

Mamata Writes Fifth Letter to EC, Alleges Voter Harassment in SIR Process

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written a fifth letter to the Election Commission of India (ECI), alleging widespread harassment of voters during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. In her latest communication addressed to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Monday, Banerjee accused the Commission of ignoring statutory corrections made over the past two decades and forcing voters to re-establish their identity without valid grounds. In the letter, the chief minister claimed that documents submitted by voters during the SIR process were not being acknowledged properly. She alleged that in several cases, no receipts or proof of submission were being issued, and later the same documents were marked as "Not Found" or "Unavailable in records". As a result, names of eligible voters were allegedly being deleted from the electoral rolls, causing serious distress and disenfranchisement.

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Morning India



Hundreds of pilgrims from across the country were seen heading towards Gangasagar in a crowded vessel on the Muriganga river on Monday.

PM Modi, German Chancellor Merz begin talks, pay tributes to Mahatma Gandhi

MI News Service, Ahmedabad : Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz began their visit to Ahmedabad on Monday morning at the Gandhi Ashram, and after paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi there, they proceeded to the Sabarmati Riverfront for the inauguration of the International Kite Festival 2026. Chancellor Merz arrived here early on Monday morning on a two-day maiden official visit to India. Sabarmati Ashram, also known as Gandhi Ashram, was established by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917. It was home to Gandhi from 1917 until 1930 and served as one of the main centres of India's freedom struggle. At the historic Gandhi Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad, both the dignitaries paid floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Later Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the International Kite Festival-2026 at



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz visit Sabarmati Ashram during the German leader's maiden India trip, in Ahmedabad.

Sabarmati Riverfront and enjoyed kite flying with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz for some time.

At the kite festival, PM Modi and Merz interacted with women

artisans and understood the process of making kites. After the inauguration, both the leaders took a ride on the ground in an open vehicle and even tried their hands at

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

flying kites. As many as 135 kitists from 50 countries and nearly 1,000 kite enthusiasts from India are participating in the International Kite Festival-2026 in Ahmedabad, according to a Gujarat government release.

As part of the festival, the kitists have already visited places like Rajkot, Surat, Dholavira (in Kutch) and Statue of Unity (Narmada) during the last two days and enthralled

►► Continued on page 3

ISRO's PSLV-C62 rocket deviates from flight path, misses orbit

MI News Service, Sriharikota : ISRO's PSLV-C62 rocket carrying 16 satellites, including a foreign Earth Observation satellite, "encountered an anomaly", the space agency said on Monday, signalling the possible failure of the mission. Disturbances in the rocket and later deviation from flight path was observed when strap-on motors were providing thrust

it is a setback as the satellites did not reach the intended orbit at 512 km in space and all satellites lost in space may be drifting as space debris

A former top ISRO scientist

during the flight's third stage to propel the vehicle to the intended altitude, space agency chairman V Narayanan said adding a detailed analysis has been initiated to identify the cause. The mission of placing the satellites in the intended orbit could not be achieved and all the 16 satellites were lost in

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'No country more essential than India' US ambassador-designate Sergio Gor



Newly appointed United States Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, center, greets officials upon his arrival at the US Embassy, in New Delhi.

MI News Service, New Delhi : No country is as essential as India for Washington and both sides are actively engaged in firming up a trade deal, US ambassador-designate Sergio Gor said on Monday. Real friends can disagree, but always resolve their differences in the end, he said in his arrival speech while referring to the friendship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump.

"India is the world's largest nation. So it's not an easy task to get this across the finish line, but we are determined to get there," he said at a ceremony attended by US embassy employees here. "No other nation is as essential to the United States as India", said Gor while announcing that Washington and New Delhi are set to restart their next round of trade deal talks from tomorrow itself on Tuesday.

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Sergio Gor US ambassador-designate

New Delhi and Washington's relationship, both nations also continue to work closely together on other very important areas such as security, counter-terrorism, energy, technology, education, and health. "I have travelled all over the world with President Trump, and I can attest that his friendship with Prime Minister Modi is real," Gor stressed. The US ambassador-designate said the purpose of his appointment is to take the partnership between our two

nations to the next level before Trump visits India by next year.

"This is the intersection between the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy. During my last dinner with him, President Trump recounted his last visit to India and also his great friendship with the great Prime Minister of India. I hope the President will be visiting us soon, hopefully in the next year or two. President Trump has a habit of calling at 2 am in the morning, and with the time difference in New Delhi, it might work out pretty well," he added.

Gor emphasised the importance of the strategic relationship with India and said he intends to pursue an ambitious agenda. "No partner is more essential than

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Mamata pays homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Birth Anniversary

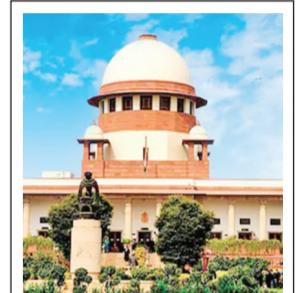


MI News Service, Kolkata : West Bengal Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday paid homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Birth Anniversary, being celebrated as the National Youth Day, saying "Swamiji believed that the youth are the architects of a nation's destiny." Extending her "warmest greetings to the patriotic young men and women of our country" on the occasion, the Chief minister in a message through her X handle said today "On the occasion of the National Youth Day, which is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, I extend my warmest greetings to the

Ex-VP Dhankhar admitted to AIIMS after two bouts of unconsciousness

MI News Service, New Delhi : Former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar was admitted to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Monday after he fell unconscious twice on January 10, officials said. Dhankhar, 74, will undergo an MRI, the officials said. On January 10, he had "two bouts of unconsciousness" when he went to the washroom, they said. "Today, he had gone to AIIMS for a checkup when the doctors insisted that he

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The taking of the laptop and keeping it in their possession for two hours also amounts to theft

The probe agency said in its 160-page petition

possession for two hours also amounts to theft," the probe agency said in its 160-page petition.

"During the search proceedings around 12:40 pm, the aforementioned state authorities/police officers took away the documents collected and indexed by the ED officers. Moreover, the backup of the computer system and email was also stopped midway, and the state security officers took away the said computer system. The storage device of the security cameras installed in the premise was also taken in possession by the state security and police officers. The state security and police officers also took away the mobile phones of the employees of Indian PAC Consulting Private Limited present at the premise. As a result of the above events, nothing was seized from the premises and no data backup could be taken by the

►► Continued on page 3

Haldiram's Prabhuji

Khushiyon Ki Asli Mithaas



Bhujia



Chat Pata



Khatta Mitha



Kaju Barfi



Gulab Jamun



Soan Papdi

Rasgulla

Haldiram Bhujiawala Limited

Regd. Office : P-420, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, VIP Road, Kolkata - 700 052
Burrabazar : 9, Jagmohan Mullick Lane, Kolkata - 700 007



Large number of pilgrims made their way towards Gangasagar in South 24 Parganas on Monday.

Mamata saddens by the demise of Marxist and PDS co-founder founder Samir Putatundu at aged 74

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday condoled the passing away of Marxist and co-founder of Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) Samir Putatundu in a private hospital in the city on Sunday night.

Putatundu, who broke away from then ruling CPI(M) along with party comrade Saifuddin Chowdhury and founded PDS in 2001, died around 11.15 PM after prolonged illness. Admitted a week ago in the hospital on EM Bypass following cardiac complications, Putatundu was 74.

Condoling the death of the Marxist, state chief minister Mamata Banerjee said she had very fond memories with Putatundu and other PDS comrades during the movement of Singur and Nandigram against the illegal land acquisition of the poor farmers.

"I am very sad by the demise of one of the powerful left leaders and his death as if I have lost someone very dear and near to me," Banerjee said on her X handle. "I have many fond mem-



ories of interacting with him and other PDS comrades when we together fought against the land acquisition at Singur and Nandigram.

A prominent figure in the Left movement and was an influential CPI(M) leader," Banerjee said.

There were no words to console Anuradha and the others, "yet I am always by their side," she said.

Putatundu was an influential leader of the Left movement and was chief of the CPI(M) of South 24 Parganas, but his departure from the ruling in 2001 over the ideological differences also doomed his political importance rapidly.

Putatundu, along with CPI(M) leader Saifuddin Chowdhury, founded the PDS but the new outfit could not make success at all in the electoral battle and evaporated with the passing of time.

Fire bursts in a shop, claims life of a sleeping shopkeeper

MI News Service, Kharagpur: A sudden fire broke out in a grocery shop in Harina area of Block No. 2, Kharagpur of West Medinipur district. Due to the fire, a shopkeeper who was sleeping inside the shop died of burn injuries. According to the information received from local police sources, the name of the deceased is Abhijeet Mandal (22 years). It is known that Abhijeet has a grocery shop a few hundred meters away from the house. Abhijeet used to run the shop. A few years ago the shop was robbed twice in a row. After that, Abhijeet used to sleep in the shop at night. The people of the area were the first to see the shop in the grip of fire. Information about the incident was given to Abhijeet's family members. With the help of local people, the family members controlled the fire in the shop, took Abhijeet out of the shop in a burnt state and took him to the hospital. The doctor declared him dead. Information about the incident was given to the police. Police sent the body for post-mortem. Till now the cause of fire in the shop could not be known. Police is investigating the incident.

Cannabis seized

MI News Service, North 24 Pgs: Two persons caught by Special Task Force of West Bengal with huge consignment of contraband Cannabis on Kalyani Expressway on Saturday. Police case under NDPS Act 1985 has been started at STF Headquarters Police Station.

A truck was intercepted on Barrackpore-Kalyani Expressway by a team of STF WB. It was coming from Odisha. After searching the vehicle a total of 243.600 Kgs of Cannabis has been recovered and seized. The same was kept hidden under huge number of cement laden sacks in the truck.

Two persons have been arrested, namely:-(i) Golam Murselim @ Bijan Sarkar, (41 years) of P.S. Islampur, Dist.-Murshidabad & (ii) Swapan Das (53) of P.S. Raha, North 24 Parganas.

Both the arrested accused persons and seized alamat were produced yesterday (10.01.26) before Lt. ACJM, Bidhannagar and remanded in Police Custody for 10 days for further investigation.

The value of the seized contraband in the Grey market is more than Fifty lakh in Indian rupees.

Three Lawrence Bishnoi gang members arrested

MI News Service, Howrah: Howrah city police on Sunday night arrested three alleged members of the notorious Lawrence Bishnoi gang from the premises of Howrah, triggering a major breakthrough in a high-profile inter-state criminal case. The arrested accused have been identified as Karan Pathak, Tarandeep Singh and Akashdeep Singh, all residents of Punjab.

According to senior police sources, the trio is suspected to be directly involved in the murder of a kabaddi player in Punjab last month. Following the killing on December 15, the accused had reportedly gone underground, prompting an intensive manhunt by the Punjab Police's Special Task Force (STF). Investigators revealed that after the murder, the three accused fled Punjab and travelled to Kolkata via Gangtok in an apparent attempt to evade arrest. They are believed to have been hiding in and around the city for several days. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, police learned that the suspects were attempting to flee Kolkata by train from Howrah station late on Sunday night. Upon receiving the tip-off, the Punjab STF alerted the Golabari police station under Howrah City Police. A joint operation was immediately launched, and the station premises were placed under heightened surveillance. The suspects were identified and apprehended before they could escape.



Ashok Kumar Chakraborty, alias Mana Chakraborty, a senior leader of the All India Trinamool Congress in North Kolkata, expressed his views on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's 163rd birth anniversary. Social workers Khawaja Khairuddin alias Laddu, Mohammad Nizamuddin alias Raju, Manoj Karmakar, Sheikh Noor Hussain alias Rocky, Mohammad Rashid, and Mohammad Junaid were also present.

Chandannagar Police Commissionerate Organises Commissioner Cup Football Final and 'Run for Health 2026'



The match was formally inaugurated with the playing of the national anthem.

Police Commissioner Amit P. Javalgi, along with several senior police officers and other distinguished guests, was present at the venue. The dignitaries interacted with the players, shook hands with them on the field, and encouraged them ahead of the final clash.

At the prize distribution ceremony, the winning football team was awarded 50,000, while the runners-up team received 25,000, along with several other important prizes.

The events were organised to promote sportsmanship, physical fitness and community engagement reflecting the ideals of Swami Vivekananda.

The day began with 'Run for Health 2026', a fitness awareness run conducted in two categories—5 kilometres and 10 kilometres. A large number of participants took part in the race, highlighting the importance of physical fitness and healthy living.

Later in the afternoon, the final match of the Commissioner Cup 2025-26 Football Tournament was held at 3 pm.

Polarhat Palli Sangha's Football Match



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The events were organised to promote sportsmanship

Abhishek Pays Homage To Swami Vivekananda

MI News Service, Kolkata: Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee paid homage to Swami Vivekananda, both through a social media post and by visiting his ancestral house on Simla Street as part of the party's programme. In his message, Abhishek Banerjee said Swami Vivekananda's thoughts continue to illuminate India's moral and intellectual conscience. He emphasised that Swamiji's message of "service to humanity is service to the divine" remains profoundly relevant, especially at a time when identity-based divisions are being amplified.

Abhishek Banerjee wrote, 'On the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, I bow in reverence to a towering soul whose thoughts continue to illuminate India's moral and intellectual conscience. His call for strength rooted in compassion, for faith anchored in reason and for service driven by empathy remains profoundly relevant even today. Swamiji reminded us that to serve humanity is to serve the divine. At a time when divisions are amplified and identities weaponised, Swami Ji's message of universal brotherhood and harmony among faiths stands as a timeless guide.'

'No country more essential than India' US ambassador-designate Sergio Gor

From PG 1

India. In the months and years ahead, it is my goal as ambassador to pursue a very ambitious agenda. We will do this as true strategic partners, each bringing strength, respect, and leadership to the table," he said. Speaking on the ongoing negotiations of the India-US trade deal, Gor acknowledged that it was a challenging task and said he was determined to get it across the finish line.

"Many of you have asked me for an update on the ongoing trade deal negotiations. Both sides continue to actively engage. In fact, the next call on trade will occur tomorrow. India is the world's largest nation. So it's not an easy task to get this across the finish line," he said. Gor also announced that India will be a member of the Pax Silica alliance. "I am pleased to announce that India will be invited to join this group of nations as a full member next month," he said. The Pax Silica alliance is a US-led strategic initiative to build a secure, resilient and innovation driven silicon supply chain.

Ex-VP Dhankhar admitted to AIIMS after two bouts of unconsciousness

From PG 1 should get admitted for tests," an official said. Dhankhar had blacked out on multiple occasions in the past, including in the Rann of Kutch, Uttarakhand, Kerala and the national capital while attending public events as the Vice President. Dhankhar, also a former Governor of West Bengal, had quit as the Vice President on July 21 citing health grounds.

Mamata pays homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Birth Anniversary

From PG 1 patriotic young men and women of our country." She said "Swamiji believed that the youth are the architects of a nation's destiny. Our government is committed to empowering them with education, skills, and opportunities to lead them into a new era of progress. Let us resolve to "Arise, Awake, and Stop not until the goal is reached." and Stop not until the goal is reached."

Mamata Banerjee Writes Fifth Letter to EC Alleges Voter Harassment in SIR Process

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written a fifth letter to the Election Commission of India (ECI), alleging widespread harassment of voters during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. In her latest communication addressed to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Monday, Banerjee accused the Commission of ignoring statutory corrections made over the past two decades and forcing voters to re-establish their identity without valid grounds.

In the letter, the chief minister claimed that documents submitted by voters during the SIR process were not being acknowledged properly. She alleged that in several cases, no receipts or proof of submission were being issued, and later the same documents were marked as "Not Found" or "Unavailable in records". As a result, names of eligible voters were allegedly being deleted from the electoral rolls, causing serious distress and disenfranchisement. Banerjee described the revision process as



"fundamentally flawed" and warned that if the current methodology continued, the names of any voter could be removed arbitrarily at any time. She further alleged that errors during the digitisation of the 2002 voters' list, including the use of artificial intelligence, had led to the exclusion of genuine voters and created widespread confusion.

Raising procedural objections, the chief minister questioned why voters were being called for hearings despite having already been

mapped with the 2002 electoral rolls. She specifically cited cases where voters were summoned because the age difference between parents and children was recorded as 18 or 19 years, calling such actions unnecessary and unjustified. "In such cases, there is no requirement to issue hearing notices," she wrote, urging the Commission to immediately stop what she termed as voter harassment. This latest letter follows another communication sent by Banerjee just two days earlier,

in which she objected to the manner in which hearing notices were being issued under the SIR exercise. In that earlier letter, she had made serious allegations, claiming that the revision drive had already resulted in 77 deaths, four attempted suicides, and 17 cases of hospitalisation due to stress and illness.

According to Banerjee, the process was being carried out without adequate planning, leading to fear, intimidation, and an excessive workload on field-level staff. She alleged that over-reliance on technical data without proper human verification was compounding the problem. "I am deeply shocked and disturbed by the manner in which the Election Commission of India appears to be relentlessly harassing ordinary citizens," she wrote. The chief minister appealed to the Commission to immediately intervene and ensure that voters are not deprived of their democratic rights due to procedural lapses. The Election Commission has not yet issued a formal response to the latest letter.

TMC Launches 'Digital Jodhdha' Campaign Ahead of 2026 Polls

MI News Service, Kolkata:

The battleground of politics in West Bengal is rapidly shifting from the streets to smartphone screens, and the Trinamool Congress has stepped up its digital push ahead of the crucial 2026 Assembly elections. According to party sources, the ruling party has appointed at least 10 "digital warriors" per booth to counter opposition narratives and strengthen its presence across social media and digital platforms.

Officially branded as "Ami Banglar Digital Jodhdha" (I am Bengal's Digital Warrior), this initiative aims to create a well-organised, trained, and proactive digital force capable of responding swiftly to political attacks, misinformation, and alleged propaganda targeting the state and its leadership. The party believes that political battles today are no longer confined to rallies, protests, Parliament, or Assembly floors, but are increasingly being fought on mobile screens and social media timelines. Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has repeatedly stressed the im-

portance of the digital space in modern political discourse. He has accused "anti-Bengal forces" of spreading misinformation and running sustained smear campaigns on social media platforms. Addressing these concerns, the party has decided to sharpen its digital strategy by making it more professional, coordinated, and grassroots-driven.

As part of this initiative, a special workshop and conference of digital warriors will be held on Monday at Milan Mela in Kolkata. Abhishek Banerjee is scheduled to personally interact with party workers who have been actively fighting online political battles across platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube.

During the session, discussions will focus on content creation, narrative building, fact-checking, and rapid response mechanisms. Party insiders say Abhishek will provide clear guidance on how to effectively highlight the Trinamool government's development initiatives and welfare schemes. A key

SC Issues Notice to ECI Over SIR in Bengal

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Supreme Court on Monday issued a notice to the Election Commission of India (ECI) in connection with a plea challenging the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in West Bengal. The notice was issued following petitions filed by Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MPs Derek O'Brien and Dola Sen, raising concerns over alleged irregularities in the voter list revision process.

The matter came up for hearing before a division bench comprising Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi. The bench took up the petitions separately filed by the two MPs, who questioned the manner in which the SIR exercise is being conducted in the state. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal appeared before the court on behalf of the petitioners.

During the hearing, Kapil Sibal alleged serious lapses and procedural irregularities on the part of the Election Commission in carrying out the SIR process. He informed the court that many of the instructions related to the revision exercise were allegedly being communicated through WhatsApp messages, which, according to him, amounted to institutional impropriety. Sibal argued that such a mode of communication undermines transparency and accountability in an exercise as sensitive as voter list revision.



AITC National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee garlanded and paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda at his house in Kolkata.

ED files second writ petition before Supreme Court over I-PAC raids

From PG 1

team of the Directorate of Enforcement," it added. The State Police have filed four cases against the ED on the day of the high-voltage face-off during the search operations in Kolkata. The ED has also appealed to the Supreme Court to stay these cases against its officials. The ED raided 10 premises -- six in West Bengal and four in Delhi -- as part of a 2020 case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against a coal-smuggling syndicate led by Anup

Majhi, alias "Lala", who allegedly stole and illegally excavated coal from the Eastern Coalfield leasehold areas in and around Ansals in Paschim Bardhaman district. A hawala operator linked to coal smuggling allegedly facilitated transactions of tens of crores of rupees to the Indian PAC Consulting Private Limited, the registered company of political consultancy firm I-PAC, the probe agency has said. The I-PAC is also one of the entities linked to hawala money, the ED has alleged.

DRDO Successfully Tests Indigenous Third-Generation MPATGM



MI News Service, Kolkata: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted a flight test of a third-generation Fire-and-Forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) with top-attack capability. The test was conducted against a moving target at the KK Ranges in Ahilya Nagar, Maharashtra, marking a major milestone in India's indigenous missile development programme. The MPATGM has been developed by DRDO's Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad, in collaboration with several sister laboratories. The missile incorporates cutting-edge indigenous technologies, including an Imaging Infrared (IIR) homing seeker, an all-electric control actuation system, an advanced fire control system, a tandem warhead, a high-performance propulsion system and a modern sighting system. Key contributing laboratories include Research Centre IMA, Hyderabad; Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory, Chandigarh; High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Pune; and Instruments Research & Development Establishment, Dehradun. To simulate a realistic battlefield scenario, the target tank was equipped with a Thermal Target System developed by Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur.



Firefighters battle a blaze after a fire broke out at shops outside Baghajatin railway station in south Kolkata.

ISRO's PSLV-C62 rocket deviates from flight path, misses orbit

From PG 1

space, ISRO sources said adding this was the second consecutive PSLV mission failure during the third stage. A similar, previous attempt in May 2025 (PSLV-C61-EOS-09) also did not succeed due to "motor pressure issue," and there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case.

A former top ISRO scientist said it would take some time for the space agency to collect data, analyse, understand what happened and make necessary corrections. It is expected that ISRO would officially release the findings in the days to come, he said requesting anonymity. To a query, he said, "it is a setback as the satellites did not reach the intended orbit at 512 km in space and all satellites lost in space may be drifting as space debris." As the 22.5-hour countdown concluded on Monday morning, the 44.4 metre tall four-stage rocket lifted off as scheduled at 10.18 am from the spaceport here. The mission was to deploy a primary Earth Observation satellite and multiple co-passenger satellites into a 512 km Sun-Synchronous Orbit, after a flight journey of about 17 minutes. The automatic launch sequence commenced following approval from the mission director. ISRO scientists provided real-time updates as the vehicle as

PM Modi, German Chancellor Merz begin talks, pay tributes to Mahatma Gandhi

From PG 1

the visitors, it said, adding that the festival in Ahmedabad will continue till January 14. Last year, the festival attracted more than 3.83 lakh visitors across Gujarat. Through the 'International Kite Festival', Gujarat Tourism is attracting visitors to leading cultural and tourist destinations, such as Dholavira and the Statue of Unity. More than five lakh tourists are expected to visit Gujarat to witness the International Kite Festival this year, the release added. Following the arrival of Chancellor Friedrich Merz directly to Ahmedabad from Berlin on his first visit not only to India but to Asia after taking over as the German Chancellor last year, both he and Prime Minister Modi are set to discuss ways to further boost bilateral ties in trade, investment, critical technologies and defence. Merz's maiden trip to India 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. The two leaders during the talks will also review the progress made in the India-Germany Strategic Partnership, which completed 25 years recently.

"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. 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 looking at deepening economic ties 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 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 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.

Name Change

I, Kakoli Biswas (Old Name) D/o Bipul Biswas Residing at Rabindranath Colony, 1 No Ward, Kalyani, District - Nadia, Pin - 741235, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Kakali Biswas (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 09/01/2026. Kakoli Biswas (Old Name) and Kakali Biswas (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Dulal Singha (Old Name), Son Of Arjun Singha, Residing At 82 Ajay Nagar,Dum Dum, South Dum Dum (M), Motijheel, North 24 parganas - 7000 - 74, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Dulal Chandra Singha (New Name) Vde An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 09/01/2026.Dulal Singha And Dulal Chandra Singha Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Aditi Chatterjee (Old Name) W/o Tapash Roy Residing at 38/4, Raipur Road, P.o - Regent Estate, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700092, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Aditi Chatterjee Roy (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 09/01/2026. Aditi Chatterjee (Old Name) and Aditi Chatterjee Roy (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sk Rahim S/o Late Sk Abdulla & Amina Begum Residing at 18/2/H/3,Mominpur Road, P.S. Ekbalpore,Kolkata-700023.That My Voter id No.WB/23/147/429215 me & my father's name was wrongly recorded as Ramesh Panja S/O Mangal Panja. But My & My father's actual name is Sk Rahim S/o Late Sk Abdulla recorded in my birth certificate issued by K.M.C. vide an affidavit before the LD.Judicial Magistrate 1st class at Alipur.date-09.01.2026,affidavit no.2867.That Sk Rahim S/o Late Sk Abdulla & Ramesh Panja S/O Mangal Panja both are the same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

In the birth certificate, (Regn. No- 3869 Dated 28-01-1998 Dhanyakuria B.P.H.C) the name appears as Abdul Selim, S/o-Moktar Ali. On 17-09-2025, in Barasat, before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate's Court, through affidavit no. 5773, I, declare that Abdul Selim Mondal, S/o-Moktar Ali Mondal & Abdul Selim, S/o- Moktar Ali is the same & identical person.

NAME CHANGE

In birth certificate (Regn no-899, dt of Resi 17-04-1995 Dhanyakuria B.P.H.C) my name has been recorded as ABDULLA , s/o MOKATAR ALI MONDAL & MSD KOHINUR MONDAL. On 17-09-2025 vide affidavit no 5762 before the Court of 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Barasat that ABDULLA MONDAL, S/O MOKATAR ALI MONDAL & ABDULLA, S/o MD. MOKTAR MONDAL & my mother KOHINOR BIBI & MSD KOHINUR MONDAL is the same & one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, BABU RAM MONDAL, S/o- Late Tarak Mondal, residing at Vill- Kalikapuri, P.O.-Majlispur, P.S.- Shasan, Dist. North 24 Parganas, Pin 743423, WB, do hereby declare that inadvertently my name has been written in my Voter Identity Card being No.WB/13/092/261462 issued by the Election Commission of India as AJIT MONDAL. On 10/02/25 vide affidavit no 566 before the Court of 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Barasat, I affirm that BABU RAM MONDAL & AJIT MONDAL is the same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, Tarak Mukherjee, S/o- Lt. Shubhankar Mukherjee (Aadhar & Voter ID Card), R/o- Present-5030/B, Shironam Paro Road, P.O- B.D. Sopan, P.S- Khardah, Dist. 24 Pgs. (N)-700111, Permanent Add- Vill- Deulvira, P.O- Naba Deulvira, P.S- Indupur, Dist-Bankura-722136, WB, declare that my & my Father's actual name & surname has been recorded in P.P.O. as Tarak Nath Mukherjee & S/o Shubhankar Mukherjee, vide Affidavit St. No.54, dt.25.11.2025, in the Court of Lt. Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, at Barrackpore, 24 Pgs. (N), That, Tarak Mukherjee & Tarak Nath Mukherjee and Lt. Shubhankar Mukherjee & Shubhankar Mukherjee all are the same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, Dhananjay Adak, S/O- Lt. Kanaiyal Adak, residing at Vill- Machinan, P/O- Gopalnagar, P/S- Golaghat, Dist- Purba Medinipur. That in my D/R card & Land record my name has been recorded as Dhananjay Adak & Sannya Adak Which are incorrect. So vide Affidavit before the Lt. 1st class J.M at Tamluk dt- 07/08/2019 (No.6856) that Dhananjay Adak & Dhananjay Adak are same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, DIPANKAR NASKAR, S/o Balaram Naskar, residing at Vill- Chapramari, P.O- Nayabed, P.S- Narendrapur (Sonarpur), Dist- South 24 Parganas, Kolkata-700150, do hereby declare in my daughter DIPTI NASKAR's Birth Certificate (Registration No.285 dated 16.02.2016 issued by Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality) my name has been inadvertently recorded as BABU SONA NASKAR which is my nick name in place of my actual & original name is DIPANKAR NASKAR. On 11/01/2021 vide affidavit no.2137 before the Court of 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Baruipur I affirm that DIPANKAR NASKAR & BABU SONA NASKAR is the same & one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, NIPANIKAR NASKAR, S/o Balaram Naskar, residing at Vill- Chapramari, P.O- Nayabed, P.S- Narendrapur (Sonarpur), Dist- South 24 Parganas, Kolkata-700150, do hereby declare in my daughter DIPTI NASKAR's Birth Certificate (Registration No.285 dated 16.02.2016 issued by Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality) my name has been inadvertently recorded as BABU SONA NASKAR which is my nick name in place of my actual & original name is DIPANKAR NASKAR. On 11/01/2021 vide affidavit no.2137 before the Court of 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Baruipur I affirm that DIPANKAR NASKAR & BABU SONA NASKAR is the same & one identical person.

Name Change

I, S Mukherjee (old name) S/o Late Subodh Mukherjee , Residing at Colonels Farm , Theru, Hanamondi Dhae Near Talpukur,Gokulpur, PO: Chanditala, Hooghly,Pin 712702, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Subrata Mukherjee (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 09/01/2026. Subrata Mukherjee (new name) and S Mukherjee (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Mobarek Mal (Old Name),Son Of Khairuddin Mal,Residing At Marakpur,Prithibha Habra, P.O- 24 Parganas-743704,West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Mobarek Hossain Mal(New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 09/01/2026.Mobarek Mal And Mobarek Hossain Mal Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Snigdha Banerjee Deoy(Old Name), Wife Of Sudip Banerjee,Residing At 74/4 A.P.C Roy Road,33/13 Kamal Park,Birati, Kolkata - 7000 51,West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Snigdha Banerjee(New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 09/01/2026.Snigdha Banerjee Deoy And Snigdha Banerjee Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Jamat Ali (Old Name),Son Of Rayhan Mondal,Residing At Vill-Tola- P/o-Baidyapur, P.S-Kalna, Bardhaman- 713122,West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Jamat Ali Mondal(New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 08/01/2026.Jamat Ali And Jamat Ali Mondal Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Kalpana Datta (Old Name), D/o Baidyapuri, Residing At 5A-Flat-5C,54/10 D C Dey Road, P.O & P- Tantora,Kolkata - 700015,have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Pushpa Devi (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 09/01/2026.Pushpa Devi (new name) and Pushpa Prasad & Pushpa Kesri (old names) all are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sayani Basu (Old Name), Wife Of Sourav Basu,Residing At Mebar Road, Chinsurah, Hooghly - 712101,West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Sayani Datta Basu (New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 12/12/2025.Sayani Basu And Sayani Datta Basu Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Nazma & Naima(Old Name), Wife Of Nehru Khan, Residing At Chak Alampur, Po-Alampur Ps-Nodakhali, South 24 Parganas-743318, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth be known as Troy Chakraborty as per the declaration affirmed before the Learned First Class Judicial Magistrate At Alipore Court, via Affidavit No. 9615, dated: 20.05.2025.Neel Chakraborty and Neil Chakraborty is the same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Nazma & Naima(Old Name), Wife Of Nehru Khan, Residing At Chak Alampur, Po-Alampur Ps-Nodakhali, South 24 Parganas-743318, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth be known as Troy Chakraborty as per the declaration affirmed before the Learned First Class Judicial Magistrate At Alipore Court, via Affidavit No. 9615, dated: 20.05.2025.Neel Chakraborty and Troy Chakraborty are one and the same identical person.

Name Change

I, Jagadish Saha (old name) son of Pyari Mohan Saha, residing at Ward No. 18, Agartala College Road, Shabnur, Agartala, Tripura - 799004, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Jagadish Chandra Saha (new name) as declared before The Notary Public at Kolkata on 09/01/2026. Jagadish Saha (old name) and Jagadish Chandra Saha (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Shamim Akhtar (Old Name) S/o Neyamatullah Residing at G/1, B L No. 05, Kankinara, Bhatpara (M), P.O- B.D. Sopan, P.S- Khardah, Dist. 24 Pgs. (N)-700111, Permanent Add- Vill- Deulvira, P.O- Naba Deulvira, P.S- Indupur, Dist-Bankura-722136, WB, declare that my & my Father's actual name & surname has been recorded in P.P.O. as Tarak Nath Mukherjee & S/o Shubhankar Mukherjee, vide Affidavit St. No.54, dt.25.11.2025, in the Court of Lt. Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, at Barrackpore, 24 Pgs. (N), That, Tarak Mukherjee & Tarak Nath Mukherjee and Lt. Shubhankar Mukherjee & Shubhankar Mukherjee all are the same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sahidul Islam Molla (Old Name) S/o Late Eman Ali Molla Residing at Vill - Dharsa Moktarpur, Dist- 24 Parganas, Pin - 700135, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Md. Sahidul Islam Molla (New Name) as declared before The Notary Public at Kolkata on 09/01/2026. Sahidul Islam Molla (Old Name) and Md. Sahidul Islam Molla (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Rajeev Agarwal (Old Name) S/o Chandri Prasad Agarwal Residing at Flat No-2A, 34B, Shub Krishna Deb Lane, Po - Kankurgachi, Ps - Phool Bagam, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700054, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Rajeev Kumar Agarwal (New Name) as declared before The Notary Public at Kolkata on 09/01/2026. Rajeev Kumar Agarwal (New Name) and Rajeev Kumar Agarwal (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Md. Rafik Khan, son of Late Harali Khan, residing at Vill - Ghuni, Po - Chakpati, Ps - Hasnabad, North 24 parganas - 743426(Parmarit Address), and Katiarpur, Champa-pur, North 24 Parganas - 743291, West Bengal(Present Address), have changed my mother name Pachi Bibi(Old Name) to Neharjan Khan(New Name) and she shall henceforth be known as Neharjan Khan vide an affidavit No.32241 sworn before the Lt 1st Class Judicial Magistrate At Basirhat on 19/12/2015.Pachi Bibi and Neharjan Khan both are the same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Md. Tanweer Rahman, Residing At 1/2/1, West Chobhoga, Block A, Flat-1/F, Kolkata - 700105, West Bengal, Do hereby Notified That My Father Sk Doma Shall Henceforth Be Known As Md Sayeed Rahman Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Lt 1st Class Judicial Magistrate At Alipore on 08/01/2026.Sk Doma and Md Sayeed Rahman Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Md. Naseem, Residing At 1/2/1, West Chobhoga, Block A, Flat-1/F, Kolkata - 700105, West Bengal, Do hereby Notified That My Father Sk Doma Shall Henceforth Be Known As Md Sayeed Rahman Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Lt 1st Class Judicial Magistrate At Alipore on 08/01/2026.Sk Doma and Md Sayeed Rahman Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Bihar jewellers to bar sales to customers wearing BURQA, HIJAB

MI News Service, Patna: Jewellery shops across Bihar may refuse entry and sales to customers whose faces are covered, citing security concerns amid a spate of robberies and soaring prices of precious metals.

The Bihar unit of the All India Jewellers and Goldsmith Federation (AIJGF) said it has asked its members not to display or sell ornaments to customers who enter shops wearing hijabs, burqas, naqabs, scarves, masks or helmets unless their faces are visible for identification. Announcing the decision, Ashok Kumar Verma, president of the AIJGF Bihar, said the directive was "purely driven by security considerations" and was not aimed at any particular community or religious group. "We have decided not to sell items to customers who enter with their faces covered. Unless the customer's face is visible for identification at the time of purchase, their entry into the shop will be restricted," Verma told re-

porters in Patna. Clarifying the scope of the move, Verma said the rule would apply equally to men and women.

"The federation is not imposing a ban on hijab or burqa. We are only requesting customers to show their faces for identification. This applies to everyone, including men who cover their faces with scarves or helmets," he said. Jewellers argue that the measure has become necessary in view of repeated thefts involving masked criminals. "If customers enter jewellery shops with their faces covered, we cannot identify them. The move will also help police ascertain identities through CCTV footage in case of any theft," Verma said. He cited recent incidents to underline the concern, including a robbery in which ornaments worth about Rs 25 crore were looted from a jewellery outlet in Bhojpur district in March last year, and another robbery at a jewellery shop in Siwan district in November.

Name Change

MI News Service, Kolkata: Malaysia Airlines' growing network, inviting travellers to discover both new destinations and familiar favourites. Travellers can connect seamlessly to global cities including Sydney, Seoul, and Shanghai, as well as regional escapes such as Cebu, Siem Reap, and Krabi via sister airline Firefly from KLIA Terminal 1. This is further enriched with Malaysia Airlines' Bonus Side Trip (BST) programme, which transforms stopovers into opportunities to discover Malaysia - from the cultural charm of Penang to the pristine beaches of Langkawi - positioning Kuala Lumpur as a welcoming gateway to journeys across Asia and beyond as part of Visit Malaysia 2026. Guests flying on Malaysia Airlines' next-generation A330neo aircraft to destinations including Tokyo, Bali, Melbourne, Sydney, and Auckland can look forward to an enhanced onboard experience designed around comfort and thoughtful details. The aircraft features ergonomically designed seats and large, high-definition in-flight entertainment screens, delivering a more comfortable and seamless journey and supporting the airline's continued fleet modernisation efforts.

Name Change

MI News Service, Kolkata: Justice Sujoy Paul has been appointed as the new Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, ending his tenure as the Acting Chief Justice. The Supreme Court Collegium formally approved his name for the post during its meeting held on January 9. Justice Paul had been discharging the responsibilities of Acting Chief Justice following the retirement of Justice T.S. Sivagnanam, who demitted office as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court

Before Justice Paul took over as Acting Chief Justice, the position was held by Justice Soumen Sen. Justice Sen was subsequently recommended for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court. After the recommendation was implemented, Justice Sujoy Paul was entrusted with the responsibility of Acting Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, which he continued to hold until his formal elevation. Justice Sujoy Paul was born into a Bengali family but spent most of his early life in Madhya Pradesh. He completed his schooling at L.S. Jha Model School before pursuing higher education in Jabalpur. He obtained his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur, and later completed his Bachelor of Laws (LLB), laying a strong academic foundation for his legal career.

The incident sparked a national debate on academic freedom, historical interpretation and responsibility of publishers, and led to the withdrawal of the book from circulation in India. OUP India's apology marks a rare public acknowledgment related to the long-running controversy. After practising as an advocate for several years, Justice Paul was appointed as a judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court at Jabalpur in 2011. He served the court for more than a decade, gaining recognition for his judicial acumen and administrative experience.



Thousands of pilgrims are heading towards Gangasagar from across the country on Monday, for a week-long pilgrimage at the confluence of Bay of Bengal.

CRPF Deployed at ED's New Town Office After I-PAC Row



MI News Service, Kolkata: Security has been significantly tightened at the CGO Complex in New Town, which currently houses the Enforcement Directorate (ED), following recent developments linked to the I-PAC controversy. After the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) shifted out of the premises, the complex had no deployment of central armed forces and security was being handled by a private agency. However, in the aftermath of the I-PAC-related incident, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to enhance security by deploying Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in place of the private guards.

Two-Day Gayatri Mahayagna Concludes



MI News Service, New Delhi: Congress on Monday distanced itself from the ruling Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) protest against the Centre, labelling it as a "fake agitation" to "tease" the people of Kerala.

Congress distances itself from LDF protest against Centre, calls it "fake agitation"

MI News Service, New Delhi: Congress on Monday distanced itself from the ruling Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) protest against the Centre, labelling it as a "fake agitation" to "tease" the people of Kerala.

Kerala assembly Leader of Opposition VD Satheshan alleged the "nexus" between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), while questioning the timing of the protest.

Speaking with ANI, VD Satheshan said, "This is a fake agitation because there is an unholy nexus between CPM in Kerala and Sangh Parivar in Delhi. Now, before the election, this agitation before elections is just to tease people."

Additionally, Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal questioned the seriousness of the agitation at the "fake" end of their term.

"I could've appreciated that if they had done this type of agitation continuously in the last ten years. If they were sincere in fighting against the central government, there

were several avenues. They didn't use that at all. Now at the fake end of their governance, what's the point of it?" KC Venugopal said.

The ruling Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), under the leadership of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, held a protest against the central government on Monday, alleging "discrimination" by withholding the necessary funds of the state.

Speaking with ANI, Kerala Excise Minister MB Rajesh alleged that the BJP-led central government has "reduced grants" and "delayed payments" on several central schemes. He was also accused of not extending support during the Wayanad landslides.

"This is against discrimination by the Modi-led govt against Kerala. They have reduced grants to Kerala and delayed payments on several central schemes and also cut short the state's borrowing limits," he said.

"When calamity happened, Centre did not allow us to take foreign aid and contributions... Centre did not support us in the recent Wayanad landslides. Kerala govt rebuilt Wayanad mainly through contributions by people in CM relief fund," he added.

Communist Party of India (CPI) leader Binoy Viswam accused the BJP government of "treating Kerala as a stranger" by not providing the state "its due share" of the national wealth.

"The Union government believes that Kerala is not a part of India. We want to say categorically that we are a part of India. We have a right to get our due share of the national wealth. It is the right of all states. India is a federal republic of which Kerala is an inseparable part... We believe we are Indians, but they treat us as strangers because they don't know the meaning of India. India is a great idea, where people, irrespective of their state, economic status, are Indians. Let the Modi govt know this," Binoy Viswam said.

The protest comes as the state prepares for its Legislative Assembly elections, expected to be held in April 2026 to elect 140 members of the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

MI News Service, Kolkata: The 11-Kundiva Rashtriya Shaurya Samridhi Gayatri Mahayagna, organized under the auspices of the Gayatri Temple, BNR, Rail Colony, Garden Reach Road, con-

Assam State Zoo authorities take precautionary measures to keep animals warm amid winter

MI News Service, Guwahati: The authority of Assam State Zoo and Botanical Garden has

taken precautionary measures to keep animals warm during the winter season. The zoo authority has installed heaters, stables, and high-powered electric bulbs to keep animals warm. Rajani Kanta Deka, Head Animal Keeper of Assam State Zoo, told ANI that they have installed heaters for lions, tigers and other wild animals.

Head Animal Keeper of Assam State Zoo, Rajani Kanta Deka, said, "We are providing stables for animals in the Guwahati State Zoo. We have provided heaters for lions and tigers. The heaters are on for 24 hours. They are kept under the sun in the morning, and at night heaters are provided in the night shed. This has been done as per the direction of the Assam State Zoo director. For animals like tortoises, we have provided stables."

"We have installed heaters for the maximum number of animals. We have also arranged electric bulbs for snakes, birds," Rajani Kanta Deka said.

He further said that, at As-

sam State Zoo, several animals, including lions, giraffes, tigers, and rhinos, gave birth, and several cubs were also born, and the animal breeding process is also going on.

"Many animals are giving birth to young ones. You will find many cubs. A giraffe has given birth to a calf. Tigers and rhinos have also given birth. The breeding programme is going on. We have given several animals in the exchange programme. Rhino has given birth to two calves, and more are expected at the year's end. We are in talks with the Central Zoo Authority. We are trying to bring zebras and kangaroos," he further added.

Blankets have been laid on the enclosure floors to protect animals from cold overnight temperatures, and heaters and bulbs have been installed to provide additional warmth.

The authority of the state zoo has taken special measures to protect animals.

Assam State Zoo occupies an area of 175 hectares of land in the middle of Guwahati city, and the botanical garden in the state zoos spreads over an area of 82 hectares of land.

Protest erupts in Shimla after death of Aanganwadi worker during Pulse Polio duty

MI News Service, Shimla: Under the banner of the Aanganwadi Workers and Helpers Union, affiliated with CITU, Aanganwadi workers from the Chakkhar, New Shimla, and Sanjauli circles of the ICDS Project Shimla staged a strong protest outside the DPO office in Nigam Vihar, Shimla.

The protest demanded justice and compensation for Aanganwadi worker Harsha, who died while on duty, and called for ensuring the safety of Aanganwadi workers and departmental accountability, along with other demands. CITU State President Vijender Mehra, District Secretary Vivek Kashyap, and Office Secretary Ram Prakash also participated in the protest.

Following the protest, the union submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister through the Child Development Project Officer, Shimla.

Union leaders Hardei Devi, Meena Devi, Lalita Devi, Promilla, Sandhya, and Pushpa Rohal stated that the death of Aanganwadi worker Harsha in the Tar-

Congress's top brass to discuss West Bengal elections on Jan 17

MI News Service, Kolkata: A meeting between the Congress leadership and West Bengal Congress leaders will be held in Delhi on January 17. Their discussions will centre around election preparations and alliances in the state.

Reacting to the searches, Sarkar said I-PAC has been working in West Bengal for nearly a decade and questioned the timing of the ED action. "I-PAC has been working in Bengal for 10 years. What is the reason for the ED raids just before the elections? So many cases are pending. ED can go there. There is no issue with it. But today, the BJP is misusing ED people," he said to ANI.

He also questioned Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's presence at the I-PAC office during the raids, asking, "Why did the Chief Minister go there? ED raids happen in many places, but Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee does not go everywhere. So why did she go there, and that too with the Police Commissioner?" Sarkar further alleged that central agencies were being selectively used for political purposes.

"After raids, many people flock to join, and cases against them close. Why is the CM going there? TMC and BJP wanted to do binary politics in the state," he added.

The remarks come amid political drama in West Bengal after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited the offices of the political consultancy firm I-PAC on Thursday, even as the ED was conducting searches in connection with the coal smuggling case.

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itel Partners with Lallantop to Present Bihar Adda - A Mega Cultural Festival for All

Patna : itel, one of India's leading tech brands of India, has partnered with Lallantop as a co-sponsor for the Lallantop Bihar Adda. The on-ground public forum brought together for an open conversation with audiences from across Bihar. The Bihar Adda brought together an impressive line-up of prominent voices from cinema, education and popular culture, creating an electrifying atmosphere for attendees. The much-awaited mega-event took place on 10th January at the iconic Bapu Sabhagar in Patna's Gandhi Maidan and was inaugurated by the Chief Secretary of Bihar, Shri Prataya Amrit. The star student event was also graced by the presence of deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Samrat Chowdhary.

Famous actors like Pawan Singh, Puklit Samrat and Amrapali Dubey lit up the stage, while captivating performances by social media star Satish Ray and RJ Anjali left the crowd enthralled. Building on the momentum of past events, this year's Lallantop Adda drew a massive footfall from students, young professionals, creators, and families - adding yet another memorable chapter to the event's vibrant legacy. The event was a live, interactive platform that reflected the region's socio-political pulse through candid discussions, storytelling, and audience engagement. itel's association with the Lallantop Bihar Adda closely aligns with its broader commitment of building deeply resonant connections with consumers through culturally relevant platforms. This partnership between itel and The Lallantop Adda is a testament to itel's dedication towards empowering masses of Bharat by providing access to durable and reliable technology.

About itel

Established over 16 years, itel is a reliable smart life brand for everyone. Adopting "Enjoy Better Life" as its brand philosophy, itel's mission is to provide budget-friendly consumer electronic products to everyone. It democratizes technology by giving entry to technology and connectedness to consumers without prior access to it. After more than 16 years of development, itel has expanded its presence in more than 50 emerging markets globally. itel has a product portfolio of smartphones, TV, accessories, electrics, speakers, home appliances and laptop products and in 2021, it ranked No.1 Global Smartphone brand under \$75 and No.1 feature phone brand.

Males born to obese moms more likely to develop health issues as adults: Research

WASHINGTON DC IUSI : Males born to obese mothers are more likely to be overweight at birth and suffer metabolic issues later in life, such as liver disease or diabetes.

The way that male sex hormones activate pathways in the developing liver is partly to blame.

That's the finding from a new study led by University of South Australia (UniSA) researchers looking at the impact of maternal obesity on fetal liver androgen signalling.

Male fetuses of obese pregnant women have different signals that are activated by male sex hormones in the liver, which encourages them to prioritise growth at the expense of their health.

UniSA researcher Dr Ashley Meakin says androgens give men their male characteristics and are crucial in their development, but if there are too many, male fetuses grow too large, causing not only problems at birth, but impacting liver function as an adult.

Female fetuses exposed to excess testosterone from an obese pregnancy are wired to switch off the androgen pathway in the liver, restricting their growth and lowering the risks of metabolic disorders in adulthood.

"We know there are sex differences in metabolic disorders in later life in response to maternal obesity," Dr Meakin says.

"Men are more prone to non-alcohol fatty liver diseases and diabetes as an adult if their mother is obese during pregnancy and their birth weight is above 4 kg (9 lb 15 oz)."

"They are genetically wired to prioritise androgens because it supports the development of male characteristics - including size - but too much androgen is bad."

Study lead author Professor Janna Morrison, Head of the Early Origins of Adult Health Research Group at UniSA, says it's a fine balance for women getting the right nutrition in pregnancy to ensure optimal conditions for their unborn child to flourish.

"There are also risks for offspring being malnourished during pregnancy," she says. "If you are too little, too big, born too early, or a male, you are more vulnerable to negative outcomes later in life. You need the Goldilocks pregnancy: you must be the right size, born at the right time."

Prof Morrison says unless society changes its approach to nutrition, it will be an uphill battle to reduce obesity and associated health issues, from the womb into adulthood.

"As a society, we urgently need to address obesity. If children were taught early on about the importance of healthy eating, it would carry through into adulthood, including during pregnancy, where the right nutrition is so important."

Dr Meakin says in the intervening period, supplements that address nutritional imbalances in pregnancy could provide the fetus with the best chance of optimal development.

The liver androgen signalling study, recently published in Life Sciences, is among a series of studies by Prof Morrison and colleagues that investigates the impact of maternal under- and over-nutrition on the placenta, heart, lung, and liver.

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

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

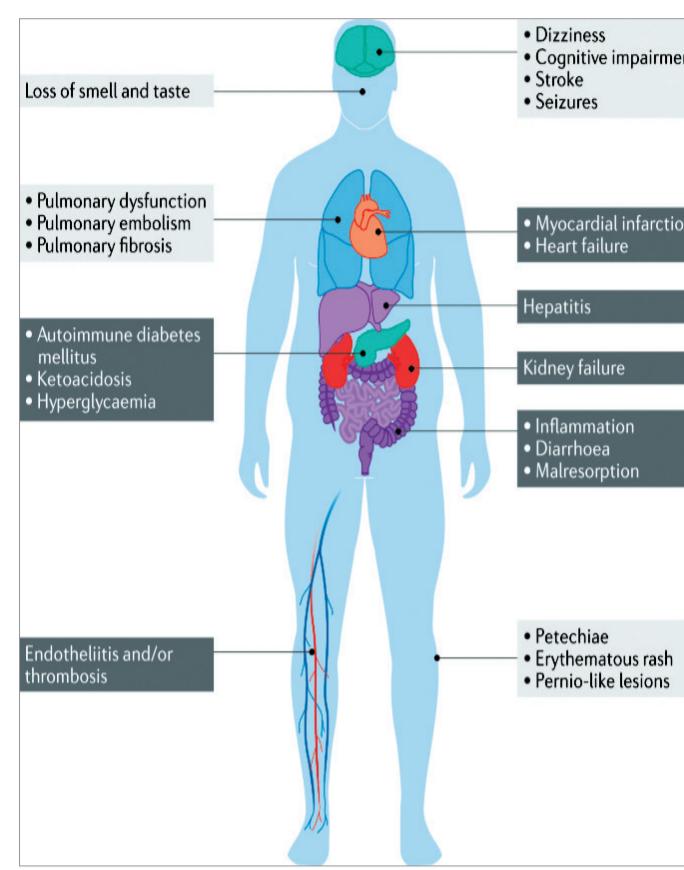
The research will be presented at the annual meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) in Madrid, Spain (9-13 September).

The study by Rhian Hopkins and Ethan de Villiers, of the University of Exeter Medical School, University of Exeter, Exeter, in the United Kingdom, there is evidence to support the link between severe illnesses and a higher BMI. In contrast, there was no evidence that mild hyperglycaemia contributes to the likelihood of a severe infection.

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

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

"If one or both of these factors can be shown to be causal, it may be possible to design interventions to lower the risk of severe infections in those at high risk, such as people with diabetes." The new study used data from the UK Biobank, which holds medical and genetic data on around 500,000 people in the UK, to explore the effect of higher BMI and poor blood sugar control on hospitalisation for bacterial and viral infections. The 486,924 participants were classified into three groups: those with a record of hospitalisation for a bacterial infection, such as pneumonia or a urinary tract infection, (n=64,005) or a viral infection, such as flu, (n=14,562) and an infection-free control group (n=408,357). A higher BMI was found to be associated with hospitalisation with infections. The



likelihood of being hospitalised with a bacterial infection increased by 30 per cent per 5-point increase in BMI (for instance, an increase in BMI from 30 kg/m² to 35 kg/m²). Similarly, every five-point increase in BMI was associated with a 32 per cent increase in the likelihood of a severe viral infection. Mild hyperglycaemia was also found to be associated with severe infections. The likelihood of being hospitalised with a bacterial infection increased by 32 per cent per 10mmol/mol increase in HbA_{1c}, a measure of blood sugar levels. Similarly, every 10mmol/mol increase in HbA_{1c} was associated with a 29 per cent increase in the likelihood of a severe viral infection. The team then used Mendelian randomisation, a technique that uses genetic information to establish whether a factor actually causes ill health, to determine if the relationships were causal. This suggested that a higher BMI is one of the causes of severe bacterial and viral infections. However, mild hyperglycaemia did not appear to be a cause of severe infections.

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

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

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

The objective of the 'DAWN' Scheme-2025 is to protect youth from drug abuse : Judicial Commissioner



Ranchi : Under the guidance of Hon'ble Mr. Justice-cum-Executive Chairman, JHALSA, Mr. Sujit Narayan Prasad, and under the leadership of Hon'ble Judicial Commissioner, Ranchi, Mr. Anil Kumar Mishra-1, the legal awareness programme to protect youth from drug abuse, under the NALSA Scheme 'DAWN-2025', concluded today, January 12, 2026. On the occasion of the closing ceremony, a special youth conference and seminar were organized, in which Hon'ble Judicial Anil Kumar Mishra-1, Mr. Atul Gera, Head of Life Savers NGO, Mr. Sharif Umar, Superintendent NCB, Mr. Rakesh Raushan, Secretary, DLSA, Mr. Prashant Kumar Verma, Registrar-cum-Judge-in-Charge, members of LADCS, renowned artist and director of Kalakriti School, Mr. Dhananjay Kumar and students of Kalakriti School, stu-

dents of Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School, PLVs and others were present. The closing ceremony was inaugurated by lighting the lamp. The stage was managed by the DLSA Secretary and the anchoring was done by Roshni Sharma.

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice said that the legal awareness program under the NALSA Scheme-2025, which ran from January 5, 2026 to January 12, 2026, to protect youth from drug abuse, concluded today with the celebration of National Youth Day. Today, the students present should draw inspiration from the teachings of Swami Vivekananda so that they can strengthen the values of discipline, character, and service. The Honorable Judicial Commissioner also discussed with the children present the dangers of drug abuse and its harmful effects.

It is noteworthy that the Honorable Justice himself presented certificates and shields to the students of Kalakriti School and Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School. Other dignitaries on the stage also presented certificates to the children.

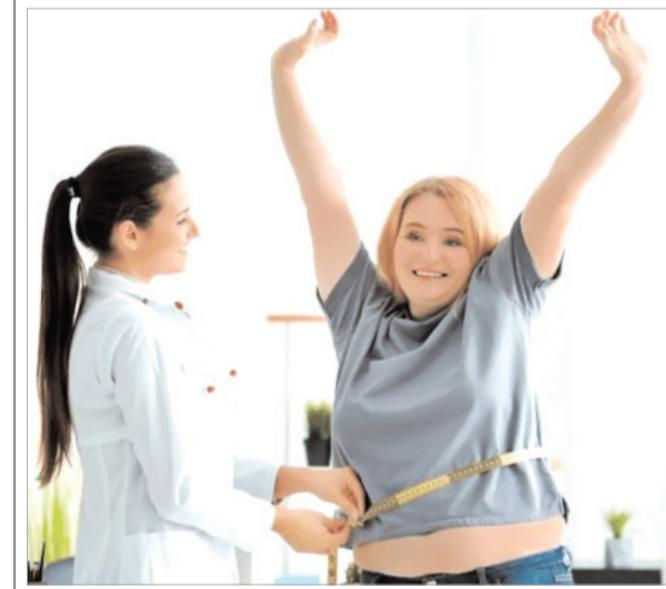
In the painting competition at Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School, Kanke, Ranchi, Jaya Kumari received the first prize, Shweta Kumari the second, and Kritika Kumari the third prize and certificates. In the essay competition (senior section), Sandeepa Kumari Bedia received the first prize, Tanu Kumari the second, and Dipshikha Kumari Bedia the third prize and certificates. In the essay competition (junior section), Roshni Kumari received the first prize, Lakshmi Kumari the second, and Namrata Kumari the third prize and certificates, which were presented by the Honorable Justice and the chief guests on the stage.

It is also worth mentioning that the students of Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School organized a painting exhibition, where the Honorable Justice and other guests viewed the artwork on display. The children also explained their artwork.

It should be noted that under the NALSA 'Dawn' Scheme-2025, more than 7375 programs were organized during the seven days of Youth Week, and more than 21,875 people participated in the NALSA 'Dawn' Scheme-2025 and took a pledge against drug abuse.

This information was provided by DLSA Secretary, Mr. Rakesh Roshan.

Weight loss surgery is more effective in controlling hypertension rates: Study



LOS ANGELES [US] : According to a study published today in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, bariatric surgery is more effective at controlling hypertension rates, or high blood pressure, in people with obesity and uncontrolled high blood pressure, than blood pressure medication alone.

People who had bariatric surgery had a lower BMI and were on fewer drugs after five years while maintaining normal blood pressure levels than those who solely used antihypertensive medications.

According to the CDC, the U.S. obesity and hypertension rates in adults are 41.9 per cent and 45.4 per cent, respectively.

Obesity is a proven risk factor for cardiovascular disease and a key contributor to high blood pressure, both of which can increase the chance of a heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

"In clinical practice, obesity is an overlooked condition. As a consequence, there is a frequent failure in approaching obesity as a crucial step for mitigating the risk of important cardiovascular risk factors including hypertension," said Carlos Aurelio Schiavon, MD, FACS, lead author of the study and a surgeon specializing in bariatric surgery at Heart Hospital and BP Hospital in São Paulo.

Researchers in this study looked at the impact of treating obesity to lower high blood pressure. While there are new medications to treat obesity, long-term adherence to medication can be challenging.

This study looks at bariatric surgery as a better long-term solution to control obesity and, as a result, high blood pressure.

The GATEWAY trial included 100 people (76 per cent of which were female) who had a body mass index (BMI) of around 36.9 kg/m². All participants had hypertension and were using at least two medications.

People with previous cardiovascular events and poorly con-

BIS committed to enhancing quality, safety in Ayurveda through robust standardisation



New Delhi : The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing quality and safety in Ayurveda through robust standardisation.

The BIS successfully organised a national-level workshop in collaboration with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) through its Division of Ayurveda, Centre for Integrative Medicine and Research.

The event, exclusively designed for faculty members, researchers, startups, and industry representatives engaged in the Ayurveda sector, witnessed the participation of nearly 180 delegates from across the country. It marked a significant milestone in the collective journey towards strengthening quality, safety, and global acceptance of Ayurveda.

The workshop theme, inspired by BIS's guiding motto "Manak Patha

"Raghavendra Naik, Scientist-C, BIS, emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary research, strong academia-industry partnerships. He also called for targeted capacity-building initiatives to create a sustainable and collaborative ecosystem involving academia, industry, and policymakers for Ayurveda standardisation.

strengthening quality and safety in Ayurveda through robust and inclusive standardisation mechanisms," said Shrishti Dixit, Head of the AYUSH Department, BIS. She highlighted that standards form the foundation of trust, which is essential for the international recognition and wider adoption of Ayurveda.

The workshop theme, inspired by BIS's guiding motto "Manak Patha

"Pradarshaka" highlighted the critical role of standards in harmonising classical Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific and regulatory frameworks.

"The workshop represents an important step toward bridging traditional knowledge with contemporary requirements through structured and meaningful standardisation," said Jayant Deopujari, Chairperson of the Ayurveda Sectional Committee, BIS.

He underscored the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to position Ayurveda as a globally trusted healthcare system.

Dr. Sharath K Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor - Health Sciences, MAHE, Manipal, stressed the urgent need for standardisation in traditional systems such as Ayurveda. He assured full institutional support from MAHE and its various divisions in advancing this national initiative of the government.

The discussions focused on multidisciplinary collaboration, the role of standards in nurturing Ayurveda startups, and the responsibility of the industry in driving quality and compliance. Participants actively engaged in open discussions, sharing innovative ideas and practical insights on advancing standardization in Ayurveda.

Raghavendra Naik, Scientist-C, BIS, emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary research, strong academia-industry partnerships. He also called for targeted capacity-building initiatives to create a sustainable and collaborative ecosystem involving academia, industry, and policymakers for Ayurveda standardisation.

People with previous cardiovascular events and poorly con-

trived Type 2 diabetes were excluded. Subjects were assigned to either Roux-en-Y gastric bypass with medical therapy or medical therapy alone and the primary outcome was reduction of at least 30 per cent antihypertensive medications while maintaining blood pressure levels less than 140/90 mmHg at five years.

At five years, BMI was 28.01 Kg/m² for those who received bariatric surgery and 36.40 Kg/m² for those on medical therapy alone. People who had bariatric surgery had an 80.7 per cent reduction in the number of medications they were taking compared to a 13.7 per cent reduction in those only using medical therapy.

Hypertension remission, defined as controlled blood pressure without medications, was 46.9 per cent in those who underwent bariatric surgery compared to 2.4 per cent in those on medical therapy alone.

"Our results underscore the importance of approaching obesity in reducing hypertension rates," Schiavon said.

Limitations of the study included that it was a single-centre, open-label study with a small sample size and there was loss of follow-up in some patients.

In an accompanying editorial comment, Michael Hall, MD, MSc, professor and chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, said the study provides important long-term data on the benefits of gastric bypass on weight loss and blood pressure control, but questions remain.

"Further studies assessing the threshold for bariatric surgery in people with obesity, optimal timing of bariatric surgery in obese people with cardiometabolic diseases, type of bariatric surgery and comparative studies of obesity pharmacotherapies and bariatric surgery are needed to clarify the optimal treatment pathways for this common and growing disease," he said.

WASHINGTON SUNDAR RULED OUT OF NZ ODIS; BADONI GETS MAIDEN CALL-UP

MUMBAI : The BCCI confirmed that all-rounder Washington Sundar will miss the rest of the ODI series against New Zealand due to side strain.

The BCCI called up the 26-year-old Ayush Badoni as Sundar's replacement, handing him his maiden national call-up.

Badoni, who has played 27 List A games, scoring 693 runs and chipping in with 18 wickets, will link up with the squad in Rajkot, the venue for the second ODI, starting on Wednesday. "India all-rounder Washington Sundar reported an acute onset discomfort in his left lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on Sunday. He will undergo further scans, following which the BCCI Medical Team will seek expert opinion. Washington has been ruled out of the remaining two matches of the ODI series. "The Men's Selection Committee has named Ayush Badoni as his replacement. Badoni will link up with the squad in Rajkot, the venue for the second ODI," the BCCI said in their statement.

This is the second injury blow that India have suffered for the ODI series after Rishabh Pant, who was ruled out just a couple of days before the first ODI in Vadodara. The wicket-keeper-batter was ruled out of the ODI series after suffering a side strain last week, with Dhruv Jurel replacing him in the squad. Tilak Varma, who underwent surgery for a groin injury, was ruled out of the first three T20Is of the five-game series that is set to begin on January 21 at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur. This is a significant setback for the hosts, especially with the home T20 World Cup upcoming. Currently, the all-rounder is also part of India's World Cup squad, but it remains uncertain whether the dependable yet injury-prone Sundar will recover in time for the T20I series.

IOA executive committee reactivates National Olympic Academy, launches NOED programme

NEW DELHI : The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has significantly advanced India's Olympic efforts by launching the National Olympic Education and Development Programme (NOEDP) and formally reactivating the National Olympic Academy (NOA).

These decisions were made during the IOA Executive Council meeting on January 8, 2026, and were unanimously approved by the IOA General House at its Annual General Meeting on January 9, 2026, both meetings held in Ahmedabad.

The initiatives showcase the IOA's renewed commitment to athlete-centred development, Olympic education, and strengthening institutional capacity, all in line with international best practices, the IOA informed in a release on Monday.

The National Olympic

Education and Development Programme (NOEDP) has been conceived as a comprehensive national framework to deliver structured education and development programmes across the Olympic ecosystem. The programme will be implemented in collaboration with National Sports Federations (NSFs) and State Olympic Associations (SOAs), ensuring wide outreach and grassroots-to-elite impact.

The key focus areas of the NOEDP include promoting Olympic values, education and ethics, ensuring holistic athlete development with strong emphasis on welfare and career transition support, building the capacity of coaches, officials, administrators, and support personnel, strengthening governance, leadership, and professionalism within sports bodies, and implementing

long-term athlete development models that are aligned with international standards.

The National Olympic Academy (NOA) has been reactivated as a key part of this initiative, serving as India's main hub for Olympic education, research, and dialogue. In addition to its academic and institutional functions, the NOA will collaborate directly with athletes to support their educational requirements, personal growth, leadership development, and comprehension of the Olympic movement, all alongside their athletic careers.

The Indian Olympic Association noted that launching NOEDP and reactivating the NOA represent a significant milestone in building a values-driven, athlete-centric, and future-ready Olympic ecosystem in India, one that combines education, excellence, and ethical governance across all levels.

The IOA General House unanimously ratified P. T. Usha, President of the Indian Olympic Association, as the President of the National Olympic Academy, and Gagan Narang, Vice President of the IOA and Olympic medallist, as the Director of the same academy. Under their leadership, the National Olympic Academy will work closely with the International Olympic Academy (IOA) in Olympia to ensure India's Olympic education programmes

adhere to the Olympic Charter and international standards. This partnership will promote knowledge sharing, joint initiatives, research projects, and involvement in worldwide Olympic education activities forums.

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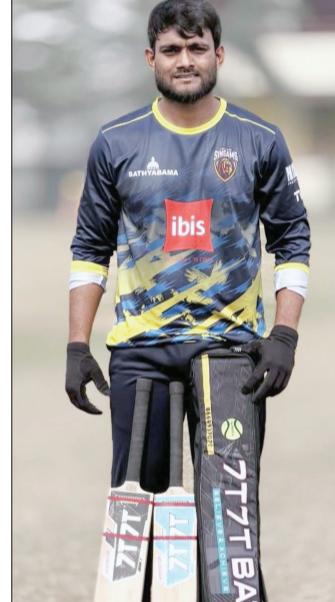
In a firm pledge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and India's vision of a Viksit Bharat, the IOA remains dedicated to athletes in the Olympic movement and enhancing the institutions that support sports nationwide.

Sarfraz Calls on Fans as He Begins New Chapter with Chennai Singams in ISPL 3

PATNA : Hard-hitting batsman Sarfraz Khan, popularly known as 'Baahubali' and '6 King' a native of Siwan district in Bihar, is all set to make a strong impact for Chennai Singams in the upcoming season of the Indian Street Premier League (ISPL). Born on 2nd July 1999, Sarfraz's cricketing journey is rooted in the by lanes of his village, where he began playing tennis-ball cricket during his school and college days.

After completing college in 2016, Sarfraz started playing competitive cricket outside his village around 2017-18. Interestingly, his journey has been exclusively with the tennis ball. "I have never played leather-ball cricket. Since childhood, we played tennis ball cricket in the village, often without proper grounds," he shared.

Known for his explosive batting, Sarfraz explained that his approach has evolved with the format and conditions. "Back in Bihar, we used to play 16- and 20-over matches where you needed to build an innings. But when I started playing outside, especially in Maharashtra, the game was much shorter and demanded power-hitting," he said. With



teams often slotting him as an opener, Sarfraz has embraced the role of an aggressive striker. "The first thought in my mind is always power. With timing and full swing, especially on big grounds, that's how you clear the ropes."

Sarfraz, whose favourite shot is the pull shot, believes it gives

him the most satisfaction as a batter. "All shots feel good, but the pull shot gives a special feeling from within," he smiled.

Having represented Tiiters of Kolkata in the previous season, Sarfraz is now enjoying his stint with Chennai Singams and credits the franchise for introducing him to a more professional environment. "The fitness tests and activities here are very different. I've already started seeing improvement in my game within just 4-5 days," he mentioned, adding that fitness will play a crucial role in the future of tennis-ball cricket.

The upcoming season will be played in Surat, a new venue for ISPL Season 3. While Sarfraz has previously played tournaments in Chikhli near Surat, this will be his first appearance at the ISPL stadium in the city. "I'm very excited to play here. It's a new ground and a new challenge," he said.

Sharing a message for his supporters, Sarfraz appealed to fans from Siwan and the large cricket-loving community in Surat to come out and support the team. "If you can come to the stadium, please watch the matches live. If not, show your love on Chennai Singams' social media and keep supporting us."

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The 30-year-old left-handed batter from Tarakeswar, around 60 km from Kolkata, has been retained for ₹20.02 lakh, making him one of the most prominent players from West Bengal to secure continuity in the league as it enters its next phase.

Bengal has long been regarded as one of India's strongest hubs for tennis ball cricket, and Sarkar is a product of that ecosystem. Having played competitive tournaments across the state for nearly a decade, he built his reputation through consistent performances in local and inter-district competitions before breaking into the national spotlight through ISPL.

"Tennis ball cricket is massive in Bengal. There are tournaments almost every week," Sarkar said. "The competition here prepares you mentally. If you can perform in Bengal, you can perform anywhere."

ISPL's pan-India reach and primetime television exposure have helped players like Sarkar showcase Bengal's street-cricket depth on a larger stage. A regular participant in tournaments across

India and overseas, including the United Arab Emirates, Sarkar is also a brand ambassador for a bats and 7070 Sports, brands closely associated with the tennis ball cricket community.

Introduced to the game by his elder brother, Sarkar grew up batting by default. "My brother was a bowler, so I was always asked to bat. That's how I became an opener," he recalled.

One of the defining moments of Sarkar's career came in 2021, when he won the Best Batsman award at the Big Bash tournament in Mumbai, his first major event outside West Bengal. The tournament featured teams from eight states and marked his arrival on the national circuit.

Sarkar featured for Chennai Singams in earlier editions of ISPL, providing attacking starts at the top of the order. With his retention confirmed, expectations will be higher as he looks to shoulder greater responsibility in Season 3.

"I'm very happy to be retained. Chennai is my favourite team in both ISPL and the Indian Premier League," said Sarkar, a long-time admirer of MS Dhoni.

For West Bengal's thriving tennis ball cricket community, Sarkar's retention serves as another validation of the state's ability to consistently produce talent capable of succeeding on a national stage.

WOMEN'S T20 WC 2026 TICKET SALES CROSS 2017 ODI WC TOTAL: REPORT

NEW DELHI : Ticket sales for the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup in England have already surpassed the total for the 50-over showpiece in 2017, underscoring the growing popularity of the women's game.

England will host the 10th edition of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in June and July. Five months before the opening match on June 12, more than 1,00,000 tickets have been sold, according to the BBC.

In 2017, the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup final at Lord's, which England won on home soil, sold out, the first time a traditionally male-oriented sport had filled England's biggest cricket stadium for a women's match.

The upcoming T20 showpiece event marks the biggest ICC Women's T20 World Cup yet, with 12 teams, more than ever before, vying for the coveted trophy.

The 12 teams will be divided into two groups. Group 1 features multiple-time champions Australia, 2024 finalists South Africa, Asian heavyweights India and Pakistan, along with two teams from the Global Qualifier.

Group 2 includes hosts England, defending champions New Zealand, Sri Lanka, former winners West Indies, and the other two teams from the Global Qualifier.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals, scheduled for 30 June and July 2 at The Oval, with the grand finale at Lord's on July 5. The tournament spans 24 days and features 33 matches across seven iconic venues - Edgbaston, Hampshire Bowl, Headingley, Old Trafford, The Oval, Bristol County Ground and Lord's. The Global Qualifier gets underway in Kathmandu, Nepal, from January 18 to February 1, bringing together 10 teams competing for the four final places at the event in England and Wales. The qualifier will be hosted across Kathmandu. New Zealand are the reigning T20 World Cup champions, having claimed the title in 2024 after defeating South Africa in the final.

Diwakar Singh Re-elected President of Jharkhand State Rifle Association

JAMSHEDPUR : Mr. Diwakar Singh was re-elected unopposed as President of the Jharkhand State Rifle Association (JSRA) at the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on January 11, 2026, at Hotel N.H. Hill, Pardih, Jamshedpur.

The AGM began at 11 am, during which the proceedings of the previous year's AGM were approved. Following this, Secretary General Uttam Chand presented a detailed report on the Association's activities. The income and expenditure statement for the financial year 2025-26 was discussed and unanimously approved. Messrs Gobind Agrawala & Associates were appointed as auditors for the year 2025-26.

Mr. Singh informed the House that the election process for office bearers and executive committee members for the 2025-2029 term was initiated through an election notification issued on December 15, 2025, by Returning Officer Advocate Ravindra Kumar. The notification outlined the detailed election procedure, under which the elections were conducted.

Returning Officer Advocate Ravindra Kumar announced that all office bearers were elected unopposed. Besides Mr. Diwakar Singh as President, Uttam Chand was elected Secretary General, Nityanand Singh as



Honorary Treasurer, Vinay Kumar and Kumar Dev Ranjan as Vice Presidents, Madhur Agrawala as Joint Secretary, and Jayesh Amin and Mrityunjay Rai as Secretaries.

For the eight posts of Executive Committee members, 10 nominations were received, necessitating voting. Eight candidates were declared elected: Amar Kumar Sinha, Arvind Kumar Ojha, Azad Kumar Pathak, Gaurav Raj Singh, Mayuri Mukherjee, Nitish Kumar, Ranjan Kumar and Vivek Pankaj.

The election process was conducted under the supervision of an observer deputed by the Jharkhand Olympic Association, Mr. Anand Bihari Dubey. Addressing the AGM, Mr. Singh,

who is also a member of the Governing Body of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), thanked all members and district associations for reposing faith in him. He said a comprehensive plan would be prepared over the next four years to ensure that more shooters from Jharkhand win medals at the national level. He also expressed gratitude to the NRAI for its continued support and announced that the NRAI has decided to organise an NRAI National Coaches Course in Rifle and Pistol shooting in Jharkhand in March.

He said the initiative would benefit local coaches and help shooters learn modern techniques in the sport.



Sharing a message for his supporters, Sarfraz appealed to fans from Siwan and the large cricket-loving community in Surat to come out and support the team. "If you can come to the stadium, please watch the matches live. If not, show your love on Chennai Singams' social media and keep supporting us."

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KYRGIOS RUNNING OUT OF TIME FOR GRAND SLAM RUN, SAYS EX-AUS OPEN DIRECTOR

NEW DELHI : Former Australian Open director Paul McNamee has said the absence of Nick Kyrgios from the singles draw is unlikely to affect the tournament, adding that time is running out for the Aussie to have a run at a grand slam.

Kyrgios announced he would not be contesting the singles draw at this year's Australian Open owing to his ongoing fitness struggles. Instead, he will be partnering Thanasi Kokkinakis in the doubles.

Kyrgios played only five matches in 2025 before ending his season in March. He eased back into competition with a



series of exhibition matches in New York and Dubai last month, then received a wildcard for the Brisbane International, where he was ousted in the first round.

Moreover, Kyrgios and Kokkinakis were beaten by the French pair Sadio Doumbia and Fabien Reboul on Wednesday in the men's doubles second round in Brisbane.

"I think the Aussie Open is too big to worry about that anymore. He is not one of the guys in contention really. Best of five on hard courts, he's not ready for that."

"He would have filled John Cain Arena for a few matches, but we have to understand time

of serious injuries in recent years, which have seen his world ranking fall to 673 and leave him without a protected ranking. The former Wimbledon finalist has played in just one Grand Slam match since 2022.

He lifted the men's doubles title alongside fellow Kokkinakis at the 2022 Australian Open. He went on to reach the Wimbledon final that year and the US Open quarter-finals.

Since losing the 2022 Wimbledon final to Novak Djokovic, Kyrgios has undergone wrist reconstruction and two knee surgeries. He has played only six professional singles

matches over the past three years, with none since Miami in March last year.

"Other than Alcaraz, there is no one you would rather watch play. The guy does cross the line, and he rubs people the wrong way. Some of the things he has done are shocking. Not excusable, but he is riveting to watch. His style is so unique. Without warming up he's serving aces. The guy is incredible talent," he added.

"He and Alcaraz are the two most talented players in the world for talent but he has health issues and body issues, and he has never had the make up of a

Lleyton Hewitt. I don't criticise him as much as others. Yes, he crosses a line, but who has everything?

"He is true to himself. He is a bit crazy, he crosses a line, but he is true to himself and he is authentic."

"He is an enormous talent; we will miss seeing him. He and Kokkinakis have won it before, and this could be one of your last chances to see him," said McNamee. Kyrgios and Kokkinakis will be granted a wildcard in the men's doubles. The Australian Open main draw begins on January 18, with qualifying underway from January 12.