

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

Jaipur, Tuesday, 8 September 2026

PRGI No. - RNI- RJBI/25/A1808 | Vol 2 | Issue No.-13 Pages 04 | ₹3.00



Artistes perform during the foundation stone-laying ceremony of development projects at Gauhati University in Guwahati, Monday .

Justice Gets a New Compass: Sanjay Kumar Agarwal Takes Charge as Rajasthan HC Chief Justice

■ FAIR REPORT
HEMRAJ TIKAMCHAND

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court entered a new judicial chapter on Monday as Justice Sanjay Kumar Agarwal took oath as its Chief Justice, assuming charge at a time when the judiciary faces a rapidly changing landscape shaped by technology, mounting caseloads and rising expectations of faster and more accessible justice. At a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan, Governor Haribhau Bagde administered the oath of office to Justice Agarwal, who took the oath in English. The formal proceedings began with Chief Secretary V. Srinivas requesting the Governor to administer the oath. Srinivas



subsequently read out the appointment notification and warrant issued by President Droupadi Murmu, formally completing the constitutional process for Justice Agarwal's elevation. The ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Deputy

Chief Ministers Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa, members of the state Cabinet, public representatives, judges of the Rajasthan High Court, senior officials, members of the Bar and family members of the new Chief Justice.

A Judiciary Under Transformation

The significance of the transition extends beyond a change at the top of the state's judicial hierarchy. Courts across India are entering an era in which the traditional architecture of justice is being tested by new realities—artificial intelligence, digital evidence, virtual hearings, cybercrime, data-driven investigations and the demand for real-time access to legal information. For the Rajasthan High Court, the challenge is equally structural: delivering justice not merely through judicial pronouncements, but through a system capable of reducing delays, improving case management and making the justice process more accessible to citizens across the state. The future of judicial administration is increasingly likely to be defined by how effectively courts combine constitutional values with technological capability. Artificial intelligence may assist with research and case management. Digital platforms may reduce procedural friction. Data analytics may help identify patterns in pendency and listing. But the final arbiter will remain the human judge—and the constitutional principles of fairness, independence and due process.

New World Map Row: India Backed It, Now Objects — Here's the Real Story

NEW DELHI: A vote India itself supported at the United Nations has now become a diplomatic flashpoint — with New Delhi objecting to the very map it helped pass, and Pakistan piling on to call India's claim "baseless."

At the heart of the controversy is the "Equal Earth Projection," a map that corrects centuries-old distortions in how the world has been visually represented. On September 4, the UN General Assembly adopted the "Correct the Map" proposal — moved by Togo's Foreign Minister Robert Dussey — calling on member states to adopt the projection, or any other area-accurate map, in place of the traditional Mercator projection. The resolution passed with support from 164 countries, India among them. The United States was the lone vote against. Six nations, including Ukraine, Serbia and Georgia, abstained.

1.48 Billion And Counting: AIIMS Delhi's Population Clock Puts a Number to a Nation's Anxiety

A billboard reading India's population in real time has gone viral — reviving a debate the country has been avoiding for years

■ FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

A digital billboard outside AIIMS Delhi has done what census reports and parliamentary debates have struggled to — put India's population crisis in a single, ticking number that people cannot look away from. Videos circulating on social media this week show the display reading 1,47,92,39,016 — nearly 1.48 billion — timestamped at 15:59:30. The board, modelled to appear as a live counter, has pushed India's population question back into public conversation at a moment when the country already holds the title of the world's most populous nation. The display does

not track births and deaths as they happen. Instead, it draws on demographic models built from birth and death rate data to project an estimate — a distinction easily lost on anyone watching the digits appear to climb in real time. That distinction hasn't blunted the reaction. What the billboard captures, more than precision, is scale: a nation now brushing up against 1.48 billion people, a figure so large it resists easy comprehension until it's staring back from a signboard. Reactions online have split along familiar lines. For some, the figure is a source of national pride — proof of India's demographic weight on the world stage. For others, it's a red flag: a reminder of the pressure such numbers place on housing, healthcare, jobs, water and civic infrastructure already stretched thin in most Indian cities.

₹620 CRORE, ONE CANDIDATE: THE POLITICAL FUNDING TRAIL THAT DEMANDS AN ANSWER



Hemraj Tikamchand Tiwari

By Special Feature Desk

A little-known political party. 620 crore in donations. One Lok Sabha candidate. And a former president who says she had already left.

That is not, by itself, evidence of a scam. But it is an extraordinary finan-

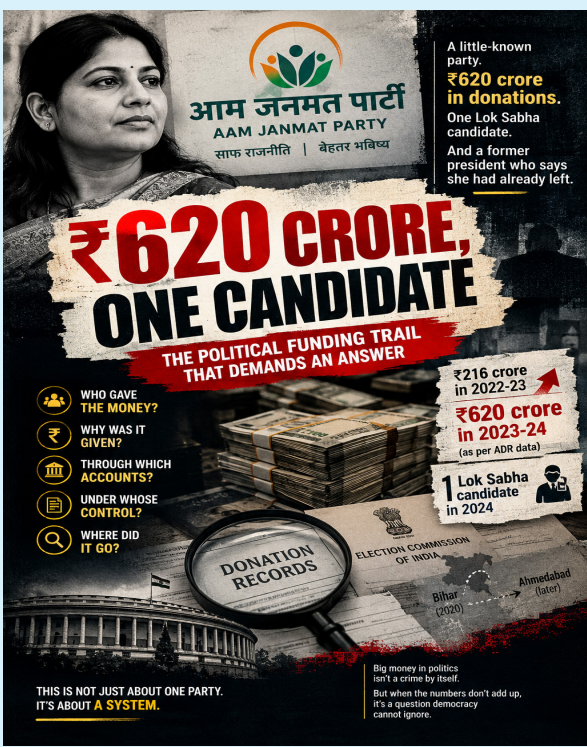
cial pattern — and in a democracy, extraordinary financial finance demands extraordinary scrutiny.

The Aam Janmat Party reported approximately 620 crore in donations in 2023-24, according to records examined in recent reporting. The figure represented a dramatic jump from roughly 216 crore in 2022-23. Yet when the country voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the party fielded just one candidate.

That arithmetic is the beginning of the story, not its conclusion.

The first question is obvious: who supplied 620 crore?

The second is more im-



portant: what was the purpose of supplying it?

And the third should be impossible for the authorities to ignore: where did the money go?

The case becomes politically sensitive because of Anamika Paswan, who was the party's founding president when it was established in Patna in 2020 and is now a BJP leader in Bihar. But Paswan has reportedly told the BBC that she resigned from the party in 2022, after which its operations shifted to Ahmedabad. That chronology must be respected: there is no established evidence in the material currently available that she controlled or received the 620 crore.

But her departure raises another question: who controlled the party when the hundreds of crores began flowing?

The current party website lists an Ahmedabad address and identifies the Aam Janmat Party as a Gujarat-based political organisation.

That makes the audit trail crucial.

The Election Commission should be able to establish the identity of the donors, the dates and modes of payment, the party's bank accounts, authorised signatories and expenditure records. The Income Tax authorities can examine whether the donors possessed the

financial capacity to make such contributions. If discrepancies emerge, the appropriate investigative agencies can determine whether any offence occurred.

This is not merely about one obscure party.

A recent investigation into six Gujarat-based registered unrecognised political parties found that they collectively received around 1,700 crore in 2023-24 but fielded only 15 Lok Sabha candidates. The investigation explicitly stopped short of alleging financial wrongdoing.

That distinction matters.

A large donation is not

corruption. A small electoral footprint is not a crime. But a huge flow of political money with an unusually limited public footprint is a legitimate transparency question.

India does not need another partisan shouting match.

It needs the documents. Who paid 620 crore? Why? Through which accounts? Under whose control? And where is every rupee today? Until those questions are answered, the 620-crore figure will remain what it already is: not proof of a scam — but a financial mystery too large for Indian democracy to simply look away from.

FAIR NATION

FAIR REPORT 02

Congress attacks BJP on Delhi building collapse

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

In a scathing attack against the BJP over the Satya Niketan PG building collapse, the Congress on Monday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "PR balloon" had been deflated and termed the "four-engine Government" in Delhi a killing machine claiming the lives of students.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi accused the BJP Government of evading accountability for the collapse and alleged that Prime Minister Modi uses insulting labels like 'dimagi Naxal' and 'naraaz phoopha' against those who ask questions.

The remarks came a day after the five-storey building in the congested area near Delhi University's South Campus collapsed killing seven people.

The opposition party demanded that action be taken against all those responsible. It also demanded that affordable accommodation be provided to students, a rent control act be brought for hostels and PGs and Rs 1 crore compensation be given to the family of those who have lost their lives.

Gandhi asked what the excuse for this helplessness was when Delhi has a "triple-engine" Government, saying it stems from a lack of intent.



"There is no accountability," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi on X, using the hashtag "TINA". Supporters of the prime minister often cite the "TINA" factor — There Is No Alternative — to argue that Modi is the only capable and indispensable leader for India.

The former Congress chief claimed that every time, the BJP Government follows the same shameful pattern -- no prevention before accidents, just grandstanding after them, and pinning the blame on a few low-level officers, while the real culprits remain unaccountable.

"The collapse of the building packed with students at Satya Niketan is no isolated tragedy. In the last four months, six people died in a similar disaster in Saidulajab, and a fire in Hauz Rani claimed 22 lives.

"Every time, lives, dreams, and aspirations get buried under rubble -- and every

time, any real action is nowhere to be found. And when you demand accountability, the prime minister himself slaps you with insulting labels like 'dimagi Naxal and naraaz phoopha' — the intent being to shame, defame, and silence anyone who dares to ask questions," he said.

For 12 years, this Government has spun people around with lofty talk about the whole world, but never addressed the real issues, Gandhi claimed.

Delhi has a "triple-engine" Government, so what is the excuse for this helplessness now, he asked. "The helplessness stems from a lack of intent — because where there's no intent, there's no accountability either."

Addressing a press conference along with NSUI president Vinod Jakhar, Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar said it is unfortunate that there is no clarity even after 24 hours

and the debris has not yet been fully cleared.

"There is no information on how many people are still trapped under the debris. The PG had 45 beds, it was Sunday, what if all the students were there? There were labourers working in the basement and students sit on the building's steps as well. The police administration present there is not only failing to carry out relief and rescue operations properly, but is also engaged in the task of hiding the truth," the NSUI in-charge said.

He alleged that the BJP has constructed five-star party offices in every district which don't collapse, but bridges fall, roads break, and Government buildings collapse. "There are such incidents where students have lost their lives. In one place, a fire broke out in a coaching centre. In another, a library flooded with water. In yet another, a student died from an electric shock. The question is-when will the BJP Government take responsibility and accountability for this?" Kumar asked.

Prime Minister Modi -- who addressed students at Delhi University's Shri Ram College of Commerce on Saturday - has time to send congratulatory messages to Italian Premier Georgia Meloni but no time to visit Satya Niketan to express his condolences, he said.

Hooch tragedy toll in MP rises to 12

FAIR REPORT ■ Sagar (MP)

The death toll in the Sagar hooch tragedy in Madhya Pradesh rose to 12 on Monday after one more person succumbed, while nearly 30 others remained under medical observation, including two in critical condition, officials said.

Police have arrested 14 of the 30 persons named as accused in FIRs lodged in connection with the incident as authorities launched a major crackdown on bootleggers, they said.

Three separate FIRs have been registered on complaints by the victims' kin, Sagar Range Deputy Inspector General of Police Shashindra Chouhan said.

On Sunday, 11 persons died and 54 others fell ill after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in two villages of Banda tehsil, about 30 km from the Sagar district headquarters.

Many of those who fell ill complained of symptoms like blurred vision and dizziness.

One more person died in the early



hours of Monday, raising the toll to 12, Sagar Collector Pratibha Pal said.

She said that 25 to 30 persons were under medical observation and two of them were in critical condition.

One of the sick persons was airlifted to Bhopal on Sunday for advanced medical treatment, she said.

Fourteen of the 30 accused named in the FIRs have been arrested, and a hunt is on for the remaining suspects, Pal said.

Police and the excise department launched a massive crackdown on bootleggers after gathering inputs,

she said, adding that revenue department teams, along with village representatives, were going door-to-door to check whether people were possessing liquor bottles.

The police were also investigating a suspected link between people in Lalitpur in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and the local liquor contractor (outlet owner), Chouhan said.

Collector Pal on Sunday said the preliminary investigation indicated that the liquor had been supplied from Lalitpur.

"There is a gang in Lalitpur that supplies this kind of poisonous liquor. Since this area is adjacent to Uttar Pradesh, this has come to light in the preliminary investigation," she said.

The administration has appealed to people who consumed liquor and were experiencing symptoms such as vomiting, headache or fever to immediately visit health centres and undergo medical examination.

Authorities suspended three excise officials and two police personnel in connection with the tragedy.

ED raids premises linked to Urdu daily promoted by TMC MP

FAIR REPORT ■ Kolkata

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday raided premises in Kolkata, Delhi and Ranchi as part of a money laundering investigation against an Urdu daily promoted by TMC Rajya Sabha MP Nadimul Haque, officials said.

The 56-year-old Haque, who is also a journalist and businessman, is the director of the company (Akhbar-E-Mashriq Pvt Ltd) that brings out the daily named Akhbar-E-Mashriq.

There was no immediate response on the ED action from Haque or the TMC.

The probe relates to allegations of publication and dissemination of material

promoting communal disharmony, unaccounted cash transactions and funding from suspicious sources of the daily, the officials said.

About seven premises in Kolkata, Delhi and Ranchi (Jharkhand) were raided.

The ED case booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) stems from an FIR registered by the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate, they said.

"Akhbar-e-Mashriq is more than a newspaper. It is a four-decade legacy of uncompromising journalism, technological innovation, and relentless dedication to our readers," the Urdu daily states on its website.

West Bengal economy to revive in 1 year: Suwendu

FAIR REPORT ■ Kolkata

Bengal's economic health had just started to limp back to normalcy, but it would be at least a year before it regains its vitality, thanks to the economic anarchy and large-scale corruption of the previous Trinamool Congress regime, State Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday said.

"Though it cannot be said that the economic health of our State has recovered fully, it has started recovering, and I am of the opinion that in a year's time we will be able to overcome the crisis," Adhikari said, holding the previous Mamata Banerjee Government fully responsible for the "economic mess" that Bengal was in.

"There was large-scale corruption and fiscal indiscipline committed by the previous Government," and adding insult to injury, the previous Government would not join the central Government's schemes leading to the present situation, the Chief Minister alleged. "The State Government has joined the various central schemes as a result of which more funds are coming ... I am hopeful that the economy will return to normalcy in a year," he said and claimed that because of some corrective measures taken by the Government revenue leakages would stop.

"The Government has taken some measures that will plug the revenue leakages" and eventually the



State's tax revenue would go up by 18 per cent, he said.

The Chief Minister was addressing a gathering of beneficiaries of social schemes where old people and widows had assembled to receive enhanced benefits. The State Government increased the old age allowance from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500. The Chief Minister said that the waiting lists of beneficiaries prepared by the previous Government would stand cancelled as new welfare camps would be set up by the new Government to enlist newer beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, in a new development, the Central and State agencies have approved construction of a four-lane green-field corridor connecting parts of North Bengal so that vehicles moving from southern Bengal to northern Bengal will not have to enter the Kishanganj corridor of Bihar, sources said. The new road would connect Chopra in North Dinajpur with parts of Darjeeling district.

India-France ties have reached new heights: PM Modi

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said India-France relations have reached new heights, and this strategic partnership is particularly special because it rests on the solid foundation of long-standing cultural and political ties.

Addressing virtually the inauguration of the Swaminarayan temple in Paris on Sunday, Modi hoped that the grand temple in Paris will stand for centuries as a symbol of cooperation and opportunity between both nations.

"In recent years, relations between India and France have reached new heights. Together with my friend, President (Emmanuel) Macron, both nations are building a Special Global



Strategic Partnership," he said.

The prime minister said that from technology, AI, and defence to space and climate action, India and France are moving forward together with new momen-

tum and energy.

"We are also celebrating 2026 as the India-France Year of Innovation. This strategic partnership is particularly special because it rests on the solid foundation of our long-standing cultur-

al and political ties," he said.

Modi said these days, there is much talk about joint venture possibilities between India and France.

He said history bears witness that the sacrifice of Indian soldiers in France remains alive in the hearts of people to this day.

"Language enthusiasts also know the pivotal role French scholars played in popularising Sanskrit. Romain Rolland's writings on Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda brought our societies closer," he said.

Furthermore, the prime minister said, the spiritual journey of 'The Mother' from Paris to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry has inspired countless Indian and French seekers.

He said decades ago, Srila Prabhupada Swami also

visited France, opening a new chapter in spiritual connections through ISKCON.

"Today, yoga has also become a bridge for people-to-people connections between our nations. Images from the Eiffel Tower on International Yoga Day reflect yoga's immense popularity in France," he said.

PM Modi said the Swaminarayan temple adds a new dimension to those possibilities - "It is 'Made in India' and 'Built in France.'"

"Many of its stones were carved in India, blending India's ancient craftsmanship with modern engineering here in France," he said.

PM Modi said he was confident that the resonant values of Indian culture originating from the newly built temple in Paris will benefit people across Europe.

MPSC paper leak: Aspirants protest in Pune

FAIR REPORT ■ Pune

A large number of MPSC aspirants staged a protest march in Pune on Monday, demanding transparency in the recruitment process and action against the alleged paper leaks and irregularities in various examinations.

The protesters demanded the resignation of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) chairman and secretary and the immediate appointment of officers with a "clean image" to the posts.

The march began at Omkareshwar Temple Chowk and proceeded to the Pune District Collectorate, where pro-



testers raised demands related to the functioning of the MPSC and examination procedures.

NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar and Congress legislator Vishwajit Kadam joined the protesters, extending support to their demands. Pawar said

the Government must fulfil the protesters' demands. The protesters demanded that the commission provide, within eight days, an explanation on objections raised about the Drug Inspector (Group-B) examination and initiate an inquiry into alleged irregularities.

Among other demands, the aspirants sought an inquiry into alleged errors in the evaluation of descriptive papers of the 2025 State Services Main Examination and Agricultural Services examination. They also demanded that the preliminary inquiry report submitted by the Mumbai Crime Branch to the MPSC be made public.

CM Mohan Yadav meets UAE economy minister in Dubai

FAIR REPORT
 Dubai

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday held a high-level meeting with UAE Cabinet member and Minister of Economy and Tourism Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri in Dubai, seeking to deepen investment and economic cooperation between the UAE and Madhya Pradesh.

Yadav formally invited Al Marri to participate in the upcoming Global Investors Summit (GIS) in Madhya Pradesh. Accepting the invitation, Al Marri assured him that a special investment delegation from Dubai would soon visit Madhya Pradesh to explore opportunities in the hotel and



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav interacts with global investors and industrial leaders in Dubai

PTI

hospitality sector.

The two sides also discussed potential cooperation in mining, textiles, forestry and tourism. Yadav outlined the state Government's transparent policies, land ownership regulations, labour reforms and investor pro-

tection mechanisms. He also highlighted the positive experience of UAE companies already operating in Madhya Pradesh and reiterated the Government's commitment to providing a conducive business environment for new investors.

Indian, Chinese armies hold talks on border



FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Indian and Chinese armies reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh sector, days after the two sides held Special Representative talks in Beijing on the festering boundary question.

The focus of the corps commander-level talks at the Wacha-Damai border meeting point in Arunachal Pradesh's Kibithoo region on Sunday was to maintain peace and tranquillity along the frontier, people familiar with the matter said.

The Indian delegation was headed by Lt General Girish Kalia, the commander of the Army's Dimapur-based 3 Corps. There is no official word yet on the talks.

The meeting also came amid reports of aggressive military posturing by Chinese troops along the LAC in the Upper Subansiri region of Arunachal Pradesh.

In the Special Representative (SR) talks on August 25, India conveyed

to China the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity along the frontier for overall bilateral ties.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held the SR talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi which focused on delimitation of the frontier and sustaining work on trans-boundary cooperation.

In his remarks at the meeting, Doval said that normalcy in the ties has been a direct result of both sides maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

The Indian side highlighted the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas for the continued development and progress of the bilateral relationship, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said on the SR talks.

Both Doval and Wang are the designated SRs for the boundary talks mechanism, which was established in 2003 to comprehensively address the dispute over the India-China border spanning 3,488 km.

States Focus



VP RADHAKRISHNAN TO VISIT ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan will arrive in Itanagar on Tuesday evening on a two-day visit to Arunachal Pradesh, during which he will attend a special session of the Assembly, officials said.

Radhakrishnan is on a four-day tour of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, which kicked off on Sunday. The vice president will arrive in Itanagar from Manipur's Imphal on Tuesday evening and attend a special session of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly the next day, officials said. He will also visit the Assembly gallery-cum-museum. Radhakrishnan's itinerary also includes visits to Nyedar Namlo (Prayer Hall), the Jawaharlal Nehru State Museum and the Donyi Polo Mission School for the Hearing and Visually Impaired in Itanagar, they said.

(PTI)



COMMITTED TO TRANSFORMING MIZORAM INTO DIGITAL STATE: CM

Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Monday said he is committed to transforming Mizoram into a "digital state" with an aim to make governance efficient and services more accessible.

Lalduhoma was speaking at the launch of a series of technology-driven initiatives at the Administrative Training Institute (ATI) here, including the Smart ATI App, Smart Classroom and Digital Learning Laboratory.

"My personal vision and goal is to make Mizoram a digital state. Mizoram is well-positioned to embrace digital governance, given its relatively small population and high literacy rate," the chief minister said.

(PTI)

Punjab Police bust cross-border camera spy racket

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi/Chandigarh

The shoe shop, which was set up on the road between Ludhiana and Ferozepur, appeared completely ordinary. It opened at irregular times, and two Chinese cameras were directed not towards the cash register but at the highway, six kilometres from Baddowal Cantonment. The login IDs and passwords crossed the border, and live images of Army and paramilitary movements were transmitted. This shop is now one element in a bigger scheme.

Over the last six months, the Punjab Police have dealt with five cases in which internet cameras were used for spying. They arrested 22 of the 23 suspects and seized 11 cameras, solar panels, SIM cards, mobile phones, a router, and an adapter. Eight

first information reports were filed in Kapurthala, Amritsar, Bathinda, Pathankot, Barnala, and Ludhiana under the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Investigators are now tracking SIM serial numbers, device IDs, cloud logins, and financial transactions. This method is inexpensive, difficult to trace, and easy to deny. Solar-powered 4G cameras that do not require wiring are mounted on poles, shop awnings, and highways. These cameras monitor cantonments, logistics routes, and railway lines. Residents are paid tens of thousands of rupees to install the cameras and provide the login details.

Handlers in Pakistan view the camera feeds through a phone app. If a feed stops working, they send someone to fix the equipment. Payments have increased as their operations have expand-



Representative image

ed. For example, a recruit from Pathankot to Jammu via NH-44 earned about ₹40,000 and received instructions from a contact in Dubai. In Kapurthala, an installer was paid ₹35,000 by a handler known as "Fauji."

In Ludhiana, Rashpal Singh from Gurdaspur, his uncle Akash, and two men from Amritsar, Varinder Masih and

Rohit, reportedly received ₹3 to 4 lakh over several months, with the money sent through hawala. Recruitment happened through Instagram and with help from a fixer in Punjab, who connected local recruits with ISI desks in Dubai. The cameras themselves show the supply chain: many are banned Chinese internet models that are still being cir-

PM Modi to unveil ₹35,000 crore projects in Vadodara

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay foundation stones, inaugurate and dedicate to the nation development projects worth more than ₹35,000 Crore in Vadodara on Tuesday. He will also inaugurate the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2026, one of the world's largest and most influential annual fintech conferences in Mumbai.

Modi will first visit Vadodara, where he will lay the foundation stone and inaugurate and dedicate to the nation various development projects. He will also address the gathering, an official statement said.

Among the projects the prime minister will dedicate to the nation are three important sections of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor



(WDFC), covering 326 route km and developed at a cost of more than ₹20,700 crore. These include the Sanand (N)-Makarpura, New Umbergaon-New Saphale and New Saphale-JNPT sections.

The direct connectivity of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) will facilitate faster movement of EXIM cargo, strengthen connectivity between industrial centres and ports, reduce logistics costs and help decongest Mumbai's railway network.

With the commissioning of these sections, the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) network will stand fully operational across its entire length.

The Prime Minister will also flag off freight train services from New Sanand (North), New Makarpura, New Umbergaon and New JNPT, Mumbai.

In addition, he will flag off a new train service between Vadodara and Tanda Road, benefiting the people of Vadodara, Chhota Udepur

and Alirajpur districts.

Modi will lay the foundation stone for three railway projects spanning 329 km and costing more than ₹9,700 crore. These include the Vadodara-Ratlam third and fourth lines, Miyagam Karjan-Choranda-Malsar gauge conversion and the Vishwamitri-Dabhoi doubling project.

He will lay the foundation stone for three national highway projects costing around ₹1,780 crore. Modi will also lay the foundation stone for and inaugurate various Gujarat Government projects worth around ₹2,600 crore.

In Mumbai, the prime minister will inaugurate the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2026, one of the world's largest and most influential annual fintech conferences. The seventh edition of the Global Fintech Fest is being held from September 8 to 11.

Suvendu announces ₹1 lakh grant for Durga Puja in West Bengal

FAIR REPORT

■ Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday announced a grant of ₹1 lakh to the Durga Puja committees, which is about ₹10,000 less than the previous year. This, besides waiving electricity charges by 100 per cent.

Appealing to the big-budget puja committees to forego their claim to Government grant, Adhikari said, "those Puja committees which are capable of funding their Pujas independently are called upon to waive their claim to the grants." The Government will organise a Puja-centric programme at the iconic Eden Gardens on Mahalaya day, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi was likely to attend, Adhikari said, adding the programme would include drone and firework displays.



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari interacts with West Bengal DGP Siddh Nath Gupta during a coordination and security review meeting for the upcoming Durga Puja festival in Kolkata on Monday

PTI

The Chief Minister, who announced a two-day State-funded programme before the Pujas, said: "From now on it will be ensured that no Puja committee has to go to the High Court to seek permission to organise Pujas." The Chief Minister also announced that prizes would be given to the best Pujas based on decoration, theme, idol, environmental friendliness, etc.

Apparently criticising his predecessor Mamata Banerjee for inaugurating the Durga Pujas before the commencement of the Devi Paksha, he said, "the Government will not allow inauguration of Pujas before Devi Paksha or Matri Paksha sets in ... Unlike on previous occasions ... When the Pujas were inaugurated on Pitri Paksha before the Mahalayas which is not auspicious for

our Dharma."

The Chief Minister also put a ban on the organisation of Pujas blocking the national highways and main thoroughfares. "No national highway will be blocked, and there will be a ban on organising Pujas on 13 main thoroughfares of Kolkata including Red Road, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Khidderpore Road, DL Khan Road... Besides, liquor sale will also be banned on Ashtami Day when Pushpanjali is offered ... The idols should also not be designed defying the traditional aesthetics of the Sanatan dharma, he said, adding that no DJ would be played during the immersion processions.

The Government servants who would be involved in the Durga Puja management during the festivities would be given two days' paid leave after the Pujas, he said.

J&K International Film Festival kicks off in Srinagar

FAIR REPORT

■ Srinagar

The International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) got off to a spectacular start with the traditional rendition of Vande Mataram, followed by the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana, on the decked-up lawns of Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre, located on the scenic banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Monday.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, along with a galaxy of Bollywood filmmakers, including Ramesh Sippy, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, SriRam Raghvan and Cinematographer Santosh Sivan, lit the traditional lamp before felicitating them.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Lieutenant Governor Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena and Dr Farooq Abdullah also attended the glittering ceremony. The four-day festival has drawn filmmakers, actors, technicians, academics and film lovers from India and abroad to Jammu and

Kashmir to reconnect the Union Territory with Bollywood and the global film industry.

On the occasion, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah urged distinguished international filmmakers and other dignitaries to send out a clear message that Jammu and Kashmir is open, safe, vibrant and ready to welcome film crews.

He said we are not just opening a cinema event; we are opening a new chapter in the long-storied romance between J&K and the silver screen. He said, Kashmir is not just a location; it is a creative sanctuary, a home for global storytellers. The Chief Minister said the festival is a declaration of J&K's intent to emerge as a vibrant home for filmmakers, storytellers and creative talent from across the world. Omar also referred to a long list of iconic Bollywood films shot in the Valley in his welcome address while inviting the young filmmakers to return to the paradise on earth and look beyond the screen. Earlier, interacting with



media persons before the formal ceremony, filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra described his participation in the International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) as an emotional homecoming, recalling his childhood and education in Kashmir and urging local youngsters to believe in their talent.

Chopra said the festival could provide a major opportunity for young filmmakers and help bring films and filmmakers from across the world to Kashmir. "It is an opportunity for youngsters. I see this festival as an opportunity. So many films and filmmakers can come

here," he said.

Actor Fatima Sana Shaikh, who played wrestler Geeta Phogat in the Bollywood biopic Dangal, on Monday said cultural festivals are important platforms that bring people together, provide opportunities to youth and promote regional cinema.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Fatma said she is excited to attend the festival after a long time.

On regional cinema, Fatima said cinema can help showcase the culture, poetry and artistry of different regions. "Regional cinema is important. Through

cinema, poetry, culture and artistry can be showcased. These things have existed for centuries. Spoken words, artistry and all of this are part of our heritage," she said.

Fatima also said an international film festival could open doors for international filmmakers and create more opportunities for film shoots in Jammu and Kashmir.

"It will open doors for international filmmakers. Film shootings happened here earlier and they are happening now as well. It depends. With an international festival taking place, they will also understand what can be done here and what the people are like," she said.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, in his welcome address, said the festival received an overwhelming response, with more than 1,100 entries from 40 Countries.

He said the festival aims to reconnect Jammu and Kashmir with the global world of cinema and invite filmmakers to explore the region.

Calcutta HC quashes arrest warrant against Mahua

FAIR REPORT

■ Kolkata

There was a big relief for Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra when the Calcutta High Court on Monday quashed the arrest warrant against her, issued by a Krishnagar district court, and transferred her case to the special MP-MLA court in Bidhannagar, Kolkata.

The order was passed by the Division Bench of Justice Debangshu Basak and Justice Aryan Dutta.

The district court had, on August 19, issued an arrest warrant against Moitra for not appearing before it despite repeated summons. The TMC leader was summoned after FIRs were lodged against her for allegedly hurting the religious sentiments of some



community.

Moitra had earlier contended that it was becoming difficult for her to appear before the court because of security reasons, as members of the BJP were blocking her path and she feared an attack from them. She had reminded the court of how the TMC leaders were being attacked, and eggs were hurled at them in public.

33% reservation will unlock new avenues for women: Om Birla



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurates All-India Capacity Building Workshop on Gender-Responsive Governance in Faridabad on Monday. NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar was also present

PIONEER PHOTO

FAIR REPORT

■ New Delhi

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday described the 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies as a historic necessity, asserting that the coming years will witness a new generation of female leaders across political, administrative, and social spheres. He stated that the day is not far when women will account for more than 50 per cent of public services.

Inaugurating a two-day All-India Capacity Building Workshop on "Gender-Responsive Governance" organised by the National Commission for Women (NCW) in Faridabad, Birla emphasised that the focus must now shift from merely providing support and opportunities to enabling women to actively shape policies, programmes, and laws.

Birla stressed that women legislators across the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, Panchayats, and Municipalities can play a decisive role in ensuring legislation responds to ground-level realities. Highlighting the constitutional commitment to equality and legislative mea-

sures for women's safety, self-reliance, and empowerment, he added that institutions like the NCW play a vital role in identifying emerging challenges and facilitating solutions.

Underlining economic and social empowerment as non-negotiable for national progress, the Speaker noted that India cannot achieve its goal of becoming a developed nation without empowering women, who constitute nearly half the population. He urged women legislators to deliberate on effective policies and schemes to strengthen women economically, particularly those facing deprivation, while calling for cross-legislative sharing of best practices and enhanced legal awareness in vulnerable areas.

Birla observed that sensitivity is a core strength of women's leadership, fostering deeper understanding and a responsive work culture to address social challenges.

The event was attended by NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar, Haryana Minister of State (IC) for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Rajesh Nagar, and around 200 women legislators representing 20 States and 2 Union Territories.



achieved through dedicated efforts, proper planning and effective implementation at the ground level." He added. The Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan is an annual assessment of 130 cities covered under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), aimed at encouraging healthy competition among cities and promoting measures to improve air quality. Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow topped the Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan Awards among cities with a population of more than 10 lakh, while Madhya Pradesh's Indore and Jabalpur secured the second and third positions, respectively. The assessment considers

measures taken by cities on road dust, solid waste management, vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, construction and demolition waste management, other emissions (DG sets and commercial establishments), and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities. The awards were based on participation and ranking of all 130 cities in three categories – those with a population below 3 lakh, between 3 lakh and 10 lakh, and above 10 lakh.

The process involved self-assessment by cities, approval by the State-level Monitoring Committee, evaluation by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), field verification by independent committees and selection of 10 best-performing cities.

Asserting that clean air was a fundamental need rather than a luxury, the NGT chairperson said the ultimate objective should be to ensure that children can play outdoors without fear of air pollution.

India's global reach growing despite turmoil: Shah

