

## Book launch of ‘Urban Chronicles 4’

he much-anticipated launch of Urban Chronicles 4, the latest addition to Nita Bajoria’s acclaimed Urban Chronicles series, took place at The Creative Arts in Kolkata. The event saw an esteemed gathering of literary figures, artists, and prominent personalities, turning the evening into a memorable celebration of urban storytelling. The launch event was graced by an exceptional lineup of luminaries. Alokanda Roy, a distinguished Dance Educationist and Choreographer, served as the Chief Guest and emphasized the role of art in capturing the complexities of urban life. Harsho Mohan Chatteraj, a renowned graphic novelist, shared **PG 3**

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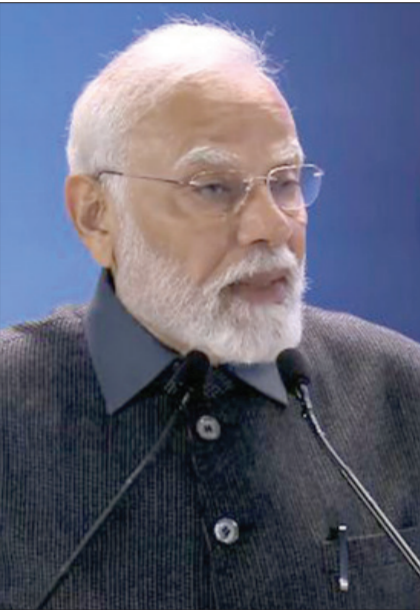
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# Morning India

## India's automotive industry is future-ready, says PM Modi



**MI News Service, New Delhi:** Stressing that modern India is focusing on the development of green technology, production of electric vehicles(EVs), hydrogen fuel and biofuels, Prime minister Narendra Modi has said thae the country now stands as an outstanding destination for every investor looking to shape their future in the mobility sector.

Speaking before a large gathering after inaugurating the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 at Bharat Mandapam here on Friday, the Prime Minister assured all government support to investors for setting up their projects anywhere in the country.

Emphasising that the strength of the 'Make in India' initiative fuels the growth prospects of the country's auto industry, he said the sale of EVs is poised to increase manifold by the end of this decade.

PM Modi said the government is working on a mobility system which can support economy and ecology, and create a system which can reduce the country's bill on the import of fossil fuels.

He also claimed that his government's 'Make in India' initiative has played a huge role in the development of auto industry which is now completely ready to meet all future demands of the consumers..

The initiative has got a push from the production linked incentive scheme which has helped in the sales of more than Rs 2.25 lakh crore in the sector.

This scheme has created more than 1.5 lakh direct jobs in the automobile sector, he said

"Ease of travel is a big priority of India. In the last budget, more than Rs 11 lakh crore were provisioned for the development of infrastructure," the prime minister said, and added the network of multi-lanes and highways were also expanded for the benefit of the people.

Noting that India's automotive industry is both fantastic and future-ready, PM Modi said India's auto industry witnessed a 12 per cent annual growth last year and exports too rose significantly.

Encouraging corporates to invest in the sector, Modi said the rising middle class, rapid urbanisation, high quality infrastructure development, and affordable vehicles are going to push automobile sector.

The endeavour, he said, is to develop a complete ecosystem for mobility.

The PM also said it is the right time to invest in battery storage system in India.

The five-day expo which is being held across three venues -- Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi in the national capital and India Expo Center and Mart, Greater Noida -- is expected to witness over 100 new launches across automobiles, component products and technologies.

The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, scheduled from January 17-22, will bring the entire value chain of the mobility ecosystem -- from automobile manufacturers to components, electronics parts, tyre and energy storage makers, and automotive software firms and material recyclers -- under a single umbrella.

On the occasion PM Modi also remembered Ratan Tata and Osamu Suzuki and expressed confidence that the legacy of both will continue to inspire the entire mobility sector of Country.

"In such a large event for India's auto sector, today I will also remember Ratan Tata ji and Osamu Suzuki. Both of these great individuals have made a huge contribution to fulfilling the dreams of India's middle class and to the growth of India's auto sector. I am confident that the legacy of Ratan Tata ji and Osamu Suzuki ji will continue to inspire the entire mobility sector

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## BJP releases Delhi manifesto; promises Rs 2500 for women, pension for elderly, LPG at Rs 500

**MI News Service, New Delhi :** BJP president JP Nadda released the first part of the party's manifesto for the Delhi assembly polls on Friday, announcing Rs 2,500 monthly aid for women, LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens.

He also assured that if the BJP is voted to power in February,all existing public welfare schemes in Delhi will continue as before.

Addressing a press conference while releasing the first part of the 'Sankalp Patra', Nadda said the party's manifesto is the foundation for a developed Delhi.

Nadda said monthly financial assistance announcing to Rs 2,500 for women, LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens will also be provided after the poll..

Hitting out at the

Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party, he said all corruption charges in the existing public welfare schemes will be investigated.

He promised that a BJP-led Delhi government will approve implementation of the 'Ayushman Bharat ' in the city in its first Cabinet meeting, and also give additional health cover of Rs 5 lakh each.

"The BJP will give LPG cylinders at Rs 500 to women housewives from poor sections.In addition one free cylinder will be given each on Holi and Diwali," he said.

The BJP president also promised Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens between the age of 60-70 and Rs 3,000 for those older than 70.

Delhi will vote on February 5 and the results will be announced on February 8.



## Mamata Banerjee to visit North Bengal from Jan 20

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to visit North Bengal from January 20, though the date of her return remains uncertain. Her visit comes amid rising concerns over law and order situation in the region following months of violence, including the killing of Trinamool Congress leaders and shootings targeting police personnel. Opposition parties have been vocal about the alleged deterioration of law and order in North Bengal, making Mamata's visit a topic of

intense political and administrative discussion. The Chief Minister is expected to visit Murshidabad, Malda, Alipurduar, and Hasimara. In Malda, she may attend an administrative service distribution programme, while a similar event is planned in Alipurduar. Sources also reveal that on January 23, Mamata will commemorate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birthday in Hasimara. This trip has been in the pipeline for some

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### Mumbai police detain one suspect in connection with attack on Saif Ali Khan

**MI News Service, Mumbai:** After conducting a massive manhunt across the city and its neighbourhood for the past 24 hours, Mumbai police detained a suspect on Friday morning in connection with the stabbing attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, an official said.

The man, whose identity is yet to be established, has been taken to the Bandra police station for interrogation to know the motive behind the attack and whether there was any other accomplice of the detainee, the police informed.

Describing the detention of the youth within 24 hours of the incident as a major success of the Mumbai Police Crime branch, the police further stated that the person was detained after several people were questioned in different places following tip offs as they resembled the attacker .

The person who has been brought to the Bandra police station was also carrying a backpack similar to the one seen in the CCTV footage from the actor's building, the official said. At least 20 police teams were working on the case and one of them is trying to obtain leads from police informers regarding any

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Caption: India's first private hospital with rooftop helipad for critical patients in Kolkata on Friday. (News on page 3)

## Cold wave further intensifies in Kashmir after fresh snowfall

**MI News Service, Srinagar:** The minimum temperature across the Kashmir valley dipped further on Friday following fresh snowfall during the past 24 hours with the meteorological department forecasting similar conditions over the next three days.

According to official sources, higher reaches of Kashmir valley as well as some areas in the plains near the Jammu border received fresh snowfall since Thursday leading to further dip in already a very cold temperature.

Following the snowfall amid severe cold conditions, the night temperatures in the valley area dipped much below the freezing point, the sources said. As a result, the minimum temperature in Srinagar came down to minus 5 degree celsius on Thursday night, which is three degree less than the previous night when it was hovering around minus 2.5 degree celsius.

Similarly the tourist resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir, known for skiing, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 7 degree Celsius following the fresh snowfall.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, recorded as low as minus 11.8 degree celsius, over seven degree down from minus 4.2 degree celsius the night before.



Vehicles move on a road amid light snowfall, in Gulmarg.

fore.The minimum temperature was minus 2.4 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 2 degrees Celsius at Konibal in Pampore town, minus 2.7 degrees Celsius in Kupwara and minus 2.4 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

The meteorological office has forecast mainly dry weather in Kashmir till January 19, with a possibility of light rain or snow at scattered places from January 20 to 22.

Kashmir is currently in the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' — the harshest period of winter. During the 40 days of 'Chillai-Kalan', which began on December 21, the chances of snowfall are the highest and the temperature drops considerably.

'Chillai-Kalan' ends on January 30, followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khur

(small cold) and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold). Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that northwest India is also expected to witness light to moderate rainfall and a gradual drop in temperatures in the coming week.

The weather department has further issued an orange alert for Punjab and Haryana,forecasting dry cold conditions for the next two days, with maximum temperatures likely to fall 4.5 degrees Celsius below normal.

According to IMD scientist Naresh Kapoor, "severe cold conditions are expected over Punjab and Haryana for today and tomorrow. He said, "At present, there is a western disturbance over Northern Pakistan. It is likely to affect the Western Hi-

malayas in the next two to three days and cause light to moderate snowfall."

A stronger western disturbance is also expected to impact the plains of northwest India, including Punjab, Haryana,Delhi-NCR, and Jammu and Kashmir..

In Uttar Pradesh too, the maximum temperature also dropped by more than 5 degree celsius in at least 50 districts, according to the Met office in Lucknow. Intense cold conditions are expected to persist until Wednesday, with the minimum temperature recorded at 1.3 degree celsius. In Punjab, Bathinda recorded the lowest temperature at 5 degree celsius. Sangrur had a cold night at 2.3 degree celsius, while Faridkot saw a low of 1.5 degree.

## As global hub of MRO sector, India looking forward to working with Singapore

**MI News Service,New Delhi :** Highlighting the "tremendous" potential of employment generation and value addition in the Maintenance, Repair, and Operations (MRO) sector, the Ministry of External Affairs has affirmed that India can emerge as a "hub" of MRO, adding that it is looking forward to working with Singapore in the area.

"Maintenance, repair of aircraft is gaining a lot of importance for us... A tremendous amount of employment can be generated and value addition can be made. India could become a hub of MRO for others as well. Singapore is itself a very strong MRO centre.

They too are looking forward to working with us, and we are also looking forward to working with them," MEA secretary (East) Jaideep Mazumdar said in a press briefing on Friday.

The MEA Secy also emphasised ongoing collaborations in energy and data sectors between India and Singapore. He said that both nations would sign an MOU in the direction

"There is already some work going on in terms of the energy corridor between India and Singapore in eastern India.You will also see an MOU being signed on it," he said.

Regarding the data corridor, he said, "The

data corridor is also an important area between Gujarat and Singapore, which is also being discussed."

Being asked about Myanmar, Mazumdar said that India is working closely with all the ASEAN nations, and discussions were also held regarding the relations with Myanmar."We work very closely with the ASEAN countries... Since Myanmar is both a neighbour of India and ASEAN and BIMSTEC member... There was a discussion on the current situation in Myanmar," he said. Earlier on Thursday, Prime Minister

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## Mahakumbh Mela expects to generate business worth of Rs two lakh crores

**MI News Service, Prayagraj (UP) :** As the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has projected that the Mahakumbh Mela 2925 is set to generate business worth about Rs 2 lakh crore in the region during the next 45 days, several consumer goods companies – branded or otherwise – have lined up and set up their well decorated stalls at the vast Mahakumbh Mela ground to showcase their different branded products.

With millions of devotees taking a holy dip at

the confluence (Sangam) of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati every day for the past one week or more, several top brands of consumer products in India like Dettol, Dabur, Pepsico, Coca-Cola, and corporate houses such as ITC and Reliance have set up camp ashrams, where they have lined up their products, and are distributing samples and refreshments free of cost to attract buyers.

The unmissable signage boards make one thing clear: the compa-

nies are expecting to make their presence felt in this holy city for the next two months, or at least till the end of the festivities of Mahakumbh on February 26.

The brands — which have been facing headwinds owing to multiple factors led by rising prices and tepid sales in urban markets — are taking the Mahakumbh as an opportunity to directly engage with the consumers — especially the rural population — and communicating with them through a host of special

initiatives over 45-day-long events, in which about 40 crore people are estimated to attend.

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), the FMCG arm of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries retail empire, is offering services and product availability of its consumer products to enhance the pilgrim journey. "This will include providing essential refreshments to ensure pilgrims remain hydrated and

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CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat, Biman Bose with others inaugurated Jyoti Basu Centre for Social Studies & Research at New Town in Kolkata on Friday.

## Colorful inauguration of Jyoti Basu Research Center

**Nurul Islam Khan**  
On Friday, the dream building of many, 'Jyoti Basu Center for Social Studies and Research', was formally inaugurated by CPI(M) Polit Bureau member and CPI(M) Central Committee Coordinator Prakash Karat. The first phase of the inauguration ceremony was held on the day. The center's library and exhibition hall were also inaugurated. While addressing the meeting, Prakash Karat said that late comrade Jyoti Basu was a public leader and a national asset. In his memory, this research center will enrich the society. He also released a valuable memorial on Jyoti Basu on the day. In fact, the foundation stone of this center was laid last year by late comrade Sitaram Yechury. The first phase of the work was formally inaugurated on Friday in a year. It goes without saying that the 16th Death Anniversary of the popular leader, the late Jyoti Basu, created a historical context. On the other hand, the party's central committee meeting was held in Newtown. The entire central committee

came out to the colorful setting of this research center on Friday. Party leader Biman Basu said that this is a dream project from which the common man will benefit in various ways. He said that Salt Lake has been named Bidhan Nagar. He demanded that this Newtown be named Jyoti Basu Nagar. Everyone present at the meeting gave their full support in one sentence. As a result, they said that they will later submit a written demand to the state Chief Minister regarding the naming of the city after Jyoti Basu. On the other hand, one of the members of this research center, Politburo leader and party state committee secretary Mohammad Salim said that democracy is being destroyed every day in our state and country. People from different walks of life, including the party, are struggling every day to bring it back. Everyone knows their current status. Still, people from all walks of life can learn a lot from such a research center. This Jyoti Basu Research Center, the full name of which is Jyoti Basu Center for Social Studies and

Research. JBCSSR, the full name of which is Jyoti Basu Center for Social Studies and Research will provide a holistic view of the fundamental rights of people. Eminent artist Rezwana Chowdhury Banya appeared as a special guest and performed music. Gautam Dev, Rabin Dev, Sujana Chakraborty, Dr. Suryakant Mishra and several party leaders were present. The party congratulated all the well-wishers and compassionate people who helped in the tireless efforts to build this building. The Jyoti Basu Social Science Practice and Research Laboratory was built with the money and support of countless left-wing people. They gave money, books, time and hard work. The party claimed that an international standard library and archive has been built. "Time" which is held in people's memory is also being recorded. Several personal researches are also being conducted here. Discussions are underway to ensure that many more modern researches are conducted in the field of sociology in the coming days.

## CM Mamata likely to announce new projects at Murshidabad

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will visit the 'Nawabi city' Murshidabad for the first time after the Lok Sabha elections on Monday. According to administrative sources, the grounds of 'Nawab Bahadur Institution' located in Lalbagh have been chosen for her meeting.

The Chief Minister will reach Murshidabad by helicopter on Monday and will leave for 21st January Malda after the meeting on the same day. In this administrative meeting, Mamata Banerjee will distribute various government services and can announce many new schemes for the district. The meeting venue has been completely covered from the security point of view. To prevent any untoward incident during the meeting, CCTV cameras have been installed at various places and police surveillance has been increased at important places like Jangipur, Jiyaganj, Raghunathganj, Baharampur and Lalbagh. Apart from this, naka checking has also been started on the borders of the district.

Murshidabad Zila Parishad Sabhapati Rubia Sultana said that we are all very excited about the arrival of the Chief Minister in the district. We hope that she will announce many special schemes for the district. We are ready in every way.

## Khidderpur Utsav to gear up from Jan 19th



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Khidderpur Utsav Committee in ward number 75 of Kolkata Port Assembly today announced its colorful and grand event. In a press conference organized at Kolkata Press Club, while talking to media persons, General Secretary of Khidderpur Utsav and youth Trinamool leader Rajesh Kumar Saw gave this information. He said that this program is completely social and for the people and this festival is celebrated every year. People of all communities participate in this event and

everyone is welcome here. In the 16th Khidderpur Utsav, social programs inspired by goodwill will be organized including voluntary blood donation camp, health checkup, children's painting, clothing distribution, study material distribution, awareness campaign by Chittaranjan National Cancer Hospital to avoid deadly diseases like cancer. Social worker Maqsood Khan Bharti, Shramjeevi Patrakar shanghs National Executive Committee member Awadhesh Kumar Chaudhary, Rajkumar Sahu were present at the press conference.

## Man sentenced to death in rape and murder case



**MI News Service, Hooghly:** Chinsurah court announced the death penalty in case of rape and murder of a neighbour's child. This person was accused of raping and then killing a five-year-old child in Gurap of Hooghly. He was sentenced to death after being found guilty in court. The child had disappeared from the front of the house on the evening of Nov 24. Her father had seen her playing while going to the market, but when he returned, his child was not found, after which the search began.

Neighbours also started searching. During the search, the body of the child was recovered from the house of a neighbour named Ashok Singh. After that, the accused was caught by the local people and handed over to the police. Chinsurah Court Judge Chandra Prabha Chakraborty declared him guilty on Wednesday Jan 15th. Chinsurah court pronounced death sentence to this criminal on Friday. On Dec 9, the police presented a charge sheet in the case of rape and murder of a child.

Charges were filed on Dec 11. After that, within a month, the judge delivered the verdict after completing all the proceedings of the case, including taking the testimony of 27 people. "The new BNS law has ended the trial so early. There was a seven-day holiday over Christmas after the trial began. Otherwise, the case would have been decided already. It was possible because of the investigation. According to local sources, Ashok's house is next to the child's house. That day, after a long search, the child's body was found buried in blankets and wood in the house. Ashok had faced various charges before. But with time, they were covered. According to a local resident, "We were all looking for the baby since evening." We were suspicious of Ashok. Later, the child was found at his house. He is also accused of misbehaving with his own daughter. Many such incidents had happened before. Later it was covered up. Everyone wanted him to be hanged. The child's parents were also demanding that the culprit be hanged. Friday, January 17, the court sentenced the criminal to death. This verdict will teach lesson to those persons who have possibility to perform such crime in future. Law is very wild to those who are eager to molest women or female child. On one hand, increase of such incidents in these days may stop with this attitude of court room.

## Calcutta Jito Chapter launched "Investing Mantra"



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** People earn money but they do not know where to invest that money. To ease this problem of the people, Calcutta Jito Chapter launched "Investing Mantra" BUY RIGHT & in a five star hotel in Kolkata on Thursday. SIT TIGHT" talk show was organized. Motilal Oswal, MD & CEO of MOFSL, who was present as the chief guest in this program, gave many tips to the people from the ups and downs of the stock market to wealth growth. Vinod Dugar, icon of RDB group Kolkata also shared many tips and his experience on invest-

ment. Regarding this special session, Dharmendra Jain, Chairman of Calcutta Jito Chapter, said that how to develop Bengal, how to bring more and more investment in Bengal especially Kolkata, with this purpose a special session was organized "Investing Mantra". The country's well-known finance expert Motilal Oswal gave many important tips. By following the steps shown by him, people will never have to face loss in the stock market. The special feature of this program was that how women can also progress in the stock

market. Information about this was also given, after hearing which the women looked very happy.

The forum was moderated by JITO Secretary Rishabh Nahata.

Motilal Oswal - MD & CEO MOFSL and JITO Apex Advisor Vinod Dugar - RDB Group Kolkata and JATF Advisor Sheetal Dugar - Chairperson JITO Apex Ladies Wing Khabiyar- JITO Member Bhubaneshwar Bhaven Kamdar - Chairman JITEM Kumar Pal Chopra - Chairman JPF Apex Rohit Ji Surana - Secretary - JIIF Pankaj Maloo - Chief Secretary - JITO East Zone were present on the occasion. JITO Kolkata team Dharmendra Jain-Chairman Ratan Dugar-Vice Chairman Nirmal Jain - Vice Chairman Rajendra Jain - Vice Chairman, Rishabh Nahata - Secretary Vivek Jain - Treasurer, Sunita Jain - Chairperson - JITO Kolkata Ladies Wing everybody was present in the grand occasion.

## From young to old, the people of Falta are all smiles!

**MI News Service, Falta:** The #Sebaashray camp, a remarkable initiative by MP @abhishekaite, has brought joy to people of all ages. Children, in particular, are filled with happiness as they benefit from the free services and care being provided. Grateful beyond words, the mother of an infant expressed her heartfelt thanks for the advanced medical services offered at the #Sebaashray camp. This remarkable initiative is making a significant impact, offering vital healthcare and bringing relief to countless families. A

shining example of compassion in action, Sebaashray continues to touch lives and provide essential support to those in need. Grateful

beyond words, the mother of an infant expressed her heartfelt thanks for the advanced medical services offered.



## Hanskhali police foils dacoity, recovers arms, arrests 5



**MI News Service, Ranaghat:** Hanskhali Police under Ranaghat PD in Nadia foiled a robbery plan and arrested 5 persons. It happened at Hanskhali Mahakal area early on Friday, Deputy Superintendent of police (border), Ranaghat PD said. They were produced in Court on Friday with prayer for police remand for further investigation.

It was around 1.30 am. On Friday. On a sources information, police stopped a

black vehicle (scorpio) near Mahakal under Hanskhali PS limits and checked thoroughly. The cops found some illegal arms and ammunitions as well as the deadly weapons from their possession. Subsequently police arrested all the 5 in the car and recovered one 9 mm. pistol with ammunitions, and some weapons. After interrogation police came to know that the miscreants were on a move to commit robbery. Police has started a suo moto case under

der the concerned law of BNS for preparation and assembling for dacoity with deadly weapons and fire arms. The miscreants were produced in Ranaghat Court with prayer for police remand. The miscreants were identified as Ashish Mondal (38), of Bagula Station para, Gurupada Chowdhury (34) of Kaikhali Natun para, Subhankar Sarkar (35) of Shantipur, Jit Ghosh (22) of Shantipur, Bapi Bain (18) Hanskhali.

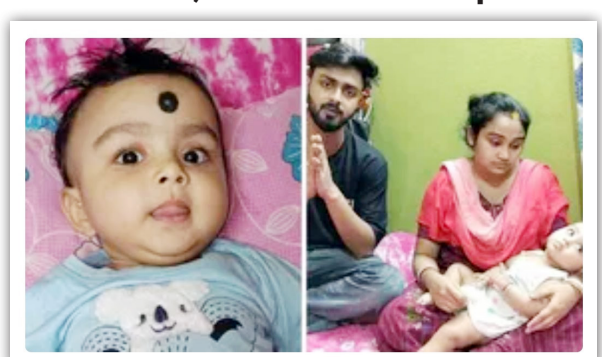
## One year Asmika needs an injection of Rs 16 Cr. within 6 months, Singer Kailash Kher, Shubhamita cooperated

**MI News Service, Ranaghat:** Renowned singers Padma Shri Kailash Kher, Shubhamita and more a few singers and many people of various walk of life have cooperated to the parents of one year old girl Asmika, for treatment of her rare disease. She is attacked with Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type - 1, and the cost for the treatment is Rs.16 crore soon. It is the price of just an injection.

Couple Shubhankar and Doli Das of Ranaghat S. B. Sarani Daspara in Nadia were blessed with a daughter on January 09, 2024. The movement of the baby girl was as usual at the beginning. But the parents observed after 4 months that her legs' movement were decreasing.

They took her to a local physician and subsequently they took her to a hospital in Kolkata. Gradually the disease was diagnosed as 'Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type -1'. The parents took the baby to Vellore and other hospitals. Shubhankar Das said on Thursday, "Finally, we came to know that an injection is to push to Asmika within 18 months of her age and the price of the injection is Rs. 16 crore. We have around 6 months in hand."

A sources said that her life may get into danger if the injection is not given in time. Due to the said disease, the child's muscles are gradual-



ly being destroyed. If she is not given a special injection by the age of one and a half, it will be difficult for him to stand up in the future. The treatment is huge expensive. She is needed an injection that cost Rs.16 crore.

Shubhankar's father belongs to a middle class family. So, Asmika's parents are reaching out for help. Shubhankar Das has opened a facebook group. It is a crowdfunding Platform known as 'Impact Guru' for getting help. Meanwhile several prominent people have already stood by Asmika. There are only 6 months left, within which Asmika's parents will have to raise 16 crores.

Padma Shri Kailash Kher, Mahammad Irfan, Rupali Jajja, Barun Jain from Bollywood and Shubhomita Banerjee, Rupam Islam from Tollywood have cooperated. "The above singers have helped through developing

video with appeal to cooperate for the treatment of Asmika," Shubhankar Das said. However, upto Thursday, the collection is Rs. 4.30 crore, he iterated. Subhankar Das is a person from middle class family. It is somehow impossible for him to raise the huge cost of treatment for his child suffering from a rare disease.

The survive of Asmika is now depending upon the crowdfunding and the family is looking to it. Shubhankar was a worker in a private company. But for remaining busy in collecting fund, he has lost his job. His father Narayan Chandra Das is a retired Primary school Teacher and family runs on his pension.

The collection from public has been going on since last 155 days. Side by side, he has applied to CM Relief Fund and West Bengal Governor but got no response so far.

## Sebaashray arranges free heart surgery and treatment for 9 yr old boy

**MI News Service, Falta:** 9-year-old boy to undergo open-heart surgery On Friday, January 17, 9-year-old Altaf Hossain Gharani will undergo a 12-hour open-heart surgery at JIMS (Jagannath Gupta Institute of Medical Sciences) hospital tomorrow. Abhishek Banerjee, through Sevashray, has arranged for the free surgery and treatment for the boy. Altaf went to a health

camp at Sevashray with his father, where the report revealed that the boy had a heart problem. After seeing the report, the camp doctors sent Altaf to the Model Camp at SDO Ground, Diamond Harbour for advanced review. The report and the investigation by the camp doctors further revealed that Altaf has a hole in his heart (cyanotic heart disease), due to which he has been facing

a major problem for many years. When this matter was brought to the notice of Hon'ble MP Shri Abhishek Banerjee, without any delay he ensured that Altaf's treatment would start at JIMS (Jagannath Gupta Institute of Medical Sciences) Hospital. All India General Secretary Shri Abhishek Banerjee assured that Altaf would get free surgery and necessary treatment.



Former MLA Purnendu Basu along with eminent personalities, attends Press Conference by Desh Bachao Ganmanch, where affected employees share their experiences regarding the Centre's 'systematic neglect' of West Bengal by withholding their wages for the 100-day work program and downsizing PSUs with the unlawful removal of workers' rights. The press conference was held at Kolkata Press Club, Kolkata on Friday.

India's automotive industry...

**From PG 1**  
The Expo will host over 9 concurrent shows, 20+ conferences and pavilions. In addition, the Expo will also feature state sessions to showcase policies and initiatives in the mobility sector to enable collaboration between industry and regional levels.  
Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 aims to unite the entire mobility value chain under one umbrella. This year's expo will have a special emphasis on global significance with participation from across the globe as exhibitors and visitors. It is an industry-led and government-supported initiative and is being coordinated by the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India with the joint support of various industry bodies and partner organizations.

Mamata Banerjee to visit...

**From PG 1**  
time, as announced earlier by the Chief Minister herself. Political observers are keenly watching this visit, given its significance in the backdrop of the Trinamool Congress's (TMC) growing influence in North Bengal, a region traditionally dominated by opposition parties.  
TMC has been gaining ground steadily in North Bengal, as evidenced by their recent by-election victory in Madarihat in Alipurduar district..  
The TMC's recent win in Madarihat has added momentum to its efforts to consolidate power in North Bengal. As Mamata prepares to visit the region, political analysts are curious about the message she intends to deliver to both party workers and voters.  
In addition to political considerations, Mamata's visit is expected to address administrative concerns. The violence in North Bengal has raised questions

Mumbai police detain one...

**From PG 1**  
robber with a past history seen in the area recently. The police are also analysing their database on history sheeter robbers matching the description of the suspect caught on CCTV camera of the Satguru Sharan building on St Terra Road, Bandra West, where Khan's family resides.  
Early Thursday morning, between 2 am and 2:30 am, a man believed to be in his early 30s snuck into Khan's 11th-floor apartment, allegedly demanded Rs 1 crore, injured the family's nanny, and later attacked Khan with a blade six times before escaping.  
Khan, who bled profusely, was rushed to the Lilavati hospital by his family in an autorickshaw, where he underwent surgery. Senior doctors say he is stable and out of danger.  
The Bandra police have registered a case of attempted robbery, causing grievous hurt with an intention of robbery, trespassing and under other sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita.  
Meanwhile, amid concerns regarding Saif Ali Khan's well-being, Dr Nitin Dange of Lilavati Hospital has confirmed that the actor was doing "extremely well" and is now out of danger. "He has since been shifted out from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), but his movements will remain restricted for some days now. Addressing a press conference, the doctors who operated on the actor said that he was out of danger and there was no issue of paralysis.  
Dr Niraj Uttamani said he first met Saif Ali Khan

Mahakumbh Mela expects...

**From PG 1**  
energised during their spiritual quest. Signage and directional boards are also being installed to assist pilgrims with clear, easy-to-read signages and branding to navigate the vast expanse of the event smoothly," said RCPL Chief Operating Officer Ketan Mody.  
It will also operate 'aarav sthal' (resting areas), designated comfortable rest zones to offer pilgrims a moment to relax during their long and often arduous journeys, he added.  
FMCG brand Reckitt and Kolmann through its flagship hygiene brand Dettol will support nearly 15,000 sanitation workers by providing training programmes and making soaps accessible to them at Kumbh.  
It is also deploying health and hygiene volunteers across all 25 sectors of the Kumbh, offering on-ground support and guidance to the pilgrims, under the campaign 'Dettol Banega Swasth India'.  
"The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 provides a unique opportunity to embed hygiene practices into one of India's most culturally significant events. We are delighted to take ahead our long-standing partnership with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and GIWA," said Reckitt — South Asia Executive Vice President Gaurav Jain.  
Home-grown FMCG firm Dabur said it has also planned a series of consumer engaging activities to strengthen connect with people during the Kumbh Mela.  
"We feel direct engagement with consumers during such traditional melas that helps us strengthen our bond with consumers. They, in turn, get the opportunity to touch, feel and experience our products. This reinforces their long-standing trust in the brand Dabur," Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said.  
In rural markets, success depends highly on how a brand is positioned and promoted. The greater the strategic attention to a unique demand, the greater the chances of the product's success in rural pockets.  
"Since the Kumbh Mela is deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions, brands that align their messaging with these values can create a stronger connection with the audience," he said.  
Moreover, standing out in a crowded environment requires creativity and innovation.  
"While the space may seem cluttered, it actually offers companies the opportunity to get consumers to touch, feel and experience their brands and build greater connections. This will generate sales in the days to come," he said, adding, "Most of our key power brands like Dabur Chyawanprash, Dabur Honey, Dabur Red Paste, Dabur Amla Hair Oil, Vatika, Hajmola, and Honitus will be undertaking consumer activations at the Kumbh Mela." Beverages major Coca-Cola will pair with its portfolio of beverages with local foods and flavours.  
"We are committed to creating social impact through multiple initiatives at the event that showcase the potential of repurposed packaging and raise awareness about recycling to inspire collective action," said Coca-Cola India and South West Asia Vice President Marketing Greishma Singh.

about the effectiveness of local governance and policing. The Chief Minister's attendance at administrative service programmes in Malda and Alipurduar could be a bid to restore public confidence and demonstrate her government's commitment to improving infrastructure and public services in the region.  
Mamata Banerjee's North Bengal visit is being closely monitored, not just for its immediate political implications but also for its potential to shape the region's political dynamics ahead of future elections. Mamata's outreach to the people and her administrative assurances could play a pivotal role in the political narrative.  
Observers are eager to see how this visit unfolds and what message the Chief Minister delivers to the people of North Bengal in this critical juncture of Bengal's political landscape.

Duare Sarkar to commence from Jan 24

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The much-awaited Duare Sarkar (Government at Doorstep) program, announced by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, is set to return to West Bengal. The program will commence on January 24 and run until February 1. This time, the administration is emphasizing ensuring that every family, especially in remote areas, benefits from the scheme.  
Along with Duare Sarkar, the Parayay Samad-



Mayor Firhad Hakim addresses during the 38th general meeting at KMC House in Kolkata on Friday.

First Air Ambulance in Kolkata to airlift critical patients to hosp

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** For the first time in Bengal, an air ambulance will land on the rooftop of a hospital. This service, already available in several private hospitals in other Indian cities, is now set to be launched at a private hospital near the Kolkata bypass. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted the hospital permission to carry out this service, adhering to all the necessary safety regulations set by civil aviation authorities. It will ferry burn and emergency patients from remote corner of Bengal and Neighboring districts to the hospital. A helipad has been specially constructed to facilitate this operation. DGCA representatives will be present on-site during the trial landing. As per DGCA rules, no civilian aircraft or helicopter can operate without its approval. To ensure the air ambulance can



State Education Minister Bratya Basu inaugurates 17th Urdu Book Fair by Urdu Academy in presence of Mukhtar Ali, Shakil Ahmed, Obaidur Rahaman, Nizhat Zainab, Nadimul Haque, S. Haider, and A. Ahluwalia, in Kolkata on Friday.

Panihati building collapse: No causality reported

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** In a dramatic repeat of the Baghajatin building collapse, a part of an under-construction multi-storey building collapsed in Panihati's Mahajati Nagar area, creating further alarm. The incident occurred in Ward No. 4 of Panihati Municipality, where a multi-storey residential building was being constructed. Fortunately, pedestrians nearby were spared, as the collapse happened when no one

was in the immediate vicinity. This comes just after the shocking collapse of a four-storey structure, which had been standing for only 12 years. The residents, who had invested all their savings into the property, are left in disbelief after the building collapsed due to structural defects. Local sources report that part of the building collapsed around 2:45 PM on Tuesday, causing a loud noise and panic among the locals. At the time of the collapse, efforts were being made to straighten the leaning structure, which had been showing signs of instability. The four-storey building in Baghajatin was similarly affected, tilting dangerously before collapsing. It fell onto an abandoned one-storey house next door, but fortunately, no casualties were reported as there was no one inside either structure.

Modi, during his meetings with leaders at East Asia Summit in Laos, emphasised the inclusion of Myanmar and said the country should not be isolated. He also stressed the importance of restoration of democracy in the crisis-hit nation, and urged all nations to work for it together.

already fulfilled her promise under the Bangla Awas scheme, with the first installment of funds being transferred to the beneficiaries' accounts. Additionally, as the next state assembly elections approach, the political landscape is heating up. While the elections are still some months away, the government's return to Duare Sarkar is seen as a significant move to solidify its position on the

South Kolkata faces water outage on Jan 18

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Residents of South Kolkata will face a temporary water supply shutdown on Saturday, January 18, as the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) halts services for maintenance work. From 9 a.m. onwards, areas such as Garden Reach, Jadavpur, Tollygunge, Behala, Joka, Kasba, Maheshtala, and Budge Budge will experience water supply disruptions.  
The KMC has announced that maintenance and repair work will be conducted at the Garden Reach Water Treatment Plant. This includes the installation of new valves and repairs to pipelines at various booster pumping stations. The work is essential to ensure efficient water supply in the future.  
The water outage will primarily impact the following neighborhoods: Kalighat, Ranikuthi, Garfa, Chetla, Golf Green, Layelka, Behala, Sirity, Daspara, Banskroni, Gandhi Maidan, Senpally, Prafulla Park, Parnashree, Metiabruz and Shakuntala

Industry 5.0 to revolutionize personalised manufacturing

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Industry 5.0 is set to transform manufacturing by integrating advanced technologies like AI, AR, and big data analytics to create human-centric, sustainable, and resilient processes. At the 3rd Edition of Manufacturing and MSME Conclave, experts emphasized how AI, machine learning, and human experience can enable

Book launch of 'Urban Chronicles 4'

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The much-anticipated launch of Urban Chronicles 4, the latest addition to Nita Bajoria's acclaimed Urban Chronicles series, took place at The Creative Arts in Kolkata. The event saw an esteemed gathering of literary figures, artists, and prominent personalities, turning the evening into a memorable celebration of urban storytelling.  
The launch event was graced by an exceptional lineup of luminaries. Alokanda Roy, a distinguished Dance Educationist and Choreographer, served as the Chief Guest and emphasized the role of art in capturing the complexities of urban life. Harsho Mohan Chattoraj, a renowned graphic novelist, shared his thoughts on the evolving role of graphic novels in contemporary storytelling. Meanwhile, Ramanjit Kaur, an international award-winning theatre director and artpreneur, moderated the event, steering a thought-

Fire breaks out in South Kolkata residential area

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** A fire broke out on the roof of a residence at 9 Hungerford Street in South Kolkata, triggering panic in the densely populated area. The blaze, which reportedly started in the equipment room of the roof, saw eight fire engines deployed to the scene in a swift response to control the flames.  
The incident occurred dangerously close

to a renowned hospital and a school, heightening concerns for public safety. While residents were evacuated promptly, many were visibly distressed. "There was a lot of noise, and someone shouted, 'There's a fire, come down!'" said one resident. Another speculated that the fire might have been caused by a geyser explosion.

**Name Change**  
I, Sefali Mazumder (old name) wife of Late Sudhir Ranjan Ma-jumder, residing at AA 88, Pra-fulla Kanan West Kestopur, P.S.-Baguiati, Dist.- North 24 Par-ganas, Pin- 700101, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Shefali Majumder (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public at Kolkata on 17/01/2025. Shefali Majumder (new name) and Sefali Mazumder (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Mahanta Ghosh (old name as per daughter birth certificate No 2085,date of birth 29/12/1981, is-sued by K.M.C) son of Late Nirmal Kanti Ghosh, residing at Ma-haprabhu Colony, Habra-1, Ban-ipur, P.S.- Ashokenagar, Dist.-North 24 Pgs, Pin- 743233, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Susanta Kumar Ghosh (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Barasat (SL No.257) on 15/01/2025. Susanta Kumar Ghosh (new name) and Mahanta Ghosh (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Maria Chatterjee (old name) wife of Soumyajit Chatterjee, re-siding at Sakumbari Apartment, 7/1 Olai Chandi Road, Nmta, Dist.- North 24 Parganas, Pin- 700049, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Maria Mitra (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public at Kolkata on 15/01/2025. Maria Mitra (new name) and Maria Chatterjee (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Partha Sen (old name) son of Ranjit Kumar Sen, residing at 1, Dakshin Para Road, South Dum-dum (M), Dist.- North 24 Par-ganas, Pin- 700028, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Parthasarathi Sen (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public at Kolkata on 17/01/2025. Parthasarathi Sen (new name) and Partha Sen (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Mahavir Sethia (old name) son of Manik Chand Sethia, residing at 4, Pretoria Street, Middleton Row, Kolkata- 700071, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Mahavir Kumar Sethia (new name) vide an affidavit sworn be-fore the notary public at Kolkata on 17/01/2025. Mahavir Kumar Sethia (old name) and Mahavir Sethia (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Shrabanti Das (old name) wife of Debabrata Das, residing at Naraharipur, P.S.- Eggra, East Me-dinipur, Pin- 721429, West Ben-gal, India, shall henceforth be known as Shrabanti Patra Das (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public at Kolkata on 17/01/2025. Shrabanti Patra Das (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Gopal Das (old name) son of Late Nagendra Kumar Das, resid-ing at 216, Lenin Sarani Ward No-15, New Barrackpore, Dist.- North 24 Parganas, Pin- 700131, West Bengal, India, shall hence- forth be known as Gopal Kumar Das (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public at Kolkata on 17/01/2025. Gopal Kumar Das (new name) and Gopal Das (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Munmun Biswas (old name) daughter of Susanta Kumar Ghosh, residing at Mahaprabhu Colony, Habra-1, Banipur, P.S.- Ashokenagar, Dist.- North 24 Pgs, Pin- 743233, West Bengal, India, shall henceforth be known as Munmun Ghosh Biswas (new name) vide an affidavit sworn be-fore the 1st Class Judicial Magis-trate at Barasat (SL No.258) on 15/01/2025. Munmun Ghosh Biswas (new name) and Munmun Biswas (old name) both are the same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Nivedita, W/O no.13682888P Rank Ex Havildar name Badri Narayan Dan Resident of Vill & PO -Uchalan,Dist-Purba Bard-haman, West Bengal, Pin-7134 27, have changed my name from Nivedita to Nivedita Dan vide af-fidavit dated 17.01. 2025, before the Executive Magistrate Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal.

**Name Change**  
I, Sanjoy Ghosh,Army no.15153 967L Rank-Hav,Unit-22 med Regt./S/O Shankar Ghosh alias Sankar Ghosh Residing at Vill-Ra-jendranagar Ghoshpara, & P.O-Bethuadhari,PS-Nakshipara,Dist -Nadia,Pin-741126 West Bengal, my Father actual name is Shankar Ghosh & Date of birth is 07.09. 1962,My Army Artillery record my father's name is Sankar ghosh instead of Shankar Ghosh & also Date of birth is 01.07.1961 instead of 07.09.1962,before the Ld.Execu-tive Magistrate, Krishnagar, Nadia, W.B Dated 16.01.2025. That Shankar Ghosh and Sankar Ghosh both are the same and one identical person.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Smt. Tandrima Ghosh Bose, W/O Sri Tapas Ghosh, R/O- B6/9 EKT, Phase- II, P.S.- Kasba, P.O.- E.K.T., Kolkata- 700107, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Tandrima Ghosh as declared before the Notary Public Alipore Court, West Bengal vide Affidavit No. 61, Dated : 15/01/2025, Tandrima Ghosh Bose and Tandrima Ghosh both are same and identical person.

One Pair EMU local to be cancelled for Maintenance Work

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Periodic Track and Signal & Telecom (S&T) equip-ment maintenance work is crucial to ensure the safe & efficient operation of rail- way system. Regular and systematic maintenance of this component helps pre-vent disruption and delays, ensuring trains run on schedule and extend the lifespan of railway infra-structure, contributing to the overall safety & reliabil-ity of train operation. Keep- ing in the mind the need for maintenance, Traffic & Power Block has been planned over Howrah Divi-sion on 19.01.2025 (Sun-day). Consequently, the train regulations will be as follows:

**Cancellation On 19.01.2025 (Sunday):** From Tarakeswar : 37334 From Howrah: 37323 Reschedul- ing of trains on 19.01.2025 (Sunday): • 37749 Bandel – Katwa local will leave Ban- del at 12:45 hrs, instead of 12:15 hrs. • 37374 Goghat – Howrah local will leave Goghat at 13:20 hrs. in- stead of 13:10 hrs.

Services on Green Line to remain normal hereafter till further notice

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** As already communicated earlier, there will be no service on 19.01.2025 (Sunday) on Green Line for testing of Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) System. Normal Green Line services (Both on Green Line-1 and 2) will be operational regularly hereafter till further ad-vice. Number of services on Blue Line have been in- creased from 248 to 262 already by reducing the headway from seven min-utes to six minutes during morning and evening peak hours i.e. 09.00 hrs to 11.00 hrs and 17.00 hrs to 20.00 hrs on trial basis.

**Name Change**  
I, Basudab Biswas S/O- Gangad- har Biswas resident of Vill- P.O.- Chanchal, P.S.-Memari, Dist- Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal, PIN-713151, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as 'BASUDEB BISWAS' vide an affidavit before the Notary Public at Purba Bardhaman on 17/01/2025. That Basudab Biswas and Basudeb Biswas both are same and one identical person.

**Name Change**  
I, Madhu Sudhan Dey (Old Name),S/O Late Sailen Chandra Dey,Residing At Vill-Tejganj,Po- Nutanganj,Ps-Burdwan Town, Pin-713102,Dist-Purba Bardham an, West Bengal Have Chan ged My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Madhu Sudan Dey(New Name) As Declared Be- fore The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2025. Madhu Sudhan Dey (Old Name) And Madhu Sudan Dey (New Name) Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

**Name Change**  
I, Ayesa Sultana Begam(Old Name),W/O Late Md Abutaher Resident Of Vill-Mirzamohalla, Po-Midnapore,Ps-Kotwali,Dist-Paschim Midnapore, Pin-721101, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Ayesha Sultana (New Name) Vide 1st Class Judicial Magistrate At Midnapore On 26/ 09/2024. Ayesa Sultana Begam (Old Name) And Ayesha Sultana (New Name) Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

**Name Change**  
I, Quadir Iqbal (Old Name),S/O Late Abdul Kadir,Residing At 40h/4,Shamsul Huda Road,Ps- Karaya,Pin-700017,West Bengal Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Iqbal Kadir (New Name) As De- clared Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 17/01/2025,Quadir Iqbal (Old Name) And Iqbal Kadir (New Name) Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

**Name Change**  
I, Israt Parveen (Old Name),W/O Iqbal Kadir,Residing At 40h/4, Shamsul Huda Road,Ps-Karaya, Pin-700017,West Bengal Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Israt Parveen (New Name) As Declared Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 17/01/2025, Israt Parveen (Old Name) And Israt Parveen (New Name) Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

**Name Change**  
I, Dipika Debnath (Old Name), W/O Abhik Chakraborty,Residing At 135,Pathagar Road, Panihati, Ps-Khardah,Pin-700114,West Bengal Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Dipika Chakraborty (New Name) As Declared Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2025,Dipika Debnath(Old Name) And Dipika Chakraborty (New Name) Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi.

ER Women's Welfare Organisation Felicitates Meritorious Students and Competition Winners



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organization (ERWWO), under the lead-ership of its President, Smt. Seema Deouskar, or- ganized a grand felicita- tion ceremony to honor the outstanding achievements of students for the aca- demic session 2023-24. The event took place on 17th January 2025 at the Eastern Railway Officers' Club, Belvedere Park, Ali- pore, Kolkata, and wit- nessed the presence of other ERWWO members. The ceremony recog- nized three categories of excellence: 1. Meritorious

students who scored 90% and above in the 10th and 12th Board Examinations. 2. Students who show- cased extraordinary achievements in extracur-ricular activities such as sports, dance, and singing at the State or National level. 3. Winners of the All India Essay and Drawing Competition – 2024, held on 15th and 22nd Septem-ber 2024. The event began with the traditional lighting of the lamp, followed by a delightful cultural program performed by Eastern Rail- way's cultural staff. A total of 34 meritorious students and 56 competition win-

ners, all wards of Eastern Railway Group C and Group D staff, were felici- tated during the program. The awardees received Certificates of Merit and a token gifts, presented by Smt. Seema Deouskar. In her concluding address, she inspired the young achievers with her encour- aging words, urging them to continue striving for ex- cellence in their respective fields. This initiative by ERWWO underscores its commitment to fostering a culture of academic and extracurricular excellence among the children of East- ern Railway employees.

Advanced Conversa- tion Intelligence breaks language & dialect barriers

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** On the occasion of National Startup Day, Mihup, a trendsetting voice technol- ogy innovator, proudly reaf- firms its commitment to advancing regional inclu- sivity across India. As a shining example of India's thriving startup ecosystem, it is revolutionising digital access through its AI-driven voice solutions, breaking linguistic barriers and pro- moting inclusivity. It di- rectly addresses this challenge by creating cut- ting-edge voice AI plat- forms that fluently understand and process re- gional languages. This em- powers users from every corner of India to engage with technology effortlessly, regardless of their linguistic background.

India's insurance mkt is fastest growing among G20 nations: Swiss report

**(MI News Service, Basel (switzerland):** Global rein- surance major Swiss Re in its January 2025 update has estimated India's in- surance market to be the fastest growing among G20 countries over the next five years with pre- mium growth (life and non-life) at 7.3 per cent in real terms on an average each year. However, growing nat- ural catastrophe risks are emerging in Gujarat, Ma- harashtra, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, where there is a high concentration of in- dustrial clusters, logistics infrastructure and renew- able energy projects. "Life (insurance) is the mainstay of India's insurance mar- ket, accounting for 74 per cent of total premium vol- umes. We estimate that life premiums will grow 4.8 per cent in 2024 in real terms and by 5 per cent in 2025.

Steel manufacturers advocate problems to Bengal govt



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** A bunch of secondary steel- makers from Bengal have urged the state government to advocate their case for se- curing raw material such as coal, iron ore and electricity at a competitive rate from central public sector units. Bengal-based units, mostly operating out of Bur- dwan and Purulia districts, require about 10 million tonnes (mt) coal and 15mt of iron ore annually. While the state has abundance in coal, it depends on neighbouring Odisha and Jharkhand for iron ore. State units pointed out that Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL), a subsidiary of CPSU Coal India Ltd, who has a number of mines in Bengal, is not putting enough coal under long term linkages which can en- sure continuity in supply. "Our Association is in con- tinuous touch with CIL and ECL for at least 6-7mt in long term linkage. We re- quest the state government to take up this matter with CIL and ECL," Vivek Adukia, chairman of Steel Re-Rolling Mills Association of India (SRMA), said. Adukia and SRMA members managed to sit across Bengal industry minister Shashi Panja to air their grievances at the side- lines of the association's an- nual general meeting last week. The minister prom- ised them to take up their cause at the appropriate forum. He also proposed that CPSU Steel Authority of India Ltd should be nudged to sell iron ore from their captive iron ore mines. "We are sourcing iron ore from Odisha and Jharkhand since Bengal does not have the re- source. But SAIL, which has

two plants in this state, has captive mines linked to those units. According to the MMDR Act, it can sell up to 25 per cent of their produce to outsiders. We hope that the Bengal government will talk to SAIL about it," Adukia pleaded to Panja. The SRMA members also raised the issue of differen- tial electricity tariff charged by DVC in Bengal and Jharkhand. Adukia said unit cost in DVC command area such as Jamuria near Asan- sol is ₹6 compared with ₹4.7 in Jharkhand. The rolling mills and sponge iron ore makers, who guzzle lots of power, are at a competitive disadvantage, he argued. While iron ore, coal and electricity are some of the ongoing trouble spots for the steel industry of Bengal, they are also mindful of the regulatory changes being proposed to reduce carbon emission. As part of the net zero goal of 2070, the Indian gov- ernment wants to bring down emission by 20 per cent by 2030 in the short term and by 50 per cent by 2047 in the hard to abate steel sector. Secondary pro- ducers, many of whom have turnover of ₹50-100 crore, said they need government hand-holding. "The Centre should se- lect a batch of technologies that we can pick up. If the individual units are not in a position financially to ex- ecute the projects to reduce carbon intensity, the govern- ment has to give us grants/ interest free loans," Shankar Lal Agarwal, pres- ident of West Bengal Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Associ- ation argued.

Miscellaneous

ECoR Sets Record by Achieving 200 Million Ton Freight Loading in Just 290 Days

■ Highest ever freight load- ing by any zone surpassing previous records. ■ Achieved the Milestone 05 Days earlier than last FY. ■ 200.13 MT Coal loaded dur- ing the period. ■ During the period, ECoR has unloaded a record of 183.5 MT freight. ■ Taken 366 Days in 2019-20; 360 Days in 2020-21; 320 Days in 2021-22; 310 Days in 2022-23; 295 Days in 2023-24 and 290 Days in 2024-25 fiscal. **MI News Service, Bhubaneswar:** East Coast Railway (ECoR) has shat- tered all previous records by achieving an unprece- dented freight loading mile- stone of 200.13 million tons in a remarkably swift 290 days during the fiscal year 2024-25. This achievement marks the highest-ever freight loading by any zone in the history of Indian Rail- ways, reinforcing ECoR's leadership in freight trans- portation and operational excellence. ECoR reached this landmark on January 15, 2025, surpassing its own record set in the previ- ous fiscal year (2023-24) when it took 295 days to cross 200 million tons. This year's feat was accom- plished 15 days ahead of last year's pace and comes on the back of a strong per- formance in previous years, where it took 366 days (2019-20), 360 days (2020-21), 320 days (2021-22), and 310 days (2022-23) to achieve similar milestones. During this period, East Coast Railway has unloaded a record of 183.5 million tons of freight, further high- lighting its remarkable per- formance in freight handling. Over the period, East Coast Railway handled a total of 200.13 million



tons, up by 1.6% from 196.779 million tons in the previous fiscal year. The zone's performance in freight handling remains robust, and it continues to be a crucial enabler of eco- nomic growth. The major commodities loaded by ECoR included: 119.637 MT of Coal, 7.67 MT of Raw Materials for Steel Plants, 15.991 MT of Pig Iron & Finished Steel, 24.426 MT of Iron Ore, 0.88 MT of Cement, 2.226 MT of Food Grains, 5.477 MT of Fertilizers, 2.317 MT of Mineral Oil, 4.372 MT of Freight in Containers, 17.159 MT of Other Goods. Along with this remark- able feat, East Coast Rail- way has also seen an increase in revenue gener- ation, earning ₹20,288.041 crore, which represents a 1.28% growth compared to the previous fiscal year. The achievement of 200 million tons within a span of 290 days is a direct result of East Coast Railway's metic- ulous planning, excellent coordination with indus- tries and government enti- ties, and the tireless efforts of its workforce. Under the dynamic leadership of Gen- eral Manager Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal,

ECoR has embraced a cul- ture of efficiency, positive thinking, and strategic fore- sight, making it a model of excellence within the In- dian Railways network. Several key initiatives have been instrumental in achieving this remarkable success, including: The con- struction and commission- ing of new rail lines, along with the doubling and third & fourth line projects, boosting connectivity across the region. Linking indus- tries with mineral belts and ports through an expanded rail infrastructure, strengthening the zone's position as a critical freight hub. Continued collabora- tion and planning with various government agencies and industries to ensure the timely and efficient move- ment of goods. With this record achievement, East Coast Railway continues to raise the bar in freight trans- portation, setting new benchmarks for operational excellence and contributing to the economic growth of the nation. The zone re- mains committed to en- hancing its capabilities and providing sustainable and efficient transportation so- lutions for the future.

Modi govt reviews tariff structures amid US pressure

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** India is set to revamp its customs duty structure in Union Budget 2025-26 as the government balances domestic demands for tariff protection with mounting global trade tensions and US criticism of its trade po- lices. President-elect Donald Trump has repeatedly slammed India's high tariffs, dubbing it a "tariff king". Sim- ultaneously, Indian indus- tries are pressing for duty rationalisation to address inefficiencies and enhance competitiveness in domestic production. The govern- ment is reviewing tariffs and exemptions on over 200 items, with potential changes to be announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1. The initiative aims to sim- plify trade, correct anom- alies in the inverted duty structure and incentivise local industries, reflecting a commitment to strengthen- ing India's global competi- tiveness. "The customs duty is primarily intended to boost domestic manufacturing, reduce disputes and streamline the duty struc- ture," sources said. Sectors such as electronics, electric vehicles (EVs), solar energy, steel, and pharmaceuticals are likely to benefit from the review, which could include reduced duties on raw ma- terials and components es- sential for production. The inverted duty structure — where import duties on in- puts exceed those on fin- ished goods — has long hindered domestic manu- facturing.

An oath taking ceremony organized at Divisional Railway Hospital, Malda for eliminating tuberculosis



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** As part of the ongoing ef- forts to sensitize health- care workers on the various aspects of the Na- tional Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), an oath taking ceremony was organized at Divi- sional Railway Hospital, Malda. In this programme, all participants pledged their commitment to elim- inate tuberculosis (TB) under the slogan "TB HAREGA, DESH JITEGA". The District Tuberculosis Team, alongside Dr. K.K. Pandey and his team from the State Technical Sup- port Unit-Tuberculosis, also visited Divisional Rail- way Hospital, Malda. The session continued with an engaging interactive dis- cussion focused on the goals of the NTEP, particu- larly the crucial mission to "find and treat missing TB cases," especially among high-risk groups such as patients with Diabetes, HIV, and the elderly, and significantly reduce TB-re-

lated deaths. Doctors, healthcare providers, and patients attending Divi- sional Railway Hospital, Malda for various ailments took part in this informa- tive session. The attendees were enlightened about the importance of identifi- ing and treating patients at high risk for TB. In a sig- nificant move to increase awareness, the ring tone for all CUG phone users in the Malda Division has been changed to a TB awareness tune starting from 16.01.2025. Further, the Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organi- zation (ERWWO), Malda continues to lead the way in supporting TB-affected individuals, particularly in the non-railway popu- lation, with their initiative "Nikshay Mitra," which provides food baskets to those in need. This collab- orative effort underscores the commitment to combat tuberculosis and create awareness at all levels of the healthcare system.

Regulation of trains due to developmental works in Adra Division

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** In view of developmental works in Adra Division, the fol- lowing trains will be regulated as under:-

Cancellation of Trains				
Sl. No.	Train No. & Name	Date of Cancellation		
1	68046/68045 Asansol-Adra-Asansol MEMU Passenger	20.01.2025 to 25.01.2025		
2	68089/68090 Midnapore-Adra-Midnapore MEMU Passenger	24.01.2025		
Short Termination/Short Origination of Trains				
Sl. No.	Train No. & Name	Short terminated at/Short originated from		Service cancelled between/Journey Commencing on
1	68056/68060 Tatanagar-Asansol-Barabhum MEMU Passenger	Adra	Adra	Adra-Asansol 20.01.2025 & 25.01.2025
2	63594/63593 Asansol-Purulia-Asansol MEMU Passenger	Adra	Adra	Kharagpur-Purulia 20.01.2025



# Study finds how weight loss could reduce chances of severe infections in diabetic people

WASHINGTON : According to new research, weight loss therapies may lower the risk of severe flu cases and other infections in patients suffering from diabetes.

The research will be presented at the annual meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes. The study by Rhian Hopkins and Ethan de Villiers, of the University of Exeter Medical School, University of Exeter, Exeter, in the United Kingdom, there is evidence to support the link between severe illnesses and a higher BMI.

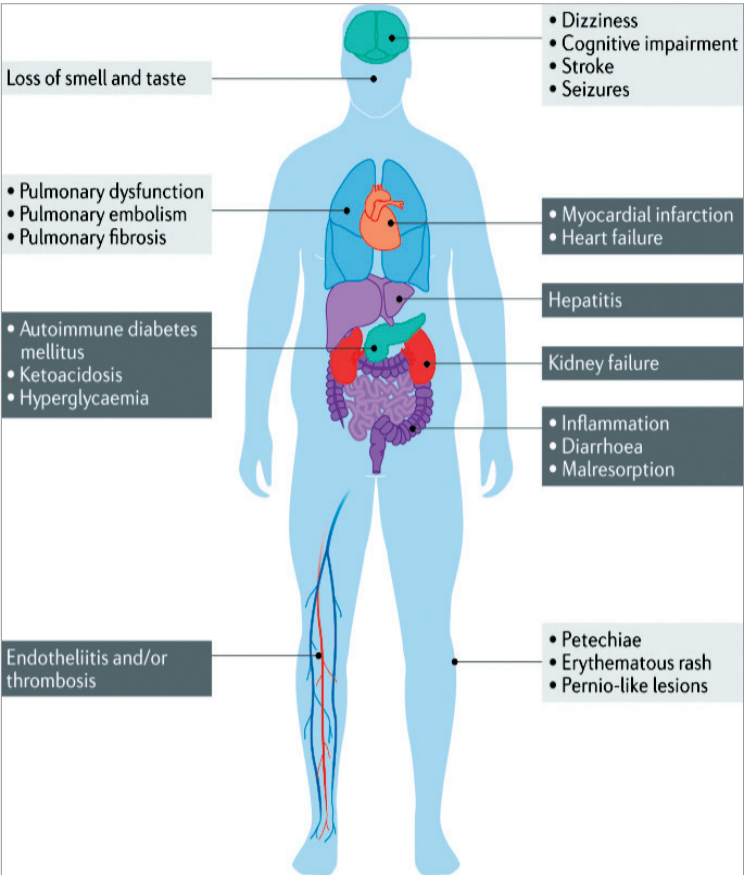
In contrast, there was no evidence that mild hyperglycemia contributes to the likelihood of a severe infection.

Hopkins says: "Up to one in three hospitalisations in people with diabetes are for infections and people with diabetes are twice as likely to be hospitalised with infections than the general population. They are also at high risk of readmission."

"Previous studies have found that a higher BMI and poor blood sugar control are associated with severe infections. However, these studies have been observational and so haven't been able to prove that the links are causal."

"If one or both of these factors can be shown to be causal, it may be possible to design interventions to lower the risk of severe infections in those at high risk, such as people with diabetes." The new study used data from the UK Biobank, which holds medical and genetic data on around 500,000 people in the UK, to explore the effect of higher BMI and poor blood sugar control on hospitalisation for bacterial and viral infections.

The 486,924 participants were classified into three groups: those



with a record of hospitalisation for a bacterial infection, such as pneumonia or a urinary tract infection, (n=64,005) or a viral infection, such as flu, (n=14,562) and an infection-free control group (n=408,357).

A higher BMI was found to be associated with hospitalisation with infections. The likelihood of being hospitalised with a bacterial infection increased by 30 per cent per 5-point increase in BMI (for instance, an increase in BMI from 30 kg/m2 to 35 kg/m2). Similarly, every five-point increase in BMI was associated with a 32 per cent increase in the likelihood a severe viral infection.

Mild hyperglycaemia was also

found to be associated with severe infections. The likelihood of being hospitalised with a bacterial infection increased by 32 per cent per 10mmol/mol increase in HbA1c, a measure of blood sugar levels. Similarly, every 10mmol/mol increase in HbA1c was associated with a 29 per cent increase in the likelihood of a severe viral infection.

The team then used Mendelian randomisation, a technique that uses genetic information to establish whether a factor actually causes ill health, to determine if the relationships were causal.

This suggested that a higher BMI is one of the causes of severe bacterial and viral infections.

However, mild hyperglycaemia did not appear to be a cause of severe infections.

The study didn't focus on individuals with diabetes. However, given how vulnerable they are to infections, the results may be of particular relevance to them, says Hopkins. She adds: "Infections are a major cause of death and ill health, particularly in people with diabetes. Anyone admitted to hospital with a severe infection is also at high risk of being admitted again with another. However, we currently have few effective ways to prevent this."

"This study demonstrates that higher BMI is a cause of hospital admission with infection. Clinicians could discuss weight loss options for people with a high BMI at risk of severe infections and readmission to hospital for infection."

"While this message may be particularly relevant to people with diabetes, it applies more widely, too."

# AI Good at some tasks, but bad with Maths says Deutsche Bank research



NEW DELHI : Generative AI, while gaining widespread attention, is not without its flaws. A recent report by Deutsche Bank Research highlighted that despite its strengths, the technology still struggles with certain tasks, particularly when it comes to mathematical calculations. The report noted that though generative AI has proven useful in many areas, such as summarizing, translating, and even generating creative content on a wide range of topics, its limitations in reasoning, learning abstract concepts, and developing an understanding of the world remain significant obstacles.

"Generative AI is certainly flawed... while Generative AI is surprisingly good at some activities, it is surprisingly bad at others, such as making mathematical calculations" said the report.

As per the report one of the key issues is the tendency of generative AI systems to produce hallucinations, or inaccurate information, despite using reliable data. It noted that these systems can also introduce bias or irrelevance into their outputs, and existing solutions have not fully addressed these problems. This remains a challenge, even as AI models continue to evolve. The report also pointed

out that much of the optimism surrounding AI's potential to boost productivity comes from controlled experiments. However, real-world applications show that the technology may not be as effective in every setting. For instance, highly regulated industries like financial services and healthcare, where the stakes are especially high, have been slow to adopt generative AI despite the potential benefits of analyzing vast amounts of unstructured data. The risks in these sectors--where errors could lead to serious consequences--make it harder for them to integrate AI into everyday use.

"The gap between high experimentation and low uptake is particularly striking in regulated industries such as financial services and healthcare" the report added.

In some cases, generative AI is showing potential in unexpected ways, such as generating novel research ideas, identifying irony, and even creating game engines that simulate real-world environments. However, as per the report the generative AI tools will only get better from here. And indeed even if they never did, it would take years for companies and individuals to find and implement the best use cases of AI.

# Overcoming Infertility: New Advances in IVF and Fertility Treatment

HOWRAH: Dr. Sonali Mandal In recent years, there has been remarkable progress in the field of fertility treatments, providing new hope for couples facing infertility. Advances in In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and other fertility technologies have significantly improved success rates, making parenthood a reality for many who once thought it impossible.

Dr. Sonali Mandal Bandyopadhyaya, an IVF specialist at Birla Fertility & IVF, Howrah, explains, "Advancements in fertility treatments, like genetic testing, embryo freezing, and AI-driven embryo selection, have revolutionized outcomes in IVF. At Birla Fertility & IVF, we leverage cutting-edge technologies to enhance success rates and minimize risks. Techniques like time-lapse imaging, ICSI, and donor programs provide hope to couples with complex fertility challenges. These innovations, combined with personalized care, ensure that more individuals and couples can achieve their dreams of parenthood. Science and compassion together are paving the way to overcoming infertility."

One of the key breakthroughs in IVF is genetic testing, which allows doctors to screen embryos for genetic disorders before implantation. This minimizes the risk of passing on inherited conditions, leading to healthier pregnancies and a higher likelihood of successful outcomes. Additionally, pre-implantation



genetic testing (PGT) helps in selecting the most viable embryos, further boosting IVF success rates.

Embryo freezing, or vitrification, is another important advancement in fertility treatments. This technology enables the safe preservation of embryos, which can be thawed and implanted at a later date, offering greater flexibility and better chances of success for women who may need to delay pregnancy for personal or medical reasons.

The introduction of artificial intelligence

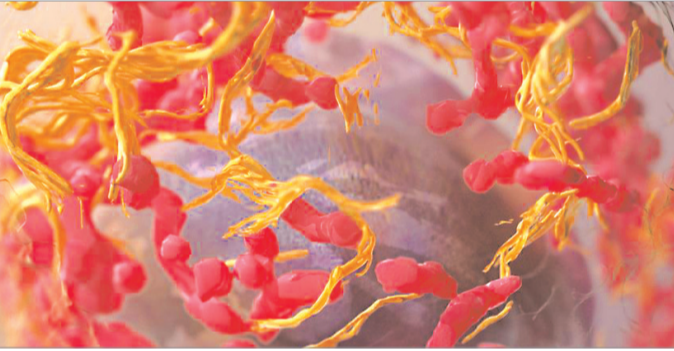
# Study finds how skin cancer occurrence in young adults declines

SOLNA [SWEDEN] : A recent study suggested that the risk of malignant melanoma, or skin cancer, may be declining in Sweden, at least for people under the age of 50. "We can see a trend break in young adults around 2015 where the incidence curves are falling," says first author Hildur Helgadottir, senior consultant and associate professor of oncology at the Department of Oncology-Pathology, Karolinska Institutet.

Her research colleagues have examined the incidence and death of melanoma for various age groups over time by analysing data from the Swedish Melanoma Registry. This indicates that they have made a comparison between people in the same age range at one point in time and people in the same age range at another.

The findings indicate that while the new-onset curves for individuals over 50 continue to rise, they began to decline about 2015 for those in the younger age groups.

"This is the first time we see this in Sweden, and we are actually the first European country to report a decline," said Hildur Helgadottir. In terms of mortality, the curves have also turned downwards for ages up to 59, but not for those over 60. Hildur Helgadottir believes that the decrease in mortality in the younger groups is due both to a



reduction in the incidence of the disease and to the introduction of new oncological drugs that have improved the prognosis for the disease. She believes that the fact that mortality is not decreasing in the elderly is because the incidence of the disease is still so high in this group. "The question is why the risk of melanoma has decreased. "We have not directly analyzed the causes in our study, but we have hypotheses about factors that we believe have interacted," said Hildur Helgadottir.

"There are four main factors," she said. The first is increased awareness of sun protection.

"The first national 'Sun Safe' campaign in the 1990s specifically highlighted the importance of protecting children. About 20 years later, we believe that this has led to a reduction in the incidence of the disease in younger adults,"

said Hildur Helgadottir.

Another factor is that access to sunbeds has decreased drastically. Since 2018, there has been an 18-year age limit on sunbeds, but the number of public sunbeds decreased much earlier.

Third, mobile phones and computers mean that children and young people are spending more time indoors and are not exposed to sunlight in the same way today. Finally, immigration means that there are more individuals in Sweden with darker pigmentation who can tolerate the sun better. "We see that it is necessary to continue the work of emphasizing the importance of sun protection so that the reduction of melanoma in younger people is maintained and that the incidence will eventually also decrease in older people," said Hildur Helgadottir.

# Study finds new target for treating heart failure



NAGOYA : As society ages, the number of patients suffering from heart failure grows significantly. Fibrosis, or excessive growth of fibrotic tissue in the heart, has been linked to the advancement of heart failure. A group from Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine in Japan discovered an enzyme called protein kinase N (PKN) that controls cardiac fibrosis.

The enzyme converts heart fibroblasts to myofibroblasts, putting the heart's integrity at risk.

Deleting this enzyme reduced ventricular dysfunction, indicating that anti-PKN therapies are a prospective therapy for protecting patients from heart failure.

The findings were published in Nature Communications.

The heart maintains its integrity by the usage of tiny cells known as fibroblasts, which are frequently transformed into myofibroblasts following damage. Myofibroblasts promote wound healing by creating fibrous connective tissues like collagen and elastin. However, in

heart failure patients, they frequently cause extra tissue to collect, resulting in hardening of heart tissue and reduced function, a disease known as fibrosis. This process reduces the integrity of the heart's structure, increasing the risk of a heart attack.

The enzyme PKN has been implicated in a signaling cascade that causes heart fibroblast activation. A group led by Drs. Satoya Yoshida, MikitoTakefuji, and ToyookiMurohara in the Department of Cardiology at the Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine suspected the involvement of PKN in the changes of fibroblasts to myofibroblasts seen in fibrosis. In collaboration with colleagues at the Max Planck Institute, they investigated its role.

In mammal cells, there are three forms of PKN: PKN1, 2, and 3. Using RNA-sequencing data, they identified PKN1 and 2 in heart fibroblasts. The study used mice raised without PKN1 and PKN2. It found that although heart function remained unaffected, there was a notable decrease in actin and collagen expression in the myocardial infarction and heart failure model.

# Long-term metastatic melanoma survival dramatically improves on immunotherapy: Study

NEW YORK [US] : Long-term data from a landmark international trial show that about half of patients with metastatic melanoma treated with a combination of immune checkpoint inhibitors live cancer-free for 10 years or more, according to a new report from Weill Cornell Medicine and Dana-Farber Cancer Centre investigators and colleagues.

The 10-year follow-up research, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, will bring the phase 3 CheckMate 067 trial to a conclusion. The research, which followed 945 patients treated at 137 sites across 21 countries, found that combining nivolumab and ipilimumab, immunotherapies that suppress two separate immune checkpoint proteins, significantly improved outcomes for a condition that had previously been nearly deadly. Subsequent studies of patient outcomes at three, five, and 6.5 years after the trial began revealed that the effect lasted several years for individuals who responded to the medication.

"This was a practice-changing trial," said first author Dr. Jedd Wolchok, the Meyer Director of the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center and professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine and an oncologist at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. "The median survival for this population is now a little over six years, and people who are free from cancer progression at three years have a high likeli-



hood of remaining alive and disease-free at the 10-year time point." In 2011, the median survival for patients with metastatic melanoma was just six and a half months. However, the emergence of immune checkpoint inhibitors, which facilitate the ability of the immune system to attack cancer, as a treatment option gradually began to increase survival. The CheckMate 067 trial demonstrated that nivolumab alone or in combination with another checkpoint inhibitor, ipilimumab, is a more effective approach than ipilimumab alone.

"This trial is a key part of how we talk to patients about the lasting benefits of immune checkpoint therapy and the potential of combining multiple immune therapies to improve treatment outcomes," said Dr. F. Stephen Hodi, the director of the Melanoma Center and the Center for Immuno-Oncology at Dana-Farber and the

co-senior author of the study. Dr. James Larkin of The Royal Marsden Hospital in the UK is the other co-senior author.

In addition to confirming long-term survival in about half of patients treated with the combination, the 10-year analysis found no new safety signals for the treatment. Some physicians worried that treatment-related health problems might emerge later because patients must continue taking the drugs long-term. But the 10-year analysis found no concerning signals of long-term toxicity. There was also no resurgence of well-documented acute toxicities and few recurrences of melanoma.

The team analyzed melanoma-specific survival and overall survival at 10 years and found the two diverge long-term, showing that metastatic melanoma survivors become increasingly likely to die of other causes as they age, an indication of long-term treatment success, according to the investigators.

"After a decade of follow-up, we can now confidently tell our patients that there are treatments available with the potential to transform metastatic melanoma into a manageable, long-term condition, instilling confidence about the future," said Dr. Hodi.

In addition to demonstrating a reassuring long-term efficacy and safety profile for this immune checkpoint inhibitor combination, the investigators hope the data will also help improve the care protocols for metastatic melanoma survivors.

# Indian Railways Reimagined: The RPF’s Digital Leap in Public Engagement

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** “The function of law enforcement is not just to maintain order but to create the conditions under which all citizens feel protected, empowered, and included in the societal fabric.” – James Q. Wilson

In the digital era, social media has transcended its original purpose as a communication tool to become a powerful driver of social change, participatory governance, and public accountability. For the Railway Protection Force (RPF), responsible for the safety of over 20 million daily passengers across the vast Indian Railways network, social media represents a platform of great strategic value. Forums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are leveraged not only to communicate but also to build trust, foster inclusivity, and amplify awareness campaigns. This sophisticated integration of digital engagement aligns with theories of participatory communication, public sociology, and digital citizenship, establishing the RPF as a forward-thinking law enforcement agency in the global context.

## Social Media: A New Frontier for Public Engagement

Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have revolutionized communication by offering instantaneous and interactive interfaces. For law enforcement, these platforms enable: 1. Real-Time Information Sharing: Quick dissemination of safety alerts, updates on services offered by RPF to the passengers, and guidelines during emergencies. 2. Interactive Public Engagement: Direct interaction with passengers for queries, grievances, and feedback. 3. Crowdsourcing Intelligence: Leveraging user-reported information for monitoring suspicious activities. Bridging the Gap: From Authority to Accessibility Social media has redefined the traditional dynamic between law enforcement and the public by enabling real-time, two-way communication. For the RPF, this interactive digital interface acts as a bridge, narrowing the psychological and operational gap between citizens and authorities. Verified handles on platforms like Twitter and Facebook provide passengers with an asynchronous communication channel to report grievances, seek assistance, and receive critical updates, enhancing both accountability and operational transparency. This approach is rooted in Habermas’s Public Sphere Theory, which conceptualizes social media as a modern public sphere where individuals can engage with institutions and contribute to discourses shaping their lived realities. By prioritizing responsiveness and accessibility, the RPF reinforces its legitimacy as a citizen-centric service-oriented organization, shifting the public perception of law enforcement from that of distant authority to collaborative ally. For vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, this digital accessibility represents a lifeline. The RPF’s ability to respond swiftly to distress signals posted on social media, combined with its proactive outreach, demonstrates the application of proactive policing frameworks within a digital ecosystem. The immediacy of these responses builds trust and positions the RPF as a dependable institution safeguarding mass public transport network. Amplifying Awareness: Campaigns That Resonate Social media’s network effect empowers the RPF to amplify its awareness campaigns, reaching millions across urban, peri-urban, and rural demographics. Initiatives like Operation Meri Saheli (for security of women traveling alone in long distance trains), Operation AAHT (Action Against Human Trafficking), and anti-rerpassing drives leverage digital platforms to educate passengers, promote vigilance, and encourage participatory safety practices. Operation Meri Saheli, for example, benefits from emotive storytelling, where the RPF shares real-life accounts of women passengers receiving timely assistance. These narratives, supported by compelling visuals and infographics, employ the Narrative Transportation Theory, which avers that audiences are more likely to engage with and act upon emotionally resonant stories. Similarly, Operation AAHT uses behavioural design principles to educate the public on recognizing signs of trafficking and reporting suspicious activities, transforming passive audiences into active participants in combating transnational crimes.

By tailoring content using algorithmic targeting, the RPF ensures that its messages reach the intended audiences, maximizing impact. This strategy aligns with Lasswell’s Communication Model, emphasizing the importance of addressing the “who,” “what,” “how,” and “to whom” in communication efforts. Through platform-specific strategies, the RPF achieves not only visibility but also meaningful engagement. Humanizing the Force: Social Media as a Sociological Catalyst

One of the most profound impacts of social media is its ability to humanize institutions, bridging emotional gaps between organizations and the communities they serve. For the RPF, this capability transforms public perceptions of law enforcement from rigid authority to empathetic protectors. Posts celebrating women officers leading security operations or videos showcasing the rescue of trafficked children are not merely content—they are cultural artifacts that reinforce societal trust. This aligns with Symbolic Interactionism, a sociological framework suggesting that meaning is constructed through shared symbols and



interactions. By sharing moments of bravery, compassion, and dedication, the RPF not only reinforces its institutional values but also strengthens its relational equity with the public. Behind-the-scenes glimpses into operations and personnel narratives further align with Authenticity Theory, creating a perception of transparency and accountability. Moreover, the RPF’s digital storytelling strategy helps build a resonant identity, fostering a deeper emotional connection with passengers. This connection extends to promoting gender inclusivity, as posts featuring women-led security teams challenge entrenched stereotypes and inspire broader societal shifts in perceptions of women in law enforcement.

## Leveraging Social Media as a Crime Prevention Ecosystem

Social media is not just a platform for communication but also an integral part of the RPF’s crime prevention architecture. The force uses social media to share live updates on potential threats, train disruptions, and safety advisories, ensuring passengers have access to real-time situational awareness. These updates align with the Time-Sensitive Communication Paradigm, prioritizing timely dissemination of critical information to mitigate risks effectively. In addition to broadcasting updates, the RPF actively employs social media intelligence tools to monitor digital conversations for distress signals, suspicious activities, and emergent security concerns. By analysing hashtags, geotags, and user-generated content, the RPF incorporates predictive analytics into its operational framework. This approach aligns with Predictive Policing Models, enabling the force to preemptively address threats and allocate resources efficiently. For instance, during large-scale events or emergencies, the RPF uses Twitter as a crowdsourced intelligence platform, allowing passengers to share on-ground observations. This participatory approach exemplifies Community Policing Theory, fostering a collaborative relationship between law enforcement and the public.

## Digital Literacy and Bridging the Digital Divide

While social media enhances engagement, its effectiveness depends on the audience’s ability to navigate digital platforms. Recognizing this, the RPF’s strategy includes promoting digital literacy to ensure equitable access to information and services. Posts explaining the use of the RailMadad app, helpline numbers, and online grievance redressal systems are designed to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that passengers across all socioeconomic strata can benefit from the RPF’s initiatives. This effort aligns with Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which emphasizes the role of communication channels in the adoption of new technologies and practices. By producing multilingual content and simplifying complex processes, the RPF addresses disparities in digital accessibility, fostering inclusivity.

## Celebrating Milestones: Building Social Capital

Social media provides the RPF with a platform to celebrate achievements, from rescuing trafficking victims to apprehending criminals and executing high-impact campaigns. These celebrations not only enhance institutional morale but also build social capital, reinforcing public trust in the force’s capabilities. By highlighting milestones, the RPF employs the Self-Determination Theory, which underscores the importance of recognition in fostering intrinsic motivation. Public acknowledgment of these successes reassures passengers of their safety and inspires confidence in the RPF’s operational excellence.

## Strengthening Gender Representation: Digital Narratives of Inclusivity

The RPF’s commitment to gender inclusivity finds robust representation on its social media platforms. Posts spotlighting the leadership of women officers and members of the force or the achievements of all women teams like Shakti or Rudramma or Veerangana or JOYMATI BAHINI challenge traditional gender norms and inspire young women to pursue careers in law enforcement. This strategy aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory, emphasizing empowerment, vision, and collaboration. By promoting women’s achievements, the RPF not only enhances its operational framework but also fosters societal progress toward gender parity.

## Challenges in Using Social Media for RPF

1. Misinformation and Fake News: Rumors and unverified information can escalate panic. While handling social media handles, we should be careful to share accurate and verified information. 2. Digital Literacy: Many passengers, especially in rural areas, lack access or understanding of social media.

# Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf condemns conviction of Imran Khan and his wife in Al Qadir Trust case, vows to challenge decision

**MI News Service, Islamabad:** The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders have condemned the conviction of former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the 190 million pound Al Qadir Trust, labelling the ruling “politically motivated” and vowed to challenge the decision of the judge in higher courts. The Express Tribune reported.

Speaking to reporters, Opposition leader in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub, called the decision a “dark day” in Pakistan’s judicial history, according to The Express Tribune report. He raised questions over the relation between the funds involved and the PTI leadership, stressing that the Supreme Court received the money and not former Pakistan

PM or his wife. PTI’s senior leader, Shibli Faraz, said that Imran Khan and his wife did not gain any benefit from the alleged transactions. He stressed that the couple was being punished for founding Al-Qadir University, which aimed to promote the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), The Express Tribune reported. Slamming the system, Faraz said, “Those who looted the country walk free, while sincere leaders face jail.” He expressed PTI’s commitment to challenge the verdict and pursue justice. Imran Khan-founded party has said that the case is part of a broader effort to undermine PTI’s leadership through politically motivated charges.

Earlier in the day, the court

convicted Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the 190 million pound Al-Qadir Trust case with the PTI founder being sentenced to 14 years in prison while seven year jail term has been handed over to his wife, Dawn reported. The verdict, delayed three times previously, was announced by Judge Nasir Javed Rana in a makeshift courtroom at Adiala Jail. The court asked Imran Khan and his wife to pay a fine of amounting to Pakistani Rupees (PKR) 1million and PKR 500,000, respectively. Failure to pay the fines would cause six months in jail. The judge announced the verdict amid tight security outside Adiala Jail. Following the announcement of the verdict, Bushra Bibi was arrested from the court-

room. The couple was indicted in the case on February 27 last year, shortly after the elections were held on February 8.

The case alleges that Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising PKR 50 billion that was identified and returned to Pakistan by the UK during the PTI government, Dawn reported. On December 23, when the verdict was supposed to be announced, an Islamabad accountability court postponed the verdict in the case till January 6 due to winter vacations. On January 6, the verdict was not announced as Judge Nasir Javed Rana, who has been hearing the case, was on leave.

## Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to mark February 8 as "Black Day" to protest against deprivation of mandate



**MI News Service, Islamabad:** Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to mark February 8 as a ‘Black Day’ in protest against the deprivation of its mandate, Dawn reported.

Pakistan held its 12th national general election on February 8 last year, amid allegations of rigging and the shutdown of cellular and internet services. The PTI dominated the election results, with the highest number of successful candidates in the elections. However, the party has alleged rigging in the polls.

In a statement, PTI’s Central Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram announced that the party has started preparations to mark the first anniversary of the “mother of all poll robberies” as a ‘Black Day’ which had allowed the “power-greedy” and “self-serving” to illegitimately take hold of the power, making mockery of democracy, according to Dawn report. Akram said that all Members of National Assembly (MNAs)

and Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) were asked to make preparations to hold large demonstrations in various parts of Pakistan to send a strong message to the power usurpers that the people of the nation would rest until reclaiming the “stolen” mandate and ensuring constitutions supremacy and rule of law. He pointed out to the surprising turn of events that on one hand Shehbaz Sharif was nominated as Pakistan’s Prime Minister on the very day when the court was set to sentence him and his son in corruption cases, while on the other hand, he facilitated the deal to ensure homecoming of his brother and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, Dawn reported.

On the Al-Qadir Trust case, Sheikh Waqqa Akram said that PTI founder Imran Khan had faced all politically motivated cases in the court and expressed hope that the result of this case would not be different.

## Israel: PM Netanyahu to convene Security Cabinet meeting to approve ceasefire deal

**MI News Service, Jerusalem:** Amid the background of the ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas, the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office on Friday shared that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been updated by the negotiating team over agreements reached for the deal on release of hostages.

The details were shared on X by the official account of the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel. In a series of tweets, it was mentioned, “Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been updated by the negotiating team that agreements have been reached on a deal for the release of the hostages”. “The Prime Minister has di-

ordinator for the Hostages and the Missing to coordinate the preparations to receive the hostages upon their return to Israel”, the post said.

“The State of Israel is committed to achieving all of the objectives of the war including the return of all of our hostages, the living and the deceased”, the post concluded. Earlier on Wednesday, Qatar, Egypt, and the US, in a joint statement, confirmed that Israel and Hamas have reached a ceasefire and hostage release deal that is likely to take effect on January 19. The Qatar Foreign Ministry, in a statement on Wednesday, said that both parties have reached an agreement



rected that the Security Cabinet be convened later today (Friday). The Government will be convened later in order to approve the deal. Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed his appreciation for the negotiating team and all those who assisted,” the statement read. It was noted that the Prime Minister’s Office Authority for the Hostages and Missing has updated the families of the hostages. “The Prime Minister has also directed the Co-

to release hostages in exchange for hostages and prisoners. US President Joe Biden also announced the successful negotiation of a ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas, ending over 15 months of conflict. The deal, structured in three phases, includes a complete ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, and the release of hostages, including Americans, in the first phase.

## Knesset opposition leader promises Netanyahu his support for hostage release deal

**MI News Service, Tel Aviv:** Leader of the opposition in the Knesset Yair Lapid responded to the threat made by a coalition party to quit the government should it approve the proposed deal for the release of Israelis held hostage in Gaza by promising to support the government in this matter.

“I say to Benjamin Netanyahu, don’t be afraid or intimidated, you will get every safety net you need to make the hostage deal,” tweeted Lapid. “This is more important than any disagreement we’ve ever had.”

Israel’s National Security Minister and leader of the right-wing Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Strength) Party Itamar Ben-Gvir announced that he will resign from the government if it implements the emerging ceasefire with Hamas, which he called “reckless” in a statement.

“Not only that, it does not lead to the release of all the hostages, it seals the fate of the remaining hostages who are not included in the deal, and it will lead to the end of the war when Hamas has not yet been defeated, with a significant ability to rebuild itself,” Ben-Gvir said.

He added, “If the war on Hamas is renewed with force in order to decide and realise the unachieved goals of the war, we will return to the government.”

# Regulation of trains for construction of Road under Bridge over Sealdah Division

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** In connection with the replacement of old steel girder of rail over bridge No. 15/CCR in between Bally Ghat & Bally Halt stations in Dum Dum Jn. – Dankuni section by providing RCC Box to construct Road Under Bridge (RUB), Traffic cum Power Block for 100 hours (from 00:00 hrs. of 23.01.2025 to 04:00 hrs. of 27.01.2025) has been planned. Consequently, the following arrangements in train running will be made as under:-

CANCELLATION OF EMU: On 23.01.2025 (Thursday), 24.01.2025 (Friday), 25.01.2025 (Saturday) and 26.01.2025 (Sunday): • Sealdah-Dankuni: UP 32211, 32213, 32215, 32217, 32219, 32221, 32223, 32225, 32227, 32229, 32231, 32233, 32235, 32237, 32239, 32241, 32243, 32245, 32247, 32249, DN 32212, 32214, 32216, 32218, 32220, 32222, 32224, 32226, 32228, 32230, 32232, 32234, 32236, 32238, 32240, 32242, 32246, 32248, 32250, 32252. • Sealdah-Baruipara: UP 32411, 32413, DN 32412, 32414. • Sealdah-Kalyani Simanta: UP 31317, 31333, 31339, DN 31318, 31332, 31338. Sealdah-Madhyamgram: UP 33421, DN 33422. • Sealdah-Bardhaman: UP 31151, DN 31152. • Sealdah-Dum Dum Cantonment: UP 33411, DN 33412. • Sealdah-Duttapukur: UP 33621, DN 33628. • Naihati-Bandel: UP 37535, 37537, 37545, 37529, 37521, 37523, 37555, 37557, DN 37538, 37540, 37548, 37532, 37522, 37524, 37556, 37558.

On 27.01.2025 (Monday): Sealdah-Dankuni: UP 32211, 32213, DN 32212, 32214

CANCELLATION OF MAIL/EXPRESS: On 21.01.2025 (Tuesday):

12359 Kolkata-Patna Garib Rath Express (JCO 21.01.2025).

On 22.01.2025 (Wednesday): 13179 Sealdah-Siuri Express (JCO 22.01.2025), 13161 Kolkata-Balughat Tebhaga Express (JCO 22.01.2025).

On 23.01.2025 (Thursday): 13179 Sealdah-Siuri Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13161 Kolkata-Balughat Tebhaga Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13180 Siuri-Sealdah Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13162 Balughat-Kolkata Tebhaga Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 15234 Darbhanga-Kolkata Maithili Express (JCO 22.01.2025), 15233 Kolkata-Darbhanga Maithili Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13177 Sealdah-Jangipur Road Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13178 Jangipur Road-Sealdah Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 12359 Kolkata-Patna Garib Rath Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 12360 Patna-Kolkata Garib Rath Express (JCO 23.01.2025), 13177 Sealdah-Jangipur Road Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 13179 Sealdah-Siuri Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 13161 Kolkata-Balughat Tebhaga Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 12384 Asansol-Sealdah Intercity Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 13178 Jangipur Road-Sealdah Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 13180 Siuri-Sealdah Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 13162 Balughat-Kolkata Tebhaga Express (JCO 24.01.2025), 12364 Haldibari-Kolkata Intercity Express (JCO 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# D Gukesh, Manu Bhaker, Harmanpreet Singh, Praveen Kumar receive prestigious Khel Ratna award

NEW DELHI [INDIA] : Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker, World Chess Champion Gukesh Dommaraju, Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh and Para Athlete Praveen Kumar were awarded the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award by the President of India, Draupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Friday.

Earlier on January 2, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports released a statement and announced the names of recipients of the prestigious National Sports Awards 2024.

On Friday, the National Sports Awards 2025 took place at the Rashtrapati Bhawan where the President of India awarded all the recipients of the Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award, and Dronacharya Award.

Manu Bhaker opened India's medal tally in the Olympics after she secured third place in the women's individual 10m air pistol event, becoming the first-ever woman shooter to win an Olympic medal for India. Following that, Sarabjot Singh and Bhaker won the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol (mixed team) event, which was India's first-ever shooting team medal.

Meanwhile, Gukesh's success story was one of the major highlights



of Indian sports in 2024. He made history in December by defeating China's Ding Liren in the decisive 14th game of the FIDE World Championship match in Singapore. The championship, tied at 6.5-6.5 heading into the final game, saw a stellar performance from Gukesh,

who secured a 7.5-6.5 victory, becoming the youngest world champion ever at 18. He also became India's second world chess champion after Viswanathan Anand.

Para Athlete, Praveen Kumar won a Gold in the Men's High Jump T64 at the Paralympics 2024.

Harmanpreet Singh had been part of the Tokyo Olympics where India had won the Hockey bronze. He has also been nominated for FIH Player of the Year. Under his leadership, the India team won a bronze medal in the Paris Olympics

Indian men's hockey players Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh and women's hockey team captain Salima Tete have been awarded Arjuna Awards for outstanding performance in Sports and Games 2024.

Indian chess grandmaster Vantika Agrawal and athlete Jyothi Yarraji have also been conferred with Arjuna Awards.

Para athletes Preeti Pal, Jeevanji Deepthi, Ajeet Singh, Sachin Sarjerao Khilari, Dharambir, Pranav Soorma, Hokato Sema, Simran, and Navdeep will also receive Arjuna Awards.

Olympic medalists Swapnil Suresh Kusale and Sarabjot Singh and Para-Olympic shooters Mona Agarwal and Rubina Francis have also been awarded with Arjuna Awards.

Former Dempo FC and East Bengal head coach Armando Agnelo Colaco was also awarded with Dronacharya Award in the lifetime category.



## ISL: Bengaluru FC chase form and momentum against Hyderabad FC

HYDERABAD (TELANGANA) [INDIA] : Hyderabad FC will host Bengaluru FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 on Saturday, at the GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium.

The Blues are currently in third place in the table with 27 points from 15 matches, while Hyderabad FC sit at the bottom with nine points from as many games. The visitors began the season on a flawless note but recent results mean that they are eight points behind league leaders Mohun Bagan Super Giant, a release from ISL stated.

With nine matches to go in the regular season for them, the side can't afford to drop points if they have to keep their ambitions of becoming the ISL Champions alive.

Bengaluru FC went scoreless in their last match, which was a 0-1 loss to Mohammedan SC. The previous time they went consecutive games without finding the back of the net were the last two matches before Gerard Zaragoza took over as the head coach in December 2023. Since then, particularly this season, there has been a smooth consistency in their frontline, as reflected by the Blues having found the back of the net 28 times, as opposed to 11 of Hyderabad FC. Four of Hyderabad FC's 11 goals in ISL 2024-25 have come in their last five matches, where they have drawn twice and lost thrice.

A victory here will see Hyderabad FC extend their unbeaten home stretch against the Blues to four matches. Bengaluru FC, on the other hand, are looking to avoid a third consecutive loss, in order to sustain pressure on their opponents in the upper half of the points table.

With Bengaluru FC striving to break their away run and Hyderabad FC seeking to bounce back from a testing campaign, this promises to be a contest with a reasonable lot to play for both teams.

Hyderabad FC have conceded 26 goals from inside the box, interestingly exactly

the same numbers that Bengaluru FC have scored from the zone this term. Can Hyderabad FC take a brave call to operate with a high defensive line, win the ball in Bengaluru FC's half and limit their involvement in closer ranges?

While Hyderabad FC have scored in their last two home games, they have managed only one goal in each of their three home matches against Bengaluru FC. They need to step up their scoring efforts to push Bengaluru FC back and make the most of the opponents' recent away issues.

Bengaluru FC have scored 26 goals from inside the box this season, a tally only bettered by Odisha FC (28). Their attack, led by clinical players like Sunil Chhetri (9), Ryan Williams (5), and Edgar Mendez (4), will look to outnumber Hyderabad FC inside the 18-yard area.

The Blues come into this game on the back of two consecutive losses, a streak they last endured in October-November 2022. They will have to overcome their woes on the road to mount a serious challenge for the top spot.

Hyderabad FC interim head coach Shameel Chembakath encouraged his players to take the opponents out of the equation when preparing for a match.

"The message to the players has always been clear. That is, to not think about the three points. That way, we will be in a good place," Chembakath was quoted in a release from ISL as saying.

Bengaluru FC head coach Gerard Zaragoza said that his team seeks happiness out of the way they play football.

"We want to enjoy the way we play football. We want to win, of course. We hate losing. But, we also want the supporters to enjoy watching us play," Zaragoza said.

In 11 matches between the two teams, Hyderabad FC and Bengaluru FC have won four and three games respectively. The rest have resulted in a draw.

## INDIA TO ANNOUNCE ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2025 SQUAD TODAY

MUMBAI (MAHARASHTRA) : The Indian squad for the upcoming ODI series against England and the ICC Champions Trophy will be announced on Saturday, announced the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday.

BCCI issued a media advisory announcing the same. Skipper Rohit Sharma and the chairman of the men's selection committee Ajit Agarkar will be attending the press conference scheduled for 12:30 PM IST.

"The Men's Selection Committee will select India's squad for the IDFC First Bank ODI series against England and the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025 tomorrow in Mumbai. The Selection Meeting will be followed by a press conference," the advisory from BCCI read.

Before the ODIs against England, a five-match T20I series against England will be kicking starting on January 22.

The five-match T20I series will commence on January 22 in Kolkata. The second and third matches will be held on January 25 and 28 in Chennai and Rajkot, respectively. The fourth game of the series will be played on January 31 in Pune. Mumbai will host the final match of the T20I series on February 2.

The three-match ODI series will kickstart from February 6 onwards. The freshest challenge awaiting India is the ICC Champions Trophy, starting from February 19 till March 9. It will be hosted by Pakistan and UAE, with India playing its matches in UAE under a hybrid model. The eight-team tournament will feature 15 50-over matches and will be played across Pakistan and in Dubai. The biggest match of the tournament between two arch-rivals India and Pakistan will be played on February 23 in Dubai. India will start its campaign against Bangladesh on February 20. India's last league match will be against New Zealand on March 2.

Group A of the tournament features current Champions Trophy holders and hosts Pakistan, along with India, New Zealand and Bangladesh, while Group B features Cricket World Cup 2023 champions Australia, alongside Afghanistan, England and South Africa.



## Subhash Rana, Deepali Deshpande, Armando Colaco among sporting personalities felicitated with Dronacharya Award

NEW DELHI [INDIA] : Coaches Subash Rana, Deepali Deshpande, Sandeep Sangwan, S Muralidharan and Armando Colaco were felicitated with the prestigious Dronacharya Award by the president Droupadi Murmu on Friday.

Various eminent sporting personalities were felicitated during the National Sports Awards ceremony by President Murmu on Friday.

Subhash, Deepali and Sandeep were honoured with the regular category Dronacharya award, while Muralidharan and Armando were felicitated with the Dronacharya Lifetime category award.

Subhash's award was in recognition of his outstanding achievements in Para-Shooting. He has trained many outstanding Para Athletes including Manish Narwal, Rubina Francis, Singhraj, Avani Lekhara. These players have won medals at the Paralympic Games 2021 and 2024, the World Championship 2022, the Asian Para Games 2023 and other international tournaments.

His most notable pupil, Avani became the first-ever Indian woman to secure two gold medals in Paralympics during the Paris Paralympics 2024. She got a gold and bronze medal in the 10m air rifle SH1 and 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 respectively after a gold medal in the 2020 Paralympics in the 10m air rifle SH1.

Also, Deepali was honoured for her contributions to the sport of shooting. She has trained many outstanding Athletes including Swapnil Kusale, Akhil Sheoran, Arjun Babuta, Sift Kaur Samra, Anjum Moudgil and Shriyanka Sadangi. These players have won medals in Olympics 2024, World Championship 2023 and 2024, World Cups 2024, Asian Games 2023 and Asian Shooting Championships 2023.

Sandeep's contributions to the sport of hockey also got their well-deserved recognition, having trained players like Sumit, Mandeep Singh,



Gurjant Singh, Jarmanpreet, Sanjay, and Abhishek. These players have won medals at the Olympic Games 2021 and 2024, Asian Games 2023, Commonwealth Games 2022 and other International tournaments.

In the lifetime Dronacharya award category, Muralidharan's contributions to badminton were given recognition. He has trained many outstanding Athletes including U Vimal Kumar, Madhumita Bisht & George Thomas. These players won medals at the Asian Games 1982, the Commonwealth Games 1998, the French Open - Badminton 1983 & 1984 and the Welsh Open - Badminton 1988.

Armando's contributions to sport

of football, most notably in training the all-time great player and captain Sunil Chhetri, were also honoured. Other than Chhetri, he has trained several players like Mahesh Gawli, Climax Lawrence, Anwar Ali, Anthony Pereira and Samir Naik. These players won the Silver medal in the 2002 SAFF Cup, Gold medal in 2005 SAFF Cup, Silver medal in 2008 SAFF Cup, Gold medal in 2012 SAFF Cup and Gold medal in 2002 LG Cup.

Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games' is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and for enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.

## India U19 captain Niki recalls advice by Shafali Varma ahead of 2025 T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI [INDIA] : India's U19 captain Niki Prasad expressed happiness at getting a chance to lead the team during the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup and also recalled advice from senior Indian batter Shafali Varma, who led Women in Blue to the title in inaugural edition in 2023. The tournament will be starting from Saturday onwards in Malaysia and will go on till February 2 this year. India secured the inaugural title back in 2023 under the captaincy of Shafali Varma, beating England in the final.

In a video posted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Niki expressed that she feels thankful for the opportunity to lead the team as many players dream of playing and captaining India. She also recalled that Shafali advice the team to "go out and enjoy" as they start their campaign against West Indies from Sunday at Bayuemas Oval, Pandamaran.

Speaking in the video, Niki said, "Representing the country is a matter of highest pride for us as a cricketer. And now since we have gotten this opportunity, I think we are going to go out there and give our best and



defend the title. It is very special for me, because a lot of players out there are dreaming to play for India. And I have not just got the opportunity to play for the country but also to lead the Indian side."

"All of us are really excited to be playing the ICC World Cup. And we are all very motivated and very excited to go out there and show what we can do. I got to speak with the captain who won last time. I got

to speak to Shafali Varma and one piece of advice she gave me was to just go out there and have fun and enjoy. We are definitely looking forward to carrying the tradition of winning and we want to create this legacy of winning ICC trophies," she added.

16 teams will compete in 41 matches across three host cities in Malaysia - Johor, Sarawak, and Selangor. These teams are divided into four groups of four teams each. India is in Group A with hosts Malaysia, Sri Lanka and West Indies.

The knockout stage will start from the first semifinal on January 31 and the final will take place on February 2 at Bayuemas Oval, Pandamaran. The four best teams out of the Super Six will make it to the semifinals.

Squad: Niki Prasad (Captain), Sanika Chalke (Vice-captain), G Trisha, Kamalini G (WK), Bhavika Ahire (WK), Ishwari Awasare, Mithila Vinod, Joshitha VJ, Sonam Yadav, Parunika Sisodiya, Kesari Drithi, Aayushi Shukla, Anandita Kishor, MD Shabnam, Vaishnavi S

Standby players: Nandhana S, Ira J, Anadi T.

## Hockey India gets government backing, facilities have improved: Pritam Rani Siwach

NEW DELHI [INDIA] : Former Indian hockey player Pritam Rani Siwach has praised the government's support for hockey players, stating that although the efforts may not be immediately visible, they have contributed significantly to the sport's growth.

Siwach, a Dronacharya Awardee, Commonwealth Games 2002 gold medalist and former coach of the junior women's team that won silver at the 2012 Junior Asia Cup, currently runs the Sonepat Hockey Academy. In an exclusive interview with ANI on the sidelines of the BBC Indian Sportswoman Of The Year Award nominees announcement, she discussed the government's backing for players participating in tournaments.

"The facilities have increased, and player requirements are being fulfilled," Siwach said. "The government is also funding the Sports Authority of India to enhance player training and overall development," she added.

Siwach highlighted the improvements in player support, noting that earlier, players had to manage stress on their own. Now, they have access to psychiatrists who help them stabilize their mental state before games.

As a coach, Siwach emphasized that guiding players is more challenging than playing herself. "When you play, you are aware of your mental state and performance. However, as a coach, you need to understand the different mental states of each player."

Siwach also congratulated Indian hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh on receiving the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award.

"It is a matter of great happiness. I congratulate him on this accomplishment. He has won two Olympic medals and is leading the team as a captain. He is also our 'Sarpanch sahab' (his nickname) and scored a lot of goals for us," she said.

Harmanpreet was a part of India's bronze-winning teams at Tokyo Olympics 2020 and Paris Olympics 2024. In the 2024 Olympics, he was the highest goal scorer with 10 and led India as a captain.

