



Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon reveals that she opted for egg freezing to preserve her future motherhood options. She said she took the decision during the making of her National Award-winning film 'Mimi' when she was gaining weight for the role.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said the Karnataka Government is focusing on creating employment opportunities and improving education in rural areas to prevent migration to cities.



INSIDE

Good morning

May your day be Beautiful, Peaceful, Happy, Healthy, Abundant and filled with the Love.

BRIEFS

Rain Alert Closes Schools

> Vikrama Vahini | Mangaluru
The Dakshina Kannada district administration has declared a holiday for all schools and pre-university colleges on July 8 in view of the forecast of heavy rainfall in the region.

Deputy Commissioner has issued an official notification announcing the holiday as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of students amid the weather alert.

The district administration has also advised tourists and residents to avoid visiting riversides, beaches and hilly areas due to the possibility of heavy rains and related risks.

Officials have urged people to remain cautious and follow safety guidelines issued by the authorities during the rainy conditions. **PG3**

Truck Strike Threat From August 1



> Vikrama Vahini | B'luru
The South India Truck Owners' Association has warned of an indefinite strike from August 1 if the government fails to address their demands related to the transport and goods sector.

Association General Secretary G.R. Shanmugappa said the government must resolve issues, including the removal of border check posts and withdrawal of mandatory GPS panic buttons for goods vehicles, by July 30. If their demands are not met, truck operations will be suspended across Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.

He said around 7 lakh trucks in Karnataka and nearly 24 lakh trucks across South India are expected to participate in the strike.

HC Plea Against Parallel SIR

> Vikrama Vahini | B'luru
A petition has been filed before the Karnataka High Court challenging the State Election Commission's decision to conduct a parallel Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in select wards under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) while the Election Commission of India is already carrying out a nationwide revision exercise.

The petition, filed by Vivek and others, seeks the quashing of the State Election Commission's June 19 order directing a separate voter list revision in certain GBA wards.

The matter was mentioned before the single-judge Bench of Justice Suraj Govindaraj by advocate Venkatesh Dalwai, who requested an urgent hearing. The court agreed to hear the petition on Wednesday.

IIM B'luru Expands Global Footprint with Indonesia Campus

> Vikrama Vahini | Jakarta

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the prestigious Indian Institute of Management Bangalore will establish an overseas campus in Indonesia, a move aimed at strengthening educational ties between the two countries and benefiting students across the ASEAN region.

The announcement was made during a joint statement with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta. PM Modi said the new campus would provide greater opportunities for youth in the ASEAN region and mark a significant milestone in India-Indonesia cooperation.

The proposed campus will begin with short-term executive education programmes in the first phase, followed by degree-granting courses in later stages. The initiative follows an agreement between IIM Bangalore and the Singhasari Special



Economic Zone for setting up the campus. IIM Bangalore said the move will promote

IIMB Expands to Indonesia

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- * The campus will initially offer executive education programmes, followed by degree courses in later phases.
- * The project aims to promote global business education, innovation, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- * The move is part of growing strategic cooperation between India and Indonesia in education, technology and startups.

global business education, create employment opportunities and strengthen collaboration between India and Indonesia. The partnership is also expected to support innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership development in the Global South.

5 Killed in Wayanad Landslide



> Vikrama Vahini | Wayanad

Three people were killed and several others went missing after a landslide struck Kalladi in Kerala's Wayanad district on Tuesday. Police have registered a case of unnatural death and launched an investigation into the incident.

According to the FIR, the landslide occurred between 11 am and 11.30 am near Meenakshi Bridge, where work on the Anakkampoyil-Kalladi-Meppadi twin tunnel road project was underway. The collapse of soil from the upper portion of the tunnel slope triggered the landslide, officials said.

Kerala Health Minister K. Muraliedharan confirmed five deaths and said rescue operations were being carried out with the support of police, fire personnel, disaster management teams and district authorities. Several injured

people were admitted to nearby hospitals.

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan held an emergency meeting and directed officials to speed up rescue efforts. Ministers T. Siddique and A.P. Anil Kumar were asked to reach Wayanad and monitor the situation.

Minister Alleges Construction Lapse

Kerala Minister T. Siddique termed the incident a "man-made disaster", alleging that lapses at the construction site contributed to the landslide. He said the district administration had earlier warned about the possibility of soil collapse near the site. The incident has revived memories of the deadly Wayanad landslides of 2024, which claimed hundreds of lives. Authorities have intensified search and rescue operations while investigations continue to determine the exact cause of the latest tragedy.

HC Rejects Choudareddy's Plea

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has refused to quash the FIR registered against former minister Choudareddy and former Chintamani municipal commissioner B.H. Narayanappa in an alleged government land encroachment case.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna's single-judge bench observed that land grabbing by persons holding political power severely affects public trust in governance. The court said the allegations against the accused were serious and required a detailed investigation.

The petitioners had sought cancellation of the Lokayukta FIR, alleging that it was wrongly registered against them. Rejecting the plea, the court directed the Lokayukta police to complete the investigation within six months.

The case relates to allegations of illegal transfer and sale of 1.19 guntas of government kharab land in Kannampalli village of Chintamani taluk. The land was allegedly converted into sites and sold after being transferred in violation of rules.

The FIR was registered in 2017 under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Indian Penal Code based on a complaint alleging misuse of official power by officials and others.

The court said stopping the probe at this stage could prevent the truth from emerging and allowed the investigation to proceed.

Hormuz Tensions Rise After Tanker Attacks

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Security tensions have resurfaced in the Strait of Hormuz after three tankers were attacked within 24 hours, threatening efforts to restore normal shipping operations following the recent ceasefire between Iran and the United States.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations Centre (UKMTO) reported that multiple vessels came under attack in the strategic waterway, one of the world's busiest shipping routes for oil and gas transportation.

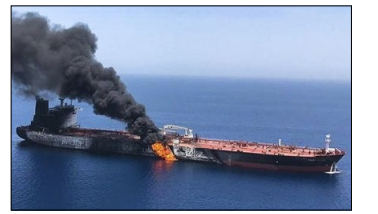
Tanker Hit by Drone, Vessel Catches Fire

According to British military officials, one tanker was attacked by a drone while sailing near the coast of Oman on Tuesday. Another vessel reportedly caught fire after being struck during the attack.

Two other tankers were also targeted, with authorities confirming that the ships suffered damage. No casualties were reported, and at least one vessel continued its journey after the incident.

Iran Responds to Maritime Incident

Iranian state television said a liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker was attacked after allegedly ignoring warnings issued by Iranian



authorities. However, Tehran stopped short of officially claiming responsibility for the attack.

Iran has repeatedly warned that vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz must follow routes approved by it, claiming that alternative routes near the Omani coast could pose security risks.

Global Trade Faces New Uncertainty

The latest attacks have increased concerns over the stability of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of the world's energy shipments passes.

The United States is reportedly seeking renewed negotiations with Iran to reopen the strategic waterway, address nuclear concerns and achieve a long-term resolution to the conflict.

The developments come amid continued tensions in the region following the recent Iran-US conflict and efforts by countries to restore stability in global energy markets. **PG2**

BJP ATTACKS KHARGE OVER RSS MARCH ROW

BJP has accused Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge of double standards over mandatory permission for RSS marches, sparking a fresh political row with the Congress government.

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The political war between the BJP and the Congress government in Karnataka has intensified over the issue of permission for RSS route marches, with the BJP accusing Home Minister Priyank Kharge of adopting a double standard.

Reacting to Kharge's statement that permission would be mandatory for RSS processions as long as he remains the Home Minister, the BJP alleged that the

government was restricting patriotic organisations while allegedly ignoring illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators.

In a post on its official X handle, the Karnataka BJP questioned why restrictions were being imposed on RSS marches while, according to the party, illegal migrants were being provided facilities and voting rights. The BJP accused the Congress government of pursuing "vote bank politics".



Kharge had earlier stated that any RSS procession in the state would require prior permission and that legal procedures must be followed. He also criticised the BJP for opposing his remarks on RSS activities.

The BJP has now challenged the Home Minister to take strict action against alleged illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the state. The controversy has widened the political debate between the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP over security, law enforcement and ideological issues.

Three Officials Sacked Over Nicobar File Leak

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Centre has removed three senior officials from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change over allegations of leaking confidential files related to the Great Nicobar mega project.

The Prime Minister's Office reportedly took the matter seriously after intelligence inputs indicated that environmental reports linked to the project were leaked from the personal staff of Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav. Amar Singh, a 2010-batch IAS officer serving as the Private Secretary to the Environment Minister, has been relieved of his duties with immediate effect on administrative grounds and sent back to his parent department, the Revenue Department. **PG2**

NDA Flags SIR Irregularities to ECI

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

A delegation of the NDA, led by Union Ministers H.D. Kumaraswamy and Pralhad Joshi, on Tuesday met Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and submitted a complaint alleging serious irregularities in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka.

The delegation alleged that the Congress government was misusing the administrative machinery to manipulate voter rolls and retain ineligible names. It also submitted documentary and video evidence in support of its claims.

Speaking after the meeting, Kumaraswamy said the Chief Election Commissioner had assured the delegation that the complaint would be examined in detail.

He also said the Election Commission had already deputed observers to Karnataka and sought the appointment of an officer from outside the state to oversee the SIR process.

The NDA urged the Commission to ensure that the voter list revision is conducted in a fair, transparent and impartial manner in accordance



Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and H.D. Kumaraswamy, along with Union Ministers Shobha Karandlaje and V. Somanna, Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Arvind Bellad, and other NDA leaders, meet Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in New Delhi on Tuesday and submit a memorandum, along with documentary evidence and a pen drive, alleging irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka. The delegation urged the Election Commission to temporarily halt the ongoing SIR process, appoint central observers from outside the state for every district, and ensure a fair, transparent and impartial revision of electoral rolls.

with Election Commission guidelines.

Several senior BJP and JD(S) leaders, including

Union Ministers V. Somanna and Shobha Karandlaje,

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka, and other MPs and

MLAs, were part of the delegation.

The delegation also alleged that the ongoing SIR exercise was being conducted in violation of Election Commission guidelines, claiming that revision work was being carried out at community halls, religious places and other locations instead of through the prescribed door-to-door verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

It urged the Commission to order corrective measures and ensure strict adherence to the established procedures.

The NDA further demanded the removal of all ineligible and fraudulent names from the electoral rolls after proper verification, alleging that fake voter identities had been created in certain cases.

The leaders said maintaining the integrity of the electoral rolls was essential to ensuring free and fair elections and safeguarding public confidence in the democratic process.

The NDA delegation also requested the Election Commission to take strict action against officials and political workers allegedly involved in violations of the SIR guidelines.

Editorial

ACT BEFORE DRY SPELL STRIKES

The shadow of an imminent drought looms large over Karnataka, particularly across the plains of the southern interior region. As July progresses, the persistent lack of rainfall has pushed the agricultural sector to the brink of a major crisis. If the dry spell continues through this crucial month, cultivating primary and staple crops will become virtually impossible for farmers who rely heavily on monsoon cycles. This looming agrarian distress is not just a localized rural problem; it threatens the food security of the entire state and jeopardizes the livelihoods of millions who depend directly on agricultural yields.

Beyond the immediate impact on farming, this severe rain deficit carries profound economic implications for the state capital. The surrounding districts, which serve as the primary vegetable and perishable food hub for Bengaluru, are facing acute water scarcity. Any disruption in this vital supply chain will inevitably trigger a sharp spike in inflation, directly impacting the state's economy. Furthermore, if the drinking water crisis escalates in these peripheral areas and the capital itself, it will severely dent Bengaluru's global reputation as India's "Silicon Valley," potentially deterring future investments and tech talent. Experts also warn that declining reservoir levels and depleting groundwater could affect industrial production, power generation, and urban infrastructure if timely preventive measures are not implemented.

Given the gravity of this impending crisis, the state government must shift from a reactive stance to immediate, proactive drought management. The administration must prioritize safeguarding drinking water supplies to prevent urban and rural distress. On a long-term note, the government must accelerate and complete the pending works of the Yettinahole and Cauvery water supply projects. Finalizing these crucial infrastructure pipelines is the only sustainable remedy to secure the state's water future. Authorities must also intensify rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, watershed development, and efficient irrigation programmes to strengthen climate resilience. The time to act is now, before a seasonal scarcity snowballs into a full-blown humanitarian and economic disaster.

-Editor

RUDRAKSHAM HOSTS GRAND KERALA ART DEBUT

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Rudraksham Centre for Arts and Culture, a registered non-profit cultural society based in Vidyanayapura, celebrated a significant milestone by hosting the grand Arangettam (formal debut performance) of traditional Kerala art forms, including Chenda Melam, Ashtapadi, and Idakka.

The event showcased the rich rhythmic heritage of Kerala through captivating performances that drew a large gathering of art enthusiasts from Vidyanayapura and neighbouring areas.

The highlight of the programme was the Panchari Melam performance, marking the formal debut of artists Ishaan Abhilash, Arun Kumar Sadasivan, Dr. Arun Bhanu Kuduvan, Rajesh P. Raj, Harshaskanda, Sreeram Puthanpura, T.V. Sudheer Mohan, and Sarosh Kumar Kayanadath.

The senior group presented a powerful Pandi Melam performance, featuring Abhilash Kunjappan, Mohan Kumar, Sreekesh, Umikrishnan Nair, Umesh K., Sasidharan Nair,



and Ramakrishna R., adding grandeur and energy to the celebrations.

The evening also witnessed the Idakka and Ashtapadi Arangettam performances by Anu Ashok Kumar, Smera Sudhakaran, Abhilash Kunjappan, Arun Kumar Sadasivan, Rajesh P. Raj, and Anil Kumar Vinayan, further enriching the cultural experience.

As part of the Guru Vandana ceremony, Rudraksham honoured eminent personalities for their contribution towards preserving and

promoting traditional art forms. The Guru Shiromani Puraskaram was conferred upon Shri Peruvanam Sankaranarayanan Marar, while the Acharya Ratna Puraskaram was presented to Shri Anilkumar Kombath and Shri Sarath S. Marar. The programme was graced by Smt. Meenakshi Byre Gowda, Smt. Lakshmi Hari, and Shri Hari. The organisers also expressed their gratitude to Dr. Jagadish, Secretary of Shri Vidya Ganapathi Temple, for his valuable support in making the event a success.

Three Officials Sacked Over Nicobar File Leak

From PG

The government has also suspended the minister's Additional Private Secretaries Ayush Sharan and Shailesh Kumar Singh. The Centre said the action was taken to improve administrative efficiency and ensure effective functioning of the department.

The Great Nicobar project has been under scrutiny due to concerns related to environmental impact and development activities in the ecologically sensitive region.

The action follows an alleged breach of confidentiality involving key project documents, with authorities continuing to examine the circumstances behind the reported leak. The Centre has maintained that strict measures will be taken to protect sensitive government information.

CM Unveils Rural Jobs, Education Push

Vikrama Vahini | Kalaburagi

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said the Karnataka Government is focusing on creating employment opportunities and improving education in rural areas to prevent migration to cities.

Addressing a press conference after a divisional-level progress review meeting in Kalaburagi, the Chief Minister said the government would encourage industries to establish units in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities by offering incentives, including 0.6 premium FAR and 2x FAR, to make industrial land more affordable. Necessary amendments will be introduced by the Urban Development Department.

2,000 CSR Schools Planned

To improve access to quality education in villages, Shivakumar announced that the government plans to establish around 2,000 CSR-supported schools at the gram panchayat level. Corporate companies will be encouraged to invest ₹10-15 crore each to build school infrastructure under their Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Yuva Setu for Private Employment

The Chief Minister said the government will launch the Yuva Setu programme as a private-sector employment exchange. Under the initiative, the Skill Development Department will train youth according to industry requirements, while companies will recruit candidates directly. Preference will be given to local youth, with the extent of local reservation to be decided in consultation with industry representatives.

No Political Interference in SIR

Referring to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Shivakumar said the State Government is committed to protecting voters' rights and has no intention of politicising the exercise.

He said the government would ensure the revision process is carried out strictly in accordance with Election Commission

guidelines. Booth Level Officers (BLOs) have been instructed to visit every household, while recognised political parties have been permitted to assist voters through Booth Level Agents (BLAs). The government has also challenged certain aspects of the SIR process before the court.

Water, Revenue and Welfare Initiatives

The Chief Minister said a task force has been formed to tackle drinking water shortages, and all RO water plants will be inspected to ensure water quality. He also announced an annual allocation of ₹5,000 crore for the development of the Kalyana Karnataka region.

He highlighted ongoing reforms in the Revenue Department, including the distribution of e-Khata, implementation of Podi and e-Swathu programmes, and efforts to convert villages into revenue villages.

Youth Associations



Family Attacked in Expressway Road Rage

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

A family travelling on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway was allegedly attacked by a group of miscreants following an argument over overtaking, in a shocking case of road rage near the Maddur flyover in Mandya district.

According to police, Sagar, a Bengaluru resident, was returning from Mysuru on the night of July 5 with his wife, children, and mother when an argument broke out with occupants of another car on the Srirangapatna service road over overtaking.

Although Sagar continued his journey,



the accused allegedly chased the family in two vehicles up to the Maddur flyover on the expressway.

Police said the attackers intercepted Sagar's car, dragged him out, and assaulted him. He was allegedly struck on the head with a jack rod, causing serious

injuries.

The assault reportedly continued despite repeated pleas from Sagar's wife and mother. His eight-year-old son, who tried to protect his father, was also allegedly assaulted, with the attackers twisting the child's arm.

A case has been registered against the accused at Maddur Police Station, and further investigation is underway.

The incident has once again raised concerns over the increasing number of road rage and violent crime cases reported on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway in recent months.

Hormuz Tensions Rise After Tanker Attacks

From PG

The incidents have raised fresh worries among shipping companies and energy markets, with governments closely monitoring the situation to prevent further disruptions to international trade routes. The attacks have triggered renewed calls for enhanced maritime security measures in the Gulf region, as any prolonged disruption in the Strait of Hormuz could impact global oil and gas supplies and shipping costs.

International agencies are closely tracking developments, while diplomatic efforts continue to reduce tensions and ensure the safe movement of commercial vessels through the strategically important waterway.

NEWS

Congress workers attack on Suresh Kumar is strongly condemnable - Ravi Kumar

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

BJP strongly condemns the attempts of the Congress workers to gherao the office of our MLA S. Suresh Kumar, Chief Whip of the Opposition in Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar has said.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Ravi Kumar stoutly dismissed the allegations of corruption and favoritism against Suresh Kumar.

"All the charges made against Suresh Kumar are baseless, malicious and far from truth. The

Congress workers are indulging in a smear campaign against Suresh Kumar whose political track-record is absolutely spotless and unblemished," Ravi Kumar added.



According to Ravi Kumar, the Congress has complained to the Lok Ayuktha about the alleged loss of Rs 300 crores to BBMP due to Suresh Kumar.

"Suresh Kumar has said that he is going to reply to the Lok Ayuktha shortly. Let the investigating agency complete its

job and submits its report. Till then the Congress need to wait. Instead, the workers of the Grand Old Party have taken law into their own hands and staged demonstration in front of MLA office. This is not only unacceptable but also strongly condemnable, Ravi Kumar explained.

BJP will not take this incident lightly. We believe in Constitutional Order and Rule of Law. "BJP will stage a peaceful protest against the Congress if this goondagiri continues," Ravi Kumar warned.

CHAMPAT RAI DENIES ALLEGATIONS AFTER TRUST EXIT

Vikrama Vahini | Ayodhya

Former Ram Mandir Trust general secretary Champat Rai has denied allegations against him, stating that "baseless claims" were made on social media and that he had maintained silence until now.

In an open letter, Rai said he would give a detailed response after the Special Investigation Team (SIT) submits its final report on the alleged misuse of donations at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple.

The Trust recently accepted the resignations of Champat Rai and trustee Anil Mishra following discussions on the SIT's preliminary report. The Trust has appointed Krishna Mohan as interim general secretary and announced steps to strengthen the donation management system.

Rai said the truth would emerge after the completion of the investigation and that he would

respond to allegations against those being wrongly accused. The SIT has already taken eight people into custody in connection with the case.

The Ram Mandir Trust said the decision to restructure the administration was taken to ensure greater transparency and maintain the confidence of devotees.

The Trust also assured that all financial systems related to donations would be reviewed and strengthened.

The controversy emerged after allegations of irregularities in the handling and counting of temple donations surfaced, leading to an investigation by the SIT. The final report is expected to provide further clarity on the matter.

The Trust officials said the temple administration will continue to function smoothly despite the recent changes in its leadership. Further action will be taken based on the findings of the SIT's final report.



HEALTH & Lifestyle

Diabetes Linked to Gum Bleeding

Diabetes is widely known for affecting blood sugar levels, but its impact extends beyond the heart, kidneys and eyes. Health experts say uncontrolled diabetes can also seriously affect oral health, increasing the risk of gum infections, bleeding, swelling, bad breath and even tooth loss.

People with high blood sugar levels often experience weakness in their gums and teeth because diabetes affects the body's ability to fight infections. If blood glucose remains uncontrolled for a long period, harmful bacteria in the mouth can multiply rapidly, leading to plaque formation and gum diseases.

High Sugar Levels Increase Gum Infection Risk

According to dental experts, diabetes weakens the immune system, making it difficult for the body to control bacteria present in the mouth. Excess glucose in saliva creates a favourable environment for bacterial growth, which can result in plaque accumulation around the teeth.

This plaque can cause inflammation of the gums, leading to a condition known as gum disease. In severe cases, the infection can damage the tissues and bones supporting the teeth, causing gum bleeding, tooth mobility and eventual tooth loss.

Experts also point out that high blood sugar levels increase inflammation in the body and can damage collagen, an important protein that supports healthy gums. This makes the gums more vulnerable to infection and bleeding.



Dry Mouth Adds to Dental Problems

Many diabetes patients also suffer from dry mouth due to reduced saliva production. Saliva plays an important role in washing away food particles and controlling harmful bacteria. When the mouth becomes dry, bacteria grow faster, increasing the chances of tooth decay, cavities and oral infections.

If these problems are left untreated, they can become more severe and may require extensive dental treatment.

Steps to Protect Oral Health

Doctors advise people with diabetes to take special care of their dental health along with managing blood sugar levels. Maintaining proper glucose control is the first step towards preventing gum-related complications.

Brushing teeth twice a day, using dental floss regularly, drinking enough water and maintaining a balanced diet can help reduce the risk of oral infections. Experts also recommend regular dental check-ups, preferably once every six months, to identify problems at an early stage.

People with diabetes should not ignore symptoms such as frequent gum bleeding, persistent swelling, bad breath or loose teeth. Immediate consultation with a dentist can prevent further damage.

SCIENCE & Technology

Microsoft Restructures Xbox, Cuts Jobs

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Microsoft has announced a major restructuring of its Xbox gaming division, with plans to cut around 3,200 jobs and separate four game development studios as part of efforts to reduce costs and improve long-term growth.

The restructuring, expected to continue through 2027, comes after weaker-than-expected performance in Game Pass subscriptions and Xbox hardware sales. Xbox CEO Asha Sharma said the company needs to simplify operations and adapt to changing market conditions.

Around 1,600 employees are expected to lose their jobs immediately, while additional reductions will take place during Microsoft's 2027 fiscal year.

The company said the Xbox business has not grown at the pace originally expected despite investments in gaming services, publishing and studio acquisitions.

As part of the overhaul, Microsoft will separate four studios from its first-party gaming portfolio.

Compulsion Games and Double Fine Productions will become independent again with their existing intellectual properties and game libraries.

Ninja Theory and Undead Labs will continue under new management with funding to complete ongoing projects, including Senua and State of Decay 3. Meanwhile, France-based Arkane Studios is reportedly exploring strategic options, including a possible sale or spin-off.

Microsoft said the restructuring aims to create a more efficient Xbox organisation by reducing management layers and improving coordination across gaming content, hardware, platforms and services.

Ahmedabad Blasts: Death Sentences Upheld

> Vikrama Vahini | Ahmedabad

The Gujarat High Court on Tuesday delivered a significant verdict in the 2008 Ahmedabad serial bomb blast case, upholding the death sentence awarded to 38 convicts belonging to the banned terror outfit Indian Mujahideen (IM).

The court also confirmed life imprisonment for 11 other convicts, affirming the order passed by a special court in 2022.

The verdict was delivered by a division bench comprising Justice A.Y. Kogje and Justice Sameer Dave, which dismissed all appeals filed by the convicts challenging the special court's judgment delivered in February 2022.

Among those convicted are former chief of the banned Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) Safdar Nagori and his associates.



2008 Ahmedabad Serial Blasts

On July 26, 2008, Ahmedabad witnessed a series of 21 coordinated bomb explosions across different locations in the city within a span of 70 minutes. The attacks claimed the lives of 56 people and left more than 200 others injured.

In a further escalation of the attack, bombs were also planted at hospitals where victims of the initial blasts were being taken for

treatment. The incident was considered the first major terror attack in India where medical institutions were specifically targeted.

Following the blasts, police registered 20 FIRs in Ahmedabad and 15 FIRs in Surat. After a detailed investigation, authorities stated that the attacks were part of a larger conspiracy planned by the Indian Mujahideen. All cases were clubbed together and tried jointly.

Landmark Verdict in Indian Judicial History

The case holds a significant place in India's legal history as it became the first instance where the highest number of 38 convicts were awarded the death penalty in a single case.

Earlier, in 1998, a TADA court had awarded

capital punishment to 26 people in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

A total of 78 accused were tried before the special court, of whom 49 were convicted in February 2022.

The convicts included Safdar Nagori, former SIMI leader, and his associates from 11 states, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, and Uttar Pradesh.

Compensation for Victims' Families

The Gujarat High Court directed the state government to provide compensation to the families of blast victims.

The families of those who lost their lives will receive ₹10 lakh each, while those who suffered serious injuries will be provided ₹5 lakh each.

The compensation has been ordered to be paid before March 30, 2027.

Wild Buffalo Attack Claims Woman's Life in Kalasa

> Vikrama Vahini | Chikkamagaluru

A 52-year-old woman was killed after being attacked by a wild buffalo near Bilaguli village in Kalasa taluk.

The victim, identified as Sheela, was working in a plantation when the animal suddenly attacked her, causing severe injuries to her abdomen and neck. She died due to heavy bleeding while being taken to hospital.

A case has been registered at Kalasa police station. Residents have urged authorities to take permanent measures to prevent repeated wild buffalo attacks in the Malnad region.

Forest officials and local residents have expressed concern over the increasing human-animal conflicts in the area. They have urged the authorities to strengthen monitoring and take immediate steps to ensure the safety of people living near forest regions. Authorities are expected to review preventive measures to reduce wildlife-related incidents in the affected areas.

Modi Hails Shared Heritage

PM Modi highlighted the centuries-old cultural ties between India and Indonesia, citing shared heritage of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Nalanda. He said the two nations' bond is strengthened by democracy, diversity and strategic cooperation.

> Vikrama Vahini | Jakarta

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday highlighted the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between India and Indonesia, stating that the relationship between the two nations is built on a shared heritage of the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Addressing the Indonesian Parliament, PM Modi said that the friendship between the two countries dates back centuries and is strengthened by common cultural connections, including the ancient knowledge tradition of Nalanda and iconic monuments such as Borobudur and

Prambanan.

"India and Indonesia share a common history. Our relationship is rooted in the heritage of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Our bond goes back centuries to the knowledge of Nalanda. We are also connected through magnificent monuments like Borobudur and Prambanan," the Prime Minister said.

He noted that although the capitals of both countries are separated by thousands of kilometres, the maritime distance between them is only around 150 km. The sea, he

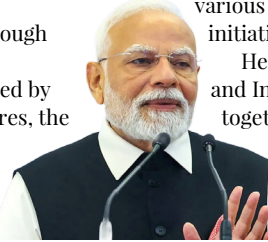
said, has never been a symbol of separation between India and Indonesia but has served as a bridge connecting their shared future.

Speaking about India's economic progress, the Prime Minister said that more than 25 crore people have moved out of poverty in the last decade due to various development initiatives.

He said that when India and Indonesia stand together, global confidence in democracy and its ability to create opportunities becomes

stronger.

He also referred to India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family) and Indonesia's national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity), stating that both nations have transformed diversity into the foundation of democratic unity. Earlier, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto conferred Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Indonesia's highest civilian honour, the "Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia", recognising his contribution towards strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.



As part of the Fifth Vedanta Samrajya Pattabhisheka Mahotsava of the present Peethadhipathi of Shriman Madhwatirtha Matha, His Holiness Shri Shri 108 Shri Vidyavallabha Madhwatirtha Shripadagalavaru, a series of special religious rituals were held at the Matha in Tambihalli on Tuesday, July 7, 2026 (Jyeshtha Krishna Saptami, Shri Parabhava Nama Samvatsara). The ceremonies included Panchamruta Abhisheka to Shri Mukhyaprana devaru, Shri Narasimha Stuti Homa, Shri Veera Ramadevara Samsthana Puja, Mantraputa Kalashabhisheka to Shri Vidyavallabha Madhwatirtha Shripadagalavaru, Tulabhara for Shri Veera Ramadevaru and Shripadagalavaru, followed by a grand Pushpavrushti (floral shower).

BYV Slams Cong Over Sapling Neglect

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka BJP president B. Y. Vijayendra on Tuesday accused the Congress government of failing to protect 15 lakh saplings planted under a state-wide plantation drive, alleging that many plants dried up due to lack of maintenance.

In a post on X, Vijayendra claimed that the government spent ₹88 crore on the campaign and celebrated it after achieving a Guinness World Record, but failed to ensure proper watering and care of the saplings.



Calling the initiative a "record for the camera, graveyard on the ground", he alleged that the plantation drive was part of the government's "politics of publicity" and accused it of focusing more on announcements than implementation.

The BJP leader also criticised the Congress government's welfare schemes, alleging gaps in their execution. The state government has not yet responded to the allegations. He demanded accountability over the plantation drive.

DCET-2026 Document Verification From July 15

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will conduct document verification for DCET-2026 applicants from July 15 to 17 at its Malleswaram office in Bengaluru. Candidates must book a slot and appear with original documents and attested copies between 10.30 am and 3.30 pm. Failure to submit required documents will lead to rejection of claims and exclusion from the option entry process.



RAIN FURY: SCHOOLS SHUT IN KARNATAKA TALUKS

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Several districts in Karnataka have declared holidays for schools, colleges and Anganwadi centres on July 8 following heavy rainfall and weather alerts.

In Belagavi district, holidays have been announced for schools, colleges and Anganwadi centres in Belagavi, Khanapur and Nipani taluks due to continuous heavy rains.

In Shivamogga district, holidays have been declared in four taluks.



In Soraba taluk, leave has been announced for Anganwadi centres and primary and high schools, while schools and colleges in Sagara, Hosanagara and Thirthahalli taluks will remain closed.

The Dakshina Kannada district

administration has also declared a holiday for schools and colleges across the district in view of the heavy rainfall forecast.

Authorities have advised people to remain cautious as the monsoon continues to intensify in several parts of the state.

The district administrations have urged residents, especially those living in low-lying and vulnerable areas, to follow safety advisories and avoid risky locations during heavy rainfall.

ENTERTAINMENT

Top OTT Picks Streaming This Week

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

OTT platforms are set to offer an exciting mix of crime thrillers, courtroom dramas, sports stories, documentaries and family entertainment this week, with several highly anticipated films and series arriving on Netflix, Apple TV+, SonyLIV and JioHotstar between July 7 and July 12.

From Sunny Deol's courtroom thriller Ikka to Ram Charan's sports drama Peddi, viewers can look forward to a diverse range of content across multiple languages.

Crime Thrillers Take Centre Stage

Netflix will premiere Nothing to Lose on July 8, a French crime drama revolving around a mother desperately searching for a bone marrow donor for her critically ill son, forcing her into the dangerous world of crime.

Also releasing on the same day is Salcedo, Leather and Boogaloo, a Colombian crime-comedy that follows a man whose seemingly perfect life unravels after he becomes involved in a world of nightlife, crime and hidden secrets.

Popular Series Return

Apple TV+ brings back the acclaimed comedy-drama Trying with its fifth season on July 8. The new season explores fresh emotional challenges as Nikki and Jason's family faces unexpected developments following the return of their adopted children's biological mother.

Netflix will also release a new adaptation of the classic novel Little House on the Prairie on July 9, combining family drama with survival stories set in the American frontier.

Indian Releases to Watch

One of the week's biggest Indian releases is Peddi, premiering on Netflix on July 9. Starring Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor, the Telugu sports action drama follows the journey of a talented cricketer who leaves the game



behind to unite his village through wrestling.

On July 10, Netflix will stream Ikka, a courtroom thriller featuring Sunny Deol, Akshaye Khanna, and Tillotama Shome. The film centres on a high-profile legal battle where a lawyer struggles to defend a client accused of attempted murder.

SonyLIV will also release Balti on July 10, a Tamil sports thriller based on the lives of four kabaddi champions whose friendship is tested by crime and gang rivalry along the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border.

Documentaries and Sports Stories

Netflix will premiere Miguel Ángel Blanco: The 48 Hours That Changed Spain on July 10, a documentary revisiting one of Spain's most significant political tragedies through archival footage and eyewitness accounts.

Football enthusiasts can watch Land of Football on JioHotstar from July 10. The Malayalam documentary series explores Kerala's deep-rooted passion for football and its influence on the state's culture and communities.

K-Drama for Comedy Fans

Closing the week's releases is The

Apartment Job, arriving on Netflix on July 11.

The South Korean comedy thriller follows a former gang leader and an ambitious lawyer who hatch an unusual plan to seize control of a luxury apartment association, only to uncover a larger web of corruption.

With an impressive mix of international productions, Indian originals, documentaries and sports dramas, this week's OTT lineup offers entertainment for audiences across genres.

This week's OTT slate also reflects the growing popularity of international content among Indian audiences. From French and Colombian crime dramas to South Korean comedy thrillers and Spanish documentaries, streaming platforms continue to expand their multilingual offerings, providing viewers with a wide range of entertainment across genres and cultures.

Industry observers believe the latest lineup caters to audiences of all age groups by combining family dramas, courtroom thrillers, sports-based stories, documentaries, and action-packed films.

Madhavan to Star as 'Edison of India' G.D. Naidu

> Vikrama Vahini | Chennai

Actor R. Madhavan, who earlier portrayed the life of renowned rocket scientist Nambi Narayanan in Rocketry: The Nambi Effect, is all set to bring another inspiring real-life story to the big screen.

The actor will now be seen playing the role of Gopalaswamy Doraiswamy Naidu, popularly known as the "Edison of India," in the upcoming biographical film GDN.

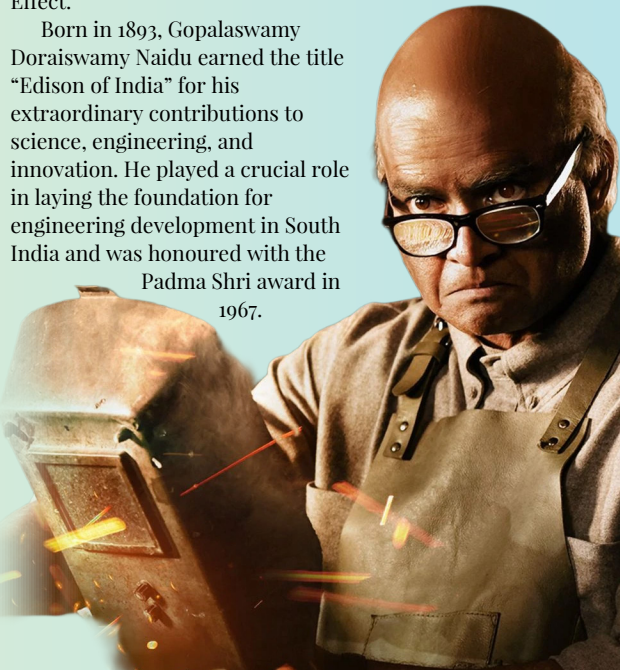
The makers of the film have released the trailer, offering a glimpse of Madhavan in a retro look as he steps into the role of the legendary inventor and industrialist.

The film highlights G.D. Naidu's remarkable contributions to India's engineering, automobile, and technology sectors, showcasing his journey as an innovator who transformed the industrial landscape of the country.

Speaking about the project, Madhavan said that G.D. Naidu was not just an inventor but also a visionary, genius, extraordinary achiever, and patriot. He expressed his desire to introduce Naidu's inspiring achievements to audiences across India, stating that this was one of the key motivations behind making the film.

The movie is directed by Krishnakumar Ramkumar, with Madhavan also involved in the writing process. It is produced by Varghese Moolan Pictures and Tricolour Films, the same production houses that collaborated on Rocketry: The Nambi Effect.

Born in 1893, Gopalaswamy Doraiswamy Naidu earned the title "Edison of India" for his extraordinary contributions to science, engineering, and innovation. He played a crucial role in laying the foundation for engineering development in South India and was honoured with the Padma Shri award in 1967.



BUSINESS

Markets Open Higher as Sensex, Nifty Gain

> Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Indian equity markets opened on a positive note on Tuesday, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty trading in the green during early morning deals, supported by easing crude oil prices, renewed foreign investor interest and gains in key IT and banking stocks.

Within the first 10 minutes of trading, the BSE Sensex gained 67.89 points, or 0.087 per cent, to trade at 78,352.96, while the NSE Nifty 50 rose 22.70 points, or 0.093 per cent, to reach 24,453.05.

Market sentiment improved after Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco announced a significant reduction in crude oil prices for Asian buyers.

The cut of around \$11 per barrel was higher than market expectations and is expected to provide relief to oil-importing economies, including India. The Indian rupee also gained strength in early trade, rising 15 paise to 95.28 against the US dollar.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers after a period of sustained selling, purchasing Indian equities worth ₹243.03 crore in the previous session.

Market experts said that two major concerns affecting Indian markets — high crude oil prices and continuous foreign fund outflows — have eased, improving investor confidence.

"Signs of an uptrend are visible in the market as crude prices have returned to earlier levels and foreign investors have started buying again," market strategist V K Vijayakumar said.

In the Sensex 30 pack, several major companies recorded gains in early trading. Titan Company emerged as the top performer, rising 2.57 per cent, followed by Eternal Limited with a 1.61 per cent rise. Shares of Infosys gained 1.43 per cent, while HCLTech, State Bank of India, HDFC Bank and Tata Consultancy Services also traded higher.

However, some stocks remained under pressure. Power Grid Corporation of India, Bharti Airtel, NTPC Limited, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Reliance Industries were among the early laggards.

Asian markets displayed a mixed trend in morning trade. While some indices witnessed gains, others remained under pressure due to global economic concerns.

SPORTS

Dhoni's 7 Legendary Records

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Former India captain and cricket legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni celebrated his 45th birthday on Monday. Known worldwide as 'Captain Cool', Dhoni's iconic No. 7 jersey has become a symbol of his remarkable achievements and legacy in world cricket.

From leading India to historic victories to setting several individual records, Dhoni remains one of the most successful captains in cricket history. Here are seven unforgettable records held by the Ranchi-born star.

Dhoni is the only captain in cricket history to win all three major ICC white-ball trophies. Under his leadership, India lifted the ICC T20 World Cup in 2007, the ODI World Cup in 2011 and the Champions Trophy in 2013.

Dhoni holds the record for captaining the most international matches. He led India in 332 games, including 200 ODIs, 60 Tests and 72 T20 internationals.

Known for his lightning-fast wicketkeeping skills, Dhoni has the highest number of international stumpings, with 195 dismissals behind the wickets. He also holds the record for one of the fastest stumpings in cricket history.

Dhoni's unbeaten 183-run knock against Sri Lanka in Jaipur in 2005 remains the highest individual ODI score by a wicketkeeper-batter. The record continues to stand even after two decades.

Gambhir to Miss Zimbabwe Series

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir is set to miss the upcoming Zimbabwe series starting July 23 due to a packed international schedule. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has planned to split the coaching responsibilities to manage multiple tournaments and give the support staff adequate rest.

Former India cricketer VVS Laxman is expected to take charge as head coach for the Zimbabwe tour. The move comes as India will be involved in multiple assignments, including the West Indies series and the T20 tournament at the Asian Games, scheduled around the same period.

With senior players engaged in other assignments, India has selected a strong young squad to defend its gold medal at the Asian Games. Shreyas Iyer will lead the team, with Tilak Varma as vice-captain.

The squad includes players such as Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Jasprit Bumrah, Sanju Samson, Axar Patel, Ishan Kishan, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Shivam Dube and Varun Chakravarthy.

The BCCI's rotation strategy aims to maintain a balanced workload for the coaching staff and players amid a busy international cricket calendar.

Delhi Tops as Five States Cross Income Mark

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Five Indian states have surpassed the World Bank's per capita income threshold for upper middle-income economies, highlighting the growing economic divide between India's top-performing states and the country as a whole, which continues to remain a lower middle-income economy.

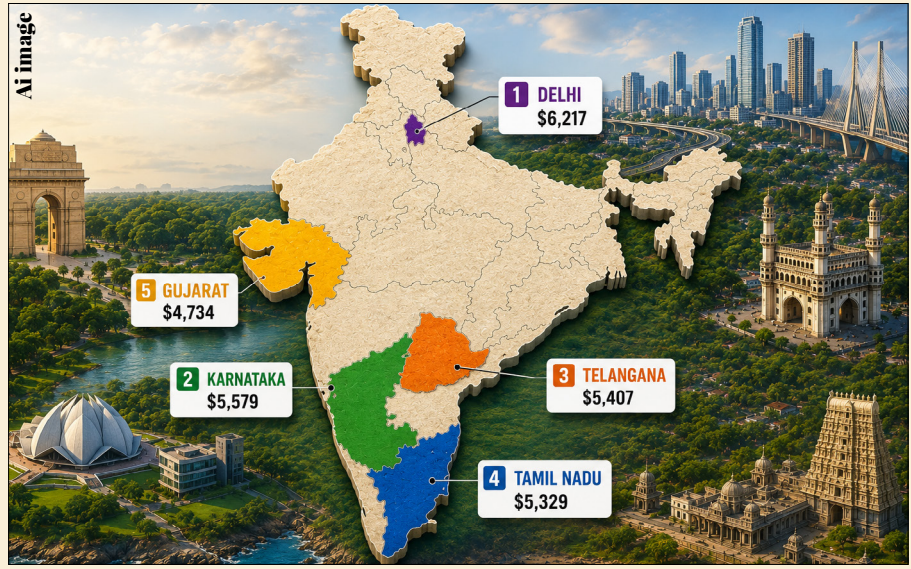
According to the latest income estimates, Delhi, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat have all crossed the World Bank's upper middle-income benchmark of \$4,636 per capita income.

Delhi Tops the List
Delhi leads the country with a per capita income of \$6,217, followed by Karnataka (\$5,579), Telangana (\$5,407), Tamil Nadu (\$5,329), and Gujarat (\$4,734). The achievement reflects sustained economic growth and rising income levels in these states.

Maharashtra Narrowly Misses the Mark
Three major states narrowly missed the World Bank threshold. Maharashtra, India's largest state economy, recorded a per capita income of \$4,628, just \$8 short of the benchmark.

Haryana stood at \$4,627, missing the mark by \$9, while Kerala recorded \$4,610, falling short by \$26.

Income Gap Across States
Several Indian states have witnessed



remarkable economic progress over the past three decades. The per capita incomes of Karnataka and Telangana are now higher than those of countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam.

At the other end of the spectrum, Bihar remains the poorest major state with a per capita income of \$984, followed by Uttar Pradesh (\$1,403) and Jharkhand (\$1,470).

World Bank Income Classification
The World Bank classifies economies

based on per capita income as follows:

- > **Low-income:** Below \$1,175
- > **Lower middle-income:** \$1,175-\$4,635
- > **Upper middle-income:** \$4,636-\$14,375
- > **High-income:** Above \$14,375

The latest figures indicate that while India as a nation remains in the lower middle-income category, several states have advanced into the upper middle-income bracket through sustained economic growth and industrial development.

China Ex-Official Gets Death for \$325M Bribes

> Vikrama Vahini | Beijing
A Chinese court has sentenced former Nanjing official Yang Youlin to death after convicting him of accepting more than 2.21 billion yuan (\$325 million) in bribes over a period of 30 years.

The Changzhou Intermediate People's Court found Yang guilty of bribery, embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, abuse of power, and money laundering. According to the court, he accepted money and assets between 1993 and 2023 in exchange for granting land, government projects, business approvals, and financial benefits.

The court ordered the confiscation of Yang's personal assets and directed authorities to recover all illegal gains. Yang reportedly admitted his crimes and expressed remorse during the trial.

The verdict is one of the biggest corruption convictions under President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign and ranks among China's largest bribery scandals in recent years.

CUBA PLUNGED INTO NATIONWIDE BLACKOUT

> Vikrama Vahini | Havana
A massive nationwide blackout has left nearly 10 million people across Cuba without electricity after the country's power grid collapsed, severely disrupting essential services and exposing its worsening energy crisis.

State-run utility Electric Union said the cause of the grid failure is under investigation, while the Ministry of Energy and Mines has launched emergency measures to restore power and stabilize the network.

Cuba's ageing electricity infrastructure has been under severe strain due to chronic fuel shortages and years of underinvestment. The country produces only about 40 per cent of its fuel needs and relies heavily on imports, which have been affected by US sanctions and restrictions on oil supplies.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel blamed US economic pressure for the crisis and praised



electricity workers engaged in restoration efforts. Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy said emergency 'microsystems' had been activated to ensure power supply to hospitals and other critical infrastructure.

The prolonged outage has disrupted electricity, water supply, transportation, communication services, and healthcare across the island. With no immediate improvement in fuel supplies, Cuba continues to grapple with one of its worst energy crises in recent years.

Indonesia Eyes India's Astra Mk1 Missile

> Vikrama Vahini | Jakarta
Indonesia is set to become the first foreign customer of India's indigenous Astra Mk1 Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM), marking a major achievement for India's defence exports.

The proposed deal is expected to be a key outcome of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Indonesia and will further strengthen strategic ties between the two countries.

Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Astra Mk1 has a range of over 100 km and is compatible with Indonesia's Su-30 fighter jets.

India and Indonesia are also expected to advance cooperation on the development of Sabang Port under the Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR vision.

Hormuz Attack Sparks Gulf Tensions

> Vikrama Vahini | Jakarta
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday highlighted the deep cultural and historical ties between India and Indonesia, stating that the relationship is rooted in the heritage of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Nalanda.

Addressing the Indonesian Parliament, PM Modi said the sea between the two nations acts as a bridge of friendship and cooperation. He also highlighted India's development journey and democratic values.

Earlier, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto honoured PM Modi with the country's highest civilian award, 'Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia', for strengthening bilateral relations.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the shared values of diversity and unity between the two largest democracies. He said India and Indonesia's partnership would continue to contribute to regional peace and global development.

Nurse Held for Husband's Chilling Murder

> Vikrama Vahini | Nizamabad
A nurse, her alleged lover, and an accomplice have been arrested in Telangana's Nizamabad district for allegedly conspiring to murder her husband in a shocking two-

stage murder plot, police said. According to investigators, the victim, Prashant, was first pushed from the rooftop of his house after being intoxicated.

Although he survived the fall

and was admitted to hospital, police alleged that his wife, Sandhya, later injected toilet cleaning liquid into his intravenous (IV) line while he was undergoing treatment, leading to his death.

Police said Sandhya and her alleged lover, Anil, planned the murder due to their extramarital relationship, with Venkat Sai assisting in the rooftop attack.

Arecanut Trucks Cleared in Maharashtra

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
Union Minister Pralhad Joshi has resolved the issue of Karnataka arecanut trucks being held in Maharashtra after talks with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis.

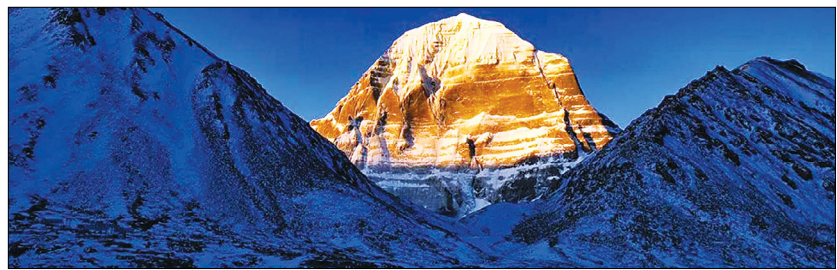
The detained consignments were released, with Maharashtra

assuring smooth movement of arecanut vehicles in future.

The move brings relief to Karnataka farmers, traders and cooperative societies. The decision ensures uninterrupted transport of arecanut consignments across states.

Kailash Yatra Gains Special Significance in 2026

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi
The sacred Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, one of the world's most revered spiritual journeys, holds special significance this year as 2026 marks the rare combination of the 'Fire Horse' year according to Tibetan and Buddhist traditions. The year is believed to occur once every 60 years, making the pilgrimage particularly auspicious for devotees.



Fire Horse Year: A Rare Spiritual Occasion

According to Tibetan Buddhism, completing one circumambulation (parikrama) around Mount Kailash during the Fire Horse year is believed to be equivalent to completing 12 or 13 rounds during ordinary years. Devotees believe that undertaking the pilgrimage during this period brings greater spiritual merit and blessings.

The special combination of the Horse year and the Fire element is considered a powerful spiritual period, and the region around Mount Kailash and Mansarovar is believed to be filled with heightened spiritual energy. This period is also referred to by some as the 'Kailash Mahakumbh.'

Sacred Mansarovar Lake

Situated at an altitude of around 4,590 metres, Mansarovar Lake is among the highest freshwater lakes in the world.

According to traditional beliefs, taking a holy bath in the lake during the Fire Horse year helps devotees cleanse their past karma and attain spiritual purification.

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is undertaken to the sacred Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake located in China's Tibet Autonomous Region. It is considered

one of the most challenging pilgrimages in the world due to its high altitude and difficult terrain.

Religious Importance of Mount Kailash
For Hindus, Mount Kailash is believed to be the eternal abode of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Buddhists worship it as 'Kang Rinpoche', meaning the precious jewel of snow. Jains also consider the region sacred, believing it to be the place where their first Tirthankara, Rishabhdev, attained liberation.

During the pilgrimage, devotees do not climb Mount Kailash. Instead, they offer prayers from a distance and complete a 52-kilometre circumambulation, known as Kailash Kora, around the holy mountain.

2026: The Year of the Horse

According to Tibetan traditions, 2026 is also the Year of the Horse, which occurs once every 12 years.

The Tibetan zodiac consists of 12 animals - Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig - with each year represented by one animal.

The Horse symbolises strength, freedom, courage, determination, and spiritual progress. Tibetans consider Mount Kailash a centre of cosmic energy,

and therefore visiting the holy site during a Horse year is regarded as highly auspicious.

The previous Horse year was observed in 2014, while the next one will occur in 2038.

Significance of the Fire Element

In Tibetan and Chinese astrology, each zodiac animal is associated with five natural elements - wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. These combinations do not repeat every year, making the Fire Horse year a rare event that occurs once every 60 years.

The element of fire represents purification, transformation, and new beginnings, while the horse represents movement, independence, and courage. Together, they are believed to create a period of powerful spiritual energy and positive transformation.

Growing Interest Among Devotees

According to Tibetan and Chinese astrological beliefs, the Fire Horse year is considered a time when people can overcome negativity and move forward with greater clarity and purpose.

Devotees undertaking the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra during this rare period believe they receive enhanced spiritual benefits and divine blessings.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

WHY DOES MUMBAI FLOOD EVERY YEAR?

THE MAIN REASONS BEHIND THE MONSOON CRISIS

1 INTENSE, SHORT-DURATION RAINFALL

Very heavy rain of 150-300 mm in just a few hours overwhelms the city's capacity.

2 LOW-LYING COASTAL CITY & HIGH TIDES

Built just meters above sea level, high tides push sea water backward, trapping rainwater in drains.

3 OUTDATED DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

Old drains lack capacity. Rivers & drains are choked by silt, encroachments and plastic waste.

4 VANISHING WETLANDS & MANGROVES

Loss of natural sponges like wetlands and mangroves increases surface runoff and flooding.

5 CHAOTIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Unplanned construction, narrow roads and constant construction debris block drains and alter natural water flow.

6 CLOGGED GULLIES & GARBAGE

Garbage, plastic bags and debris block road gullies, stopping water from draining.

THE IMPACT

Local trains delayed

Severe traffic gridlock

Commuters stranded

Business & daily life hit

THE WAY FORWARD

Upgrade & expand drainage infrastructure

Protect wetlands & mangroves

Plan sustainable urban development

Improve civic coordination & awareness

MUMBAI'S FLOODS ARE NOT AN ACT OF NATURE ALONE - THEY ARE A RESULT OF OUR UNPLANNED GROWTH AND NEGLIGENCE. THE TIME FOR PERMANENT SOLUTIONS IS NOW.