

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

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Bhajan Lal Reviews PM Modi’s Jodhpur Visit Preparations, Inspects New Airport Terminal Ahead of Inauguration

FAIR REPORT

Jodhpur: With Prime Minister Narendra Modi set to visit Jodhpur on Saturday, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday conducted an extensive review of the preparations, underscoring the state’s push to ensure a seamless rollout of one of the city’s key infrastructure milestones.

The Chief Minister visited the newly built airport terminal, inspected the facilities, and took stock of arrangements ahead of its formal inauguration by the



Prime Minister. During the inspection, Sharma was briefed by senior officials on the progress of the

event preparations and the operational readiness of the terminal. Emphasising meticu-

lous planning and flawless execution, the Chief Minister issued necessary directions to the concerned de-

partments, asking officials to ensure that every logistical and security aspect of the high-profile visit is completed well in advance.

The review comes a day before Prime Minister Modi’s scheduled arrival in Jodhpur, where the inauguration of the modern airport terminal is expected to significantly strengthen the city’s aviation infrastructure and improve passenger convenience. The project is seen as a major boost to connectivity in western Rajasthan, a region witnessing increasing eco-

nommic and tourism activity.

Senior administrative officials accompanied the Chief Minister during the inspection and presented updates on the arrangements for the inauguration ceremony, crowd management, transport, and coordination among various agencies.

The visit reflects the state government’s focus on delivering a smooth, well-coordinated event as Jodhpur prepares to welcome the Prime Minister for the landmark infrastructure inauguration.

Meta in the Dock: Government Set to Summon Tech Giant Over Child Exploitation Ads on Instagram

FAIR REPORT

New Delhi: In a move that could set the tone for how Big Tech is held accountable in India, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has directed officials of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to summon Meta over alarming reports that Instagram allowed advertisements linked to child sexual exploitation content to run on its platform.

According to reports, the ministry’s action stems directly from findings that such advertisements were being promoted on Instagram within India, raising urgent questions about the adequacy of Meta’s content moderation systems and ad-approval mechanisms — systems the company has long claimed are ro-



bust and AI-monitored.

The government is expected to demand concrete answers from Meta on what safeguards failed, how such content bypassed detection, and what corrective measures are being implemented to prevent recurrence. Given the gravity of the allegations, officials are unlikely to accept vague assurances — the summons signals New Delhi’s growing impatience with global platforms treating child safety violations as a public-relations problem rather than a systemic failure demanding urgent fixes.

‘TARGET-RICH ENVIRONMENT’: Trump Ally Laura Loomer Sparks Fury by Calling for Strike on Khamenei’s Funeral



FAIR REPORT

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN: Far-right political activist and outspoken Trump loyalist Laura Loomer has triggered widespread condemnation after suggesting that the state funeral of former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei would be a “target-rich environment,” appearing to advocate military action against the massive gathering of mourners.

Responding to reports about the multi-day state funeral, Loomer wrote on X: “A funeral for Khameni? That’s what we call a target rich environment,” accompanied by a bomb emoji. She later tagged the Israel Defense Forces, adding that it had “the opportunity to do the funniest thing.”

After facing criticism online, Loomer intensified her rhetoric, stating she would “never say no to an opportunity to see the US or IDF bomb a bunch of jihadis,” remarks that critics said appeared to endorse violence against a gathering expected to include millions of civilians.

The comments prompted a wave of backlash, with opponents arguing that Loomer’s language effectively portrayed an enormous civilian funeral procession as a legitimate military target. The phrase “target-rich environment” is a military term generally used to describe areas containing a high concentration of enemy assets, making its application to a public funeral particularly controversial.

“I’m Alive, You Absolute Geniuses”: MBA Chaiwala Founder Slams Death Hoax With Choicest Words

FAIR REPORT

New Delhi: Turns out reports of Prafull Billore’s death were, quite literally, greatly exaggerated — and the MBA Chai Wala founder wasn’t in the mood to let the internet’s latest rumour mill off easy.

As fake news of his demise spread like wildfire across social media platforms, sending well-meaning supporters into a premature spiral of condolence posts, Billore did what any self-respecting entrepreneur with a smart-

phone and zero patience would do: he screenshots the Google search results declaring him dead, posted it on Instagram, and torched the rumour with characteristic bluntness.

“This is stupid, disrespectful and sad. Please stop spreading fake news. I’m alive,” he wrote — helpfully clarifying a fact that should, frankly, not have needed clarifying. His caption also came seasoned with a few choice expletives, leaving little ambiguity about how he felt about being digitally buried

while very much sipping chai and breathing.

The episode adds to a growing, increasingly absurd genre of internet culture: celebrities and public figures forced to publicly confirm they haven’t died, simply because a stray “news” site decided otherwise. Billore’s fans, understandably relieved, flooded his post with reactions — some laughing, some outraged on his behalf, all in agreement that the internet really needs to verify things before hitting publish.

NASA Launches Historic ‘Boost’ Mission to Rescue Ageing Swift Telescope from Fiery Fall

FAIR REPORT

Robotic servicing spacecraft LINK blasts off from Marshall Islands to grapple and lift the 22-year-old observatory before it plunges into Earth’s atmosphere In a first-of-its-kind orbital rescue operation, NASA has launched a mission to save its Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory — a veteran space telescope that has spent over two decades unravelling the universe’s most violent explosions — from an untimely death in Earth’s atmosphere. The mission lifted off at 4:36 am EDT (2:06 pm IST) on Fri-



day from Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, carried by a Northrop Grumman Pegasus XL rocket that was air-launched from the belly of the Stargazer aircraft at roughly 40,000 feet. Aboard was LINK, a robotic servicing spacecraft built by Arizona-based Katalyst Space Technologies under a \$30 million NASA contract. Launched.

FAKE PM MODI AI CALL ROW! Congress Leader Pushpendra Bhardwaj’s Son Booked as BJP Launches Multi-City Legal Offensive

FAIR REPORT
SHUSHIL PAL

JAIPUR: A political storm erupted in Rajasthan on Friday after an FIR was registered against Kartikeya Bhardwaj, son of Congress leader Pushpendra Bhardwaj, over the alleged creation and circulation of a fake AI-generated video purportedly showing Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a video call.

The complaint, lodged by BJP leader Khemchand Sharma at Jaipur’s Sanganer police station, accuses Kartikeya of creating and disseminating an AI-generated video that falsely portrayed the Prime Minister speaking directly to him and apologising during the purported conversation. According to the complainant, the manipulated clip was designed to appear authentic and was widely circulated on social media, allegedly



misleading viewers into believing it was a genuine interaction.

The BJP has alleged that the fabricated content was intended to spread false and misleading narratives against the Prime Minister and influence public perception through digitally manipulated material.

The Sanganer FIR marks the beginning of what the BJP describes as a coordinated legal campaign. Party leaders said similar complaints will

also be filed in Sikar, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Bikaner, Pali, and one additional location across Rajasthan, escalating the controversy into a statewide political and legal battle.

The case comes amid growing concerns over the misuse of artificial intelligence to generate highly realistic deepfake videos capable of impersonating public figures. Investigators are expected to examine the origin of the video, the technology used to produce it, and the extent of its circulation across social media platforms.

Police have initiated legal proceedings and are expected to probe whether offences relating to impersonation, forgery, misinformation, and provisions governing electronic communication were attracted. The Congress had not issued an official response at the time of writing.

Literary Legacy Reimagined: International Booker Prize Rebranded, Prize Money Doubled to ₹1.28 Crore

FAIR REPORT

New Delhi/London: In a landmark shift for global literary recognition, the International Booker Prize is being renamed the “Bookman International Booker Prize,” honouring philanthropic organisation Bookman Philanthropies, which has committed decade-long funding to sustain the award’s future.

The transformation carries substance beyond nomenclature: the winner’s purse has doubled from ₹50,000 (64 lakh) to ₹100,000 (1.28 crore) — a figure now split equally between author and translator, reaffirming translation as co-authorship rather than secondary craft.

For scholars and bibliophiles, this recalibration signals something deeper than institutional rebranding. It reflects literature’s evolving economy in an era where translated fiction — long relegated to the mar-



gins of Anglophone publishing — is being re-centred as vital cultural currency. As machine translation and AI-assisted tools reshape how stories cross linguistic borders, the Prize’s renewed investment in human translators feels like a deliberate, almost defiant, affirmation: meaning cannot be automated, only rendered with craft.

With guaranteed funding for ten years, the award now offers something rare in publishing — stability, allowing literary risk-taking to flourish rather than chase fleeting relevance. In doubling its stakes, the Prize isn’t just rewarding literature’s past — it’s underwriting its future.

From Blackspots to Safe Highways: CS Srinivas Charts Rajasthan’s Road Safety Vision

FAIR REPORT
HEMRAJ TIKAMCHAND

Balotra: Signalling a sharper governance focus on preventing road fatalities rather than merely responding to them, Rajasthan Chief Secretary V. Srinivas on Friday outlined an ambitious roadmap to strengthen the state’s road safety architecture, calling for stricter vehicle verification, scientific enforcement, and infrastructure-led interventions.

Chairing a high-level review meeting in Balotra, Srinivas directed officials to intensify efforts to reduce road accidents through a co-



ordinated, technology-backed strategy that combines enforcement with engineering reforms. Stressing that road safety must remain a governance priority, he instructed departments to ensure rigorous verification of vehicles and tighter compliance with transport regulations to curb violations before they

lead to tragedy. A key highlight of the meeting was his directive to undertake a comprehensive safety audit of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway corridor passing through Rajasthan. The audit will identify accident-prone stretches, engineering deficiencies, signage gaps, and other risk factors, paving the way for targeted

corrective measures aimed at making one of India’s busiest high-speed corridors significantly safer. Projecting a governance model rooted in prevention, accountability, and evidence-based policymaking, Srinivas emphasised that reducing road fatalities requires seamless coordination among the transport, police, public works, and district administrations. He called for proactive monitoring and swift implementation of safety recommendations rather than reactive responses after accidents occur. Officials were instructed to strengthen institutional mechanisms for road

safety, improve enforcement capabilities, and accelerate measures that enhance commuter safety across the state. The review reflects Rajasthan’s evolving administrative vision of leveraging technology, inter-departmental coordination, and infrastructure planning to build a safer transport ecosystem. With the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway emerging as a strategic economic corridor, the state’s renewed emphasis on safety audits and preventive governance is expected to shape a more resilient and future-ready road network while reinforcing public confidence in road infrastructure.

PM to launch ₹1.06 lakh crore projects in Rajasthan, Gujarat

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to undertake a high-profile whirlwind tour of Rajasthan and Gujarat on Saturday, during which he will dedicate and lay the foundation stones for massive development projects worth approximately Rs 1.06 lakh crore. The major highlights of the Prime Minister's multi-state itinerary include the rollout of a mega aviation connectivity scheme, the inauguration of India's premier greenfield refinery-cum-petrochemical complex, and a massive boost to the nation's semiconductor ecosystem.

The Prime Minister will commence his visit in Rajasthan at Jodhpur around 10:45 am, where he is set to unveil the newly constructed Jodhpur Airport Terminal Building. Built at a cost of Rs 480 crore, the heritage-inspired, eco-friendly terminal is designed to manage 20 lakh passengers annually.



On this occasion, he will launch the Modified UDAN scheme. Backed by a whopping 10-year allocation of Rs 28,840 crore, this revamped initiative intends to modernise 100 unserved airstrips and establish 200 high-tech helipads across difficult terrains, heavily prioritising indigenous aircraft like the HAL Dhruv and Dornier platforms.

Moving to Balotra later in the afternoon, the Prime Minister will dedicate India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex at Pachpadra.

Developed as a joint venture between HPCL and the Rajasthan Government with an investment exceeding Rs 79,450 crore, the state-of-the-art 9 MMTPA facility aims to significantly augment the country's energy security and downstream plastic industries.

While in Balotra, Modi will also lay the foundation stone for the Rs 13,000-crore Phase 2 of the Jaipur Metro Rail Project, spanning a 41-km north-south corridor with 36 stations.

His developmental packet for the desert state further

encompasses the Churu-Sadulpur and Churu-Ratangarh rail doubling projects, solar energy ventures in Bikaner by SJVN and NHPC totalling 1,300 MW, and power transmission infrastructure worth over Rs 1,900 crore. In a major employment push, the Prime Minister will also distribute appointment letters to nearly 54,000 youth recruited across various Rajasthan Government departments.

Later in the evening, the Prime Minister will travel to Sanand in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to inaugurate the state-of-the-art CG SEMI Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility. Established under the India Semiconductor Mission with an investment of over ₹7,500 crore, the facility boasts an ultimate capacity of manufacturing 5 billion chips annually to power AI, automotive, and 5G sectors, marking a seminal milestone in India's quest for chip self-reliance.

Environment Ministry proposes targets to curb emissions in iron and steel sector

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Environment Ministry has issued a draft notification to set legally binding emission reduction targets for the iron and steel sector under the Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity (GEI) Target (Amendment) Rules, 2025.

The draft notification published on Thursday sets targets for 255 iron and steel

units. These include Tata Steel in Jharkhand, JSW Steel in Karnataka, and Jindal Steel and Power in Chhattisgarh.

With the draft notification, the total number of carbon-intensive industries required to comply with the framework has risen to nine, the other eight being aluminium, secondary aluminium (made from recycled scrap), petroleum refinery, petrochemical, textile industries,



cement, chlor-alkali, and pulp and paper.

All these sectors are under the purview of the country's domestic carbon market as

part of the Carbon Credits Trading Scheme (CCTS) launched in 2023.

The scheme incentivises reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and supports the country's climate action commitments under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. If industries achieve the legally binding targets, they earn carbon credits, which can be sold to industries that fail to meet the targets.

DAC clears ₹52,000 cr military procurements

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Giving a major fillip to enhance capabilities to fight modern-day wars, the Government on Friday gave the go-ahead to proposals worth over ₹52,000 crore to procure anti-drone systems and sophisticated surveillance and intelligence-gathering satellites for the Army and IAF.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, in a meeting here, also approved acceptance of necessity (AON) for Multi-Influence Ground Mine (MIGM) and the setting up of Land-Based Testing Facility (LBTF) for Electric Propulsion System for the Navy. The DAC is the apex body for clearing proposals put up by the three Services. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, is the final authority to approve the projects.

Giving details about the latest DAC's clearance, officials said that for the Indian Army, approval was accorded for the procurement of Anti-Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) Electronic Warfare System 'AKASH TARANG', Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided



Missile (MPATGM) Systems, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) Weapon System, Very Short Range Air Defence System (V-SHORADS), Active Protection System for Tanks and Jet-Based Kamikaze Drone System.

Akash Tarang will provide effective anti-UAV protection to the Army Formations. The MPATGM will enhance the potential of the infantry to counter mechanised threats posed by the adversary. The MRSAM system provides medium-range air defence against a variety of stand-off aerial threats.

The V-SHORADS with multi-spectral sensing will enhance counter-measure resilience and effectiveness of the Indian Army. The Active Protection System will be capable of improving the defence mechanism of tanks

and enhancing their survivability. The Jet-Based Kamikaze Drones provide better Electronic Warfare capability with greater lethality and survivability while also being cost-effective.

For the Indian Navy, approval was given for the procurement of Multi Influence Ground Mine (MIGM), Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial System (NSUAS) and the setting-up of Land Based Testing Facility (LBTF) for Electric Propulsion System.

The MIGM will deny freedom of manoeuvre to the adversary. The NSUAS, equipped with advanced sensors, will enhance situational awareness of the Indian Navy. The LBTF will meet the testing requirements for the motors and associated Propulsion Systems of the Indian Naval assets.

CM Suwendu offers to transform West Bengal from Didi era

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Kolkata

Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Friday launched a blistering attack on his predecessor Mamata Banerjee, saying hers was the worst Government the State had seen — since Independence — and calling upon all the legislators to join him in building a democratically strong and performing Bengal.

Speaking at the opening session of a two-day orientation programme of the newly elected Members of the State Legislative Assembly, inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, the Chief Minister said, referring to Banerjee, that "most unfortunately never since Independence" Bengal "fared so poorly under any Chief Minister." Adhikari's statement came in tandem with his Government's decision to seize wage distribution powers in the 125-day work scheme from the hands of the Panchayat Pradhans — often considered the 'king-makers at the lowest level'.

The Chief Minister said that during the previous Government, main policy decisions routinely came from the party offices and were not decided on the floors of the Assembly. "I don't want to launch political attacks or say negative things but only ...



place the facts before the newly elected legislators" he said, adding his Government wanted all the MLAs from all the parties to be a part of the administrative meetings, reminding how during the previous Government no opposition party MLAs were called to administrative meetings. Giving an account of how he, as an Opposition Leader was treated during the last five years by the TMC Government he said, "I was Opposition Leader for five years and was suspended for five times ... mostly during the Budget and important session when decisions were taken," advising the first timers to even those from the Opposition join him "in the development of the State together."

The Chief Minister stressed Bengal's "Gateway of the East" status, often underscored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying it was his wish to restore the democratic institutions in the State

and work towards maximising the State's natural and industrial resources under the guidance of the Prime Minister. "We now want to make Bengal stand on its feet," he said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who inaugurated the programme, called upon the new legislators to contribute towards building a new Bengal and carry forward the work of the renaissance by strengthening the democratic traditions, reminding them that the people's representatives were the custodians of the people's aspirations.

Stressing the growing role of technology, Birla said that the digital era had opened the doors for the legislators to access legislative debates, policy documents, and best practices from Parliament and State Legislatures. Referring to the Digital Sansad platform, he said that the Members could now benefit from a vast repository of parliamentary knowledge and comparative legislative experiences.

Adhikari also proposed to introduce the digital era in the Bengal Assembly.

Adhikari's discernible mention of the 15-year Mamata Banerjee rule, pockmarked with scams, came amidst his decision to free the 100-days work regime from corruption.

This, even as his Government decided to seize wage disbursing power from the village panchayat pradhans. Earlier the panchayat pradhans used to decide who would get the wages under the 100 days' work scheme — now rechristened G RAM G scheme "but now the Government officials will be entrusted with that task because in most of the cases the workers' money used to the pockets of the party men or Pradhan's henchmen," Bengal Minister Agnimitra Paul said hailing the decision of the CM.

There are about 147 jobs that fall within the G RAM G (Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission — Gramin) scheme, she said, driving home the point that Adhikari said, "Government has embarked on uprooting corruption from the grassroots." The Centre has upgraded the job project to 125 days per year with an upward revision of the wages from about ₹230 to ₹300 per day.

Massive reshuffle in West Bengal lower police administration

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Kolkata

In a major reshuffle at the subaltern section of the State police administration, the Bengal Government transferred 108 police inspectors posted in various districts, police stations and specialised units, including the CID and GRP throughout the State.

The decision was communicated via a notification issued by the Home Department late Thursday night, sources said, adding that a number of police officers had been shifted out of the sensitive police station areas, whereas some important police stations in Howrah and Kolkata got new police officers too.

"These are all routine transfers that continue to take place from time to time ... the officers have been asked to join their new postings immediately," an IGP-level officer said.



Amit Shah reviews El Niño rainfall deficit, flood damage

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

On Friday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met to discuss the impact of below-normal rainfall in some parts of the country, which has been linked to El Niño. Senior officials from important ministries, such as the Home Secretary and Agriculture Secretary, were also present.

Shah said the Government is monitoring the low rainfall and the risk of drought in affected areas. He told the Ministry of Agriculture and other related ministries to work with State Governments and guide farmers on which crops to plant. Shah also asked the



Department of Water Resources to monitor reservoir levels nationwide and suggested focusing on crops that require less water, such as fodder, millets, and pulses.

The Home Minister asked the Secretary of the Power Ministry to ensure a steady and sufficient supply of electricity. Officials told him that there are enough stocks of

important food grains like rice and wheat, and that prices are stable.

The Home Minister told the Inter-Ministerial Central Team from the Ministry of Home Affairs to visit Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to assess the damage caused by recent heavy rain, floods, and landslides. Assam has seen floodwaters rise across

several districts, and Arunachal Pradesh has faced landslides and road blockages. The team's visit will help determine the extent of damage to infrastructure, farms, and homes.

Secretaries from important departments, including Agriculture, Water Resources, Consumer Affairs, Fisheries, Environment, Power, Rural Development, and Science and Technology, attended the meeting. Representatives from the National Disaster Management Authority, the India Meteorological Department, the Central Water Commission, the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and the National Remote Sensing Centre were also present.

NCPCR probes Bengaluru daycare abuse, Meta CSAM ads

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) on Friday took suo motu cognisance of alleged physical abuse and torture of children at a daycare centre operating in Bengaluru's Brookefield area.

The Child Body NCPCR also took suo motu cognisance of the alleged Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) circulating through Instagram, as reported by BBC Eye. Sources in the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare said the Commission is following up the case closely. An investigation by the BBC has found that Meta has been running paid advertisements for child sexual abuse material (CSAM) in India on their Instagram platform.

In a letter dated July 2, addressed to Bengaluru Urban Deputy Commissioner PS Kantharaju, NCPCR Member Secretary Dr Sanjeev Sharma said the Commission has decided to inquire into the matter that came to light through media reports.

An NCPCR team headed by Senior Technical Expert Paresh Shah visited Bengaluru on Friday for a fact-finding inquiry. The team also includes Anshita Surana, Professional (Law), JJ Division. The inquiry will be conducted by Saturday, and the report will be submitted by Monday.

The Commission has requested the district administration to extend all support,

including stay and transportation, to the team. The letter notes that NCPCR is a statutory body under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, and is mandated to monitor the implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012, the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and the RTE Act, 2009.

The case pertains to the alleged abuse of an infant at a day care facility, which came to light after video evidence of the incident surfaced. According to police, five women employed as nannies at the daycare centre have been arrested after videos allegedly showing them abusing toddlers surfaced.

The accused have been identified as Manjula, Vijayalakshmi, Bhavani, Sindhu and Bindu. HAL Police have registered a case under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and Section 351 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

NCPCR also took cognisance of BBC's World Service, which discovered advertisements using terms such as 'rape video' and 'child video' that direct people to channels on the Telegram messaging service where users can purchase this material for as little as \$1. While Meta said that they had disabled several adverts and suspended the accounts behind them.

Telegram said that it had already removed more than 274,000 groups and channels that promote child sexual abuse material in 2026.



El Niño to strengthen rapidly, risk of extreme weather: WMO

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

El Niño conditions in the tropical Pacific are expected to strengthen rapidly in the coming months, increasing the risk of heatwaves, droughts, heavy rainfall and other extreme weather events across many parts of the world, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said on Friday. The organisation's monthly 'WMO Global Seasonal Climate Update' indicates a rapid development into a strong El Niño event during July-September this year.

El Niño is one of the three phases of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a climate phenomenon characterised by changes in sea temperatures along the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, accompanied by fluctuations in the atmosphere overhead.

While El Niño is known to have a warming effect on the planet, its opposite phase, called La Niña, usually results in a cooling effect. ENSO also has a neutral phase.

In a statement, WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo said, "El Niño conditions are already underway and are forecast to strengthen rapidly into a strong event as accurately anticipated by WMO forecasts."



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The chances of drought and heavy rainfall and the risk of heatwaves on land and marine heatwaves in many regions of the world." On June 12, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the onset of El Niño conditions and said that they would strengthen further during the southwest

monsoon season. El Niño conditions typically lead to less rainfall in India. They were one of the key reasons why, in June, the country as a whole witnessed a rainfall deficit of about 40 per cent, with central India worst affected with a deficit of 50.4 per cent.

In its June 30 forecast, the IMD said the monthly average rainfall over India is expected to be below normal during July. The weather department said July is most likely to see 94 per cent of the long-period average rainfall (1971-2020). The LPA rainfall over India in July is about 280.4 mm. LPA refers to the rainfall recorded over a particular region for a given period, such as a month or a season, averaged over a long period, typically 30 to 50 years.

States Focus



CONGRESS, BRS SPAR OVER TELANGANA DEBT BURDEN

The ruling Congress and Opposition BRS in Telangana continued to spar for the second day on Friday over debt burden, with Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka stating that a debt of over ₹8.21 lakh crore was made during the previous BRS regime. Slamming BRS leaders KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao for downplaying the debt burden, he also said the BRS is carrying out a Goebbels campaign against the Congress Government over various issues. He alleged that it was BRS president K Chandrasekhara Rao who "destroyed" the state when he was the chief minister. (PTI)



JAGDEEP DHANKHAR UNDERGOES ANGIOPLASTY IN JAIPUR

Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar underwent angioplasty at a private hospital in Jaipur on Friday, hospital sources said. Dhankhar was admitted to a hospital near Jawahar Circle for routine medical examinations. Following cardiac investigations, doctors advised angioplasty, which was performed later in the day. Sources said the procedure was part of a pre-planned cardiac evaluation.

Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot visited Dhankhar at the hospital and enquired about his health. Gehlot said Dhankhar was undergoing treatment under the supervision of noted cardiologist Dr Sameen Sharma, who had come from United States. (PTI)

NATION

FAIR REPORT 03

Channi row: Punjab Congress rift out in open

FAIR REPORT
■ Chandigarh

Former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi's supporters gathered at his residence in Punjab's Morinda on Friday, with many former MLAs demanding that he be made the state unit chief.

The development comes after the party's central leadership decided to retain Amrinder Singh Raja Warring as the state unit chief. The announcement to retain Warring came on Wednesday, alongside the unveiling of the party's various committees for the 2027 Assembly polls.

Before the supporters started to gather at Channi's Morinda residence, some former party MLAs, who reached Channi's residence, told reporters that if the Congress has to come to power in Punjab in the next year's election, the former chief minister should be made the president of the State unit.

Channi is said to be miffed at not being appointed to the post. He is learnt to have not even made a customary call to thank the party leadership following the new announcements.

Channi's supporters have expressed disappointment



over not being given the post for which the former Punjab chief minister had been lobbying hard.

Among those who reached Channi's residence were former deputy chief minister OP Soni, former ministers Bharat Bhushan Ashu and Gurpreet Singh Kangar, former MP Mohd Sadiq, sitting MLA Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa, ex-MLAs Nazar Singh Man Shahia, Gurkirat Singh Kotli, Lakhvir Singh Lakha, Darshan Singh Brar and Tarsem Singh.

Before the meeting, several supporters of Channi, including some former MLAs, threw weight behind him demanding that party should

hand over reins of Punjab Congress to the ex-CM. Ex-MLA Darshan Singh Brar said, "If Channi is not made the state president, the Congress cannot form its Government in Punjab. Under Warring's leadership, the Congress cannot come to power".

Gurpreet Kangar said, "We have to go to people to seek votes and people want Channi as the state chief." Amid talks of a change in the leadership of its Punjab unit, the Congress decided to retain Amrinder Singh Raja Warring as the State unit president.

Jalandhar MP Channi, a Dalit, who was seen as one of the main contenders for the post of Punjab Congress

NEW CRACKS EMERGING IN CONGRESS: BJP

New Delhi: The BJP on Friday claimed that "new cracks" are emerging in the Congress, citing reports that party leader Charanjit Channi is "miffed" over the latest organisational reshuffle ahead of the Punjab polls.

The attack came a day after Congress leader Manish Tewari put out a cryptic post on X, saying he wished he had an antidote for the "insecurities of individuals" and "institutions" after he was not assigned any organisational role in the latest reshuffle in the state.

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

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said that the opposition party is in "tukde tukde mode" and facing infighting across states. "After Manish Tewari, now it is Channi's turn.



Tewari was upset with the Congress and tweeted about it. A day later, Channi, who is also upset with the Congress, is calling a meeting of his supporters," he said in a video statement.

Poonawalla claimed that the party was coasting headless. "It seems the Congress is giving evidence every day that it has no neta, no niti, no netriva, no mission – only confusion and division," he said.

Citing factional rivalries in several states, the BJP leader alleged that internal conflicts have become the defining feature of the Congress. (PNS)

chief, has been appointed chairperson of the campaign committee, an important position for strategising and planning the party's poll campaign.

The party also did not make any change in the position of the leader of

opposition in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, which is currently held by Partap Singh Bajwa. Gurdaspur MP and former deputy chief minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has been appointed chairperson of the core committee.

Amarnath Yatra: Second batch of over 3800 pilgrims leave Jammu

FAIR REPORT
■ Jammu

Amid tight security, the second batch of more than 3,800 pilgrims left the Jammu base camp on Friday for the Amarnath cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high Amarnath cave shrine started on Friday morning simultaneously via the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in the Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in the Ganderbal district. The yatra will conclude on August 28.

As many as 3,865 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in a cavalcade of 201 vehicles escorted by security personnel and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), they said.

Of the total pilgrims, 1,735 were headed for the Baltal base camp in 115 vehicles, while 2,130 pilgrims in 86 vehicles were proceeding to the traditional Pahalgam base camp in the Anantnag district.

The atmosphere at the Bhagwati Nagar base camp was charged with devotion as pilgrims chanted "Bam Bam Bhole", "Har Har Mahadev"



Amarnath Yatra pilgrims riding ponies wave as they proceed towards the holy cave shrine via the Baltal route in Ganderbal district of J&K PTI

and "Jai Barfani Baba Ki" before embarking on their journey. Many expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made for the smooth and peaceful conduct of the pilgrimage.

On Thursday, the first batch of 4,822 pilgrims was flagged off from Bhagwati Nagar by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. With the fresh departure, a total of 8,687 pilgrims have left the Jammu base camp for the valley since Thursday. Authorities have put in place multi-layered security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and at all transit camps to ensure the safe and smooth movement of the yatra convoys. A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the annual pilgrimage.

PM EXTEND GREETINGS ON AMARNATH YATRA

New Delhi: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday greeted devotees on the commencement of the 57-day Amarnath Yatra.

In a two-page letter to pilgrims, Modi urged them to take five pledges, including maintaining cleanliness and promote the 'vocal for local' campaign by supporting local businesses in Jammu and Kashmir. He also asked the devotees to follow instructions related to security and traffic movement during the pilgrimage. Noting that the yatra will conclude on Raksha Bandhan, he asked pilgrims to gift their brothers and sisters a sapling to promote greenery.

BJP seeks ₹51,000 payout for women over AAP scheme delay

FAIR REPORT
■ Chandigarh

Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillion on Friday said the Punjab Government should transfer ₹51,000 to every woman in the State, ₹1,000 for every month AAP has been in Government, for delaying financial aid promised ahead of the last elections.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday rolled out his Government's monthly financial assistance scheme for women - 'Mawan Dhiyan Satkar Yojna', and said the AAP has fulfilled its final poll "guarantee" made ahead of the 2022 assembly elections.

Under the scheme, women from the general category will receive ₹1,000 per month, while those belonging to the Scheduled Castes will receive ₹1,500.

Mann said more than 40 lakh women have already been regis-



Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillion

tered under the "landmark" initiative. Speaking to reporters here, state BJP chief Dhillion said Mann Government has cheated the women of Punjab.

"We demand that the Government immediately transfer ₹51,000, the total amount due for 51 months of AAP rule in Punjab, as per the third guarantee given by AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal on November 21, 2021, during a programme titled 'Kejriwal di Teeji

Guarantee, Mahilavan Nu Vadhaiyan' in Moga," Dhillion said.

Dhillion, who was flanked by Punjab BJP leader Vineet Joshi, claimed the "delay" in the rollout of the scheme a "historic betrayal".

First, by transferring only ₹1,000 per month to general category women and ₹1,500 per month to Scheduled Caste women, the Mann Government has effectively denied the ₹51,000 due for 51 months under Kejriwal's original promise of ₹1,000 per month to every eligible woman, he said.

The AAP came to power in Punjab in March 2022. "Second, Kejriwal's guarantee was for every woman above 18 years of age in Punjab, covering more than 1.25 crore women. Yet, the Mann Government claims to have transferred money to only 36 lakh women, meaning over 89 lakh women have been denied even the promised ₹1,000 assistance," Dhillion

said. The AAP has mastered the art of misleading people through false claims and propaganda, BJP leader alleged. He said Kejriwal had claimed at the Moga rally that he delivers on his promises.

But in reality, this promise appears to have been a calculated attempt to mislead Punjab's women and secure votes through false guarantees when Punjab polls were barely few months away, Dhillion said. Dhillion said that Kejriwal had then claimed that there was no shortage of money for the scheme and that stopping ₹20,000 crore worth of illegal sand mining would finance the initiative.

"But after AAP came to power, illegal mining has not stopped; rather it has increased manifold," Dhillion alleged. The Punjab BJP chief asserted that BJP will continue to fight for Punjab's women until every promised rupee reaches their bank accounts.

Adi Kailash Yatra suspended due to monsoon

FAIR REPORT

■ Pithoragarh

The Adi Kailash and Om Parvat Yatra in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh has been suspended in view of the monsoon, risk of landslides and safety of pilgrims, officials said on Friday.

Dharchula Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Ashish Joshi said that 52,441 pilgrims visited Adi Kailash and Om Parvat within two months of the commencement of the



pilgrimage on May 1. "Inner Line Permits for the Adi Kailash and Om Parvat Yatra will now be issued only after further orders," he said.

Joshi said that 103 pilgrims were last issued permits on July 1 before the suspension came into effect. The Adi Kailash pilgrimage in Pithoragarh began in 1981 — alongside the Kailash Yatra in Tibet — but gained popularity following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on October 12, 2023.

UCC bill to be passed in West Bengal Assembly in August: Senior official

FAIR REPORT
■ Kolkata

The bill for implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in West Bengal will be passed in the assembly next month, a senior functionary of the state government said on Friday.

The West Bengal cabinet on Thursday approved the formation of a committee to examine the draft UCC bill and the panel will have four weeks to scrutinise the draft legislation and submit its recommendations.

"August is a month of many significant events in the country.

The Quit India movement began this month. India got independence in August.

Khudiram Bose was martyred in August and there are many other historical events. By August this year, another significant event will happen. We will pass the UCC bill in Bengal assembly," the functionary said.

Earlier this week, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari formally launched the process to implement the UCC in West Bengal.

Since 2014, three states have adopted the UCC bills — Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Assam

and West Bengal is set to become the fourth. The West Bengal UCC bill aims to standardise civil laws across all communities regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. The bill is similar to the models in Uttarakhand and Assam in key parameters.

The UCC was one of the BJP's key electoral promises in the 2026 Assembly polls. The party came to power ending the Trinamool Congress's 15-year rule in the state. Talking about the priorities of the BJP government in Bengal, the functionary said every month, at least two



FAIR REPORT

new industries are coming to the state and the trend will continue for many months to come. Adhikari on June 12 had said that his government would bring Tata Group back to the state.

However, he had said, the land at Singur on which Tata Motors had set up a car factory is no longer with the state government as it had been returned to the farmers by the previous Mamata Banerjee-led government.

The functionary also said that ever since the BJP government came to power in West Bengal, about 10,000 illegal immigrants

were handed over to the Bangladesh authorities along the border after verifying their Bangladeshi nationality.

About 1,800 more illegal Bangladeshi immigrants are kept in holding centres in West Bengal and they would also be sent back to the neighbouring country.

On June 23, Adhikari had said his government has identified thousands of illegal immigrants and begun deporting them while assuring genuine Indian citizens they would not be affected, irrespective of their faith.

Help the common man, LS speaker Om Birla tells new Bengal MLAs

FAIR REPORT
■ Kolkata

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asked the newly elected MLAs of West Bengal on Friday to make efforts to change the life of the last person in society while fulfilling the hopes of the common people.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of an orientation programme for the newly elected members of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Birla also said a developed West Bengal is necessary to build a developed India by 2047. He said each MLA represents their area as well as the collective aspirations of people.

"Their aim should always be to



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Ritabrata Banerjee and others at a two-day orientation programme for the newly-elected members of the State Assembly in Kolkata PTI

change the life of the last person while fulfilling the hopes of the common people of Bengal," Birla said. He said great visionaries from West Bengal played a crucial role in social reformation and the struggle for freedom, along with spirituality, religion and culture.

"Bengal gave voice to the freedom movement with the proclamation of 'Vande Mataram'. The MLAs should work tirelessly to enrich the heritage, spiritual consciousness and cultural renaissance of Bengal again.

They should make all efforts for making India a developed country and empower the democracy with democratic dialogue," he said.

The Lok Sabha speaker said there

may be agreement and disagreement, but the tradition of democracy and excellent dialogue should remain intact.

He said the newly elected MLAs should learn from the experiences of old and experienced members and study old proceedings of the Assembly. "The newly elected MLAs should have a desire to learn and understand, a desire for innovation," he said. Birla said legislative members keep themselves updated in the times of AI technology and digitalisation.

"The newly elected members should sit in the House for maximum time and listen to the statements of other MLAs," he said.

Paswan promises justice in Bharat Tiwari killing case

FAIR REPORT
■ Bhojpur

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Friday said police officials allegedly responsible for the killing of Bharat Tiwari in Bihar's Bhojpur district would face strict punishment.

Tiwari, a resident of Bilauti village within Shahpur police station limits, allegedly opened fire on a police team with an illegal firearm when officers attempted to arrest him on June 17, officials said.

Police claimed they retaliated in self-defence, during



which Tiwari sustained bullet injuries and later died while undergoing treatment.

