

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

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NATURE'S WRATH

Swollen Godavari river partially submerges an area after heavy rainfall in Nashik, Thursday.

Remove Pradhan or Face the Heat': Fringe Party Chief Warns PM Modi

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Escalating his attack over the education crisis, Abhi-jeet Dipke, founding president of the Cockroach Janta Party, publicly urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, warning that public outrage could eventually be directed at the Prime Minister himself. Addressing the media in Delhi, Dipke said, "Modi ji, I once again request you to accept Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. Otherwise, the issue will not remain limited to Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation alone; it will come for your resignation also."

Rahul Gandhi Alleges Police Block Congress Protest Bus, Accuses BJP Govt of 'Silencing Students'

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Thursday released a video from inside a Congress bus, accusing the BJP-led Central government of obstructing a peaceful protest in solidarity with students and alleging that the administration was attempting to suppress democratic dissent. In the video, Gandhi claimed that Congress leaders had planned to march to India Gate to express support for students protesting over education-related issues, but were prevented from doing so by the authorities. "Students are on the streets, so in solidarity we wanted to protest at India Gate, but the government stopped us. Now, when we were going to Gandhi Sm-

is being considered more important than these crores of students, then remember: no one in India will vote for you in the elections," he said. The remarks come amid continuing political debate over education-related issues, with opposition parties and several student groups demanding greater accountability from the Union Education Ministry. Dipke sought to frame the controversy as a test of the government's commitment to students, asserting that electoral consequences could follow if public concerns remain unaddressed. There was no immediate response from the Prime Minister's Office or the Union Education Ministry to Dipke's remarks. The comments add another voice—albeit from a fringe political outfit—to the growing chorus of criticism surrounding the Education Ministry, even as the government continues to defend its handling of student-related concerns.

'Nothing Is More Important Than Our Youth'

PM Modi Announces Fast-Track Courts for Paper Leak Cases

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Sending a strong message against examination malpractice, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced that the government will establish fast-track courts to ensure the speedy trial and strict punishment of those involved in paper leak cases, describing the protection of students' futures as a national priority.

Declaring that the welfare and future of young people stand above all else, the Prime Minister said he had directed the concerned authorities to take all necessary steps to operationalise the proposed fast-track judicial mechanism. "Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth," Modi said, adding that the move forms part of a broader series of measures aimed at safeguarding the interests of students and restoring confidence in the country's examination system.

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Reiterating the government's zero-tolerance approach, Modi warned that those attempting to jeopardise the aspirations of young Indians would face the full force of the law. "Those who try to harm the future of our youth will not be spared," he asserted. The proposed fast-track courts are expected to accelerate prosecution in paper leak cases, a move the government believes will strengthen deterrence and reinforce public trust in examination processes. The announcement also signals the Centre's attempt to address growing concerns over the integrity of competitive examinations, an issue that has become a major political and governance challenge in recent years.

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'Students Come First, Go Home': Salman Khan Urges Protesters to Trust PM Modi's Assurance

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Salman Khan on Thursday appealed to students protesting over the alleged examination paper leak to return home, expressing confidence that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would ensure strict action against those responsible for the breach.

In a public message, Khan said the safety and educational future of students remained the government's highest priority and urged both students and their parents not to worry. "The students are at top priority, educationally and security-wise, so they need not worry or have their parents worried for them. The Honorable Prime Minister has tweeted, and I am sure that he will take strict action against all those people who are responsible for this leak," Khan said.

Appealing directly to students, the actor added, "Students, please go back to your parents and homes." Addressing activist Sonam Wangchuk, Salman Khan urged him to



end his fast, saying the Prime Minister's announcement had addressed the core concern.

"Sonam, it's done, bro. Don't extend this. Keep the spirit for another day if there be a need, which I doubt, and eat something. If you want, I'll send you food from home," he said. Salman Khan's remarks came shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the establishment of fast-track courts to ensure speedy trials and stringent punishment in paper leak cases, reiterating that those who jeopardise the future of India's youth would not be spared. The actor's appeal adds a high-profile celebrity voice to the debate, urging protesters to place faith in the government's assurances while the administration moves to implement its promised measures.

Rajasthan Health Minister's Surprise Hospital Checks Amid Maternal Death Scrutiny; Orders Faster Upgrade of Women's Care

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

Amid mounting concern over maternal deaths in Rajasthan, Health Minister Jagendra Singh Khimsar conducted surprise inspections of two of Jaipur's largest government women's hospitals on Tuesday, reviewing emergency services, critical care facilities and infrastructure while directing officials to expedite improvements in maternal healthcare.

Without prior intimation to hospital authorities, Khimsar visited Sanganeri Gate Women's Hospital and Janana Hospital, Chandpole, inspecting OPD, IPD and

ICU facilities and interacting with doctors and administrators to assess the quality of services being provided to pregnant women.

The inspection comes at a time when maternal mortality has drawn sharp public attention in the state. Seeking to allay concerns, the Minister asserted that Rajasthan's maternal mortality ratio remains within acceptable limits and compares favourably with national and international benchmarks. He attributed the recent rise in maternal complications largely to seasonal illnesses such as malaria and typhoid, maintaining that these

SILENCE IS NO SOLUTION: WHEN STUDENTS ASK QUESTIONS, DEMOCRACY MUST ANSWER



Hemraj Tikamchand Tiwari

By Special Feature Desk

A democracy does not become weaker because students protest. It becomes weaker when questions are met with barricades instead of answers.

The anger over repeated examination paper

leaks is not merely about one test or one minister. It is about the erosion of trust in institutions that determine the future of millions of young Indians. Every leaked paper represents years of hard work reduced to a cruel lottery.

If students cannot demand accountability, who can? In a parliamentary democracy, asking for the resignation of a minister is not sedition, nor is it an assault on the Constitution. It is a legitimate political demand. Governments are free to reject such demands—but they cannot delegitimise the right to raise them.

Equally disturbing are reports and videos alleging excessive use of force during protests. Every allegation of police misconduct, especially involving women protesters, deserves an independent, transparent investigation. If law enforcement crossed legal or ethical boundaries, accountability cannot stop at the constable on the street.

The larger question is unavoidable: after years of recurring paper leak scandals across recruitment and entrance examinations, why do masterminds so rarely face swift conviction? Why do criminal networks ap-

pear to outlast governments? Why are students repeatedly paying the price for administrative failure?

India rightly aspires to become a global knowledge superpower. That ambition cannot rest on compromised examinations and public distrust. Restoring faith requires more than promises. It demands impartial investigations, speedy trials, exemplary punishment within the rule of law, and political accountability at every level. Students are not asking for favours. They are asking for fairness. In a democracy, that is the minimum the Republic owes them.



India and Israel cross new agricultural milestone

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

More than 3,500 farmers from across Haryana gathered in Munimpur village, Jhajjar district, on 17 June 2026 to inaugurate the 35th Indo-Israel Centre of Excellence (CoE) under the Indo-Israel Agricultural Project (IIAP). Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Agriculture Minister Shyam Singh Rana, and Israel's Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, joined the event, underscoring the growing trust in this long-running bilateral partnership. The new centre, built at a cost of ₹8.50 crore, specialises in seed production technology, floriculture, and quality planting material. A companion Horticulture

Research Centre at Raiya, costing ₹13.27 crore, will focus on locally adapted horticultural crops and medicinal plants. Together, they mark another milestone in a programme that began with a single centre at Gharaunda in 2008 and has now expanded to 35 facilities across 12 states. Chief Minister Saini highlighted the centres' role in boosting farmer incomes through innovative technologies and international collaboration. Ambassador Azar pointed to a deeper shift: "The first Centre of Excellence, 30 years ago, was brought from Israel with Israeli components and technology. But this centre was built only by Indian companies with Indian components. Today and in the future, every



technology we bring from Israel will be produced in India and owned by India." This evolution from technology importer to domestic manufacturer reflects the programme's maturing model of practical knowledge transfer. Rather than abstract

duces over 25 million quality vegetable seedlings and 387,000 fruit plants, while training around 1.2 lakh farmers each year. More than 250 Indian agricultural officers have received advanced training in Israel. The initiative has also grown into "Villages of Excellence" to spread modern practices across entire rural clusters. In a country where agriculture consumes the lion's share of freshwater and groundwater depletion is a pressing concern, the partnership's focus on resource efficiency is particularly valuable. Israeli expertise in water-scarce farming — pioneered through precision irrigation and protected cultivation — has been adapted to Indian realities,

helping farmers raise yields and quality while using fewer inputs. A new example is N-Drip, a gravity-powered micro-irrigation system introduced through Israel's MASHAV agency. By eliminating the need for pumps or electricity, it aims to bring precision irrigation within reach of small and marginal farmers. The true measure of success lies not just in numbers of centres or trainees, but in higher incomes, better produce, and more sustainable practices. As India balances the need to raise farm incomes with responsible resource use, the Indo-Israel model offers a proven template for long-term, practical technology transfer at scale.

Nation Focus



DRDO conducts maiden flight test of Kusha long-range missile

The DRDO on Thursday successfully conducted the maiden flight-test of Kusha long-range surface-to-air missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. The test was conducted against an "electronic target" simulating high-speed and high-altitude aerial threat which was successfully intercepted by the missile system, the defence ministry said. The Kusha missile system is capable of neutralising a wide variety of aerial threats including fighter jets, missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and large enemy aircraft within a wide range and altitude envelope, the ministry said in a statement. (PTI)



Mizoram CM reviews key infrastructure projects

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Thursday chaired the fourth meeting of a high-level monitoring committee established in last year and reviewed the progress of major infrastructure projects across the state. The meeting of the Mizoram Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (Mi-PRAGATI) focused on the ongoing construction of the Aizawl western side by-pass road, where issues related to the dumping site, pending compensation, refugee relocation and forest clearance were discussed, an official statement said. Officials presented reports on follow-up actions taken since previous meetings, and the chief minister instructed departments to pursue unresolved matters more vigorously. (PTI)

Houses of 2 LeT terrorists demolished, over 2,000 detained after cop killed in J&K

FAIR REPORT ■ Jammu

Sending out a stern message to the perpetrators behind the targeted killing of a police head constable deployed on Amamath yatra duty in the South Kashmir district of Anantnag, authorities on Thursday demolished the houses of two local Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists, believed to be active in the area. The action followed close on the heels of the detention of over 2000 suspected over-ground workers (OGWs) as part of an ongoing investigation into the Anantnag terror attack. In a related development, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also chaired a high-level security review meeting with senior officials from the Army, J&K Police, Civil Administration, central paramilitary forces, and key security agencies. Sinha directed officials to remain highly vigilant, step up intelligence-led anti-terror operations and proactively neutralise emerging security threats.

According to official sources, hours after the top brass of the Jammu and Kashmir Police paid floral tributes before dispatching the mortal remains of Head Constable Ashiq Hussain Qureshi to his native village in the central Kashmir district of Budgam for the last rites, the houses of local terrorists Adil Ahmad Thokar and Haroon Rashid Ganaie were razed to the ground during the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. The homes of Haroon Ganie and Adil Ahmad Thokar were demolished in the Hasanpora and Bijbehara areas of south Kashmir. Similar demolitions were carried out in the aftermath of the Pahalgalam attack in April 2025, when the homes of at least nine suspected terrorists were blown up in different parts of the Valley. Later, a multi-storey house, belonging to Dr Umar Un Nabi, who allegedly triggered the car blast near the Red Fort Metro station on November

10, 2025, was demolished using explosives during the intervening night of November 13-14 in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reacted strongly to these demolitions. He cautioned against wanton retributive action in the wake of a terror attack in Anantnag that killed a policeman on Wednesday, saying violence cannot be brought to an end without carrying the people along. "I understand the anger of the police, but the Supreme Court has issued an order stating that summary action of this kind should not be taken. "We witnessed a similar situation after the Pahalgalam attack (in April 2025) when some people's houses were bulldozed. At that time, I had to speak to the Central Government to stop the trend," Abdullah told reporters. He also spoke out against the detention of hundreds of individuals in the Valley, stating that this "will not



People stand near debris after a house belonging to Haroon Rashid Ganaie, a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist, was demolished at Bijbehara in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday

help improve the situation in J&K but in turn strain it further." The chief minister stated that while the police had blown up homes of suspected terrorists after the Pahalgalam attack, the investigation showed that those involved in the attack were from outside J&K. Pointing to his previous stint as chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Abdullah said that based on his experience, the cycle of violence cannot be brought to an end without taking the people along.

"We can reach a certain point using the police, Army and the CRPF, but the real end will come only when the general public stands together against such violence. "After the Pahalgalam incident, the general public expressed their anger and raised their voice against the terror attack. Even today, people are angry over how head constable Ashiq was brutally killed," Abdullah said. Referring to the detention of over-ground workers (OGWs) across the Kashmir Valley in the aftermath of

Wednesday's attack, the chief minister said when such reports come, people's anger turns against the system. "I hope we take our people along in this fight; only then will we achieve real success," Abdullah said. Former J&K chief minister and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said that demolishing houses of "alleged" terrorists was "collective punishment" that has no place in a democracy. "The killing of a police officer in the line of duty is a heinous and condemnable act. But detaining over a thousand people and demolishing the homes of families of two alleged militants amounts to collective punishment that has no place in a democracy," Mehbooba said in a post on X. If the Centre maintains that militancy has been reduced to near zero, it must adopt a more humane and lawful approach towards innocent civilians instead of resorting to "tit for tat" for an entire community, the former J&K chief minister said.



West Bengal civic heads lose power to issue birth certificates

FAIR REPORT ■ Kolkata

The Bengal Government has decided to bar all civic heads including the panchayat pradhans, municipal chairmen and even the Mayors of various corporations from issuing birth certificates after massive irregularities in issuing the same across the State were found in recent inspections. The decision was on Thursday announced by State Chief Secretary Manoj Agarwal following reports suggesting about 25 percent fake birth registrations from the samples checked. The rate of issuance of fake birth certificates witnessed a sudden rise between 2023 and February 2026 out of which there was a whopping rise in such cases in the last one year that incidentally coincided with special intensive revision of electoral rolls ahead of the recently concluded Assembly elections. The Bengal police administration has also started conducting simultaneous raids at various places including municipalities, Corporations, panchayats and even the burning ghats to find out fake registration of deaths apparently in order to establish backward linkages of persons whose parents were not registered as voters in 2002 electoral rolls. According to Government sources in one district about 11 thousand certificates were found to be fake out of a sample of 47,000. Most number of fake certificates were found in Malda, Murshidabad, two Dinajpurs, two 24 Parganas, Nadia and Birbhum, sources said. For

instance the figure was 16000 in Malda compared to 8,000 in Murshidabad. While North Dinajpur recorded a massive 58,000 issuances there were about 19,000 fake certificates to be found in North 24 Parganas. Police raids were conducted in various wards and central record room in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, sources said adding the police also raided the registry at burning ghats in Kolkata. The Government had received many such complaints, Agarwal said adding such irregularities were noticed during SIR. "Many people have taken advantage of the situation" bypassing the rules... If anyone has knowingly and deliberately committed fraud, they won't be spared." However the top official iterated that the "initiative is being undertaken to restore transparency. It will not cause problems for anyone. Those who have obtained genuine birth certificates have no cause for worry or fear." Keeping the largescale malpractices in issuance of birth certificates the Government has also decided to seize the power of issuing such certificates from the panchayat pradhans, municipal chairmen and even Corporation Mayors. "The officers will issue birth certificates," the officer said. In order to prevent fraud, the Government would fully integrate its systems with the central Civil Registration System (CRS) portal, he said adding the Government would proceed with a humane approach and that no one required to be scared.

NIA arrests key absconder in PFI-linked Srinivasan murder case at IGI airport

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

On Thursday, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Muhammadali KP, a key absconder and former Palakkad district president of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI), at Indira Gandhi International Airport after he arrived from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This arrest is an important step in the 2022 Sreenivasan murder case and brings the total number of people in custody to 67. Muhammadali KP had been living in Saudi Arabia for four years. He was already one of the 65 people charged in the case registered as RC-02/2022/NIA/KOC. The NIA has charged him under the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Authorities announced a reward of Rs three lakh for information leading to his arrest, and Interpol issued a Red Notice. Investigators say Muhammadali, from Palakkad district in Kerala, played a key role in planning the killing of Sreenivasan on April 16, 2022. According to the NIA, he helped organise the murder and gave shelter to those



involved. The agency took over the investigation in September 2022. It linked the crime to the PFI's larger goal of using violence to create communal divisions and what it calls a plan to establish Islamic rule in India by 2047. The NIA found that the PFI operated through a network of different wings and units. The group is accused of using its offices, campuses, and other facilities to train selected members in the use of weapons, while presenting these activities as physical education and yoga programs run by its PE Wing. "The Reporters Wing" gathered information about possible targets, and "Service Teams" carried out violent attacks. Investigators think Sreenivasan's murder was planned to create fear and divide communities. According to the NIA, the

accused worked together to promote violent extremism and jihad in India. With Muhammadali K.P. now in custody, the agency says its case against the other suspects is stronger, and it is still following leads about the group's wider network. The arrest at a major international airport highlights the NIA's ongoing efforts to find fugitives linked to banned groups. Officials said the accused had been living quietly in Saudi Arabia since leaving India after the case picked up speed. His return and arrest are important steps in the investigation and raise more questions about the PFI's methods and funding. The Sreenivasan murder case is still one of the most high-profile investigations since the PFI was banned. The NIA has already filed charge sheets against many of the accused and is still looking into the roles of different units within the group. The investigation is ongoing, with agencies focusing on the remaining networks and absconders. This latest development is expected to help the prosecution as the case moves through the courts, sources said.

Bestselling Adam Nee Evide Aakunnu? set to reach wider audience with english edition next month

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Thiruvananthapuram

After emerging as one of Kerala's biggest publishing successes in recent years, Chief Minister VD Satheesan's bestselling book *Adam Nee Evide Aakunnu?* (Adam, Where Are You?) is set to reach a national readership with the formal launch of its English translation next month. The Malayalam original, published by DC Books on May 9, 2026, has witnessed extraordinary commercial success, becoming a stand-out non-fiction bestseller in the state. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, DC Books publisher Ravi DC said more than 20,000 copies of the Malayalam edition were sold in just two months of its release, underscoring the remarkable demand the title has generated. "The translation has been carried out by Rauf Rumi. The English edition will be released before August 30, 2026, and will be available through major bookstores and digital platforms across India and overseas by mid-August," he added.



Spread across 200 pages, the book is a collection of 32 speeches delivered by Satheesan to Christian communities across Kerala. Rather than presenting a conventional political memoir, the work reflects on faith, governance, ethics and public life, examining how Biblical teachings have shaped the Chief Minister's personal values, political outlook and decades-long public career. Literary commentators have described the book as a reflective spiritual and philosophical journey that transcends partisan politics, portraying the introspective thoughts of a public leader

seeking deeper moral meaning. The volume also carries a foreword by noted academic Ciyric Thomas, adding scholarly weight to the reflections. With its combination of spiritual depth, political insight and ethical reflection, *Adam Nee Evide Aakunnu?* has already made a significant mark in Malayalam publishing. The forthcoming English edition is expected to extend that impact, positioning the book as one of the most notable literary contributions from Kerala to the wider Indian readership this year.

India extends rare invitation to Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman for BRICS Summit

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

In a notable diplomatic gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman as a special guest to the 18th BRICS Summit, scheduled to be held on September 12-13 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Official sources confirmed that the invitation has already been conveyed to Dhaka. Bangladesh is neither a member nor an observer of BRICS, making the invitation significant. India currently holds the BRICS chairmanship for 2026, with the summit themed "Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainable Development."

According to Government sources, Tarique Rahman is likely to attend, which would mark his first visit to India since assuming office. This follows the February general elections in Bangladesh. Prime Minister Modi was among the first world leaders to invite the newly elected Bangladeshi leader. In April, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman visited India, during which a possible prime ministerial visit was discussed. Relations between the two neighbours have remained lukewarm. Tarique Rahman had earlier chosen to visit China via Malaysia, signalling a departure from his predecessor Sheikh Hasina's approach of prioritising India.



Despite this, New Delhi has continued to extend cooperative gestures without expecting immediate reciprocity. If the visit materialises, Prime Minister Modi is expected to hold bilateral talks aimed at resetting ties and addressing issues of mutual interest for the benefit of both nations. The summit will see participation from BRICS members — now expanded to 11 countries — including

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Leaders from Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Indonesia are also expected. Iran's representation remains unclear. This invitation continues India's tradition of engaging Bangladesh at high-level multilateral platforms. Earlier, India had invited former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the G20 Summit and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to the Voice of the Global South Summit. Diplomatic observers view the move as an opportunity to open a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relations through sustained dialogue and cooperation.

MPs in Parliamentary panel question officials over E20 fuel use

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Several MPs on Thursday questioned top Government officials over the rise in problems in vehicles due to the use of E20 (Ethanol-blended) fuel and asked what the Government was doing about it. Sources said the officials told the MPs during a department-related meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture that even though ethanol-blended fuel has been used for several years now, the problems in vehicles are a recent phenomenon. Asked what they were doing to check the problem, the officials said tests were underway to ascertain the reason behind



the rise in issues due to the use of E20 fuel. The sources added that the officials told the panel that the Government had already started ethanol-blended fuel to the extent of 19.2 per cent in 2022, which went up to 20 per cent only recently. Secretary in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, V Umashankar, and other stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, oil marketing companies, SIAM, ARAI, ACMA and ICAT, were present at the meeting.

States Focus



SC HAS 96,000 PENDING CASES: LAW MINISTER TELLS RS

The Supreme Court has more than 96,000 pending cases, with over 10,000 awaiting disposal for more than a decade, the Raja Sabha was told on Thursday. Collectively, 5.64 crore cases are pending across courts, including the top court, the 25 high courts and district and subordinate courts.

Citing data available on the National Judicial Data Grid, Law Minister Arjun Meghwal said in a written reply that as many as 80,660 cases are pending for more than 30 years across high courts.

In the top court, while 26 cases are pending for more than 30 years, 558 are awaiting disposal for over 20 years, he said. The disposal of cases, the minister said, is within the exclusive domain of the judiciary.

Pendency of cases in courts arises due to several factors, including complexity of facts involved, nature of evidence, and cooperation of stakeholders " Bar, investigating agencies, witnesses and litigants. (PTI)



YSRCP TO HOLD STATEWIDE YOUTH RALLIES ON JULY 28

The YSRCP on Thursday announced statewide protest rallies by its youth and student wings in all district headquarters on July 28, alleging that the Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Government had betrayed students and unemployed youth.

The opposition party alleged that the Government had promised to provide unemployment allowance until jobs were given but had accumulated dues running into thousands of crores.

"The Government has failed to honour its promises to the youth and ignored serious irregularities in the Mega District Selection Committee (DSC) recruitment process. We demand a CBI probe on this," a YSRCP press release said. (PTI)

Jammu flash flood death toll rises to 26

FAIR REPORT
■ Jammu

The death toll in the recent rain-triggered flash floods and landslides across Jammu region rose to 26 on Thursday with the recovery of the body of a 25-year-old woman from Poonch district, officials said.

The body of Khalida Kouser, wife of Yasar Iqbal of Murrah village, was recovered near the Fazalabad foot-bridge in Surankote during a search operation.

She had been washed away in the devastating flash floods that struck the area on the night of July 18, they said.

Officials said the decomposed body was shifted to the Sub-district hospital in Surankote, where the village lambardar, Zakir Hussain, identified it.

After completing legal formalities, they said the body was handed over to her family for the last rites.



A damaged footbridge over the Lidder River following flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall in Pahalgam, Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir PTI

With the latest recovery, the death toll in Poonch district has risen to 17, the highest among the affected districts and a total of 26 in the Jammu region, they said.

Overall, 29 people have lost their lives in the rain-related incidents across Jammu and Kashmir, including two deaths in Bandipora district and one in Budgam district in the Kashmir valley.

Those, who died in the flash floods in Murrah hamlet on the night of July 18 include 59 year Noor Safia wife of Mohd Latief, 16 year old son Sajad Ahmed son, Haqnawaz Ahmed (11), Shahnawaz Ahmed (11), daughter Khaldi Kouser wife of Yasar Iqbal (25) and grand child 2 year old Sofian, and other kins Bano Bi wife of Mohd Hussain (60) and Mohd Akram son of Mohd Liaqat (7).

Officials said search operations are continuing as six people are still missing.

Assam CM visits flood-hit Golaghat, reviews relief operations

FAIR REPORT | Golaghat/Dispur

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday visited flood-affected areas of Golaghat district to assess the damage caused by the recent floods and review ongoing rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts. During the visit, he also interacted with displaced residents at relief camps and assured them of continued Government support.

The Chief Minister first visited the relief camp at Bhaskar Senior Basic School in Kamarbandha, where 178 flood-affected people are currently taking shelter.

He spoke with camp inmates to understand their concerns, daily needs and the challenges they are facing.

Following the visit, Sarma said the district administra-



tion and concerned departments had been instructed to ensure that all essential services and relief materials reach affected families on priority. According to official figures, the recent floods have impacted 25,791 people in Golaghat district.

He later visited another relief camp at Numaligarh Higher Secondary School, which is sheltering 182 displaced people, including a large number of children. The Chief Minister interacted with the children and enquired about their well-being.

Addressing reporters after the visits, Sarma said the floods had caused extensive damage to agricultural land and livestock, while disrupting the lives of thousands of families across the district. He

1,200 rescued from Gujarat's rain-hit areas, 1 dead in Tapi

FAIR REPORT
■ Ahmedabad

Around 1,200 people have been rescued and hundreds more relocated to safer places as heavy showers battered south Gujarat districts, where Umbergaon taluka received over 1,100 mm rains in just 16 hours, an official said Thursday. One rain-related death was reported in Tapi district, while teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the state's SDRF as well as the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Coast Guard were put on alert for rescue efforts, he said.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel reviewed the rain situation and also spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who assured the Gujarat Government of all necessary assistance.

Valsad district was the worst affected by the recent rains with Umbergaon taluka receiving over 1,100 mm rains between 6 am on Wednesday and 10 am on Thursday, State



A vehicle partially submerged in a waterlogged underpass after heavy rainfall, near Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad on Thursday PTI

Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) data showed. Many other talukas in the district received over 600 mm rains during the same period, it said.

A 'red alert', warning of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall, was in effect since Wednesday for the southern districts of Valsad, Navsari, Surat, and Tapi, with NDRF and SDRF teams deployed there for rescue operations, Relief Commissioner Gaurang Makwana said.

"The Air Force and Coast Guard are also on alert and people will be airlifted if necessary, once weather condi-

tions improve," he told reporters. Makwana informed that deployment of disaster management personnel is being scaled up in view of increase in the intensity of rainfall, and rescue operations are being conducted in coordination with the administration, police, and local volunteers. "1,200 people have been rescued, and 1,500 residents in Surat moved to safe locations. In Navsari district, 200 people stranded across 11 villages due to rise in the water level of the Kaveri river have been rescued and relocated to safety," said the IAS officer.

Severe flooding in Maharashtra's Palghar district; 891 rescued



FAIR REPORT
■ Palghar

A massive relief and rescue operation was launched in Maharashtra's coastal Palghar district on Thursday after heavy rains cut off several villages in Dahanu and Talasari talukas, inundating low-lying areas and leading to power outages.

Emergency response teams have so far rescued 891 people or 218 families from flood-affected areas while some two lakh people are living without electricity, officials said. Collector Dr Indu Rani Jakhar said the district has been receiving torrential rainfall since Wednesday night, with Dahanu and Talasari bearing the brunt.

All educational institutions in the district have been ordered to remain closed on Thursday, she said. "National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have been deployed in Talasari and Dahanu to carry out rescue operations," she said, adding that an emergency rescue team from the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation

(WVMC) and a local rescue unit at Bharad (Charoti) have also been helping stranded residents. A person was found dead in a nullah in the district, Collector Jakhar said. The identity of the deceased was yet to be established.

Water is being discharged from Kurje and Dhamani dams as they are filled to capacity. "All villages situated along the canal banks have been put on high alert, and the local administration is maintaining continuous vigil," the Collector stated, urging people to refrain from non-essential travel and stay away from submerged roads, bridges, and overflowing water bodies.

The flooding has also caused severe damage to the power infrastructure, leaving around two lakh people without electricity.

Ajit Igatpurikar, Deputy Chief PRO (Kalyan Region) for Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd, stated in a release that floodwaters inundated 17 electrical substations, forcing authorities to shut down 106 feeders as a safety precaution.

UAE eyes energy, food, semiconductor sectors for stronger investment ties with Gujarat

FAIR REPORT
■ Ahmedabad

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday said it is looking at expanding investments in Gujarat in sectors such as food security, energy, logistics and semiconductors as the Gulf country seeks to deepen economic ties with India.

UAE Minister of Economy and Tourism Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri noted the growing strategic partnership between India and his country has created opportunities for greater business-to-business collaboration across key sectors.

Al Marri, who was in Ahmedabad to participate in the India edition of 'Investopia Global', identified energy as another major area of cooperation between the two sides as countries worldwide transition towards cleaner sources of power.

Speaking to media after the inaugural event, the visiting minister said food security remains a priority area as the UAE imports more than 90 per cent of its edible requirements, with a significant share of processed food, fruits and vegetables coming from India. Asked which sectors hold the greatest potential for



increased UAE investments in Gujarat, Al Marri identified food security, energy, logistics and semiconductors as key focus areas.

"A large portion of our processed food, vegetables and fruits comes from India.

That itself shows the huge growth potential between both countries," he maintained. Al Marri said energy would remain another major area of cooperation as countries move towards cleaner sources of power.

"Energy is the next fuel for the world. We are moving from hydrogen to renewables, especially to support data centres, which require massive amounts of energy," he emphasised.

Referring to logistics and supply chains, he said the UAE has maintained a long-term presence in India's port infrastructure. "DP World (a multinational logistics firm based in Dubai) has invested in Mundra Port (in Gujarat) and we continue to see logistics and connectivity as an important area of cooperation," he said.

On whether new invest-

ment avenues could emerge from his Gujarat visit, Al Marri insisted the objective of Investopia was to facilitate business-to-business engagement rather than announce projects immediately.

At the inaugural event, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel invited UAE businesses to invest in the state, saying the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and the UAE has strengthened bilateral economic ties and opened new opportunities for trade and investment.

BRICS health ministers adopt 16th health declaration

FAIR REPORT
■ Chandigarh

The 16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting was held here on Thursday under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, with major outcome being the unanimous adoption of the Health Ministerial Declaration, reflecting the shared commitment of BRICS countries to deepen health cooperation and strengthen resilient, equitable and people-centric health systems.

The Ministers' meeting concluded successfully bringing



together Health Ministers, Heads of Delegation, senior officials and public health experts from BRICS member

countries to strengthen cooperation in addressing shared public health priorities and advancing a resilient global

health architecture.

Convened under India's BRICS Chairship theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," the Meeting provided a platform for member countries to deliberate on key health challenges and reaffirm their collective commitment towards strengthening health systems, promoting innovation, enhancing pandemic preparedness and advancing Universal Health Coverage through sustained cooperation.

Raja Raghuvanshi kin welcome SC order on Sonam bail

FAIR REPORT
■ Indore

The kin of murdered Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi welcomed the Supreme Court's decision on Thursday to set aside the bail of his wife and main accused in the case, Sonam Raghuvanshi, and asserted it had renewed their hope of getting justice.

The apex court allowed a plea filed by the Meghalaya Government challenging the bail granted to Sonam. A bench of justices M M



Sundresh and PB Varale granted her three weeks to surrender before police.

"We have finally got a little happiness after a long time. My son has been dead

for more than a year. I still cry whenever I look at his photograph. Sonam deserves the death penalty," Raja's father Ashok Raghuvanshi told PTI.

Only parents know the effort and years of sacrifice involved in bringing up a child, he said while trying to hold back his tears. "The Supreme Court's latest order has given us fresh hope that we will ultimately get justice," he added.

He said Sonam's family had not contacted them since Raja's murder, adding

that his family no longer wished to have any communication with them.

Raja's mother Uma Raghuvanshi said she felt relieved because a woman like Sonam should not have been out of jail.

"Our family was worried about its safety after Sonam was released on bail. My innocent son was brutally murdered. I am confident a mother's hope will not be shattered and Sonam will receive the strictest punishment from the court," she said.

Around 26,000 flights cancelled due to West Asia airspace curbs

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Indian airlines have cancelled around 26,000 international flights till July 20 besides flight diversions and delays due to airspace restrictions in the wake of the US-Iran conflict, according to the Government.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol on Thursday told the Lok Sabha that airlines are incurring significant revenue losses due to the ongoing crisis and are taking measures to miti-



gate the impact while ensuring continuity of operations. The conflict, which started

in late February, has significantly impacted the airline industry, which is grappling with high fuel costs and airspace curbs in the West Asia region.

"The US-Iran conflict has significantly disrupted international flight operations due to airspace restrictions leading to widespread cancellations (approx 26,000 flights by Indian carriers till 20 July 2026), along with considerable diversions and delays across airlines and airports," Mohol said in a written reply.

Shiv Sena UBT to hold Tiranga Morcha in Mumbai on July 24

FAIR REPORT
■ Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray on Thursday said his party will organise a 'Tiranga morcha' on July 24 in solidarity with the students demanding resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over exam irregularities.

The party earlier said the 'Tiranga morcha' will be held at Shivaji Park in Dadar on July 24.

However, on Thursday, Aadiya, along with Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Amit



Thackeray said, the march was postponed as many who wanted to participate said the event should be deferred to weekend and a decision

was taken accordingly.

However, hours later, Aadiya, speaking to reporters, said he received overwhelming response in

the form of messages and calls for the demonstration.

People wanted to articulate their views on issues related to students and express their sentiments so the Tiranga morcha will be held on Friday (July 24) at 5pm, said the Opposition MLA.

The protest march will be organised without any political flag, he said and urged people to join the agitation in large numbers.

Earlier in the day, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and MNS president Raj Thackeray announced a separate

morcha on July 26 to convey the "angst" of students and their parents for the alleged police atrocities against agitators and the NEET paper leak, which has triggered widespread protests.

Raj Thackeray said the morcha will begin from Shivaji Park in Dadar and culminate at the Siddhivinayak Temple in the Prabhdevi area. He insisted no political flags will be displayed during the protest, he said.

Mumbai has been witnessing protests since Monday in solidarity with the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led students' agitation in New Delhi.

