

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

MOTHER MARY

A massive crowd turned out for the grand chariot procession of Mother Mary, held on Tuesday to mark the conclusion of the annual festival at St. Mary's Basilica in Shivajinagar, Bengaluru.

UPI WAS JUST THE BEGINNING: INDIA SETS ITS SIGHTS ON AI-DRIVEN, GLOBAL FINTECH

At Global FinTech Fest 2026, the push is for a broader digital finance ecosystem spanning credit, insurance, investments and pensions

■ FAIR REPORT
MUMBAI

India's next FinTech battle will not be fought over payments alone. With UPI having established India as a global digital-payments powerhouse, the country is now looking to take its FinTech ecosystem into credit, insurance, savings, investments and pensions, while pushing emerging technologies such as Agentic AI, tokenisation and quantum computing into the sector.

The message emerged at the Global FinTech Fest 2026 in Mumbai, where India's remarkable FinTech journey and the success of UPI were highlighted alongside an ambitious agenda for the sector's next phase.

The emphasis was on taking UPI to more markets globally, but also on ensuring that India's digital-finance success story does not remain confined to payments.

Modi-Putin meeting to set stage for deeper India-Russia economic, defence ties

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet on Friday ahead of the BRICS Summit, their second bilateral meeting in weeks, with the talks set to give fresh momentum to the India-Russia partnership across energy, defence, trade and strategic cooperation. The meeting comes amid record levels of Russian energy supplies to India, discussions on expanding defence cooperation and efforts to address long-standing payment issues in bilateral trade. Putin will attend the BRICS Summit on September 12-13. head of the visit, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said India-Russia energy cooperation was continuing to reach new highs. "Every month we have a new record," Peskov said, while declining to disclose figures.



The next frontier, the address underlined, is a financial ecosystem in which technology can expand access to a much wider range of services—while stronger safeguards keep pace with rapid innovation. That makes cybersecurity, ethical data protection and consumer protec-

tion central to the next phase of FinTech growth. A stronger FinTech Consumer Protection Index was also called for, alongside greater innovation—reflecting a growing recognition that scale alone cannot define the success of digital finance.

The technological op-

portunity is enormous. Agentic AI could reshape how financial services are delivered; tokenisation could change the way assets and transactions are structured; and quantum technologies could eventually transform computing and security.

But the larger challenge is trust.

As financial technology moves deeper into people's savings, credit, insurance and investments, the cost of weak cybersecurity, poor data governance or inadequate consumer protection will rise sharply.

India's FinTech journey, therefore, is entering a more demanding phase.

UPI proved that India can build digital financial infrastructure at extraordinary scale. The next test is whether it can build the world's most innovative—and most trusted—FinTech ecosystem.

CM pushes 'triple-engine' pitch in Kota, targets Congress

■ FAIR REPORT
KOTA

Campaigning intensified in Kota Tuesday as Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma embarked on a vigorous offensive ahead of the municipal local body elections set for Wednesday and Friday. During a public gathering in the Kaithuni area, a crucial battleground in the Kota North constituency, Sharma made an appeal for a "triple-engine govt" to expedite progress in the region.

CM urged voters to support BJP candidates across Kota and the neighbouring districts of Bundi, Jhalawar, and Baran. He stressed the aligning of local governance with state and central administrations to maximise development efficiency. "If you elect local representatives from BJP,



every single rupee allocated by the govt will be utilised effectively for development," Sharma said. "We must upgrade our current double-engine govt into a triple-engine system by securing victories in urban local bodies. I assure you that with a BJP (municipal) board, we will fulfill every promise and deliver unprecedented progress to Kota."

Sharma highlighted his administration's govern-

ance record, noting that 78% of the party's 'letter of resolutions' have been completed in the past two years. He added that projects stalled for decades have found momentum under Narendra Modi govt. "Our govt is working tirelessly on critical fronts—from law and order to infrastructure development, creating 1.83 lakh job opportunities, and rolling out examinations for 1.22 lakh aspirants," he said.

Mid-Air Scare: Passenger Tries to Force Open Emergency Exit on Dubai-Jaipur Flight, Overpowered by Crew

■ FAIR REPORT

JAIPUR

A routine red-eye from Dubai turned into a mid-air ordeal on Tuesday morning after a passenger aboard Air India Express flight IX-196 attempted to force open the aircraft's emergency exit door mid-flight, triggering panic among fellow travellers be-



fore alert cabin crew intervened and brought the situation under control. The flight, which took off from Dubai at 3:12 AM, was cruising toward

Jaipur when the passenger, identified as Babulal, allegedly began creating a disturbance without warning. Eyewitness accounts suggest he then moved toward the emergency exit and attempted to pry it open—a moment that sent a ripple of fear through the cabin. Crew members,

trained for precisely such emergencies, moved swiftly. Acting with what officials described as timely alertness, they physically restrained the passenger and prevented the door from being breached, averting what could have escalated into a far graver crisis at cruising altitude.







मजबूत आधारभूत संरचना - विकसित राजस्थान

सड़क एवं कनेक्टिविटी

- ₹13,037 करोड़ की लागत से 41 कि.मी. लंबा जयपुर मेट्रो फेज-2
- 19.22 किमी प्रतिदिन औसतन नवीन सड़क निर्माण
- 1,760 गांवों को सड़क नेटवर्क से जोड़ा
- 17 RUB, 13 ROB और 13 उच्च स्तरीय पुलों का निर्माण पूर्ण

उद्योग एवं निवेश

- ₹79,459 करोड़ के निवेश से राजस्थान रीफाइनरी
- राइजिंग राजस्थान ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टमेंट समिट में ₹35 लाख करोड़ के एमओयू
- पीएम विश्वकर्मा योजना में 2.21 लाख दस्तकारों को प्रशिक्षण एवं 61,617 को ऋण

भाजपा सरकार की नीति और नीयत से बदली
राजस्थान की किस्मत

नगर निकाय चुनाव में

कमल

खिलाना है

विकास को आगे बढ़ाना है

परिवहन

- रोडवेज बेड़े में 798 नई सुपर एक्सप्रेस बसें और 12 वोल्वो बसें शामिल
- वरिष्ठ नागरिकों के लिए रोडवेज किराये में 50% छूट

ऊर्जा

- 26,956 मेगावाट अक्षय ऊर्जा क्षमता का विस्तार
- पीएम कुसुम कम्पौनेंट-ए में देश में प्रथम स्थान
- पीएम कुसुम योजना के तहत 4,889 मेगावाट क्षमता की 2,212 सौर परियोजनाएं

पेयजल एवं जल संरक्षण

- ₹91,000 करोड़ की लागत से राम जल सेतु लिंक परियोजना
- ₹34,102 करोड़ की यमुना जल परियोजना से शेखावाटी क्षेत्र में भरपूर पेयजल और सिंचाई जल
- "कर्मभूमि से मातृभूमि" अभियान में 57,716 जल संरक्षण संरचनाओं का निर्माण
- जल जीवन मिशन से 15.32 लाख ग्रामीण परिवारों को नल से जल



निकाय चुनाव हेतु भाजपा का संकल्प पत्र पढ़ने के लिए QR कोड स्कैन करें

भाजपा के काम पर मोहर लगाएँ, दिनांक 9 / 11 खितबत को वोट देने जरूर जाएँ कमल का घटन दवाएँ, भाजपा को जिताएँ

भारतीय जनता पार्टी, राजस्थान

FAIR NATION

FAIR REPORT 02

MEA distance itself from Eiffel Tower BAPS temple controversy

FAIR REPORT ■ New Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has described the controversy surrounding a BAPS delegation's visit to the Eiffel Tower as a matter between the organisations directly involved.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India was aware of the inauguration of a BAPS Hindu temple in the Paris region but said the ministry would not comment on the specific dispute linked to the Eiffel Tower.

"We are aware of the opening of a temple by the BAPS Sanstha in the Paris area. As to the particular issue pertaining to the Tower, this is a matter purely between the entities concerned," Jaiswal said during a media briefing in New Delhi.

The controversy erupted after reports that female employees at the Eiffel Tower were asked to move away from their regular work areas during a visit by around 100 people associated with BAPS, or Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha.

French union representatives reportedly objected to arrangements under which



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

some women were moved to different areas while certain duties were temporarily assigned to male employees. There were also allegations that female staff had been instructed not to cross particular areas while the delegation was present.

The reported incident resulted in a staff protest, and the Eiffel Tower was closed for a day before reopening to visitors.

The company operating the landmark, Société d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel, later acknowledged that the delegation had requested limited interaction with female employees.

The operator said such arrangements should not have been permitted.

BAPS has since expressed regret over the controversy and said it was taking the concerns raised by Eiffel Tower employees seriously. The organisation said the visit had been coordinated with the tower's teams and scheduled around the start of normal operating hours to reduce disruption.

BAPS also said that, to its knowledge, no visitor had been denied access to the Eiffel Tower. It apologised to anyone who may have been affected by the incident and reaffirmed its commitment to

mutual respect and service.

The controversy has drawn criticism from several senior French political figures. Paris Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire described the reported arrangements as unacceptable and said an investigation would be undertaken.

National Assembly President Yaël Braun-Pivet also criticised the reported treatment of female employees, saying demands from foreign visitors should not result in women being asked to step aside.

France's Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination, Aurore Berge, called the incident unacceptable and stressed that gender equality remains a fundamental principle in the country.

Former Prime Minister Gabriel Attal also criticised the reported restrictions, saying cultural or religious beliefs should not determine the position of women in public spaces.

The BAPS delegation was in France in connection with the opening of a new Hindu temple near Paris. The organisation has described the BAPS Hindu Mandir of Paris as its first traditional Hindu temple in France.

Delhi traffic advisory issued ahead of BRICS summit rehearsal

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Ahead of the motorcade rehearsal for the BRICS Summit 2026, the Delhi Traffic Police have released a comprehensive advisory, imposing restrictions and diversions on major roads in the national Capital from Tuesday evening.

The advisory stated that the motorcade rehearsal would take place from 7.45 pm to 10 pm on September 8. The advisory also said the BRICS Summit would be held at Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan from September 11 to 13.

The traffic police said over 35 roads would be regulated and that traffic diversions would take place at 22 locations during the advisory period.

The following major roads are likely to be affected: Sardar Patel Marg, Mother Teresa Crescent, Teen Murti Marg, Akbar Road, Tees January Marg, Rajesh Pilot Marg, Subramania Bharti Marg, Mathura Road, Moti Lal Nehru Marg, Dr Zakir Hussain Marg, Brig Hoshiyar Singh Marg, Janpath, Ashoka Road, Barakhamba Road and Tolstoy Marg.

The advisory includes 22 diversion points, such as Dr Dinesh Nandini Dalmia Chowk, Ram Charan



Aggarwal Chowk, Mir Dard Chowk, Kasturba Gandhi Marg/Outer Circle, Janpath/Connaught Place, Patel Chowk, the roundabout at the RML Hospital and Vande Matram Marg/Simon Bolivar Marg.

At Dr Dinesh Nandini Dalmia Chowk, traffic heading towards Mathura Road and Tilak Marg will be prohibited, and vehicles will be directed via routes such as BSZ Marg, IP Marg, and Delhi Gate, depending on their destination.

Commercial vehicles heading beyond Ram Charan Aggarwal Chowk towards the W-Point will also be prohibited. At Mir Dard Chowk, traffic will be directed via roads such as Mir Dard Marg, Abdul Gaffar Marg, DDU Marg, Kotla Marg and BSZ Marg.

Restrictions will also apply

around Connaught Place, with traffic heading for the C-Hexagon diverted from the Outer Circle. At Patel Chowk, vehicles bound for Windsor Place and the RBI on Sansad Marg will face restrictions.

Traffic flow around Dhaula Kuan, Moti Bagh, Lodhi Road, and the Mathura Road corridor will also be controlled.

Traffic on the Mathura Road heading towards Bharat Mandapam will also be diverted at various points, such as underneath the Lodhi Flyover, at Neela Gumbad, underneath the Oberoi Flyover and at the U-turn opposite the DPS on Mathura Road.

The advisory also proposes alternative routes for commuters travelling to the major railway stations. For New Delhi Railway Station, routes have been suggested via ISBT Kashmiri Gate,

Boulevard Road, Rani Jhansi Marg, DBG Road, Panchkuian Road, and Connaught Place, among others.

At Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, people can take routes via AIIMS, Ring Road, Ashram Chowk, and Mathura Road; alternative routes have also been proposed for Old Delhi. During the advisory period, the traffic police recommend using the Metro when travelling to the airport. The advisory sets out different road routes for commuters coming from Gurugram, Dwarka, New Delhi, and South Delhi, as well as from West, North, and East Delhi, to reach the airport terminals. Metro services will run fully at all stations, though some bus routes might be diverted during VIP movements.

Taxis and autos will be allowed to operate, but roadside parking will not be permitted except in designated areas. The traffic police said emergency and medical vehicles would be given priority and that they would ensure their routes remained clear. Essential services and utility operations would also keep going without interruption. The traffic police asked commuters to remain informed by checking their official social media accounts.

CRPF to replace Indian Army in Jammu anti-terror operations



FAIR REPORT
■ Srinagar

In a tactical shift in their strategy ahead of the winter months, the top brass of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been directed to take over counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism (CI/CT) operations from the Indian Army in vulnerable pockets of the Jammu region in a phased manner.

Security agencies have so far identified 21 locations in Kathua and Udhampur districts where CRPF units, supported by specialised Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) companies, will replace Army camps currently handling hinterland CI/CT roles.

COBRA battalions, equipped for jungle warfare, can act as a force multiplier to effectively deal with the foreign terrorists who have carved out their safe hideouts inside jungles and execute targeted killings without coming on the radar of the security forces, especially in the Jammu region.

Soon after the formal induction of these battle-hardened companies into the multi-tier security grid, the CRPF will be tasked with undertaking operations in the forested areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Having successfully led anti-Naxal operations in central India, select CRPF units are currently being de-inducted from the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) theatre to be repositioned in Jammu and Kashmir, officials added.

The reorganisation of paramilitary forces will allow Army infantry and Rashtriya Rifles units to be withdrawn from routine anti-terror duties in the hinterland and redeployed to strengthen the Line of Control and Line of Actual Control.

At present, quick reaction teams (QRTs) of the CRPF are already participating in anti-terror operations along with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir police and the Indian Army.

Some of the CRPF units also remain deployed in the outer cordon to plug the escape routes of terrorists and deal with the local masses during the engagement of troops with the anti-national elements.

In several areas, CRPF personnel have already set up Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) in the upper reaches to track down the suspected movement of armed terrorists following a surge in the terrorist related incidents in the forested areas of Kathua and Udhampur.

Last year in April, a new Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) was raised for Jammu and Kashmir, on the directions of the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Last year, Pakistan-based terrorists launched several operations targeting security personnel and patrolling parties to inflict maximum injuries and spread the reign of terror across the Jammu region. In response, the security forces had to launch massive combing and

search operations to track down the footprints of perpetrators behind these attacks. The Pakistan-based terrorists relied heavily on their network of over-ground workers, and on the other hand, the security forces were not receiving adequate human intelligence to launch anti-terror operations to neutralise these hiding terrorists.

According to official sources, 21 CRPF companies comprising around 2,100 personnel, along with at least nine COBRA teams, are expected to man the camps. Sources indicated that troop numbers and formal handover procedures are being finalised, with the first phase focused on the most sensitive sites. The CRPF will operate from existing Army infrastructure to ensure continuity.

According to the latest assessment of the Intelligence agencies, Pakistan is making desperate attempts to push fresh groups of armed terrorists inside Indian territory via the Line of Control and the International border with Pakistan. During the winter months, the plain areas of Jammu and the Line of Control in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch become active transit points for the various terrorist groups.

The Home Ministry has already given its nod to modernise the CRPF units by equipping CRPF personnel with specialised winter gear, including Himsuraksha clothing sanctioned earlier this year.

BJP confident of winning West Bengal by-elections

FAIR REPORT
■ Kolkata

The BJP is confident of winning the Assembly by-elections to two seats, Nandigram and Rejinagar, polling to which would be held on October 6, Bengal Chief Minister Adhikari, who vacated the former seat after winning from the Bhawanipore constituency in Kolkata, defeating former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the April-May State elections, said.

While Nandigram is in East Midnapore district, Rejinagar is in Murshidabad district. Both the seats are differently important considering their

political status and features. Adhikari has been the sitting MLA of Nandigram, the main battleground of Mamata Banerjee's land movement that eventually catapulted her to power in 2011. In 2021, Adhikari won the seat, defeating Banerjee by a margin of little more than 1,900 votes, before becoming the Opposition Leader in the State Assembly. Adhikari, a son of the soil, is confident of winning this seat for the BJP by breaking all records.

"The question is not who wins Nandigram... Because it is for sure that the BJP will win it... The question is who bags the second position...



West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari

The TMC or the breakaway section of the TMC or the Left that has suddenly risen to hog the opposition lime-light... Both Nandigram and Rejinagar will help the BJP Government and the other political parties to rejig their strategies in future," said Bishwanath Chakrabarty, a

political analyst.

Rejinagar, on the other hand, is a Muslim-dominated seat and a traditional stronghold of the Congress and later on the Trinamool Congress before Kabir left that party to form his own. He won this seat in this year's elections along with the Bharatpur seat. Rejinagar fell vacant after he chose to retain the other seat. The seat is important because it is likely to witness a keen contest between BJP, Congress, Left and Kabir's party, and the results would decide whether the BJP can capitalise on the division of Muslim votes in the region.

Senior Bengal minister Dilip

Ghosh said, "The way the Government has worked in the past four months, there is no doubt that the BJP will win by a huge margin... Rest assured, we are winning... Nandigram definitely and Rejinagar too... The people have reposed their faith in us by giving us such a huge mandate, and the Government is responding to it by taking all the decisions very confidently and effectively."

The polls are to be held on October 6, and results will be declared on October 9. The last date for filing nominations is September 16, and withdrawal of nomination can be done till September 19.

Kashmir offers stories beyond landscapes: Pankaj Tripathi, Divyendu

FAIR REPORT
■ Srinagar

Budding filmmakers, movie buffs and students attending the first-ever International Film Festival in Srinagar on Tuesday interacted with the star cast of the popular web series Mirzapur.

During their exchange of ideas, Actors Pankaj Tripathi and Divyendu, known for their roles as Kaleen Bhaiya and Munna Tripathi, respectively, said Kashmir can offer filmmakers stories beyond its landscapes, including its people, food, culture and everyday life.

Responding to a question related to filmmaking in Kashmir, the duo said the region offers rich material for storytelling, praising its natural beauty and deeply rooted local narratives.

"We like Dal Lake. Kashmir has beautiful, rooted stories," they said.

They added that Kashmir can offer filmmakers stories beyond its landscapes, including its people, food, culture and everyday life.

"Kashmir is one of the most beautiful parts of the country. If infrastructure is further developed, it would be wonderful to come here and tell stories about Kashmir," they said.

Another renowned filmmaker Imtiaz Ali during his interaction with the media said Kashmir has many untold stories, characters and



cultural traditions that can provide rich material for filmmakers, while expressing hope that the region's growing connection with cinema would create more opportunities for local talent.

Interacting with the media at SKICC Srinagar, Ali said he always hopes to return to the region whenever he shoots a film. "We always hope that whenever we shoot, we come back to Kashmir. There is perhaps no other place in the world that is so cinematic," he said.

On Laila Majnu, he said the film was deeply rooted in Kashmir, with its characters and setting closely connected to the region. "Laila Majnu is a film based in Kashmir. The characters are from Kashmir, and the whole setting and feel of the film are Kashmiri," he said.

Ali said he was happy that the film continued to remain

popular in Kashmir even years after its release. "Eight years later, it is still popular here. This is Kashmir. I am very happy and I thank Kashmir for Laila Majnu," he said.

Speaking about the future of cinema in the region, the actors Pankaj Tripathi and Divyendu said Kashmir's storytelling potential goes far beyond its scenic beauty. There is a lot of future ahead. There will be theatres, OTT platforms and many other opportunities. There is tremendous scope," they said, adding that young talent in the region could benefit from the evolving film ecosystem.

Responding to students and aspiring filmmakers attending the festival, the actors said film festivals and masterclasses offer valuable opportunities to learn from experienced professionals.

"We have seen how films are made. In a four-day festival, if there are masterclasses, that is a very good thing. There will be a lot to listen to and learn," they said.

Reflecting on Kashmir's long association with the film industry, the actors noted that while filmmakers historically visited the region for song sequences and shoots, there is now an opportunity to tell deeper stories about its people and culture.

"Kashmir has had a connection with cinema for a long time. People used to come here for songs and shoots. But there are so many other things, the people, food and culture. Why not talk about them?" they said.

Meanwhile, Five films, helmed by directors from Jammu and Kashmir, have been selected for the J&K Select Section, the competitive category of the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK), 2026.

The films were recommended by the Preview Committee constituted for the festival, following a review of submissions and assessment of their artistic merit and suitability for the competitive section.

The selected films include Searching for the Grandpa, directed by Mohammad Wali; Arifa, directed by Rohin Ravendran Nair; Batt Koch (The Lost Lane), directed by

Siddarth Koul and Ankit Wali; Tasrufdaar (Djinnns of Kashmir), directed by Kapil Mattoo; and Naqsh-e-Daur (The Story of Ghulam Nabi Dhar), directed by Baba Tassaduq Hussain.

Spanning Kashmiri and Hindi languages, the films explore themes ranging from childhood, family and memory to displacement, identity, heritage, resilience and the changing social landscape of Kashmir.

Searching for the Grandpa follows two young siblings in a Kashmiri village on Eid. Arifa centres on a woman returning to her ancestral home in Kashmir and confronting memories of her childhood and father. Batt Koch explores displacement, identity and the enduring idea of home through the story of a Kashmiri migrant family. Tasrufdaar (Djinnns of Kashmir) weaves together mystery, memory and the scars of Kashmir's past, while Naqsh-e-Daur portrays the life and legacy of a Padma Shri-honoured woodcarver in downtown Srinagar, highlighting Kashmir's craftsmanship, heritage and resilience.

The selected films will form part of the competitive programming of the four-day International Film Festival, offering audiences and filmmakers an opportunity to engage with distinctive cinematic voices and stories from Jammu and Kashmir.

Deaths due to passive smoking in India up 50% compared to 1990: Lancet study

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Deaths in India due to second-hand smoke increased nearly 50 per cent in 2023, compared to 1990, even as death rates improved by about 30 per cent, according to a global analysis published in The Lancet Public Health journal.

The estimates also suggest that while the population

exposed to second-hand smoke increased from 375 million in 1990 to 444 million in 2026 — up by 18.4 per cent — age-standardised prevalence dropped from 43.2 per cent in 1990 to 30.6 per cent in 2023 in India.

Age-standardised prevalence is a statistical adjustment made to data to allow a fair comparison of prevalence across age groups.

An international team of

researchers forming the 'Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2023 Second-hand smoke Collaborators' estimated prevalence of exposure to passive smoking and the disease burden it contributes to across 204 countries and territories.

"In 2023, an estimated 2.71 billion people worldwide were exposed to SHS (second-hand smoke), including 767 million children aged 0-14



years," the authors wrote.

Globally, exposure prevalence was 33.9 per cent in 2023. China, India, and Indonesia accounted for nearly half of the world's exposed population, with 664 million, 444 million, and 142 million people exposed, respectively, in 2023, they found.

However, "age-standardised prevalence was highest in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania (48.4 per cent),

with female individuals in some countries experiencing nearly 1.8 times the exposure prevalence of male individuals," the team said.

In India, absolute deaths in 1990 due to passive smoking were 2,17,700, while those in 2023 were 3,25,600 — death rates or deaths per hundred thousand population, however, fell from 46.1 in 1990 to 30 in 2023, down by 35 per cent, the findings show.

"The numbers mean that despite a fall in the adjusted rates, the absolute number of people exposed to passive smoking is still increasing. This can have long-lasting effects across multiple organ systems, not just the respiratory system," Dr Neetu Jain, pulmonologist and senior consultant at Pushpawati Singhania Hospital and Research Institute, New Delhi, said.

PM Modi: Working to provide free online coaching to students

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Vadodara

Prime Minitr Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Government was working to reduce the burden of fees faced by the families of students preparing for competitive examinations by providing free online coaching. Speaking at the 'NaMo for Viksit Bharat' programme here where he inaugurated or laid foundation stones for ₹35,000 crore-worth development projects, the PM referred to the announcement he had made in this regard in his August 15 Red Fort speech. "You are aware that lakhs of young people prepare for competitive examinations. Every year, a significant



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the inauguration and foundation stone laying of ₹35,000 crore development projects at an event, in Vadodara, Gujarat

portion of our families' earnings is spent on coaching for these students," Modi said. "We aim to save money for the families of poor and middle-class students. Consequently, the Government is moving towards providing free online coaching, allowing our youth

to prepare under the guidance of India's best teachers. The Government itself will oversee this coaching arrangement," he added. Changing global needs had also changed the approach to education, with skills being given equal importance alongside degrees, the prime minister noted. Hence, the Government was reshaping the education policy and institutions, he said. Artificial Intelligence expertise would not be limited only to the IT sector and it could be used in agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing and robotics startups, he noted. India was witnessing an "extraordinary era", Modi said, and called upon the youth to prioritise the goal of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Election petition, SIR delay bypolls to 2 LS seats

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

An election petition and the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls have delayed bypolls to two Lok Sabha seats, while a by-election to another parliamentary constituency has already been announced. The Basirhat seat in West Bengal, the Shillong seat in Meghalaya and the Nagaon constituency in Assam fell vacant on different dates. The Election Commission on Monday announced a bypoll to the Nagaon Lok Sabha seat but not to the other two. Responding to a query on why bypolls to the Shillong and Basirhat parliamentary seats were not announced, senior EC functionaries said the ongoing SIR in Meghalaya and a pending election petition in the Calcutta High Court were behind the deci-



sion. An election petition was filed challenging the election of TMC's SK Nurul Islam from Basirhat. But months after taking the oath as a Lok Sabha member, he died on September 25, 2024. Despite his death, the petition challenging his election remains pending. An election petition can be filed against the victory of a candi-

winning candidate's election as void. The Shillong Lok Sabha seat was vacated following the demise of Voice of the People's Party MP Ricky Andrew Syngkon on February 19 this year. Poll authority functionaries said the SIR is in progress in Meghalaya, where the final electoral rolls will be published on October 21. The lone Lok Sabha bypoll will be held in Assam's Nagaon constituency, which was vacated by Pradyut Bordoloi. Votes will be cast on October 6, and counting will take place on October 9. Bordoloi had won Nagaon on a Congress ticket in 2024 but quit the party in March this year and joined the BJP ahead of the Assam assembly elections. He subsequently resigned from the Lok Sabha, contested the assembly polls as a BJP candidate from Dispur and won.

Congress seeks FIR over purification ritual at UK Haldwani rally venue

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

A Congress leader on Tuesday sought registration of an FIR against Shri Ram Dharmarth Seva Nyas president, Girish Chandra Pandey and 15 others over an alleged "purification" ritual performed at Ramlila Maidan in Uttarakhand's Haldwani after the party president Mallikarjun Kharge's address. In his complaint at Parliament Street police station, MP Mallu Ravi alleged that Pandey and 15 unidentified persons entered into a "criminal conspiracy" and performed a yajna and sprinkled Gangaal at the venue on August 10, two days after Kharge addressed the meeting there on August 8. Ravi alleged that the act was aimed at insulting and



Police stop Congress leaders during a protest march towards the Uttarakhand CM's residence over an FIR filed against Rahul Gandhi in Haldwani over the 'purification' row, in Dehradun

humiliating members of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities and was contrary to constitutional guarantees of equality and the abolition of untouchability. He said the incident had deeply hurt his feelings and those of his community, adding that he had received

calls from several people expressing concern over the alleged practice. Ravi urged the police to register a case, arrest those responsible and take strict legal action under the SC/ST Act, the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act and relevant provisions of the BNS.

CWMA directs Karnataka to release 6,000 cusecs to TN

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Tuesday upheld the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's (CWRC) recommendation directing Karnataka to ensure a flow of 6,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days. The decision was taken at the 57th meeting of the CWMA held in Delhi under the chairmanship of SK Haldar. Officials from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka among others participated in the meeting. "Karnataka has released 33 TMC of Cauvery water towards Tamil Nadu's Biligundlu border point so far in accordance with the directions issued by the CWMA and CWRC," Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited Managing Director Mahesha told reporters after the meeting. He added that



despite Karnataka being in a "distress situation", the state has been following the orders of the CWMA and CWRC and there has been no violation so far. "If the situation were normal, it would be different. But now that we are in a distress situation, we have to follow the distress-sharing proportion as per the orders

issued by the CWMA and CWRC. We have been following those orders so far and, accordingly, have released water," Mahesha told reporters. Earlier in the day, the CWRC had recommended that Karnataka release water to Tamil Nadu at a rate of 6,000 cusecs for the next 15

days. The recommendation was upheld by the CWMA later in the afternoon, Mahesha said. "The people of Tamil Nadu are demanding nearly 20,000 cusecs. They made this demand at the meeting, but at the same time, the CWMA's direction is restricted to 6,000 cusecs," he added. This

follows the CWMA's earlier order on August 25 when, upholding the CWRC's recommendation, it had directed Karnataka to ensure a flow of 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days. The meeting was held following the Supreme Court's direction to the Tamil Nadu Government a day earlier to raise before the CWMA its grievance over the release of its proportionate share of Cauvery water by Karnataka. At its 141st meeting on August 24, the CWRC had directed Karnataka to release water from its reservoirs and ensure a flow of 9,000 cusecs at the Biligundlu border point. The flow had to be maintained continuously for 15 days, during which Tamil Nadu was expected to receive approximately 11.66 TMC of water. The release is expected to benefit Kuruvai cultivation and meet Tamil Nadu's drinking water requirements.

Rahul questions Amit Shah over Manipuri musician's death

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday lashed out at the Modi Government over the beating to death of a musician from Manipur here, asking what Home Minister Amit Shah's ministry is doing to stop this "growing lawlessness" and demanding a swift investigation into the incident. Vikram Singh, a 54-year-old Manipuri musician, died after a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff allegedly assaulted him when he objected to their shouting and drinking alcohol outside his Kilokari village apartment early Monday, officials said. Police arrested seven men and apprehended one juvenile in the case. "Chongtham



LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi meets Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan at 10 Janpathi, in New Delhi

Vikram Singh ji, a renowned musician from Manipur, went downstairs to ask some men to lower the noise outside his home. He was beaten to death for it," Gandhi said on X. A father, killed outside his

own home, in his own country's capital, he said. "After many such incidents, every Northeast family in Delhi is asking the same question today - are we safe here?" the Leader of

Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. "What are Shah's MHA and Delhi Police doing to stop this growing lawlessness, especially against people from the Northeast?" Gandhi said. There must be a swift investigation, and the culprits must be brought to justice, he asserted and expressed condolences to Vikram's family, he said. The Sunlight Colony police station received a PCR call regarding the beating of Singh, who has been residing in Kilokari village for several years. A preliminary enquiry revealed that Singh, who belonged to the Meitei community, objected to men creating a nuisance outside his house. He sustained injuries during the attack, in which the men rained blows and punches on him, police said.

Singh's son Yaiphaba rushed him to Holy Family Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries, they said. Police initiated an investigation into the circumstances leading to the assault and Singh's death. The North East Students Society, Delhi University (NESSDU) condoled Singh's death and described him as a "respected Manipuri musician". "According to reports, Singh went downstairs from his residence in Kilokari, New Delhi, after a group of six men were allegedly drinking and creating a disturbance outside his apartment. When he requested them to lower the noise, he was reportedly attacked by the group and sustained severe injuries, to which he later succumbed," the students' body said.

MP CM Yadav visits BEEAH HQ in Sharjah to discuss waste management

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Dubai

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday visited the headquarters of BEEAH in Sharjah during the three-day Annual Investment Meeting (AIM Congress) 2026 and held a high-level bilateral meeting with BEEAH Group CEO and vice-chairman Khalid Al Huraimel. The discussions focused on environmental protection, smart city development, circular economy and advanced waste management solutions, with particular emphasis on their potential implementation in Madhya Pradesh. During the visit, Yadav inspected BEEAH's facilities for the treatment of industrial waste, sewage waste, waste reprocessing and disposal of inert material. Experts briefed him on the advanced technologies being used at the facility. Yadav invited BEEAH to explore investment and technology partnerships in municipal solid waste management and waste-to-energy projects across Madhya Pradesh. He said the State was moving rapidly towards clean energy and sustainable urban development and that BEEAH's digital, AI-enabled and circu-



MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visits the BEEAH waste management facility in Sharjah

lar-economy capabilities could complement Madhya Pradesh's smart city and clean-energy initiatives. The Chief Minister also discussed the potential for collaboration in electric vehicle-based fleets and renewable energy projects. Highlighting Indore's waste management model, Yadav said the city had established an exemplary model in solid waste management and bio-CNG. He proposed that BEEAH work with the Indore model to develop advanced solutions aimed at improving waste management and achieving the goal of zero-waste landfills. Yadav also formally invited Al Huraimel to the Global Investors Summit 2027, scheduled to be held in Bhopal next year. He urged BEEAH to consider Madhya

Pradesh as a priority destination in its future global expansion plans. During the visit, Yadav toured BEEAH's AI-enabled and net-zero-ready headquarters, designed by renowned architect Zaha Hadid, and appreciated its sustainable design and advanced facilities. Established as a public-private partnership in 2007, BEEAH has expanded from a waste management company into a diversified group operating in environmental services, renewable energy, technology, healthcare and sustainable real estate. According to the information shared during the visit, the group has more than 13,000 employees representing 46 nationalities and operations across the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

MPSC aspirants protest in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar



FAIR REPORT
 ■ Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Scores of MPSC aspirants staged a protest in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on Tuesday, alleging widespread corruption and paper leaks, and demanded a high-level probe into the recent recruitment examinations. Protesters gathered at the Kranti Chowk area of the city, demanding the immediate appointment of officers with a "clean image" to the top posts in the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC). A similar march was held in Pune on Monday.

ED action against Haque part of Operation Lotus 2.0: TMC

FAIR REPORT
 ■ New Delhi

Trinamool Congress on Tuesday said the Enforcement Directorate's search of its Rajya Sabha MP Nadimul Haque's Delhi residence was part of "Operation Lotus 2.0" to put pressure on party lawmakers who do not cross over. TMC sources claimed a former leader of the party had been in touch with



Haque as part of an attempt to pressure him, but the MP refused to "strike a deal". The ED on Monday searched seven premises linked to Haque and his Urdu newspaper Akhbar-E-Mashriq in Kolkata, Delhi and Ranchi as part of a money-laundering probe. Officials had said the probe relates to allegations concerning the publication and dissemination of material promoting communal disharmony.

NGT orders replacement of dead saplings and tighter waste control in Bhopal

FAIR REPORT
 ■ Bhopal

National Green Tribunal's (NGT) Central Zone Bench in Bhopal has directed authorities to replace all saplings that died during compensatory plantation undertaken over the past five years and ensure 100% survival of the new plantations. The direction came during the hearing of a petition filed by Nitin Saxena concerning tree felling and compensatory plantations linked to development projects in Bhopal. The bench, comprising judicial

member Justice Shyo Kumar Singh and expert member Sudhir Kumar Chaturvedi, expressed serious concern over the extremely low survival rate reported by the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Forest Department's Environmental Forestry Division. The tribunal observed that compensatory plantation is intended to offset the environmental impact of trees felled for development works. However, the death of planted saplings due to inadequate maintenance defeats the purpose and results in



environmental loss. The NGT directed the authorities to immediately replace saplings that have died over the last five years and ensure regular watering and protection until the plants are fully established. It also sought details of the

average height and girth of saplings planted during the period, rejecting reliance solely on plantation figures recorded on paper. The tribunal has sought site-wise photographs of 10,000 trees planted along roadsides and medians and 70,000 trees on land allotted by the Bhopal Collector in Huzur tehsil. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board have been given 30 days to submit the required information. In a separate matter, the NGT issued directions for

stricter management of biomedical waste in Bhopal. The case involved alleged dumping and burning of expired medicines, medicine strips, syrup bottles and injection vials at an open site in Rani Avantibai Transport Nagar behind the RTO premises. A joint committee reported that the waste had been removed and handed over to an authorised Common Biomedical Waste Treatment Facility (CBWTF). The facility confirmed receiving 5.2 kg of expired medicines, which were disposed of through incineration. A sub-

sequent inspection on August 27 found the site clear of biomedical waste and related residues. The tribunal directed that biomedical waste transport vehicles have GPS-based online real-time tracking, separate cabins for staff and colour-coded waste containers, leak-proof waste compartments and bio-hazard markings. The NGT directed that biomedical waste must be collected, transported and treated within 48 hours of generation. The MP PCB was asked to ensure that healthcare establishments have the

required authorisations and memberships of authorised CBWTFs and take action against violators. The municipal corporation was also directed to strengthen source-level segregation and separate collection of household healthcare waste and ensure its regular handover to authorised facilities. It was asked to prevent mixing, unauthorised disposal and open burning or dumping of waste. The next hearing in the tree plantation matter has been scheduled for October 6. Advocate Harpreet Singh Gupta represented Saxena.

