

Violence Derailed the Protest!

Wangchuk Defends Stone-Pelters; Police Hurt in Fresh Unrest

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Activist Sonam Wangchuk on Wednesday said he would end his indefinite hunger strike if the Centre gives an unequivocal assurance that no punitive or retaliatory action will be taken against students and youth who participated in protests over alleged examination irregularities.



In a letter to Union Ministers J.P. Nadda and Jitendra Singh, Wangchuk said the two leaders, who met him at Medanta Hospital on Tuesday night, had assured him that the government would positively consider two of his key demands—adequate compensation for families of students who died by suicide following the alleged NEET paper leak, and a meaningful discussion in Parliament on examination reforms and accountability, including consideration of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

No Cases Against Protesters

Wangchuk urged the Centre to guarantee that peaceful protesters would not face legal action, harassment or any retaliatory measures. "If such an assurance is given, I shall end my fast. Otherwise, I will be forced to continue it indefinitely," he said, adding that he wanted to return to his students and educational work but not at the cost of the young people who joined the movement.

Opposition Extends Support

Sharing the letter on X, Wangchuk said he would also appeal to students to suspend their protest and begin dialogue with the government once the assurance is received.

He said nearly 65 MPs from different political parties had appealed to him to end his fast. On Wednesday, a delegation of Opposition MPs, including Congress leader Vivek Tankha, CPI(M)'s John Brittas and TMC's Sagarika Ghose, met Wangchuk at the hospital and assured him that examination reforms and accountability would be raised in Parliament.

Wangchuk has been on an indefinite hunger strike since June 28 and is currently undergoing treatment at Medanta Hospital after being shifted from Safdarjung Hospital following a

ACP Among Three Cops Injured in Fresh Stone Attack

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Three Delhi Police personnel, including ACP Bhagat Singh, were injured after unidentified miscreants allegedly pelted stones near Tolstoy Marg, close to the NDMC intersection and Jantar Mantar, on Wednesday night. The incident occurred around 8.30 pm, prompting police to use a lathi charge to disperse the crowd and restore normalcy.

The injured officers, attached to the Connaught Place police station, were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Police said the situation was brought under control within a short time, and an investigation has been launched to identify those involved in the attack.

Security Tightened

Following the incident, security has been intensified in the New Delhi district, particularly around Jantar Mantar and other sensitive locations. Police are examining CCTV footage and gathering evidence to trace the suspects responsible for the violence.

Officials said strict legal action will be taken against those found involved, and additional personnel have been deployed to prevent any further disturbance.

Incident Follows Recent Violent Protest

The latest stone-pelting incident comes just days after violence erupted during the CJP's "Sansad Chalo" protest in the national capital.

According to Delhi Police, more than 118 police personnel, including several senior officers, were injured when protesters allegedly attacked security forces with stones, damaged government vehicles and attempted to breach barricades.

Around 70 protesters were detained following the clashes, while several others also sustained injuries during the confrontation.

Police Appeal for Peace

Delhi Police appealed to the public to maintain peace and cooperate with law enforcement agencies. Authorities said investigations into both incidents are continuing and assured that those responsible for attacking police personnel and disrupting public order would face stringent action under the law.



Nadda Counters Rahul Over Paper Leak Row

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Wednesday responded to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations over the NEET paper leak issue, saying the matter should be discussed in Parliament rather than being politicised. He also highlighted paper leak incidents reported in several non-NDA ruled states.

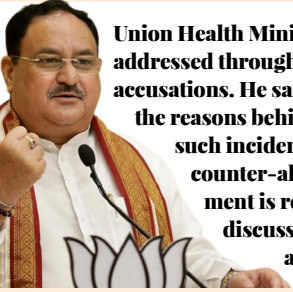
Addressing the media amid ongoing protests over the issue, Nadda said the government is ready for a detailed discussion on paper leaks, including their causes, those responsible and the steps taken to prevent such incidents. Nadda said the Narendra Modi-led government is "responsible and responsive" and welcomed a comprehensive discussion in Parliament.

He urged the Opposition to present its concerns while assuring that the government would respond with facts.

Reacting to Rahul Gandhi's claim of 150 paper leaks in the last 10 years, Nadda said such matters require proper investigation and cannot be reduced to political allegations.

On his meeting with climate activist Sonam Wangchuk at Medanta Hospital, Nadda said he had visited to enquire about Wangchuk's health and requested him to end his hunger strike and continue guiding students positively. He added that Wangchuk had

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said the NEET paper leak issue should be addressed through a detailed discussion in Parliament instead of political accusations. He said the government is ready to discuss the matter, including the reasons behind paper leaks, those responsible and steps taken to prevent such incidents. Nadda said, "We should move beyond blame and counter-allegations and discuss the issue in Parliament. The government is responsible and responsive, and we are ready for a thorough discussion." He also urged the Opposition to present its views and assured that the government would respond with facts.



NEET Row Sparks BJP-Congress Clash in Bengaluru

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The political battle over the alleged NEET question paper leak intensified in Bengaluru on Wednesday, with the BJP and Congress staging rival protests that led to clashes outside the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) office. The Karnataka BJP organised a protest outside the KPCC office, accusing the Congress of indulging in political drama over the NEET controversy while ignoring key issues affecting the state, including drought and the deaths during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) victory celebrations.

Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka alleged that Congress leaders were more focused on protests in New Delhi than addressing Karnataka's problems. He demanded that the state government declare drought in affected areas, allocate funds for drinking water projects and establish drought management task forces at the taluk level.

PG2

Good morning

We wake up for expectation but the day ends with an experience!

BRIEFS

Bidadi Row: Farmers Cry Foul Over PIL

► **Vikrama Vahini | B'luuru**

Farmers' organisation Samyukta Horata Karnataka (SHK) on Wednesday alleged that a dismissed public interest litigation (PIL) against the proposed Bidadi Township project was aimed at weakening the ongoing farmers' agitation against land acquisition.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, SHK leaders claimed that the PIL, challenging the acquisition notification for 518 acres was a "defective" petition intended to create confusion and benefit interests supporting the township project.

SHK urged farmers to remain united and continue their struggle through legal and democratic means, warning against attempts to divide the movement.

The Bidadi Township project has continued to face opposition from farmers and has emerged as a major political and legal issue in Karnataka.

TRUMP ISSUES IRAN STRIKE WARNING

► **Vikrama Vahini | Washington**

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday issued a strong warning to Iran, saying any attack on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz would invite American strikes on Iranian infrastructure.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said that if Iran targets vessels with missiles, rockets, drones or other weapons, the US would retaliate by destroying key facilities such as bridges and power plants, including those near Tehran.

Tensions Rise in West Asia

Trump's warning comes amid growing tensions between Washington and Tehran, with fresh military exchanges reported across the region. Air defence systems were activated in Jordan's port city of Aqaba after missile attacks, with Jordanian forces intercepting several projectiles.

US-Iran Conflict Escalates

The situation further intensified following reports of a US missile strike on Iran's Larak Island. Iranian media reported a powerful blast in the area, adding to concerns over a wider regional confrontation.

The Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global oil shipping route, remains at the centre of rising tensions between the two countries amid escalating conflicts.



K'taka Cabinet Expansion Delayed Again

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The much-awaited Karnataka Cabinet expansion has been postponed again after Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad returned from New Delhi without holding discussions with the Congress high command.

The three senior leaders had travelled to Delhi on Tuesday following a call from the party leadership to discuss the Cabinet expansion.

A meeting was scheduled at AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal's residence under the leadership of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi also expected to attend.

However, the meeting could not take place as Congress leaders were engaged in protests over the alleged NEET irregularities.

Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other leaders were detained by Delhi Police during a protest near Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence, leaving no time for the Cabinet discussions.

The state government had already written to Raj Bhavan making arrangements for a possible swearing-in ceremony. With the high command meeting getting cancelled, the oath-taking programme has now been deferred.

According to Congress sources, the three Karnataka leaders are likely to visit Delhi again after July 25 for further discussions, and the Cabinet expansion may take place later this month.

The repeated postponement

Karnataka Cabinet expansion has been delayed again as Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah and KPCC chief B.K. Hariprasad returned from Delhi without meeting the Congress high command. The discussion was postponed due to the party's focus on NEET protests, leaving ministerial aspirants waiting for a fresh date after July 25.

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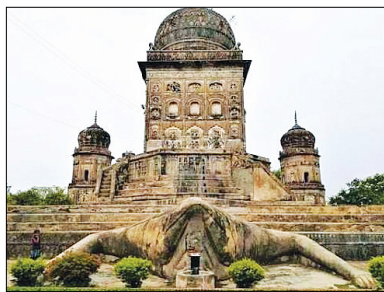
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WHERE YOUR SUCCESS MAKES HEADLINES



SPIRITUAL

India's Unique Frog Temple Mystery



► **Vikrama Vahini | Lakhimpur Kheri**
India is home to countless temples with unique traditions, architecture and legends, but the Frog Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district stands apart for its unusual design and spiritual significance. Known as the country's only temple dedicated to a frog-shaped structure, the ancient shrine attracts visitors with its rare architecture, colour-changing Shivling and standing Nandi idol.

Located in Oel town, the temple is believed to be around 200 years old and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Unlike conventional temples, the entire structure is designed in the shape of a giant frog. According to local traditions, the temple was built based on the principles of "Manduk Tantra", an ancient tantric architectural system associated with prosperity and positive energy.

The temple was constructed under the guidance of tantric expert Kapil from Meghalaya and follows a blend of tantric concepts and Rajasthani architectural style. The structure is designed as if a giant frog is sitting on the back of a crocodile. Visitors enter through the eastern entrance and reach the sanctum through the frog's head-like structure.

The outer walls of the temple feature intricate tantric carvings, adding to its historical and architectural importance. One of the biggest attractions of the temple is the Narmadeshwar Mahadev Shivling installed inside the sanctum. Made from a rare stone brought from the Narmada River, the Shivling is believed by devotees to change colours at different times of the day depending on the light.

According to local beliefs, the temple has a connection with the rulers of the region. During a severe drought, King Bakht Singh of the Chauhan dynasty is said to have received blessings from a divine frog. Following this, prosperity returned to the kingdom. Since frogs are considered symbols of rain, fertility and abundance in tantric traditions, the king built the temple in honour of the divine creature.

The temple receives a large number of devotees during Maha Shivratri and Diwali, when special rituals and prayers are performed.

Siddu Awaits High Command's Call

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said Karnataka Congress leaders are ready to return to New Delhi if the party high command calls them for further discussions on the long-pending Cabinet expansion.

Speaking to reporters before leaving Delhi, Siddaramaiah said the leaders would attend another round of talks if invited. Earlier, he held a breakfast meeting with several MLAs at Karnataka Bhavan.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah and KPCC leaders had travelled to Delhi to discuss the Cabinet expansion, but no final decision was taken. The meeting ended without any announcement, delaying the much-awaited expansion.

According to party sources, the Congress high command has sought changes to the proposed list of ministerial aspirants, stressing that only loyal, active, clean-image leaders with no criminal background should be considered. State leaders, however, have argued that social justice and regional representation must also be taken into account.

The issue remains unresolved, and another round of consultations with the party leadership in Delhi is expected, though no date has been finalised.

Party leaders are now awaiting a fresh directive from the Congress high command to resume discussions on the Cabinet expansion. The delay has also prolonged uncertainty among ministerial aspirants in the state.



K'TAKA YOUTHS RESCUED FROM MYANMAR SCAM

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Two young men from Karnataka have been rescued after being trafficked to a cyber scam centre in Myanmar through a fake overseas job offer that promised high-paying employment in Thailand.

The rescue was carried out through a coordinated operation involving the Karnataka Cyber Command, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), Enforcement Directorate (ED), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Indian Embassy in Myanmar.

Lured by Fake Job Offer



According to officials, the victims were offered data entry and computer-related jobs in Thailand with attractive salaries by human traffickers. However, after reaching Thailand, they were illegally taken across the border into Myanmar.

At the cyber scam compound, allegedly operated by a Chinese network, their passports and identity documents were confiscated, and they were forced to participate in online financial fraud and cryptocurrency scams targeting victims worldwide.

Forced into Cyber Fraud

Officials said the victims were subjected to physical and mental harassment whenever they refused to carry out cybercrime activities.

The two men eventually managed to contact their families in Karnataka and informed them about their ordeal. Their relatives alerted the authorities, triggering a joint rescue operation.

Based on inputs from the Enforcement Directorate, Karnataka Cyber Command coordinated with central agencies and the Indian Embassy to secure the victims' release. Both have now returned safely to India.

₹5,000 Footpath Riding Fine Proposed

► **From PGi**

The Minister said that solving Bengaluru's traffic problems requires not only infrastructure development but also responsible behaviour from road users.

He urged traffic authorities to focus on effective enforcement of existing rules instead of introducing new regulations alone.

The meeting was attended by senior traffic police officials and civic officers, who discussed measures to improve road discipline, reduce congestion and ensure safer mobility for pedestrians and motorists across the city.

Gowda also directed officials to strengthen monitoring of traffic violations and take immediate action against repeated offenders.

Nodal Officers Named for Waste-Free Drive

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed all civic departments to appoint department-wise nodal officers for the month-long "Freedom from Waste" campaign, which will be held across Bengaluru from August 1 to 31.

Reviewing preparations through a virtual meeting, Rao instructed departments to identify bulk waste and construction and demolition (C&D) waste hotspots, complete GIS mapping, and ensure all arrangements are in place before the campaign begins. Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has already identified 1,616 locations containing over 22,000 tonnes of waste.



The campaign will focus on clearing bulk waste, overgrown vegetation, illegal dumps, and improving cleanliness along Outer Ring Road, National Highways, major roads, and key junctions.

Departments were also directed to remove unused BESCOM poles, relocate transformers where necessary, and clear BWSSB pipelines obstructing public spaces.

Rao said the drive would be jointly implemented by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), City Corporations, BMRL, Railways, K-RIDE, NHAI, BDA, KIADB, BESCOM, BWSSB, and other agencies. A joint cleanliness drive has also been planned for Hebbal Junction.

AI Aided KR Puram Triple Murder Plot Uncovered

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Police investigating the sensational KR Puram triple murder case have uncovered evidence that the prime accused allegedly used artificial intelligence (AI) to meticulously plan the crime, making it one of the first such cases in Karnataka involving the misuse of AI technology.

According to investigators, the accused, Kenneth, extensively used Google's AI assistant Gemini to gather information on carrying out murders and disposing of bodies. Rather than directly searching for ways to kill,



he allegedly used indirect prompts, such as asking how to defend himself against intruders and what weapons could be used, to obtain relevant information.

Police said Kenneth also searched for

methods to attack victims without being noticed and explored ways to dispose of the bodies. Investigators found that he had even considered using an industrial furnace, originally purchased for a cloud kitchen business, to burn the bodies but abandoned the idea after realising it was impractical.

The triple murder took place in June at an apartment in KR Puram, where a 55-year-old man, his 48-year-old wife, and their 20-year-old daughter were found stabbed to death.

During the investigation, police arrested the couple's elder daughter Shwetha and her

live-in partner Kenneth from Puducherry after they went into hiding. Shwetha was taken into custody on June 24, followed by Kenneth on June 25.

According to the investigation, Kenneth allegedly believed that eliminating Shwetha's parents would enable the couple to gain control of the family's assets and overcome mounting financial difficulties.

Investigators said Shwetha initially dismissed Kenneth's conversations about killing her family as jokes and was unaware that he was allegedly planning the murders.

Sri Vyasaraaja Mutt Begins Decennial Fest

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

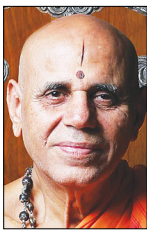
The Sri Vyasaraaja Mutt (Sosale) will inaugurate the 10th Peetharohana (Pontificate) anniversary celebrations of Sri Vidyashreesha Theertha Swamiji on July 23 and 24 at the Vyasaraaja Mutt premises in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru.

Sri Vidyashreesha Theertha has completed ten years as the head of the historic Vyasaraaja Mutt, during which the Mutt has

undertaken several religious, educational, social and cultural initiatives.

On July 24, a ceremonial Darbar in honour of Sri Vyasaraaja Gurusarvabhoutma will be held in the evening, followed by the formal inauguration of the Peetharohana Decennial celebrations.

The event will witness the divine presence of several prominent seers, including Sri



Subudhendra Theertha of Mantralaya Sri Raghavendra Mutt, Sri Satyatma Theertha of Uttaraadi Mutt and Sri Sujayanidhi Theertha of Mulabagilu Sripadaraaja Mutt, along with pontiffs from various other mutts.

Justice V. Srishananda, MLA Ravi Subramanya, Udaya Garudachar, scholar Dr. A.V. Nagasampige, former IAS officer K. Jaiaraj and several other dignitaries will attend the function as chief guests.

NEET Row Sparks BJP-Congress Clash in B'luru

► **From PGi**

Targeting Rahul Gandhi, Ashoka alleged that the Congress leader had raised the NEET issue but remained silent on the Bengaluru RCB celebration tragedy.

Tensions escalated when BJP and Congress workers confronted each other outside the KPCC headquarters. The BJP later alleged that several of its legislators were attacked while being escorted by police.

A BJP delegation led by Ashoka met Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh and demanded

immediate action against those responsible.

Ashoka described the incident as a "pre-planned conspiracy" and blamed the Congress leadership, while alleging that weapons were kept inside the party office. The BJP leader warned of further protests if arrests were not made.

KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad said Congress workers were holding a peaceful protest demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET issue, but BJP workers created tension by gathering outside the office.

NEWS

Friday Phone-in for Civic Services

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

To strengthen citizen grievance redressal and improve civic services, Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar has launched a weekly Phone-in Programme to directly hear public complaints.

As part of the initiative, this week's Phone-in Programme will be held on Friday, July 24, 2026, from 7:00 am to 9:00 am.

During the programme, residents can directly speak with the Commissioner regarding a wide range of civic issues, including potholes and road repairs, streetlight maintenance, door-to-door garbage collection and disposal,



removal of dangerous trees and branches, mosquito control measures, stray dog management, development and maintenance of parks, removal of illegal banners and posters, clearing encroachments on footpaths, e-Khata-related issues, and other public service concerns.

All complaints received during the programme will be registered on the Sahaya 2.0 portal and immediately forwarded to the concerned departmental officials for prompt action. Citizens will also receive an SMS with their complaint registration details and the contact information of the officer assigned to address the issue.

Ashok Seeks Drought Relief for Farmers

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok on Wednesday urged the Karnataka Government to immediately declare drought across the state, provide ₹30,000 per acre as compensation for crop loss, and waive farmers' loans, alleging that worsening drought conditions have led to farmer suicides and large-scale migration in several districts.

Addressing a press conference, Ashok claimed that 157 taluks have been affected by drought, agricultural activity has nearly come to a standstill, and fodder shortages have forced farmers to sell their cattle.

He urged the government to submit a drought assessment report to the Centre without



delay and release immediate relief through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The BJP leader alleged that 31 farmers had died by suicide in the past two months and criticised the Congress government for failing to respond adequately to the crisis.

He also demanded ₹20 crore for every drought-hit taluk, an

immediate ban on the sale of fodder to other states, and implementation of the Chief Minister's promise to waive farm loans.

Ashok further accused the state government of neglecting farmers while engaging in political activities in New Delhi and urged it to prioritise drought relief measures across Karnataka.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Can Jamun Help Control Diabetes?

Jamun (black plum) is widely believed to help control diabetes, but health experts say it should be viewed as a supportive food rather than a treatment. While the fruit contains several beneficial nutrients, it cannot replace diabetes medication or insulin.

Rich in Nutrients and Antioxidants

According to endocrinologist Dr. Nishant Jain, Jamun is rich in vitamin C, fibre, potassium, magnesium, iron, anthocyanins, flavonoids and other antioxidants that help protect the body's cells from oxidative stress, which is common in people with diabetes.

May Help Regulate Blood Sugar

Experts say some natural compounds in Jamun may slow the conversion of starch into sugar and improve the body's response to insulin. Its low glycaemic index and high fibre content may also help prevent a sudden rise in blood sugar after meals. However, larger scientific studies are still needed to confirm these benefits.

Seed Powder Not Scientifically Proven

Although Jamun seed powder is widely used in traditional medicine for diabetes management, experts caution that there is limited scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness.

It should not be used as a substitute for prescribed medicines without medical advice.

Consume in Moderation

Eating excessive Jamun may cause constipation, bloating, indigestion and stomach discomfort. People taking diabetes medicines or insulin should

consume the fruit in moderation and consult their doctor if necessary.

Experts also advise avoiding Jamun on an empty stomach or with milk. Around 8–10 fruits (75–100 grams) at a time is generally considered sufficient as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

Follow a Healthy Lifestyle

Doctors stress that diabetes management depends on a combination of a balanced diet, regular physical activity, routine blood sugar monitoring and prescribed medication. Jamun should be consumed only as part of a healthy lifestyle, not as a standalone remedy.

Consult a Doctor Before

Making Changes

Those planning to include Jamun or its seed powder regularly in their diet should first consult a qualified healthcare professional to ensure it is safe and appropriate for their condition.

Health experts emphasise that no single fruit or food can cure diabetes or completely control blood sugar levels.

A nutritious diet, healthy weight, regular exercise and medical supervision remain the most effective ways to manage the condition and reduce the risk of complications.

Experts recommend regular blood sugar checks and periodic medical consultations to ensure effective diabetes management.

Any dietary changes should complement, not replace, the treatment plan prescribed by a healthcare professional.



SCIENCE & Technology

WhatsApp Upgrades CarPlay, Android Auto

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

WhatsApp has introduced a range of new features across iPad, CarPlay, Android Auto, desktop and web platforms, enhancing convenience for users across multiple devices.

Direct Account Setup on iPad

Users can now create and register a WhatsApp account directly on an iPad using their phone number, eliminating the need to first link the device to a smartphone. The feature is expected to benefit tablet users, families and businesses.

Improved CarPlay and Android Auto Experience

WhatsApp has upgraded its interface for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, allowing users to make calls, listen to messages and send voice replies through their vehicle's infotainment system. The update also adds access to call history and favourite contacts while supporting hands-free operation.

PDF Editing on Desktop

WhatsApp Web and desktop users can now open PDF files directly within chats and perform basic editing tasks such as highlighting text and adding notes through Adobe Acrobat integration, reducing the need to download files separately.

Music Sharing to Status

The messaging platform has also introduced direct sharing of songs from Spotify and Apple Music to WhatsApp Status, enabling users to share their favourite tracks with contacts.

The new features are being rolled out gradually and may become available at different times depending on the user's device, app version and region.



State to Modernise Mayura Hotels

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Government will modernise Mayura Hotels and other tourism department properties by adopting the expertise and best practices of the private hospitality sector to enhance visitor experience and bring government-owned tourism infrastructure up to global standards, Tourism and Energy Minister K. J. George announced on Tuesday.

The Minister made the announcement after inaugurating the newly constructed Mayura Sunrise Restaurant at Nandi Hills in Chikkaballapur district, developed by the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC).

George said that although KSTDC and Jungle Lodges & Resorts own several properties at prime tourist destinations across the state, many of them have not reached their full potential. He said the government plans to introduce professional hospitality management, modern amenities, and improved service standards while retaining government ownership of the properties.

Citing the Department of Tourism's successful collaboration with the Taj Group at Chikkamagaluru, the Minister said the state would adopt similar best practices from leading hospitality companies to upgrade tourism facilities.

He emphasised that quality accommodation, food, and hospitality services should be made available at affordable prices for middle-class families, making tourism more inclusive and accessible.

Expert Committee to Guide Upgrades

The government will constitute an Expert Advisory Committee comprising leading hoteliers, hospitality



professionals, and tourism experts to recommend measures for upgrading Mayura Hotels and other tourism properties.

Based on the committee's recommendations, improvements will be made to guest rooms, food and beverage services, operations, customer experience, and overall management in a phased manner.

Ropeway, Parking Plan for Nandi Hills

Addressing the growing traffic congestion at Nandi Hills, George said the government is preparing a comprehensive mobility plan. During weekends and holidays, private vehicle access to the hilltop will be regulated, with a dedicated parking facility to be developed at the foothills.

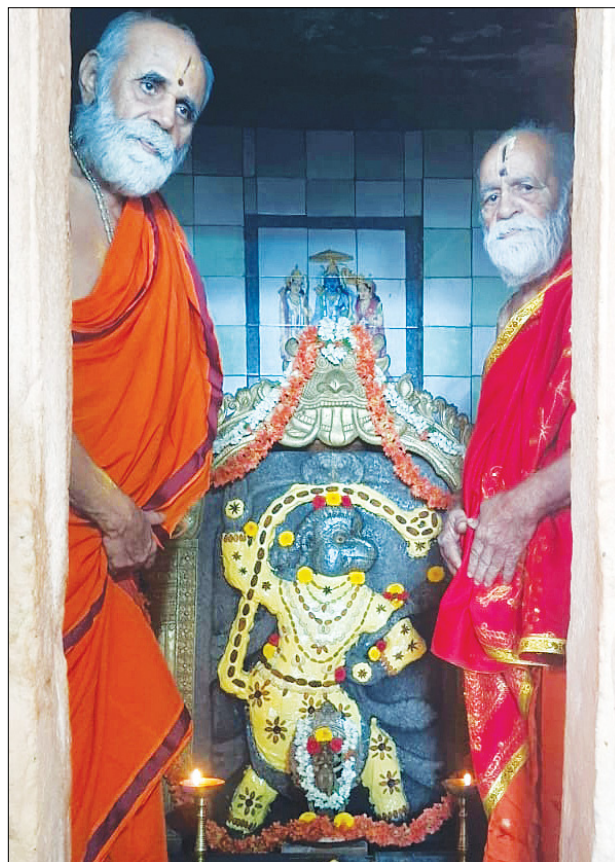
Visitors will be transported to the summit through

designated transport services, while the long-pending Nandi Hills Ropeway Project will be expedited to provide a permanent solution to traffic congestion.

The Minister also directed officials to prioritise cleanliness, quality service, and courteous treatment of tourists, stressing that the principle of "Atithi Devo Bhava" (Guest is God) should guide Karnataka's tourism sector.

Tourism Department Secretary Dr. V. Ram Prasath Manohar said efforts are underway to obtain the required forest clearances for the ropeway project and expressed confidence that approvals would be secured soon, paving the way for implementation.

Senior officials from KSTDC and the Department of Tourism attended the inauguration ceremony.



Sri Vidya Shreesha Theertha Sripadaru, Pontiff of Sri Vyasaraja Matha Visited Sri Man Madhava Theertha Matha at Tambihalli on the invitation of Sri Vidya Vallabha Madhava Theertha Sripadaru, Pontiff of Sri Man Madhava Theertha Matha and had the Darshana of Sri Vyasaraja Pratishtha Dwiteeya Sri Mukhya Prana Devaru.

Kalyan Banerjee Suspended from Lok Sabha

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kalyan Banerjee was suspended from the Lok Sabha for the remainder of the ongoing Monsoon Session over the alleged use of unparliamentary language against a woman Member of Parliament.

The suspension was announced by Presiding Officer Krishna Prasad Tanneti, who said the remarks had "hurt the dignity of the House." The resolution was passed through a voice vote amid protests and sloganeering by Opposition members over the NEET paper leak issue.

Following the decision, Banerjee was directed to leave the House, after which the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day.

Heated Exchange Outside the House

After the adjournment, Banerjee was involved in a verbal altercation with several former TMC colleagues who are

now members of the Nationalist Congress Party of India (NCPI).

The exchange reportedly involved MPs Mitali Bagh, Shatabdi Roy, and Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar. Other Opposition leaders intervened to defuse the situation, following which Banerjee left the Parliament premises. The NCPI leaders later met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and raised the issue.

Political Background

The confrontation comes in the wake of a major split within the Trinamool Congress after the party's defeat in the West Bengal Assembly elections earlier this year. Around 20 TMC MPs reportedly rebelled against the party leadership, with several joining the NCPI and others switching to the BJP. The NCPI members are now seated separately from the TMC benches in the Lok Sabha.



Lalbagh Blooms With Ganga Dynasty Heritage

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The iconic Lalbagh Flower Show in Bengaluru, organised as part of Independence Day celebrations, will showcase the rich legacy of the Ganga dynasty this year.

The Department of Horticulture is creating floral displays highlighting the architecture, culture, literature and contributions of the Gangas, who ruled parts of southern Karnataka for centuries.

The main attraction at the Glass House will be a floral replica of the 1,300-year-old Begur Naganatheshwara Temple, which carries one of the earliest references to Bengaluru through an ancient Kannada inscription.

Other highlights include floral models of Shravanabelagola's Jain heritage, Gomatheshwara statue, Nandi Hills' Yoganandeeshwara Temple, Ganga-era monuments and statues of prominent Ganga rulers.

Horticulture officials said the exhibition aims to introduce the glorious history of the Ganga dynasty to visitors while offering a unique experience for nature lovers and history enthusiasts.

ALMATTI FILLS, KRS WAITS FOR RAINS

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Heavy rainfall in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra has boosted inflows into the Krishna River, leading to a rise in water levels at Karnataka's Almatti Dam. However, the Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) reservoir, the primary drinking water source for Bengaluru, continues to remain below the 100-foot mark despite the advancing monsoon.

Continuous rain in the upper catchment areas has increased inflows into the Krishna basin, with nearly 80,000 cusecs of water flowing into the Krishna River. Water levels have also risen in the Vedaganga and Dudhganga rivers, submerging several bridges in the Nipani and Chikkodi regions. The Yedur-Kallol connecting bridge has reportedly gone underwater for the second time this season.

The increased inflow has significantly improved storage at the Almatti (Lal Bahadur Shastri



Sagar) Reservoir in Vijayapura district.

The reservoir's current water level stands at 518.25 metres against its maximum capacity of 519.60 metres. It is receiving 63,792 cusecs of inflow, while 25,000 cusecs are being released downstream.

At the Basavasagar Reservoir in Narayanpur, the water level has reached 489.26 metres against its full level of 492.25 metres. The reservoir is receiving 14,771 cusecs of inflow and releasing 6,000 cusecs.

Despite the monsoon season nearing its peak, the KRS Reservoir in Mandya remains well below its full capacity.

The reservoir's water level is

92.24 feet, compared to its maximum level of 124.80 feet, with a storage of 17,317 TMC against its total capacity of 49,452 TMC.

KRS is currently receiving only 852 cusecs of inflow while 1,801 cusecs are being released, reflecting limited recharge during the current monsoon.

Its current level stands at 72.65 feet, down from 83.63 feet recorded a year ago. Water storage has declined to 13.01 TMC, compared to 19.27 TMC last year.

The reservoir is receiving 3,132 cusecs of inflow, significantly lower than the 11,746 cusecs recorded during the corresponding period in 2025. Authorities are releasing 500 cusecs downstream.

The latest reservoir data indicates that while the Krishna basin has benefited from fresh rainfall, reservoirs supplying southern Karnataka continue to await stronger monsoon inflows in the coming weeks.

ENTERTAINMENT

Ranbir's Double Role in Ramayana

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Ahead of the much-awaited trailer release on July 24, the makers of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana have officially unveiled the film's cast through a special collector's edition comic book, offering fans a first look at the characters and the grand mythological world of the two-part epic.

The illustrated comic, launched at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, features concept artwork, character profiles and visual depictions of Ayodhya, Mithila and Lanka while confirming the actors portraying key roles in the film.

Ranbir Kapoor in Dual Role

Ranbir Kapoor will play Lord Ram, with reports indicating he will also portray Parashuram in a dual role. Sai Pallavi has been cast as Sita, while Ravie Dubey will essay the role of Lakshman.

Kannada actor Yash will portray Ravana, the king of Lanka, while Sunny Deol takes on the role of Lord Hanuman. Veteran actor Anupam Kher has been cast as Jatayu, the heroic vulture king who sacrifices his life while trying to rescue Sita.

The film features Arun Govil as King Dasharatha, with Indira Krishnan as Queen Kaushalya, Lara Dutta as Queen Kaikeyi, and Sonal Jha as Queen Sumitra. Sheeba Chaddha will portray

Manthara, whose actions lead to Ram's exile. Other key roles include Adinath Kothare as Bharat, Nitish Sharma as Shatrughan, Ajinkya Deo as Sage Vishwamitra, and Shishir Sharma as Sage Vashishtha.

Lanka's Characters Unveiled

The comic also confirms Kajal Aggarwal as Mandodari, Rakul Preet Singh as Surpanakha, and Faisal Malik as Kumbhakarna. Supporting roles include Kunal Kapoor as Lord Indra, Shobana as Kaikesi, Chetan Hansraj as Sumali, and Mukesh Tiwari as Agastya Muni.

Director Nitesh Tiwari said Ranbir Kapoor and Sai Pallavi were chosen because of their sincerity and screen presence.

"I saw Lord Rama in Ranbir's eyes and Sita in Sai Pallavi's eyes. Their honesty as actors made them the ideal choice for these iconic roles," he said.

Produced by Prime Focus Studios, DNEG and Yash's Monster Mind Creations, Ramayana is being made as a two-part cinematic adaptation of Valmiki's epic. The film is among the most ambitious Indian productions to date, combining advanced visual effects with an ensemble cast and is expected to be one of the biggest releases in Indian cinema.

VIJAY FANS PLAN GRAND JANA NAYAGAN TRIBUTE

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Fans of actor Vijay are preparing for a grand celebration in Maharashtra ahead of the theatrical release of Jana Nayagan on July 23, a film widely expected to be the superstar's final appearance on the big screen before entering full-time politics.

The Maharashtra unit of the Thalapaty Vijay Makkal Iyyakkam has booked an entire theatre for a special screening and lined up a series of events to mark the occasion. The celebrations will begin with a pre-show DJ and dance performance, while the venue will feature a large event banner, selfie standees and a special signature wall where fans can write farewell messages and express their admiration for the actor.

Tributes and Charity As part of the celebrations, fans will distribute "Thank You" cards acknowledging Vijay's contribution to Indian cinema and his long association with audiences. A cake-cutting ceremony has also been planned after the screening to mark the release of the film.

In keeping with Vijay's philanthropic image, the fan club has announced a ₹25,000 donation towards the ear surgery of a one-and-a-half-year-old child. Organisers said they hope to raise

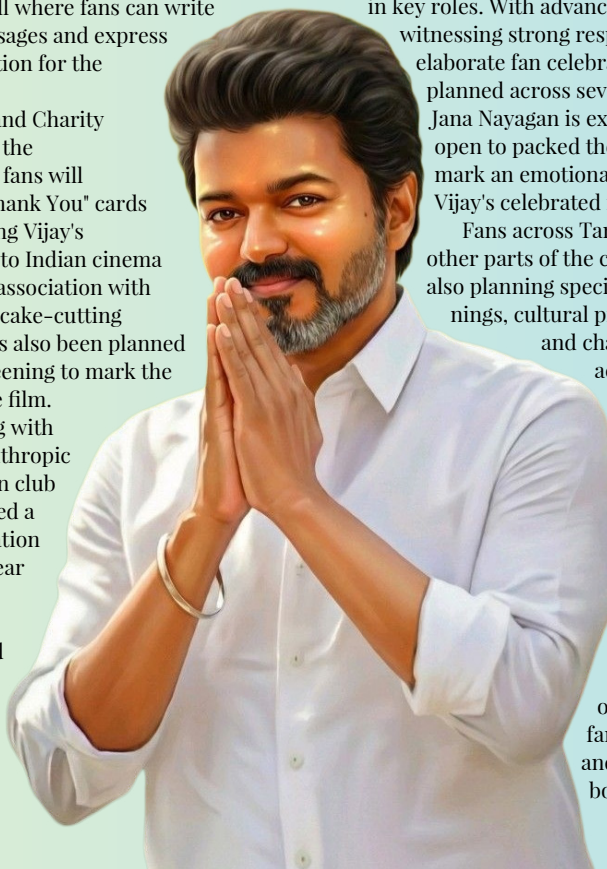
additional contributions during the event to support the medical treatment.

Film Cleared After Certification Delay

Jana Nayagan faced a lengthy certification process with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and was released only after receiving an 'A' certificate following 12 edits. The delay had initially pushed back the film's release schedule.

The film has a runtime of 3 hours and 3 minutes and features an ensemble cast including Bobby Deol, Pooja Hegde, Prakash Raj, Priyamani, Mamitha Baiju, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Narain and Sunil in key roles. With advance bookings witnessing strong response and elaborate fan celebrations planned across several states, Jana Nayagan is expected to open to packed theatres and mark an emotional farewell to Vijay's celebrated film career.

Fans across Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country are also planning special screenings, cultural programmes and charitable activities to celebrate the film's release. The movie is expected to register one of the biggest openings of the year, driven by overwhelming fan enthusiasm and advance bookings.



BUSINESS

Bullion Prices See Mixed Trend



► Vikrama Vahini | Kolkata

Gold prices registered a marginal increase across major Indian cities on Wednesday, while silver prices declined in the domestic retail bullion market amid global geopolitical tensions. The rise in crude oil prices, driven by the ongoing US-Iran conflict, supported demand for safe-haven assets such as gold.

In the futures market, MCX gold rose 1.18% to ₹1,45,240 per 10 grams, while MCX silver gained 1.15% to ₹2,25,860 per kg during early trade.

Global Factors Support Gold

Analysts attributed the movement in bullion prices to a sharp rise in global crude oil prices following fears of supply disruptions in West Asia. Brent crude climbed above \$91 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude traded near \$85 per barrel, boosting investor interest in gold as a safe-haven investment.

Retail Gold Prices in Major Cities

Among major cities, 24-carat gold was priced at ₹1,44,610 per 10 grams in New Delhi, ₹1,41,260 in Mumbai, ₹1,44,980 in Bengaluru, ₹1,44,670 in Kolkata, ₹1,45,210 in Hyderabad, and ₹1,45,400 in Chennai.

Silver (999 purity) was quoted between ₹2.19 lakh and ₹2.27 lakh per kg, depending on the city.

Bullion traders said gold prices are likely to remain volatile in the coming days as investors closely monitor geopolitical developments, crude oil movements and global economic indicators.

Jewellers said retail demand has remained steady despite elevated prices, with buyers focusing on festive and wedding-related purchases. Market experts expect bullion prices to continue reacting to global economic data, interest rate expectations and developments in the Middle East.

SPORTS

FanCode to Stream IND-ZIM T20s

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Team India will look to bounce back from disappointing tours of Ireland and England when it takes on Zimbabwe in a three-match T20 International series beginning July 23 at the Harare Sports Club.

Unlike most India matches, the series will not be broadcast on Star Sports, Sony Sports or streamed on JioHotstar and Sony LIV. Fans can watch the matches live on the FanCode platform through a subscription. Television coverage will be available on DD Sports and Unite8 Sports.

Series Schedule

- **1st T20: 23 – Harare – 4:30 pm IST**
- **2nd T20: 25 – Harare – 4:30 pm IST**
- **3rd T20: 26 – Harare – 4:30 pm IST**

India Squad

The Indian team will be led by Shreyas Iyer and includes Tilak Varma, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Prabhsimran Singh, Shivam Dube, Suryansh Shedge, Rinku Singh, Harsh Dube, Ravi Bishnoi, Prince Yadav, Yash Thakur, Ashok Sharma and Mayank Yadav.

The series provides India an opportunity to regain winning momentum while giving several young players a chance to impress ahead of upcoming international assignments.

All three matches will be played at the Harare Sports Club, with India aiming to begin the series on a winning note. The tour is also expected to help the team assess emerging talent and strengthen its squad depth ahead of future ICC tournaments and bilateral assignments.

Gill Misses No.1 by One Point

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India captain Shubman Gill has narrowly missed reclaiming the No.1 spot in the latest ICC Men's ODI batting rankings, trailing New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell by just one rating point.

Despite an impressive performance in the three-match ODI series against England, Gill remains second with 801 rating points, while Mitchell tops the rankings with 802 points.

Strong Series, Narrow Miss

Gill scored 188 runs in three matches at an impressive average of 94, including two half-centuries. However, his rating dropped from 803 to 801 points after the second and third ODIs, leaving him just one point short of the top position.

Top ODI Batters

Former India captain Virat Kohli is ranked third with 767 points, while Rohit Sharma occupies the fourth spot with 758 points, giving India three batters in the top four of the ICC ODI rankings.

Although India lost the ODI series 2-1 to England, Gill's consistent form was one of the major positives. His performances have strengthened his reputation as one of the world's leading ODI batters ahead of India's upcoming international assignments. With several ODI series scheduled in the coming months, Gill will have another opportunity to reclaim the No.1 ranking. His consistent performances continue to make him a key pillar of India's batting line-up across the 50-over format.

JEJURI TEMPLE CELEBRATES SHARED FAITH

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Jejuri Khandoba Temple in Maharashtra's Pune district continues to stand as a remarkable symbol of India's shared spiritual heritage, where Hindu and Muslim devotees have worshipped together for generations. The nearly 800-year-old hilltop shrine is renowned for its unique traditions, vibrant turmeric festival, and centuries-old culture of religious harmony.

Dedicated to Lord Khandoba

Located atop Jejurigad Hill, the temple is dedicated to Lord Khandoba, also known as Malhari Martand or Martanda Bhairava, who is regarded as a warrior manifestation of Lord Shiva. Khandoba is worshipped as the family deity by farming communities, shepherds, traders, warriors, and rural communities across Maharashtra and northern Karnataka.

Centuries-Old Tradition of Muslim Devotion

One of the temple's most distinctive features is the long-standing participation of Muslim devotees. Many local Muslim families worship Khandoba as a divine protector, affectionately referring to him as Mallu Khan or Ajmat Khan.

Historians note that Muslim devotion at Jejuri is not a recent development but a centuries-old tradition. Historical records also mention that some Muslim rulers patronised Khandoba temples, while certain



Muslim families continue to perform hereditary duties associated with the shrine.

Legend of Khandoba

According to local belief, Lord Khandoba descended to Earth to defeat the demon brothers Mani and Malla, who had spread fear across the region. Following their defeat, Khandoba came to be revered as the protector of villages, cattle, and agrarian communities throughout the Deccan.

The 'Golden Temple' of Maharashtra

The temple is famous for its spectacular Bhandara Festival, during which devotees throw turmeric powder into the air, covering

the entire temple complex in a golden-yellow hue. The ritual symbolises prosperity, victory, and divine blessings, earning Jejuri the title "Sonyachi Jejuri" (Golden Jejuri).

Another major celebration is Champa Shashthi, a six-day festival marking Khandoba's victory over the demon brothers, attracting lakhs of devotees every year.

Believed to have originated in the 12th century, the Jejuri temple showcases the traditional Hemadpanthi style of architecture. The shrine is reached by climbing around 385 stone steps, offering panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

NHAI Rolls Out Digital Local Toll Pass

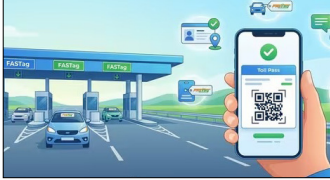
► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced a mobile-based digital local toll pass facility for residents living within 20 km of toll plazas, allowing them to apply for monthly passes through the RajmargYatra app.

The new system enables users to complete the entire process online without visiting toll plaza offices. Applicant details are verified through DigiLocker and the VAHAN database, while GPS and GIS technology confirm eligibility based on location.

Pilot Project in Delhi

The service has been launched on a pilot basis at the Mundka-Bakkarwala Toll Plaza on Delhi's Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II). NHAI plans to extend the facility to toll plazas across the country.



AI Assistance and Highway Services

The RajmargYatra app also features an AI-powered virtual assistant, Margmitra, which supports 22 Indian languages, including Kannada. It helps users with FASTag services, KYC verification, refunds and roadside assistance.

The app also allows travellers to report highway issues, track complaints, access emergency services through the 1033 helpline, and find nearby facilities such as fuel stations, hospitals and restaurants.

INDIA'S FIRST AI BIRD SANCTUARY SET TO RISE

► **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Maharashtra is set to establish India's first artificial intelligence-powered bird sanctuary at the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary in Mumbai, combining advanced technology with wildlife conservation and eco-tourism.

The Maharashtra government has approved a ₹45-crore Eco-Nature Park at Bhandup, which will feature an AI-based Bird Detection and Monitoring Centre to track flamingos and other migratory birds.

The AI system will identify bird species in real time, monitor their movements within a 1.5-kilometre radius, and maintain digital records of resident and migratory bird populations. The technology will help researchers and forest officials analyse biodiversity patterns and improve conservation efforts.

Spread across 20.09 hectares, the project has been designed to minimise environmental impact, with only a small portion reserved for



infrastructure. The park will include a 2.16-km mangrove nature trail, bird observation towers, viewing decks, a nature interpretation centre, butterfly garden and boat facilities.

The Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, a Ramsar wetland site, is home to around 250 species of birds, including Greater and Lesser Flamingos.

Officials said the AI-powered initiative will transform the sanctuary into a global birding destination while strengthening wildlife protection.

Terror Attack Claims Policeman's Life

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

A police constable was killed after suspected terrorists opened fire on a police team in Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir, on Wednesday, prompting a massive security operation in the area.

The attack took place around 12.30 pm at Lal Chowk in Anantnag, where police personnel had been deployed for security duties related to the Amarnath Yatra.

The injured policeman was rushed to the Government Medical College and Hospital, Anantnag, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

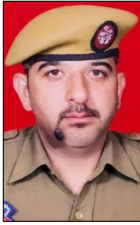
The deceased has been identified as Aashiq Hussain Qureshi, a 35-year-old police constable.

Following the attack, security forces immediately cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace the attackers. Security has also been intensified across other parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to reports, The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy outfit linked to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The incident comes amid heightened security arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra, which has remained suspended for the past four days due to heavy rainfall across the Union Territory.

Authorities have placed security forces on high alert as the search operation continues.



Pink Line Metro Faces Fresh Delay

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The opening of Bengaluru's much-awaited Pink Line Metro is likely to be delayed as the final approval from the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) is still pending.

BMRCL had planned to launch the Kalena Agrahara-Tavarekere stretch on August 15 after receiving speed certification for trains. However, further clearance from RDSO, followed by inspection by the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS), is awaited.

The 7.5-km elevated stretch with six stations, including the Jayadeva Hospital interchange, may now open in September or October. The complete 21.25-km Pink Line connecting Kalena Agrahara to Nagawara is expected to be operational by the end of the year.

UK Backs Limited US Iran Strikes

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham has approved the continued use of UK military bases for limited US military operations against Iran, maintaining the policy adopted by his predecessor Keir Starmer amid ongoing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

The decision allows the United States to use key British military facilities, including RAF Fairford and Diego Garcia, for specific defensive missions linked to the conflict.

According to reports, Burnham's decision ensures continuity in Britain's approach despite the change in government. While former Prime Minister Keir Starmer initially declined a broader US request, he later approved the use of British bases for limited defensive operations.

Burnham said his government remains committed to protecting the UK's national security while supporting its allies. He also stressed that Britain continues to favour diplomatic efforts and wants to prevent the conflict from escalating into a wider regional war.

US Operations Against Iran Intensify

The development comes as US President Donald Trump has stepped



UK PM Andy Burnham has approved the continued use of British military bases for limited US operations against Iran, while reaffirming Britain's defensive role and support for diplomatic efforts to prevent a wider regional conflict.

up military operations targeting Iranian military infrastructure and missile capabilities. The ongoing campaign has reportedly continued for 11 consecutive nights.

The British government has reiterated that it is not directly participating in offensive military operations against Iran.

However, it has permitted the United States to use British military bases for specific and limited defensive purposes in accordance with international law.

British forces have also carried out defensive missions in the region, including intercepting Iranian drones and missiles that posed threats to allied countries and British personnel.

Modi Reviews Viksit Bharat Roadmap

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting with senior government officials at his official residence in New Delhi to review progress towards the goal of building a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India).

During the meeting, Modi discussed developments in key sectors including rural development, agriculture, social welfare, youth affairs, sports and other priority areas with secretaries from various ministries. He stressed that every government reform must focus on public welfare and bring meaningful changes to people's lives. The Prime Minister said the vision of Viksit Bharat should become a nationwide movement with the youth playing a central role. He highlighted the need for reforms that are designed according to citizens' needs and can accelerate India's journey towards becoming a developed nation.

Modi directed officials to identify emerging challenges and prepare comprehensive plans to ensure effective governance. He said a whole-of-government approach is essential to achieve national development goals.



Teen Held in ₹64 Crore Cyber Fraud

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Surat Cyber Crime Police have arrested an 18-year-old from Uttar Pradesh for allegedly developing fake Android applications used in a nationwide cyber fraud network involving transactions worth nearly ₹64.38 crore.

The accused, Rohit Virendra Singh Shakya, a Class 11 dropout, allegedly learned coding through online tutorials and artificial intelligence tools before creating malicious applications that mimicked popular banking, payment, and government service apps.

According to police, Shakya developed 121 fake APK files that were circulated among cybercrime gangs operating in Jharkhand, Haryana, and Rajasthan. Once installed, the applications allegedly allowed fraudsters to access sensitive information, including one-time passwords (OTPs), banking credentials, text messages, and other personal data.

Investigators said the malware infected more than 21,600 mobile phones and has been linked to over 54,000 suspicious banking

transactions across the country.

The case came to light after a businessman from Surat's Adajan area allegedly lost ₹5 lakh after installing a fake "PNB One.apk" application received through WhatsApp. Believing it to be an official banking app, the victim installed the file, enabling fraudsters to gain access to his phone and bank account. He later reported the incident through the national cybercrime helpline 1930.

A technical investigation led Surat Cyber Crime Police to a hotel in Kanpur, where the accused was arrested.

Police alleged that Shakya supplied the malicious applications to cybercrime syndicates on a subscription basis, charging between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000 per month. Separate versions of the applications were reportedly developed for victims and administrators, allowing fraudsters to remotely monitor infected devices and steal financial information.

Police have seized two mobile phones and a laptop from the accused.

CJP Seeks Neutral Venue for Talks

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Wednesday expressed its willingness to hold talks with the Centre over the ongoing agitation against alleged irregularities in competitive examinations but insisted that the discussions take place at a neutral venue.

Addressing reporters at the protest site, CJP chief spokesperson Saurav Das said police informed the party that Union Minister J.P. Nadda had invited its representatives for talks at his residence.

However, the party declined the invitation, stating that negotiations should be held either at Jantar Mantar or another neutral location. "We will not go to anyone's house or office. If the government wants dialogue, ministers should come among the people," Das said.

The party maintained that it remains open to discussions aimed at resolving the issue but stressed that the venue should reflect transparency and fairness.

Neighbour Held for Elderly Woman's Murder

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A 21-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly murdering a 61-year-old woman to rob her gold jewellery, a day after her body was found stuffed inside a suitcase in Ramohalli Lake on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

The accused, identified as Gagan R., a resident of Challaghatta and the victim's neighbour, allegedly strangled Jayamma to death before fleeing with her jewellery, police said.

Jayamma had been reported missing by her son on July 16. During the investigation, police traced the accused and uncovered the motive behind the murder. Further investigation is underway.

Karnataka Cave Reveals 10,000-Year-Old Human Life

► **Vikrama Vahini | Ballari**

A major archaeological discovery in Karnataka has pushed back the history of human habitation in South India by over 10,000 years. Scientific tests have confirmed that the Devdari Cave in Ballari district was inhabited by prehistoric humans during the Mesolithic period.

Carbon dating by the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, revealed that stone tools and fossil remains found near Navloti village in Sandur taluk are more than 10,000 years old.

The discovery was made when villagers found microlithic tools made of chalcedony, quartz and ferruginous chert while digging trenches for temple construction. Animal bone remains, believed to be of cattle and goats, were also recovered.

A team of archaeologists led by Prof. Ravi Korishetter studied the site and said the findings challenge the earlier belief that prehistoric communities lived mainly near rivers and plains.

The evidence shows early humans also occupied forested hill regions like Sandur.

Researchers said Devdari Cave is the first scientifically confirmed prehistoric habitation site in South India located at an altitude of around 850 metres. The discovery could lead to further studies on ancient human migration and settlement patterns.

Environmental activists have urged the government to protect the site from possible mining activities in the region, warning that such operations could damage valuable archaeological evidence.

Archaeologists described the discovery as a significant milestone in understanding prehistoric life in the region.

The findings are expected to provide new insights into early human adaptation, tool-making practices and settlement patterns in Karnataka and across South India.