

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

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Bhajan Lal Unveils ‘Yuva Suyog’: Rajasthan Bets on Sports, Skills and Digital Leadership to Harness Youth Power

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a major push to position youth at the centre of governance and nation-building, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Tuesday launched the ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Suyog’ platform, a flagship initiative that seeks to blend sports, skill development, digital engagement and employment into a single statewide ecosystem.

Launching the programme from the Chief Minister’s residence, Sharma described the initiative as a “transformational plat-



form” that would convert Rajasthan’s youthful energy into productive leadership. The pilot has been

rolled out in Bagru Assembly constituency and Baran district, with plans for expansion across every pan-

chayat and urban ward. Pitching sports as a vehicle for social change, the Chief Minister said compe-

titions in cricket, football, volleyball and kabaddi would become the foundation for identifying talent

and nurturing grassroots leadership. The platform will be integrated with the Centre’s MY Bharat portal, enabling registered youth to access volunteering, skill development and employment opportunities through a unified digital interface.

A key feature of the initiative is the creation of a statewide digital network of youth clubs. Every registered participant will become part of district-level Yuva Suyog Clubs, linked to panchayat and ward-level units. Sports grounds in schools, colleges and local

bodies will also be digitally mapped, while registration camps, leadership workshops, cleanliness drives, digital literacy campaigns and interactive youth dialogues will form part of the programme.

Highlighting his government’s employment record, Sharma claimed that over 1.78 lakh government appointments had been made in the last two-and-a-half years, recruitment for another one lakh posts was underway, and a recruitment calendar for 1.25 lakh additional vacancies had been released. He also as-

serted that 4.5 lakh youth had secured private-sector jobs during the same period and claimed that not a single recruitment examination had witnessed a paper leak under his government’s tenure.

Calling the initiative a “digital revolution” for Rajasthan’s youth, Sharma said Yuva Suyog was designed to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity, ensuring that aspiring young people from even the remotest villages receive a platform to compete, lead and contribute to the state’s development.

Rajasthan Launches ‘Yuva Suyog’: CM Bhajan Lal Sharma’s Big Bet to Turn Youth Power Into Nation-Building Force

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Tuesday launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Suyog scheme at his residence, positioning it as Rajasthan’s most ambitious attempt yet to channel the state’s youth energy into sport, skilling and employment — starting with a pilot rollout in Bagru assembly constituency and Baran district.

Announcing the platform, Sharma said Yuva Suyog would give young Rajasthanis “the right direction, the right opportunity and the right platform,” built around mass-participation sports — cricket, volleyball, kabaddi and football — designed to surface leadership at the panchayat and ward level. The platform will be integrated with the Centre’s MY Bharat portal, extending Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s youth-engagement vision to the grassroots. With roughly 65% of India’s population under



35, Sharma called youth “the country’s biggest capital” — and said Yuva Suyog was Rajasthan’s answer to converting that demographic strength into measurable outcomes. Under the scheme, competitions will move from ward and panchayat level up to the assembly constituency stage, with online registration through the Suyog portal and digital mapping of sports grounds at schools, colleges, panchayats and wards.

District-level Suyog Yuva Clubs will anchor the network, linking every registered youth to ward clubs

in urban areas and panchayat clubs in rural pockets. Special registration camps will run at schools, colleges and community centres, alongside volunteer drives on cleanliness and digital literacy meant to test leadership potential — with youth given a voice through “Suyog-charcha” dialogues, talk shows and video conferencing.

The CM also listed the government’s employment record: nearly 1.78 lakh government appointments over the past two and a half years, another 1 lakh recruitments underway, a calendar issued for 1.25 lakh

more posts, and 4.5 lakh youth placed in the private sector — all, he stressed, without a single paper leak. He pointed to the State Skill Policy 2025 and Rajasthan Yuva Niti 2025, over 3.5 lakh youth trained under skilling missions, 1,347 crore disbursed to more than 4 lakh beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Yuva Sambal Yojana, and 4,500-plus startups registered in the state. Bagru MLA Dr. Kailash Verma called disciplined youth “the foundation of a developed Rajasthan,” while Chief Secretary V. Srinivas described Yuva Suyog as “far more than a sports scheme” — a mechanism to identify and nurture sporting talent at the grassroots. Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Premchand Bairwa, Law and Justice Minister Jograram Patel, and MLA Gopal Sharma were among those present, while Baran MLA Lalit Meena led local youth and students from various institutions in joining the launch via video conference.

‘Democracy Can’t Be Reduced to Political Theatre’ Rathore Blasts Rahul Gandhi, Revives Gehlot’s Paper Leak Record

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

The political battle over student protests and unemployment intensified on Monday as former Rajasthan Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore launched a scathing attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of staging “political theatre” that “shames democracy” while attempting to divert attention from Parliament’s agenda. Claiming that the concerns of protesting students had al-



ready been taken up with Union Minister J.P. Nadda, Rathore alleged that Rahul Gandhi’s intervention was aimed at creating disruption rather than finding solutions. “Congress has

become accustomed to surviving on political crutches as its public support continues to shrink,” he said. Rathore also targeted former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, ac-

curring him of displaying “selective concern” for students despite his government’s alleged failure to curb recruitment irregularities. He claimed that 17 recruitment examinations were hit by paper leak scandals during the previous Congress regime, leaving thousands of aspirants in uncertainty. He further referred to the controversy involving former RPSC member Babulal Kataria, alleging it had damaged the credibility of the recruitment body.

Delhi Police Drag Away Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Vadra as NEET Protest Erupts Outside PM’s Residence

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

In dramatic scenes outside Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s residence on Tuesday, Delhi Police forcibly detained and removed Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, hours after they



launched a sit-in protest demanding accountability over the NEET paper leak and police action against

agitating students. Visuals from the scene showed the Leader of Opposition lying on the

ground and resisting as security personnel tried to lift him, sustaining an injury below the eye in the process, according to an aide. (Deccan Chronicle) The most striking moment came when Priyanka Gandhi was seen hanging onto the door of a moving police bus even after it had started to pull away. (Deccan Chronicle)

₹12.09-Crore Gold Trading Scam Cracked: Rajasthan Police Nab Mumbai Woman Director, Unravel Pan-India Cyber Fraud Network

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

a major breakthrough against organised cyber fraud, the Rajasthan State Cyber Crime Police has arrested the woman director of a Mumbai-based finance company accused of facilitating a sprawling 12.09-crore online gold trading scam, exposing what investigators describe as a sophisticated network spanning multiple states.

The accused, Divya Singh Kushwaha, director of Golden Legend Leasing and Finance Limited (GLLFL), was arrested from Mumbai for her alleged role in enabling virtual merchant accounts

that investigators say were used to siphon off crores from unsuspecting investors lured by promises of extraordinary returns through a fake gold trading platform.

The arrest marks a significant development in a case registered on December 9, 2025, after a Jaipur-based investor alleged that fraudsters, operating through WhatsApp, persuaded him to invest over 12.09 crore via the fraudulent website www.kdeonegold.net .

The Trap: Fake Profits, Real Losses

According to investigators, the cyber syndicate first contacted the victim through WhatsApp before



directing him to the bogus trading platform. The portal displayed fabricated profits inside a virtual wallet, convincing the investor to continue pump-

ing in larger sums.

When the victim attempted to withdraw his money, the fraudsters allegedly demanded repeated payments under the

guise of income tax, processing charges, account unfreezing fees, and other fabricated levies. Despite receiving crores, the syndicate neither released the investment nor allowed any withdrawal.

Money Trail Exposes Corporate Link

Officials said an intensive financial and digital forensic investigation revealed that the virtual merchant accounts used in the fraud had been provided to Prime Information Technology Pvt. Ltd., allegedly operated through GLLFL. Investigators claim the company ignored critical compliance safeguards, including Know Your Customer (KYC), due

diligence, risk monitoring, onboarding protocols, and fraud detection mechanisms. Authorities also found that the same accounts had attracted numerous complaints from victims across India through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (1930).

Network Under Scanner

Police said the role of GLLFL’s directors emerged during the investigation, leading to Kushwaha’s arrest. She has been remanded to five days of police custody, during which investigators are tracing the money trail, examining digital evidence, and identifying

the wider network behind the operation. The alleged mastermind, Jayanta Roy, along with several other accused, remains absconding. Earlier, police had already filed a chargesheet against another accused, Iqbal Ahmed, as the investigation gathered pace.

Pan-India Probe Intensifies

The Rajasthan Cyber Crime Police is now analysing bank accounts, mobile numbers, and digital evidence linked to the syndicate to identify additional conspirators and victims across multiple states. Officials believe the fraud may have en-

snared several investors beyond Rajasthan.

The operation was carried out under the leadership of Station House Officer Gajendra Sharma, with Investigating Officer Inspector Amrita Singh, Sub-Inspector Mukesh Kumar, and Constable Boduram playing key roles.

Police have urged citizens to remain wary of investment schemes promising guaranteed or unusually high returns, particularly those circulated through WhatsApp, Telegram, and other social media platforms, and to report suspected cyber fraud immediately through the 1930 Cyber Helpline.

Opposition leaders back student protests

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Several Opposition leaders, including NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, visited the Cockroach Janta Party's protest site at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday, a day after the police crackdown on its 'Sansad Chalo' march, and extended support to the agitation over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations.

Pawar, accompanied by party MP Supriya Sule, met injured protesters and members of the movement and condemned the police action during Monday's attempted march to Parliament.

Among other political leaders who visited the protest site were Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs Sanjay Raut and Arvind Sawant, Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji, AAP leader Gopal Rai, Kerala Congress (M) leader Jose K Mani, and a delegation of parliamentarians from Left parties.

According to a statement issued by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), Pawar said the voices of students demanding a fair and transparent



NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar interacts with CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke as he visits Jantar Manta on Tuesday PTI

examination system could not be silenced through force and assured that the NCP (SP) would continue to support the movement both inside and outside Parliament.

"The Nationalist Congress Party stands firmly with the students. We will raise these issues in Parliament and continue supporting this movement until justice is delivered and accountability is fixed," he said.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal

visited Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and met students injured in Monday's police action. He said one of the injured protesters, a young woman, continued to remain in the intensive care unit.

"I pray that the girl recovers soon and is able to return home. I am trying to get in touch with her parents," Kejriwal said.

The former Delhi chief minister later visited Jantar Mantar and interacted with protesters who had returned to the site

despite the injuries they suffered during the police action. Raut and Sawant also met the protesters and expressed support for the agitation.

According to the CJP, Raut said, "The fire lit at Jantar Mantar will not be extinguished. We will join the hunger strike if needed."

Separately, a delegation of Left MPs comprising CPI(M) Rajya Sabha members John Brittas, AA Rahim and V Sivadasan, CPI Rajya Sabha MP P Sandosh Kumar, CPI(M)

Lok Sabha MPs Amra Ram and S Venkatesan, along with Kerala Congress (M) leader Mani, visited the protest site and demanded that Union Home Minister Amit Shah make a statement in Parliament on the police action against protesters.

The visits came a day after thousands of protesters gathered at Jantar Mantar for the CJP's march to Parliament despite heavy security deployment and prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. Police used tear gas shells and batons to stop the protesters.

Opposition parties have demanded a discussion in Parliament on the incident.

The CJP-led agitation began on June 20. The Abhijeet Dipke-led outfit is demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the education system and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was forcefully shifted by the Delhi Police to Safdarjung Hospital on July 18, has continued his fast from the hospital.

89 treated, 1 in ICU after police action on CJP protest

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

In the aftermath of violent clashes between participants of the CJP's "Sansad Chalo" march and the Delhi Police, RML Hospital continued to be the focus. Numerous injured individuals received medical treatment, with one young woman remaining in critical condition in the ICU.

Hospital sources informed *The Pioneer* that a total of 89 protesters, with injuries ranging from minor to moderate severity, were treated and discharged between Monday and Tuesday afternoon, following police intervention. An eyewitness reported that multiple ambulances arrived at the emergency department late Monday evening, observing at least three individuals with serious head injuries being admitted.

A senior hospital official indicated that most of those treated were student protesters; however, their exact ages and backgrounds could not be precisely determined. By Tuesday evening, three indi-



viduals remained hospitalised: a Delhi Police officer, a Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel, and a 23-year-old protester named Sakshi, whose condition was classified as serious but stable.

Security on the ICU ward was substantially increased, with the area cordoned off. Media personnel were denied access to Sakshi's family and the ward itself.

According to hospital and family reports, Sakshi likely experienced asphyxia during a stampede-like incident triggered when tear gas shells were fired, causing protesters to flee. A family member, who wished to remain anonymous, reported that Sakshi sustained

injuries to her face, chest, and neck. She attended the protest with her cousin, who also suffered a leg injury.

The family member stated, "After tear gas shells were fired, the crowd began to run. She was caught in the rush and sustained severe injuries. She is on a ventilator but responding to treatment."

Residing in Chhattarpur Extension, Sakshi is pursuing an Advanced Dip in Computer Applications (ADCA). Sources also indicated that she has been undergoing treatment for tuberculosis over the past several months. Hospital authorities have issued no official medical bulletin regarding her condition.

CJP march: Delhi Police, students trade blame on violence

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Delhi Police faced criticism after several videos of protesters alleging excessive action against them surfaced on social media a day after the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) 'Sansad Chalo' march.

However, some videos also appeared to show police personnel being attacked by demonstrators.

A woman protester, an UPSC aspirant, said the police action had left her disillusioned.

"I am preparing for UPSC,

but after seeing the police, I no longer feel like continuing. How will I survive among them when they behave like this with students?" she said.

Another protester, breaking down in tears, said, "We are not criminals. We are here demanding a better education system. Who treats human beings like this?"

In another video, a protester alleged that a tear gas shell exploded near his feet. "Are we terrorists or what? Why is such action being taken against us? The police are supposed to help us," he said.

A protester with an injured



leg alleged that the Government had failed to address their concerns. "Had the government shown even 20 per cent accountability, we

would not have been protesting. Because of their incompetence, we are facing such brutality," he said.

One purported video also

appeared to show a police official from the northeast district slapping a young woman protester.

Meanwhile, other videos showed police personnel being attacked during the clashes.

In one clip, an officer trying to stop protesters in Connaught Place fell during a scuffle, after which some protesters allegedly pulled his hair and attacked him. Another video showed a protester pulling off a police personnel's helmet during an argument.

According to Delhi Police, more than 118 police person-

nel, including several senior officers, were injured and over 60 protesters sustained injuries after the CJP's protest march to Parliament, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over alleged examination irregularities, turned violent in the New Delhi area on Monday.

In a statement, Delhi Police alleged that protesters displayed "unruly, aggressive and violent behaviour," attacked security personnel, and damaged Government vehicles and public property.



Delhi Police deny CJP claim of pellet gun use in march

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Delhi Police on Tuesday rejected CJP's allegation of use of pellet guns by its personnel against protesters during the "Chalo Sansad" march. Cockroach Janata Party spokesperson Saurav Das on Tuesday shared a video on X alleging that the police had fired pellet guns at peaceful protesters.

The post also carried a video showing a man with perforations on his face that resembled having been inflicted by a pellet gun. "Fake News Alert," Delhi Police wrote on X in response. "Reports claiming that police forces are using pellet guns against peaceful protesters are completely false and misleading," the police said.

The force urged people not to share or circulate unverified content and advised the public to verify facts only through official sources before posting or forwarding information on social media. "Appropriate legal action will be taken against individuals found spreading rumours or misinformation," its post read.

In another post on social media, a user claimed that Rapid Action Force (RAP)

used a stun gun on the protesters. The police rubbished this claim a

"Reports claiming that the RAF used electric stun guns against protesters are completely false and misleading," they said.

Some videos showed police personnel being attacked during the clashes.

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Mumbai man sends food to CJP protesters at Jantar Mantar

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Protesters sitting at Jantar Mantar had a welcome visitor early Tuesday who came bearing food packets, all paid for.

A video clip, which has since gone viral, showed a delivery partner reaching the site where hundreds stay put amid heavy rain with packets of food ordered and paid for by a Mumbai resident.

Displaying the order details on his mobile phone, the man says the food was ordered by Anuj Rawat from Mumbai, Maharashtra, with instructions to distribute it to anyone hungry.

"Someone named Anuj Rawat from Mumbai, Maharashtra, ordered the food and asked us to distribute it to anyone hungry at Jantar Mantar. The payment has already been made



online," the delivery partner says in the video.

The clip has garnered widespread praise. Several users hailed the Mumbaikar's solidarity, while others commented that "humanity is not lost."

The video surfaced a day after thousands of protesters participating in the Cockroach Janta Party's Parliament march were subjected to a lathi charge and tear gas.

CJP march echoes 15 years of major Delhi protests

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The attempted march by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters towards Parliament on Monday, leading to clashes with the police and detentions, brought back memories of similar mass protests over the last 15 years in the national Capital. These included the 2021 tractor rally on January 26, where protesting farmers breached security at the Red Fort and or the 2012 Nirbhaya agitation, where ordinary citizens reached the doors of Raisina Hill.

The 2021 Republic Day tractor rally was among the biggest protests to witness a march towards central Delhi. As part of the year-long agitation against the three farm laws, later scrapped, many farmers entered the capital with tractors on January 26 after assembling at the city's borders.

While the rally had been permitted on designated



routes, a section of the protesters breached barricades, deviated from the agreed routes and headed towards central Delhi, leading to clashes with police. Some protesters also entered the Red Fort complex and hoisted the Nishan Sahib and farmers' union flags from its ramparts. More than 300 police personnel were injured in the violence.

On Monday, Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters carrying the tricolour raised

slogans and pushed through multiple police barricades while demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged paper leaks and examination irregularities. Police used force to stop the protesters from marching towards Parliament.

Attempts to march towards Parliament or other high-security areas in central Delhi have featured in several major protests over the years,

WFAIR REPORT ng to press their demands before the Government.

The preparations on the ground appeared to indicate that the police believed the protest march would fizzle out before noon. The area around Jantar Mantar was extensively barricaded. Initially, around 2,000 personnel were deployed. The Home Ministry also seems to have believed that the protest would not sustain. The initial internet shutdown order was issued from 6 am to noon. However, as the situation spiralled out of control, with protesters breaking barricades and clashing with police, the internet shutdown was extended till 6 pm.

As the crowd swelled, the DMRC closed five metro stations, ostensibly to prevent more protesters from reaching the site. However, this created chaos and an unending agony for the thousands of office-goers and commuters who remained stuck for hours.

Bodies at the barricade: notes from Jantar Mantar student protest

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

On July 20, thousands of students converged on Jantar Mantar for CJP's "Chalo Sansad" march, demanding accountability from a Government that has spent years disclaiming responsibility for the state of the education system it presides over. What had begun as an orderly, almost procedural demonstration transformed by evening curdled into scenes of lathi charges, tear gas fired in sustained volleys, and crowds pressed against barricades with nowhere left to go.

I was there. What follows is my own account, alongside testimonies I gathered from four peers who were present at different points along the march route — Aditi, Vikram, Saira*, and Palak. Read together, their accounts do not converge on a single narrative so much as they triangulate one: a demonstration that was peaceful and self-policing until the state decided otherwise, and a use

of force so undifferentiated that it stopped distinguishing between protester and bystander, advance and retreat, dissent and simple presence.

The morning

We arrived early. The mood was determined but not adversarial; if anything, what struck me was how unremarkable it all felt. The police, for most of the morning, were genuinely courteous. There was no indication, yet, of where the day was headed. By early afternoon, the heat had gotten to me. I started feeling unwell along with a few others, and we withdrew to steady myself that news reached us of what was happening to the rest of our group: lathi charges, tear gas shells landing in the same stretch we'd occupied less than an hour before.

Aditi, a first-year student, was still in the crowd when



the police moved to push it back.

"They were trying to push us back with lathis, but there was no place to go," she said. "It just ended up hitting us, and we were being squashed against each other. You couldn't breathe, because the crowd was so thick, and when you turned your face to breathe upward, it was just tear gas and your eyes, face and throat started burning. It

was really horrible."

At one point, Aditi fell. "I thought I might die, because that's how stampedes happen," she said. What kept it from becoming one, by her own account, was the crowd's own restraint — the people around her were careful enough not to step on her, and she was able to get back up.

Vikram was elsewhere in the same crowd, said that

even though this issue doesn't affect him personally "I can't turn my back on an issue that affects lakhs of people, and a government that takes no accountability," he said. He described people bleeding from the head, every route blocked, tear gas on every side, and a question he kept returning to: why force, instead of dialogue?

Nothing in what he described suggested a target-

ed or discriminating dispersal. It was tear gas released indiscriminately into a packed, contained crowd that was the precise conditions under which a stampede became likely rather than merely possible. People were not being pushed back in any orderly sense. They were being trapped.

Saira left home at 8 a.m. and did not return until 10 that night. By the time things escalated, she said, tear gas was being dropped on both ends of the crowd simultaneously, front and back - collapsing whatever direction people might have retreated toward. People ended up colliding into one another simply trying to find space that no longer existed. In Connaught Place, she said, a tear gas shell was dropped even on people who were already retreating rather than advancing. This detail, if accurate, undercuts any reading of the response as a controlled attempt to disperse an advancing crowd.

She described Reserve Armed Forces personnel charging at bystanders, and said she watched around a dozen of them, in blue uniforms, beating three people at once. When police then charged toward her own group, they ran and tried to get off the street; shopkeepers locked their doors against them. "The employees of KFC were laughing at us and recording videos when we were pleading with them to let us in to get away from the personnel and the tear gas."

"Lathi charge is the new normal"

Palak, another protester I spoke to, was among the first people standing behind the barricades on Sansad Marg, and her account traces the same arc as mine: police cordial at first, and then, with little warning, tear gas fired at intervals of two to three minutes until a stampede broke out. Even then, she said, people were doing their best

to remain respectful of one another.

She and a friend were both hit by lathis, her friend repeatedly. She noted that police seemed, at moments, to go somewhat easier on women, though this held inconsistently: when a group of women told officers they were already leaving, "they still didn't stop."

By her count, (reported by Saira* as well) roughly ten rounds of tear gas were fired within eight minutes, some directed at people who were already running away. She saw one man beaten badly enough that his head split open; she and others were administering first aid to him when police moved in again, scattering everyone before they could finish. What has stayed with her most is the indiscriminate-ness of it; they were hitting people left and right, not caring if they were retreating. "It was a really sorry situation," she said.

States Focus



HARYANA'S CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER REVIEWS SIR'S PROGRESS

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) A Sreenivas on Tuesday reviewed the progress of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and directed district authorities to ensure that no eligible voter is left out of the revision exercise.

Chairing a video conference with deputy commissioners and election officials from all districts, Sreenivas reviewed the work of Booth Level Officers (BLOs), including the collection of enumeration forms, enrolment of eligible voters and identification of ineligible entries in the electoral rolls. Additional Chief Electoral Officers Ritu and Apurv, along with Joint Chief Electoral Officer Raj Kumar Lohan, attended the meeting from the New Civil Secretariat in Chandigarh. (PTI)



SUKHU ASKS WORKERS TO STRENGTHEN CONGRESS PARTY

Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Tuesday asked the Congress workers to remain united and strengthen the party's ideology while taking the State Government's policies and public welfare schemes to the people.

Sukhu's remarks came after launching the 'Chief Minister's Dialogue with Workers' programme for the Pachhad assembly constituency in Sirmaur district and the Chopal assembly constituency in Shimla district.

From his official residence, Oak Over, Shimla, Sukhu interacted with Congress workers from both constituencies, sought their feedback and discussed developmental works, a statement said.

He said that during the last three-and-a-half years, the State Government has launched several welfare schemes to ensure the well-being of the people, and every eligible person should receive their benefits.

Sukhu said the Congress Government inherited a deteriorated administrative system from the previous BJP Government, and that several measures have been taken since then to improve the system. (PTI)

FBI seeks Indian national Harmanveer Singh in drug probe

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Following a major crackdown on India-linked crime syndicates, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a federal wanted notice for Harmanveer Singh. He is an Indian national accused of helping the Ravinder Dhanda Organised Crime Group smuggle drugs across the border in Vancouver, Canada.

The FBI led Operation Hard Ball for several years, working with the RCMP and other international partners. The investigation resulted in three federal indictments charging 37 people with crimes like racketeering, extortion, violence, firearms offences, and international drug trafficking. Authorities arrested 24 people in the US, Canada, and Europe, but several fugitives, including Singh, remain at large.

Operation Hard Ball was announced in Los Angeles in early July 2026. It targeted three criminal groups based in India that operate in North

America and other regions. One of these is the Bishnoi Organised Crime Group, led by Lawrence Bishnoi, who has been in jail since 2015 and reportedly uses smuggled cellphones.

The Bhagwanpuria gang, led by jailed gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, was involved in murder-for-hire, weapons trafficking, and extortion. The Ravinder Dhanda drug trafficking network mainly operated in British Columbia's Lower Mainland.

Officials described these groups as "brutal transnational organisations that have terrorised families, exploited communities, and stolen lives." US First Assistant Attorney Bill Essayli said, "Transnational criminal gangs who spread fear, drugs, and violence will face the full force of justice... There is no safe harbour for these thugs." nd arrest warrants. They seized more than 1,000 kilograms of drugs, mostly cocaine and methamphetamine, along with a kilogram



of heroin. Officers also found dozens of firearms, including a fully automatic machine gun, and tens of thousands of dollars in cash.

The Dhanda organisation is known for allegedly acting as a professional smuggling broker. The indictment says Ravinder Singh Dhanda, also known as "John Wick," ran operations in the Vancouver area, including White Rock and Surrey. He is accused of

organising the storage, transport, smuggling, and distribution of methamphetamine, cocaine, and other drugs across the US-Canada border each week.

The network is accused of hiding hundreds of kilograms of drugs in long-haul semi-trucks carrying real cargo and in farm trucks near the border. It offered "international smuggling services" to drug trafficking groups in

the United States, Canada, and Mexico. From March 2024 to July 2025, the group allegedly stole about 520 kilograms of cocaine from rivals in the Los Angeles area. Dhanda was arrested in British Columbia during the operation and now faces extradition to the United States. The civil forfeiture director in British Columbia is also trying to seize two of his Metro Vancouver properties, worth millions of dollars, claiming they were bought with money from crime.

Harmanveer Singh, born September 26, 1994, is wanted for his alleged role in the Dhanda conspiracy. A federal arrest warrant was issued for him on June 23, 2026, in the US District Court for the Central District of California. He is accused of conspiracy to distribute and possess controlled substances, conspiracy to export controlled substances, and possession with intent to distribute controlled substances. Singh also goes by the names "Hari Gautam" and "Harman

Sandhu." He is described as an Indian male, 5'7" tall, weighing 190 pounds, with black hair and black eyes.

The indictment does not specify Singh's exact role in the group. Still, his inclusion among the accused shows that law enforcement considers him part of the Dhanda network's drug trafficking and export operations. He is still a fugitive, and the FBI is actively seeking information about his whereabouts. The Dhanda case highlights drug smuggling between the US and Canada. The network is said to have moved drugs in commercial vehicles, sometimes with help from corrupt insiders.

Operation Hard Ball is a rare example of cooperation between the US, Canada, India, and Europe against these crime syndicates. As of mid-July 2026, Harmanveer Singh is still on the run. The FBI asks anyone with information to contact their local field office, the nearest US embassy or consulate, or to submit tips online.

West Bengal CM Adhikari flags off 50 eco-friendly AC buses

FAIR REPORT
■ Kolkata

Focusing strongly on an eco-friendly transport system, Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari announced the launching of 1000 eco-friendly air-conditioned buses in phases, flagging off the first 50 on Tuesday.

Saying that in a year's time Bengal would see a discernible change in its transportation system, Adhikari iterated, "We have plans to bring out 1000 buses," besides starting water metro services soon. Disclosing his government's plans to implement an eco-friendly transport system, the Chief Minister said that he had talks with Union Urban Development Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on launching more electric buses in Bengal on a 60:40



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari along with State Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar and others flag off 50 buses at Paribahan Bhawan in Kolkata, West Bengal (PTI)

cost partnership between the centre and the state governments. The Chief Minister also unveiled his plans to expand the metro connectivity to lesser cities outside Kolkata. He said that his gov-

ernment was planning to take the metro railway network to the industrial cities of Asansol and Durgapur and Siliguri and Jalpaiguri in North Bengal. "I will request Chief Secretary

(Manoj Agarwal) to prepare projects with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank or the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO)" to start metro connectivity

between Asansol and Durgapur and Siliguri and Jalpaiguri, he said.

Adhikari, who subsequently held a meeting with the State Electricity Department, launched the Vidyut Prahari app to stop theft of electricity. During a review meeting with senior officials, the Chief Minister ordered a zero-tolerance approach so as to stop power pilferage.

"I have asked them not to show any leniency towards the commercial consumers. I know many politicians own such establishments and are not paying power bills ... I will ask you not to take note of any political interference ... don't listen to even BJP leaders ... take a strong stance on power bills ... but show some leniency towards domestic customers who sometimes face hardships," he said.

ED registers PMLA case in ₹336 crore crypto fraud

FAIR REPORT
■ Bengaluru/New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday registered a money-laundering case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and searched locations linked to an alleged ₹336 crore cryptocurrency fraud targeting a Dutch national.

The Bengaluru office of the agency carried out raids on July 18 and 19, focusing on over-the-counter (OTC) crypto Tokens involved in the case, including MultiverseX, Kava, BEAM, GRASS, SUI, VANA, and AGLD, among others.

The PMLA case began after the cybercrime police station in South Andaman received a complaint from a Dutch national about large-scale cheating in crypto investments.

The ED said the accused took multi-million-dollar investments from the

complainant but stopped delivering the promised tokens when market prices went up.

The ED identified Ravindra K, based in Bengaluru, as the mastermind behind the fraud. The agency now estimates the scam's value at \$35 million (₹336 crore), which is much higher than the \$10 million reported in the original police FIR. During the raids, the ED seized 87,000 USDT. Investigators also found that the same suspects cheated several other foreign investors, many of whom have not yet filed complaints.

OTC crypto trading involves direct, private deals between parties, often outside regulated exchanges. These deals carry greater risk because they lack transparency and oversight, making them attractive to fraudsters who exploit market changes. The ED's action under PMLA lets it



trace, attach, and possibly confiscate the proceeds of crime.

This case highlights the agency's increased focus on cryptocurrency-related money laundering, in which digital assets are used to conceal illicit funds. Ravindra K and his associates allegedly gained the complainant's trust by promising to deliver

tokens but failed to do so when prices rose. As a result, the Dutch investor lost a large sum of money, while the accused retained the funds.

Finding more foreign victims during the Bengaluru searches suggests the scam was bigger than first believed. The ED has asked anyone affected to come forward

and help with the investigation. Crypto fraud has been rising in India in recent years, with more international investors being targeted by complex digital scams.

This case shows how difficult it is for regulators to monitor cross-border OTC deals in anonymous crypto environments. The ED is still investigating to track the full money trail, identify all beneficiaries, and recover assets. More actions, such as attaching property, are expected as the investigation continues, especially for high-risk crypto investments and OTC trades that promise guaranteed delivery or high returns. Doing due diligence on counterparties and using regulated platforms remain important safeguards. The quick registration of the PMLA case and the raids show the ED's determination to act firmly against financial crimes involving new digital assets.

Bengaluru: GBA officials attacked during anti-encroachment drive

FAIR REPORT
■ Bengaluru

Street vendors allegedly attacked Bengaluru municipal officers and employees who had gone to clear encroachments on a footpath in Shivaji Nagar on Tuesday.

On the directions of Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, officials of the Greater Bengaluru Authority have been carrying out a drive to remove encroachments from pavements.

On Tuesday, when a team of GBA officials reached Shivaji Nagar, some people allegedly turned violent, dragged Assistant Executive Engineer Gowtham and a few other officers onto the road, and assaulted them.

They allegedly used pepper spray on another



official named Ruchitha.

"Five suspected attackers have already been caught by the police. The main instigator, Basavaraj Pudukote, will also be arrested soon. All the attackers will be booked on charges of attempt to murder," a police officer said.

Condemning the attack, Gowda said he had directed the police to take stringent action against those responsible.

"The attackers are not hardworking poor people earning their livelihood.

They are anti-social elements. Assaulting Government officials while they are implementing the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions is a serious violation of the law. We stand firmly with officers discharging their public duty in accordance with the law," he said.

According to Gowda, the driver of a tractor and the operator of an earthmover engaged in the encroachment removal drive were also hospitalised following the attack.

"Police have arrested some people. I have asked the police to book Basavaraj under the Goonda Act. Those who attacked our staff with pepper spray will be booked on charges of attempted murder," the minister told reporters.

Union Govt sets up cyber teams for Jamtara, Mewat hotspots

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Jamtara in Jharkhand and Mewat in Haryana are among seven regions where the Centre has constituted Joint Cyber Coordination Teams (JCCTs) to strengthen coordination in tackling cybercrime, the Government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In a written reply to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said the teams have been set up under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) for Mewat, Jamtara, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Visakhapatnam and Guwahati.

He said the teams cover the entire country by onboarding States and Union Territories to enhance the coordination framework among law



enforcement agencies in dealing with cybercrime hotspots and cases involving multiple jurisdictions.

The minister said the I4C has operationalised the 'Samanvaya' platform as a management information system, data repository and coordination platform for cybercrime data sharing and analytics. Its 'Pratibimb' module maps the locations of criminals and cybercrime infrastructure and facilitates technological assistance to law enforcement agencies.

Omar vows to intensify J&K Statehood stir after Delhi protest

FAIR REPORT
■ Jammu

Even after receiving a cold response from India alliance partners and Kashmir-based Opposition parties, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said his party would intensify its agitation until the Centre restores Statehood.

Apparently, the ruling party failed to amplify its demand at the national level in support of restoration of Statehood, as none of the national leaders, including members of the India alliance, attended the sit-in dharna in New Delhi on Monday.

A day after the protest, Omar in Srinagar launched a scathing attack against a section of Opposition parties that stayed away from the protest and mocked the National Conference on their social media handles.

A handful of leaders of the J&K unit of the Congress party

stood with National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah as he led the protest march, after the formal permission was denied to stage a sit-in dharna at Jantar Mantar. All other national party leaders and prominent citizens, invited by the National Conference, stayed away.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Omar on Tuesday asserted the Centre must honour its commitment and restore J&K's Statehood.

Defending his party's stand on the issue, Omar said the National Conference had gone to Delhi to remind the Union Government of assurances made in Parliament, before the Supreme Court and to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that Statehood would be restored after the Assembly elections.

"This is the beginning, not the end. The movement will continue," he said, adding that protests would continue in Delhi as well as



across Jammu and Kashmir. Omar said the demand for statehood belonged to all people of Jammu and Kashmir and should not have been reduced to party politics. Without mincing words, Omar clarified that any discussion on constitutional guarantees, including Article 370, can follow only after that.

"What's the meaning of Article 370 without statehood?" Omar asked. "If there's no State, where's the State List? Without statehood, everything remains under the Union List. Statehood is the foundation. Once that foundation is restored, we can move towards discussions on constitutional guarantees," he said.

Responding to criticism that the NC was no longer focusing on Article 370, he said the party had not diluted its stand. "J&K Assembly has already passed a resolution seeking restoration of J&K's special constitutional position, the chief minister said.

Omar said NC president Farooq Abdullah would decide the future course of the agitation. He reiterated there would be "no compromise" until the Centre fulfilled its commitment to restore Statehood.

Without naming any political adversary, Omar said, "I'm not disappointed by the attitude of the Central Government as much as I'm saddened by those who claim to be sympathisers of Jammu and Kashmir but choose to remain silent at crucial moments."

"We invited every political party because this is not the issue of one party or one Government. It concerns the entire people of Jammu and

Kashmir. Instead of joining us, some tried to ridicule and weaken our efforts," he said.

Without naming the People's Democratic Party, Abdullah also criticised parties that had allied with the BJP in the past, saying those questioning the NC's commitment to Article 370 had themselves abandoned their agenda to form a Government with the BJP, while the National Conference had remained consistent on the issue.

On support from other political parties, Abdullah said Congress leaders remained with the NC throughout the protest, while leaders from the CPI and CPI(M) also joined. He added that several opposition leaders, including those from the NCP, Trinamool Congress and the Samajwadi Party, could not reach the venue because of restrictions and road closures in the national Capital.

