



PG 3 ►►

Rs. 3

KOLKATA

MONDAY 12 JANUARY, 2024
PG-8, YEAR-12, ISSUE-222
(RNI NO.: WBENG / 2014 / 56803)

WEBSITE: WWW.LIVETV.COM

PM Modi to visit Andamans to participate in Netaji's 129th birth anniversary celebrations



The preparation for the PM's visit the islands have already taken up, though it is in the preliminary stage

a senior police officer

MI News Service, New Delhi / Port Blair : Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a visit to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on January 23 to participate in the celebrations of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 129th birth anniversary there, official sources said on Sunday.

During his tour to the archipelago, PM Modi will hoist the national flag and deliver a public speech at the Netaji Stadium, where Subhas Chandra Bose had unfurled the Tricolour on December 30, 1943 when it was known as the Gymkhana Ground, the sources said. The central government has been observing Netaji's birth anniversary as the Parakram Divas to honour his selfless service to the nation. The Prime minister will also pay floral tributes at the statue of Netaji at Marina Park here, he said. "The prime minister will lay a wreath at the Martyrs' Column here and visit the Cellular Jail to pay tribute to Veer Savarkar," the sources added. The PM is also likely to visit Campbell Bay to inspect developmental

►► Continued on page 3

Doval's call for revenge 'deeply unfortunate', says Mehbooba

MI News Service, Srinagar : PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday severely condemned the statement of National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval who had called for revenge for centuries-old events, saying it is "merely a dog whistle". It is unfortunate that the NSA, whose duty is to protect the nation, has chosen to join the "communal ideology of hate", the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief minister said in a post on X. Speaking at the opening ceremony of Viksits Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue in Delhi on Saturday, Doval said India has to strengthen itself not just at the borders, but in every other way, including economically, to "avenging" a painful history of attacks and subjugation. In her post, Mehbooba said, "It is deeply unfortunate that a high-ranking officer like Mr Doval, whose duty is to guard the nation against internal and external nefarious designs, has chosen to join a communal

►► Continued on page 3

Morning India

PM Modi and German Chancellor Merz set for talks amid rising geopolitical tension

MI News Service, Ahmedabad / New Delhi : Boosting bilateral ties in trade, investment, critical technologies and defence will be the prime focus of wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz following his arrival in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Merz's maiden trip to India after he took over as the German Chancellor last year, is taking place amid a fractious geopolitical environment, including the US's display of raw military strength to capture Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro. The German leader and Modi are also likely to discuss the pressing global challenges. Merz's January 12-13 visit to India will also be his first to Asia as the German Chancellor. PM. Modi and the German Chancellor will visit the Sabarmati Ashram and participate in the International Kite Festival at the Sabarmati Riverfront on Monday, which will be followed by bilateral engagements at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar. The two leaders will review the progress made in the India-Germany Strategic Partnership, which completed 25 years recently.



Workers arrange a welcome hoarding of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Vice Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Friedrich Merz ahead of their scheduled visit at International kite festival, in Ahmedabad.

"Their discussion will also focus on further intensifying cooperation in trade and investment, technology, education, skilling and mobility, while also advancing collaboration in important domains of defence and security, science, innovation and research, green and sustainable

development, and people-to-people ties," a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Prime Minister Modi and Chancellor Merz will also exchange views on issues of regional and global importance, and engage with business and industry leaders of the two countries. Ways to bring peace to Ukraine may also figure prominently in Modi-Merz talks. The

German leader will travel to Bengaluru after concluding his engagements in Ahmedabad. In their talks, Modi and Merz are likely to deliberate on trade and investment ties as New Delhi is

rose by 12.5 per cent in the financial year 2024-25, reaching a record USD 16.65 billion. The influential European nation is the ninth largest foreign direct investor in India, with cumulative

“

Their discussion will also focus on further intensifying cooperation in trade and investment, technology, education, skilling and mobility, while also advancing collaboration in important domains of defence and security, science, innovation and research, green and sustainable development, and people-to-people ties

a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

looking at deepening economic engagement with Europe against the backdrop of Washington's 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, people familiar with the matter said. Germany is one of India's most important partners in Europe. It is New Delhi's largest trading partner in the European Union and the bilateral trade in goods and services between the two countries reached USD 51.23 billion in 2024-25. Germany accounts for roughly one-fourth of India's trade with the EU, reinforcing its position as New Delhi's leading EU trading partner. The Indo-German trade in services

►► Continued on page 3

FDI inflows of USD 15.40 billion from April 2000 to June 2025. More than 2000 German companies are currently operating in India. Days after Merz's trip, several top leaders of the European Union will visit New Delhi during which the two sides may announce finalisation of the much-awaited India-EU free trade agreement. India will host French President Emmanuel Macron next month. Macron is visiting India to participate in the AI Summit. Defence and security ties between the two countries have also

PM Modi leads Shaurya Yatra offers prayers at Somnath temple



Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds a 'trishul', a trident, during the 'Somnath Swabhiman Parv' celebration at the Somnath Temple, in Gir Somnath district, Gujarat.

Somnath Swabhiman Parv, included people of all ages, local residents as well as long-distance travellers. PM

Modi participated in 'Omkar Mantra', had 'darshan' and witnessed a grand drone show featuring an assemblage of 3,000 drones, an amazing feeling. The fireworks, the decoration in the streets leading to the temple, the wonderful drone show only added to the power of divinity.

We came to see Somnath temple, to see our Prime minister. This occasion that celebrates the temple and its traditions and resilience is an amazing feeling. The fireworks, the decoration in the streets leading to the temple, the wonderful drone show only added to the power of divinity that has brought so many people to the shrine in just one day --Preeti Karelia

matching the scale of the gathering on ground. Preeti Karelia, along with 24 other women, travelled all the way from Mumbai to just witness the celebrations. The 'Shaurya Yatra', a ceremonial procession organised to honour those who laid down their lives defending the Somnath temple, was organised as part of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, featured a procession of 108 horses, reflecting valour and sacrifice.

"We came to see Somnath temple, to see our Prime minister. This occasion that celebrates the temple and its traditions and resilience is an

amazing feeling. The fireworks, the decoration in the streets leading to the temple, the wonderful drone show only added to the power of divinity that has brought so many people to the shrine in just one day," Karelia said. The women-only group also described itself as a 'bhajan mandali' from Mumbai. The main road leading to the temple, from Shankh Circle to Veer Hamirji Ghil Circle, has been decked up with flowers and thematic decorations. Mounted lights fashioned in the shapes of 'trishul', 'Om' and 'damru' lined the stretch, complemented by Somnath Swabhiman Parv posters and flower-made 'shivalings'. Large

►► Continued on page 3

Alipore Zoo hippo lost mobility, undergoing infrared physiotherapy



“

A medical board has been constituted by Alipore Zoo authorities to treat the animal. The treatment team includes veterinarians from Alipore Zoo, Belgachia State Animal Hospital, and Nandankanan Zoological Park

the official said

pore zoo from Nandankanan in Odisha in 2024. "Veterinarians from Ranchi and Mysuru zoos are also part of the medical consultation," he added. Initially, forest officials had considered using a crane to lift the hippo out of the water for treatment and sought expert advice. "However, following consultations, we decided against using a crane for now. Instead, the medical board opted for physiotherapy to

►► Continued on page 3

Govt should refrain from hiking income tax surcharge on super-rich in Budget: say Experts



We have a pretty good slab, wherein at the highest level you pay 42 per cent, at the lowest level you pay almost zero, even at reasonable income levels. But, when you start making it (taxation) very prohibitive, you run the risk of high-income earners wanting not to be in India, and that is possible in the world today

Amit Rana, PWC & Co LLP Partner said

uity, meaning the higher one earns, the higher is his/her tax liability.

"We have a pretty good slab, wherein at the highest level you pay 42 per cent, at the lowest level you pay almost zero, even at reasonable income levels. But, when you start making it (taxation) very prohibitive, you run the risk of high-income earners wanting not to be in India, and that is possible in the world today," he commented when asked. Rana further said the taxation of high-income individuals should be "carefully balanced" as they are the ones who create industries and generate jobs.

EY India, Tax Partner, Surabhi Marwah, also asserted that "there could be a risk" of high-net-worth individuals leaving the country for low tax jurisdictions if surcharges are high or wealth tax is reintroduced. "Tax uncertainty and steep effective rates may play a role in decisions around capital relocation and residency. Stability and predictability in the tax regime may be as

►► Continued on page 3

BLO found hanging, family alleges work pressure due to SIR duties

MI News Service, Kolkata : Another Booth Level Officer (BLO) was found hanging inside a primary school in Murshidabad district, with his family alleging that excessive SIR work pressure led him to take his own life, police said on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Hamim Islam (47), a primary school teacher at Paikmari Char Krishnapur Boys Primary School and a BLO assigned to a booth in Purba Alipur village under Kharibona gram panchayat, an officer of Ranitala Police Station said. The incident came to the notice of locals late Saturday night in the Paikmari Char area under Ranitala police station, he said. Earlier one more BLO was found dead in district a few days ago, triggering allegations that work-related pressure linked to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls may have played a role, police said. The incident occurred in Ranibandh block, where the body of the deceased, Haradhan Mandal, was recovered from a school premises on last Sunday morning. The police said they found a note left back by the deceased.

According to estimates by independent economists, the GST rate cut and lower income tax collections are likely to cost the exchequer around Rs 2 lakh crore in the current fiscal. Any additional source of revenue in

there should be vertical eq-



Leader of the Opposition in West Bengal, Suvidhu Adhikari, along with other leaders and activists, took part in a protest rally over recent incidents in Bengal in Kolkata on Sunday.

Political storm in Burdwan over alleged I-PAC vehicle

MI News Service, Burdwan: A late-evening roadside confrontation involving a vehicle allegedly linked to political consultancy firm I-PAC (Indian Political Action Committee) and bearing a board reading "Government of West Bengal" has triggered a political storm in Burdwan, with opposition parties questioning the misuse of government identity and official insignia.

The incident occurred on Saturday night, shortly after 7.30 pm, at the Baranipur crossing on Old GT Road. According to allegations made by Congress leader Gaurav Samaddar, a white car attempted to hit his motorcycle while he was on the road. Samaddar, a member of the Pradesh Congress Committee and president of the district INTUC, said he blocked the vehicle and confronted its occupants. Videos of the confrontation, recorded live by Samaddar and later widely circulated on social media, show a tense exchange on the middle of the road as locals gathered around the vehicle. The video has since gone viral, fuelling widespread outrage and political controversy. Samaddar alleged that the vehicle was being driven by a very young boy, "possibly a minor," and claimed that the occupants identified themselves as I-PAC workers. He questioned why a privately operated political consultancy vehicle was displaying a board marked "Government of West Bengal" and alleged that the car again attempted to hit him during the confrontation. "I repeatedly asked why a government board was being used on a private vehicle, but they refused to give any explanation," Samaddar claimed. He



later called the police and lodged a formal complaint, demanding action for reckless driving, impersonation, and misuse of government identity. Police arrived at the spot and assured that the matter would be investigated. Officers reportedly recorded visual evidence and accepted the written complaint. A senior police official said the allegations would be verified and appropriate legal action taken if violations were found. The incident has drawn sharp political reactions. Trinamool Congress district general secretary Bagbul Islam said, "A complaint has been filed. The police will investigate the matter. Let the law take its course." The BJP, however, launched a scathing attack. Party leader Mrityunjay Chandra questioned the legitimacy of the vehicle's markings. "How can an I-PAC vehicle carry a 'Government of West Bengal' board? Are I-PAC workers now treating government property and authority as their own?" he asked. The controversy has once again raised uncomfortable questions about the blurred lines between the ruling party, private political strategists, and the use of official symbols. As the video continues to circulate widely, pressure is mounting on the administration to clarify whether government identity was misused and who authorised its display on a non-government vehicle.

Congress delegation visits Champahati blast site

MI News Service, South 24 Parganas: A day after a powerful explosion ripped through a factory in Champahati, killing one worker and leaving several others injured, a delegation of the Indian National Congress on Sunday visited the blast site and launched a sharp attack on alleged safety lapses and the pace of the police investigation.

The explosion occurred on Saturday at the Bidhan Naskar factory in Haral village, under the jurisdiction of Baruipur police station. The blast claimed the life of Gourahari Goswami, a worker at the factory, while three others sustained severe injuries and remain in critical condition, according to hospital sources. Led by senior Congress leader Ashutosh Chatterjee, the delegation inspected the site and interacted with local residents and affected families. Chatterjee expressed strong anger over what he described as "gross negligence" in the storage of gunpowder and explosive materials in close proximity to the factory premises. "It is shocking that highly in-

CPM begins hill 'rights protection' outreach in Darjeeling district



MI News Darjeeling: The Darjeeling district CPM launched its "Adhikar Raksha Abhiyan (campaign to protect rights)" in the hills on Saturday. Saman Pathak, the secretary of the party's Darjeeling district committee, said the campaign was a part of the CPM's broader "Bangla Bachao Abhiyan (Save Bengal movement)" aimed at reconnecting with people ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections.

"This campaign is an extended initiative of our 'Bangla Bachao Abhiyan', which is already underway across the state. Through this new campaign, we are trying to reconnect with hill residents. Our main objective is to understand how people in the hills have been suffering due to unemployment and lack of development since 2009 under both the BJP and Trinamool," Pathak said.

On Saturday, the campaign began in the Tharbo division and Mirik subdivision's Nandalalgaon. Mirik subdivision was among the worst hit in last October's landslides and heavy rain. The disaster claimed at least 12 lives in different parts of the subdivision.

Around 100 CPM workers participated in the drive in Tharbo and Nandalalgaon. They also visited Jamansingh, Bahadurgaon and Ninth Mile areas, and interacted with nearly 350 families. According to Pathak, residents expressed ire over unemployment, inadequate infrastructure and "neglect" of tea workers by both the state and central governments. "The outreach will continue across the hills," the CPM leader said, urging people to support the party.

Newborn's body found on Ganga bank in Nadia's Nabadwip



Dipankar Edbar, Nabadwip (Nadia): The body of a newborn baby was recovered from the banks of the Ganga under the Gouranga Setu in Nabadwip on Saturday afternoon, triggering tension among local residents.

According to police sources, some locals spotted the infant lying motionless near the

riverbank and alerted others, following which a crowd gathered at the spot. Nabadwip police reached the area soon after being informed and recovered the body, which has been sent for post-mortem examination.

The area where the body was found is relatively secluded. However, a local farmer claimed that while working in his

field, he noticed a four-wheeler entering the area. He alleged that a few people got down from the vehicle, hurriedly left the baby near the riverbank and fled.

Residents expressed shock over the incident, especially as the Ganga banks witness heavy footfall during the winter season with picnickers frequenting the area. Locals questioned how such a brutal act could take place in broad daylight in a populated zone. Police have initiated an investigation to trace those responsible.

Officials said the post-mortem report would ascertain whether the baby was already dead or abandoned alive. CCTV footage from nearby areas is being examined, and inquiries are also being conducted at nearby hospitals and nursing homes to identify the infant's origin.

AIIMS Kalyani saves critically injured Rail accident victim with rare chest wall reconstruction

Dipankar Edbar, Kalyani: Doctors at AIIMS Kalyani have successfully saved the life of a 50-year-old man who was brought to the hospital in a near-fatal condition following an alleged railway track accident, using an advanced and rarely performed surgical reconstruction of the rib cage and lung.

Bhairav Ghosh was rushed to the emergency department on December 20 with massive injuries to the chest and spine. He was in shock and struggling to breathe, with a large accumulation of blood and air in the left side of his chest, multiple broken ribs forming a "flail chest", a torn lung, a shattered shoulder blade and a fracture in the cervical spine.

The trauma team immediately secured his airway, inserted a chest tube

to drain the blood and air, and began blood transfusions and fluid resuscitation. These emergency measures stabilised him and bought critical time for further treatment.

On December 25, a multidisciplinary surgical team performed a major open-chest operation to re-

pair the lung and rebuild the severely damaged rib cage.

Surgeons approached the fractured ribs from the back of the chest, close to the spine—a technically demanding method that allows precise reconstruction. Multiple pre-shaped metal plates and locking screws were used to stabilise the ribs. In a rare and innovative step, where ribs were too shattered to hold screws, doctors anchored a specially designed plate to the transverse process of the T5 vertebra to restore chest wall stability. This eliminated the flail segment, allowed the lung to re-expand and enabled normal breathing.

The surgery was led by Dr Pranay Kabiraj and Dr Debmoi Ghatak, assisted by Dr Manoj Kumar and Dr Pukit, with anaesthesia provided by Dr Aziz and Dr Anuja.

Following surgery, Mr Ghosh was managed in the intensive care unit, where he was gradually weaned off the ventilator, treated for a chest infection and given specialised care for post-trauma delirium. ICU care was provided by a team that included Dr

Woman dragged off toto, brutally assaulted in Deganga

MI News Service, North 24 Parganas: A disturbing incident of alleged domestic violence spilled onto a public road in Deganga on Sunday, where a young woman was reportedly dragged off a tonto, thrown to the ground and assaulted in full public view, even as her minor child cried beside her. The incident has triggered widespread outrage in the area and prompted a police investigation. The victim, identified as 27-year-old Sabina Khatun, was allegedly assaulted in the Kartikpur area under Deganga police station limits. According to her complaint, the attack was carried out by her in-laws, including her brother-in-law and sister-in-law's husband, following a long period of alleged harassment. Sabina told police that her husband had left her two years ago and begun living separately with another woman. Since then, she claimed, neither her husband nor her in-laws provided any financial support for her or her five-year-old son.



are also being seen before that. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has instructed the Trinamool Congress leaders, MPs, MLAs, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Councilors, Panchayat Pradhans, Trinamool Congress workers and supporters of the entire state to go among the people and enumerate our fifteen years of development work and performance one by one. It has also been emphasized that wherever you go, first worship in a temple of that area and then go among the people. If there is a

Principal found dead in school, 8th BLO death shakes state



return even after school hours. Alarmed by his prolonged absence, relatives began searching for him and eventually went to the school premises. There, they discovered his body hanging inside a room. Police from Ranitala police station rushed to the spot upon receiving the information. The body was recovered and taken to Nasipur Block Primary Health Centre, where doc-

tors declared him dead. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination, and an investigation has been initiated to ascertain the exact cause of death. Family members have alleged that extreme work pressure drove Hamimul to suicide. His brother, Farmanul Islam, said that the deceased had been under severe mental stress for several days. "My brother was overwhelmed by the burden of his duties as a BLO along with his responsibilities as a headmaster. The pressure of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) work pushed him to take this extreme step," he alleged. Police officials stated that all aspects of the case, including the family's allegations, are being examined. "This is an unnatural death. We are investigating the circumstances thoroughly," a senior officer said. The incident has added to a growing list of BLO deaths

Newborn dies, family alleges brutal negligence at Serampore hospital

MI News Service, Hooghly: A horrifying account of alleged medical negligence and inhuman treatment has emerged from Serampore Walsh Government Hospital, where a newborn baby died shortly after birth, triggering tension and outrage among family members who accused the hospital of gross mismanagement and cruelty during delivery.

The incident involves Reena Devi, a resident of the Bangur Park Rail Gate No. 2-Rishra Rail Gate No. 11 area, who was admitted to Serampore Walsh Hospital on the night of January 9 after going into labour. According to the family, Reena had been under medical supervision earlier, and a specific date had already been fixed for her operation. As per schedule, she was admitted when labour pains began. She delivered a baby boy in the morning, and family members initially believed the delivery had gone well. However, they alleged that the hospital authorities did not inform them about the health condition of the new-

born or the mother for several hours. Late at night, the family was suddenly informed that the newborn had died. The body was handed over only the next afternoon. Even then, the family claimed, the hospital failed to clearly disclose the condition of the mother, who was allegedly kept isolated and not allowed to meet her relatives. What followed was chaos and tension inside the hospital premises, as grieving family members accused the authorities of delaying a necessary caesarean section, which they believe could have saved the child. A relative of the patient made chilling allegations, stating, "My patient was fine when we admitted her. Later, we were told she was bleeding, but no operation was being done. I was sitting outside the OT when I saw them pushing down hard on her chest. Is this how deliveries are conducted? They climbed on her chest. She was screaming in pain. They made her half-dead. Only after that did they say the baby was not coming out and that a caesarean

would be done." The family alleged that despite repeated pleas, timely surgical intervention was denied, leading to the tragic death of the newborn and severe trauma to the mother. As tensions escalated, police from Serampore police station were deployed at the hospital to control the situation. However, the family claimed that they received no clear explanation or response from the hospital authorities regarding the sequence of events or the medical decisions taken. The incident has once again raised disturbing questions about the quality of maternal healthcare, accountability, and patient safety in government hospitals. Police sources confirmed that the matter is being looked into, while the hospital authorities have so far remained silent. As the mother continues to recover amid trauma and grief, the family has demanded a thorough inquiry into the alleged negligence, warning that justice must be delivered for a tragedy they say was entirely preventable.

Civic chief steps down on Abhishek nudge: Rabindranath Ghosh quits Cooch Behar post

MI News Service, Cooch Behar: Trinamool Congress veteran and former state minister Rabindranath Ghosh on Saturday resigned from the post of Cooch Behar municipality chairman almost two months after the district party leadership asked him to do so.

Ghosh, a prominent face of Cooch Behar politics for decades, submitted his resignation letter to the SDO.

Confirming the development to , Ghosh said he stepped down following instructions from the party's national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee. Abhishek is scheduled to visit Cooch Behar on January 13.

"I am a loyal soldier of the party. I have always followed the party's instructions to the letter. Now I need to focus more on organisational work. The Assembly elections are approaching, and strengthening the party's organisation is our main objective," Ghosh said.

Anjum Naz and Dr Abhijit Kumar, while physiotherapists and nurses began early breathing exercises and mobilisation.

AIIMS Kalyani bore the full cost of the implants and hospital care, ensuring that treatment decisions were based purely on medical need.

After nearly three weeks of coordinated trauma, surgical and intensive care, Mr Ghosh was discharged on January 11, walking independently and breathing on his own.

Hospital authorities said the case reflects the growing capability of AIIMS Kalyani to deliver complex, life-saving trauma care locally, under the overall supervision of Director Prof Dr. Arvind Sinha and Medical Superintendent Prof Mahuya Chattopadhyay.

PM Modi and German Chancellor Merz set for talks amid rising geopolitical tension

From PG 1
been on an upswing. With the easing of export control and expeditious clearing of cases, defence exports from Germany to India have increased. Both sides have a joint working group on counter terrorism. Germany will be deploying a German Navy liaison officer in India's Integrated Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). There has been speculation that India and Germany may finalise an inter-governmental agreement during Merz's visit for supplying six stealth submarines to the Indian Navy. German defence major ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) are holding price negotiations with the defence ministry for an Euro 5 billion deal to supply six stealth submarines to the Indian Navy. The deal is being billed as one of the biggest 'Make in India' projects in recent years.

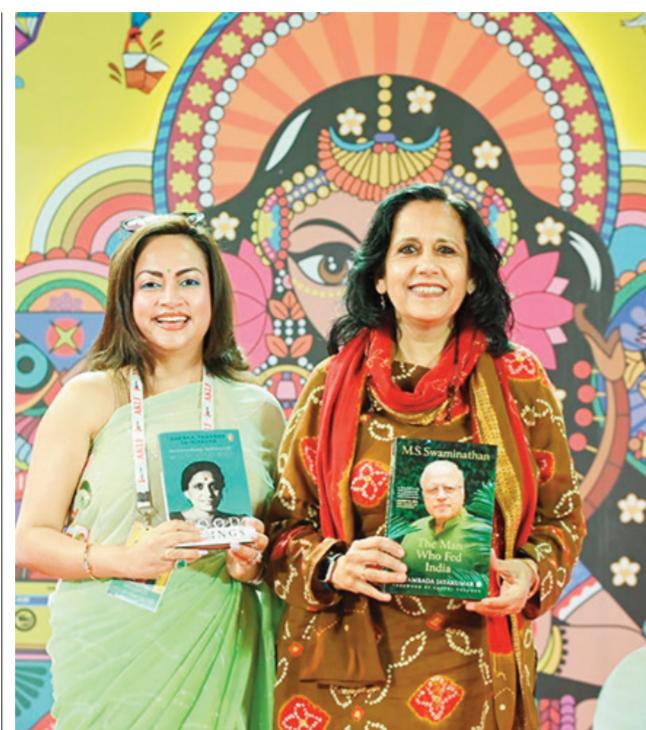
The India-German relations are also expanding in a number of other areas, including education, energy, skill development, culture, people-to-people exchanges and technology. In 2024, the two sides launched the Indo-German green hydrogen roadmap that was aimed at supporting India's ambition for production, usage and export of green hydrogen. The experts said enhancing cooperation in critical technologies may also figure prominently in the talks between Modi and Merz. India and Germany firmed up a strategic agenda to enhance Indo-German partnership in the 21st century in 2000. The strategic partnership completed 25 years last year. Since 2011, the top leadership of the two sides has been undertaking a comprehensive review of cooperation through the Inter-Governmental consultation (IGC framework). The seventh IGC was held in New Delhi in 2024.

PM Modi to visit Andamans to participate in Netaji's 129th birth anniversary celebrations

From PG 1
projects in the area, he said. "The preparation for the PM's visit to the islands have already taken up, though it is in the preliminary stage," a senior police officer said. There will be a series of cultural events at the stadium, the officials said, adding that the local administration is planning to invite renowned singers to perform at the stadium on the occasion of 'Parakram Diwas'. The Prime Minister had named two islands - 'Shaheed' (Neil Island) and 'Swaraj' (Havelock Island) - to honour Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The Prime Minister had also named the 21 unnamed islands of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands after 21 Param Vir Chakra awardees. The proposed memorial on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Dweep (Ross Island) will have a museum-cum-interpretation corner, a ropeway, a laser and sound show, a guided heritage trail through the island's historical buildings, a theme-based children's amusement park and a food and resto-lounge for tourists.

Doval's call for revenge 'deeply unfortunate', says Mebooba

From PG 1
ideology of hate and normalise violence against Muslims. "Calling for REVENGE in the 21st century over centuries-old events is merely a dog whistle, inciting poor and uneducated youth to target a minority community already facing an onslaught from all sides," she said.



(L) The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2026 hosted a compelling session titled "M.S. Swaminathan: The Man Who Fed India", featuring Priyambada Jayakumar in conversation with author, poet, and editor Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan at the Alipore Museum in Kolkata. (R) Veteran CPI(M) leader Subhashini Ali along with Senior CPM leader and former MP Brinda Karat during a recent panel discussion at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2026, in Kolkata.

Mamata Consoles the Sudden Demise of Prashant Tamang

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed deep grief over the sudden passing of Darjeeling-born singer Prashant Tamang, popularly known for winning Indian Idol. Tamang passed away on Sunday at Dwarika Hospital in Delhi at the age of 43. Sharing her sorrow on social media, Mamata wrote, "Saddened by the sudden and untimely demise today of Prashant Tamang, the popular singer of Indian Idol fame and an artist of national renown. His roots in our Darjeeling hills and one-time association with Kolkata Police made him particularly dear to us in Bengal. I convey my condolences to his family, friends, and countless followers." Mamata highlighted Tamang's special connection with Bengal, noting that his origins in the Darjeeling hills and his association with Kolkata Police made him especially close to the state. The Chief Minister's heartfelt message reflected the singer's significance beyond music, as a proud son of Bengal's hill region.

Born in January 1983, Tamang



showed a passion for music from a young age. While working with the police, he auditioned for Indian Idol in Mumbai and won the competition in 2007. Over the years, he established himself in the Nepali music industry and appeared in the web series Paatal Lok 2. Tamang fell ill after a musical performance in Delhi on Saturday and was admitted to Dwarika Hospital

where he passed away on Sunday morning. His untimely death has left fans, colleagues, and the entertainment community mourning.

Mamata's condolence message reinforced Tamang's special place in the hearts of Bengalis, emphasizing his dual identity as a talented musician and a son of the Darjeeling hills with ties to Kolkata Police.

Free Health Check-up Camp Held at Vidhanpally on Swami Vivekananda's Birth Anniversary



MI News Service, Kolkata: On the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, a free health check-up camp was organized on Saturday, January 11, at Vidhanpally near Belur Station under the initiative of the Dr. Nikhil Prasoon Foundation. From early morning, a large number of local residents were seen gathering at the

camp. Along with general health check-ups, eye examinations were also conducted, and necessary medicines were distributed free of cost. People of all age groups, from children to the elderly, benefited from the camp. Many economically disadvantaged residents, in particular, expressed satisfaction after availing themselves of these services.

The All India Seishinkai Shitoryu Karate Do Federation organised Black Belt Award Ceremony



MI News Service, Kolkata: The All India Seishinkai Shitoryu Karate Do Federation organised a prestigious Black Belt Award Ceremony in Kolkata, breaking age stereotypes by honouring senior citizens, including women above 60 years of age, for their achievements in karate. The event showcased karate as a lifelong discipline that transcends age and gender. More than 500 karate practitioners participated, including over 200 women and several senior karatekas, reflecting the growing acceptance of martial arts as a path to physical fitness, mental well-being, and self-confidence. The ceremony strongly emphasised inclusivity, intergenerational learning, and women's empowerment through self-defence training.

Kunal Ghosh Alleges ED Raid on I-PAC Was Directed by Union Home Ministry

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) recent raid on political consultancy firm I-PAC has sparked a fresh political storm in West Bengal, with the Trinamool Congress alleging direct involvement of the Union Home Ministry in the operation. Senior TMC leader and state general secretary Kunal Ghosh on Sunday claimed that the ED, which functions under the Union Ministry of Finance, was effectively acting on instructions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs during the raid. Backing his allegation, Ghosh shared a screenshot on social media purportedly showing a conversation between two individuals. According to the screenshot, one person claims to have learned from Saker Kumar, an aide to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, that a team of 13 ED officials along with a deputy director had travelled from Delhi to Kolkata. The message further mentions that a cyber expert named Gulshan Rai and another official from Maharashtra were also part of the group, and that they were summoned to the CGO Complex for an urgent meeting by the Home Ministry. Ghosh alleged that the same ED team subsequently con-



ducted the raid at the I-PAC office and residence of its founder Pratik Jain, suggesting that the operation was carried out on the instructions of the Home Minister's office. "If this conversation is true, it raises serious questions. Were the ED's movements being controlled by the Union Home Ministry? This matter requires a thorough investigation," Ghosh wrote in his post. The TMC has consistently claimed that the ED raid was part of a larger political conspiracy orchestrated by Amit Shah. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier accused central agencies of attempting to seize Trinamool Congress hard disks and strategic documents under the guise of a search operation. Ghosh alleged that the same ED team subsequently con-

Alipore Zoo hippo lost mobility, undergoing infrared physiotherapy

From PG 1
help restore strength in the animal's legs," the official said. The hippo is currently undergoing physiotherapy using infrared rays, he elaborated. The radiation helps activate nervous tissues and is commonly used to treat muscle pain, joint pain, and nerve-related conditions in both humans and animals. According to two sources, infrared therapy has previously shown positive results at Alipore Zoo. Earlier, a sambar deer that had suddenly lost the ability to walk due to a

Police Seize I-PAC Chief's Register, Question Staff After ED Raid

MI News Service, Kolkata: Police have seized the entry register book of the residential complex housing I-PAC chief Pratik Jain as part of their ongoing probe into the controversial Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid at his Loudon Street residence. At the same time, notices have been issued to several residents and staff members of the complex for questioning, including the facility manager, sources said.

Investigators are examining whether ED officials had signed the gate register maintained by security personnel at the time of entering the premises to conduct the search. As part of this verification process, statements of three security guards deployed at the complex have already been recorded. The facility manager has been served a notice seeking details of all remaining security guards, including their names and duty rosters for the relevant period. Police officials said they also intend to record statements of multiple residents of the housing complex to reconstruct the sequence of events on the day of the raid. Notices have been issued asking them to appear before investigators and cooperate with the inquiry. In addition, statements of staff working inside Pratik Jain's residence, including domestic help and personnel responsible for security arrangements, have reportedly been recorded by the police. These statements are expected to help establish a clearer timeline of when ED officials arrived, how they entered the premises, and whether standard procedures were followed.

According to sources, ED officials began their search operation at Pratik Jain's flat on Loudon Street at around 6:15 am on Thursday.

However, Kolkata Police were formally informed about the search nearly five hours later, reportedly through an email sent by the central agency. The delay in intimation has emerged as a key issue in the subsequent confrontation between state police and ED officials. Soon after learning about the search, senior Kolkata Police officers rushed to the spot in multiple phases. The Deputy Commissioner (South) also visited the residence and attempted to speak with ED officials. Allegations have since surfaced that ED officers and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel engaged in pushing and shoving with state police officers at the gate. Sources further claimed that CRPF personnel raised batons and aggressively confronted senior Kolkata Police officials during the altercation, escalating tensions at the site.

AKLF 2026 Pays Tribute to the Legendary M.S. Swaminathan, The Man Who Fed India

MI News Service, Kolkata:

The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2026 hosted a compelling session at the Alipore Museum titled 'M.S. Swaminathan: The Man Who Fed India', which is also the title of the recently published biography written by his niece, Priyambada Jayakumar, who was in conversation with author, poet, and editor Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan. The discussion traced how M.S. Swaminathan's work with high-yielding crop varieties and farmer-focused scientific interventions transformed India's food security landscape, altering the nation's trajectory in the decades following Independence. Drawing from her biography, Priyambada Jayakumar spoke about the personal convictions, institutional battles, and the deeply human stories that shaped his journey. During the session, Priyambada Jayakumar powerfully observed, "While Gandhi gave us freedom from colonialism, M.S. Swaminathan gave us freedom from hunger." The audience also got to learn that the 'Evergreen Revolution', a partnership that erstwhile US President Barack Obama had announced with India in 2010 to improve global food security and sustainability, explicitly drew from M.S. Swaminathan's later ideas. This initiative aimed to build on the successes of the original Green Revolution while tackling its environmental issues. She highlighted a defining episode from the biography: for seven weeks, Swaminathan knocked on farmers' doors in Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, carrying hybrid seeds in his pocket, trying

Govt should refrain from hiking income tax surcharge on super-rich in Budget: say Experts

From PG 1

important as the rates when the objective is to retain capital and talent," Marwah added. She said the wealth tax was abolished in 2015 because collections did not justify the administrative effort involved, and from an administrative perspective, the surcharge has generally been viewed as more efficient and less litigious than the wealth tax. "With the government now having access to robust data trails through GST, CRS agreements and other systems, policymakers may continue to see surcharge adjustments as a relatively simpler option compared to asset-based valuation regimes," Marwah said. Shardul Amarchand Mangalndas & Co Partner Gouri Puri said increases in tax rates could encourage capital flight and discourage entrepreneurship and job creation. Moreover, reintroducing a wealth tax would revive concerns about administrative complexity and compliance costs. "Capital flight is a genuine risk since mobile fami-

lies can re-domicile to other jurisdictions with lower rates. There is always global competition to keep tax regimes investor-friendly, and harsher taxes in India may discourage investment and push capital away," Puri added. Deloitte India Partner Alok Agrawal said in Budget 2023, the government cut the highest surcharge rate for individuals with income above Rs 5 crore from 37 per cent to 25 per cent. This reduction brought down the maximum marginal tax rate for such taxpayers from about 42.7 per cent to 39 per cent. This change applied from 1 April 2023, for FY 2023-24 (AY 2024-25) onwards and was applicable only under the new tax regime. "So, it seems unlikely that the government would hike this once again within a short span of 3 years," he said. Agrawal said as far as wealth tax is concerned, there has been a lot of speculation since the last couple of years before the Budget announcement.

PM Modi leads Shaurya Yatra offers prayers at Somnath temple

From PG 1

banners across the city bore the festival's name and slogans such as 'Akhand Somnath and Akhand Bharat'. The entire circle, facing the temple complex, was illuminated with lights and floral decorations, presenting a striking sight.

"It's a celebration of the spirit of Somnath and you can see the joy among the people on this occasion," Kotecha stated further. Even as sections of the crowd departed after 'darshan', cultural programmes and the drone show, more visitors poured in, including a large number of women who braved the early January chill with enthusiasm. Harsh Shah, who visited the temple complex close to midnight with family members, said, "Somnath baba is pulling people and we also came to see the decorations and lights."

A nearly 15-minute drone show featuring several thematic formations, including huge images of Lord Shiva and a 'shivling', and a 3D depiction of the Somnath temple, followed by a dazzling display of fireworks, was an instant show stealer. One of the drone formations also depicted the destruction faced by the historic temple over the centuries, as well as its rise and resilience.

After Independence, efforts to restore the temple were undertaken by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. A key milestone was achieved in 1951 when the restored Somnath temple was formally opened to devotees in presence of the then President Rajendra Prasad. The Somnath temple is one of the 12 'jyotirlingas' – holy sites associated with Lord Shiva – in the country.

Government to pay Rs25,000 to road rescues

MI News Service, New Delhi: In a landmark initiative to address India's growing road accident crisis, the Union Government is set to launch PM-Rahat, a scheme providing cashless treatment for accident victims and incentives for rescuers. The program, approved by the Union Finance Ministry, is expected to be formally announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, possibly on March 1, ahead of the elections.

India records one death every three minutes on its roads, making it the country with the highest number of road accident fatalities in the world. Recent trends show that two-wheelers account for more deaths than four-wheelers, with young riders aged 18-24 being the most affected. Under PM-Rahat, victims admitted to hospitals after an accident will receive



seven days of completely cashless treatment, ensuring families do not bear any medical expenses during critical initial care. The scheme also aims to tackle the widespread

reluctance of bystanders to assist accident victims due to fear of police entanglements or disputes over hospital bills. To encourage prompt intervention, PM-Rahat will reward

rescuers with ₹25,000 and a medal, provided the injured person is admitted immediately to the hospital and survives. Officials emphasized that the award is contingent upon the life of the patient being saved. "The objective is simple: to save lives without delay and recognize those who step forward in moments of crisis," said a senior government official. Road safety experts have welcomed the move, noting that timely intervention often makes the difference between life and death in accident cases. With India witnessing a surge in road accident deaths, PM-Rahat is expected to incentivize public participation in emergency response, streamline hospital admission, and provide much-needed relief to victims and their families, while also cultivating a culture of civic responsibility.

Winter Wonderland Hits Jangalmahal

MI News Service, Purulia: In an extraordinary turn of weather, parts of western Purulia witnessed what locals are calling "snow" over the weekend, leaving residents both astonished and awed. For the first time in years, the fields and haystacks of Jhalsa and surrounding areas were blanketed with a white layer of frost-like snow, a phenomenon rarely observed in this part of West Bengal.

The unusually severe cold wave, which has gripped Jangalmahal for several days, brought temperatures down to a record 5-6°C, forcing residents to light fires just to keep warm. Early morning walkers in the Bandowan region, including Bimal Kuri, Thakurdas Mahat, and Satyanarayan Swarnakar, were surprised to find the haystacks along the roadside coated with what appeared to be snow. On closer inspection, it was confirmed as ground-level



frost, forming a delicate, crystalline layer over the straw. "This is unlike anything we have seen before," said locals gathered to witness the spectacle. "It feels as if we are experiencing snowfall in Jhalsa, not Kashmir or Darjeeling." While the unusual white blanket offered a picturesque sight for many, it also exacerbated the hardships faced by the elderly and children, who struggle to cope with the biting cold. Residents report difficulty in venturing outdoors in the early hours, as the severity

of the frost rivals winters in regions far north. Meteorologists confirm that this is not actual snowfall but a case of ground frost, occurring when water vapor freezes into fine ice particles due to a sudden drop in temperature. A similar event was reported in 2019 in Begunkodar, which briefly captured social media attention. As Purulia grapples with this record winter chill, the rare phenomenon has sparked both wonder and concern, highlighting the region's vulnerability to sudden cold snaps.

Kalna hospital steps up with advanced CCU

MI News Service, Purba Burdwan: Kalna Subdistrict Hospital is set to significantly strengthen healthcare services for residents of Kalna and surrounding areas with the upcoming launch of a 24-bed Critical Care Unit (CCU), a major step toward providing advanced medical treatment closer to home. The new facility is expected to greatly improve the hospital's ability to manage critically ill patients who previously had to be referred to distant urban hospitals.

The announcement was made during a review meeting chaired by Swapan Debnath, Minister of State for Livestock and Chairman of the Patient Welfare Association. The meeting was attended by hospital superintendents, senior doctors, nursing staff, and officials from the Public Works Department, who assessed the progress of ongoing infrastructure projects. According to Debnath, nearly 90 percent of

the construction work for the CCU has already been completed, and efforts are underway to ensure its early operational launch.

"This Critical Care Unit will dramatically enhance the hospital's treatment capacity," Debnath said. "Our goal is to modernize healthcare infrastructure and ensure that people in Kalna and nearby regions receive timely, quality, and advanced medical care without unnecessary delays." He emphasized that strengthening district-level hospitals is key to reducing pressure on major city hospitals. In addition to the CCU, another important development is underway at the hospital. Work has begun to connect the old isolation ward with the medicine department, a move that will increase bed capacity and allow for better patient management. Hospital officials noted that this integration will help streamline services and improve overall efficiency in patient care.

Regulation Of Trains Due To Developmental Works In Adra Division

MI News Service, Kolkata, 11 Jan. 26: The following trains will be regulated due to developmental works in Adra division:

Cancellation of Trains

1) 68046/68045 Asansol-Adra-Asansol MEMU will remain cancelled on 13.01.2026, 14.01.2026 & 18.01.2026 to be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra.

2) 68053/68054 Adra-Barabhum-Adra MEMU will remain cancelled on 15.01.2026 & 18.01.2026

3) 68077/68078 Adra-Bhaga-Adra MEMU will remain cancelled on 18.01.2026

4) 68061/68062 Adra-Asansol-Adra MEMU will remain cancelled on 12.01.2026 & 15.01.2026

5) 68056 Tatanagar-Asansol MEMU will remain

cancelled on 13.01.2026 Short Termination/ Short Origination of Trains

1) 18019/18020 Jhargram-Dhanbad- Jhargram Express, journey commencing on 12.01.2026, 14.01.2026 to 16.01.2026 & 18.01.2026 to be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra.

(4) 63594/63593 Asansol -Purulia- Asansol MEMU journey commencing on 12.01.2026, 13.01.2026, 15.01.2026 & 18.01.2026 to be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra.

(5) 68055/68056 Asansol -Tatanagar-Asansol MEMU journey commencing on 13.01.2026 to be short-terminated at Adra

(6) 68055/68056 Asansol -Barabhum-Asansol MEMU journey commencing on 17.01.2026 to be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra

Diversion of Train

1) 18601 Tatanagar -Hatiya- Barddhaman Express, journey commencing on 14.01.26 & 17.01.2026 will run on diverted route via Chandil-GundaBihar - Muri.

Three Bengal BLOs Take Own Lives Amid SIR Pressure

MI News Service, Bankura:

The ongoing Special Identification and Review (SIR) exercise has sent shockwaves across West Bengal as three primary school principals, serving as Booth Level Officers (BLOs), reportedly took their own lives under immense work pressure. The tragic incidents highlight mounting concerns over the mental and emotional toll on teachers entrusted with election-related responsibilities.

In Mursidabad, Hamimul Islam, headmaster of Char Krishnapur Boys Primary School in Ranitala, was found dead in a school room on Saturday night. Residents say Hamimul, who was working as the BLO of a booth in Purba Alipur village, did not return home after school. Family members allege that he was under severe stress due to his SIR duties. The police recovered his body and sent it for autopsy. Simultaneously, in Bankura, Haradhan Mandal, also a primary school principal and the BLO of booth 206 in Ranibandh, was found hanging in a classroom after failing to return home. A suicide note recovered at the scene read, "I can't take the pressure anymore. I am responsible for the work of the BLO. Forgive

me." Family members indicated that Mandal had been struggling with depression, exacerbated by the heavy workload of SIR responsibilities. Earlier, in Krishnanagar, Nadia district, Rinku Tarafdar, 54, a part-time teacher and BLO of booth 201 in Chapra Bangalji, also ended her life. In her suicide note, she cited the Election Commission and the inhuman demands of the SIR work as reasons for her tragic decision. Tarafdar, a resident of Shasthitala, Krishnanagar, had been balancing teaching duties with the added burden of election administration in a Muslim-majority area. These successive tragedies have raised alarm among educators and political observers alike, sparking debates over the mental health risks associated with SIR and other election-related administrative pressures. The incidents underline the urgent need for systemic reforms and psychological support for frontline educators who are now being thrust into high-pressure civic roles. Police investigations are ongoing in all three districts, and families of the deceased have demanded accountability, stressing that the victims were overburdened and unsupported in their roles.

Toy train adventure returns, tourist thrilled

MI News Service, Siliguri:

After a hiatus of nearly six years, the iconic Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) toy train has resumed its jungle safari service, offering tourists an immersive journey through the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary. The special service, which began on Sunday, will operate twice a week on the Siliguri-Gayabari route, blending the thrill of a mountain ride with the serenity of North Bengal's forests and tea gardens.

Authorities said the revival has been executed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, aimed at boosting local tourism and generating employment opportunities. "This service will highlight the hills, forests, and folk culture of North Bengal," said DHR Director Rishab Choudhury. "We are also planning to launch several new safari routes during the tourist season. The Gayabari route offers a distinct experience compared to Darjeeling or Kurseong. All rides will be during daylight hours, with multiple new engines and renovated heritage coaches ensuring comfort and safety." The jungle safari promises a unique perspective of the region's natural beauty, as passengers travel through dense forests, over rolling hills,

and past sprawling tea gardens. Tourist amenities, including breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tiffin, have been arranged, according to Sanjay Goswami, head of the organization managing the PPP initiative. Tourists have welcomed the relaunch enthusiastically. Rajkumar Agarwal, a frequent visitor, said, "I immediately booked a full room when I learned the safari had started. The chance to enjoy a picnic at Tindharia while reliving memories of the toy train is exciting." DHR authorities hope the service will attract a steady flow of visitors, strengthen the local tourism sector, and revive interest in one of North Bengal's most treasured experiences—a scenic and culturally rich ride through the hills and forests aboard the historic mountain toy train.

and past sprawling tea gardens. Tourist amenities, including breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tiffin, have been arranged, according to Sanjay Goswami, head of the organization managing the PPP initiative. Tourists have welcomed the relaunch enthusiastically. Rajkumar Agarwal, a frequent visitor, said, "I immediately booked a full room when I learned the safari had started. The chance to enjoy a picnic at Tindharia while reliving memories of the toy train is exciting." DHR authorities hope the service will attract a steady flow of visitors, strengthen the local tourism sector, and revive interest in one of North Bengal's most treasured experiences—a scenic and culturally rich ride through the hills and forests aboard the historic mountain toy train.

Authorities said the revival has been executed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, aimed at boosting local tourism and generating employment opportunities. "This service will highlight the hills, forests, and folk culture of North Bengal," said DHR Director Rishab Choudhury. "We are also planning to launch several new safari routes during the tourist season. The Gayabari route offers a distinct experience compared to Darjeeling or Kurseong. All rides will be during daylight hours, with multiple new engines and renovated heritage coaches ensuring comfort and safety." The jungle safari promises a unique perspective of the region's natural beauty, as passengers travel through dense forests, over rolling hills,

and past sprawling tea gardens. Tourist amenities, including breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tiffin, have been arranged, according to Sanjay Goswami, head of the organization managing the PPP initiative. Tourists have welcomed the relaunch enthusiastically. Rajkumar Agarwal, a frequent visitor, said, "I immediately booked a full room when I learned the safari had started. The chance to enjoy a picnic at Tindharia while reliving memories of the toy train is exciting." DHR authorities hope the service will attract a steady flow of visitors, strengthen the local tourism sector, and revive interest in one of North Bengal's most treasured experiences—a scenic and culturally rich ride through the hills and forests aboard the historic mountain toy train.

Authorities said the revival has been executed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, aimed at boosting local tourism and generating employment opportunities. "This service will highlight the hills, forests, and folk culture of North Bengal," said DHR Director Rishab Choudhury. "We are also planning to launch several new safari routes during the tourist season. The Gayabari route offers a distinct experience compared to Darjeeling or Kurseong. All rides will be during daylight hours, with multiple new engines and renovated heritage coaches ensuring comfort and safety." The jungle safari promises a unique perspective of the region's natural beauty, as passengers travel through dense forests, over rolling hills,

and past sprawling tea gardens. Tourist amenities, including breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tiffin, have been arranged, according to Sanjay Goswami, head of the organization managing the PPP initiative. Tourists have welcomed the relaunch enthusiastically. Rajkumar Agarwal, a frequent visitor, said, "I immediately booked a full room when I learned the safari had started. The chance to enjoy a picnic at Tindharia while reliving memories of the toy train is exciting." DHR authorities hope the service will attract a steady flow of visitors, strengthen the local tourism sector, and revive interest in one of North Bengal's most treasured experiences—a scenic and culturally rich ride through the hills and forests aboard the historic mountain toy train.

Shocking home robbery: Dismissed IAS officer targeted

MI News Service, Pune: In a dramatic incident that has sent shockwaves through Pune, dismissed IAS officer **Pooja Khedkar** and her family were allegedly tied up and robbed by a domestic worker who drugged them with sleeping pills. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

sources and a statement given by Pooja to authorities, the maid, a Nepalese national recently employed by the family, mixed sedatives into the family's dinner. After consuming the food, all three members fell unconscious. The accused then tied them up and fled with mobile phones and other valuables. Pooja managed to free herself later and alerted the police

Study reveals how infertility treatment can double risk of postpartum heart disease

NEW JERSEY : Infertility treatment patients were twice as likely to be hospitalised with heart disease in the year following delivery as spontaneously conceived patients, according to a study conducted by Rutgers Health experts using more than 31 million hospital records.

Infertility patients were 2.16 times more likely to be hospitalised for hypertension, or dangerously elevated blood pressure than normally conceived patients.

"Postpartum checkups are necessary for all patients, but this study indicates they are particularly important for patients who undergo infertility treatment to achieve a conception," said Rei Yamada, an obstetrics and gynecology resident at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and lead author of the study.

The study authors say their results support standards of care that now call for an initial postpartum checkup three weeks after delivery, standards that some health systems have yet to adopt. Much of the elevated risk came in the first month after delivery, particularly for patients who developed dangerously high blood pressure. "And these results aren't the only ones to indicate



that follow-up should occur early," said CandeAnanth, chief of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and senior author of the study. "We have been involved in a series of studies over the past few years that have found serious risks of heart disease and stroke to various high-risk patient populations within those initial 30 days after delivery - risks that could be

mitigated with earlier follow-up care." The study analyzed the Nationwide Readmissions Database, which contains nationally representative data on about 31 million hospital discharges and readmissions per year. The database contains diagnosis codes, which let researchers find specific populations and identify reasons for readmission.

The researchers used data from more than 31 million patients who were discharged following delivery from 2010 to

2018, including 287,813 patients who had undergone any infertility treatment.

Although infertility treatment predicted a sharply elevated risk of heart disease, the study authors said the relative youth of infertility treatment patients kept their overall risk fairly low. Just 550 of every 100,000 women who received infertility treatment and 355 of every 100,000 who conceived naturally were hospitalized with cardiovascular disease in the year after delivery.

The cause of the elevated risk of heart disease associated with infertility treatment remains unclear. The increase in heart disease could stem from the infertility treatments themselves, the underlying medical issues that made patients infertile or some other cause.

"Looking forward, I'd like to see if different types of infertility treatment and, importantly, medications are associated with different risk levels," said Yamada. "Our data gave no information about which patients had undergone which treatment. More detailed information might also provide insight into how infertility treatment impacts cardiovascular outcomes."

Global study predicts significant increase in life expectancy by 2050

LIFE expectancy around the world is projected to improve by almost five years in men and by over four years in women between 2022 and 2050, according to a global study published in *The Lancet* journal.

Researchers said that the improvements are expected to be the highest in countries where life expectancy is lower, thereby contributing to an overall enhancement of life expectancy across geographies. Public health measures preventing and improving survival rates from cardiovascular diseases, COVID-19, and a range of communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases, are largely driving the trend of increasing life expectancy globally, the authors said.

"In addition to an increase in life expectancy overall, we have found that the disparity in life expectancy across geographies will lessen," said Chris Murray, director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, US.

"This is an indicator that while health inequalities between the highest and lowest income regions will remain, the gaps are shrinking, with the biggest increases anticipated in Sub-Saharan Africa," said Murray. The IHME coordinates the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, the "largest and most comprehensive effort to quantify health loss across places and over time."

However, the researchers from the GBD 2021 Forecasting Collaborators said that the ongoing shift expect to live in good health, will increase by 2.6 years in the coming years - from 64.8 years in 2022 to 67.4 years in 2050.

For India, the study has projected that by 2050, on average, men could have a life expectancy of over 75 years, while that for women could be almost 80 years. Healthy life expectancy, however, was projected to be over 65 years for both men and women in India. Drawing on the work of more than 11,000 collaborators, the GBD 2021 includes more than 607 billion estimates of 371 diseases and injuries and 88 risk factors in 204 countries and territories, according to the IHME.



expect to live in good health, will increase by 2.6 years in the coming years - from 64.8 years in 2022 to 67.4 years in 2050.

For India, the study has projected that by 2050, on average, men could have a life expectancy of over 75 years, while that for women could be almost 80 years. Healthy life expectancy, however, was projected to be over 65 years for both men and women in India. Drawing on the work of more than 11,000 collaborators, the GBD 2021 includes more than 607 billion estimates of 371 diseases and injuries and 88 risk factors in 204 countries and territories, according to the IHME.

Sleep apnea symptoms linked to memory, thinking problems: Study

PENNSYLVANIA : According to recent research, dopamine is essential for the growth of neurons. Researchers have shown that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and disrupted impaired developmental dopamine signalling are related.

Their findings open the door for future targeted therapies by highlighting the significance of researching developmental signalling pathways to comprehend the aetiology of ASD. Their research is published by Elsevier in *The American Journal of Pathology*. Lead investigators Lingyan Xing, PhD, and Gang Chen, PhD, Key Laboratory of Neuroregeneration of Jiangsu and the Ministry of Education, Co-innovation Center of Neuroregeneration, NMPA Key Laboratory for Research and Evaluation of Tissue Engineering Technology Products, Nantong University, explained, "While dopamine is commonly recognized as a neurotransmitter, its significance in the developmental aspects of autism is largely unexplored. Recent studies have highlighted the crucial roles of dopamine and serotonin in development and their importance in the construction of neural circuits."

In addition, studies have indicated that the use of dopamine-related drugs during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of autism in children. Armed with these tantalizing clues, we embarked on a mission to bridge the gap between dopamine's known functions and its potential impact on neurodevelopmental disorders, particularly autism. Our quest was to uncover a novel therapeutic target that could revolutionize the way we approach autism treatment." Investigators studied the role of disrupted dopaminergic signalling in the etiology of ASD by integrating human brain RNA sequencing transcriptome analysis and a zebrafish model, recognized for its high degree of conservation with humans. To analyze the developmental deficits in ASD systematically, two large publicly available data sets were retrieved from



the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Gene Expression Omnibus database and RNA sequencing data from Arkinglab. Transcriptome analysis of human brains revealed significant correlations between changes in dopaminergic signalling pathways and neural developmental signalling in patients with autism. This suggests a potential link between disrupted developmental dopamine signalling and autism pathology. To explore this link further researchers used the zebrafish model to study the effects of disrupted dopaminergic signalling on neural circuit development. They found that perturbations in developmental dopaminergic signalling led to neural circuit abnormalities and behavioral phenotypes reminiscent of autism in zebrafish larvae. The study also uncovered a potential mechanism by which dopamine impacts neuronal specification through the modulation of integrins. Dr. Chen commented, "We were surprised by the extent of the impact that dopaminergic signalling has on neuronal specification in zebrafish, potentially laying the groundwork for circuit disruption in autism-related phenotype. Furthermore, the unexpected involvement of integrins as downstream targets of dopaminergic signalling provides new insights into the mechanisms underlying neurodevelopmental disorders." Dr. Xing concluded, "This research sheds light on the role of dopamine in neural circuit formation during early development, specifically in the context of autism. Understanding these mechanisms could lead to novel therapeutic interventions targeting dopaminergic signalling pathways to improve outcomes in individuals with autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders."

ASD is a developmental disorder that usually manifests itself in early childhood. Although clinical outcomes vary greatly from case to case, autism is characterized by both a restricted interest in social interaction and repetitive behavior. This coincides with disruptions in brain connectivity shown by diffusion tensor imaging. Studies have shown that several neurodevelopmental processes may be affected in ASD, including neurogenesis, neural migration, axon pathfinding, and synaptic formation, all of which can lead to neuronal circuit disruption.

well as memory and thinking problems. For sleep, participants were asked about snoring, gasping or breathing pauses in their sleep. For memory and thinking, participants were asked questions related to difficulty remembering, periods of confusion, difficulty concentrating or problems with decision making.

Of all participants, 1,079 reported symptoms of sleep apnea. Of those with symptoms, 357 people, or 33 per cent, reported memory or thinking problems compared to 628 people, or 20 per cent of people without sleep apnea symptoms. After adjusting for other factors that could affect memory and thinking problems, such as age, race, gender and education, researchers found that people who reported sleep apnea symptoms were about 50 per cent more likely to also report having memory or thinking problems.

Sleep apnea is when people stop and restart breathing repeatedly during sleep which can lower oxygen levels in the blood. Symptoms include snoring, gasping and breathing pauses. People with the disorder may also experience morning headaches or have trouble focusing on tasks. "Sleep apnea is a common disorder that is often underdiagnosed, yet treatments are available," said study author Dominique Low, MD, MPH, of Boston Medical Center in Massachusetts, and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "Our study found participants who had sleep apnea symptoms had greater odds of having memory or thinking problems."

The study involved 4,257 people. Participants completed a questionnaire asking about sleep quality as well as memory and thinking problems. For sleep, participants were asked about snoring, gasping or breathing pauses in their sleep. For memory and thinking, participants were asked questions related to difficulty remembering, periods of confusion, difficulty concentrating or problems with decision making.

These findings highlight the importance of early screening for sleep apnea," said Low. "Effective treatments like continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machines are readily available. Quality sleep, along with eating a healthy diet, regular exercise, social engagement and cognitive stimulation, are key to managing sleep apnea symptoms."

Researchers discover new biomarker to diagnose Alzheimer's in asymptomatic stages

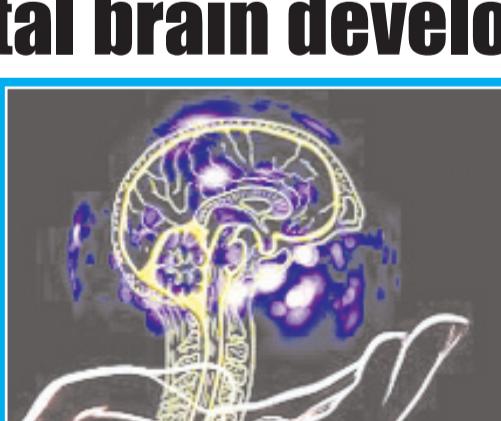


"Currently, tests to diagnose Alzheimer's disease are usually done after the onset of symptoms, when there is already underlying cognitive impairment. We believe that the detection of this microRNA may help to establish additional criteria for a more accurate diagnosis in the early stages of the disease," explains IBEC principal investigator Jose Antonio del Rio, full professor at the Faculty of Biology and the Institute of Neurosciences of the University of Barcelona (UB) and co-leader of the study.

The study also comparatively analyses the presence of the biomarker in samples from other neurodegenerative diseases:

If our goal is to use miR-519a-3p as a biomarker to detect Alzheimer's dementia in hypothetically healthy people, it is essential to ensure that its levels are not altered in other neurodegenerative diseases. In our study, we compared the levels of this biomarker in samples from other tauopathies and Parkinson's disease, confirming that the changes in miR-519a-3p are specific to Alzheimer's disease," said IBEC senior researcher Rosalina Gavin, UB associate professor and co-leader of the study.

In addition, studies have indicated that the use of dopamine-related drugs during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of autism in children. Armed with these tantalizing clues, we embarked on a mission to bridge the gap between dopamine's known functions and its potential impact on neurodevelopmental disorders, particularly autism. Our quest was to uncover a novel therapeutic target that could revolutionize the way we approach autism treatment." Investigators studied the role of disrupted dopaminergic signalling in the etiology of ASD by integrating human brain RNA sequencing transcriptome analysis and a zebrafish model, recognized for its high degree of conservation with humans. To analyze the developmental deficits in ASD systematically, two large publicly available data sets were retrieved from



researchers wanted to explore whether there is a possible link between these increases and excessive folic acid. Green notes that folic acid fortification may be an imperfect solution.

The food industry has been adding folic acid to breakfast cereals, snack foods, and vitamins, and that has likely increased intake above recommended guidelines," Green said. "The safe upper limit for folic acid is 1,000 micrograms per day. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data showed that a substantial percentage of women's diets were above that limit."

During that same time, the prevalence of neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) increased. Epilepsy rates rose as well. The

consequences of high folic acid and low B12

Green and colleagues have been studying this issue for several years. In a 2020 paper published in *Cerebral Cortex*, the group showed that both folic acid overabundance and deficiency could cause neurodevelopmental issues in mice.

In the new study, the team investigated the effects of high folic acid intake, B12 deficiency and high amounts of a natural folic acid -- folinic acid -- that may act differently than folic acid. The body needs B12 to recycle and adequately use folic acid.

The investigators supplied a group of mice before and during pregnancy with a controlled diet containing normal levels of folic acid and B12 and four separate groups with diets that either included:

- high folic acid
- low B12
- high folic acid with low B12
- high folinic acid

Using multiple imaging techniques, the offspring of these pregnancies were examined with a focus on the development of the cerebral cortex, the primary brain structure associated with important cognitive and emotional functions.

The cerebral cortex is central to a range of psychiatric disorders, particularly those that first appear in childhood.

"These different dietary conditions appear to influence the way neurons arise in the developing brain," said Konstantinos Zarbalis, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, faculty member of the UC Davis MIND Institute and co-senior author.

"With high levels of folic acid or B12 deficiency, there was a change in neural development. Cortical neurons that usually emerge during a later stage of brain development were produced over a longer period of time and required a longer period to settle in and assume their proper position in the developing brain. In addition, both high folic acid and B12 deficiency appear to cause many neurons to develop fewer interconnections," Zarbalis said.

The exception was folinic acid, the natural folic acid. Even though it was given at the same high levels as folic acid, there were virtually no consequences to developing mouse brains. As researchers expected, the group given a diet

that combined high folic acid with low B12 showed the most pronounced neurodevelopmental abnormalities.

While these results are intriguing and may eventually be linked to human pathology, the authors stress the need for abundant caution. Animal models differ from humans in key ways, including metabolic rates and the efficiency with which they process folic acid. In ongoing work, the team is investigating the effects of folic acid and B12 in human brain organoids (3D cell clusters that incorporate several neural cell types). This research may provide better insights into how these nutrients affect human biology.

"There's a lot of complexity in how the body responds to folic acid, vitamin B12 and folinic acid. We are at the early stages of determining how these elements interact," Zarbalis said. "Ultimately, we would like to find a definitive answer for how much folic acid, and what form, is optimal to avoid neural tube defects and other potential brain health issues."

High folic acid, low B12 may affect fetal brain development in mice: Study

Washington : Folate is a B vitamin that is essential for preventing neural tube abnormalities such as spina bifida. Folic acid, a synthetic version of folate, has been added to vitamins, breakfast cereals, and other items in the United States and more than 80 other countries to guarantee that pregnant women get enough of it. However, new research reveals that there might be such a thing as too much folic acid.

In a study published in *Communications Biology*, a Nature publication, researchers from the UC Davis School of Medicine and the UC Davis MIND Institute showed that imbalances in folic acid and vitamin B12 can alter brain development in mice.

"There's no doubt the introduction of folic acid diet fortification has been beneficial, substantially lowering the incidence of neural tube defects," said Ralph Green, distinguished professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and co-senior author of the study. "However, too much folic acid may have detrimental impacts on brain development, and that's something we need to sort out."

Concerns about folate deficiencies and neural tube defects, which can lead to stillbirths, paralysis, cognitive disabilities and other issues, peaked in the 1990s. At the time, the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revised guidelines to ensure people who were pregnant got the necessary amounts. Green played an important role in developing these standards.

However, the timing of folate during pregnancy is tricky. The neural tube forms early in pregnancy and usually closes about 28 days after conception. This meant targeted folic acid supplements would likely arrive too late.

The solution was to fortify foods and vitamins with folic acid, the synthetic form of folate, to ensure pregnant people received enough. In the decades since folic acid fortification began, neural tube defects have declined dramatically.

During that same time, the prevalence of neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) increased. Epilepsy rates rose as well. The

U.S. launches large-scale strikes on ISIS targets in Syria

MI News Service, Washington: U.S. Central Command said Saturday that its forces conducted large-scale strikes against multiple Islamic State (IS) targets across Syria. "Today, at approximately 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time, U.S. Central Command forces, alongside partner forces, conducted large-scale strikes against multiple ISIS targets across Syria," the command posted on X. The command said these strikes were part of Operation Hawkeye Strike, which was launched and announced on Dec. 19 in response to a deadly IS attack on U.S. and Syrian forces in Palmyra, Syria, on Dec. 13. In the attack, a lone IS terrorist carried out an ambush, killing two U.S. soldiers and one U.S. civilian interpreter. The strikes are "part of our ongoing commitment to root out Islamic terrorism against our warfighters, prevent future attacks, and protect American and partner forces in the region," U.S. Central Command said, adding that U.S. and coalition forces "remain resolute in pursuing terrorists who seek to harm the United States."

Israel closed out last year with a record number of 252 Arab citizens killed in violent crime-related incidents, marking its deadliest year in that community to date. Less than two weeks into the new year, killings are continuing at a high rate, with 16 Arab homicide victims in less than two weeks. Tensions between demonstrators and

Voting for 2nd phase of Myanmar's general election concludes

MI News Service, Yangon: Voting for the second phase of Myanmar's multi-party democratic general election concluded on Sunday afternoon.

Voting began at 6 a.m. local time on Sunday. At 4 p.m., an election official at a polling station in Yangon's Latha township announced the closure of the polling station.

Following the closure, election staff at the polling station, in the presence of domestic and international media, candidates, and observers, counted the votes, including advance votes, for seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House), Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House), and State and Region Hluttaws (State and Region Parliaments).

The second phase of the election was held in 100 townships across 12 of the 14 regions and states. In the Yangon region, it was held in 16 townships, including the townships of Latha, Bahan, Kyimyindaing and Kawthu.

Myanmar's multi-party democratic general election is being held in three phases, with the first phase held in 102 townships on Dec. 28 last year, and the third phase scheduled for Jan. 25 this year.

Syria government forces said to detain 300 Kurds, evacuate 400 fighters from Aleppo

MI News Service, Damascus: Syrian government forces evacuated more than 400 Kurdish fighters from the last district in Aleppo to fall to the army, and detained 300 Kurds, an interior ministry official tells. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, says "360 fighters and more than 59 wounded" were evacuated from the Sheikh Maqsud neighborhood to the Kurds' de facto autonomous zone in the northeast, and 300 other Kurds, including members of the security forces, were detained. An AFP correspondent reports buses filled with men leaving Sheikh Maqsud under escort by government forces during the night.

Trump says Iran 'in big trouble'; US watching protests 'very carefully'

MI News Service, Washington: President Donald Trump said Iran is "in big trouble" as protests spread across the country, saying the US is closely monitoring developments and warning Iranian authorities against using lethal force.

"Iran's in big trouble. It looks to me that the people are taking over certain cities that nobody thought were really possible just a few weeks ago," Trump told reporters at the White House. "We're watching the situation very carefully."

Noting his previous warning to Tehran, he said, "If they start killing people like they have in the past, we will get involved." "This is something pretty incredible that's happening in Iran. It's an amazing thing to watch," he said. "They've done a bad job. They've treated their people very badly, and now they're being paid back."

Trump added that any US response would not in-

'Arab blood isn't cheap': Hundreds Protest outside Netanyahu's office over crime wave

MI News Service, Jerusalem: Hundreds of protesters gather outside the Prime Minister's Office to protest how the police have handled crime in the Arab community under National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir.

Protesters chant in Arabic: "Hey police, hey police, Arab blood isn't cheap," and call to "free Tarabin [al-Sana]," a town that was subject to a 12-day police raid up until this morning, in which one resident, Muhammad Hussein Tarabin, was shot dead by an officer at his front door.

Israel closed out last year with a record number of 252 Arab citizens killed in violent crime-related incidents, marking its deadliest year in that community to date.

Less than two weeks into the new year, killings are continuing at a high rate, with 16 Arab homicide victims in less than two weeks. Tensions between demonstrators and



A young protester holds up a sign that reads: 'Police force of criminals' during a demonstration against how police have handled crime in Arab society, outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, January 11, 2026.

the Border Police securing the scene at the PMO are high, as officers form a human barrier between the protest and reporters.

Police horses and a water cannon are stationed close to the demonstration. While some attendees come from Arab locales in northern and central Israel, the vast majority are from the Negev, as police continue a con-

troversial crime crackdown in Bedouin towns.

The protest is organized by the Higher Follow-Up Committee, the leading Arab-Israeli umbrella organization. Most of the Knesset's Arab lawmakers were present at the demonstration, including Ra'am chairman Mansour Abbas, Hadash chairman Ayman Odeh and Ta'al chairman Ahmad Tibi.

Taha emphasised the need for a unified, clear,

and firm Islamic position in support of Somalia, grounded in the OIC Charter, international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions. On December 26, 2025, Israel officially recognised Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state, becoming the only country in the world to do so.

On January 7, its Foreign Minister Gideon Saar visited Somaliland and held talks with President Abdurrahman Mohammed Abdulla.

Later in the capital Hargeisa.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt and Indonesia, censured Saar's visit, released a joint statement saying Saar's visit violated Somalia's sov-

OIC reject Israel's recognition of Somaliland, calls it 'dangerous precedent'

MI News Service, Jeddah: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Saturday, January 10, rejected Israel's recognition of Somaliland and reaffirmed its support for Somalia's sovereignty. The decision was taken during the 22nd Extraordinary Session of Foreign Ministers at the General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah.

Delivering the opening address, OIC Secretary-General Hissein Taha said the meeting was convened at a highly sensitive moment to address what he described as serious developments affecting Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. "Israel's move constitutes a dangerous precedent, a flagrant violation of international law, and a direct threat to regional security and stability," Taha said.

Taha emphasised the

need for a unified, clear,

and firm Islamic position in support of Somalia, grounded in the OIC Charter, international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions. On December 26, 2025, Israel officially recognised Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state, becoming the only country in the world to do so.

On January 7, its Foreign Minister Gideon Saar visited Somaliland and held talks with President Abdurrahman Mohammed Abdulla.

lah in the capital Hargeisa.

Later, he posted this on his X page: "We are determined to vigorously advance relations between Israel and Somaliland."

Foreign Minister Gideon

Saar with Somaliland's

president Abdurrahman

Mohammed Abdulla (right)

As many as 21 Muslim

countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

As many as 21 Muslim countries, including Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Egypt

and Indonesia, censured

Saar's visit, released a joint

statement saying Saar's

visit violated Somalia's sov-

ereignty and territorial integrity. "The visit undermines international law and the United Nations Charter. It encourages secessionist ideas, potentially leading to instability in an already fragile region," the statement read and reiterated their support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

During his address, the Secretary General called on Israel to initiate the second phase of the ceasefire agreement reached with Hamas in October 2025, leading to a comprehensive and permanent halt to hostilities and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

1st ODI: Daryl Mitchell's 84 helps New Zealand set 301-run target for India



VADODARA : Daryl Mitchell was New Zealand's star batter, as his 71-ball 84 helped the side reach a decent 300/8 in 50 overs and overcome the Indian bowlers' late carnage in the first ODI of the three-match series at the Kotambi International Stadium (B2A).

After being put in to bat, New Zealand started quietly and sluggishly, with openers Devon Conway and Henry Nicholls proceeding cautiously. However, once they picked up pace, the Indian bowlers' struggles began as they failed to get the first break-

through. Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Harshit Rana, Washington, and Kuldeep Yadav all faced the heat as the openers reached their half-centuries off consecutive deliveries in the 20th over. The two went on to share an unbeaten 100-run stand, the first 100-plus opening stand for New Zealand away from home since 2019, as the Kiwis scored 104 runs in 20 overs without losing a wicket.

Building on momentum, Nicholls (62) smashed Rana for two consecutive boundaries in the

aging only 49 runs in 10 overs. While the opening pair added 117 runs, India fought back with three wickets to halt their momentum.

Kuldeep soon joined the pacers in the celebrations as he picked up Glenn Phillips (12), adding to the BlackCaps' woes. Mitchell Hay gave his side some respite with quick runs on the scoreboard, but Prasidh Krishna cut his innings short as the former was bowled out for a 13-ball 18.

While wickets kept falling at one end, Daryl Mitchell kept his good form going and raced to a slow half-century, anchoring the team's innings against the dominant-looking Indian bowling unit. But back-to-back wickets of Michael Bracewell (run out for 16 by Shreyas Iyer) and Zakary Foulkes (1) showcased some clutch bowling by the hosts as the Kiwis struggled to add runs in the death overs. While Daryl aimed to finish strongly, Krishna ended his innings by dismissing him in the 48th over, helping India maintain their dominance as the World No. 3 ODI batter walked back scoring a well-made 84.

A poor final over from Krishna saw Kyle Jamieson and debutant Kristian Clarke score 12 runs off it, as New Zealand reached the 300-run mark, finishing at 300/8.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 300/8 in 50 overs (Daryl Mitchell 84, Henry Nicholls 62, Devon Conway 56; Mohammed Siraj 2-40, Harshit Rana 2-65) against India.

While wickets kept falling at one end, Daryl Mitchell kept his good form going and raced to a slow half-century, anchoring the team's innings against the dominant-looking Indian bowling unit. But back-to-back wickets of Michael Bracewell (run out for 16 by Shreyas Iyer) and Zakary Foulkes (1) showcased some clutch bowling by the hosts as the Kiwis struggled to add runs in the death overs. While Daryl aimed to finish strongly, Krishna ended his innings by dismissing him in the 48th over, helping India maintain their dominance as the World No. 3 ODI batter walked back scoring a well-made 84.

A poor final over from Krishna saw Kyle Jamieson and debutant Kristian Clarke score 12 runs off it, as New Zealand reached the 300-run mark, finishing at 300/8.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 300/8 in 50 overs (Daryl Mitchell 84, Henry Nicholls 62, Devon Conway 56; Mohammed Siraj 2-40, Harshit Rana 2-65) against India.

EZ Inter-University Soccer: Ranchi University Crowned Champions

PC JHA

RANCHI: Ranchi University etched its name in history with a spirited and memorable triumph at the East Zone Inter-University Football (Men) Championship 2025-26, clinching the title with an impressive all-round performance.

Dominating the Super League stage, the host university secured six points to emerge champions and emphatically establish its sporting supremacy on home turf.

In the decisive Super League encounters, Ranchi University defeated Adamas University 1-0 in a closely contested match. Another key fixture between the University of Calcutta and Bardhaman University ended in a 1-1 draw. In a separate encounter, Adamas University registered a 2-1 victory over the University of Calcutta. In the final standings, Bardhaman University finished second with five points, while Adamas University secured third place with four points. Throughout the tournament, all participating teams displayed commendable sportsmanship, discipline and high technical skill.

The closing ceremony was graced by Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari as the chief guest. Congratulating the players of Ranchi University on their historic achievement, he said sports are vital not only for physical fitness but also for mental well-being.

He emphasized that regular participation in sports helps main-



Ranchi, Jharkhand, India Plot No: 39, Near Royal Enfield Workshop, Kekar Industrial Area, Nagra Toli, Ranchi, Jharkhand 834001, India

Lat 23.372865° Long 85.352031° Sunday, 11/01/2026 01:35 PM GMT +05:30

tain good health and keeps several diseases at bay, urging the youth to make sports an integral part of their lives.

Among the distinguished guests present on the occasion were Keshav Mahato Kamlesh, Rajesh Thakur, Labour Commissioner Avinash Krishna and other eminent personalities.

The winners and runners-up were felicitated by Vice-Chancellor Dr D.K. Singh, DSW Dr Sudesh Kumar Sahu, Sports Coordinator Dr Rajesh Gupta, CCDC Dr P.K. Jha, Financial Advisor Ajay Kumar, Controller of Examinations Dr Sanjay Kumar Jha, Dr Ajay Prakash, Dr Ajay Lakra, Dr Amar Kumar Chaudhary, Dr Dinesh Oraon, Dr Arun Kumar, Pankaj Chaturvedi, Punjab National Bank Manager Pradeep Kumar, Dr Bande Khalkho and other officials.

Presenting the vote of thanks, Sports Coordinator Dr Rajesh Gupta described the victory as a proud and historic moment for Ranchi University. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to the university administration, non-teaching staff, especially the entire sports department, chief coach Manoj Kumar, all players, technical officials, the organising committee and supporting institutions.

He said the collective effort, discipline and dedication of all stakeholders were the key reasons behind this golden success. With this landmark victory, Ranchi University not only lifted the championship trophy but also firmly established its strong identity and excellence in the East Zone university sports arena.

Daniil Medvedev beat Brandon Nakashima to win Brisbane International



ond proved more complicated. He missed two opportunities to close out the match on his serve at 5-4, allowing Nakashima back into the contest. However, Medvedev quickly reset his focus, dominating the tie-break to secure the win.

Medvedev dedicated the win to his family. He also explained that the long travel distance prevented his family from joining him, meaning he missed a significant personal milestone.

"I want to dedicate this to my family. My daughter had a birthday when I was here, so I dedicate it to her first birthday."

Medvedev's form has been on an upward curve since October, when he ended a lengthy title drought in Almaty under the guidance of new coaches Thomas Johansson and Rohan Goetzke. By winning on Sunday, he became the first top seed to claim the Brisbane title since Roger Federer in 2015.

For Nakashima, the defeat ended a strong week in which he had not dropped a set prior to the final. The former Next Gen ATP Finals champion was seeking his second career title but could not overcome Medvedev, who now holds a 3-0 lead in their head-to-head series. With this triumph, Medvedev has joined Novak Djokovic and Jannik Sinner as the only active players to possess 20 or more tour-level trophies on the surface.

This victory holds special significance for the 29-year-old, marking his 22nd tour-level crown. Daniil Medvedev also holds a unique stat. All 22 of his titles have been won at different tournaments. The win also served as redemption for the former World No. 1, who had previously fallen short in the Brisbane final in 2019.

The championship clash lasted one hour and 34 minutes, characterised by heavy hitting from the baseline. While Medvedev cruised through the opening set, the sec-

Sabalenka defends Brisbane International crown, clinches 22nd career WTA title



BRISBANE : World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka successfully reclaimed her Brisbane International crown, defeating Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-3 in 1 hour and 18 minutes at Pat Rafter Arena on Sunday.

became one of only three women to defend the season-opening WTA 500 title, joining Serena Williams and Karolina Pliskova on the tournament's illustrious honour roll. Moreover, she is ranked third among active players for most tournament victories among active players, trailing only Venus Williams (with 49) and Iga Swiatek (with 25), as per WTA stats. Sabalenka imposed pressure early on as she charged to a 3-0 first-set lead. But Kostyuk came alive, winning three straight games to level the set at 3-all. But recovery was brief for the 23-year-old, as Sabalenka elevated the intensity, converting the second of five break points to secure



the 40-minute first set, WTA reports. Sabalenka soon held all momentum, building a streak of six straight games as she took control of the second set, holding a 3-0 lead. She punctuated her hold for 4-1 with a combination drop shot plus crosscourt forehand winner, then served out the match comfortably a few games later. "First of all, I just want to congratulate Marta and her team on an incredible start to the season. I wish you all the best this season. It seems like it is going to be great tennis, and I hope that we are going to meet each other many more times in finals," said Sabalenka, who has not lost a set in five matches against.

14 Indians with superior personal bests to event records set for Mumbai Marathon

MUMBAI : As the Mumbai Marathon enters its twenty-first year, the fast and furious field will see as many as eight men and six women, all of whom hold personal bests superior to the current event records for Mumbai, taking the starting line-up on Sunday.

Ethiopians Hayle Lemi Berhanu (2:07:32) and Anchiale Haymanot (2:24:15) have held the event records since 2023. The Mumbai Marathon, a World Athletics Gold Label Road Race, offers substantial prizes. The top three finishers in both men's and women's categories will earn USD 50,000, USD 25,000, and USD 15,000 respectively, from a total prize pool of USD 390,238. Additionally, there is a USD 15,000 bonus for those who set new event records in their categories. The men's line-up for 2026 includes Merhawi Kesele from Eritrea, who was runner-up here last year, behind his countryman Berhane Tesfay. Kesele is the top favourite this time for the title. However, it will not be an easy task, as the field also includes some of the finest marathon runners of our time. Uganda's 2023 World Champion, Victor Kiplangat; South African Stephen Mokoka; and Ethiopian Bazezew Asmare and Tadu Abate Deme are other hot contenders for the top spot. Another Ethiopian, Tesfaye Demeke, who was fortunate to make it to the podium with a third-place finish last year, will

also be returning to improve his ratings this year.

Asmare holds the fastest time of 2:04:57, set four years ago when he finished third in the Amsterdam Marathon, a shade ahead of Cherop's 2:05:00 winning time in the Toronto Marathon in 2019. Kiplangat (2:05:09 - 2022), Deme (2:05:38 - 2023), Debela (2:05:46 - 2019), and another Ethiopian runner, Kelkile Gezahegn (2:05:56 - 2018), are all logged with sub-2:06 times against their names, making the top prize among the men highly competitive.

Though Kesele's best to date remains 2:06:36 (2021), a tactical approach can yield better results in a marathon. When Medha Armino finished third last year, there was a host of other top-rated runners from Kenya and Bahrain to challenge her all the way. However, this year's line-up mostly featured her countrymen, which will be a remarkable relief for Medina to dream big in Mumbai. The 2026 women's field includes three runners near 2:21. Zinah Senbeta clocked a world-class 2:21:05 to win in Lubyliana in 2023. Incidentally, her marathon debut was in Mumbai four years earlier, where she finished seventh. In 2021, Yeshi Chokole posted 2:21:17 to finish third in the Zurich Marathon de Sevilla in Spain. She had another third-place finish (2:23:26) in the Korean city of Incheon less.

Legacy still unbreakable: true icon of the game: Wishes pour in from fraternity as Dravid turns 53



ness, and many more years of making a difference to the game he loves," the former spinner tweeted on X.

Shikhar Dhawan praised Dravid's elegance and cricketing intelligence while wishing him a happy 53rd birthday. "Happy birthday, Rahul bhai! Your calm, class and cricketing mind have inspired generations. Have a fantastic one," Dhawan wrote.

Former Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh commended

IPL 2025 champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru also joined in wishing their first skipper. "Our first Royal Challenger. Our first leader. Forever our Bengaluru boy. Wishing a very happy birthday to one of Indian cricket's finest, a true icon of the game, and the former #TeamIndia head coach, Rahul Dravid," RCB wrote on X.

Five-time IPL champions Chennai Super Kings wrote, "Built as the wall at the crease, to build generations of cricketers. Super birthday, Rahul Dravid. Your legacy is still unbreakable."

Rajasthan Royals posted a photo of Rahul Dravid praising Vaibhav Suryavanshi's performance in IPL 2025, when he was the team's coach, and wrote, "Unforgettable. Happy birthday, Rahul Dravid."

Mumbai Indians shared a photo of Rohit Sharma and Dravid holding the T20 World Cup 2024 trophy on X, writing, "Happy birthday to everyone's favourite, The Great Wall of India."

Rohit Sharma surpasses Chris Gayle for most sixes by an ODI opener

VADODARA : India's charismatic batter Rohit Sharma created history on Sunday, becoming the opener with the most sixes in ODI cricket as he achieved the landmark during the first match of the ongoing ODI series against New Zealand at the Baroda Cricket Association Stadium.

Chasing a target of 301 runs, Rohit opened the innings with captain Shubman Gill. After a slow start, the 38-year-old hit the first maximum in the sixth over against Ben Foulkes. The former captain continued his momentum in the next over and sent Kyle Jamieson's back-of-a-length delivery into the stands. With this, Rohit also completed 650 sixes in international cricket, becoming the first player to achieve the milestone. Rohit, however, was not able to convert the early start into a big innings as he got out in the ninth over off Kyle Jamieson's ball. He scored 26 runs off 29 balls, hitting three fours and two sixes. Rohit has now hit 329 sixes as an opener in ODIs, surpassing West Indies great Chris Gayle, who has 328 maximums to his



name. The Indian star had already broken Shahid Afridi's record for the most sixes in ODI cricket last year during the South Africa series. Rohit was in great touch last year as well. The right-hander slammed 650 runs in 14 ODI innings from as many matches, with one not out. His personal best was 121 not out. He is currently the number one batter in the ICC rankings. Speaking of the match, after winning the toss, India elected to field first. New Zealand got off to a confident start as openers Devon Conway and Henry Nicholls laid a strong foundation. Their 100-plus stand put the Indian attack under sustained pressure. India, however, responded well as the innings progressed, tightening their lines and striking at key moments to wrest back control. Regular wickets in the middle overs slowed New Zealand's momentum and prevented them from fully capitalising on the platform provided.