

Imran Zaki honored with prestigious Xaverian award

MI News Service, Kolkata: Imran Zaki, former Honorary Secretary and Vice President of the St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association, was conferred with the Xaverian Award for Exemplary Services during the annual Alumni Reunion Dinner, Sangam 2024. This prestigious accolade celebrates his remarkable contributions to the college and its alumni community. The award ceremony, held at the St. Xavier's College Ground, saw the presence of notable dignitaries, including Father Dominic Savio, Principal of St. Xavier's College; Father JeyrajVeluswamy.... **PG 3**



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Semester system in primary schools faces strong opposition from Mamata Banerjee

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed her strong disapproval over the proposed introduction of a semester system in primary schools, claiming that she was unaware of the policy until she read about it in the media. The Chief Minister publicly reprimanded Education Minister Bratya Basu for implementing a major change in the education system without consulting her.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addressing an administrative meeting at Nabanna on Thursday.

Presiding over an Administrative meeting in the state Secretariat Nabanna on Thursday, Mamata Banerjee instructed Basu to halt the proposed semester system, making it clear that no such policy could proceed without her approval.

Recently, Gautam Pal, President of the Primary Education Board, announced in a press conference that primary schools in the state would adopt a semester system for classes I to V. According to this

plan, students would take exams twice a year, and a credit system would also be introduced. However, this announcement triggered Mamata

Banerjee's sharp reaction, as she accused the education department of bypassing her authority. During the meeting, Mamata Banerjee questioned

Bratya Basu, saying, "I saw in the newspapers that a semester system is being introduced at the primary level. I was not informed about this. Even the

Chief Secretary was unaware. Why wasn't I consulted before this policy was prepared?"

In response, Bratya Basu clarified that no official directive would be issued without Mamata Banerjee's approval and said that the announcement was only preliminary and subject to her final decision. Nevertheless, the Chief Minister expressed her dissatisfaction, adding, "Why was this information released to the media before informing me? Any policy decision must first be communicated to me."

Mamata Banerjee emphasized her opposition to the semester system, stating, "It will not happen. My priority is to reduce the burden on children. I want lighter schoolbags, not a heavier academic load. How can such young children, who are still learning basic rhymes like 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star,' cope with a semester system? A Class one student cannot be expected to handle the same system as a college stu-

dent. Things should continue as they are."

She also directed Bratya Basu to ensure that any future changes in educational policies must be discussed with her before being shared with the media. "When it comes to education policies, inform us before you inform the media. Leaking such news is unacceptable," she added firmly.

This incident underscores the Chief Minister's focus on maintaining direct control over major policy decisions in the state. The controversy has sparked discussions among educators and parents, many of whom are divided in their opinion over the feasibility and implications of introducing a semester system in primary schools.

While the Education Department is yet to make an official statement following Mamata Banerjee's directives, it appears that the proposed semester system will remain on hold for now.

PM Modi to inaugurate 'Housing For All' and other urban development projects in Delhi

MI News Service, New Delhi : As part of his own initiative under the "Housing For All" project to provide permanent residence to the dwellers of Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) clusters in Delhi with a better and healthier living environment and equipped with proper amenities and facilities, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hand over keys to the owners of a total of 1,675 flats in one of the JJ clusters in the city on Friday.

This will be a part of a slew of development measures under the union government's urban redevelopment projects in the city, said the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a statement on Thursday.

According to the statement, Prime minister Modi will visit the newly-constructed flats for the dwellers of Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) clusters as part of slum rehabilitation project at Swabhiman Apartments in Delhi's Ashok Vihar and hand over keys to the eligible beneficiaries.

He will inaugurate 1,675 newly constructed flats, the PMO said, adding the development is in line with the prime minister's "housing for all" initiative.

The objective of the project is to provide the residents of JJ clusters in Delhi with a better and healthier living environment equipped with proper amenities and facilities.

For every Rs 25 lakh spent on construction of a flat by the Central government, the eligible beneficiaries pay less than seven per cent of the total amount, comprising Rs 1.42 lakh as a nominal contribution and Rs 30,000 for five years of maintenance, it said.

This massive urban development programme from the BJP-led government at the Centre comes ahead of the assembly polls in Delhi expected to be held in February. The BJP has been locked in a bitter political rivalry with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), in power in the city since 2013, and is making all out efforts to end its reign. On Friday, Modi will also inaugurate two urban redevelopment projects -- the World Trade Centre (WTC) at Nauroji Nagar and the General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) type-II quarters at Sarojini Nagar. The World Trade Centre, the statement said, has transformed the area by replacing over 600 dilapidated quarters with state-of-the-art commercial towers, offering around 34 lakh square feet of premium commercial space with advanced amenities. The project incorporates green building practices with provisions such as a zero-discharge concept, solar energy generation and rainwater harvesting systems. The GPRA type-II quarters include 28 towers that house over 2,500 residential units, offering modern amenities and efficient use of space. The project's design incorporates rainwater harvesting systems, sewage and water treatment plants, and solar-powered waste compactors encouraging eco-conscious living, it said.

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Chinmoy Krishna Das again denied bail by Bangladesh court

MI News Service, Dhaka: In a major set back and contrary to all expectations and prayers from many people, a court in Chattogram in Bangladesh denied bail to Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, a former ISKCON monk, after a brief hearing held under tight security on Thursday.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions judge Md Saiful Islam rejected the bail plea after hearing arguments from both sides for around 30 minutes in this high profile case, said Bangladesh media quoting Metropolitan Public Prosecutor advocate Mofizur Haque Bhuiyan.

Earlier, a team of 11 Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyers arrived at the court around 10:15am (local time) to represent Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari in the high-profile case. Despite their efforts, the court's decision went against their plea, media report said.

Before the court proceedings began Senior Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhat-tacharjee said, "We have come to Chattogram under the banner of Aijnjibi Oikya Parishad, and we will move for Chinmoy Das in the court for his bail. I already got the Vakalatnama from Chinmoy Das. I am a member of both the (Bangladesh) Supreme Court and Chattogram Bar Associations, so I don't need authorisation from any local lawyer to move the case." On December 3, 2024, the Chittagong court had fixed January 2 for a bail hearing as the prosecution submitted a time petition, and there was no lawyer to represent Chinmoy Das. The unrest in Bangladesh stems from the sedition charges filed against Chinmoy Krishna Das for

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Mamata Banerjee accuses BSF of allowing illegal infiltration, including militants from Bangladesh

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday alleged that the Border Security Force (BSF) was facilitating militants and infiltrators from Bangladesh to enter the state, causing socio-political disruptions in the region.

She accused the central forces of allowing infiltration from Bangladesh with the aim of destabilizing the state and referred to it as the Centre's "nefarious blueprint."

The Chief minister claimed that the BSF, which is responsible for guarding the international borders with Bangladesh, was not only allowing infiltration but also torturing women. "The BSF is allowing infiltration from different areas into Bengal and torturing women. The TMC is not guarding the borders. The border is not in our hands, so if someone accuses the TMC of permitting infiltration, I will point out that it is in fact the BSF's responsibility," Mamata said.

She further clarified that the police and the Centre had prior information about the situation (of infiltration). "The police have all the information, and the Centre has it too. I have received information from (DGP) Rajiv Kumar and local sources. I will write a strong letter to the

Centre regarding this," Banerjee added.

Banerjee emphasized her desire for peace between Bengal and neighbouring Bangladesh, stating, "We have no enmity, but goons are being allowed here. They commit crimes here and return by crossing the border once again. BSF is enabling this, and the Centre has a role in it." During the State Administrative Review Meeting at the Nabanna Sabhaghar in Kolkata, Banerjee mentioned that if the BSF continued to facilitate such activities, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) would organize protests against them.

The Chief Minister remarked that the BSF was allowing people to cross into India from areas like Islampur, Sitai, and Chopra. She attributed the situation to a "blueprint" from the central government, stressing that this could not have happened without their involvement. "Border is guarded by BSF but not TMC. They (BSF) are allowing goons. They are allowing people who commit murders and flee through these borders. It is an inside job of the BSF, and it is a blueprint of the Central Government. If there was not any blueprint from the Central Government, then it would not be possible," Banerjee said.

Banerjee also denied that TMC was involved in the alleged infiltration, asserting that the party was not responsible for the actions of individuals crossing the border. She placed the blame squarely on the BSF, which she said was in charge of securing the border areas. Banerjee further accused the BSF of committing atrocities against women.

"The border is in the hands of BSF... If anyone feels that they will allow infiltrators to come into Bengal and put the blame on TMC, then he is wrong. It is not the TMC but BSF is responsible for the infiltration," she said.

Banerjee also mentioned that the central government had been informed of her concerns multiple times. She made it clear that while the TMC would follow the government's decisions, they would oppose any actions that allowed militants to disrupt peace and stability in the state. "We will protest against them if they facilitate militants to disrupt the state... We will send a protest letter to the Centre also for this," she concluded.

These allegations by the Bengal CM come amid reports of Bangladeshi infiltrators entering the state and are causing disturbances in the region's peace and harmony.

Centre should clear West Bengal's entire dues in 2025, says TMC leader Derek O'Brien

MI News Service, New Delhi : Reiterating that Union Government should give top priority in controlling the inflation to reduce prices of daily commodities, TMC leader Derek O'Brien has emphasized the need for clearing the entire dues of West Bengal under MGNREGS and other central schemes and control the unabated violence in Manipur during 2025.

Outlining his suggestions and demand from the Centre during this (New) year, the TMC leaders in a post published on his blog on Thursday listed 25 things that the Centre needs to do in 2025.

Controlling inflation should be the first step, he said, adding that ensuring an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), attracting foreign investment, making the rupee stronger, providing "food for all" and ensuring equal wages are among the economic measures that the Union government should take.

Stressing that the Centre should "favour the common man", O'Brien said in the last four years, a total amount of Rs 5.65 lakh crore has been written off for the industrial sector, while agriculture, the largest employment-generating sector in the country, received the least attention in terms of loan



write-offs among all sectors from the Scheduled Commercial Banks.

The TMC Rajya Sabha leader further stated that the Centre should ensure dignity of life for farmers, adding that according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 30 farmers commit suicide every day and since February 2024, 22 farmers have lost their lives and more than 160 have been injured while agitating for a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

Demanding that Centre must clear the entire dues of West Bengal by this year, O'Brien said the Union government owes Rs 1,500 crore to the state under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yo-

jana. "The non-payment of dues has directly affected the livelihood of 5.9 million MGNREGS workers," he said.

On Manipur, he said violence has continued for nearly two years now, causing the displacement of 67,000 people, of which 14,000 are school going students. "It is very unfortunate that the prime minister is yet to visit the state," O'Brien said.

Talking about Parliament proceedings, he said since 2019, more than 100 bills have been passed in less than two hours and in the 17th Lok Sabha, nine of the 10 bills introduced were marked by zero or incomplete consultations. He also stressed that a deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha should be selected soon. The TMC

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'Dual centres of power are not to anyone's advantage': feels CM Omar Abdullah

MI News Service, Srinagar: Strongly opposing the hybrid model of governance in the Union territory, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Thursday that it is not to anyone's advantage and the systems work better when there is single centre of command.

"Obviously, dual centres of power are not to anyone's advantage. If dual centres were effective tools of governance, you

would see it everywhere," Abdullah told reporters at a media interaction here when asked about the hybrid model of governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

The chief minister said while there have been "differences of opinion on some issues", there was no confrontation with the Raj Bhavan.

He said "Systems work better when there is single centre of command. For the UT, the dual centres of command are inbuilt.

There have been differences of opinion on some issues, but not on the scale at which it is being speculated. Such reports are just a figment of imagination," he added.

Abdullah said the business rules for the government would be framed after proper consultations and then sent to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The chief minister said he was not the one to tell people not to go to the Raj Bhavan. "Rather

I would say people should go wherever they can get their issues resolved, be it in the Raj Bhavan or with the local MLA or the officers," he remarked.

Asked about his party MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi's protest over the issue of reservation, Abdullah said the National Conference (NC) is a democracy and anyone has the right to speak. "NC was often accused of being a family party. But we have always said that we are a democ-

racy and everyone has a right to speak. Look at the positive side, how much change has come. From a time when protesting was considered illegal, people protested and reached my door. We had a meeting afterwards," he said, referring to the anti-reservation protest near his residence in Gupkar which was joined by Mehdi. "As far as reservation is concerned,

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New Year Day celebrated in West Bengal with fervour

MI News Service, Kolkata: Celebrations to usher in a restrictions-free New Year's Day seemed to know no bounds in West Bengal as people from all walks of life and of all ages sought to make the most of the day — from going to picnics to crowding cinema halls and restaurants besides thronging popular tourist spots and religious places across the state.

Apart from attending various cultural events and eating out are also parts of the festival for large number of people. Most of the well known



restaurants in Kolkata and the nearby towns saw long queues outside, while many swarmed Alipore Zoo, Victoria Memorial Hall, Eco Park and Nicco Park with home-cooked food for a picnic of sorts on Wednesday since early morning. Those who chose to enjoy a leisurely holiday stayed at home with a sumptuous spread for lunch, while at many places, local clubs and cultural organisations arranged for a feast.

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Abhishek Banerjee inaugurates 'Sebaashray' health camp in Diamond Harbour

MI News Service, Diamond Harbour: To fight against COVID-19, multiple services were launched in Diamond Harbour during the pandemic, including home visits for COVID testing, distribution of medicines, and food delivery by TMC workers. Now, Abhishek Banerjee has inaugurated a health camp in his constituency, named "Sebaashray," which will run for 75 days. The camp will operate in seven Assembly constituencies of Diamond Harbour and will be attended by 1,200 doctors.

Along with providing medical services, the camp will also conduct tests and distribute medicines. After inaugurating the camp, Abhishek Banerjee visited the facility and explained that the initiative is a continuation of efforts started in November. In a conference held in Amtala, more than 1,200 doctors from various districts of the state attended, and now the Sebaashray initiative has been launched in Diamond Harbour. Abhishek emphasized that it is the responsibility of elected representatives to ensure the well-being of the people. He recalled that last year, he had announced the dis-



TMC's National General Secretary, Abhishek Banerjee interacts with a physically disabled man during the Sebaashray health camp in Diamond Harbour SDO ground on Thursday.

tribution of old-age pensions, benefiting around 70,000 people. This year, with no elections, Sebaashray was launched. He also mentioned that during COVID, no elections had been held, yet they managed to conduct 50,000 COVID tests in a day, and Diamond Harbour achieved 100% vaccination. Regarding Sebaashray, Abhishek

stated that 300 camps will be set up across the seven constituencies, 71 Gram Panchayats, and 93 wards of Diamond Harbour. In the Diamond Harbour constituency alone, 40 camps will be held, including one model camp and 39 general camps. Each general camp will feature registration desks, help desks, and two doctor chambers, along

with waiting areas and a pharmacy for free medicines.

From 2nd to 11th January, 41 camps are planned. In other areas, 41 camps will be held in Faltah, 47 in Bishnupur, 36 in Metiabruz, 35 in Satgachia, and 45 in Maheshtala.

The general camps will provide free healthcare services, medicines, unique IDs for each participant, and an awareness booklet outlining dos and don'ts for various diseases. Each camp will conduct tests for blood pressure, sugar levels, BMI, hemoglobin, dengue, malaria, and serology. The camps will be equipped with oxygen meters, oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters, and digital thermometers. A referral system will send patients to 12 hospitals, including Diamond Harbour Medical College, PG Hospital, Bangur Hospital, Vidyasagar Hospital, Garden Reach Hospital, Calcutta Medical College, Chittaranjan Hospital, RG Kar, Jagannath Gupta Hospital, and Neuro Science Hospital. A mega camp will be held from 16th February to 20th March, which will see follow-up camps across the area.

Kolkata hosts B Praak

MI News Service, Kolkata: Eminent singer B Praak recently rocked the stage of Kolkata with his mesmerising performance. The programme was organised by Bivita Events & Co. The fusion of music and visuals brought to life the spirit of Kolkata, making the night a multi-sensory celebration of the city's cultural heritage. The grand festival, celebrating the city's cultural richness, featured an unforgettable fusion of music, breathtaking visuals, and immersive soundscapes that elevated the concert experience to an entirely new level. Kolkata Odyssey was not just a performance, but a tribute to Kolkata's vibrant spirit, bringing together the city's love for music and art in a spectacular show of lights and sound.

Pointers prove a point

MI News Service, Kolkata: This was not just an ordinary get together of old folks. It was in a way a rejuvenation of spirit, identifying the ethical and moral values that have been achieved throughout the years of true education. The Pointers Batch of 1998 from South Point High School reunited in a grand celebration recently in Kolkata. The celebrations began with a visit to 'Save the Orphans' in Rania near Ranikuthi, where batch members donated essential stationery, clothes, toys, and school supplies to over 30 children aged 4 to 12 years. Former South Point teachers were also honored for their invaluable contribution in the said event.

Alipurduar Univ set to appoint permanent V-C

MI News Service, Alipurduar: The Alipurduar University is set to appoint its first permanent vice-chancellor (V-C), marking a significant milestone after a prolonged wait. Sharit Kumar Chowdhury, current vice-chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University in Arunachal Pradesh, has been selected for the position, according to a government notification. While the official joining date has not been announced, the development has sparked optimism among university authorities. Kumar Basnet, Assistant Registrar of Alipurduar University, expressed hope, stating: "A notification has been issued for the appointment of the permanent vice-chancellor. Sharit Kumar Chowdhury will soon assume the post."

World Meet Indonesia 2025: Registration Closes on January 5

MI News Service, Jakarta/Kolkata: The 6th World Meet 2025 is set to take place on January 28 in Jakarta, Indonesia, bringing together high-level dignitaries and members of royal families from over 50 countries. The event is being organized under the leadership of the World Meet Committee Chairperson, Princess Mufida Rayya Mubarak. Founder and Director of World Meet, Dr. M.A. Ali, announced that numerous kings and queens are expected to grace the occasion. Additionally, an



invitation has been extended to the President of Indonesia to attend this prestigious gathering. The event will also

feature Hollywood actor and singer Tony Taylor, who serves as the Vice President of World Meet, arriving from New York,

USA. Sahid Mahmood Raja, Director of A1 Global TV (UK), will join from Manchester, while Pervaiz Vicky who is the vice president of the World Meet, along with other karate and martial arts delegations, will also attend. Dr. M.A. Ali emphasized that the mission of the World Meet is to promote global peace and harmony, uniting the world under a shared vision of cooperation and understanding. Registrations for this grand event will close on January 5, 2025.

India & UN should react against Hindu Holocaust in Bangladesh: Sanatani Sansad

MI News Service, Kolkata: Sanatani Sansad organised a press Conference on behalf of Global Bengali Hindu Coalition with Sitangshu Guha, Puspita Gupta, Sushanata Das Gupta, Chitra Pual, Arun K Dutta, Arun Barua, Suhas Barua and other at Kolkata Press Club on Thursday.

According to Sanatani Sansad, Hindus in Bangladesh are now facing extinction. They also criticized arrest of Chinmay Krishna Das Prabhu in a fake sedition case and for not issuing bail to him on just ground. They further alleged that there are clear evidences that thousands of Hindus

were forced to resign from their jobs. Hindu homes, shops, business establishments are being looted and set to fire every other day. Temples are also regular targets of the Jihadis who clearly envisage a 'Hindu free Bangladesh'.

To them, raping and molestation of Hindu and non-Muslim women are rampant in Bangladesh. They also mentioned about the recent atrocities of the police and military at Chittagong against the Buddhists and Hindus.

To Sansad, while the Muslim population in West Bengal grew in leaps

and bounds, Hindu population decreased in much greater pace and now it is facing extinction via mass genocide by different governments in power in Bangladesh. They also mentioned the menace of forced conversions in Bangladesh under direct patronage of present interim government of Bangladesh.

Sanatani Sansad urged that Government of India and United Nations should take commensurate measures to save the Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh from the ravage genocide in the hands of Islamists in Islamic Bangladesh.

Police launches 'green patrolling' for women's safety

MI News Service, Siliguri: Taking another step towards ensuring women's safety, the Siliguri Metropolitan Police has launched a unique initiative called 'Green Patrolling,' where women police officers will patrol the city on bicycles. This innovative measure aims to enhance security in areas that are often inaccessible to larger vehicles.

Under the Siliguri Police Commissionerate, each police station has been equipped with five bicycles for the initiative. Teams comprising five women police personnel, including members of the 'winners team,' will patrol different parts of the city.

These officers will particularly focus on crowded areas, shopping malls, hotel vicinities and narrow

lanes where conventional patrol vehicles cannot reach. "This initiative has been taken to strengthen the bond between the public and police while ensuring the safety of women. Bicycles can easily navigate narrow lanes, which will be beneficial for preventing and responding to crimes," said Biswa Chand Thakur, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP),

West Zone. The 'Green Patrolling' is the latest addition to Siliguri's ongoing efforts to ensure women's safety. Previously, the city introduced the 'Winners Team,' which patrolled on scooters and the 'Pink Mobile Patrolling Van' initiative. The 'Green Patrolling' initiative is expected to bring a positive change in public safety and will continue daily.

WB Tea Directorate gets restructured for increased efficiency

MI News Service, Jalpaiguri: The West Bengal Tea Directorate is being restructured to take direct control of development work for tea garden workers in North Bengal. Previously under the North Bengal Development Department (NBDD), the Directorate has been shifted to the Labour department and relocated to its own office in Dagapur, Siliguri, with plans to establish an engineering cell along with ensuring greater autonomy. Development projects like crèches and primary health centres were previously proposed by the Directorate but constructed by the NBDD. This arrangement limited the Directorate's

ability to maintain and operate the projects due to inadequate staffing and the absence of an engineering unit. As a result, several completed health centres remain non-operational. In December, a meeting at the Directorate's Dagapur office, chaired by Labour Minister Moloy Ghatak, decided to make the Directorate autonomous. A Deputy Director has been appointed and a small team of employees has joined to initiate the transition. Deputy Director Sanju Simik stated: "I have just joined the new office in Dagapur. The process of transferring resources from the NBDD has started and a proposal for an engineering

cell is underway." The Labour department has confirmed that the engineering cell will include executive, assistant and junior engineers, along with essential equipment, enabling the Directorate to independently manage construction and maintenance. Nakul Sonar, Chairman of the Trinamool Cha Bagun Sramik Union (TCBSU) Central Committee, expressed optimism about the restructuring. "The primary health centres built in tea gardens need to be operationalised soon. I hope the Directorate will collaborate with the Health department to address this promptly. Autonomy will allow the Directorate to

manage construction and implementation seamlessly," he stated. The restructuring is expected to strengthen developmental efforts for tea garden workers across the Terai, Doars and hill regions. The state government has prioritised enhancing the Directorate's infrastructure to streamline operations. Mahua Gope, a member of the Tea Directorate, emphasised the importance of these changes. "The state government is focused on improving the lives of tea garden workers. By building its own infrastructure, the Directorate will ensure efficient management and implementation of various projects," she remarked.

STF arrests fake passports kingpin from Nadia

MI News Service, Kalyani: STF has arrested one Dhiren Ghosh from Madanpur Jamadarpara para under Chakdaha police station in Nadia on Wednesday afternoon allegedly for having link with the racket of fake passport developer, police sources said. Even he has the link to Europe. He spent 20 years in Italy.

He was a cook in a hotel in Italy, does he have such big connections in Europe? Amidst the unrest in Bangladesh, the authorities were shocked to learn about Dhiren's identity. A one-story house in Kalyani Madanpur. That house has the impression of a completely lower-middle-class lifestyle. That is Dhiren's house. He lived with his wife and children. But after Dhiren's arrest, the collapsible gate of the house is locked from outside.

Dhiren Ghosh has been arrested from Chakdaha, Nadia in the fake passport ring. More sensational information has come to light during his interrogation. The investigation found connections to Europe. The police have learned that Dhiren's role in sending someone abroad after returning to Italy was quite important.

North 24 Parganas, after Kolkata, Nadia. The police have spread a net in the investigation of the fake passport ring. More mysteries have been revealed in the network of the fake passport ring. One after another, sensational information is com-



ing out during the interrogation of Dhiren Ghosh, who was arrested by the STF from a remote area of Chakdaha. The Italian connection has been found with the fake passport ring in Bengal.

A one-story house in Kalyani Madanpur. That house has the impression of a very lower middle class lifestyle. That is Dhiren's house. He lived with his wife and children. But after Dhiren's arrest, the collapsible gate of the house is locked from outside. Dhiren had spread a network of fake passports throughout the state from this house. He is known in the neighborhood as a very polite, calm boy. They are also shocked since Dhiren's revelation.

A resident of the house next door said, "I never thought of this when I saw Dhiren. I couldn't even understand. Today, I saw him and it hit me. How does this guy do this!"

The 'aunt' of the house next door said, "I knew he worked in hotel management in Italy. He cooked in hotels abroad. Then I

heard he also sold clothes. People from Bangladesh used to come to their house. Mothers used to come, relatives used to come."

In the midst of the unrest in Bangladesh, the fake passport ring was discovered in Bengal. While trying to find its roots, a person named Ripon Biswas was arrested from Barasat. That was the first. After that, Samaresh Biswas, Deepak Mandal and many others were caught in the net one by one. The latest addition is Dhiren.

How did Dhiren work? According to police sources, Dhiren was in Italy for ten years from 2007 to 2017. After returning to the state, Dhiren joined the fake passport ring. He would help Bangladeshi citizens come to this side, then deliver the fake passports to Samaresh and Deepak. However, even though Manoj-Samaresh were the main leaders, it was always difficult to send them to Europe. Ghosh would do that.

Road accident in Bansberia kills 1, 2 injured



MI News Service, Hooghly: New Year 2025 brought a worst morning. On January 1, a Bolero pick-up van came like a black storm near the Bansberia Shibpur bus stand and ran away after crushing three people standing there. According to the information received from the sources, this accident took place between 6 and 6:30 in the morning. Qadir Khan, Sohan Rajbhar and Duma were injured in this accident. The locals rushed the three to Chinsurah Sadar Hospital where Sohan Rajbhar and Duma were discharged after initial treatment, but Qadir Khan had deep injuries on his head and the doctors imme-

diately shifted him to Kolkata PG Hospital. But even there, the doctors, seeing the condition of his injuries, transferred him to the Neuroscience Hospital. But he died this morning. As soon as he got the news of his death, the entire Bansberia area was suddenly filled with grief and commotion. Qadir Khan was also employed in a jute mill and for many years used to collect garbage from the area under the DRW scheme in Bansberia Municipality in Ward No. 20. Every morning such workers and supervisors would gather at the Shibpur turn and from there the work would be distributed. On January 1, like every day,

Qadir Khan and his supervisor Sohan Rajbhar of Ward No. 20 and a laborer whose name is said to be Doma were standing when a Bolero pickup van came from behind and crushed like a wind. ran away MLA Tapan Dasgupta reached Chinsurah Sadar Hospital on hearing the news of this accident and expressed his grief. This morning, after hearing the news of Qadir Khan's death, people are feeling sad and angry. People are questioning that there are so many cameras installed on the streets and intersections, then why the car that crushed them and the driver have not been arrested? In this case, the officer-in-charge of Mogra police station Dipankar Sarkar said that the vehicle is being seen in the CCTV camera but the number plate is not visible, due to which it is difficult to identify the vehicle, but the police is engaged in the action on its own. The vehicle and the driver will be in possession of the police very soon. Sujit Roy in charge of Bansberia Mill Phari, also said the same thing.

State govt provides job to mother of Rajbanshi girl killed in 2023

MI News Service, Raiganj: Over 18 months after the alleged rape and murder of a minor Rajbanshi girl in Gangua, under Kaliyaganj Police Station of North Dinajpur, the bereaved family has received support from the state government. Sabitri Sarkar Barman, the mother of the victim, has been appointed as an attendant in the office of Kaliyaganj Block Land & Land Reforms department. Surendra Kumar Meena, District Magistrate of North Dinajpur, handed over the appointment letter to Sabitri at the Kaliyaganj BDO office. This job comes as a significant relief to the family, which had been struggling financially since the tragedy.

The initiative was spearheaded by Krishna Kalyani, MLA of Raiganj, who brought the family's plight to the attention of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Speaking to the media, Kalyani said: "After



tempted to recover the body. The agitation turned violent, culminating in the torching of Kaliyaganj Police Station. In response, the state government provided Rs 8.25 lakh as compensation to the family. The family had also petitioned the Calcutta High Court for a CBI investigation into the case. Expressing her gratitude, Sabitri said: "We had no source of income. When I approached Krishna Kalyani for help, he ensured that my family received permanent support."

Chinmoy Krishna Das...

From PG 1
allegedly raising a saffron flag above Bangladesh's national flag in Chittagong on October 25. His arrest on November 25 sparked protests, culminating in violent clashes between his followers and law enforcement outside the Chattogram Court Building on November 27, which resulted in the death of a lawyer.

The situation worsened following additional arrests. According to ISKCON Kolkata Vice-President Radha Ramon Das, two monks, Adipurush Shyam Das and Ranganath Das Brahmachari, were detained on November 29 after visiting Chinmoy Krishna Das in custody. Das also alleged that rioters vandalised an ISKCON centre and several Hindu temples and set them on fire in Bangladesh during the unrest.

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had also voiced "serious con-

cern" over escalating violence and extremist rhetoric in Bangladesh, emphasising that it has consistently raised the issue of targeted attacks on minorities with Dhaka. The issue was raised even during the high level meeting during the recent visit of Indian Foreign Secretary to Dhaka. However, even after that the attacks on the minorities continue unabated.

In December 2024, Veena Sikri, former High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh also wrote an open letter seeking immediate release of Chinmoy Krishna Das from jail.

Meanwhile, in spite of the present situation, in an effort to improve the present strained bilateral relations, India has exported about 27,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh as part of its earlier commitment to send as much as 200,000 tonnes of rice to the neighbouring country.

Centre should clear West...

From PG 1
Leader pointed out that the number of opposition MPs suspended in last five years has increased 13-fold and 95 per cent of the cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the last 10 years were against those from the opposition.

O'Brien also stressed that minorities should be safeguarded. "The NCRB recorded 378 instances of communal violence in 2021 and 272 such instances in 2022. In 2023, India witnessed 668 documented hate speech incidents against one community alone. One hundred and twenty-eight properties were demolished between April and

June 2022, following communal violence and protests," he said.

Talking about women's safety, he pointed out that section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita deals with the offence of rape but provides an exception for marital rape. He also said the government should ensure equitable representation for women in the legislature.

Among other suggestions, the TMC leader said the Centre should focus on creating safe infrastructure and pointed out that 244 train accidents took place between 2017 and 2022. He also urged the Union government to act against incidents of cyber fraud.



Sanatani Sansad organised a press Conference on behalf of Global Bengali Hindu Coalition with Sitangshu Guha, Puspita Gupta, Sushanata Das Gupta, Chitra Pual, Arun k Dutta, Arun Barua, Suhans Barua and other at Kolkata Press Club

'Dual centres of power are...

From PG 1
I told the delegates that the cabinet sub-committee has been framed," the chief minister said.

The party expected that Mehdi, the Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar, would hold a similar protest for the restoration of statehood in Parliament as well, he added.

Abdullah, however, said "while we can fight the reserved and open category fight, but first we have to save our jobs. What will we do when people from other places come here for jobs?" he asked.

Responding to a question on the row over land

acquisition for a campus of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, the chief minister said there is a need to find a balance between development and protecting our productive agriculture land.

"We cannot increase our land, development cannot stop. We will try to ensure that development projects are on non-productive lands as much as possible. I met a delegation from Pulwama and I said to them that if you don't want NIT in Pulwama, we will take it to some other location,"

New Year Day celebrated in...

From PG 1
Celebrations to mark the first day of 2025 seemed to be boundless with almost no restrictions in the family zambora.

Thousands of people gathered at the Kashipur Udyanbati in north Kolkata for the annual 'Kalpataru Utsav'. It is believed that on this day in 1886, Ramakrishna Paramahansa was blessed with the inner vision ('Chaitanya') at this house. It is also believed that he had become 'Kalpataru', the mythical wish-fulfilling tree, on the same day. A large number of people also visited the famous Kali temples at Kalighat and in Dakshineswar on the banks of the river Hooghly.

Similar scenes of fun and frolic were also witnessed in districts with thousands of visitors flocking the popular tourist spots like the sea beach of Digha and Mandarmoni

and the well known hill resorts of Darjeeling and Kalingpong. According to the latest official data, almost all the hotels and home stays in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and other places in the hills are fully booked for the entire week beginning on the New Year's eve. Though the cost of having fun and visiting places has increased manifold in the past few years, that failed to discourage people from crowding all the popular and even known tourist places this year and spending their hard earned money with their friends and families.

The trends of organising picnics in open spaces with families, friends and neighbours are on the wane these days, because the people are now preferring to visit the nearby resorts with all amenities of fun filled games.

Mamata Banerjee takes a firm stand on land encroachment and rising vegetable prices

MI News Service, Kolkata: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has issued a stern warning regarding land encroachment and rising vegetable prices during the first administrative meeting of the year at Nabanna on Thursday.

On land encroachment, Mamata made it clear that the state would not tolerate any illegal occupation of government land. She emphasized that the authorities could seize properties, similar to actions taken by the ED or CBI, if necessary. She also made it clear that any officer found involved in such activities would face severe consequences, including the impact on their pensions. "If a former officer is found involved, their pension will also be affected," she stated, adding that no one would be spared. The Chief Minister directed the formation of a committee consisting of IAS, IPS, and WBPCS officers to track down the encroachers, with Home Secretary Nandini Chakraborty overseeing the efforts. Mamata also ordered that district officials, including SPs and ICs, would be held accountable for encroachments in their areas, and no leniency would be shown, even if ministers, councillors, or

panchayat members were involved.

Mamata further pointed out that many individuals had illegally occupied land, constructed buildings, and sold flats. She made it clear that those responsible would be tracked down and penalized. "Even those who have granted building permissions will face action," she said. Additionally, she announced that state police, not district authorities, would handle the matter and ensure that the illegal activities were addressed swiftly.

Regarding those living or running businesses on government land without legal documents, Mamata said they would be penalized. A new policy would be implemented by June, aimed at helping individuals obtain legal papers for their properties. "The documents they have are illegal. This measure will help them obtain legitimate documents," she explained.

On the 'Bangla Bari' (Bengal Housing) scheme, Mamata instructed officials to take action if any errors were found in the survey. She also directed Rajeev Kumar to develop an app for each department to increase transparency and accountability.



"With an app, I will be able to track who is involved in any wrongdoing," she said, highlighting the importance of digitization for better monitoring. The Chief Minister also agreed with a suggestion to upload survey data onto the app to ensure that no official could shirk their responsibility.

Addressing the issue of rising

vegetable prices, Mamata expressed frustration at the ongoing price hikes, particularly in potatoes, which were expected to drop during the winter season. The Chief Minister attributed the surge in prices to black marketing and illegal syndicates. During the meeting, she questioned Agriculture Marketing Minister Becharam Manna, asking whether it was the government's responsibility to dismantle these syndicates. Manna confirmed that district officials and police superintendents had been notified about the issue and that breaking these syndicates was a priority for the government.

She ordered action to break these syndicates. Manna responded that district officials and police superintendents had been informed about the issue and that dismantling these syndicates is the government's responsibility.

This response angered the Chief Minister, who retorted, "Is it the government's job to break syndicates, or to run the government?" The issue of rising potato prices was raised, particularly after the state imposed strict regulations on potato exports to prevent illegal trade to other

states, about a month ago. Despite the ban, price control remains elusive, prompting further complaints from Minister Manna during the meeting. He pointed out that illegal market activities were behind the price hikes, comparing the situation to betting syndicates in cricket, where groups determine the price of potatoes the night before. He stated, "This monopoly needs to be broken."

In response, the Chief Minister asked, "Who are these people? Who is behind this syndicate?" Manna clarified that the list of involved parties had been provided to the Director General of Police (DG) and the Chief Secretary. The Chief Minister expressed her frustration, saying, "Will the syndicate control the government, or will the government control the syndicate?" She further pointed out that new potatoes were being harvested and that some traders in Medinipur and Garbeta were allegedly involved in the syndicate. She instructed the DG and Chief Secretary to take immediate action against the culprits and ensure necessary steps were taken to curb the illegal practices.

Mamata expresses shock over murder of TMC leader in Malda

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday confirmed the tragic murder of her close associate, Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Dulal Sarkar, also known as Babla Sarkar, in Malda district. Expressing deep shock over the incident, Mamata condemned the attack and urged immediate action against the perpetrators.

Babla Sarkar, a TMC councillor from Malda, was shot by four bike-borne assailants early Thursday morning at Jhalghalia More area. The miscreants approached him from behind and fired four rounds at close range. Sarkar was struck by three bullets, injuring his shoulder.

In a post on X, Mamata Banerjee wrote: "My close associate, and a very popular leader, Babla Sarkar has been murdered today. From the beginning of the Trinamool Congress, he (and his wife Chaitali

Sarkar) worked hard for the party, and Babla was also elected a councillor." She expressed her sorrow, stating, "I am sad and hugely shocked after knowing about the incident. The culprits must be booked immediately. I am so shocked and sad that I do not know how to convey my condolences to the bereaved family. May God give Chaitali strength to survive and fight the battle."

At the time of the attack, Sarkar was en route to his factory after leaving the TMC party office. He was rushed to Malda Medical College Hospital for treatment after being shot.

The attack was captured on CCTV footage, though viewers have been advised to use discretion due to the graphic nature of the content. Authorities are investigating the incident and searching for the assailants involved in this tragic attack on a prominent TMC leader.



Sadhus at Babughat transit camp ahead of Ganga Sagar Mela in Kolkata

Abhishek Banerjee criticizes Centre over silence on Bangladesh human rights violations

MI News Service, Kolkata: Trinamool Congress (TMC) general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday urged the Indian government to take a strong stand against alleged human rights violations in Bangladesh. He called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to address the issue with Bangladesh's interim government "in the language they understand."

Banerjee's remarks came after a Bangladeshi court rejected the bail plea of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, sparking criticism of the Mohammed Yusuf-led interim government in Bangladesh. "It is disheartening. The Government of India should immediately address this with Bangladesh and ensure that the issue is resolved. What is happening in Bangladesh is a blatant violation of human rights and cannot be ignored any longer. The UNHCR should also take this up sternly with the Bangladeshi government," Banerjee stated. He expressed concern over the silence of the Union government amid

ports of alleged atrocities in Bangladesh. "The Union government's silence on the anarchy in Bangladesh only fuels speculation about their stance," Banerjee said. He added, "The Prime Minister often boasts about his '56-inch chest.' Now is the time to show that strength and respond to Bangladesh in a firm manner. Our party has always supported steps taken for the nation's security and safety, and we will do so here as well." Banerjee accused the BJP-led government of being indifferent to the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. "It is surprising to see the party, which claims to be the protector of Hinduism, remaining silent about the ongoing oppression of Hindus in Bangladesh. This silence is emboldening the perpetrators," he remarked.

He further questioned the BJP's inconsistency in addressing such issues. "Before elections, BJP made noise about NRC and CAA. But now, when Hindus are being tortured in Bangladesh, they are silent. Is it because there are no

elections in the near future? The anarchy in Bangladesh has been ongoing since August 5. Yet, has the Centre spent even five minutes on this issue in the last five months?" Banerjee asked.

Banerjee criticized the state of India's relations with its neighbors, expressing dismay over what he described as India's deteriorating regional diplomacy. "I don't wish to comment extensively on foreign policy, but it pains me to see how India's relations with its neighbors have soured. Before 2014, would a country like Bangladesh ever have dared to threaten India?" he said. He also lamented the lack of transparency from Indian authorities following the foreign secretary's visit to Bangladesh last month. "Neither the foreign secretary, the foreign minister, nor the Prime Minister issued any statement in Parliament after the visit. This silence is troubling and often interpreted as agreement," he added. Banerjee concluded by asserting that India's pivotal role in Bangladesh's independence should not be forgotten.

Remembering Sova Sen on her 100th birth centenary

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Forum for Film Studies and Allied Arts, in collaboration with People's Little Theatre (founded by the legendary UtpalDutt), organized a press conference on Thursday to pay tribute to Sova Sen on the occasion of her 100th birth centenary. The event also announced a film screening program scheduled for January. Present at the conference were Pratap C. Ghosh, Secretary, Kamalash Chakraborty, Assistant Secretary, Biswajit Sarkar, E.C. Member, AbhijitBrahmachary, E.L.C. Member, and other members of People's Little Theatre. They shared their thoughts on Sova Sen's work and dedication to theatre, highlighting her unwavering principles and her lifelong commitment to giving to theatre without expecting anything in return. The members discussed her background and the kind of performances she was known for.

Pratap C. Ghosh, Secretary, mentioned that Sova

Sen's actual birth centenary was on September 17th. However, due to the R.G. Kar incident, they postponed the program. He said, "We are now holding this festival to showcase Sova Sen's iconic theatre and films, allowing people to appreciate her remarkable legacy." The film screening program will be held at TapanTheatre (Tapash-GayaneshtSabhagriha) on the following dates: 8th January 2025: BhaginiNivedita (1962), directed by Biyay-Basu, inaugurated by actor Asit Bose, with Chief Guest Anjan Bose, 9th January 2025: Ma (1982), directed by UtpalDutt, inaugurated by dramatist AnsumanBhowmik, with Chief Guest SankarChakraborty and 10th January 2025: Padma Nadir Majhi (1992), directed by GoutamGhose, introduced by the director, with Chief Guest Bhadra Bose.

Pratap C. Ghosh emphasized that the screenings are free and open to all, starting at 6:00 PM daily.

Alleged theft of 2 lakh books from govt godown: Report sought by Cal HC

MI News Service, Kolkata: A case of alleged theft of two lakh books from a government godown has led to a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Calcutta High Court. The division bench, led by Chief Justice T.S. Shivagnanam, heard the matter on Thursday and directed the North Dinajpur District Primary School Education Council to submit a report within three weeks, detailing how many books have been recovered.

The incident dates back to 2022, when nearly two lakh primary school books were stolen from a godown in Islampur, North Dinajpur. Sources reveal that the books were reportedly taken from the

SI office itself. The PIL filed in the case demands a CBI investigation into the theft.

The police Investigation identified two individuals, but the complainant alleges that the probe has not been conducted effectively. The court observed that it would be impossible for just two people to steal such a large quantity of books. The state has informed the court that a charge sheet will be filed by November, and several books have been recovered. The court has instructed the District Primary School Education Council to submit a report regarding the stolen books and whether the students received new textbooks.

Arun Roy, director of 'Baghajatin', passes away after battling cancer

MI News Service, Kolkata: Arun Roy, the director of the film Baghajatin starring Dev, passed away on Thursday morning at RG Kar Hospital after a long

battle with cancer. He had been admitted recently due to a lung infection and was on BIPAP support in the ICU. His condition deteriorated in

Imran Zaki honored with prestigious Xaverian award



Imran Zaki, former Honorary Secretary and Vice President of the St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association, receives the prestigious Xaverian Award for Exemplary Services during the annual Alumni Reunion Dinner, Sangam 2024, at the St. Xavier's College Ground in Kolkata on Thursday.

MI News Service, Kolkata: Imran Zaki, former Honorary Secretary and Vice President of the St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association, was conferred with the Xaverian Award for Exemplary Services during the annual Alumni Reunion Dinner, Sangam 2024. This prestigious accolade celebrates his remarkable contributions to the college and its alumni community.

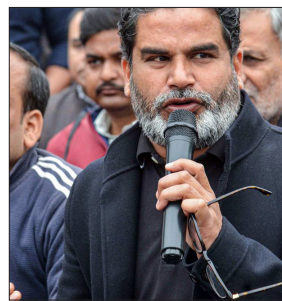
The award ceremony, held at the St. Xavier's College Ground, saw the presence of notable dignitaries, including Father Dominic Savio, Principal of St.

Xavier's College; Father JeyrajVeluswamy, Rector of St. Xavier's School and College; and Father Roshan, Principal of St. Xavier's School. Distinguished alumni and members of the St. Xavier's family also graced the occasion.

Expressing gratitude, Imran Zaki remarked, "This recognition is not just for me but for the entire alumni community that continues to shape the future of St. Xavier's. I am honored and remain committed to supporting the institution in building a brighter future."

the final days. Roy, who was deeply admired by actor Dev, had been in regular contact with him. Dev had visited him at the hospital and expressed admiration for Roy's work. Despite his illness, Roy had plans to work with Dev in the future, though these plans did not materialize.

BPSK exam fiasco: Prashant Kishor starts fast unto death



MI News Service, Patna: Upping the ante, Jan Surraaj founder Prashant Kishor on Thursday began a fast unto death to press the demand for cancellation of an examination recently held by Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSK).

Kishor made the announcement at the historic Gandhi Maidan in the state capital, three days after giving a "48-hour ultimatum" to the Nitish Kumar government for acting on the demand, raised by aggrieved candidates.

"My primary demand, of course, is cancellation of the exam held on December 13 and conducting a fresh test. I have also heard allegations that posts to be filled by the exam were virtually put on sale. Such corrupt officials must be identified and brought to justice", said Kishor, who was accompanied by a number of supporters. The venue was barely a couple of kilometres from Gardani Bagh where the aggrieved aspirants have been holding a round-the-clock sit-in for nearly two weeks.

Regulation of trains for developmental work over Asansol division

MI News Service, Kolkata: For dismantling of Foot Overbridge and launching of Limited Height Subway & Foot Overbridge in Jhajha-Sitarampur section of Asansol Division, Power & Traffic Block has been planned on Jan 5 2025 (Sunday). Consequently, following arrangement in train running have been made as under: Cancellation of Passenger (MEMU) on Jan 4 2025: 63571 Jasidih-Mokama MEMU.

MEMU 63546 Jasidih - Andal MEMU 63565 Jasidih - Jhajha MEMU 63566 Jhajha - Jasidih MEMU 63573 Jasidih - Kiul MEMU 63574 Kiul - Jasidih MEMU. Cancellation of Mail/Express: 13319 Dumka-Ranchi Intercity Express (JCO Jan 5 2025).

12304 New Delhi - Howrah Poorna Express (JCO Jan 4 2025) will be diverted via Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya - Dhanbad - Sitarampur. 12326 Nangal Dam - Kolkata Gurumukhi Super Fast Express (JCO Jan 4 2025) will be diverted via Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya - Dhanbad. 13044 Raxaul - Howrah Express (JCO Jan 4 2025) will be diverted via Kiul - Rampurhat - Bardhaman.

minutes 22197 Kolkata - VGL Jhansi Pratham Swatantra Sangram Express will be rescheduled by 1 hour 30 minutes. 22500 Varanasi - Deoghar Vande Bharat Express will be rescheduled by 40 minutes. 22499 Deoghar - Varanasi Vande Bharat Express will be rescheduled by 40 minutes. 17006 Raxaul - Hyderabad Weekly Express will be rescheduled by 1 hour 20 minutes. 22348 Patna - Howrah Vande Bharat Express will be rescheduled by 2 hour 50 minutes.

Eastern Railway's Howrah division organizes 100-day intensified campaign on TB elimination

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Divisional Railway Hospital, Howrah, Eastern Railway, organized an awareness programme as part of the 100-Day Intensified Campaign on TB Elimination on January 2, 2025. The event was held at the Orthopaedic Hospital, Howrah, under the guidance of Dr. Debasish Guha, Chief Medical Superintendent, Howrah.



and highlighted the critical role of Indian Railways in supporting the national mission to eliminate Tuberculosis (TB). Dr. Kangati Sneha Reddy, Additional Divisional Medical Officer (Pulmonology), Howrah, elaborated on TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies. Dr. Chaitali Patra, Sr. Divisional Medical Officer (Pediatrics), Howrah, discussed the impact of TB on children and pediatric-specific considerations.

To make the session interactive, Dr. Shibani Sardar, Sr. Divisional Medical Officer Howrah, conducted a quiz to evaluate participants' understanding of TB-related topics. The programme concluded with a summary of the campaign's goals and achievements by Dr. Debasish Guha, Chief Medical Superintendent, Howrah. He reaffirmed the commitment of the Divisional Railway Hospital, Howrah Division, to the national mission of eradicating TB.

This initiative underscores Eastern Railway's steadfast dedication to promoting public health awareness and contributing to the country's efforts to eliminate Tuberculosis. The Vande Bharat Express, particularly its upgraded version 2.0, brings futuristic features and amenities, ensuring an unparalleled travel experience.

Marking two glorious years of excellence: Vande Bharat Express redefines rail travel in Eastern India

MI News Service, New Delhi / Kolkata: Two years ago, on a crisp New Year's Day in 2023, a new chapter in the annals of Indian Railways unfolded as the regular run of Howrah - New Jalpaiguri Vande Bharat Express (Train No. 22301 UP) roared to life, ushering in a new era of high-speed train communication in Eastern region of the country & luxurious rail travel.



Elevating Passenger Experience: Delectable Regional Cuisine: Freshly prepared meals inspired by regional tastes, elevating onboard dining. Climate-Controlled Comfort: Intelligent air-conditioning systems ensure a pleasant atmosphere. Eco-Friendly Operations: Low carbon emissions make Vande Bharat a sustainable travel option.

version 2.0, brings futuristic features and amenities, ensuring an unparalleled travel experience. Enhanced Speed and Performance: With a top speed of 180 km/h, passengers reach their destinations faster than ever. Advanced Suspension System: Ensures a noiseless and smooth ride. Spacious and Comfortable Seating: Ergonomic reclining seats in all classes, with 180-degree swivel seats for executive class.

Smart Toilets and Sliding Doors: Bio-vacuum toilets and automated doors for a hygienic and accessible experience. Panoramic Windows: Offers scenic views for travellers, enhancing the joy of the journey. Infotainment and Connectivity: High-speed Wi-Fi and personal entertainment systems keep passengers connected and entertained. Energy Efficiency: Regenerative braking systems and LED lighting promote sustainability.

Safety Features: Equipped with the Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) and CCTV cameras for a secure journey. On the wake of new year 2025 the passengers of Howrah - New Jalpaiguri - Howrah Vande Bharat Express are still thrilled with their joy ride to experience the high speed journey linking Southern part of West Bengal with the North Bengal & Dooars region.

The Vande Bharat Express has emerged as more than just a train—it's an experience. As the first Vande Bharat train to grace Eastern India, it has transformed the rail travel landscape, setting a gold standard in punctuality, cleanliness, and passenger comfort. With its sleek design, futuristic amenities, and superior performance, it has truly become a symbol of India's progress and innovation.

The Vande Bharat Express, particularly its upgraded version 2.0, brings futuristic features and amenities, ensuring an unparalleled travel experience. Enhanced Speed and Performance: With a top speed of 180 km/h, passengers reach their destinations faster than ever.

Smart Toilets and Sliding Doors: Bio-vacuum toilets and automated doors for a hygienic and accessible experience. Panoramic Windows: Offers scenic views for travellers, enhancing the joy of the journey. Infotainment and Connectivity: High-speed Wi-Fi and personal entertainment systems keep passengers connected and entertained.

New building of Arunodaya Ghoshapur School opened at Ghoshapur Railway Colony, Behala

MI News Service, Kolkata: The much-awaited new building of Arunodaya Ghoshapur School was opened on January 2nd 2025 by Seema Deoukar, President of the Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organization (ERWWO), in the presence of all executive members of ERWWO. The school, which is run by ERWWO, provides education from Nursery to Class -IV and currently serves approximately 130 students. It is supported by a dedicated team of nine (09) teachers and two supporting staff members, ensuring quality education and holistic development for the students.



The opening ceremony began with the formal opening of the new building by Seema Deoukar, followed by the "Aaradhana" of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Saraswati. The event also included the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolizing the illumination of knowledge and wisdom. To mark this special occasion, sweets were distributed among the students, spreading joy and celebration.

Arunodaya Ghoshapur School stands as a testimony to ERWWO's commitment to nurturing young minds and supporting their educational journey. This new building provides an enhanced learning environment, enabling the students to excel in academics and beyond. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, staff, and members of ERWWO, making it a memorable and inspiring day for the entire school community.

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Indian Railways' extensive support, with over 9,000 athletes across 29 disciplines, is shaping India's sports ecosystem and driving excellence both nationally and internationally

MI News Service, Delhi: Indian Railways through its sports wing, Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB), has contributed immensely in promoting sports across the country since 1928. The modest beginning of promoting Hockey, Athletics and Tennis, now RSPB has become an important organization in promotion of Sports in the country and presently has 29 Game Disciplines- 18 individual games & 11 team games. RSPB is affiliated with 28 National Sports Federations and also affiliated with USIC (World Railways Sports Association).

Indian Railways have supported a sizeable number of sportspersons by ensuring security through jobs. As on date, more than 9000 sportspersons are on roll of Indian Railways in 29 game disciplines of whom about 3000 are active sportspersons. The performances of IR sportspersons in international prestigious events have been outstanding. National Sports Awards for the year 2024 have been announced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

It is a matter of pride that out of 32 players, who have been awarded with the prestigious Arjuna Award, five players are from Indian Railways. The details of the player and their events are as under: Jyothi Yarraji, SCR (Athletics-100 m hurdles) Annu Rani, PLW (Athletics-Javelin Throw) Salima Tete, SER (Hockey) Swapnil Suresh Kusale, CR (Shooting-50 m 3P) Aman, NR (Wrestling-57 kg Freestyle) With these 5 Arjuna Awards, there are total 183 Arjuna, 28 Padma Shri, 12 Dhyhan Chand, 13 Dronacharya and 9 Major Dhyhan Chand Khel Ratna Awardees in the basket of Indian Railways, which in itself is the largest number of such awardees for any single organization in India. The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at a specially organized function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 17th, 2025.

Indian Railways congratulates these gems and wishes a very bright career ahead. Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat, leading to the cave shrine in Reasi district. PTI AB According to SMVDSB CEO Anshul Garg, as many as 94 83 lakh pilgrims paid obeisance at the cave shrine in 2024.

Ropeway turmoil: Katra returns to normalcy after weeklong shutdown

MI News Service, Katra: Katra, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Mata Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu and Kashmir resumed normal business activity after a week-long shutdown protesting a proposed ropeway project in the Trikuta hills of Reasi district. Eighteen people detained by police during the protests were also released, sparking overnight celebrations in the holy town.

which draws thousands of devotees daily. The Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, which called for the shutdown, had announced that all activities in Katra would remain suspended during this period. On Tuesday night, the Jammu and Kashmir administration announced the release of the detainees and constituted a four-member committee to hold talks with the protesting civil society members.

The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project will connect ropeway to facilitate access to the temple for senior citizens, children, and others who find it challenging to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine. The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project will connect ropeway to facilitate access to the temple for senior citizens, children, and others who find it challenging to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine.

Eighteen people detained by police during the protests were also released, sparking overnight celebrations in the holy town. "All shops, restaurants, and business establishments reopened after a week-long closure due to the shutdown, while traffic movement was also restored, bringing much relief to the pilgrims," an official said. With the return of normalcy, hundreds of pilgrims thronged the holy town on the first day of the year to pay obeisance at the cave shrine, with long serpentine queues seen at the entry points in Katra and Bhawan. "We are very happy that the bandh has ended. It was causing huge inconvenience to us. We have come here to pay obeisance on the first day of the new year," Suresh Kadam, a resident of Pune, said. The 'bandh', which began on December 25, disrupted normal life in one of the country's busiest pilgrimage towns

Manu Bhaker & D Gukesh among 4 athletes to get Dhyhan Chand Khel Ratna award: Sports Ministry

MI News Service, New Delhi: The quartet of shooter Manu Bhaker, chess world champion D Gukesh, men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh and para-athlete Praveen Kumar were on Thursday named recipients of this year's Major Dhyhan Chand Khel Ratna Award -- the country's highest sporting honour. The 22-year-old Bhaker became independent India's first athlete to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics with her bronze-winning show in the 10m air pistol individual and 10m air pistol mixed team events in August. In the same Games, Harmanpreet led the Indian hockey team to its second consecutive bronze medal. The 18-year-old Gukesh, on the other hand, became the youngest ever World champion while also helping the Indian team win a historic gold in the Chess Olympiad last year. The fourth recipient will be para-high-jumper Praveen, who was crowned the T64 champion in the Paris Paralympics. The T64 classification is for athletes who have one or both legs missing below the knee and rely on a prosthetic leg for running. "The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at a specially organised function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 17th January, 2025 (Friday) at 1100 hours," the sports ministry said in a press release.

high-jumper Praveen, who was crowned the T64 champion in the Paris Paralympics. The T64 classification is for athletes who have one or both legs missing below the knee and rely on a prosthetic leg for running. "The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at a specially organised function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 17th January, 2025 (Friday) at 1100 hours," the sports ministry said in a press release.

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Office of the Concillors of Haringhata Municipality Subarnapur, Haringhata, Nadia. Notice Inviting e-Tender Chairman, Haringhata Municipality invites e-Tender No WEMAD/ULB/HM/NIT-13e/2024-25, Memo. No-02/HM/2025 Dated: 02/01/2025 Tender Id: 2025_MAD_793808_1 Date of Publising-02/01/2025 Bid Submission Closing Date-30/01/2025 For details please visit www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- CHAIRMAN HARINGHATA MUNICIPALITY

NOTICE Power of Attorney Prabr Bhujij, s/o- Kalipada Bhujij of Somsara, Hanral, P.S.- Panduah, Dist-Hooghly- 712149, appointed my client namely Paulus Murmu, s/o- Surali Murmu, of Chhoto Khejuria, P.O.- Adconagar, P.S. Magra, Dist. Hooghly- 712121, as his Lawful Attorney (General Power of Attorney Deed No. 1149/24) with regard to the schedule land. After getting Order dated 18/12/2024, issued by Office of the District Magistrate & Collector, Backward Classes Welfare, Hooghly, said Prabr Bhujij through his Attorney will sell the schedule land to Q Industrial Park Pvt. Ltd., Belmuri, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly. Anybody, having any claim, demand, right, title or interest in respect of the schedule land or any part thereof, he/she is hereby requested to take necessary steps within next 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that there is no such claim and shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Schedule: Dist.- Hooghly, P.S.- Dadpur, Mouza-Beraben, J.L. No.- 36, area - 9.5 decimal in L.R. Dag No. 284. L.R. Khatian No. 217. Subhashis Debsarma (Advocate) Dist. Judges' Court, Hooghly.

NOTICE Power of Attorney Shila Bhujij, W/o- Badal Bhujij of Villi-P.P.- Senet, P.S.- Dadpur, Dist-Hooghly- 712305, appointed my client namely Paulus Murmu, s/o- Surali Murmu, of Chhoto Khejuria, P.O.- Adconagar, P.S. Magra, Dist. Hooghly- 712121, as her Lawful Attorney (General Power of Attorney Deed No. 5954/24) with regard to the schedule land. After getting Order dated 18/12/2024, issued by Office of the District Magistrate & Collector, Backward Classes Welfare, Hooghly, said Shila Bhujij through her Attorney will sell the schedule land to Q Industrial Park Pvt. Ltd., Belmuri, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly. Anybody, having any claim, demand, right, title or interest in respect of the schedule land or any part thereof, he/she is hereby requested to take necessary steps within next 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that there is no such claim and shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Schedule: Dist.- Hooghly, P.S.- Dadpur, Mouza-Talchinan Sanihati, J.L. No.- 66, area - 44 decimal in L.R. Dag No. 3494, L.R. Khatian No. 5084. Subhashis Debsarma (Advocate) Dist. Judges' Court, Hooghly.

NOTICE Power of Attorney Sukumar Bhujij, s/o- Shambhu Bhujij of Villi-P.P.- Senet, P.S.- Dadpur, Dist-Hooghly- 712305, appointed my client namely Paulus Murmu, s/o- Surali Murmu, of Chhoto Khejuria, P.O.- Adconagar, P.S. Magra, Dist. Hooghly- 712121, as his Lawful Attorney (General Power of Attorney Deed No. 8742/24) with regard to the schedule land. After getting Order dated 18/12/2024, issued by Office of the District Magistrate & Collector, Backward Classes Welfare, Hooghly, said Sukumar Bhujij through his Attorney will sell the schedule land to Q Industrial Park Pvt. Ltd., Belmuri, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly. Anybody, having any claim, demand, right, title or interest in respect of the schedule land or any part thereof, he/she is hereby requested to take necessary steps within next 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that there is no such claim and shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Schedule: Dist.- Hooghly, P.S.- Dadpur, Mouza-Talchinan Sanihati, J.L. No.- 66, area - 76 decimal in L.R. Dag No. 3487, L.R. Khatian No. 1649. Subhashis Debsarma (Advocate) Dist. Judges' Court, Hooghly.

EASTERN RAILWAY e-Tender Notice No. : MC_SC_KRP Cleaning_24, dated 30.12.2024. Sealed open tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Eastern Railway, Sealdah, Room no. 42, 1st Floor, DRM Building, Kaizer Street, Kolkata-700014 on "Two Packet System" in prescribed tender forms from reputed contractors with adequate experience and financial capability for the under mentioned work: Name/Description of Work : "Cleaning work of Round Trip maintenance coaching train at Krishnapur for three years". Tender Value : ₹ 3,26,48,834.48. Earnest Money: ₹ 3,13,300/-. Cost of Tender Documents: ₹ 5,000/-. Period of contract : 03 years. Bidding Start Date: 08.01.2025. Date & time of closing of tender: 22.01.2025 at 11.00 hrs. Date and timing of tender opening : 22.01.2025 at 11.00 hrs. Tender document including e-tender notice and eligibility criteria of the work may be seen and downloaded from www.irps.gov.in (Website URL). No manual offer will be accepted. (SDAH-300/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.eindianrailways.gov.in / www.irps.gov.in Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY e-Tender Notice No. : EL-SDAH-CON-TRD-166R-2024-NIT, dated 01.01.2025. Tender No. : EL-SDAH-CON-TRD-166R-2024. Open tender is invited through E-tendering procedure by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Con), Eastern Railway, Sealdah, R.M.S. Building, 3rd Floor, Kaiser Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014 from experienced Electrical Contractors, Partnership firms etc. holding valid electrical contractor's license with adequate financial capability and sufficient experience for the following work : Name of work : "Electrical TRD works of (A) Design, Drawing, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25KV A.C. Single Phase Overhead Equipment, LT Supply Transformer for Yard modification of Ranaghat and provision of LT Supply Transformers for E.I. Hut in between Kalyani to Ranaghat and balance work in connection with 3rd line work from Nalhati to Ranaghat, (B) Design, Drawing, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25KV A.C. Single Phase Overhead Equipment, LT Supply Transformer for Yard modification of Berhampore Court Station, (C) Electrical TRD works for Berhampore Court - Road Over Bridge in lieu of L.C. Gate No. 132/T in Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway". Tender Value : ₹ 6,51,17,610.70. Earnest Money : ₹ 4,75,600/-. Cost of Tender Document : Nil. Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) months. Date and Time of Closing: 04.02.2025 at 12.30 hrs. Tender documents can be downloaded and bids can be submitted at www.irps.gov.in after online payment of "cost of Tender Document" and "Earnest Money" as mentioned above against this tender on or before the tender closing date and time mentioned above. Tenders complete in all respects and with all documents as stated above should be uploaded at www.irps.gov.in against this tender. Bidding for the tender is to be submitted through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected. Tender Documents, details of tender notice, corrigendum/s issued from time to time (if any) and other basic information are available at www.irps.gov.in Detail tender notice can also be seen in the notice board of Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Con), Eastern Railway, R.M.S. Building, 3rd Floor, Kaiser Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014. (CON-84/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.eindianrailways.gov.in / www.irps.gov.in Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

NOTICE Power of Attorney Biswanath Mudi @ Bishu Mudi, s/o- Lal Mudi of Gunpala, Babnan, P.S.- Dadpur, Dist-Hooghly- 712305, appointed my client namely Paulus Murmu, s/o- Surali Murmu, of Chhoto Khejuria, P.O.- Adconagar, P.S. Magra, Dist. Hooghly- 712121, as his Lawful Attorney (General Power of Attorney Deed No. 2433/24) with regard to the schedule land. After getting Order dated 18/12/2024, issued by Office of the District Magistrate & Collector, Backward Classes Welfare, Hooghly, said Biswanath Mudi @ Bishu Mudi will sell the schedule land through his Attorney to Q Industrial Park Pvt. Ltd., Belmuri, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly. Anybody, having any claim, demand, right, title or interest in respect of the schedule land or any part thereof, he/she is hereby requested to take necessary steps within next 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that there is no such claim and shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Schedule: Dist.- Hooghly, P.S.- Dadpur, Mouza-Gunpala, J.L. No.- 65, area - 22 decimal in L.R. Dag No 387.L.R. Khatian No. 1428. Subhashis Debsarma (Advocate) Dist. Judges' Court, Hooghly.

Lack of tech transfer slowing climate action in India: Govt to UNFCCC

NEW DELHI : A concerning lack of technology transfer from developed countries has forced India to rely heavily on domestic resources and stretch national capacity, slowing its efforts to achieve critical climate objectives, the government has said in a biennial update report (BUR) to the UN climate change office.

In its fourth BUR submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on December 30, India said that in the absence of promised technology and financial support, it is forced to divert resources from other essential needs to develop these solutions independently.

India had also raised the matter at the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November last year and urged developed nations to eliminate intellectual property barriers to technology transfer that hinder climate action in developing countries.

"India's climate strategy emphasises integrating advanced technologies across key sectors, such as solar, wind, bioenergy, electric vehicles, climate-resilient agriculture, and carbon capture to foster low-carbon development and build resilience."

"Despite substantial national efforts and investments, barriers like slow international technology transfer and intellectual property rights (IPR) hinder the rapid adoption of these technologies," the BUR report said. Biennial update reports are submitted by developing countries to the



UNFCCC every two years, providing updates on emissions, climate action progress, and needs for support in mitigation and adaptation. India's previous BURs have outlined essential technologies required to cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the warming world. However, none of the required technologies have been effectively transferred, facilitated, or made available under the current climate change regime, the report said.

"This lack of technology transfer has forced India to rely heavily on domestic resources and stretch national capacity, slowing its efforts

to achieve critical climate objectives," it said. Technology transfer is a critical component of climate change mitigation and adaptation that faces both demand and supply-side challenges which must be addressed within the framework of the 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities' (CBDR-RC) principles.

"The Convention, along with subsequent agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement (Article 10), emphasises the central role of transferring financial resources and technology from developed to developing nations for

climate action. The establishment of the Technology Mechanism, consisting of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), was intended to facilitate this process. "However, India has not received significant technology transfer under the UNFCCC-guided regime," the report said. On the demand side, India said, access to relevant, affordable, and scalable technologies is often limited due to high costs, lack of infrastructure, and regulatory barriers.

"On the supply side, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regimes can act as a barrier to technology transfer, restricting access to technologies, especially for developing countries like India," the country said. Addressing both demand and supply side issues is crucial for effective technology transfer, requiring a comprehensive approach that includes policy interventions, capacity building, financial support, and international cooperation, it said. Addressing a high-level ministerial roundtable on pre-2030 ambition at the UN climate talks in Baku, Leena Nandan, the then environment secretary of India, had said that innovative technologies are critical for a low-carbon future but said they must be made accessible to developing countries.

"Developing countries need solutions like clean energy and carbon removal, but barriers like Intellectual Property Rights make it hard for them to access these technologies," Nandan had said.

Study reveals role of gamma-delta T cells in cancer immunology

Florida [US] : The significance of gamma-delta T cells in 33 different cancer types is revealed in a recent study that was published in Cell Press. This information sheds light on the cells' potential as clinical biomarkers and therapeutic targets in the treatment of cancer. This thorough examination, which was carried out under the direction of a group of Moffitt Cancer Center experts, marks a substantial breakthrough in our knowledge of these distinct immune cells and how they affect cancer therapy outcomes for patients. Gamma-delta T cells are a minority in the T cell population, but they are becoming more and more valued for their capacity to activate both innate and adaptive immune responses. The gamma-delta T-cell receptor landscape across 11,000 tumors was analyzed by Moffitt researchers using a novel computational algorithm in collaboration with scientists at Dartmouth College and Duke University. The result is a comprehensive database that tracks the progression of cancer and its response to different treatments, most notably immunotherapy.

"It's like finding a needle in a haystack," said Xuefeng Wang,

Ph.D., chair of Moffitt's Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Department and the lead contact of the study. "After two years of effort screening approximately 700 billion tumor RNA sequencing reads, our algorithm distilled 3.2 million gamma-delta T-cell reads, highly informative for the study of gamma-delta T-cell clones. Our findings suggest that the diversity and clonality of gamma-delta T cells can significantly impact patient survival and treatment efficacy." As the study evolves, researchers will expand the database by incorporating additional T-cell receptor repertoires and functional annotations, including single-cell RNA sequencing analyses. This ongoing work aims to deepen our understanding of the functional roles of gamma-delta T cells in cancer and their interactions within the tumor microenvironment.

"This research not only expands our knowledge of gamma-delta T cells but also opens new avenues for therapeutic strategies," Wang said. "By understanding the specific roles of these cells in different cancers, we can better tailor treatments to improve patient outcomes." The Immuno-Oncology Program

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Expands Presence in Bihar with New Outlets in Semra Gopalganj, Lalganj, Sarsi Istamrar and Mehsi

Bihar: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited proudly announces the inauguration of its new banking outlets in Semra Gopalganj, Lalganj, Sarsi Istamrar and Mehsi Bihar. With these launch, the Bank has foot printed 244 banking outlets in Bihar and 1014 outlets nationwide. Residents of Semra Gopalganj, Lalganj, Sarsi Istamrar and Mehsi Bihar will benefit from a comprehensive suite of banking products, including savings accounts, current accounts, fixed deposits, and recurring deposits. The Bank also provides various loan products, such as housing loans, business loans, loan against property, credit, insurance, and investment products. The Bank's infrastructure, digital banking capabilities, and ATM network ensure a seamless banking experience.

Commenting on the expansion, Mr. Govind Singh, MD & CEO, Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited, said, "Our new banking outlets in Bihar reflect our dedication to strengthening our network. Mehsi, part of the historical Motihari region, is renowned for its connection to Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran Satyagraha, Purnia is home to landmarks such as the Jalalgarh Fort and the beautiful Kali Mandir. Bihar Known for its cultural richness and community spirit. The opening of these outlets marks a step forward in our journey to support the dynamic and fast-growing population, fostering growth and development in this vibrant locality."

These banking outlets will offer micro-banking loans for business development services to underprivileged or low-income individuals or groups who have limited access to financial services. The JLG model of group lending involves a peer-guarantee loan model enabling individuals to take loans without providing collateral or security on an individual basis, while promoting credit discipline through mutual support within the group and prompt repayment of their loans.

Customers can access banking services through various channels such as Banking Outlets, Micro ATMs (during banking hours), Internet banking, Mobile banking, Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and the Call Centre.



Medication increases radiation therapy's efficacy for lung cancer that has progressed to brain



Washington [US] : A group of researchers from the University of Cincinnati has discovered a possible novel approach to enhance the efficacy of radiation therapy and enhance the prognosis of patients with lung cancer metastasizing to the brain.

The research, which was headed by Debanjan Bhattacharya, PhD, as the lead author, was just released in the journal *Cancers*.

Lung cancer accounts for approximately one in five cancer deaths in the United States, making it the primary cause of cancer death, according to the American Cancer Society. About 80 per cent to 85 per cent of all instances of lung cancer are non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), which is the most common kind of the disease.

Up to 40 per cent of lung cancer patients develop brain metastases during the course of the disease, and these patients on average survive between eight and 10 months following diagnosis.

Current standard of care treatments for lung cancer that spreads to the brain include surgical resection and stereotactic brain radiosurgery, and whole brain irradiation is standard in patients with more than 10 metastatic brain lesions.

"Lung cancer brain metastasis is usually incurable, and whole brain radiation treatment is palliative, as radiation limits therapy due to toxicity," said Bhattacharya, research instructor in the Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine in UC's College of Medicine. "Managing potential side effects and overcoming resistance to radiation are major challenges when treating brain metastases from lung cancer. This highlights the importance of new treatments which are less toxic and can improve the efficacy of radiation therapy, are less expensive, and can improve the quality of life in patients."

Bhattacharya and his colleagues at UC focused on AM-101, a synthetic analog in the class of benzodiazepine drugs first developed by James Cook, a medicinal chemist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Prior to this study, AM-101's effect in non-small cell lung cancer was unknown. AM-101 is a particularly useful drug in the context of brain metastases in NSCLC, Bhattacharya said, as benzodiazepines are known to be able to pass through the blood-brain barrier that protects the brain from potential harmful invaders that can also block some drugs

from reaching their target in the brain.

The team found AM-101 activated GABA(A) receptors located in the NSCLC cells and lung cancer brain metastatic cells. This activation triggers the "self-eating" process of autophagy where the cell recycles and degrades unwanted cellular parts.

Specifically, the study showed that activating GABA(A) receptors increases the expression and clustering of GABARAP and Nix (an autophagy receptor), which boosts the autophagy process in lung cancer cells. This enhanced "self-eating" process of autophagy makes lung cancer cells more sensitive to radiation treatment.

Using animal models of lung cancer brain metastases, the team found AM-101 makes radiation treatment more effective and significantly improves survival. Additionally, the drug was found to slow down the growth of the primary NSCLC cells and brain metastases.

In addition to making radiation more effective, adding AM-101 to radiation treatments could allow for lower radiation doses, which could reduce side effects and toxicity for patients, Bhattacharya said. The team is now working toward opening Phase 1 clinical trials testing the combination of AM-101 and radiation both in lung cancer within the lungs and lung cancer that has spread to the brain.

Bhattacharya began this research while working in the lab of former UC researchers Soma Sengupta and Daniel Pomeranz Krummel, who are now at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Bhattacharya credits their mentorship and the collaboration with other experts within UC and across multiple academic research institutions in the United States.

Bhattacharya also emphasizes the role of shared university research resources that helped the study move forward. He dedicates this work to his father, who died in 2021 while he was in the early phases of the research.

"The entire work, along with revision experiments, was done at the University of Cincinnati, and this reflects the strong collaborative effort between multiple teams. I am grateful to the Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine for the overall support in completion of this study," he said. "My father's passing motivated me to work harder to complete this project, as he had known about my research and wanted to see me succeed."

Researchers identify new potential treatment for cardiac arrhythmias

Arizona [US] : A recent study by researchers at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix and the University of California Davis Health discovered a new target for developing a medication to treat atrial fibrillation, the most prevalent kind of irregular heart rhythm.

According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, atrial fibrillation, also known as AFib or AF, accounts for approximately one in every seven strokes and is associated with a considerable increase in morbidity and death. The American Heart Association predicts that more than 12 million people will have AFib by 2030, and existing treatment approaches are inadequate, according to researchers.

Proteins involved in physiological processes of the heart have been a target of research for AFib for some time. Until recently, most research suggested that treating AFib through inhibition of specific small-conductance calcium-activated potassium channels, or SK channels, could either reduce or worsen arrhythmias under different conditions.

"Our study used pioneering experimental and computational approaches to decipher how the human SK2 channel can be dynamically co-regulated. The study is especially timely considering inhibitors of SK channels are currently in clinical trials to treat AFib, making further insight into their regulatory mechanisms paramount," said Nipavan Chiamvimonvat, MD, chair of the Department of Basic Medical Sciences at the U of A College of Medicine - Phoenix.

The paper, "Atomistic Mechanisms of the Regulation of Small Conductance Ca²⁺-Activated K⁺ channel (SK2) by PIP₂," was published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of*

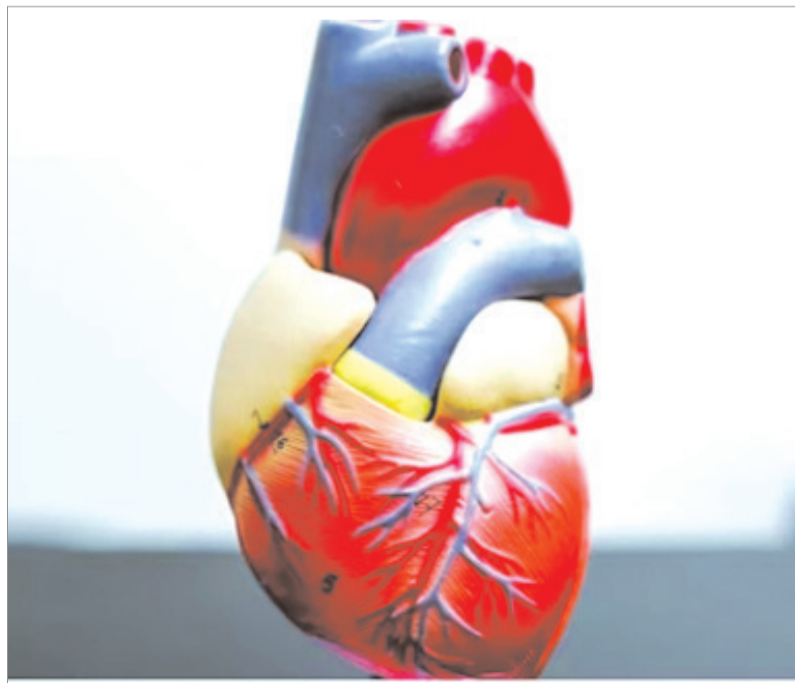
Sciences. The research team examined the role of a lipid - phosphatidylinositol 4,5-bisphosphate, or PIP₂ - in regulating the SK2 channel. PIP₂ is an integral component of all plant and animal cell membranes and acts as a messenger for a variety of signaling pathways in the body.

"Because PIP₂ plays such an essential role in multiple ion channels, regulating cardiac ion channels through PIP₂ presents a new mechanism for the lipid regulation of cardiac excitability and function," said computational biologist Ryan Woltz, PhD, the paper's co-first author and an assistant research professor at the College of Medicine - Phoenix. Currently, SK channels are the only known potassium channels that are upregulated in heart failure, and their regulation plays a critical role in cardiac excitability and how disturbances in the heart's rhythm develop.

"Since PIP₂ is known to be dysregulated in heart failure, our study provides critical translational insights into possible mechanisms of cardiac arrhythmias in heart failure," said co-first author Yang Zheng, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow at the College of Medicine - Phoenix.

Using comparative modeling, the research team generated human SK2 channel models in closed, intermediate and open states. They then used molecular dynamics simulations to explore the molecular mechanisms of SK2 channel modulation by PIP₂.

"Structural insights from our study will be useful to design novel inhibitors of SK2 channels to treat cardiac arrhythmias," said Vladimir Yarov-Yarovoy, PhD, a professor at UC Davis Health. Co-senior author Igor Vorobyov, PhD, an associate professor at UC Davis Health,



said the team is already using similar computational approaches to study other SK channel subtypes.

"I am thrilled to participate in this collaborative multi-university and multidisciplinary research study and looking forward to a continued collaboration," Vorobyov said. "We are currently working on applying a similar pioneering experimental/computational approach to modulation of SK channels by drug molecules, which may enhance or inhibit function of these ion channels and can be used as prospective treatment options for AFib and other cardiovascular dis-

eases." A new study by researchers at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix and the University of California Davis Health identified a new target for developing a therapy to treat atrial fibrillation, the most common type of abnormal heart rhythm.

Atrial fibrillation, commonly called AFib or AF, causes about 1 in 7 strokes, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is associated with a significant increase in the risk of morbidity and mortality. More than 12 million people are expected to have AFib

by 2030, according to the American Heart Association, and current treatment paradigms remain inadequate, researchers say. Proteins involved in physiological processes of the heart have been a target of research for AFib for some time. Until recently, most research suggested that treating AFib through inhibition of specific small-conductance calcium-activated potassium channels, or SK channels, could either reduce or worsen arrhythmias under different conditions.

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Professor Shahid Akhtar felicitated at an educational event organized by Al Barakat Academy in Bansberia

MI News Service, Hooghly: Education is extremely important, otherwise life is incomplete. Imam Wazeeh Al-Qamar of Bansberia Sophia Masjid, Dingal hat Boro Para, has been continuously engaged in establishing educational awareness among children along with Imamate since he came to this land.

Just a few months ago, an institution named "Al Barakat Academy" was established, in which children from LKG to 10th standard are engaged for education after finishing their school hours like a coaching. They are well supported by the teachers of different local schools.

An educational event was organized on Thursday among the children in which speech competition on various topics, Kar'at Quran competition, Nazm Khwani, Kavita competition in Bangla, Hindi language was conducted in which students of Urdu,



Hindi, Bangla and English languages were held.

Children participated in these events like a festival. Their guardians were also seen with them.

After the competition, an honour ceremony was organized under the title of "Mujahid e Millat". In which many regional and distant guests were also invited. In which Dr. Dilip, Maulana Qamruddin Sahil Hasmati, Maulana Matiar Rahman, Maulana

Moinuddin were present. Besides them, the famous advocate and political social leader of Bansberia, Nawab Sohail, were also included, who were seen playing the role of Nizam (announcer) from time to time.

Shahid Akhtar, former professor of Urdu department of Hooghly Mohsin College, was the special guest of the event. They were awarded with a special honour and 'thank

you' letter. The children looked very happy after receiving prizes and honours from the teachers and guests. At the end of the ceremony, Maulana and the spirit of this institution, Wazeeh Al-Qamar, thanked all the guests and attendees of the event and said that they are grateful for the support of the teachers and local people who played an important role in making this event successful.

10 injured in mass shooting outside nightclub

MI News Service, New York: At least 10 people were injured in a shooting outside a nightclub in Queens on Wednesday night, according to the New York City Police Department, the New York Post reported on Thursday.

The incident occurred near the Amazura nightclub in Jamaica, a neighborhood in New York City, just before 11:20 pm.

Law enforcement reported that the victims were taken to nearby hospitals, including Long Island Jewish Hospital and Cohen's Children Medical Center.

None of the victims are in critical condition and all are expected to survive, according to the NYPD, the New York Post reported.

Footage shared on Citizen App showed a large police and ambulance presence outside the club. Amazura, known for its spacious interior that can accommodate up to 4,000 people, frequently hosts DJs and live events.

The incident of mass shooting in New York City follows the attack in New Orleans that claimed 15 lives. Earlier, US President Joe Biden said that law enforcement is investigating any possible connection between the New Orleans 'terror' attack and the Tesla Cybertruck explosion outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas.

The vehicles used in both incidents were rented from a car rental site, 'Turo', prompting authorities to look for links between the two events. 'We're tracking the explosion of a Cybertruck outside the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas. Law enforcement and the intelligence community are investigating this as well, including whether there's any possible connection with the attack in New Orleans,' Biden said.

Biden assured that every resource is being utilised to ensure there is no threat to the American people.

A Tesla Cybertruck exploded outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas, killing one person and injuring seven, hours after the New Orleans attack, in which a car rammed into a crowd during New Year's celebrations, killing at least 15 people.

World leaders condemn New Orleans "terror" attack that claimed 15 lives

MI News Service, Washington DC: Following an attack in United States' New Orleans that claimed 15 lives, world leaders have expressed their condemnation. Messages of condolences poured in from global leaders, including Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and others.

The leaders denounced the attack, extended sympathies to the victims and their families, and emphasised the need to combat "terrorism".

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar in a post on X wrote, "Deeply saddened by the terrorist attack in New Orleans. My heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the victims. Wishing a swift recovery to the two injured Israeli citizens and all the wounded."

He added, "I instructed Israel's Consul General in Houston to immediately deploy a representative to the scene. Terror has no place in our world. Israel stands in solidarity with New Orleans and the United States."

Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy while extending condolences to the families of the victims, said, "Horrified by the attack in New Orleans, US, which has claimed innocent lives and left many injured. We trust that those responsible for this terrible act will be brought to justice. Violence, terrorism, and any threats to human life have no place in our world and must not be tolerated."

"Our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, and we wish a swift recovery to all those injured. Ukraine stands with the American people and denounces violence," the post added.

French President Emmanuel Macron said, "New Orleans, so dear to the hearts of the French, has been struck by terrorism. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims and the injured, as well as with the American people, whose sorrow we share."

Canadian PM Justin Trudeau in a post on X said, "The news out of New Orleans this morning is horrifying. My heart is with the loved ones of the victims, those fighting to recover, and everyone impacted by this senseless act

of violence."

United Kingdom PM Keir Starmer wrote, "The shockingly violent attack in New Orleans is horrific. My thoughts are with the victims, their families, the emergency responders and the people of the United States at this tragic time."

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said, "Deeply saddened by the news of the horrific attack in New Orleans. My thoughts and prayers are with those who were injured or who lost loved ones."

European Commission Vice-President Kaja Kallas wrote, "I am deeply saddened by the news of the horrific attack on those celebrating New Year's in New Orleans. There is no excuse for such violence. As authorities continue their investigation, we stand in full solidarity with the victims and their families during this tragic time."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz wrote, "This is terrible news from New Orleans: People celebrating happily are torn from their lives or injured by senseless hatred. We grieve with the families and friends of the victims and wish all those injured a quick recovery."

4-day long Mahfil begins at Darussalam in Furfura



Nurul Islam Khan

Pir Ala Hazrat Dada Huzoor of Mujaddide Zaman Furfura Sharif has advised that the holy and authentic religious news should not be turned into a festival or a fair. He has also strictly prohibited women from coming to this Majlis. That tradition is still alive today. Its most shining example is the 4-day long historical Isale Sawab Mahfil organized by the centuries-old tradi-

tion of Darussalam in Furfura Darbar Sharif. The 63rd Annual Mahfil of the Shirk-free, tradition-free Darussalam organized by Pir Boro Huzoor of Furfura Sharif began on Tuesday, December 31, 2024. The meeting, attended by millions of people, will conclude next Friday. On this day, the gathering was inaugurated by the Gaddishin Pir Shaikhul Hadith Allama Shaikh Mishkat Siddiqui of Furfura Sharif with the recitation of the

Holy Quran. This Mahfil is being conducted under the initiative of World Islam Mission Quranic Sunni Jamiatul Muslimeen Hizbullah. Shere Furfura Hazrat Pir Allama Abul Ansar Siddiqui and Pir Hazrat Allama Abu Ibrahim Muhammad Obaidullah Siddiqui have conducted this Mahfil with great fame for a long time. In the Annual Waz Mahfil Isale Sawab, Pir Allama Abu Taher Muhammad Motiullah

Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi, Pir Allama Abu Bakr Muhammad Abdullah Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi were present. The meeting is being conducted by the descendant of the beloved Prophet Hazrat Muhammad SAW, his chief companion and the first Caliph of the Muslim world Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RA) - the successor of Pir Dada Huzoor, the Gaddishin Pir of Furfura, Shaikhul Hadith Abu Bakr Abdul Hai Mishkat Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi. The sermons were given by Shaikhul Hadith Allama Ubaidullah Farooq, Shaikhul Hadith Al-Jami'atus Siddiqiyah Darul Uloom Furfura Jamia Madania. Pirzada Maulana Mustafa Madani Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi, Pirzada Maulana Mujahid Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi, Pirzada Maulana Shah Fateh Ali Ayatullah Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi and Pirzada Maulana Sawban Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi, Pirzada Maulana Miftahul Jannah Siddiqui Al-Qurayshi, etc. Renowned speakers from across the country and Pir Mashayek, Khalifa of Furfura, and other Islamic speakers gave speech on this occasion.

Israel reports 436 Road Fatalities in 2024

MI News Service, Jerusalem: In 2024, 436 deaths were recorded on Israeli roads, according to data from the National Road Safety Authority. The figure reflects a 21% increase compared to 2023, when 361 deaths were recorded. The current figure is one death higher than the number of deaths in 2007, when 435 deaths from road accidents were recorded. Israeli-Arab communities recorded the highest jump in the number of fatalities in 2024 with 159 road fatalities - an increase of 62% compared to 2023, when only 98 fatalities were recorded, making 2024 its deadliest year to date. A particularly vulnerable group of road users in Arab society are children aged 0 to 14, of whom 31 fatalities were recorded, 17 of whom were pedestrians, most of whom were in yard accidents and accidents close to home. This is out of 41 fatalities between the ages of 0 and 14 in the entire State of Israel. Arab drivers are involved in approximately 50% of all accidents and their share in the number of fatalities is approximately 37% of all fatalities - a figure almost double their share in the driving population in Israel. Another negative record recorded this year is a 26% jump in the number of two-wheeled vehicle riders killed to 97 deaths, compared to 77 deaths in 2023. Another disturbing statistic that emerges from the 2024 data is the spike in the number of young drivers killed. In 2024, 65 young drivers up to the age of 24 were killed. This year's figure reflects a 55% jump in the number of young drivers killed.

New Orleans: ISIS-inspired attack that killed 15

MI News Service, Washington DC: In The United States saw 2025 begin with a violent attack, after a man drove deliberately at high speed into a crowd of New Year's revelers in New Orleans, killing at least 15 people and wounding dozens more. A US citizen drove a white Ford pickup truck flying an Islamic State flag into throngs of people celebrating the New Year in the French Quarter, the Louisiana city's most iconic tourist district, around 3:15 am (0915 GMT), according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He crashed the vehicle, then opened fire and died in a shootout with police, who said he had driven with the aim of killing as many people as possible. Authorities had earlier put the toll at 10, but an FBI spokesman told AFP it had risen to 15, citing the New Orleans coroner's office. The assailant shot and wounded two police officers, who were described as being in stable condition, said New Orleans police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick.

MQM Leader Altaf Hussain condemns New Orleans terror attack, offers global solidarity

MI News Service, London: In the wake of the tragic terrorist attack in New Orleans, which claimed the lives of 15 innocent individuals and left dozens more injured, Altaf Hussain, the leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), has expressed his heartfelt condolences and unwavering solidarity with the victims.

In a post on X, Hussain conveyed his sympathy to the people affected by the horrific attack. He addressed President Joe Biden, stating, "It is with a heavy heart that

I extend my deepest condolences to all those affected by the horrific terrorist attack in New Orleans."

The MQM leader added that his millions of followers, both in Pakistan and across the world including in the United States stand united with the victim families during this difficult time. Hussain also reaffirmed his long-standing commitment to fighting religious fanaticism and extremism, emphasizing his dedication to the cause over his 46-year-long political struggle.

This tragedy was followed by another incident hours later in Las Vegas, where a Tesla Cybertruck exploded outside the Trump International Hotel, killing one and injuring seven. The FBI confirmed that the explosion was linked to an act of terrorism, with the suspect, Shamsud Din Jabbar, identified as having ties to ISIS. The FBI further revealed that the vehicle used in the attack was rented from a platform called Turo, and it contained multiple suspected explosive devices.

India extends USD 500,000 aid to earthquake-hit Vanuatu

MI News Service, New Delhi: India announced immediate relief assistance worth USD 500,000 on Thursday, to Vanuatu in the wake of a devastating earthquake, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"The MEA in a release stated, "India extended its deep condolences to the Government and the people of Vanuatu for the damage and destruction caused by this unprecedented disaster and conveyed its readiness to extend all possible support and assistance in

this time of difficulty." "As a close friend and partner under the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) and as a gesture of solidarity with the friendly people of Vanuatu, the Government of India extended a monetary assistance of USD 500,000 to support relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts," MEA press statement added.

India has firmly stood by Vanuatu during times of difficulty and devastation caused by natural disasters. An important pillar of

India's Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI), announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2019, is Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

India is committed to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and continues to be a responsible and steadfast responder in the region.

Notably, an earthquake of magnitude 7.4 struck near Vanuatu's coast in the South Pacific Ocean on 17 December 2024 causing major destruction and loss of life.

Israel eliminates head of Hamas Internal Security Forces in Gaza

MI News Service, Jerusalem: The Israel Air Force (IAF) conducted an intelligence-based strike in the Humanitarian Area in Khan Yunis and eliminated Hassam Shahwan, the Head of Hamas Internal Security Forces in southern Gaza, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) said on Thursday.

The IDF further said that Shahwan was responsible for developing intelligence assessments in coordination with elements of Hamas' military wing in attacks on the IDF in Gaza.

"The Head of Hamas Internal Security Forces in southern Gaza, the terrorist Hassam Shahwan, was eliminated by the IAF in an intelligence-based strike in the Humanitarian Area in Khan Yunis. Shahwan was responsible for developing intelligence assessments in coordination with elements of Hamas'

military wing in attacks on the IDF in Gaza. The Hamas Internal Security Forces have conducted violent interrogations of



the Gazan population, violating human rights and suppressing dissent within the organization," IDF said in a post on X.

Israel has been conducting military operations on Hamas operatives in the region.

Earlier this week, the IDF had confirmed the killing of Hamas' Nukhba Platoon commander, Abd al-Hadi Sabah, in a recent drone strike. As per the IDF, Sa-

bah had led the attack on Kibbutz Nir Oz during the October 7, 2023, massacre.

On December 30, the IDF had stated the elimination of six Hamas terrorists who participated in the brutal October 7 massacre in Israel.

The IDF had further confirmed that Raseem Judeh, a Hamas commander in the Jabaliya region, was also eliminated. Judeh, who played a direct role in the October 7 massacre, was killed alongside four other Hamas commanders and five additional terrorists.

On Sunday, the IDF had confirmed that the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza is being questioned for his suspected involvement in terrorist activities, following a raid that led to the arrest of over 240 alleged Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives.

"Grain from Ukraine": Zelenskyy sets up Fund for stabilising Syria

MI News Service, Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has announced the setting up of "Grain from Ukraine" fund in order to provide security and economic prospects for stabilising Syria. The announcement was made on Thursday.

Zelenskyy shared the details on X.

"I received a report from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine regarding their visit to Syria. The outcomes of the Damascus talks, along with security and economic prospects. Ukraine will support all efforts to stabilize Syria. We will set up the 'Grain from Ukraine' program to cooperate with the Syrian administration and all interested partners.

We will engage with the Europeans and America to ensure maximum support. More stability in the Middle East means more peace and trade for all partners."

The first tranche of the grain fund was announced during Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Andrii Sybiha's visit to Ukraine.

On December 30, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha held talks in Damascus with the leadership of the Syrian administration, its leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, Prime Minister Mohammed al-Bashir, and Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaybani, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said.

"We are ready to help the Syrian people, because Ukraine is interested in stable Syria and the

development of mutually beneficial cooperation," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha had said.

During his visit to Damascus which also saw the restoring of diplomatic ties between Ukraine and Syria.

Foreign Minister Sybiha made the announcement of giving to Syria, "500 tons of Ukrainian flour within the framework of the humanitarian program. Grain from Ukraine. This amount of flour will be enough to meet the needs of more than 33 thousand Syrian families or 167 thousand people for a month", the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry reported.

"This is the first delivery of free humanitarian aid. We are ready to deliver more," emphasized the Foreign Minister.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ravanchi to visit India for discussing trade, connectivity, security

MI News Service, New Delhi: Iran's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Takht Ravanchi is set to visit India on Thursday and discuss key issues between the two countries such as falling trade volumes. Other items on the agenda are increasing bilateral trade in both energy and non-energy sectors, improving connectivity and tourism, regional and international security, and the completion of Chabahar Port.

On condition of anonymity, a senior Iranian official told reporters here, "We are extended neighbors and there is a lot of commonality, we can complement each other on many issues including international and regional security."

"We used to have good economic ties but they are not same after sanctions, nevertheless there are opportunities to have better traditional energy trade, there are sanctions on Iranian oil however I still

lot of interest, Indian refineries which are so used to traditional Iranian oil had to adjust, India is buying Russian oil, however circumstances of sanctions on Iran and India are different," the senior official added.

The Iranian senior official said that Iran looks ahead to enhance ties with India in non-energy sectors like agriculture and tourism. He also said that the Indian government should be more forthcoming in issuing visas to Iranian tourists, as Iranians visit other neighboring countries and Europe for vacations and have not been coming to India. "Connectivity is one issue like Chabahar port has brought India and Iran closer. It is a meeting point of Iran, central Asia and Europe, it is a very strategic route, we have been doing good things for development of Chabahar," the senior official said.

Iran is also very keen to in-

crease cooperation on Chabahar port which is gateway to central Asia and Europe

Speaking about the proposal of world's longest undersea tunnel with Qatar, which would connect Iran's southern port city of Dayer to Qatar, and play a strategic role, amid the background of the INSTC corridor's construction underway, the Iranian official clarified that the Qatar undersea tunnel is "not competing with other regional corridors but is to improve connectivity".

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is an important initiative taken by India, Russia and Iran by signing an Inter-Governmental Agreement on 12th September 2000, to enhance trade and transport connectivity among countries along its route, the Ministry of External Affairs had answered during a Lok Sabha session earlier.

Who will replace Rohit Sharma as captain? Bumrah the logical choice, but Virat Kohli's name also surfaces

Rohit Sharma is probably going through the toughest phase in his cricketing career, both as a batter and as a captain.

Though India's T20 World Cup triumph under him came as a relief, Sharma's form, especially in whites, has been a concern. Though India won both the Tests against Bangladesh at home, the skipper scored only 42 runs in the series.

Next came the shocking whitewash in the three-Test series against New Zealand, when India lost their first home series in more than a decade. Sharma managed to score a fifty but did not make any other meaningful contribution with the bat. His captaincy, too, came under scrutiny.

Sharma was not part of the

team in the first Test of the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy series against Australia in Perth as he went to India for the birth of his second child. Upon return, not only did his batting woes continue—he tried to bat in the middle order, before returning to the opening slot but could reach double figures only once in three Tests—his captaincy in crunch moments came under fire from former cricketers like Simon Katich and Dinesh Karthik, among others.

Will Rohit Sharma be dropped for the Sydney Test?

With India trailing 1-2 ahead of the final Test which begins in Sydney tomorrow, and Sharma showing no signs of returning to form, he is likely to be rested or dropped from the playing XI. Head coach Gautam Gambhir



was non-committal in his response when asked about Sharma's place in the playing XI for the fifth and final Test.

Who will replace Rohit Sharma as captain—Bumrah or Kohli?

If Sharma does not make the playing XI, Shubman Gill will most likely replace him. But, the larger question is—who will be the captain? Pace spearhead and vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah, who led the team to a win in Perth, is the obvious choice. But, will he be the long-term choice if India decide to rest Sharma for the upcoming Tests, or if the veteran calls it quits from the longer format? In Mohammed Shami's absence, Bumrah shoulders the burden of the bowling department across formats. So, the team management will be wary

of putting additional responsibilities on Bumrah, especially in the longer format.

A report in The Indian Express had quoted a senior BCCI official as saying that a senior player, who termed himself 'Mr Fix-it', has shown captaincy ambitions saying he does not have much confidence in the young brigade to lead the team. While there are speculations who that player is, a Times of India report said that Virat Kohli may be given the reins of the team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, probably after the Australia series, to manage the transition.

It is learnt that the BCCI will review the performance of the team and coach Gambhir after the Australia series. One can expect some tough calls in the coming days.

'Then he would have agreed': Rodri responds to Cristiano Ronaldo's Ballon d'Or criticism

After five-time winner Cristiano Ronaldo openly claimed that Vinicius Junior of Real Madrid deserved to win the Ballon d'Or over Rodri, the Manchester City CDM broke his silence. The Spaniard said Cristiano Ronaldo should be well aware of how the Ballon d'Or winner is chosen and the Portuguese captain's comment was a total surprise for him.

'Vinicius Jr or Rodri': What did Cristiano Ronaldo say Al-Nassr FC forward Cristiano Ronaldo attended the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai last Friday. During an interaction, the veteran lauded upcoming youngsters, including Barcelona's Lamine Yamal and Real Madrid stars Vinicius Jr. and Jude Bellingham—all standout performers last season.

However, CR7 didn't stop there. He went on to add that he believed Vinicius Jr deserved to win the Ballon d'Or over Rodri. Having won the UEFA Champions League and scoring the final are no menial feats, he said.

"It wasn't fair, in my opinion. I'll say that here in front of everybody. They gave it to Rodri. He deserved it, too... But I think they should have given it to Vinicius Jr because he won the Champions League and scored a goal in the final. The other issues for me are not important," Cristiano Ronaldo was quoted as saying.

Rodri reacts to Cristiano Ronaldo's comments

Rodri reacted to the Real Madrid legend's statement while talking with Spanish media house AS. "Well, it was a surprise because he knows better than anyone how this award works and, above all, how the winner is chosen. This year, the journalists who vote have decided that I should win it. Probably, these same journalists were the ones who at some point voted for him to win it, and I imagine that then he would have agreed," the Manchester City holding midfielder, who is out with an ACL injury said.

Perhaps City's most important player, what elevates Rodri beyond the rest of the world's best defensive midfielders, is his involvement in open-play sequences resulting in shots. With 8.4 per 90 minutes, he was comfortably top of the league, outshining even attacking players such as Phil Foden (7.8), Martin Odegaard (7.7), Bukayo Saka (7.5), Dominik Szoboszlai (7.4), James Maddison (7.3) and Mohamed Salah (7.3).



Chosen for Khel Ratna honour: Gukesh promises best moves in future as well

NEW DELHI: Chess world champion D Gukesh on Thursday promised his "best moves on 64 square and outside" in future as well after being chosen for the prestigious 'Khel Ratna' award by the government.

Gukesh recently became the youngest-ever world champion when he defeated China's Ding Liren. He is only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to claim the title.

"Honourable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji, I am truly grateful and feel humbled to receive the prestigious Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna Award. Your words and guidance have always inspired me to strive for excellence and make the nation



proud," Gukesh wrote on X.

"I promise to continue delivering my best moves on 64 squares and outside of it. Thank you Hon. Sports Minister @mansukhmandviya Ji for your constant support."

Gukesh was chosen for the highest sporting honour in the country along with shooter Manu Bhaker, hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh and para-athlete Praveen Kumar.

He had become the challenger for the world title after winning the Candidates Tournament earlier in 2023 when he was 17. The Chennai-based Gukesh had also become the top-ranked player from India last year to end Anand's 37-year run.

India aims to retain Border-Gavaskar Trophy in crucial fifth Test

SYDNEY [AUSTRALIA]: India will face Australia in the fifth Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. After a thrilling win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the hosts have taken a 2-1 lead in the series. India needs to win this match so that they can retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Despite moments of brilliance from both sides, India's batting remains a concern heading into the final game. With senior players out of form, the responsibility has fallen on the youngsters to help the team reach competitive scores throughout the series.

Jasprit Bumrah has been the standout bowler, but it is Yashasvi Jaiswal's contributions with the bat that have kept India in the contest. Alongside KL Rahul, Jaiswal has shown the ability to handle the fierce Australian pace attack. Once again, his performance at the top of the order will be crucial for India.

Travis Head has twice hurt India with centuries in Adelaide and Brisbane, swinging the momentum in favour of Australia. Although he had a quieter game in the fourth Test, a return to form on the batting-friendly pitch in Sydney could pose a significant challenge for the visitors.

The Sydney pitch traditionally offers runs in the first half of the game, with spinners becoming more influential as the match progresses.



However, rain is predicted for the final day and on Thursday, which could aid fast bowlers more than usual. The teams winning the toss may look to bat first to capitalize on the early batting conditions.

Indian ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma is expected to miss out in the fifth Test, with Jasprit Bumrah set to lead the side. When asked about Rohit's absence from the pre-match press conference, head coach Gautam Gambhir reassured that everything is fine with the captain.

"Everything is fine with Rohit, and we will announce the playing XI tomorrow after evaluating the pitch. Our main focus in the dressing room has been on how we will win the next test, as it is crucial for us," Gambhir noted.

Australia's star pacer Mitchell Starc struggled with fitness during the Melbourne Test, experiencing upper body discomfort and rib

soreness. However, he has been declared fit to play in Sydney.

Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Pat Cummins praised Starc's resilience.

"He has bowled 145 km/hr for almost 15 years, and you just don't do that without always dealing with different niggles or setbacks. He grinds his teeth and gets on with it. He's the one player who just refuses ever to talk about being rested or rotated," Cummins said.

Australia XI: Sam Konstas, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Beau Webster, Alex Carey (wk), Pat Cummins (c), Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Scott Boland.

India probable XI: Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant (wk), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah (c), Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna.

JEPC all set to host 68th National School Games

PC JHA

RANCHI: 68th National School Games starting from January 4 as a decisive meeting was held today with the officials of all the 17 committees related to the event in Jharkhand Education Project Council regarding the successful organization of the National School Games.

State Education Project Director Shashi Ranjan, State Program Officer Dhirasen Soreng, officials of Sports Cell and members associated with various committees participated in this meeting.

Addressing the meeting, State Education Project Director Shashi Ranjan said that the members of the committees working diligently for the successful organization will be rewarded.

He said that the teams have also started coming from today, so no negligence should be done in their accommodation, registration and health facilities. Action will be taken on receiving complaints.

He directed the authorized contact officers for the teams to be alert and work in coordination with the team. Shashi Ranjan said that officials from management to ground level should complete the preparations by this evening at any cost.

Players from various states have started reaching Ranchi from today to participate in the sports event. Special accommodation has been arranged for girls players at Jharkhand University of Technology, Namkum and Jharkhand Council of Educational Research and Training, Ratu. Medical teams will be deployed 24 hours a day (in two shifts) not only for girls but also for boy players. Female medical staff will be deployed at JUT and JCERT. Keeping in mind the arrival, accommodation and registration of players, the control room has been activated at the state level from today. In case of any inconvenience, the concerned officials can be contacted over the phone.

The teams that have reached Ranchi today include teams from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.



"Murlikant sir, you are our country's finest champion": Kartik Aaryan on para-athlete's Arjuna Award

MUMBAI (MAHARASHTRA): Actor Kartik Aaryan expressed his happiness for para-athlete Murlikant Petkar after the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced that the para-swimmer will be conferred the Arjuna Award (Lifetime) for his outstanding performance in the sport.

Kartik Aaryan, who played the role of Murlikant Petkar in the film Chandu Champion, praised the athlete's 'headstrong' attitude and sportsmanship. Petkar made India proud by winning the country's first gold medal in the Paralympic Games.

Speaking to ANI, Kartik Aaryan said, "So, so, so happy to hear this news! While working on his biopic, I came to know about his life in such great detail and up close and personal that his win feels deeply personal. He has remained unbreakable and solid throughout his life, despite all the challenges

destiny threw at him."

The actor called the news the "best way to start the year."

"I have met many sports personalities, but Murlikant sir's sportsmanship and headstrong attitude are unmatched. Hearing about this honour is the best way to start the year. Murlikant sir, you are our country's finest champion - truly one of a kind," he added.

Kartik Aaryan's 'Chandu Champion' was based on the life of Murlikant Petkar and it was directed by Kabir Khan.

This is not the first time that the 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' actor has paid tribute to the para-athlete. After the release of the film, Kartik Aaryan penned a long heartwarming note for gold medallist Murlikant and shared a behind-the-scenes video from his initial meeting with him.

In the video, director Kabir Khan warmly welcomes Petkar's



family, while Kartik receives appreciation for his performance. Kartik likened the Olympian's praise to a 'medal' for him.

Sharing the video, Kartik penned a lengthy note, as he wrote, "Couldn't have imagined a non-swimmer like myself Swimming without the use of Legs. Meet The Real Champion who inspired me to achieve the impossible @murlikantpetkar"

"Firstly, Thank you for being you and being a living inspiration. Your story was important for everyone to know - to make everyone believe in themselves.

When Kabir sir narrated Chandu Champion for the first time, I didn't believe that this could be a true story. Aapne ek zindagi mein, anek zindagiyan jo jee hain !!," he continued.

"From not being able to believe your story in the first place to living your extraordinary life for almost

two years, it's been an incredible experience and the utmost honour. My life has changed ever since you have entered it. I have never received so much love and appreciation for my work before, as I'm getting for Chandu Champion," Kartik added.

"It's overwhelming!! Really fortunate that I got the opportunity to meet you and relive some unbelievable, magical and inspiring moments of your life. Actor banna safal ho gaya #Gratitude #ChanduChampion," Kartik concluded.

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8txzRatZjy?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_id=96ac8231-8619-4c19-95ed-70bed705c384

Murlikant Petkar will receive his award from the President of India at a specially organized function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 17, 2025.