

Mamata Banerjee suspends...

From PG 1 committee formed by the Chief minister was Abhishek. The first name was that of Bakshi. It was known only after the meeting at the Trinamool Bhavan that All India General Secretary Abhishek would hold a 'virtual' meeting with the district leaders on March 15 at 4 pm. But the party leaders came to know about Abhishek's meeting later. Many came to know about it after leaving the meeting, while others came to know about it while leaving.

let it go. Earlier TMC has launched a rigorous voters list verification process across West Bengal, with a 36-member committee led by state president Subrata Bakshi. Each member has been instructed to meticulously inspect the electoral rolls in their respective areas to eliminate discrepancies and ensure accuracy. On Thursday, the committee convened at Trinamool Bhavan to review the progress of this scrutiny initiative. However, senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee was absent due to prior commitments. The meeting primarily focused on assessing ongoing verification efforts and setting guidelines for further action. It was decided that on March 15 at 4 PM, TMC's National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee will hold a virtual meeting with state committee members, district presidents, and heads of branch organizations. This high-level discussion aims to refine the party's voter verification strategy and address any challenges faced during the process.



'MCCI Women's Achievers Award 2025' Padma Shri Mouma Das (Indian Table Tennis Player & Arjuna Awardee), Churni Ganguly (Actress, Writer & Director), Padma Shri Dr.Sudha Kaul felicitated by Amit Saraogi (President, MCCI) and Deepali Saraogi (Chairman, MCCI Ladies Forum), with the at the Panel Discussion on "The Next Generation of Women Leaders - Unleashing the Power, Thrive and Lead" & Felicitation Ceremony held in Kolkata on Friday. Pic Prabir Bhattacharya

Abhishek Banerjee champions year-round political commitment through 'Sebaashray'

MI News Service, Kolkata: In the often-cynical landscape of Indian politics, where leaders are frequently dismissed as 'seasonal visitors' who appear only during elections, Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee has made a strong statement against this notion. He asserts that politics is not merely a seasonal engagement but a continuous commitment to the people's welfare. His initiative, 'Sebaashray', is a testament to this philosophy, reflecting his party's dedication to serving the public beyond electoral cycles.

stake, who feign concern when electoral dividends are on the line. But we stand by the people through joy and despair, through crises and calm. 'Sebaashray' is a manifestation of this ethos." Highlighting the impact of the initiative, Banerjee revealed that since its inception, Sebaashray has provided professional healthcare services to 9,03,400 patients. On its 63rd day, health camps in Maheshtala alone served 8,888 people. He reaffirmed his commitment, stating, "As long as people stand with us, we will stand by them, every single day, without fail."

ject's scale and efficiency underscore Banerjee's vision of seamless public service beyond electoral considerations. This initiative serves not only as a political message—one that seeks to redefine governance as a year-round responsibility rather than a periodic obligation tied to elections. Abhishek Banerjee has repeatedly emphasized that his engagement with the people extends beyond political campaigns, positioning himself and his party as consistent contributors to public welfare. As the 2024 elections approach, his focus on grassroots healthcare services could play a crucial role in shaping voter perception. With over 9 lakh beneficiaries in just 63 days, the initiative is setting a new benchmark for social service in West Bengal's political landscape.

Over 1,000 illegal arms...

From PG 1 districts of the Northeastern state are Naga-majority ones where no ethnic violence has been reported since May 3, 2023. In the other 11 districts, at least 250 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless since that day in clashes between the valley-based Meitei community and the Kukis who are in majority in the hills. Of the surrendered arms, more than 760 were from the valley districts while the rest were from the hill districts and Jiribam.

self-loading rifles (SLRs), modified snipers, grenades including Chinese ones, INSAS and AK 56 rifles, they said. Besides, the people also handed over articles like bulletproof jackets, helmets, radio sets, camouflage uniforms, boots and locally made mortars (Pompi) during the last two weeks. The highest number of arms surrendered was on February 27 when 307 weapons were handed over to the security forces in both valley and hill districts. Of them, 246 were alone surrendered by Arambai Tenggol, a Meitei group, police said.

"The figures, however, are tentative and we are in the process of categorising the details of the weapons and ammunitions surrendered between February 20 and March 6," the officer said. Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla had on February 20 urged warring groups to voluntarily surrender weapons robbed from security forces and other illegally held arms within seven days. He extended the deadline for the surrender of looted and illegal arms till 4 PM of March 6, following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time. The administration had assured people that no punitive action would be taken against those who would surrender their weapons within this period, emphasising that "this is the last opportunity for everyone concerned to contribute to peace, communal harmony, the future of our youth, and the security of our society". Arms surrendered included 9mm pistols, sub-machine guns (SMGs), colt-machine guns (CMG),

As many as 12 bunkers were destroyed at K Langnom and Khegang areas while three others were demolished at Haraothel, all in Kangpokpi district. The Centre has imposed President's rule in the state on February 13 after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned. The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation.

Indo-China relations made...

From PG 1 member of the powerful political bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC). "We should never allow bilateral relations to be defined by the boundary question or specific differences to affect the overall picture of our bilateral ties," he said. China believes that as the largest neighbours, both countries should be partners in each other's success. "A cooperative partnership between the dragon and the elephant is the only right choice for both sides," he said. "There is every reason for us to support each other rather than undermine each other or undercut each other," he said, adding that both the countries "should work with each other rather than guard against each other". "This is the only path that truly serves the funda-

mental interests of the two countries," Wang said. "As important members of the Global South, we have the responsibility to take the lead in opposing hegemonism and power politics" he said in apparent reference to the United States. "We must not only safeguard legitimate rights and interests of our countries but also uphold the basic norms governing international relations," he said. "If China and India join hands, the prospect of greater democracy in international affairs and the stronger Global South will improve greatly," he said. Wang said 2025 marks the 75th anniversary of China-India diplomatic relations.



State to commence OBC Survey from March 8

MI News Service, Kolkata: The West Bengal government is set to launch a comprehensive survey on Other Backward Classes (OBCs) starting March 8, provided there are no last-minute hurdles. A video conference with district officials has already been conducted, and the state administration has issued directives from Nabanna to form specialized teams for the survey. Officials at the block and sub-divisional levels have been instructed to compile a list of personnel to be involved in this survey operation. The primary objective of this initiative is to reassess the eligibility of sub-categories (sub-castes) recognized under the OBC classification. Despite the gravity of the issue, officials from the Backward Classes Welfare Department have refrained from commenting. Even Sanjoy Bansal, the department's secretary, remained unresponsive to queries. When contacted, Backward Classes Welfare & Tribal

Development Minister Buluchik-Baraik stated, "The matter is sub-judice, and I have no comments." The legal uncertainty surrounding OBC reservations has already created significant disruptions in government employment, scholarships, and admissions. Following the Calcutta High Court's ruling, the West Bengal Public Service Commission (WBPS) has put several recruitment exams on hold, including the 2024 WBCS examination. Any new government notifications must now include a clear stance on OBC reservations, which has not been possible due to the legal deadlock. A senior district official admitted that this has affected multiple areas, including scholarships and college admissions. In a landmark judgment, the Calcutta High Court's division bench, comprising Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty and Justice Rajasekhar-Mantha, ruled that all OBC certi-

icates issued post-2010 were invalid. The court emphasized that the mandatory survey required before granting reservations was not conducted, violating the 1992 Supreme Court judgment delivered by a nine-judge bench. However, the High Court also clarified that those who had secured government jobs with OBC certificates between 2010 and 2024 would not lose their employment. With over 1.2 million OBC certificates now invalidated, the West Bengal government has challenged the High Court's decision in the Supreme Court, but the matter remains unresolved. Additionally, as the Supreme Court has not issued a stay on the High Court's ruling, contempt proceedings against the state government were initiated on March 7. All eyes are now on the Supreme Court, as stakeholders eagerly await a resolution to this intricate legal impasse.

State Health Dept issues alert on substandard drugs following CDSCO report

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) recently conducted a nationwide quality assessment of pharmaceutical drugs, including those sold in West Bengal. In its January report, the regulatory body found that as many as 93 drugs failed to meet quality standards. Shockingly, the list includes widely used medications such as paracetamol, anti-hypertensive drugs, and anti-a-u-s-e treatments—common prescriptions in households across the country. In response, the West Bengal Health Department has swiftly moved to address the issue, issuing a stern warning regarding the sale and distribution of these substandard medicines. The department has directed the Central Medical Store to immediately withdraw all non-compliant drugs from state-run hospitals. Additionally, the state's health secretary has issued a circular instructing wholesalers and retailers to cease the sale of these rejected medications with immediate effect. However, the government's action is not limited to mere notifications. To ensure compliance, the state's Drug Control Authority will conduct rigorous inspections across retail pharmacies and healthcare institutions. Officials will assess whether any establishments continue to distribute the banned drugs despite the directive. The Health De-

partment has warned that any violation of the order will invite strict legal action. The scale of the problem is significant. Reports indicate that between December and February, over 250 drugs were declared substandard, raising serious concerns about the quality of medicines reaching consumers. Since many of the rejected medications are essential for treating common ailments, their sudden withdrawal could create challenges for both patients and healthcare providers. Recognizing this potential crisis, the West Bengal Drug Control Authority is expected to release an advisory listing suitable alternatives to the banned medicines. This will help ensure that patients can continue their treatments without disruption. The development has once again highlighted the pressing need for stringent quality control measures in the pharmaceutical sector. Experts emphasize that regular inspections and stringent regulatory oversight are crucial to preventing such incidents. Public health advocates have also urged consumers to remain vigilant, verify drug authenticity, and rely only on trusted sources for their medications. As authorities work to address this alarming situation, the Health Department reassures the public that steps are being taken to prevent any further risks associated with substandard drugs.

MI News Service, Kolkata: Tension escalated at Park Circus National Medical College and Hospital early this morning following allegations of medical negligence in a maternity case. According to reports, Sonali Das (39), a resident of Park Circus, was expecting a child and had visited the hospital's outpatient department for a routine check-up yesterday. Her delivery was scheduled for April. However, as per the family's claims, doctors advised an immediate cesarean section since the unborn child had already reached a weight of three kilograms. The family has accused the hospital of negligence, stating that despite admitting Sonali yesterday, no medical attention was provided. They further alleged that Arindam, a postgraduate trainee doctor, misbe-

Bengal Chemists & Druggists Association raises alarm on fake drug crisis

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Bengal Chemists and Druggists Association (BCDA), an influential member of the All India Organisation of Chemists & Druggists (AIOCD), has sounded the alarm over the rising threat of counterfeit medicines in West Bengal and across India. Representing over 40,000 members in the state, the BCDA has urged swift action to address this escalating crisis. During a recent awareness event,

healthcare professionals, and the public. He also pointed to excessive discounts as a driving factor behind the rise of fake medicines in West Bengal's pharmaceutical sector. BCDA has identified several cities as hotspots where counterfeit drug production is alarmingly high. Many of these illicit drugs are manufactured by unlicensed entities, with some licensed manufacturers also under scrutiny. The organization



Prithwi Bose, General Secretary, Bengal Chemists & Druggists Associate and Sankha Roy, official spokesperson of Bengal Chemists & Druggists Associate at press meet on Rising Fake Drug Menace.

BCDA officials—including General Secretary Prithwi Bose, Official Spokesperson Sankha Roy Chowdhury, President Pranab Ghosh, Organising Secretary Debashish Guha, Admin Secretary Prodyot Banerjee, and Treasurer Md. Irfan Khan Lodhi—stressed the critical need for a unified response to combat the spread of fake drugs. Prithwi Bose highlighted the severity of the issue, stating, "The proliferation of counterfeit medicines is a ticking time bomb. We urge the government to implement stricter regulations, intensify enforcement, and enhance public awareness. This is a battle that requires collective effort." BCDA has consistently advocated for a multi-stakeholder approach, calling for greater collaboration between regulatory agencies, law enforcement,

has pointed to weak regulatory oversight, inadequate testing facilities, lack of a whistle-blower mechanism, and the absence of specialized courts as major challenges in tackling the crisis. BCDA has urged both state and central authorities to strengthen monitoring in these high-risk areas. BCDA spokesperson Sankha Roy Chowdhury stated, "Counterfeit drugs pose a severe threat to public health and damage India's pharmaceutical reputation. Immediate intervention is essential." According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, counterfeit medicines accounted for 10% of the market in low- and middle-income countries a few years ago. Recent data suggests this figure has risen by nearly 47%, with fake or illegal drugs now making up around 15% of the total market.



West Bengal Board of Secondary Education employees protest at Salt Lake's Derozio Bhawan against the attack on Bratya Basu by Left student activists at Jadavpur University.

Uproar at Park Circus National Medical College over alleged medical negligence

haved with them. Matters took a tragic turn today when, according to the family's claims, surgical scissors and gauze were used inside the patient's abdomen, after which the baby reportedly stopped moving. Distressed, Sonali's husband was called in and asked to sign a document. However, the family alleges that they were not informed at that point that their unborn child had already passed away. It was only later that hospital authorities confirmed the tragic news. Outraged by the incident, the grieving family has submitted a formal complaint to the hospital superintendent, demanding strict action against the accused doctor. Responding to the allegations, hospital authorities have promptly formed a nine-member inquiry committee to investigate the matter.

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Night-time traffic disruptions on Maa Flyover for maintenance work

MI News Service, Kolkata: Kolkata commuters will face night-time traffic restrictions on the crucial Maa Flyover as the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMMA) initiates essential maintenance work. According to a directive issued by Kolkata Traffic Police, all vehicles intending to access the EM Bypass via the Maa Flyover will have to take detours. The designated alternative route will di-

rect vehicles through Park Circus Seven Point Crossing, Surawardy Avenue, Darga Road, and Bridge No. 4 before reaching the EM Bypass. While this diversion adds a slight detour, it is expected to facilitate smooth traffic movement during the flyover closure. The Maa Flyover is a vital arterial link in Kolkata's traffic network, serving as a crucial connector for those traveling to-

wards Salt Lake and New Town via the EM Bypass. The growing volume of bikers using the flyover, often engaging in high-speed rides, has led to a surge in accidents, prompting Kolkata Traffic Police to implement stringent measures aimed at curbing reckless driving. The ongoing maintenance work is part of broader efforts to enhance road safety and structural integrity.

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Taiwan MOFA fends off Chinese cyberattack as U.S. indicts Beijing-linked hackers

MI News Service, Taipei: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) confirmed yesterday that it was targeted by hackers from China but assured that no data was compromised. This follows a Wednesday indictment in the US of a group of alleged Chinese hackers who supposedly aimed at US government agencies, MOFA, and several other foreign governments, according to a report by Taipei Times.

US federal authorities have charged 10 individuals with collaborating to illegally access data from their targets and have imposed sanctions on a Chinese tech firm due to what they described as a prolonged espionage campaign that resulted in the theft of information both in the US and globally, as reported by Taipei Times.

As per the Taipei Times, eight of the indicted individuals were employed by Anxun Information Technology, commonly referred to as i-Soon, while two were affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

The indictment, along with a separate announcement from the Manhattan District Attorney's office, indicated that i-Soon is recognized as "a significant player in the PRC's [People's Republic of China's] hacker-for-hire ecosystem," as cited by Taipei Times. These cyberattacks targeted the US Defense Intelligence Agency, the US Department of Commerce, and the foreign ministries of Taiwan, South Korea, India, and Indonesia, as well as news outlets critical of China and the New York State Assembly, according to the report from Taipei Times. The ministry stated that it has consistently been a target of Chinese cyberattacks due to the sensitive nature of its operations. It confirmed awareness of these hacking attempts and mentioned that a comprehensive investigation had been initiated, concluding that none of the attempts to breach its system were successful, as highlighted by Taipei Times.

Australia deploys warships and surveillance aircraft to track Chinese naval task groups near its waters

MI News Service, Canberra: The Australian Navy has deployed three ships and surveillance aircraft to "closely monitor" a Chinese task group operating "near Australia" since mid-February, according to a report by Radio Free Asia (RFA). Richard Marles, also serving as deputy Prime Minister, stated on Thursday that the three Anzac-class frigates - HMAS Stuart, HMAS Warramunga, and HMAS Toowoomba - were tracking the Chinese warships, which were located approximately 500 kilometers (310 miles) northwest of Perth, as reported by RFA. "From the moment this task force entered the vicinity of Australia, in an unprecedented manner, we have been observing their movements," Marles mentioned. "We intend to continue monitoring them as long as they remain in the vicinity of Australia," he added, as cited by RFA. The Chinese task group consists of the Jiangkai-class frigate Hengyang, the Renhai-class cruiser Zunyi, and the Fuchi-class replenishment vessel Weishanhu.



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah arrives to present the state Budget 2025-26, in Jammu.

Ramadan, Friday and the second day of Furfura Sharif's Isa-e-Sawab



MI News Service, Kolkata: Friday was the second day of Furfura Sharif's Isa-e-Sawab. Along with this, people got Friday day as an additional benefit. Naturally, the crowd of people to offer holy prayers gradually went on increasing on this day. Lakhs of religious people appeared at the invitation of Pir Ala Hazrat Dada Huzoor of Furfura Sharif in the state of fasting. As a result, the area of prayer increased by several km with crossing the main court to offer prayers. Prayers were recited from the ancient historical Isa-le-Sawab court established by Dada Huzoor with a prayer. Pir Hazrat Abdullah Siddiqui offered prayers. Pirzada Maulana Sawban Siddiqui delivered an enlightening speech. On this day, Pir

Hazrat Ansar Siddiqui Huzur's son Pirzada Mustafa Madani Siddiqui offered a short prayer from the Khanqah. After Namaz, Pir Baro Huzur, Pirzada Maulana Ziauddin Siddiqui, Pirzada Ammar Siddiqui and Pirzada Minhaj Siddiqui were busy with philanthropic activities including Iftar. A book titled "Baro Huzur o Furfura Sharif" written by Dr. Rafiq Anwar Sahib has been published. The highly research book costs only Rs 200. It is available at the Khanqah and the office of Hezbullah. There is a continuous crowd at the shrine. The rare scene of orderly prayers enriched the mahfil. There was also a large crowd at Pirzada Taha Siddiqui's house. People from different walks of life are attending

the Iftar Majlis. MLA and Minister Snehashis Chakraborty attended the Mahfil in the evening and he met the Pirsahabs and requested for their prayers. Pirzada Sattar Siddiqui, Pirzada Ehia Siddiqui, Pirzada Ishaq Siddiqui, Pirzada Junaid Siddiqui, Pirzada Uzair Siddiqui, Pirzada Nurullah Siddiqui and Pirzada Affan Siddiqui, Pirzada Naushad Siddiqui, Pirzada Montakim Siddiqui and many other Pirzadas are serving the guests. Many Pirsahabs are sincerely ready to provide emergency services at the police camp, medical camps on behalf of various organizations and the common people. Prayers are being offered for the welfare of the state, the country and the entire humanity.

Banned Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir holds first open rally in Bangladesh

MI News Service, Dhaka: Hizb ut-Tahrir, a radical Islamist organisation banned in Bangladesh since October 2009, carried out its first open rally in Dhaka on Friday. Joined by thousands of its members, the group began the rally from the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Friday prayers. The rally was titled "March for Khilafah." Dhaka Tribune reported that a clash erupted between police and members of the banned organiza-

tion near the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka. Law enforcement intervened to stop the procession, leading to a violent altercation. To disperse the crowd and regain control, police fired tear gas shells and sound grenades. Demonstrators scattered temporarily but they later regrouped and attempted to continue their procession, reported Dhaka Tribune. Hizb ut-Tahrir advocates for the establishment of a global Islamic Caliphate, or Khilafah, which it claims would unite all Muslim-majority countries under a single Islamic government. Earlier in February, Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, Professor, Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, admitted that Islamist groups in Bangladesh have got more freedom after Sheikh Hasina left the country. Kalimullah, while speaking to ANI, said that several banned Islamist outfits are active in Bangladesh and are even holding press conferences.

Visuals showed the fishermen arriving at the Chennai Airport. The fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and were released from prison. A total of 32 fishermen were arrested on February 23, and their boats were seized. On February 23, fishermen in 440 boats went to sea from Rameswaram. While they were fishing in the Palk

US, Ukraine to hold peace talks in Saudi Arabia next week, Zelensky says

MI News Service, Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that he would travel to Saudi Arabia on Monday for a meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman ahead of diplomatic-level talks later in the week with US officials. "Next week, on Monday, my visit to Saudi Arabia is planned to meet the Crown Prince. After that, my team will remain in Saudi Arabia to work with our American partners. Ukraine is most interested in peace," Zelensky said.

US President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, said earlier on Thursday that a meeting with the Ukrainians was planned for next week in Saudi Arabia. He also said discussions were underway with Kyiv for a peace agreement framework and an initial ceasefire.

Witkoff said that Trump was pleased by Zelensky's letter after last Friday's disastrous meeting in the White House. "He felt that Zelensky's letter was a very positive first step. There was an apology. There was an acknowledgement that the United States has done so much for the country of Ukraine and a sense of gratitude," he added. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and others are expected to depart for Riyadh on Tuesday to attend the meeting, which will include Andriy Yermak, a top aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenski, media reported.

Donald Trump said he would visit the Kingdom probably over the next month and a half but did not mention a date. "I'm going to Saudi Arabia. I said, I'll go if you pay a trillion dol-



lars, \$1 trillion to American companies, (spreading) the purchase over a four-year period, of a trillion dollars. They've agreed to do that, so I'm going to be going there," Trump said, suggesting a major investment deal with Saudi Arabia.

The meeting signals a warming in US and Ukraine relations since the Oval Office blow-up between Trump and Zelensky last week. Following the row, the US cut off military aid for Ukraine and shut down intelligence sharing with the Ukrainian armed forces.

The announcement came as Zelensky met European Union leaders for an emergency summit in Brussels on the Russia-Ukraine war and security in Europe. The European Union leaders backed new defence spending plans aimed at freeing up billions of euros for the continent's security after the Trump administration signalled that Europe would have to

defend for itself in future. The 27 leaders signed off on a move to loosen budget restrictions so that willing EU countries can increase their military spending. They also urged the European Commission to explore new ways "to facilitate significant defence spending at national level in all Member States," a statement said.

The EU's executive branch estimates that around 650 billion euros (SAUS\$1.1 billion) could be freed up in this way. Several East European leaders at the summit also welcomed French President Emmanuel Macron's plan of sharing his country's nuclear force to deter attacks. But it was dismissed by the Russian government as "extremely confrontational". The EU's 27 leaders on Thursday greenlit a plan drawn up by the European Commission that aims to mobilize €800 billion to "rearm Europe" against the perceived threat from Russia.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 14 Indian fishermen from Pamban for fishing across border



MI News Service, Rameswaram: The Sri Lankan Navy arrested 14 fishermen from the Pamban area for fishing across the border and took them to the Mannar Naval Base for investigation, according to the Rameswaram Fishermen Association. The Sri Lankan Navy patrolling the area arrested the fishermen belonging to Salalanga and the 14 fishermen on board for fishing across the border. They have been taken to the Mannar Naval Base for investigation. Earlier on February 27, a group of 25 Indian fishermen who were sent back from Sri Lanka arrived at the Chennai International Airport.

Visuals showed the fishermen arriving at the Chennai Airport. The fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and were released from prison. A total of 32 fishermen were arrested on February 23, and their boats were seized. On February 23, fishermen in 440 boats went to sea from Rameswaram. While they were fishing in the Palk

US lawmakers call for crackdown on China's illegal trade practices, call for Section 301 investigation

MI News Service, Washington DC: Chairman John Moolenaar and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party have sent a letter to US Attorney General Pam Bondi, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer urging them to take further action against China's illegal trade practices, according to a report from the Select Committee on CCP (SCCCP). They called for a Section 301 investigation into China's transshipment schemes.

In the letter, the US lawmakers urged the three officials to conduct investigations and implement appropriate enforcement measures against companies that evade US trade laws by unlawfully routing products through third countries. It underscored the significant damage these practices have caused to various US industries, including automotive parts, textiles, and apparel support, as well as the trafficking of precursor chemicals used in the production of fentanyl by China, SCCCPC said in a press release.

"The PRC's systematic abuse of US trade laws and protective mechanisms through transshipment, forced labor, and other illicit trade practices represents a clear and urgent threat to American industry and workers. The Select Committee's bipartisan investigative and oversight work

has exposed many examples of relevant concerns. Given such evidence of systemic fraud, we urge your agencies to strengthen enforcement against the PRC's unlawful trade practices, including by criminally prosecuting trade criminals, stepping up civil enforcement, and self-initiating a Section 301 investigation into PRC transshipment schemes", the letter read.

"We are reaching out today to urge your agencies to take further actions to enforce US trade regulations and to address the unlawful practices of the People's Republic of China (PRC) that hinder US commerce. The Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has revealed multiple instances of actors based in the PRC violating U.S. trade laws, including the illegal transshipment of products through third countries," SCCCPC press release said.

The US lawmakers noted that failure to hold China accountable for these "unlawful practices" would lead to actors "continuing to inflict severe harm on American industries and workers."



Pakistan: Women's March demands recognition of International Women's Day as national holiday

MI News Service, Islamabad: Organisers of the Women's March held a press conference at the National Press Club on Thursday, urging the government to recognise International Women's Day, marked on March 8, as a national public holiday in Pakistan. Dawn reported.

During the press conference, prominent social activists, including Farzana Bari, Huda Burghari, Nishat Maryam, Zainab Jamil, and Jiya Jaggi, outlined a series of urgent demands aimed at ad-

ressing human rights, social justice, and environmental issues in the country.

They emphasised the need for immediate action on gender-based violence, calling for a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of patriarchal violence, as well as the eradication of child marriages.

The activists also demanded the strict enforcement of laws against violence and full implementation of the Transgender Rights Protection Act. They highlighted the importance of ensuring equal



rights for religious minorities, specifically calling for measures to provide them with better access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, Dawn reported.

In addition, the Women's March organisers expressed concerns over the misuse of blasphemy laws, urging immediate amendments to prevent their exploitation.

They also condemned the persecution of Christian, Hindu, Shia, and Ahmadi communities, demanding the protection of their social, political,

and economic rights.

A significant portion of the press conference focused on the organisers' ongoing struggle for the right to peaceful assembly.

The activists criticised the government for obstructing their efforts to hold gatherings, especially pointing out the repeated difficulties in obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for their events since 2020, Dawn reported.

growing momentum for gender equality and human rights activism in Pakistan.

