

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Wednesday, 15 July 2026

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REJUVENATED LOOK

Devotees in large numbers thronged the Srimandir in Puri for a glimpse of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra as part of 'Nabajouban Darshan' ritual, Tuesday



Trump's Hormuz U-Turn: Blockade Stays, Toll Goes, as Gulf "Investments" Take Its Place

■ FAIR REPORT
NEWS DELHI

Barely a day after threatening a 20 percent toll on all cargo transiting the Strait of Hormuz, President Donald Trump reversed course on Tuesday, saying he would scrap the fee in favour of trade and investment commitments from Gulf states, even as the naval blockade on Iranian ports remained firmly in place. (Axios) (ABC News)

In a Truth Social post, Trump declared the strait "open to ALL Ship traffic except for Iran," (Axios) blaming Tehran's leadership for what he called a path toward "TOTAL DESTRUCTION." The blockade, he said, would apply only to vessels linked to Iranian ports or cargo — a narrower target than his original toll proposal, which had rattled oil markets and drawn sharp pushback from allies and international bodies alike.

The climbdown followed swift objections from the UN's International Maritime Organization,

which maintained there was no legal basis for imposing tolls on passage through an international strait, (PBS) and from Iran's own foreign minister, who called the proposed 20 percent rate excessive.

The reversal comes against the backdrop of an escalating US-Iran conflict, with Washington reimposing the naval blockade even as it unwinds the last threads of a preliminary peace deal with Tehran. Gulf nations, meanwhile, are left navigating a rapidly shifting American position — one day facing a toll, the next being courted for investment. Whether "highly productive conversations with Middle East leadership" produce durable commitments, or simply buy time in a volatile standoff, remains to be seen. What's certain is that in this administration's approach to the Gulf, policy is being written and rewritten in real time — one Truth Social post at a time.

Zero Tolerance, Zero Excuses: CM Sharma Puts Officers ON NOTICE OVER CRIME

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma convened a high-level law and order meeting on Monday, sending a pointed message to Rajasthan's police and administrative machinery: crime control is no longer a shared burden—it is an individual one.

Directing officials to enforce a "zero tolerance" policy against crime, Sharma called for swift and stringent action against offenders. But the more consequential directive was aimed inward, not outward. The Chief Minister instructed that accountability for crimes be fixed on the specific officer concerned—a shift from institutional responsibility to individual liability that could reshape how police performance is evaluated across the state.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Po-



lice, and senior officials from every range and district, underscoring the administrative weight behind the directive.

Zero-tolerance pledges are a familiar refrain in Indian governance, often long on rhetoric and short on follow-through. What will distinguish this one is whether "fixing responsibility" translates into actual transfers, suspensions, or disciplinary action when crime figures don't move—or whether it remains, as such directives often do, a line in a press release rather than a lived reality for officers on the ground.

Rajasthan's Camp Diplomacy: 7,701 Urban Camps Later, the Numbers Impress—But the Real Test Lies Ahead

Jaipur: In what has become one of Rajasthan's largest citizen outreach exercises, the Bhajan Lal Sharma government has concluded a month-long urban governance campaign that sought to take public services directly to people's doorsteps. Between June 12 and July 13, the state organised 7,701 urban service camps, processing 38,494 property pattas, 12,163 name transfers, and 6,811 building plan approvals, significantly reducing the need for repeated visits to government offices. According to official figures released by the Chief Minister's Office, the camps also issued 91,599 birth, death and marriage certificates, along with 5,644 Economically Weaker Section (EWS) certificates. Civic infrastructure remained a major focus, with authorities clearing 25,448 garbage-prone locations, approving 2,517 new sewer connections, installing nearly 20,000 streetlights, and repairing more than 62,000 existing lights. The campaign extended beyond civic administration into welfare delivery. Officials sanctioned 38,381 new electricity connections, verified 11,132 beneficiaries under the Palanhaar Scheme, and received 17,354 applications under the PM SVANidhi programme aimed at supporting street vendors through affordable credit.

Contempt? What Contempt? Supreme Court Says Samay Raina Took It for a Ride

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday came down heavily on comedian Samay Raina, observing that he had "taken the court for a ride" and had brazenly violated its orders, signalling growing judicial impatience with what it viewed as deliberate non-compliance.

A Bench of the apex court expressed strong displeasure over Raina's failure to adhere to its earlier directions, remarking that the conduct displayed reflected a disregard for the authority of the country's highest constitutional court. The judges noted that court orders are not optional advisories but binding directions that demand strict compliance.

In a sharp rebuke, the Supreme Court imposed a fine of 3 lakh each on Raina and the other respondents for failing to comply with its previous order. However, while cracking the whip, the Bench provided a final opportunity by granting them two weeks to file compliance affidavits, making it clear that the matter would not



be allowed to drift further.

The observations mark one of the sternest judicial censures faced by the popular stand-up comedian, whose legal troubles have increasingly shifted from public controversy to courtroom scrutiny. The order also serves as a broader reminder that litigants cannot test the limits of judicial patience by delaying or sidestepping compliance. The Supreme Court's remarks suggest that repeated defiance of its directions will invite not only financial penalties but also closer judicial examination. With the clock now ticking on the two-week deadline, attention will shift to whether Raina and the other respondents finally comply—or risk inviting even more stringent consequences from a Bench that has already made its displeasure unmistakably clear.

From Model Schools to System Reform: Rajasthan Bets on PM SHRI to Rewrite the Future of Public Education

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

Signalling a shift from infrastructure-led reforms to outcome-driven education, the Rajasthan government on Tuesday intensified its focus on strengthening school education through the PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India) initiative. In a state-level webinar, senior officials interacted with the principals of 14 top-performing PM SHRI schools, reviewing best practices, leadership models and strategies that could be repli-

cated across the state's education system. The exercise, conducted under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, reflected the government's attempt to position Rajasthan's government schools as centres of academic excellence rather than merely institutions of access. The discussions centred on improving learning outcomes, integrating technology into classrooms, promoting innovation in pedagogy and building leadership capacity among school heads.

Twenty-Four Years, One Sortie, and a Silence That Still Echoes: Remembering Flying Officer Abhimanyu Singh Chauhan

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Some sacrifices arrive without warning, in the space of a single training sortie meant to sharpen readiness, not claim a life. Flying Officer Abhimanyu Singh Chauhan's did.

Born on 14 July 1978 in Bhankrota, Jaipur district, Chauhan cleared the NDA in 1997 and was commissioned into the Indian Air Force on 16 June 2001, part of the 167th Pilots' Course. Posted to the storied No. 8 Squadron at Air Force Station Bagdogra, he flew the MiG-21 — an aircraft whose accident record has long made it a subject of parliamentary scrutiny and public unease, even as it remained, for decades, the IAF's operational backbone along



sensitive frontiers.

On 14 November 2002, Chauhan and his Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Naresh Dogra, took off on a low-level combat training sor-

tie near the Indo-China border. Roughly twenty minutes into the flight, the MiG-21 UM trainer struck a high-tension wire and crashed into a tea estate in Darjeeling district.

Neither officer survived. Chauhan was 24.

He was cremated in Jaipur with full military honours. The Vishisht Seva Medal followed, posthumously — official rec-

ognition that arrives, as it so often does, after the loss it commemorates.

More than two decades on, a Jaipur road bears his name, and his alma mater's alumni still gather

for a memorial football match each year.

His story is not exceptional in India's military ledger — and that, perhaps, is the point.



FAIR NATION

FAIR REPORT 02

MEA clarifies stand on passport as row over SIR grows

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday clarified that an Indian passport is a travel document issued to regulate the departure of Indian citizens from the country and is not meant to serve as proof of citizenship, amid a growing political debate over its use in electoral roll revisions.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal emphasised that passports are granted only after thorough verification as per established procedures under the Passports Act, 1967 and the Passports Rules, 1980. He also

noted that less than eight per cent of Indian citizens currently hold a passport.

The clarification comes in response to questions regarding remarks made by senior MEA officials during Passport Seva Divas on June 24. Officials had described the passport as a travel document for visiting foreign countries and explicitly stated it is not a document to prove citizenship.

The comments were made in the context of the Election Commission's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in several states, where questions arose about whether



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

passports could be accepted as proof of citizenship.

The remarks triggered sharp criticism from opposition parties, particularly the Congress, which accused the Government of attempting to create grounds to arbitrarily deny citizenship rights to certain individuals.

Addressing the controversy directly, Jaiswal stated: "An Indian passport is a document that, as per the Passports Act, 1967, is issued by the Government of India to regulate the departure from India of citizens of India."

"It is issued after due verification laid out by an estab-

lished process. The issue of passports to Indian citizens or any other individual is governed by The Passports Act, 1967 and Passports Rules, 1980," he added.

The MEA has maintained that while the passport confirms the holder's identity and nationality for international travel, it does not function as primary evidence of citizenship in domestic legal or administrative processes such as voter list revisions.

The fresh clarification aims to put an end to the political controversy and underscore the limited scope and purpose of the passport document.

Nation Focus



VP URGES SENIOR LAWYERS TO PROVIDE FREE AID TO POOR

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Tuesday urged senior lawyers to routinely provide free legal assistance to the poorest of citizens to ensure justice is truly accessible.

He also emphasised that the Constitution is an evolving document that balances continuity and change. Addressing the launch of a book titled 'The Voice of Justice: Justice Gopal Speaks' – a collection of speeches, lectures and judicial reflections of former Chief Justice of India BR Gopal – Radhakrishnan said while the Constitution remains the bedrock of national unity and democratic stability, Parliament's amending powers ensure it stays relevant. (PTI)



VCS MAY LAND IN JAIL OVER PAST GRAFT: BENGAL MINISTER

The BJP Government in West Bengal on Tuesday sharpened its attack on the previous TMC dispensation over alleged corruption in the higher education sector, with Higher Education Minister Jagannath Chattopadhyay hinting that the arrest of one or more university vice chancellors over irregularities under the former regime would not be surprising. Chattopadhyay said the State's immediate priority was to create a "corruption-free and politics-free" education system after what he described as decades of political interference, culminating in widespread irregularities during the TMC's 15-year rule. "You have already seen a former education minister go to jail. You have not yet seen university vice-chancellors in jail. (PTI)

India supports UN membership for Palestine: MEA



FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

India has backed Palestine's bid for United Nations membership and reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution to the festering conflict between the Palestinian people and Israel.

New Delhi's position on Palestine was appraised by Sri Priya Ranganathan, a secretary at the external affairs ministry, during a ministerial meeting of the Palestine Donor Group, held in Brussels on Monday. India has been backing a vision of a "two-state" solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognised borders,

consistent with international law. At the Palestine Donor Group meeting, Ranganathan emphasised that India has been a long standing partner of the Palestinian, and reaffirmed India's continued support to a two-state solution as well as to Palestine's membership of the UN, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

She underlined India's ongoing developmental assistance, including capacity building programmes and humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine, noting that India's projects are demand-driven and largely centred on healthcare, education, capacity building, and vocational training, it said.

ED arrests Ebix Chairman Vikas Garg in ₹6,000 crore Mahadev betting probe

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Vikas Garg (53), chairman of the Ebix Group, on Tuesday in connection with a money-laundering case tied to the Mahadev online betting syndicate. Officials said Garg was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after ED teams searched his Delhi home. He was brought before a special court in the capital, which gave the agency 24 hours to take him to Raipur, Chhattisgarh, where the main investigation is underway.

This is the 14th arrest in the case. Last week, the ED temporarily seized assets worth ₹940.77 crore belonging to Garg, his family, and related entities. This action is part of the investigation into illegal online betting by Mahadev Online Book and Skyxexchange.

The agency says that



money from the betting syndicate was moved through companies owned and controlled by Garg, using a complex hawala network for cash transfers. The funds were allegedly laundered through platforms and websites like Tiger Exchange and Gold365, as well as through shell companies and multiple transactions.

The Mahadev betting app case involves suspected illegal earnings of ₹6,000 crore and has been connected to several top politicians and officials from Chhattisgarh. The ED describes the Mahadev app as

a major international betting syndicate that enabled illegal betting via online platforms and websites such as Tiger Exchange, Gold365, and Laser247.

The operation used a franchise network of 'panels' and 'branches' run by associates across India. According to the ED, the main promoters, Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal, managed the betting syndicate from Dubai. So far, five charge sheets have been filed in a special PMLA court in Raipur, naming 74 accused entities.

The agency has also asked the court to declare

Chandrakar, Uppal, and others, including Anil Agrawal (also known as Atul) and Shubham Soni, as fugitive economic offenders under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018. Garg's arrest, as a well-known business leader, is a major step in the investigation. It shows how the syndicate is accused of using complex methods to make betting money look legitimate. Investigators are expected to question Garg in Raipur about the movement of funds and his suspected role in the laundering.

The case continues to reveal links between illegal online betting operations run from outside India and local networks that move and hide the money. With Chandrakar recently detained in Oman and extradition in progress, the ED is focused on breaking up the syndicate's finances and recovering the illegal earnings. More arrests and asset seizures are expected as the investigation goes on.

TMC split: Mamata and rebel camps clash over rally venue

FAIR REPORT ■ Kolkata

Amid the ongoing dogfight within the Trinamool Congress — between the faction led by former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and present Opposition Leader Ritabrata Banerjee — for the party's bank deposits, symbol and office a new dispute has erupted over the venue of Trinamool Congress Martyrs' Day rally that has been organised for the past 15 years in front of the CESC House at the Esplanade Crossing one of the busiest junctions in the country.

Interestingly, the Mamata Banerjee faction is not interested in holding the July 21 Trinamool Congress Martyrs' Day rally at the Brigade Parade Ground as has been offered by the Kolkata Police, sources in her faction said.

Following a writ petition, a single-judge bench of Justice Sougata Bhattacharya of the Calcutta High Court had earlier admitted a petition from the Mamata Banerjee faction challenging the two-month prohibitory order around CESC House near the busy Esplanade Crossing. The petition would be heard on July 15.



Former Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

While the breakaway faction led by MLA Ritabrata Banerjee, which too had been asking permission for the CESC House venue, has reportedly been given to hold its version of the Martyrs' Day rally in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in near Jawahar Lal Nehru Road little less than 800 metres from CESC House, the Mamata faction is still insisting on CESC House or as an alternative the Dorrina Crossing.

A senior police officer, referring to the dispute, said that it would be impossible to grant the Mamata faction a place at Dorrina Crossing as

the venue would be "precariously close to the one given to the other group," leaving a good chance of clashes.

"The Police are giving us Brigade Parade Ground which besides being too large for getting it filled within a span of two weeks is also muddy during the monsoons... they are doing it intentionally to disturb us... but we will go ahead with programme even if that means holding a rally from a pick up van," said TMC MP Dola Sen hoping "the High Court will appreciate our problem and issue appropriate directions."

US national nabbed at Nepal border with Chinese passport

FAIR REPORT ■ Lucknow/Maharajanji

A 36-year-old American who said his name was Jordan Brown from California was arrested on July 11 while trying to cross into Nepal on an unauthorised footpath near the Sonauli border in Maharajanji district, Uttar Pradesh. Security forces found a Chinese passport and other items on him, prompting a multi-agency investigation. Brown said he served in the US Navy and Special Forces, but officials have not confirmed this.

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) officers stopped Brown during a routine patrol in the Mainihwa area, near border pillar 516 under Sonauli police station. This part of the India-Nepal border is busy and connects Maharajanji in Uttar Pradesh with Bhairahawa in Nepal. Police said Brown was stopped for verification as he approached the border. He reportedly tried to run into Nepal, pushing past SSB officers and local people, but villagers helped catch him. He did not have a valid passport, visa, or any identity documents at the time.

Maharajanji Superintendent of Police Shakti Mohan Awasthi said,



"He was not carrying documents that could confirm his identity. He identified himself as Jordan Brown, a resident of California, United States. We have informed the US Embassy about him." Police registered a case at Sonauli police station under Sections 21 and 23 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act. Brown was brought

before a local court and sent to judicial custody.

During questioning, Brown said he served in the US Navy and the Special Forces for about 6 years and left 2 years ago. He also said he studied at the University of California, that both his parents have died, and that he has travelled to nearly 70 countries. Brown said he met an Indian yoga

instructor from Uttarakhand in Italy about three years ago and married her in October 2024. He told police he planned to go to Nepal to meet a Nepalese person named Naz, whom he met in Goa. He also said someone he knows in Bengaluru has his passport.

Brown gave conflicting accounts about when he arrived in India and his movements near the border. He said he went to Thailand on a tourist visa last year and lost his documents there. He claimed he travelled by sea to Sri Lanka and entered India illegally around November 2, 2025. He also said he came to Goa from the United States about two months ago, after visiting Bali, Indonesia, in May.

He said he stayed in Goa for six weeks, then went to Bengaluru. From there, he took a bus to Lucknow on July 8, went to Gorakhpur, and then took a taxi to Sonauli. He told police he spent time in Goa, then went to Noida, and later reached Maharajanji to cross the river.

UP Police officials noticed inconsistencies and unclear details in his contacts and plans, which raised concerns during questioning. These discrepancies in dates (espe-

cially the 2025 vs 2026 arrival claims) and routes are why multiple central agencies are conducting detailed verification of his identity, travel history, and movements of approximately 8 months (from early November 2025 to July 11, 2026). He had no valid Indian visa or passport during this entire period, according to authorities.

Items found with him, including a Chinese passport, are being checked by forensic and intelligence teams. However, the officials say they have not found any evidence of espionage or anti-national activities so far, but the investigation is ongoing. Central intelligence and security agencies have questioned Brown. Authorities are checking his identity, claimed military background, travel history, movements in India, and possible local contacts.

Police are also checking if anyone in India helped him reach the border. UP Police have informed the US Embassy, as is standard for foreign nationals. The investigation is ongoing. Officials say there is no immediate security threat, but they are being extra cautious because of the border location and Brown's unverified claims of military service.

Ladki Bahin Scheme: Congress accuses Maharashtra Govt of cheating women

FAIR REPORT ■ Mumbai

The Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP-led Mahayuti Government in Maharashtra of cheating women by removing nearly 38 per cent of beneficiaries of the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana after the 2024 assembly elections.

Speaking at a press conference in Delhi, Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe Patil alleged that the State Government excluded around 62 lakh women citing non-completion of e-KYC and another 1.8 lakh women on the ground that they were above 65.

Why the Government had collected their Aadhaar details at the time of application if they were later found to be ineligible on age grounds, he sought to know.

Making e-KYC mandatory unfairly affected poor women, many of whom did not own smartphones, while the captcha-based verification process was too complicated for illiterate beneficiaries, the Congress leader said.

He also claimed the Government was going to remove more beneficiaries and nearly 38 per cent of women enrolled under the scheme had been excluded.

The Congress leader alleged that the scheme was introduced in haste ahead of the 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections for electoral gains, and the promised increase in the monthly assistance from ₹1,500 to ₹2,100 was not implemented after the polls.

Citing a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Londhe alleged that the Government spent



Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe Patil

₹33,237 crore against the approved allocation of ₹29,732 crore and failed to explain the additional expenditure of about ₹3,500 crore.

He demanded that the State Government complete the e-KYC process for all eligible women through the administration, restore ben-

efits to those excluded on that ground, and release their pending instalments.

The Congress also sought an independent inquiry into the implementation of the scheme, alleging irregularities, inclusion of ineligible beneficiaries, inclusion of men and Government

employees, and misuse of public funds. Meanwhile, in Mumbai, Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Nirupam rejected allegations of irregularities in the scheme.

He said the beneficiaries who were found ineligible after the e-KYC verification process had received the monthly assistance of ₹1,500 for the past ten months, and their eligibility was reviewed strictly as per the scheme's rules.

Nirupam said around 29,000 men had wrongly received benefits under the scheme, but Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has assured the State Assembly that the amount paid to them would be recovered.

The Shiv Sena leader demanded that the Government extend the deadline for completion of the e-KYC process.

NC leader Mustafa Kamal dies at 83

FAIR REPORT ■ Srinagar

Veteran National Conference leader and former Jammu and Kashmir minister Sheikh Mustafa Kamal died at a private hospital in Srinagar on Tuesday following a prolonged illness, his family said. He was 83.

Kamal, the younger brother of National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah and uncle of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, was the additional general secretary of the party.

He was laid to rest at a graveyard in the Sonwar area of the city. Apart from the Abdullahs, ministers, NC's MPs and MLAs, and a host of other leaders joined the funeral prayers for the departed soul.

Before joining politics,



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, National Conference President Farooq Abdullah and others offer funeral prayers for senior National Conference leader and former Jammu and Kashmir minister Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, in Srinagar on Tuesday (PTI)

Kamal earned his MBBS degree from the Sawai Mansingh Medical College in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in 1962.

He later built a distinguished legislative career and became a member of the Jammu and Kashmir

Legislative Council from 1983 to 1987. Kamal represented the Gulmarg constituency in Baramulla district as an MLA from 1987 until 2002. Throughout his political career, he held various high-profile Cabinet portfolios.

States Focus



95% OF JHARKHAND VOTERS COVERED UNDER SIR: OFFICIAL

Booth-level officers (BLOs) have reached nearly 95 per cent of Jharkhand's 2.64 crore electors under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, an official said on Tuesday. The enumeration exercise began on June 30 and will continue till July 29, during which BLOs are conducting door-to-door visits to distribute, collect and verify enumeration forms.

"BLOs have successfully reached out to 94.96 per cent of the total electorate, covering 2,51,28,733 voters, and made enumeration forms available to eligible Indian citizens through house-to-house visits," an official in the Chief Electoral Officer's office said.

He said more than 41.27 per cent of the enumeration forms have been digitised so far.



KERALA CELEBRATES ASTRONAUT ANIL MENON'S JOURNEY TO ISS

People of the State celebrated and felt proud as Kerala-origin NASA astronaut Anil Menon flew to ISS on Tuesday.

He is the great-grandson of former Indian National Congress chief Sir C Sankaran Nair. Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar congratulated Menon, whose roots lie in the Ottapalam area of Palakkad district.

In a Facebook post, Arlekar said that he was fortunate to have visited Menon's ancestral home last year to pay tributes to Sir Nair.

"Hearty congratulations and best wishes to Anil Menon, the pride of Kerala, in his historic space odyssey. I have had the fortune of visiting his ancestral home, Chettur House at Ottapalam, a year back, to pay tributes to Anil Menon's great-grandfather, late Sir C Sankaran Nair," he said.

Menon took off for the International Space Station (ISS) on board the Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft as part of Expedition 74. Chief Minister VD Satheesan on Saturday had congratulated Menon on his achievement and termed his journey to the ISS as a "truly historic milestone" for the State.

Union Govt appoints 5 new digital forensic examiners

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

India's digital forensic system has received a major boost, with the Centre appointing five new Examiners of Electronic Evidence under Section 79A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. Announced on Tuesday, this step will help the country handle the increasing volume of electronic evidence from cybercrimes, cross-border offences, and other digital violations.

Officials said these agencies can now give expert opinions on electronic evidence in court. This should make digital evidence more reliable and accepted in legal cases. One of the new designees is the Special Instruments Wing (SIW) of the Border Security Force (BSF), which will focus on Drone Forensics, an area that is becoming more important.

Security agencies are dealing with the misuse of drones for smuggling, illegal surveillance, and other crimes. The SIW's advanced technology capabilities help it recover and analyse drone data, strengthening India's response to new aerial threats. The other four agencies will focus on digital forensics, with DFSL Mumbai, NFSU Goa, and CFSL Kolkata handling Computer (Media) Forensics and Mobile Device Forensics.

These three laboratories will handle Computer (Media) Forensics and Mobile Device Forensics. Their mandate includes these three labs, which will work on Computer (Media) Forensics and Mobile Device Forensics. They will examine data from computers, hard drives, removable media, smartphones, and other devices. The Cyber Forensic Division in Jaipur will focus on Computer (Media) Forensics for the national



network, but not on floppy disks or mobile devices.

This expansion, according to experts, supports the Central Government's goal of creating a larger, more accessible network of digital forensic labs. Investigators increasingly rely on electronic records from devices such as phones, computers, external drives, CCTV, cloud services, and drones. Quickly and accurately analysing this evidence is crucial for building strong prosecution cases.

The benefits of this approach are clear. Many modern crimes, such as cyber fraud, financial scams, terrorism, and organised crime, depend on digital evidence. Fast, reliable forensic reports can decide the outcome of a case. By reducing delays and training a skilled workforce, the scheme speeds up everything from evidence collection to presentation in court, making it easier to

handle these cases.

This push gains added urgency with the implementation of the new criminal laws. They emphasise scientific investigation and aim to deliver justice, from the registration of an FIR to the final decision by the Supreme Court, within three years.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah often stresses the importance of scientific evidence in ensuring justice is both quick and fair, as well as in raising conviction rates. This focus has become even more important with the introduction of new criminal laws. The new laws emphasise scientific investigation and aim to resolve cases, from the initial FIR to the Supreme Court's final decision, within three years.

They focus on establishing new campuses of the National Forensic Sciences University, setting up additional Central Forensic Science Laboratories, upgrading existing infrastructure, addressing the acute shortage of trained forensic professionals, and reducing case pendency in forensic science laboratories nationwide.

By naming these five new Examiners of Electronic Evidence, the Centre is making digital forensic work more widespread and stronger. This also means that experts, especially in new fields like drone forensics, are available to law enforcement across India. The move should speed up digital evidence checks, cut investigation and trial delays, and help build a stronger, more modern justice system.

As cyber threats and tech-related crimes keep changing, these steps in forensic infrastructure are important for national security and timely justice. Naming these labs and agencies is another step in modernising India's forensic system to meet the needs of the digital era.

MP Govt gets final UCC report; panel excludes STs

FAIR REPORT
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday urged the Congress to clearly spell out its stand on the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC), saying the high-level committee constituted by the Madhya Pradesh Government has submitted its final report and the time has come for political parties to State their position on the issue.

Speaking to media persons at the State Assembly after paying tributes to former Chief Minister Kailash Joshi on his birth anniversary, Yadav alleged that the Congress views issues such as the Uniform Civil Code and the Bhojshala dispute only through the prism of Hindu-Muslim politics and vote-bank considerations. He said people from different religious communities had expressed their views before the committee, but the Congress had so far not officially clarified its stand.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav

The Chief Minister said the committee submitted its final report to the State Government on July 13 within the stipulated timeframe and thanked its chairperson and members for completing the exercise. Committee members Gopal Sharma, Budhpal Singh, Shobha Paithankar and Member Secretary Ajay Katesaria were present when the report was handed over.

According to Yadav, the report has been prepared in three volumes. The first con-

tains the committee's recommendations based on an analysis of international, national and State laws, as well as existing legal traditions and practices. It comprises 10 chapters outlining the committee's key recommendations.

The second volume contains the draft legislation prepared after examining the laws and regulations currently applicable in Madhya Pradesh. The proposed Bill consists of four parts, 404 sections and seven schedules.

The third volume details the public consultation process undertaken by the committee. Suggestions were invited through district-level consultations, State-level interactions and an online portal. More than 9.58 lakh suggestions were received, and the report includes an analysis of responses based on questions, gender and community categories.

The committee has also recommended that Scheduled Tribes be kept outside the ambit of the proposed Uniform Civil Code. The State Government will now examine the report before deciding on the next course of action.

Yadav said representatives of the Muslim, Hindu and Christian communities had participated in the consultation process and expressed their views, but alleged that the Congress, despite being a major political party, had not formally conveyed its position on the proposed legislation.

Satluj movie controversy must end now: Punjab BJP chief

FAIR REPORT
■ Chandigarh

Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillon on Tuesday said the 'Satluj' movie controversy must end now, asserting that reopening these wounds serves no one, the State has bled enough, and healing takes time.

"The Satluj controversy must end now. Reopening these wounds serves no one — Punjab has bled enough and healing takes time," Dhillon said in a post on X. In his post, he further said, "The killings of PUNJABIS, irrespective of religion, must never be forgotten. Let us honour the memory of our people, not exploit it for noise."

"I specially appeal to the media to report with responsibility and restraint on this matter — Punjab's peace comes first," he said.

Dhillon's statements come after many political parties,



Kewal Singh Dhillon

including Shiroma Ali Dal (SAD) and Sikh bodies in Punjab, have slammed the takedown of Diljit Dosanjh's film "Satluj" from an OTT platform, saying the movie compels India to confront one of the State's "darkest chapters" and history must be confronted with honesty, not buried through censorship. SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal had on Wednesday said his party will screen the film "Satluj" in every village and corner of Punjab.

Datia bypoll: Congress leader Nayak meets BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari

FAIR REPORT
■ Bhopal

The Datia Assembly by-election has been jolted by a potentially game-changing development, with disgruntled Congress leader Avdhesh Nayak — who was conspicuously absent from his own party candidate's nomination filing — holding a meeting with BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari, fuelling intense speculation that the former Congress ticket claimant may be on the verge of switching allegiance ahead of the July 30 vote.

The meeting between Nayak and Tiwari, which has been confirmed through multiple political sources, has sent tremors through both party camps in the constituency. Photographs and accounts of the encounter between the two leaders have been circulating widely on social media, with political observers interpreting the rendezvous as a signal that Nayak's disenchantment with the Congress has crossed the point of reconciliation.

Nayak's resentment has been simmering since the party's ticket distribution. He had staked a strong claim to



BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari

the Congress nomination for the Datia by-election, arguing that his sacrifice in 2023 — when the party had initially declared him as its candidate before replacing him with Rajendra Bharti following factional pressure — entitled him to the ticket this time. However, the Congress leadership once again overlooked his candidature, a decision that appears to have pushed him to the breaking point.

Following the ticket announcement, State Congress president Jitu Patwari had described the selection as a "social decision." However, this characterisation reportedly deepened Nayak's sense of grievance. Adding insult to injury, his name was omitted from the

party's list of star campaigners for the Datia by-election — a pointed exclusion that has been widely interpreted as a deliberate marginalisation of a leader who had expected to be the party's face in the constituency.

Nayak's absence from the Congress candidate's nomination proceedings was the most visible manifestation of the rift. In a constituency where every public gesture carries electoral weight, his decision to stay away from what should have been a show of party unity has been read as an unambiguous declaration of dissent.

The development has injected a volatile new variable into the Datia contest. Nayak commands significant

influence among OBC voters, particularly within the Nayak-Kachhi community, and any formal or informal alignment with the BJP could substantially redraw the constituency's caste arithmetic — which was already finely balanced, with Congress having won the seat by a margin of just 7,742 votes in 2023.

The BJP, for its part, appears to be actively cultivating the disaffected Congress leader. The meeting with candidate Tiwari is being viewed not as a casual social encounter but as a calculated political outreach aimed at either securing Nayak's formal defection or, at the very minimum, ensuring his passive non-cooperation with the Congress campaign — either outcome serving the BJP's electoral interests.

Congress leaders in the district have attempted to downplay the significance of the meeting, maintaining that Nayak remains a party member and that internal differences will be resolved through dialogue. However, senior functionaries privately concede that the damage may already be irreparable, with Nayak's public signals leaving little room for ambiguity about his intentions.

Rebel TMC MPs meet Speaker over NCPI seating in Lok Sabha

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Lok Sabha MPs Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, who have left the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and joined the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI), have met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and discussed seating arrangements for the party's 20 MPs in the Lower House of Parliament, sources said on Tuesday.

During their meeting with the speaker on Monday, the NCPI leaders also discussed the allotment of a party office in the new Parliament building, the sources said.

The MPs who have switched to the NCPI have informed Birla that they have designated Bandyopadhyay as their floor leader, Satabdi Roy as the deputy leader and Ghosh Dastidar as the chief whip.

The meeting comes ahead of the Monsoon session of Parliament and amid the process of according parliamentary recognition to the NCPI as a constituent in the ruling



Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar

Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Bandyopadhyay also met Home Minister Amit Shah recently, a source said.

The sources said the NCPI is expected to submit a formal communication to the speaker's office for according parliamentary recognition to it. The leaders are also likely to join an all-party meeting on July 19.

The meeting with the speaker assumes significance as petitions have been filed by the TMC, seeking the disqualification of the 20 MPs who have left the party and joined the NCPI.

TMC leader in the Lok

Sabha, Abhishek Banerjee, has met Birla and submitted 20 separate petitions, seeking the disqualification of the rebel MPs under the 10th Schedule of the Constitution.

He has argued that the MPs have voluntarily given up their membership of the TMC by joining another party and are, therefore, liable to be disqualified.

He has also urged the speaker not to accord any recognition, status or facility to any group claiming to be a separate faction of the TMC.

The sources said the issue of the disqualification petitions did not come up during Monday's meeting of the MPs with the speaker.

YMA flags discrepancies in Mizoram draft electoral rolls

FAIR REPORT
■ Aizawl

The influential Young Mizo Association (YMA) on Tuesday alleged discrepancies in the State's draft electoral rolls prepared under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and sought a thorough review to ensure that only genuine citizens are included in the voters' list.

The demand came days after Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Garima Gupta, who had ruled out any abnormal surge in the number of voters in the draft rolls, was transferred to Delhi.

Addressing a press conference, leaders of the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) said they had examined the draft electoral rolls published on July 4 and found what they described as "improbable" discrepancies in the digitisation of Enumeration Forms (EFs).



Bihar takes centre stage as an emerging textile hub at Bharat Tex 2026

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi/Patna

Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh on Tuesday inaugurated the Bharat Tex 2026, India's largest global textile event, at Bharat Mandapam, Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita, Secretary (Textiles) Neelam Shami Rao, Industries Secretary Kundan Kumar and other senior officials were present on the occasion marking the beginning of four days of innovation, collaboration and global textile excellence. On the very first day of the event,

investors signed MoUs worth over ₹1,400 crore with the Government of Bihar.

Participating as the Partner State, Bihar showcased its growing strength in the textile and apparel sector with the inauguration of the Bihar Pavilion.

Speaking on the occasion, Giriraj Singh said that Bihar is rapidly emerging as one of India's promising textile hubs. He noted that the Bihar Government has developed modern industrial infrastructure, including plug-and-play facilities, which have significantly enhanced investor

confidence in the State.

Speaking on the occasion, Industries Minister Shreyasi Singh said that Bihar is rapidly emerging as one of India's most promising destinations for textile and apparel manufacturing. She stated that the State Government's progressive industrial policies, investor-friendly ecosystem and strong focus on traditional crafts are creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs, artisans and global investors. She added that Bharat Tex 2026 provides an ideal platform to showcase Bihar's manufacturing



capabilities and rich textile heritage to the world.

Industries Secretary Kundan Kumar said that the

Bihar Pavilion reflects the State's commitment to pro-

moting its traditional crafts alongside modern industrial growth. He noted that the participation of Bihar's enterprises at Bharat Tex 2026 will strengthen market access, enhance business linkages and create new opportunities for the State's textile ecosystem.

During the Knowledge Session at Bharat Tex 2026, the Government of Bihar signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with 16 leading textile and apparel companies, reinforcing the State's growing reputation as an emerging textile

investment destination.

The Bihar Pavilion features leading exhibitors from across the State, including SAVI Global, Gramin Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Sangh, Gopalan Silk, Eco Tasar Silk Pvt Ltd, High Spirit Commercial Ventures Pvt Ltd (HSCVPL), New Zeel Fashion Wear Pvt Ltd, Earthomadic Foundation, Competence Exports Pvt Ltd., NIFT Patna, Modelama Group, alongside live demonstrations of Madhubani and Tikuli painting by master artists Kumari Nalini Shah & Arundhati Mahato.

