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# Morning India



A pitch battle broke out at Esplanade at the foundation day programme of ISF on Saturday at R R Avenue. Police lathi charged the mob and burst tear gas shells. However, police denied the allegation of lathi charge. A member of ISF told police attacked them without any provocation. Earlier in the day a clash broke out between the supporters of ISF and Trinamul Congress at Bhanagar in South 24 Parganas. In both the incidents a number of people including some police personnel were injured. PIC: Prabir Bhattacharya

## Govt blocks tweets, videos on BBC's 'propaganda piece'; Retd officials term documentary 'delusions of British imperial resurrection'

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The Centre has reportedly issued directions to block YouTube videos sharing the first episode of the BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question". Along with YouTube videos, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has also directed Twitter to block over 50 tweets containing links to the concerned YouTube videos. The directions were reportedly issued by Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Friday using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021. Meanwhile, a co-signed statement was released by retired judges, bureaucrats and armed forces veterans on Saturday rebutting the controversial BBC documentary critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "delusions of British Imperial resurrection".

According to sources, senior officials of several ministries, including external affairs, home affairs, and information and broadcasting, examined the documentary and found it to be an attempt to cast aspersions on the authority and credibility of the Supreme Court, sow divisions among various Indian communities, and make unsubstantiated allegations regarding actions of foreign governments in India. They said the documentary was found to be undermining the sovereignty and integrity of India, and having the potential to adversely impact friendly relations with foreign states as also public order within the country. Orders have also been issued to Twitter for blocking of over 50 tweets containing links of the YouTube videos concerned, they said, adding that social media platforms have complied with the directions. Reliable sources have confirmed that senior officials of multiple Ministries, including MEA, MHA and MIB, examined the documentary and found it to be an attempt to cast aspersions on the authority and credibility of the Supreme Court of India, sow divisions among various Indian communities, and make unsubstantiated allegations regarding actions of foreign

Governments in India. The documentary was accordingly found to be undermining the sovereignty and integrity of India, and having the potential to adversely impact India's friendly relations with foreign States as also public order within the country. Earlier, the Ministry of External Affairs had described the BBC documentary as a "propaganda piece" that lacked objectivity and reflected a colonial mindset. The two-part BBC documentary claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state. "Let me just make it very clear that we think this is a propaganda piece designed to push a particular discredited narrative. The bias, the lack of objectivity, and frankly a continuing colonial mindset, are blatantly visible," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi had said on Thursday responding to questions on the documentary. On comments made by for-

mer British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on the riots, Bagchi said he seemed to be referring to some internal report of the UK government. "How do I have access to that? It is a 20-year-old report. Why would I just jump on it now? Just because Jack Straw says it, how do they lend it that much legitimacy?" he wondered. The letter signed by over 300 senior government officers, judges and veterans, called the controversial BBC documentary as "delusions of British Imperial resurrection". "Not only is the BBC series — judging from what we've seen of it so far — based on delusional reporting, but presumes to question the very basis of 75-year-old edifice of India's existence as independent, democratic nation that functions according to the will of the people of India," the signatories said. It further called the documentary "the staple, dyed-in-the-wool negativity and unrelenting prejudice of the BBC towards India". The letter further said that though BBC claims its

series has been "rigorously researched according to the highest editorial standards", and "examines the tensions between India's Hindu majority and Muslim minority." However, there are "glaring factual errors apart, the series - which uses the words 'allegedly' and 'reportedly' repeatedly, (not 'factually') - reeks of motivated distortion that is as mind-numbingly unsubstantiated as it is nefarious." "This is demonstrated most vividly by its completely sidelining the core fact: that the apex judicial institution of India, the Supreme Court of India, has unambiguously ruled out any role of PM Modi in the Gujarat violence of 2002, while firmly rejecting allegations of complicity and inaction by the then Gujarat state government headed by chief minister Modi," signatories said, accusing the BBC of "naturally thriving on sensationalism regardless of how false its basis". "This alone exposes the BBC's malafides, and leads one to question the motivations behind this series," the letter added.

## CM to start campaign for panchayat polls from Malda after the Republic Day celebration

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Once the Republic Day celebration is over, the Chief Minister starts its campaign for panchayat polls. Chief Minister will visit Malda on January 31 after the Republic Day celebrations. Then on 1st, he will attend the government service delivery ceremony at Bolpur in Birbhum. Mamata Banerjee is scheduled to attend a government service function in Malda. This public service delivery program is scheduled to be held at Gajol College grounds in Malda. Basically, the Chief Minister will hand over the benefits of various projects of the government program to the consumers. Besides, bicycles are also supposed to be given from that program. The district administration has already started preparing for this. According to Nabanna sources, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself wants to hand over the benefits of door-to-door government program to consumers in every district. That is why the Chief Minister has already started visiting the district from the beginning of the new year. Recently, the Chief Minister

held a public event at SagarDighi in Murshidabad district. After that, Mamata Banerjee attended the government service delivery program focusing on three districts of North Bengal in Alipurduar district. Mamata Banerjee handed over government services to the consumers of three districts of Alipurduar, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri this week. According to Nabanna sources, Mamata Banerjee will inaugurate the book fair on January 30. The state cabinet is also scheduled to meet on that day. Then Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has already announced several facilities for the families of willing landowners for the DeuchaPachami coal mine project. However, it is known that there is no political program for the Chief Minister's visit to Birbhum. Then Mamata Banerjee is scheduled to return to Kolkata on February 2. According to Nabanna sources, after Malda, Birbhum districts, the Chief Minister may also visit some other districts of South Bengal in February to attend the government service delivery function. The top class of Nabanna has started to prepare for it.

## Swati Maliwal's dragging Case 'Fake Sting'? To BJP's big claim, DCW chief hits back

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The terrifying incident of Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal's harassment and dragging in the national capital, has taken a political turn as the Centre raised questions on the authenticity of the act and alleged that it was a "staged drama". The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) also leveled serious allegations against the AamAadmi Party (AAP) and charged that the person behind the incident was actually an AAP worker. Swati Maliwal had on Thursday claimed that she was harassed and dragged by a man after her hand got stuck in his car window as he tried to flee. She hit back at BJP for alleging the incident was staged and said, "Let me tell those who think that they will scare me by telling dirty lies about me. I have done many big things in this short life, with a shroud on my head. I was attacked many times, but did not stop. With every atrocity, the fire inside me grew stronger. No one can suppress my voice. I will keep fighting as long as I am alive!" Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Thursday sent Harish Chandra, the man accused of molesting and dragging Swati Maliwal, to 14-day judicial custody. The 47-year-old Chandra was arrested by the Delhi Police on Thursday, and his car was also impounded. Speaking to ANI, DCP South ChandanChowdhary stated that according to Maliwal she was with her team outside the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here at around

2.45 am when the arrested accused identified as Harish Chandra, a resident of SangamVihar area, appeared to be in an inebriated condition approached her. The DCW chief in her complaint to police alleged that the man who was driving a white-coloured car stopped his car near where she was standing and "made indecent gestures" at her. Delhi BJP working president VirendraSachdeva on Friday tweeted a picture of Harish Chandra Suryavanshi, the man accused of the crime. He claimed that Suryavanshi is a prominent AamAadmi Party (AAP) worker in SangamVihar. In the picture, the accused could be seen campaigning with AAP MLA Prakash Jarwal. Meanwhile, National Commission for Women (NCW) took cognizance of the incident and has written to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi to intervene in the matter personally and to ensure that strict action is taken against the accused person and also sought a detailed action taken report must be apprised to the Commission within 2 days. "We have taken cognizance of the incident. This points a finger at the safety of women in Delhi. Though police have arrested the man behind this, why did such an incident happen in the first place?," said Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, NCW. Maliwal's claims come days after a 20-year-old woman identified as Anjali died after allegedly being dragged in the Kanjhawala area of Delhi for several kilometers.

## Who is Shah Rukh Khan? asks Assam CM Sarma after vandalism on "Pathan" issue

**MI News Service, Guwahati:** Assam Chief Minister HimantaBiswaSarma's curt answer to queries amid Pathan protest left everyone in shock. Replying to the media he said "Who is Shahrukh Khan? I don't know anything about him or his film Pathaan". This comes after media persons raised questions on the violent protest by Bajrang Dal activists, who stormed a theatre at Narengi in the city on Friday where the film is slated to be screened. The far right-wing group's volunteers tore down the film's posters and burnt them. "Khan has not called me, though many from Bollywood do so, regarding the problem. But if he does, I will look into the matter. "Action will be taken if law and order has been violated and a case has been filed," he said. Bollywood megastar Shahrukh Khan and his film 'Pathaan' are facing backlash for showing Deepika Padukone in a saffron bikini in the song 'Besharam Rang'. Many leaders, including from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad have demanded a ban on the film. When reporters told him that Khan is a Bollywood superstar, Sarma said that the people of the state should be concerned about Assamese and not Hindi films. He said the Assamese film 'DrBezbaruua - Part 2', the first directorial venture of late NiponGoswami, will be released soon. "People should see it." Pathaan, which has been directed by SiddharthAnand, will be released on January 25.

## Narwal twin blast injures nine, bomb squad at spot; panic amid Rahul Gandhi's J&K Yatra

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** At least nine people were injured on Saturday as twin explosions rocked Jammu, senior officials said. The blasts took place in the Narwal area of Jammu city, Additional Director General of Police (Jammu) Mukesh Singh said. According to a visual shared by ANI, several police personnel was present at the spot of the blasts and those injured were immediately rushed to a hospital nearby. The area has been cordoned off. "Twin blasts occurred in Narwal area of Jammu, six people injured," Singh said. The explosion raises concern as senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is in Jammu and Kashmir for 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'. Due to security concerns, a significant portion of the yatra in the state will be completed by bus. Officials said that the forensic team and bomb squad have arrived at the Narwal blast site. According to preliminary investigation, it could be an IED blast. Gandhi's yatra is set to conclude with a mega rally in Srinagar, which is expected to be attended by leaders from nearly two dozen national parties. The march began in September from the southern tip of the country in Kanyakumari

and has travelled about 3,400 km in 125 days. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, during the yatra, criticised the central government's decision to revoke the special status of the former state, calling it a "grave insult" to the people of the region. The Narwal blast comes days after twin explosions in Rajouri left seven members of the minority community, including two children, dead, and fourteen others injured in the Upper Dangri village. Last week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured that an action plan has been chalked out to strengthen the entire security of the Jammu region. He was scheduled to meet the families of those killed in the terror attack in Rajouri, but had to settle for a phone call due to bad weather, which made travelling difficult. "I have spoken to all the seven families of those who died over the phone. I was about to go there myself to meet them, but today we could not go there due to the weather. I have heard them very carefully, and have also spoken to Lieutenant Governor Manoj ji. The courage of those who lost their lives is an example for the country," he said.

## How to withdraw money using your Aadhaar

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) is a bank-led model developed by NPCI, which allows online transactions at Micro ATM/Kiosk/mobile devices through the authorised Business Correspondent (BC) of any bank using Aadhaar authentication. Business Correspondents are

authorised (by banks) entities who represent the bank and who have Micro ATM devices to facilitate customer transactions. This solution has been designed by NPCI to handle various kinds of service requests effectively by enabling an authentication gateway for all Aadhaar linked *Continued to Pg 5*

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Sabala Mela inauguration at New Town fair ground on Saturday.

## APDR raises voice against NIA



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** APDR on Saturday held a media conference in the city to make caustic criticism on National Investigation Agency (NIA) for its so called atrocities on people being arrested on different charges regarding so called anti national activities of different

magnitude. To the APDR, NIA must be scrapped with immediate effect as its presence is affecting the very core element of federal structure of the nation. They accused that there are too many people being under trial in grossly insufficient NIA court, especially in the state.

APDR also mentioned that the judgments of few esteemed judges in the nation have been quite 'shocking' and does not go by the secular understanding of the constitution. The organization also accused the central and state government for 'high jacking' the entire judicial system in their favour to inculcate ulterior motive.

Ranjit Sur, the general secretary of APDR arranged the entire show and eminent lawyer Mihir Desai was the principal speaker at the said occasion.

## Problem trio a real worry for Terai tea planters

**MI News Service, Siliguri:** Three Es — encroachment, elephant attack, and erosion — have emerged as prominent posers for the Terai tea industry, senior tea planters said. "In recent times, fallow land in many tea estates of Siliguri subdivision has been encroached by land grabbers. These people are also involved in illegal commercial dealings of such land and run organized rackets. It is getting difficult for the industry to put a stop to such activities. The administration should take stern steps in this regard," said S.K. Gupta, chairman of the Terai Branch of Indian Tea Association (TBITA), on the sidelines of the 61st annual general meeting of the branch.

Some other representatives of the association said that the geographical location of Siliguri resulted in a steady demand for land

in and around the city.

"The problem is prevalent across the sub-division and especially in tea estates on the outskirts of the city. These people are grabbing land, finding buyers ready to pay and helping the buyer settle on the land. The entire practice is completely illegal," Rana Dey, the TBITA secretary, said. The planters' association also said that the state government should mull their request to amend the compensation law in case properties are damaged by elephant depredation. According to them, there are 42 gardens in Terai, and elephant attacks are common in most. However, unlike normal villages, tea workers do not get any compensation if their quarters on estates are damaged as these are leasehold land. Compensation is paid only if a person

is killed in such attacks. "Tea companies have to bear additional expenditure in a regular manner to carry out repairs of such quarters and other infrastructure damaged by elephants," said a planter. At the meeting, Gupta, the branch chairman, also elaborated on the issue of erosion. He pointed out that a number of rivers and streams move through the tea estates, many of which, during the monsoon months swell and erode the plantations. "These swollen streams cause extensive damage to internal roads, culverts and even homes. Many tea estates carry out protection works such as building embankments, which adds to their expenses. The state irrigation department, we believe, should step in, and take up necessary jobs to help the industry," said Gupta. The planters of the

Terai, an area comprising the Siliguri subdivision and parts of Islampur subdivision of North Dinajpur district, also underscored that the Tea Board — the sector's apex government agency — should take up initiatives with the industry stakeholders to increase the per capita consumption of tea in India.

The planters also pointed out that as of now, the per capita consumption of tea in India is 850 grams, which is lower than that of a number of other countries where the brew is marginally produced or not produced at all.

"Though marginally as of now, tea production has been increasing over the years. If the demand for tea in the domestic market does not go up, it would be tough to strike a balance. The cost of tea production is on the rise," a senior planter said.

Midnapore, especially "one or two particularly rough elephants", were creating problems.

Three people were killed and a forester was injured by elephants in Bankura in the past 10 days. Sources said 15 persons were killed by elephant attacks in the past six months in the district.

Sources said that ruling Trinamool is worried about elephant attacks and the anger of people as the party fears it could impact votes ahead of the panchayat polls.

## Bankura foresters wary of group of 88 elephants

**MI News Service, Bankura:** Foresters in Bankura are facing the jumbo task of restraining the movement of around 88 elephants, split into multiple groups, who are searching for food at a time when 80 per cent of fields are vacant after the Kharif paddy harvest, putting human habitats at risk.

"As fields are almost empty as harvesting season is almost over and there is no other source of food for animals here, elephants are moving around at various locations in

search of food. This has left us with the huge challenge to handle 88 odd elephants, the largest herd in the area in recent memory," said Umar Imam, the divisional forest officer, Bankura north division.

"However, around 100 foresters are relentlessly tracking the movement of elephants," he added.

The number of elephants in Bankura north division increased after a fresh herd of 30 entered the district from West Midnapore on January 10.

"This is the highest

number of elephants we are handling at one time in a division in recent memory. Senior forest officials and staff from various ranges have been deployed in crisis zones. Over 100 foresters, including the divisional forest officer, are spending sleepless nights since January 10, monitoring the animals," said a source.

Several foresters, who have worked in elephant zones in Jungle Mahal districts, said elephants usually came from Dalma range of Jharkhand and

Odisha in search of ripe crops.

"Though a large number of crops are damaged during the stay of the elephants, the crops help save human lives. Right now, that buffer is almost gone. There are a few potatoes or cabbages on the field, but they're only 20 per cent of the total cultivated land. The situation is manageable if there are 30-40 elephants but this number is more than double," said a senior forest officer. Foresters said that the new herd from West

Midnapore, especially "one or two particularly rough elephants", were creating problems.

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**MI News Service, Darjeeling:** The Sikkim Public Service Commission (SPSC) has come out with wrong answers to some of the questions in a recruitment exam conducted recently. Two such questions are: 1: Bacteria was first discovered by a) Robert Koch, b) A. V. Leeuwenhoek, c) M. D. Zinder and d) Elie Metchnikoff 2: How many feet does an object travelling at 6 feet per second travel in one hour? a) 30, b) 300, c) 18000, d) 720

The answer to the first question is A. V.

Leeuwenhoek and 21,600 feet is the correct answer to the second. However, if you were to believe the SPSC, the correct answer to the first question is Robert Koch and the answer to the second is not 21,600 feet.

Such howlers in the examination for recruitment to the posts of under-secretaries, deputy superintendents of police and accounts officers were brought to light by the leaders of the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)'s students wing Rikzing Norbu Bhutia and Bandana Sharma at a press meet here.

"There are more than 10 such glaring mistakes in the question papers set by the SPSC for the recruitment examination which was held on January 16. We demand that the examination be re-conducted by strictly following all laid down rules," said Bhutia.

Bhutia said it was apparent the questions were prepared in a hurry. "What can be more shameful than this for the SPSC?" he said, adding the SDF would soon write to the SPSC pointing out the mistakes and it was also not averse to approaching the

court if its demand was not met. Howlers apart, the SDF spokespersons alleged that all rules regarding the conduct of the test were flouted by the SPSC at some examination centres.

Over 8,000 candidates had appeared in the examination for 30 posts of accounts officers, 18 under-secretaries and 14 DSPs. SPSC officials were not available for comment, but a source said the commission would come out with a press briefing in the next couple of days.

## New political outfit to emerge in Sikkim on Republic Day

**MI News Service, Darjeeling:** A new political party is entering the fray of Sikkim politics on Republic Day. As per sources, the party would surface at Melli in south Sikkim on Republic Day to provide an alternative to the people of the state. Addressing a press conference here, Ganesh Rai, the leader of Reform Call, said the new party would be very different from all the existing parties in Sikkim. "We will celebrate Republic Day in south Sikkim's Melli Bazar... We will assemble 999 leaders from the grassroots, villages, constituencies and the state and also those who take an interest in politics. And that day, we will declare the formation of a new party in Sikkim," he said. Rai, who is a former leader of the Sikkim Democratic Front, had embarked on the Sikkim Sudhar Sankalpa Yatra under the banner of Reform Call on November 21 as a precursor to the formation of the new party. "In the 35-day yatra, we met thousands of people and interacted with them. We visited hundreds of villages and walked for hundreds of kilometres. From the yatra, we have come to know that Sikkim is looking for an alternative," he said. Rai said the new party would not be dominated by an individual, but it would operate on the basis of collective leadership. "A person from among those who have taken the membership of Reform Call will lead the party. The president of the party will be declared in a transparent manner through election," he said.

## Centre allots Rs 7,600 crore to state for infrastructure development

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The Centre has allotted Rs 7,668 crore to the state of West Bengal for infrastructure development in the ongoing fiscal — a relief for the state government which find it tough to fund projects which need capital investments because of its commitment to run welfare schemes with the available financial resources.

The Union government allocated Rs 6,018 crore under the special assistance for capital investment, while Rs 1,650 crore has already reached the state from the 15th finance commission.

"The special assistance for capital investment is an interest-free loan from the department of expenditure that functions under the Union finance ministry. The loan has to be repaid over a period of 50 years. A major portion of the funds from the 15th finance commission is untied and rural bodies can spend amounts for infrastructure development," said a source.

The allocations come amid accusations from the ruling party in Bengal that the Narendra Modi government in Delhi is depriving the state of funds under the 100-day rural employment guarantee scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and various other projects.

"The handsome allotment by Delhi for the development of infrastructure is certainly going to help the state immensely as funds flow for the purpose dried up in the state in the past few months," said a senior state government official.

Although the Mamata Banerjee government is alleging that the Centre is discriminating against the state, a source in Delhi said the share of the state in the corpus of Rs 80,000 crore — which is divided among all states under the special assistance for capital investment in the 2022-23 financial year — is reasonably high.

"Only Uttar Pradesh (Rs 14,351 crore) and Bihar (Rs 8,046 crore) are getting more allotment under the head," the source said.

"We cannot say that Bengal was denied its dues at least when we talk about this particular allotment. Given that UP is a much bigger state and Bihar needs more funds to develop infrastructure, the allotment to Bengal can be considered to be a good one," the source added.

The department of expenditure has already released 50 per cent of the amount under the special assistance for Bengal and the remaining portion will be sent as soon as the state submits utilisation certificates.

The Centre didn't hold back the 15th finance commission funds though the state could not spend about Rs 1,800 crore received over the past few years.

"Despite a handsome amount lying unspent, the Centre has sent Rs 1,700 crore from the 15th finance commission. It is now a challenge for the

utilisation certificates by the first half of February, we can claim the remaining 50 per cent allotment in this financial year. It is a challenge for us to use the funds on time and the PWD has to respond to it with utmost sincerity," said a senior bureaucrat.

The allocations from the Centre have come at an opportune moment, said a source, referring to worries at Nabanna on how to fund several important projects.

The state is facing a shortage of funds to execute projects like six-lane elevator to connect Belghoria Expressway and Kalyani Expressway and the widening of Bongaon-Chakdah road (SH1), Dugguri-Falakata road and Santoshpur-Duttapukur road.

While Nabanna is leaving no stone unturned for the use of the funds without any delay, a section of bureaucrats is worried



state to utilise the amount before the end of the current fiscal on March 31," said a bureaucrat. The chief minister has already asked district administrations to develop rural roads with a major portion of the 15th finance commission funds in the absence of grants under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Considering the importance of the funds under the special assistance for capital investment and the need to utilise the amount on time, the state finance department has asked the public works department to submit a request for the release of Rs 1,236 crore immediately so that utilisation certificates can be produced before February 10 and the remaining 50 per cent of the allocation could be claimed.

"If we can submit the

over the proper utilisation of funds by the PWD on time. "The department has not completed any major project on time. Be it Dhana Dhaney (a 2200-seat auditorium in Alipore) or any road project, none could be completed on time. Hence, there are worries," said a senior official. Another official has pointed out that files pending in the PWD have become a common feature nowadays, delaying projects.

"For example, a proposal to improve Kurseong Pankhabari Road keeping the forthcoming G-20 summit in mind as foreign delegates are scheduled to Visit Darjeeling has been pending with the department since October. If this approach continues, utilising funds on time is not possible," the official added.

## SMC launches 40 new trippers

**MI News Service, Siliguri:** The Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) launched a fleet of 40 "hopper-trippers" or covered vehicles for collection and disposal of waste.

Mayor Gautam Deb flagged off the vehicles bought with funds provided by the State Urban Development Agency (SUDA).

"We introduced 40 new vehicles for the SMC area to prevent dumping of garbage on streets. Our plan is to make Siliguri a 'zero waste' city where the

(door-to-door waste collectors) workers will continue visiting households daily to collect trash and dump it in these vehicles," said Manik Dey, member, SMC mayor-in-council (conservancy).

In all, 685 collectors work in 47 wards. Every day, around 350 tonnes of garbage is collected in the city.

Dey said that as a part of solid waste management, they had started fertilisers from waste at the dumping ground off



garbage would be collected and taken away to the disposal ground. Twenty more vehicles will be added to the fleet soon. We don't want garbage to pile up in municipal wards," Deb said.

Since February last year, after Trinamool bagged the SMC — the largest civic body of north Bengal — Deb has been constantly focusing on prompt and proper collection and disposal of waste. Sources in the SMC said SUDA provided Rs 5.9 crore for the vehicles, each of which has separate covered storage cells for biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes. "Each van can carry 1.5 tonnes of garbage at a time," said a source. The civic body plans to park these vans in marketplaces and centrally located spots. "We will make announcements to appeal to people to dispose of waste in these vans and not on the streets. Nirmal Bandhu

Eastern Bypass. "Samples have been sent to the Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Pundibari of Cooch Behar. Once we get its report and certification, we will make fertilisers on a large scale," he said.

Mayor Deb told the media that he would launch "Manusher Pashe Cholo" to reach out to Siliguri residents, next month, where people would be urged to dispose of garbage properly and obey the plastic carry bag ban, among others.





ISF, at Esplanade meeting on Saturday.

PIC: PRABIR BHATTACHARYA

## ISF siege turns Dharamtala into 'bloody' battlefield

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The pertinacious siege of Dharamtala by ISF turned the entire central part of the city into a full-fledged battlefield. The police tried to persuade the protesters to move, but it was of no use. Allegedly, the police later lathi-charged the ISF members at the venue, and in turn the police get the blues from the ruthless ISF people.

Clashes between police and ISF members increased and police had to arrest the ISF leader and MLA Naushad Siddiqui.

On Saturday, it was a premeditated rally by ISF which witnessed thousands of unruly ISF mem-

bers capturing the entire area creating an obvious traffic snarl in the entire zone. Police tried to disperse the protesters.

The tension gradually increased. The police fired tear gas at the protestors as ISF cadres counter-attacked the police force in a vociferous manner. The police then resorted to baton charge to bring the situation under control.

The ISF supporters attacked the police kiosk. Extensive vandalism was carried out in the car. Several police officers were injured. Police ultimately arrested the ISF leader and MLA Naushad Siddiqui.

## RamKrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda inspired Indo-jazz band Shakti to perform in city

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Shakti, the Indo-jazz band started by John McLaughlin and Zakir Hussain, is set to perform in the city on Tuesday as part of its 50th anniversary India tour. McLaughlin, 81 and Hussain, 71, are the only original members who still remain. The current line-up includes vocalist Shankar Mahadevan, violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan and kanjira player V. Selva-ganesh. The band will take the stage at CC&FC as part of the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet. The 11th edition of the meet starts at the Victoria Memorial on Saturday.

"If seeing them play is rare, hearing them speak at a public event is unprecedented," said Malavika Banerjee, festival director. On Tuesday afternoon, at Victoria, the Shakti members will look back at the five-decade journey of the band. "I'm always happy to return (to Kolkata). First of all the city is renowned over the world for its marvelous musicians. That means the general public is accustomed to great music and as a consequence, more discriminating. Generally speaking, all audiences are as good as the music that is being played and, in this sense, audiences are the same all over the world. Another personal element is the proximity of the Kali Temple and the personal room of Sri Ramakrishna," McLaughlin told. The last time the band played in Kolkata was on January 14, 2020, at Saturday Club. But Tuesday is, in all likelihood, going to be the last time Kolkata is going to see Shakti or McLaughlin — a legendary guitarist who has

taught Jimmy Page, played in a band with Ginger Baker and is the creator of the Mahavishnu Orchestra — perform, as he is retiring from touring. He was one of the early musicians from the West to have been influenced by Indian music and spiritualism. McLaughlin has often spoken of being influenced by the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda.

Asked to look back at five decades of Shakti, McLaughlin told, "The essential nature of Shakti is joyful and at the same time profound. The journey has been and continues to be a joy for me. Wherever we play, the essential nature of Shakti is there and perhaps this is why we have had such a long life."

On calling it a day, he said: "It is my personal conviction that at a certain point in life, musicians can no longer perform as they did in past times. I am against waiting for that time to arrive and be embarrassed by my own performance. So, my philosophy is, quit while you're ahead." Hussain, tabla player, composer and music producer with a bouquet of Indian and international awards, said he felt a "growing sense of awe and reverence, because John bhai, as revelation slowly dawned on me, is not only one of the greatest Ustads of the music he represents, but also a man of strong conviction and principles." "He is charming and generous to a fault, his humour is limitless. To be with him then and even now is to be in a place full of joy, happiness and creativity," said Hussain.

## Recruitment scam: ED arrests TMC youth leader



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** ED has ultimately arrested TMC youth leader Kuntal Ghosh in connection with the alleged primary school teachers recruitment scam. The agency arrested Ghosh after conducting searches at two of his apartments at New Town for nearly 22 hours. Ghosh was arrested on grounds of non-cooperation with investigation.

Ghosh was brought under agency scanner after Tapas Mondal, owner of a private B.Ed college who was perceived to be close to the now arrested former primary board president and TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya, had alleged he had paid Rs 19.5 crore to Ghosh as proceeds from recruitment irregularities.

Mondal alleged that Ghosh collected money from job aspirants by promising them TET qualification and that the sum total of money he collected may exceed Rs 100 crore.

## Bengal Christian Council organizes 'Peace Rally' in the city

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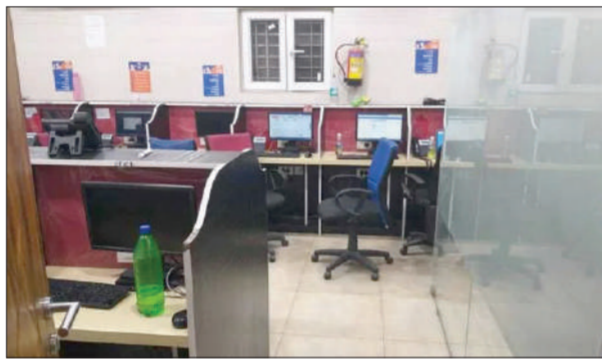
Mondal alleged that Ghosh collected money from job aspirants by promising them TET qualification and that the sum total of money he collected may exceed Rs 100 crore.

# Police busts fake call centre in Salt Lake Sector V, 21 arrested

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Twenty-one employees, including two "directors", of a call centre in Sector V were arrested for alleged fraud. They were allegedly duping British citizens by posing as representatives of software majors and anti-virus companies.

The Bidhannagar police commissioner, Gaurav Sharma, said the raid was part of a continuous drive against illegal call centres. "We want to root out these call centres," Sharma told.

A senior officer of the Bidhannagar commission-



erate said teams from Salt Lake cyber crime police station conducted the raid at the call centre at Glob-

syn Crystals Towers in Sector V following a tip-off. The police identified

the "directors" as Parag Kundu, 36, from Hatiara in Rajarhat, and Sanjay Chandra Das, 41, from Topsia.

An investigating officer said the employees made international calls through VoIP, which makes such calls difficult to trace by law enforcement agencies. The employees would pose as members of technical support teams of software companies, he said. "The callers would tell the victims that they were under a virus attack and would offer to repair

the operating systems for a small fee and send a link," said the officer.

"Once a victim clicked on the link, the caller got remote access to his or her computer and would make transactions from the person's e-wallet and account," he said. Salt Lake police have started a crackdown on dubious call centres. More than 20 call centres that were allegedly being involved in duping people using similar tactics have been shut down over the past four months.

## Rag pickers a cause for worry in city: Mayor

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The city's pavements are rapidly getting filled with "rag pickers", Kolkata's mayor said. He has asked police to collect the identities of these people and shift them to shelters for the homeless. Mayor Firhad Hakim said he would write to the police commissioner of Kolkata about the issue. He said there were two risks associated with "unidentified" people staying in the city: their dwelling on the pavement can turn into a "law and order" issue any day and the stack of bottles and bags that they keep make the city ugly. Hakim

said the police should also find out whether someone who is not an Indian is living on a pavement.

Hakim then named a few places where he said the number of "rag pickers" is increasing very fast. These are "opposite Modern High, on Southern Avenue and near the gurdwara in Kalighat".

"If some unidentified people live in the city, it could lead to some law and order problems any day. Besides, they are also making the city ugly by stacking bottles and other items on footpaths," the mayor

said.

"The police have to find out who these people are. The police should check their Aadhaar cards and Voter cards, verify whether they are citizens of India. After identifying them, the police should shift these people to the shelters for the urban homeless," he said. "I will write to the police commissioner on the matter. They should verify the identities of these people before shifting them to shelters for the urban homeless. We have to also keep a tab on those being taken to the shelters. If someone who

remains unidentified does something illegal and leaves, we will be in trouble." When asked whether there are adequate shelters to accommodate all pavement-dwellers, Hakim said: "We have enough shelters."

A KMC official said there are eight shelters for the homeless in Kolkata and those can accommodate more than 5,000 people. At least four more shelters are being constructed, said an official of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC).

Police and elected representatives identify the people who need to be

shifted to the shelters, said the official. Across Kolkata, small settlements of families can be found living on pavements. They use plastic sheets, flexes and other materials to cover the place where they live. Wood collected from various places are used as fuel to cook.

A number of such people live under the Gariahat flyover, near Gariahat police station. A KMC official said they have found that some of these people have some properties in villages. They moved to Kolkata in search of work that they did not find.

# WBHIDCO auction fetches crores in the southern fringes of the city

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** A private corporate's property emerged as the highest bidder for a 7.44-acre plot near Tollygunge Phari in south Kolkata.

In an auction conducted by the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (WBHIDCO) the Mumbai-based company offered to pay Rs 230 crore, or Rs 30.9 crore an acre, for the plot, pipping local builders, real estate sources said. At least four Kolkata developers were in the fray, including Ambuja Neotia, Merlin and South City consortium for the prized plot on BL Saha Road. The

land, which comes with a lease of 99 years, can be used for residential purposes. Real estate circles said the plot can be used for developing about 8.5 lakh sq ft of built-up area. This is the third government land auctioned by WBHIDCO, which has earned praise for running a transparent process and raising big bucks for the cash-strapped state, in less than 12 months.

The Phoenix Mills of Mumbai had emerged as the highest bidder for a 5.64-acre plot, on leasehold basis for residential purpose, in



Alipore in August by promising to pay over Rs 400 crore. In December, Ambuja was the highest bidder for a 10.15-acre plot in Nonadanga, on a freehold basis for commercial and residential purposes, for about Rs 260 crore. If approved by the state cabinet, the Tollygunge Phari plot could be Godrej Properties fourth residential project in Kolkata. Previously, it has developed a large project in Sodepur and a marquee one in Alipore. It is now executing a multi-phase project near Joka. City-based developers say the par-

ticipation of developers from outside is a positive sign for the state. "There is a reason why national builders are showing interest in the auction. The land comes from the government, without any litigation. They are ready to sacrifice a bit of the return to gain access," a builder who participated in Friday's auction said.

In contrast, the entrenched city-players have ears to the ground and they are a step ahead to scoop up any private land that comes to the market.

Jitendra Khaitan, chairman of Pioneer Properties, said the location was ideal for a high-end residential project.

## Physical copies are immortal: Shirshendu Mukhopadhyaya

SIDDHERTHA ALBERTT MAJUMDERR

A chat with octogenarian author of many a best seller is worth cherishing especially since he is not the one to hold back his words. Shahitya Academi winner Shirshendu Mukhopadhyaya certainly knows the pulse of his readers and this is one reason why his stories are also a favourite with film makers who enjoy box office acclaim banking on his books. There are plenty of such instances (see box).

He is a man who goes with the flow and the changing scenario, but when it comes to airing his views, as I said earlier, he would not mince words.

Talking about the advent of kindle that has seen encouraging sales of e-

books, Mukhopadhyaya welcomes the trend, but to him "physical copies are still immortal". These lines would certainly encourage both the publishers and the readers with the enigmatic Kolkata book fair almost knocking the door.

Adding that e-books are handy and economical; he brings an anecdote to justify his reverence for physical copies. "The West has proved this fact again and again. The hi-tech West is still soft towards the hard copies as there has been a steady rise in print book sales. The e-books will always exist, but not as a substitute. Both hard copies and e-books will happily co-exist thus maintaining the nature's law which is fundamentally divine," says the

### BOOKS TO FILMS

- Kagojer Bou
- Goynar Baksho
- Manojder Adbhut Bari
- Chayamoy
- Hirer Angti
- Eagolerr Chokh
- Aschchorjo Prodeep
- Ashe Abar Shobor
- Patalghar
- Gosainbaganer Bhutt

man behind immortal literally sleuths like Shabor Dasgupta, Baro-dacharan and Fatik.

Our conversation shifts towards the current reading habit and he candidly says, "At one point of time we had reached the nadir. That was one of the symptoms of our decadence. But I personally feel that the clock has once again started ticking to indicate a possible resurgence in the neo-Bengali society."

Mukhopadhyaya, who has mesmerized kids and adults with nearly 100 books of short stories, is also happy with the passion of writing his successors have. "It is a divine bliss to see so many young authors coming up and very encouragingly they are blessed with new contemporary and

brave thoughts," he says.

Meanwhile, Mukhopadhyaya, who has always been vocal about relevant issues, supports any effort to change the name of the state from West Bengal to 'Bangla'. "West Bengal certainly does not remind me of the so-called East Bengal, as it never existed. The very name reminds me of the curse of East Pakistan that destroyed quite a few generations. The horrendous past still haunts me. It would be a noble effort to recreate the charm of undivided Bengal by renaming it as Bangla," says Mukhopadhyaya.

On a parting note, he somehow assures us that there could be some gifts for his fans at the upcoming Kolkata book fair. Now, that is a bonus after a freewheeling chat.



Regulation of trains due to developmental work at Nekurseni station in Kharagpur division

MI News Service, Kolkata: In view of Pre Non-Interlocking and Non-Interlocking work at Nekurseni Station of Kharagpur Division from Jan 29 to Feb 2 2023...

Cancellation of Trains: 12074/12073 Bhubaneswar-Howrah-Bhubaneswar Jan Shatabdi Express will remain cancelled on Jan 30, Feb 1 and 2 2023...

Garib Rath Express will remain cancelled on Feb 2 2023. 08017/08018 Kharagpur-Balasure-Kharagpur MEMU Passenger Special will remain cancelled on Jan 31, Feb 1 and 2 2023...

Name Change I, SADAF YASMIN (Old Name) D/o ASHOK JHA residing at 42B BOSE LANE PO HOWRAH, HOWRAH-71101 WB India...

Name Change I, ABDUL RASHID (Old Name) S/o SK ABDUL LATIF residing at 30/H/3 Alimuddin Street, Park Street, Kolkata, Pin-700016 WB India...

Name Change I, Madan Hela (Old Name) S/o Nazir Hela residing at 242/2E/H/10.A.P.C. Road Kolkata-700004 WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

Name Change I, BIMAL ROY (Old Name) S/o LATE BROJENDRA NATH ROY residing at Vill-Ganti, PO-Thakumgar, PS-Gaighata, Dist-North 24 Parganas, Pin-743287 WB India...

Name Change I, DILIP PASWAN residing at 226/A/H/39, Bagmari Road, Kankargachi, Kolkata-700054, WB India...

Name Change I, KAKALI DEY alias Hiramoyee Dey alias Kakali Shil (Old Name) W/o Dr. Samir Shil residing at Bosepara, Bandh Road, PO & PS-Nabadwip, Dist-Nadia WB India...

Name Change I, am MANJARA QUILANSARI, S/o Abdul Rauf Ansari R/o, 3/9, G.C.R.C Ghat Road, Shibpur, Howrah-711102, also known as MANJAR AQEEL ANSARI...

Name Change I, NOOR ALI (Old Name) S/o ANSAR residing at T-476/3, PANCHPARA LANE, PO-BARTALA, PS-RAJABAGAN, KOLKATA-700018 WEST BENGAL...

E-Tender Notice Pradhan Hantal Anantabati G.P under Jagatballavpur Block, Howrah invites e-tender reference No. HAGP/NIE/T/01/2023...

Name Change I, Syed Md. Khozaima, S/o-Late S.M. Matin, Residing at 85, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, P.S.-Taltala, P.O.-Dharmatala, Kol- 700 013.

Name Change I, Arindam Das, my son Ayush Das residing at 30, Ashtosh Pally, Flat B-3 Kolkata-700084 vide an Affidavit (No.-2990) dated 19/11/2023...

Affidavit I, Srabani Chatterjee Saha W/o Soumajit Chatterjee, my children (son's name Srayan Chatterjee) resident of 103, Ram Lal Dutta Road, P.O. - Bhadrakali, P.S Uttarpada, Dist - Hooghly, Pin 712232, W.B. do hereby solemnly affirm and declared that my name Srabani Chatterjee to Srabani Chatterjee Saha...

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER Notice inviting e-Tender 8 (Eight) on works within Bargachia-I Gram Panchayat, Details of which will be available at https://wbidders.gov.in.

Name Change I, SANGEETA CHAKRABORTY CHATTARAJ (Old Name) D/o DEBDAS CHATTARAJ residing at Baduria, Ghoshpur, North 24 Pgs, Pin-743289 WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

Name Change I, LIAO SHENG CHUNG alias JAMES LIAO (Old Name) S/o CHIH CHIEH LIAO residing at Ekta Floral, BL-5, 2nd Floor, Flat-2F, 27, Christopher Road, near Panckhuri School, Gobinda Khatick Road, Kolkata-700046 WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

Name Change I, KALPANA DHAR (Old Name) W/o AMAL DHAR residing at 18, BIKASH GUHA COLONY, NAYABAD, PO-MUKUNDAPUR, PS-PANCHASAYAR, KOLKATA-700099, WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

Name Change I, SWAPAN SINGHA (Old Name) S/o BANSHIDHAR SINGHA residing at 40/A, RAMANATH DAS ROAD PO DHAKURIA, KOLKATA-700031 WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

Name Change I, I am MANJARA QUILANSARI, S/o Abdul Rauf Ansari R/o, 3/9, G.C.R.C Ghat Road, Shibpur, Howrah-711102, also known as MANJAR AQEEL ANSARI...

Name Change I, SWAPAN SINGHA (Old Name) S/o BANSHIDHAR SINGHA residing at 40/A, RAMANATH DAS ROAD PO DHAKURIA, KOLKATA-700031 WEST BENGAL, INDIA...

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Name Change I, I am DANISH EQBAL, father Md Ashgar, age 33, Address- A/1, Railway Market, Post and P.S.-Adra, District-Purulia, PIN- 723121, West Bengal.

e-Tender Notice Pradhan, Maju Gram Panchayat under Jagatballavpur Development Block, Howrah, has invited e-Tender vide NIT No. Maju GP/42/15th CFC/2022-23...

Name Change I, I am DANISH EQBAL, father Md Ashgar, age 33, Address- A/1, Railway Market, Post and P.S.-Adra, District-Purulia, PIN- 723121, West Bengal.

Notice Furfura Gram Panchayat Jangipara Panchayat Samiti Tender is being invited from eligible contractor vide Tender No: 45/FGP E TENDER dated: 21/01/2023.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER Notice inviting e-Tender 8 (Eight) on works within Bargachia-I Gram Panchayat, Details of which will be available at https://wbidders.gov.in.

Pradhan, Moshira Gram Panchayat invites Tenders of few Construction works in Moshira GP area details of which are available at www.wbtenders.gov.in website and the Notice Board of Moshira Gram Panchayat, PO - Moshira, Dist. - Bankura.

132nd Birth Anniversary of Srimat Annyada Thakur celebrated at Addyapeeth



MI News Service, Kolkata: The speaker of the West Bengal State Assembly Biman Banerjee graced the occasion at the Daxineswar Ram Krishna Sangha Adyapeeth to be a part of the celebration of the 132 Birth Anniversary of the founder of the organization Srimat Annyada Thakur.

The speaker was accompanied by his wife and Tapan Chatterjee (Ex Judge-Calcutta High Court), Tapes Chatterjee (MLA), Sovon Chatterjee (Ex Mayor of Kolkata), Gopal Saha (Head-Kamarhati Municipality), Alok Rajoria (Barrackpore Police Commissioner) and other dignitaries.

The organizers distributed 5000 saris and 3000 blankets to the needy people at the venue. It is a seven days packed program to commemorate the founder of this highly esteemed organization serving people for ages.

MI News Service, Kolkata: In a bid to clear extra rush of passengers during winter season, Railway has decided to run one more special train between Kolkata & New Jalpaiguri.

Critical to set up elephant corridors to curb human-animal conflict: State intimates centre

MI News Service, Kolkata: The state government has drawn the attention of the Centre towards the importance of identifying new elephant corridors as they have been changing their routes.

MI News Service, Hooghly: Detection of 16 bottles of officers choice Deluxe whisky-750 ML value Rs-500/-each Total- 8000/-Rs. and 34 bottle officers Hayward's 5000 500 ML unclaimed value Rs-105/-each...

MI News Service, Kolkata: In order to clear extra rush of pilgrims during the ensuing URS Mela at Ajmer, Railway has decided to run 03021/03022 Howrah - Ajmer - Asansol & 09663/09664 Madarjn. - Asansol - Madar Jn. URS special trains.

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Winter spl train between Kolkata & New Jalpaiguri

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Good Work done under operation "SATARK" by RPF Post Bandel & CIB/HWH

MI News Service, Hooghly: Detection of 16 bottles of officers choice Deluxe whisky-750 ML value Rs-500/-each Total- 8000/-Rs. and 34 bottle officers Hayward's 5000 500 ML unclaimed value Rs-105/-each...

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Regulation of trains in Howrah division

MI News Service, Kolkata: Two days Traffic & Power Block for Non Interlocking work at Singur and Nalikul stations in Howrah - Tarakeswar Section has been planned on Jan 22 (Sunday) & 23 2023 (Monday).

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## Foundation Anniversary meeting of ISF at Rani Rasmani



**Nurul Islam Khan**

On January 21, a huge rally was held at Rani Rasmani Road, Kolkata to mark the foundation day of ISF party. The party's call was 'Don't be silent; Let's make a roar'..... Bhagar took the look of the field of war over this meeting. There was a fierce clash between ISF workers and Trinamool Congress workers. The leaders warned through the meeting that if the administration did not arrest the accused, they would take revenge in a democratic manner. MLA Naushad Siddiqui himself was injured. His car was vandalized. It is noted that Chairman Naushad Siddiqui had promised on the debut of the party at the Kolkata Press Club that he will be vocal in fighting for the oppressed, ordinary and backward people of Bengal to get their basic rights. That struggle is continuing in and outside the Assembly. For example, against the rape of women and political killings in Hanskhal, he is beating to death in police lock-ups or natural calamities like the erosion of the Ganga, he raised his voice strongly. From Anees Khan to Bogtwi - ISF has launched a strong movement against all crimes. In Rani Rasmani rally, he

mainly protested against various corruptions of the state government. He burst into protest. He also lashed out against the BJP government at the Centre Competition is going on between the BJP government led by dictator Narendra Modi and the Trinamool government of the state by destroying democracy and taking away the rights of the common people. The Gujarat government decided to release Bilkis Bano's rapist and the killers of her family members while Narendra Modi was speaking on the dignity of women on August 15 at the Amrit Mohotsav of Independence. Endangering the basic rights of tribal communities of water, land and forests, the Forest Act of 1980 was amended in 2006 that now says, gram sabha approval is not required for government projects in forests. We must stop the attempt to establish corporate rule in the jungle. At a time when the prices of daily essentials are rising uncontrollably, the Chief Minister of the state is talking to various industrial groups to implement the anti-public Health Bill - 2022 and the 'New Education Policy' of the central government. The entire education de-

partment of this state has immersed in corruption. Educated youth is plagued by unemployment, Chief Minister is silent. While the Central government is working in line with its policy of state oppression against the country's minority Muslim community in the name of counter-terrorism, the State government has practically given permission to various central agencies in this state to implement the same policy. He also said that the fear of NRC/CAA is to keep pressure on minorities. Panchayat election is near. The corruption of billions of rupees in the housing scheme is a proof of how much damage is done when the elections are by force without any opposition in politics. In the housing scheme, the leaders and workers of the ruling party have embezzled money depriving the real helpless poor of their rights. He vehemently demanded bloodless panchayat elections. Finally MLA Naushad reminded and said that today all of you have come to the rally on party's stand against various types of corruption. Roar, and get ready for panchayat polls. was present Many eminent people including Biswajit Maiti present in the rally.

## Security forces seize drugs worth Rs 1.71 cr

MI News Service, Peren: Security personnel seized a large quantity of contraband drugs worth Rs 1.71 crore from the possession of husband and wife in Nagaland's Peren district, informed officials on Saturday.

The husband and wife are residents of Senapati, Manipur. According to Nagaland police, a joint team comprising of Peren District Executive Force, Narcotic Personnel, and CISF while conducting a routine inspection at Teipuiki bridge, Peren intercepted a car that was proceeding to Dimapur from Senapati.

"During thorough checking and frisking, security personnel recovered 50 soap cases containing suspected Heroin measuring 600 grams approximately, with a market value estimated to be Rs 1.71 crore from the possession of husband and wife who are residents of Senapati, Manipur," said Nagaland Police officials.

A case has been registered at the Narcotic Cell in Kohima.

## Couple arrested for honey-trapping, extorting people

MI News Service, Saharanpur: Police arrested a couple who allegedly extorted people by honey-trapping them and also recovered some cash and a gold chain from them, an official said.

A doctor in Thanakubsher complained that a month ago, a woman befriended him at a hospital and allegedly lured him into establishing a physical relationship. Superintendent of Police (City) Abhimanyu Manglik told PTI.

The doctor alleged that two-three people soon reached the spot and took away his ATM card before withdrawing cash from his account.

The police on Friday arrested Aman Vihar Colony resident Suleman and his wife Rafat alias Imrana Suleman, Manglik said.

The couple had allegedly cheated two or three people before as well by accusing them of rape, the police said.

Rs 16,500 in cash, a gold chain and ATM cards were recovered from the arrested couple, Manglik said.

## Banbasa PS honoured as one of top-3 PS

MI News Service, Champawat: Banbasa police station in the Champawat district of Uttarakhand was honoured as one of the country's top-3 police stations at the DGSP/IGSP Conference-2022 in the national capital.

Banbasa police station was adjudged among the top-3 alongside Odisha's Aska and Bihar's Arwal police stations in the annual ranking of police stations across the country. Union Home Minister Mr Amit Shah honoured Banbasa police station at the ongoing top security summit at the National Agricultural Science Complex of New Delhi.

Uttarakhand Director General of Police (DGP), Ashok Kumar said it is, indeed, a matter of pride to be among the top 3 in a country which has an estimated 16,000 police stations. He added that this was the first time at a police station in Uttarakhand featured among the top 3.

In 2017, two Uttarakhand police stations -- Banbhurpa and Rishikesh -- had ranked inside the top-10, at the 6th and 8th places respectively.

Again, in the 2018 rankings, Munsyari police station of Uttarakhand was at the 9th place.

**Kodalisa-II Gram Panchayat**  
Kodalisa, Bandel, Hooghly

**Notice Inviting e-Tender**

E-Tender is invited from Reputed, Bonafied Tenderer for vide e-NIT No. : 1) 032/KGP-II/2022-23 (Sl. 1 to 4), Date: 21.01.2023, & 2) 033/KGP-II/2022-23 (Sl. 1 to 2), Date: 21.01.2023. Fund: 15th FC (Tied & Untied). Period & Time for download of Bidding Documents: From 21.01.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. to 27.01.2023 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bid Opening Date: 30.01.2023 at 15:15 Hrs. For detailed information visit [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtenders.gov.in) & undersigned G.P. Office.

Sd/-  
Proddhan  
Kodalisa-II Gram Panchayat

**Office Of The Executive Officer**  
**Namkhana Panchayat Samity**

**Namkhana, South 24-Parganas**  
**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

Memo No.: 40/EO Date: 20-01-2023  
NIT No.: NIT09/2022-23/EO/NAM (sl 01-19) dated 20-01-2023.

E-Tender ID:- 2023 ZPHD 451044 Dated : 20/01/2023 for Sinking of tubewell & NIT10/2022-23/EO/NAM (sl 01-07) dated 20-01-2023.

E-Tender ID:- 2023 ZPHD 451051 Dated : 20/01/2023 for Construction of road, culvert, boundary wall under Namkhana Panchayat Samity.

Last date of online bid submission is 04-02-2023. Details on [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtenders.gov.in).

Sd/- Executive Officer  
Namkhana Panchayat Samity  
South 24 Parganas



There is TET exam for job recruitment in the state. Still there is need to clear CTET. Only then one can find a primary job in Bengal! Why this decree? An organization called Bangla Pokkho raised that question and held a protest march. The organization claims that in fact giving opportunity to sit for CTET means giving opportunity to different states including Bihar-UP for primary school teacher jobs in Bengal. The organization strongly opposes this anti-Bengali decision. This meeting was called by the Bangla Pokkho at the Rani Chaya Manohar in Kolkata on Saturday All deprived job aspirants participated. Editors Garg Chatterjee and Kaushik Maiti were present. PIC: Nurul Islam Khan

## Christians not engaged in converting people: Union minister Barla



MI News Service, Kolkata: Union Minister John Barla rejected allegations that Christians are engaged in converting people, and asserted that the community has made immense contributions to the progress of India.

In spite of contributions in the field of education and philanthropy, he said Christians have not found their due recognition, while addressing a Peace Rally here on Friday.

Christian schools can be found everywhere in the country, the BJP leader said asserting that a number of personalities from Mahatma Gandhi to filmstar Shah Rukh Khan had their schooling in such institutions.

"(Besides) there are health centres, old-age homes. Yet, after so much contribution, there is no respect. Why will there be allegations that we convert people? No, we don't convert people," the union minister of state for Minority Affairs said.

BJP leaders in various states accuse Church leaders of converting people to Christianity.

"We want nothing but

peace ... Time has come to be united," Barla, himself a Christian, said, adding that members of the community should not face injustice as was the case in Chhattisgarh.

On January 2, a church was vandalised and six police personnel, including an IPS officer, were attacked and injured during a protest by tribals in connection with an alleged religious conversion in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur city.

"If we do not tell the world (about our contribution), we will get beaten up instead," said the MP of Alipurduar in West Bengal.

He said that besides schools, there are hospitals, health centres, old age homes and other facilities run by Christians with their funds, but still, they do not get respect.

Barla said, "From the time I became a minister, as the minority minister, as Christian, I thought - what is our contribution to the country? What have we given and what have we got in return? - both before and after Independence. What respect did

we get for our contribution?" There are Christian schools in the remotest area of the country where there are no government institutes, he said.

Eminent personalities such as freedom fighters Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi, politicians LK Advani, Arun Jaitley, Smriti Irani, JP Nadra, "Pawar family" and filmstar Shah Rukh Khan - all studied in Christian schools, Barla claimed.

Barla said, "Christian people are not against the government. Businessmen and politicians send their children to Christian schools. Then why will we get beaten up? Why will Christians be blamed for conversion?" He said that the community also has a fault.

"The fault is that we are not showing our contribution to the nation. That's why we did not get any respect from the government," the minister said at the Peace Rally.

Such rallies will be held all over India next year to show the contribution of Christians to the nation, Barla said

adding: "It is not a political issue. Christians only want peace and development." Later, he told reporters that the BJP was not involved in the Chhattisgarh church violence and it was between two groups of tribals.

Barla also alleged that the West Bengal government did not submit any proposal for the development of minority people.

Paritosh Canning, president of the Bengal Christian Council and Bishop of Calcutta, CNI, said the minister was invited to the rally as a part of the Council.

"Our objective is to bring all Christians of West Bengal on a single platform. We also want to highlight the contribution of other minorities - Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, etc - to build the country, state and society," Canning said.

Organised by the Bengal Christian Council and other organisations, participants of the Peace Rally marched for around two kilometres from St. Paul's Cathedral and to Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Mayo road.

## How to withdraw money using your Aadhaar

Continued from Pg 1

People having an Aadhaar number linked to a bank account - referred to as an Aadhaar Enabled Bank Account (AEBB) - can utilise the AePS service.

Customers need to have a valid Aadhaar number through which they can set up an AEBB with an authorised bank and enjoy the AePS service suite.

What is Aadhaar Enabled Payment System? AEPS is a bank led model which allows online interop-

er-able financial transactions at PoS(Point of Sale)/Micro ATM through the Business Correspondent (BC)/Bank Mitra of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication.

**Services offered:**

- Balance Enquiry
- Cash Withdrawal
- Cash Deposit
- Aadhaar to Aadhaar funds transfer
- Payment Transactions (C2B, C2G Transactions)

What does a customer require to do an AePS transaction?

- Aadhaar Number

- Bank Name
- Biometric captured during their enrollment
- Transaction Type (If needed)

**Benefits**

It allows the customer to have doorstep banking and do basic banking transactions without the need to visit any bank branch, carry cards or remember PIN passwords.

Among other benefits, it facilitates merchant transactions by allowing the merchant to accept the Aadhaar number/Virtual ID and biometrics of the customer for the purchase of goods and services through Aadhaar based biometric authentication.

## Seventh Champdani Drama Mela inaugurated



MI News Service, Hooghly: Seventh Champdani Drama (Natye Mela) was inaugurated on Friday evening at RKM Lane, Newaran Mukhopadhyay Vidya Mandir stage.

This drama fair was inaugurated by the Chairman of Champdani Municipality, Suresh Mishra. Apart from Vinay Kumar, Deputy Chairman of Champdani Municipality Swapan Ku-

mar Maiti, Sukhen Maiti and many important personalities were present in this event. This festival will continue to January 22. It was told that this festival is organized for the purpose of promoting daily services, education and culture.

Apart from Champdani, Ballyganj, Champdani Art and Cultural Society and many theater companies have been invited in this festival. On this occasion, Champdani Municipality Chairman Suresh Mishra said that I welcome the honorable citizens in this festival. He also thanked the organizers of the event.



Public meeting held in-front of Howrah station by Uttar Howrah district Trinamool Congress on 21st Jan in the evening. Honourable MP Dr. Santanu Sen delivering the speech from the dias. Following dignitaries were present in the dias. Honourable Minister Mr. Pulok Roy, Dr. M.A. Kasem Ex - MLA President IMA Bengal, Mr Bhaskar Bhattacharyya President Uttar Howrah TMC and other leaders of TMC.

## SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, A/C Bose Road, Kolkata 700020 CIN No: L85190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

**Whereas** The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	New Rachha Kanta Bhandari Kalipada Chakraborty (Guarantor & Mortgagee) / 9/2 Goswami Bager Lane Sheoraphuly Hooghly West Bengal- 712223/ 241205500117 & 241255000003	Mouza- Seoraphuly, J.L No.6, R.S No.909, R.S Dag No. 3081, R.S Khatian No. 1399, L.R Dag No.6023, L.R Khatian No.9966, Hising, Para No.160(68/2/A), and 159(68/2), Chatterjee Para Lane, P.S- Serampore Under Baidyabati Municipality, Dist- Hooghly, Piece and Parcel of Land Admeasuring 3 Cottahs 4 Chittaks and 38 Sq. Ft/ Date of Symbolic: 18.01.2023	01.08.2022 Rs. 1,10,02,111/-	Hooghly (West-Bengal)
2.	R.K. Traders/ Vineet Kumar Jaiswal (Guarantor & Mortgagee) / 14, Rajendra Deb Road, P.S Jorasanko, Near Thantarnia Kail Bari West Bengal Kolkata- 700006/ 128805501383	Residential Flat on Fourth Floor, Northern Side as Gobinda Bhawan, at Pandit Battala, Mouja- Hatilara, J.L.No.14, Re. Sa 188, Touzi No.169, Comprise in R.S Khatian No. 1848, Appertaining to R.S Dag No. 4004/4589 Within Local Limit of Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation, Ward No. 14, Formerly Rajarhat Gopalpur Municipality, Ward No.20, Being Municipal Holding No. 568, 288, Within Jurisdiction of Rajarhat Police Station in the District of North 24 Parganas at Pandit Battala/ Jhilbagan, Hatilara, (Admeasuring an area of 1000 Sq. Ft Super Built Up area) / Date of Symbolic: 18.01.2023	02.09.2022 Rs. 29,77,524/-	West-Bengal
3.	Indian Steel Enterprise/ Manoj Kumar Jaiswal (Guarantor & Mortgagee) / 7/8, Thakurdas Surekha Road, Ghosuri Near Jaiswal Hospital West Bengal Howrah- 711107/ 160405500065	Flat No. 201 on The Second Floor, Eastern Side, Guha Road, Bally Municipality Holding No.5 Liliuh, Part No. R.S Dag No.89/159, Under R.S Khatian No.442 of Mouza- Ghosuri, P.S- Bally, District-Howrah (Admeasuring an area of 1200 Sq. Ft Super Built Up area) / Date of Symbolic: 18.01.2023	10.08.2022 Rs. 34,78,389.26/-	Howrah (West-Bengal)
4.	Knap International/ Shahnin Sultana-Proprietor (Co Applicant) / Sarifuddin Ahmed (Guarantor & Mortgagee) / 4, Netaji Subhas Road 1st Floor Room No. 110 West Bengal Kolkata- 700011/ 000605032545	Flat No.9C, on The Ninth Floor of Block-1, in Merlin Legacy, at Premises No.9A, Bechulal Road, P.S- Entally, Ward No.56 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Road Zone: Railway Line- Kamar Ganga Road, Kolkata 700014 (Admeasuring an area of Measuring 839 Sq. Ft Carpet area More or Less and 972 Sq. Ft Built Up area With Facility to Park one Medium Size Car in The Allotted Covered Car Parking Space Being No.02 on The Ground Floor./ Date of Symbolic: 18.01.2023	10.08.2022 Rs. 87,13,837.18/-	West-Bengal

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 21, 2023  
Place : Kolkata & Hooghly & Howrah  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited



“ WE LOVE MOVIES, WHETHER IT IS FROM NORTH, SOUTH, EAST OR WEST. STORIES ARE IN OUR DNA. IT'S IN OUR DNA TO LISTEN AND TO TELL STORIES. SO WE SHOULD RESPECT INDIAN FILMS. INDIAN CINEMA "ONE OF THE STRONGEST GOODWILL AMBASSADORS IN THE WORLD.

JAVED AKHTAR  
LYRICIST, WRITER



QUOTE-UNQUOTE



“ THE FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY SHOULD FOCUS ON QUALITY AND REDUCE IMPORT DEPENDENCE TO CAPTURE A LARGER SHARE IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. THE GOVERNMENT WANTS QUALITY CONTROL ORDERS FOR LEATHER AND NON-LEATHER FOOTWEAR TO BE IMPLEMENTED FROM JULY 1, 2023.

PIYUSH GOYAL  
UNION MINISTER OF COMMERCE

UNION BUDGET 2023-24 MUST ENSURE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

DR. GYAN PATHAK

Poor households of the country have increasingly been put into precarious conditions as far as education of their children are concerned. Public educational institutions, which are the only destination for poor students, are deteriorating in imparting quality education due to a range of issues including insufficient budget among others. Even fundamental right to education has not been honoured, which is reflected in decline in budgetary allocation for Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan compared to 2020-21, while population is increasing. Education, beyond this primary level, have been made costlier through a range of policies, a general trend under PM Modi rule since 2014. Tuition fees have been increased and taxes have been imposed on educational services and input materials that have made reading and writing materials unaffordably costly for poor students.

Such an environment has been creating two distinct worlds of privileged and unprivileged students. The entire education system is heading toward disempowering the unprivileged students through blocking their paths to quality and universal education - right from simple reading and writing materials to quality and affordable educational institutions. Union Budget 2023-24 should therefore must increase budgetary support to public education system, and ensure that private educational institutions also must earmark certain number of seats for unprivileged students since most of them derive benefits from public resources and certain other facilities from the government.

The last three years under the shadow of COVID-19 is marked with huge learning losses at all level of education. Union government is yet to come out with effective programmes to make up this learning loss. The crisis has led to a new system of education which is known as online education. Online and offline education are now to stay. However, poor students are still not able to access online education or virtual classroom due to lack of proper electricity and internet connectivity and instruments like mobile, laptops, or desktops.

Huge digital gaps are there not only between students of poor and rich households but also between the urban and rural areas. This gap is also visible between girls and boy students, and the students from educated and uneducated households. This is a measure of concern which need to be properly addressed now since the future economies and employments would be heavily dependent on traditional and digital knowledge, skills and trainings. It would be very unfair if we do not provide equal educational access but would insist on 'competition' between the privileged and unprivileged, only to insure that students from privileged households only succeed an all spheres of life.

Budget 2022-23 had increased Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan budget by Rs6000 crore, but was still below the budgetary allocation for 2020-21. Budgetary allocation for teachers training and adult education was reduced to almost half from Rs250 crore in 2021-22 to Rs127 crore in 2022-23. Union government must take note of

the new requirement of teachers training in the light of hybrid (physical classroom and digital) education, and also for the effective implementation of the provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 right from primary to higher education level. Teachers and students both need to be technology enabled.

Imposing GST on educational services is indeed a bad idea which includes Ed-Tech, training, coaching and other related educational activities. Taxing education is a greed and no civil society should tax it. Union Budget 2023-24 must remove all taxes on services and goods that make education costly and unaffordable for majority of Indians at a time when more than 81 crore people out of 140 crore population survive on 5 kg free food-grains per month.

The NEP2020 emphasizes a new framework for pre-primary education. How can it be implemented if there would not be any clear policy for funding and appropriately trained teachers and other personnel? The Union Budget 2023-24 therefore clearly needs to have appropriate allocation in this regard.

NEP lays much emphasis on compulsory and vocational training from secondary education level. It would need huge funding and trained human resources if we really want our students to have an exposure to vocational education from their early school days.

Education sector expenditure have been almost stagnant over the last few years at 3.1 per cent of the GDP. According to the Economic Survey for 2021-22, it was only 2.8 per cent in 2019-20, and 3.1 per cent in 2020-21 revised estimate and 3.1 per cent in 2021-22 budgeted estimate. The NEP-2020 has said that the government would make efforts to increase it to 6 per cent of the GDP, but did not mention the year by which Modi government intends to do it. Universal school education remains a dream.

NEP 2020 aims for universalization of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent gross enrolment ratio in school education by 2030, will bring 2 crore out-of-school children back into the mainstream, gross enrolment ratio in higher education to be raised to 50 per cent by 2035 with 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education, among others. All these are easier said than done. Union Budget 2023-24 will need to considerably enhance the educational expenditure if there are to be achieved.

Among these sugar-quoted words a contradiction exists that says every college would develop into either an autonomous degree-granting college or a constituent college of a university. It only means making education even more costly, since the burden of funding education would be ultimately shifted to students, and only those student could be able to access higher education who can afford it.

Budget allocation for education in 2022-23 was only Rs 1,04,278 crore (2.6 per cent of the total Union budget) as against Rs 93,224 crore (2.7 per cent of the Union budget) in 2021-22. However, the revised estimate for 2021-22 shows that the Centre spent only Rs 88,002 crore which was only 2.3 per cent of the total budget.

HYDEROGEN HYPE

MASSIVE GREEN ENERGY PLAN FOR INDIAN CAPITAL BUT NOT FOR ITS PEOPLE



PRABIR PURKAYASTHA

The recent announcement of the Narendra Modi government of a Rs 20,000 crore (Rs 19,794 crore) National Green Hydrogen Mission has created two kinds of questions. The most common reaction is what is green hydrogen? And do we have a plan for a green hydrogen path for which Rs 20,000 crore is being earmarked?

Let us get one fact straight: all shades of hydrogen-green, blue, or grey-are only on how hydrogen is produced, not the colour of the gas. Regardless of how hydrogen is generated, it remains the same colourless, odourless gas. If it is generated using a fossil fuel route, e.g., natural gas to produce hydrogen and inevitably some carbon dioxide, it is referred to as "grey" hydrogen. If the carbon dioxide emitted during the production of grey hydrogen can be captured by various methods instead of being emitted, then the same grey hydrogen is referred to as "blue." If hydrogen can be produced without using either coal or natural gas, but by electrolyzing water using electricity, then the hydrogen is termed "green" hydrogen.

It helps us very little in our fight against greenhouse gas emissions if we produce hydrogen and release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The promise of blue hydrogen is a strategy of oil and natural gas companies to continue using natural gas as long as possible with the hazy promise of carbon capture at some future date. Currently, only 1 per cent of hydrogen produced is blue, the

rest is from grey hydrogen with carbon emissions that is equal if not more than if natural gas is burnt directly. If carbon capture at scale using natural gas was commercially viable, we could then continue to use natural gas for power generation to produce electricity. Unfortunately, it is not. Blue hydrogen is simply a rebranding or a marketing exercise by oil-gas companies to earn profits as long as they can, similar to rebranding natural gas as a "transitional fuel".

In a hydrogen economy, there are two questions that we need to address: how will it be used, and what will it cost?

Let us take the use of hydrogen first. Those who have read my earlier columns know that if we want to use electric vehicles (EVs), the problem is the low energy density of the battery. For one kilogram of battery, the amount of energy stored is lower compared to one kg of diesel, petrol, or compressed natural gas (CNG). The energy stored in a litre of petrol is about 32 times that of one kg of battery. That is why electric cars have a range of about 100-150 kilometres before they need to be recharged. Worse, they are completely unsuited for heavy-duty trucks and, therefore, for commercial transport.

The use of hydrogen as a fuel is much more important for trucks; or even buses. In fact, such trucks can then travel even longer distances-up to 1,000 kilometres - as hydrogen is typically stored under high pressure. Hydrogen can be burnt in engines very similar to what we use today for burning CNG or converted to electricity in fuel cells and direct-

ly used in EVs. Fuel cells convert natural gas to electricity and are therefore directly used in the electric motor of the EV. In both cases, the only by-product is water, and environmentally benign.

There are two other uses of hydrogen: one is to produce ammonia for fertilisers, and the other, is its use in refineries. In the Haber process, ammonia is produced from nitrogen in the atmosphere, and naphtha or natural gas as feedstock leads to carbon emissions as a by-product. It is possible to replace LNG with hydrogen and combine it with nitrogen and produce ammonia. As the use of LNG means carbon emissions, that is why the term green ammonia for this alternate route of using hydrogen directly. Since India imports natural gas or LNG, therefore there is the added benefit of using hydrogen to replace costly imported LNG. The difference in the price of green ammonia and ammonia using naphtha or LNG is still significant; therefore, the need for research and development to bring down the price of green ammonia.

India imported about \$12 billion worth of LNG in 2021-22, a significant part of it going to fertiliser plants as a feedstock. Of course, this was only a fraction of our oil bill of a whopping \$119 billion. So, the key question for a hydrogen economy instead of the fossil fuel one is how much will it cost? And here is the bad news. It currently costs \$3-5 to produce one kg of hydrogen, which needs to drop to about \$1/kg before it can become competitive. The good news is that with the costs of renewables dropping sharply, we are likely to see a surplus of

renewables on the grid. So, can we marry green hydrogen to renewables? And will it then help us meet our ambitious greenhouse emission targets of 2030 and net zero (meaning no net carbon emissions) by 2060? This is the genesis of the National Green Hydrogen Mission that the prime minister has recently launched with a lot of fanfare.

Typical of all such grandiose "plans" of the current BJP government, the Green Hydrogen Mission has some financial commitments, in this case, Rs 20,000 crores, and grandiose statements regarding green hydrogen and green ammonia and its transformative role for the future. There is very little discussion on how India is going to develop the entire technology cycle for green hydrogen or green ammonia and what is the national plan for doing so.

A reading of the PIB release makes clear that even a relatively small green end-to-end hydrogen plan will involve much larger outlays than the Rs 20,000 crores. So let us examine briefly what such a plan means. First is the assumption that based on the cost of renewables, surplus renewable energy is available. The problem is how to use it. As Indian big capital has already invested heavily in renewables, what should they do with the surplus which the state utilities are in no position to buy? One obvious answer is to use the surplus renewable energy available and convert it to "green" hydrogen or "green" ammonia, helping those who have already invested heavily in renewables while also reducing India's costly oil and LNG imports.

POLITICAL DELICACIES

Rahil Nora Chopra

KCR TRIES TO FORGE THIRD FRONT, GETS CHIEF MINISTERS ON BOARD

The political buzz around the formation of a third front is revived once again. While talk of a third front has been recurrent, a key change this time is that Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has succeeded in getting top politicians from three other regional parties, including three fellow and former chief ministers, to share a stage with him at a public meeting in Khammam. Samajwadi Party president and Uttar Pradesh former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, CPI National Secretary D Raja, and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in front of a massive audience. KCR has been strategically working on a non-Congress and non-BJP alliance of regional parties.

CHIRAG PASWAN'S LJP MAY RETURN TO BJP-LED NDA FOLD

The speculation is rife that BJP is talking to chief of Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), Mukesh Sahani, as well as Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan for alliance ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. The buzz is that before the announcement of alliance between LJP with BJP, Union Minister and president of Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP) Pashupati Kumar Paras will go ahead for a merger of the party with his estranged nephew Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas). The RLJP has five members in the Lok Sabha from Bihar. The erstwhile LJP had won six seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election in Bihar. But after a split in the LJP, five MPs went with Paras-led RLJP, while Ram Vilas Paswan's only son Chirag Paswan remained the lone MP of the LJP (Ram Vilas).

KUSHWAHA UPSET WITH CM NITISH, MAY JUNK JD(U) FOR BJP

With Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar categorically ruling out the possibility of appointing another deputy, other than Tejashwi Yadav, rumours are circulating that Upendra Kushwaha may leave the JD(U) and might join the BJP. Kushwaha, who started his political career in 1985, has switched parties seven times in the last 15 years. Kushwaha has been a Union minister in the Modi government, and has formulated his own party twice. The duo Kushwaha and Nitish is called the Luv-Kush in Bihar. Meanwhile, Kushwaha has also said that RJD had created a controversy over the Ramcharitmanas as part of a design to help BJP in lieu of leniency from the Centre in the corruption cases against RJD chief Lalu Prasad. On the other hand, Sushil Kumar Modi defended Kushwaha and also said out that JD(U) has no or bleak future.

GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER M M KEERAVANI IS A GREAT MUSIC TALENT IN FILM INDUSTRY

HE HAS GIVEN MUSIC IN MORE THAN 100 FILMS OF MANY LANGUAGES

HARIHAR SWARUP

When M M Keeravani won the Golden Globe award for the best original song for S Rajamouli's film RRR on January 11, he was fulfilling his destiny. As a 4-year-old in Kovvur, Andhra Pradesh, he had walked up to his father; Koduri Siva Shakti Dutta, and narrated a dream: "A divine being asked to open my mouth and stretch my tongue out. I did, and it placed a burning coal on my tongue." Then, abruptly, the young Keeravani declared "I want to learn music."

The whole family was surprised. "It was not that he was exposed to a lot of music to have been influenced. Nevertheless, we took him seriously and got him educated in music," celebrated writer-director and Keeravani's uncle Vijayendra Prasad said. Prasad has written the stories of "Bahubali-the beginning" and "Bahubali-the conclusion",



besides many other films. He is also a play back singer, and currently the toast of Telugu cinema.

Now 62, Keeravani won the Globe for the song "Naatu, Naatu" written by lyricist Chandrabose for the Telugu film "RRR" that was directed by Rajamouli. But his music has mesmerized audiences in different languages for years. It's just that his name sometimes does

not ring a bell because of the aliases he works under. In Bollywood he is known as M M Kreem, and in the Tamil industry as Marakathamani. He carved out his space in Hindi cinema with the song "Tu Mile, Dil Khile" sung by Alaka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu in 1984 film 'Criminal' 'Jism', released in 2013 was another high light of his Bollywood career.

Music director R P Patnaik says Keeravani's music in film 'Is Raat ki Subh Nah' showed his skill and acumen."He has sung for me and I have sung for him. We shared a good bond. In fact, Keeravani in someone, everyone loves in the film industry," Patnaik said.

But Keeravani had to earn his way to the top through diligence. He had started as an assistant to an assistant of well known music director Chakraverthi more than 30 years ago. "It is his grounding in classical music and literature that has taken him so far", said Patnaik, who rates Keeravani's music in Nagarjuna - starred 'Annamayya' as of a very high order.

Keeravani has provided music for nearly 100 films in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada since his debut with the film 'Manasu Mamata' in 1990. Directors feel comfortable working with him, and K Raghavendra Rao, who won the national award for

best director with Annamayya in 1997, has collaborated with him in more than 20 films. "It is your sheer hard work and determination that has taken you places. You are an example of what one can achieve through commitment". Rao tweeted as soon as the Golden Globes announcement was made.

Keeravani once said he chose the screen name M M Kreema to make life easier for his Bollywood colleagues, but now he's become household name. His uncle Prasad and others in the family are of course delighted. "We saw the spark in Keeravani when he was a child. We were certain that he would go places but did not imagine the heights he would reach winning the Golden Globe. It is a matter of pride for our family, the Indian film industry and the country," Prasad said. Now an Oscar for "Naatu Naatu" would be icing on the cake, and the song is already on the short list.



EC reminds parties of law, provisions barring use of religious institutions



NEW DELHI : Ahead of assembly polls in three northeastern states and various byelections, the Election Commission has reminded its field machinery and political parties of a law and provisions of the model code which prohibit the use of places of worship as a forum for election propaganda "in any manner".

years and with a fine, it pointed out. A copy of the letter has been sent to leaders of all recognised national and state parties. "The Commission desires that the provisions of the existing law may be brought to the notice of all district election officers and returning officers so as to ensure that any violation of these provisions during election is dealt with firmly and FIRs/complaints are lodged under relevant provisions in the event of any offence under the said sections of the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act," it said.

In a letter to its chief electoral officers in all states and union territories on January 19, the poll panel reminded them of its 2012 instructions on the issue which had noted that the existing provisions of the model code of conduct prohibit the use of "places of worship as a forum for election propaganda in any manner".

"Further, Sections 3, 5 and 6 of The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988, prohibit the use of religious institutions or funds of religious institutions for the promotion or propagation of any political ideas or political activity or for the benefit of any political party," the letter read. Contravention of the provisions of any of these sections is punishable by imprisonment up to five

Over 300 bureaucrats, ex-judges slam BBC for its documentary on PM Modi

NEW DELHI : A group of 302 former judges, ex-bureaucrats and veterans on Saturday slammed a BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "motivated charge sheet against our leader, a fellow Indian and a patriot" and a reflection of its "dyed-in-the-wool negativity and unrelenting prejudice".

They claimed it is the archetype of past British imperialism in India setting itself up as both judge and jury to resurrect Hindu-Muslim tensions that were overwhelmingly the creation of the British Raj policy of divide and rule.

The two-part BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question" claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Modi was the chief minister of the state. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking multi-

ple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to the BBC documentary, according to sources.

This documentary is not a neutral critique and is not about exercising creative freedom or a divergent, anti-establishment point of view, a statement signed by 13 former judges, 133 ex-bureaucrats, including diplomats, and 156 veterans said.

"Not only is the BBC series, judging from what we have seen of it so far, based on delusional and evidently lopsided reporting, but it presumes to question the very basis of the 75-year-old edifice of India's existence as an independent, democratic nation, a nation which functions according to the will of the people of India," it said.

Former Rajasthan High Court chief justice Anil Deo Singh, former home secretary L C Goyal, former foreign secretary Shashank, former RAW chief Sanjeev Tripathi



and former NIA director Yogesh Chander Modi are among the signatories to the letter.

"BBC's 'India: The Modi Question': Delusions of British Imperial Resurrection? Not this time. Not with our leader. Not with India. Never on our watch," they said.

Their statement added, "Regardless of whom you, as an individual Indian, might have voted for, the Prime Minister of India is the Prime Minister of your country, our

country. We cannot allow just about anyone to run amok with their deliberate bias, their vacuous reasoning...."

Their statement alleged that the BBC series reeks of motivated distortion that is "as mind-numbingly unsubstantiated as it is nefarious".

This is demonstrated, it said, vividly by its completely sidelining the core fact that the Supreme Court of India has unambiguously ruled out any role of Narendra Modi in the Gujarat riots of 2002, rejecting allegations of com-

placency and inaction by the then state government headed by him.

The SC had upheld the closure report filed by the Special Investigation Team, appointed by it, after years of investigation.

The statement noted that the court had dismissed allegations made against Modi and others on the basis of the ultra-sensational revelations made by then police officers, including B B Sreekumar and Sanjiv Bhatt, and by BJP leader Haren Pandya.

The court had said it was done to sensationalise and politicise the matters in issue, although replete with falsehood, it said. The BBC documentary has mentioned them. It is also full of "glaring factual errors" which seem motivated, the statement alleged.

The statement noted that the BBC has called The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) unfair to Muslims,

though it is in fact a law to help minorities facing religious persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and has nothing to do with Indian Muslims.

It added, "Similarly, Article 370 was a temporary provision of the Constitution of India, never meant to be permanent. Thus, its removal was in no manner a violation of constitutional norms."

It is time to let the BBC know that India does not need "colonial, imperialistic, somnambulist outsiders" whose primary claim to fame has been 'divide and rule' under the British Raj to teach Indians how to live together in unity, the statement said.

"Inclusion is inherent in India. Instead of making a documentary titled, 'India: The Modi Question', the BBC should begin by questioning their own bias against Prime Minister Modi and make a documentary called, 'BBC: The Ethical Question'.

G20 presidency: Bengaluru to host 1st environment meeting during Feb 9-11

NEW DELHI : The first G20 environment meeting under India's presidency will be held in Bengaluru from February 9 to February 11 with focus on restoration of degraded lands and ecosystems, biodiversity enhancement, strengthening of the circular economy, and promotion of blue economy along with coastal sustainability.



and two initiatives will meet to discuss priorities and give recommendations. Environment, Climate & Sustainability is one of the working groups under the Sherpa Track.

The Union Environment Ministry is scheduled to host four meetings of the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG).

The discussions will focus on 'promotion of blue economy along with coastal sustainability', 'restoration of degraded lands and ecosystems', 'enhancement of biodiversity' and 'strengthening of circular economy', a statement said.

At a meeting on Saturday, Leena Nandan, Secretary, Environment Ministry, and Vandita Sharma, Chief Secretary, Karnataka, discussed aspects pertaining to branding, security, venue management, cultural events, and other logistic arrangements. The G20 delegates are scheduled to visit the Kalkere Arboretum and Bannerghatta Biological Park in Bengaluru.

Govt trying best to equip nation to deal with challenges: Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI : Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the government is leaving no stone left unturned to equip the country to deal with challenges which may arise due to the "fast-evolving global security scenario".

During his address to a large number of cadets who are taking part in a Republic Day NCC Camp here, he described the country's fool-proof security infrastructure as one of the best examples of teamwork, and asserted that "if there is ever a need to fight a war, the whole country will be behind our armed forces".

It is the result of teamwork that India has defeated its enemies in the past and won many wars," Singh said.

He also asserted that while the armed forces are protecting the nation from all kinds of threats, scientists, engineers, civil officers and others are providing support by moving shoulder-to-shoulder with them.

"If there is ever a need to fight a war, the whole country will be behind our armed forces. It is the result of teamwork that India has defeated its enemies in the past and won many wars," he said.

During the address, Singh also called upon the youth to eliminate the concept of use and throw, pointing out that directly or indirectly, society and the environment suffer the most due to this practice, according to a statement issued by the Defence Ministry.

The Union minister also emphasised on the need to mould oneself according to the changing times.

"No stone is being left unturned by the government to equip the nation to deal with challenges that may arise due to the fast-evolving global security scenario," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

He, however, maintained that while changing with time is essential, staying connected with the country's glorious past is equally important. "The aim is to build a strong and prosperous India, rooted in its culture and traditions," Singh said.



He addressed the cadets during his visit to the NCC Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantonment, and also gave away Raksha Mantri Padak and Commendation Cards to many cadets for their exemplary performance and devotion to duty.

This year, the Raksha Mantri Padak was awarded to Under Officer Tinggechule Nriame of North Eastern Region Directorate and Cadet Avinash Jangir of Rajasthan Directorate," the statement said.

"The Raksha Mantri Commendation Cards were awarded to Captain Pratap Keshari Harichandan of Odisha Directorate, Cadet Under Officer Jenny Francina Victor Anand of Tamil Nadu, Pudukcherry and Andaman and Nicobar Directorate, Cadet Fiza Shafi of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate and Cadet Sehwaq Rana of Uttarakhand Directorate," it said.

In his address to around 2,000 cadets, who are participating in the Camp, the Defence minister also exhorted them to "identify new ways and strive to help the nation move forward on the path of development with faster pace". He, however, urged them to stay connected with the country's age-old values and traditions and work in the field of their choice with humility. Stressing that destruction of environment means destruction of life, he appealed to the youth and the nation at large to reuse goods as far as possible and work for the conservation of nature.

Singh also encouraged the youth to "not let the 'use and throw' concept enter their personal lives", and urged them to respect elders, family and friends. He said that

while knowledge and education are important, life values hold equal relevance.

The minister urged the cadets to focus on character building as much as they pay attention to gaining knowledge and earning wealth. He expressed confidence that the cadets, with their hard work, dedication and values, will touch heights of success and bring laurels to the country.

"The path of India's progress goes through the youth. The stronger our youth is, the stronger our country will be," he said.

Singh appreciated the NCC for transforming its cadets into a well-rounded personality by inculcating in them the qualities of a leader, soldier, artist and above all a good human being.

Unity, discipline, truthfulness, courage, harmony, leadership and teamwork taught at the NCC have always been the guiding light of our country. Some of the most important qualities, the NCC inculcates in its cadets, are determination to achieve a desired goal, team spirit and getting rid of the fear of failure, he said.

"This not only helps the young minds to create their own path, but also gives a new direction to society. There is a need to keep working on these qualities as it makes a person perfect and complete in the longer run," the Union minister said.

Elaborating on the benefits of team spirit, Singh stressed that India itself is a "shining example" as it is home to a number of languages, dialects, religions and ideas. He said despite this diversity, India remains united and moves forward to secure the interest of its people.

Cong releases charge sheet against Modi govt, calls BJP Bhraashtr Jumla Party



NEW DELHI : The Congress Saturday released a "charge sheet" against the Narendra Modi government, terming the BJP a 'Bhraashtr Jumla Party' and alleging that its mantra was 'kuch ka saath, khud ka vikas, sabke saath vishwasghat' (For the benefit of few, development for self and betrayal of everyone)".

The opposition party also said that Rahul Gandhi, who is leading the Bharat Jodo Yatra, will hoist the national flag at the Pradesh Congress Committee office in Srinagar's Lal Chowk area followed by a public meeting at the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium which will mark the culmination of the Kanyakumari to Kashmir march.

At a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jai Ram Ramesh and general secretary K C Venugopal also unveiled the logo of the party's follow-up programme to the yatra -- Haath Se Haath Jodo Abhiyan'.

The logo is similar to that of the Bharat Jodo Yatra but the only difference is that it has the Congress' hand symbol on it signifying that it would be a 100 per cent political campaign which cannot be said of the cross-country march, Ramesh said.

Venugopal said as part of the Congress' campaign starting January 26, the party would take the 'charge sheet' and Rahul Gandhi's letter with the message of the yatra to every household. The charge sheet

released by the two leaders dubbed the BJP 'Bhraashtr Jumla Party' and alleged that its mantra is 'Kuch ka saath, khud ka vikas, sabke saath vishwasghat' (For the benefit of few, development for self and betrayal of everyone)", an apparent swipe at the government's 'sabka-saath-sabka-vikas-sabka-vishwas-sabka-prayas' slogan.

The one-page 'charge sheet' shared by the Congress is divided into three sections -- 'kuch ka saath', 'khud ka vikas' and 'sabke saath vishwasghat'. Under the 'kuch ka saath' (for the benefit of few) segment of the 'charge sheet', the party alleged loan waivers for a few select businessmen, 10 per cent of the wealthy owning 64 per cent of India's wealth and ports and airports being "gifted" to the prime minister's "close friends".

In the 'khud ka vikas' (development for self) segment, the Congress accused the BJP of spending crores on propaganda and indulging in nepotism.

In the third segment, the party raised multiple issues such as unemployment, food security, women's security, the plight of farmers, hate speeches, the "toppling" of elected governments and India's ranking in international indices in various sectors.

Venugopal said that along with this 'charge sheet', respective state units of the party will prepare "charge sheets" against state governments as well.

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As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

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The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 21, 2023 Place : Kolkata Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited



## Pacers dominate as India thrash New Zealand in second ODI, clinch series

RAIPUR: India secured a comprehensive eight-wicket win against New Zealand in the second ODI on Saturday to clinch their seventh consecutive ODI series at home.

Rohit Sharma's fifty coupled with a fiery performance from the Indian bowlers made sure that the hosts cruised to victory, chasing a paltry 109 at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium, Raipur. The Indian captain played a 51-run knock while Shuman Gill remained unbeaten on 40 runs to take India over the line. Henry Shipley and Mitchell Santner took a wicket each.

Chasing the target, the hosts had a shaky start with the Indian captain getting beaten and surviving a close call in the very first over. However, Rohit pulled Henry Shipley for a boundary in the second over to get things going for.

The openers didn't face any discomfort after initial few overs as they started to middle the ball and caress boundaries with ease. Rohit stamped his authority with some powerful hits, smashing Lockie Ferguson for a six in the fifth over with his trademark hook shot.

It was one-way traffic as India piled up the misery on the visitors, with the Indian captain firing on all cylinders. He took the hosts to 52/0 at the end of the 10 overs, smacking a four and a sublime six in the over.



The right-hander brought up his fifty in the 13th over but was unfortunate to be dismissed on a ball that kept drastically low and was declared leg before wicket for 51. He stitched a 72-run stand for the opening wicket with Gill.

Gill carried on his purple patch and made 40\* as the hosts lost Virat Kohli for 11(9) in quick succession.

Ishan Kishan and Gill took

India past the Kiwi total in the 21st over. The right-hander finished things with style as he struck a superb boundary over mid-on to secure eight-wicket win.

After coming under a severe assault at the back end of the New Zealand chase in the first ODI, the Indian bowlers unleashed their fury to skittle out the visitors for 108 in the second ODI.

The Indian new ball

bowlers ran riot on a pitch that had decent grass cover, making use of the favourable bowling conditions on offer. Mohammad Shami was the wrecker-in-chief, scalping three wickets. Hardik Pandya and Washington Sundar picked two wickets each. Siraj, Kuldeep and Shardul took one wicket each.

Most New Zealand batsmen could not reach double digits.

Mohammad Shami was declared the player of the match for his clinical bowling performance in the first inning.

India have now 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

**Brief Score: India 111/2 (Rohit Sharma 51, Shubman Gill 40\*; Henry Shipley 1-29) vs New Zealand 108/10 (Glenn Phillips 36, Mitchell Santner 27; Mohammad Shami 3-18)**



### INJURED HARDIK SINGH RULED OUT OF HOCKEY WORLD CUP

**INJURED MIDFIELDER** Hardik Singh was ruled out of the remainder of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, dealing a big blow to India ahead of their crossovers match against New Zealand on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Hardik failed to recover from a hamstring injury sustained at the end of India's second pool match against England on January 15.

His absence will be a big setback for India as they have been struggling in the attacking department, and also considering the fact that they will face defending champions Belgium in the quarterfinals if they beat New Zealand on Sunday.

Hardik, who scored a brilliant solo goal in India's 2-0 win over Spain in the opening match, will be replaced by alternate player Raj Kumar Pal.

Hardik did not play against Wales. "Having rested the youngster for the match against Wales, and subsequent assessment, Hardik has now been ruled out of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela," Hockey India said in a statement.

Talking about the decision made by the team management, chief coach Graham Reid said: "Overnight we had to make the difficult decision of replacing Hardik Singh in the Indian team for Sunday's match vs New Zealand and the subsequent World Cup matches."

"While the injury was not as severe as the initial incident suggested, time was not on our side and after our ongoing thorough rehabilitation process and functional and on-field assessment today, it has been decided that we will replace Hardik with Raj Kumar Pal."



### JUVENTUS LOSE 15 SERIE A POINTS FOR ALLEGED ACCOUNTING, FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

**TURIN:** 15 Serie A points have been deducted from the tally of top Italian club Juventus for alleged financial irregularities and false accounting, while Tottenham Hotspurs' transfer chief Fabio Paratici has received a ban of 30-months from Italian football for his involvement. The two and half year ban for Paratici, who was also Juve's former sporting director and currently is Director of Football at Spurs, includes a request for an extension to cover activities of UEFA and FIFA, as per Sky Sports. This decision from the Italian National Football Federation (FIGC) means that the top club will plunge to 10th place from their third position standing in the Serie A table, outside the spots for European competition. Juve indicated on Friday night that it is waiting for the written reasons behind the sanctions, but will be launching an appeal as well. The court also ruled that the former Juventus chairman Andrea Agnelli will be banned from holding any office in Italian Football for 24 months. Former Vice President Pavel Nedved has been handed over a ban of eight months, while the former chief executive Maurizio Arrivabene has also been handed a ban. Juventus has said that its accounting was in line with the standards of the industry.

### AUSTRALIAN OPEN

## Rublev, Sabalenka advance to fourth round

**FIFTH-SEEDED** Andrey Rublev advanced to the fourth round of the Australian Open for the third time in four years with a 6-4 6-2 6-3 win over Dan Evans in Melbourne on Saturday.

Rublev hit 60 winners, including 10 aces.

Rublev, who will play ninth-seeded Holger Rune in the last 16, also thanked Evans for helping him by giving him a banana late in the first set.

Danish teenager Rune beat Ugo Humbert 6-4 6-2 7-6 (5) to move into the fourth round on just his second visit to Melbourne Park.

Rune had a nasty-looking fall on the second point of the second set when his right ankle slipped. He had his right wrist checked but seemed unaffected as he claimed a convincing victory.

Fifth-seeded Aryna Sabalenka extended her streak to seven matches as she beat Elise Mertens 6-2, 6-3 to reach the fourth round. The Belarusian player hit 32 winners to beat Mertens, with whom she won the doubles title in Melbourne in 2021.

Sabalenka will now play Belinda Bencic after the Swiss player reached the fourth round for the first time since 2016, beating Camila Giorgi 6-2 7-5 on Rod Laver Arena.

The 12th-seeded Bencic was broken when serving for the match at 5-4 but she broke serve in the following game and then served out to love for victory.

Bencic won the warm-up event in Adelaide before the Australian Open and has won eight matches in a row.

Former top-ranked Karolina Pliskova also reached the last 16



**FIFTH-SEEDED ARYNA SABALENKA EXTENDED HER STREAK TO SEVEN MATCHES AS SHE BEAT ELISE MERTENS 6-2, 6-3 TO REACH THE FOURTH ROUND. THE BELARUSIAN PLAYER HIT 32 WINNERS TO BEAT MERTENS, WITH WHOM SHE WON THE DOUBLES TITLE IN MELBOURNE IN 2021.**

with a 6-4 6-2 win over Varvara Gracheva. Pliskova, who last made the second week in Melbourne in 2019, did not face a break point.

Pliskova next plays Zhang Shuai, who ended the run of American qualifier Katie Volynets 6-3 6-2. Donna Vekic advanced to the fourth round for the second time in three years with a 6-2 6-2 win over Nuria Parrizas Diaz of Spain.



### AUSTRALIAN OPEN: KORDA SHOCKS SEVENTH-SEED MEDVEDEV, FELIX OVERCOMES CERUNDOLO

**MELBOURNE:** America's Sebastian Korda produced another shocker in the ongoing Australian Open as he defeated the seventh-seed Daniil Medvedev of Russia in the third round of the men's singles category at Melbourne on Friday.

The American downed the 2021 and 2022 Australian Open finalist 7-6(7), 6-3, 7-6(4) to advance to the round of 16. Korda struck the ball with confidence from the first point onwards and broke Medvedev in the first game. His composure was key in his win as he held his nerves in first and third-set tiebreaks to clinch a memorable win in two hours and 59 minutes.

"It was an unbelievable match," said Korda in his on-court interview as quoted by ATP. "I kind of knew what I had to do. I stuck with it even when I was going up and down with the emotions, but I am thrilled right now, I played amazing, and it was an unbelievable match from me," he added.

This win saw Korda rise to number 28 in ATP Live Rankings and could see a new career high after the tournament but Medvedev, a former world number one has dropped out of the top 10 to sink to number 12 in the live rankings.

Korda will face Hubert Hurkacz of Poland in the round of 16, who defeated Denis Shapovalov of Canada in his third-round match by 7-6(3), 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 6-3 in a three hour, 40-minute affair.



### WFI REJECTS WRESTLERS' ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PRESIDENT BRIJ

**NEW DELHI:** The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has rejected all the allegations, including that of sexual harassment against its president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, saying "there is no scope for arbitrariness and mismanagement" in the sports body.

"The WFI is managed by an elected body as per its constitution, and therefore, there is no scope for arbitrariness and mismanagement in WFI by any one individually, including the president," the WFI said in its response to the sports ministry.

"The WFI, in particular, under the sitting president has always acted keeping the best interests of wrestlers in mind."

"The WFI has enhanced the image of wrestling sport nationally as well as internationally and for the record of this ministry, it is not possible without fair, supportive, clean and strict management of WFI," it added.

The WFI sent its reply on Friday evening after being asked by the sports ministry to respond to the allegations within 72 hours.

The allegations were made by renowned wrestlers like Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya.

### T20 SPECIALIST DAN CHRISTIAN TO RETIRE FROM CRICKET AT THE END OF ONGOING BBL SEASON

**MELBOURNE:** Australian all-rounder Dan Christian announced his retirement from cricket at the ongoing Big Bash League (BBL) season on Saturday, and added that he is hoping that he is able to win a title with Sydney Sixers and end his run in T20 cricket on a high.

The 39-year-old all-rounder, who made his debut in the sport and in its T20 format in 2006 took to Twitter to share a statement on his retirement, bringing down curtains on a "great run" that saw him play T20 leagues worldwide and capture multiple titles.

"Yesterday at training I told my Sydney Sixers teammates that I will be retiring from playing at the end of the BBL season. Sydney Smash tonight, followed by our last-round game against the Hurricanes, and then the finals," said Christian in the statement.

"Hopefully, we can go all the way again this season, but regardless, it has been a great run. I have achieved things and made some memories that I could have only dreamt of as a kid."

## PETAR SLISKOVIC: MAN IN FORM FOR CHENNAIYN FC

**CHENNAI:** Chennaiyin FC striker Petar Sliskovic is a man in form. The Croatian forward has netted five goals in Chennaiyin FC's last six games, taking his tally to eight goals for the current Indian Super League (ISL) season.

The Marina Machans may have missed the presence of key players like Abdenasser El Khayati, Kwame Karikari, Anirudh Thapa and a few others throughout the season, but Sliskovic's contribution has been vital. Thomas Brdaric's side is currently placed eighth in the ISL standings but has scored the third-most goals in the league (24) after Mumbai City FC and Hyderabad FC. Sliskovic alone has had a hand in 11 of those

goals, with three assists to add to his eight goals. Sliskovic's side will face ATK Mohun Bagan on Saturday. Sliskovic has scored eight goals in his last nine matches and has failed to find the back of the net in just two of those games. That has helped him become Chennaiyin FC's top goalscorer this season. ISL expert Paul Masefield and commentator Mark Tompkins feel the CFC No. 9 has massively benefited from the service he has been receiving.

"Sliskovic is a fantastic striker. He plays with his back to the goal, bringing others into play. But then you got to look at the quality that's coming from the wide areas. Aakash Sangwan has been playing well in the left-

back role and delivering quality into the box. On the right-hand side, they have Vincy Barretto as well, who has looked lively and is very quick. That quality is what Sliskovic thrives on," said Masefield in as quoted by an ISL press release.

"He manages to get himself in and around where the ball is going to be. To be fair, the youngsters have been doing that this season. They are putting the ball where it needs to be. And when you have got someone with the height and physique of Sliskovic, it's very difficult to mark him," Masefield added.

Tompkins also has a similar view. "I think the reason he is scoring so well at the moment is that he is getting good service



from the players behind him, particularly Ajith Kumar and Aakash Sangwan. Sangwan is outstanding in the last game, getting forward and putting in crosses. With a player of Sliskovic's heading ability, he will always pose a problem for defenders."

"But with Vincy behind him as well, adding a little pace to the side, Sliskovic can feed off him. He reminds me of an old-fashioned centre-forward. A big number nine who is in the right place at the right time. His positioning is excellent," added Tompkins.

Sliskovic has been among the three Chennaiyin FC players besides Fallou Digne and Julius Duker to feature in all of

Chennaiyin FC's matches. A towering presence in front of goal, Sliskovic is just a goal shy of the league's current joint-top scorers in Cleiton Silva and Jorge Diaz, who have nine goals each.

The 31-year-old has also been a vital team player in creating chances. He has created 15 chances so far, and only full-back Aakash Sangwan has created more chances for Chennaiyin FC this season (17).

"Sliskovic without question is one of the in-form strikers at the moment. Five goals in six matches and eight goals in total. He has scored six goals with his head, which is the most we have seen in a single season of the ISL," says Tompkins.