

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Sunday, 12 July 2026

PRGI No. - RNI- RJBL/25/A1808 | Vol 1 | Issue No.- 295 Pages 04 | ₹3.00

STEALTH FRIGATE

The Indian Navy officially commissioned the sixth of the advanced P17A class of stealth frigate 'INS Mahendragiri' in Visakhapatnam on Saturday (July 11, 2026). The commissioning ceremony, held at the Eastern Naval Command headquarters, in the presence of Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, marked a significant leap in India's capacity to design, construct, and deploy state-of-the-art naval platforms independently.

15 feared dead after boat carrying Indian tourists capsizes near Vietnam's Phu Quoc Island

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

At least 15 people are feared dead after a speedboat carrying Indian tourists capsized near Phu Quoc Island in southern Vietnam on Saturday, according to local media reports. SouthAsians & Diaspora According to VN Express International, the speedboat was carrying 32 Indian tourists and four crew members from Hon May Rut to An Thoi Port when it overturned around 400 metres off Hon May Rut Ngai, throwing all those on board into the sea.

The report, citing authorities in the Phu Quoc Special Economic Zone,



said nearby tourist boats immediately launched rescue efforts before personnel from the border guard, navy, coast guard and other

emergency agencies joined the large-scale search-and-rescue operation.

Local media reported that 15 people were killed in

the accident. However, Indian authorities have not yet officially confirmed the fatalities or the identities of the victims. The Indian Em-

bassy in Hanoi described the incident as tragic and said search and rescue operations were continuing.

"In a tragic incident, a boat carrying several Indian tourists has capsized near Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam," the embassy said in a post on X.

The embassy said it has established control rooms at the Embassy in Hanoi and the Consulate General of India in Ho Chi Minh City to assist affected families and coordinate with Vietnamese authorities. Officials said further details regarding casualties and survivors are awaited as rescue teams continue operations at the site.

Woman "Hypnotised" in Broad Daylight, Robbed of Gold Jewellery on Jaipur Street

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a bizarre and unsettling case that has left the city on edge, a woman was allegedly hypnotised and robbed of her gold jewellery in broad daylight — on a busy street, in front of unsuspecting passersby. The victim, Gayatri Devi, daughter-in-law of retired Tehsildar Mewaram of Awadhपुरi, Mahesh Nagar,

had stepped out around 1:45 PM on Friday for what should have been a routine errand — picking up her children from school. Instead, she became the target of a chillingly calculated con. Two young men intercepted her on the road, feigning innocence as they asked for directions to an address. But the conversation quickly turned sinister. Police say

the duo invoked talk of divine blessings — "ashirwad" — to lull her into a trance-like state of compliance. Under their spell, Gayatri removed the gold ring from her finger and the gold nose pin from her nose, handing them over without resistance. The men then instructed her to walk 10-15 steps ahead without looking back — and vanished with the jewellery be-

fore she even realised what had happened. It was only afterward that the enormity of the theft dawned on her. A complaint was swiftly filed at Mahesh Nagar police station, prompting officers to rush to the spot and scan CCTV footage from the area. Investigators have now zeroed in on visuals of the two suspects and launched a manhunt to track them

down. The unnerving incident has reignited fears over so-called "hypnotism gangs" operating in Jaipur, preying on unsuspecting citizens — often women — through psychological manipulation rather than force. Police are urging residents to stay alert and avoid engaging with strangers who initiate unusual or overly friendly conversations on the street.

Bhajan Lal Invokes Modi Legacy, Development



FAIR REPORT
AJMER

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Saturday laid the foundation stone and inaugurated a slew of development projects worth approximately Rs 880 crore in Kekri, Ajmer district, framing the initiatives within a broader narrative of national transformation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decade-long tenure.

Addressing the gathering, Sharma said the country had witnessed a marked shift since 2014 — one defined by welfare schemes for the poor, new dimensions of development, the elimination of terrorism and Naxalism, and India's rising stature on the global stage. The remarks positioned the local infrastructure push in Kekri as part of a larger continuum of governance the Chief Minister attrib-

uted to the Modi-led Centre. The event, held at Kekri's agricultural produce market complex, saw the Chief Minister lay the foundation for the Naseerabad-Sarwar-Kekri-Deoli phase-one four-lane road, alongside the inauguration and groundwork for road strengthening and widening projects spanning dozens of villages in the constituency — including Singawal, Gopalpura, Bhinay, and Tantoti, among others. Construction of classrooms in local schools and cement-concrete roads across Kekri municipality wards were also part of the package.

Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, who also addressed the gathering, credited the "double engine government" for accelerating the state's development trajectory, pointing to the Rajasthan Refinery as emblematic

of what she called the state's positive developmental outlook in service of Modi's Viksit Bharat vision.

The Chief Minister further noted that over the past two and a half years, the state had developed nearly 49,000 kilometres of roads at a cost exceeding Rs 33,000 crore, including 18,000 kilometres of newly constructed roads, with additional stretches upgraded under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Bhagirath Choudhary, Water Resources Minister Suresh Singh Rawat, Public Health Engineering Minister Kanhaiya Lal Chaudhary, Devnarayan Board chairman Om Prakash Bhadana, and local MLAs including Shatrughan Gautam were among those present.

180-kmph Chase Ends for Rajasthan's Most Wanted: ANTF Nabs Punjab's Alleged 'Doda King' After Dramatic Riverbank Hunt

FAIR REPORT
JAIPURI

A high-speed pursuit stretching from the Mumbai Expressway to village lanes, followed by a combing operation through dense shrubs and a riverbed with the help of local residents, ended with the arrest of an alleged interstate narcotics kingpin wanted for three years. In

a major breakthrough under "Operation Madpanduki", the Rajasthan Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) arrested Baldev alias Pammu alias Gora Bazigar (46) of Patiala, Punjab, an alleged interstate poppy husk trafficker carrying a 25,000 reward announced by Kotputli-Behror Police. Officers seized 83.93 kg of poppy



husk (doda post) and the luxury SUV allegedly used for trafficking.

The operation was car-

ried out under the supervision of Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar Sharma and Additional

Director General Dinesh MN, with Inspector General Vikas Kumar leading the anti-narcotics drive.

According to police, Baldev had been absconding since 2023, when he allegedly abandoned his vehicle and escaped during a police interception in Kotputli while his driver and a consignment of narcotics were caught. Investiga-

tors claim he continued running an interstate network, allegedly making eight trips every month between Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, transporting 80-90 kg of poppy husk per trip. Police said Baldev allegedly adopted elaborate counter-surveillance tactics, using a different vehicle and a different associate on eve-

ry journey to evade detection. Investigators also claim he routinely stopped at a gurdwara near Kota before each trip.

Acting on fresh intelligence, ANTF teams tracked the suspect after he allegedly loaded narcotics in Madhya Pradesh and entered Rajasthan. When officers attempted to intercept him, the SUV alleg-

edly accelerated to nearly 180 kmph before leaving the Mumbai Expressway and speeding through rural roads toward Chechat. A police blockade forced the vehicle into village lanes at Phanda, where it crashed into a wall. Baldev and an accomplice fled on foot into dense vegetation near a river. As officers raised an alarm, villagers

FAIR NATION

FAIR REPORT 02

Single-window system for mega investments in Bengal: Suvendu

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Dankuni (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday announced that his Government would introduce a single-window clearance mechanism for investment proposals of ₹100 crore and above, asserting that land availability would not be a constraint for industries in the State.

Speaking at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of Lux Industry Ltd's new facility, touted as one of Asia's largest garments manufacturing plants, at Dankuni in Hooghly district, Adhikari said the Government was committed to creating a business-friendly environment and attracting fresh investments. "There will be a single-window clearance system for investment proposals worth ₹100 crore and above. Availability will not be an issue for industry," he said, laying the foundation stone for the ₹600-crore plant.

"Such investments will not have to obtain approvals from panchayats, municipalities, municipal corporations or zilla parishads. Instead, clearances relating to land and environment, among others, will be processed through a single-window mechanism involving the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation



(WBIDC) and the State departments concerned," he added.

Adhikari said his Government would rely on direct purchase of land, rather than acquisition, for industry needs.

"We do not want another Singur or Nandigram. If investors require land, the Government will procure it under the direct land purchase policy and hand it over," he said, noting that this framework was being used for infrastructure projects, including those for the railways, the BSF and airports.

Claiming that West Bengal was poised to regain its position as a leading investment destination, he said the state was entering a new phase of industrial growth.

"West Bengal will once again become India's top destination for investment. A business-friendly environment is created only when

law and order are maintained," he said.

Adhikari alleged that the State's debt had increased from around ₹2 lakh crore during the Left Front regime to nearly ₹8 lakh crore under the previous Trinamool Congress Government, maintaining that attracting investments was crucial to augmenting the State's own revenue.

Stating that around one crore workers from West Bengal were employed outside the State, he said the Government aimed to create large-scale employment opportunities through industrialisation.

Adhikari said his Government was working to build a "three-pillar" framework for employment generation through industry, infrastructure and skill development, expressing confidence that people would soon witness the benefits of a

"double-engine" Government through improvements in law and order, employment, education and healthcare.

Industry Minister Tapas Roy said the Government would make all efforts to bring back companies that had moved out of the State, expressing confidence that West Bengal's "industrial drought" would soon end.

"We are prepared to work tirelessly with the chief minister to bring industries back. People should not have to leave the State in search of jobs," he said.

State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya, a Rajya Sabha MP, said industrial growth should transcend linguistic identities, welcoming investment from all sections.

"Anyone who has contributed to Bengal's economy and generated employment belongs to Bengal, irrespective of the language they speak at home. We are Indians first," he said, adding that the new Government would strive to unlock the State's industrial potential.

Health Minister Sharad Mukherjee and Transport Minister Arjun Singh were also present at the function.

Meanwhile, Lux Industries Ltd announced that it will undergo a three-way demerger, under which the Lux Cozi Group will emerge as one of the independent business verticals.

FSSAI issues 9 notices to Swiggy Instamart over rotten food

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Food regulator FSSAI on Saturday said it has issued 9 notices to quick-commerce platform Swiggy Instamart following several consumer complaints, including allegations of supply of rotten and expired food products, against the platform.

In a social media post on X, the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it has "issued 9 notices to Swiggy Instamart following multiple consumer complaints alleging violations under the FSS Act 2006."

The FSSAI informed that the consumer complaints "alleged the supply of expired, spoiled, rotten, contaminated and otherwise unsafe food products through Swiggy Instamart".

The regulator has directed the platform to submit a detailed explanation and compliance report, failing which appropriate legal action will be initiated.

Meanwhile, an Instamart spokesperson said: "We are reviewing the flagged listings by FSSAI and are in touch with the authorities to resolve the same."

Elaborating on the consumer complaints, the FSSAI mentioned that 'Healthy 100% Whey Protein 1 kg' and 'Noice Homestyle Madras Mixture with Peanuts' were allegedly supplied after



their expiry dates. 'AkshayaKalpa Organic Egg' was reportedly found expired, rotten, emitting a foul odour, with signs of contamination. Similarly, 'Kakke da Paratha' was reportedly found spoiled, emitting a foul odour.

The FSSAI said that some of the complaints alleged the delivery of contaminated eggs and milk, along with damaged packaged food items through Instamart.

"An infant food formula was reportedly found in a highly deteriorated and unsafe condition, showing signs of contamination and improper storage and handling," it added. Even after the return of this same product, it was allegedly re-supplied.

FSSAI also observed incorrect, invalid or non-existent FSSAI licence numbers. Food business entities were allegedly being listed under names different from those reflected against their FSSAI Registration.

"Some complaints alleged

that no satisfactory response, grievance redressal or corrective action was taken despite the complaints being forwarded or escalated, while one complaint stated that only a refund was offered without addressing the reported food safety concerns," the FSSAI said.

The regulator said these notices raised concerns regarding seller onboarding, compliance verification, traceability, food quality monitoring, consumer grievance redressal, supervision of food business activities and the adequacy of food safety compliance systems.

Of late, the regulator has been posting on social media platforms regarding its actions taken on food business operators (FBOs) as well as e-commerce companies over misleading claims and advertisements, as well as labelling violations under the law.

The notices are based on suo motu cognisance as well as consumer complaints.

In the last 2-3 months, the

FSSAI issued notices to many energy drink makers, alcoholic beverage companies, food companies and quick-commerce platforms.

The regulator gave notices to Lotte India, Ferns N Petals and Kubera Foods for misleading claims and violation of labelling norms on their various food products.

The FSSAI sent notices to six beverage brands claiming to be 'energy drinks' for misbranding and misleading claims. These are: Red Bull Energy Drink, PepsiCo's Adrenaline Rush Energy Drink, Reliance Consumer Products' 'Campa Energy Drink- Gold Boost', Sting Energy Drink, Hell Energy and Coca-Cola-backed Monster Energy.

The regulator has also sent a notice to quick-commerce player Blinkit regarding consumer complaints about the sale of poor-quality eggs on its platform after the regulator took 'suo-moto cognisance' of consumer complaints on social media platforms. In another case, it sought an explanation from Blinkit on a complaint by a person who allegedly fell sick after consuming curd ordered from the platform.

Earlier this month, the FSSAI issued a notice to Heritage Foods Ltd for misleading claims regarding its product 'Fresh Paneer' as part of its efforts to safeguard consumer interest.

West Bengal Govt sets up committee to examine draft UCC Bill

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Kolkata

The West Bengal Government has constituted a high-level committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to examine a draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for the State.

A Government notification issued on Friday said the committee was formed in view of the "wide ramifications and voluminous nature" of the proposed legislation.

The panel will undertake a comprehensive examination of the draft Bill before any further steps are taken, it said.

The State Government said it has prepared the draft Bill with the objective of creating a comprehensive legal framework governing personal civil matters for residents of the State, irrespective of religion, faith or community.

The proposed legislation seeks to deal with issues relating to marriage, divorce, intestate succession and testamentary succession, it said.

Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd) will chair the committee, the notification stated.

Other members include former Meghalaya Governor Tathagata Roy, Resident Commissioner Dushyant Narijala, retired IAS officer Shatrughna Singh, Principal Secretary of the Home and Hill Affairs Department Sanghamitra Ghosh, academic Dr Ratna Bhattacharya, former vice-chancellor of Gour Banga University Gopalchandra Misra, advocate Osman Gani Mallick and former executive director Nirmalya Bhattacharyya.

The committee has been constituted following a decision taken at the State Cabinet meeting held on July 2.



FAIR REPORT

"It has been set up for a comprehensive examination and review of the draft Bill in view of the wide ramifications and voluminous nature of the subject," a senior State Government official said.

Another senior official said the panel would study the draft document in detail and submit its recommendations to the Government before any decision on the proposed legislation is taken.

The initiative has been

taken keeping in view Article 44 of the Constitution, which directs the State to endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for citizens, the notification stressed.

Since 2014, three States — Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Assam — have adopted UCC, 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.

Speaking to reporters in Baruipur in South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday said that the committee would soon start working and the UCC would soon be implemented in the State.

"The committee has been formed under former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai. It will soon start working, and it will soon be implemented in the State just as it has been in other states. There will be one nation and one law and not two laws," Adhikari said.

Ex-Bengal minister channelled scam cash into restaurant: ED

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Arrested ex-West Bengal minister and TMC leader Sujit Bose "infused" illicit cash obtained from an alleged municipality recruitment scam into his Chinese food restaurant and other hospitality ventures, including a bar, the Enforcement Directorate alleged in its latest chargesheet.

In a statement on Saturday, the federal agency said it filed a prosecution complaint on July 9 against Bose, a former minister for fire and emergency services; his son Samudra Bose; IAS officer and former director of local bodies Jyotishman Chattopadhyay; and some others before a special PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court in Kolkata.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Sujit Bose in May. He is currently lodged in a Kolkata prison.

In the statement, ED claimed that Bose, also a former vice-chairman of the South Dumdum Municipality, "illegally" recommended 340 candidates for various posts in the municipality, and 284 of them secured appointment during 2014-22.

"The proceeds of the crime so generated and received from undeserving candidates were initially infused into his (Sujit Bose)



Former West Bengal minister Sujit Bose

proprietorship concern, Chinese Cuisine Restaurant, by projecting it as legitimate cash sales despite its limited business operations. Huge cash deposits were made in bank accounts, even during the Covid lockdown period," the ED claimed.

A three-time sitting MLA from Bidhannagar, Bose lost the recent assembly elections to BJP candidate Sharadwat Mukherjee by a margin of more than 37,000 votes.

The ED had raided him in October 2025, along with former food and civil supplies minister Rathin Ghosh.

Bose has denied wrongdoing in these recruitments.

The ED further alleged that funds drawn from the Chinese restaurant were "utilised" to finance and expand hospitality entities — including Shree Venkatesh Banquets and Speciality Dhaba LLP (which

ran Bengal Dhaba and The Bar & Lounge) — through capital contributions and unsecured loans.

It said additional funds for the acquisition of properties were arranged through borrowings from various shell companies and individuals, which were later repaid by routing the proceeds of crime through "inflated" and "bogus" cash sales of the hospitality entities.

The agency said Bose was the beneficiary of "direct" proceeds of crime in the form of multiple flats in lieu of ensuring jobs to certain individuals.

Bose, the ED charged, not only vitiated the recruitment process of South Dumdum Municipality but also "expropriated" the authority of fair and transparent recruitment from the municipality and administered illegal appointments in lieu of pecuniary gains.

Omar accuses BJP of trying to buy NC legislators

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Jammu

In his strongest and first public outburst against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since assuming office, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday accused the saffron party of attempting to destabilise his Government by engineering a split in the National Conference through money power and false promises.

Addressing party workers during the 26th death anniversary of Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah at Hazratbal, Omar charged that one of the party's legislators from Jammu was offered Rs 20-30 crore, a ministerial berth and a promise of statehood to switch sides. He said such efforts were aimed at weakening the National Conference but asserted that the party would not succumb to political pressure.

The sharp criticism came days ahead of the National Conference's (NC) planned July 20 protest at Jantar Mantar in support of statehood restoration.

Invitations have been sent to more than 50 prominent personalities, including like-minded politicians, civil society activists, representatives of trade bodies, religious leaders, and other eminent citizens.

Feeling left out despite waiting patiently for the restoration of 'statehood', Omar also cautioned the centre that Jammu and Kashmir's patience should not be mistaken for weakness. Unsparing, Omar also questioned why the promise to restore statehood remained unfulfilled despite the completion of the delimitation process and the Assembly elections.

In his fiery speech, Omar posed a direct question: why was New Delhi prepared to consider constitutional safeguards such as Article 371 for Ladakh while denying basic political rights to the people of J&K?

Omar said the Centre was adopting different yardsticks for two different Union Territories. They are holding a dialogue with the representatives of Ladakh



while J&K continues to wait for the restoration of statehood despite repeated assurances. He said he had repeatedly raised the issue of statehood in meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, only to be told each time that restoration would happen "at the right time".

"I ask them, for God's sake, how will we know that the appropriate time has come," asked the chief minister. "What do my colleagues and I have to do to reach that appropriate time?"

He also asked if the "appropriate time" implies the BJP coming to power in Jammu and Kashmir. "Have the courage to say it publicly," said Omar Abdullah. "At least, we will not remain in this deception that you will fulfil the promise."

Referring to the party's approach towards the Centre, Omar said the National Conference had spent nearly two years seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood through dialogue rather than confrontation.

"I repeatedly said we wanted to

secure our rights through dialogue, not conflict. I consciously gave the Centre time to fulfil its promises. But today we are compelled to speak of protest because something has clearly changed," he said.

Announcing that the National Conference would hold a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on July 20, Omar said the party would peacefully intensify its demand for the restoration of statehood.

Questioning the functioning of the elected Government, Omar said if key decisions continued to be taken from Raj Bhavan, there was little purpose in holding elections.

"If everything has to be run from Raj Bhavan, if employees are to be dismissed and all major decisions taken there, then why were elections held? Why were we brought into government with our hands tied behind our backs?" he said.

He added, "Our demand is simple: restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. Our patience remains, but it should never be mistaken for surrender.



Rahul, Kharge urge aid for Vietnam boat tragedy victims

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

After a boat carrying Indian tourists capsized in Vietnam on Saturday, the Congress urged the Centre to work in coordination with Vietnamese authorities to ensure that necessary assistance is extended to the affected families.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic boat capsizing near Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam, carrying Indian tourists.

"My heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones. My thoughts are also with those who are still missing, and with their families enduring an agonising wait," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X.

"I urge the Government of

India and the Ministry of External Affairs to work closely with the Vietnamese authorities to ensure that every possible effort is made in the ongoing rescue operations and that all necessary assistance is extended to the affected families," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha added.

Congress president

Malikarjun Kharge said the tragic boat-capsize incident near Vietnam's Phu Quoc Island is deeply distressing.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and pray for strength and courage for those anxiously awaiting news of their missing family members.

BJP demands apology from Omar over bribe charge

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Jammu

J&K BJP launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over his public allegation that a BJP office-bearer allegedly offered money to lure a National Conference MLA, terming the statement "baseless, irresponsible and politically motivated".

This was stated by senior BJP leader and MLA Udhampur East, Adv RS Pathania, accompanied by BJP Media Incharge Dr Pardeep Mahotra, and Spokesperson Dr Hari Dutt Shishu, while addressing a press conference at party headquarters in Jammu.

RS Pathania said that the BJP will be constrained to initiate appropriate criminal and other legal proceedings if Omar Abdullah fails to tender an unconditional public apology and substantiate his allegation with verifiable evidence.

Pathania questioned why, if such a serious attempt to bribe a legislator had indeed taken place, neither the alleged recipient nor the Chief Minister reported the matter to the Jammu & Kashmir Police, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, or any other competent investigating agency. They demanded answers to fundamental questions: Who allegedly made the offer? Which BJP office-bearer was involved? Which NC legislator was approached?

10th Northeast International Fashion Week to be held in Guwahati on July 18 to 19

FAIR REPORT ■ GUWAHATI

The 10th edition of the Northeast International Fashion Week (NEIFW) will be held on July 18 and 19 at Regal Gardenia on Lokhra Road in Guwahati, bringing together fashion designers, models and industry professionals from across India and neighbouring countries.

Organised by Kreative People, the two-day event will be centred on the theme "Save the Earth, Style the Future," with a focus on creating awareness about global warming and environmental conservation. The event is supported by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

Over the years, NEIFW has evolved into one of the Northeast's premier fashion platforms, combining fashion with social causes. Previous editions have promoted issues



such as support for old-age homes, eye and organ donation, and environmental protection in collaboration with organisations including PETA.

The organisers said the event aims to provide a platform for aspiring designers, models and creative professionals, iding children, teenagers and

women, to showcase their talent and gain national and international exposure. It also seeks to promote the region's handloom and handicrafts while connecting local talent with domestic and international buyers.

This year's edition will feature designers from the

Northeast, other parts of India and neighbouring countries, including Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Celebrity designer Felix Bendish, known for presenting collections at London, New York and Paris Fashion Weeks, will participate alongside resort wear designer Sakshi Bindra. International designer Roney Alay Magar from Nepal will also showcase his creations.

As part of the celebrations marking its 10th season, NEIFW will honour 10 personalities for their contribution to the growth of the fashion industry in Northeast India.

The event is being led by fashion designer and choreographer Prasantt Ghosh, who has been associated with the fashion industry since 1994 and has choreographed more than 2,500 fashion and beauty events in India and abroad.

'India must boost certification, buyer networks to gain from UK FTA'



FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The India-UK free trade agreement opens market access but does not automatically translate into higher exports, and the country must strengthen standards, certification, logistics and buyer linkages to realise its full benefits, economic think tank GTRI said on Saturday.

The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will come into force from July 15.

"Without parallel work on standards, certification, logistics, regulatory approvals and buyer networks, much of the opportunity will remain on paper. The agreement opens the door; India must now convert access into exports," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

Citing example, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said while food exporters need better testing, traceability and compliance with UK sanitary and phytosanitary rules; machinery and electronics firms need certification, technology and stronger buyer links.

Similarly automobile exporters must meet rules-of-origin and technical requirements; and the garment, leather and footwear producers should move quickly to turn tariff savings into orders before competitors adjust.

Chakraborty's sudden exit raised governance questions: HDFC MD

FAIR REPORT
■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank MD and CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan on Saturday said abrupt resignation of part-time chairman Atanu Chakraborty was a challenging event and it led to questions about governance standards at the bank.

Chakraborty resigned as a part-time chairman of the country's biggest private sector lender on March 18, more than a year before his term came to an end, citing ethical concerns. This is the first time a part-time chairman of HDFC Bank has left midway, raising concerns about its functioning.

"Towards the end of the



Financial Year 2025- 26, the bank faced a challenging event with the resignation of Atanu Chakraborty, part-time chairman and independent director of the bank, on March 18, 2026," Jagdishan said in the annual report of the bank released on Saturday.

The statement mentioned in Chakraborty's resignation letter led to questions about

governance standards at the bank, he said. To reinforce the robust governance standards of the bank, he said, the board of directors of the bank took the proactive step of appointing external law firms to conduct a review regarding the statement made by Chakraborty in his resignation letter.

Since the ADRs of the Bank are listed on NYSE, the board

Over 1.7 crore ITRs filed for AY 2026-27: I-T dept

FAIR REPORT
■ NEW DELHI

Over 1.7 crore I-T returns have been filed for 2025-26 financial year so far, the Income Tax Department said on Saturday.

The last date to file ITRs 1 and 2 for income earned in 2025-26 fiscal year is July 31.

"Over 1.7 crore taxpayers have already taken the smart step and filed their ITRs for AY 2026-27," the department said on X.

Of this, more than 10 lakh returns were filed on

Friday. ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) is a simpler form that caters to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.

Sahaj can be filed by a resident individual having annual income up to ₹50 lakh and who has salary income, one house property, and agricultural income up to ₹5,000 a year.

ITR-2 is filed by individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) not having income from profits and gains in business or profession, but having income from capital gains.



Assam CM inspects zoo, housing, cultural projects in Guwahati

FAIR REPORT ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday visited the Bhupen Hazarika Samannay Tirtha at Jalukbari, where he paid tribute to the legendary music maestro and announced plans to develop the memorial into a vibrant year-round cultural destination. He also reviewed major infrastructure projects at the Assam Police Reserve campus and the Assam State Zoo and Botanical Garden.

During his visit to the Samannay Tirtha, the Chief Minister held discussions with officials of the Cultural Affairs Department and the Public Works Department on upgrading the complex. He said the memorial would be redesigned to better reflect the life and legacy of Bhupen Hazarika.

The proposed revamp will include the use of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies to provide immersive experiences, allowing visitors to interact with the artist's life and music through digital platforms. An open-air stage will also be constructed, while a government committee will be formed to manage the complex and organise cultural programmes throughout the year, in addition to events on Hazarika's birth and death anniversaries.

Later, Sarma inspected the

ongoing redevelopment of the Assam Police Reserve campus at Paltan Bazar. The project, estimated to cost around ₹600 crore, will provide residential accommodation for more than 600 police personnel, including inspectors, sub-inspectors and constables. The campus will also house a school, temple, namghar, playground, press conference hall and administrative office. A separate residential building for 42 police officers is also being constructed at Panbazar.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the modernisation works at the Assam State Zoo and Botanical Garden, a ₹360-crore project aimed at improving visitor amenities while creating more natural habitats for wildlife. He inspected the under-construction veterinary hospital, wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centre, and museum before chairing a review meeting with officials of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department and the Public Works Department in the presence of Forest Minister Jayanta Mallabharui.

Sarma directed that the veterinary hospital be developed in consultation with leading veterinary experts and asked officials to examine the feasibility of introducing an internal train service to improve visitor convenience.



FAIR REPORT

A mirror across the Himalayas

FAIR REPORT ■ NEW DELHI

There are books that merely inform, and there are books that compel readers to question long-held assumptions. Chindia: Journey to an Asian Century by Shastri Ramachandaran belongs firmly to the latter category.

It is not just a study of India-China relations but an invitation to rethink the future of Asia itself, free from the prejudices, slogans and inherited fears that have clouded public discourse for decades.

My own fascination with China began long before I set foot in the country. One of the greatest scoops of my journalistic career was for the India Press Agency (IPA), when I reported that India was on the verge of restoring diplomatic relations with China after the rupture caused by the 1962 war.

The story created quite a stir. The next day, with MPs and journalists demanding confirmation, External Affairs Minister YB Chavan announced in Parliament that KR Narayanan had been appointed India's Ambassador to China.

Yet, like millions of Indians of my generation, my understanding of China remained filtered through the lens of the 1962 conflict. We grew up on the official narrative while the Henderson Brooks-Bhagat Report remained under lock and key. Defence Minister George Fernandes famously described China as "enemy number one", reinforcing a perception that had already become deeply embedded in the Indian psyche.

When I eventually travelled to Beijing nearly two decades later, en route to Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia, I found a country that was still poor but unmistakably disciplined.

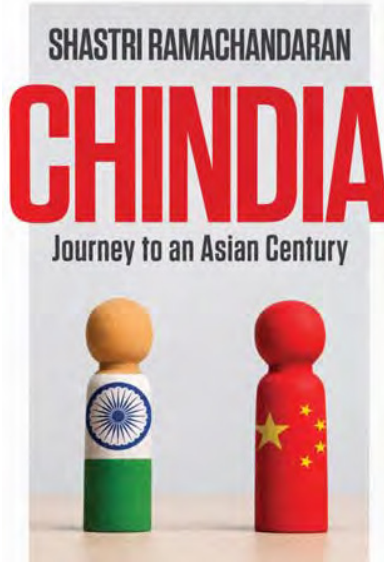
The airport was hardly superior to New Delhi's. As the aircraft taxied, I noticed an elderly man in the familiar Mao suit carefully removing weeds from the grassy verge. The sight seemed symbolic of a nation painstakingly rebuilding itself.

Driving to the diplomatic enclave where my host, a PTI correspondent, lived, another image remained etched in my memory: endless streams of cyclists moving with clockwork precision through the streets. Even my host commuted by bicycle. Consumer goods were inexpensive. I bought batteries for my camera flash at almost half the Indian price, only to discover that they took forever to recharge. Japanese batteries proved far more reliable, a reminder that China had not yet become the manufacturing powerhouse it is today.

I also remember standing in a long queue near Qianmen Gate, close to Tiananmen Square, to buy a burger from China's first McDonald's outlet, which had opened only days earlier.

That scene, ordinary as it seemed then, represented a society cautiously opening itself to the world.

Years later, after the Beijing Olympics,



my wife sent me photographs of the Bird's Nest Stadium and other landmarks. Comparing those images with my memories of the city was astonishing. China had transformed itself beyond recognition. The bicycles had given way to expressways, gleaming skyscrapers and world-class infrastructure. The nation that once struggled to produce dependable batteries had become a technological giant competing with the world's best.

It is precisely this remarkable journey that Shastri Ramachandaran explains with clarity, balance and authority.

He occupies a unique place among Indian writers on China. Having spent more than a decade as a senior journalist with Chinese publications in Beijing, he combines the curiosity of a seasoned reporter with the discipline of a serious scholar. That combination gives Chindia its distinctive flavour. It reads effortlessly without sacrificing intellectual depth.

His earlier work, Beyond Binaries: The World and China, established him as one of India's perceptive observers of contemporary China. That book appealed largely to diplomats, academics and policy specialists. Chindia, however, speaks to a much wider audience. It translates complex geopolitical developments into lucid prose that ordinary readers can readily grasp.

Writing objectively about China is no easy task for an Indian. Public opinion has long been shaped by suspicion, selective information and political rhetoric. Unlike Indians who proudly claim distant relatives in Britain or America, very few can say they have Chinese friends.

Familiarity breeds understanding, distance breeds caricature.

Ramachandaran approaches China without ideological baggage. His central argument is straightforward yet profound: the twenty-first century belongs to Asia, and India and China will largely determine its course.

The two countries have every reason to cooperate rather than confront each

other. Their destinies are intertwined economically, strategically and civilisationally.

That is easier said than done. Powerful geopolitical interests would prefer India and China to remain adversaries, constantly distracted by border disputes and strategic rivalries. Such confrontation benefits outside powers far more than it benefits either Asian giant.

The book is particularly refreshing because it refuses to indulge in comforting illusions. Ramachandaran frankly acknowledges where China has surged ahead of India. Whether in infrastructure, manufacturing or increasingly in advanced technologies, China has established a commanding lead.

Even in areas where India once claimed comparative advantage, such as information technology, China has emerged as a formidable competitor. The rapid rise of AI platforms like DeepSeek illustrates how intensely China now competes with the United States rather than with India.

He also places China's diplomacy in a broader regional context. Beijing today enjoys stronger relations with many of India's neighbours than New Delhi does. Nepal, Bangladesh and much of Southeast Asia feature prominently in his analysis. His discussion of China's regional engagement is comprehensive, authoritative and remarkably accessible despite the complexity of the issues involved.

The book also ventures beyond bilateral relations into global geopolitics. Ramachandaran analyses America's declining influence, including its chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan under President Joe Biden.

Future editions may well examine the consequences of subsequent developments in West Asia, including America's confrontation with Iran, further enriching an already comprehensive study.

Throughout the book, Ramachandaran writes with quiet confidence. His prose has a magisterial quality, yet it never becomes ponderous. Complex strategic calculations, diplomatic manoeuvres and historical developments are explained with admirable clarity, making them easily digestible even for readers with little prior knowledge of international affairs.

Ultimately, Chindia is far more than a book on India-China relations. It is a thoughtful meditation on Asia's future and on the immense possibilities that emerge when neighbours choose cooperation over confrontation.

It serves as a mirror reflecting both countries, their strengths, their weaknesses, their misunderstandings and their shared potential.

The image it offers is clear: India and China need not fear each other to prosper. They must learn to trust one another if they are to triumph together. In that sense, Shastri Ramachandaran has written not merely a book, but an indispensable guide to understanding the century that Asia is destined to shape.

Volkswagen India launches Tayron Life SUV at ₹41.99 lakh with level 2 ADAS, 4MOTION AWD

FAIR REPORT
■ Mumbai

Volkswagen India has expanded its premium SUV portfolio with the launch of the Tayron Life, a five-seater SUV priced at ₹41.99 lakh (ex-showroom). The model is the company's second locally assembled vehicle introduced in India this year and is aimed at customers seeking a spacious, technology-rich premium SUV.

The Tayron Life is powered by a 2.0-litre TSI EVO petrol engine paired with a 7-speed DSG automatic transmission and 4MOTION all-wheel-drive system. The powertrain develops 204 PS of power and 320 Nm of peak torque.

Positioned as a premium lifestyle SUV, the Tayron Life measures 4,792 mm in length and has a 2,789 mm wheelbase. It offers an 885-litre boot, which can be expanded to 2,090 litres with the rear seats folded, making it one of the more spacious offerings in its segment.

Speaking on the launch, Nitin Kohli, Brand Director, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said the Tayron Life



reflects the company's strategy of introducing global products tailored for Indian customers. He said the locally assembled SUV strengthens Volkswagen's premium SUV lineup with its combination of spaciousness, advanced technology, German engineering and driving confidence.

The SUV comes equipped with a host of premium features, including LED Plus headlights, a panoramic sunroof, heated and ventilated ergoActive front seats with massage function, a 26.03-cm digital cockpit, a 32.77-cm touchscreen infotainment system, an 8-speaker audio system, wireless smartphone connectivity and charging, and the IDA Digital Voice Assistant.

On the safety front, the Tayron Life features Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) with 14 driver assistance functions, including adaptive cruise control, autonomous emergency braking, lane keeping assist, blind spot detection, rear traffic alert and park assist. It also comes with nine airbags, electronic stability control, hill start and hill descent assist, tyre pressure monitoring system and ISOFIX child seat anchors.

The SUV offers six drive modes-Eco, Comfort, Sport, Individual, Offroad and Snow-along with an independent suspension setup featuring McPherson struts at the front and a multi-link rear suspension.

The Tayron Life is available

in seven exterior colour options: Dolphin Grey Metallic, Cipressino Green Metallic, Oyster Silver Metallic, Nightshade Blue Metallic, Ultraviolet Metallic, Oryx White Mother-of-Pearl Effect and Grenadilla Black Metallic.

With the launch of the Tayron Life, Volkswagen India further expands its premium SUV range, which now includes the Taigun, Tiguan R-Line, Tayron R-Line and the newly introduced Tayron Life.

The company said the SUV has been designed for customers looking for a combination of comfort, practicality, advanced technology and German engineering in a premium five-seater package.

