

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Wednesday, 2 September 2026

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Shame on Islamabad: Pakistan’s Petty Photoshop Job Exposes Its Insecurity on the World Stage

■ FAIR REPORT
BISHKEK

In a diplomatic own-goal that has left Islamabad red-faced on the international stage, Pakistan’s Prime Minister’s Office was caught digitally erasing Prime Minister Narendra Modi — along with Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian and several other world leaders — from the official SCO family photograph, in a transparent bid to manufacture centrality for Shehbaz Sharif that reality had denied him.

The original photograph, taken at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Bishkek on Tuesday, showed all ten member-state leaders standing together — Modi, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Pezeshkian and others, with Sharif positioned fourth from the right, an unremarkable spot in the



lineup. But the version Islamabad’s PMO chose to broadcast to the world told a different story: a heavily cropped frame that conventionally placed Sharif at the centre, flanked by Putin and Xi, while airbrushing out the inconvenient presence of India’s Prime Minister — and, bizarrely, Iran’s president too, despite Tehran’s frontline role in recent ceasefire di-

plomacy. The optics were not subtle. This was not cropping for aspect ratio. This was narrative engineering — a desperate, image-doctoring exercise by a government evidently more concerned with stage-managing perception at home than with the basic diplomatic honesty expected of an official state communication.

Caught red-handed, and

then the retreat

The backlash was swift and global. Journalists and social media users pulled up the original image within hours, exposing the deception in real time. One commentator’s assessment cut to the bone: taking over the SCO chairmanship and making your first move a “terrible crop job” so desperate to centre your own leader that five heads of

state had to be erased.

Faced with mounting ridicule, Sharif’s office beat a hasty retreat — quietly posting the full, unedited photograph on his personal X account, accompanied by a boilerplate line about the SCO “continuing to strengthen” and improving the lives of “3 billion-plus people.” The climb-down did nothing to erase the initial impression: that

Pakistan’s state machinery had knowingly circulated a falsified image of a multilateral summit, only backing off once caught. It did not stop there. Sharif’s official Facebook account was found to have shared a similarly doctored video from the summit’s roundtable session — with Modi edited out yet again. Social media users responded by resurfacing the unedited

footage, alongside mocking edits depicting Sharif with a “begging bowl,” a pointed callback to his own past appeals for international financial assistance.

Substance versus stagecraft

The photo farce could not have come at a more revealing moment. While Islamabad’s digital team was busy airbrushing

world leaders out of pictures, Modi used his actual platform at the summit to deliver a pointed message on terrorism — calling on the SCO to dismantle terror financing, radicalisation networks and safe havens, and warning against any nation treating terrorism as “an instrument of state policy.” The subtext, unmissable given the backdrop of the April 2025 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 people, was aimed squarely at Pakistan.

Video footage from the sidelines only deepened the contrast: Modi seen exchanging warm greetings with both Putin and Xi, while Sharif was left watching from a distance — later seen trailing after Putin in an apparent bid for a moment of proximity the cameras had already denied him at the podium.

Kerala HC: Muslim Personal Law No Shield Against POCSO in Minor “Wife” Rape Case

■ FAIR REPORT
KOCHI

In a significant ruling, the Kerala High Court has held that sexual intercourse with a minor girl cannot escape the rigours of the POCSO Act merely because the accused claims she is his wife under Muslim personal law. The court refused to quash rape charges against a man booked for raping a 17-year-old, who had argued the relationship was a valid nikah under Mus-

lim customary practice. The bench made clear that personal law cannot override the statutory protections guaranteed to minors under the POCSO Act — marital status, real or claimed, offers no immunity when the survivor is under 18. The ruling reinforces a settled but often contested principle: the age of consent under Indian criminal law is absolute, and no personal law framework can carve out an exception to it.

₹40,000 Bribe Trap in Jaipur Rural: ACB Arrests Police Head Constable, Liquor Shop Employee

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday arrested a head constable and a private person for allegedly accepting a 40,000 bribe to “settle” a police complaint and prepare a report in favour of the complainant at Amarasar police station in Jaipur Rural.

The accused have been identified as Ratan Lal Arya, Head Constable No. 520, posted at Amarasar police station, and Rakesh Kumar Meena, a salesman



at an English and country liquor shop in Amarasar, whom the ACB described as a private person and alleged middleman.

According to the ACB, its Jaipur City-I unit received a written complaint alleging that Arya was de-

manding 50,000 to dispose of a police complaint against the complainant and submit a report favourable to him. The allegation was subsequently verified by the ACB. During verification, Arya allegedly demanded 50,000 but agreed

to accept 40,000.

The ACB said that during Tuesday’s trap operation, Meena allegedly collected the 40,000 from the complainant on behalf of Arya. He was subsequently caught and arrested. Arya was detained and, after questioning, arrested, the agency said.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of ACB Deputy Inspector General of Police Om Prakash Meena and led by Additional Superintendent of Police Bhupendra of the Jaipur City-I unit.

42 Feet Below, Hope Held by a Rope: How Rajasthan Rescuers Brought 8-Year-Old Bhanu Back to Safety

■ FAIR REPORT
ALWAR

For nearly four hours, an eight-year-old boy trapped 42 feet inside a borewell in Rajasthan’s Alwar district remained at the centre of a race against time. At around 11 pm on Monday, a simple, improvised rescue device—and the steady hand of an SDRF constable—turned the operation into a remarkable success. Eight-year-old Bhanu Gurjar, a resident of Bootoli village under Laxmangarh police station, had fallen into a nearly 300-foot-deep borewell while flying a kite. He became trapped at a depth of about 42 feet but remained conscious and responsive. The alert was received by the Rajasthan State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) control room in Jaipur at around 6.30 pm. A rescue team from Company C-05, Bharatpur, deployed with the Alwar Reserve Police Line during the monsoon



season, was immediately mobilised and reached the site at around 8.30 pm. What followed was a carefully coordinated operation involving technology, heavy machinery and improvisation. A camera was used to continuously monitor Bhanu’s condition, while oxygen was supplied through a pipe by the medical team. Rescuers also lowered food and water using a rope and bottle to keep the child stable.

PORN AD CLICK CAN HIJACK YOUR PHONE

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

A new cyber-fraud warning issued by the Rajasthan Police exposes a disturbing shift in digital crime: the bait is increasingly personal, the technology increasingly sophisticated, and the victim often gives the criminal the key himself. The Rajasthan Police Cyber Crime Branch has warned citizens against

fraudulent Android applications circulated through pornographic advertisements and suspicious links on social media. According to the advisory, cybercriminals are promoting APK files under names such as “Night Play”, “Reloop”, “Kyss”, “Vimo”, “Rivo”, “Nexo” and “Vixa”, while using similar names to lure users into downloading malicious software.

The danger, however, is not the advertisement itself. It is what happens after the APK is installed.

Users may initially be directed to a website and persuaded to download an application from an unknown source. Once installed, the application may demand Accessibility permissions or other sensitive access, sometimes under the pretext of an

update. That permission can become the turning point. According to the police advisory, malicious applications can operate in the background and potentially obtain extensive control over a device. Some may also install or exploit a VPN configuration, allowing internet traffic to be routed through infrastructure controlled by criminals. The consequences

can move rapidly from privacy invasion to financial theft. Once criminals gain sufficient access to a compromised device, they may attempt to access sensitive information and facilitate unauthorised financial transactions involving banking or other financial services. Some malicious applications may also make themselves difficult to remove through

normal procedures. The real vulnerability is not Android. It is trust. The episode illustrates a fundamental weakness in India’s rapidly expanding digital economy: users are becoming increasingly dependent on smartphones for banking, UPI payments, authentication and personal communication, while basic cyber-hygiene remains uneven.

JAIPUR MAYOR RACE: BJP’S CASTE CALCULUS PUTS VAISHYA COMMUNITY IN THE DRIVING SEAT

■ FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

As BJP candidates filed nominations for all 150 wards of the Jaipur Municipal Corporation on Monday, the real contest has already shifted from the ballot to the backroom — where the party’s social engineering math is quietly deciding who gets to be mayor.

With the BJP widely expected to retain its majority, the party is believed to be leaning toward a mayor from the Vaishya community this time — a calculated move that reveals just how closely Ra-

jaasthan’s civic politics tracks caste arithmetic rather than merit alone. The logic behind the choice

Brahmins, Vaishyas, Rajputs and the general category form the BJP’s traditional core vote bank in the state. The party, sources suggest, believes it has already balanced the scales elsewhere: Bhajanlal Sharma, a Brahmin MLA from Sangner, holds the Chief Minister’s chair; Diya Kumari, a Rajput, is Deputy CM; and Jaipur MP Manju Sharma is also Brahmin. That leaves the Vaishya



community — a politically significant and economically influential bloc in the Walled City — as the logical claimant for the mayoral post this cycle.

Complicating the picture: five of Rajasthan’s ten municipal corpora-

tions have mayoral posts reserved for women, a structural detail that, in this case, works against Vaishya women candidates and pushes the party toward a male nominee.

The frontrunners Sunil Kothari — a jew-

eler by profession and former state vice-president — is being called the strongest contender. He was once the closest aide of Chandrashekhar, the party’s former organisational general secretary, though his political visibility dipped after Chandrashekhar’s exit. Tellingly, the party has denied a ticket to outgoing mayor Kusum — a signal, if any were needed, that this contest is a clean slate.

Puneet Karnawat, the outgoing Deputy Mayor and an ABVP-bred organiser now seen close to CM

Bhajanlal Sharma, ranks second. He was passed over for a Malviya Nagar assembly ticket in favour of Kalicharan Saraf — a bruise that hasn’t gone unnoticed in party circles, especially given the dramatic late reversal that saw Kuldeep Mishra’s symbol handed and then withdrawn before him.

Vimal Katiyar, the BJP media cell’s former convener and a Madan Rathore loyalist with RSS Laghu Udyog Bharati ties, faces a structural handicap: he hails from Uttar Pradesh, where the

Katiyar community falls under OBC, not Vaishya — raising real questions about his acceptance among Jaipur’s Maheshwari-dominated Vaishya electorate.

Vimal Agarwal, a two-time councillor and Ward-135 candidate with grassroots credibility, carries the baggage of having briefly quit BJP for Ghanshyam Tiwari’s now-defunct Deendayal Vahini before returning to the fold.

Subhash Singhi from Ward 98 — a prominent businessman, RSS collaborator, and confidant of State Finance Commis-

sion Chairman Arun Chaturvedi — is being floated as the dark-horse name.

The wildcard If the five frontrunners cancel each other out through infighting, the party may fall back on Jyoti Khandelwal — Jaipur’s first-ever elected mayor and a former Congress Lok Sabha candidate who crossed over to BJP with an assembly-ticket assurance in hand. Her Vaishya credentials and Walled City base make her a plausible consensus pick, but only if the men fail to close ranks.

Govt clears zero-cost rooftop solar plan for 2.3 lakh homes

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Delhi households using up to 400 units of electricity a month will be able to install rooftop solar systems of up to 3 kW without paying any upfront cost under an amended solar policy approved by the Delhi government. The revised Delhi Solar Energy Policy, approved at the Cabinet's 40th meeting, aims to bring rooftop solar to 2.30 lakh households and add 500 MW of rooftop capacity by March 2027. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the move would make it easier for ordinary consumers to shift from simply using electricity to also generating it. Under the new arrangement, eligible domestic con-

sumers with average monthly consumption of up to 400 units in 2025-26 will receive rooftop solar systems of up to 3 kW, subject to technical feasibility. The Centre will provide a subsidy of ₹78,000, while the Delhi Government will provide an additional capital subsidy of the same amount. The state Government will also cover the difference between the available subsidy and the tendered cost of the solar plant through an additional top-up. The policy changes the earlier system in which consumers had to make an initial payment and receive financial benefits later. The Government will now arrange the installation without an upfront payment from eligible households.

Solar vendors will also be responsible for operating and maintaining the systems for the first five years. After that, consumers will have the option of taking maintenance support through the electricity distribution companies for the remaining life of the installation, which is expected to be around 25 years. The existing electricity subsidy will continue after solar installation. Consumers using up to 200 units will remain eligible for the 100 per cent electricity subsidy. The policy will also provide an energy-saving incentive to eligible consumers. Surplus electricity generated by rooftop systems and supplied to the grid will be paid for at the average power purchase cost of the distribu-



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Delhi Minister Ashish Sood during a press conference at Delhi Secretariat in New Delhi on Tuesday

tion company. According to the government, a 3 kW rooftop solar system can generate around 300 units of electricity.

A household consuming 200 units could therefore use the generated power and send excess electricity to the grid through net meter-

ing. The Government has also sought to reduce the time required to connect residential rooftop systems to the grid.

The net metering process, which earlier took about 75 days, has been reduced to 25 days. Application and registration fees for residential solar systems of up to 10 kW have also been waived. The scheme will operate through a utility-led aggregation model. Indraprastha Power Generation Company Limited will select vendors through competitive bidding and will oversee installation, coordination with vendors, grievance redressal and consumer support. The Government has set a separate target of adding 500 MW of new rooftop solar capacity by March 2027. Solar installations on Government buildings are already underway. So far, 10,073 solar systems have been installed in Delhi, many

of them on Government buildings. The Chief Minister said the policy is intended to strengthen Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PM Surya Ghar vision in Delhi while reducing the financial and practical difficulties that have discouraged households from adopting rooftop solar. Power Minister Ashish Sood said the Cabinet decision would help institutionalise the government's free electricity programme while expanding access to rooftop solar. He said 2.30 lakh consumers would receive solar systems without an upfront cost. The Government said the revised policy is aimed at making rooftop solar more accessible to eligible households and expanding Delhi's renewable energy capacity.

Affluent seats see higher voter drop than seats with unauthorised colonies



FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Delhi's affluent Assembly constituencies have seen a 37.4 per cent fall in their electorate after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), compared to a 35.7 per cent reduction in seats with a large number of unauthorised colonies and Jhuggi-Jhopdi clusters. The comparison covers eight affluent constituencies — New Delhi, Greater Kailash, Kasturba Nagar, Malviya Nagar, RK Puram, Jangpura, Model Town and Rajouri Garden — and 12 constituencies with unauthorised colonies (UCs) and JJ clusters — Okhla, Seelampur, Tughlaqabad, Bijwasan, Sangam Vihar, Kirari, Burari, Badarpur, Vikaspuri, Nangloi Jat, Karawal Nagar and Uttam Nagar. The draft electoral rolls of 70 Assembly constituencies in Delhi were published by the Delhi chief electoral officer's (CEO) office on Monday. A total of 47.5 lakh out of 1.45 crore voters, across 70 Assembly segments, have been excluded from the draft rolls. The eight affluent constituencies had a combined 11,36,032 electors in the August 17 electoral roll. The draft published on Monday has 7,11,187 names, leaving 4,24,845 names out of the draft list. The 12 constituencies with UCs and JJ clusters had 34,03,201 electors in the August 17 roll. Their number

has fallen to 21,88,733 in the draft, with 12,14,468 names not appearing in it. Within the affluent constituencies, RK Puram recorded the highest reduction at 44.4 per cent. Its electorate fell from 1,30,161 to 72,426 names appearing in the draft roll, with 57,735 names excluded from the list. Kasturba Nagar saw a 43.9 per cent reduction, with its electorate falling from 1,37,365 to 77,036 and 60,329 names deleted from the draft list. In New Delhi, the electorate fell from 89,683 to 52,368, a reduction of 41.6 per cent, while 37,315 names were not included. Jangpura recorded a 41.4 per cent reduction, with its electorate falling from 1,45,823 to 85,497. Malviya Nagar saw a 38.5 per cent fall, from 1,48,627 to 91,346, while Model Town recorded a 37.2 per cent reduction, from 1,58,519 to 99,611. Greater Kailash saw its electorate fall 34.9 per cent, from 1,77,885 to 1,15,790. Rajouri Garden recorded the lowest reduction among the posh constituencies of the national Capital, with its electorate falling from 1,47,969 to 1,17,113, a decline of 20.9 per cent. The highest reduction among the constituencies with UCs and JJ clusters was recorded in Tughlaqabad, where the electorate fell by 47.8 per cent, from 1,92,419 to 1,00,386. The number of names excluded from the draft list was 92,033.

Minority, SC seats see 20-45% voter exclusion in SIR draft against 33% overall

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Minority-dominated and SC-reserved constituencies in the national Capital registered between 20 and 45 per cent voter exclusions against the overall figure of 33 per cent deletions that Delhi recorded at the draft stage in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Officials said among all States and Union Territories where SIR has been taken up, Delhi has recorded the "highest percentage" of deletions overall at 33 per cent at the draft stage. Okhla, one of the seven constituencies where minorities are in sizeable numbers, recorded a staggering 45 per cent removal of voters in the draft rolls of the constituency while Patel Nagar



(reserved) saw 42 per cent exclusions. The draft electoral rolls of 70 Assembly constituencies in Delhi were published by the Delhi chief electoral officer (CEO) office on Monday. Across 70 Assembly segments, 47.5 lakh out of

1.45 crore voters have been excluded from the draft rolls. Okhla, currently held by AAP MLA Amantullah Khan, had 3,62, 813 voters out of which 1,63,829 (45 per cent) have been excluded, leaving 1,98,984 voters in the draft rolls. Other minority-domi-

nated constituencies in Delhi besides Okhla witnessed relatively lower exclusions, including 38 per cent in Chandni Chowk, 32 per cent in Ballimaran, 28 per cent in Mustafabad, 26 per cent in Babarpur, 24 per cent in Matia Mahal and 23 per cent in Seelampur. The excluded number of voters in these constituencies was 48,405 in Chandni Chowk, 80,804 in Mustafabad, 55,264 in Babarpur, 49,640 in Balliamaran, 45,105 in Seelampur and 32,099 in Matia Mahal. Although there was no pattern of voter exclusion across the 70 constituencies, minority dominated seats had witnessed relatively higher submission of enumeration forms as compared to general seats, during the door to door verification

exercise from June 30 to August 17. Digitisation of completed forms of voters was 76.6 per cent in Seelampur, followed by Matia Mahal with 75.5 per cent, Babarpur at 72.9 per cent and Mustafabad at 71.9 per cent. In the 12 SC-reserved seats in Delhi, 40 per cent voters in Karol Bagh were excluded in the draft rolls, followed by 39 per cent in Ambedkar Nagar, 37 per cent each in Deoli and Kondli, 33 per cent in Trilokpuri, and 31 per cent each in Seemapuri and Sultanpur Majra. The reserved constituencies that saw less than 30 per cent deletions were Gokalpur (25 per cent), Bawana (23 per cent), Madipur (23 per cent) and Mangol Puri (21 per cent). The reserved constituen-

cies with a high number of exclusions are Deoli (94,726), Patel Nagar (80,346), Kondli (75,930), Bawana (74,829), Karol Bagh (72,430), Seemapuri (68,227), Trilokpuri (63,582), Ambedkar Nagar (63,260) and Gokalpur (60,625). According to the Delhi CEO office, the voters whose names are excluded from the draft rolls have been put under the absent, shifted, dead, duplicate and others (ASDDO) category. The Delhi CEO data said the highest contributor to the ASDDO category was permanently shifted or absent voters — 43,32,775 out of the total 47,56,722 voters have been excluded from the draft rolls. The number of deceased voters was 2,82,412, while those enrolled at multiple places numbered 1,41,535.

Chirag Paswan receives death threat, office seeks security review

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Union Minister Chirag Paswan, a Z-category protectee, received a death threat by post on Tuesday. The threat includes a warning that he would be killed by "hardcore terrorists," prompting his office to seek an urgent security review from the Home Ministry. Paswan, who heads the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and serves as Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, had his office write directly to Home Secretary Govind Mohan regarding the threatening communication. "An unsigned communication containing two mobile numbers was received in the ministry today. Upon opening the same, it was found to contain a direct threat to the life of the Union Minister for Food Processing Industries," Alok Kumar Singh, Additional Private Secretary to Paswan, said in the letter. According to the letter, the

threatening portion of the communication, excluding the mobile numbers mentioned in it, read: "You will be killed shortly by hardcore terrorists." The letter stated that the contents of the communication, particularly its direct nature and the reference to "hardcore terrorists," were a matter of grave concern and raised serious apprehensions over the minister's safety and security. Paswan's office has requested the Home Ministry to examine the matter on an urgent basis, seeking a thorough investigation into the origin, authenticity and circumstances surrounding the threatening communication. "It is further requested that the security arrangements of the minister may be reviewed and suitably augmented, as considered necessary, in view of the threat perception and his scheduled public engagements," Singh said in the letter. A copy of the letter has also been sent to the Private Secretary of the



Union Home Minister and the Delhi Police Commissioner, indicating the matter is being escalated across multiple levels of the security establishment. The threat comes despite Paswan already holding Z-category securi-

ty cover, one of the highest tiers of protection provided to VIPs in India, typically involving armed commandos and round the clock security personnel. The letter's request for enhanced security suggests his office believes

the current protection level may need strengthening in light of the threat. Officials said the contents of the letter and the circumstances surrounding its delivery would be examined as part of a broader security assessment. Investigators are expected to trace the origin of the communication, including the two mobile numbers mentioned in it, as part of efforts to establish its authenticity and source. Paswan, a prominent leader from Bihar and son of the late Ram Vilas Paswan, has been a Union Cabinet minister since 2024. His party, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), remains an important ally within the ruling coalition at the centre. Further details about the threat, including whether authorities have identified any leads on its origin, were not immediately available. The Home Ministry is yet to issue a public statement on the matter following receipt of Paswan's office's letter.

Govt bans curtains, films on bus windows, mandates panic buttons and fire extinguishers

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Government has banned curtains and unauthorised films on bus windows and made functional panic buttons, fire extinguishers and first-aid kits mandatory for all buses operating in the capital, in fresh directions issued to bus operators on Tuesday. The directions, issued by the Transport Department, apply to all bus operators plying in Delhi, including buses from other states, with specific emphasis on the safety of women and children passengers. Violations may invite action under the law, according to the department. Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said the Delhi government, under Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, remains committed to strengthening passenger safety across the public transport system and ensuring mandatory safety norms are implemented on the ground. Under the new directions, every bus operator must ensure Vehicle Location Tracking Devices and panic buttons remain functional at all times, with panic buttons kept easily accessible to pas-



sengers. Buses must also carry serviceable fire extinguishers and first-aid kits, and must be parked during night hours or idle periods only at authorised, secure and well-lit locations. In line with existing court directions, buses must not have curtains or unauthorised films fitted on windows, and prescribed transparency standards for windshields, rear windows and side windows must be strictly maintained. The directions also lay down conduct requirements for drivers and crew. Staff must behave courteously with passengers, and driving under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating substance has been strictly prohibited.

Drivers must carry valid driving licences, uniforms and PSV badges where applicable, while conductors must carry valid conductor licences, uniforms and PSV badges. Operators have been directed to verify all drivers, conductors, attendants and other staff before deployment. Buses requiring an attendant must have one on board, and all doors must remain securely closed while the vehicle is moving. Crew members have also been directed to assist persons with disabilities while boarding or alighting. Specific instructions have been issued regarding the safety of women passengers. Bus operators must sensitise drivers, conductors

and other crew about preventing harassment and the consequences of misconduct against women. In case of any incident involving indecent behaviour, molestation, eve-teasing or any other offence against a woman passenger, the crew has been directed to immediately inform police and take the bus to the nearest police station, police post or PCR van. Every bus must carry a valid Fitness Certificate and remain mechanically sound, along with compliance with applicable emission norms and a valid Pollution Under Control certificate. Operators have also been told to follow designated bus lanes and applicable traffic rules, with passenger boarding and alighting permitted only at designated stops or authorised locations. Stopping at unsafe or unauthorised points, particularly in the middle of roads or at intersections, has been strictly prohibited. Singh said safety measures must be implemented in practice and not remain confined to paperwork, adding that the Government would take strict action against violations as per law.

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Delhi Police are mapping the route of the sleeper bus in which a 16-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped earlier this month, using CCTV footage and the mobile phone location of one of the accused, with investigators also finding that the vehicle was issued eight challans in Uttar Pradesh in July, mostly for speeding, officials said. One of the challans, issued in Hamirpur on July 23, was for ₹23,000 for allegedly operating the bus without a permit, while five of the eight challans were issued in Mathura. The total value of the challans was ₹54,000, police said. The bus was purchased in April and registered in Firozabad on April 28, according to the investigation. Police are using CCTV footage collected from several locations, including Kashmere Gate, Timarpur parking and Pari Chowk in Greater Noida, to reconstruct the movement of the bus on the night of August 4. One of the cameras captured the bus getting onto the Hanuman Mandir flyover, which investigators believe will help establish its route. The footage is being



analysed alongside the location data of the accused's mobile phone to map the bus's movements and identify the places where it may have stopped during the journey, a senior police officer said. The victim's clothes, which allegedly bear blood and semen stains, have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory and will be matched with the DNA samples of the two accused, bus driver Kuldeep (39) and conductor Sandeep (26), both residents of Kanpur. It has been found that no verification of the accused was done by the bus company, according to police sources. The victim's clothes, the seat cover and CCTV footage are expected to form impor-

tant pieces of evidence in the case, police said. The 16-year-old girl, who had left her home in Mainpuri after being scolded by her mother, boarded the bus at Pari Chowk in Greater Noida on a rainy night, believing the conductor's assurance that it would take her to Noida Sector 63, where her cousin lived. The bus, however, was not on regular passenger service that night. It had been taken to a workshop in Surajpur, Greater Noida, for repairs after developing a technical fault and was subsequently being taken towards Kashmere Gate for painting, according to the travel company that operated it. Police allege that the two accused picked up the girl

around 9 pm and proceeded towards Kashmere Gate. During the journey, they allegedly raped her inside the moving bus and threatened to kill her when she resisted. The girl was abandoned near Kashmere Gate and later reached the police station in an auto-rickshaw, where she reported the incident. Delhi Police registered an FIR and got her medically examined, which confirmed rape, officials said. With the help of CCTV footage, police traced the bus within a few hours and arrested Kuldeep and Sandeep from a parking lot in Timarpur. The bus was seized and the accused underwent potency tests, police said. During forensic examination, strands of the girl's hair were found inside the bus. Investigators are now examining the seat cover and other material recovered from the vehicle for further forensic evidence. The bus had company-fitted curtains around its sleeper berths, which allegedly allowed the accused to conceal their activities from people outside. The travel company had earlier said the bus's CCTV cameras were not operational as it was undergoing renovation.

MCA probe flags forged DGCA NOC by drone federation

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

A Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) inspection report has recorded serious allegations concerning the affairs of Drone Federation India (DFI), including the alleged submission of a forged No-Objection Certificate (NOC) purportedly issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

According to the inspection report, MCA Assistant Director Altaf M Shaikh recommended penal action against three DFI directors and company secretary Anoop Kumar Pandey under Sections 448 read with 447 of the Companies Act, 2013, in connection with the alleged document.

The report followed DFI's application to change its name from "Drone Federation India" to "Drone Federation of India." The proposed name had reportedly faced an objection because it could suggest government patronage. DFI subsequently submitted a purported DGCA NOC as part of the process.

The inspection report states that DGCA informed MCA that the NOC was not genuine and that the file number mentioned in the document did not exist in DGCA records. It further records that the signature on the NOC was attributed to an officer who had retired before the date appearing on the document.

On pages 59-60 of the inspection report, the officer

records that the allegedly false DGCA document was submitted with RUN applications and concludes that the three directors and company secretary were liable for penal action under Sections 448 read with 447.

The Pioneer has accessed the Ministry of Corporate Affairs investigation report. The report also records a separate alleged irregularity involving a director's signature on a clarification letter. According to the findings, the signature was allegedly copied from a Board Resolution, with penal liability recorded under Section 158.

However, documents connected with the subsequent prosecution before the 37th Court, Fort, Mumbai, indicate



a significant difference between the inspection findings and the charges ultimately pursued.

In Special Case No. 578/2026, filed by the Deputy Registrar of Companies, DFI

and directors Rahat Kulshreshtha, Pravin Vinod Prajapati and Vipul Singh are proceeded against under Sections 134(8), 129(7) and 128(6) of the Companies Act. The provisions relate to cor-

porate reporting, financial statements and maintenance of books of account.

The prosecution does not invoke the Sections 448 and 447 provisions cited by the inspection officer in relation to the alleged forged DGCA NOC.

The MCA's subsequent action communication specifically directed the Registrar of Companies to proceed on Parts B and C of the inspection report, while the alleged forgery finding appears in Part A.

The apparent difference has become a subject of CVC Complaint No. 16240/2026, which alleges that officials failed to act on the Part A findings and raises allegations of possible corruption. The allegations contained in the com-

plaint have not been established.

The matter also comes amid separate scrutiny of the DGCA by the Central Bureau of Investigation in two corruption cases in 2026, including cases involving former Director of Flying Training Capt. Anil Gill and serving Deputy Director General Mudavath Devula over alleged bribery linked to drone-import approvals.

Those cases are independent of the DFI matter and do not establish wrongdoing by DFI or its directors. However, the combination of the MCA inspection findings and the subsequent prosecution has raised questions about regulatory transparency and the manner in which serious findings are carried forward

into enforcement proceedings.

The unresolved issue remains why the alleged forgery finding recorded in the MCA inspection report and accompanied by a recommendation for penal action did not form part of the subsequent prosecution under the same provisions.

On the serious allegation, DFI president Smit Shah issued a statement and said: "The matter is currently sub judice, and we categorically deny any wrongdoing. Our legal team is examining the matter and will respond appropriately before the competent forum. Given the ongoing proceedings, it would not be appropriate for us to comment further at this stage."

MP Guv denies sanction to prosecute Vijay Shah

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel has reportedly approved the State Cabinet's recommendation against granting prosecution sanction to senior minister Kunwar Vijay Shah over his controversial remarks in May 2025 concerning Army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi.

The development came hours after the State Government informed the Supreme Court that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) had completed its probe and that the decision on prosecution sanction rested with the Governor. The Supreme Court subsequently deferred further proceedings, awaiting the decision of the competent authority.

The matter was heard by a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and comprising Justices Joymalaya Bagchi and J Mohana. Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, appearing for the state government, told the court that the SIT had concluded its investigation. An SIT



MP Governor Mangubhai Patel, MP minister Kunwar Vijay Shah



officer informed the bench that a chargesheet would be filed if prosecution sanction was granted, while refusal of sanction would result in a closure report.

The Cabinet's recommendation was placed before the Governor on Monday, following which the proposal against granting prosecution sanction was approved.

The Cabinet had decided on August 25 not to grant sanction. The recommendation was then forwarded to the Governor. The entire Council of Ministers is learnt to have supported Shah, a prominent tribal leader of the BJP, with ministers reportedly citing his repeated public

apologies for the remarks.

The controversy erupted on May 11, 2025, when Shah made remarks at a public programme in the Mhow area that were perceived as referring to Colonel Qureshi, who had briefed the media during Operation Sindoor along with Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. The remarks triggered widespread criticism.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court took suo motu cognisance of the matter on May 14, 2025, and ordered registration of an FIR. Police registered the case at Manpur police station in Indore-Rural under Sections 152, 196(1)(b) and 197(1)(g) of the Bharatiya Nyaya

Sanhita. The High Court also criticised the drafting of the FIR and indicated that it would monitor the investigation.

Shah subsequently approached the Supreme Court challenging the High Court's intervention. On May 19, 2025, the apex court granted him interim protection from arrest and ordered a three-member SIT headed by senior IPS officers to investigate the matter.

The SIT later sought prosecution sanction under Section 196(1)(a) of the BNS. Its report and sanction request had remained pending with the State authorities since August 19, 2025. The Supreme Court subsequently expressed concern over the delay and, on January 19, 2026, directed the State Government to take a decision.

The issue resurfaced before the apex court on May 8, with the bench seeking clarity on the pending sanction. During Monday's hearing, senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for Shah, urged the court to consider the minister's apologies and representation while deciding the matter.

Congress, JMM protesting MMDR Act to divert people's attention from students' movement, says Jharkhand BJP

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Ranchi/Jamshedpur

Jharkhand BJP chief Aditya Sahu on Tuesday alleged that the Congress and the JMM were protesting against the MMDR Act to divert people's attention from the students' movement against alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations in the State.

He said that the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, is in the State's interest.

"The Congress and the JMM are engaged in political posturing over MMDR and misleading the public to divert attention from the students' movement. The MMDR Act is in the State's interest," Sahu said in a statement.

He said the Act will help curb illegal mining.

"Both the ruling parties should not be under the illusion that their protest against MMDR would make the students' issues disappear



Jharkhand BJP chief Aditya Sahu

from the public eye). "The students' protest would continue till their demand for a CBI inquiry into irregularities in recruitment exams is met. The Congress-JMM's protest (against MMDR) is not for protecting mineral resources but to shield the masterminds behind the recruitment examination scams," Sahu alleged.

Parliament in August passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to restrict states' powers to levy taxes

on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands.

Questioning the CID probe into the alleged examination irregularities, Sahu alleged that the government's actions regarding the investigation were failing to progress beyond newspaper headlines.

"Students and job aspirants across the state are consistently raising questions regarding transparency in recruitment exams, timely appointments, and their own future. But the State Government is evading

these fundamental issues. This is an attempt by the ruling dispensation to divert the course of the student movement," he said.

The BJP stood by the students in their struggle for justice and will continue to stand firmly in the future as well, he added.

Reacting to Sahu's statement, JMM central general secretary Vinod Kumar Pandey accused the BJP of indulging in politics over students' issues.

"The concerns raised by the JMM and the Congress regarding the MMDR are not politically motivated. They represent a fight for the state's constitutional rights over its water, forests, land, and mineral resources," he said.

Pandey said the BJP does not have the right to decide on issues the ruling parties will raise.

Meanwhile, former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren questioned the JMM-led government's intention in opposing the MMDR Act.

Punjab CM Mann calls for massive awareness drive to curb stubble burning

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Chandigarh

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday called for a multi-level information and awareness campaign to curb the burning of paddy straw in the State.

He also claimed that due to the State Government's sustained efforts, there was 86 per cent decline in such incidents from 2023 to 2025.

Directing officers to take the campaign deep into villages and blocks, CM Mann stressed that active participation of NGOs, social workers, panchayats and farmers, backed by large-scale social media outreach and stronger ex-situ and in-situ paddy straw management, is essential to consolidate these gains and protect Punjab's environment.

Chairing a meeting on the paddy straw management strategy, Mann stated that around 30 lakh hectares of paddy has been sown in Punjab this year, which is expected to generate 18.81 million tonnes of paddy straw.

"Due to the strenuous efforts of the Punjab government, Punjab has witnessed 86 per cent reduction in stubble fire incidents from 2023 to 2025, he said.

The incidents have come



down from 36,663 in 2023 to 10,909 in 2024 and further to 5,114 in 2025. We have to take this progress further and ensure that stubble burning incidents are reduced even more this year, he said.

Calling for an intensified grassroots campaign, Mann said, "A massive information and awareness campaign must be launched at the village and block levels to make farmers aware about the hazards of paddy straw burning. Every stakeholder must work together to motivate farmers to adopt sustainable alternatives to stubble burning."

He said NGOs and social workers should be actively involved in the campaign to strengthen efforts to motivate farmers.

"NGOs and social workers

should be roped into motivating farmers. Machinery demonstrations, nakkad natakas, meetings with sarpanches, pledge-taking activities and other awareness programmes must be organised extensively so that the message reaches farmers at the grassroots level," he said.

Mann also called for a comprehensive digital and multi-media strategy to complement field-level activities.

"A detailed digital plan should be implemented covering radio jingles, print media, television, mobile SMS and outdoor media. The social media awareness campaign should also be conducted on a big scale to create wider awareness about the harmful effects of paddy straw burning and the available management options," he said.

West Bengal Govt imposes fine on public spitting, littering

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Kolkata

When in the City of Joy, spit, pee or poo on thoroughfares at your own peril. This is because the Bengal Government started cleanliness rules from Tuesday, with civic authorities in Kolkata and other municipal areas cracking down on violators for spitting, soiling, urinating in public or even disposing of plastic in undesignated places.

Civic inspectors were doing the rounds and were parked at public places, corners, markets, transport hubs and elsewhere to spot offenders and impose instant fines that would not be accepted other than through digital means. "No cash is



Representative image

accepted... only you have to pay digitally," said an official of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, which was presently run by an Administrator.

"You cannot do whatever you like on the streets and public places... there has to be some kind of civic discipline that should be followed by the members of the society... if offenders do not

see reasons in following civic rules then they will have to be given a lesson or two on cleanliness through imposing penalty... there is a price you have to pay for everything," Bengal Municipal Affairs Minister Agnimitra Paul earlier said.

"From 1st September, let's say NO to single-use plastic. Say no to plastic bags, cups, straws and disposable

cutlery. Together, let's protect our environment and build a cleaner, greener Bengal for the next generation," Paul posted while her party colleague and senior BJP leader and former MP Locket Chatterjee said, "cleanliness is not the responsibility of the Government alone... the people should also learn to cooperate."

To begin with, the Government had fixed Rs 100 as a fine for those who spit in public places, including schools, markets, hospitals, etc while one will have to pay ₹200 for urinating or defecating in the open other than designated public toilets. For using banned plastic too, one will have to pay ₹200 digitally.

Littering, depositing, dumping or throwing any solid waste, plastic waste, garbage, debris or other waste material in public streets, roads, drains, water bodies, open spaces or any place other than designated waste collection points, and the use or carrying of banned plastic carry bags in violation of applicable laws and Government orders too will attract a penalty.

The new rules also target illegal parking and encroachment, while charges will be introduced for night-time roadside parking in urban areas.

This apart, the mandatory use of Bengali as the language for official communication and orders also started from Tuesday.

Suwendu announces health, pension benefits for mediapersons

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Kolkata

Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday fulfilled his earlier promise by introducing a host of schemes and programmes for the benefit of journalists and common people, including providing health insurance to the media personnel and launching a specialised disaster management force



christened Arjun Vahini to be recruited preferably from the defence personnel, including the (retired) Agni

Veer jawans.

Accordingly, the Chief Minister doubled the pension benefits for the retired journalists from ₹2,500 to ₹5000 besides bringing them into the Chief Minister's health insurance scheme. Accordingly, the journalists would benefit from the Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Yojana by getting free medical treatment up to ₹5 lakh in designated 38,000 Government

and private hospitals across India, including AIIMS, Christian Medical College (CMC)-Vellore, Tata Cancer Hospital in Mumbai, PGIMER-Chandigarh, and Dr Reddy's Hospital in Hyderabad.

In West Bengal, the facility would be available in 1900 state and private hospitals. While the scheme was available only to Accredited journalists earlier, it would benefit other media men too, officials said. As for

pension, the journalists in districts would get ₹3,000 per month in place of earlier ₹1,000.

Regarding 'Arjun Vahini', the Chief Minister said that the Force would presently comprise 200 personnel to begin with and later the number of the staff would be increased adding, "priority of appointment would be given to the former defence personnel including the (retiring) Agni Veers."

Bihar power minister invites investors, highlights solar plan

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Bihar Power Minister Shailesh Kumar alias Bulo Mandal on Tuesday invited national and global investors to partner in the State's rapid economic and energy growth, assuring them of full administrative support and an enabling environment.

Addressing the inaugural session of 'Bharat Electricity 2026' on the theme Energy Sovereignty for a Climate-Resilient Viksit Bharat, the Minister showcased Bihar's modernised power sector. He

inaugurated the Bihar Power Pavilion, highlighting the State's strides in clean energy, storage systems, and digital grid transformation.

Kumar revealed that Bihar has installed over 94 lakh smart prepaid meters, successfully reducing Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses from around 60 per cent to 11.54 per cent. He added that the State recently met a record peak demand of 9,475 MW, with projections expected to touch 19,033 MW by FY 2037.

Outlining upcoming initiatives, the Minister announced



a scheme to provide free 1.1 kW rooftop solar systems to 2.5 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in the coming months. Key future projects highlighted at the pavilion included a 1,200 MW Pumped Storage Plant at Nawada, major solar-plus-storage

setups in Lakhisarai, and initial discussions on nuclear energy options.

"Come to Bihar not merely as investors, but as our partners. Our goal is to ensure every consumer becomes energy sovereign," Kumar stated, emphasising the need for climate-resilient infrastructure to withstand natural calamities like floods and storms.

Senior officials, including Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood and Central Electricity Authority Chairman Ghanshyam Prasad, attended the event.

Shakti Sharma becomes IAF's first woman Air Vice Marshal

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

In a historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma has become the first woman officer (non-medical) in the country's armed forces to attain the rank of air vice marshal or equivalent, officials said on Tuesday.

She assumed the appointment of assistant chief of the air staff (education) at the Air Headquarters on September 1, they said.

The air officer previously held the rank of air com-



modore, an IAF official said.

"In a historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma became the first woman officer (non-medical) in the Indian Defence Forces to

attain the rank of Air Vice Marshal (or equivalent)," the defence ministry said.

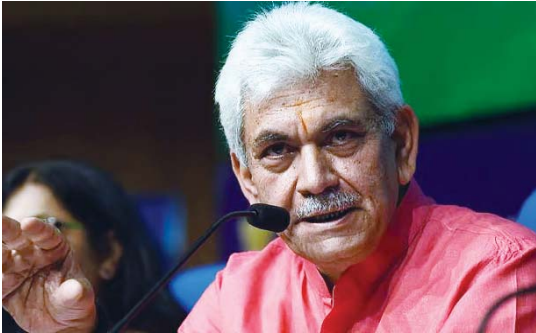
Commissioned into the Education Branch of the IAF on June 18, 1994, AVM Sharma brings a wealth of experience to her new role, spanning diverse postings across training establishments, field stations, command headquarters and the Air Headquarters, it said.

"Throughout her career, she has spearheaded key institutional initiatives, including establishing the IAF Chairs of Excellence at IIT Kanpur and Pune University

to drive academic and strategic defence collaboration. She also created history as the first woman officer from the Tri-Services to command a Sainik School, serving as principal of Sainik School, Kapurthala," the ministry said in a statement.

This landmark achievement marks a new chapter in the journey of women officers in the Indian defence forces. With over three decades of distinguished service, she continues to inspire generations to 'Touch the Sky with Glory' — the motto of the IAF, it said.

States Focus



MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON TERROR NETWORKS: J&K LG TO OFFICIALS

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday instructed senior officials to maintain pressure on terror networks, enhance ground-level operational synergy to eliminate emerging threats. Emphasising that public trust is vital to the security apparatus, Sinha directed police officials to foster engagement with the public, designate specific hours for citizen interaction and grievance redressal.

"Police must continuously engage with the public. Every genuine grievance must be addressed with sensitivity and every investigation must be conducted with fairness and transparency" he said. While reviewing security situation and assessing the security apparatus and strategic preparedness across the UT, he underscored transparent, impartial and sensitive complaint handling.

(PTI)



CEC GYANESH KUMAR TO VISIT GOA TO ENGAGE WITH BLOs

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar will arrive in Goa on Wednesday for a two-day visit to interact with booth-level officers and engage with youth as part of measures to strengthen electoral participation at the grassroots, officials said on Tuesday. Goa is slated to go to polls in 2027.

During his visit, Kumar will also attend a regional conference on Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) and the ECINET platform at Ravindra Bhavan in Margao, South Goa, the Chief Electoral Officer, Goa, stated in a release.

He will interact with BLOs on Wednesday, providing them an opportunity to share their experiences.

(PTI)

Rahul should apologise for spreading falsehood on Indian economy: BJP

FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for the 7.8 per cent GDP growth in the April-June quarter and demanded that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi apologise for calling the Indian economy "dead" and spreading falsehood that a big economic tsunami was on its way.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, senior party leader Ravi Shankar Prasad also lauded Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's financial management and the contributions of the Indian industry, businessmen and workers for the achievement.

He slammed the Congress for its criticism of the Modi Government's economic policies, saying, "We have brought the Indian economy from the fragile five in 2013 to 7.8 per cent GDP growth."

Crediting Prime Minister Modi's vision and leadership, Prasad hit out at Gandhi, alleging that he tried to tarnish India's image with his baseless remarks about the



BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad

Indian economy.

"Rahul Gandhi has shared a wealth of insights over the past three or four months: 'Indian economy is a dead economy, a big economic tsunami is coming'. Now, a growth rate of 7.8 per cent is there in front of you. Do you have some shame?" the BJP MP asked the Congress leader.

"The BJP condemns outright the irresponsible, false, baseless and mischievous contention of Gandhi that the Indian economy is a dead economy and a big economic tsunami is going to come," Prasad said

This has happened despite war and the Gulf crisis. This

happens when there is stable leadership in the country like Narendra Modi, who can turn challenges into opportunity. This happens when the entire country stands together with Modi's leadership, the BJP leader said

Prasad said that though Gandhi is the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, he is bereft of any understanding of economic management and economic development.

"The BJP demands that Gandhi must apologise for condemning the Indian economy based on falsehood and baseless allegations that it is a dead economy and a

big economic tsunami is coming," he added.

"Rahul Gandhi doesn't do his homework. He relies on cheat-speak. He simply reads out whatever has been written for him," the BJP leader said, and asked, "Has Rahul Gandhi taken a contract to compromise and weaken the morale of the people of India?"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has termed the GDP growth a "herculean feat", calling it particularly impressive, coming against the backdrop of global turmoil, geopolitical conflicts and supply chain disruptions.

In a video message on Instagram, the prime minister also slammed those spreading "jhooth ki goonj", an apparent riff on Rahul Gandhi's 'Chhatron ki Goonj' campaign, where he has been critical of the Modi Government's performance, saying the latest GDP growth rate tore through the narrative of "pessimism" about the Indian economy.

Modi said India must maintain the growth momentum and continue working towards greater self-reliance.

Rahul slams ECI, BJP after over 2 crore voters excluded from Maharashtra voter roll



FAIR REPORT
New Delhi

With more than 2.06 crore electors excluded from Maharashtra's draft electoral roll after the SIR exercise, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that the BJP and the "Vote Chori Aayog" keep changing their tactics and will continue to do so as their goal remains to ensure the BJP's victory at any.

Gandhi said that for a Government built on 'vote chori', the people are not important and that is why the BJP neither listens to the people nor obeys their command.

"The BJP and the 'Vote Chori Aayog' keep changing their tactics, and they will continue to do so - the goal remains just one: BJP's victory at any cost, and the end of India's democracy," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said in a post in Hindi on X.

More than 2.06 crore electors, accounting for 21.14 per cent of Maharashtra's previous voter base, have not figured in the draft electoral roll following a Special Intensive Revision (SIR), the Chief Electoral Officer said on Monday.

The draft roll currently has more than 7.71 crore voters (78.86 per cent of the previous electorate), comprising 3.95 crore men, 3.75 crore

women, and 3,087 third-gender voters, according to State election authorities.

As many as 2,06,88,487 people have not been included, as their enumeration forms were uncollectable because they were either untraceable, deceased, or had shifted residences, they said.

Reacting to the development, Gandhi said, "Maharashtra 2024 — Suddenly, 39 lakh new voters were added between the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections. I said it then, and I say it today: This was vote theft."

"Bengal 2026 — Of the names struck off in the SIR, 91 per cent had to be reinstated after appeals. That means 9 out of every 10 names were wrongly deleted, and added back only after the election. I said it then, and I say it today: This was vote theft. And now in Maharashtra, 2.07 crore voters have been removed from the draft list - that's every fifth voter," Gandhi said.

"Lok Sabha 2024: 9.29 crore; Vidhan Sabha 2024: 9.7 crore; SIR 2026: 7.78 crore. Which list was correct? For a Government built on vote theft, the people are not important - that's why this BJP neither listens to the people nor obeys their command," the former Congress chief said.

BJP launches 10-day Padayatra against alleged corruption in Karnataka Govt

FAIR REPORT

Raichur (Karnataka)

The Opposition BJP in Karnataka on Tuesday kick-started a 10-day 'Padayatra' from Raichur to Ballari to protest against the alleged corruption under the Congress Government in the State.

The BJP targeted Chief Minister DK Shivakumar for re-inducting Ballari Rural MLA B Nagendra in the cabinet, who they alleged was involved in the ₹89 crore scam in Karnataka State Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation.

Nagendra had resigned as Tribal Development Minister in June 2024 when the scam came to light following the suicide of a corporation offi-



Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra, State Assembly LoP R Ashoka, former state CM BS Yediyurappa and others during the inauguration ceremony of the Ballari Chalo Padayatra in Bengaluru

PTI

cial P Chandrasekharan, who left behind a detailed suicide note. He was re-inducted on August 3.

The opposition party had disrupted the legislative session, demanding Nagendra's removal. The din compelled assembly speaker GS Patil and legislative council chairperson Saleem Ahmed to adjourn the pro-

ceedings of the Houses sine die on August 24, cutting it short by three days.

Senior party leaders, including three former Chief Ministers – BS Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai and Jagadish Shettar, led the agitation at Lingasugur in Raichur district.

Addressing the gathering, Yediyurappa termed the

Padayatra a protest against the "power drunk" Congress Government.

"This Government, which is drunk on the power of its mandate, is anti-farmer, anti-people, anti-environment, anti-women and involved in corruption. Our struggle will continue until this Government is removed," Yediyurappa said.

He asked Shivakumar whether he has any freedom at all because he has to run to Delhi for every issue.

"If you have to go and bow at Rahul Gandhi's feet for everything, are you really the Chief Minister? Are you doing anything that brings dignity to the office of Chief Minister? The people of the state are watching all this," the BJP stalwart in Karnataka said.

Chhattisgarh PSC scam: ED raids Baghel's ex-PA

FAIR REPORT

Raipur

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Chhattisgarh, including against a former personal assistant of ex-chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, in a money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities at the State Public Service Commission, officials said.

They said a total of seven locations in Bhilai, Durg and Raipur are being raided as part of the probe initiated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The investigation pertains to alleged irregularities at the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission (CGPSC) and the searched premises include that of KK Chandrakar, the former personal assistant of Baghel,



the officials said.

Baghel had earlier dismissed allegations made by the ED in the liquor and coal levy-linked money laundering cases, calling the charges a political witch hunt against him and people linked to him.

The money laundering investigation stems from a Chhattisgarh EOW FIR and a subsequent complaint filed by the CBI in July 2024.

Sonwani was also arrested by the CBI in 2024.

In a statement issued on July 27, the ED said that while functioning as the CGPSC chairman, Sonwani entered into a criminal conspiracy with other public servants and private individuals.

They allegedly leaked question papers and "manipulated" the selection process in exchange for illegal gratification to secure the fraudulent selection of his own relatives and other favoured candidates for senior public posts, including deputy collector and deputy Superintendent of Police. "The recruitment rules of the CGPSC were amended in 2021 to remove the word 'nephew' from the definition of 'family,' thereby facilitating the selection of the relatives of Sonwani," it had said.

ZSI scientists, global experts come across new species of deep-sea skate

FAIR REPORT

Kolkata

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), in collaboration with ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and international experts, have discovered a new species of deep-sea skate in the Arabian Sea off India's southwestern coast, an official said on Tuesday.

The discovery was made during surveys carried out under the Ministry of Earth Sciences Deep Ocean Mission, aimed at studying and documenting little-known marine life in India's deep waters.

A deep-sea skate is a flat, shark-related fish that lives on the dark bed of the ocean.

The new species, commonly called the Arabian skate, can grow up to about 1.3 metres in length and was found at depths of 400 to 600 metres off the Kerala coast and in the Wadge Bank region.

Scientists identified the skate as a distinct species after examining its physical features and conducting



Zoological Survey of India

genetic studies. One of its most noticeable features is five rows of thorn-like structures along its tail, a ZSI spokesperson said Tuesday.

Genetic testing also showed that the Arabian Skate is different from its closest known relative, the Travancore Skate, with the two species showing a genetic difference of around 3.8 to 4.7 per cent.

The species had remained unidentified for more than four decades and was earlier mistaken for another type of deep-sea skate. It has also frequently been caught as bycatch in deep-sea shrimp trawling operations.

The scientists have named the new species after Dr Dhriti Banerjee, the first

woman Director of the Zoological Survey of India, in recognition of her contribution to research on India's biodiversity. "The deep sea remains largely unexplored, and every survey provides a crucial opportunity to expand our understanding of marine biodiversity," Banerjee said.

Banerjee further said deep-sea skates are particularly vulnerable to overfishing because they generally reproduce slowly, have few offspring and take a long time to recover when their populations decline. "Identifying these species before their populations decline is essential for developing effective, targeted conservation strategies," she said.

India faces rise in fatty liver, colorectal cancer

FAIR REPORT

New Delhi

India is seeing a rise in gastrointestinal diseases such as fatty liver and colorectal cancer, experts said on Tuesday, highlighting the need for greater focus on their early detection and prevention.

Ahead of the World Congress of Gastroenterology (WCOG) 2026, experts from AIIMS, Delhi, said improvements in hygiene, vaccination and public health measures have helped reduce several communicable and preventable diseases, but the country is now witnessing a growing burden of metabolic and lifestyle-related gastrointestinal conditions.

The World Congress of Gastroenterology (WCOG) 2026, which will be held for the first time in India from September 30 to October 3 at Yashobhoomi in Dwarka, will bring together gastroenterology experts from across the world to discuss the changing burden of digestive diseases.

Dr Pramod Garg, professor and head of the Department of Gastroenterology and Human Nutrition at AIIMS,



Representative image

said, "India is facing an epidemiological shift at this time. We have made significant strides in controlling preventable disease through awareness, vaccinations and improving quality of life, however alongside these we are now seeing metabolic disease on a scale we have never handled before."

Fatty liver disease has emerged as a major concern, with an AIIMS-led systematic review and meta-analysis finding the condition in 38.6 per cent of Indian adults and 35.4 per cent of children, said Dr Shalimar, professor in the department of Gastroenology at the hospital said.

The disease is closely associated with diabetes, obesity

and hypertension and can remain silent until liver damage has progressed, he said.

According to experts, India is facing a rise in the form of metabolic conditions such as fatty liver disease and colorectal cancer alongside persistent infections such as Helicobacter pylori and intestinal worm infestations.

A recent study has also reported clinically significant liver fibrosis in one in four patients with Type 2 diabetes

India included fatty liver disease in its National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in 2021, followed by guidelines

for its detection at the primary-care level.

"The disease is easy to find if we look for it, and we become aware only after the patient falls ill. This is a greater challenge than before — we must move away from only treating diseases; we must now actively promote good health," Dr Garg said.

Colorectal cancer is another growing concern, with doctors reporting an increasing number of cases among younger adults. India recorded 40,430 new cases among men and 24,433 among women in 2022, according to available data.

Blood in the stool, persistent changes in bowel habits and unexplained weight loss should not be dismissed as routine gastrointestinal problems, experts said.

"India has never been short of gastroenterologists or technology. What we have lacked is the habit of taking early symptoms seriously," said Dr Govind Makharia, professor at AIIMS and chairman of the local organising committee for WCOG 2026.

"Any symptom that persists beyond two to three weeks should be evaluated," he said. Persistent infections also

remain an important part of India's gastrointestinal disease burden. H pylori, which is associated with peptic ulcer disease and gastric cancer, remains widespread, while intestinal worm infections continue to affect children and can contribute to anaemia and undernutrition.

At the same time, conditions such as celiac disease and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), once considered uncommon in India, are increasingly being recognised.

A community-based study led by AIIMS found celiac disease in approximately one in 96 people in northern India. "Inflammatory bowel disease and celiac disease were textbook rarities in India when I trained, and we now see them every week," said Dr Vineet Ahuja, professor at AIIMS and secretary general of the Crohn's Colitis Foundation of India.

The WCOG 2026 will focus on advances in diagnostics, endoscopy, therapeutics, gut microbiome research and artificial intelligence-enabled healthcare, besides examining the changing global burden of gastrointestinal diseases.