

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Saturday, 1 August 2026

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SPANISH BORDER RUSH CLAIMS 57

Ceuta (Spain)/Fnideg (Morocco), July 31: Spain said Friday that at least 57 people were killed during a bape ru of migrants into its enclave North Africa, but noted that most of the more than 20,000 who entered are already return ing voluntarily. The Spanish government's representative in the endave of Ceuta sall 57 bodies have been recovered on the Spanish side of the border and that there could be additional caualties on the Moroccan side. It said some drowned and some were crushed while trying to climb the breakwater that holds the border lesson Moroccan foros best In crowds with batons gas at the gates to Ceuta, trying to prevent re from storming luy Spanish ter that juta on a spit of san dy land into the Mediterr from Morocco. The rush on the border that dens of fellow EX tained. and the incident omparatively la end to thousands of migration poli duding author

AI VS SAND MAFIA: RAJASTHAN UNLEASHES HIGH-TECH OFFENSIVE TO SAVE THE CHAMBAL SANCTUARY

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a decisive escalation against the illegal sand mining mafia, the Rajasthan government has rolled out a sweeping technology-driven enforcement framework to protect the fragile ecosystem of the National Chambal Sanctuary, signalling a shift from conventional policing to intelligence-led environmental governance.

At a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary V. Srinivas, the state finalised a comprehensive action plan in compliance with Supreme Court directives and recommendations of the Central Empowered Commit-



tee (CEC). The strategy seeks to dismantle organised mining syndicates while strengthening conservation of one of India's most ecologically sensitive river habitats, home to critically endangered species such as the gharial, Gangetic dolphin and Indian skimmer.

Under the new framework, District Collectors have been designated as nodal officers to coordinate enforcement, while Superintendents of Police have been entrusted with identifying and dismantling illegal mining networks, including financiers, transporters and organised

criminal syndicates that sustain the illicit trade.

The government's biggest weapon, however, will be technology. An AI-powered online monitoring dashboard will integrate field intelligence with high-resolution satellite imagery, monthly drone surveys, GPS tracking, PTZ surveillance cameras and AI-enabled thermal imaging to detect illegal mining activity in real time. Joint teams of revenue, police and forest officials will conduct surprise inspections every fortnight under a standard operating procedure, with enforcement personnel equipped with body cameras and GPS devices to ensure transparency.

The crackdown also seeks to transform local communities into environmental watchdogs. QR code-based digital complaint platforms will allow villagers and fishermen to anonymously upload geo-tagged photographs and videos of illegal mining activities, while a reward mechanism will incentivise actionable intelligence.

In a significant administrative reform, the performance of district officials in curbing illegal mining and implementing court orders will now form part of their Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs), with accountability fixed for failures in sensitive zones.

'Faith Is Rajasthan's Living Heritage': CM Bhajan Lal Sharma Announces New Push for Om Banna Temple Development

Jaipur: Blending faith with tourism and heritage conservation, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday reaffirmed his government's commitment to preserving the state's revered spiritual landmarks, announcing that the recently allotted land for the expansion of the Shri Om Banna Temple in Pali district will pave the way for a modern pilgrimage complex while safeguarding its unique legacy. Addressing a gathering at the Chief Minister's Residence, where devotees had assembled to express gratitude for the land allocation, Sharma said Rajasthan's identity is inseparable from its rich tapestry of sacred sites, folk traditions and legendary personalities whose lives continue to inspire generations.

SMS Hospital Scripts Medical History:

Rajasthan's First Robotic Surgery for Oesophageal Cancer Marks New Era in Public Healthcare

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a landmark breakthrough for Rajasthan's public healthcare system, Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital has successfully performed the state's first robotic-assisted thoracic surgery for oesophageal (food pipe) cancer, demonstrating that cutting-edge cancer care is no longer confined to private hospitals. The complex procedure, carried out by the Department of Surgery's Unit-V under senior surgeon Dr Rajendra Bagdi, involved a patient diagnosed with a seven-centimetre malignant tumour located approximately 30 centimetres from the upper end of the oe-

sophagus. Following a multi-disciplinary evaluation, surgeons performed a robotic-assisted oesophagectomy with intrathoracic oesophago-gastric anastomosis, removing the cancerous section of the oesophagus and reconstructing the digestive tract by connecting the stomach to the remaining oesophagus within the chest cavity. The surgery, among the most technically demanding thoracic oncological procedures, was executed using robotic technology that offers 360-degree instrument articulation, superior precision and enhanced manoeuvrability, enabling surgeons to operate with remarkable

Portable Ultrasound, Secret App and ₹50,000 Sting: Rajasthan Cracks Down on Illegal Foetal Sex Determination Racket

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR/JODHPUR

In a major crackdown on illegal prenatal sex determination, Rajasthan's PCPNDT enforcement team on Friday arrested a man allegedly conducting clandestine foetal sex determination tests using a handheld portable ultrasound device linked to a mobile application, exposing what officials describe as an emerging technological challenge to the enforcement of the PCPNDT Act.

The accused, Omaram Choudhary, was apprehended during a meticulously planned decoy operation at Shri Sagar Clinic on Banad Road in Jodhpur. Investigators

seized the portable ultrasound probe, the mobile phone used to operate the device and 50,000 in marked currency notes allegedly accepted as payment for the illegal procedure.

According to Mission Director Dr Jogaram, the suspect had been under surveillance for an extended period after intelligence inputs suggested his involvement in unlawful foetal sex determination. Acting on verified information, the state constituted a special team led by PCPNDT Project Director Sonal Meena and Additional Superintendent of Police Anjali Ajit Jorwal to execute the sting.

Officials said a decoy



pregnant woman was first instructed by the accused to reach Paota, following which he alleg-

edly transported her in his Scorpio SUV to his clinic on Banad Road. There, investigators

claim, he conducted an ultrasound examination using a portable handheld probe connected by

cable to a smartphone, with a specialised application functioning as the imaging display.

The waiting police team moved in immediately after receiving the pre-arranged signal and took the accused into custody. Along with the electronic equipment, investigators recovered the marked cash allegedly paid for the illegal sex determination test.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the accused was using a mobile-based portable ultrasound system, a technology more commonly seen in international markets but increasingly drawing the attention of enforcement agencies due to its portability and

ability to evade conventional monitoring mechanisms.

Officials noted that under India's Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, both conducting and seeking foetal sex determination are criminal offences. Every ultrasound machine used for diagnostic purposes must be registered and is subject to regulatory monitoring, including GPS-based tracking mechanisms designed to prevent misuse.

The operation involved a coordinated effort by officials from the Health Department and Rajasthan Police, including Chief Medical and Health

Officer Dr Surendra Singh Shekhawat, Police Inspectors Preeti Chaichi and Santosh Kumar Sharma, Sub-Inspector Dwarka Prasad, PCPNDT coordinators, and personnel from the PBI Police Station. The seizure is being viewed as a significant enforcement success, highlighting how authorities are adapting to increasingly sophisticated methods allegedly being employed to circumvent India's strict ban on prenatal sex determination. The investigation is expected to examine whether the accused acted independently or was part of a wider network facilitating illegal foetal sex determination across the region.

Order Order

Govt rejects legal changes for CAG recommendations



The Government on Friday told the Lok Sabha that there is no proposal to amend the law to effectively implement recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) across ministries and States.

In a written reply, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also said measures have been taken to improve legal compliance and accountability regarding the audit findings of the principal auditor.

He said in the last five years, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered one case on the basis of CAG Report No 7 of 2012-2013 regarding performance audit of allocation of coal blocks and augmentation of coal production. "Upon completion of investigation, a closure report was filed on March 31, 2025, in the competent court," he noted.

Supreme Court stays CIC order on NSEI RTI status



The Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order of the Central Information Commission which held that the National Stock Exchange of India (NSEI) is a 'public authority' under the Right to Information Act.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta agreed to hear a petition filed by the NSEI and sought responses from the Central Information Commission and others within four weeks.

The NSEI challenged the July 1 verdict of a division bench of the Delhi High Court.

The high court's division bench had dismissed the NSEI's appeal against its single judge's April 2010 decision which ruled that NSEI qualified as a 'public authority' under section 2(h) of the RTI Act.

The stock exchange had challenged the June 2007 CIC order before the single judge and asserted that it was not a 'public authority' under the RTI Act.

Citizens can enforce their right to ask for information only from a 'public authority' under the RTI Act.

The high court's division bench had observed that if the body is owned, controlled or substantially financed by the appropriate Government, it would qualify as a 'public authority'.

"The single judge holds, in the impugned judgment, that the NSEI is controlled by the appropriate Government, and

SC stays arrest of DMK leader Senthil Balaji

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

In a major relief to DMK leader and former minister V Senthil Balaji, the Supreme Court on Friday granted him anticipatory bail till further orders in a fresh corruption case lodged against him by the Tamil Nadu Government.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi stayed his arrest with certain conditions — that he will cooperate with the investigation, deposit his passport and not influence any witnesses and tamper with evidence.

"You immediately come to us even if there is slightest breach in bail conditions. We will modify or cancel our orders," Justice Bagchi told senior advocate Guru Krishnakumar, appearing for the Tamil Nadu Government.

The case, pertaining to alleged irregularities in the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) saw fast paced twist and turns in last couple of days.

On Thursday, the Madras High Court dismissed his pre-arrest bail plea saying his custodial interrogation was needed. Within a couple of hours, a battery of senior lawyers led by Kapil Sibal mentioned the appeal against the denial of bail before the apex court for urgent hearing.

The top court took the plea and listed it for hearing on Friday, when Justice Mohana recused herself from hearing. The petition was taken up for hearing during the day by a bench headed by CJI owing to the urgency. During the hearing, the Chief Justice asked Krishnkumar, why Balaji's custodial interrogation was needed as the case was largely based on documentary evidence.

The senior counsel replied that the allegations pertain to the incident of 2021-25 and Balaji prevented the registration of the FIR as he was then a minister and therefore he cannot get a blanket protection from the court.

Sibal along with senior



counsels Mukul Rohatgi and Amit Anand Tiwari, appearing for Balaji submitted that it was a "strange case" as the FIR was filed on July 28 after the new TVK Government led by Chief Minister Joseph Vijay came to power, based on an affidavit filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in another case.

"The events they say are of 2021-25. There's an affidavit filed by ED in 2025 in this court. The person who filed the affidavit has now turned as the Government has come into existence. FIR filed on July 28 relying on that affidavit," he submitted.

Justice Bagchi then pointed out that he was no longer a minister and the state Government was not under his influence and the court will ensure that he does not run away from the investigation and influence the witnesses.

Krishnakumar further submitted that it was a case of grave corruption and anticipatory bail was not warranted.

He pointed out Balaji's antecedents, saying that the top court has also earlier adversely commented on his conduct in the case.

The top court issued notice

to Tamil Nadu Government on the plea and said the Government can approach the court, if his custodial interrogation was needed in the case. The bench observed that these are all political matters and ordered that subject to Balaji joining the investigation in the case, his arrest shall be stayed till further orders in the FIR registered on July 28.

It posted the matter for further hearing after three weeks. The high court had dismissed the anticipatory bail petition of Balaji in the FIR lodged by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) in the TASMAC scam case. Balaji represents Coimbatore South in the Tamil Nadu assembly.

According to the FIR, a large-scale scam took place in TASMAC in the allotment of shops and bars.

Balaji alleged that the FIR quoted verbatim the ED's affidavit and the petition the agency filed before the Supreme Court.

In fact, the FIR itself at

various places says that it is from the counter affidavit and petition of the ED, the plea said.

The FIR details a systematic cash-kickback scheme involving tens of crores, where bottle supply companies generated bogus or inflated invoices for distilleries. The DVAC in its FIR said that Balaji entered into a criminal conspiracy to manipulate TASMAC's functioning by rigging bar and transport tenders, favouring a few select liquor manufacturers, resulting in overpricing of liquor, and causing financial loss to the public exchequer. The DVAC registered an FIR against seven accused.

The FIR against Balaji, former TASMAC managing director S Visakan and five others was for alleged misappropriation, manipulation of procurement and tender processes in allotting bar licences, transport tenders, and bogus and inflated transactions by certain distilleries and bottling firms.

SC orders aid for Indian families affected by Russia-Ukraine war

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre to appoint a nodal officer in the external affairs ministry to coordinate with the families of those who have died, gone missing, or suffered injuries while fighting in the Russia-Ukraine war.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana also directed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to facilitate DNA matching of family members with the mortal remains.

The bench was hearing a plea pertaining to Indian nationals recruited into the Russian military after being allegedly duped by travel agents. The plea seeks return of mortal remains, compensation and a coordinated mechanism for affected families.

The bench heard submissions of the counsel for the petitioner and Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya



Bhati, on behalf of the Centre and passed a slew of directions. "The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) shall notify an official as the nodal officer whose details and contact number be shared with the family members of Indian nationals who had gone to Russia... and died or injured," the bench said.

It asked the MEA to arrange for the DNA tests of family members of the dead and upon matching, ensure handing over of the mortal remains. It also asked the ministry to ensure that bereaved families are provided with the details of documents

needed for claiming compensation from the Russian Government. It directed the MEA to provide all relevant information and updates in vernacular language. The bench asked the ministry to deal expeditiously with the cases pertaining to handing over the mortal remains to the families for conducting last rites.

It also directed the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and state legal services to extend assistance to the families in securing the mortal remains of their relatives and pursuing compensation claims.

SC agrees to dissolve J&K CM marriage with estranged wife

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to dissolve the marriage of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with his estranged wife Payal Abdullah after taking note of their submissions that they have "embraced freedom".

The apex court took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the National Conference leader, that an application has been filed under Article 142 of the Constitution seeking dissolution of marriage as the parties have settled the matter. "We will make it a part of our order and will dispose of it in terms of that," a bench of justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe said. The bench will pass a formal order.

"Both of them have embraced freedom. It's all settled. (Article) 142 filed.



Your lordships may grant divorce," Sibal told the bench. "When did this application come on record?" the bench asked. It was informed that the application was filed on July 22.

"All other matters will be withdrawn. It is all set out (in the application)," Sibal said. The bench was hearing two pleas, including the one filed by Omar Abdullah seeking divorce on the grounds of cruelty.

In July 2024, the apex court had sought response from Payal Abdullah on Omar Abdullah's plea challenging an order of the

Delhi High Court. On December 12, 2023, the high court dismissed Omar Abdullah's plea seeking a divorce, saying there was no merit in his appeal. The high court upheld the 2016 family court order refusing to grant a decree of divorce to him.

On August 30, 2016, the family court dismissed Omar Abdullah's plea, holding that he could not prove his claims of "cruelty" or "desertion" which were the grounds alleged by him for seeking a decree of divorce.

Recruitment irregularities hit constitutional mandate: Karnataka HC

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has observed that allegations of large-scale irregularities in the KPSC recruitment of 400 Veterinary Officers, if ultimately established, would amount to "not sporadic irregularities, but a systematic assault upon the constitutional mandate governing public employment."

The bench sought the Karnataka Government's response on a plea to transfer the probe to the CBI during the hearing on July 29.

Hearing a petition filed by Manjunath, Justice M Nagaprasanna observed that recruitment to public office is the gateway through which the constitutional promise of equality of opportunity under Article 16 finds practical expression and that if the process becomes susceptible to "manipulation, favouritism or

pecuniary influence", the casualty is not merely the unsuccessful candidate but also the credibility of every public institution entrusted with selecting the best candidates.

Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Girish Bhardwaj contended that permitting the investigation to remain with the Crime Investigation Department (CID) would be futile in view of the magnitude of the alleged recruitment scam and argued that public confidence could be restored only if the investigation was entrusted to the CBI. The court noted that the complaint alleged the recruitment process was not merely marred by isolated irregularities but was "thoroughly contaminated by an organised design to subvert merit itself".

It referred to allegations that candidates with outstanding academic credentials were left out of the select list while several others with comparatively weaker academic



records secured unusually high marks, raising grave suspicion over the fairness of the selection process.

The order further recorded allegations that certain candidates had access to confidential examination material before the test, that OMR answer sheets were subsequently manipulated, and that middlemen had promised appointments in exchange for large sums of money.

It observed that, if the allegations

withstand judicial scrutiny, they would disclose a systematic attack on the integrity of public recruitment rather than isolated irregularities. The High Court directed the Special Public Prosecutor to explain why the investigation, presently entrusted to the CID, should not instead be transferred to the CBI, particularly in the backdrop of the petitioner's allegation that previous CID investigations in matters of con-

siderable public importance had failed to inspire confidence in the fairness and completeness of the investigative process.

The court directed the respondents to file their objections by August 7 and ordered that the entire investigation record and all material collected so far be placed before it on the next date of hearing. It also directed that no coercive action be taken against the petitioner in connection with the subject crime until then.

The matter has been posted for further hearing on August 7.

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) has been in turmoil following Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot suspending its Chairman Shivashankarappa S Sahukar on July 13, following allegations that he allegedly facilitated the illegal selection of his two daughters as Industrial Extension Officers.

Muslims offer *namaz* at site near Bhojshala complex

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Dhar

A day after the Supreme Court granted permission, Muslims offered prayers on Friday at a site near the Bhojshala.

FAIR REPORT

Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh amid heavy deployment of police personnel.

The arrangements for the *namaz* at the site, survey number 612, near Bhojshala was selected by the Muslim community leaders during a meeting with the district administration.

A good number of devotees turned up for the Friday *namaz* for the first time after the Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled in May that the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex was a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati. The Supreme Court on Thursday permitted Muslims to offer Friday prayers at the premises of a *dargah* adjacent to the disput-

ed Bhojshala complex. It directed the Madhya Pradesh Government to ensure that Muslims are allowed to offer *namaz* at the site between 1 and 3 pm on Friday.

Accordingly, the administration made necessary arrangements for the *namaz*, officials said.

The prayer time was set from 1 to 3 pm. Around 2.30 pm, more than 150 Muslims arrived for prayers, officials said. Although it was raining at that time, the worshippers offered their prayers, they said. A meeting was held prior to this between the district administration and the Muslim community. Barricades were erected around the Bhojshala complex for security purposes, the official said.

A large police force was deployed in and around Bhojshala as a precautionary measure. The prayers were offered at survey land number 612. Abdul Samad, a member



of Kamal Maulana Welfare Society, representing the Muslim side, said, "We presented our demands before the Supreme Court. They listened to them with complete seriousness and issued an order directing us to offer *namaz* at the location adjoining the Kamal Maula mosque."

They specified survey numbers 611, 612, and 596. They instructed us to arrange and offer prayers within whichever survey numbers provided, and make arrangements, he said. "By cooperat-

ing with the administration, we offered *namaz* on survey number 612 and relinquished survey number 611 so that no one's sentiments or faith is hurt," he said.

Additional Superintendent of Police Vijay Dawar said, "Discussions and dialogues have continuously being held with the Muslim community since Thursday evening. The decision was taken by the administration and the police department to conduct the *namaz* peacefully at the same place today."

A police force of approxi-

1 to 900 personnel was deployed to facilitate offering of *namaz*, including the Special Task Force (STF). In addition, a surveillance team was deployed in sensitive areas through CCTV to maintain peace and order in the city, he said. SDM Rajkumar Haldhar said, "The administration made excellent preparations as approximately 150 Muslim brothers offered *namaz* peacefully on survey number 612."

Earlier, Dhar Collector Rajiv Ranjan Meena told reporters that all necessary administrative arrangements had been made for offering of *namaz*.

In May this year, the MP High Court, while ruling that the ancient site was a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, had quashed a decades-old Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) order that had allowed the Muslim community to offer Friday prayers at the complex.

SC seeks Centre's response on plea to declare polygamy among Muslims as unconstitutional

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday sought the Centre's response on a plea to declare the practice of polygamy among Muslims as unconstitutional for being violative of constitutional provisions.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice to the Centre on a petition filed by women's rights activists Zakia Soman and Noorjehan Safia Niaz and others. The bench tagged the plea with pending matters.

The plea sought direction for applying Section 82 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which punishes bigamy uniformly and by removing any exemptions under the Muslim Personal Law. It sought directions to the Centre to take legislative



steps to abolish the practice of polygamy and ensure it is treated as void ab initio (invalid from the outset) for all citizens regardless of religion. Besides seeking several other directions for the legal rights and protection of Muslim women, the plea also sought directions for the compulsory registration of all Muslim marriages and divorces with the State authorities to prevent secret subsequent marriages.

The petition also seeks an immediate right to the matrimonial home for the first wife and children and a fast-track mechanism for maintenance in cases involving polygamous marriages.

"The present writ petition is filed under Article 32 of the Constitution of India in the public interest to protect the fundamental rights of Muslim women," it said.

The plea filed through advocate Shriya Maini challenged the constitutional validity of Section 2 of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, as it recognises and validates the practice of polygamy, creating a legal vacuum where Muslim women are denied the protection against bigamy available to all other citizens under Section 82 of the BNS.

