

Good morning

Every morning is a gift of life - bring some smile on your face and welcome the happiness of life.

BRIEFS

NTA Shake-Up After NEET Row

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

The Centre has removed 47 personnel from the National Testing Agency (NTA) as part of a major restructuring exercise following the NEET-UG paper leak controversy.

The government plans to complete the overhaul within a month, with possible disciplinary action against officials found responsible for lapses.

The reforms include stricter checks on private vendors, improved security in question paper handling and technology-based monitoring systems to prevent future leaks. The move aims to restore students’ confidence in national-level examinations conducted by the NTA.

The restructuring comes amid nationwide concerns over examination integrity, with the Centre focusing on stronger accountability measures and a more transparent system for conducting competitive examinations.

Yadgir Court Gives Life Term to 17

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Yadgir**

After a 12-year-long trial, the Yadgir Principal District and Special Sessions Court on Friday convicted 17 accused and awarded them life imprisonment in connection with the murder of Dalit leader Devendrappa Bheemappa Dalapati.

The case relates to a 2014 incident at Kanyakoluru village in Shahapur taluk, where a caste-related clash broke out during a festival following a dispute over a banner. Devendrappa was allegedly attacked with axes, sticks and stones, leading to his death.

The court also sentenced two other accused to six months’ imprisonment and directed that a fine of ₹4.25 lakh be handed over to the victim’s family. Police had filed a chargesheet against 32 accused in the case.

Sitharaman’s Tax Reform Push

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday urged Income Tax officials to ensure a taxpayer-friendly system for honest citizens while taking strict action against those deliberately evading taxes.

Addressing an event marking the 167th Income Tax Day celebrations in New Delhi, the Finance Minister asked officials to focus on responsive and fair tax governance.

Sitharaman said the Income Tax Department’s role has expanded beyond just revenue collection and now includes ensuring fairness, efficiency, ease of doing business and better taxpayer services.

Highlighting the department’s long journey, Sitharaman said the Income Tax Department has continuously evolved with India’s economic transformation and adapted to the changing needs of the nation.

Cabinet Clears Tough Anti-Paper Leak Bill

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

In a major move to curb examination malpractices, the Union Cabinet on Friday approved a draft Anti-Paper Leak Bill proposing stringent penalties, including up to 10 years’ imprisonment and a fine of ₹10 crore, for individuals and organised syndicates involved in question paper leaks.

The proposed legislation, which is expected to be introduced in Parliament next week during the ongoing Monsoon Session, is aimed at restoring public confidence in India’s examination system following a series of controversies, including the alleged NEET paper leak.

Harsher Punishment for Offenders

According to government sources, the draft law prescribes severe punishment for those found guilty of leaking examination papers or participating in organised examination fraud.

The legislation also proposes the establishment of fast-track courts to

PM Modi said paper leaks pose a serious threat to the future of students and assured that the government would take strict action against those involved. He emphasised that fast-track courts and stronger laws would be introduced to ensure swift punishment and protect the interests of India’s youth.

ensure speedy investigation, prosecution and disposal of paper leak cases, creating a stronger deterrent against examination-related crimes.

PM Announces Strong Legal Framework

The Cabinet’s decision came shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the government would strengthen the legal framework to tackle paper leaks.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, ‘More strict actions against paper leaks to come in tomorrow’s Cabinet!’

In a video message, Modi described paper leaks as a serious threat to students’ future and reaffirmed that protecting the interests of the country’s

youth remained the government’s highest priority.

He said those attempting to damage the future of students would face strict legal action and assured that fast-track courts would deliver swift justice.

Fast-Track Trials Proposed

Apart from prescribing tougher penalties, the proposed Bill seeks to streamline investigations and judicial proceedings through dedicated fast-track mechanisms.

The government believes quicker convictions will strengthen the integrity of competitive and recruitment examinations while discouraging organised criminal networks involved in

paper leaks.

NEET Row Triggers Reform Push

The move comes amid widespread public outrage over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, particularly the NEET paper leak controversy, which sparked nationwide student protests and intensified demands for reforms in the examination system.

The controversy has become one of the biggest political issues confronting the Centre, prompting calls for stronger accountability and institutional reforms.

Issue Dominates Parliament

The paper leak controversy has also dominated the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Congress and other INDIA bloc parties have repeatedly disrupted proceedings in both Houses, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and accusing the government of failing to safeguard the credibility of public examinations.

Opposition parties have maintained that they will not participate in debates until the Education Minister steps down, leading to repeated adjournments of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha during the first week of the session.

Government Defends Its Stand

The Centre has rejected the Opposition’s allegations, asserting that it remains committed to protecting students through legislative, administrative and technological reforms.

The government has also accused the Opposition of avoiding a constructive discussion on examination reforms despite its willingness to debate the issue in Parliament.

The proposed Anti-Paper Leak Bill is expected to trigger an intense debate when it is introduced next week, with the government presenting it as a decisive step to eliminate examination fraud and restore confidence in India’s public examination system.

SC SEEKS LEAK-PROOF NEET SYSTEM

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Supreme Court on Friday said it would closely monitor the Centre’s efforts to reform the National Testing Agency (NTA) following the NEET paper leak controversy, stressing the need for permanent institutional reforms instead of temporary measures to safeguard examinations.

A Bench comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe made the observations while hearing petitions filed by the United Doctors Front and the FAIMA Doctors Association regarding the functioning of the NTA. The court noted that while the Centre had constituted the Radhakrishnan Committee after the controversy, long-term structural reforms were essential to restore public confidence in the examination system.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, informed the court that substantial progress had been made and sought additional time to submit a comprehensive roadmap for reforms.

Questioning emergency arrangements adopted in previous examinations, Justice Narasimha observed

The Supreme Court has decided to closely monitor reforms in the National Testing Agency after the NEET paper leak controversy, directing the Centre to present a long-term roadmap to prevent examination fraud. The court stressed that permanent institutional changes, stronger security measures and transparency are needed instead of temporary solutions.

that deploying the Indian Air Force to transport question papers was only an ad hoc solution and could not replace a robust institutional mechanism.

The Bench directed the Centre to file a detailed affidavit outlining proposed reforms, including the structure of the governing board, transparency measures, expert participation, and improvements in pre-examination, examination and post-examination processes. The court also sought details on secure printing and transportation of question papers, state and district-level examination bodies, and other safeguards to prevent future paper leaks.

The Supreme Court asked the Centre to explain its proposal to shift NEET to computer-based testing (CBT) and emphasised that any transition to digital examinations must be supported by robust cybersecurity measures to prevent data breaches and ensure examination integrity.

Assuring the court that reforms were being implemented beyond the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Committee, Mehta said the process was being supervised at the highest executive level.

The Supreme Court made it clear that it would continue to oversee the reform process to ensure a transparent and credible examination system.

Bittu Quits Cabinet Ahead of Punjab Polls

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Union Minister of State for Railways and Food Processing Industries Ravneet Singh Bittu resigned from the Union Council of Ministers on Friday, amid speculation that he may return to state politics ahead of the Punjab Assembly elections.

President Droupadi Murmu accepted Bittu’s resignation with immediate effect on the advice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to an official statement issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan. Bittu, a senior Punjab BJP leader, had ceased to be a Rajya Sabha member in June, leading to speculation about his next political move. Sources said he is likely to focus on Punjab politics and may contest the upcoming Assembly elections.

The BJP has been strengthening its organisational activities in Punjab, where the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is currently in power, with Bittu playing a key role in expanding the party’s presence.

Bittu, the grandson of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, began his political career with the Congress and represented Punjab in the Lok Sabha several times.

He joined the BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and was later inducted into the Union Council of Ministers.

His resignation comes at a time when political parties have intensified preparations for the Punjab polls, with the BJP aiming to increase its influence in the state. The resignation is seen as a strategic move as the BJP prepares to strengthen its base in Punjab ahead of the electoral battle.

Bittu’s return to active state politics could play a key role in shaping the party’s campaign and outreach efforts.

PMK Opposes Cauvery Talks

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Chennai**

The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) on Friday opposed Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay’s proposed August 3 meeting with Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar over the Cauvery water dispute and Mokedatu dam issue. PMK President and Rajya Sabha MP Dr Anbumani Ramadoss urged Vijay to cancel the talks, stating that negotiations could weaken Tamil Nadu’s legal stand on the Mokedatu project.

Anbumani said Cauvery water rights should not be compromised and demanded that the state government hold consultations with farmers’ groups and political parties before taking any decision. He also called for legal measures and an all-party meeting to address the issue.

PG2

Cong Starts DCC Reshuffle Drive

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Congress on Friday launched the process to appoint new District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents in Karnataka as part of a major organisational revamp aimed at strengthening the party’s grassroots network.

AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal announced the exercise after holding discussions with Karnataka Congress leaders. He said the selection process has begun and the final list of DCC presidents will be announced after consultations with state leaders.

Focus on Strengthening Grassroots Network

The restructuring is being viewed as the first major organisational exercise after D.K. Shivakumar assumed charge as Chief Minister. The move is

aimed at improving the party’s organisational strength ahead of upcoming local body elections and Assembly bypolls.

DCC presidents play a key role in managing district-level party activities, coordinating with MLAs and local leaders, strengthening membership drives and supporting election preparations.

Leadership Balance in Focus

Party sources said the selection process is expected to consider factors such as regional representation, organisational ability and coordination with party workers.

Venugopal said further decisions would be taken after detailed discussions, indicating that appointments would be finalised only after completing the consultation process.

Cong Revamps KPCC Ahead of 2028 Polls

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Congress on Friday launched a major organisational overhaul in Karnataka, initiating a comprehensive restructuring of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) with an eye on the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections, local body polls and the 2028 Assembly elections.

The exercise is being closely monitored by the party high command, with AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala arriving in Bengaluru to oversee the process.

High Command Takes Charge

Venugopal and Surjewala are scheduled to hold a meeting with 40 observers appointed to

identify new district Congress presidents at Bharat Jodo Bhavan. Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah are also expected to attend the meeting.

The move signals the Congress leadership’s determination to strengthen the party organisation despite being in power in the state.

Focus on Grassroots Leadership

According to party sources, the high command is keen to replace underperforming district presidents and appoint leaders with strong organisational skills, grassroots connect and the ability to expand

the party’s support base.

Observers have been asked to assess potential candidates based on their organisational capability, ideological commitment, coordination with party workers and contribution to strengthening the Congress at the grassroots.

District-Wise Panels to Be Prepared

After consultations, the observers will prepare district-wise panels of eligible candidates. These recommendations will be submitted to the KPCC and later forwarded to the All India Congress Committee (AICC) for final approval.

The appointments of

the new district presidents are expected to be announced directly by the Congress high command.

Preparing for Upcoming Elections

The organisational revamp is being seen as the first major initiative under newly appointed KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad. Alongside the restructuring, the party is expected to launch statewide outreach programmes to consolidate its support base and improve electoral preparedness.

The Congress leadership believes that strengthening the organisation at the grassroots level will help the party enter the upcoming civic elections and the 2028 Karnataka Assembly polls with a stronger political network and organisational structure.

Editorial

Protests Must Not Derail Democracy

The controversy over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination began as a legitimate expression of students' anxiety and public concern over the credibility of India's competitive examination system. Peaceful protest is a constitutional right and an essential feature of every vibrant democracy. However, every democratic movement also carries the responsibility of remaining peaceful, lawful, and focused on its original objective. Reports of unrest at Jantar Mantar, where the protest gradually expanded beyond student issues, have raised serious questions about whether the movement remained true to its purpose. When genuine public grievances become overshadowed by political narratives, the credibility of the cause itself begins to suffer.

Equally concerning are allegations that individuals with controversial backgrounds and ideological agendas found space on the protest platform. Reports of inflammatory speeches, divisive rhetoric, and slogans unrelated to the NEET issue shifted attention away from the concerns of students. Further allegations of stone-pelting, attacks on police personnel, and the involvement of non-student elements have deepened concerns about the direction of the agitation. These claims must be investigated thoroughly and impartially by the competent authorities. At the same time, it is important to distinguish peaceful protesters from those who may have exploited the movement to create disorder or provoke confrontation.

India's democracy is strengthened when citizens exercise their right to dissent responsibly and governments respond with transparency and accountability. Legitimate student concerns deserve a fair hearing, and any examination-related irregularities must be addressed decisively. Equally, violence, vandalism, or attempts to hijack peaceful demonstrations for political or unlawful purposes cannot be justified under the guise of democratic protest. The rule of law must prevail without prejudice or political bias. Protecting the right to peaceful dissent while ensuring public order and national security is not a contradiction—it is the very balance that sustains a mature and resilient democracy.

-Editor

6.25 km Footpaths Freed from Encroachments

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The footpath encroachment removal drive continued across Bengaluru on Wednesday, with civic authorities clearing 6.25 km of pedestrian pathways to ensure safe, smooth and obstruction-free movement for pedestrians.

The operation was carried out under the directions of Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and the guidance of Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar.

In the Byatarayanapura Division, encroachments were removed along 1.25 km of Jakkur Double Road from Bellary Road to Jakkur, and another 2.50 km stretch from Bellary Road to Kempegowda Circle.

In the Dasarahalli Division, a 2.50 km stretch of Bagalagunte Main Road, from Bagalagunte Arch to Canara Bank Circle on NH-4, was cleared.

During the operation, officials removed 8 shops and kiosks, 16 pushcarts, 48 temporary



sheets and canopies, 50 steps and ramps, 56 advertisement and name boards, and one temporary shed. Around 44 tonnes of construction debris, soil and dust were also cleared from the footpaths.

The drive was carried out using three JCB excavators, five tractors, one tipper truck, with the support of 30 civic staff and workers. Authorities said the encroachment removal campaign will continue in other parts of the city to make footpaths safer and more accessible for pedestrians.

KPTCL CRACKS DOWN ON POWER RULE VIOLATORS

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) will initiate strict action against Self-Execution (SE) projects that have failed to create mandatory electrical infrastructure or violated Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) regulations, Energy and Tourism Minister K.J. George announced on Friday.

The Minister said that under the KERC Self-Execution Regulations, 2006, projects with a sanctioned electrical load exceeding 7.5 MVA are required to establish dedicated substations and related electrical infrastructure at their own cost before obtaining permanent power supply.

He said the Self-Execution framework



was introduced to ensure that large residential and commercial developments create the necessary power infrastructure alongside construction, reducing pressure on the public electricity network and preventing the misuse of public funds for private projects.

According to the Minister, around 45 projects in Bengaluru have been identified for non-compliance, and notices have already been issued. Violators will face a 10 per cent penalty under the applicable KERC regulations.

In cases where developers fail to complete the mandatory infrastructure within the stipulated time, KPTCL may also disconnect electricity supply if the violation causes transmission constraints and affects the public power network.

North Karnataka Seeks Two Deputy CMs

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

The Federation of North Karnataka Associations has urged the Karnataka government to appoint two Deputy Chief Ministers and increase Cabinet representation for the North Karnataka region, asserting that the region deserves a greater share in the state administration.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Federation President Shivakumar R. Meti said the demand comes as the Congress government completes three years in office and D.K. Shivakumar assumes charge as Chief Minister.

Meti said the 14 districts of North Karnataka, comprising Kalyana Karnataka and Kittur Karnataka, currently have only five ministers in the State Cabinet



despite playing a decisive role in bringing the Congress to power.

He pointed out that the region accounts for 96 Assembly constituencies, of which more than 65 are represented by Congress MLAs, and argued that every district should have at least one Cabinet minister.

He also demanded three ministerial berths for Belagavi, considering its size and political significance.

The Federation urged the Congress leadership to appoint two Deputy Chief Ministers from

North Karnataka, suggesting that senior leaders such as M.B. Patil, Satish Jarkiholi, H.K. Patil and Eshwar Khandre be considered for the posts.

Honorary President of Uttara Nava Nirmana Vedike, Basavaraj Dindur, said the appointments should be based on regional representation rather than caste considerations, with the objective of accelerating the overall development of North Karnataka.

Federation General Secretary Shankar Pagoji said North Karnataka covers nearly half of the

state's geographical area and has contributed significantly to the Congress' electoral success. He maintained that appointing ministers from every district would ensure balanced development and strengthen governance across the region.

The press conference was also attended by Basavaraj Biloor, M.V. Negaluru, Basayya Nandikola, Shantesh Math, Ramanagouda Biradar and social worker Munikrishna, who supported the demand for greater regional representation in the State Cabinet. The Federation urged the government to ensure fair regional representation in the next Cabinet expansion. It called for greater North Karnataka representation in the State Cabinet.



Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar addresses AICC and KPCC observers during the AICC's 'Sangathan Srujan Abhiyan' programme at Bharat Jodo Bhavan, the KPCC headquarters, on Friday. AICC General Secretaries K.C. Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala, KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and other senior Congress leaders were present.

ADEO Seeks Regular ASDD Voter Data Updates

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Additional District Election Officer (ADEO) K.N. Ramesh has directed election officials to regularly share ASDD (Absent, Shifted, Dead and Duplicate) voter details with recognised political parties as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026 of electoral rolls.

Chairing a meeting with representatives of recognised political parties in the Bengaluru South jurisdiction, Ramesh reviewed the ongoing voter list revision being carried out under the directions of the Election Commission of India.

Political party representatives requested that ASDD voter details be shared periodically to ensure greater transparency in the revision process. Responding to the demand, the ADEO said that while the details are currently being shared through e-mail at the ADEO level, officials have now been instructed to provide the information regularly through the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) as well.

Ramesh also said that any objections regarding discrepancies or ineligible names in the electoral roll must be submitted in writing with complete voter details. He assured that such complaints would be verified promptly



and appropriate action taken.

He clarified that voters who have shifted their residence will continue to have an opportunity to enrol their names even after the publication of the draft electoral roll. Applications and objections received after the prescribed date, along with valid address proof, will be accepted online or in writing and processed as per rules.

The ADEO further directed schools, government offices and public institutions to provide adequate space and necessary facilities for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and their assistant staff to carry out voter revision work effectively.

Additional Commissioner Rachappa, Tahsildar Rashmi and representatives of recognised political parties were present at the meeting.

PMK Opposes Cauvery Talks

► From PGi

PMK President Anbumani Ramadoss questioned the purpose of the proposed Chief Minister-level discussions and sought clarity on whether the meeting was being arranged by the Union government or Karnataka authorities. He warned that engaging in talks could make the Mokedatu dispute appear as a bilateral issue between the two states.

He reiterated that Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed the construction of the Mokedatu dam across the Cauvery river and said the state should protect its long-standing rights through legal and constitutional channels.

Anbumani urged Chief Minister Vijay to focus on strengthening Tamil Nadu's position and avoid any move that could affect the state's interests in the Cauvery water dispute.

NEWS

RAMESH BABU SLAMS BJP OVER EXAM ROW

► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Media and Communication Department Chairman and MLC Ramesh Babu on Friday accused the BJP of engaging in "anti-national activities" by allegedly playing with the future of students through examination-related issues. Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Ramesh Babu said the alleged failures surrounding examination systems were a serious concern and strongly condemned what he called the BJP-led government's handling of the issue.

Criticism Over Paper Leak Issue

Ramesh Babu alleged that the paper leak controversy had damaged the credibility of examinations and affected the confidence of students preparing for competitive tests.

Taking a dig at the government, he said a situation had emerged where warning messages



would have to be displayed even on examination admit cards, similar to health warnings on cigarette packets, cautioning students about the possibility of question paper leaks.

Congress Attacks BJP

The KPCC leader said protecting students' future should be the government's top priority and accused the BJP of failing in this responsibility.

He added that the Congress party strongly condemns what it termed the "anti-student and anti-national actions" of the BJP-led government and demanded accountability over examination irregularities.

Ramesh Babu said the integrity of competitive examinations must be protected to ensure equal opportunities for students across the country. He urged the government to take strict measures to prevent paper leaks and restore public trust in the examination system.

Anaemia-Free India Drive Enters Phase II

► Vikrama Vahini | Ballari

The second phase of the Anaemia-Free India campaign has commenced in Ballari under the initiative of Sri Mathru Mahila Mandali, in collaboration with Shrimad Rajendra Mission, Dharampur (Gujarat), IRD, and Spandana, Vijayapura.

The organisers said the first phase of the campaign was successfully implemented across Ballari district, reaching a large number of beneficiaries through awareness and health screening programmes.

As part of the second phase, haemoglobin (HB) testing has



been launched in schools, colleges, hostels and public institutions to identify anaemia at an early stage and promote awareness about its prevention.

Sri Mathru Mahila Mandali President Pushpalatha Chandrashekhar said the

campaign aims to reach communities through educational institutions and public organisations, encouraging regular health screening and creating greater awareness about anaemia and its impact on public health.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

H1N1 Cases Surge in Nagpur

► Vikrama Vahini | Nagpur

Nagpur has reported its first H1N1 (swine flu) death of 2026 amid a sharp increase in infections during the monsoon season. According to the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC), the city has recorded 25 confirmed H1N1 cases since January, with 15 cases detected in July alone.

Health authorities have increased surveillance, testing and public awareness campaigns as respiratory infections tend to rise during the rainy season.

July Sees Sharp Rise in Cases

More than 60 per cent of this year's H1N1 cases in Nagpur were reported in July, prompting officials to closely monitor the situation.

The civic body has advised people with flu-like symptoms to seek medical attention early to prevent complications.

High-Risk Groups Identified

Health experts have warned that certain groups are more vulnerable to severe H1N1 infection, including:

- Senior citizens above 65 years
- Children below five years, especially infants
- Pregnant women and women after childbirth
- People with asthma and chronic lung diseases
- Patients with diabetes, heart, kidney or liver diseases
- Individuals with weakened immunity

• People with severe obesity

These groups face a higher risk of pneumonia, breathing difficulties and hospitalisation.

Symptoms and Warning Signs

H1N1 symptoms are similar to seasonal flu and include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, body pain, headache, chills and extreme tiredness. Doctors advise immediate medical care if patients develop breathing difficulties, chest pain, confusion, severe dehydration or persistent high fever.

Early Treatment Key to Recovery

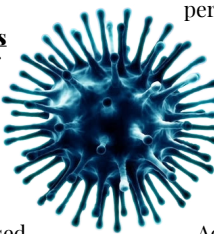
Health authorities said antiviral medicines such as oseltamivir are most effective when started within 48 hours of symptom onset. Adequate rest, fluids and medical advice are recommended for faster recovery.

Antibiotics are not effective against H1N1 as it is a viral infection and are used only when secondary bacterial infections occur.

Vaccination and Prevention Measures

Health agencies continue to recommend annual influenza vaccination for senior citizens, pregnant women, young children, healthcare workers and people with chronic illnesses.

Officials have urged citizens to maintain hand hygiene, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid close contact with infected individuals and wear masks when experiencing flu symptoms to reduce the spread of infection.



SCIENCE & Technology

Delhi HC Rejects ANI's ChatGPT Plea

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to grant interim relief to Asian News International (ANI) in its copyright lawsuit against OpenAI, stating that the news agency failed to establish a prima facie case for an injunction against ChatGPT.

Justice Anil Bansal observed that granting an interim order at this stage could cause serious harm to OpenAI as well as public interest. The court also held that ChatGPT's responses were not found to be substantially similar to ANI's copyrighted content.

No Evidence of Content Reproduction

The court noted that ANI had not provided evidence showing that ChatGPT had memorised or reproduced its original reports in a manner that amounted to copyright infringement.

It also observed that OpenAI's use of copyrighted material for AI model training appeared to fall under exceptions provided in the Copyright Act, at least at the preliminary stage.

ANI's Copyright Claims

ANI had filed the case in 2024, alleging that OpenAI used its news content without permission for training AI models and that ChatGPT-generated responses could create misinformation risks.

OpenAI argued that its AI models are trained outside India and that information itself cannot be copyrighted. The company also stated that publishers can opt out of data collection through available mechanisms. The case is being closely watched as it could influence future legal debates on artificial intelligence, copyright protection and the use of news content in AI systems in India. The detailed court order is awaited.



Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda felicitates GBA officials for their dedicated role in clearing footpath encroachments in Shivajinagar despite threats from anti-social elements, at Vikas Soudha on Thursday. Those honoured included Executive Engineer Atif, Assistant Executive Engineers Madhav Rao and Savitri, Assistant Engineer Ruchita, Engineer Gautham, and the JCB driver's representative. Additional Chief Secretary Tushar Giri Nath, Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, Central City Corporation Commissioner Jagadeesh, and GBA-Palike Officers & Employees Welfare Association President A. Amruth Raj were also present.

Ravikumar Appointed New Kolar DC

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Ravikumar M.R. has been appointed as the new Deputy Commissioner of Kolar district by the Karnataka government.

According to official sources, the state government has issued an order regarding his appointment. Ravikumar M.R. was previously serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Food and Civil Supplies.

He will be relieved from his current post on July 31 and is expected to take charge as Kolar Deputy Commissioner on August 1, sources said. The appointment is part of the state government's administrative reshuffle aimed at strengthening district-level governance.



ORR Development Talks with Key Stakeholders Today

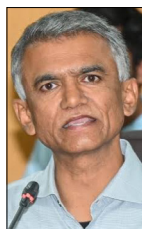
➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

A high-level consultation meeting on the development of Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road (ORR) will be held on Saturday, July 25, at 10.30 am under the chairmanship of Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda at the Goldman Sachs, Wing-C, Helios Business Park, Kadubeesanahalli.

The meeting will bring together representatives of the Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA), local organisations, government agencies and other stakeholders to discuss measures for improving traffic flow, upgrading infrastructure, strengthening road maintenance, enhancing public amenities, ensuring inter-departmental coordination and planning future development along the ORR corridor.

A key focus of the meeting will be the B-SMILE initiative, which proposes to transform the 17.1-km

stretch of the Outer Ring Road from Silk Board Junction to Baiyappanahalli Metro Station into a world-class urban corridor with international standards of design and infrastructure. The implementation strategy for the project will be discussed in detail.



Senior officials from the Greater Bengaluru Development Authority (GBA), Bengaluru East and South City Corporations, BMRL, BWSSB, BESCOM, KRIDE, KPTCL, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd. (BSWML), BSNL and GAIL, along with ORRCA representatives, industry leaders, developers and corporate representatives from the ORR corridor, are expected to participate. The meeting is expected to finalise an action plan for the coordinated execution of infrastructure projects and strengthen collaboration among various departments for the comprehensive development of the Outer Ring Road corridor.

Dharwad HC Bench Gets Women-Only Roster

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

In a landmark move for gender representation in the judiciary, the Karnataka High Court's Dharwad Bench will have an all-women judicial roster on August 1, with all courts functioning under women judges.

The special roster, issued on the directions of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru, will see all seven courts at the Dharwad Bench — including three Division Benches and four Single Benches — being presided over exclusively by women judges. The women

judges will handle a wide range of cases, including constitutional, civil, criminal, service, labour, education, commercial and family matters.

The move marks a significant milestone in the higher judiciary, highlighting the growing role and leadership of women judges in India's judicial system.

The initiative is being viewed as a major step towards promoting gender diversity and strengthening the participation of women in judicial decision-making.

Holiday Village Road Widening Reviewed

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Chief Engineer Basavaraj Kabade on Friday inspected the ongoing Kanakapura Main Road-Holiday Village Road widening project and other infrastructure works in Talaghattapura Ward of Anjanapura Division under the Bengaluru South City Corporation.

During the inspection of the

B-SMILE project, the Chief Engineer said additional land is required for widening the Holiday Village Road and urged the owners of Holiday Village Resort to voluntarily provide the required land under the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) scheme.



Kabade also directed BWSSB engineers to complete the shifting of the main water supply pipeline within 10 days, stating that road construction under the CSSIP project would begin immediately after the utility work is completed.

The project includes the development of two connecting

roads linking Holiday Village Road with Anjanapura Road.

He further instructed officials to expedite the construction of a new bridge across the stormwater drain (rajakaluve) under the Project Implementation Unit.

The bridge is expected to improve connectivity between Anjanapura and Kanakapura Road through Holiday Village Road.

upGrad, IIT Roorkee Join Hands for Tech Skills

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Leading higher education technology company upGrad Learning Support Centres has announced a strategic partnership with iHub DivyaSampark, IIT Roorkee to launch two industry-oriented certification programmes in Data Science and Full Stack Development.

The collaboration aims to make quality technology education more accessible to students across India through upGrad's expanding network of learning support centres.

Industry-Focused Skill Development

iHub DivyaSampark, a Technology Innovation Hub established under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, will provide academic support for the certification programmes.

The courses are designed to equip learners with industry-relevant skills through structured classroom learning, practical applications, academic excellence and career-focused guidance.

Available Across 23 Learning Centres

The certification programmes will be offered through 23 upGrad Learning Support



Centres across the country, enabling students from diverse regions to access advanced technology education backed by IIT Roorkee.

The initiative seeks to address the growing demand for skilled professionals in emerging technology domains while making high-quality technical education more widely accessible.

Expanding Access Beyond Metro Cities

This marks the first time that IIT Roorkee's iHub DivyaSampark technology certification programmes will be delivered in a structured offline classroom format through an edtech learning network. The partnership is expected to expand opportunities for students beyond major metropolitan cities, helping them acquire future-ready skills, improve employability and meet the evolving needs of the technology industry.

Karnataka Braces for Heavy Rain

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a four-day Yellow alert for 17 Karnataka districts from July 25, warning of heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and gusty winds.

An Orange alert has been issued for coastal districts Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada, with forecasts of heavy to very heavy rain. Coastal areas are expected to witness active monsoon conditions till July 28.

Heavy showers are also likely in Malnad districts including Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Kodagu and Hassan, while several northern interior districts may experience thunderstorms and strong winds.

The IMD has advised residents in vulnerable areas to remain cautious and warned fishermen against venturing into the sea due to rough coastal conditions.

Meanwhile, continuous rainfall in Uttara Kannada has increased water levels in rivers and streams, raising flood concerns in low-lying areas. The rains have also brought relief to farmers by helping resume delayed paddy cultivation in coastal regions.

VILLAGERS QUESTION PRAKASH RAJ

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Chitradurga**

Residents of Bandlarahatti village in Hiriyur taluk have expressed anger against actor Prakash Raj, alleging that he has failed to fulfil promises made after adopting the village in 2019.

The villagers staged a protest, questioning the actor's absence and asking why he had time to participate in protests in New Delhi but not to visit the village or honour the commitments he made six years ago.

According to the protesters, Prakash Raj had visited Bandlarahatti twice in 2019 and promised comprehensive development of the village. His assurances reportedly included resolving the drinking water crisis, improving schools, constructing roads and drainage systems, developing grazing land, and sending a team to assess the village's needs. However, the villagers alleged that none of the promised works have been carried out and that the proposed survey team never visited the village.

They said the drinking water problem remains severe, with high fluoride content in

groundwater affecting water quality, while declining groundwater levels have further worsened the situation.

Villager Siddappa said residents had welcomed the actor's announcement of adopting the village, hoping it would improve



basic infrastructure, but none of the promises had materialised even after six years.

Former Farmers' Morcha General Secretary Sindhu Tanaya also criticised Prakash Raj, saying the actor finds time to comment on national issues and participate in protests but has not fulfilled the assurances given to the people of Bandlarahatti.

The villagers demanded that Prakash Raj either fulfil the promises made to the village or issue a clarification, warning that they would intensify their protest if no action is taken. The protesters urged the actor to visit Bandlarahatti at the earliest, review the village's condition firsthand and announce a concrete timeline for implementing the long-pending development works.

ENTERTAINMENT

Yash Backs Ranbir as Lord Ram

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Actor Yash has strongly defended Ranbir Kapoor's casting as Lord Ram in the upcoming epic film Ramayana, saying the actor's dedication, discipline and sacrifices make him worthy of portraying one of India's most revered characters.

The remarks were made during the Ramayana panel at San Diego Comic-Con 2026, where Ranbir Kapoor, Yash, producer Namit Malhotra and director Nitesh Tiwari shared insights into the much-awaited film. **'Nobody Can Claim to Be Worthy of Playing Lord Ram'**

Responding to criticism over Ranbir Kapoor's casting, Yash said no actor could ever claim to be completely worthy of portraying Lord Ram, making humility the most important quality for the role.

"Nobody in this world can come and say, 'I have the virtue to play Lord Rama.' The fact that Ranbir himself

acknowledged this speaks volumes about him. He is a fabulous actor, and portraying Lord Rama is not easy," Yash said.

Praising his co-star's commitment, Yash added that Ranbir had worked tirelessly on his physical transformation and performance.

"He has worked very hard on his fitness. When audiences watch Ramayana, they will see a beautiful portrayal of Lord Rama with great intent and understand the sacrifices he has made for the role," he said. Ranbir Kapoor's casting as Lord Ram has generated mixed reactions ever since the first teaser of the film was released.

Ranbir Opens Up About His Initial Fear



Speaking during the panel, Ranbir Kapoor admitted that he initially felt overwhelmed when he was offered the role.

"I remember when the film was first offered to me, there was so much fear and so much doubt. I kept asking myself whether I was capable of playing such an iconic character," he said.

However, those fears gradually turned into gratitude as he realised the significance of the opportunity.

"I soon understood that this was a blessing, an opportunity of a lifetime and also a moral responsibility. Lord Rama has been the conscience keeper of millions of people for generations. He represents courage, compassion, forgiveness and righteousness," Ranbir said.

The actor added that portraying such a revered figure required faith, honesty and noble intentions.

"Our entire cast and crew shared one common objective—to tell the story of the Ramayana as authentically as possible," he said. **Star-Studded Cast and Release Schedule**

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra, Ramayana features Sai Pallavi as Goddess Sita, Yash as Ravana, Sunny Deol as Hanuman and Ravi Dubey as Lakshman. The film also stars Lara Dutta, Arun Govil, Rakul Preet Singh, Anupam Kher and Kajal Aggarwal in pivotal roles.

The first instalment of Ramayana is scheduled for release during Diwali 2026, while the second part is expected to hit theatres in Diwali 2027.

RANBIR'S RAM ROLE FEARS REVEALED

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**

Actor Ranbir Kapoor has opened up about his experience of portraying Lord Ram in the much-awaited film 'Ramayana', saying that he initially had fear and doubts about taking up the challenging role.

The film, directed by Nitesh Tiwari, is being promoted on a global platform, with the team recently participating in San Diego Comic-Con. Actors Ranbir Kapoor, Yash, and producer Namith Malhotra spoke about the film and their characters during the event.

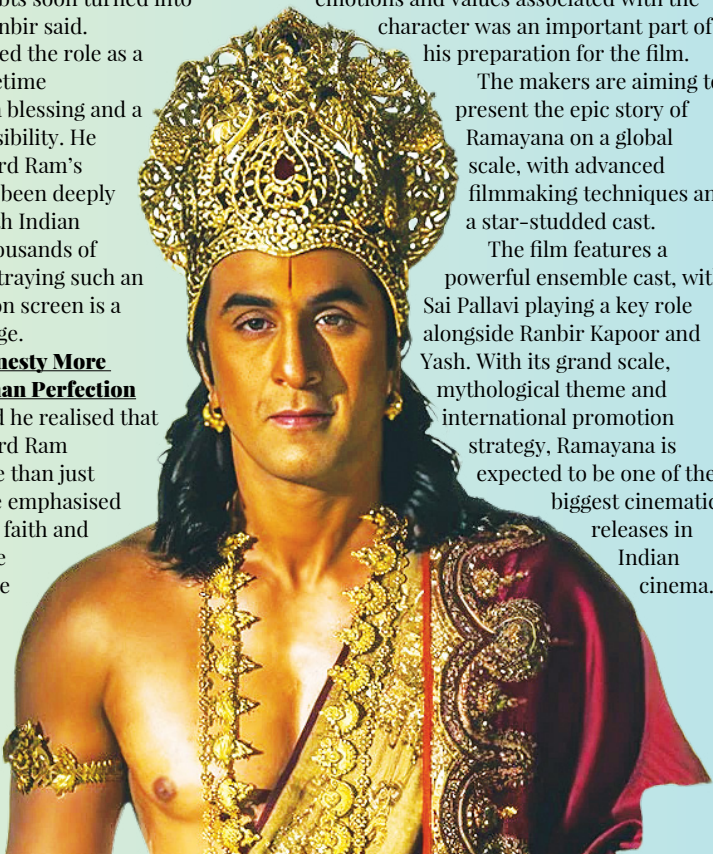
'A Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity'

Speaking about playing Lord Ram, Ranbir said he felt nervous when the role was first offered to him.

"I had a lot of fear and doubts. I wondered whether I was capable of doing this role and whether I was worthy of it. But those doubts soon turned into gratitude," Ranbir said.

He described the role as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a blessing and a moral responsibility. He added that Lord Ram's character has been deeply connected with Indian culture for thousands of years and portraying such an iconic figure on screen is a major challenge. **Faith and Honesty More Important Than Perfection**

Ranbir said he realised that portraying Lord Ram required more than just perfection. He emphasised that sincerity, faith and respect for the character were more important while bringing the legendary figure to the big screen.



Yash Praises Ranbir's Choice

Actor Yash, who plays the role of Ravana in the film, praised Ranbir Kapoor for taking up the role of Lord Ram.

Yash said that no actor could claim to possess all the qualities required to portray Lord Ram and appreciated Ranbir's humility about the responsibility.

He added that playing Lord Ram is not an easy task and praised Ranbir's dedication and hard work for the role.

The film, which also stars Sai Pallavi, is among the most anticipated Indian movies and is expected to release during the Diwali season this year.

Ranbir said the significance of Lord Ram's character made him approach the role with greater responsibility and dedication.

He added that understanding the emotions and values associated with the character was an important part of his preparation for the film.

The makers are aiming to present the epic story of Ramayana on a global scale, with advanced filmmaking techniques and a star-studded cast.

The film features a powerful ensemble cast, with Sai Pallavi playing a key role alongside Ranbir Kapoor and Yash. With its grand scale, mythological theme and international promotion strategy, Ramayana is expected to be one of the biggest cinematic releases in Indian cinema.

BUSINESS

6 Reasons to Update Aadhaar

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Aadhaar has become a crucial identity document for accessing banking, government schemes, education services and various digital platforms. Keeping Aadhaar details updated is important to avoid inconvenience during authentication and verification processes.

Experts advise individuals to update their Aadhaar information in the following situations:

1. Change of Address

People shifting permanently to a new city or location should update their address to avoid difficulties while accessing banking services, loans and government benefits.

2. Change of Mobile Number

The registered mobile number is required for receiving OTPs during Aadhaar-based verification. A changed number must be updated to continue using online services smoothly.

3. Correction in Personal Details

Errors in name, date of birth or other personal information should be corrected immediately to prevent problems during identity verification.

4. Biometric Updates

Children enrolled under Baal Aadhaar need biometric updates as they grow. Biometric information is also recommended to be refreshed periodically to maintain accuracy.

5. Updating Photograph

Individuals whose appearance has changed significantly can update their photograph to make identification easier.

6. Face Authentication Issues

Failure of Aadhaar-based face authentication while using banking, telecom or government services may require updating Aadhaar details.

To update Aadhaar, applicants generally need their Aadhaar card along with valid identity proof, address proof and date-of-birth documents. Keeping Aadhaar information current ensures uninterrupted access to essential services.

The UIDAI recommends keeping Aadhaar details accurate and updated to ensure smooth access to essential services and avoid authentication failures.

Regular updates also help maintain security and reliability of Aadhaar-based digital verification systems.

SPORTS

Vaibhav Breaks Sachin's Record



➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Harare**

Young Indian cricketer Vaibhav Suryavanshi created history by breaking a long-standing record of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar during India's first T20i against Zimbabwe.

India secured a comfortable 7-wicket victory in Harare, with Suryavanshi's explosive innings of a half-century off just 18 balls becoming the highlight of the match.

At the age of 15 years and 118 days, Vaibhav became the youngest player in international cricket history to score a T20i fifty, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's record.

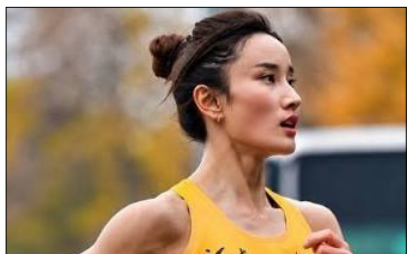
Sachin's Record Overturned

Sachin Tendulkar had scored his first international half-century at the age of 16 years and 213 days against Pakistan after making his debut at 16 years and 205 days.

Vaibhav, who had earlier become the youngest international debutant during the T20i series against England, has now added another remarkable achievement by becoming the youngest player to register an international fifty.

His record-breaking knock has marked a new milestone in world cricket and highlighted the emergence of India's next generation of cricketing talent.

Athlete Runs Marathon Through Period Pain



➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Beijing**

Chinese marathon runner Li Meizhen has won global appreciation after completing a 42-kilometre marathon despite experiencing menstruation midway through the race.

The incident took place during the Hengshui Lake Marathon held in China's Hebei province on September 22, 2024. Li, 25, began her menstrual cycle while reaching the difficult 34-35 km mark of the race, a stage known for extreme physical exhaustion.

Despite severe discomfort, fatigue and visible stains on her clothes, Li continued running and completed the full marathon without giving up. Explaining her decision, Li said that quitting at that stage would have forced her to participate in another marathon to achieve her goal.

Her determination has received widespread praise on social media under the title "God Is A Woman", with many calling her achievement a powerful message against the stigma surrounding menstruation and the challenges faced by women athletes.

SC Bars Unauthorised Sharing of Court Videos

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Supreme Court on Friday directed that live-streamed court proceedings cannot be copied, edited, uploaded or circulated on social media or other digital platforms without prior permission. The restriction applies to proceedings streamed by the Supreme Court as well as all High Courts across the country.

The court, however, clarified that the order will not affect regular news reporting of judicial proceedings.

Prior Permission Mandatory

Under the interim order, no individual or digital platform can extract, modify, upload, repost or circulate clips from official court live streams without obtaining permission from the Secretary General of the Supreme Court or the Registrar General of the concerned High Court.

The restriction also covers edited courtroom videos, reels, short-form clips, altered audio, captions, commentary and



content uploaded for monetisation or online engagement.

News Reporting Exempted

The Bench made it clear that journalists and media organisations are free to continue reporting court proceedings through news reports, live updates and written coverage.

The order is limited to the unauthorised use of official video recordings and does not restrict fair and accurate reporting of court hearings.

Centre, States Issued Notice

The Supreme Court issued notices to the Centre and all State Governments on a

petition seeking regulation of the unauthorised extraction, circulation and monetisation of live-streamed court videos.

It also directed the Secretary General of the Supreme Court and the Registrars General of all High Courts to prominently display the order on their official websites.

Move to Prevent Misuse

The direction comes amid growing concerns over the misuse of court proceedings on social media, where edited clips have increasingly appeared as memes, sensational videos and short-form content.

Earlier this year, the Madhya Pradesh High Court ordered the removal of 102 online links containing allegedly distorted footage from live-streamed court proceedings.

The latest order aims to preserve the integrity of judicial proceedings by preventing unauthorised editing and circulation of official court videos while ensuring that the principle of open justice and legitimate news reporting remains unaffected.

WANGCHUK ENDS FAST, SEEKS REFORM

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Activist Sonam Wangchuk has ended his 26-day hunger strike after receiving written assurances from the Centre on key demands related to the alleged NEET paper leak and examination reforms, saying that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation was not the deciding factor.

In a video message released after ending his fast, Wangchuk said he continued the protest for two extra days to ensure that the government's commitments were provided in writing rather than as verbal promises.

He said the Centre assured that no legal action would be taken against peaceful protesters, compensation would be provided to the families of students who died, and Parliament would hold a discussion on examination reforms and accountability.

Wangchuk said Union Ministers J.P. Nadda and Jitendra Singh met him after two days of discussions. He also noted that around 65 Members of Parliament from different political parties had appealed to him to end the fast, promising that the NEET paper leak and examination system would be debated in Parliament.



Addressing questions about the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Wangchuk said the government had given no assurance on the issue. He explained that he had to choose between extending the fast and risking his life or accepting the significant gains already achieved through the movement.

He said ensuring that students were not implicated in legal cases was more important than securing the minister's resignation, adding that any political consequences arising from the controversy would ultimately be faced by the government itself.

Thanking supporters for standing with him throughout the protest, Wangchuk said the movement for a transparent, fair and accountable examination system would continue.

CJI Slams False Reports on Protest Plea

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant on Friday dismissed as "completely false" media reports claiming that he had refused to list a petition challenging police action against student protesters, clarifying that no writ petition had been filed before the Supreme Court.

Addressing the issue in open court, the CJI said that what had been submitted was only a representation by a lawyer and not a properly instituted writ petition.

He said a mere representation could not be treated as a writ petition in the absence of a formal filing and, therefore, there was no question of refusing to list the matter.

Justice Surya Kant criticised sections of the media for what he described as "irresponsible and reckless" reporting.

He said reports alleging that the Chief Justice had declined to hear the matter were factually



incorrect, adding that no petition had been filed before the court even till 10 a.m. on Friday.

The clarification came while Senior Advocate Shob Alam was mentioning another case before the Bench.

The CJI explained that the issue earlier raised by Advocate Narendra Mishra was only in the form of a letter representation and did not qualify as a writ petition under Supreme Court procedures.

FRS Deployed at Jantar Mantar

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Delhi Police has deployed four Facial Recognition System (FRS) units around the protest site at Jantar Mantar to identify wanted criminals, absconders and history-sheeters, police sources said on Friday.

The surveillance system has been installed at key entry and exit points of the protest venue and is connected directly to the Delhi Police database.

Police officials clarified that the facial recognition system is not aimed at ordinary protesters but is intended to detect individuals with criminal backgrounds who may attempt to infiltrate protests and disrupt law and order.

The move is part of the police department's efforts to strengthen security arrangements at major protest locations in the national capital.

The FRS technology will help authorities quickly identify individuals with criminal records and take necessary action, while ensuring security at the protest site.

CONG HITS BACK ON SCAMS

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka Congress on Friday intensified its attack on the BJP over alleged irregularities in government recruitment, accusing the opposition party of trying to divert attention from recruitment scams reported during its own tenure.

Responding to Leader of Opposition R Ashok's allegations that government jobs were being "sold" and the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) had become a "rate card", the Congress said the BJP had no moral right to question recruitment transparency.

The ruling party alleged that former KPSC Chairman Shivashankarappa Sahukar, who was recently suspended over allegations linked to his daughter's appointment, was

appointed to the commission in 2019 and elevated as chairman in 2021 during the BJP government.

The Congress also highlighted the controversial 345 Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) recruitment scam, alleging that irregularities occurred during the previous BJP regime and that BJP leader Divya Hagaragi was named in the chargesheet.

Reiterating its stand on the ongoing veterinary recruitment controversy, the Congress said investigations would remain transparent and impartial, with strict action against anyone found guilty.

The party assured that its government would continue to focus on merit-based and transparent recruitment without protecting any individual involved in wrongdoing.



Iran Must Pay for Ship Damage: Trump

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Washington**

US President Donald Trump on Friday said any damage caused to commercial ships and cargo during the ongoing conflict with Iran should be compensated using frozen Iranian assets held by the United States, while making it clear that Washington would continue its military campaign against Tehran instead of pursuing an immediate ceasefire.

'Iran Will Pay'

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said the US-controlled Iranian funds should be used to cover losses suffered by commercial shipping. He said the damages could be substantial but argued that using frozen Iranian assets was "the fair and equitable thing to do."

No Immediate Ceasefire

Speaking to reporters, Trump ruled out an immediate ceasefire, saying Iran was "not ready" for negotiations and that continued military pressure remained necessary.

He reiterated that the United States would not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons and accused Tehran of continuing to pose a threat to regional security.

US Continues Airstrikes

The remarks came as the US military carried out its 13th consecutive night of airstrikes targeting Iranian military infrastructure.



US President Donald Trump said frozen Iranian assets should be used to compensate for damage to commercial ships amid the escalating conflict, while ruling out an immediate ceasefire and reaffirming continued US military action against Iran. He said Washington would maintain military pressure until Tehran no longer posed a threat to international shipping and regional security.

According to the US Central Command (CENTCOM), the operation targeted military command centres, drone storage facilities, communication networks, coastal surveillance sites and maritime assets linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), with the objective of reducing threats to commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

CENTCOM did not disclose the extent of the damage caused during the strikes.

Shipping Attacks Fuel Global Concerns

The latest escalation follows attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, including recent strikes by Iran-backed Houthi rebels on Saudi-linked ships.

The attacks have disrupted key global shipping routes and pushed crude oil prices above \$100 a barrel, raising concerns over global energy supplies and maritime security.

Political Divide in Washington

The conflict has also triggered debate

within the United States, with the House of Representatives approving a measure seeking to limit military action against Iran without congressional approval, although a similar proposal failed in the Senate.

Despite growing international concern over the possibility of a wider regional conflict, Trump indicated that the United States would continue its military operations until Iran no longer posed a threat to international shipping and regional stability.

The escalating confrontation has further heightened fears of a wider conflict in the Middle East, with global leaders urging restraint to prevent further disruption to international trade and energy markets. Analysts warn that prolonged instability in the region could lead to higher fuel prices, increased shipping costs and renewed pressure on the global economy, while diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions remain uncertain.

Rajya Sabha Washout Over NEET Row

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Rajya Sabha proceedings were disrupted for the fifth consecutive day on Friday as Opposition protests over the NEET paper leak controversy and demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan led to repeated adjournments.

The House conducted no major business except the introduction of a Bill proposing criminal action for insulting the national song "Vande Mataram".

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the alleged police lathi-charge on students protesting against paper leaks, following which the House was adjourned within minutes.

The proceedings were later adjourned again till 2 pm as Opposition members continued their protest. Opposition parties have demanded accountability over examination irregularities and insisted on the Education Minister's resignation before any discussion.

The government, however, said it has taken strict steps to prevent paper leaks and is ready for a detailed debate on examination reforms.



GKVK Students Step Up Protest



➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Students of the University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK, intensified their protest on Friday over alleged irregularities in admissions under the farmers' quota, with BJP extending support to their agitation.

Karnataka Legislative Council Leader of Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy joined the protest and demanded immediate action from the state government to address students' concerns.

The students alleged unfair practices in seats reserved for farmers' children and sought corrective measures from the university authorities.

Narayanaswamy accused the government of ignoring the issue and said he would raise the matter with the Chief Secretary, Agriculture Commissioner and the university Vice-Chancellor.

He urged authorities not to neglect students' demands and warned of further action if their grievances were not resolved.

Woman Waits 3 Days With Husband's Body

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Khagaria**

A heartbreaking incident has come to light from Khagaria district of Bihar, where a woman reportedly spent three days beside her husband's body as the family did not have money to perform his last rites.

The incident occurred in Ward No. 5 under Gangaour police station limits, where Manu Sah, a daily wage worker, died after a prolonged illness. His wife was unable to arrange funds for the funeral and remained beside his body for three days, according to local reports.

The matter came to light after a foul smell began coming from the house. A local resident, Rahul Kumar, noticed the situation and informed the local administration.

Following the information, municipal officials provided the required materials for the funeral. With the support of social workers and local residents, the woman was able to perform her husband's last rites. Manu Sah, who worked as a daily wage labourer, was the sole breadwinner of the family. He had been bedridden due to illness and had spent his limited savings on treatment before his death.