

Good morning

Inspiration and positivity are the strongest assets we need for success, among others.

BRIEFS

13 Indians Trapped on Ukraine Ship

► **Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**

Thirteen Indian seafarers are among 15 crew members stranded aboard a cargo vessel at Ukraine's Chornomorsk port amid repeated drone and missile strikes, the Forward Seamen's Union of India (FSUI) said.

The union described the situation as "life-threatening" and urged the Indian government, ship owners and concerned authorities to immediately intervene and ensure the safe evacuation of the crew.

The vessel, M.V. AMIRI, has reportedly been surrounded by attacks in the port area, leaving the crew in constant fear of a possible direct hit.

The development comes after the Ministry of External Affairs recently raised concerns with Ukraine over an attack on another merchant vessel near Odessa, which resulted in the death of an Indian seafarer. The MEA has urged protection of commercial vessels and safety of maritime routes.

20 Killed in PoK Protest Crackdown

► **Vikrama Vahini | Muzaffarabad**

At least 20 people were killed and several others injured during a long march organised by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), amid a crackdown by Pakistani authorities.

The protest march began from Mirpur after talks between JAAC and the Pakistan government failed to resolve key demands. The procession was heading towards Muzaffarabad when clashes broke out.

JAAC claimed that 20 people had died in the violence, with casualties expected to rise. The group alleged the use of force, including live ammunition, tear gas and shelling against protesters.

₹1 Crore Reward Maoist Held

► **Vikrama Vahini | Ranchi**

Top Maoist leader Misir Besra, carrying a bounty of over ₹1 crore, was arrested by security forces from the Maniadih area of Dhanbad district in Jharkhand on Tuesday evening.

Police said Besra, a resident of Harladih village in Giridih district, was wanted in several Maoist-related cases across Jharkhand, Odisha and other states.

His arrest is being viewed as a major success for security agencies in their ongoing operations against Left-Wing Extremism.

Further investigation is underway to gather information about the Maoist network and his associates.

CWRC Orders 3,500 Cusecs Cauvery Water Release to Tamil Nadu

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee has directed Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs of water daily to Tamil Nadu for 15 days, triggering a fresh interstate dispute. Karnataka has opposed the move citing poor monsoon rainfall, low reservoir levels and drinking water concerns, while the state government is considering its next course of action.

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru/New Delhi**

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) on Tuesday directed Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs of Cauvery water per day to Tamil Nadu for 15 days, reigniting the long-standing interstate water-sharing dispute.

The committee's decision came despite Karnataka's objections that poor monsoon rainfall and low reservoir levels have created a severe water shortage in the state, making it difficult to meet even drinking water requirements.

The CWRC, which met in New Delhi, recommended the release of nearly 4 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) of water to Tamil Nadu during the 15-day period.

The directive is based on Tamil Nadu's demand that Karnataka follow the water-sharing arrangement outlined in the Supreme Court's 2018 Cauvery verdict.

Reacting to the CWRC recommendation, Karnataka Water Resources Minister Ramalinga Reddy said the state government would consult Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar before deciding whether to implement the order or challenge it

CAUVERY ROW INTENSIFIES OVER WATER RELEASE ORDER

- The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) directed Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs of Cauvery water daily for 15 days to Tamil Nadu.**
- Water Resources Minister Ramalinga Reddy said the government would consult Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar before deciding on implementation or further legal action soon.**
- The panel also recommended releasing around 4 TMC of water during the period.**
- Karnataka opposed the directive, citing poor monsoon rainfall, low reservoir levels and drinking water concerns. Tamil Nadu urged Karnataka to follow the Supreme Court's 2018 Cauvery water-sharing order.**

Karnataka is facing a serious water shortage due to deficient rainfall and low reservoir levels. The government's priority is to ensure drinking water availability throughout the year. We will examine the Cauvery water release directive and take an appropriate decision after discussions with legal experts and officials.



before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA). "We are facing a water shortage. There has been no rain here and we have to ensure drinking water for the entire year. We will discuss

the matter with the Chief Minister and decide," Reddy said.

Karnataka officials informed the CWRC that the Cauvery basin received almost no rainfall during June, resulting in very low inflows into reservoirs. Although some parts of the basin witnessed rainfall in July, the state said water storage levels remained inadequate. Tamil Nadu reiterated before the committee that Karnataka should release water according to the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment on Cauvery water sharing. The state has maintained that timely release of water is essential for meeting its agricultural and drinking water needs.

The latest directive comes two weeks after Karnataka expressed its inability to release water during the July 15 CWRC meeting, citing one of the worst rainfall deficits in the Cauvery basin and critically low reservoir levels.

The Karnataka government is now expected to take a final decision after discussions with the Chief Minister. If it decides against implementing the recommendation, the state may approach the Cauvery Water Management Authority for further review.

K'taka Cabinet Expansion Nears Final Stage

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Karnataka Congress government's long-awaited Cabinet expansion has reached its final stage, with the party high command holding crucial discussions in New Delhi to finalise the list of new ministers.

A high-level meeting was held at the residence of AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal on Tuesday, where Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Karnataka Congress leaders discussed the names of leaders likely to be inducted into the Cabinet.

Final Approval Awaited

The final decision on the ministerial list is expected after a meeting with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. The discussion is likely to give the final approval for the second phase of Cabinet expansion.

Sources said the leaders discussed various criteria, including regional representation, caste and community balance, seniority, and giving opportunities to new faces from underrepresented groups.

Rahul Gandhi's Meeting Crucial

The Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah and Karnataka Congress leaders have been camping in Delhi for the past few days for consultations with the party leadership. After the meeting with Venugopal, the focus has now shifted to the final round of talks with Rahul Gandhi. The meeting is expected to take place on Wednesday evening at Rahul Gandhi's residence in Delhi, following his Parliament engagements.

Swearing-in Likely on July 30

Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony of the new ministers have reportedly begun. The ceremony is likely to be held on July 30 at Lok Bhavan, with the final schedule expected after the high command's approval.

Aspirants Await Decision

Several Congress MLAs aspiring for ministerial berths have been waiting for the expansion for the past two years. Many legislators have reached Delhi to lobby for positions, making the final selection a matter of intense anticipation within the party.

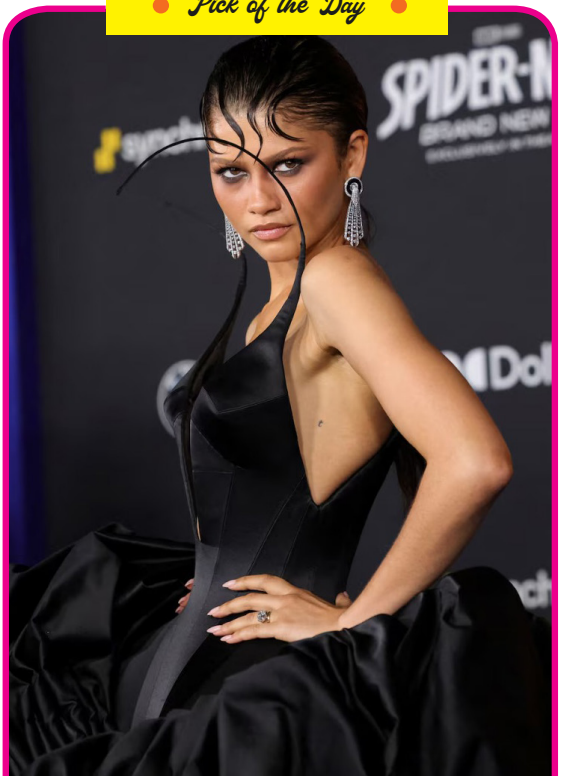
The names of the new ministers are expected to be clear after the final discussions between the state leaders and the Congress high command. The Cabinet expansion is being closely watched within the Congress as the party aims to maintain a balance between experienced leaders and emerging faces.

The expansion is also expected to address the growing demands from several legislators who have been seeking ministerial opportunities since the formation of the government. The final list, once approved by the high command, will determine the new shape of the D.K. Shivakumar-led Cabinet and is likely to have an impact on the party's preparations for upcoming political challenges.

Karnataka's much-awaited Cabinet expansion has reached the final stage, with Congress high command discussions in Delhi nearing completion. Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah and state leaders held talks with AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal, while the final approval is expected after a meeting with Rahul Gandhi. The new ministers are likely to take oath on July 30, leaving several MLAs anxiously waiting for their names in the final list.



● *Pick of the Day* ●



Zendaya graces the red carpet at the worldwide premiere of 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' in Los Angeles.

NCPI INVITED TO NDA'S 'MANGAL MILAN' FOR FIRST TIME



► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Parliamentary Party will hold its weekly 'Mangal Milan' meeting on Tuesday, with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI) invited to participate for the first time. The meeting assumes significance as Parliament continues to witness intense discussions during the Monsoon Session over examination reforms and recent student protests.

The meeting is scheduled to be held at 9.30 a.m. at the GMC Bhalayogi Auditorium in the Parliament Library Building.

If the NCPI attends, it will mark the party's maiden participation in an NDA Parliamentary Party meeting following the merger of 20 former Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs with the party and their decision to support the BJP-led alliance.

The NCPI, led in Parliament by senior MP Sudeep Bandyopadhyay, held its first parliamentary party meeting on Sunday. Party leaders said their seating arrangements, division numbers and

legislative blocks had been accepted within Parliament, while reaffirming their support for the NDA.

However, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is yet to formally recognise the merger of the rebel MPs with the NCPI.

The parliamentary meeting comes a day after Union Minister of State Jitendra Singh introduced the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha amid repeated disruptions by Opposition members.

The proposed legislation seeks to strengthen measures against paper leaks and examination malpractice through seven major reforms, including time-bound investigations and trials, Special Fast-Track Courts, Special Task Forces, Special Public Prosecutors, stricter punishments, enhanced financial penalties, and a simplified appeal mechanism.

The NDA is expected to field several young Members of Parliament during the debate on the Bill, including NCPI MPs Sharmila Sarkar and Mitali Bagh. **PG2**

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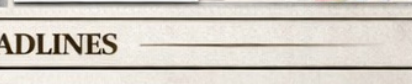
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WHERE YOUR SUCCESS MAKES HEADLINES



Editorial

When Justice Ignores Reality

Monday offered Karnataka a rare moment of optimism in the long-running Cauvery dispute. The Union Government clarified in Parliament that the 2018 Supreme Court judgment does not require Karnataka to obtain the consent of Tamil Nadu, Kerala or Puducherry before taking up the proposed Mokedatu balancing reservoir project. For a State that has struggled for years to secure approval for a project primarily intended to meet Bengaluru's drinking water needs, the clarification appeared to remove a major legal hurdle. But the relief lasted only a few hours. The Cauvery Water Management Authority's subsequent direction asking Karnataka to release a substantial quantity of water to Tamil Nadu transformed that optimism into deep concern. At a time when Karnataka is witnessing a severe rainfall deficit, with reservoirs far below expected levels and drought looming across several districts, the order has naturally raised serious questions about whether ground realities are receiving the attention they deserve.

Water-sharing agreements are essential to maintaining harmony between riparian States, and every State must honour its legal obligations. However, law cannot be interpreted in isolation from extraordinary circumstances. Karnataka has already decided to reserve water in the Krishnaraja Sagar reservoir primarily for drinking purposes, recognising that the first responsibility of any government is to ensure safe drinking water for its people. Even the principles governing water management in India place domestic consumption above all other uses during periods of scarcity. Therefore, decisions involving inter-State water release cannot become routine administrative exercises. They must be guided by scientific assessment of rainfall, live storage levels, inflows, crop requirements and future drinking water needs. Justice is not served by mechanically implementing formulas while ignoring the reality unfolding on the ground.

The Karnataka Government has indicated that it will challenge the Authority's direction before the appropriate forum, and that is the correct constitutional course. More importantly, the Cauvery Water Management Authority must also demonstrate the flexibility expected of an institution entrusted with balancing competing interests. Its decisions should inspire confidence, not resentment. River-water disputes cannot be resolved merely by arithmetic; they demand sensitivity, fairness and an appreciation of changing climatic conditions. Cooperative federalism is sustained not only through legal compliance but through mutual trust and practical wisdom. If exceptional drought conditions are overlooked in favour of rigid interpretation, institutions themselves risk losing public confidence. Justice, particularly in matters as vital as water, must ultimately reflect both the letter of the law and the realities of life.

-Editor

DKS SEEKS MPS' BACKING FOR 13 KEY PROJECTS

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**
Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday appealed to Members of Parliament from the state to rise above political differences and work unitedly to secure Central approval for 13 major infrastructure and development projects. He also expressed concern over Karnataka's worsening water situation, warning that the state could face a severe drought and drinking water crisis if monsoon conditions do not improve.

Chairing a meeting of Karnataka MPs at Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, the Chief Minister said the welfare of the state should take precedence over party politics and urged MPs across party lines to collectively pursue long-pending proposals before the Union Government.

Calls for United Effort
Addressing the meeting, Shivakumar said Karnataka's development required



coordinated efforts from all elected representatives.

"When it comes to Karnataka, let us all work together. Let us keep party politics aside for the welfare of the people. Your cooperation is crucial for securing approvals for projects pending before the Centre," he said.

He stressed that timely approval of key projects would significantly boost the state's infrastructure, transport, healthcare, irrigation and rural development sectors.

Warns of Drought and Drinking Water Crisis
The Chief Minister expressed serious concern over the state's water reserves, stating that, except for the Almatti and Harangi reservoirs, most major reservoirs in Karnataka were nearly empty due to inadequate monsoon rainfall.

He warned that if the situation continued, the state could face an acute shortage of drinking water affecting both people and livestock.

Shivakumar said he had already written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking immediate Central assistance and had advised farmers to take up cultivation only after assessing the availability of water in reservoirs.

Focus on Major Water Projects
The Chief Minister said Karnataka was actively pursuing several major river water

13 Priority Projects Before the Centre

The meeting identified 13 priority proposals requiring urgent Central approval. These include:

- * Bengaluru Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR)
- * Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project
- * Bengaluru-Mumbai High-Speed Rail Corridor
- * Kolar Railway Coach Factory
- * Revival of commercial operations at HAL Airport
- * Establishment of AIIMS at Raichur

- * Approval of Sagarmala 2.0 projects
- * Transfer of Defence land to Karnataka
- * Rehabilitation of families from Kudremukh National Park
- * Modernisation of the police force
- * Release of 15th Finance Commission grants to Gram Panchayats
- * Financial assistance for pest control in coconut and arecanut plantations
- * Early approval of Karnataka Bills pending before the Centre

projects to improve long-term water security.

Referring to a recent meeting with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, and Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, he said the three states had agreed to construct the Peacock Balance Reservoir on the Tungabhadra River, which is expected to help conserve nearly 30 TMC of water.

Mokedatu and Mahadaya Projects
Speaking on the proposed Mokedatu balancing reservoir project, Shivakumar

said the Supreme Court had clarified that Karnataka did not require the consent of neighbouring states to construct a balancing reservoir within its own territory. He added that the Union Jal Shakti Minister had reiterated the same position in Parliament.

The Chief Minister also said the Supreme Court had agreed to constitute a special Bench to hear matters relating to the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal award, while legal efforts were continuing to remove hurdles delaying the Mahadaya project.

BYV Seeks CBI Probe into KPSC Recruitment Row

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**
Karnataka BJP State President and MLA B.Y. Vijayendra on Tuesday demanded a CBI investigation into all alleged recruitment irregularities in the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), accusing the Congress government of jeopardising the future of the state's youth.

Addressing a protest by KPSC aspirants and job seekers at Freedom Park, Vijayendra alleged that large-scale irregularities had occurred in several KPSC recruitments, including the recent recruitment of 400 Veterinary Officers. He claimed there were allegations of bribes ranging from ₹80 lakh to ₹90 lakh per post and sought a thorough investigation into the matter.

The BJP leader also criticised the government for failing to fill nearly 2.5 lakh vacant government posts, including thousands of teaching positions that have remained unfilled for over a decade. He said



many qualified candidates were crossing the upper age limit while waiting for recruitment, causing uncertainty over their careers.

Vijayendra urged the state government to introduce a transparent, UPSC-style recruitment system to eliminate corruption and restore public confidence. He also

called for immediate recruitment to vacant posts and justice for unemployed youth.

Stating that the BJP would continue its agitation inside and outside the Legislature, Vijayendra said the party would persist in demanding a fair recruitment process and strict action against those responsible for alleged irregularities.

Tejasvi Surya Asks DKS to Answer KPSC Scam, Not Just NEET

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**
BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Tuesday questioned Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar over the alleged KPSC recruitment scam, asking why the state government was focusing on the NEET issue while thousands of aspirants in Karnataka were protesting over alleged irregularities in recruitment.

Participating in the Lok Sabha debate on the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, Surya said the Chief Minister had travelled to Delhi to protest

against the NEET controversy, but had remained silent on the grievances of KPSC candidates protesting at Bengaluru's Freedom Park.

Referring to the recent suspension of the KPSC Chairman, Surya alleged that serious irregularities had surfaced in recruitment processes, including allegations of forged documents and corruption in appointments. He also cited allegations of large-scale bribery in veterinary college admissions and demanded



accountability from the state government.

Surya said he was speaking on behalf of students who had allegedly suffered due to examination and recruitment irregularities.

He stressed that young people across the country were seeking a transparent and credible examination system rather than political accusations.

Calling for long-term reforms, the Bengaluru South MP said the future of lakhs of students should not depend on a single

examination and emphasised the need for a fair, innovation-driven education and assessment system. He said the National Education Policy (NEP) was introduced to bring structural changes in education after more than three decades.

Surya also accused the Opposition of disrupting Parliament despite the Centre bringing legislation to strengthen action against examination malpractices and paper leaks, asserting that students expected solutions rather than political confrontation.

NEWS

Rao Pushes Clean-Up Drive Ahead of Campaign

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**
Ahead of the launch of the 'Freedom from Waste' campaign on August 1, GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao directed officials to give top priority to cleanliness, debris removal and pedestrian-friendly footpath development across Bengaluru.

During inspections in the Bengaluru North and Bengaluru West City Corporation limits, Rao instructed officials to stop sewage from entering stormwater drains near Hebbal Junction, replace damaged drain slabs, maintain public toilets, and clear debris and overgrown vegetation in Metro construction and land acquisition areas through coordinated action by BDA, KIADB, BMRCCL and BBMP.

He also ordered the development of public spaces near Hebbal Junction, relocation of an unsafe bus shelter near Bhadrappa Layout, and clearance of soil, debris and vegetation along the K-RIDE corridor.

In the Bengaluru West zone, officials were directed to construct proper footpaths near Mattikere Bus Stop, restore damaged roads after BWSSB

underground drainage works, remove footpath encroachments, relocate a public toilet, and clear debris along the Yeshwanthpur-Tumakuru Road.

Concluding the inspection, Maheshwar Rao instructed all civic agencies to work in coordination to ensure the successful implementation of the month-long campaign and make Bengaluru cleaner, safer and more pedestrian-friendly.

investigation initiated despite the recommendation. The selection list was reportedly finalised and sent to the state government, which later issued appointment orders.

The alleged irregularities include manipulation of OMR answer sheets and examination malpractice. The issue has gained attention as KPSC is already under scrutiny over alleged irregularities in the recruitment of veterinary officers.

KPSC Acting Chairman Dr. B. Prabhudeva said the matter would be reviewed after obtaining legal opinion, while Secretary Jyoti assured that appropriate action would be taken if required. The allegations have intensified calls for greater transparency in government recruitment processes.

HEALTH & Lifestyle

Monsoon Diet Alert: Avoid These Vegetables

The monsoon season brings relief from the summer heat but also creates a favourable environment for the growth of bacteria, viruses and fungi due to increased moisture levels in the air and soil. Health experts advise people to be cautious while consuming certain vegetables during this period, as they may carry hidden insects, dirt and harmful microorganisms.

Vegetables to Avoid or Consume Carefully During Monsoon
Cauliflower
Cauliflower is more vulnerable to insect attacks and microbial growth during the rainy season. Dirt, worms and bacteria can often remain hidden in its leaves and florets, which may lead to stomach-related problems if not cleaned properly.

Brinjal (Eggplant)
Brinjal is another vegetable that attracts more pests during monsoon. Small insects may enter the vegetable, and improper cleaning or cooking can increase the risk of digestive issues.

Leafy Vegetables
Vegetables such as spinach, lettuce and fenugreek leaves are highly nutritious but require extra caution during the rainy season. Due to high moisture levels, they can easily collect mud, small insects and bacteria. They should be washed thoroughly before consumption.

Cabbage
High humidity during monsoon can encourage bacterial growth and insect infestation in cabbage. People are advised to clean it properly before cooking to avoid health problems.

Mushrooms
Mushrooms naturally contain high moisture, making them more likely to spoil quickly during the rainy season. It is advisable to avoid buying mushrooms unless they are fresh and properly stored.

Safe Ways to Consume Vegetables During Monsoon
Experts say these vegetables do not need to be completely avoided as they contain essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants. However, proper hygiene and preparation are important.

Buy fresh vegetables and avoid those that appear damaged or spoiled. Wash vegetables thoroughly before cutting and cooking.

Soak leafy vegetables, cauliflower and broccoli in clean water with a little salt or vinegar for 15-20 minutes to remove dirt and insects.

Cook vegetables properly and store them safely.
Following these precautions can help reduce the risk of infections and ensure safe consumption of vegetables during the monsoon season.

SCIENCE & Technology

Cursor Launches ₹649 AI Coding Plan in India

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**
AI coding platform Cursor has introduced a new India-exclusive subscription plan, Cursor Start, priced at ₹649 per month, aimed at making AI-powered programming tools more accessible to developers in the country.

The company said its Indian user base has tripled over the past year, making India its third-largest market globally. The new plan comes amid growing demand for AI coding assistants and increasing adoption of artificial intelligence tools among developers.

Affordable AI Coding Access
The Cursor Start subscription includes features such as Cursor Composer 2.5, Grok 4.5, cloud agents, iOS app support, plugins, Model Context Protocol (MCP), hooks and skills.

The plan offers a lower-cost alternative to Cursor's Pro subscription, which is priced at \$20 per month and provides access to additional advanced features.

Premium Features Limited to Pro Plan
While Cursor Start provides essential AI coding capabilities, features including advanced OpenAI and Anthropic models, Bugbot, Auto Mode, automations and Cursor SDK will remain available only to Pro subscribers.

India Emerges as Key AI Market
Cursor co-founder Aman Sanger said Indian users make more AI agent requests per user than users in any other market. The company's India-focused pricing strategy reflects the growing importance of the country's developer ecosystem.

The move follows a broader trend among global AI companies adopting region-specific pricing models to expand their reach in emerging markets and encourage wider AI adoption.

WANGCHUK URGES HUMILITY AMID CJP ROW

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Activist Sonam Wangchuk has urged the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) to celebrate its success with humility after videos of party members celebrating the resignation of former Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan went viral on social media.

The celebrations followed the conclusion of the CJP's 37-day protest over the alleged NEET-UG paper leak, but drew criticism from many who felt the festivities were insensitive given the movement's focus on students affected by the controversy.

Calling for restraint, Wangchuk said, "Victory must be accompanied by humility," and stressed that achievements should be celebrated with dignity and responsibility.

Defending the event, CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said it was organised to honour 150-200 volunteers who had supported the month-long protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar. He clarified that the gathering was not held at a five-star hotel, as alleged by some



Activist Sonam Wangchuk has urged CJP supporters to celebrate victories with humility after videos of post-resignation celebrations sparked controversy. While critics called the festivities insensitive, the CJP defended the event as a gathering to honour volunteers who supported the month-long protest.

critics, but at a modest venue where volunteers shared their experiences and feedback.

Das maintained that the programme did not affect the organisation's ongoing dialogue with the government on examination reforms and said the volunteers deserved recognition for their contribution to the movement.

"3,000+ Recruitment Scam Claim"

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

BJP MLC C.T. Ravi has demanded a comprehensive investigation into alleged irregularities in various recruitments conducted by the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), claiming that more than 3,000 posts may have been affected by malpractice in the last two years.

Ravi referred to the alleged leak of audio and video clips related to the recruitment of veterinary inspectors, claiming that there were instances of "selling of posts" in the selection process. He also raised concerns over candidates who scored low marks in regular examinations securing unusually high marks in KPSC exams.

The BJP leader alleged that the issue was not limited to veterinary inspector recruitment and claimed similar irregularities had surfaced earlier in Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) and Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) selections.

Lok Sabha Takes Up Tougher Anti-Paper Leak Bill

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday took up for consideration and passage the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, with the Centre proposing stricter punishment and stronger legal measures to curb paper leaks and organised examination fraud.

Introducing the Bill, Union Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh said the proposed amendments aim to reinforce the integrity and credibility of public examinations by introducing stringent penalties, fast-track judicial mechanisms and enhanced safeguards against organised cheating.

Under the proposed amendments, those convicted of paper leaks and related offences could face imprisonment ranging

The Lok Sabha has taken up the Anti-Paper Leak Amendment Bill, 2026, proposing 5-10 years' imprisonment, fines of up to ₹50 lakh, and Special Fast-Track Courts to tackle organised examination fraud. The legislation aims to strengthen the integrity of major national recruitment and entrance examinations.



from five to ten years, while the maximum financial penalty would be increased to ₹50 lakh.

The government said the tougher provisions are intended to act as a strong deterrent against organised examination fraud and ensure strict action against those responsible for compromising the examination process.

The proposed legislation will apply to major competitive examinations conducted by central agencies, including the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), National Testing Agency (covering

NEET, JEE and CUET), Railway Recruitment Boards, and banking recruitment agencies.

The Bill seeks to amend the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 by providing for Special Fast-Track Courts, time-bound investigations, stronger enforcement mechanisms and stricter accountability to ensure speedy disposal of cases involving examination malpractice.

The government said the amendments would strengthen the legal framework and improve the efficiency of investigations into organised exam fraud.

BESCOM Seeks Timely Payment of Average Bills

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The Bangalore Electricity Supply Company has urged domestic electricity consumers in Bengaluru to pay their July electricity bills within the prescribed due date, even though regular meter readings were not carried out during the month. The utility clarified that July bills have been generated based on the average electricity consumption of the previous three months as meter readers have been assigned to door-to-door data verification work under the Gruha Jyothi scheme.

Average Billing for July

According to BESCOM, the temporary arrangement was necessitated by the

deployment of meter readers for verification of beneficiaries under the Gruha Jyothi scheme. As a result, domestic consumers received bills calculated on their average power consumption instead of actual meter readings. The power utility assured consumers that there is no need for concern, as regular meter reading and billing based on actual consumption will resume from August.

No Physical Bills This Month

BESCOM has also announced that physical electricity bills will not be distributed this month. Instead, consumers have received their

bill details through SMS and email.

The utility said consumers whose meter readers did not visit their premises need not worry, as the bills have already been generated and are available through the usual online payment platforms.

15-Day Payment Deadline

Consumers have been advised to pay their electricity bills within 15 days from the date of bill generation to avoid any inconvenience or late payment charges. BESCOM appealed to consumers to ensure timely payment despite the temporary change in the billing process.



Actual Meter Reading Continues for Certain Consumers

The utility clarified that the average billing system applies only to domestic consumers.

Consumers in categories such as High Tension (HT) connections, Low Tension (LT) connections with a connected load of 40 HP and above, rooftop solar installations, and temporary electricity connections will continue to receive bills based on actual meter readings as per the existing procedure. BESCOM reiterated that the temporary arrangement is limited to July and that the normal billing process will be restored from the next billing cycle.

Karwar Police Seize ₹48,000 Ganja in Goa Raid

► **Vikrama Vahini | Karwar**

Karwar Rural Police have busted an interstate ganja trafficking racket and seized 846 grams of ganja worth ₹48,000, along with ₹10,800 in cash, a digital weighing machine and other materials during a raid at Canacona in Goa.

The operation followed the earlier arrest of Nagaraj (26) and Vinod, from whom police had seized 465 grams of ganja worth ₹25,000, a motorcycle and two mobile phones. During the investigation, police traced the supply network to Goa and conducted the raid.

Notices have been issued to three women allegedly involved in the drug trade, and further investigation is underway.

Quality Roads Top Priority: Krishna Byre Gowda

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has instructed officials and contractors to ensure that road development works under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) are carried out with the highest quality standards and without any compromise.

Following the minister's direction, quality asphalt works are being taken up at various locations in the Mahadevapura zone, including roads near the GBA office. Vehicles parked randomly along the roadsides are being cleared to ensure smooth and systematic completion

of the works.

Officials have also been instructed to complete essential works such as cable installation, drainage arrangements and drinking water pipeline works before taking up asphalt laying. The department must ensure that roads are not dug up again after completion of resurfacing works, the minister said.

The GBA has stressed the need for coordination among all departments to maintain road quality and prevent unnecessary damage to newly completed roads.



GE HealthCare, UWBe Boost Early Childhood Education in K'taka

GE HealthCare and United Way Bengaluru have strengthened early childhood education in Karnataka through the Born Learning Campaign, upgrading 48 Anganwadi centres in Raichur and benefiting around 4,200 children.

► **Vikrama Vahini | Raichur**

Marking a decade of successful partnership, GE HealthCare and United Way Bengaluru (UWBe), in collaboration with the Raichur District Administration, have strengthened Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) through the Born Learning Campaign (BLC), transforming Anganwadi centres into child-friendly learning spaces across Karnataka.

In Raichur, one of Karnataka's aspirational districts, the initiative has renovated 48 Anganwadi Centres, benefiting nearly 4,200 children aged 0-6 years. The programme has also been extended to Whitefield, KR Puram and Kadugodi in Bengaluru to improve early



childhood education and care.

The initiative focuses on upgrading Anganwadi infrastructure, providing age-appropriate learning materials, enhancing the capacity of Anganwadi workers, and encouraging active participation of parents and local communities. It aligns with the 'Saksham

Anganwadi' initiative of the Government of India and the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for universal access to quality early childhood education.

Over the past ten years, the programme has reported significant improvements in children's cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical development, besides increasing attendance and participation at Anganwadi centres. Officials said the success of the initiative has been driven by strong collaboration between GE HealthCare, United Way Bengaluru, the district administration, government departments, Anganwadi workers and local communities.

ENTERTAINMENT

Ramayana Trailer to Premiere with Spider-Man Release

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The much-awaited trailer of Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Ramayana' will now be unveiled in theatres along with Marvel Studios' upcoming superhero film 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day'. The decision has created excitement among movie lovers as audiences will get a first look at the Indian epic drama on the big screen ahead of one of the biggest Hollywood releases of the year.

According to trade sources, the latest trailer of Nitesh Tiwari's 'Ramayana' will be attached to Spider-Man: Brand New Day along with the trailer of Marvel's highly anticipated film 'Avengers: Doomsday'. The special trailer showcase will begin when Spider-Man: Brand New Day releases in Indian theatres on July 30, 2026.

Big Theatrical Launch for 'Ramayana'

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh confirmed that cinema audiences watching Spider-Man: Brand New Day will receive an added attraction with the trailers of Ramayana and Avengers: Doomsday being screened before the main film.

The move is expected to give Ramayana a massive theatrical reach, as Marvel's Spider-Man franchise enjoys a strong fan base in India.

The film's makers are looking to create a global impact by presenting the epic on an international platform.

Trailer Release Was Earlier Postponed

The Ramayana trailer launch was earlier delayed just before its scheduled global debut at the San Diego Comic-Con. The postponement came after the makers announced a partnership with Sony Pictures Entertainment for the film's worldwide distribution.

Producer Namit Malhotra said the collaboration would help take the Indian epic story to audiences across the globe and present it on the scale of major international productions.

Star-Studded Cast of 'Ramayana'

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra, Ramayana features a star-studded cast. Ranbir Kapoor will portray Lord Ram, while Sai Pallavi plays Sita. The film also stars Ravi Dubey as Lakshman, Yash as Ravan, Sunny Deol as Hanuman and



Anupam Kher as Jatayu.

The project is being developed as a large-scale cinematic adaptation of the ancient Indian epic, with high production values and advanced visual effects.

'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' Set for Global Release

Meanwhile, Tom Holland's 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' is scheduled to hit theatres worldwide on July 30, 2026. The film will release in India in multiple languages, including English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.

The Marvel film also features Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Sadie Sink, Jon Bernthal and Mark Ruffalo in important roles.

With the combination of Marvel's global popularity and the anticipation surrounding Ramayana, theatres are expecting a strong response from audiences, making the July 30 release a major event for film fans.

'TOXIC' UNVEILS HUMA QURESHI'S NEW POSTER

► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

The makers of Kannada superstar Yash's much-awaited film 'Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups' have released a new poster featuring actress Huma Qureshi's character Elizabeth on the occasion of her birthday.

Huma Qureshi, who turned 40 on July 28, plays the role of Elizabeth in the film, which is set against the backdrop of the 1950s and 1960s. The newly released poster showcases the actress in a glamorous gown, adding to the curiosity surrounding her character.

Earlier, the film's team had unveiled another poster featuring Huma in a vintage look, dressed like a British royal beside a black classic car. The poster had created significant buzz among fans and raised interest about her role in the film. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, 'Toxic' stars Yash in the lead role and features an ensemble cast including Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Tara Sutaria, Rukmini Vasanth and Huma Qureshi.

Huma has expressed high expectations for the film, stating that every major character has importance and offers scope for strong performances. The actress, who made her debut with the critically acclaimed film 'Gangs of Wasseypur', has become one of Bollywood's prominent performers and is now making her entry into Kannada cinema with this pan-world project.



BUSINESS

₹80,000 Crore Push for Deep-Sea Oil Exploration

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Centre is preparing an incentive package worth around ₹80,000 crore to accelerate domestic oil and gas exploration, particularly in deepwater and ultra-deepwater regions, as part of efforts to strengthen India's energy security and reduce dependence on imports.

Under the proposed scheme, the government may bear up to 50 per cent of the drilling cost for deepwater exploratory wells to encourage investment and reduce risks for companies. The proposal is being finalised by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas under the National Deepwater Exploration Mission, 'Samudra Manthan'.

The proposed package aims to make offshore exploration more attractive for both domestic and global energy companies. The government is also considering providing financial support for a portion of the cost involved in 3D seismic surveys, which are crucial for identifying potential oil and gas reserves.

However, assistance for each well is likely to be capped to prevent cost overruns. The proposal will be placed before the Union Cabinet after consultations with various ministries.

India, one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, relies heavily on imported crude oil and natural gas to meet rising energy demand. Officials said increasing domestic production is essential to reduce vulnerability to global price fluctuations and geopolitical uncertainties.

Deepwater exploration, however, involves high costs and risks. Drilling a single deepwater well can cost between ₹1,000 crore and ₹1,200 crore, while ultra-deepwater projects require even higher investments.

State-run ONGC has already commissioned its first deepwater exploratory well under the Samudra Manthan programme, marking a major step in India's offshore exploration efforts.

Meanwhile, the government is auctioning 18 deepwater and ultra-deepwater blocks under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy. Companies can submit bids until September 17.

Along with financial incentives, the Centre is also focusing on improving geological data quality and using advanced technology to analyse offshore survey data to support future exploration activities.

SPORTS

PM Hails Sharmila's Historic CWG Gold



➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated para-athlete Sharmila Dhankar for winning India's first-ever Commonwealth Games para-athletics gold medal, calling her achievement a historic moment for the nation. Sharmila clinched the gold medal in the women's F57 shot put event with a season-best throw of 9.81 metres in Glasgow, ending India's 20-year wait for a para-athletics gold at the Commonwealth Games. She also became India's first para-athlete to win a gold medal at the Games since Ranjith Kumar Jayaseelan's bronze in 2006.

Congratulating her on social media, Prime Minister Modi wrote, "History has been created in Glasgow. Congratulations to Sharmila for a very special Gold. This remarkable performance ends a two-decade-long wait for a Para Athletics Gold at the Commonwealth Games."

The Prime Minister also congratulated Ajaya Babu, who won silver in the men's 70kg weightlifting event with a total lift of 330 kg, and Sarvesh Kushare, who secured silver in the men's high jump with a leap of 2.25 metres, becoming the first Indian to win a Commonwealth Games silver in the event.

India Need Clean Sweep to Boost WTC Final Hopes

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

India's upcoming two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, beginning August 15, has gained major significance as the team looks to strengthen its chances of reaching the World Test Championship (WTC) final. A 2-0 clean sweep in the series is considered crucial for India's campaign.

The first Test will be played at the Galle International Stadium from August 15, while the second match is scheduled at the SSC Ground in Colombo from August 23. India are currently placed fifth in the WTC points table and have completed nine of their scheduled 18 matches. With nine games remaining, the team needs to secure maximum victories to remain in contention for a place in the top two.

India's remaining WTC fixtures include two Tests against Sri Lanka, two against New Zealand, and a five-match home series against Australia.

A strong performance, including eight wins from the remaining nine matches, could virtually secure India's place in the WTC final. However, fewer victories would leave the team dependent on results of other competing sides.

Compared to New Zealand and Australia, Sri Lanka are considered a relatively less challenging opponent, making the upcoming series an important opportunity for India to collect valuable points.

CENTRE SUMMONS META OVER PM POST GLITCH

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Centre has summoned Meta's Global Head of Public Policy after the company briefly removed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post due to what it described as a technical glitch. Although the social media giant restored the post and issued an apology, the government has expressed dissatisfaction with Meta's explanation and has sought further discussions on the matter.

PM's Post Removed, Later Restored

The deleted Facebook post contained Prime Minister Modi's message addressing India's youth on the issue of examination paper leaks. In the post, the Prime Minister assured students that the government would take stricter action against those responsible for such irregularities and reiterated its



commitment to ensuring transparency and integrity in the examination system.

The post was later restored by Meta after the company acknowledged that it had been removed in error.

According to sources, Meta informed the government that the post was mistakenly removed because of a glitch in its automated

The Centre has summoned Meta's Global Head of Public Policy after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post was briefly removed due to an alleged technical glitch. While Meta restored the post and apologised, the government has sought a detailed explanation and called for stronger safeguards in the company's content moderation systems.

content filtering and moderation system. However, government officials have reportedly found the explanation unsatisfactory and believe the issue warrants a more detailed investigation.

Sources said the matter is "not settled and done" and that the government expects a comprehensive explanation from the company. Officials also indicated that if an automated system error was responsible for deleting the Prime Minister's post, Meta must

strengthen its content moderation mechanisms to ensure that similar incidents do not recur.

Meta Issues Apology

Meta admitted that the post had been removed inadvertently and apologised for the error. The company stated that the incident resulted from a technical problem in its automated moderation systems and confirmed that the post had been restored immediately after the mistake was identified.

Gulf Accounts for Most Indian Suicides Abroad

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

More than 70 per cent of suicides involving Indian citizens abroad between 2023 and 2025 occurred in Gulf countries, according to data tabled by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Parliament.

The government said 1,763 Indians died by suicide overseas during the three-year period, of which 1,340 cases (around 76%) were reported from the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations. The UAE recorded the highest number with 677 cases, followed by Saudi Arabia (566), Kuwait (60), Qatar (22), Oman (13) and Bahrain (2).

The MEA also informed Parliament that 28,349 Indian nationals died abroad during the same period. Of these, 24,278 deaths were due to natural causes, 1,622 were caused by road accidents and 686 resulted from workplace accidents.

The Gulf region, which hosts the largest Indian expatriate population, accounted for the majority of suicide cases. The latest figures also show an



More than three-fourths of Indian suicides abroad between 2023 and 2025 were reported from Gulf countries, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia accounting for the highest numbers. The latest MEA data has renewed concerns over the welfare, working conditions and mental health of Indian migrant workers in the region.

increase from the previous annual average of 445 suicides (2014-2022) to nearly 588 suicides per year between 2023 and 2025.

The data has renewed focus on the welfare and mental health of Indian migrant workers, particularly in Gulf countries, where labour groups have repeatedly highlighted concerns over working conditions, financial stress and social isolation.

KUWAIT SEALS FIVE-YEAR DEFENCE PACT WITH PAKISTAN

Kuwait has approved a five-year defence cooperation agreement with Pakistan to deepen military collaboration through joint training, intelligence sharing and defence cooperation. The pact reflects growing Gulf efforts to strengthen regional security partnerships amid evolving geopolitical challenges.

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Kuwait**

Kuwait has ratified a five-year defence cooperation agreement with Pakistan, strengthening military ties amid growing security concerns in the Gulf region. Approved by the Kuwaiti Cabinet, the agreement aims to expand strategic cooperation through joint military training, defence education, intelligence sharing, logistics support, personnel exchanges and defence procurement.

The agreement comes as Gulf nations seek to diversify their security partnerships following recent regional tensions.

Pakistan, with its experienced armed forces and long-standing ties with Gulf countries, has emerged as an important defence partner.

Officials clarified that the pact



does not provide for the deployment of Pakistani combat troops in Kuwait. Instead, it focuses on institutional cooperation, joint exercises and capacity building.

The agreement follows Pakistan's mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia last year and is expected to strengthen not only military cooperation but also economic ties, energy security and investment between Pakistan and Gulf nations.

Kerala Teachers Arrested in Drug Network Case



➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Thiruvananthapuram**

In a shocking incident in Kerala, two teachers who were expected to guide students have been arrested for their alleged involvement in a drug trafficking network.

According to the police investigation, the accused teachers, Kavya and Keerthana, allegedly acted as intermediaries by receiving money from drug buyers through their bank accounts before arranging delivery of narcotics through courier services.

Keerthana was arrested first, and during her interrogation, police reportedly obtained information about Kavya's alleged role in the network. Investigators found that payments from customers were transferred through the teachers' bank accounts before drugs were sent to buyers.

Keerthana was arrested last week, while Kavya was taken into custody on July 27. Police are continuing their investigation to identify other persons linked to the alleged drug network. The accused teachers were associated with the Perambra Block Resource Centre under Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK), a sub-district-level educational institution.

Farmers Announce Nationwide Protests

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has announced a nationwide agitation demanding the fulfilment of farmers' long-pending demands. At an all-India convention held in New Delhi, farmer organisations decided to hold 'Jail Bharo', road blockade and rail blockade protests at more than 1,000 locations across the country on August 10.

Farmers' leaders said the protests are against "anti-farmer" free trade agreements and in support of various demands, including legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all crops as per the Swaminathan Commission's C2+50% formula.

The organisations announced plans to submit a memorandum of demands to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, state Chief Ministers, MPs and MLAs on August 17. They will also organise state-level conventions, awareness campaigns, foot marches, vehicle rallies and tractor rallies over the next two months.

The SKM has decided to conduct village-level Maha Panchayats from October 3 and launch an indefinite nationwide agitation from November 26 until their demands are addressed. Farmer groups also plan to organise Kisan Marches at 100 locations, including the national capital. Key demands include withdrawal of free trade agreements, a legal MSP guarantee, comprehensive loan waiver for farmers and agricultural labourers, and ₹25 lakh compensation to families of farmers who died by suicide.

7.1 QUAKE TRIGGERS JAPAN TSUNAMI ALERT

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Tokyo**

A powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Kumamoto Prefecture on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu on Tuesday, prompting authorities to issue a tsunami warning and emergency alerts across several prefectures. Residents in coastal areas were advised to move to higher ground as officials monitored the situation for possible tsunami waves.

Tsunami Warning and Evacuation Advisory

The JMA urged residents living along coastal regions to evacuate immediately and follow official safety instructions. Emergency earthquake alerts were issued for several prefectures on Kyushu, including Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Saga, Oita, and Miyazaki.

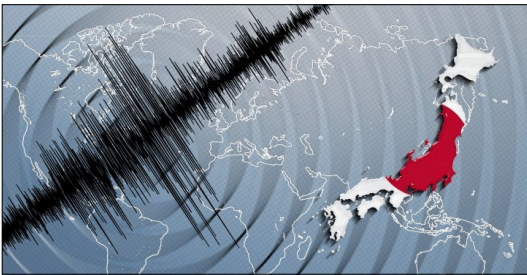
Public broadcaster NHK reported that waves close to the predicted height may already have reached certain coastal areas. Authorities continued to monitor sea conditions and advised people to stay away from beaches, ports, and other low-lying coastal locations until the warning was lifted.

No Immediate Reports of Major Damage

As of the latest reports, there were no immediate reports of widespread destruction, fatalities, or serious injuries. Emergency response teams and local authorities continued assessing the impact of the earthquake while inspecting infrastructure and public utilities for any damage. Officials appealed to the public to remain vigilant, as aftershocks are common following powerful earthquakes.

Japan's High Seismic Activity

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone nations due to its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire,



where four major tectonic plates converge. The country experiences hundreds of earthquakes every year and accounts for nearly 18 per cent of global seismic activity.

Strict building regulations, advanced early warning systems, and regular disaster preparedness drills have helped Japan minimise casualties from frequent seismic events.

Memories of the 2011 Disaster

The latest earthquake has revived memories of the devastating 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, a 9.0-magnitude quake that triggered a massive tsunami, claiming or leaving missing around 18,500 people and causing the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Earlier this year, on April 20, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck northern Japan, injuring at least 10 people and shaking buildings as far away as Tokyo. The incident prompted authorities to issue a temporary advisory warning about the possibility of a stronger earthquake before the alert was withdrawn a week later. Authorities continue to closely monitor Tuesday's earthquake and have urged residents to rely only on official updates while remaining prepared for possible aftershocks.

his private parts using a hot knife as punishment.

The child's family later approached the Lalpur-Pandeypur Police Station, following which an FIR was registered on July 25.

Police have registered a case against the teacher, the school principal, and the school management under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Sections 115(2) and 118(1) for voluntarily causing hurt, and Section 351(2) for criminal intimidation. Station House Officer Atul Kumar Singh confirmed that the investigation is underway.

As part of the investigation, police have seized the school's CCTV recording equipment and footage to verify the sequence of events. Investigators have also inspected the school's kitchen and other areas to collect evidence related to the alleged assault.

Officials said statements of school staff and other witnesses will be recorded as part of the inquiry.

