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PAGE 2 :
Race On! Hindustan Zinc
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PAGE 3 :
Nehru Garden Reopens in a New
Avatar..

UDAIPUR | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2025 | PAGE 1 - 4 | PRICE : 5.00* (Vol. 11, No. 23)



Smart City Millions, But Udaipur's Identity at Risk

Roads Shrink, Footpaths Vanish, River Choked – The Stark Reality Behind the Projects

Udaipur (Dr. Munesh Arora): Under the Smart City Project, Udaipur has spent a staggering ₹940 crore completing 112 works. Yet, instead of offering citizens a modern and convenient city, these projects have exposed glaring loopholes. Roads have been narrowed under the guise of beautification, footpaths have disappeared, and the city's lifeline – the Ayad River – is shrinking due to massive encroachments and soil dumping.

Smart Roads Without

Smartness

The Hirnagri "Smart Road," built at a cost of ₹36 crore, is the most striking example. A 10–15 feet wide park was constructed right in the middle of what used to be a 100–150 feet wide road. As a result, the once spacious road now feels congested even for vehicles. Footpaths, which should have ensured pedestrian safety, were either removed or swallowed by parking and encroachments.

At Surajpol, footpaths were completely eliminated in the name of road widening, while at Udiapol, the existing footpath was handed over to street vendors. Even cycle tracks and food corners have been overtaken by shopkeepers and encroachers.

Ayad River Under Siege

Encroachers have been far more active than beautification projects along the Ayad River. In Bhupalpura and Krishnapura, influential individuals dumped nearly 400 truckloads of soil into the riverbed, raising its level by as much as 8 feet. At several spots, 30-foot-wide roads have been carved through the river by simply dumping soil.

In Kunpura, over 100 trucks of soil were used to widen the causeway, turning it into a permanent vehicular road. Near Bhupalpura ground and the CPS bridge, private landholders filled in riverbed farmland, even constructing houses—despite legal restrictions allowing only farming in such land.

Old Surveys and Ignored Red Marks

Back in 1990, the Ayad River was 102 meters wide.



Today, government records show it has shrunk to just 50–55 meters, and in some places, only 37 meters remain. Fifteen years ago, the Urban Improvement Trust and Municipal Corporation marked

encroachments with red boundary marks. Many of these marks still exist, but no action was taken. Instead, Smart City works erected walls and beautification structures while ignoring these encroachments.

Leaders and Officials Acknowledge the Crisis

MLA Tarachand Jain admit-

ted that encroachments have strangled the river and stressed that restoring the Ayad to its original form is only possible by acting on the old red-marked survey boundaries.

District Collector Namit Mehta assured that a new survey will be undertaken and encroachments removed to revive the natural flow of the river.

What It Means for Citizens

Despite the huge investment of ₹940 crore, the ground reality for Udaipur residents is grim:

- Roads narrowed, leading to congestion
- Footpaths erased or occupied by vendors
- Pedestrians forced to walk on roads, increasing accidents
- River flow reduced, causing urban flooding in many areas

• Beautification works like parks and parking spaces adding to chaos rather than convenience

Smartness or Sheer Disorder?

The Smart City Project was envisioned to make Udaipur modern, safe, and sustainable. Instead, the city is grappling with shrinking roads, missing footpaths, choking rivers, and growing encroachments. Far from being "smart," the outcomes raise tough questions:

Is Smart City merely about spending crores, or about addressing the real needs of citizens?

Supreme Court Directs Aadhaar Inclusion in Bihar Electoral Rolls

Clarifies Aadhaar as Valid Identity, Not Citizenship Proof

New Delhi: In a landmark ruling on Monday, the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to accept Aadhaar as the 12th valid document for inclusion in Bihar's electoral rolls as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The order comes amid complaints that election officials were refusing to recognize Aadhaar despite earlier instructions.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and Joydip Bagchi emphasized that while Aadhaar cannot be treated as proof of citizenship, it remains a legitimate indicator of identity and residence. "The Aadhaar card shall be treated as the 12th document by the ECI. However, authorities may examine the validity and genuineness of the card itself. Aadhaar will not be treated as proof of citizenship," the bench directed, also instructing the poll panel to issue immediate field-level instructions.

The court's intervention holds significance as it compels the ECI not only to treat Aadhaar on par with the existing 11 approved documents but also to verify its authenticity for establishing voter identity and residence. This decision comes over two months after Bihar's electoral revision exercise began, during which much of the field survey and door-to-door verification had already been completed.



The ruling followed intense courtroom arguments, where senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), accused the ECI of deliberately excluding Aadhaar. "Booth-level officers (BLOs) are being pressured to accept only the 11 notified documents. How can this be an inclusive exercise if a universal document like Aadhaar is rejected?" Sibal argued.

The ECI, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, maintained that Aadhaar was already being accepted but cautioned against misusing it as a proof of citizenship. He highlighted that the commission has a constitutional mandate to verify citizenship while preparing electoral rolls.

The bench, however, raised concerns over discrepancies between the commission's claims and the instructions provided to field officials. Justice Bagchi stressed that while Aadhaar cannot establish citizenship, it carries legal weight under the Representation of the People Act as a proof of identity.

The existing 11 documents include birth certificates, passports, matriculation certificates, government-issued identity cards

or pensions, permanent residence certificates, forest rights certificates, caste certificates, NRC documents, family registers, land documents, and identity documents issued by government or public sector units.

Senior counsels Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan supported Sibal's plea, urging the explicit inclusion of Aadhaar. The court noted that most of the approved documents do not serve as proof of citizenship, except for passports and birth certificates, making Aadhaar's inclusion in line with the objective of inclusive electoral verification.

The controversy has gained urgency in the context of Bihar's SIR, where nearly 6.5 million names were excluded from the draft rolls last month. Opposition parties allege that genuine voters are being disenfranchised due to technical barriers and inconsistent instructions, while the ECI maintains that the revision is essential after nearly two decades without such an exercise. The Supreme Court's clarification makes it unambiguously clear: genuine citizens must be included in the rolls, while attempts to claim voter rights through forged or invalid documents will not be tolerated. The ruling now provides a framework for balancing inclusivity with the integrity of the electoral process, marking a decisive moment in Bihar's ongoing electoral roll revision.

Barmer to Host Unique Martyr Fair on Tuesday

Remembering 17 Railway Employees Who Sacrificed Their Lives in 1965 India-Pak War

Barmer: A unique martyr fair will be held on Tuesday near the border in Barmer district to honor 17 railway employees who laid down their lives during the 1965 India-Pakistan war. During the war, the Pakistani army bombed a train carrying essential supplies for the Indian army, but these railway workers displayed extraordinary courage to ensure the train reached its destination. **India's Only Fair Dedicated to Railway Heroes-** Every year on 9th September, the village of Gehrorod in Barmer hosts a fair to commemorate the sacrifice of these brave souls. The event is organized by the North Western Railway Employees Union, Barmer branch, which has sent invitations to families of the martyrs, local residents, and railway officials. A martyr memo-

rial and a railway museum at the site keep the story of these heroes alive for future generations.

Extraordinary Bravery Amidst War - The train, carrying vital military supplies to the western border, came under heavy bombing near Gehrorod.

Despite the attacks, the railway employees risked their lives to repair the tracks and drive the burning train to safety, displaying unparalleled courage. Seventeen railway employees sacrificed their lives in this act of bravery. These brave martyrs were Nandram, Gangman; Multanram, Painter; Bhanwara, Cutter; Karna, Trolleyman; Mala Ruparam, Gangman; Humaram, Khalasi; Madha, Gangman; Rawta, Gangman; Hukma, Gangman; Lala Aganda, Gangman; Chima, Gangman; Seemraj, Gangman; Devi Singh, Khalasi; Jeha, Gangman; Chunnail, Driver; Chiman Singh, Fireman; and Madhe Singh, Fireman.

Vidya Bhavan Polytechnic Hosts Special Lecture on Literacy Day

Dr. Vivek Bhatnagar Emphasizes Knowledge and Skills as Pillars of a Prosperous Society

Udaipur: Vidya Bhavan Polytechnic organized a special lecture on the occasion of Literacy Day, highlighting the deeper meaning of education beyond mere literacy. Dr. Vivek Bhatnagar, Director of the Research Department at Pratap Gaurav Kendra, addressed students and faculty, underscoring that true progress in society comes not from the ability to read and write alone, but from knowledge coupled with practical skills.

Distinguishing Literacy from True Knowledge - Dr. Bhatnagar explained that in India, literacy (akshargyaan) and knowledge (gyaan) have always been distinct concepts. "In Western education systems, literacy and information are often treat-



ed as education. In India, however, the ability to read and write is only a small part of learning. True education is the logical analysis and understanding of information, which has been the essence of India's knowledge tradition," he said.

He further emphasized that while Literacy Day celebrates reading and writing skills, the ultimate goal of education in India should focus on nurturing wisdom, analytical thinking, and practical abilities. "A society must be not only literate but also knowledgeable and skillful to truly prosper," Dr. Bhatnagar added.

Historical Insights and Indian Knowledge Tradition - Dr. Bhatnagar cited historical references from Raja Bhoj's Saraswati Kanth Bharan, explaining, "Knowledge resides in the mind, the

Saraswati Kanth. When it is present, the intellect naturally flows with understanding and wisdom. Without it, learning remains superficial and cannot be effectively applied."

Encouraging Students to Build a Better Society - Presiding over the event, Principal Dr. Anil Mehta urged students, especially those in technical fields, to use their knowledge and skills to contribute positively to society. He highlighted that education should not only aim for personal growth but also serve the broader community. The session was coordinated by NSS In-charge Jai Sharma, who facilitated the program, and Professor Ramesh Chandra Kumhar delivered the vote of thanks, appreciating the efforts of the speakers and organizers. The event at Vidya Bhavan Polytechnic served as a reminder that education in India is not merely about literacy, but about cultivating wisdom, analytical thinking, and practical skills—qualities essential for building a strong, prosperous society.

SPSU Celebrates Ganesh Utsav with Grandeur and Devotion



Udaipur: The Ganesh Utsav was celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion at Sir Padampat Singhania University, Udaipur, under the inspiring guidance and support of Honourable President and Vice Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Prithvi Yadav. Paying tribute to Lord Ganesha, the God of wisdom, intelligence, and new beginnings, Prof. Yadav emphasised that the celebration reflected the university's commitment to nurturing both intellectual growth and cultural consciousness.

The five-day celebration (August 27–31, 2025) was preceded by the grand Aagaman on August 26, followed by the Sthapana on August 27. Throughout the festival, the campus resonated with devotion, creativity, and festivity through a variety of events such as Bhajan Sandhya, Art and Craft activities, Cultural Performances, Dandiya and Garba, Rangoli Competition and many more. On the concluding day, August 31, a Hawan Pujan was performed, invoking the blessings of Lord Ganesha, after which the Visarjan—the immersion of the idol—was carried out with deep devotion.

Students, faculty, and their families actively participated in the rituals and celebrations, making the occasion vibrant and memorable. The events were organised by the students of SPSU under the guidance of Dy. Dean – Student Welfare, Lt. Prof. D. S. Chouhan, and Coordinator – Student Welfare, Dr. Archana Gajbihi.

The event also received immense support from Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Prasun Chakrabarti, Campus Director, Col. H. P. Singh, Proctor, Prof. Sadananda Prusty, and the entire SPSU fraternity.

Governor Meets President, Prime Minister and Law Minister



New Delhi: Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde paid courtesy visits to President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal in the capital.

During his meeting with President Murmu, the Governor held discussions on various state-related matters. In his meeting with Prime Minister Modi, Governor Bagde presented a copy of his book "Abhyuday Ki Aur", published on the completion of his one-year tenure. The Prime Minister appreciated the book, lauded Bagde's efforts in the fields of dairy, cooperatives, and natural farming, and described him as a grounded leader. The Governor also briefed him on initiatives in higher education quality improvement, NAAC accreditation, tribal welfare, border area visits, and welfare scheme implementation across 41 districts.

Later, Governor Bagde also met Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, where both discussed issues related to the state and the nation. He also presented a copy of "Abhyuday Ki Aur" to the minister. All three meetings were held as courtesy calls.