

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

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Rajasthan Assembly Marks 75 Years With ‘Amrit Mahotsav’, a Rare Gathering of Past and Present Legislators

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Legislative Assembly on Wednesday marked 75 years of its existence with the launch of “Amrit Mahotsav,” a year-long commemorative programme that brought together sitting and former MLAs in what organisers described as a historic assembly of experience and generational continuity.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, addressing the inaugural session titled “Vidhan Gaurav Yatra — Conference of Former and Present Members,” said legislatures were not merely law-making institutions but “schools of de-



mocracy,” where elected representatives absorb the values of dialogue, discipline, consensus, and service. Describing the Rajasthan Assembly as the “first school” of his own public life, Birla traced his personal trajectory from student leader to MLA, MP, and eventually Lok Sabha Speaker back to les-

sons learned within the House—chiefly, that a culture of listening and healthy debate strengthens democracy, while personal discord weakens it.

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma called the Amrit Mahotsav a celebration of the state’s “unwavering faith in democracy,” noting that the Assembly,

which began in 1952 with 160 members, has since evolved into a cornerstone of governance and public welfare — even as governments and ideologies changed over the decades. Sharma clarified that the celebrations would extend through the year, featuring discussions with constitutional experts, delibera-



tions on democratic challenges, and conversations on the Assembly’s digital transformation aimed at connecting younger generations with parliamentary traditions.

Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani framed the moment as a “golden chapter” in India’s democratic history, highlighting legis-

lative milestones on land reform, panchayati raj, and education, while also pointing to modernisation efforts — including e-Vidhan, a paperless legislative culture, and a digital museum within the Assembly premises.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Joga Ram Patel credited the House’s long-

standing culture of constructive dialogue between treasury and opposition benches for its institutional resilience, while Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Jolly struck a more pointed note — framing the celebration not merely as nostalgia, but as a tribute to citizen-empowering legislation such as the

Right to Information Act. Jolly also called for more sittings and greater floor time for elected representatives, arguing that legislative dignity depends on genuinely inclusive debate, not just ceremonial commemoration.

The event, attended by current and former legislators alongside senior Assembly officials, doubled as both a celebration of institutional memory and an implicit reminder of the ongoing tension between symbolic milestones and substantive legislative functioning — a tension Jolly’s remarks were careful to leave unresolved.

EU Chief Ursula von der Leyen reaffirms support for Ukraine during Kyiv visit

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Kyiv on Wednesday to mark Ukraine’s Statehood Day, reaffirming the European Union’s continued military, financial, and political support as the country battles Russia’s ongoing invasion. Making her 11th wartime visit to Ukraine, von der Leyen said the EU would continue standing with Kyiv in its fight to protect its sovereignty and independence.

During the visit, she announced plans to deepen cooperation between European and Ukrainian defence industries and pro-



vide additional assistance to strengthen Ukraine’s air defence systems before winter, when attacks on critical infrastructure often intensify. Von der Leyen also said Ukraine had gained significant military momentum, adding that “the tide is turning” in its favour. The visit coincided with a regional summit attended by leaders from southeastern Europe to discuss Black Sea

security and regional stability. Meanwhile, Russian aerial attacks reportedly killed at least eight civilians across several Ukrainian regions, while Russia claimed it intercepted dozens of Ukrainian drones overnight. The latest developments underscore the continuing intensity of the conflict, which has entered its fourth year with no peace agreement in sight.

Rajasthan’s War on Narco-Terrorism Record Arrests, Record Seizures, But Is the Supply Chain Really Broken?

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In the nine months since Rajasthan constituted its Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), the state has registered 5,951 cases under the NDPS Act, arrested 7,502 traffickers, and seized narcotics worth over 692 crore — numbers the Bhajan Lal Sharma government is presenting as proof that its “mission mode” crack-down on drug trafficking is delivering results at a scale unprecedented in the state’s recent history.

The push aligns with a three-year national anti-drug campaign launched by Union Home Minister

Amit Shah on March 31, 2026, targeting what officials describe as “narco-terrorism” — the deliberate use of drug trafficking networks to destabilise India’s youth and undermine national security. Since the ANTF’s formation in October 2025, the task force alone has carried out 515 operations and arrested 703 traffickers, while combined operations with district police pushed the total past 5,900 cases.

Officials attribute the scale-up to a shift in strategy: rather than intercepting isolated consignments, the ANTF says it is using artificial intelligence, dedi-

cated trained teams, and a strengthened intelligence network to target the entire trafficking chain simultaneously — from production and transport to distribution and consumption. The government claims narcotics disposal cases have risen elevenfold between 2023 and May 2026, while the area under illegal opium cultivation destroyed has expanded to 170 acres.

The seizure numbers, broken down, are substantial: 127,491 kg of dodachuri (poppy husk), 838 kg of opium, 7,563 kg of ganja, 82 kg of heroin, and 46 kg of smack, alongside 180,843 narcotic tablets.

Rajasthan’s 181 Helpline Gets a Rare Ground-Level Check - But Will Oversight Translate Into Outcomes?



FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a move that officials are framing as evidence of the state government’s commitment to grievance redressal, Jagjit Singh Monga, Director of the Civil Defence Department, on Wednesday inspected the Rajasthan Sampark Portal 181 at the Secretariat, reviewing the helpline’s complaint resolution mechanisms firsthand. Acting on directives from Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Monga did not limit his visit to a review meeting with officials. He personally spoke with citizens calling in on the 181 helpline, gathering direct feedback on the nature of their complaints and the responsiveness — or lack thereof — of the system meant to address them. The optics were notable: a senior bureaucrat listening in real time to citizen grievances, rather than relying solely on official data presented by subordinates. Monga instructed officials to ensure complaints are resolved swiftly, effectively and without compromising on quality, adding that citi-

zens should face no inconvenience and that pending grievances be tracked through regular monitoring. The review also delved into the system’s back-end architecture — subject classification protocols, the mapping of complaints to the correct responsible officers, and broader improvements to the grievance management framework. These are precisely the technical bottlenecks that typically undermine helpline systems: a complaint may be registered promptly, but misrouted to the wrong department or left unresolved due to poor accountability mapping. Helplines like 181 are only as effective as the administrative machinery behind them. Registering a grievance is the easy part; ensuring it reaches the right desk and gets acted upon — within a reasonable timeframe — is where such systems typically falter. Wednesday’s inspection signals intent at the top. Whether it translates into a measurable drop in unresolved complaints will be the real test of this exercise, one that citizens, not officials, will ultimately judge.

Modi’s Quiet Diplomacy? Polish Minister Credits Indian PM With Helping Avert 2022 Nuclear Escalation

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI/WARSZAWA

In remarks that underscore India’s growing diplomatic weight, a senior Polish minister has claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi played an important role in helping prevent a potential Russian tactical nuclear strike during the Ukraine war in 2022.

According to the statement attributed to Poland’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Russian President Vladimir Putin “actually pays attention” to what Prime Minister Modi says,



reflecting the level of trust New Delhi continues to enjoy in Moscow despite deep geopolitical divisions over the Ukraine conflict.

The Polish minister described Modi as a “very

well-known world statesman” whose relationship with Russia gave India a unique channel of communication at a time when most Western capitals had little direct leverage over

the Kremlin. He added that Russia does not view India as a hostile nation, enabling New Delhi to exercise influence unavailable to many other global powers.

The remarks align with India’s long-standing position of advocating dialogue and diplomacy. During the 2022 Samarkand SCO Summit, Prime Minister Modi famously told President Putin that “today’s era is not of war,” a message that was widely welcomed by Western governments while preserving India’s strategic engagement with Russia.

If the Polish minister’s assertion is borne out by further evidence, it would reinforce the perception of India as a pivotal geopolitical interlocutor capable of

maintaining dialogue across competing power blocs. It would also highlight New Delhi’s expanding role as a stabilising force in an increasingly polarised international order.

However, the specific claim that Prime Minister Modi helped prevent a Russian tactical nuclear strike has not been independently substantiated through official Russian, Indian, or NATO documentation. The statement currently reflects the Polish minister’s account and should be viewed in that context.

CCEA approves ₹25,445 crore elevated corridors for Varanasi

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Tuesday approved two major elevated corridor projects worth ₹25,445.96 crore for Varanasi, aimed at easing traffic congestion, improving multimodal connectivity and significantly reducing travel time.

The two projects will be implemented under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) and form a key part of the Varanasi Decongestion Plan.

The first project approved by the CCEA is 46.039 km , comprising a six-lane elevated main carriageway, an iconic cable-stayed bridge, an extradosed Foot Over Bridge-cum-Major Bridge, loops, ramps, link roads and service roads, will be implemented under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) at a total capital cost of ₹14,447.64 crore including a civil construction cost of ₹6,037.85 crore (including utility shifting, excluding GST) and a land acquisition cost of ₹541.11 crore under NH(O).

The project will provide seamless connectivity between NH-19 and the Varanasi Ring Road, significantly decongesting the city's road network and improving urban mobility.

Designed for an operating speed of 80–100 km/h, it is expected to reduce the average travel time across the project influence area from approximately 60 minutes to 20 minutes, representing a reduction of nearly 67 per cent.

Travel time between NH-19 and Kashi Railway Station will be reduced from approximately 50 minutes to about 25 minutes, resulting in a saving of about 25 minutes (nearly 50 per cent).

Aligned with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the corridor will strengthen multimodal connectivity by



providing seamless access to major highways, railway stations, Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport and Ramnagar IWLAI Port, while significantly improving connectivity to key religious, educational and cultural landmarks, including the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Namo Ghat, Ramnagar Fort and the Ghats of Varanasi.

By linking important economic, social and logistics nodes, the project will improve logistics efficiency, enhance road safety, facilitate tourism and pilgrimage, and support sustainable regional economic growth across eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The corridor has been conceived as a transformative urban mobility project to decongest the road network of Varanasi & Chandauli by providing a high-speed, access-controlled connection between NH-19, the Varanasi Ring Road (NH-135B), Ramnagar/ BHU and other major urban destinations.

With more than 15 crore tourists and pilgrims visiting Varanasi every year, the project will significantly improve connectivity to major religious, educational and cultural landmarks, including the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Namo Ghat,

Ramnagar Fort, the Ghats of Varanasi, and Kashi Railway Station, while substantially reducing congestion on the existing city road network.

An elevated spur between BHU/Lanka and Samne Ghat will further ease traffic congestion at the heavily trafficked Lanka Junction by separating through traffic from local traffic movements.

The project will improve road safety through controlled-access movement, reduce vehicle operating costs and emissions, enhance travel reliability, and facilitate the efficient movement of passenger and freight traffic.

It will also decongest NH-19, the BHU-Ramnagar Corridor and NH-35 by diverting through traffic away from the densely developed urban core.

The project comprises a 6/4-lane predominantly elevated corridor, including main carriageway, flyovers, loops, ramps and service roads, and will be implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) at a total capital cost of ₹10,998.32 crore, including a civil construction cost of ₹4,565.33 crore and land acquisition cost of ₹934.91 crore.

The corridor is a major component of the Varanasi Decongestion Plan and will

provide seamless connectivity between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station, while substantially improving access to Varanasi Ring Road, Varanasi Airport, Kashi Railway Station, Varanasi City Railway Station, Varanasi Junction, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction, Ramnagar Port, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, the ghats of Varanasi and the adjoining Chandauli region.

Designed for an operating speed of 80–100 km/h, the project will reduce travel time between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station from approximately 40 minutes to 20 minutes, representing a reduction of nearly 50 per cent.

It will significantly decongest the city's road network, improve road safety, reduce vehicle operating costs and facilitate faster, uninterrupted movement of passenger and freight traffic.

The project will also strengthen regional connectivity by improving access to one Economic Node (Chandauli Social Economic Zone), one Social Node (Chandauli) and six major Logistics Nodes, thereby enhancing multimodal integration in line with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

It will facilitate efficient movement of agricultural produce, industrial goods, construction materials and minerals, improving logistics efficiency and supporting sustainable economic growth across eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Overall, the project will create a modern, access-controlled urban transport corridor that enhances connectivity, strengthens multimodal transport integration, promotes tourism and economic development, and improves the quality of life for residents and visitors to Varanasi.

Punjab: Farmers take out motorcycle marches against India-US trade deal

FAIR REPORT
■ Chandigarh/Hoshiarpur

Protesting against the proposed India-US trade deal, farmers took out motorcycle marches in Punjab on Wednesday, alleging that it would adversely impact the country's farming sector.

The marches were carried out on a call given by different farming bodies under the banner of 'Desh Bachao Morcha' in Punjab.

Several farmers' organisations, including Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), Azad Kisan Morcha, Bharatiya Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Organisation and BKU (Boka Singh Mansa), participated in the motorcycle marches.

Opposing the India-US trade deal, farmer leaders claimed that the pact is not limited to the import and export of a few products. Instead, it may cover several crucial sectors, including agriculture, dairy, digital trade, services, intellectual property rights, energy and investment.

Highlighting the United States' long demand for greater access to India's agriculture and dairy sectors, they said any reduction in import duties on agricultural and dairy products could adversely affect Indian farmers, dairy producers and

small industries.

The leaders pointed out that the complete text of the agreement has not yet been made public, leading to widespread concern among sections of society.

They emphasised that such a significant and sensitive agreement should be placed before the people and discussed thoroughly in Parliament.

As part of the call, a motorcycle march was taken out by the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (Piddi Group) in Hoshiarpur. Led by the outfit's district president Paramjit Singh Bhulla and district general secretary Kuldip Singh Begowal, the march commenced after an 'ardas' (prayer) at Gurdwara Pull Pukhta Sahib near Tanda and passed through Tanda, Dasuya and Miani.

The protesters later reached the office of Dasuya Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Kanwaljit Singh and submitted a memorandum addressed to the prime minister, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the proposed India-US trade agreement.

In the memorandum, the protesters alleged that the proposed trade pact would adversely affect farmers, agricultural labourers, livestock rearers, small traders and micro industries.



Workers under the 'Desh Bachao Morcha' take out a motorcycle rally against the proposed India-US trade deal and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), while heading to the Deputy Commissioner's office to submit a memorandum in Amritsar, Punjab on Wednesday

Nation Focus



PURI GEARS UP FOR RAINY RATH YATRA AMID TIGHT SECURITY

The three chariots of Lord Jagannath and his sibling deities are ready to roll along Puri's Grand Road on Thursday as the Odisha government braces for the attendance of lakhs of devotees for a possibly rain-soaked Rath Yatra.

The temple town has been blanketed by a multi-layered security cover with the deployment of personnel from state police, central forces, Indian Navy and Coast Guard, while special focus is on crowd control, traffic management and emergency response.

Puri received a staggering 143.8 mm of rain on the eve of the iconic chariot festival and has battered down hatches for heavy showers on Thursday as the weather department issued a red warning for heavy showers and thunderstorms.

(PTI)



ED FILES CHARGESHEET IN ₹40 LAKH US VISA FRAUD CASE

Private immigration assistance agencies from some north Indian states allegedly used to deposit ₹40 lakh in the bank accounts of US visa aspirants for a "short duration" to create "false" financial credentials for them to obtain the vital travel authorisation, the ED has said in a latest chargesheet.

The federal agency filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) on Monday before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Jalandhar in related to "organised" immigration and visa fraud.

The ED probe stems from multiple FIRs filed by the Delhi Police and the Punjab Police against this alleged racket that was prompted by a complaint filed by the US Embassy in Delhi, the agency said in a statement on Wednesday.

(PTI)

Ladakh flags off first 5 MT apricot consignment to UAE

FAIR REPORT
■ Jammu

In a landmark initiative that would transform Ladakh's horticulture sector and expand international market access for local farmers, Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Wednesday flagged off the first export consignment of 5 MT of Ladakh's premium apricots to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The initiative marks the beginning of Ladakh's largest-ever fresh apricot export programme and is expected to significantly enhance farmers' incomes while establishing Ladakh as a global supplier of premium-quality organic apricots.

Speaking on the occasion, L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena said that the export of the first consignment marked the beginning of a new era for Ladakh's horticulture sector and reflected the Administration's commitment



ment to connecting local farmers directly with global markets.

"This export initiative is a historic moment for Ladakh, its horticulture sector and, above all, our hardworking farmers. The flagging off of the first export consignment of Ladakh apricots to the UAE marks the beginning of Ladakh's journey towards becoming a global horticulture export hub.

This initiative will not

only provide our farmers with direct access to international markets but also ensure fair and remunerative prices for their produce, substantially improving their incomes and living conditions," said L-G Saxena.

The export has been facilitated under an MoU signed in April 2026 between the Ladakh Administration and the UAE-based global retail conglomerate Lulu Retail through APEDA, which

envisages the export of over 1,000 metric tonnes of fresh apricots during the current harvest season.

According to a statement of the DIPR, Ladakh, "This is a monumental leap from the mere 1,500 KG of apricots exported during the previous two years, making it one of the most significant milestones in Ladakh's horticultural history".

Apricots, being fragile and perishable, require to be stored and transported in temperatures from zero degrees to 4 degrees. Keeping this in view, the Ladakh Administration, with support from CONCOR, ensured the shipment of Apricots from Ladakh using cold-chain transportation so as to maintain the freshness of the fruits.

The flagship export initiative focuses on 'Raktsey Karpo' and 'Halman', Ladakh's indigenous apricot varieties, internationally recognised for their exceptional sweetness, rich

flavour, superior nutritional value and completely organic cultivation. Grown under Ladakh's unique high-altitude climatic conditions, abundant sunshine and pristine environment, the variety is regarded among the finest apricots in the world and has witnessed increasing demand in international markets.

Notably, the farmers had traditionally faced considerable challenges in harvesting, sorting, grading, cleaning, packaging and marketing their produce, often resulting in significant post-harvest losses and reduced returns. But under the new arrangement with Lulu Retail, farmers would simply hand over their orchards to the export agency at the time of harvest, following which the company would undertake the entire value chain – from plucking, sorting to grading, processing, packaging and transporting it to international markets.

FAIR REPORT
■ Kolkata

After days of tug-of-war between rival groups of the Trinamool Congress demanding police permission for the premium Victoria House venue near the busy Esplanade crossing to hold their respective version of the TMC Martyrs' Day rally the Mamata Banerjee faction of the party on Wednesday managed to receive a "face saving" relief from the Calcutta High which directed the administration to accommodate the former Chief Minister's rally near Birla Planetarium, some two km south of Victoria House where the former Chief Minister had been holding her rally every year for the past 15 years or so.

The Bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya shifted the venue from Victoria House to Cathedral Road in front of Birla Planetarium after the State Government cited traffic disruption in the heart of Kolkata and law and order issues if the two rival

Punjab Police foils a terror attack just before Prime Minister's visit

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi/Amritsar

Amritsar Commissionerate Police foiled a cross-border terror plot, arresting one suspect and recovering a hand grenade, a 9 mm Glock pistol, and four live cartridges. The police action is believed to have averted potential violence and ensured public order in the sensitive border district.

The arrest happened just before Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Punjab on July 17.

He is slated to launch several railway infrastructure projects and other development programs.

Security agencies have heightened vigilance in Amritsar and nearby areas in preparation for the visit, which is expected to draw large crowds.

Punjab Police said the

recovery of weapons highlights the seriousness of the conspiracy.

"Preliminary investigation reveals that the accused was in contact with cross-border ISI handlers through Instagram and was being directed to target police establishments and public places to disturb peace and public order. Punjab Police remains vigilant and committed to dismantling terror networks," DGP Punjab Gaurav Yadav said.

Investigators think the goal was to spread fear and disrupt peace in the area. The hand grenade and loaded Glock pistol show a clear plan to use violence.

Police officials said the seizure happened just in time and was important in stopping a possible attack.

An FIR has been filed at Police Station Cantonment, Amritsar, under the laws



about terrorism and illegal weapons.

The suspect is in custody, and police are still questioning him to learn more about the plan.

They are also continuing to analyse the communication records.

Senior police officials said

they are still investigating to uncover the entire network, identify other people involved in India, and determine who the handlers are on the other side of the border.

Specialised agencies are analysing the suspect's phone, social media, and

other communication records. Social media is often used to radicalise and direct people inside India.

This case shows how handlers now use encrypted or seemingly harmless platforms to issue instructions while staying hidden.

Constant monitoring and quick response have helped neutralise several such conspiracies in recent times.

Amritsar, being a sensitive border district with significant religious and tourist footfall, remains under heightened security vigil.

Residents and security analysts alike have welcomed the successful bust as a timely intervention that has saved potential lives. Investigators are also examining whether the accused had any prior criminal record or links with other modules.

Police are looking into

the accused's finances and travel history.

Punjab Police have asked people to stay alert and report anything suspicious or strange messages on social media to the nearest police station.

Officials said that public help is key to keeping the state safe.

As the investigation continues, police are confident they will uncover the full plan and catch everyone involved.

This operation shows that the Punjab Police are committed to keeping people safe from cross-border threats.

They are demonstrating their resolve to counter such threats through proactive intelligence gathering, strong social media monitoring, and close coordination with central agencies, a senior police official said.

Lok Sabha tells MPs to avoid smart watches, spectacles in Parliament

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

The Lok Sabha secretariat has advised the MPs not to use smart watches, or smart spectacles in ways that may compromise the security, privileges and privacy of members in the Parliament Estate during the upcoming Monsoon Session.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is slated to begin July 20, and will continue till August 13.

"Members are aware that a large number of advanced devices such as smart spectacles/ pen cameras/ smart watches etc. are now widely available in the country. Some of these devices can be used in ways so as to compromise privacy of Members and



breach parliamentary privileges," a bulletin issued by the Lok Sabha secretariat on Wednesday said.

In view of this, MPs were requested to refrain from using such devices in any way that compromises security, privileges and privacy of members in any part of the Parliament Estate, the secretariat said.

States Focus



TN CM C Joseph Vijay and others pay tributes to former state chief minister K Kamaraj on his birth anniversary in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on Wednesday

Top leaders pay tributes to K Kamaraj on his birth anniversary

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Wednesday paid rich tributes to the former TN CM K Kamaraj, remembering his contributions on his 124th birth anniversary. "Remembering Thiru K Kamaraj ji on his birth anniversary. A stalwart of India's freedom movement and an exceptional public figure, he dedicated his life to nation-building. His unwavering commitment to areas like education, inclusive development and the welfare of the underprivileged continues to guide generations," the PM said on his social media platform. In his message, Arlekar said, "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the great leader Kamaraj, I pay my respectful tribute to the visionary leader who brought about the greatest transformation in the educational development of Tamil Nadu."



Right to question heart of rule of law: Former CJI Chandrachud

Former chief justice of India DY Chandrachud on Wednesday said press freedom holds the highest value in a democratic society and the right to question lies at the heart of the rule of law. Addressing the inauguration of a new studio of the digital news platform 'Dynamite News' in the national capital, Chandrachud said no democracy could exist without a free press. "Press freedom is the highest value in a democratic society. No democracy can exist in the absence of a free and absolutely free press," he said.

ECI extends SIR schedule for three States, Delhi

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday extended the schedule for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in four States — Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana and Delhi. In a letter to the chief electoral officer of Delhi, the poll authority said the draft electoral rolls will now be published on August 17 instead of August 5. Similarly, the house-to-house visits which were scheduled till July 29 will now continue till August 8. In a letter to the chief electoral officer Delhi, the poll authority said the draft electoral rolls will now be published on August 17 instead of August 5. Similarly, the house-to-house visits which were scheduled till July 29 will now continue till August 8. The SIR which was rolled out on May 14, Under the exercise so far, over 98 per cent of the total 1.45 crore voters in Delhi have been provided with enumeration forms to furnish the required details. Out of the distributed



A Booth Level Officer (BLO) verifies voter details during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls at Karad in Satara district, Maharashtra on Wednesday

forms, 17,66,553 were completed and digitised by the booth level officers (BLOs). Over 13,000 BLOs in Delhi are associated with the door-to-door exercise. According to the revised SIR schedule for Delhi, draft electoral rolls will now be published on August 17 instead of August 5. Claims and objections by the voters will be filed from August 17 to September 16. The claims and objections

come out on October 12 in place of October 10. In Telangana, the draft rolls will be published on August 10 while the final rolls will be published on October 12. In Karnataka, the house-to-house visits by the BLOs will continue till August 8 in place of July 29. Draft rolls in the state will be published on August 17 in place of August 5. The final electoral rolls in the southern state were to be published on October 7 but according to the revised schedule, they will be published on October 19. On Tuesday, ECI extended the SIR schedule for Haryana and Andhra Pradesh. Delhi and three States besides Haryana and Andhra Pradesh are part of Phase 3 of the SIR which was rolled out on May 14. Once Phase 3 is completed, the entire country, except for Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, will be covered under the SIR rollout. Due to a variety of reasons, the SIR in the previous phase has also seen frequent tweaking in schedules.

SIR PROCESS FOCUSED ON EXCLUSION, HAS PLAYED HAVOC WITH DEMOCRACY: EX-CEC

New Delhi: Former chief election commissioner SY Quraishi has hit out at the Election Commission over the ongoing SIR exercise, saying the process is focussed more on "exclusion" and has "played havoc with democracy" with free and fair elections having been "disturbed".

The emphasis in the ongoing process of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is on how many to exclude as if the Election Commission (EC) would get good marks for "throwing out" as many as it can, Quraishi said in an exclusive interview with PTI Videos ahead of the launch of his new book "India and I: A Hundred Memories, Not a Memoir".

The book, published by Hachette India, throws light on 100 episodes from Quraishi's life. Quraishi told PTI that being registered as a voter is a constitutional right but a situation is being created that it is a favour granted to people by the EC. The ongoing process of SIR is "unfair" because of the way this is being done, he said. The process is focusing more on "exclusion", Quraishi said. "How many people can you throw out of the electoral roll, that seems to be the focus," he said. "Whereas in our time it was a very clear policy – our instruction to the polling staff used to be that if somebody comes introducing himself or herself and there was some minor error in the spelling, age or address or something, but you know that the person is the right person, ignore all mistakes. So that no voter is excluded," he asserted.

Ex CEC SY Quraishi speaks during an interview with PTI in New Delhi on Tuesday

Giribala's counsel says voice samples were never refused

FAIR REPORT
Bhopal

In a significant development in the high-profile Twisha case, counsel for accused Giribala Singh has publicly responded to the ongoing controversy over the collection of voice samples, asserting that the accused never refused to provide them. Speaking to the mediapersons, advocate Enosh George Carlo said the court record would clearly show what transpired during the proceedings. He maintained that the issue was not a refusal to provide voice samples but

legal concerns regarding the transcript supplied by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for the recording process. According to Carlo, the accused sought legal advice before reading the transcript, a right available to every accused person, but were not given adequate opportunity to consult their lawyer. Despite this, he claimed Giribala Singh spent nearly three hours providing voice samples during the process. The counsel further said that on July 11, the defence had formally informed the CBI that the accused had no objection to reading the transcript and



providing voice samples. "We have nothing to hide and therefore no reason to

fear. Our clients have cooperated with the investigation at every stage," Carlo said. Referring to Monday's court proceedings, the advocate said the court questioned both accused through video conferencing on whether they had any objection to providing voice samples. According to him, both clearly stated they had no objection and were willing to read whatever transcript was provided. He claimed this was also recorded in the court's order sheet. Carlo argued that once the accused expressed their consent before the court, there was no need for the CBI to pursue its application under Section 349 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). He said the court observed that an earlier order had already addressed the issue, making further proceedings on the application unnecessary. Citing the Supreme Court's 2016 judgment in Nirmal Kumar vs State (NCT of Delhi), Carlo said the guidelines require voice samples to correspond with the recording they are intended to match. If there are doubts regarding the transcript, he said, it is the investigating agency's responsibility to provide proper clarification to the accused.

BJP slams Congress over Rahul Gandhi's Dehradun venue row



FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The BJP on Wednesday criticised the Congress over its claim that permission for party leader Rahul Gandhi's July 17 event at Dehradun's Parade Ground was revoked, alleging that several alternative venues have already been made available for the programme. The remarks came after the Congress staged a sit-in at Parade Ground in Dehradun on Tuesday after the district administration cancelled permission for Gandhi's event, 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' (Voice of Students), saying another programme is being held at the venue. BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged that the Congress is looking for an excuse as Gandhi is planning to go on another vacation. "Stop playing the false victim card. Several additional venues have already been made available. It seems Rahul Gandhi wants to go on a vacation and is looking for an excuse to cancel his programme. "The country's Gen Z has already seen through the Congress party's lies," Bhandari said in a post on social media. The event will now be held at the Bannu School Ground, Uttarakhand Congress president Ganesh Godiyal said on Tuesday night. Earlier in the day, Dehradun District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan said a central government programme at Parade Ground was scheduled to end on July 15 but has been extended till July 17.

RSS chief Bhagwat to interact with women

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat will interact with women from various walks of life at upcoming events organised by the Vishwamangalya Sabha (VMS) in Delhi and Hyderabad later this month. The interactions will center around the theme 'Yuganukul Matrutva' (Contemporary Motherhood). According to the organisers, the core deliberations will focus on critical issues faced by modern women, including work-life balance, motherhood responsibilities, and the growing impact of technological advancements. The discussions during these sessions will influence and shape the VMS' roadmap for the next five years, they added. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, VMS national organising secretary Vrushali Joshi said the organisation's North India meeting will be held in Delhi on July 23-24 and the South India meeting in Hyderabad on July 25-26. Bhagwat will deliver a special address and interact with women from different walks of life in Delhi on July 24 at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre and in Hyderabad on July 26. The Delhi event is expected



to be attended by around 800-900 women from northern states, including Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal, while the Hyderabad programme will bring together participants from Maharashtra and southern states. Joshi said the organisation decided to focus on "Contemporary Motherhood — Challenges, Liabilities and Assets" after conducting discussions with around 35,000 women at conventions organised in 22 regions last year. "The biggest concerns that emerged were how women can balance work life and the responsibilities of motherhood, and how mothers in nuclear families can give adequate attention to their children while managing their professions equally," she said. She said the organisation has compiled these concerns and Bhagwat will present a "solution-oriented" perspective on the issue.

President Murmu urges Ayurveda students to follow Sushruta, embrace science

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday urged young Ayurveda students and researchers to follow the path shown by Acharya Sushruta and remain steadfast in their commitment to medical ethics and compassionate patient care, while embracing scientific research and new technologies to strengthen the global acceptance of the traditional system of medicine. Addressing the inaugural session of the three-day international seminar 'Saushrutam 2026' at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) here on the occasion of Sushruta Jayanti, the president said the future of Ayurveda lies in the hands of the younger generation. She advised students and researchers embarking on their professional journeys to pursue practical research and generate high-quality scientific evidence with curiosity, integrity and a scientific temper. "Wherever appropriate, they should not hesitate to make use of new technologies," the President said, urging them to follow the path shown by Acharya Sushruta and remain committed to medical ethics and compassionate service



President Droupadi Murmu during the inauguration of 'Saushrutam 2026' at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi

towards patients. The president also inaugurated the MRI section of AIIA during the event. Congratulating the Ayurveda fraternity on the birth anniversary of Acharya Sushruta, widely regarded as the father of surgery, Murmu said his pioneering work in surgery centuries ago was revolutionary for its time. She said Sushruta introduced several complex and innovative surgical techniques, including plastic surgery, cataract surgery, treatment of tumours and ENT procedures, while the Sushruta Samhita provided a new direction not only to the Indian subcontinent but to the world. Murmu said the knowledge embedded in India's traditions should be carried forward in harmony with changing times for the benefit of society. Describing Ayurveda's holistic vision of life as a boon to humanity, she said efforts should be made to ensure that the ancient system remains relevant and effective in the present era. The president said the Government of India has worked to establish Ayurveda and Yoga on the global stage with renewed vigour and is making efforts to validate the ancient tradition of surgery through scientific benchmarks. She said standardised documentation, digital health integration and modern scientific research techniques would help enhance the global acceptance of Ayurveda.

IPC signs MoU with UP Pharma Council to strengthen drug quality

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Uttar Pradesh Promote Pharma Council to strengthen quality standards, regulatory compliance and innovation in the pharmaceutical and medical device sectors. The MoU was signed during the YEIDA MedTech Investors Meet and Site Visit 2026 held at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida on July 14. The partnership aims to promote quality standards, regulatory excellence, innovation and capacity building across the pharmaceutical and medical device ecosystem, the Health ministry said in a statement. Under the collaboration, the two organisations will work to strengthen quality standards and regulatory compliance in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, while promoting awareness of the Indian Pharmacopoeia, pharmacovigilance and materiovigilance. The partnership also envisages organising joint training programmes, workshops and stakeholder awareness initia-



tives, besides fostering research, innovation and industry-academia collaborations, the statement said. The MoU will support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by providing digital tools for adverse event reporting and enhance patient safety through quality assurance and post-market surveillance initiatives, the statement said. It said the collaboration reflects the Commission's commitment to advancing healthcare quality standards, supporting innovation and strengthening India's regulatory framework, while contributing to the growth of Uttar Pradesh as a major hub for pharmaceuticals, medical devices and healthcare technologies. The partnership seeks to build a stronger ecosystem focused on quality, safety, innovation and global competitiveness, it added.

Bought Stolen Petrol and Diesel from the Highway, 830 Litres Seized

Police posed as a customer to expose the illegal trade; accused arrested, probe into the fuel theft network begins

FAIR REPORT
CHITTORGARH

Police have exposed an illegal business of stolen petrol and diesel running for a long time near the highway in Bhadsoda. In a joint operation, the District Special Team (DST) and Bhadsoda

Police seized 830 litres of petrol and diesel and arrested 30-year-old Prem Shankar Mali, a resident of Bhadsoda Chauraha. Equipment used for storing and filling the fuel was also seized. SP Dharmendra Singh said DST In-charge ASI Suraj Kumar received information that the accused was buying stolen petrol and diesel and selling it illegally. To verify the information, police first sent a person as a customer. When

the accused agreed to sell petrol, the police team raided his house. During the search, police found 730 litres of petrol stored in four large drums and 100 litres of diesel in five cans. The accused had no valid licence to store or sell the fuel. Initial investigation revealed that the accused's house is located near the Sanwaliyaji Prakatya Sthal on the highway, where fuel tankers and trucks often stop. Police said he bought

stolen petrol and diesel from these vehicles at a low price, stored it at his house, and later sold it to local people at a higher price. Police added that storing such a large quantity of highly flammable fuel in an open area was a serious safety risk for nearby residents. Police are now investigating the entire network to find out where the stolen fuel came from and who else was involved in the illegal business.

Two Drug Peddlers Arrested with 22 Grams of MD Powder Under Operation Trinetra

FAIR REPORT
CHITTORGARH

Under Operation Trinetra, the District Special Team (DST) and Sadar Chittorgarh Police arrested two alleged drug peddlers and seized 22 grams of illegal MD powder (Mephedrone) along with a motorcycle. SP Dharmendra Singh said the action was taken as part of the anti-narcotics campaign launched by Udaipur Range IG Gaurav Srivastava. Acting under

the supervision of DSP Brijesh Singh, SI Tulsiram and his team were patrolling near the road behind Sadar Police Station on the night of July 14. During the patrol, police noticed two youths riding a motorcycle. On seeing the police vehicle, they made a U-turn and tried to flee. The police team chased and stopped them. They were identified as Rohit Sharma (20) and Mohammad Tabrez Gauri (26), both resi-

dents of Nimbahera. During the search, police recovered a plastic packet containing 22 grams of illegal MD powder from the pocket of Tabrez's shorts. The contraband was seized as per legal procedure, and both accused were arrested. A case has been registered under the NDPS Act. The operation was carried out by SI Tulsiram, Constables Doongar Singh, Narendra, Bhajan, Kuldeep and driver Mukesh.

