

# FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Wednesday, 08 July 2026

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## SPEEDING TRAILER MOWS DOWN BALLOON-SELLER FAMILY ON JAIPUR HIGHWAY, THREE CHILDREN DEAD

**Toddlers waiting for a bus met a horrific end as a runaway trailer tore through a roadside railing on the busy Delhi-Ajmer highway**

FAIR REPORT

**JAIPUR:** A routine Tuesday morning at the 200 Feet Bypass on Ajmer Road turned into a scene of unspeakable horror when a speeding trailer,

careering out of control, smashed through a roadside railing and ploughed straight into a family of balloon sellers waiting for public transport — killing three children instantly and leaving their parents fighting for life.

The trailer, laden with POP bags and travelling from Jaipur towards Ajmer, veered off the highway between 8:45 and 9 a.m., crashing outside a



hotel on the busy Delhi-Ajmer stretch before mounting the pavement where the family of five had gathered. Traffic Police Officer Puniram Mee-na said three children died on the spot, and four others were injured, including the parents, with both of the mother's legs broken. (The News Mill)

ACP Amin Hasan said preliminary findings suggest the family had been

waiting for public transport when the speeding trailer ran over them, and police are now investigating what caused the driver to lose control of the vehicle. (Asianet Newsable) Police promptly responded to the scene and transported the injured to hospital, and the bodies of the children were taken to the mortuary of Sawai Man Singh Hospital for post-mortem examina-

tion. The accident sent shockwaves through the neighbourhood, with CCTV footage of the crash circulating widely and re-igniting anger over the chronic lack of safety barriers along Rajasthan's high-speed highway corridors. The collision also triggered significant traffic congestion on Ajmer Road as police worked to clear the scene and launch

an investigation into the circumstances of the crash.

For a family that earned its living selling balloons by the roadside, the highway meant to carry Jaipur's traffic forward instead delivered an irreversible tragedy — one that has left a mother and father to wake up in hospital beds without the children they once tended to at that very bus stop.

## De-Dollarisation Gains Strategic Muscle:

## India, Indonesia Back Rupee-Rupiah Trade as Modi and Prabowo Redraw Indo-Pacific Economics

FAIR REPORT

**JAKARTA:** India has taken another decisive step in its long-term campaign to reduce dependence on the US dollar, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto giving political backing to a long-awaited local-currency settlement mechanism that will allow bilateral trade to be conducted directly in Indian rupees and Indonesian rupiah.

The agreement marks far more than a banking reform. It is a geopolitical statement that Asia's two

largest democracies intend to build a more resilient regional economic architecture—one that is less vulnerable to dollar liquidity, exchange-rate volatility and external financial shocks.

The rupee-rupiah framework, built upon the Reserve Bank of India and Bank Indonesia arrangement concluded in 2024, enables businesses to settle cross-border transactions without routing payments through the US dollar. Once operational at scale, exporters and importers in both countries are expected to



enjoy lower transaction costs, faster settlements and reduced exposure to fluctuations in the green-back.

Banking executives described the mechanism as the visit's most consequential economic out-

come. Akash Damniwala, President Director of SBI Indonesia, said the arrangement would create a direct settlement channel between the rupiah and the rupee, substantially reducing the need for dollar-denominated transac-

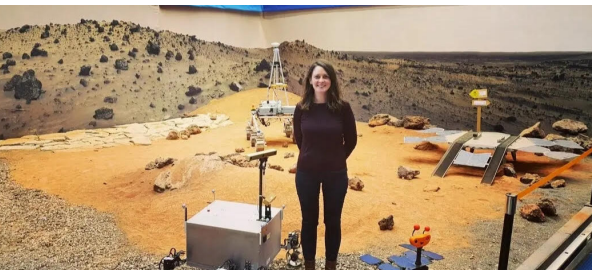
tions and strengthening financial sovereignty for both economies. The currency initiative forms the economic pillar of a much broader strategic agenda. During their summit at Jakarta's Merdeka Palace, Modi and Prabowo reviewed cooperation across defence and maritime security, trade and investment, energy security, food resilience, critical minerals, digital technology, healthcare, education and capacity building. Officials indicated that seven to eight bilateral agreements are expected to emerge from the visit, re-

flecting the growing depth of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership established in 2018. The symbolism of the visit carried equal strategic weight. This is Modi's fourth visit to Indonesia and his first bilateral visit since the partnership was elevated, underscoring Jakarta's central role in India's Indo-Pacific strategy. The ceremonial reception, with schoolchildren waving the flags of both nations, reflected a relationship that has evolved beyond diplomacy into a partnership anchored in shared strategic interests.

## From Space Toilet to Leading Europe's Mars Mission

FAIR REPORT

**LEICESTER/NETHERLANDS:** Claire Parfitt's remarkable journey from cleaning a space toilet at age 14 to leading the European Space Agency's Mars exploration programme highlights the power of curiosity and perseverance. After a rejected NASA application, she gained work experience at Leicester's National Space Centre, where handling space



hardware inspired her career in science. She later earned a physics degree and PhD, contributing to missions including ExoMars and SMILE. Now based at ESA's Netherlands research centre,

Parfitt oversees future human and robotic Mars missions and chairs the International Mars Exploration Working Group, helping shape humanity's long-term path to the Red Planet.

## Prabowo Hails Modi, Deepens India-Indonesia Partnership

FAIR REPORT

**JAKARTA:** During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jakarta, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto publicly praised India's development model, saying, "I copy your programmes, and I'm proud to admit it." He credited Modi's governance initiatives with inspiring reforms in Indonesia, particularly in rural development and sustainable agriculture.



The visit also produced major strategic outcomes, including cooperation on BrahMos-Astra missile systems and plans to establish IIT and IIM campuses in Indonesia. Several agreements covering space, critical

minerals, digital technology, agriculture, and maritime safety were signed. Indonesia also conferred its highest civilian honour, the Bintang Adipurna, on Modi for strengthening bilateral relations.

## Centre Backs Rajasthan's Rural Development Push



FAIR REPORT

**NEW DELHI:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma received strong backing from the Union Government during meetings in New Delhi with Union Ministers Shriraj Singh Chouhan and Nirmala Sitharaman. Chouhan praised Rajasthan's implementation of rural employment and livelihood initiatives under the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Employment and Livelihood Mission (Ru-

ral), while also commending the Chief Minister's Gram Vikas Chaupals for promoting direct public engagement. In a separate meeting, Sitharaman and Sharma discussed economic development, investment priorities, and stronger Centre-State coordination to accelerate key projects. The meetings reaffirmed the Centre's confidence in Rajasthan's governance and its commitment to supporting the State's long-term development agenda.



## JDA'S DOUBLE FACE: BULLDOZERS FOR THE CAMERAS, ALLEGED COLLUSION FOR THE COLONIES

FAIR REPORT  
HEMRAJ TIKAMCHAND

**Jaipur:** The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) has turned demolition into a weekly spectacle — bulldozers rolling over illegal plots, cameras rolling alongside, press notes following within hours. But behind the dust and photo-ops lies a question the authority has yet to answer: if JDA's enforcement machinery is truly this vigilant, how are fresh illegal colonies still springing up across the city?

**The bulldozer runs. The officers don't. :** Every demolition drive ends with a triumphant press note. What it never ends

with, residents and complainants allege, is action against the officials in whose jurisdiction the illegal construction was allowed to rise in the first place. Multi-storey structures do not appear overnight without land-use conversion, without approvals, without notice — so did the enforcement inspector, the patwari, and the zonal officer simply not know? If they knew, why did no action follow? And if they genuinely didn't know, what does that say about their competence — or their accountability?

**Demolition here, fresh construction there :** Local sources allege something more trou-



bling than mere inefficiency: that even as JDA bulldozes one illegal colony, new ones are rising elsewhere in the city at a faster pace than the demolitions can keep up with — a pattern complainants say would be impossible without administrative protection at the local level.

**Kho Nagoriyan: When even court orders are allegedly ignored :**

Nowhere is the pattern starker than in Kho Nagoriyan, opposite JNU Hospital, where large-scale construction has allegedly continued without land conversion or JDA approval — despite repeated written complaints and despite the JDA's own court reportedly issuing explicit stop-work orders on June 1, June 12 and June 23. If these allegations hold, the ground

floor became a first floor, and the first floor has now become a second — in open defiance of the tribunal's own directives. The question writes itself: if JDA's own court orders cannot be enforced on JDA's own watch, who exactly is meant to enforce them?

**Compliance on paper, construction on the ground :** Complainants further allege that "compliance reports" are routinely filed on record — declaring the construction stopped — even as work continues unabated at the site itself. If true, this is not administrative negligence. It is a systemic indictment of the entire enforcement apparatus.

Collusion — but whose? Residents allege that construction on this scale simply cannot happen without the alleged connivance of officials ranging from the enforcement wing to the zonal level. No independent confirmation of these allegations exists, and no official named has offered any public response. Yet the question persists: if there is no collusion, why is there no action?

**The questions the public is asking the government :** Where were the responsible officers when the first brick was laid? Why did nobody intervene during months of open plotting? How did construction material

reach an unapproved site? How were temporary electricity and water connections secured? Who was supposed to ensure court orders were followed — and did they? And above all: how many officials have actually faced departmental or criminal action so far?

**Bulldozers alone won't do. Accountability must follow. :** Legal experts note that illegal construction is never purely a builder's crime — where an official's role, negligence or protection can be established, the law applies to them too. That is precisely why the growing demand is not for more bulldozers, but for the officials under whose

watch these colonies flourished to be named and held responsible.

**The question that won't go away:** If JDA is truly enforcing "zero tolerance" against illegal colonies, why does every demolition photo-op stop short of disclosing the one thing that matters — who was the officer responsible for that zone, what action was taken against him, how many officials have been suspended, and how many FIRs have been registered? Until those answers arrive, every bulldozer image will leave the same question hanging in the public mind: is the action really targeting illegal colonies — or only their photographs?



IN FOCUS



An Indian chameleon perches on a tree branch, in the outskirts of the Hyderabad, Telangana

PTI

Shivraj launches PRAGATI to empower agri-entrepreneurs

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday launched PRAGATI, a landmark multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to empower 20,000 agri-entrepreneurs and directly support 20 lakh smallholder farmers across India.

The initiative brings together PepsiCo Foundation, SBI Foundation (SBIF), Gates Foundation, IDH, Heifer International, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Global Agri Entrepreneurship Academy, Sustainable Agriculture Foundation International Association (SAFIA), Agri Entrepreneur Growth Foundation (AEGF), and Transform Rural India Foundation (TRIF) to build a nationwide ecosystem of agri-entrepreneurs.

Built on a network of over 26,000 agri-entrepreneurs supporting 2.6 million farmers, PRAGATI will add 20,000 new agri-entrepreneurs across Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The initiative will promote regenerative agriculture through advisory services, mechanisation, soil health, finance, insurance, market linkages and 20,000 entrepreneur-led kiosks,



targeting a 30 per cent increase in farmer incomes, 15–20 per cent higher crop yields, adoption of regenerative agriculture by 20 per cent of participating farmers, and financial inclusion for 50 per cent of associated farmers. Speaking at the launch, Chouhan said the vision of Viksit Bharat cannot be achieved without a developed agricultural sector and prosperous villages. “Our focus is not only on increasing production but also on reducing cultivation costs, enhancing farmers’ incomes, promoting crop diversification and making agriculture more profitable,” he said.

Monica Bauer, Senior Vice President, Global Social Impact, PepsiCo, and President, PepsiCo Foundation, said farmers are at the heart of our business, and strengthening their livelihoods is key to building resilient food systems. “Through PRAGATI, we aim to expand farmers’ access to the tools and knowledge needed for more sustainable agriculture,” he added. Swapan Dhan, MD & CEO, SBI Foundation, said, “PRAGATI brings together institutions with diverse expertise to empower local change-makers who will drive farmer prosperity, climate resilience and financial inclusion across India.” Hisham Mundol, Chief Advisor – India, Environmental Defense Fund, was also present on the occasion.

PM Modi celebrates India-Indonesia ties

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday praised Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as a “true friend of India” while expressing gratitude for the warm welcome he received during his State visit to Indonesia.

Addressing members of the Indian community in Jakarta, PM Modi said he was deeply touched by the affection shown by Indonesians, adding that the strong cultural and historical ties between the two nations continue to flourish.

“I sincerely thank President Prabowo for his kind words and support. He is a true friend of India,” the Prime Minister said, noting that the warmth extended to him throughout the visit reflected the deep goodwill Indonesians hold for India.

Referring to the popularity of Indian cinema in Indonesia, Modi mentioned the



Bollywood film Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, saying it has a special place among local audiences. Using the film’s title as a light-hearted analogy, he remarked that cooperation between India and Indonesia results in “much more” than just kuch kuch, underlining the vast potential of the bilateral partnership.

Worker at Badrinath temple suspended over donation theft

FAIR REPORT ■ Jyotirmath

The four-member committee formed by the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) to probe allegations of misappropriation of donations made to Badrinath Dham has begun its investigation in the matter.

BKTC chairman Hemant Dwivedi said that initial probe by the committee has prima facie confirmed irregularities, after which the employee in the centre of the allegations- Pramod Nautiyal has been suspended with immediate effect.

He said that the BKTC follows a policy of zero toler-



ance for corruption or irregularities, adding that the guilty will not be spared under any circumstances. The BKTC chief executive

assistant Pramod Nautiyal which was found to be doubtful. He was suspended with immediate effect and attached to the BKTC’s Jyotirmath office.

Following a letter written by Bhairav Sena to the CEO levelling allegations of misappropriation of donations to the temple, the BKTC chairman ordered formation of an internal investigation committee after the letter went viral on social media. Stating that the findings of the inquiry committee will be made public, he has stressed that strict action will be taken as per the law against anyone found guilty in the investigation.

Delhi LG Sandhu welcomes Kanchi Shankaracharya at India Foundation event

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Sardar Taranjit Singh Sandhu welcomed His Holiness Shankaracharya Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal of the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham while presiding over an India Foundation programme at the India Habitat Centre.

Sandhu described the Peetham as a “living civilisational institution” that has preserved India’s spiritual, educational and charitable



traditions for over 2,500 years. Sandhu, who presided over the programme at the Stein Auditorium in the pres-

ence of India Foundation President Ram Madhav, said it was a privilege to host one of India’s oldest living spiri-

tual traditions in the national capital and commended the India Foundation for bringing together policymak-

ers, diplomats and scholars.

Describing the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham as a living civilisational institution established by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya at Kanchipuram, the LG said it has maintained an unbroken lineage of 71 Acharyas while preserving three core pillars: Veda, Vidya and Vaidya.

He said the institution has played a significant role in preserving Vedic scholarship, promoting education through integrated pathshalas and higher educational institutions, and

providing healthcare through a network of charitable medical facilities across the country.

Sandhu also praised the Peetham’s outreach in the North-East and Jammu and Kashmir, saying its initiatives have contributed to strengthening national integration. He further highlighted its efforts in preserving India’s cultural heritage through manuscript digitisation and the revival of traditional temple architecture.

The LG said Delhi, as the nation’s capital and a meeting

point of diverse traditions and communities, continues to draw inspiration from institutions such as the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in the country’s journey towards a Viksit Bharat.

Concluding his address, Sandhu said the timeless values nurtured by the Peetham would continue to guide the nation’s progress with wisdom and harmony. He offered his respects to the Shankaracharya and requested His Holiness to bless the gathering with his benedictory address.

Runway scare at Mumbai airport

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

A serious runway conflict was narrowly averted at Mumbai’s Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on late evening Tuesday, when a Delhi-bound Air India (AI) flight was instructed to abort its takeoff as another AI flight was landing on the same runway.

According to airport sources, the AI aircraft was cleared for departure to Delhi when the AI flight, arriving from Kochi, approached for landing on the same active runway. On instructions from Air Traffic Control (ATC), the Air India crew immediately discontinued the takeoff roll and returned safely to the bay.

In an official statement, AI confirmed the incident involving flight AI8 d emphasised that safety protocols were followed.

This marks the second reported ground incident involving AI in less than a month. Earlier, an AI and an IndiGo aircraft came face-to-face on the ground at Ahmedabad airport, triggering safety concerns.

A joint investigation by aviation authorities has been initiated to determine the exact sequence of events and identify any lapses in runway management or communication at Mumbai airport.

From River Disputes to River Governance: Four States Seal Historic Narmada Settlement in Federal Breakthrough

FAIR REPORT

NEW DELHI, July 7: In a significant step towards resolving one of India’s longest-running inter-state water-related financial disputes, the Centre on Tuesday facilitated a landmark agreement among Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to settle decades-old pending payments arising from the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award linked to the Sardar Sarovar Project. The agreement, signed in the presence of Union

Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah and Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil, provides for a one-time settlement of outstanding financial liabilities among the four beneficiary states, bringing closure to a contentious issue that had remained unresolved for years despite the project’s completion. The accord was signed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and Madhya Pradesh

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, in the presence of senior officials from the Centre and the participating states. The settlement pertains to the sharing of construction costs of the Sardar Sarovar Project, one of India’s largest multipurpose river valley projects. Differences over financial obligations among the beneficiary states had remained unresolved for decades. The new arrangement formally closes these liabilities through a mutually agreed one-time payment mechanism.

Rahul Gandhi Expresses Grief Over Wayanad Landslide, Urges Congress Workers to Intensify Relief Efforts

NEW DELHI : Rahul Gandhi on Monday expressed profound grief over the landslide tragedy in Wayanad, offering condolences to the bereaved families and calling upon Congress and United Democratic Front (UDF) workers to actively support ongoing rescue and relief operations.

Describing the disaster as “deeply distressing,” Gandhi said his thoughts and prayers were with those who had lost their loved ones and with all families affected by the calamity.

Sting Operation on ‘Sting’: Jaipur Food Safety Team Seizes 7,000 Bottles Over Misleading Energy Claims

FAIR REPORT

JAIPUR, JULY 7: In a decisive enforcement action against misleading food and beverage marketing, the Jaipur-II Food Safety Department has seized 7,000 bottles of Sting Energy, a caffeinated beverage, from a PepsiCo distributor after finding allegedly deceptive promotional claims on its labels, reinforcing Rajasthan’s intensified crackdown under the ‘Shuddh Aahar Milawat Par Vaar’ campaign.

The operation, carried out at M/s Priyanka Marketing in Mangyawas, was

conducted under the directions of Dr. T. Shubhamangala, Commissioner, Food Safety and Drug Control, and supervised by Dr. Manish Mittal, Chief Medical and Health Officer (Jaipur-II). According to officials, the bottles carried promotional claims such as “Stimulates Mind,” “Energizes Body,” and “Same Great Taste”—descriptions that the Food Safety Department believes fall within the category of misleading representations under prevailing food safety regulations. Food Safety officers collected statutory samples

under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and sealed the remaining stock of 7,000 bottles of the 250ml variant pending further investigation. Officials pointed out that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has cautioned beverage manufacturers against using expressions such as “Energy Drink,” “Sports Drink,” “Stimulates Mind,” or “Energizes Body” on caffeinated beverages, as such claims may mislead consumers regarding the product’s physiological benefits. The department also noted that the Union food regula-

tor had recently issued notices to beverage manufacturers on similar labelling concerns. Health authorities have repeatedly warned that beverages with high caffeine content may not be suitable for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, making accurate consumer information a matter of public health rather than mere marketing. Officials said regulatory action will be determined after laboratory analysis of the collected samples. The seizure reflects a welcome shift from reactive enforcement to preventive regulation.

DELHI HC REJECTS BAIL TO 2008 DELHI BLASTS ACCUSED MANSOOR PEERBHROY, SAYS GRAVITY OF TERROR CHARGES OVERRIDES 17-YEAR CUSTODY

FAIR REPORT

NEW DELHI, JULY 7: In a significant ruling underscoring the judiciary’s approach towards terrorism cases, the Delhi High Court on Monday refused bail to alleged Indian Mujahideen operative Mansoor Asghar Peerbhoy, holding that the gravity of the charges and the advanced stage of the trial outweighed his nearly 17 years of incarceration as an undertrial.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Prathiba

M. Singh and Justice Madhu Jain dismissed Peerbhoy’s appeal against a trial court order rejecting his third bail application. The Bench also directed the trial court to conclude proceedings within eight months, in line with earlier directions of the Supreme Court.

Court Cites Seriousness of Allegations

The High Court observed that the allegations against Peerbhoy concern

one of India’s most devastating urban terror attacks, making the case exceptional despite the prolonged period of custody.

According to the prosecution, Peerbhoy headed the media cell of the banned Indian Mujahideen and played a key technical role in the conspiracy. Investigators allege that he, along with co-accused Mubin Kadar Shaikh, hacked into the Wi-Fi network of a Mumbai-based company to send an email titled “Message of Death” to media organisa-

tions just minutes before the coordinated serial blasts on September 13, 2008. The email claimed responsibility for the explosions and included a PDF document foreshadowing the attacks. The Bench observed that the execution of such a synchronised operation required sophisticated technological expertise and logistical planning, adding that Peerbhoy appeared, at least prima facie, to occupy a central role in facilitating the digital component of the conspiracy.

Digital Evidence Strengthens Prosecution Case

The court noted that investigators had placed substantial prima facie material linking Peerbhoy to the conspiracy, including evidence relating to the purchase of laptops allegedly used to transmit the email, the recovery of electronic devices, and forensic findings indicating the presence of file-erasing software and copies of the incriminating PDF

document. These materials, the Bench held, were sufficient at the present stage to invoke the stringent restrictions on bail under Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Relying on the Supreme Court’s landmark judgment in NIA v. Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali, the High Court concluded that the accusations against the accused were prima facie true, thereby attracting the statutory bar on bail.

Liberty vs Public Safety

Peerbhoy’s counsel argued that he had remained in judicial custody for approximately 17 years without conviction, that the delay in the trial was not attributable to him, that he had already been acquitted in the Ahmedabad serial blasts case, and had secured bail in a related Mumbai matter. The defence also pointed out that only two prosecution witnesses remain to be examined. The High Court, how-

ever, held that prolonged incarceration alone cannot justify bail in cases involving grave acts of terrorism. The Bench observed that the allegations relate to coordinated bomb blasts that claimed 26 lives and left 135 others injured, offences punishable up to the death penalty. It held that while Article 21 guarantees personal liberty, courts must equally safeguard the right to life and security of ordinary citizens threatened by acts of terrorism.



## States Focus



### BIHAR: BJP FIELDS ABHISHEK KUMAR FOR BANKIPUR BYPOLL

The BJP on Tuesday announced its candidate for the Bankipur Assembly bypoll in Bihar, fielding Abhishek Kumar from the seat. The Bankipur Assembly by-election will be held on July 30, and the votes polled will be counted on August 3. The vacancy arose following the resignation of BJP national president Nitin Nabin as an MLA from the seat in Bihar. Nabin was sworn in as a Rajya Sabha member. Kumar has been named as the BJP candidate from the seat for bypolls with the approval of the party's Central Election Committee (CEC), according to a notification issued by BJP national general secretary Arun Singh. Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor is contesting from the Bankipur Assembly seat that had elected Nabin five times in a row.



### RAM TEMPLE ROW IS THEFT OF FAITH: HIMACHAL CM SUKHU

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu stated on Tuesday that the controversy surrounding donations for the Ram temple involved not only the theft of funds but also the theft of the faith held by millions of devotees across the country.

During his visit to a Ram temple in Shimla, where he offered prayers and participated in 'kirtan', the chief minister emphasised that "Hindu culture teaches respect for all religions, and true followers of Lord Ram do not engage in politics in his name." Sukhu mentioned that state cabinet members had also prayed at the Ram Mandir, hoping that those responsible for misusing temple donations would find their way to righteousness. He noted that individuals collecting donations or engaging in politics in the name of Lord Ram and religion should do so with honesty and integrity. He said that while the Central Government had announced a half-day holiday for the Pran Pratishtha (consecration) ceremony of Ram Lalla, the Himachal Pradesh Government had declared a full-day public holiday. Sukhu stated that the credit for initiating the process for the construction of the Ram Mandir primarily belongs to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, under whose leadership the locks of the Ram Janmabhoomi site were opened.

# Indonesia award for PM slap on Islamophobia narrative: BJP

**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday said Indonesia's highest civilian honour for Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a "resounding slap" on the Opposition for spreading the "Islamophobia narrative". The latest honour is a strong endorsement of India's diplomacy under Modi, the party asserted.

The remarks came after Prime Minister Modi on Tuesday was conferred with Indonesia's highest civilian honour, the 'Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia'.

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the latest recognition reflects growing global trust in Modi's leadership and India's rising stature on the world stage.

"Today is a difficult day for Modi baiters, diplomacy doubters and Islamophobia insurgents," he said in a video statement.

Referring to Indonesia as the country with the highest Muslim population, he said



BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla

the honour also demolishes allegations that Modi and his Government are "anti-Muslim".

"But there is yet another significant aspect of this national civilian honour that has been given to him. It has been conferred by Indonesia, which has the highest Muslim population.

"And this is not the first award he is getting from a Muslim nation. Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Maldives, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Oman — all Muslim nations — have given the highest civilian honour to

Prime Minister Modi," he said.

Poonawalla alleged that the honours conferred by Muslim-majority countries expose the Opposition's "Islamophobia narrative".

There goes the Islamophobia narrative, crashing down. Are Prime Minister Modi and his Government anti-Muslim? And despite that, these Governments are giving him the highest civilian honour? Obviously not," he said.

"So today, those who have been doubting our diplomacy and those who have been insurgents of the

Islamophobia narrative have got a resounding slap from the highest civilian honour being given to Prime Minister Modi," Poonawalla added.

The BJP spokesperson said India's diplomacy under Modi has earned the confidence of countries and helped India emerge as a bridge in a divided world.

"Be it the Western camp or the Eastern camp, be it Russia or Ukraine, be it Israel or Palestine, all of them trust Modi, and India has emerged as a bridge between a divided world," Poonawalla said.

Poonawalla aimed Modi has received well over 30 international civilian honours, more than all previous prime ministers put together.

"He has received well over 30 such civilian honours. If you put all the other prime ministers together—Nehru ji, Indira ji, Rajiv ji, Manmohan Singh ji and others—they do not add up to even half of that. That, in itself, is an indication of how the world trusts Prime Minister Modi," he said.

## Rajasthan committee on UCC begins public consultations



**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ Kota

A committee to prepare a draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for Rajasthan, chaired by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, has sought responses to 19 questions through an online portal and public consultations.

The questionnaire includes several questions related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, property rights, and live-in relationships.

The committee, constituted by the Rajasthan Government, has sought an opinion on whether legal provisions similar to those governing divorce should apply to live-in relationships. The draft Bill, incorporating public feedback, is expected to be presented during the next session of the State Legislative Assembly.

The committee's first divisional-level public consultation was held in Ajmer on Monday, while a public hearing for Kota division will be held on Wednesday, July 8.

The committee is scheduled to hold public consultations at divisional headquarters for Jaipur on July 10-11 in the presence of committee member Shatrughan Singh; on July 13-14 in Udaipur in the presence of committee member Basant Singh Chhaba; and in Bharatpur on July 9-10 in the presence of committee member Ramswaroop Agarwal.

Elected representatives, social organisations, political parties, legal experts, academicians and members of the public have been

invited to submit their suggestions on the proposed legislation of the UCC.

The main opposition Congress has threatened to boycott UCC consultations, saying no draft had been made public.

Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra alleged that the BJP "ment is conspiring to distract people's attention from real public issues by spreading religious frenzy over the UCC.

"It wants to tear apart peaceful states like Rajasthan," he alleged.

Meanwhile, officials said that discussions with elected representatives, including MLAs, Zila Pramukhs, mayors, municipal chairpersons, along with representatives of various religions, non-governmental organisations, recognised political parties, legal professionals and eminent academicians will be held from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm in Kota.

Representatives from Bundi, Baran and Jhalrapur districts will join the proceedings through video conferencing from their respective district headquarters.

A separate session for the general public will begin at 2 pm.

The officials said the hearing was originally planned over two days, on July 7 and 8, but has now been consolidated into a single-day programme on Wednesday, July 8.

The committee is seeking views on creating uniform legal provisions applicable across all communities and on whether live-in couples should be required to register their relationship.

# Telangana CM orders setup of digital governance panel

**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday directed officials to constitute a committee to strengthen 'digital governance' in the State.

Reddy, who held a meeting with officials, said the committee, comprising officials, should submit its report in 100 days. He sought details of the implementation of 'digital governance' and instructed officials to formulate plans for digital governance and draft relevant legislation, a release said.

The CM emphasised that the administration should move towards full-scale digitisation. The main objective of the State Government is to



Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy

provide better services to the public and ensure that welfare schemes reach beneficiaries directly through digital governance, it said.

The chief minister, who held a review of the problems being faced by contract and outsourcing employees, enquired about the digitisation of data concerning contract and outsourcing staff.

He told officials to digitise all the data and ensure that salaries to contract and outsourcing staff are paid on the first day of every month.

Reddy said strict action must be taken against agencies that are not paying salaries promptly to contract and outsourcing employees even after the release of funds by the Government.

## Bengaluru street vendors call for strike over ongoing eviction drive

**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ Bengaluru

The street vendors' associations have called for a massive protest and total shutdown of their activities in the city on Wednesday against the ongoing eviction drive being carried out in Bengaluru.

The associations have accused the state government of "violating" the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.

"On July 8, we have called for a massive protest, there will be a bandh... Street vending in all the city's major markets will cease. We appeal to street vendors who are not part of any association to join us," Advocate and activist associated with street vendors,



Vinay Srinivasa, said.

Speaking to reporters, he said this fight is just the beginning. "If the Government fails to respond, there will be a call for a statewide protest."

"A minimum of five to six thousand people are likely to gather for the protest on June 8 (at Freedom Park in Bengaluru)," he added.

As part of the Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) 'Safe Footpath' campaign that began on July 1, officials are conducting a drive to clear encroachments aimed at improving pedestrian infrastructure across the city. The drive is spearheaded by Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda.

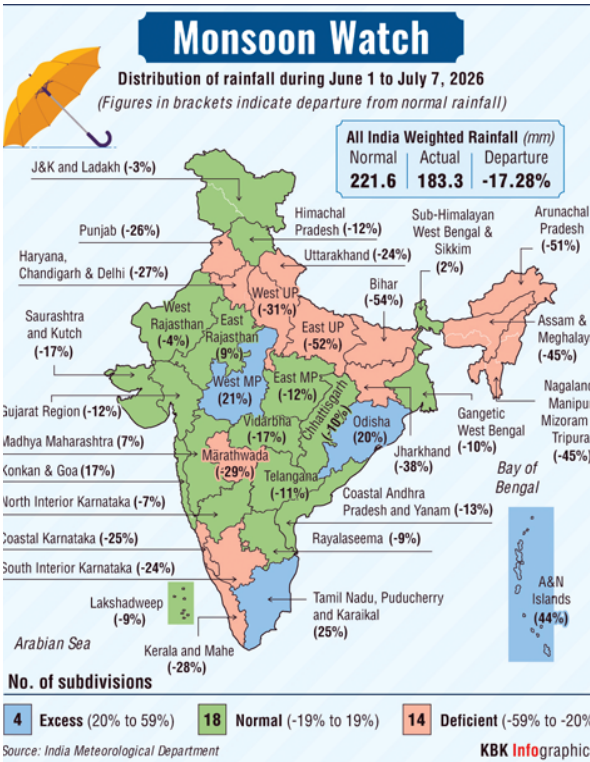
## Climate change altering behaviour of Indian monsoon: Experts

**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ New Delhi

El Niño, the recurrent weather pattern that drives up global temperatures, and climate change cannot be viewed independently, as one is delaying the rains and the other intensifying them, according to climate experts.

A rapidly strengthening El Niño in the Pacific delayed the onset of the monsoon and kept rainfall subdued through June, leaving India with a 40 per cent rainfall deficit by the end of the month. Yet, within days, the scenario changed dramatically. As the monsoon entered an active phase by the end of June, Mumbai and large parts of India's West Coast were battered by exceptionally intense rainfall.

Experts say the new reality is that climate change is fundamentally altering the behaviour of the Indian monsoon.



"Monsoon is presently in an active phase, with several weather systems prevailing across the country. There was a depression over Odisha and a cyclonic circulation over Maharashtra, keeping the western and eastern arms of the monsoon active," said Mahesh Palawat, Vice President - Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather.

"Along with this, continuous moisture feed from the Arabian Sea led to continuous regeneration of clouds over Maharashtra in the last three to four days, leading to heavy rainfall," Palawat said.

Raghu Murtugudde, Emeritus Professor, University of Maryland and retired professor, IIT-Mumbai, explained that Mumbai saw a delayed onset of monsoon, which is partly explainable by El Niño. "But the global warming pattern of warm Western Asia and shifted Arabian Sea winds have kicked in as expected. Lots of winds as

well, which is part of the larger heavy rain over the core monsoon zone. Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are both feeding heavy rain in the interior. El Niño just cannot be separated from global warming anymore.

"Both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are active, and a low-pressure system is also starting from the Bay of Bengal. When this happens, and both sides fire up, the core monsoon zone gets heavy rain and that moisture supply also goes over Mumbai. Western Ghats force air to climb, so Mumbai gets lots of rain," Murtugudde said.

While three-digit rainfall in Mumbai and places along the West Coast are common during the monsoon season, meteorologists suggest that there has been a significant rise in such deluge-like spells during July and August across Maharashtra, Gujarat, South Rajasthan and Southwest Madhya Pradesh.

## Mizoram's Natural History Museum notified as designated repository

**FAIR REPORT**  
 ■ New Delhi

The Environment Ministry has notified the Natural History Museum (NHM) in Mizoram as a designated repository, making it the 21st such repository in the country, officials said on Tuesday.

Designated repositories constitute an important component of India's biodiversity governance framework by preserving authenticated biological specimens accessed under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

"Based on the recommendation of the National Biodiversity Authority and after due examination of the proposal, the Central Government notified the institution as a designated repository on June 19, 2026," a senior ministry official said.

"With this notification, NHM becomes India's 21st



Designated Repository, further strengthening the country's biodiversity conservation and scientific infrastructure," the official said. The NHM will maintain voucher specimens of select flora, including pteridophytes and macrofungi, and fauna such as reptiles, amphibians, fishes, moths, beetles and butterflies, according to the official.

"It will also serve as the designated depository for

type specimens of newly discovered species from the region. These authenticated collections will strengthen species identification, traceability and scientific research while safeguarding India's biological resources for long-term conservation.

"They will also support future ecological restoration in the event of habitat loss, natural disasters or species decline," the official said.



