

# Morning India

## Uttarakhand avalanche: Rescue workers pull out more bodies from Chamoli

**MI News Service, Chamoli:** The bodies of more labourers were pulled out from the avalanche-hit Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp in Chamoli on Sunday, bringing the death toll to seven, while efforts were on to rescue another missing worker on the third day of the operation.

Army doctors said 46 workers who were earlier rescued have been brought to the military hospital in Jyotirmath while one with a spinal cord injury was airlifted to AIIMS, Rishikesh. Three of the workers are in critical condition, Lt Col DS Maldhya said.

Helicopters, sniffer dogs and thermal imaging technology were being used to expedite the rescue operation due to apprehensions about possible inclement weather on Monday, officials said.

Three bodies of the missing labourers were found on Sunday, district administration officials said in Gopeshwar. With this,



the number of workers who lost their lives in the Mana avalanche has mounted to seven.

One person is still missing for whom the search is in progress, they said.

The bodies have been brought to Jyotirmath by helicopter where the post-mortem was being done at the Community Health Centre.

The deceased include Anil Kumar (21) from Rudrapur in Uttarakhand's Udham Singh Nagar district, Ashok (28) from Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh and Harmesh from Una in Himachal Pradesh, the officials said. The lone worker who remains missing is 43-year-old Arvind from the Clement Town area in Dehradun.

The avalanche hit the BRO camp between Mana and Badrinath on Friday, burying 54 workers inside eight containers and a shed. Earlier, it was believed that the total number of trapped labourers was 55 but one of them was on unauthorised leave and had reached home safely.

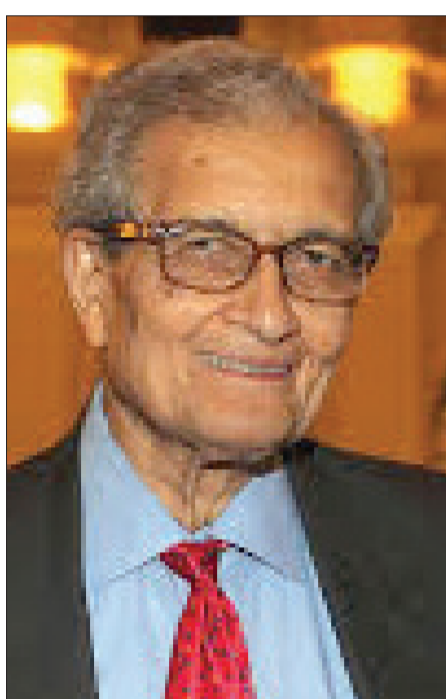
By Saturday evening, 50 workers trapped under the snow were pulled out and four of them had died.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited the Uttarakhand State Emergency Operation Centre here to take an update on the rescue operation.

"The ground penetrating radar (GPR) system is being sent to the avalanche site and the help of modern tools like thermal imaging cameras and victim locating cameras is being taken to trace the labourers. The weather may turn bad on Monday again. The effort is to trace the missing on Sunday itself," the chief minister said. In a post on X, Dhami said he has instructed officials to expedite the ongoing operation. "The Indian Army, ITBP, NDRF, SDRF and other relief and rescue teams are working on a war

►► Continued on page 3

## B'desh: Amartya Sen raises concern over current crisis



**MI News Service, London:** Expressing deep concern over the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen said his friend Muhammad Yunus, chief adviser of the neighbouring country's interim government, is taking significant steps but has a long road ahead to resolve the impasse.

Sen said the situation in Bangladesh had deeply affected him and he was concerned about how the country would navigate the challenges.

Sen emphasised that Bangladesh, which has largely kept communal forces like Jamaat in check, should continue its admirable commitment to secularism.

"The situation in Bangladesh affects me deeply because I have a strong Bengali sense of identity," Sen told.

"I have spent a lot of time in Dhaka and began my school education there. Aside from Dhaka, I often visited my ancestral home in Manikganj. On my maternal side, I regularly visited Bikrampur, particularly Sonarang. These places have deep personal significance for me.

►► Continued on page 3

### Ganga Water Treaty: B'desh delegation to visit India for talks

**MI News Service, Dhaka/New Delhi:** An 11-member Bangladeshi delegation will travel to India on Monday for a meeting regarding the Ganga Water Treaty, which is due for renewal in 2026. India and Bangladesh are set to hold the 86th meeting of the joint committee of technical experts next week regarding the renewal of the 30-year-old treaty for sharing the waters of the trans-boundary river. According to sources, the Bangladeshi delegation, led by Muhammad Abul Hossen, member of the Joint River Commission (JRC), will reach Kolkata on March 3 and immediately

► Continued on page 3

## SFI strike coincides with Board Exam: Bengal Police steps up security

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** In the wake of a state-wide protest called by CPI(M) students' wing SFI on Monday, adequate police arrangements have been made across West Bengal to ensure that the state board's class 12 students can reach their exam centres without trouble, top police officials said.

The Students Federation of India (SFI) has called the strike demanding Education Minister Bratya Basu's resignation over the injuries of two protestors at Jadavpur University, when the tyres of one of the vehicles in his convoy grazed past them on Saturday.

Additional DGP (law and order) Jawed Shamim said adequate police arrangements have been made across the state to ensure that the higher secondary examinees reach their examination centres and go back home after writing their papers without any hindrance. Monday is the first day of the state board's class 12 finals.

"Police officials in all districts,

different police commissionerates, and government railway police have been sensitised to ensure seamless movement of the examinees," Shamim said.

Stating that the state government has taken the strike call "seriously," he said that "a large number of police personnel will be on the streets on Monday to ensure that the examinees do not face any problem." "Legal action will be taken in case of any kind of disruption or obstruction," he told reporters.

The ADG said that any student facing any problem can contact the nearest police personnel available or dial 100 to seek assistance.

Kolkata Police commissioner Manoj Verma assured that "there will be adequate presence of police personnel in the city to ensure there is no impediment in the movement of the examinees." "Some political organisations have taken up programmes in view of the incidents at Jadavpur Univer-

sity," Verma said addressing the joint press conference by him and Shamim. The police commissioner said it will be ensured that "the political programmes do not hinder movement of the examinees." Verma said a helpline number (9432610039) will also be operational on Monday which can be contacted by the examinees in case of any problem.

"We hope that those who have taken the political programme will keep the convenience of the students in mind," he said.

Verma said that "seven cases have been registered in connection with the Jadavpur University incident, of which two have been initiated suo motu by police." One person has been arrested in connection with the arson at Siksha bandhu office and has been remanded to police custody till March 12, he said.

Verma said that the police were investigating all the sequence of events related to the violence to find out all those involved.

# HOLY

## Furfura Sharif

**Mojaddide Zaman, Qutubul Alam, Amirush Shariat Mohammad Shah Sufl Abubakar Siddiqui founded by Dada Huzur Pir Qibla (R.A.)'s famous, historical**

### Historical Isale Sawab Mahfil

21st, 22nd and 23rd Phalgun (English 6,7 & 8 March)

- Congratulations to all the guests who come to Holy Mahfil.
- Joining the Majlis is entitled to endless rewards. → Pray five times in congregation. → Protect the sanctity and etiquette of the ceremony.
- Participate in morning-evening Zikr Majlis. → Women are strictly prohibited in this Mahfil. → This majlis is not a festival or a fare, it is a grand Isale Sawab Mahfil. → Do not use any narcotics in the Mahfil
- Here the message of peace is given. → Worship more and more fir the month of holy ramadan

Peerjada, Ayatullah Siddique

Peerjada Mujahid Siddique

# Holy

## Furfura Sharif

**Mojaddide Zaman, Qutubul Alam, Amirush Shariat Mohammad Shah Sufl Abubakar Siddiqui founded by Dada Huzur Pir Qibla (R.A.)'s famous, historical**

### Historical Isale Sawab Mahfil

21st, 22nd and 23rd Phalgun (English 6,7 & 8 March)

- Congratulations to all the guests who come to Holy Mahfil.
- Joining the Majlis is entitled to endless rewards.
- Pray five times in congregation.
- Protect the sanctity and etiquette of the ceremony.
- Participate in morning-evening Zikr Majlis.
- Women are strictly prohibited in this Mahfil.
- This majlis is not a festival or a fare, it is a grand Isale Sawab Mahfil.
- Do not use any narcotics in the Mahfil
- Here the message of peace is given.
- Worship more and more fir the month of holy ramadan

**Pirjada Md Mosfekin Siddique**  
 Ph:9933330307  
**Furfura Darbar Sharif**

## Zupee and STAN bring 10,000+ fans together for LudoFest 2025



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Zupee, India's leading skill-based gaming platform, partnered with STAN to host LudoFest 2025, a unique event featuring 10,000+ attendees and India's largest 500-player

Ludo tournament. The event featured interactive sessions with gaming influencers, cosplayers, and celebrities like Elvish Yadav and Jisshu Sengupta. Participants received prizes and giveaways worth 10,00,000. STAN's Co-Founder and COO, Nauman Mulla, emphasized the event's commitment to empowering India's gaming community.

## Haldia Petrochemicals & Govt of West Bengal- a thriving partnership for better tomorrow

**MI News Service, Haldia:** Petrochemicals & Govt of West Bengal- a thriving partnership for better tomorrow MI News Service, Kolkata: The peers often say, 'To do anything good one needs a big heart to feel, a creative brain to think and effective limbs to execute the thoughts.' These diverse yet co-related elements often combine to give an outcome that provides a huge impetus to any endeavour taken for good. Haldia Petrochemicals is one such jewel that has come up through this process. It still glitters with pride in West Bengal's industrial cabinet. Haldia Petrochemicals and government of West Bengal have nurtured a thriving partnership for years and this endeavour is still continuing with great momentum and is instrumental in transforming West Bengal's economic scenario in a positive direction. Navanit Narayan, WTD & CEO, Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd is very candid in his expression when he says, "We have 1.75 Cr household in West Bengal, with approx. 55% coverage of piped drinking water. The "Jal Swapno" scheme initiated by the CM Mamata Banerjee has large potential for manufacture of pipes within the state to meet the demand. There cannot be any doubt regarding the phenomenon that West Bengal is moving very fast in terms of industrialization and holistic development, much faster which one would have expected. West Bengal, with a population exceeding 10 Cr and GDP > Rs 20 lakh Cr (230 billion USD) growing at almost 12%, is the 6th largest State in terms of GDP. West Bengal is largest producer of Rice, the largest producer of Vegetables & Fruits, Flowers, Meat & Jute in the country. It's also the 2nd largest producer of Tea, Potato & Fish. This data says everything for Bengal, what else do you need." After saying it in one gasp at the INDPLAST '25 in Kolkata, he further mentioned that the growth of the polymer market in West Bengal is quite remarkable. According to Narayan, "The opportunity for growth of the plastic industry is immense. Polymer consumption CAGR in West Bengal is 8% almost in tandem with National average." "With the position of the state in agriculture, there is huge opportunity for the industry in improving the life of the produce as we store and transport across the country using bags and rigid containers- Bengal today also has one of the largest concentration of good quality hospitals and healthcare infrastructure. Geo textiles also have potential to increase longevity of roads and highways. Government's thrust on rural road networks and upgradation of urban roads and highways can catalyse the growth of Geotextile manufacturing units in West Bengal." He added, "At the heart of this transformation lies Haldia Petrochemicals Limited (HPL), a true catalyst of growth and progress in West Bengal. HPL has been instrumental in propelling West Bengal's polymer market to new heights. With its state-of-the-art facilities and unwavering commitment to quality and innovation, HPL has laid a strong foundation for the downstream plastic industry. Today, the region is thriving with a robust network of downstream units, which rely on HPL's consistent supply of high-quality polymers. HPL, since its inception, has promoted setting up of downstream industries in Bengal and provided handholding support to entrepreneurs in machine & technology selection, project report preparation & facilitation with government agencies. According to sources, in the last 25 years, there have seen 5X increase in polymer consumption which has increased from 180 KTA in FY21 to 850 KTA in FY24.

## Fake birth certificate and voter ID, 2 arrested in Haringhata

**MI News Service, Haringhata (Nadia):** Haringhata police has unearthed a fake document development centre at its jurisdiction on Saturday and subsequently arrested two persons. They were produced in Kalyani Court on Sunday, police said. According to Haringhata BDO Mahasweta Biswas, one Sajal had deposited concerned documents to get his EPIC Card. While the checking was going on, it was that the documents were fake. As required, he had submitted his birth certificate and the voter ID cards of his parents. However when officials of Haringhata Block Development Office found those fake, called him and interrogated. He confessed that he had collected the documents from one Litan who has a computer cafe at Haringhata. Consequently police nabbed and interrogated him. It then revealed that he had developed the fake documents. Police then arrested him. Police suspects that Litan was used to create fake documents regularly. However, the duo were produced in Court on Sunday, police added.



## MLAs reach the spot of road accident while returning from Maha Kumbh

**MI News Service, Hooghly:** While returning home after taking a dip in the "Maha Kumbh" in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, a bus carrying devotees of Ashok Nagar and Gobra Danga met with an accident in Dadapur, Hooghly. The injured in this accident were admitted to Chinsura Sadar

Hospital. Meanwhile, as soon as the news of this accident was received, MLA of Saptagram Tapan Dasgupta reached Chinsura Sadar Hospital, spoke to the injured, and after talking to the doctors about them, assured all possible cooperation for their treatment.

## Hearing Protection Walk on World Hearing Day to Reduce Hearing Problems

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** According to a report by the World Health Organization, 1.5 billion people worldwide suffer from hearing problems. By 2050, this number is expected to reach 2.5 billion. More than 1 billion young people are at risk due to listening to loud music and excessive use of headphones. In India, approximately 1.17 lakh children are born with congenital hearing impairment every year. However, with proper awareness and timely consultation with doctors or hearing specialists, many hearing and speech-related problems can be effectively addressed. Keeping this in mind, World Hearing Day is observed globally on March 3 every year. On this occasion, a hearing awareness walk was organized in Kolkata by the West Bengal Branch of the Speech and

Hearing Association of India, covering the stretch from Rashbehari Crossing to Garihat. Alongside speech and hearing specialists, children suffering from such conditions and their parents also participated in the walk. Joint Secretary of the Association, Dr. Md. Sahidul Arefin, stated that this year's World Hearing Day theme is: Changing mindsets: Empower Yourself, make ear and hearing care a reality for all. He emphasized that Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) is a simple test used to diagnose hearing problems in infants. In developed countries, over 98% of newborns undergo this test, whereas in India, only 5-15% of infants receive this screening. He urged that awareness must be increased to ensure early intervention.

## Mortuary freezer box has been added to the Metropolitan Homeopathic College and Hospital at the initiative of the Rotary Club of Kolkata Temple City!

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Saturday, March 1, the Rotary Club of Kolkata temple city inaugurated a six-compartment morgue freezer box machine named OM Shanti at the Metropolitan Homeopathic College and Hospital in Sodepur, Temple City. This is the first of its kind in the Panihati Municipality area and it is a very important project. This will bring life back to the hospital morgue by preserving unidentified bodies and other bodies. Dum Dum MP Saugata Roy was present as the inaugurator of the program. Also



were present MLA Nirmal Ghosh, former Governor of Rotary District 3291 Right Ajay Kumar Law, Dr. Krishnendu Gupta, Metropolitan Homeopathic Medical

Society College Director Soumitra Basu, Dr. Chinmoy Mahato, Dr. Chandranath Das, General Secretary Hindu Satkar Samiti Sandeep Mukherjee, College Principal and other members of the Rotary Club of Kolkata Temple City. This machine was donated by the Hindu Funeral Society. Due to the inability to properly preserve the bodies and the lack of a freezer, various problems arose during the autopsy. There was a mortuary crisis in the morgue for a long time. That crisis was resolved by setting up a mortuary. In addition, MP Saugata Roy donated 8 lakh taka from the MP fund for the construction of an auditorium adjacent to the College Hospital.

## Holi: Hindutva outfit seeks ban on Muslim participation



**MI News Service, Ayodhya:** The Dharam Raksha Sangh, a Hindu nationalist outfit based in Vrindavan, has issued a statement expressing distrust towards the Muslim community and alleged the possibility of disturbances during the Holi celebrations. The group has urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to impose restrictions on their participation. Dharam Raksha Sangh's national president Saurabh Gaur claimed that recent incidents in Bareilly showed people belonging to the Muslim community threatening the Hindus. "We have decided to prohibit the entry of Muslims in Holi celebrations at major pilgrimage sites like Mathura, Vrindavan, Nandgaon, Barsana, Gokul and Dauji," he stated. The organisation declared that Holi is a festival of love and harmony for the Sanatan community and opposed any involvement of Muslims in selling colors or entering the festivities. "We still perceive a threat from their intentions. They could cause disturbances," Gaur alleged. Supporting the demand, Dharam Raksha Sangh's national coordinator Acharya Badrish likened the Muslims to "separatists and jihadists" and urged the government to enforce a ban similar to restrictions placed on Muslim

participation in Garba festivities in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. "Since they object to colors and gulas, they have no place in our Holi celebrations," he remarked. Badrish suggested that Muslims could be allowed if they provided a written assurance to the Hindus. "Otherwise, they should be kept away and the government must ensure it," he said. Meanwhile, Dinesh Sharma, a petitioner in the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute, wrote a letter to the chief minister in his blood and demanded a ban on the entry of Muslims into Braj's Holi celebrations. He alleged that Muslims could "spit on sweets" during the festivities. In response, Shahi Idgah Intazamia Committee secretary Tanveer Ahmed, who is the legal representative of the Muslim side in the temple-mosque dispute, dismissed these statements as divisive. "Holi in Braj has always been celebrated with love and peace. There has never been any complaint from any community. Even great Krishna devotees like Ras Khan and Taj Bibi, who were Muslims, are revered here," he said. Ahmed highlighted that even during the recently concluded Maha Kumbh, the Muslims provided shelter and food to the Hindu pilgrims, showcasing communal harmony. "Holi will be celebrated here in the same spirit of brotherhood. People will exchange greetings and embrace each other as per tradition. Such statements only seek to create divisions," he said. Ahmed said while the Dharam Raksha Sangh's statement may reflect personal opinions, it is up to the government to respond to their demands.

## Protest erupts in Darjeeling against raised land cap for non-tea use

**MI News Service, Darjeeling:** The Darjeeling Dooars Chia Shramik Suraksha Samiti, a social organisation working for the tea workers of north Bengal, on Saturday staged a daylong sit-in demonstration at Chowrasta in the heart of Darjeeling against the state's recent decision to allow alternative use of vacant land in tea estates up to 30 per cent.

Bandana Rai, the president of the organisation, said they launched the protest, demanding that the state revoke the decision as they felt it could affect the future of the tea industry, its workers and their families. "We want the state government to withdraw the decision and issue a fresh notification in the interest of tea workers. We have launched our protests in Darjeeling. If required, we will hold marches to Uttarkanya (the state's branch secretariat located in southern Siliguri) and even Nabanna." Rai told newsmen during the agitation. Last month, chief minister Mamata Banerjee during the Bengal Global Business Summit, announced that her government had decided to allow tea companies to use 30 per cent of the vacant land in their tea gardens for tea tourism and certain other alternative purposes. This would generate revenue as well as create employment for local residents, she had said.

After her announcement, the state land and land reforms department came up with a notification on February 7 on the issue.

The announcement and the notification triggered massive protests across the hills, with many claiming it could hurt tea workers' jobs and even cause their displacement. Even Anit Thapa, who heads the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajantrik Morcha, Trinamool's hill ally, expressed concern over the decision. The situation reached such an extent that Mamata had to address the issue and ensure that the interests of the workers would not be affected. The state's policy will also not hamper tea production and create local employment, she had said.



At the annual function of Behala Gurudwara Prabhande Committee, Minister Aroop Biswas presented the chador (Rumala Sahib) on behalf of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and greeted everyone through his speech. Mayor Parishad Asim Basu was present, on Sunday



INDPLAST-2025 Left to right - Alok Tibrewal - Chairman, National Advisory Board, Indplas2025 Lalit Agarwal - President, Indian plastic federation Dr. Shashi Panja - MIC Industry & Commerce; Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Govt Of West Bengal Ashok Jajodia - Chairman Indplas2025 Exhibition Organising committee Navanit Narayan - WTD & CEO - Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd. Ravish Kamath, President, Plastindia Foundation.

## Negligence finger at doctor after patient dies in Malda Medical College & Hospital



**MI News Service, Malda:** Over 200 Adivasis blocked the Malda-Nalagola state highway in Malda for around one-and-a-half hours on Saturday, alleging that a tribal woman had died on Friday at the Malda Medical College & Hospital (MMCH) because of negligence of the doctors. The relatives of 26-year-old Chanchala Murmu, the deceased, filed a complaint at Habibpur police station on Friday against a doctor and the

MMCH authorities. "She was suffering from a benign abscess or botch and was admitted to MMCH on February 16. The doctor released her simply after injecting a medicine. He advised some expensive pathological tests too at a private health establishment," said one of her relatives. "We got the tests done by spending 6,000... When we took her to MMCH again, the doctor again released her after an injection," he added.

Since her abscess was growing larger, they took her to MMCH on February 19.

"Initially, the doctors refused to admit her. Later, she was admitted but no treatment was administered to her. As her condition deteriorated, surgery was conducted on her but she did not survive. She might have survived if the surgery had been conducted before," the relative said. Prasenjit Bar, the medical superintendent cum vice-principal of MMCH, said all possible care was arranged for the patient. "I have received the primary reports which suggest that she succumbed to her ailments as there was septicemia in her abscess. Even then, we are probing the allegation of negligence," said Bar. The road blockade at Aihoo was lifted around 1pm after police spoke to the protesters.

## Burdwan varsity exam put off, finger at WBCUPA: Rejig affects 40,000 students

**MI News Service, Burdwan:** A mandatory choice-based credit system (CBCS) exam of Burdwan University was postponed on Saturday and rescheduled to March 4 allegedly to facilitate a section of teachers to attend the general body meeting of the TMC-affiliated college teachers' association at Jadavpur University. University sources said the authorities postponed the exam following an appeal from the teacher-in-charge of a college in Burdwan. However, sources claimed the appeal was made

under pressure from a leader of the West Bengal College and University Professors' Association (WBCUPA), who allegedly compelled the teacher-in-charge to seek rescheduling of the CBCS exam (general elective-I) for BA (general) fifth-semester students. WBCUPA has denied the allegation. According to university sources, the authorities of Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya, the Burdwan college, mailed the varsity seeking rescheduling of the exam, which needed many teachers as invigilators.



Another international film festival was held in the city on Sunday. With this film festival at its center, New Town's 'Nazrul Tirtha' briefly turned into a gathering of respected people. People associated with the renowned film industry from India, South Africa, France, Korea, Iran and other countries attended the Crownwood International Film Festival. Actors, actresses, directors, producers, and directors, along with film artists, were in attendance. This time, the Crownwood International Film Festival has been held for six years. In total, about three thousand films have participated in these years. Awards have been given in a total of 99 categories from different countries and languages. About 50 awards have been given in these 99 categories. The participants are happy to attend this film festival and receive awards. The Crownwood International Film Festival authorities said that this film festival is an initiative to make the public more cinema-orient

Uttarakhand avalanche...

From PG 1 Located three kilometres from Badrinath, Mana is the last village on the India-Tibet border at a height of 3,200 metres.

Army officials said the rescue operation on Saturday was mostly carried out by the Army and IAF helicopters as the approach road was blocked by snow at several points, making vehicular movement nearly impossible.

The priority is to bring the rescued workers to the Army hospital in Jyotirmath and look for the four missing workers, they said. If weather permits, specialised RECCO radars, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), quadcopters and avalanche rescue dogs will be pressed into service to trace the missing workers, Lt Gen. Sengupta said.

"Everything depends on the weather," he added. More than 200 personnel from the disaster management authority, ITBP, BRO, NDRF, SDRF, IAF, district administration, health department and fire brigade are engaged in the rescue operations, he said.

Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, GOC-in C, Central Command, and Lt Gen D G Mishra, GOC, Uttar Bharat, are at the avalanche site to monitor the rescue operations.

Six helicopters -- three of the Indian Army Aviation Corps, two of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and a civil chopper hired by the Army -- have been engaged in the operation.

Our idea is to elevate West Bengal to 'BEST BENGAL': Shashi Panja

MI News Service, Kolkata: The government of West Bengal is determined to elevate West Bengal to 'BEST BENGAL' as it is the vision of the Chief Minister of the state, Mamata Banerjee. This idea was echoed at the INDPLAST '25 by state's indus-

try and commerce minister Dr. Shashi Panja.

The minister said that in West Bengal power and water are in plenty to set up industries. To her 'Utkaarsh Bangla' has given a big impetus to the industrial revival of West Ben-

gal. She further mentioned that in Bengal there are at present more than five thousand plastic industry employing more than six lakh people directly.

Minister also mentioned that different industrial parks across the state have given a major

boost the state economy. Dr. Panja added that there are at present 130 plastic recycling units in the state strntngening the state's economy.

She said, "4.5 lakh crore business proposals came during recent BGBS in Kolkata. We are

advancing for massive industrialization in the state." She also mentioned very candidly that a "very conscious and deliberate conspiracy has been hatched both inside and outside the state to thwart Bengal's progress."



ABTA activists took part in a protest rally in Kolkata on Sunday.

JU not to allow fests on campus during board exam

MI News Service, Kolkata: Jadavpur University (JU) has decided not to allow students' fests on campus during school board examinations.

Residents staying on the campus had alleged that fests with blaring sound hampered preparations for their sons and daughters writing the board examinations, usually held between February and April.

Even residents staying adjacent to the campus had complained to the JU authorities about their

sound hazards, said a JU official.

The fests could be held after the exams are over, he added.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the students' welfare board.

"The sound limit must be maintained during board examinations. The restrictions that are applicable across the state have to be implemented at JU as well," JU's officiating vice-chancellor Bhaskar Gupta told.

A committee has been constituted to decide the

sound limit for fests at other times and whether sound boxes can be used after 10pm.

The welfare board has also decided that the terrace doors of the first-year hostels on the campus will be closed by 10pm.

Some first-year students last week allegedly smashed the gates and CCTV cameras of the two first-year hostels to protest the decision to close the doors of the terrace and the gates of the hostel by 10pm.

Police bust Call centre running fake antique goods business

MI News Service, Kolkata: A call centre that was allegedly selling household articles, making them look like antiques using a chemical coating, was busted in Bidhannagar.

One person, identified the arrested person as Hemanta Sarkar, has been arrested.

An officer of Eco Park police station said that the fake call centre was operating under the name -- NEXT-era Energy Solution -- inside Ecosuit Building, which falls under the jurisdiction of Eco Park police station.

"We had specific information that those at the call centre were calling people at random and con-

vincing them to purchase household articles at a premium price, claiming them to be antiques. A chemical has been seized from the call centre. We suspect the chemical coating was used on the articles that were being sold off as antiques," said a senior officer of the New Town police division of Bidhannagar Police.

Apart from the chemicals, a protective body gear, a set of watercolours, and a laptop have been seized, the police said.

Unlike other fake call centres where fraudsters try to dupe their targets either by putting them under the threat of digital arrest or a blocked bank account

by convincing them to download malware or an app that would help them (fraudsters) gain remote access to their devices, this call centre worked differently, the police said.

"In this case, the callers would simply try to sell regular household articles for a high price by pitching them as antique sets. They did not use any website. They did the entire trading through mobile phones," said an officer.

The cops said they were investigating who else was involved in the crime.

"We are also probing who was operating the call centre," said an officer.

Nabard projects 21% growth in priority sector lending for Bengal

MI News Service, Kolkata: Nabard has projected a 20.63 per cent growth in priority sector lending potential for Bengal in 2025-26. The state focus paper, released estimates a priority sector lending potential of 3.8 lakh crore for the fiscal year. For 2024-25, Nabard's estimated priority sector lending potential was 3.15 lakh crore.

Nabard chief general manager P.K. Bhardwaj on Friday said of the total estimated credit potential of 3.80 lakh crore, the agriculture sector, including agri-infrastructure and ancillary activities, accounts for 33.42 per cent, amounting to 1.27 lakh crore, while MSMEs at 2 lakh crore accounts for 52.6 per cent.

The other priority sectors as part of the aggregate lending potential include export, education, housing, social infrastructure, renewable energy and others. Bhardwaj emphasised

the need to focus on key areas such as FPOs (farmer-producer organisations), increasing client resilience, and initiatives in processing and marketing. However, the importance of supporting these initiatives with adequate credit allocation is a collaborative effort among all stakeholders, including lenders and government, he said.

Nabard said that with the priorities outlined by both the central and state governments to accelerate and sustain agricultural growth while improving farmers' income, there has been an emphasis on credit projections for capital formation in agriculture and allied sectors.

"This approach focuses on sustaining and enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting food and agro-processing activities, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and strengthening informal credit delivery

systems such as SHGs and JLGs," Nabard said.

Onkar Singh Meena, principal secretary, agriculture, Bengal government, said credit disbursement under agriculture has reached 75,000 crore as of December 2024, with expectations to exceed 1 lakh crore in the current financial year.

He stressed the importance of a market-demand-based strategy, the need for GI (Geographical Indication) registration for more products, and the diversification of crops with a focus on pulses, maize, and oilseeds. "Bengal already has high cropping intensity, and our focus now is on value addition," he said.

Meena also urged lenders to focus on long-term agricultural financing, supporting infrastructure such as cold storage, rice mills, godowns, and other processing facilities.

New fleet of yellow taxis hit Kolkata streets

MI News Service, Kolkata: In an effort to revive the iconic yellow taxis which are dwindling in numbers with time, the West Bengal government in association with a private company, has launched a fleet of 20 modern cars. The hatchback cars were flagged off by the state transport minister Snehasis Chakraborty. The transport secretary, Soumitra Mohan, and other officials were also present on the occasion. Christened 'Yellow Heritage Cabs', the fleet is likely to evoke the nostalgia and emotions surrounding the iconic yellow taxis which have been an integral part of the city for many years. According to a transport department official 3,000 such cabs hit the streets in two months. The private company has entered into an agreement with a leading automobile company to launch the new yellow taxis in

the city. All the taxis will have modern features, including seat belts and airbags, he said. The taxis will run on CNG and petrol. The cars will have images of the city's iconic landmarks like the Victoria Memorial Hall and the Howrah Bridge on their bodies. "These taxis can be booked with the government's 'Yatri Sathi' app," the official said. The development comes in the wake of the imminent phasing out of yellow taxis as per the Calcutta High Court's order in 2009. It had said that commercial vehicles older than 15 years would not be allowed to ply in the Kolkata and Howrah under the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) area. Less than 2,000 metered yellow taxis will be on the roads by the end of 2025, down from 20,000 even three years back. After 2027-28 all the old yellow taxis will stop plying.

form by four weeks how many cases against Sudipta Sen, then director of the Saradha Group, were still pending, along with the status of such cases. The order followed Sen's petition, seeking to know the status of pending cases against him. He was arrested in 2013 and is behind bars.

HC asks state govt about pending cases against Sudipto Sen

MI News Service, Kolkata: A division bench headed by Justice Joymalya Bagchi of Calcutta High Court asked the state home department to in-

form by four weeks how many cases against Sudipta Sen, then director of the Saradha Group, were still pending, along with the status of such cases. The order followed Sen's petition, seeking to know the status of pending cases against him. He was arrested in 2013 and is behind bars.

form by four weeks how many cases against Sudipta Sen, then director of the Saradha Group, were still pending, along with the status of such cases. The order followed Sen's petition, seeking to know the status of pending cases against him. He was arrested in 2013 and is behind bars.

Road repair at Salt Lake to begin from Mar 3

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) will start repairing battered roads in 14 of its 41 wards from March 3.

Bidhannagar MLA Sujit Bose said the work "will be completed in a month or a maximum of 10 more days". The wards -- 28 to 41 -- where the repairs will start are part of Salt Lake. The areas fall under Bose's Assembly constituency.

Bose and Bidhannagar's mayor Krishna Chakraborty, jointly announced the road repair plan.

Officials in the municipal corporation said they were expecting the funds for the remaining wards to arrive in the new financial year that starts in April.

"We have received ₹25 crore from the urban development department. The Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority will also spend ₹9.5 crore for the repairs, out of which ₹4.5 crore has already been released," Bose told.

"The work will start on March 3. All the repairs will be completed within a month, or maximum of 10 more days," Bose said.

Bose promised "thorough repairs".

While the KMDA will

undertake repairs of the arterial roads like the one between the Karunamoyee crossing and the JK Saha bridge, the Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation will repair the roads inside the blocks.

An official of the corporation said about 22km of roads will be repaired.

Mayor Chakraborty, seated beside Bose, said the contractors who have won bids for the repairs have to repair the roads on their own in case they break within 5 years.

"There is a warranty period of 5 years. We did not include this clause during the earlier road repairs, but now the contractors will be responsible if the roads crack before 5 years. They have to repair the roads again in such a scenario," Chakraborty said.

"We are answerable to the government that disburse money for road repairs. If the roads start cracking within months of repairs, it raises questions about the quality of work. I, Bose and others at the corporation have to answer to the government," Chakraborty said.

Metro has reported several times how the broken and battered roads in Salt Lake made travelling through the township

a miserable experience for its residents and visitors. Once a showpiece township with well-laid roads, residents said Salt Lake roads have gone from bad to worse over the past few years.

"My father suffered a fracture in one of his legs last month. Doctors have asked him to walk slowly. The roads in our block are so bad that he cannot risk walking outside, fearing he will fall and sustain more injuries. It pains him even while travelling in a car because the car shakes so much because of potholes and cracks," said a resident of CE Block. "Last week, there was a meeting between residents and our councillor. Everyone in that meeting complained about the state of roads and demanded immediate repairs," said the woman.

She said the roads in the AE block were also in terrible condition.

An official of the civic body said the 14 wards where the repairs will begin on

Monday were all within Salt Lake and its added areas like Duttabad.

The repairs in the remaining 27 wards, which are not part of Salt Lake but within the BMC's ambit, will be taken up soon.

B'desh: Amartya Sen raises....

From PG 1 Like many others, I am worried about how Bangladesh will overcome its current challenges," he said. Sen, who spent much of his childhood in Dhaka, began his formal education at St. Gregory's School. He later moved to Santiniketan and studied at Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's school. On Bangladesh's progress since its independence, Sen highlighted the country's improvements in per capita income -- at one point surpassing India -- along with a sharp reduction in birth rates and higher life expectancy compared to India.

"Bangladesh has undergone major economic and social transformations, particularly in advancing women's rights, with contributions from both the government and non-governmental organisations like BRAC and Grameen Bank," he said. Sen also noted that newspapers in Bangladesh remained "relatively free", with many flourishing despite taking strong anti-government positions.

He praised the Bangladeshi Army for its restraint in not attempting to establish military rule, as has happened in many other countries.

He cautioned against banning the Awami League, arguing that such a move would repeat the same mistakes that other parties had accused the Awami government of making. "I think Bangladesh should make the best use of its tradition of working together rather than attempting to sideline any particular group. A broader perspective is needed. I hope that the Bengali commitment to freedom and pluralism will

persist. And I hope future elections will be more visibly free than many claim they have been. There is room for change. I am worried about Bangladesh, but I am not without hope," he said.

Asked about his assessment of Muhammad Yunus as Bangladesh's chief advisor, Sen remarked, "Yunus is an old friend. I know he is highly capable and, in many ways, a remarkable human being. He has made strong statements about Bangladesh's secularism and democratic commitment." "If you suddenly become the head of a country, as Yunus effectively has, you must consider various factions. There are Islamic parties, and now Hindu factions as well. I have great confidence in Yunus's abilities," Sen said.

Sen strongly condemned attacks on Hindu minorities and the vandalisation of temples, emphasising that it was the responsibility of both the government and the public to prevent such violence.

"This is an important issue because Bangladesh has historically taken pride in its treatment of minorities and its efforts to keep communal forces like Jamaat in check. Unfortunately, there have also been attacks on mosques in India. These incidents, whether in Bangladesh or India, must stop," he asserted. "There is nothing easier than fuelling communalism by selectively amplifying certain incidents. This is how the Hindu-Muslim riots of the 1940s escalated, leading to bloodshed. We must reflect on our past and consider our future in that light. Selective publicity can be extremely dangerous," Sen warned.

Ganga Water Treaty: B'desh...

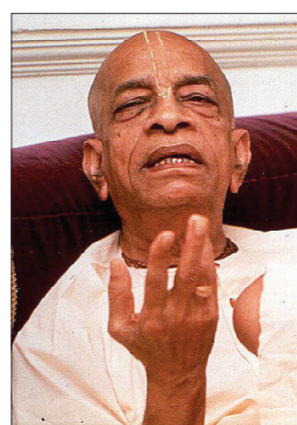


From PG 1 Bangladesh was constituted in 1972 as a bilateral mechanism to address issues of mutual interest on common / border / trans-boundary rivers.

The Ganga Water Treaty was signed on December 12, 1996 by the then Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina. During Hasina's last visit to India in June -- weeks before her regime was toppled in August 2024 -- the two sides announced that technical negotiations had begun for the renewal of the 1996 Treaty.

According to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers. The Joint Rivers Commission of India and

Srila Prabhupad's ideology still inspires us: Jagdeep Dhankhar



MI News Service, Kolkata: Gaudiya Mission recently hosted the 150th Advent Commemoration of Srila Prabhupad. The closing ceremony featured Jagdeep Dhankhar, Vice President of India; Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose, Governor of West Bengal; Suresh Gopi, Minister of State for

Tourism; and Srimad Bhakti Sundar Sanjay Goswami Maharaj, Acharya & President of Gaudiya Mission.

Jagdeep Dhankhar, Vice President of India, said, "His teachings continue to illuminate the path of devotion, knowledge and righteousness, shaping the spiritual consciousness of countless individuals across the world. The recognition of this historic occasion by UNESCO signifies the global importance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's message."

Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, Governor of West Bengal, said, "Kolkata, a historic spiritual and cultural hub has been at the heart of many discussions. The gathering highlighted figures like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, emphasising their role in shaping India's identity. It is our duty to preserve and propagate it. India's spiritual fabric is its greatest strength. We must protect it -- not just for ourselves but for the world."



## Punjab sets 3-month deadline to wipe out drugs

**MI News Service, Chandigarh:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann convened a meeting with senior officials and set a deadline of three months to make the state drug-free. To give a renewed push to the state's anti-drug campaign, Mann said the government will set up special courts that will ensure speedy trial in drug cases and conviction of those found guilty. The meeting was held a day after a five-member sub-committee of Cabinet ministers was formed to monitor the ongoing drive against drug menace in the state. The sub-committee - headed by Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema and comprising state ministers Aman Arora, Balbir Singh, Laljit Singh Bhullar and Tarunpreet Singh Sond -- has been tasked with overseeing the measures taken by the police and the health department to tackle the menace of drugs and implement de-addiction programmes.

The meeting was attended by deputy commissioners and senior superintendents and commissioners of police from across the state. Chief Secretary KAP Sinha, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav and the members of the sub-committee were also present.

According to an official statement, Mann said that preventive measures should be taken in schools and colleges so that the youth do not fall prey to the scourge of drugs. The education department will take necessary steps to introduce courses detailing the downside of drug addiction, Mann said.

The chief minister also said the supply lines should be snapped and drug-sellers should be put behind bars. The state government will ensure that the drug-peddlers and their families do not get any subsidy, or free power and water, so that it acts as a deterrent, Mann said. Exhorting that the war against drugs should be transformed into a mass campaign, Mann asked the officials to plan bigger actions. The chief minister also said that properties of those convicted in drug cases should be seized with immediate effect.

Citing the example of a drug smuggler whose illegal property in Ludhiana district was razed on Thursday, Mann announced the construction of a library on the 'Shamlat' (common land) in the village where the property stood.

Punjab won the war against militancy in the past, and now all the concerned officers in the state will play a major role in the war against drugs, Mann said. He also directed the police officers present at the meeting to ensure that no drugs are available in the state within the next three months.



Artistic models from used plastic bottles hung from a tree during a 'Climate March' by volunteers at the Yamuna bank to raise awareness about cleanliness of the Yamuna river and other environmental issues, near ITO in New Delhi.

## Bihar: 2.85 lakh farmers to get electricity connections

**MI News Service, Patna:** Around 2.85 lakh more farmers in Bihar are set to get electricity connections for agricultural activities by June this year, officials said.

So far, 5.55 lakh farmers in the state have already received electricity connections through agricultural feeders, they said. "By June 2025... around 2.85 lakh more farmers, who have already applied for agricultural electricity connections, will be provided connections," a statement issued by the state's Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) said.

Upon the direction of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the state's energy department is working to ensure the remaining farmers receive agricultural electricity connections at the earliest, it said. "The CM has consistently emphasised the significance of renewable energy, referring to it as 'real energy'. As part of the Jal Jeevan Hariyali scheme launched in 2019, he has called for comprehensive efforts to expand solar energy adoption. "The energy department has begun implementing measures to supply electricity for agricultural activities from costly thermal power to more sustainable renewable energy alternatives. The state government is committed to providing dedicated electricity for agricultural activities through specialised feeders. This electricity will be sourced from solar and other renewable energy sources," the statement said. Under the third phase of this initiative, 1,200-MW electricity will be generated from solar power plants to energise these feeders. "The government has decided to introduce solar power-based agricultural feeders... to ensure electricity is made available to farmers during day time. This transition will eliminate the need for night-time irrigation, easing the workload on farmers. The tender process for the third phase of this project has been initiated," it said.

## Successful Completion of Underpass by Eliminating Level Crossing Gate at Katwa-Azimganj Section in Howrah Division



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** As part of its continued commitment to enhancing passenger safety, structural integrity, operational efficiency, and accessibility, Eastern Railway's Howrah Division has successfully executed a significant infrastructure upgrade by constructing a new subway in place of Level Crossing (LC) Gate No. 24/1/3 on the double-line section between Katwa and Azimganj section over Howrah Division. This was achieved through the planned and successful insertion of Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) boxes and slabs. During the block period, for work, from 09:50 hrs to 15:50 hrs on 01.03.2025, a total of 11 RCC boxes and 10 slabs were inserted as part of this critical infrastructure enhancement. The construction of the subway was completed well ahead of schedule, ensuring the smooth resumption of railway operations. Additionally, several essential maintenance works were carried out during the block period. A total of 520 meters of panel rail was replaced, and Elastic Rail Clip (ERC) greasing was completed for 0.827 km. Other significant works, including the destressing of 0.480 km of track, welding of railway joints, point packing, and tamping of 2.5 km of plain track, were also executed across the section. Furthermore, Overhead Equipment (OHE) and Traction Distribution (TRD) works received significant attention, with annual overhauling conducted at 104 locations alongside other critical maintenance tasks.

## Blaming farmers in Punjab for pollution ridiculous: Piyush Goyal

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** Blaming farmers in Punjab for pollution 500 kms away in Delhi is "ridiculous", Union Minister Piyush Goyal said. Goyal, who handles the commerce and industry portfolio, asked everybody to "apply their mind" before coming to such conclusions. "...for Delhi, don't believe anybody who tells you it's the farmers of Punjab who cause the pollution in Delhi," Goyal said. "Just apply your mind... I wonder how pollution travels 500 kms through the high rises of Gurgaon and finds a pathway to come to my home in New Delhi," Goyal said speaking at an event organised by IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry here. It is "ridiculous" to place the blame on the farmers, Goyal said, making it clear that he is not supporting the burning either. Stubble burning by farmers after summer harvest to prepare their fields for winter crop often gets blamed for high levels of pollution in the national capital. Air quality in Delhi remains poor or worse for many days in a year, and concerns are also being raised over the health hazards posed by the high levels of pollution.

According to Goyal, construction activity and vehicle emissions are the main causes of pollution in cities, and the minister implored everybody to switch to precast construction and electric mobility. He said both the alternatives represent cost advantages or a business case for a switch. In the case of mobility, it makes a business case to switch to the electric option from the conventional internal combustion engine, and asked India Inc to ensure that vehicles carrying goods in and out of their units be run by electric mobility. "Rather than blame somebody else, can we also think of our role? Can we think of electric mobility, personal use, our company use," Goyal told the audience comprising industry leaders. In the case of construction, he said the world is switching to precast, which is faster, more efficient and less polluting. The minister, who is a member of parliament from Mumbai North constituency, questioned if one can find dust floating around in the air or decaying footpaths in cities like Dubai or Singapore like we find in India, and exhorted all to take measures on the same.

## Stock mkt fraud: Mumbai court orders FIR against Madhabi Puri Buch, 5 oth

**MI News Service, Mumbai:** A special court here has directed the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to register an FIR against former Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and five other officials in connection with alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations. "There is prima facie evidence of regulatory lapses and collusion, requiring a fair and impartial probe," the special ACB court judge, Shashikant Eknathrao Bangar, said in the order passed. The court said it will monitor the probe, and sought a status report (of the case) within 30 days.

The court order also noted that the allegations disclose a cognisable offence, necessitating an investigation. The inaction by law enforcement (agencies) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) necessitates judicial intervention under the provisions of the CrPC (Criminal Procedure Code), it added. The complainant, a media reporter, had sought an investigation into the alleged offences committed by the proposed accused, involving largescale financial fraud, regulatory violations and corruption. The allegations

pertain to the fraudulent listing of a company on the stock exchange with the active connivance of regulatory authorities, particularly the Sebi, without compliance under the SEBI Act, 1992 and rules and regulations there under. The complainant claimed that the SEBI officials failed in their statutory duty, facilitated market manipulation, and enabled corporate fraud by allowing the listing of a company that did not meet the prescribed norms.

Despite approaching the police station and regulatory bodies concerned on multiple occasions, no action has been taken by them, the complainant said. The court, after considering the material on record, directed the ACB Worli, Mumbai Region, to register an FIR under relevant provisions of the IPC, Prevention of Corruption Act, SEBI Act, and other applicable laws.

India's first woman Sebi chief Buch, who faced conflict of interest allegations by the US-based short-seller Hindenburg and also political heat thereafter, completed her three-year tenure on Friday. Although, Buch in her tenure made significant

strides in areas like faster settlements in equities, enhanced FPI disclosures and increasing mutual fund penetration through Rs 250 SIP, the last year of her tenure saw heightened controversy, when she battled a series of allegations by Hindenburg and the Congress party, while simultaneously dealing with in-house employee protests against "toxic work culture". In August last year, Buch faced pressure to resign after the Hindenburg Research accused her of having conflict of interest that prevented a thorough examination of manipulation and fraud claims at the Adani Group. Hindenburg accused Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch of investing in offshore entities that were allegedly part of a fund structure in which Vinod Adani -- the elder brother of Adani group founder chairman Gautam Adani -- also had investments. Buchs have denied the allegation, saying the investments were made before she joined the regulator and she had complied with all disclosure requirements. Hindenburg recently announced shutting down its business.

## Landlord to have final call regarding eviction: SC

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has ruled that a landlord or owner of a property has the right to evict a tenant for the bona fide personal use of the tenanted premises either for himself or his family. It said the tenant had no authority to dictate terms to the landlord on the manner of use of the property.

"The need has to be a real one rather than a mere desire to get the premises vacated. The landlord is the best judge to decide which of his property should be vacated for satisfying his particular need. The tenant has no role in dictating as to which premises the landlord should get vacated for his need alleged in the suit for eviction," the court said in a judgment.

A bench of Justice Pankaj Mishra and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh passed the judgment while allowing an appeal filed by a landlord, Kanahiya Lal, challenging the concurrent orders passed by the district court and Jharkhand High Court quashing the eviction proceedings launched against the tenant, Md Ehsan, and others in the Chatra municipality area.

A rent control court had earlier ruled in favour of Lal by permitting him to evict Ehsan as the landlord had pleaded that he wanted to use the premises for setting up an ultrasound machine centre for his two unemployed sons. However, the district court and thereafter the high court had ruled in favour of the tenant, saying he cannot be evicted.

## Track Slab Manufacturing Factory at Anand for Bullet Train Project T-3 Package



**MI News Service, Kolkata:** A state-of-the-art track slab manufacturing factory has been established to support the ambitious project of India's first Bullet Train, marking a significant milestone in the country's high-speed rail infrastructure. The factory is designed to produce ballastless track slabs (J-slab) of different sizes, as required. Till date nearly 35000 track slabs have been cast (from two factories), which are equivalent to nearly 175 track km.

**Location:** The factory is strategically located near the alignment at 436 km (will be serving for km 393 to 508). This proximity to the project site ensures efficient logistics and timely delivery of track slabs for the bullet train construction.

**Production Capacity:** The pre-cast reinforced concrete track slabs are generally 2220 mm wide, 4900 mm long and 190mm thick and each slab weighs about 4 tonnes.

The track slab manu-

facturing factory is designed to produce 60 slabs per day, ensuring high efficiency and a steady supply of critical components for India's first Bullet Train project. The production scope of this factory is of nearly 46000 slabs. This facility will produce track slabs for 115 route km of high speed rail track for MAHSR corridor in Gujarat & DNH (352 km).

**Stacking Capacity:** To support the large production volume, the factory is equipped with an extensive stacking capacity of 24000 track slabs. This allows for the organized storage of produced slabs, ensuring they are ready for transportation to the construction site as needed. The engineers involved in manufacturing of the track slabs have undergone training and certification course under the supervision of Japanese experts based on practices followed in Japan, prior to start of manufacturing of track slabs.

# Indian Railways Marks 100 Years of Electric Traction — A Century of Progress

## Traction Distribution (TRD) — A Role Model for Indian Railways: ECoR GM

**MI News Service, Bhubaneswar:** Indian Railways proudly celebrates the centenary of electric traction, marking 100 years of technological evolution and operational excellence since the launch of India's first electric train on 3rd February 1925. Over the past century, electrification has revolutionized railway operations, significantly enhancing efficiency, sustainability, and speed while reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

On this momentous occasion, East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal highlighted the crucial role of automation, maintenance, and diagnostics in modern railway operations. He emphasized the need for Indian Railways to



adapt to rapid technological advancements and prepare for the

next 25 years. Shri Funkwal also underlined the importance of im-

proving asset maintenance and acknowledged Traction Distribution (TRD) as a role model within Indian Railways. The celebration was attended by ECoR Additional General Manager, all Principal Heads of Departments of East Coast Railway, and senior officials, including the Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, who collectively recognized the remarkable journey of railway electrification in India. The foundation of railway electrification in India was laid on 3rd February 1925, when the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) introduced the first electric train service between Bombay VT (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus) and Kurla. This 16 Route Kilometer (RKM) section operated on a

1500V DC traction system and was inaugurated by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson. With this milestone, India became the 24th country in the world to adopt electric traction.

The initial phase of railway electrification posed several technological challenges, including speed control and power transmission. However, continuous innovations led to the adoption of 3000V DC traction in the 1950s, with the Howrah-Burdwan section being the first to be electrified under this system in 1957. Recognizing the superior efficiency of 25 kV AC traction, Indian Railways standardized this system in 1957 based on recommendations from the Traction Advisory Committee.

# Prem Rawat Smashes Harry Potter Author J.K. Rowling's Book Reading Record with Historic 1,33,234 People in Attendance in India

MIRZAPUR: On March 2, 2025, New York Times bestselling author Prem Rawat, alongside Indian author Vipul Rikhi, set a new Guinness World Record for the largest audience at a multiple-author book reading, attracting an astonishing 133,234 attendees. The event, organized by local charity Raj Vidya Kender in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, India, shattered the previous record of 20,264 held by J.K. Rowling and two Canadian authors since 2000 by an incredible margin of nearly 113,000.

Prem Rawat, a New York Times bestselling author known for "Hear Yourself: How to Find Peace in a Noisy World", read excerpts first from his latest book, "Breath: Wake Up to Life", published in English by Pan Macmillan and then in Hindi by HarperCollins India.

"Breath comes into you and you are alive. The power that ripples through the whole universe comes through you in the form of the breath, and makes it possible for you to be. Turn within, feel this breath. This is the most incredible miracle there is! The source of the joy that you want is inside of you, not outside."

Joining him, Vipul Rikhi read to the crowd with selections from his book "Drunk on Love, a poetic exploration of Kabir's work", also published by HarperCollins India. One of the inspiring couplet meaning he read:

"Swans swans mei namm le, virtha swans mat khoye

Na jaane is svaans ka phir aavan hoye na hoye"

Remember the Name in each breath, don't let a single breath go in vain

who knows if in the next moment, another breath will come again.

This achievement marks Prem Rawat's 3rd Guinness World Record. In 2023, he set records for the largest audience at a single-author book reading



**PREM RAWAT, A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR KNOWN FOR "HEAR YOURSELF: HOW TO FIND PEACE IN A NOISY WORLD", READ EXCERPTS FIRST FROM HIS LATEST BOOK, "BREATH: WAKE UP TO LIFE", PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH BY PAN MACMILLAN AND THEN IN HINDI BY HARPERCOLLINS INDIA**

(114,704 attendees) and the largest attendance at a lecture (375,603 attendees). His latest record underscores the endur-

ing global appeal of his message of peace and inspiration, drawing massive crowds in India and beyond.

"We're thrilled to witness such an overwhelming response," said Lohit Sharma, representing Raj Vidya Kender and international sponsor Words of Peace Global. "This event reflects the power of Prem Rawat's message to inspire humanity towards peace which is so much needed in this world today."

Prem Rawat: From boy prodigy, 70's teenage icon, New York Times bestselling author, and two Guinness World Records holder, Prem Rawat has brought exceptional clarity,



inspiration and deep life learning to millions. Prem had his first speech published in his native India at the age of just 4 years old. Now based in the United States, but touring internationally 9 months every year, Prem Rawat works with people from all walks of life, showing them how to experience the source of peace within themselves. His global efforts span over 100 countries, bringing a practical message of hope, happiness, and peace to all, one person at a time.

Prem Rawat is the New York Times bestselling author of "Hear Yourself: How to Find Peace in a Noisy World" and the creator of the highly successful Peace Education Program now used in 87 countries. He holds 2 Guinness World Records, for largest audience at a single author book reading of 114,704, and the largest audience at a lecture of 375,603 people.

His new book "Breath: Wake Up to Life" is published by St. Martin's/Pan MacMillans in English and Harper Collins India in Hindi and is read at the latest world record attempt for the largest audience at a multiple author book reading.

Prem is a fixed and rotor wing pilot, with over 15000 hours experience. He is a keen photographer, cook, classic car restorer, and a father to four children and grandfather of four.

Vipul Rikhi is a writer, singer, poet, storyteller and translator, immersed in the oral traditions of Kabir and other Bhakti and Sufi poets for over a decade. He is the author of several books of poetry, fiction and translation. His most recent books are "One Palace, a Thousand Doorways".

His book "Drunk on Love", published by Harper Collins India, is based on the poetry of Kabir and is read in conjunction with Prem Rawat, for the world record attempt for the largest audience at a multiple author book reading.

## SAMSUNG BRINGS AI-POWERED FEATURES TO BUDGET-FRIENDLY GALAXY A-SERIES DEVICES

WASHINGTON: Samsung has announced the latest additions to its Galaxy A-series lineup, including the Galaxy A56, A36, and A26. The new devices come with a range of AI-powered features, including advanced image-editing tools and improved performance, as reported by The Verge. One of the standout features of the new Galaxy A-series devices is the inclusion of "awesome intelligence," which enables a range of AI-powered image editing features. These features include Best Face, an AI tool that allows users to swap the facial expressions of up to five people in a motion photo. This feature is similar to Google Pixel's Best Take and was first introduced with the Galaxy S25 in January. In addition to the new AI-powered features, the Galaxy A56 also comes with a modest spec upgrade, including an upgraded Exynos 1580 chip and a larger vapor chamber to improve performance, as per The Verge. The device also features a 6.7-inch full HD Plus display with an up to 120Hz refresh rate, as well as a 12MP ultrawide sensor, 50MP main camera, and 5MP macro camera. According to The Verge, the Galaxy A56 will be available in the US "later this year" with a starting price of USD 499. The Galaxy A36 will be available exclusively at Best Buy starting at USD 399 on March 26, while the Galaxy A26 will cost USD 299 when it launches on March 28. The devices will also be available in the UK on March 19th, with prices starting at Euro 299 for the Galaxy A26. Other notable features of the new Galaxy A-series devices include support for up to six years of Android OS and security upgrades, as well as IP67 dust and water resistance on the Galaxy A26.

# Hundreds of different dinosaur footprints discovered in UK's Oxfordshire

London: Researchers from the Universities of Oxford and Birmingham have uncovered a huge expanse of quarry floor filled with hundreds of different dinosaur footprints. In a stunning find, the teams uncovered multiple enormous trackways dating back to the Middle Jurassic Period (around 166 million years ago).

The trackways form part of a huge 'dinosaur highway' and include footprints from the nine-metre ferocious predator Megalosaurus, and herbivorous dinosaurs up to twice that size. The excavation will be broadcast on BBC Two's Digging for Britain on January 8 and featured in a new public exhibition Breaking Ground at Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH).

These footprints offer an extraordinary window into the lives of dinosaurs, revealing details about their movements, interactions, and the tropical environment they inhabited.

The dig, carried out at Dewars Farm Quarry in Oxfordshire, uncovered five extensive trackways with evidence of more in the surrounding area. The longest continuous trackway measured more than 150 metres in length. Four of the trackways were made by gigantic, long-necked, herbivorous dinosaurs called sauropods, most likely to be Cetiosaurus, an up to 18-metre-long cousin of the well-known Diplodocus. The fifth trackway was made by the carnivorous theropod dinosaur, Megalosaurus which had distinctive, large, three-



toed feet with claws.

One area of the site shows the carnivore and herbivore tracks crossing over, raising questions about whether and how the two were interacting.

Megalosaurus was the first dinosaur worldwide to be scientifically named and described in 1824, and kick-started the last 200 years of dinosaur science. Dr Emma Nicholls, Vertebrate Palaeontologist at OUMNH, explained: "Scientists have known about and been studying Megalosaurus for longer than any other dinosaur on Earth, and yet these recent discoveries prove there is still new evidence of these animals out there, waiting to be found."

The footprints were buried under mud but came to light when quarry worker Gary Johnson felt 'unusual bumps' as he was stripping the clay back with his vehicle,

in order to expose the quarry floor. At this point, the experts were called in. Working closely with Dewars Farm and Duns Tew Quarry Manager Mark Stanway, and his staff, the Universities of Oxford and Birmingham co-led a team of more than 100 people on a week-long excavation in June 2024. Together, they painstakingly uncovered around 200 footprints and built detailed 3D models of the site using aerial drone photography - documenting the footprints in unprecedented detail for future research. Professor Kirsty Edgar, Professor of Micropalaeontology at the University of Birmingham, said: "These footprints offer an extraordinary window into the lives of dinosaurs, revealing details about their movements, interactions, and the tropical environment they inhabited."

Mark Stanway and his team at Smiths Bletchington provided an

enormous amount of support from the initial discovery through to the full excavation. They were invaluable in providing both their extensive expertise in the local geology, and operating specialist equipment such as excavators and rock saws. The new trackways connect to discoveries made in the area in 1997, where previous limestone quarrying revealed more than 40 sets of footprints, with some trackways reaching up to 180 m in length. At the time, the site provided major new information on the types of dinosaurs present in the UK during the Middle Jurassic Period. The site was recognised as one of the most scientifically important dinosaur track sites in the world and subsequently designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, the original site is largely no longer accessible and, since the findings predated the use of digital cameras and drones, there is limited photo-

graphic evidence. The new trackways add to the significance of the area, and even though the discoveries are separated by just thirty years, modern techniques and technology mean the prints can be recorded much more comprehensively than ever before. Professor Richard Butler, Professor of Palaeobiology at the University of Birmingham, said: "There is much more that we can learn from this site, which is an important part of our national Earth heritage. Our 3D models will allow researchers to continue to study and make accessible this fascinating piece of our past for generations to come."

During the new excavation, more than 20,000 images were created of the prints. These will provide a wealth of material for further study and education and could yield valuable insights into how these dinosaurs walked, including speeds, how large they were, and if and how they interacted. Dr Duncan Murdock, Earth Scientist at OUMNH, said: "The preservation is so detailed that we can see how the mud was deformed as the dinosaur's feet squelched in and out. Along with other fossils like burrows, shells and plants we can bring to life the muddy lagoon environment the dinosaurs walked through."

The BBC's Digging for Britain team filmed the work as part of a new series due to be broadcast next week. Presented by Professor Alice Roberts, who is also the University of Birmingham's Professor of Public Engagement in Science, the programme.

# TN to harness CSIR-NIIST technologies for agriculture MSME growth

Thiruvananthapuram: (PTI) Tamil Nadu's Industries Minister, T R B Rajaa, stated on Monday that the state aims to leverage innovative technologies from CSIR-NIIST to enhance productivity in agriculture, industry, and MSMEs.

During his visit to the CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST) campus at Pappanamcode, Rajaa held discussions with CSIR-NIIST Director C Anandharamkrishnan and senior scientists of the institute, an official release stated.

The minister stated that Tamil Nadu would explore opportunities for collaborative initiatives with CSIR-NIIST, a premier research and development institute in the country, which has successfully developed and transferred technologies and solutions for the sustainable development of the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Rajaa stated that Tamil Nadu aims to leverage the institute's advanced research and technological expertise to address the challenges faced by the state's industries and farming communities.

"We want farmers to benefit through increased productivity. The Tamil Nadu government is actively seeking fresh ideas and innovative solutions to uplift our agricultural, industrial, and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sectors. Collaborations with premier institutions like CSIR-NIIST will pave the way for transformative advancements that benefit all

stakeholders," Rajaa said, as quoted in a NIIST release.

Rajaa also emphasised the Tamil Nadu government's commitment to fostering innovation and ensuring that scientific advancements directly benefit farmers and industrialists by enhancing productivity and profitability.

The minister toured the state-of-the-art research facilities on the campus.

During the interaction, Anandharamkrishnan highlighted the institute's ongoing efforts in developing scalable technologies and expressed a willingness to work closely with the Tamil Nadu government to implement solutions tailored to the state's needs, the release said.

"The minister's visit underscores Tamil Nadu's proactive approach to fostering partnerships with premier research institutions to drive inclusive growth and sustainable development," Anandharamkrishnan said. The collaborative effort promises to usher in a new era of innovation, ensuring tangible benefits for the people of Tamil Nadu, he said.

The discussions explored multiple areas of potential collaboration, including agri-based industries, where developing value-added products and technologies could enhance farmers' income and promote sustainability initiatives. Possibilities for improving Tamil Nadu's healthcare sector, advancing the hydrogen value chain, and supporting MSMEs were also discussed, the release said.

## Israel adopts US framework for temporary ceasefire during Ramzan, passover period

MI News Service, Tel Aviv: Israel has adopted the framework of US Presidential envoy Steve Witkoff for a temporary ceasefire during Ramzan and Passover period. The decision was taken after a security discussion chaired by Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and with the participation of Israel's Defence Minister, senior security establishment officials and the negotiating team. In a post on X, the Israel Prime Minister's Office stated, "Following a security discussion chaired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and with the participation of the Defense Minister, senior security establishment officials and the negotiating team, it was decided. Israel adopts the framework of US Presidential envoy Steve Witkoff for a temporary ceasefire during the Ramadan and Passover period." On the first day of the framework, half of the living and deceased hostages will be released. Upon its conclusion, if agreement is reached on a permanent ceasefire, the remaining living and deceased hostages will be released, according to the statement released by Israel Prime Minister's Office. The statement released by Israel Prime Minister's Office states, "Steve Witkoff proposed the framework on extending the ceasefire after gaining the impression that, at present, there was no possibility of bridging between the positions of the sides on ending the



Army personnel during rescue work after several labourers got trapped under snow following an avalanche in Mana area, in Chamoli district.

## Hamas issues new hostage video, Israel says 'will not be deterred'



MI News Service, Jerusalem: Hamas released a video of Israeli-Argentine hostage Eitan Horn, who was kidnapped on October 7, 2023, and has been held in the Gaza Strip ever since. The video, authorised by Horn's family for release in Israeli media, shows Eitan, 38, parting ways with his elder brother Iair, who was also kidnapped but freed two weeks ago under the 42-day initial phase of a Gaza truce deal between Israel and Hamas, which expired earlier on Saturday.

Xinhua news agency reported. The footage also includes hostage Sagui Dekel-Chen, freed together with Iair, and two other hostages with their faces blurred.

In the video, Eitan pleaded, "Get everyone out and don't separate families anymore," urging Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to move on to the second phase of the truce deal to secure the release of remaining hostages. In response, Netanyahu's office denounced the video

as "Hamas propaganda," in which "hostages are forced to convey psychological warfare messages." It stressed in a statement that "Israel will not be deterred" and "will continue to work tirelessly to return all hostages and meet all war goals."

The negotiations over the next stages of the Gaza ceasefire agreement currently face an impasse. Hamas called for international pressure on Israel to proceed to the second phase of the deal, while Israel insisted on only extending the first phase for an additional 42 days with more swaps of hostages and detainees. Currently, 59 Israeli hostages remain in Gaza, with 24 of them still believed to be alive. Earlier Hamas said that the Israeli proposal of extending the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement is "unacceptable". "The extension of the first phase as proposed by the occupation is unacceptable to us, and the mediators and guarantor countries are required to oblige the occupation to abide by the agreement in its various stages," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said in a statement on Saturday.

## Pope Francis continues to rest after peaceful night in hospital: Vatican

MI News Service, Vatican City: Pope Francis continues to have rest after having had a peaceful night in the hospital, Vatican News reported, citing Holy See Press Office's statement. On Saturday evening, the Press Office described Pope Francis' medical condition stable with respiratory physiotherapy alternating between non-invasive mechanical ventilation and long periods of supplemental high-flow oxygenation with a good response to gas exchange. It further said that the prognosis still remains guarded. According to the statement released on Saturday, Pope does not have a fever or show signs of leukocytosis (high white blood cell count). He remained alert, oriented and in good humour, the statement said, according to Vatican News. Pope Francis was first admitted to Rome's Gemelli Hospital two weeks ago, after being plagued by a string of lung-related medical struggles, including bronchitis and then pneumonia. His current hospitalization is his fourth, and now longest, stay since he became Pope in 2013, as per CNN report. The pontiff has suffered from lung-related issues for much of his life. As a young man, he suffered from severe pneumonia and had part of one lung removed. The Vatican has been releasing daily updates twice on Pope Francis' health. The Pope's schedule has been cleared to accommodate his intensive medical treatment. The Vatican has announced that the Pope will not lead next week's Ash Wednesday service, marking the start of Lent, for only the second time in his 12-year papacy. A Cardinal is expected to lead the service instead. On Friday night while praying for Pope Francis, Argentinian Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernandez said, "Certainly, it is close to the Holy Father's heart that our prayers be not only for him, but also for all those who, in this particular dramatic and suffering moment of the world, bear the heavy burden of war, sickness, and poverty."

## Israel announces Gaza supply cut-off as Hamas rejects hostage deal



MI News Service, Tel Aviv [Israel]: Israel's Prime Minister's Office has announced that all goods and supplies entering the Gaza Strip will be halted effective immediately. This decision comes after what the Israeli government describes as Hamas' refusal to accept the Witkoff framework for continuing negotiations, a proposal that Israel had agreed to. Prime Minister Netanyahu has

declared that Israel will not permit a ceasefire without the release of Israeli hostages. The statement warned that if Hamas continued to refuse the terms, "there will be additional consequences. Tel Aviv [Israel], March 2 (ANI/TPS): In a pre-Ramzan crackdown, 432 Palestinians illegally living in Israel were arrested during the past week, the Israeli Police said on Sunday.

## National Seminar on "Relevance of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the 21st Century" at AMU Centre, Murshidabad



MI News Service, Murshidabad: A national seminar on the theme "Relevance of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the 21st Century" was organized at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Centre, Murshidabad. The seminar commenced with a tribute to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, with a large gathering of distinguished scholars, researchers, faculty members, and students in attendance. The inaugural session was presided over by Professor S.M. Javed Akhtar, Director of AMU Murshidabad Centre, while Professor Shariq Ali, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, graced the event as the Chief Guest. In his keynote address, Professor

Shariq Ali highlighted Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's pivotal role in addressing the educational backwardness of Muslims and promoting scientific thought. He emphasized that modern education is essential for the progress of any community, and Sir Syed initiated the Aligarh Movement with this very vision in mind. In his presidential address, Professor S.M. Javed Akhtar stated that Sir Syed's ideology remains as relevant today as it was in his era. He stressed that embracing modern education and scientific research is the need of the hour, and AMU is committed to carrying forward this mission. The seminar featured research presentations by scholars

and academicians from various parts of the country. Dr. Khalid Anwar from Jamia Millia Islamia remarked that Sir Syed's educational movement played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and social progress of Muslims in the subcontinent. He urged that we must reinterpret Sir Syed's vision in contemporary contexts and implement his ideas effectively. Dr. Saba Fatima, from the Department of Urdu, University of Calcutta, elaborated on Sir Syed's concept of education, which was not confined to bookish knowledge but also emphasized character building. She noted that his primary aim was to create a society that excelled both in knowledge and ethics.

## Former WUC President Dolkun Isa's brother sentenced to 20 years in China's Xinjiang for allegedly "inciting terrorism"

MI News Service, Beijing: Former World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa's brother Yalkun Isa is facing a 20-year imprisonment in China's Xinjiang for allegedly "inciting terrorism," according to local law enforcement and security personnel at the school where he worked, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported. At 63 years old, Yalkun was an educator at the Aksu Education Institute located in Aksu city, where numerous Uyghur instructors were detained in 2017 during a period characterized by mass arrests of Uyghur educators, entrepreneurs, and cultural figures under the pretext of re-education to combat what China termed terrorism and religious extremism, according to RFA report. Yalkun's brother Dolkun Isa served as the president of the Germany-based World Uyghur Congress (WUC) from 2017 to 2024. Living in exile since 1994, Dolkun has consistently faced intimidation from China due to his advocacy for Uyghurs. A law enforcement officer confirmed Yalkun's arrest was due to his communication with individuals in foreign nations via phone but also indicated that he had accessed content from international websites, the report said. The officer mentioned that he had seen the sentence handed to Yalkun.

## Israel threatens action if Druze community "harmed" by Syria's gov't forces

MI News Service, Jerusalem/Damascus: At least one person was killed and nine others injured on Saturday as fighting erupted between residents and security forces in the city of Jaramana near Syria's capital Damascus, a war monitor reported. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the confrontation was reportedly triggered by an attack from the nearby town of Al-Malihah in Jaramana. Armed fighters from Al-Malihah launched assaults, prompting committees and community leaders of Jaramana to intervene in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. However, after a young man from Al-Malihah was killed by residents of Jaramana, tensions worsened as security forces clashed with gunmen from Jaramana in the city's central Swords Square, leaving one gunman critically wounded. Following the violence, security forces expanded deployment at the entrances and exits of Jaramana, combating gunmen in multiple areas. Also on Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz ordered military troops to defend the Druze

population in Jaramana. "Israel will not allow the regime of radical Islam in Syria to harm the Druze community," they said in a joint statement, vowing to take "all necessary steps to ensure our Druze brothers' safety." Israel has been working to solidify ties with Druze communities since expanding its territorial control near the border with Syria and in the occupied Golan Heights following the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024. Syria hosts Druze villages in the Carmel mountain region, the Galilee, and parts of the Golan Heights. Many Druze citizens serve in the Israeli military, with some holding high-ranking positions. In a separate statement, the Israeli Defense Ministry issued an ultimatum to armed groups attacking Jaramana, warning that the Israeli military has been on high alert and "ready to enter Jaramana" within 40 minutes if hostilities continue. The developments come as Syria's interim government struggles to navigate instability following the political upheaval, and there are concerns that international players could be drawn into the country's ongoing chaos.

## Jordan's king urges de-escalation in West Bank in call with Canadian PM

MI News Service, Amman: King Abdullah II of Jordan on Saturday urged an end to the dangerous Israeli escalation in the West Bank. In a phone call with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the king stressed the need to establish a political path toward a just and comprehensive peace in the occupied Palestinian territory, according to a statement from the Royal Court. He also underscored the importance of rebuilding Gaza without displacing its residents, ensuring a ceasefire, and intensifying international humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the two leaders discussed strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation across various sectors. The United Nations Relief and



Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) warned Wednesday that the West Bank is becoming a "battlefield," with ordinary Palestinians bearing the brunt of the escalation. According to UNRWA, more than 50 people, including children, have been reportedly killed since the Israeli forces' large-scale operation started in the West Bank weeks ago.

## Tibetans-in-exile offer prayers on third day of Losar, pray for long life of Dalai Lama

MI News Service, Dharamshala: The Tibetans-in-Exile in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamshala offered special Sang-Sol (incense burning) prayers on the third day of Losar, the Tibetan new year, and prayed for the long life of the Dalai Lama and worshipped the mother nature. Sang means incense and Sol means wake up. Tibetans also call it incense burning offering or smoke pooja. Hundreds of Tibetans gathered at the Lha Gyari temple in Dharamshala to celebrate this special occasion. They also tied colourful holy flags around this monastery and offered prayers here. According to the Tibetan lunar calendar this



the 'Wood Sanke' year 2152. Tibetans celebrate Losar for three days, however, in some regions,

they also celebrate it for 15 days. Speaking to ANI, Techung, a Tibetan musician said, "This is the

third day of Losar, our New Year. On the first day we have a family gathering, on second day visiting friends and on the third day, we have a very special occasion which is called Sang - Sol which is incense burning, offering smoke, essences and foods to the deities and this is a very ancient kind of Pre Buddhist sort of tradition whereby we honour the nature like water, mountains and all the spirits and this is the combination of the new year third day where the community come together to honour and respect the nature and for the abundance of rain and showers for the future."

He also spoke about the im-

portance of people tying holy flags around the monastery. He said, "These holy flags we call it lungta, they are supposed to carry your good wishes, spirits and also to honour spirits of the nature. This is basically for good luck to your family, to your beloved teachers." Tsering, a Tibetan-in-exile said, "it's the third day of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. We are doing a Sang-Sol just to pray for the long life of his holiness the Dalai Lama. These flags represent four elements sky, earth, water and fire so it's just for good luck. These are our rituals to pray for good luck and long life of the Dalai Lama."

## Vidarbha clinch third Ranji Trophy title



**NAGPUR (MAHARASHTRA)** : Vidarbha exorcised the ghosts of their 2023-24 heartbreak in the most emphatic way, clinching their third Ranji Trophy title with a commanding performance against Kerala.

They fought hard to secure the crucial first-innings lead and then batted for nearly five sessions in the second innings to grind down their opponents. The victory was made even sweeter as it unfolded in front of 3,000 home fans at the VCA Stadium in Nagpur, where captain Akshay Wadkar proudly lifted the trophy, as per ESPNcricinfo.

The final day started with a glimmer of hope for Kerala. When Nair fell after adding just three runs to his overnight 132, and Harsh Dubey was trapped LBW by Eden Apple Tom, it seemed another twist was in store.

The belief grew stronger when Wadkar was bowled by a delivery that stayed low, and Aditya Sarwate celebrated wildly after dismissing him. Sarwate, who had shared many key moments with Wadkar, now had three wickets and Kerala's prayers behind him.

However, Akshay Karnewar, a spinner who hadn't played a major role with the ball, stepped up with a crucial 30-run knock.

He batted for a long time, taking precious minutes out of the game. By the time Darshan Nalkande smashed a half-century, Kerala's hopes had faded. At 2:20 PM, the stumps were drawn with tea approaching, and Vidarbha were officially crowned champions.

Vidarbha had been relentless throughout the season, reaching the semi-finals with the joint-most wins alongside Mumbai. Their title win was a team effort, led by Nair, scoring his fourth century of the season, and 21-year-old Malewar, contributing a vital half-century.

Their success wasn't just about individual brilliance—it was about a collective effort. Yash Rathod finished as the season's top run-scorer, Harsh Dubey set a new record for most wickets in a Ranji Trophy season, and Parth Rekha's game-changing spell in the semi-final crushed Mumbai's dreams. Dhruv Shorey adapted seamlessly to his new team, while Wadkar, a battle-hardened leader, guided them through last year's heartbreak to finally lift the trophy.

Vidarbha's gritty style of cricket had once again prevailed, cementing their place among India's domestic cricket powerhouses.



**New Zealand's Tom Latham, Kane Williamson and William O'Rourke celebrate the wicket of India's KL Rahul during their ICC Champions Trophy 2025 - Group A match, at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai on Sunday. (ANI Photo)**

## SHAFALI VERMA REFLECTS ON HER MATCH-WINNING KNOCK, DC'S DOMINANT SHOW

**BENGALURU (KARNATAKA)** : Young batter Shafali Verma reflected on her match-winning knock against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Saturday and said she backed herself to stay longer on the crease and was confident of things getting easier for her.

The Delhi Capitals Women Team stormed into the playoffs of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2025 with a dominant nine-wicket win over the home side, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, at M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday, as per a Delhi Capitals press release.

Debutant N Charani and Shikha Pandey scalped two wickets each to restrict the home side to 147/5 in 20 overs. Delhi Capitals then chased down the target in just 15.3 overs, riding on fifties from Shafali Verma and Jess Jonassen.

This was the Delhi Capitals' second consecutive win on back-to-back nights, making them the first team to qualify for the playoffs in the tournament.

Player of the Match Shafali Verma, who scored an unbeaten 80 off 43 balls, said, "As a batter, you have to start from zero every time, even if you're playing on consecutive days. Our bowlers did a great job in the first innings, and our planning has been going well. We've been executing our plans perfectly."

"Early on during the chase, they were getting a lot of assistance, but once we settled in, we were able to play our shots confidently. I backed myself to stay at the crease. I knew that if I spent some time in the middle, my eyesight would adjust, and things would get easier. Once Jess and I settled in, the runs started flowing," she added, as quoted by Delhi Capitals press release.

Speaking about her match-winning partnership and her experience playing with Aussie all-rounder Jonassen, who smashed an unbeaten 61 off 38 balls, Verma said, "Playing with JJ is always fun."

## Virat's gets out cheaply in 300th ODI, a look at how star batter has fared in milestone 50-over matches

**DUBAI [UAE]** : Star India batter Virat Kohli's 300th ODI ended with an unremarkable outing with the bat, as he could score just 11 runs off 14 deliveries against New Zealand in their ICC Champions Trophy league stage match at Dubai on Sunday.

During his brief inning, Virat looked in great touch, scoring two boundaries against Matt Henry. However, a cracking shot fell into Glenn Phillips's zone at a backward point. Phillips took yet another stunning diving catch, adding one more to his stunning catalogue of catches.

In 300 ODIs, Virat has scored 14,096 runs at an average of 58.00, with 51 centuries and 73 fifties. His best score is 183. He is



the third-highest run-getter in ODIs, next to Kumar Sangakkara (14,234 runs in 404 matches with 25 centuries) and Sachin Tendulkar (18,426 runs in 463 matches with 49 centuries). He also has the most centuries in ODIs.

During the ongoing CT 2025, Virat has scored 133 runs in two matches at an average of 66.50, with the best score of 100\* against arch-rivals Pakistan.

However, his milestone ODIs have not been the best, with the batter having scored only one century and fifty each in six such ODIs. In his 50th ODI against South Africa in the 2011 Cricket World Cup, he made one run in three balls. South Africa won the

match by three wickets.

Virat's century in ODIs came against West Indies in the ICC Champions Trophy 2013. He scored an 18-ball 22 with four boundaries. India won that match by eight wickets.

In his 150th ODI against England at WACA Stadium back in January 2015 at Perth during a tri-nation series featuring Australia, in which he scored eight runs off 26 balls, with England winning by three wickets.

During his 200th ODI against New Zealand at Wankhede Stadium in October 2017, Virat finally let his arms loose in a milestone match, scoring 103 in 102 balls, with eight fours and two sixes. India lost that match by six

wickets.

In the 250th ODI, which came against Australia at Sydney in November 2020, Virat scored 89 in 87 balls, with seven fours and two sixes. India lost that match by 51 runs.

In the match, New Zealand put India to bat first after the Kiwis won the toss.

At the end of 30 overs, India was 130/4, with Shreyas Iyer (53\*) and KL Rahul (1\*) unbeaten. After India lost their top-order of skipper Rohit Sharma (15), Shubman Gill (2) and Virat Kohli (11) early and were reduced to 30/3, a 98-run stand between Shreyas and Axar Patel (42 in 61 balls, with three fours and a six) helped India get back in the game.

## England's ODI struggles continue as Archer shines amid Champions Trophy disaster

**NEW DELHI [INDIA]** : England's Champions Trophy campaign has been nothing short of a disaster. However, head coach Brendon McCullum believes there were a few positives to take away from the disappointment, as per ESPNcricinfo.

The brightest of them was Jofra Archer's performance and fitness. The fast bowler completed his full quota of overs in England's first two matches and bowled nine of the 29.1 overs in the third game against South Africa. He consistently clocked good pace, took wickets in each game, and was England's standout bowler, even as South Africa cruised to victory.

"He's been out of competitive cricket for a couple of years," McCullum said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

"I think it's taken just a little bit of time to get that rhythm of game-play back, but I think he's been really good. He's bowled high pace, he's played a lot of cricket, he's been able to get significant workload under his belt throughout this time and we've seen moments of how great Jofra is, even tonight, a couple of wickets he took the other night against Afghanistan, three with the new ball," he added.

"We know how great a player Jofra is at the very top of his game, and to have him back and to have him fit and excited about playing is a real win for English cricket," he said.

Archer impressed with both the new ball and the worn wicket. Against Australia, he dismissed Travis Head early with a sharp return catch but, with little swing on offer, stuck to tight lines instead of searching for movement. Against Afghanistan, he bowled 12 consecutive short balls before varying his



lengths, picking up two wickets in five deliveries. In the final game, with Mark Wood injured and England defending an almost impossible target, Archer was the fastest bowler on either side, dismissing Ryan Rickelton and Tristan Stubbs in his opening spell.

His ability to handle increased workloads will give England hope that he can play a key role in the Ashes later this year. McCullum, however, remained cautiously optimistic.

"We've got to make sure that we're always doing the right thing by Jof as well and understand the risks involved," McCullum said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

"But I'm pretty sure he's pretty keen to play Test cricket, and you look at someone like Jof - and if you can add him to the battery of fast bowlers you're trying to build, that can only strengthen this squad. We'll

wait and see, but overall, I'm really pleased with where Jof's at, and it's great to see him back playing and injury-free at the moment," he said.

Beyond Archer's resurgence, there was little else to celebrate. England's ODI struggles under McCullum have been severe—three wins and eleven losses, including seven consecutive defeats, their longest losing streak in ODIs since 2001. While McCullum suggested England could have won their first two matches, their crushing loss to South Africa left no illusions about the side's decline.

"We weren't good enough across, obviously very disappointed," McCullum said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

"We had high hopes of being able to finish the tournament with a bit of a bang, but we were very poor, and we've got a lot of work to do. We'll put our thinking caps on over the

next few weeks and start to try and navigate our way through what an improvement looks like across our white-ball cricket and make sure we try and be pretty thorough with that and work out a way that we can get ourselves back to where we should be," he added.

With nearly three months before their next ODI, England face a major rebuilding phase, starting with the appointment of a new captain. Jos Buttler stepped down on Thursday, acknowledging that the team's poor results made it the right time to pass on the leadership.

His final innings as captain were a shadow of the player who is widely regarded as England's greatest white-ball batter. He scratched his way to 21 off 43 balls without hitting a single boundary—the second-longest innings of his career without finding the fence—before tamely chipping Lungi Ngidi to mid-off.

"We still see Jos as obviously a big player within that, and he's got a huge role to play. He cared so much about it, and he admittedly said that he wasn't able to get the best out of the guys at this stage. I thought it was a brave decision to make, and it gives us now an opportunity to be able to start to plot and plan our way forward," he said.

"I'll get home in the next couple of days and start having some conversations with Rob Key and the guys at the ECB about who the right person is for us to put in that position of white-ball captain. Then we assess how to learn some of the lessons that we've been dealt on this tour and in this tournament to ensure that we're a lot more competitive than what we've been," he noted.

## ISL 2024-25: Chennaiyin FC looking ahead as NorthEast United pay visit for penultimate game

**CHENNAI (TAMIL NADU)** : Chennaiyin FC (CFC) will have one eye on the future when they take on NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 on Monday in their penultimate match of the regular season, a press release by CFC media stated.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, head coach Owen Coyle underlined the same, while addressing what he needs from his team for these last two matches.



### HISTORICAL HOLY ISALE SAWAB MAHFIL IN FURFURA SHARIF

On Falgun 21, 22, 23 (6, 7, 8 March) Furfura Sharif's Founder of the historical Holy Isale Sawab Mahfil Mojaddide Zaman Ala Hazrat Pir Abu Bakr Siddique Dada Huzur Pir Qibla (Rah:)

On behalf of Furfura Sharif Bokhariya Darbar Sharif all the guests are welcomed on this great historical occasion.

Attend the Zikr Majlis in the morning and evening.

Pray namaz five times in group.

- Maintain the etiquette of the Majlis.
- Worship more and more for the month of Holy Romjan.

**PIRZADA SYED HAMMAD HOSSAIN**  
Furfura Darbar sharif

