power banks, water bottles, energy bars, dry fruits, and mobile chargers. Authorities have strictly advised pilgrims not to carry valuables such as expensive jewellery, large amounts of cash, plastic waste, alcohol, tobacco, or any narcotic substances. Oxygen cylinders or unapproved medical equipment should also be avoided unless medically prescribed.

Any symptoms like dizziness, breathlessness, or chest pain must be reported immediately to nearby medical centres. Strict adherence to instructions issued by security personnel and local authorities is essential for a safe journey.

Officials have emphasized that the Amarnath Yatra is not only a spiritual experience but also a physically challenging expedition, requiring discipline, preparation, and caution for a safe pilgrimage.

Press Day Marked with Charity Trust Launch

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Newspaper distributors celebrated Press Day with enthusiasm at Majestic in Bengaluru on Tuesday morning, highlighting the invaluable contribution of newspaper vendors to the media industry.

On the occasion, the News Paper Distributors Charitable Trust was formally inaugurated by K.V. Prabhakar, former Media Adviser to the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Speaking after inaugurating the trust, Prabhakar said newspaper distributors are the "lifeline" of media organisations. "They are like oxygen to the newspaper industry. Irrespective of rain, cold or scorching heat, they ensure newspapers reach every doorstep every morning. Their dedication deserves the highest appreciation," he said.

Ravi Hegde, Editor-in-Chief of Kannada Prabha, described newspaper distributors as the backbone of the media industry. "They



work tirelessly in all weather conditions, and society must always recognise and respect their service," he remarked.

Addressing the gathering, Shivananda Tagadur, State President of the Karnataka Working Journalists' Association (KUWJ),

recalled the movement led by K. Shambhulinga to secure welfare measures for newspaper distributors. He said the support extended by K.V. Prabhakar during the tenure of then Chief Minister Siddaramaiah helped distributors obtain several benefits.

"This struggle demonstrated that only a strong organisation can effectively secure rights and welfare measures for its members," he said.

B.V. Mallikarjunayya, President of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ), emphasised that newspapers cannot exist without distributors. "They are an inseparable part of the entire media ecosystem," he said.

The programme also featured the celebration of KUWJ State President Shivananda Tagadur's birthday, with members cutting a cake and extending their greetings.

Among those present were Prashanth, Vice-President of the Karnataka State Newspaper Distributors' Federation; Suresh, General Secretary; and members Sangam, Gopal, Jagadish, Devaraj, Nagaratna, and several others.

BBMP Cracks Down on Footpath Encroachments

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Bengaluru East City Corporation has launched a special campaign to make footpaths safe, obstruction-free and pedestrian-friendly by removing illegal encroachments across major roads, Commissioner D.S. Ramesh said on Tuesday.

The drive has been initiated following the directions of the Minister for Greater Bengaluru Development to improve pedestrian safety and ease traffic congestion caused by encroachments on sidewalks.

A joint task force comprising officials from the engineering, health, solid waste management, BESCOM, BWSSB and police departments has been constituted for the operation. Heavy equipment, including JCBs, hydras, tractors and metal cutters, has been deployed for the drive.

13.25 km of Footpaths Cleared
In the first phase, encroachments were removed from 13.25 km of footpaths covering major roads in Whitefield, Marathahalli, KR Puram, Horamavu, HAL, Ramamurthy Nagar, Doddanekkundi and Kadugodi.

Encroachments Removed
The operation resulted in the removal of:
> 59 petty shops



- > 65 pushcarts
- > 38 barricades
- > 7 commercial shop staircases
- 156 advertisement boards, banners and flexes
- > 69 temporary canopies
- > 2 temporary sheds

The BBMP also cleared 25 tonnes of solid waste and 80 tonnes of soil, dust and construction debris from footpaths.

Drive to Continue Across the City
Commissioner Ramesh said the campaign would continue in phases across all major roads under the corporation's jurisdiction. He warned that civic marshals would conduct round-the-clock inspections and that repeat encroachments would attract heavy penalties and legal action.

He also appealed to shop owners, street vendors and other encroachers to voluntarily remove illegal structures, stating that footpaths are meant exclusively for public use and pedestrian safety.

₹35 crore offer to topple Vijay govt?

> From PG1
He further claimed that individuals linked to Senthil Balaji and the so-called "Karur gang" were behind the alleged operation and demanded strict legal action against all those involved.

The minister also alleged that the operation was being carried out at the behest of senior DMK leaders, including Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, and claimed that almost every TVK MLA had been contacted with inducements to defect.

Police have not confirmed the political allegations and said the investigation is continuing. No official response has yet been issued by the DMK or the leaders named in the allegations.

Officials added that statements from the accused and witnesses are being verified as part of the probe. Police said digital evidence and financial trails are also being examined in detail.

India on Dengue Alert

> From PG1
India Steps Up Vigil
The Union Health Ministry has instructed states to strengthen dengue surveillance and preparedness.

Screening has been intensified at airports and ports receiving passengers from Sri Lanka, while hospitals have been asked to ensure adequate stocks of testing kits, medicines and platelets.

Authorities have also directed local bodies to eliminate stagnant water and intensify anti-mosquito drives ahead of the peak monsoon period.

Monsoon Raises Risk
India has reported over 16,000 dengue cases so far this year. Although the situation remains under control, health officials have warned that cases could rise during July and August due to increased rainfall.

Coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh are under close monitoring because of their proximity to Sri Lanka and frequent travel links.

Public Advised to Stay Alert
Health experts have urged people to prevent water stagnation around homes, use mosquito protection measures and seek immediate medical attention in case of high fever, body pain or other dengue symptoms.

Authorities said early prevention and community participation remain the most effective tools to contain the spread of the disease.

Officials said rapid response teams have been placed on standby in high-risk districts. Public awareness campaigns are being intensified through local health centres and media outreach.

New Wage Hike Under VB-G Scheme

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
The Central Government has notified revised wage rates under the Viksit Bharat-Grameen Employment and Livelihood Guarantee Mission (VB-G RAM G) Act 2025, which came into effect from July 1, replacing the earlier MGNREGA framework.

Under the new scheme, rural households

are guaranteed 125 days of wage employment, with a minimum wage benchmark set at ₹300 per day.

The national average wage has been increased from ₹298.8 to ₹327.4, reflecting an average hike of ₹28.6 per day.

In Karnataka, the revised daily wage has been fixed at ₹382, officials said. The

government stated that the reform aims to reduce regional wage disparities, strengthen rural livelihoods, and improve income security for rural workers. Over 21 states and union territories will now fall under the new ₹300 minimum wage bracket.

Officials added that the revised system ensures higher wage gains for historically

low-paying states, with some regions witnessing increases of over 20%. The scheme is expected to boost rural purchasing power and support broader development goals under the Viksit Bharat vision.

Officials said the revised structure will be periodically reviewed based on inflation and cost-of-living indices.

NEWS

FIGHT FAKE NEWS WITH ETHICAL JOURNALISM: CM

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru
Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said fearless journalism is one of the greatest challenges in the present times and stressed that adherence to professional ethics and integrity is essential to overcome it.

Speaking after inaugurating the Press Day celebrations organised by the Karnataka Media Academy and the Karnataka Working Journalists' Association (KUWJ) at Gandhi Bhavan, the Chief Minister urged journalists to uphold truth, ethics and their professional conscience.

He expressed concern over the growing spread of fake news, saying the media must be aware of the serious consequences of misinformation.

Referring to a recent incident, Shivakumar said he had visited a hospital only for a routine health check-up, but some television channels falsely reported that he had been admitted.



He also recalled that during the Makedatu Padayatra, visuals of him appearing exhausted were wrongly portrayed as if he was under the influence of alcohol, describing it as a deliberate attempt to mislead the public.

"If I make a mistake, expose it. But do not publish or broadcast false news," he said, adding that a news report belongs to a journalist until it is published, after which it becomes the property of society and therefore must be truthful and responsible.

The Chief Minister also noted that great leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, had strengthened society through

journalism and called upon media professionals to uphold that legacy.

Vartha Bharati Editor Abu Salam Puthige delivered the keynote address. Kannada Development Authority Chairman Purushottama Bilimale, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, Karnataka Women Journalists' Association President R. Poornima, Karnataka Media Academy Chairperson Ayesha Khanum, KUWJ State President Shivananda Tagadur, Information and Public Relations Commissioner Anucheth, and several other dignitaries attended the event.

₹77.85 lakh seized in Ram Mandir donation case

> From PG1
Meanwhile, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust is preparing to discuss the alleged donation scam at its meeting scheduled in Ayodhya on July 6.

The meeting is also expected to deliberate on the reported resignations of the Trust's General Secretary Champat Rai and member Anil Mishra.

Police said the investigation is continuing to

determine the full extent of the alleged misappropriation and whether more persons were involved in the theft of temple donations.

The case has attracted widespread attention due to the scale of the alleged fraud and its connection to one of the country's most prominent religious institutions. Officials said further scrutiny of financial records and digital transactions is underway to trace the flow of funds.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Don't Ignore These Early Thyroid Warning Signs

Health experts have advised people to pay attention to early signs of thyroid disorders, saying timely diagnosis and treatment can prevent long-term health complications.

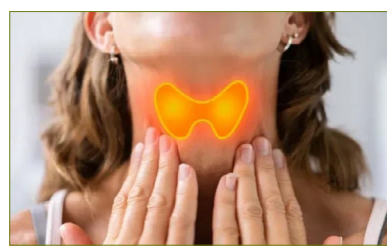
The thyroid, a small butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of the neck, plays a vital role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, mood, heart rate, body weight, skin and hair health. When the gland produces either too little or too much thyroid hormone, the body often shows subtle warning signs long before a diagnosis is made.

Persistent Fatigue
One of the earliest signs of thyroid imbalance is unusual tiredness. An underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) can cause constant fatigue, sluggishness and excessive sleepiness, while an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) may lead to restlessness, anxiety and difficulty sleeping.

Unexplained Weight Changes
Sudden weight gain despite a healthy diet and regular exercise may indicate hypothyroidism. Conversely, unexplained weight loss accompanied by an increased appetite can be a sign of hyperthyroidism.

Mood and Memory Changes
Thyroid disorders can significantly affect mental well-being. Low thyroid hormone levels may result in depression, forgetfulness, irritability and difficulty concentrating, while excessive hormone levels can trigger anxiety, nervousness, panic-like symptoms and mood swings.

Skin and Hair Problems



Dry, rough or sensitive skin, excessive hair fall, thinning hair and loss of the outer portion of the eyebrows are common signs associated with thyroid dysfunction.

Menstrual Irregularities
In women, thyroid imbalance may affect reproductive health by causing irregular, unusually heavy or light menstrual periods, ovulation problems and difficulty conceiving.

Neck Swelling
An enlarged thyroid gland, known as a goitre, may cause visible swelling in the neck, difficulty swallowing or a persistent feeling of tightness around the throat.

Heart Rate and Digestive Changes
Hypothyroidism is commonly associated with a slow heart rate, constipation and bloating, whereas hyperthyroidism may cause a rapid heartbeat, frequent bowel movements and increased hunger. Medical experts emphasise that thyroid disorders are common and can usually be managed effectively if detected early. They advise individuals experiencing persistent symptoms to seek medical evaluation rather than dismissing them as routine stress or fatigue.

SCIENCE & Technology

Govt Scans WhatsApp Usernames Over Scam Fears

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The Central Government is set to examine WhatsApp's upcoming username feature amid concerns that it could be misused for online fraud, impersonation and other cybercrimes.

According to sources, officials will assess whether the new feature has adequate privacy and security safeguards before or during its rollout in India. If any shortcomings or compliance issues are identified, parent company Meta may be asked to provide clarifications or take corrective measures.

The username feature will allow users to connect on WhatsApp without sharing their mobile phone numbers, enhancing privacy, particularly while interacting with strangers or in group chats.

However, authorities are concerned that concealing phone numbers could make it more difficult to trace fraudsters and investigate cybercrime.

The government's review comes amid a sharp rise in digital fraud and online financial scams across the country. Officials are expected to evaluate how the new system balances user privacy with accountability.

Meta has said the feature is optional, allowing users to create, change or delete their usernames at any time. Usernames can be up to 35 characters long, while certain names associated with public figures and celebrities will be reserved to prevent impersonation.

The company also said it is introducing anti-impersonation measures, including optional numeric username identifiers to help verify identities. The feature will be rolled out gradually, initially through the mobile app, while end-to-end encryption for messages will remain unchanged.

Probe Flags ₹285-Crore CIMS Cost Escalation

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A high-level inquiry headed by the Principal Secretary of the Karnataka Public Works Department (PWD) has concluded that additional works carried out during the construction of the Chikkaballapur Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS), allegedly on the directions of then Health Minister Dr K. Sudhakar, imposed an additional financial burden of ₹285 crore on the State Government.

According to the 5.134-page investigation report, the original project estimate of ₹525 crore was revised to ₹810 crore after the inclusion of additional components, including nearly 14,947 sq. m of extra construction. The report states that statutory payments such as tender premium, price adjustment and GST, along with new facilities including a skill development centre, kitchen, laundry and cafeteria, contributed to



Dr K. Sudhakar has not issued any official response to the inquiry report so far. His version, if any, was not included in the findings released by the PWD Principal Secretary-led committee.

the cost escalation.

The inquiry also found that the tender process contained restrictive conditions that limited competition and discouraged wider participation by contractors, thereby benefiting a select group of bidders. Only three firms participated in the tender.

The report notes that many additional works were approved following review meetings chaired by the then Health Minister and subsequent recommendations by departmental committees.

It further states that while the revised estimate received approvals from technical and tender scrutiny committees, the additional works resulted in a substantial increase in project cost.

Based on similar technical reports covering the medical college projects at Chikkaballapur, Haveri, Yadgir and Chikkamagaluru, the Medical Education Department has already ordered the preparation of charge sheets and appointed a retired district judge to examine responsibility and recommend disciplinary action against officials allegedly involved in procedural violations and unauthorised expenditure.

Rice gets costlier again

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Rice prices in Karnataka have risen again due to rainfall deficit and raw material shortages, with retail prices expected to increase by ₹15-₹20 per kg after recent wholesale hikes. Traders said common rice has gone up by ₹5 per kg and premium varieties by up to ₹10 per kg, with further price revision likely in the second week of July.

Wholesale prices have also increased by ₹130-₹260 per quintal, while poor monsoon and reduced paddy output have tightened supply. Export activity and rerouting of rice shipments are also contributing to the domestic shortage and rising consumer burden.

Consumers across Karnataka are likely to feel the pinch as prices continue to trend upward amid supply constraints.

Muniraju Birthday Celebrated



► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The birthday of H.K. Muniraju, Treasurer of the Hagaduru Shri Rama Youth and Farmers Association, was celebrated with enthusiasm in Bengaluru.

On the occasion, several local leaders, friends and well-wishers felicitated him and extended their greetings. Those present included Association President H.K. Narayanaswamy, former municipal councillor H.E. Srinivas, Manju Wines S. Manjunatha Gowda, Revenue Inspector and Director of the GBA-Corporation Employees Welfare Association H.B. Harish, H.E. Muniyappa, Principal M. Mallesh, builder Ashok Reddy, Bharani Electrical owner Raghu J., and other local residents including Janardhan, H.M. Manjunath, T. Babanna and L. Vijaykumar.

Muniraju, known for his deep devotion and strong interest in agriculture, was honoured by the gathering. As he completed 50 years of age, the celebration included cake cutting and distribution of sweets by local leaders, supporters and friends. Muniraju has been serving as Treasurer of the Hagaduru Shri Rama Youth and Farmers Association, contributing actively to community and cultural activities in the region.

KHANDRE ORDERS O&M TENDERS FOR WATER UNITS

Rural Development Minister Eshwar B. Khandre has directed strict measures to ensure proper operation and maintenance of drinking water purification units, warning officials against sub-leasing and delays in Jal Jeevan Mission projects, while also emphasising completion deadlines, fair water distribution, and scrutiny of encroachments on government "B-kharab" land.

► **Vikrama Vahini | Davanagere**

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar B. Khandre has directed officials to invite tenders only for the operation and maintenance of drinking water purification units and take strict action against sub-leasing, stating that such practices are not permitted.

Chairing a review meeting at the Zilla Panchayat office, he warned that officials failing to ensure timely completion of drinking water projects under Jal Jeevan Mission would face action or be replaced.

Khandre said the Centre's condition of releasing funds only after states contribute their share is unjust, adding that Karnataka has launched a revised rural employment scheme due to increased financial burden.

He said the issue would be

discussed in the upcoming Cabinet meeting.

He also instructed officials to personally verify "Har Ghar Jal" implementation and ensure uninterrupted water supply, warning against misuse of connections leading to inequitable distribution.



On encroachments, he said "B-kharab" land belongs to the government and no unauthorised e-swathu should be issued for such properties.

He, however, added that genuine long-term occupants could be considered after verification.

The Minister also stressed that all single-village and multi-village drinking water projects must be completed by year-end, and sought reports on water usage trends in villages where 24x7 supply has been introduced.

KPSC chief faces misuse charge

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi has sought a high-level probe into alleged misuse of office and nepotism by the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) chairman, writing to the Chief Minister and Governor.

He has alleged irregularities in recruitment of Industrial Extension Officers, including claims of favoritism in the selection process involving the chairman's daughters.

Joshi has urged a transparent investigation, stating the issue has raised serious concerns over the credibility of KPSC.

Illegal Seed Stocks Seized in Hassan, Tumakuru

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Agriculture Department officials have seized illegal stocks of seeds and micronutrients during inspections at fertilizer and seed sales outlets in Hassan and Tumakuru districts, Karnataka.

In Hassan district's Salagame hobli, officials raided Karthik Traders in Kondajakoppalu and confiscated around 180 kg of hybrid maize seeds valued at approximately ₹85,000, which were allegedly stored without permission in violation of the Seeds Act, 1966.

In a separate action in Tumakuru district's Madhugiri taluk, officials seized about 22 litres of micronutrient



mixture worth nearly ₹86,000 from Hasiru Hi-Tech Seeds Centre in Midigeshi hobli for being stored without valid authorization.

The Agriculture Department said strict action will be taken against

dealers found violating seed and fertiliser storage and distribution norms, and inspections will continue across the state to curb illegal practices, violations will attract strict action.

RSS Belagavi Meet on Census, Expansion

► **Vikrama Vahini | Belagavi**

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will discuss the upcoming Census and its organisational expansion plans at its All India Prant Pracharak Baithak scheduled in Belagavi from July 10 to 12, according to an official statement on Wednesday.

The meeting will bring together senior RSS leaders, including

Sarsangchalak Dr Mohan Bhagwat, to review shakha expansion, training programmes and centenary year initiatives.

The three-day conclave will also assess the implementation of organisational plans at the grassroots level and chart the next phase of expansion across the country. Discussions will include contemporary

issues such as the Census, along with reviews of training camps held between April and June following the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha meeting.

RSS functionaries from across regions and prants are expected to participate, with the organisation also finalising its roadmap for centenary events continuing until Vijaydashami

on October 20. Dr Bhagwat is scheduled to arrive in Belagavi on July 6 ahead of the meeting.

Key organisational decisions on expansion strategy are expected to be taken during the meeting.

Representatives from various regions will also share field-level feedback and implementation experiences.

ENTERTAINMENT

IMDb's 2026 Most-Awaited Films Revealed

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

IMDb has released its list of the most-anticipated films of 2026 based on global pageviews, with "Ramayana: Part 1" emerging as the most awaited film worldwide. The ranking is based on data from over 250 million monthly IMDb users between January 1 and June 28, 2026.

The list highlights several major Indian and international releases expected to dominate theatres in the second half of the year, including big-budget action films, sequels and franchise expansions.

Ramayana: Part 1 Leads the Chart

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and backed by producer Namit Malhotra, Ramayana: Part 1 tops the list. The epic features Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi, Sunny Deol and Yash in key roles. The film is the first installment of a two-part mythological saga.

Spy Thriller 'Alpha' at No. 2

The second position is held by Alia Bhatt's "Alpha", a spy thriller scheduled for release on July 3, 2026. The film is part of the YRF Spy Universe, which includes blockbuster franchises like Pathaan, Tiger and War.

Toxic and King Follow

At number three is "Toxic", starring Yash, directed by Geetu Mohandas, featuring Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth. The film is scheduled for release on August 26, 2026.

The fourth spot is occupied by Shah Rukh Khan's "King", marking his big-screen comeback after three years. Directed by Siddharth Anand, the film features a large ensemble cast including Deepika Padukone, Jaideep Ahlawat, Arshad Warsi, Suhana Khan, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff and Rani Mukerji, and is expected to release during Christmas 2026.

Comedy, Thriller and Franchise Sequels

At number five is "Dhamaal 4", starring Ajay Devgn, Riteish Deshmukh, Arshad Warsi and Jaaved Jaaferi, among others, scheduled for July 3, 2026.



"Drishyam 3", another Ajay Devgn-led film, ranks sixth, continuing the popular crime thriller franchise.

Regional Cinema and Other Titles

The list also features Tamil film "Vishwanth and Sons" starring Suriya at number seven, and "Mirzapur: The Movie" at number eight, bringing back the popular OTT franchise to the big screen with Pankaj Tripathi, Ali Fazal, Divyendu Sharma and others.

At number nine is "Haiwaan", featuring Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, where Saif plays a visually impaired character. The tenth spot is occupied by "Eetha", starring Shraddha Kapoor, based on the life of folk artist Vithabai Bhau Mang Narayangaonkar.

Other Expected Releases

Other anticipated titles include Awarapan 2, Ikka, Khalifa, I'm Game, Arasan, Idhayam Murali, Sigma, Ranabaali, Shakti Shalini, and Vvan: Force of the Forest, among others.

Industry observers say the list reflects strong global interest in Indian cinema franchises, mythological epics and star-driven projects, which are expected to dominate box office trends in 2026.

Ram Charan's 'Peddi' Set for OTT Release

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor's sports drama "Peddi" is reportedly gearing up for its digital release on Netflix, following its theatrical run earlier this year. The film, which was released in cinemas on June 4, received mixed reviews from critics but managed a strong performance at the box office.

According to industry reports, the film is expected to begin streaming on Netflix from July 16, 2026, in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada languages. The Hindi version is likely to follow on July 30, after the standard eight-week theatrical window. However, the makers and the streaming platform have not yet made an official announcement.

Cast and Crew

Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, Peddi features Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor in lead roles, along with Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyendu, Boman Irani, Ravi Kishan, Viji Chandrasekhar, Rajatava Dutta, Satya, John Vijay, and Ajay Ghosh, among others. The

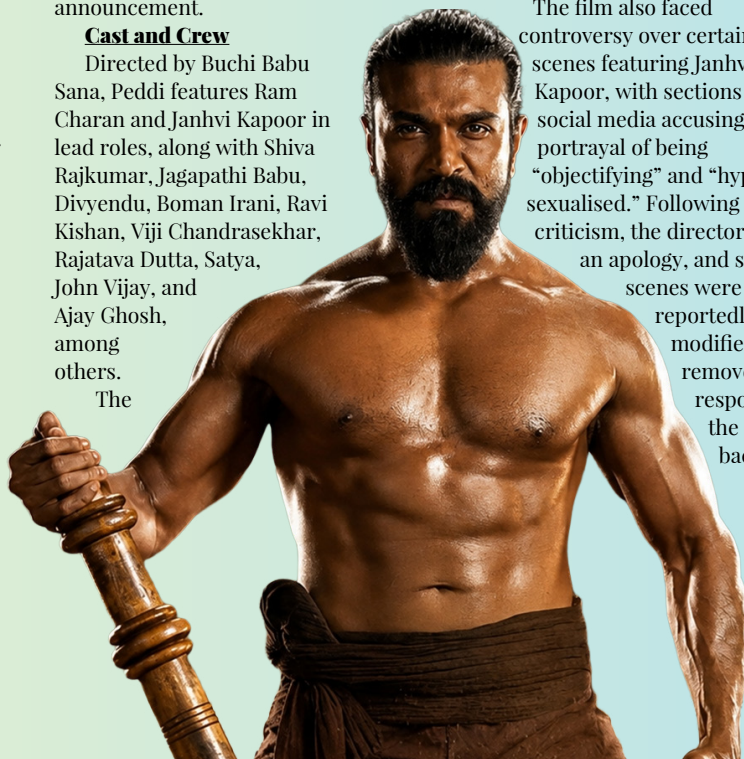
sports drama follows the journey of a cricketer who initially plays for any team that pays him. His life takes a transformative turn when he meets Appalasu, a villager striving for recognition for his community. Under the mentorship of wrestling coach Gournaidu, he evolves into a disciplined and committed sportsman.

Box Office Performance

Peddi has reportedly earned around ₹336.85 crore worldwide, including approximately ₹240.14 crore net in India, ₹283.95 crore gross domestically, and ₹52.90 crore from overseas markets, making it a commercial success despite mixed critical reception.

Controversy

The film also faced controversy over certain scenes featuring Janhvi Kapoor, with sections of social media accusing the portrayal of being "objectifying" and "hyper-sexualised." Following public criticism, the director issued an apology, and some scenes were reportedly modified or removed in response to the backlash.



BUSINESS

Russia Tops as India's Crude Imports Hit Record



► **Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata**

India imported a record 4.93 million barrels of crude oil per day (bpd) in June, with Russia retaining its position as the country's largest supplier, according to data released by energy intelligence firm Kpler.

Russian crude accounted for nearly 53 per cent of India's total imports during the month, with supplies rising to about 2.6 million bpd, up from 2.16 million bpd in May.

Despite geopolitical tensions and disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, India maintained strong crude imports by diversifying its sourcing strategy, Kpler analysts said.

Analyst Sumit Ritolia said India's proactive procurement approach over the past few months has ensured stable crude supplies. He added that Indian refiners have already secured most of their crude requirements through August, placing the country in a comfortable position unless global oil supplies face major disruptions.

India, the world's third-largest crude oil importer, meets nearly 88-90 per cent of its oil demand through imports due to limited domestic production. Russian oil has remained a key source for Indian refiners since the Russia-Ukraine conflict, largely because it has been available at discounted prices compared with global benchmarks. The country's import basket, analysts noted, remains diversified and well-balanced, enabling refiners to optimise procurement while ensuring energy security.

The sustained flow of discounted Russian crude has helped Indian refiners manage input costs and maintain stable fuel supplies amid global market volatility. Industry experts expect India to continue diversifying its import sources while prioritising energy security and cost efficiency.

SPORTS

Harmanpreet Captaincy Under Scanner

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Former India women's captain Diana Edulji has called for leadership changes in the Indian women's cricket team following their exit from the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, urging the BCCI to move beyond Harmanpreet Kaur as skipper.

India fail to reach semifinals

India were knocked out after a heavy defeat to Australia in their final group-stage match, missing out on a place in the semifinals. The loss has triggered renewed debate over team strategy and leadership.

Edulji calls for tough decisions

Edulji, a former member of the BCCI Committee of Administrators, criticised the team's approach and suggested that India should consider a new captain while allowing Harmanpreet to continue as a player. She also indicated that head coach Amol Mazumdar should be part of the review.

"Need better tactical leadership"

Speaking to Cricbuzz, Edulji said the team needs stronger tactical thinking, especially in areas like bowling changes and match strategy. She added that the current leadership appears to have "stagnated" and fresh ideas are needed.

Comparison with men's cricket

Edulji cited recent captaincy changes in men's cricket, including the replacement of Suryakumar Yadav with Shreyas Iyer, questioning why similar bold decisions cannot be made in women's cricket.

Performance in focus

Harmanpreet Kaur scored 141 runs in five matches during the tournament, including a half-century in the must-win clash against Australia. However, India still fell short as Australia secured a comfortable victory to eliminate them from the competition.

Sabalenka Survives, Osaka Advances

> Vikrama Vahini | London

World no.1 Aryna Sabalenka battled past American McCartney Kessler 6-1, 7-6(9) in a tense second-round match at Wimbledon 2026 on Wednesday, surviving a strong comeback attempt that pushed the contest deep into a tie-break.

Sabalenka started in dominant fashion but was forced to dig deep after Kessler surged to a 5-2 lead in the second set.

Despite struggling briefly with a thigh issue, the four-time Grand Slam champion held her nerve to seal victory in one hour and 39 minutes, extending her streak of successive Grand Slam quarterfinal appearances. She will now face Jelena Ostapenko in the third round.

In another second-round match, Japanese star Naomi Osaka progressed to the third round after defeating Anastasia Gasanova 6-3, 6-2 in straight sets, keeping her hopes alive of surpassing her previous best Wimbledon performance.

Sabalenka showed strong mental resilience to close out the match under pressure. Osaka delivered a commanding performance with a straight-sets win to advance confidently.

MEIL-Analog Pact Ushers in AI-Driven Future

> Vikrama Vahini | Hyderabad

In a major step towards integrating advanced artificial intelligence with real-world infrastructure, Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Ltd. (MEIL) and UAE-based Analog have entered into a strategic partnership to introduce Physical Intelligence technology in India.

The collaboration aims to deploy next-generation AI systems capable of sensing, understanding and interacting with the physical world, enabling machines to learn continuously from experience and make autonomous decisions beyond conventional programming.

Focus on Smart Infrastructure

Under the partnership, MEIL will contribute its extensive infrastructure expertise and nationwide project execution capabilities, while Analog will provide advanced AI and Physical Intelligence technologies.

The two companies will collaborate on projects involving smart infrastructure, transportation, industrial systems, public safety, smart cities and intelligent operations.

Strengthening India-UAE Technology Ties

The agreement is expected to deepen technology cooperation between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) while accelerating the adoption of intelligent infrastructure solutions across the country.

MEIL Managing Director P.V. Krishna Reddy said future infrastructure must be intelligent, interconnected and adaptive.



He described the partnership as a significant milestone in bringing Physical Intelligence technology to India.

Analog Founder and Chief Executive Officer Alex Kipman said India is one of the world's most important technology markets, with exceptional engineering talent and strong infrastructure ambitions.

He said the partnership with MEIL will help build the next generation of intelligent systems for real-world applications.

Key Areas of Collaboration

The partnership will focus on developing intelligent infrastructure, smart city solutions, advanced sensor technologies, operational intelligence, robotics, spatial computing, industrial automation, public safety systems and AI-powered real-world applications.

The companies also announced plans for long-term investments in technology skill

Physical Intelligence to Shape India's Future: MEIL MD

Physical Intelligence will play a transformative role in India's future development by making infrastructure smarter, safer and more efficient. P.V. Krishna Reddy, Managing Director of Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Ltd. (MEIL), said on the occasion of the company's strategic partnership with UAE-based technology firm Analog.

Describing India as "not just a country but a continent" because of its vast population and scale, Krishna Reddy said the next phase of infrastructure development would go beyond steel and cement to incorporate intelligence-driven technologies.

He said the integration of Physical Intelligence with Artificial Intelligence development, talent creation and innovation ecosystems in India.

About the Companies

Hyderabad-headquartered MEIL is one of India's leading engineering and infrastructure companies, executing large-scale projects in irrigation, power, transportation, hydrocarbons and manufacturing in India and abroad for over three decades.

(AI) would usher in a new era of innovation across multiple sectors.

He noted that while AI can analyse and identify traffic congestion, Physical Intelligence can help manage traffic in real time, reduce congestion and prevent accidents through intelligent decision-making and adaptive systems.

Krishna Reddy said the technology has applications across power, irrigation, drinking water supply, electric vehicles and other critical infrastructure sectors, adding that the partnership between MEIL and Analog would pave the way for significant technological advancements and deliver long-term benefits to India's infrastructure and public services.



Abu Dhabi-based Analog, backed by technology group G42, develops Physical Intelligence platforms that connect people, places and assets through intelligent networks.

The company works with governments and global enterprises on smart cities, autonomous infrastructure, robotics and immersive technologies.

PM Reviews Monsoon Plan

Cabinet Assesses Monsoon Risks, Issues Preparedness Directive

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the country's monsoon preparedness amid concerns over the impact of El Niño and the possibility of below-normal rainfall in July, officials said on Wednesday.

During a Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister directed all concerned ministries to remain on high alert and ensure close

coordination with state governments to manage both excess rainfall and drought-like conditions.

Ten key ministries have been assigned specific responsibilities to strengthen preparedness and response mechanisms.

Officials informed the

meeting that changing weather patterns linked to El Niño could significantly affect rainfall distribution across the country.

The government also reviewed potential challenges such as increased electricity demand and directed authorities to ensure maintenance of power infrastructure to

prevent disruptions.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast rainfall below 94% of the long-period average for July, following India's fifth-driest June since 1901, which recorded a 39.8% deficit. Authorities said some regions may face deficient rainfall while others could witness heavy downpours, raising concerns of both drought-like situations and flooding risks.



SOMANNA BACKS PARTY LINE AMID BJP LEADERSHIP BUZZ

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Railways V Somanna on Wednesday said he would abide by any decision of the BJP central leadership amid speculation over a possible change in the party's Karnataka unit leadership following recent cross-voting in the Legislative Council polls.

Describing himself as a "disciplined soldier" of the party, he said he has always accepted decisions taken by the leadership and will continue to do so in the future.

Somanna said he had no personal ambitions and would take up any responsibility assigned to him by the party high command.

His remarks come amid reports that the BJP central leadership is reviewing the state unit's functioning after internal dissent and cross-voting by MLAs raised concerns over organisational stability.

Party sources have named Somanna among the possible contenders for the post of Karnataka BJP president, though no official announcement has been made.



LPG Commercial Price Cut ₹183.50

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Commercial LPG cylinder prices have been reduced by ₹183.50 across major cities from Wednesday, marking the first cut in 2026 and bringing relief to hotels, restaurants and catering businesses dependent on bulk fuel consumption.

Following the revision by oil marketing companies, the price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder in Delhi has fallen to ₹2,930 from ₹3,113.50 in June, with similar reductions reported in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

However, domestic LPG prices remain unchanged. The 14.2-kg household

continues to cost ₹942 in Delhi, ₹941.50 in Mumbai, ₹968 in Kolkata and ₹957.50 in Chennai.

The price reduction follows a period of multiple hikes earlier this year driven by geopolitical tensions in West Asia, which had pushed up global crude oil prices and disrupted supply chains.

With easing tensions and improved movement of oil and gas shipments, international energy markets have stabilised, leading to the latest correction in commercial LPG rates. Industry experts say the cut may ease operating costs for commercial establishments, though household consumers will see no immediate relief.



Coastal Karnataka on Red Alert as Heavy Rains Continue

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread monsoon activity across Karnataka until July 7, issuing a Red Alert for coastal districts and warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and strong winds in several regions.

Red Alert for Coastal Karnataka

The IMD has issued a Red Alert for Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts, where extremely heavy rainfall is likely. Wind speeds of 30-40 kmph are also expected, increasing the risk of waterlogging, tree fall and local disruptions. An Orange Alert has been issued for

parts of South Interior Karnataka on July 5.

Heavy Rain Likely in Interior Districts

Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected in several districts, including Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mysuru, Mandya, Chamaraajanagar, Ballari, Koppal, Bagalkote,

Vijayanagara and Raichur. Thunderstorms and gusty winds are also likely in parts of the Malnad region.

Cloudy Skies for Bengaluru

Bengaluru is expected to see generally cloudy skies with light rainfall and gusty winds over the next 24 hours. Temperatures are likely to

remain moderate due to persistent cloud cover, though authorities have advised residents to stay alert as monsoon conditions remain active across the state.



Bangladesh Visa Rush to India Surges

India's resumption of tourist visas for Bangladeshi nationals has triggered a massive surge in demand, with over 1.40 lakh applications filed within 24 hours. Long queues were seen at visa centres across major Bangladeshi cities as people rushed to apply.

> Vikrama Vahini | Dhaka

India's decision to resume tourist visa services for Bangladeshi nationals after a two-year suspension has triggered a massive surge in applications, with over 1.40 lakh submissions recorded within just 24 hours of reopening.

The reopening of visa services has led to long queues at Indian visa centres across Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna, reflecting strong demand despite strained diplomatic relations between the two neighbours.

India had suspended tourist visas following political unrest in Bangladesh in August 2024.



However, medical visas were continued on a limited basis during the suspension period. Officials and travel operators say the primary

reason for the rush remains access to affordable healthcare in India. Thousands of Bangladeshi citizens travel annually to cities such as Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Guwahati for specialised treatment, along with visits for shopping and family reunions.

Analysts note that geographical proximity, cultural ties and lower travel costs make India a preferred destination compared to other countries in the region. The resumption of tourist visas is also expected to boost business for hospitals, hotels, and travel agencies in India, particularly in border and metro cities that regularly receive Bangladeshi visitors.

RSS Declines Reply on Kharge's Letter

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has decided not to respond to Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge's letter regarding its registration issue, sources said. The decision was reportedly taken at an RSS meeting held on Wednesday. RSS leaders maintained that the issue has been repeatedly clarified by Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat and other functionaries in the past, and further engagement could unnecessarily prolong the controversy.

The organisation also conveyed to BJP leaders that no immediate response would be issued, stating that any reply would depend on future legal or official action by the government. The organisation added that it would continue to maintain its existing position on the matter unless there is a formal legal requirement or government directive necessitating a response.

Belgium High-Rise Fire: Several Feared Dead

> Vikrama Vahini | Antwerp, Belgium

A massive fire broke out in a 10-storey apartment building in Antwerp city, raising fears of multiple fatalities. The blaze reportedly started on the 8th floor and quickly spread to other parts of the building.

The incident occurred in the Linkerover area, where the residential complex houses over 200 people. Firefighters, police, and emergency services rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations to evacuate residents safely.

Authorities said the intensity of the fire made firefighting efforts extremely challenging, with special drone units also deployed to assist in the operation.

Dense smoke engulfed the surrounding area, prompting officials to advise nearby residents to keep doors and windows closed and switch off ventilation systems if necessary. The exact number of casualties and the cause of the fire are yet to be confirmed, officials said.