

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Friday, 10 July 2026

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WORTH A CAPTURE

Gates of Hirakud Dam were opened for the first time this monsoon season to release water, in Sambalpur district, Thursday

INDIA, AUSTRALIA DEEPEN DEFENCE, NUCLEAR TIES

Both nations also launch a critical minerals partnership and expand defence collaboration to strengthen regional stability

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described India as “one of Australia’s closest strategic partners” and said the agreements reflected a relationship that had matured beyond trade into a comprehensive partnership covering security, technology, clean energy and regional stability. “We are building a partnership that delivers prosperity, security and resilience for both our nations. Today’s agreements will strengthen supply chains, expand investment opportunities and contribute to a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific,” Albanese said. The leaders also reviewed progress under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, noting significant growth in bilateral trade, defence engagement and people-to-people ties over the past few years. They welcomed the increasing



participation of Australian universities and research institutions in India and agreed to deepen collaboration in higher education, vocational training and innovation. On critical minerals, both countries recognised the need to diversify global supply chains for minerals essential to electric vehicles, batteries and renewable energy technologies. Australia, one of the world’s largest producers

of lithium and other critical minerals, will work closely with India to ensure reliable supplies while encouraging investment in processing and value addition. Climate and clean energy also featured prominently in the discussions. The two sides agreed to expand cooperation in green hydrogen, renewable energy storage, carbon capture technologies and low-emission industrial processes. They reiterated their shared commitment to achieving net-zero goals while ensuring affordable and secure energy access.

The leaders welcomed growing defence cooperation under exercises such as AUSINDEX and Malabar, stressing that stronger maritime collaboration would help safeguard freedom of navigation, maritime commerce and regional security. Both countries

also agreed to strengthen cooperation against illegal fishing, transnational crime and cyber threats.

Trade and investment received renewed attention, with both Prime Ministers directing officials to conclude the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) at the earliest. Business leaders from both sides are expected to benefit from easier market access, greater investment protection and expanded opportunities in manufacturing, digital services, agriculture and education.

The summit also highlighted the importance of the Indian diaspora in Australia, which has emerged as one of the fastest-growing migrant communities in the country. Both leaders praised the contribution of the Indian community in strengthening cultural and economic ties between the two nations.

Cheating in Plain Sight: LDC Exam Scandal Rocks Jaisalmer, Five Booked as CCTV Exposes the Cover-Up

JAISALMER: A brazen cheating racket inside an exam hall has blown the lid off Rajasthan’s recruitment process, exposing exactly how far invigilators are willing to go to fix results. CCTV footage from Swami Vivekananda Model School, where the Staff Selection Board’s LDC (Grade-II) exam was held on 6 July, allegedly shows a relieving teacher slipping a candidate’s answer sheet out of the hall inside a file, only to return it filled in roughly twelve minutes later. When fellow candidates protested, one teacher had a chillingly casual reply: “We’ll tell you too, don’t make noise.” An FIR now names five accused, including centre superintendent Ummed Singh, relief invigilator Padam Singh, and candidate Manu Kanwar, booked under the state’s stringent Public Examination Act, 2022 — the same law meant to crush the paper-leak mafia. RSSB Chairman Alok Raj insists the Board acted, not covered up, and that the FIR will “establish the full truth.” But for thousands of genuine aspirants, the question is sharper: if a hall full of witnesses could be silenced with a threat, how many such moments have gone unrecorded?

China shoe factory fire kills 28; Xi Jinping orders probe into deadly blaze



FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

At least 28 people were killed after a massive fire ripped through a shoe factory in China’s southern Fujian province, prompting President Xi Jinping to order a full investigation into the country’s latest major industrial disaster. The blaze broke out on Thursday at the Huiteng shoe factory in Jinjiang, a major manufacturing hub often referred to as China’s “shoe capital.” Of the 239 people inside the five-storey factory at the time of the incident, 213 were safely evacuated, while 28 people lost their lives, including two who later succumbed to injuries in hospital. Initial investigations indicate that

the fire started on the ground floor and spread rapidly due to highly flammable materials and adhesives used in shoe manufacturing. Rescue operations were hampered by blocked stairwells and thick smoke, though firefighters brought the blaze under control after several hours. President Xi Jinping expressed condolences over the heavy loss of life and directed authorities to conduct an exhaustive investigation, identify the cause of the accident and hold those responsible accountable. Chinese authorities have reportedly detained the factory owner and other company officials while freezing the firm’s bank accounts as part of the probe.

10,000-Plus Cans of Mislabeled Caffeinated Drinks Seized in Jaipur’s Bassi Industrial Area

Food safety raid at GRS Enterprises flags misleading claims on energy drink packaging; samples sent for lab testing
FAIR REPORT

JAIPUR: Acting on directions from Dr. T. Shubhmangala, Commissioner of Food Safety and Drug Control, Rajasthan, food safety officials in Jaipur Second district carried out an inspection and sampling operation at GRS Enterprises in the Bassi Industrial Area, seizing over 10,000 cans of caffeinated beverages found to carry mis-



leading labels. Dr. Manish Mittal, Designated Officer and Chief Medical and Health Officer, Jaipur Second, said the food safety team collected three sam-

ples from among several energy drink brands stocked at the unit — Red Bull Energy Drink, Campa Energy, and Predator Energy — before sealing the

remaining inventory. The seizure includes 4,928 cans of Campa, 3,608 cans of Predator, and 1,512 cans of Red Bull, taking the total to over 10,000 units taken out

of circulation.

The action rests on a clear regulatory red flag: under Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms, labeling beverages with terms such as “stimulates mind,” “energises body,” “energy drink,” “sports drink,” or “healthy drink” falls squarely within misleading advertising. Notably, FSSAI has already issued notices to several well-known beverage brands over similar claims, seeking formal responses.

The health concern is not incidental. High-caffeine energy drinks of this

kind can pose real risks to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children — precisely the population labelling laws are meant to protect from unverified wellness claims dressed up as fact. The collected samples will be sent to the Public Health Laboratory, Jaipur, and further action will follow strictly as per the report’s findings.

The operation was carried out by food safety officers Ramesh Chand Yadav, Awadhesh Gupta, and Nand Kishore Kumawat, under the office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer, Jaipur Second.

US hits Iran, Tehran targets Gulf allies

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

The US military said it hit some 90 targets across Iran, releasing footage of strikes on an airport runway and missile launchers. The United States launched new airstrikes against Iran early Thursday, and Tehran responded by targeting US-allied Mideast countries in an exchange of fire that threatened an interim deal intended to help end the war in the Middle East. Back-and-forth attacks, including a day earlier, have repeatedly threatened the ceasefire, but Thursday’s appeared bigger all around, with sirens sounding at least three times in Bahrain, home

to the US Navy’s 5th Fleet headquarters, and missiles targeting Kuwait and Qatar. Sirens sounded Thursday afternoon in Jordan as well, where the US has stationed troops and aircraft. An Iranian official accused the US of launching an airstrike later Thursday targeting the area around Iran’s sole nuclear power plant, and other explosions were reported elsewhere in the country during the afternoon. The strikes came hours after US President Donald Trump said recent Iranian attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz signalled the end of a fragile ceasefire and threatened to escalate.

PoJK faces showdown as JAAC ultimatum raises tensions

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Tensions in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) have escalated after the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) gave Islamabad a 48-hour ultimatum. JAAC warned of a "grand and final" phase of protests if its 38-point charter is ignored, and it planned major demonstrations before the July 27 Assembly elections. What began as economic complaints has now turned into a direct challenge to the region's political relationship with Pakistan.

JAAC is a coalition of traders, transporters, lawyers, students, and civil society groups formed in 2023. It initially gained support due to rising electricity bills and wheat prices, even though PoJK has its own hydropower resources. The group's 38-point charter, created after deadly protests in 2025, calls for immediate relief and long-term reforms. Economic demands include setting electricity tariffs based on local generation costs and providing wheat subsidies, as in Gilgit-Baltistan. Structural demands include reducing elite privileges, shrinking the PoJK Cabinet, cutting bureaucratic perks, and,



Protests in PoK

FILE PHOTO

most controversially, abolishing 12 reserved seats in the PoJK Legislative Assembly for refugees from Jammu and Kashmir who live in Pakistan.

JAAC argues that these seats allow parties close to Islamabad to influence PoJK Governments without being accountable to local people. After violent clashes in 2025, an agreement promised compensation, new education boards, health funding, infrastructure projects, and a monitoring committee. However, only some of these promises have been kept, leading to renewed protests.

Pakistan's Supreme Court ruling upheld their constitutional status, requiring amendments to remove

them. JAAC responded with renewed agitation. On June 5, authorities banned the organisation under anti-terrorism laws. A region-wide shut down and wheel-jam strike on June 9 triggered clashes, particularly in Rawalakot and Poonch, with reports of multiple deaths and injuries on both sides. Security forces were deployed in large numbers, and communications were restricted in parts of the region.

People in PoJK accuse authorities of using arrests, excessive force, and a blockade that has caused shortages. Sit-ins continue, and leaders have promised to keep protesting until all demands are met.

As the July 9 deadline neared, JAAC stepped up its calls for action, urging people in PoJK and the Kashmiri diaspora to join a "grand and final" protest. They plan new demonstrations and may march on the capital, similar to earlier threats of a long march. The timing is deliberate, as nominations for the July 27 elections have started, and any unrest could disrupt the electoral process that Islamabad wants to show as normal.

There are deeper issues behind the current crisis. Most of the hydropower produced in PoJK is fed into Pakistan's national grid, yet local people still pay high electricity rates. Islamabad still has strong control over the region, and real autonomy is limited, even though the area is called "Azad." The refugee seats show this imbalance, as critics say they weaken local representation.

In the coming days, it will become clear whether talks will work or if protests and unrest will continue and become even riskier. JAAC's actions show how frustrated ordinary people are with broken promises. Pakistan now faces the challenge of controlling the unrest without making people feel more alienated or attracting international attention.

Congress questions PM's silence on Ayodhya row



FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The Congress on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the issue of "embezzlement" of Ram temple donations and alleged that attempts are being made to save the "big fish" and take action against small employees.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh claimed that several irregularities relating to land purchase and construction of the temple have also come to light.

"After the theft of offerings at the Ram temple in Ayodhya came to light, several major irregularities related to land purchase and construction have also surfaced.

"Despite all this, Prime Minister Modi remains silent and the entire BJP-RSS apparatus is attempting to protect the big fish by taking action against a few small employees," Ramesh said in a post in Hindi on X.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress leader Surinder Rajput said Modi cannot escape responsibility in the Ram temple "donation-theft case" as it was he who had established the trust to look after the management of the shrine.

He also questioned the involvement of people with a specific ideology in this trust.

"In the donation-embezzlement issue, a few small fish are being used as bait to protect the big fish. In this entire matter, the needle of suspicion also points towards the RSS and the VHP, and we demand answers from them," Rajput said.

He said it was Modi who had laid the foundation stone of the Ram temple and it was he who had performed the "Pran Pratishtha" (consecration) of the deity.

"When a big sin of stealing the offerings has been committed, Prime Minister Modi should clarify. The Ram temple is a matter of faith for crores of people and the prime minister, the RSS and the VHP cannot escape responsibility," the Congress leader said.

He also demanded that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) clarify whether it had any role in the "donation theft" and asked why the temple trust was kept out of the purview of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

"If the trust is entirely religious, why were only people connected to the BJP-RSS placed in it? The prime minister will have to answer these questions," he said.

Nation Focus



BAIL GRANTED TO SANJAY KUMAR SON IN POCSO CASE

The Telangana High Court on Thursday granted conditional bail to Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bageerath, who was arrested in connection with a POCSO case registered against him.

The High Court on July 6 reserved its orders in the bail petition filed by Bageerath. The court allowed Bageerath's plea and directed him to furnish a personal bond for a sum of Rs One lakh with two sureties for a like sum each and other conditions, including directing him to cooperate with the investigation.

"The petitioner shall appear before the concerned SHO at 11:00 am on every Monday for a period of eight weeks or till filing of chargesheet, whichever is earlier, for the purpose of investigation, and thereafter, as and when required," the court order said.

(PTI)



ABVP CELEBRATES 78 YEARS WITH MULTIPLE CAMPAIGNS

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Thursday celebrated National Students' Day and its 78th foundation day by organising seminars, blood donation camps, tree plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns and other programmes across the country.

According to a statement issued by the ABVP, the celebrations also included youth interactions, counselling sessions, essay and debate competitions, cultural programmes and intellectual discussions, it said.

"The celebrations included seminars, youth interactions, community service initiatives, blood donation camps, tree plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, counselling sessions, essay and debate competitions, cultural programmes, intellectual discussions, and floral tribute and cleanliness programmes at memorials of Swami Vivekananda," the statement said.

(PNS)

Mining banned in Himachal Pradesh till September, says Industries Minister Chauhan



FAIR REPORT
■ Shimla

A complete ban has been imposed on mining activities in Himachal Pradesh till September due to the monsoon, Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said on Thursday. He said stringent action will be taken against those violating the ban.

Talking to mediapersons here, Chauhan said the state government has completed all preparations to tackle potential disasters during the monsoon. Necessary instructions have been issued to all deputy commissioners, and adequate funds have been made available for relief and rescue operations.

In the event of a disaster, the district administrations would immediately launch relief and rescue operations to ensure that people receive assistance as quickly as possible, the minister said.

Chauhan said the State Government has adopted a strict stance against illegal mining, and continuous action is being taken across various regions, including the Himachal-Punjab border. Accountability is being fixed for the departments concerned wherever complaints of illegal mining arise.

Regarding the Bulk Drug Park project, the industries minister said construction work is progressing rapidly, with approximately 15 to 20 per cent of the work completed so far.

He informed that some tendering processes are in the final stages and will be concluded soon. About 75 per cent of work related to the power supply and approximately 95 per cent of work related to the drinking water system in the project area have been completed.

Additionally, funds have been released to the Public Works Department for road construction, and a double-lane road will be built to connect the project area, he added.

Shah unveils roadmap for smart borders

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah addressed the Land Border Districts' Superintendents of Police Conference-2026 in New Delhi, outlining a comprehensive strategic plan for enhancing India's border security infrastructure.

The conference has established a holistic approach to land border management and is poised to extend this integrated framework to coastal borders in the near future. Shah emphasised that the Modi Government is developing a robust quadrangular security network that integrates border-guarding forces, State and district administrations, Central Government stakeholders, and local communities. This development signifies a transition from isolated border outposts to a cohesive, proactive security system.

India's border security, guided by the "Smart Border" initiative, is anticipated to become one of the most advanced globally through the deployment of cutting-edge technology, real-time surveillance, and scientific planning.

Highlighting key accomplishments, the Home Minister noted that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the country has made significant progress in eradicating Naxalism and terrorism in



Jammu and Kashmir as well as in the North-East.

To combat the narcotics trade, the government aims to inflict substantial damage within the next three years and achieve complete victory. A comprehensive mechanism is being established to make India entirely infiltration-free by addressing fundamental issues rather than implementing temporary solutions. Border infrastructure has been expanded by 400 per cent through a scientific, technology-driven approach.

The Vibrant Villages Programme has transformed the narrative by prioritising the last village in the country as its first. The initiative focuses on preventing out-migration, creating local employment opportunities, and ensuring the full delivery of Government welfare schemes in remote border regions. Prime Minister Modi has launched the Demography Mission to systematically analyse demo-

graphic changes in border areas, identify abnormal growth patterns driven by infiltration, and recommend corrective measures. The Government is committed to addressing such demographic shifts with a firm and rigorous approach.

Information regarding demographic changes must be disseminated swiftly from the grassroots to the highest policy levels. In a major initiative to secure vulnerable frontiers, the Modi government is constructing fencing along the entire 1,610-kilometre India-Myanmar border at an estimated cost of over ₹31,000 crore.

The overarching objectives are to prevent proxy warfare, illegal infiltration, radicalisation, narcotics trafficking, smuggling, drone threats, cybercrime, organised crime, and demographic alterations. The vision is to transform border areas into secure, prosperous, and livable regions while maintaining zero tolerance for any threats to national security.

NMCG launches wetland projects to clean Yamuna drains

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) on Thursday said it has initiated two pilot projects based on constructed wetlands for in-situ treatment of urban drains discharging into the Yamuna as part of its efforts to mainstream nature-based solutions for river rejuvenation.

The two pilot projects — at the Shastri Park Drain and Kailash Nagar Drain — with a combined treatment capacity of approximately 10 MLD, both discharging into the Yamuna, "mark an important step towards adopting sustainable, low-energy and climate-resilient approaches for urban drain management", the Mission said in a statement.

Unlike conventional treatment systems that rely heavily on mechanical infrastructure and energy-intensive processes, these interventions are based on con-



structed wetland systems, which replicate the treatment functions of natural wetlands, it said.

The treatment systems integrate stone masonry structures for regulating water flow and enhancing hydraulic retention time, rock filters for removing suspended solids, aquatic vegetation for nutrient uptake and oxygen transfer, and phytoremediation using carefully selected plant species capable of absorbing, stabilising and degrad-

ing pollutants, including excess nutrients and certain heavy metals.

The NMCG said steady progress has already been achieved at both project sites. At the Kailash Nagar Drain, site clearance through desludging and desilting has been completed, brick lining works are currently underway and installation of rock filters will follow in the next phase.

At the Shastri Park Drain, preparatory desludging and desilting activities are in

way for installation of stone masonry structures, rock filtration systems and aquatic plant species.

"Together, these projects are expected to demonstrate the effectiveness of nature-based solutions in treating around 10 MLD of wastewater while serving as scalable and cost-effective models for urban drain management across the Ganga basin," the statement said.

The mission said river rejuvenation requires "a comprehensive approach that combines conventional wastewater treatment infrastructure with sustainable ecological interventions" and that it is increasingly integrating nature-based solutions alongside sewerage networks and sewage treatment plants, while also ensuring environmental flows to strengthen ecological restoration, improve river ecosystem health and build resilient water management systems.

Centre approves 17 road projects worth ₹611 crore for Arunachal

FAIR REPORT
■ Itanagar

The Centre has approved 17 road projects worth ₹611.17 crore to improve connectivity across Arunachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said on Thursday.

Announcing this in a social media post, Khandu termed it another major boost to the State's development journey and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari for their continued support.

"Our State's development journey has received another significant boost with the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), Government of India, approving 17 road projects worth ₹611.17 crore under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) 2026-27 for Arunachal Pradesh," the chief minister



Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu

said in a post on X. According to an official communication by the ministry, the approval follows a proposal submitted by the Arunachal Pradesh Public Works Department seeking clearance for 17 priority road projects under the CRIF scheme.

While the State Government had sought approval for projects worth ₹592.50 crore, the ministry approved works amounting to ₹611.17 crore. The sanctioned projects are spread

across several districts and include the construction and improvement of major district roads as well as important connectivity projects.

Among the major works approved are the construction of the Ningcho-Langpia road in East Kameng, Latsum Pate-Namorah road in Pakke Kessang, Hara Happa to Upper Nyorch road in Papum Pare, Gengi to Subansiri Ferry Ghat road in Lower Siang, and Mirem to Resing road in East Siang.

"This is of immense strategic significance because nearly 30 per cent of global maritime trade passes through the Strait of Malacca. If this agreement is viewed alongside India's Great Nicobar Project, it represents concrete evidence of India's expanding strategic footprint in the Indo-Pacific," he said.

Stressing the importance of the nuclear energy agreement with Australia to supply uranium to India, Sinha said it would provide further momentum to the country's efforts to expand nuclear power generation.

States Focus



Hyderabad should host 2036 Olympics, says CM Reddy

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday said that his vision is to see Hyderabad hosting the Olympics in 2036. Speaking at the launch of the logo and website of Young India Physical Education and Sports University (YIPESU) here, he said sports policy should be formulated first, followed by the establishment of training institutes, academies and other institutions.

The State Government is keen on establishing such institutions, he said. Telangana had no sports policy during the last 12 years (during the previous BRS regime), he said. Recalling that Hyderabad had hosted the Afro-Asian Games and Military World Games during 1999-2004, he said no such major events were held in Hyderabad in the last two decades. The sports infrastructure, including sports stadiums, built in Hyderabad during undivided Andhra Pradesh, was used for organising marriages and political programmes in the last several years, which is unfortunate, he said.

"I have decided to revive sports culture in Hyderabad, Telangana. In 2036, India wants to host the Olympics. We are preparing our state, our Hyderabad to host the Olympics. That's my dream," he said.

(PTI)



Himachal Govt withholding MPLADS fund: Kangana

Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut on Thursday accused the Congress-led Himachal Pradesh Government of withholding the MPLADS fund which she had allocated for the development of Kullu and Mandi districts.

She said this during her visit to Chansari village in Kullu, where she inaugurated a mobile medical van-based primary and preventive health services operated by Matrix Society for Social Services in collaboration with NHPC Limited.

Addressing the people, Ranaut said that the BJP government at the Centre is continuously providing fund for the development of Himachal Pradesh, but the Congress Government is blatantly denying this fact.

"Just as a corrupt Government was ousted from West Bengal, the Congress party will soon be wiped out in Himachal Pradesh. This will enable the BJP, both at the Centre and in the state, to approve major projects and restart public welfare services," she said.

(PTI)

Assam-Meghalaya ties cordial, says Himanta

FAIR REPORT ■ Jowai (Meghalaya)

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said his State and Meghalaya continued to maintain a friendly and cooperative approach towards resolving their decades-old boundary dispute, asserting that there was "no friction" between the two neighbouring States.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the annual Behdienkhlam festival in Jowai, Sarma said both governments remain in constant communication and are committed to resolving any issues that arise along the inter-state border through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Sarma was in Meghalaya to attend the festival, one of the most significant religious and cultural festivals of the Pnar (Jaintia) community.

Celebrated annually in Jowai town in eastern Meghalaya, the festival is observed to seek divine blessings for a bountiful harvest, good health and prosperity, while warding off diseases, calamities and evil spirits.

"I keep on meeting the CM and deputy CM. So, the channel of discussion is always open. We keep on meeting, and there is no friction. Whenever something happens, we resolve that immediately with the spirit of friendship," Sarma said.



Asked about reports of frequent friction in border areas, the Assam CM dismissed such concerns, saying the overall situation remains peaceful.

"I don't think so... everything is smooth," he added.

His remarks come days after the Meghalaya Government reconstituted its regional committees to take forward the second phase of boundary negotiations with Assam.

The committees have been tasked with holding consultations with local stakeholders and examining the remaining six disputed areas between the two States.

In the first phase of the talks, Assam and Meghalaya signed a landmark border settlement agreement in March 2022, resolving disputes in six of the 12 identified areas of difference. The second phase aims to resolve the remaining six areas of difference — Langpih, Borduar, Nongwah-Mawtamur, Deshdemoreah, Block I and Block II, and Psiar-Khanduli.

Both Sarma and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to resolving the long-pending inter-state boundary dispute through dialogue, consultation and mutual understanding.

Sangma has said the reconstituted regional committees will engage with stakeholders, assess ground realities and submit their recommendations to facilitate progress in the second phase of the border talks.

J&K CM Omar Abdullah backs value-driven tourism

FAIR REPORT

■ Srinagar

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday called for a shift from volume-driven to value-based tourism, saying there is a need to develop Jammu and Kashmir as a sustainable tourism destination and regulate the flow of visitors.

Addressing the inaugural session of the Conclave on Sustainable Tourism Planning — Designing Tourism for Tomorrow, organised by the Department of Tourism at the SKICC, Abdullah called for a paradigm shift in Jammu and Kashmir's tourism strategy.

He urged policymakers, industry stakeholders and local communities to move beyond volume-driven tourism towards a value-based and sustainable tourism model that safeguards the region's fragile



ecology while ensuring long-term economic prosperity. The CM said that tourism devoid of sustainability inevitably leads to long-term

Tripura has immense potential in manufacturing, logistics: Goyal

FAIR REPORT

■ Agartala

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said Tripura has immense potential to emerge as a manufacturing and logistics hub because of its strategic location and connectivity with Bangladesh.

Addressing the inaugural session of the two-day 'Destination Tripura: Business Conclave-2026' virtually from New Delhi, Goyal said the northeastern State has undergone significant transformation over the past decade under the Centre's Act East Policy.

"Tripura has unlimited possibilities in the manufacturing and logistics sector because of its strategic location, surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides. The State should leverage its strengths to promote exports of MSME products, and the Commerce Ministry will extend all possible support," he said.

Tripura shares an 856-km international border with Bangladesh, while Sabroom in South Tripura is located about 75 km from Bangladesh's Chittagong Port.

Goyal said the State's business environment has improved significantly with the development of highways, inland waterways, railways and air connectivity under the Centre's HIRA



THE STATE SHOULD LEVERAGE THEIR STRENGTHS TO PROMOTE EXPORTS OF MSME PRODUCTS, AND THE COMMERCE MINISTRY WILL EXTEND ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT

(Highways, Internet, Railways and Airways) model. "Tripura lacked basic infrastructure for business a decade ago, but the overall scenario has changed after implementation of the HIRA model," he said.

He said projects such as the Agartala-Akhaura rail link and the Maitri Setu connecting Sabroom with Bangladesh have enhanced Tripura's connectivity and strengthened its potential as a trade gateway to Southeast Asian countries. Goyal said Tripura's Gross

State Domestic Product (GSDP) has increased from ₹19,208 crore in 2011-12 to around ₹90,000 crore in 2024-25.

He also pointed to the State's abundant natural resources, including rubber, bamboo, agarwood and tea, as key advantages for industrial development.

Welcoming around 1200 business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors, Chief Minister Manik Saha said the State expects to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth around ₹1 lakh crore during the two-day conclave.

"Our strategic location, the Agartala-Akhaura rail link and the Maitri Setu have positioned Tripura as a gateway to Southeast Asia. We hope the investment proposals translate into projects on the ground and become part of the state's next phase of growth," he said.

Karnataka CM orders CCTV in all Muzrai temples after Ayodhya donation theft

FAIR REPORT

■ Belagavi (Karnataka)

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday directed officials to install CCTV cameras in all major temples under the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Muzrai) Department across the State.

The directive comes in the wake of allegations of embezzlement of donations received at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.



Karnataka CM DK Shivakumar

He said the CCTV cameras should operate round the clock and cover all areas within the temples, including places where money is collected and counted.

"The recent developments at the Ram Mandir are disrespectful to all of us. Out of devotion, all of you have donated bricks, money, gold and silver for the temple. But the major theft that allegedly occurred there is deeply humiliating. What has happened there in the name of religion is known to everyone," Shivakumar said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said that, as a precautionary measure, it had been decided to install CCTV cameras in Muzrai temples across the state.

Flash floods submerge 100-foot iron bridge in HP's Kinnaur

FAIR REPORT

■ Shimla/Rampur

Flash floods triggered by heavy rains submerged a 100-foot iron bridge, cutting off Lippa village from other areas in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur district on Thursday, officials said. A massive surge in the Pejar Nallah (stream) within the Lippa Panchayat obstructed the flow of the Teti Khad (drain). Consequently, the iron bridge was completely submerged and is now unsafe. Several houses located near the bridge are also at risk.

Due to rainfall since Wednesday, water levels in many of the district's rivers and streams have risen significantly above normal. The administration is monitoring the situation and urging people to avoid venturing near water bodies and to refrain from unnecessary travel. A debris fall on the Shiller-Pathia link road near Kasauli in Solan district also impacted the traffic movement. The Shimla Met Office issued a yellow alert for heavy rains at isolated places in the state till July 15.

Since Wednesday evening, moderate to heavy rains continued to lash parts of the state, with Shimla, Kangra and Jot receiving thunderstorms and lightning.

Nahan in Sirmaur district was wettest in the state recording 89.6 mm of rainfall followed by Solan (46.8 mm), Jot (45.2 mm) Malroan (41 mm), Sarahan (38.7 mm), Poanta Sahib (34.4 mm), Kalpa (29.9 mm), Bilaspur 24.8 mm, Guler (24.4 mm).

Jharkhand unveils roadmap for AI-driven governance, digital innovation

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has said that Jharkhand's identity should extend beyond its mineral wealth and emphasised the need to build a knowledge-driven economy powered by research, innovation and technology.

Inaugurating the two-day National Stakeholders Consultation in the national Capital, Soren said that the integration of the State's traditional knowledge with modern technologies would drive the development of both Jharkhand and the country. "Jharkhand should be known not only for its mines, but also for its minds," said the Jharkhand CM.

The conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, technology experts and academicians to discuss Jharkhand's long-term development strategy



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren during the National Stakeholders Consultation 2026 in New Delhi on Thursday

PT

under Vision 2050. Representatives from leading technology companies, including Microsoft and Google, shared recommendations on strengthening Jharkhand's digital ecosystem, promoting IT investments and preparing the state for future technological opportunities.

The State Government launched a transformative roadmap to accelerate the State's digital transformation and establish

Jharkhand as India's leading Public Governance-led AI State through Artificial Intelligence (AI). The roadmap outlines a comprehensive strategy to integrate AI across governance, education, healthcare, agriculture, industry and citizen services, enabling faster, transparent and data-driven decision-making while improving the quality, efficiency and accessibility of public services.

A Business-to-Government (B2G) interaction was also held to explore investment and partnership opportunities in IT, artificial intelligence, digital governance and other advanced technology sectors.

A major highlight of the consultation was the proposed Jharkhand Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2026-2031, which aims to integrate AI across governance, healthcare, agriculture, education, mining, environmental management and disaster response, while ensuring transparency, data privacy, cyber-security and the responsible use of technology.

To transform governance, the Chief Minister Data Intelligence Platform (CM-DIP), an AI-enabled decision-support system for real-time monitoring of government programmes, infrastructure projects and development.

As part of its long-term digital vision, the Government announced plans to establish

a State AI Mission, Jharkhand AI Cloud, AI Innovation Hub, AI Park, AI Innovation Zones, Centres of Excellence and an integrated startup and skilling ecosystem to promote research, innovation, entrepreneurship and industry-academia collaboration.

To support this transformation, the Government has proposed an investment of ₹1,150 crore over the next five years to build AI infrastructure, strengthen digital capabilities, support innovation and accelerate AI adoption across Government departments.

The State also showcased its proposal for a 100.97-acre IT Park in Ranchi, envisioned as a hub for Global Capability Centres (GCCs), IT companies, startups and innovation-driven enterprises.

Under Vision 2050, Jharkhand aims to attract over ₹10,000 crore in investments, establish 50+ Global Capability Centres (GCCs), nurture more than 1,000 AI startups, and generate over

one lakh AI-enabled employment opportunities, positioning the State among India's foremost destinations for AI innovation, digital transformation and technology-led industrial development.

Addressing the concluding session on Thursday Soren stated that institutions of innovation and research are welcome in Jharkhand to elevate the State's intellectual capacity. He emphasised that Jharkhand must move forward on the path of sustainable progress, aiming to develop the State into a research and innovation hub powered by new technological advancements while working holistically on long-term plans for overall development.

During the event, the Chief Minister presented a fresh vision for the comprehensive and long-term development of Jharkhand to members of the industry, tech experts, investors, tourism partners, and policymakers.

Army Chief Dhiraj Seth reviews LoC security in Rajouri, Poonch

FAIR REPORT

■ Jammu

Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth on Thursday took first-hand account of the prevailing security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch.

During his maiden visit to Jammu and Kashmir, General Dhiraj Seth visited Srinagar-based Chinar Corps headquarters on Wednesday and its formations and reviewed the prevailing security situation, operational preparedness and combat readiness along the

Line of Control and in the hinterland. On Thursday, the Chief of Army Staff visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Poonch, Rajouri & Sunderbani.

The visit, his first to the forward areas in Poonch after assuming office, comes amid heightened security measures in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

The Army chief visited the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps headquarters, where he was briefed by senior commanders on the security situation in the Jammu region and the oper-



Chief of the Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth during a visit to the forward areas along the Line of Control in Poonch, Rajouri and Sunderbani

PIONEER PHOTO

ational preparedness of formations under the corps, officials said.

General Seth later visited forward locations in the Poonch district and reviewed the security arrangements and operational preparedness, they said.

The Army chief also met senior military officials at the Poonch Brigade headquarters, where he was briefed on troop deployment, the prevailing security scenario and operational readiness.

The top officers apprised the Army chief of the overall security environment and

the preparedness of troops to effectively respond to emerging challenges.

General Seth has been on a visit to Jammu and Kashmir since Tuesday. During the visit, he called on LG Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah and reviewed the overall security situation in Kashmir.

"General Dhiraj Seth, COAS, visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Poonch, Rajouri and Sunderbani. He reviewed the prevailing security dynamics along the Line of Control and the counter-insurgency grid of the White Knight corps," the ADGPI said.

