HC notice on plea against closure of proceedings against Hooda

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TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 18
The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Monday issued notice of motion on a petition filed by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against Associated Journals Limited (AJL) challenging the closure of PMLA proceedings in a case related to former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda and others.

The ED filed the criminal revision petition before the court against an April 3 order passed in the matter by the Special Judge under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at Panchkula. Among other things, it was contended that the Special Court closed the PMLA proceedings on the basis of a discharge order dated February 25 passed by the High Court.

According to the petition, an FIR was registered on May 5, 2016, at Panchkula for cheating and other offences under Sections 409 and 420, IPC, along with provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, against senior HUDA officials, AJL office-bearers and others.

On the basis of the FIR, an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) was recorded on July 15, 2016, against senior HUDA officials and office-bearers of AJL.

The petition added that the investigation was transferred to the CBI on December 22, 2018. The agency thereafter registered an “RC” for cheating and other offences, along with provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, against Hooda and others.

The ED said the Special Court failed to consider submissions made on its behalf that the CBI was in the process of challenging the discharge order passed by the High Court and that the PMLA proceedings ought to have been kept pending awaiting a decision of the Supreme Court.

The petition asserted that though the submission stood recorded in the impugned order, the Special Court failed to return any finding of its own on the issue.

It was further added that the CBI had already challenged the High Court judgment dated February 25 before the Supreme Court by filing a special leave petition (SLP), wherein notice had been issued by the court. Taking up the matter, the court fixed July 8 as the next date of hearing.

Cabinet approves 10 new industrial policies

Eyes ₹5 lakh-cr investment, 10 lakh jobs in 5 years

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CHANDIGARH, MAY 18
The Haryana Cabinet on Monday approved 10 new industrial policies aimed at accelerating manufacturing, digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, green industry and agro-based growth across the state. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

The flagship "Make in Haryana Industrial Policy 2026" will replace the 2020 industrial policy and seeks to attract Rs 5 lakh crore investment, generate 10 lakh jobs and boost exports over the next five years.

According to a government spokesperson, the state has replaced the earlier A, B, C and D block-based classification system with a new framework categorising regions as Core, Intermediate, Sub-Prime and Prime/Focus Areas.

Under the policy, net State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) reimbursement will range between 30% and 70%. Large units will receive benefits for seven years, mega units for 10 years and ultra-mega projects for up to 12 years under special packages. Capital subsidy ranging from 5% to 20% will be available for large units, while mega and ultra-mega projects in Prime/Focus Areas can avail subsidy up to 30%.

To encourage local hiring, the employment generation subsidy has been increased from Rs 48,000 to up to Rs 1 lakh per employee annually for 10 years. For women, Scheduled Castes, 'divyangs', Agniveers and ex-servicemen, the assistance will rise to Rs 1.20 lakh per employee annually. Industries recruiting through the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam portal will also get reimbursement of employer and employee EPF contributions.

In a move aimed at improving investor confidence, the government has introduced a provision for 8% annual interest in case of delay in incentive payments after April 1, 2026. Fifty per cent of eligible incentives will be released within seven working days and the remaining within 45 days. A Land Feasibility Certificate mechanism will provide clarity on ownership, land use and approvals within 45 working days.

The Cabinet also approved sector-specific policies for electronics manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, toys and sports equipment, e-waste recycling, Global Capability Centres (GCCs), IT and Artificial Intelligence, AVGC-XR, data centres, and agro-processing.

Under the Haryana IT/ITeS, AI and Emerging Technologies Policy 2026, a Global Artificial Intelligence Centre will be established in Gurugram, while the Haryana Advanced Computing Facility will come up in Panchkula. The state plans to train more than 50,000 professionals and establish three Centres of Excellence.

The new Data Centre Policy offers incentives including relaxation in floor area ratio up to 500%, dual-grid power supply and essential service status to attract investors.

The Agri Business and Agro Processing Policy aims to attract over Rs 5,000 crore investment and create nearly 30,000 jobs, with special incentives for women entrepreneurs, SC categories, 'divyangjan', ex-servicemen and export-oriented units.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF INDUSTRIAL PUSH

POLICY	MAJOR FOCUS
Make in Haryana Industrial Policy 2026	₹5 lakh crore investment target, 10 lakh jobs
Electronics Manufacturing Policy	Capital aid up to Rs 200 crore
Pharma & Medical Devices Policy	₹10,000 crore investment target
Toys & Sports Equipment Policy	₹5,000 crore investment, 25,000 jobs
E-Waste Recycling Policy	Incentives for recycling and green industry
Global Capability Centres Policy	Target to attract 100 new GCCs
IT/ITeS & AI Policy	AI Centre in Gurugram, 50,000 professionals to be trained
AVGC-XR Policy	Push for gaming, animation and VFX sectors
Data Centre Policy	Incentives for hyper-scale data centres
Agri Business Policy	₹5,000 crore investment, 30,000 jobs

Vadra withdraws plea in Shikohpur land deal case

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NEW DELHI, MAY 18
Businessman Robert Vadra on Monday unconditionally withdrew his petition from the Delhi High Court, challenging a trial court order summoning him in a money laundering case linked to the controversial Shikohpur land deal in Haryana.

Justice Manoj Jain disposed of the petition after Vadra’s counsel informed the court that the petitioner no longer wished to pursue the matter. Vadra’s counsel told the High Court that “appropriate submissions” would be made before the trial court at an “appropriate stage”. The court said all rights and contentions of the parties would remain open.

The development comes days after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) opposed the plea, arguing that Vadra’s challenge rested on a “complete false statement on law”.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Vadra, had argued that the ED lacked jurisdiction to investigate the case since the offences under the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act cited by the agency were not scheduled offences under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at the time of the alleged transactions.

According to the defence, the land transactions took place between 2008 and 2012, while the relevant offences were added to the PMLA schedule in 2013 and 2018.

The ED, however, rejected the argument and maintained that the petitioner’s legal contention was untenable.

Cabinet clears one-time switch from UPS to NPS

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CHANDIGARH, MAY 18
The Haryana Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday approved the introduction of a one-way switch facility under the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for state government employees.

The decision allows employees who had opted for the Unified Pension Scheme to switch back to the Haryana New Pension Scheme (NPS), in line with a similar provision introduced earlier by the Central Government.

The Government of India had introduced the Unified Pension Scheme as an option under the National Pension System through a notification issued on January 24, 2025, with effect from April 1, 2025. Following the Centre’s move, the Haryana Government had also implemented the Unified Pension Scheme for state government employees through a notification dated July 2, 2025, effective from August 1, 2025.

Subsequently, the Centre, through an office memorandum issued on August 25, 2025, introduced a one-time, one-way switch facility allowing employees covered under UPS to move back to NPS.

Adopting the same framework, the Haryana Cabinet approved the provision for state government employees who had opted for UPS. Under the decision, employees will be allowed to exercise the switch facility at any time, but not later than one year before the date of superannuation.

If an employee does not exercise the option within the stipulated period, he or she will continue under the Unified Pension Scheme by default.

UPS to remain default option if switch facility not exercised

The Cabinet decision also clarified that the switch facility will not be available in cases involving removal, dismissal, or compulsory retirement as a penalty. Employees facing ongoing or contemplated disciplinary proceedings involving major penalties will also not be eligible for the switch option.

Validity of pre-July 2024 BC certificates restored

The Cabinet on Monday approved the validity of BC-A and BC-B non-creamy layer certificates issued during 2024-25 under the state government notification dated November 17, 2021.

The decision has been taken in connection with recruitment advertisements issued by the Haryana Public Service Commission for 3,069 Post Graduate Teacher (PGT) posts in various subjects in 2024.

According to the recruitment advertisement issued on July 23, 2024, candidates belonging to BC-A and BC-B categories were required to submit fresh certificates in line with the latest government instructions and the notification dated July 16, 2024. Keeping this in view, the Cabinet approved that BC-A and BC-B (non-creamy layer) certificates issued during 2024-25 under the November 17, 2021 notification, prior to July 23, 2024, “shall be treated as valid for all intents and purposes.”