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FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

MANMADE MENACE

Clouds hover over the Yamuna, where a thick layer of toxic foam floats on the water during monsoon, at Kalindi Kunj, in Okhla, New Delhi, Saturday.

Rajasthan's Justice Grid Gets a Digital-Age Push

CM Bhajan Lal Sharma Calls for Faster Prosecution, Stronger Legal Machinery

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

Rajasthan is moving to strengthen the state's judicial and legal architecture with a focus on faster prosecution, better coordination and technology-enabled access to justice, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said on Saturday, underlining the role of public prosecutors as the critical link between the government, courts and citizens seeking justice. Addressing a dialogue with public prosecutors and law officers at the Chief Minister's residence, Sharma said effective law enforcement coupled with accessible justice is central to building public trust and translating the government's good-governance agenda into reality.

"Public prosecutors are the link through which the government presents its case before courts and ensures that people at the last mile are able to access justice," Sharma said, stressing that legal professionals must combine statutory rigour with sensitivity towards victims and those in distress.

Fee hike for government law officers

In a significant move aimed at strengthening the government's legal representation, Sharma announced an increase in retainer, appearance, drafting and opinion fees for law officers representing the state government before the Rajasthan High Court.

He said additional advocates general would be assigned division-wise responsibility to facilitate regular interaction with law officers and address their professional and administrative concerns.

The state government, he said, has already revised the remuneration of law officers appointed in the Supreme Court, High Court and subordinate courts twice.

80 new courts, expanded legal infrastructure

The government has created 80 new courts, including 14 district and sessions courts, two additional district and sessions courts and eight each of Chief Judicial Magistrate and Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate courts. Specialised judicial infrastructure has also been expanded through courts dealing with ACB, POCSO, NIA, NDPS and commercial matters, according to the government.

The state has additionally created 10 posts of Additional Advocates General, nine Assistant Government Counsels and two Special Public Prosecutors in the Rajasthan High Court. Forty new ministerial posts have been sanctioned for the offices of the newly created Additional Advocates General. Another 76 posts for public prosecutors, special public prosecutors and additional public prosecutors, 109 ministerial posts in subordinate offices and 77 Home Guard posts have also been created.

CM flags long-pending cases as economic risk

Sharma also put the spotlight on an often-overlooked economic consequence of judicial delays: projects can become substantially more expensive when litigation remains unresolved for years.

He directed departments and districts to identify cases involving public interest and prepare dedicated lists for their early resolution, backed by regular monitoring. he Chief Minister also called for seminars and structured interactions with senior advocates so that public prosecutors can draw upon their courtroom experience and collectively address practical challenges in litigation. The government said its legal-aid initiatives have so far benefited 27,251 persons under the Prisoners and Child Protection Scheme, while 3,905 victims have received 84.53 crore in compensation under the Rajasthan Victim Compensation Scheme.

Jaipur's Buried Secret: How Labourers Turned Palace Treasure-Hunters Vanished With a ₹1.75 Crore Fortune - Until Police Caught Up

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

A decade-old mansion in Jaipur's Tripolia Bazaar held more than memories — it held a fortune that nearly vanished into the hands of the men hired to tear it down. When house owner Rahul Sethi contracted Mahesh Malhotra alias "Chhotu Khatik" to demolish his ancestral property at Vidyadhar Ka Rasta and clear the ground for reconstruction, he had one explicit instruction: report any metal, coins, or valuables unearthed during the work. Instead, greed took over. As the walls came down, so did the demolition crew's honesty — silver ingots, gold coins, and thousands of antique silver pieces surfaced from the debris, and were quietly split among the men on site. For ten months, the theft stayed buried — literally. Chhotu Khatik and his associates, Anuj, Jagdish, Rajat, and Omprakash alias "Pappu," along with a driver, allegedly smuggled the loot to a forest near Jamdoli and dug it into the earth, marking the spot with a wooden stake, betting the case would go cold before they cashed in.

Bride Betrayed: Jaipur Woman Accuses In-Laws of Rape Conspiracy, Says She Was "Pushed" Into Brother-in-Law's Room

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

A shocking dowry and sexual exploitation case has surfaced in Jaipur, where a 29-year-old woman has accused her in-laws — including the family of a former IPS officer — of orchestrating years of psychological torment, financial fraud, and an alleged attempt to force her into a relationship with her brother-in-law. According to the complaint filed at a Jaipur police station, the woman's marriage was arranged in 2019 with the son of a retired IPS officer, with the groom's family reportedly agreeing to a dowry-free wedding. She alleges that after the engagement, demands escalated — first for dowry, then for an extravagant wedding at a premium venue — pressures her family says it met in full. The complaint alleges that after the February 2020 wedding, her husband avoided physical intimacy, and when confronted, disclosed he was undergoing treatment for a sexual health condition — a fact she claims was concealed before marriage. She further alleges that her mother-in-law then coerced her into her brother-in-law's room and pressured her toward a relationship, threatening to destroy her family's reputation if she spoke out. The woman also alleges financial fraud, claiming her father-in-law opened accounts in her name to route property acquired through deception. When she objected, she alleges she was assaulted, thrown to the ground, and eventually turned out of the house in November 2023. The final rupture came in August 2026, she says, when her in-laws called to threaten her with divorce — prompting her to approach the courts. Police have registered a case against the husband and in-laws following a court order. Investigators say the allegations — spanning dowry harassment, concealment of a pre-existing medical condition, financial fraud, and attempted coercion into a relationship with a relative — will be examined in detail before charges are framed.

RLP Faces Political Jolt in Sujangarh as Key Leaders Cross Over to BJP

FAIR REPORT

Churu : In a significant political development in the Sujangarh Assembly constituency, several prominent functionaries and workers of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday, giving the ruling party a fresh organisational boost in the region.

The defections took place in the presence of BJP Rajasthan president and Rajya Sabha MP Madan Rathore. The leaders joining the BJP said they were influenced by the development agenda of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the governance and welfare initiatives of Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma.

Among those who joined the BJP were Ratanlal Nayak, former Sujangarh mandal president; Ramniwas Tetarwal, former RLP rural president; Manohar Nayak, mandal general secretary in Sujangarh; Bhawani Nayak, president of the Nayak community's tehsil unit in Bidasar; and Banwari Nayak, tehsil secretary in Bidasar.

The shift assumes political significance in a constituency where the RLP has sought to retain its influence among sections of voters, particularly through its regional political positioning. The movement of established local functionaries to the BJP could strengthen the latter's organisational footprint ahead of future electoral contests.

Welcoming the new entrants, Rathore said the BJP's expanding support base reflected public confidence in the development and governance model pursued by the Modi government at the Centre and the Bhajan Lal Sharma government in Rajasthan.

"People from different political parties are joining the BJP after being influenced by its nationalist ideology and politics of development," Rathore said, asserting that government schemes were bringing tangible changes in the lives of farmers, women, youth and economically weaker sections.

Rathore also sought to frame the induction as part of the BJP's broader organisational and political expansion, describing the party as an organisation committed to nation-building and the vision of a "Viksit Bharat".

He said the experience and grassroots connect of the newly inducted workers would further strengthen the BJP organisation in Sujangarh and urged them to work with "full dedication" towards strengthening the party's ideological and organisational base.

The induction was attended by BJP state vice-president Mukesh Dadheech, general secretaries Shravan Bagri and Mithilesh Gautam, Rajasthan ministers Bhupendra Saini, treasurer Pankaj Gupta, Rajasthan minister Jhabar Singh Kharra, besides several party office-bearers, workers and local dignitaries. The immediate electoral impact of the crossover remains to be seen, but politically, the BJP has succeeded in turning a local organisational development into a larger narrative of expanding its footprint— and attracting leaders from a rival regional formation.

NIA files chargesheet in cross-border terror case

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against two people accused in a cross-border terror plot. The case involves the alleged smuggling of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), a firearm, and heroin across the India-Pakistan border. The plan was meant to enable attacks that could cause mass casualties and disrupt public order in India.

The chargesheet, filed in the NIA Special Court in Mohali, names Shubham Kumar, who is in custody, and Jasvir Chaudhary, who is still at large. Both are charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Explosive Substances Act, the Arms Act, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and the Railways Act.

These charges include terrorism, illegal possession of explosives and firearms, drug trafficking and threats to transportation infrastructure. The case started in February 2026 when the State Special Operations Cell (SSOC) in Amritsar arrested Shubham Kumar. He was found with a live IED in a metal case, a remote-control device for detonation, a foreign-made .30 bore pistol with a magazine, 20 live cartridges, a mobile phone and some heroin.

These seizures gave investigators their first major lead, which later pointed to a larger, organised conspiracy. In March 2026, the NIA took over the case because it involved both interstate and cross-border elements. Their investigation uncovered a network led by a handler in Pakistan with several associates in India. According to the NIA, the main goal of this network was to obtain and smuggle arms, explosives and drugs through cross-border routes. These operations used weak spots along the border to support terrorist activities in India.

The investigation found that Kumar was tasked with planting a timer-activated IED on a passenger train. The aim was to cause civilian casualties on the railway. The larger plan included coordinated attacks at several locations in Punjab and Delhi, aiming to cause loss of life and property, disturb public peace and threaten national security.

The NIA says the investigation has produced a large amount of oral, written and digital evidence. This material supports the alleged conspiracy and shows the roles of each accused person. The chargesheet was filed on time, showing the agency met legal deadlines and was thorough.

At the same time, authorities are working to find and close the routes used to move explosives, weapons and drugs across the border. Officials say stopping these supply lines is key to preventing future plots. This case highlights the ongoing challenges of cross-border terrorism and the need for constant vigilance, teamwork between agencies and strong legal action to protect national security.

Cross-border smuggling networks: Persistent threat to India's security

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

Cross-border smuggling networks operating along the India-Pakistan frontier continue to pose a significant challenge to national security, combining the illicit movement of narcotics, arms and explosives with elements of terrorism. These networks, often directed by handlers based across the border and supported by local associates in India, have been repeatedly highlighted in investigations by agencies such as the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Border Security Force (BSF) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

A recent example came on August 7, 2026, when the NIA charged two people with smuggling an improvised explosive device, a firearm, and heroin across the border. The plan included attacks in Punjab and Delhi and an attempt to target a passenger train. This case shows how these networks mix drug trafficking with gathering materials for violence. The NIA says its investigation is still ongoing to find more members and the routes used to move contraband.

These networks often use Punjab and Rajasthan as main entry points because they are close to the border. Much of the heroin comes from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, and the money from this trade often funds terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. Parliament has confirmed that foreign groups use drug smuggling to raise money for terror groups in these areas.

In recent years, authorities have seen the problem grow. NCB data from 2025 shows a big increase in cases, especially in Punjab, where most aerial deliveries of contraband happen. Each year, hundreds of kilograms of drugs are seized in Punjab and nearby areas, showing both the scale of smuggling and the strong response from law enforcement. At the same time, foreign-made weapons are also being found, highlighting how arms and drugs often move together.

The effects go beyond security. Large amounts of narcotics entering border states cause public health problems, especially in Punjab, where addiction is a major issue. The illegal trade also hurts the economy by undermining legal businesses and creating hidden funds that support organised crime and extremism. These networks also threaten national security by enabling attacks that disrupt public order and important infrastructure.

Indian agencies have increased their efforts. The NIA, BSF, state police, and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are working together and have made several arrests, seized large amounts of goods, and disrupted money trails. They are trying to find handlers in Pakistan, local contacts, and distribution networks in different States. They are also checking other possible routes, such as those on the western coast. Using technology and sharing intelligence are important parts of their work, with the main goal of breaking up the smuggling networks.

Even with these successes, the networks keep adapting, so the problem continues. Cases like the recent NIA investigation show that ongoing vigilance, interagency cooperation, and strong legal action under laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act remain essential.

Tackling the connections between smuggling, organised crime, and terrorism is vital to protect India's borders and internal security, security experts say.

Govt to take measures to rebuild breached embankments: Himanta

FAIR REPORT
Guwahati

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday visited Bengabara and Naharbari under Mangaldai Assembly constituency in Darrang district to take stock of the recent flood situation and assess the condition of the affected areas.

The Chief Minister inspected the breached portion of the embankment along the Noa River near Bengabara village and reviewed the ongoing repair works. The breach in the river embankment a few days ago had inundated several villages in the area.

Sarma also visited the relief camps set up at the under-construction Anganwadi Centre at Bengabara village and Outala HS School and interacted with flood-affected people taking shelter there. He enquired about their well-being and assured them of all possible assistance. He subsequently inspected the breached embankment along the Kulsi River at Naharbari.

Chief Minister Sarma said that the recent floods had caused considerable hardship to the people of the area following breaches in the embankments. The Chief Minister said that the Government would take special measures to rebuild the breached embankments with enhanced strength. He also assured that all flood-affected families would be provided the necessary assistance at the earliest as per Government norms.

Health and Family Welfare Minister and Guardian Minister of Darrang Ashok Singhal, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister and local MLA Nilima Devi, MLA Paramananda Rajbongshi, District Commissioner and officials of the district administration and concerned departments were present during the visit.

Par panel flags OBC quota deficit in Posts dept

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi


Lok Sabha MP Ganesh Singh

A parliamentary committee chaired by Lok Sabha MP Ganesh Singh has expressed concern over the shortfall in Other Backward Classes (OBC) representation in the Department of Posts and urged the Union Ministry of Communications to strictly adhere to the mandated 27 per cent reservation quota across all cadre levels.

The report of the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes was presented in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, laying out six major recommendations aimed at addressing backlog vacancies, boosting rural infrastructure, and ensuring social equity.

Highlighting a sharp deficit, the parliamentary panel noted that OBC representation in Group 'A' stands at a meager 7.2 per cent at the Junior Time Scale level. In Group 'B', OBCs constitute only 19.5 per cent of Inspectors of Posts and 21 per cent of Stenographers. The figures are marginally better in Group 'C', where representation stands at 25.2 per cent among Postal Assistants and 26.1 per cent among Postmen — yet still below the prescribed threshold.

Expressing dissatisfaction that representation remains incomplete even after three decades of the policy's rollout, the panel urged the department to immediately initiate Special Recruitment Drives to clear 207 Group 'C' backlog vacancies, the majority of which (204) are in the West Bengal Circle.

Taking note of the financial hardship faced by over 2.5 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) who perform essential doorstep postal and payments bank services in rural areas on a basic monthly remuneration of ₹10,000 to ₹12,000, the panel recommended an immediate upward revision in their regular pay.

Among other key observations, the committee directed the department to strictly enforce reservation rules for temporary and contractual appointments lasting 45 days or more, as per DoPT guidelines. It also advocated for operating more rural post offices from Gram Panchayat Bhawans to deepen financial inclusion and cut rental overheads, while recommending that basic facilities be granted to recognised OBC Employees' Welfare Associations.

Emphasising the vision of inclusive development, Shri Ganesh Singh stated that reservation must extend beyond mere percentage fulfillment to deliver real socio-economic empowerment and equal opportunities for eligible youth.

Four hardcore ULFA(I) cadres lay down arms in Arunachal

FAIR REPORT
Itanagar

In a major blow to the proscribed United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent), four hardcore cadres of the insurgent outfit surrendered before the security forces along the Chupkhao Track in the Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday.

The successful operation was executed by the Assam Rifles following sustained intelligence gathering, continuous surveillance, and persistent counter-insurgency engagement in the region.

According to defence officials, the persuaded insurgents chose to lay down their arms and rejoin the mainstream as part of the security forces' ongoing outreach initiatives aimed at encouraging misguided youth to abandon violence.

During the surrender, the cadres handed over a cache of four weapons along with a substantial quantity of ammunition and war-like stores.

CPI(M) slams E20 fuel policy, cites vehicle damage

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Friday expressed serious concern over the implementation of the Union Government's Ethanol Blending Policy (EBP), demanding that consumers be given a choice between blended fuel and unblended petrol at all retail outlets.

Taking a strong stance against the mandatory roll-out of E20 fuel, the CPI(M) alleged that the policy prioritises corporate profits over public interest, food security, and consumer rights.

In a statement issued from the party's central committee office, the Left party highlighted a recent communication by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) to the Union Petroleum Ministry. The party noted that SIAM had raised alarm over vehicle damage caused by ethanol-blended fuel before withdrawing its letter. "The subsequent withdrawal of the letter, obviously under pressure, does not negate the concerns raised therein," the Polit Bureau stated.

Critiquing the pricing structure of E20 fuel, the CPI(M) pointed out that despite initial assurances that ethanol blends would be cheaper, E20 is currently sold at rates comparable to regular petrol. This comes despite blended fuel offering lower mileage and causing increased wear and tear on engine components, leaving motorists with no alternative options.

Raising concerns over agricultural impact and food security, the CPI(M) warned against the diversion of food crops for fuel production in a nation struggling with hunger and malnutrition. The party highlighted that maize is being imported to boost ethanol output, leading to distortions in cropping patterns and the over-extraction of groundwater due to water-intensive cultivation.

The CPI(M) further cautioned the Centre against the potential import of Genetically Modified (GM) corn from the United States, warning that it risks contaminating local crops and being diverted for human consumption.

Calling for an immediate review of the fuel strategy, the CPI(M) demanded that ethanol blends be priced proportionately lower than unblended petrol to compensate consumers for reduced fuel efficiency. It also urged the government to cap ethanol blending at 20 per cent and warned of widespread public protests if the policy is not rectified.

Improved connectivity drives Ladakh tourist surge

FAIR REPORT
Jammu

Better air and road connectivity has boosted tourist arrivals in the cold desert region of Ladakh this season.

The Union Territory has already recorded 3,30,332 tourist arrivals between January and July this year, accounting for 98.35 per cent of the total footfall for the entire year of 2025.

Ladakh became the most sought-after destination this season, with a rapid surge in June and July. More than 2.12 lakh tourists visited Ladakh, accounting for nearly 65 per cent of the total 3.30 lakh tourist arrivals recorded so far this year.

According to official sources, Ladakh received 1,05,046 tourists in July 2026, compared to 67,273 in July 2025, registering a growth of 56.15 per cent. The July arrivals comprised 95,416 domestic and 9,630 foreign tourists.

June also witnessed a significant increase, with 1,07,740 tourists visiting Ladakh compared to 75,089 in June 2025, representing a growth of 43.48 per cent. Of the June 2026 arrivals, 1,01,060 were domestic and 6,680 foreign tourists.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena attributed the growing tourist footfall, particularly domestic tourism, to the sustained infrastructure development in Ladakh.

LG Saxena said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to our citizens to explore the beauty and diversity of our own country has given a further impetus to domestic tourism.

LG Saxena said the trend reflects the growing popularity of Ladakh as a destination for adventure, nature, culture, Spirituality and high-altitude tourism.

The fact that Ladakh has crossed the one-lakh mark in tourist arrivals for two successive months and has already achieved more than 98 per cent of the entire 2025 footfall by the end of July is a very encouraging milestone, LG Vinai Saxena added.

Of the 3,30,332 tourists who visited Ladakh during January–July 2026, 1,57,371 (47.64 per cent) arrived by air, while 1,16,523 (35.27 per cent) entered through the Kashmir route and 56,438 (17.09 per cent) arrived through the Manali route.

Ladakh and India are among the safest places for tourists, and we welcome visitors from across India and abroad. Our priority is to ensure that this growth translates into sustainable livelihood opportunities for our people while protecting Ladakh's fragile ecology, rich culture and heritage," said LG Saxena.

According to a spokesman of the Ladakh Tourism department, the surge in tourist arrivals during June and July has also been supported by a vibrant calendar of cultural, spiritual and experiential events organised across Ladakh. Major attractions during the period included the Hemis Festival, Pratham Sindhu Kumbh, Ladakh Astro Week 2026 (held in the last week of May), Phyang Tsedup and several other local monastic festivals, which brought together visitors interested in Ladakh's rich Buddhist heritage, culture, spirituality and unique high-altitude experiences.

The rapid growth in the Tourism sector assumes greater significance and coincides with a major and rapid transformation in Ladakh's connectivity infrastructure since the formation of the Union Territory. The total road network has increased from 1,799 km in 2019 to over 4,200 km in 2026, while the number of bridges has increased from 19 to 72. According to experts in the Tourism sector, the period of seasonal disruption on key routes has also reduced substantially. Zoji La, the gateway to Ladakh from Kashmir, which earlier remained closed for around 127 days annually, now remains closed for only 16 days. Similarly, the annual closure of the Kargil–Zanskar Road has declined from 154 days to 11 days, significantly improving near-year-round connectivity for tourists. The number of homestays has increased from 128 in 2019 to 2,275 in 2026, creating new livelihood opportunities for local households.

The tourism surge has further been supported by a series of reforms in the tourism sector, creating tourist-friendly infrastructure and amenities under the guidance of LG Vinai Saxena. Initiatives like tourism sector reforms to reduce compliance burden, simplification of cumbersome documentation, and granting of Industry Status to hotels and guest houses have strengthened confidence among tourism stakeholders, including hoteliers, guest house owners, tour operators, etc.

AIKS calls for mass farmer protests on August 10

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi


Representative image

The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) on Saturday called upon farmers and their families across the country to participate in mass protest actions on August 10, including 'Jail *Bharo*', '*Rasta Roko*', and 'Rail *Roko*', targeting the Central Government's agrarian and labour policies.

The call for the nationwide agitation was declared by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) during its All-India Convention on July 28 and subsequently endorsed by the National Convention of Farmers and Workers convened alongside the Central Trade Unions (CTU) in New Delhi on July 29.

According to AIKS leadership, the upcoming action serves as a prelude to a longer, sustained agitation set to launch on November 26, 2026 — marking the anniversary of the 2020–21 farmers' movement — under the banner of 'Save Agriculture, Save Industry, Save India'.

In a press statement, the farmer body emphasised that the August 10 action aims to project a united front of workers and peasants against corporate encroachment and the denial of fair remuneration. The outfit highlighted key charter demands, including a statutory guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) calculated at the C2+50 per cent formula with guaranteed State procurement across all crops.

Additionally, the unions are demanding the repeal of the four Labour Codes, an increase in the minimum wage for workers to ₹42,000, and a daily wage of ₹700 for 200 days of work under MGNREGA for agricultural labourers. Other major demands raised by the body include complete agricultural loan waivers, ₹25 lakh compensation for families affected by peasant suicides, an explicit rejection of free trade agreements, the withdrawal of the proposed Seed Bill 2025, and a halt to the privatisation of electricity and installation of pre-paid smart meters.

Alcohol ban in Bihar failed to prevent violence against women: NCAER study

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

Bihar should revoke the ban on alcohol as it failed to prevent violence against women from rising, and anecdotal evidence suggests that legal drinking was substituted by an increase in the consumption of illicit drugs and alcohol, a research paper by economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has said.

The paper, titled 'Macro Perspective of Bihar's Development Achievements, Unfinished Agenda, and the Way Forward', further said that the reinstatement of the liquor excise tax to the pre-ban levels would increase the state's own revenues by 14-15 per cent and decrease spending on enforcement and anti-smuggling operations.

The paper, prepared by a team of economists led by Ratna Sahay and presented at the 'India Policy Forum', noted that the primary motivations for introducing the ban in April 2016 were the belief that alcohol consumption was a significant contributor to domestic violence and that household resources could be better spent on more productive activities.

It added that women's groups and activists strongly supported the prohibition, arguing that it would lead to a decrease in alcohol-related abuse. "We now have sufficient data and information to assess if the ban was effective. Reported crimes against women in Bihar have not declined following the introduction of prohibition. Instead, total reported crimes against women increased over the post-2016 period," it said.

According to the paper, overall, the available evidence does not indicate a broad-based reduction in crimes against women following prohibition.

At the same time, it pointed out that the prohibition regime has been accompanied by concerns regarding the expansion of the illicit liquor trade, increased enforcement challenges and corruption, and the growing use of alternative intoxicants, including illicit drugs.

"In tandem, there was a significant rise in illegal liquor trade leading to higher alcohol consumption, increased crime and corruption, and an increase in the use of alternative additive substances, such as illicit drugs," it said.

The paper said the economic consequences of the liquor ban were significant; before the ban, excise duty on alcohol was an important source of state revenues (14 per cent in the 3 years leading up to the ban).

"Moreover, enforcement expenditures on monitoring and anti-smuggling operations increased, widening the fiscal deficit further," it said, adding that, in short, the introduction of the ban has not served its intended purpose; instead, it has coincided with higher violence against women, loss of state revenues, and higher expenditures.

The authors of the paper said they believe it's time to reintroduce the excise duty at historical levels to achieve 14 per cent of state revenues.

The restoration of law and order was critical in Bihar's post-2005 recovery.

Following decades of corrupt practices, violent crime, and weak administrative capacity, the state government under Nitish Kumar began to emphasise policing, criminal prosecution, judicial reforms, and administrative accountability. Bihar's development is central to India's ambition of Viksit Bharat to become a developed economy by 2047, given that Bihar has the second largest population and remains the poorest state.

Railways approves merger of Chitrakutdham Karwi-Kanpur, Pratapgarh-Kanpur Express trains

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

Indian Railways has approved the merger of the 14109/14110 Chitrakutdham Karwi-Kanpur Central Express and 14123/14124 Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratapgarh-Kanpur Central Express.

The merged service will operate as the 14123/14124 Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratapgarh-Chitrakutdham Karwi Express. The merger is aimed at improving direct rail connectivity between Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratapgarh and Chitrakutdham Karwi, while strengthening connectivity between major destinations including Kanpur Central, the Lucknow region and Chitrakoot.

Passenger capacity to double to 24 coaches

As part of the merger, the combined train service will have an enhanced passenger carrying capacity. The existing 12-coach composition will be increased to 24 coaches, significantly augmenting seating capacity and helping address overcrowding and rising passenger demand on the Kanpur-Pratapgarh section.

The enhanced capacity is expected to provide greater convenience to passengers travelling between Kanpur, Banda, Chitrakoot, Pratapgarh and other stations along the route.

Direct connectivity between Chitrakoot and Pratapgarh-Lucknow region

The merged service will provide improved direct rail connectivity between Chitrakoot and the Lucknow-Pratapgarh region. Passengers will have a more convenient travel option without the need to change trains at Kanpur Central.

The service is expected to particularly benefit passengers travelling for pilgrimage, tourism, education, employment and other purposes between the important religious and regional centres of Chitrakoot, Pratapgarh and the Lucknow region.

Major stations to remain connected

The merged service will continue to serve several important stations along the route, including Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratapgarh, Chilbila, Maa Chandrika Devi Dham Antu, Amethi, Gauriganj, Kashimpur, Jais, Fursatganj, Rae Bareli, Harchandpur, Bachhrawan, Nigohan, Lucknow, Manak Nagar, Unnao and Kanpur Central.

Beyond Kanpur Central, the train will serve Bhimsen, Kathara Road, Patara, Ghatampur, Hamirpur Road, Yamuna South Bank, Bharwa Sumerpur, Ragaul, Banda, Atarra and Chitrakutdham Karwi.

The merger is expected to ease overcrowding on the Kanpur-Pratapgarh section and provide improved connectivity for passengers across the region.

The new merged service will strengthen passenger connectivity across Uttar Pradesh and improve accessibility to important religious and cultural destinations, while also supporting more efficient utilisation of railway resources.

The service will create a seamless rail corridor connecting Bundelkhand and Awadh, providing direct connectivity from Chitrakoot to Lucknow, the state capital, as well as to Pratapgarh.

The augmentation of the train composition from 12 to 24 coaches will double passenger carrying capacity at an affordable price and substantially improve rail services on the corridor.

Besides facilitating pilgrimage and tourism to Chitrakoot, the service is expected to strengthen connectivity for education, healthcare, employment, business and administrative travel.

Young, aspiring innovator wins Gold at IRIS National Fair

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

Shaurya Patel won Gold for the second consecutive year at the Initiative for Research and Innovation in STEM (IRIS) National Fair 2025-26 Cohort 2, India's leading platform for school-level scientific research and innovation.

A class X student at Adani International School, Ahmedabad, Shaurya Patel's research aimed at developing a unified, longitudinal metabolic that integrates clinical biomarkers with lifestyle and wellness factors to improve early risk stratification and AI enabled preventive intervention.

This year 120 projects by 152 students were evaluated at the IRIS National Fair.

Having won the Gold at the IRIS in 2025 as well, Shaurya represented India at the prestigious Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) 2025 which was held in Columbus Ohio, USA, in May 2025.

BEML Q1 loss narrows to ₹27 cr

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

State-owned BEML has narrowed its consolidated net loss to ₹27.01 crore in June quarter FY27, helped by increased revenues.

It had reported a net loss of ₹64.11 crore in the first quarter of preceding 2025-26 fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday.

During the quarter, the total income increased to ₹821.19 crore from ₹642.56 crore a year ago.

In a separate statement, BEML said it secured orders worth ₹1,181 crore in Q1 FY27 as compared to ₹435 crore a year ago.

With this, BEML's total order book stood at ₹16,284 crore as on June 30, 2026 providing strong revenue visibility and a robust foundation for sustained growth.

"Our performance in the first quarter reflects the strength of our business fundamentals and the progress we are making in our transformation journey. Our focus remains on sharper execution, operational excellence, technology-led innovation and building deeper capabilities across our strategic business verticals.

"With a strong pipeline of opportunities and a growing presence across domestic and international markets, we remain confident of creating sustainable, long-term value for all our stakeholders," CMD Shantanu Roy said.

BEML serves India's core sectors like power, infrastructure, rail, metro, defence, aerospace and mining.

IAF band to perform at Param Yodha Sthal at India Gate complex

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The Indian Air Force band (IAF) is set to perform at the Param Yodha Sthal adjoining the National War Memorial on Sunday, ahead of the 80th Independence Day.

According to officials, the "spectacular display" aims to foster national pride through public engagement while celebrating 150 years of 'Vande Mataram'.

A team of musicians comprising 32 airmen and eight Agniveervayu, including three women, will perform at the venue, the defence ministry said.

"The musicians are set to take the stage with a performance that promises to be an unforgettable experience for the audience. With a repertoire of patriotic and soulful numbers, the IAF Band is set to raise the patriotic spirit with an energetic performance," it said.

The band is scheduled to perform for an hour at the Public Plaza, Param Yodha Sthal, in the India Gate complex on August 9 evening, the officials said.

The principal conductor of the event will be Master Warrant Officer A Srihari, who will be assisted by Junior Warrant Officer Moon Deka, Warrant Officer Abhishek Paul, and Sergeant NT Singh, they said.

FAIR REPORT

India ships 18 tonnes of *makhana* to Austral...

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

India has shipped 18 tonnes of Mithila *makhana* by sea route from Bihar to Australia, the commerce ministry said on Saturday.

The consignment, sourced from *makhana* growers of Darbhanga district, is expected to strengthen the international presence of Bihar's flagship GI product while creating enhanced income opportunities for farmers through export-led market access.

Bihar accounts for nearly 85 per cent of India's Makhana production.

To further strengthen the sector, a separate HS (harmonised system) Code for *makhana* came into effect from July 2025.

During 2025-26, India exported more than 7,000 metric tonnes of *makhana* and value-added *makhana* products to over 20 international destinations, including the USA, the Middle East and Africa.

Assam forest Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah participates in the Special Rhino Protection Force (SRPF) Raising Day celebration at Bagori Range of Kaziranga National Park and also paid tribute to Late Constable Partha Morang, one of SRPF's first personnel who lost his life in the line of duty and felicitated his bereaved wife

Technology, transparency key for urban cooperative banks to stay competitive: Shah

FAIR REPORT
Mumbai

Union Minister Amit Shah on Saturday urged urban cooperative banks to embrace technology, ensure transparency and modernise customer services to remain competitive. Speaking at the inauguration of the new office of the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC) in Mumbai, he said ensuring the prosperity of customers will help the banks achieve growth.

The Union Home and Cooperation Minister also urged all urban cooperative banks to join the NUCFDC, the apex umbrella organisation for the sector, within a year.

The NUCFDC serves as the umbrella organisation and self-regulatory body for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) in India. Approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and headquartered in Mumbai, it provides capital, IT infrastructure and liquidity support to strengthen the cooperative banking sector.

"Our responsibility is to ensure that all banks become members of this organisation (NUCFDC), introduce technology, bring transparency, train staff, provide modern services to customers and sustain in the competition," he said.

Shah said that of the nearly 1,400 urban cooperative banks in the country, around 690 have already become members of the organisation, and added that the remaining UCBs should also become part of it within a year. Making India prosperous requires fostering prosperity among its people, the minister said, adding that the capital market alone cannot fulfil this objective.

"We need to create a new system of self-employment simultaneously. Urban cooperative banks can do it and it is our responsibility," he said.

Shah said the idea of "cooperation to prosperity" does not merely mean making banks financially stronger, but ensuring that customers become prosperous as well, which in turn would help banks grow.

Speaking about the RBI's role, Shah said there was a need to bridge the perception gap between the central bank and urban cooperative banks.

"The Reserve Bank has a different outlook towards urban cooperative banks, and our urban banks also look at the RBI differently. We have to come out of it," he said.

Drawing on his five-year experience as cooperation minister, Shah said the RBI had always extended proactive support whenever the cooperation sector approached it with confidence.

No charges for UPI users, vast majority of transactions to remain free for merchants as well: Govt

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The Government on Saturday categorically stated that consumers and small merchants will continue to enjoy free Unified Payments Interface (UPI) services to allay fears regarding the levy of charges on such transactions following the passage of a Bill to amend the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

However, nominal Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) for merchants will be applicable as and when charges are introduced.

"They will apply only to a limited set of merchant transactions, above a certain threshold, at a nominal rate, far lower than debit or credit card MDRs," the finance ministry said in a statement.

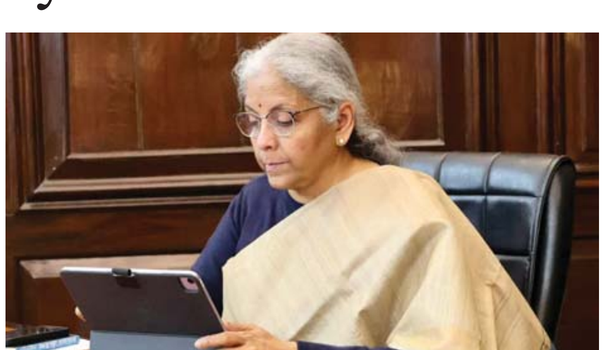
The statement comes two days after the Lok Sabha passed a Bill to amend the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which authorises the government to permit banks and other service providers to levy charges on payments through UPI and other notified electronic payment modes.

"Once the Parliament passes the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which proposes to amend Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, the 'UPI and Services Steering Committee' headed by NPCI will decide on the MDR, if any," it said.

The recent amendment to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSS Act) has generated a debate, with some misinterpreting it as a move to impose charges on ordinary users, it said, adding, in reality, the amendment is an enabling provision designed to ensure UPI's long-term sustainability, technological advancement, and resilience against emerging risks.

Explaining the rationale, the statement said, with exponential transaction volumes, the system requires significant and continuous upgrades in cybersecurity, fraud prevention, and infrastructure.

The statement further said that it was required for market expansion and self-sustainability.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

It is necessary to increase competition by encouraging more companies to expand their operations, which requires a self-sustaining revenue model, it said.

Reliance on subsidies alone is not viable for the next wave of growth, it said, adding that a balanced framework is required to ensure that UPI remains robust, inclusive, and future-ready.

Addressing concerns on narratives like external influences may be driving policy changes, the statement said, this is unfounded, completely false and misleading.

If external pressure had been a factor, the government would not have introduced UPI in 2016 or made it free of charge for both merchants as well as citizens since January 2020 and ensured that it became the world's largest real time interoperable payment system, it said.

The amendment should therefore be viewed in the context of the Government's broader objective of ensuring that India's digital payment infrastructure remains sustainable, competitive, innovative and capable of serving the country's rapidly expanding digital economy, it said.

UPI is India's own innovation, and the government remains committed to keeping it free for citizens while ensuring its sustainability for decades to come, it added. India now stands at the cusp of the next wave of digital payments growth, it said, adding that to expand UPI further into rural and semi-urban areas and maintain competitiveness, the UPI ecosystem must be self-sustainable and affordable.

The amendment to the PSS Act is a forward-looking step to ensure that UPI continues to thrive as a secure, affordable, inclusive, and globally recognised payment system, it said.

Since its launch in 2016-17, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has transformed India's digital economy into one of the most inclusive and dynamic payment ecosystems in the world, it said.

What began as a bold experiment in real-time, interoperable payments has now become a global benchmark, processing billions of transactions every month and reaching deep into the fabric of everyday life, it said.

Today, it said, UPI has grown into the world's largest real-time payment system, processing 2,366 crore transactions worth ₹29.9 lakh crore in July 2026 alone.

VISION INDIA FAIR REPORT

SAY NO TO DRUGS, SAY YES TO TALENT: YOUTH GIVE MESSAGE OF DRUG-FREE DEVELOPED INDIA

Youth show talent through speeches, street plays, dance, poetry, painting and reels; winners will represent Chittorgarh at state-level competition

FAIR REPORT
CHITTORGARH

Youth gave a message to stay away from drugs and adopt a healthy lifestyle through their creative talent. A district-level 'Drug-Free Youth for Developed India' programme was organised jointly by MY Bharat, Chittorgarh and Maharana Pratap Government Post Graduate College, Chittorgarh. Youth took part in different competitions including speech, street play, group dance, poetry, painting, slogan writing and reels and gave a message of a drug-free society. The programme was chaired by college principal Dr. Bharti Mehta. Deputy Director of the Social Justice and Empowerment Department, C.P. Jeenagar, administered the drug-free pledge to the youth. A signature campaign was also organised, in which youth and other participants took part and pledged to build a drug-free society. District Youth Officer Hemant Kumar Mathuria gave information about the programme and its objectives. He appealed to the youth to stay away from drugs, adopt a healthy and positive lifestyle and play an active role in building a developed India. Youth participated enthusiastically in the competitions and showed the harmful effects of drugs through their creative performances. Kajal Meghwal won first position in group song, Khushnud Mansuri in speech, Meera Dangi and Group in street play, Sakshi and Group in group dance, Lavesh God in poetry, Rachit Ladda in painting, Krishna Kumari in slogan writing and Pankaj Mali in the reels competition. All the winners will represent Chittorgarh district in the upcoming state-level competition. Kuldeep Prajapat, Accounts and Programme Assistant of MY Bharat, and volunteers Rishabh Chaturvedi, Akash Tank and Shweta Samar supported the programme. From the college, Prof. Suman Dad, Prof. Bharat Vaishnav, Prof. Hemlata Mahawar, Prof. Sandeep Sharma, Assistant Professor Meenakshi Chaudhary and other faculty members were present. The programme was conducted by Prof. Mahipal Dan and Bharat Bareth. Dharmraj Jat, Suresh Chandra Jat and other dignitaries, college staff and a large number of youth were present. At the end of the programme, everyone took a collective pledge to build a drug-free society and connect youth with positive, creative and healthy activities.

A Surgical Marvel at SMS Hospital: Doctors Successfully Tackle Rare Case of Transvaginal Evisceration of Bowel

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

In a remarkable feat of emergency surgery, doctors at Sawai Man Singh Hospital (SMS Hospital), Jaipur, have successfully operated on an exceptionally rare and potentially life-threatening case of transvaginal evisceration of the bowel—a condition in which a segment of the intestine protrudes through the vaginal canal.

What makes the case particularly extraordinary is the duration and extent of the condition: nearly half a metre of bowel had reportedly remained protruded through the patient's vaginal passage for around 10 days before she underwent definitive surgical management.

The challenging operation was led by senior surgeon and Professor Dr Bhupen Songra, with Dr Rohit Gupta, Dr Ved Prakash, Dr Rahul, Dr Ayush, Dr Manish and Dr Akash playing key roles in the surgical team. The anaesthesia team, led by Dr Sushil Bhati, with Dr Sunil Chauhan and Dr Indu Verma, provided critical perioperative support. A rare surgical emergency Transvaginal evisceration is considered an exceptionally uncommon surgical emergency. In such cases, abdominal contents—most often bowel—can protrude through a defect in the vaginal wall. The condition demands urgent assessment because prolonged exposure of the bowel can raise the risk of injury, contamination, compromised blood supply and intestinal ischaemia.

For the SMS Hospital team, the immediate priority was to assess the condition and viability of the protruding bowel and determine whether it could be safely returned to the abdominal cavity.

The surgical team carefully reduced the protruding intestine through the vaginal route, assessed its condition and undertook the necessary operative management.

Where minutes can determine outcomes

From a surgical perspective, the case presented a formidable combination of anatomical complexity and emergency decision-making. Doctors had to establish whether the exposed bowel remained viable, whether there was evidence of injury or compromised circulation, and how best to restore the normal anatomy while minimising further trauma.

The successful outcome, doctors said, reflected the coordinated efforts of the surgical and anaesthesia teams.

For a medical institution such as SMS Hospital, the case represents more than another difficult operation. It is a striking demonstration of what high-volume tertiary-care expertise, emergency surgical judgement and multidisciplinary coordination can achieve when confronted with an exceptionally rare complication.

Cases of transvaginal bowel evisceration are so uncommon that every successful intervention adds valuable clinical experience to the limited body of medical knowledge surrounding the condition.

In the high-stakes theatre of emergency surgery, where anatomy, time and judgement intersect, the SMS Hospital operation stands out as a remarkable surgical achievement.

10 quintals mustard and 15 quintals garlic stolen along with tempo from warehouse, three arrested

Police cracked the theft case; stolen tempo, mustard sacks, household items and 52,000 received from selling garlic recovered

FAIR REPORT
CHITTORGARH

Badisadri police have solved the case of theft of a tempo carrying 10 quintals of mustard and 15 quintals of garlic from a warehouse. Police arrested three accused in the case. The stolen loading tempo, mustard sacks, gas stove with cylinder, LED, cooler and 52,000 received from selling the stolen garlic were recovered from the accused. According to SP Dharmendra Singh, complainant Vinod Kumar Jaitawat, a resident of Boheda, filed a report at Badisadri police station on July 24. He said that his warehouse was located on Dungla Road in Boheda, where he kept the goods purchased by him. On the evening of July 23, he parked his tempo inside the warehouse, locked it and went home. The next morning, at around 9 am, when he reached the warehouse, he found the lock broken and the tempo missing. The locks of all the rooms were also broken. The tempo was carrying 20 sacks of mustard weighing around 10 quintals and 30 sacks and five boxes of garlic weighing around 15 quintals. The thieves also took away a cooler, LED and gas stove from the warehouse. After registering the case, a police team was formed under the direction of Additional SP Chittorgarh Gajendra Singh and supervision of DSP Badisadri Harishchandra Singh. The team was led by Badisadri SHO Bhagwanlal, with ASI Jhameshwar Singh and other police personnel. The police checked CCTV cameras in Boheda, Dungla, Chikarda, Sanwaria Ji and Bansen. In Bansen, the police found clues that the stolen goods were unloaded from the tempo and shifted to another vehicle. After questioning suspicious persons in Bansen and nearby areas, the involvement of Wajid Mir Khan, Irfan Mohammad, Deepak Jatiya and another person came to light. Police arrested Wajid Mir Khan, resident of Kheda Baneshti, Irfan Mohammad, resident of Putholi, and Deepak Jatiya, resident of New Abadi Bansen. The police recovered the stolen loading tempo, mustard sacks, gas stove with cylinder, LED, cooler and 52,000 received from selling the garlic.

Jharkhand government holds talks with student groups amid paper leak protests

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

The Jharkhand government on Saturday, Aug 8 held talks with various outfits amid the massive agitation over alleged paper leaks in recruitment exams, but failed to break the deadlock, as protesting aspirants said their stir would continue until all demands are met. Fast-Track Courts A five-member panel of ministers first met the faction led by JLKM leader Devendra Nath Mahto, whose fast over the issue entered its seventh day, before separately meeting delegations of the Congress-backed NSUI, ACS and JCM. On Friday night, the government held similar talks with the JPSC/JSSC Reforms Manch. "Demands of protesting aspirants are genuine; we will place these before Chief Minister Hemant Soren," said state minister Sanjay Prasad Yadav, a panel member. The ruling JMM's students' wing, Jharkhand Chhatra Morcha, placed five demands, including cancellation of the 14th Jharkhand PSC Civil Services Examination. NSUI placed six demands, including a CID probe into all JPSC and JSSC exams under doubt within 90 days, and setting .

'80% Ministers Are Payment Seats': Anurag Thakur Targets Congress Over Karnataka 'Chadhava' Audio Row

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

A fresh political storm erupted over an alleged audio conversation linked to Congress leaders in Karnataka, with BJP MP Anurag Thakur launching a sharp attack on the Congress leadership and alleging that ministerial positions are being distributed in exchange for money.

Reacting to the purported audio, which has been dismissed as "doctored" by the two Congress leaders involved, Thakur alleged that "80 per cent ministers are payment seats" and accused the Congress of operating a system in which party positions and ministerial berths are allegedly linked to financial contributions to the high command.

"Congress posts are given on the basis of chadhava (offerings) to the high command," Thakur alleged, demanding that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi explain who allegedly collected the money.

The BJP MP further escalated the attack by questioning the Congress leadership's decision-making structure, saying that whenever Kharge is questioned, he looks towards the "Gandhi family".

Audio controversy puts Karnataka Congress under pressure The controversy centres on a purported audio conversation involving two Karnataka Congress leaders concerning cabinet appointments. The leaders have rejected the recording as fabricated or doctored, putting the authenticity of the allegations at the heart of the political confrontation.

Thakur, however, used the controversy to question the transparency of Congress's internal decision-making and alleged that the party's "chadhava culture" has now become a matter of public debate.

He also made a serious allegation against an unnamed minister, claiming that a person accused of large-scale corruption and of "looting poor people" was made a minister in Karnataka.

Thakur further alleged that senior Congress leader H.K. Patil was denied a ministerial berth because he had purportedly refused to pay money—an allegation for which no independent evidence was presented in the remarks.

BJP turns audio row into wider attack on Congress

The BJP's attack comes amid recurring political battles over allegations of corruption, cabinet formation and the influence of the party high command in Karnataka.

On World Tribal Day, 77 Students Get Stationery Kits to Support Their Studies

Round Table distributed study material to Class 1 to 8 students at Pal Ka Kheda school

FAIR REPORT
CHITTORGARH

On the occasion of World Tribal Day, Round Table distributed stationery kits to 77 students at Government Upper Primary School, Pal Ka Kheda. The kits included notebooks, pencil boxes, pens, geometry boxes, colour packets and other study materials. The material was given to students from Class 1 to 8. The initiative encouraged students and increased their interest in studies. Former Chittorgarh Round Table president Deepak Pagariya said that a stationery distribution programme was organised at the school on August 8. Stationery kits were provided to all students from Class 1 to 8 as per their needs. School head Hukum Singh welcomed the guests and shared information about the school and its activities. Round Table president Rishabh Sisodia said that it was a happy experience to see the interest of children in studies in the remote village surrounded by nature. During the interaction with the students, they answered the questions with full interest. The students also shared information about World Tribal Day, which is observed on August 9. The organisation assured the students of support for any educational needs in the future. Reference person Hemendra Kumar Soni, teacher Surendra Prajapat and Seema Yadav were also present on the occasion. Round Table has been working for a long time in the field of education and social service. The organisation has made several efforts to support students in Chittorgarh city as well as rural areas by providing study material and encouraging education. The organisation has also received a state-level award for its work in the field of education.

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