

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Friday, 03 July 2026

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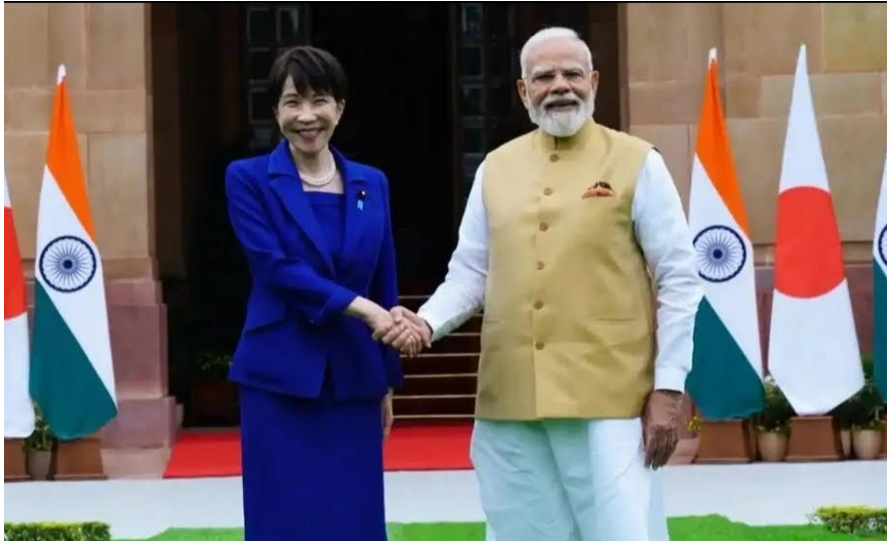
CRITICAL MINERALS BECOME THE ‘NEW OIL’! India, Japan Seal Strategic Pact as PM Sanae Takaichi Makes Landmark Delhi Debut

FAIR REPORT

NEW DELHI: In a clear signal that the global contest for critical minerals has become the defining geopolitical battle of the decade, India and Japan on Thursday elevated their strategic partnership with a series of landmark agreements spanning critical minerals, artificial intelligence, defence, healthcare, clean technology and advanced manufacturing during the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on her first official visit to India since assuming office, underscored that the future of the bilateral relationship would be driven as much by technology and resilient supply chains as by traditional security cooperation.

Among the summit’s most significant outcomes was an agreement between the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Japan Organization for Metals and



Energy Security (JOGMEC) to deepen cooperation in geological surveys and the exploration of critical mineral resources. The two sides also concluded agreements covering battery technology, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and sustainable energy.

Prime Minister Modi described technology and innovation as the next major pillar of India-Japan relations, reflecting both countries’ determination to reduce strategic dependence

on vulnerable global supply chains.

The importance of the partnership extends far beyond economics.

Minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements have rapidly become indispensable to the global economy, powering electric vehicles, semiconductors, smartphones, renewable energy systems, advanced batteries and next-generation defence technologies. Increasingly, governments

view these resources with the same strategic significance once reserved for crude oil.

Takaichi’s three-day visit has been framed in Tokyo as a summit focused on semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and economic security, highlighting Japan’s effort to strengthen trusted partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. The visit builds upon last year’s Joint Vision for the Next Decade, under which Japan com-

mitted approximately \$68 billion in private investment in India over the coming decade. Bilateral trade between the two countries currently stands at approximately \$27.5 billion, with both governments seeking substantial expansion.

The agreements also carry considerable geopolitical weight.

With China maintaining a dominant position in the global processing and export of rare earths and several critical minerals, both New Delhi and Tokyo are seeking to diversify supply chains and reduce strategic vulnerabilities. Officials from both governments also reaffirmed co-operation on energy security, maritime security, defence equipment and resilient supply chains, reflecting a broader convergence in their Indo-Pacific strategy.

The urgency of strengthening alternative supply networks has intensified following disruptions to

global energy markets caused by the recent conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran, reinforcing the need for trusted economic partners capable of securing access to strategically vital resources.

Addressing the joint media interaction, Prime Minister Takaichi reaffirmed Japan’s commitment to a “free, open, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific,” emphasizing that closer cooperation with India remains central to maintaining regional stability and economic resilience.

As global power competition increasingly shifts from oil fields to lithium mines, semiconductor fabs and rare-earth processing facilities, Thursday’s agreements underscore a new strategic reality: the race for critical minerals has become one of the defining geopolitical contests of the 21st century, and India and Japan intend to compete together.

“It’s Hilarious”: Trump Says US Spent ₹95 Lakh Crore on NATO in a Decade, Gets Little in Return



FAIR REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has reignited his long-running grievance against NATO allies, claiming that Washington footed a bill of \$999 billion — roughly 95.19 lakh crore — for the alliance’s security between 2014 and 2025, while getting little credit for it.

Trump contrasted America’s contribution with what he called paltry sums from European partners. “The UK gave \$90.5 billion... France gave \$66.5 billion. It’s hilarious,” he said, arguing that the US shoulders a disproportionate share of NATO’s financial burden despite the alliance being a collective defence pact. The remarks fit a

pattern Trump has repeated across his political career — casting NATO allies as free-riders on American military spending. Fact-checkers have previously pushed back on similar claims, noting that NATO’s 2% GDP defence spending target is a guideline rather than a “bill” owed to the US, and that no ledger tracks debts between member states. Still, US spending has historically made up the largest share of the alliance’s total defence expenditure by a wide margin. The comments come amid renewed scrutiny of burden-sharing within NATO, with European members under pressure to ramp up their own defence budgets.

DOG MAFIA BUSTED! Guwahati Police Smash Alleged Stray Dog Kidnapping Syndicate; Five Arrested, Probe Widens

FAIR REPORT

GUWAHATI: In a major breakthrough against an alleged animal trafficking network, Guwahati Police have arrested five people for their suspected involvement in the systematic kidnapping of stray and community dogs from across the city, exposing what investigators believe is a wider interstate racket. The arrests were made during an investigation launched by Basistha Police after residents reported a spate of mysterious dog disappearances. Acting on intelligence, police raided Karbi Anglong district, initially apprehending three suspects before arresting two more, including a woman allegedly linked to

receiving the stolen animals. Two vehicles believed to have been used for transporting the dogs were also seized. Police suspect the gang trafficked the stolen dogs outside Assam, with investigators probing possible links to the illegal dog meat trade. The accused have been identified as Rangcina Ronghang (31), Bishu Rongpi (41), Munu Rongpi (20), Waisong Teron (32), and Marcy Tokhipi (42), all residents of Karbi Anglong. The crackdown comes amid claims by the Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Foundation that nearly 1,000 dogs have been stolen across Assam since November by an organised trafficking syndicate operating across neighbouring states.

KISS ON TIKTOK, 21 LASHES IN PUBLIC! Indonesian Couple Caned After Livestream Sparks Sharia Case

FAIR REPORT

BANDA ACEH: A young unmarried couple was publicly caned 21 times each in Indonesia’s Aceh province on Thursday after a Sharia court found them guilty of violating Islamic law by kissing during a TikTok livestream. The 22-year-old man and 25-year-old woman were arrested in April after a February 27 livestream showing them kissing inside a car in Banda Aceh went viral, prompting complaints to the province’s religious authorities. The Sharia court had originally sentenced the pair to 25 lashes each but reduced the punishment to 21 strokes after accounting for the four months they had already spent in detention. The punishment was carried out before a crowd of around 100 spectators, with hooded officials administering the caning on a stage in a public park. Authorities also ordered the confiscation and destruction of a mobile phone and USB drive containing the viral TikTok video.

Chris Brown’s \$200-Pound Guard Dog Bites Back: Singer Ordered to Pay \$13 Million After Mauling Housekeeper

FAIR REPORT

Los Angeles : A Los Angeles jury has delivered a stinging verdict against Grammy-winning singer Chris Brown, ordering him and his company Black Pyramid LLC to pay nearly \$13 million to his former housekeeper Maria Avila, who was mauled and permanently disfigured by his 200-pound security dog Hades in 2020.

The two-week trial ended with jurors awarding Avila \$12.9 million for negligence, while her sister Patricia Avila — who was



working alongside her when the attack happened — received \$885,000 for emotional distress, and Maria’s husband Oscar Olivo was separately awarded \$50,000.

The mauling occurred in December 2020 when Avila was taking out the trash at Brown’s Tarzana mansion and was suddenly

attacked by Hades, a Caucasian Shepherd — a massive guard-dog breed notorious for use at Russian prisons. Avila testified through tears that the dog tore off large chunks of her skin, leaving her with permanent facial disfigurement, nerve damage, vision loss and scarring so severe that surgeons had to

graft skin from her abdomen to repair her arm.

What may have sealed the verdict wasn’t just the attack itself — it was what came after. Testimony revealed Brown did not personally call emergency services and instead left the property, reportedly fearing a media circus if his voice was recognized on a 911 call. Avila’s daughter recounted a frantic phone call from her aunt describing her mother struggling to breathe as the ambulance took too long to arrive, with Brown nowhere in sight.

RAM MANDIR TRUST HIT BY FRESH STORM! Priest Alleges Champat Rai Forged Documents to Seize Centuries-Old Ayodhya Temple

FAIR REPORT

AYODHYA: Even before the dust has settled over the ongoing probe into alleged financial irregularities at the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, the institution has been engulfed in yet another controversy. This time, the allegations strike at the heart of its General Secretary, Champat Rai, who has been accused by a senior priest of orchestrating the alleged takeover of a centuries-old temple through forged documents.

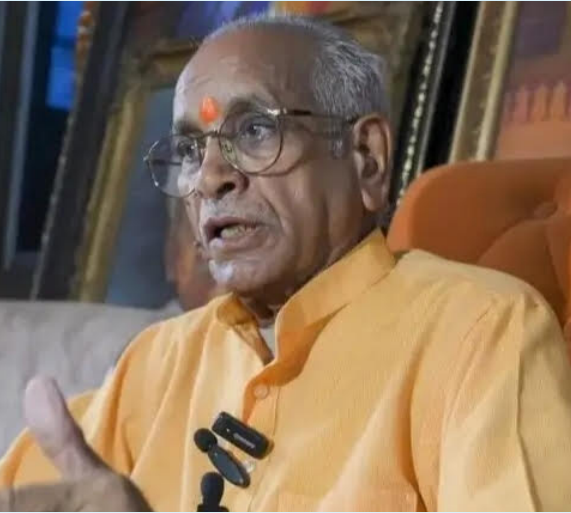
Harishankar Safariwala, the Panch Pramukh of

the historic Ram Niwas Mandir, situated barely 500 metres from the Ram Mandir complex, has alleged that Champat Rai and his associates illegally secured control over the temple and nearly 15 bigha of its land by executing fraudulent property documents.

According to Safariwala, the land was registered in the name of the Trust through priests posted at the temple despite them allegedly not being the lawful owners. He claims the sale deed recorded a consideration of 5.80 crore, but only 60 lakh was actually paid. He fur-

ther alleges that Rai facilitated the registration of a “bayanama bila kabza” — a sale deed executed without physical possession — through priest Virendra Das, enabling the Trust to claim ownership of the temple premises.

The allegations go beyond disputed land ownership. Safariwala has claimed that crores of rupees worth of ancient idols, gold and silver ornaments, a silver throne, and other priceless religious artefacts have disappeared from the temple complex following the alleged takeover. He has further alleged that despite



repeated complaints, local police have refused to register an FIR because of Champat Rai’s influence.

The fresh accusations

come at an especially sensitive time for the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

The Trust is already

facing scrutiny in a separate case involving alleged irregularities in donation collections. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by the Lucknow Divisional Commissioner has been examining allegations of embezzlement from temple donation boxes. The probe has reportedly included the seizure of CCTV footage, examination of financial records, inspection of donation boxes, and questioning of senior Trust functionaries, including Champat Rai and administrator Gopal Rao.

The investigation triggered a political storm af-

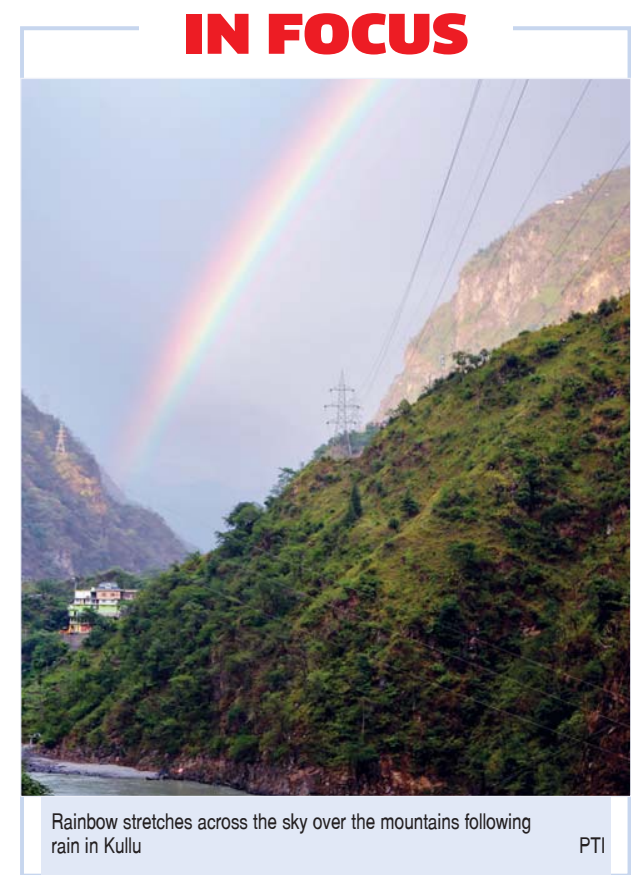
ter the FIR reportedly named several lower-level employees while excluding senior Trust officials. Opposition leaders, including AAP MP Sanjay Singh, alleged that junior staff had been made scapegoats to shield senior management, accusing top Trust officials of responsibility for alleged financial misconduct. Those allegations, too, remain contested.

The latest claims regarding the Ram Niwas Mandir have now intensified the pressure on the Trust, raising fresh questions over governance, transparency and the han-

dling of religious properties in Ayodhya.

Champat Rai and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust have not publicly responded to the allegations concerning Ram Niwas Mandir.

It is important to note that all allegations regarding the alleged land grab, forged documents and disappearance of temple valuables remain unproven. No court has established wrongdoing, no charges have been proven against Champat Rai in connection with these claims, and any investigation or legal proceedings are ongoing.



Rainbow stretches across the sky over the mountains following rain in Kullu

PTI

Delhi BJP condemns demolition of historic Gurudwara in Pakistan



FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

Delhi BJP leaders and state president Harsh Malhotra on Thursday condemned the “demolition” of a historic Gurudwara in Pakistan and criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for remaining silent on the issue.

Malhotra said in a statement that the demolition of the Gurdwara in Pakistan is “highly condemnable” and charged that the “silence” of the AAP government in Punjab on the issue is another “proof of its disregard” for Sikh values and traditions. He said the Gurudwara Shri Guru Singh Sabha in Farukhabad, Pakistan, was “demolished” during the night of June 24-25. The BJP leader said this is not an isolated incident, as attacks on Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and their places of worship have unfortunately become a recurring occurrence in Pakistan. Delhi government minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa

condemned the attack on the religious place, stating that the 125-year-old Gurudwara in Pakistan was “demolished” overnight. “Occupation of Gurdwaras in Pakistan, encroachments on their properties, thereby damaging their heritage, is a grave sin. The world must take notice of this, and the Pakistan government must restore the Gurdwara Sahib,” Sirsa said. Arvinder Singh Lovely, a Sikh leader of the BJP and chairman of the Trans Yamuna Area Development Board, said while Pakistan pretends to be a saviour of minorities worldwide, it has failed to safeguard minorities and their religious places.

“What has happened in Pakistan is also a violation of UNESCO norms,” he said.

Lovely said the Narendra Modi government took prompt cognisance of the matter and conveyed a “strong message” to the Pakistan government and called for its reconstruction.

Government brings stem cell, gene therapies under CLAA

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

The government has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945, to bring cell or stem cell-derived products, gene therapeutic products and xenografts under the Centrally Licensed Approving Authority (CLAA) framework, a move aimed at strengthening regulatory oversight of advanced and emerging medical technologies.

Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, certain categories of critical drugs and biological products are



subject to the joint regulatory supervision of the central and state regulators. These include vaccines, large volume parenterals and r-DNA-based medicines.

This set is being expanded with this amendment to cover additional emerging technologies, according to a statement by the health ministry. Cell or stem cell-derived products, including stem cell-based regenerative treatments and CAR-T cell therapies, are increasingly being used to treat blood cancers such as leukaemia and lymphoma.

Gene therapeutic products, such as gene replacement and gene editing products, are used in the treatment of genetic disorders and various types of cancers.

Xenografts are animal tissue-derived products, such as heart valves, which can be transplanted into humans and are used in cardiology and orthopaedics. As these technologies are highly complex, specialised and rapidly evolving, they need enhanced regulatory scrutiny to ensure patient safety, the statement said.

The inclusion of these products under the CLAA framework will facilitate a system of joint oversight by the central and state licensing authorities, thereby ensuring uniformity in regu-

latory standards across the country, it said. The amendment will increase regulatory rigour for emerging technologies and reinforce India’s regulatory framework in line with scientific advancements and global best practices, the ministry said.

This initiative reflects the government’s continued commitment towards safeguarding public health while promoting innovation and quicker adoption of the latest technologies in healthcare and life sciences sectors, it said.

‘Mutton’ or Beef? Telangana Police Bust Alleged Meat Fraud Racket, 50 Kg Seized; Two Arrested

FAIR REPORT

HYDERABAD: In a significant crackdown on alleged food adulteration and consumer fraud, Telangana Police have arrested two men accused of supplying beef falsely labeled as mutton to local hotels in Hyderabad. The accused have been identified as Mohd Osman, owner of Osman Meat Shop in Mallepally, and Mohd Jahan-gir Pasha, a worker at Ayan Beef Shop. According to police, the duo allegedly misrepresented beef as mutton before supplying it to hotels,

raising serious concerns over food safety, consumer trust, and possible violations of food regulations. During the operation, police seized around 50 kilograms of meat, which has been sent for examination as part of the investigation. Officials said the arrests followed intelligence inputs and preliminary inquiries into the alleged supply chain. Investigators are now working to determine the extent of the suspected operation, identify the hotels that may have received the meat, and ascer-

tain whether more individuals were involved. Police have initiated legal proceedings under the relevant provisions of law, while the investigation remains ongoing. Authorities have not yet disclosed the names of the hotels allegedly supplied with the meat or the duration for which the suspected practice had been in operation. The case has reignited concerns over food mislabeling and the need for stricter monitoring of meat supply chains to safeguard consumer rights and public health.

FAIR REPORT

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court has torn into the state’s prison administration after notorious dacoit Jagan Gurjar — a man once infamous for threatening to blow up former CM Vasundhara Raje’s Dholpur palace — was allegedly strangled to death with a towel inside the supposedly fortified Ajmer High-Secu-

rity Jail.

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice SP Sharma and Justice Manish Sharma, hearing a suo motu case on jail reforms, didn’t mince words: “What is happening in the jails of the state? There is no recording in the cameras in the high-security jail. There is no system for live monitoring of cameras. Mobiles are easily reaching the jails

of the state. Even the Chief Minister of the state has received threats from jail. Despite this, there has been no improvement in the situation.”

The court has now demanded a detailed report from the government and jail administration on exactly what the jail’s cameras did — and did not — capture around the incident, and whether any officer

has been held accountable.

Gurjar, a feared Chambal-region dacoit who terrorised Dholpur’s Dang region for nearly 27 years and once fielded his wife as a Rajasthan Assembly candidate, was lodged in the high-security jail since March. He was allegedly strangled by fellow inmate Vishnu, an under-trial in the Kuldeep Jaghina murder case, after

the two argued during breakfast. Police say the two had no gang rivalry and had reportedly played Ludo together and cleaned their bar-rack just hours before the killing — raising uncomfortable questions about how a personal spat inside a “high-security” facility ended in murder, and just how porous the walls of Rajasthan’s most fortified prisons really are.

IN FOCUS

After WhatsApp, MeitY notice to Telegram, Signal

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

After sending a notice to Meta-owned WhatsApp, the IT Ministry has now shot off notices to Telegram and Signal, raising questions on their existing username feature and asking how the platforms are addressing concerns related to fraud and impersonation risks, according to a source.

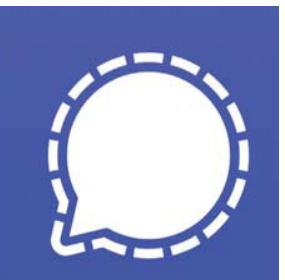
The source said that in the notice to Telegram, the government has asked the platform why it should be allowed to have the username feature.

The feature allows users to create unique usernames that can be used for connecting on the platform without sharing phone numbers.



On Wednesday, the Centre issued a notice to Meta over the username feature announced for WhatsApp, citing concerns that it could materially increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks.

It had also directed WhatsApp to pause the feature until consultations on the issue are completed to



the satisfaction of the Government”.

The government has now widened its scrutiny to other messaging platforms as well.

The source told PTI that the IT ministry has also written to Telegram and Signal — which already have the username feature — and asked how concerns around fraud and impersonation are being addressed by them.

“Government has asked Telegram why the feature should be there,” the source said. Telegram and Signal could not be reached for their comments.

Meanwhile, Zoho-backed homegrown messaging platform Arattai will be disabling the username-based account feature “to comply with the regulatory change”, according to a X post by prominent Indian founder Sridhar Vembu.

The government source added that the two cases are similar, but not identical. Telegram already has the feature in place, while WhatsApp has only announced it. The user bases also differ significantly, with India being WhatsApp’s largest market.

Power tariffs to remain unchanged in UP: Govt

FAIR REPORT

■ Lucknow

The electricity tariffs will remain unchanged across all consumer categories for the seventh consecutive year in 2026-27, Uttar Pradesh Energy Minister A K Sharma said on Thursday.

In a statement, Sharma said the tariff order for 2026-27 issued by the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission reflected the state government’s pro-consumer approach and would benefit domestic consumers, farmers and other electricity users. He said the state government has increased the electricity tariff subsidy to Rs 20,400 crore for 2026-27 from Rs 17,100 crore in the previous financial year. The subsidy will benefit lifeline consumers, rural and urban poor families, private tube



UP Energy Minister AK Sharma

well operators and rural metered consumers, he said.

The minister said the tariff order also retained the existing green energy additional tariff and introduced provisions for battery swapping stations and Battery as a Service (BAAS) providers. Electricity supplied to EV charging stations during solar hours between 9 am and 4 pm will attract a 20 per cent lower tariff to encourage electric mobility and cleaner energy adoption, he added.

Lawyers seek FIR against Ram Temple Trust functionaries, hold protests

FAIR REPORT

■ Ayodhya

On Thursday, lawyers from the Faizabad Bar Association held a protest march and filed a police complaint. They asked for an FIR against Ram Mandir Trust general secretary Champat Rai, trust member Anil Mishra, and temple official Gopal Rao, accusing them of misusing donation funds.

According to Faizabad Bar Association president Kalika Prasad Mishra, Krishna Mohan, the trustee who filed the first FIR, has now also been named as an accused in the lawyers’ new complaint.

The lawyers walked from the court to the Ram Janambhoomi police station to submit their complaint. They demanded that a case be registered and called for a fair and impartial investigation into the



allegations. A large number of lawyers raised slogans demanding an FIR and an investigation into the Trust’s senior functionaries.

Earlier, the bar association said it would not defend the accused in this case. They also warned that any lawyer who chose to represent them would have to pay a penalty of ₹5 lakh for each accused person.

During the march, police strug-

gled to control the crowd. Some lawyers said they suffered minor injuries in the pushing and shoving.

At the police station, several lawyers gathered in the Station House Officer’s office with media personnel, insisting that a case be registered immediately, while police officials tried to pacify them by assuring that the complaint would be examined and appropriate action taken in accordance with the law. Mishra told reporters that the association had requested an FIR against the three people named in the complaint for allegedly misusing donations to the Ram Temple. He also called for an impartial investigation. Rao is involved in building the temple and works with the trust. “A written complaint has been submitted. Five people have gone to collect the hard copy. If they do

not provide it, the protest will continue. The police have said that action will be taken and have given full assurance. The FIR includes Champat Rai, Anil Mishra, Gopal Rao, and Krishna Dev (the complainant in the first FIR).”

He said the association would start a protest, but the police did not file a case against the accused. Superintendent of Police (City) Chakrapani Tripathi said the police have received the complaint and are looking into it. Later, police said the case was entered in the General Diary (GD) at the Ram Janambhoomi police station, and an acknowledgement was given. A police officer said the complaint is being reviewed in accordance with the law and that appropriate action will be taken. If it is found to be warranted but is not registered, action

would also be taken against the officials concerned at the police station. A GD is the police station’s official record for proceedings. Activist Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up in Uttar Pradesh gave its initial report on June 23.

After that, people involved in counting temple donations said he was taking “moral responsibility.” Security has been increased at important places, including Rai. A security official said deployment had been strengthened at the Teerth Kshetra office, Karsevakpuram, and other important places linked to the Trust. Four sub-inspectors have been posted in Karsevakpuram and other important places linked to the Trust.

Meghalaya recorded 32 crore digital transactions in 2025-26: Official

FAIR REPORT

■ Shillong

Meghalaya recorded 32.76 crore digital transactions and nearly 10 lakh Jan Dhan accounts during 2025-26, officials said on Thursday.

RBI Shillong General Manager Olden Nongpluh said the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) Trinity, Direct Benefit Transfer and Digital Public Infrastructure have significantly expanded banking access, improved transparency and accelerated digital adoption across the country.

Participating in a panel discussion, he said 98 per



cent of bank account holders in Meghalaya have adopted at least one digital mode of transaction, while efforts are underway to achieve universal and meaningful digital adoption.

SBI Deputy General Manager Ejaz Ahmad said the state had 9.99 lakh

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts as on March 31, 2026, with SBI accounting for 3.55 lakh, or 36 per cent, of the total.

He said enrolment under the Centre’s social security schemes has also grown, with 5.08 lakh beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, 9.36 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and 1.02 lakh under the Atal Pension Yojana.

India recorded 21,860 crore digital transactions during 2025-26, while Meghalaya accounted for 32.76 crore transactions, Ahmad said.

Haryana chief electoral officer asks political parties to support SIR exercise

FAIR REPORT

■ Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) A Sreenivas on Thursday urged all recognised national and state political parties to hold meetings between their booth level agents (BLAs) and booth level officers (BLOs) to ensure the smooth conduct of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

Chairing a meeting with the representatives of political parties here, Sreenivas said the parties should inform election authorities in advance about the date and time of such meetings and ensure proper videography and photography of the proceedings.

He said the SIR will continue till July 14 while the final electoral rolls will be published on September 22.

Sreenivas said the BLOs have been instructed to visit every household where enumeration forms have not been received at least three times. If the forms are still not available, the BLOs will verify the status through neighbours and record the reason as “absent”, “shifted”, “deceased” or “duplicate”, as applicable. To ensure transparency, booth-wise lists of voters whose names are not included in the draft electoral rolls, along with the reasons for their exclusion,



will be displayed at Panchayat Bhawans, urban local body offices and block development and panchayat officer (BDPO) offices. The lists will also be uploaded on the websites of the CEO and the concerned district election officers (DEOs).

The CEO said the BLOs have also been directed to carry 30 to 40 blank Form-6 applications and declaration forms during door-to-door visits to facilitate the enrolment of eligible new voters. Referring to the Representation of the People Act, 1950, Sreenivas said no person can be registered as an elector in more than one constituency.

He said BLAs may also collect enumeration forms from voters and submit them to the concerned BLOs.

He said if a voter has permanently shifted due to employment, marriage or any other reason, a family member may return the enumeration form to the concerned BLO.

If the voter is not available

during the house-to-house survey, any adult member of the family may sign the form and hand it over to the BLO.

Sreenivas said electors who have permanently shifted, are deceased or fall under other prescribed categories will not be included in the draft electoral roll prepared during the revision.

He said Haryana conducted an SIR of electoral rolls the last time in 2002.

The enumeration forms can be downloaded from the official website and a dedicated 1950 helpline has been set up at all district headquarters and assembly constituencies.

The helpline will function from 7 am to 9 pm in two shifts. Giving an update on the exercise, the CEO said Haryana has 2,06,55,929 registered electors, of whom 75,63,762 enumeration forms have already been digitised.

He said 20,629 BLOs are engaged in the exercise, with each BLO covering an average of 1,028 electors.

ED attaches ₹58 crore assets in Bhushan Steel case

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Delhi office has provisionally attached movable and immovable properties worth about ₹58.34 crore in the name of Ritu Singal, who is the wife of Neeraj Singal, the former promoter and Managing Director (MD) of Bhushan Steel Ltd.

The attachment, ordered under the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) Act, 2002, covers land and part of a residential property in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, as well as equity shares and bank balances. With this step, the total value of attached assets in the case has reached about ₹481.72 crore.

This action is part of an ongoing investigation into an alleged bank fraud involving loans of ₹46,000 to 56,000 crore given to Bhushan Steel by public sector banks, mainly State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.

The ED alleges that the promoters diverted funds



through fraudulent means, resulting in significant losses to the lenders. Investigations found that Neeraj Singal and his associates allegedly set up about 150 shell companies to move funds through complicated chains. The money was then used to inject artificial capital into Bhushan Steel, buy properties, and divert funds for personal use.

The ED has pointed to cases of forged documents and fake letters of credit that banks discounted, with the money then sent back to group companies or moved through family members and proxies. Ritu Singal's name has come up before in the investigation. The ED claims

that large sums, including money taken from Bhushan Steel, were sent to her through associates such as Archana Ajay Mittal and her husband, Ajay S Mittal, who were arrested in January 2024 for allegedly handling about ₹80 crore in proceeds of crime. Properties held under false names or through dummy directors were also previously attached to prevent their concealment.

In March 2024, the ED attached assets worth about ₹367 crore linked to Bhushan Steel and related companies in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Odisha. Earlier, ₹61crore was seized in 2021. The latest order focuses on

assets held directly by Ritu Singal in Indore. Neeraj Singal was arrested by the ED in June 2023 and remained in custody until the Supreme Court granted him bail in September 2024, citing prolonged detention and trial delays. His mother, Uma Singal, and other family members have also been investigated.

Under the PMLA provisions, provisional attachments must be confirmed by an adjudicating authority and may result in confiscation upon conviction. The ED says these steps are intended to prevent accused individuals from benefiting from alleged crimes.

"The case began with complaints from the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) and related CBI FIRs, an still under investigation.

The total attachments of over ₹481 crore underscore the magnitude of the alleged diversion of public funds and highlight the agency's ongoing efforts to recover the money through legal means", an ED official said

Oil companies suffered ₹74,781 cr loss on fuel sales amid West Asia crisis: Puri



FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The West Asia conflict, which disrupted supply chains, led to Indian oil companies suffering ₹74,781-crore losses for selling petrol, diesel and LPG below cost, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Thursday. He also said a reduction in prices at home hinges on oil prices staying low for the next few weeks.

Puri further said international crude oil prices have come down but companies are still processing crude they bought at the height of the West Asia crisis.

Oil companies typically buy crude oil — the raw material for producing fuel — at least two months in advance. So, crude oil that is being processed now is essentially what was bought in April or early May when international prices were very high.

Asked if there would be a cut in prices of petrol and diesel, Puri said this would be a legitimate question if oil prices stayed low for the next few weeks.

"We are using the crude petroleum stock today that we had bought two months ago (at a price that existed two months ago).

If this (decline) continues for 2-3 months, we will see. But it is a hypothetical situa-

tion," he said. The Minister highlighted that the petrol price increase in developed world was around 20% and around 35% in India's neighboring countries, but in India, the increase in petrol price was just 5.58 per cent during the crisis.

"We did well without any drought or closure at any of the 1,07,000 retail outlets during last four months (February 28th till the end of June)," Puri said.

Private fuel retailer Nayara Energy has cut petrol prices by ₹5 per litre and diesel prices by ₹ 3 per litre across its retail network from July 1, making it the first major cut in retail fuel prices since crude prices began falling.

The decision may put pressure on rival private retailers to review their own prices if international oil markets remain stable.

Crude oil prices started coming down only in the second half of June after the US and Iran reached an agreement to end the conflict. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz during the US-Iran war triggered one of the most severe global energy disruptions in recent decades, sending oil prices soaring and raising concerns over supply shortages across major importing nations.

States Focus



JAYA BACHCHAN MEETS MAMATA IN KOLKATA

Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha MP Jaya Bachchan on Thursday called on former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee at her Kalighat residence here, amid continuing political chatter over opposition realignments after the TMC's defeat in the assembly polls. Bachchan arrived at Banerjee's residence in the afternoon along with TMC MP Derek O'Brien. The details of the meetir were not immediately known. The visit assumes significance as it comes days after senior Samajwadi Party leader Kiranmoy Nanda, during a visit to Kolkata, held the former CM responsible for the Trinamool Congress' defeat in the polls, and remarked that "people did not want Mamata". His comments had fuelled speculation about the growing distance between the two INDIA bloc partners in the aftermath of the emphatic victory in Bengal. (PTI)



CM SUVENDU INAUGURATES CYBER HELP DESKS

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday inaugurated cyber help desks in all police stations in the state to tackle cybercrimes. He said that cybercrime has become a pandemic, and to deal with these, help desks in all police stations have been created. Adhkari also inaugurated the Durga Suraksha squad for women's security in all districts and police commissionerates in West Bengal. Help desks for women in all police stations of the state were also inaugurated by Adhikari. (PTI)

BJP accuses Priyanka Gandhi, Robert Vadra of attempting to grab land in Uttarakhand

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Thursday claimed that Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her husband Robert Vadra were involved in an alleged attempt to grab a four-acre land parcel in Uttarakhand, where a 90-year-old woman was being threatened to vacate the property.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged that the Gandhi-Vadra family's real business was not politics



Pradeep Bhandari

but "grabbing people's land".

He said Robert Vadra's sister-in-law Saira Vadra is trying to take possession of the four-acre land at Kichha in Udhm Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The original land

lease is in the name of late Kulsum Khan, and the property is currently occupied by her 90-year-old sister, Nasreen.

Bhandari said Congress MLA from Kichha, Tilak Raj Behar, arrived at the property with around 100 supporters late on Wednesday night and threatened Nasreen Khan with dire consequences if she did not vacate the land.

Congress leaders intimidate the occupant when legal routes fail, he alleged. "When they realised that Saira Vadra could not get possession of the land through the legal route, they

intimidated the occupant. She (Saira Vadra) is the front, while Priyanka Vadra and Robert Vadra are behind her," the BJP leader claimed. Bhandari said the elderly woman has accused Congress workers of trying to get the property handed over to the Vadra family.

"This is not my allegation. Nasreen Khan herself said that Congress workers came to her farm to get possession of her property and hand it over to the Vadra family. She has named the Vadra family, not just Saira Vadra," he said.

Every country is paying more attention to India: Argentine envoy

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Argentine Ambassador to India Mariano Caucino has said that every diplomatic conversation today starts by mentioning the unpredictability and changing times we are living in, but at the same time to certain extent some certainties arise on the global stage and one of them is the rising importance of Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Speaking at the India-Latin American & Caribbean Business & Diplomatic Conference at the FIEO Auditorium, Ambassador Caucino affirmed that "It is in this scenario in which India is growing so much that it has become one of the most important countries in the world today" and remarked that "every country



is paying more and more attention to India, the world's largest country in terms of population".

Praising links between Argentina and India, the envoy reminded that "in 1950 we established a sitting embassy here, we were among the first Latin American countries to do it.

"In 2009 we opened a General Consulate in Mumbai, India's main economic and financial hub, and in 2019 we elevated the relationship to the rank of Strategic Partnership and Argentina opened an Agriculture Office in Delhi under the leadership of Agriculture Attache Mariano

Beheran," he stated.

Ambassador Caucino stated that we are convinced that Argentina in particular and South America in general can contribute even more to India's development ambitions. "The Indian government has established the goal of becoming a fully developed economy by 2047 and in order to achieve that objective it has been doing a tremendous effort of opening and diversifying," the Ambassador said.

Ambassador Caucino noted that India has emerged as Argentina's sixth-largest trading partner, reflecting the rapid growth of bilateral commerce and cooperation. "Although we are very far away countries, we are destined to continue collaborating for our mutual benefit," he remarked.

The Ambassador further stressed that policymakers and diplomatic establishments in both countries increasingly recognise India's strategic importance on the global stage, pointing out that India has become one of the world's five largest economies and remains the fastest-growing major economy as well as he recognised "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role in the global stage".

Highlighting Argentina's contribution to India's food security, the envoy said his country is currently India's leading supplier of edible oils. "Argentina exports soybean oil, sunflower oil, legumes and hides to India, while critical minerals such as lithium and copper are emerging as important components of bilateral trade," he added.

NTA urges UGC-NET candidates to formally challenge alleged errors

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has responded to concerns over alleged errors in the UGC-NET Sociology paper and reported repetition of questions in the English paper, urging candidates to formally challenge such issues through its grievance redressal mechanism.

Responding to the controversy, sources said students need to challenge the questions in the paper and submit formal queries to the NTA.

Sources said the agency would examine all genuine objections raised by candidates, citing the recent RE-NEET examination as an example of its review



process. The NTA promises to look into the errors. We received 10,000 challenges from students regarding the Re-NEET exam paper.

One question was retracted after the challenge was found to be valid. We will do the same for UGC-NET as well, but students need to submit their grievances formally through the griev-

ance redressal portal," sources said. Addressing concerns over repeated questions and typographical errors, they said such issues are not unusual and reiterated that candidates must follow the prescribed process to raise objections.

The clarification comes after a UGC-NET aspirant alleged on social media platform that the Sociology paper conducted on June 30 contained multiple spelling, grammar, and translation errors. In a post that went viral, the candidate claimed that nearly half the paper was affected by mistakes, including misspelled names of sociologists and incorrect translations in the Hindi version of the question paper.

Wish had antidote for insecurities of individuals, institutions: Manish Tewari

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Ignored in the Punjab Congress reshuffle for the upcoming assembly polls, Congress leader Manish Tewari on Thursday put out a cryptic post on social media and wished he had an antidote for the "insecurities of individuals" and "institutions".

The Chandigarh MP, however, asserted that the Congress has given him enough over the past 45 years and he has also devoted his entire adult life in the service of the party.

Tewari shared in a post a media report which stated that he was "left in the cold" as Congress appointed new working presidents and set up poll panels for Punjab.

'Hai bada koi avgun usme jise koi hunar aave' (If a person is talented, then society and people usually pick a fault in him). Wish I had an antidote for the insecurities of individuals and institutions! Tewari posted, without elaborating. "Having said that @INCIndia has given me enough over



the past 45 years and I have also devoted my entire adult life in the service of the Indian National Congress over the decades," the former Union minister said.

"Que sera, sera. Whatever will be, will be," he added.

The Congress on Wednesday appointed former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi as chairman of the party's Campaign Committee ahead of 2027 assembly elections in the state and said there will be no change in the state unit president or CLP leader.

The party also appointed former deputy chief minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa as chairperson of the party's Core Committee and former state minister Vijay Inder

Singla as chairman of the Election Management and Coordination Committee. Party MP Amar Singh will head the manifesto committee.

"Congress president has appointed chairpersons of election-related committees for the upcoming assembly elections in Punjab, with immediate effect — Campaign Committee chairperson Charanjit Singh Channi, Election Management and Coordination Committee chairperson Vijay Inder Singla, Core Committee chairperson Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Manifesto committee chairperson Dr Amar Singh," AICC general secretary, Organisation, K C Venugopal said in a statement.

BJP LINKS TEWARI'S POST TO CONGRESS INFIGHTING

New Delhi: The Congress is in "tukde tukde" mode again and has no value for those who do not put "parivar" first, the BJP claimed on Thursday, seizing on senior leader Manish Tewari's post on "insecurities of individuals and institutions" after he was sidelined in the Punjab Congress reshuffle.

According to BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, the Congress is witnessing factional rivalries in several states. "It has split into pieces in Karnataka with D K Shivakumar versus Siddaramaiah. We have seen fighting in Rajasthan between Pilot and Gehlot, in Chhattisgarh, and now in Punjab it has reached a climax where Manish Tewari has openly attacked the Congress party for leaving him out in the lurch," he said in a video statement.

"The Congress is once again in 'tukde tukde' mode," he said.

TMC's Saugata Roy writes to LS Speaker over attack on Mahua Moitra

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Saugata Roy on Thursday said he has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, seeking his intervention to ensure the safety of members of Parliament, after party MP Mahua Moitra was allegedly attacked during a visit to her constituency in West Bengal's Nadia district.

Addressing a press conference here, Roy alleged that Moitra came under attack when she visited her constituency, but refused to leave the area immediately and stayed on until the situation eased.

"She immediately reported the matter to the director general of police, but police remained silent spectators," Roy alleged.

He said he wrote to the speaker on Thursday, urging him to take steps to ensure the safety of MPs in their own constituencies. "I have written to the speaker to ensure the safety of MPs in their own constituencies. I hope the speaker takes



I have written to the Speaker to ensure the safety of MPs in their own constituencies. I hope the Speaker takes action

— SAUGATA ROY, TMC LEADER

action," he said. The veteran TMC leader said he tried to speak to Birla over the phone on Wednesday but could not get through. Instead, he said, he spoke to a Lok Sabha official attached to the speaker's office.

Roy further said he had recently written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, expressing concern over alleged attacks on TMC workers in West Bengal.

Moitra alleged on

Wednesday that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers hurled eggs at her during a protest outside TMC MLA Alifa Ahmed's residence in Nadia district.

Moitra had gone to Palashi in Kaliganj to attend a TMC meeting at Ahmed's residence when a group of protesters allegedly gathered outside and shouted slogans of "go back" and "chor". The protesters also allegedly hurled eggs at her.

NHRC notice to UP Govt, DGP over assault on 12 labourers

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The NHRC on Thursday said it has issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government and the state's police chief in a case of alleged atrocities against 12 bonded labourers at a factory in Muzaffarnagar district. The human rights panel has sought a detailed report from the authorities in two weeks.

In a statement, the National Human Rights Commission said it has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report about "12 bonded labourers being assaulted in captivity and forced to work till midnight without sufficient food and wages for nearly one and a half years at a paper plate manufacturing factory in Mandi village in Muzaffarnagar district".

One of the labourers managed to escape from the factory and a complaint was filed with the Titawli police station, leading to the rescue of the other labourers, it said.

