



# VIKRAMA VAHINI

NATIONAL SUGAR COOKIE DAY



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Actor Huma Qureshi during the promotion of her film 'Baby Do Die Do' in Bengaluru. She also expressed her admiration for the warmth and hospitality of the people of Karnataka.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed the Flight Acceptance Test of the CE20 cryogenic engine that will power the upper stage of the next LVM3 mission.

INSIDE

### Good morning

Judge nothing, you will be happy. Forgive everything, you will be happier. Love everything, you will be happiest.

### BRIEFS

#### HC Challenges B'luru Voter Roll

Four electors have approached the Karnataka High Court challenging the Karnataka State Election Commission's decision to conduct a separate Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in select Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) wards.

The petitioners argued that the move would result in two parallel voter roll revision exercises, as the Election Commission of India is already carrying out a nationwide revision of Assembly electoral rolls in Karnataka.

According to the petition, the overlapping exercises could create conflicting electoral rolls, duplicate field surveys, voter confusion and unnecessary expenditure. The petitioners contended that the State Election Commission should adopt the Assembly electoral rolls prepared by the ECI instead of conducting an independent revision.

#### Modi Begins Key Australia Visit

Narendra Modi arrived in Australia on Wednesday for a three-day visit to strengthen the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Modi will hold talks with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on defence, trade, technology and education. He is also scheduled to interact with the Indian diaspora during the visit. The trip follows his visit to Indonesia and aims to deepen bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders are expected to review progress under the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) and discuss ways to expand cooperation in critical minerals, clean energy, maritime security and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

#### Lokayukta Raids Expose Assets of 10 Officials

The Karnataka Lokayukta has concluded raids at 54 locations linked to 10 government officials across seven districts in disproportionate assets cases, uncovering properties, gold, cash and other valuables worth crores of rupees. The raids covered officials from departments including Public Works, Agriculture, Forest, Irrigation and Rural Development. Among those under scrutiny, officials in Bengaluru, Raichur, Kalaburagi, Chitradurga, Shivamogga and Tumakuru were found to possess significant movable and immovable assets, including houses, land, vehicles, jewellery, bank deposits and commercial properties.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto inaugurate the UNESCO World Heritage Prambanan Temple Compound Restoration and Conservation Project in Indonesia. The initiative reflects the deep-rooted civilisational and cultural bonds between India and Indonesia, with both nations reaffirming their commitment to preserving shared heritage, traditions and historical connections for future generations.

## Canada Clears India in Nijjar Probe

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Canadian investigators have found no evidence linking the Government of India to the 2023 killing of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a senior official of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has said, contradicting allegations made earlier by former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

RCMP Deputy Commissioner Lisa Moreland said the investigation had not uncovered any evidence connecting Indian government officials to Nijjar's murder. The statement marks a significant development in the high-profile case, which had triggered a major diplomatic dispute between India and Canada after Trudeau publicly alleged possible involvement of Indian agents in the killing.

US Charges Bishnoi, Goldy Brar

The development came hours after US authorities charged jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and his close aide Satinderjeet Singh, also known as Goldy Brar, with allegedly orchestrating Nijjar's assassination.

According to investigators, the charges are part of an international crackdown on transnational organised crime networks.

## Trump Declares Iran Peace Accord 'Over'

Vikrama Vahini | Ankara/New Delhi

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday declared that the interim memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Iran aimed at halting the ongoing conflict was "over," signalling a fresh setback to diplomatic efforts between the two countries.

Speaking alongside Mark Rutte ahead of the NATO summit in Ankara, Trump said he no longer wished to engage with Tehran. Referring to the Iranian leadership, he remarked, "I don't want to deal with them. They're sick people." He also expressed dissatisfaction with NATO over the issue of Greenland.

The interim MoU had been announced after weeks of indirect diplomacy to de-escalate tensions between the United States and Iran. The understanding was intended to serve as a temporary framework under which both countries agreed to suspend further military action, refrain from targeting each other's assets,



### Iran Blasts US Over Scrapped Peace Deal

Vikrama Vahini | Tehran

Iran on Wednesday strongly criticised the United States after US President Donald Trump announced the cancellation of the interim peace agreement with Tehran, accusing Washington of pursuing a policy of intimidation and coercion.

Responding to Trump's remarks, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the United States continued to follow its familiar foreign policy of "bending rules, bullying rivals, creating obstacles, and cheating."

In a post on X, Pezeshkian said, "The US government's conduct follows its familiar foreign policy. This is their MAGA

and continue negotiations on regional security and Iran's nuclear programme.

However, the fragile arrangement has come under severe strain following a fresh

playbook. Iran rejects such games and stands firmly for its rights."

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also criticised Washington, accusing the US of violating previous understandings, carrying out military strikes on Iranian territory, reimposing oil sanctions and continuing pressure on the country.

Earlier, Trump declared that the interim agreement with Iran was "over," although he indicated that diplomatic talks could still continue.

Speaking on the sidelines of the NATO summit, he described negotiations with Tehran as "a waste of time."

round of military exchanges over the past two days. Iran launched retaliatory attacks on US military installations in Bahrain and Kuwait after recent American strikes on Iranian targets.

The United States responded with additional military action, further escalating tensions in the region.

## IRAN TURNS BACK INDIAN TANKER IN HORMUZ

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

An Indian oil tanker was reportedly turned back by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) while attempting to transit through the US-backed Oman shipping corridor in the Strait of Hormuz, according to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency.

The tanker was using the temporary maritime corridor along the Oman coast, established on June 24 by Oman and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to facilitate the movement of stranded vessels under US oversight. According to the report, the IRGC instructed the vessel via radio to use the Iran-designated shipping route instead.

Fars also claimed that all ships passing through the Strait on Wednesday used the Iranian-designated corridor following the warning.

Tensions Escalate in Gulf

The development comes amid renewed hostilities in the Gulf after attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. Earlier, PG2

## Three Appointed as CM's Media Secretaries

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government has appointed three senior journalists as media secretaries to Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar. The Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department issued an official notification appointing P. Thyagaraj, R. Jayaprakash and Raghavendra Bhat to the posts. According to the notification, P.

Thyagaraj has been appointed as Chief Minister's Media Secretary-1, R.



Jayaprakash as Media Secretary-2, and Raghavendra Bhat as Media Secretary-3. P. Thyagaraj is a senior journalist with extensive experience in Karnataka's media sector and has also worked as a columnist. Earlier, he served as the media

adviser to D.K. Shivakumar when Shivakumar was the Deputy Chief



Minister of Karnataka. The organisation congratulated the newly appointed media secretaries and expressed hope that their tenure would contribute to the growth of the media sector and help address the concerns of journalists

KUWJ State President Shivananda Tagadour said the new media



secretaries are expected to play an important role in strengthening coordination between the government and the media. He also expressed confidence that they would work towards decisions and initiatives that support the interests of journalists.

## Market Crash Erases ₹8 Lakh Crore Wealth

Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Indian stock markets witnessed a sharp sell-off on Wednesday amid rising global tensions and developments in the Middle East, wiping out nearly ₹8 lakh crore of investor wealth.

The BSE Sensex plunged 1,677 points, or 2.15%, to close at 76,503.60, while the NSE Nifty fell 516.65 points, or 2.10%, ending at 23,882.05. Bank Nifty also declined 1,458 points, or 2.51%, to settle at 56,742.60. PG2

## HC Questions MLA's Role in Land-Grab Case

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday questioned why sitting Congress MLA MC Sudhakar was not named as an accused in an alleged government land-grab case despite being identified as a beneficiary.

Court Refuses to Quash Case

Justice M. Nagaprasanna dismissed petitions filed by former minister MC Chowdareddy and former Chintamani Municipal Commissioner BH Narayanappa, seeking to quash the criminal proceedings registered in 2017. The court directed the investigating agency to complete the probe within six months.

Court Raises Concern

The court observed that the material placed before it prima facie indicated that MC Sudhakar and his brother MC Balaji were direct beneficiaries of the alleged encroachment but were "conspicuously absent" from the list of accused.

Alleged Land Encroachment

The case relates to the alleged encroachment of 1 acre and 18 guntas of government land in Kannampalli village of Chintamani taluk. According to the prosecution, the land was allegedly merged with adjoining private property



The Karnataka High Court has questioned the exclusion of Congress MLA MC Sudhakar from an alleged government land-grab case, observing that preliminary findings indicated he and his brother were beneficiaries of the disputed land. The court has ordered the investigation to be completed within six months.

owned by Chowdareddy's family and later divided between his sons.

Investigation to Continue

The High Court refused to interfere with the ongoing investigation, observing that allowing the proceedings to be halted at this stage would prevent the truth from emerging. It directed the investigating agency to complete the probe within six months.

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WHERE YOUR SUCCESS MAKES HEADLINES

Editorial

Beyond Blame Politics

The fresh landslide tragedy in Kerala's Wayanad, which is feared to have claimed several lives, has once again exposed the fragile relationship between human settlements and nature in ecologically sensitive regions. Even before scientific assessments have begun, allegations have emerged that the ongoing Konkani Railway tunnel construction may have triggered the disaster. Others argue that the incident is another reminder of the consequences of unchecked human intervention in vulnerable landscapes. Such concerns deserve careful attention, but drawing conclusions before evidence is available risks creating confusion rather than solutions. It is worth recalling that Wayanad witnessed a devastating landslide just a few years ago, causing heavy loss of lives and property, long before the present tunnel project entered the picture. Similar tragedies in Kodagu and other hill districts have also occurred without any major infrastructure works in the vicinity.

Natural disasters should never become convenient tools for political point-scoring. The tendency of governments and opposition parties to trade accusations after every tragedy does little to address the real challenge. Whether the cause lies in extreme rainfall, geological instability, deforestation, construction activity, or a combination of multiple factors, only a thorough scientific investigation can establish the truth. Ministers describing the incident as a 'man-made disaster' or activists blaming every infrastructure project without conclusive evidence only deepen public distrust. Environmental protection and infrastructure development are not mutually exclusive; both must coexist through careful planning, rigorous environmental safeguards, and continuous monitoring. The larger lesson from Wayanad is the urgent need for disaster preparedness rather than ideological confrontation. Authorities must identify landslide-prone zones using modern geological mapping, strengthen early warning systems, and relocate families living in high-risk areas wherever necessary. Infrastructure projects in ecologically fragile regions should undergo strict scientific scrutiny and be monitored throughout execution, but development itself cannot be viewed as the enemy. Roads, tunnels, railways, and public infrastructure remain essential for economic growth and regional connectivity. The responsibility of governments is therefore twofold: ensure that development proceeds responsibly and, at the same time, protect human lives through proactive planning, transparent investigations, and effective disaster management. Preventing future tragedies, not assigning premature blame, should remain the nation's highest priority.

-Editor

Banashankari Junction Development Discussed

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Bengaluru South City Corporation Commissioner K.N. Ramesh held a meeting with officials from various departments at the Corporation Meeting Hall in Jayanagar to discuss the development of Banashankari Junction.

The meeting focused on the proposed pedestrian skywalk project and the possibility of constructing a grade separator at the busy junction to address traffic congestion.

The Corporation had earlier performed the bhoomi pooja for the pedestrian skywalk project aimed at improving pedestrian safety. However, the work was temporarily halted following a proposal by B-SMILE for the construction of a grade separator to ease traffic movement.

During the meeting, officials discussed the advantages and challenges of both projects in detail. Architect Naresh Narasimhan from M/s Venkataraman Associates, the consultant for the project, stated that a well-designed pedestrian skywalk is essential considering



the large number of daily commuters and devotees visiting the Banashankari Temple.

He suggested that traffic congestion could be reduced by introducing dedicated bus lanes and proper parking facilities.

Consultants and the Corporation's Chief Engineer also stated that studies conducted by the Corporation and BMRL have highlighted the need for a skywalk connecting all road ends at the junction to ensure pedestrian safety.

Officials emphasised that developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure is in line with Supreme Court directions that give

priority to pedestrian safety. They also suggested making the skywalk aesthetically appealing and convenient for public use.

B-SMILE Executive Director Prahlad clarified that he was not against the construction of a skywalk but stressed the need to examine the possibility of implementing a grade separator along with it, considering the future traffic requirements of the junction.

"The skywalk is important, but it should not prevent the construction of a grade separator in the future, as the junction is already facing heavy traffic congestion due to



increasing vehicle movement," he said.

After hearing the views of officials and experts, Commissioner K.N. Ramesh said a detailed review would be conducted on the necessity, cost implications and feasibility of both projects.

A comprehensive report will be prepared and submitted to the higher authorities for further action.

Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Police Gopal M. Byakod, Corporation Chief Engineer Basavaraj Kabade, and officials from BMTCL, BMRL and BWSSB were present at the meeting.

MONSOON FILLS KARNATAKA RESERVOIRS

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Continuous southwest monsoon rains have significantly improved water levels in Karnataka's major reservoirs, providing a boost to irrigation, drinking water supply and hydropower generation across the state.

The Almatti reservoir in Vijayapura recorded the highest inflow of 1,26,373 cusecs, while the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir in Mandya also witnessed a steady rise in water levels due to increased inflows from the Cauvery catchment.

The Tungabhadra reservoir in Koppal and the Bhadra reservoir in Shivamogga registered sharp increases in storage following heavy rainfall in their upper catchment areas. The Harangi reservoir in Kodagu also moved closer to full capacity.

However, the Basavasagar reservoir in



Almatti Reservoir records a sharp rise in inflow to 1.26 lakh cusecs following heavy monsoon rains in the Krishna catchment. With the water level steadily increasing, only a minimal discharge is being maintained as authorities continue to build reservoir storage.

Yadgir received no inflow on Wednesday, though water continued to be released to meet downstream requirements.

Water Resources officials said the improved reservoir storage would benefit

farmers during the kharif season and help ensure adequate drinking water supply. With more rainfall expected in the Western Ghats, inflows into major reservoirs are likely to remain strong in the coming days.

Market Crash Erases ₹8 Lakh Crore Wealth

> From PGI

The total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped to around ₹47 lakh crore. Banking, FMCG, and oil and gas stocks witnessed heavy selling pressure.

Analysts attributed the market fall to escalating Middle East tensions, rising crude oil prices and weak global market trends. Brent crude prices surged nearly 5% to \$78.09 per barrel amid concerns over supply disruptions.

Global markets also remained under pressure, with major European and Asian indices recording significant declines. A stronger US dollar, rising bond yields and a weakening rupee added to investor concerns, triggering a shift towards safer assets.

Investors remained cautious as uncertainty over geopolitical developments continued to weigh on market sentiment.

BJP Seeks Caste Survey Report in House



> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The BJP on Wednesday urged the Karnataka government to table the state's caste survey report during the upcoming Legislature session and clarify its stand on the issue.

BJP State General Secretary and MLA V. Sunil Kumar said the party was prepared

for a detailed discussion on the survey, for which over ₹450 crore of public funds had been spent.

He demanded that the Assembly allocate separate time to debate the report, stating that the BJP wanted to know its findings and the government's position before any further action is taken.

IRAN TURNS BACK INDIAN TANKER IN HORMUZ

> From PGI

An Indian crude oil tanker, OMEGA TRADER, reportedly transited the Oman corridor with assistance from the Indian government and the Indian Navy. The latest maritime tensions follow attacks on three vessels, including a Qatari LNG tanker, prompting fresh military exchanges between Iran and the United States.

The renewed conflict has further heightened concerns over the security of one of the world's busiest energy shipping routes. The incident has raised concerns among global shipping operators over possible disruptions to oil supplies and maritime trade in the Gulf region.



Paid heartfelt tributes at Jan Nayak Sthal, New Delhi, on the 19th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar. Remembered the visionary statesman for his commitment to public service, democratic values, simplicity and unwavering dedication towards the welfare of the nation.

NEWS

KARNATAKA VOTER SURVEY CROSSES 80% MARK

> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka has crossed the 80 per cent mark in the distribution of voter enumeration forms under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the Election Commission said on Wednesday.

Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukumar said more than four-fifths of the prescribed forms have been distributed across the state, including within the Bruhat

Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits. He expressed confidence that the remaining households would be covered well before the July 29 deadline.

The house-to-house exercise, which began on June 30, is being carried out by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), who are

visiting every household to distribute, verify and collect the forms as part of the electoral roll revision.



The CEO urged voters to cooperate by accurately filling out the forms and submitting the required documents on time.

He also advised those needing assistance to visit designated Voter Facilitation Centres.

The Special Intensive Revision aims to update electoral rolls by verifying voter details, removing duplicate or ineligible entries and ensuring an accurate voter database ahead of future elections.

Dipke Tells Anna Hazare to 'Retire Gracefully'

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke sparked controversy by urging veteran activist Anna Hazare to retire from public life, prompting surprise and criticism from Hazare's associates.

Abhijeet Dipke, founder-president of the Cuckooch Janata Party (CJP), has criticised veteran social activist Anna Hazare, saying senior leaders should retire from public and political life and allow the younger generation to shape its own future.

Speaking to the media, Dipke said he had no plans to meet Hazare despite the activist expressing support for the CJP's public movement.

He remarked that those who have crossed 50 or 60 years of age should refrain from making decisions affecting the future of students and youth, adding that they should voluntarily step away from public movements.

Hazare Camp Expresses Surprise

Hazare's associates expressed surprise over Dipke's remarks, noting that the veteran activist had

extended support to the new party to encourage greater youth participation in public life.

They said Hazare would not personally respond to the criticism and that local workers from Ralegan Siddhi would react if necessary.

The remarks come days after Hazare warned of a hunger strike against proposed amendments to the Right to Information (RTI) Act in Maharashtra, following which the state government put the proposal on hold.

The exchange has triggered political debate in Maharashtra, with observers viewing it as a reflection of the growing divide between established social activists and emerging political groups over leadership, generational change and the direction of public movements. The controversy has added fresh attention to the role of senior leaders in youth-led movements.



HEALTH & Lifestyle

A Handful of Walnuts, A Healthier Start

Walnuts, also known as akhrot, are among the most nutritious dry fruits and are packed with omega-3 fatty acids, protein, fibre, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Including a handful of walnuts in the daily diet may support overall health and improve various body functions.

Health Benefits of Eating Walnuts

Supports Heart Health: Walnuts contain omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants that may help maintain healthy heart function and support better cholesterol management.

Boosts Brain Health: Regular consumption of walnuts may support memory, concentration and overall brain health due to their nutrient-rich profile.

Improves Digestion: The high fibre content in walnuts helps improve digestion and may support relief from constipation.

Helps in Weight Management: Protein and fibre in walnuts provide a feeling of fullness, helping reduce unnecessary hunger and support weight control.

Provides Essential Nutrients: Walnuts are rich in magnesium, phosphorus, copper and manganese, which contribute to energy production and overall nourishment.

Best Way to Consume Walnuts: Health experts suggest consuming walnuts in the morning for better



benefits.

They can be eaten directly or soaked overnight in water and consumed the next day. Walnuts can also be added to yoghurt, oats, smoothies or salads. Around 25-30 grams (a handful) per day is generally considered a suitable quantity.

Things to Keep in Mind: While walnuts are healthy, excessive consumption should be avoided as they are high in calories.

People with dry fruit allergies or existing health conditions should consult a healthcare professional before adding them to their diet.

A balanced diet and regular exercise along with walnut consumption can help maximise health benefits.

Research suggests that walnuts can be a valuable addition to a healthy lifestyle when consumed in moderation.

Their combination of healthy fats, antioxidants and essential nutrients makes them a popular choice for daily nutrition.

SCIENCE & Technology

DRDO Successfully Tests Pinaka LRGR

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully conducted the flight test of the Pinaka Long-Range Guided Rocket (LRGR) at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha.

According to DRDO, the rocket was tested for a minimum range of 60 km, successfully completed all planned manoeuvres and struck its target with high precision. The flight was tracked throughout its trajectory.

Indigenous Defence Milestone

The Pinaka LRGR was designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment with support from the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Defence Research and Development Laboratory and Research Centre Imarat. The trial also demonstrated the capability of the existing Pinaka launcher to fire multiple variants using the same platform.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, the Indian Army and industry partners, describing the successful test as a major milestone in India's indigenous guided rocket development programme.

Senior Defence Ministry officials, including DRDO Chairman Rajesh Kumar Singh, monitored the trial and congratulated the scientists involved in the successful mission. The successful trial further strengthens India's efforts towards developing advanced indigenous defence technologies and reducing dependence on imported weapon systems. The Pinaka LRGR is expected to enhance the Army's long-range precision strike capabilities once inducted into service.

## India Pushes for Self-Reliant ACC Battery Ecosystem

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy on Wednesday called for building a complete domestic ecosystem for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) components to make India self-reliant in battery manufacturing.

Chairing a stakeholder consultation with over 25 representatives from battery manufacturers, component makers, research institutions and industry bodies, Kumaraswamy reviewed the current status of India's ACC sector, investment opportunities, technology requirements and challenges faced by manufacturers.

He said India's ACC demand is expected to rise from nearly 196 GWh by 2030 to around 236 GWh by 2032, driven by growth in electric mobility, energy storage, consumer electronics and other sectors.

The Minister stressed that manufacturing battery cells alone would not be enough and highlighted the need to strengthen the entire value chain, including raw materials, critical components, equipment, recycling, research



and skilled manpower.

Industry stakeholders raised concerns over high costs, import dependence for key components, technology access, global competition and supply chain challenges. Kumaraswamy assured full support from the Ministry of Heavy Industries to address genuine concerns and promote domestic manufacturing.

He said strengthening ACC component production is essential for achieving the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and establishing India as a globally competitive hub for advanced battery technologies.

## Lokayukta Cracks Down in DA Raids

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Lokayukta on Wednesday conducted simultaneous raids across Bengaluru, Shivamogga, Dharwad and Raichur as part of an investigation into alleged disproportionate assets held by three government officials.

The raids targeted a Panchayat Development Officer, an Assistant Conservator of Forests and a Karnataka Bhagiratha Jal Nigam Limited (KBJNL) Executive Engineer. Lokayukta teams searched residences, government offices, farmhouses, a factory and properties linked to the officials and their relatives, examining financial records, bank documents and property papers.

The action comes a day after the Lokayukta raided seven locations in Bengaluru in connection with an alleged government land allotment scam involving senior revenue officials. Investigators are probing allegations of assets disproportionate to known sources of income and suspected corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Officials said the searches were continuing, and details of any seizures or further findings would be announced after the completion of the raids.

## RAILWAYS, NDMA UNITE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

South Western Railway, in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Indian Railways Institute of Disaster Management, organised the Indian Railways-NDMA National Conclave on Disaster Management at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore.

The conclave brought together senior officials from Indian Railways, NDMA, the Railway Board, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Central Water Commission (CWC), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), academia and disaster response agencies to discuss measures for strengthening disaster preparedness and resilience across the railway network.

Speaking at the event, officials stressed the importance of technology, institutional

coordination and proactive risk management in disaster response.

Experts highlighted the use of weather forecasting, flood monitoring, satellite technology, Artificial Intelligence and drones to improve disaster prediction and emergency response.

The conclave also reviewed successful multi-agency mock drills conducted by South Western Railway, including simulated derailment rescue, anti-hijack operations, water rescue and coach fire response involving the NDRF, fire services, special forces and medical teams.

The event concluded with a call for greater adoption of predictive technologies, climate-resilient infrastructure and enhanced inter-agency coordination to strengthen the safety and resilience of the Indian Railways network.

## Rahul Gandhi Alleges UGC-NET Sociology Paper Leak

Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday alleged that the UGC-NET Sociology examination paper was leaked before the test and sold for ₹2.25 lakh across several states.

In a post on X, Gandhi claimed that a 100-page PDF containing questions from the UGC-NET Sociology examination was circulated online shortly before the examination. He alleged that nearly 90 questions in the leaked PDF matched those in the actual examination paper.

According to Gandhi, the leaked paper was allegedly sold for ₹2.25 lakh in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan. He further claimed that the same network involved in the alleged leak has been promising question papers for upcoming examinations, including CSIR-NET, HTET and ADA recruitment tests.

The Congress leader questioned the functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA), the body responsible for conducting several national-level entrance and

recruitment examinations. He said the latest allegations came in the wake of the NEET-UG controversy, where allegations of a paper leak had led to widespread protests and legal scrutiny.

Gandhi also referred to recent complaints from students regarding grammatical and spelling errors in the UGC-NET Sociology question paper. He accused the Central government of failing to address repeated instances of examination irregularities and alleged that the interests of lakhs of students were being

ignored.

"The hard work of lakhs of students has no value for this government," Gandhi said, adding that students deserved accountability and justice. He urged students across the country to raise their collective voice to bring about reforms in the education system.

The allegations surfaced after two student leaders from Rohtak, Haryana, released a video claiming that one of the two sets of questions they had used for preparation matched the UGC-NET Sociology examination almost entirely.

## Yogi Defends Ram Temple Trust, Slams Opposition

Vikrama Vahini | Chitrakoot (UP)

Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday defended the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra over the alleged donation theft case, saying only eight individuals were found involved and the entire Trust should not be blamed for the actions of a few.

Addressing a public gathering in Chitrakoot, the Chief Minister said the Trust itself had recommended a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe after receiving inputs about alleged theft during the counting of donations. Based on the SIT findings, an FIR was registered and action initiated against the accused.

Adityanath accused the Congress and the Samajwadi Party of trying to defame Ayodhya and tarnish the legacy of Lord Ram for political gains.

He said around 150 people were involved in counting temple offerings, but evidence was found against only eight individuals.

The Chief Minister also criticised the Congress over its past stand in the Ram Setu case and accused both Congress and the Samajwadi Party of adopting double standards on issues related to faith, temple heritage and Waqf properties.



Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shiva Kumar meets Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at Lok Bhavan on Wednesday night during a courtesy visit.

## BJP HITS BACK AT CONGRESS OVER AYODHYA ROW

Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The BJP on Wednesday countered the Congress' demand for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation over the alleged theft of donations at the Ayodhya Ram Temple, accusing the opposition of ignoring corruption allegations involving its own leaders.

**Targets National Herald, MUDA Cases**  
Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra said the Congress should first address the National Herald case and respond to allegations related to the MUDA site allotment and Karnataka Maharshi Scheduled

Tribes Development Corporation scams before targeting the Prime Minister.

The BJP leader's remarks came after the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) passed a resolution seeking Modi's resignation over the alleged theft of cash offerings at the Ram Temple.

**Defends Centre's Response**  
Vijayendra said the Uttar Pradesh government acted promptly by ordering an inquiry and arresting the accused in the alleged Ayodhya donation theft case.

He added that the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

Teerth Kshetra functions as an independent body and rejected allegations of any attempt to suppress the matter.

He also accused the Congress of adopting double standards on central investigative agencies, questioning why the party sought a CBI probe in the Ayodhya case while opposing similar investigations in the alleged MUDA case.

The BJP maintained that the Congress was attempting to divert attention from controversies involving its own leaders by launching political attacks against the Centre.

### ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Ramayana' Trailer Set for July 18 Release?

Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

The much-awaited trailer of the upcoming epic film 'Ramayana' is reportedly set to release on July 18, creating excitement among fans months before the film's theatrical debut.

The big-budget project, produced by Namith Malhotra, has already generated massive anticipation across India and overseas.

According to reports, the makers are planning to unveil the official theatrical trailer nearly three-and-a-half months before the film's Diwali release. The move follows the global trend of promoting major films well in advance, unlike the recent practice of releasing trailers only a few weeks before a movie's arrival in theatres.

### High Expectations After Teaser Release

The film team had released the first glimpse of 'Ramayana' on July 3 last year, followed by a teaser titled 'Ram' on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti, introducing Ranbir Kapoor's look as Lord Ram. The teaser received a strong response and increased

expectations for the upcoming trailer.

### Star-Studded Cast

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the film features Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram and Sai Pallavi as Sita. Yash will portray Ravana, while Sunny Deol will appear as Hanuman and Ravi Dubey will play Lakshman.

**Global Music Collaboration**  
Adding to the scale of the project, Oscar-winning composer A. R. Rahman and Hollywood composer Hans Zimmer are reportedly collaborating on the film's music.

'Ramayana' is planned as a two-part cinematic spectacle, with the first part scheduled for a worldwide Diwali release and the second part expected to arrive during Diwali 2027. The makers are aiming to present the Indian epic with advanced visual effects and international production standards.

The film has become one of the most anticipated Indian projects due to its star-studded cast, large-scale production and modern visual effects. The makers are expected to showcase the grandeur of the ancient epic with a global cinematic approach, aiming to attract audiences beyond India.

## Rashmika's 'Maisa' Aims for 'Arundhati' Glory

**Rashmika Mandanna is set to enter a new phase with Maisa, an intense action horror thriller that aims to show case her in a powerful and never-before-seen avatar.**

Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

Pan-India star Rashmika Mandanna is set to explore a new phase in her career with more women-centric and performance-driven roles. After receiving appreciation for her female-led film 'The Girlfriend', the actress is reportedly focusing on strong characters that offer greater scope for acting.

Rashmika is now starring in 'Maisa', a women-oriented action horror thriller that promises to present her in a never-before-seen avatar.

The film has already created curiosity among fans after the release of its first poster, where Rashmika appears in an intense look wearing a red saree, holding a weapon and covered in blood, resembling a fierce warrior figure.

### Inspired by 'Arundhati' Style?

The poster and theme of Maisa have drawn comparisons with the Telugu blockbuster 'Arundhati', which featured Anushka Shetty in a powerful lead role. The film went on to become a landmark in her career and earned her a special place among Telugu cinema audiences.

With Maisa, Rashmika appears to be aiming for a similar impact by taking up a challenging role that combines action, horror and thriller elements. The makers are expected to showcase her in a strong and intense character unlike her earlier performances.

### Rashmika's Packed Line-up

Rashmika continues to have a busy schedule with several major projects. She is currently working on films including Ranabali with Vijay Deverakonda and is also reported to be part of upcoming big-budget projects across Telugu, Tamil and



Hindi cinema.

She is also expected to appear in Pushpa 3, apart from reportedly taking up roles in Bollywood films and a project with Tamil star Ajith Kumar. With a diverse mix of roles, Rashmika is looking to strengthen her position as one of India's leading actresses. The actress has been experimenting with different genres and characters to expand her on-screen image beyond commercial roles. With Maisa, Rashmika is expected to showcase her versatility and take on a more intense and action-oriented performance.

The film's first-look poster has already sparked discussions among movie lovers, with fans eagerly waiting to see Rashmika in this bold new role. Maisa could mark another significant milestone in the actress's evolving career.

### BUSINESS

## GOLD, SILVER PRICES SLIDE SHARPLY

Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

Gold and silver prices continued their downward trend on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, offering relief to buyers as both precious metals became cheaper in domestic and global markets. Over the past month, gold prices have fallen by around 6%, while silver has declined by more than 7%.

The decline in prices has been driven by weak global market trends, a stronger US dollar, changing interest rate expectations and profit booking by investors. Since India imports large quantities of gold and silver, global price movements and currency fluctuations have a direct impact on domestic rates.

### Global Market Sees Sharp Decline

In international markets, gold prices dropped by \$22.48 to \$4,123.92 per ounce, while silver prices declined by \$1.52, or 2.46%, to \$60.38 per ounce.

### Domestic Prices Fall

According to bullion market data, the price of 10 grams of gold in the Indian spot market fell by Rs 540 to Rs 1,45,330. Silver prices also declined significantly, with one kilogram trading at Rs 2,29,330 after a drop of Rs 1,730.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for August 2026 declined by Rs 447 to Rs 1,44,945 per 10 grams. Silver futures for September 2026 fell by Rs 1,657 to Rs 2,29,200 per kg.

### Why Are Prices Falling?

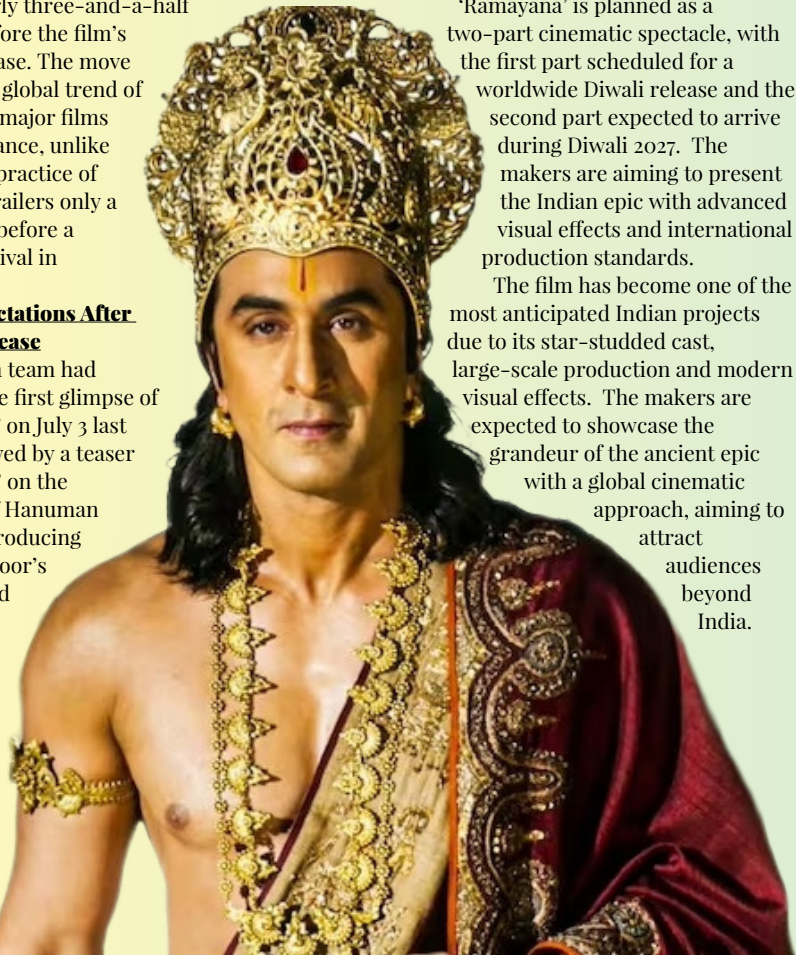
Market experts said the strong US dollar, expectations of higher interest rates by the US Federal Reserve and investor profit booking are putting pressure on precious metal prices.

A stronger dollar reduces demand for gold and silver among international buyers, while higher interest rates encourage investors to move towards interest-bearing assets such as bonds.

The fall in gold and silver prices is expected to benefit consumers planning jewellery purchases, though investors holding precious metals may see short-term pressure on returns.

Analysts said future price movements will depend on global economic indicators, US monetary policy decisions and currency market trends.

Jewellers and market participants are closely watching the upcoming economic data and policy signals for further direction.



SPORTS

### Samson Set for India Comeback?

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
India are set to make changes to their playing XI as they aim to fight back in the fourth T20 International against England after falling 2-0 behind in the five-match series. With the series victory already out of reach, the Indian team will now look to level the contest 2-2 with a strong performance.  
India suffered a heavy 125-run defeat in the third T20I, exposing major concerns in both batting and bowling departments. Despite having several T20 specialists in the squad, inconsistent performances have put the team under pressure.  
The batting order is expected to see at least one change, with Sanju Samson likely to return to the playing XI in place of Ishan Kishan. Kishan has failed to make a significant impact in recent matches, while Samson's experience could strengthen the middle order.  
The opening combination of Abhishek Sharma and Vaibhav Suryavanshi has also struggled to provide a solid start, adding pressure on the middle-order batters.  
Captain Shreyas Iyer is expected to retain his place despite his poor form, with the team management backing him as leader. Tilak Varma, who has struggled with a low strike rate, is also likely to get another opportunity due to his role as vice-captain.  
However, failure to perform in the remaining matches could put his place under scrutiny.

### Fake SAI Name Fraud Exposed

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
A fake sports organisation operating under the name 'Sports Association of India' has been exposed for allegedly misleading aspiring athletes by falsely claiming links with the Government of India's sports authorities. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) Fact Check has issued a warning, urging athletes and parents to remain cautious against such fraudulent activities.  
The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports clarified that the official government sports body is the Sports Authority of India (SAI), and it has no connection with the similarly named 'Sports Association of India'. The fake organisation is reportedly using the name similarity to create confusion among young athletes.  
According to the PIB Fact Check, the fake organisation has been allegedly sending attractive selection letters claiming to organise national and international sports events. It has also been collecting registration fees of around ₹1,500 from players for participation in championships.  
The organisation is said to be circulating promotional materials and advertisements to appear like an authorised sports body and gain the trust of athletes.

### Oil Prices Soar as Gulf Tensions Escalate

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Global oil prices rose sharply on Wednesday after renewed military clashes between the United States and Iran heightened fears of disruptions to energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz.  
Brent crude climbed more than 3 per cent to USD 76.48 per barrel, its highest level since June 23, reversing weeks of declining prices following a temporary easing of tensions in the region.  
The escalation came after US President Donald Trump declared that the interim peace understanding with Iran was "over", while fresh military exchanges between the two countries raised concerns over the security of one of the world's busiest energy shipping routes.  
The renewed tensions also weighed on financial markets, with India's benchmark Sensex closing 2.16 per cent lower amid rising crude prices and fears of



prolonged geopolitical instability. Officials said India could also face disruptions in fertiliser imports, including urea, sulphur and potash, at a crucial time for the monsoon sowing season.  
Experts warned that prolonged supply disruptions could increase food prices and further expose India's dependence on imported crude oil, much of which passes through the Strait of Hormuz.  
The latest developments have also raised concerns over higher shipping costs, supply chain disruptions and the impact on millions of Indian workers employed across the Gulf region.

### Germany Unveils New Long-Range Air Defence Missile

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
Germany is developing a new long-range version of its domestically produced IRIS-T air defence missile system as part of efforts to reduce reliance on the US-made Patriot air defence system amid rising global demand driven by conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.  
The new interceptor, named IRIS-T SLX, is being developed by Diehl Defence. According to the company's Chief Executive, Helmut Rauch, the missile will offer a significantly longer interception range than existing IRIS-T variants and is expected to serve as an alternative to Patriot interceptors for several air defence missions.  
**Boosting Indigenous Air Defence**  
Rauch said the IRIS-T SLX would help expand Europe's indigenous air defence capabilities while reducing dependence on imported missile systems. Germany has already supplied IRIS-T SLM systems to Ukraine,



where they have been used to intercept missiles and drones.  
**Extended Range and Advanced Capability**  
The IRIS-T missile family was originally designed as an air-to-air weapon before being adapted into ground-based air defence systems. While the current IRIS-T SLM has an interception range of about 40 kilometres, the upcoming IRIS-T SLX is expected to double that range to nearly 80 kilometres.  
The new system is expected to feature a combined radar and infrared seeker, enabling it to engage aircraft, cruise missiles and other aerial threats at greater distances. Series production of the IRIS-T SLX is expected to begin later this decade.

### TTD Suspends VIP Darshans Till Sept 30



**> Vikrama Vahini | Tirumala**  
The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has announced the suspension of VIP Break Darshans at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple on select dates between July and September 30 due to major religious festivals and temple events.  
According to TTD, the darshans will remain cancelled on July 14, July 17, July 19, July 20, August 22, August 24, September 8, September 14, and from September 15 to 23 during the annual Srivari Brahmotsavams.  
The temple body also stated that VIP recommendation letters will not be accepted on the day preceding these dates, except for Protocol dignitaries.  
TTD has advised devotees to plan their pilgrimage accordingly and cooperate with the arrangements made for the smooth conduct of temple rituals and festivals.



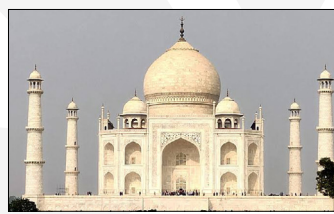
Members of the Hindu Rashtra Samanvaya Samiti submit a memorandum to Karnataka DGP Saleem in Bengaluru, demanding legal action over alleged remarks against Lord Shri Ram and Goddess Shri Mahalakshmi.

### Three Identified, Search Continues for Five

**> Vikrama Vahini | Wayanad**  
Three victims killed in a landslide at a tunnel road construction site near Kalladi in Meppadi, Wayanad, have been identified. The deceased include a JCB operator from Madhya Pradesh, a worker from Bihar and a labourer from Jharkhand.  
Five others remain missing, with over 200 personnel from SDRF and NDRF continuing search operations despite heavy rains and difficult conditions. Authorities have shifted 23 nearby families to safer locations amid fears of further land collapse.

### HC SEEKS CENTRE, ASI REPLY IN TAJ MAHAL ROW

**> Vikrama Vahini | Agra**  
The Allahabad High Court has issued notices to the Centre and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on a petition claiming that the Taj Mahal was originally a Shiva temple.  
The petition, filed by advocate Harishankar Jain on behalf of Hindu devotees, seeks the appointment of an independent Advocate Commissioner to conduct a detailed survey, videography and photography of the monument. It claims that a temple dedicated to Lord



Agrashwar Mahadev Naghathe shwar exists within the Taj Mahal complex.  
The plea challenges earlier orders of Agra's lower courts, which had rejected the request citing a lack of supporting land records. During the hearing,

**The Allahabad High Court has sought responses from the Centre and the ASI on a petition claiming the Taj Mahal was originally a Shiva temple, while making it clear that it has not expressed any opinion on the merits of the case.**

Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal directed the Centre and the ASI to file their written responses.  
Counsel for the petitioners, Vishnu Shankar Jain argued that, in light of the Supreme Court's Ayodhya judgment, courts have the authority to order scientific examinations of disputed sites.  
He contended that a scientific

survey was necessary to verify claims regarding alleged Hindu symbols inside the monument's sealed rooms and basement.  
The High Court has not expressed any view on the merits of the claims.  
The matter will be taken up after the Centre and the ASI submit their responses.

### B'luru Begins Abandoned Vehicle Drive

**> Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**  
The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will begin removing abandoned vehicles from roads and public places across Bengaluru from July 10.  
The drive will be conducted jointly with traffic police in five city

zones. Owners of identified vehicles will be given seven days' notice, after which unattended vehicles will be seized and auctioned as per rules.  
Officials said the move aims to clear public spaces and improve road safety across the city.

### Delhi Set to Lead India's Bullet Train Revolution

**> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**  
The Centre is planning a major expansion of India's high-speed rail network by developing four proposed bullet train corridors originating from Delhi. The projects aim to improve connectivity across northern, eastern and western India while significantly reducing travel time.  
**Delhi-Varanasi-Siliguri Corridor**  
The proposed Delhi-Varanasi-Siliguri route is expected to be India's longest high-speed rail corridor, covering around 1,705 km. Trains are expected to run at speeds of up to 320 kmph, reducing travel time between Delhi and Siliguri to about six hours. The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has invited tenders for the project's civil structure design.  
**Delhi-Lucknow-Varanasi Route**  
The corridor will pass through Noida,

Jewar, Agra, Lucknow, Prayagraj and Varanasi, with a proposed high-speed link to Ayodhya. Once operational, travel time from Delhi to Lucknow could be reduced to around two hours and ten minutes, while Delhi to Varanasi could take less than four hours.  
**Delhi-Ahmedabad Corridor**  
Another proposed route will connect Delhi with Jaipur, Udaipur and Ahmedabad. The corridor is expected to integrate with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train network, enabling seamless high-speed travel between Delhi and Mumbai. The project is awaiting financial approval.  
**Delhi-Amritsar Corridor**  
The proposed Delhi-Amritsar bullet train will pass through Haryana and Punjab, covering cities such as Rohtak, Chandigarh, Ludhiana and Jalandhar. The journey between Delhi and Amritsar is

expected to take around two hours. Surveys and route alignment work are currently underway.  
**High-Speed Rail Expansion**  
India's first bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad is expected to begin operations on its Surat-Bilimora section in 2027, with the full corridor likely to be completed by 2029. The four proposed Delhi corridors are currently at various stages of planning, surveys and approvals as the government pushes ahead with its high-speed rail expansion plans.



### ISRO Clears Cryogenic Engine for Next LVM3 Mission

**> Vikrama Vahini | Chennai**  
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed the Flight Acceptance Test of the CE20 cryogenic engine that will power the upper stage of the next LVM3 mission.  
The test was conducted on July 6 at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. During the hot test, the engine operated at thrust levels of 19.5 tonnes for 45 seconds and 22 tonnes for 25 seconds, successfully meeting all performance parameters. For the first time, ISRO used the newly developed Nozzle Protection System (NPS), which enables testing of the engine under sea-level



conditions, simplifies the testing process and reduces resource requirements.  
The CE20 engine has already powered eight successful LVM3 missions, including Chandrayaan-2, Chandrayaan-3 and three commercial launches. It has also completed human-rating requirements for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission. ISRO said the engine will now undergo refurbishment before being integrated with the C32 flight stage for the LVM3-M7 mission. The successful test marks another milestone in ISRO's efforts to strengthen India's indigenous launch capabilities for future space exploration and human spaceflight missions.

VIKRAMA VAHINI | INFO GRAPHICS

## IRAN STRIKES US MILITARY BASES IN BAHRAIN, KUWAIT

**TENSIONS IN GULF ESCALATE**

**WHAT HAPPENED?**

- Iran launched missile and drone attacks on US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait.
- Air defence systems were activated in both countries after explosions and sirens were reported.
- Iranian state media claimed a US MQ-9 drone was shot down.
- US officials confirmed the attacks but reported no casualties or major damage.

**US COUNTER-STRIKES**

- US struck more than 80 Iranian targets across multiple locations.
- Targets included air defence systems, command networks, coastal radars, anti-ship missiles, and 60+ IRGC boats near the Strait of Hormuz.
- Operation aimed at degrading Iran's ability to threaten international shipping.
- Trump administration revoked licence for Iran to sell oil internationally, adding economic pressure.

**US-IRAN CEASEFIRE UNDER RENEWED STRAIN**  
Iran condemned the strikes and sanctions as violations of the interim agreement. Both sides now accuse each other of breaching the ceasefire, making peace talks even harder.

**REGIONAL FEARS GROW**

Bahrain and Kuwait activated air defence systems and said they reserve the right to protect national security.

Oil prices rise amid fears of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy corridor.

Gulf states fear being drawn into the conflict despite close ties with the US.

Renewed fighting jeopardizes efforts to resume nuclear talks and achieve lasting peace in the region.

**THE EXCHANGE OF STRIKES THREATENS TO SPARK A WIDER REGIONAL WAR AND PUSHES THE FRAGILE CEASEFIRE TO THE BRINK.**