

# State Government Allocates Rs 215 Crore for South 24 Parganas Schemes

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has once again criticized the central government for neglecting Bengal, particularly in its lack of support for organizing the Gangasagar Mela. She emphasized that the entire expenditure for the fair is borne by the state government, despite repeated requests to the Centre to accord it the status of a national fair. "The West Bengal government has written multiple letters to the Centre, but no steps have been taken so far. However, I am hopeful that one day Gangasagar Mela will receive national recognition," she said. During this event, the Chief Minister... **PG 3**



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# Morning India

## Mamata Banerjee expresses concern over infiltration threats, asks police to coordinate with Central agencies

SUMAN GANGULY

**Gangasagar:** Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed concern over the possibility of infiltration at the annual Gangasagar fair which is beginning on Wednesday.

Before returning to Kolkata on Tuesday after her two day visit to Gangasagar, the Chief minister expressed her apprehension about the possibility of infiltration in the Mela ground and said, "I have informed the Navy and Coastal Guard to ensure that no one can enter from the other side. Surveillance must be maintained across water, land, and air." She also conducted an aerial survey of the Mela ground on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister stated, "The central government spends crores of rupees on the Kumbh Mela, but it provides nothing for Gangasagar.

However, in the coming days, Gangasagar Mela will definitely be declared a national fair. I have requested the head priest of the temple that more than one crore pilgrims visit this fair. Instead of sending all the earnings to Ayodhya, 25 per cent of the funds should be used to build a concrete embankment in front of the temple to prevent erosion. This will protect the temple from submerging." She mentioned that the main priest had agreed, and this would benefit the pilgrims.

Responding to the Chief Minister's appeal, the temple authorities announced (through loudspeaker) that the work would begin with this year's funds. Sanjay Das, the temple's Mohant, said, "The temple authorities will bear the cost of constructing a concrete embankment to prevent erosion along the seashore." The Chief Minister further stated, "Earlier, there was nothing at Gangasagar. The temple has been submerged three times. The sea is advancing, but we are trying our best. We have allocated Rs 1,500 crore



for the construction of a bridge over the Muriganga River. In 2-3 years, people will no longer have to face difficulties for crossing the river." The administration had earlier planted

coconut trees in rows over a 1-kilometer stretch from Road No. 1 to Road No. 5 along the seashore. However, due to recent erosion, these trees have been washed away by the sea. According to administrative sources, in 2019, the Gangasagar-Bakkhali Development Board and the state's Urban and Municipal Development Department jointly started work to prevent erosion. Experts devised a plan, and architects from IIT Chennai also provided suggestions. The Kolkata Port Authority assisted in surveying the erosion-prone areas. A report was prepared on how underwater soil was eroding. Approximately Rs 141 crore was allocated for this project, including Rs 67 crore by the state and the rest by the central government. The project was assigned to KMDA. However, the work has not yet started. Local resident Ajay Mandal said, "If the temple committee takes steps to prevent ero-

sion under the Chief Minister's initiative, it will be very beneficial." The area's MLA and Minister of Sundarbans Development, Bankim Hazra, said, "With the Chief Minister's efforts and the temple committee's consent, we are hopeful that the work will begin soon." The Gangasagar Mela will begin on January 8 and continue until January 17. Ahead of the fair, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated several projects in the district, amounting to approximately Rs 153 crore, to benefit 19 lakh people. She also announced the construction of three new bridges in South 24 Parganas and the launch of four vessel services in Patharpratima.

To prepare for the fair, dredging is being carried out in Muriganga to increase the depth. Eco-friendly bags will be distributed to pilgrims, and GPS tracking will be implemented from Wednesday.

## CM Mamata Banerjee to convene high-level meeting for BGBS

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** After overseeing the preparations for the Gangasagar Mela, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is set to shift her focus to the next month's Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS).

On Wednesday, she will convene a high-level meeting at Nabanna to assess the state's readiness for the event, scheduled for February 5-6. Sources indicate that the CM will conduct a detailed review of the progress made in preparations for the summit.

With the assembly elections approaching in 2026, the BGBS is becoming an event of significant importance, both administratively and politically. It provides Mamata Banerjee an opportunity to showcase West Bengal's industrial potential. Over the past few months, she has entrusted administrative officials with various responsibilities regarding the summit. Wednesday's meeting will serve as a platform to evaluate

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## 95 people killed and over 130 injured in an earthquake measuring 7.1 at Nepal-Tibet border

**MI News Service, Kathmandu:** At least 95 people were killed and more than 130 injured as six earthquakes, including a powerful one measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale, rocked Tibet and neighbouring Nepal early on Tuesday.

The shocks of earthquakes were also felt and shook buildings in several parts of India including North Bengal and Bihar, apart from Bhutan and even Bangladesh, informed sources said.

News agency Reuters, citing local media, reported that at least 95 people were killed in the Shigatse region of Tibet in the earthquake. China's state media said that 130 others were injured. Several buildings also

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West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addressing the public during her visit at Gangasagar, South 24 Parganas, on Tuesday.

## Delhi to go to the polls on February 5 and counting will be on February 8

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** Ending all speculations, the Election Commission of India announced the date for the much awaited elections to the 70 member Delhi Legislative Assembly next month. Announcing the date for the single phase elections, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday urged all political parties to maintain decorum during elections and said the Election Commis-

sion would conduct checks to ensure free and fair polls. Addressing a news conference in the National capital to announce the poll date, he said the elections will be held in a single phase on February 5, while the counting of votes will take place on February 8. He said the last date for filing of nominations is January 17

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## CM and top security officials pay tributes to Chhattisgarh naxalite blast victims

**MI News Service, Raipur:** A day after a major counter attack by the Naxalite guerillas who blew up a vehicle killing eight security personnel and a civilian on the spot, Chhattisgarh Director General of Police Ashok Juneja and CRPF DG Vitul Kumar visited the site on Tuesday in Bijapur district and paid their homage to the deceased, official sources informed.

In their biggest strike on security forces in Chhattisgarh in two years, the heavily armed Maoist militants used an improvised explosive device (IED), weighing 60 to 70 kg to blow up the security vehicle near Ambeli village under the Kutru police station area of the district.

As a result as many as eight security personnel, four each from the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Bastar Fighters units, travelling in the SUV died on the spot along with the civilian driver at a remote spot situated about 70 km south of the district headquarters.

Chhattisgarh DGP Juneja and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General Kumar on Tuesday visited the site separately and took stock of the incident,

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**N**ova Realtime Solutions LLP presented a round table Interactive open session on 4th January 2025 on the topic- India's growing footprint in global trade- a perspective.

The session was moderated by renowned media professional Ritwik Mukherjee. The panelists were Sushil Poddar President of CWBTA, Debraj Dasgupta - Global Healthcare Leader, Sandoz AG, Gagan Sachdev Managing Director of Bodyline Sports, Avik Gupta - Senior Manager of NSE, Manab Paul - Founder of Sree Balaji & Shyam Agarwal, Partner of R.G Agarwala & Co. Noted Attendees were Sanjay Khemka of EnServ Ranjeet Atal of PWC, Ashish Lohia of Eyantram, Ritika Tantia of MSME Business Forum India, Amit Soni into Jewellery Trade & Subhasis Dutt of Mohendro Dutt & Son's.

The session witnessed multiple viewpoints from the panelists and noted attendees with the common



view that the Next decade will be of India and Indians being the most important stakeholder in the global trade.

The session curator Sunil Goenka said that India's vibrancy is now being strongly felt across the globe.

## CM conducts aerial survey to assess security situation at Gangasagar

SUMAN GANGULY

**Gangasagar:** Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee conducted an aerial survey of Gangasagar mela compound on Tuesday to assess the security situation in the entire area. She instructed police officials to ensure fool proof security across all routes - waterways, roadways, and airways. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday inaugurated projects worth Rs 153 crore in South 24 Parganas district, which will benefit around 19 lakh people. She also announced the construction of three new bridges over the Dwaraka and Piyali rivers at a cost of Rs 40 crore. Before the inauguration of the Gangasagar Mela on January 8, Mamata Banerjee ex-

pressed her concern over possible infiltration and instructed the Navy and Coast Guard to prevent anyone from entering the area from the other side. The Chief Minister also conducted an aerial survey of the area. She announced that the temple committee would use 25 per cent of its revenue to construct a concrete embankment to prevent erosion. Mamata Banerjee also announced that the state government would spend Rs 1,500 crore to build a bridge over the Muri Ganga river, which would considerably reduce the travel time for pilgrims. This year's Gangasagar Mela will be plastic-free, and pilgrims will be provided with environment-friendly bags. GPS tracking systems will be installed on barges, vessels, and launches.







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# Okaya EV Rebrands as OPG Mobility

New Delhi : In a strategic move to meet the growing demands of India's electric mobility market, Okaya EV proudly unveils its new brand identity, OPG Mobility. This rebranding reflects the company's unwavering commitment to cutting-edge design, future-ready technology, and durable, safe products that address the evolving needs of India's dynamic consumer base. To cater to the increasing demand, OPG Mobility will also leverage a wide dealer network across the country. The brand will encompass two sub-brands: Ferrato, dedicated to premium electric motorcycles and scooters, and OTTOPG, focused on passenger and cargo three-wheelers.

At the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, OPG Mobility will launch its first product under the new branding and showcase its improved full range of electric vehicles. This includes existing models with enhanced product efficiency, now featuring the OPG Mobility logo. The company's 40-year strong legacy in battery and electronics technology has positioned it as a key player in India's electric mobility sector, offering a diverse portfolio of high-speed and low-speed electric scooters, premium electric bike, and passenger and cargo



three-wheelers.

Commenting on this exciting development, Mr. Anshul Gupta, Managing Director of OPG Mobility, said:

"After years of leadership in the battery and electronics sector, we are excited to

evolve from Okaya EV into OPG Mobility, a holistic provider of complete electric vehicle solutions. This rebranding isn't just about a new name, it's a strategic move to stay ahead in India's rapidly evolving EV market. We understand the need to connect

with today's Indian consumers, and this new identity reflects our commitment to modern design, advanced technology, and a customer-first approach. Our new logo embodies our renewed energy and our desire to engage with a younger, tech-savvy audience."

Mr. Anshul further added, "The Bharat Mobility 2025 Expo is the perfect platform to unveil this new vision. We will launch our first product under the OPG Mobility brand and implement this visual transformation across our entire portfolio. This change will be reflected in every customer touchpoint, both virtual and physical, ensuring a consistent and engaging brand experience."

With its refreshed identity, OPG Mobility aligns with the Indian government's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, focusing on developing a new generation of made-in-India electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers. The company is committed to providing high-quality products at the right price, catering to the mass market while focussing in expanding its service and dealership network across India. By 2025, OPG Mobility plans to ensure premium service access for every customer, from major all cities to tier-3 and tier-4 locations.

## Indian American Dhol band to participate in Trump inauguration parade



Washington: An Indian American Dhol band has been invited to participate in the parade from Capitol Hill to the White House following Donald Trump's swearing-in as the 47th US president on January 20. Shivam Dhol Tasha Pathak, a Texas-based Indian traditional drum and snare ensemble, will bring its vibrant beats and energetic rhythms to the heart of Washington, DC, offering the world a glimpse of India's rich musical traditions during the event that will be watched by millions globally, a media release said Monday. This milestone is not just a triumph for the ensemble but also a defining moment for the Indian community in Texas, across the US and the world. It marks the first time a dynamic, high-energy Indian traditional drum ensemble from Texas will perform on such a grand stage, the press release said.

"The group's invitation is a testament to the growing recognition of Indian culture worldwide and a celebration of the deepening

ing cultural ties between the US and India," it added.

In the past, the group has performed at a wide range of events beyond religious festivals, introducing global audiences to the powerful sound of the Dhol Tasha—a traditional drum ensemble. Prominent among them include musical concerts, collaborations with African and Japanese percussionists, the Howdy Modi event, NBA and NHL halftime shows, and the ICC T20 World Cup opening ceremony.

"However, this performance at the 60th Presidential Inauguration Parade is the pinnacle of their journey. The group's electrifying drumming and unique fusion of traditional Indian rhythms with global influences make them a perfect fit for this international stage," the release said.

"Representing Texas, a state celebrated for its cultural diversity, the group also shines a spotlight on the state's role as a hub for multicultural exchange," it added.

## Artist Reena Saini Kallat explores themes of migration ecological crises in solo show

New Delhi : At the heart of artist Reena Saini Kallat's solo exhibition at Nature Morte is a 20th-century audio device that, detached from its original role as a warfare tool, offers a glimpse into a world once inhabited by birds of 11 distinct species.

"Requiem (The Last Call)", a large-scale installation in continuation of Kallat's exploration of sound-based works, features recordings of bird calls -- including cryptic tree hunter, the pouli, the dusky seaside sparrow, and the kauai -- that have fallen victim to habitat destruction, overhunting, climate change, and pollution. In the show, titled "Zero Horizon", Kallat has examined the effects of human-made ecological and socio-political crises to explore the conditions of migration of species around the world.

"For humans, these movements are deeply personal and usually political, instigated by long-simmering historical disputes, communal tensions, and military violence. For animals and plants, centuries-old migratory patterns are being disrupted by climate change, overurbanisation, and environmental degradation," the organisers said in a statement. The artist has explored the parameters of these changes, illustrating through sculptures, paintings, collages, and installations. In another work, titled "I am the river, the



river is me", Kallat has combined eight paintings on canvas with a number of framed drawings, collages and found objects. The paintings are of specific rivers in different parts of the world which are all at critical stages of degeneration, creating a poetic synergy between the plight of human refugees, disappearing flora and fauna, and rapidly degrading ecosystems. "Kallat echoes a sense of personhood that is being projected on to natural resources in both social and political discourses, communicating a sense of loss, disappearance, and invisibility," they said.

Drawing on data, Kallat's works reveal the deep interdependence of migration and their cascading effects on ecosystems and societies. A large-scale wall triptych, titled "Pattern Recognition", consists of three pyramid constructions which document the international mobility available to citizens of different countries. While the citizens of

the nation at the top of each pyramid enjoy the most freedom as to how many countries they can travel to without the need of a specialised visa in their passport, those in the bottom rows require the most number of visas.

India is in the second-to-last row in all cases.

The work records "the strange, almost irrational, privileges that certain humans have over others".

The artist has complemented the work with a set of photographs sourced from the mass media. The images register actual human conflicts that are both the causes and effects of social unrest, including climate change, the pandemic, and political turmoil.

As national borders have recurrently appeared in Kallat's practice, "Pattern Recognition" expands the conversation to encompass privilege and policy.

The show will come to an end on January 12.

## Shutterstock Getty Images will join to become USD 3.7 billion visual content company

New York : Visual content companies Shutterstock and Getty Images will join to become a USD 3.7 billion visual content company. The companies said Tuesday that they have complementary portfolios, and the transaction creates a broader set of visual content products across still imagery, video, music, 3D and other asset types. "With the rapid rise in demand for compelling visual content across industries, there has never been a better time for our two businesses to come together," Getty Images CEO Craig Peters said in

a statement on Tuesday. Peters will serve as CEO of the combined business. At the deal's closing, Shutterstock shareholders can choose to receive either approximately USD 28.85 per share in cash for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own; about 13.67 shares of Getty Images common stock for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own; or a mixed consideration of 9.17 shares of Getty Images common stock plus USD 9.50 in cash for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own.

## Changing Gears in CNG: Tata Motors Raises the Bar with Twin-Cylinder Tech in Goa



Goa : Tata Motors, India's leading automotive manufacturer, continues to make significant strides in the CNG vehicle segment, firmly establishing itself as a market leader. With a robust product portfolio and strategic initiatives, the company achieved an impressive 21.1% market share in the overall CNG segment as of H1 FY2024. Tata Motors' commitment to sustainable mobility is evident in its proactive approach to adapting to the evolving automotive landscape. Popular models such as the Tiago, Tigor, Nexon, Altroz, and Punch have been instrumental in driving CNG sales, contributing 22%, 48%, 30%, 32%, and 35% to their individual brand sales nationally in H1 FY2024. The Tata Punch

emerged as the brand's top-selling CNG model in the region, followed by the Nexon, Altroz, Tigor, and Tiago. These figures underscore Tata Motors' leadership in the sustainable vehicle segment and its dedication to delivering innovative and eco-friendly solutions. Complementing its growing product portfolio, the CNG infrastructure in India has expanded significantly. This expansion has been a key driver of the segment's strong CAGR and YoY growth.

About Tata Motors' CNG Offerings

Nexon iCNG: The Tata Nexon has firmly established itself as a favorite among Indian customers for its style, performance, and practicality.

## Over 2 300 exhibitors from 30 countries to participate in Indusfood 2025



New Delhi : Over 2,300 exhibitors from 30 countries and 7,500 international buyers will participate in three-day Indusfood 2025, beginning Wednesday, at Greater Noida, Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) said on Tuesday. The integrated trade fair will host 15,000 Indian buyers and trade visitors, it said.

Mohit Singla, Chairman of TPCI, said the exhibition will provide a platform to bridge the gaps between farmers, technology providers and global markets. "It not only enhances trade opportunities but also directly improves farmer incomes by creating access to better markets and value-addition opportunities," he said. Union Minister of Food

Processing Industries Chirag Paswan will inaugurate the eighth edition of the Indusfood 2025, which is being organised by the Trade Promotion Council of India with the support of the Department of Commerce.

Apart from the Indusfood food and beverages trade fair at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, the council is also organising the fourth edition of Indusfood Manufacturing (covering food processing technology, packaging technology, ingredients and hospitality technology) and Indusfood Agritech (showcasing agricultural technology, fisheries technology, dairy and poultry farming technology).

The latter two fairs are scheduled for January 9-11 at Yashobhoomi here.

# Five healthy diet staples that may interact with prescription drugs

Kingston University (The Conversation) One of the most popular new year's resolutions is making a commitment to healthier eating.

Whether that's eating more fruits and vegetables, cutting down on meat consumption or even becoming a vegetarian or vegan a few days a week.

While there are many benefits that can come from following a healthier diet, it's important that any diet changes are made carefully. This is especially true if you're someone who takes a prescription drug, as many health food staples can negatively interact with them.

Here are some common foods and drinks interactions you should know about:

1. Grapefruit juice: To break down some prescription drugs in the body, the liver uses enzymes called cytochrome P450. But grapefruit juice contains chemical compounds called furanocoumarins which can block the action of these enzymes. If this happens, some drugs can accumulate in the body.

This includes ciclosporin, a drug that's commonly used to prevent organ transplant rejection and manage symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and skin conditions such as psoriasis. A build-

up of ciclosporin can cause many side-effects, ranging from mild nausea and vomiting to kidney and liver damage.

Statin, often used to treat high cholesterol levels and prevent heart attacks and strokes, can also be affected by grapefruit juice through the same mechanism. Increased statin levels in the body can raise the risk of side-effects, including muscle breakdown, which is rare but serious.

Many other drugs can potentially interact with grapefruit juice as well - including amlodipine (a common high blood pressure drug) and sildenafil (an erectile dysfunction drug). If you take any of these prescriptions drugs, it's best to talk to your doctor or pharmacist before drinking even small amounts of grapefruit juice. It may even be best to avoid it altogether.

2. Pomegranate and cranberry juice: Many fruits and fruit juices - especially from the citrus family - can affect the breakdown of drugs in the liver.

Pomegranate juice is also shown to block the liver enzymes which break down the anticoagulant drug warfarin. The drug is used to prevent blood clots from forming in people with heart arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation or deep vein thrombosis.



Some reported cases suggest that pomegranate juice might increase the international normalised ratio (INR - the time taken for blood to clot) in patients taking warfarin. This means patients may be at higher risk of bleeding.

Pomegranate juice may also affect other drugs, such as tacrolimus, an anti-rejection drug used in organ transplants.

Similarly, a number of case reports suggest cranberry juice

can also affect warfarin. There has been one reported death of a patient from bleeding after they had drunk cranberry juice for two weeks prior while taking warfarin.

But results from various studies are mixed - with some showing cranberry affects warfarin in the body while others don't show any effect. Because of this, it may be worth checking the INR more often if you drink these

juices or consider that any fluctuations in INR may be due to fruit juices.

3. Green leafy vegetables: Spinach, broccoli and kale are often hailed as healthy foods because they're filled with nutrients while being low in calories.

However, they're also high in vitamin K, which is needed to activate certain clotting factors (proteins in the blood which help it clot).

This may be problematic for patients taking warfarin. Warfarin works by blocking vitamin K in order to prevent blood clots from forming. But eating foods rich in vitamin K can lower your INR and increase the risk of developing a blood clot.

It's important to have a healthy diet - but be sure to monitor your INR levels or speak to your doctor if you do introduce more vitamin K-rich foods into your diet.

4. Milk:

Milk and dairy-rich foods such as cheese and yoghurt are all good sources of protein and calcium - a mineral required for healthy bones. But these foods can affect the absorption of some drugs in the gut. This includes antibiotics such as some tetracyclines and ciprofloxacin. The calcium in the milk can bind to the antibiotic, meaning it cannot be absorbed into the bloodstream. This means the body will not get the full dose of antibiotic - making it harder for it to fight the infection. Other drugs affected by dairy include levothyroxine, a drug used for patients with low thyroid levels.

But as these interactions happen in the gut, this means you can still have dairy even if you take these drugs. In most cases, you just need to leave at least a

two-hour gap either before or after taking the drug before consuming dairy.

5. Beans: Beans are considered healthy as they're high in fibre and vitamins and minerals. Beans are also a great source of plant-based protein.

But soybeans, broad beans (fava beans) and snow peas may be high in tyramine. While tyramine is a substance naturally found in the body and in certain foods (such as aged cheeses, cured meats and fermented foods), it can interact with the antidepressant phenelzine.

Phenelzine is a monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressant (MAOI), which is less commonly used nowadays. The drug blocks enzymes which break down tyramine in the body.

If patients eat tyramine-rich foods, this may result in high levels of tyramine, potentially leading to a dangerous rise in blood pressure. Only MAOI antidepressants, such as phenelzine, isocarboxazid, tranylcypromine, are affected by tyramine.

A healthy diet can improve your overall health in many ways. Just be sure to consult with a doctor or pharmacist before drastically changing your diet - particularly if you take prescription medications. (The Conversation)

India and other South Asian countries should stand up against China's super dam on Brahmaputra, warns expert

**MI News Service, Dharamshala:** Soon after China approved the construction of the world's largest hydropower project on the Brahmaputra river, also known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, the Tibetan experts-in-exile have said that it will have multiple implications not only for India but for many other South Asian countries as well.

While speaking with ANI, Tempa Gyaltzen, deputy director and a researcher of Tibet Policy Institute in Dharamshala said, "This will have serious implications for India. The idea of this dam came up in 2020 when I personally wrote an article called 'China's super dam in Tibet and its implications for India' and now it has been officially approved, which means the construction is going to move forward very quickly."

Gyaltzen added, "And the implication for India could be at different levels. For the people in North East India, the construction of a dam could have serious hydrological implications. I will give a few examples. In the summer when there is excess flow of water in the region, the dam that would store extra water will also be released, which means the chances of greater flood in the region is very high. During winter when there is dry season in the region, when there is scarcity of water flow in the region, the dam will store whatever river is flowing through the region, which means the region would face the scarcity of water in the region."

**UKPNP leader condemns call for jihad by PoJK Prime Minister**

**MI News Service Brussels:** Sajid Hussain, leader of the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP), has strongly criticized recent remarks by Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), who publicly called for jihad. Hussain described the statements as a serious threat to both regional and global peace, labeling them as a dangerous incitement to violence.

In a video message, Hussain condemned the Prime Minister's rhetoric as rooted in extremism, emphasizing that such remarks, made under the guise of advancing the Kashmir issue, represent a harmful shift away from diplomatic norms.

"We are deeply concerned and alarmed by the recent public statements made by the so-called Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, in which he openly called for initiating Jihad. This rhetoric, steeped in extremism, is a direct incitement to violence, posing a significant threat to regional and global peace."

# In 'one-of-a-kind' order, SC grants bail to POCSO accused on condition he pays child support

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Friday granted bail to an undertrial accused of impregnating a minor under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, on the condition that he pays maintenance for his child. The accused, Sandeep D. Nikam, was arrested six years ago in 2019 in connection with a case concerning the rape of a minor and penetrative sexual assault, under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code along with Sections 3 and 4 of the POCSO Act, 2012.

However, a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Manmohan on 3 January noted that since the peti-



tioner had served five and a half years in prison, he could be granted bail. "Considering the

facts and circumstances of the case and the period of incarceration already undergone by the petitioner, which is five and a half years, we are inclined to grant bail to the petitioner," it said.

Advocate-on-record Javed R. Sheikh, who represented Nikam, described the ruling as "one-of-a-kind" in POCSO cases. "This judgment is one-of-a-kind because it goes a step beyond the usual bail conditions in POCSO cases," Sheikh told ThePrint. "The bench gave a human touch to the case by asking the accused to pay Rs 7,500 a month to the victim's mother for child support, indicating that the court went a step ahead to take

care of the family unit."

Explaining that the POCSO victim was now dead and the child was left in a state of complete vagrancy, the lawyer added that "the court saw to it that the trial was fair". Sheikh noted that the order was "unusual" for POCSO cases, where bail is usually granted on grounds like availability of the accused for trial. "The court was mindful of the fact that the accused is an incarcerated workman who has to support his family and sufficient time was given to him so that even after obtaining his freedom, he has sufficient time to take care of his fatherly responsibilities," he said.

## Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) has been Appointed for the New Rayagada Railway Division under East Coast Railway



• Appointment of New DRM is a vital step to operationalize the new Division and to accelerate the Infrastructure Development. • Focus on Southern Odisha's Tribal and Aspirational Districts including Rayagada, Koraput, Gajapati, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri and Kalahandi for Expedited Railway Network Development. • Transformative Initiative to Boost Economic Growth, Connectivity, and Employment Opportunities in South Odisha's Tribal Belt. • Improved Railway Services to Enhance Access to Markets, Healthcare, and Education for Local Communities. • Enhanced Connectivity and Infrastructure Development to Boost Tourism in Southern Odisha's Scenic and Culturally Rich Regions. • Rayagada Railway Division to Drive Tourism, Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, Positioning Odisha as a Key Travel Destination.

**MI News Service, Bhubaneswar:** In a historic move for Indian Railways, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for the Rayagada Railway Division Building and inaugurated the Jammu Railway Division, marking a significant milestone in the expansion of the railway network. With this development, Jammu becomes the 69th Railway Division and Rayagada the 70th, further strengthening the railway infrastructure across the nation. The newly established Rayagada Railway Division will be responsible for overseeing Railway Operations predominantly across the Southern Districts of Odisha. This Division will serve the interests of the tribal and aspirational districts, including Rayagada, Koraput, Gajapati, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, and Kalahandi. The region's strategic location and growing importance make this Division crucial for further development of the State's Railway Network. The creation of the Rayagada Railway Division is expected to significantly accelerate both train operations and infrastructure development in these vital areas. Posting of new DRM is an important step forward to ensure expedited execution of the divisional headquarters and to ensure the fast-tracked development of railway infrastructure in the region. This initiative will have a transformative impact on the tribal belt of South Odisha, boosting regional economic growth, improving connectivity with local industries and providing substantial employment opportunities. With Improved Railway Services, the local communities will experience enhanced access to markets, healthcare and education, leading to a better quality of life. The future connectivity and infrastructure development in Southern Odisha will significantly boost tourism. These routes pass through scenic areas known for lush greenery, waterfalls, and tribal heritage, with the Koraput-Rayagada section offering stunning views of the Eastern Ghats.



Pilgrims from Pakistan arrive at the railway station for the ongoing 'Urs' of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at the Ajmer Sharif, in Ajmer, Rajasthan.

## IM High Madrasa Qualifies for 15th Madrasa Games and Sports 2025 of District Hooghly



**MI News Service, Hooghly:** Category, U-17 Boys. 1. Muhammad Kaish : 3000m, high jump. (first, third) 2. Rehan Ali : 100m (2nd) 3. Muhammad Arif. 200 meters (2nd) 4. Irfan Ali . Long jump, 800 meters (1st, 1st) Under 17 Girls 5. Janvi khatoun : 1500m, 800m, Javelin Throw (1st, 1st, 1st) Under 19 Boys. 6. Rafiq Siraj : High Jump, 200m (1st/2nd) 7. Zahid Alam: Shot Put and Javelin, Short Throw. (second, second) 8. Muhammad Aman Alam : 400m, 100m, long jump. (first, second, second) 9. Sadaf Ali . 800mtrs ago. 10. Tanveer Aslam. 3000 meters (1st) Out of 15 stu-

dent-athletes, 10 students of IM High Madrasa have qualified for the 15th Madrasa Games and Sports 2025 of Hooghly district. Highest achievement among all Madrasahs at President Sub-Division level this year. Madrasa management and teachers congratulate all the students for their outstanding performance in Sadar Sub Division Madrasah Games and Sports 2025. Janvi Khatun has always been a prominent performer in sports on behalf of the madrasa, for which she was specially congratulated and appreciated. Aman is also consistently playing the best game there

## Imran Khan cannot be tried for failing to deposit gift in Toshakhana: Pak IHC

**MI News Service, Islamabad:** The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ruled that former Prime Minister Imran Khan cannot be prosecuted under the amended Toshakhana rules for failing to deposit a Bulgari jewellery set gifted by the Saudi crown prince, Dawn reported. In a detailed 14-page judgement, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb stated that the 2023 amendments introducing penalties for failing to submit gifts to the state treasury cannot be applied retroactively. The court clarified that, under the Toshakhana rules of 2018, only the submission of a receipt, not the gift itself, was mandatory.

## Former Indian envoy Veena Sikri questions credibility of second arrest warrant against Hasina

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** Following a second arrest warrant against former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), over allegations of enforced disappearances, former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Veena Sikri, questioned the credibility and evidence behind these charges, emphasising the lack of facts and figures.

Sikri further highlighted that international body UN Human Rights Commission have found no substantial evidence. While speaking with ANI, Sikri said, "This is the second arrest warrant issued against Sheikh Hasina. This is on enforced disappearances... If you talk about the first arrest warrant, it was on the so-called genocide. But no facts and figures were presented. When the UN Human Rights Commission was asked to give a report on the people who lost their lives in July, August, they say we have not been given any evidence... Is there an FIR? What is written in the FIR? What is the evidence? There is nothing like that..."

She added, "When you make an extradition request, it is a long legal case. You have to give the evidence that has been presented... None of this has been done. Now the question of enforced disappearances, you just name it like that. The Rapid Ac-



tion Battalion is responsible and is accused of these enforced disappearances. This was set up during Begum Khaleda Zia's time, the Rapid Action Battalion. And since then there have been all these allegations against them that they take people, enforced disappearances. Since then it has become a political issue. But now suddenly making a case out of it and then accusing 12 people. I don't think these cases carry any seriousness."

Notably, the ICT on Monday issued an arrest warrant against Hasina and 10 others, including her former Defence Adviser Major General (retired) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed, according to a report by Daily Star.

The warrants relate to two cases involving allegations of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

## Brazil announces Indonesia as new member of BRICS

**MI News Service, Brasilia:** Brazil has announced that Indonesia has become a full member of the BRICS group. Brazil, which holds the presidency of the BRICS in 2025, said that Indonesia's candidature was endorsed by leaders of the bloc at the Johannesburg summit in 2023.

In a statement, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry welcomed Indonesia for its entry into BRICS. It said that Indonesia and other BRICS members support the reform of the global governance institutions. "The Brazilian government welcomes Indonesia for its entry into BRICS. As the largest economy and most populous nation in Southeast Asia, Indonesia shares with other BRICS members the support for the reform of the global governance institutions and contributes significantly to the deepening of Global South cooperation, priorities that align with Brazil's theme for its presidency: "Enhancing Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance." Brazilian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Indonesia formally notified the group of its interest in joining BRICS only after the establishment of its new government. In 2024, the BRICS nations approved by consensus Indonesia's membership in line with the guiding principles, criteria, and procedures for expansion agreed upon in Johannesburg, according to the statement. BRIC, as a formal grouping, started after the meeting of the Leaders of Russia, India and China in St Petersburg on the margins of G8 Outreach Summit in 2006.

## Coaching Center Inauguration



Nurul Islam Khan

On Monday, Al Araf International School inaugurated the Araf Merit Coaching Center in memory of Haji Marhum Ibrahim. The program was conducted by Sajid Middyya of Alamin Seva Federation. The coaching center was inaugurated by Mohammad Bani Amin Middyya. The head of the organization, Basir Sheikh, eminent educationist, Hafiz Abdur Dayan and village dignitaries were also present on the day.

## Cultural program



Nurul Islam Khan

A multifaceted Islamic cultural program was held for two days in favor of healthy culture against bad culture, by New Digital Club. More or less 700 people donated blood in the Basanti region of South 24 Parganas. There were various cultural programs including kerat, ghazal and naat. It is worth saying that this region has been politically heated and many people have been killed. People have been bleeding constantly. But, the current picture is completely exceptional, it is proven that

the people of that area can donate blood for life. Maulana Anwar Hossain Qasmi, head of Al Manar Girls Mission, inaugurated it. Alhaj Maulana Mufakkir Hossain Mallek (Shiksharatra Award-winning teacher), Alhaj Maulana Zulfikar Sheikh, Maulana Abusaleh Mandal (teacher), Maulana Abdus Salam Sheikh, Hafiz Abdul Kader Sheikh, Maulana Kamal Hossain Gazi and others were invited. Nur Elahi Gazi, Minara Gazi, Siraj Sardar were present on the day. Hafiz Abdur Dayan and village dignitaries were also present on the day.

## North Korea confirms testing of hypersonic missile under Kim Jong-un's supervision

**MI News Service, Seoul [South Korea]:** North Korea announced on Tuesday that it had successfully test-fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) equipped with a hypersonic warhead, Yonhap News Agency reported, citing state media.

According to North Korea's state media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the missile travelled approximately 1,500 kilometres at a speed 12 times faster than sound during a test conducted the previous day under the supervision of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un via a monitoring system. Kim stated that the de-



velopment of the missile was intended to enhance North Korea's nuclear deterrence by "making the weapon system to which no one can respond to the linchpin of

strategic deterrence." "The hypersonic missile system will reliably contain any rivals in the Pacific region that can affect the security of our state. The system can deal a serious military strike to a rival while effectively breaking any dense defensive barrier," Kim said, according to KCNA. The KCNA reported that the hypersonic glide vehicle atop the IRBM reached its first peak at an altitude of 99.8 kilometres and a second at 42.5 kilometres, successfully completing a 1,500-kilometre flight path and striking its designated target in the sea.

This missile test, North

Korea's first provocation in roughly two months, occurred less than two weeks before US President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20.

However, the South Korean military dismissed the North's claim as a "deception," saying there was no second peak. "The flight range analysed by South Korea, the US and Japan was around 1,100 kilometre and (the missile) did not reach a second peak," JCS spokesperson Col. Lee Sung-un told a regular press briefing, noting the North has a track record of "exaggerating," Yonhap reported.

