

Nipha fear returns: State issue fresh health guideline

With fresh Nipah virus cases triggering renewed alarm across West Bengal, the state Health Department has reintroduced quarantine protocols and issued stringent guidelines to contain any possible spread of the deadly infection. A five-member expert medical team has drawn up detailed advisories for both high-risk contacts and healthcare workers involved in the management of suspected and confirmed cases. According to the guidelines, any individual who has come into contact with the blood, bodily fluids, respiratory secretions, sneezes or droplets of a Nipah-infected person—or someone showing Nipah-like symptoms—will be considered “high risk” and placed under mandatory home quarantine. The Health Department has categorically stated that sharing a closed or confined space with a suspected or confirmed Nipah patient also falls under the high-risk category.

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Morning India

Rs 830 Cr boost for BENGAL as MODI launches RAIL & PORT INFRA projects



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the foundation stone laying and inauguration of several development projects, in Singur on Sunday.

“All central projects will accelerate the development of West Bengal. The central government is working to meet the goal of a developed eastern India.”
PM Narendra Modi

MI News Service, Singur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched development projects worth over Rs 830 crore in West Bengal and flagged off three Amrit Bharat trains connecting Kolkata with other parts of the country. At a function in Hooghly district's Singur, the Prime Minister also inaugurated the Jayrambati-Barogopinathpur-Maynapur rail line, and flagged off a train between Maynapur and Jayrambati. “All central projects will accelerate the development of West Bengal. The central government is working to meet the goal of a developed eastern India,” the prime minister said while addressing the programme. The PM laid the foundation stone for the Extended Port Gate System, including an Inland Water Transport (IWT) terminal and a road over bridge, at Balagarh in Hooghly district, according to a statement issued by PMO. Spread over approximately 900 acres of land, Balagarh is being developed as a modern cargo handling terminal with an envisaged capacity of about 2.7 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). The Balagarh project aims to significantly improve cargo evacuation efficiency by diverting vessel movement away from congested urban corridors. Modi also flagged off three Amrit Bharat Express trains connecting Kolkata with New Delhi, Varanasi and Chennai. These trains will run on the Howrah-Anand Vihar Terminal, Sealdah-Banaras, and Santragachi-Tambaram routes.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi turns emotional while delivering his speech at a massive public rally at Singur in West Bengal on Sunday.

PM FLAGGED OFF AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS TRAINS

MI News Service, New Delhi/Singur/ Santragachi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off three new Amrit Bharat Express trains from Singur through video conferencing on January 18, 2026.

These Amrit Bharat Express Trains will run between Santragachi-Tambaram, Howrah-Anand Vihar and Sealdah-Banaras. Prime Minister also inaugurated a new Rail line between Jayrambati and Maynapur (15 km) along with a new train between Jayrambati-Maynapur.

Ravneet Singh, Minister of State for Railways, Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO Railway Board, Anil Kumar Mishra, General Manager, South Eastern Railway, Lalit Mohan Pandey, Divisional Railway Manager, Kharagpur and other dignitaries were present at Santragachi Station during the inaugural run programme of three new Amrit Bharat Express Trains.

16107/16108 TAMBARAM - SANTRAGACHI - TAMBARAM AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS: 16107 Tambaram-Santragachi Amrit Bharat Express will leave Tambaram every Friday at 15:30 hrs and will reach Santragachi at 20:15 hrs, the next day. In the return direction, 16108 Santragachi - Tambaram Amrit Bharat Express will leave Santragachi every Saturday at 23:55 hrs and will arrive Tambaram at 10:00 hrs, the third day.

The train will have stoppages at Chennai Egmore, Sullurupeta, Nellore, Ongole, Chirala, Tenali, Vijayawada Jn, Eluru, Rajahmundry, Samalkot, Anakapalle, Duvvada, Pendurthi, Kottavalasa, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Brahmapur, Balugaon, Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Jajpur Keonjhar Road, Bhadrak, Balasore and



Kharagpur. **13065/13066 HOWRAH - ANAND VIHAR - HOWRAH AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS:** 13065 Howrah-Anand Vihar Amrit Bharat Express will leave Howrah every Thursday at 23:10 hrs and will reach Anand Vihar at 02:50 hrs, the third day. In the return direction, 13066 Anand Vihar - Howrah Amrit Bharat Express will leave Anand Vihar every Saturday at 05:15 hrs and will arrive Howrah at 10:50 hrs, the next day.

The train will have stoppages at Bandel, Bardhaman, Durgapur, Asansol, Dhanbad, NSCB Gomoh, Parasnath, Koderma, Gaya, Anugraha Narayan Road, Dehri On Sone, Sasaram, Bhabua Road, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Varanasi, Jaunpur City, Sultanpur, Maharaja Bijli Pasi (Nihalgarh), Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly, Moradabad, Gajraula, Hapur and Ghaziabad.

22588/22587 BANARAS - SEALDAH - BANARAS AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS: 22588 Banaras-Sealdah Amrit Bharat Express will leave Banaras every Sunday, Tuesday and Friday at 22:10 hrs and will reach

Sealdah at 09:55 hrs, the next day. In the return direction, 22587 Sealdah-Banaras Amrit Bharat Express will leave Sealdah every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday at 19:30 hrs and will arrive Banaras at 07:20 hrs, the next day. The train will have stoppages at Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Patna, Jasidih, Madhupur, Asansol and Durgapur.

NEW PROJECT & NEW TRAIN: Indian Railways has completed the 15 km new line between Jayrambati-Maynapur in Bankura district of West Bengal at a cost of Rs.280 crore. This section is a part of the larger Tarakeswar-Bishnupur (83 km) new rail line project, aimed at strengthening regional rail connectivity.

68095/68096 JAYRAMBATI-MAYNAPUR-JAYRAMBATI MEMU: The 68095 Jayrambati-Maynapur MEMU will leave Jayrambati at 20:10 hrs and arrive Maynapur at 20:31 hrs. The return service, 68096 Maynapur-Jayrambati MEMU will depart Maynapur at 19:28 hrs. and will reach Jayrambati at 20:00 hrs. The train will stop at Borogopinathpur in both the directions.

MODI gives a clarion call for regime change in BENGAL

MI News Service, Singur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing a massive public rally in Singur, issued a sharp political call to action, declaring that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the only path to restoring the rule of law and bringing real change in West Bengal. He alleged that the state has suffered 15 years of misrule and urged voters to decisively remove the Trinamool Congress (TMC) from power in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Addressing a gathering marked by a large presence of women, farmers and youth, the Prime Minister said the enthusiasm of the crowd reflected a single, unmistakable aspiration—an end to lawlessness and the beginning of genuine transformation in Bengal. He asserted that the people of the state are now united in their resolve to bring back good governance. Referring to the 150th anniversary of ‘VANDE MATARAM’, PM Modi said it was a moment of deep historical significance to be in Hooghly, where Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay gave the song its complete form. He noted that just as Vande Mataram inspired India's freedom struggle, it must now become the mantra for building a developed India and a transformed Bengal. Highlighting the Centre's recognition of Bengal's icons, the Prime Minister said it was under a BJP government that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's statue was installed at India Gate, tributes to the Azad Hind Fauj were paid from the Red Fort, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were renamed in Netaji's honour. He also cited the new Republic Day tradition spanning from Netaji's birth anniversary to Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom day.

PM Modi said the BJP-led Centre has shown deep respect for Bengal's language and cultural heritage, noting that Bengali was granted classical language status and DURGA PUJA received UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage recognition—achievements he attributed to the Centre's commitment to Bengal. Launching a scathing attack on the TMC government, the Prime Minister accused it of deliberately blocking central welfare schemes, turning political rivalry into hostility against the people of Bengal.

ABHISHEK vehemently counters Modi's 'PALTAO' pitch in Bengal



Abhishek Banerjee waves a TMC flag in a mega public rally at Nadia's Chapra in West Bengal on Sunday.

DIPANKAR EDBAR, CHAPRA (NADIA)

Trinamool Congress (TMC) national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday launched counter attack at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for “change” in Bengal, accusing the BJP of attempting to “punish” the state to force

gur. Responding to the PM's remarks, Abhishek alleged that the Centre was withholding funds as a means of pressuring voters. “By stopping money for MGNREGA, drinking water projects and housing schemes, they are trying to change people by punishment. Bengal's people will not change,” he said. The TMC

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TMC national general secretary

political change ahead of the 2026 assembly elections. Addressing a roadshow in Chapra, Nadia district, Abhishek said he agreed that “change is needed”, but asserted that it should be within the BJP, not among the people of Bengal. “Those who once began meetings with ‘Jai Shri Ram’ are now starting them with ‘Jai Maa Kali’ and ‘Jai Maa Durga’,” he said, in an apparent reference to the BJP's outreach to Bengal's cultural identity. Prime Minister Modi, during his recent two-day visit to Bengal, repeatedly called for a change of government in the state, saying “Bangla chai, Bangla chahi” and stressing the need for political change ahead of the 2026 polls. He reiterated the message during public meetings in Malda and Sin-

leader also criticised the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging harassment of common people, and accused the BJP and the Election Commission of acting in tandem.

Referring to electoral arithmetic, Abhishek said the party was aiming for a clean sweep in the Krishnanagar organisational district, which recorded a 7-1 result in favour of TMC in the 2021 assembly elections. “Make it 8-0 this time. I will ensure BJP is pushed below 50 seats across Bengal,” he said. He also revisited the 2024 Lok Sabha contest from Krishnanagar, where BJP fielded Amrita Roy against TMC's Mahua Moitra. Abhishek recalled Modi's promise

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RED FORT BLAST: ED files charge-sheet against AL-FALAH UNIV

MI News Service, New Delhi: The Haryana-based Al-Falah University had appointed the alleged suicide bomber and two other doctors accused in the November 2025 Red Fort blast without police verification or scrutiny, the Enforcement Directorate has alleged in its charge-sheet. The radicalisation of at least three doctors of the university involved in the “white-collar” terror module had come to light with the November 10 Red Fort blast that killed 15 people.

Dr Umar un Nabi, the lone occupant of the car that blew up near the Red Fort, worked at the Al Falah hospital along with Dr Muzammil Ahmad Ganai and Dr Shaheen Sayeed. The three doctors are accused of having links with the Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed. “The three accused doctors, besides other medical faculty, were appointed without any police verification or scrutiny and their appointment was approved by the university chairman, Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui,” said an ED official. On Friday, the ED attached properties of the Faridabad-based university valued at ₹140 crore, and



“The three accused doctors, besides other medical faculty, were appointed without any police verification or scrutiny and their appointment was approved by the university chairman, Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui”

proved by the university chairman, Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui,” said an ED official. On Friday, the ED attached properties of the Faridabad-based university valued at ₹140 crore, and filed a chargesheet against its founder-chairman Siddiqui before a Delhi court.

According to an ED official, the 260-page chargesheet seeks prosecution of Siddiqui and his Trust for alleged generation of illicit funds from fees paid by students, while allegedly misrepresenting the accreditation and recognition of his institutions. The court is yet to take cognisance of the chargesheet.

According to officials, the ED has recorded the statement of the university registrar, who “acknowledged” the visit of probe agencies to the campus and the arrests of “Muzammil and Shaheen, associated with the university hospital”. The registrar, in his statement, said the doctors of the college, established in 2019, were hired “without” police verification.

The vice-chancellor and principal of the university told the ED that the three doctors were appointed during her tenure. She said these appointments were “recommended” by the university's HR head and “approved” by Siddiqui.

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Ravneet Singh, Minister of State for Railways, Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO Railway Board, Anil Kumar Mishra, General Manager, South Eastern Railway, Lalit Mohan Pandey, Divisional Railway Manager, Kharagpur and other dignitaries were present during the inaugural run of Santragachi-Tambaram Amrit Bharat Express, Howrah-Anand Vihar Amrit Bharat Express and Sealdah-Banaras Amrit Bharat Express Trains from Santragachi Station on 18.01.2026.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi With a Portrait of Vidyasagar along with top brass of Bengal BJP at Singur in Hooghly on Sunday. Pic: Prabir Bhattacharya.

Attempt to break illicit relationship became the cause of death:
Nephew killed aunt by stabbing her with a sharp weapon

Manish Ramtke (Kharagpur, West Midnapore) : A heart-wrenching incident came to light in Basnachak of Kala Gram Panchayat of Keshpur police station of West Medinipur district. Due to a dispute over illicit relationship, a young man killed his own aunt by stabbing her with a sharp weapon. After committing the incident, the accused youth fled from the spot. The incident spread sensation in the entire area. According to local and police sources, this incident took place in Basanchak area under Kalagram Gram Panchayat of Keshpur block. The name of the deceased is Pooja Bagh (25). The name of the accused is Videsi Bagh (22). There are two related aunts and nephews. It is known that Pooja was working in the fields, during which the foreigner attacked Pooja with a sharp weapon. Due to which she got badly injured. She was taken to the hospital. She died while undergoing treat-

ment in the hospital. According to the information received from the local people and the police, there was an illicit relationship between Pooja and the foreigner for the last one year. After the matter came to light, both the families made several attempts to reach a compromise. In recent times, Pooja wanted to get out of this relationship, due to which Videsi was angry. The primary guess of the police is that due to this anger, the foreigner attacked Pooja fatally. After the attack, Pooja fell on the ground in a bloody condition. Hearing his screams, people nearby reached the spot and he was taken to Keshpur Rural Hospital in a critical condition. Due to his condition being critical, he was shifted to Medinipur Medical College and Hospital. But he died on the way. Based on the complaint of the deceased's father, Keshpur police station registered a case of murder against the accused Vaishya Bagh and started investigating the incident. A police officer said that the body was sent to the mortuary of Medinipur Medical College for post-mortem. The accused is absconding since the incident. Local Gram Panchayat member Sukhdev Dolai described the incident as extremely heart-wrenching.

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A vibrant street mural brings everyday stories to life as passersby pause to admire the colorful artwork along the city lane at Deodhar Street.

Suvendu Writes letter
to Bengal Governor

MI News Service, Beldanga : Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari wrote to governor C.V. Ananda Bose, expressing serious concern over the deteriorating law and order in Beldanga. Adhikari demanded the imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, equivalent to the earlier Section 144 of the IPC, as well as deployment of central forces, alleging that the state police administration was failing to maintain control. Senior police officers said that the situation in Beldanga remained under close watch, with additional forces deployed to prevent further flare-ups.

South Dinajpur district SDO called for hearing over name spelling discrepancy

MI News Service, S Dinajpur: Abhishek Shukla, the subdivisional officer of Gangarampur in South Dinajpur district, received a notice for a verification hearing of the ongoing SIR (special intensive revision) of electoral roll due to a discrepancy in the spelling of his name in the voter list. Obeying the schedule, Shukla appeared for the hearing at the Bansihari BDO office of the district on Friday afternoon. In early 2025, Shukla assumed the charge as the SDO of Gangarampur. Though originally from Uttar Pradesh, he registered his name in the electoral roll of South Dinajpur soon after joining the district. "There was a mistake in the spelling of my name in the 2002 voter list (in Uttar Pradesh). Because of that, I was called for an SIR hearing. I attended the hearing and submitted all documents sought by the Election Commission," said Shukla. He attended the hearing and returned to his office for work, he

added. Officials clarified that under the SIR process, anyone may be called for a hearing. Participation is mandatory if a notice is issued. The issue has led to political reactions in the district. BJP district president Swarup Chowdhury said the case proved that the rules were same for everyone. "A hearing does not mean deletion of a name. It is simply meant to identify and correct discrepancies," he said. Subhash Bhowal, the district Trinamool president, said while a government officer could easily manage the logistics to attend a hearing, migrant workers or people living outside the state might not be able to do so at short notice, either because of time or money or both. "These hearing notices for small discrepancies are causing unnecessary harassment to ordinary citizens and increasing resentment against election officials," he said.

Bollywood Superstar AFTAB SHIVDASANI Arrives in Bengal

MI News Service, Kolkata, 18 Jan.26 : Bollywood superstar Aftab Shivdasani recently visited Bengal to attend a grand event organized by Pink Roses Entertainment under the initiative of its founder, Mrs. HINA KAUSER—Miss Asia Winner, international model, actress, and social activist. The event was held at Tragerine Royal Banquet, Salt Lake. The occasion featured the Rabindranath Tagore Excellence Award – Season 2, along with a Designer Catwalk, to honor distinguished personalities from various fields such as business, medicine, modeling, makeup artistry, and



social activism. For a long time, Hina Kauser has been actively providing a platform to specially-abled and socially underprivileged yet talented individuals who aspire to make a mark in the glamour world. During the ceremony, Aftab Shivdasani and Hina Kauser jointly presented the Rabindranath Tagore Excellence Award to the

Biswajit Honoured in Drishti's Cultural Evening

MI News Service, Kolkata, 18 Jan.26 : A vibrant cultural evening was hosted by voluntary organisation Drishti, at the premises of Barisha Sab Payechir Asar, marking a significant occasion dedicated to social inclusion and cultural engagement. During the event, eminent personalities from various fields were felicitated by the organisation's secretary, noted social worker and artist Somnath Pani, in recognition of their valuable contributions to society. On the same occasion, a commemorative postage stamp was unveiled in honour of distinguished social activist and educationist Dr. Biswajit Mondal. A major highlight of the evening was the release of a Braille guidebook, brought out through the sincere efforts of Mr. Somnath Pani, himself a visually challenged individual, and other members of the organisation. The guidebook, containing essential information relevant to visually impaired persons, was widely appreciated and is expected to prove highly beneficial for the visually challenged community. Eminent attendees including Lalita Das, Banashibadan Chattopadhyay, Udayan Ray, and Dr. Moushree Vashishtha expressed their views on stage, emphasizing the importance and necessity of such initiatives. The programme was smoothly conducted by Dr. Namita Pal, whose effective anchoring added to the grace of the evening. With the wholehearted support and initiative of the organisation's chief patron Menoka Pani, the event concluded on a successful and harmonious note.



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TMC MP Yusuf Pathan visits
family of migrant worker whose
death sparked Beldanga violence

MI News Service, Beldanga: TMC MP from Murshidabad Yusuf Pathan on Sunday visited the residence of a migrant labourer from Beldanga whose unnatural death in Jharkhand earlier this week triggered mob violence in the West Bengal town and pledged his support to the victim's family. Pathan met the parents of 30-year-old Alauddin Sheikh, whose body was found hanging at his shelter in the neighbouring state and brought to his native village in Beldanga on Friday. "I strongly deplore the harassment and attacks on poor Bengali-speaking migrant workers from Murshidabad and other parts of Bengal who go outside the state in search of livelihood," Pathan told reporters after meeting the family. "Our party, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and other MPs and MLAs are taking up the issue with the administration of respective states. We are also flagging the issue regularly. I am pledging my support to the victim families," he said. Responding to opposition allegations that he had failed to visit families of migrant workers who were allegedly killed or harassed in other states, Pathan dismissed the charge as "propaganda". "It is an attempt by the opposition to mislead people. I have been constantly monitoring every case. I have been constantly mon-



itoring every case, and our supreme Mamata Banerjee and party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee are getting regular feedback," he said. He said the district administration set up helpline numbers for migrant workers working outside Bengal and called upon them to contact the administration if they faced any trouble. Armed state police personnel, accompanied by Rapid Action Force, conducted route marches in violence-hit Beldanga in West Bengal's Murshidabad district on Sunday, even as shops were closed and roads were a deserted look following back-to-back road blockades, stone pelting and assault on journalists on two consecutive days. Murshidabad SP Kumar Sunny Raj monitored the situation as police personnel patrolled the town's main roads and bylanes and fanned out into nearby villages where an eerie calm prevailed. A senior police officer said strict vigil was being maintained to prevent any gathering or assembly of people on main thoroughfares and bylanes. A day earlier, Abhishek Banerjee had said at a meeting in the district that Pathan would visit the family of Alauddin Sheikh. Banerjee also said he had taken up the matter with the Jharkhand Chief Minister's Office, seeking a probe into the incident and action against those responsible for the migrant worker's death.

Hearings Resumed

MI News Service, S Dinajpur: Voter hearings resumed at the Goalpokher-II BDO office in Chakulia of North Dinajpur on Saturday, two days after the violence and arson. Violence had erupted on Thursday when a mob in Chakulia staged a protest, accusing authorities of continuous harassment during the "second phase" of SIR hearings. The mob attacked the BDO office, vandalised multiple rooms and set fire to government documents, computers and furniture.

Beldanga fury over fresh migrant 'assault';
police lathicharge mobs on NH12, railway tracks

MI News Service, Beldanga: Mob violence over the alleged assault of a migrant worker in Bihar erupted at Beldanga in Murshidabad on Saturday, forcing police to resort to lathicharge and burst tear gas shells to clear a blockade on National Highway 12 and cane protesters on railway tracks. A similar protest had erupted on Friday as well, but the one on Saturday was more violent, said the police. Trouble in Beldanga began on Friday after news spread about the death of a migrant worker in Jharkhand. Crowds blocked roads at the Maheshatala intersection under Beldanga police station limits for nearly six hours, demanding action and clarity on the incident, but dispersed after talks with the administration. On Saturday, fresh rumours surrounding another migrant labourer from Beldanga beaten up and injured in Bihar renewed protests, which quickly turned violent. The police said the agitation escalated around 10am when a large and frenzied crowd blocked NH12 at the Barua intersection, a key arterial road connecting Murshidabad with neighbouring districts. Almost simultaneously, another group obstructed railway movement near Beldanga station at the Panchraha intersection by dumping parts of electric poles on tracks. The mob broke the level-crossing gate and vandalised several roadside shops and a passenger bus at Barua, leading to panic and complete disruption of traffic. NH12 remained blocked for nearly two hours. A heavy police force, led by the district superintendent of police, rushed to Barua and attempted to persuade protesters to disperse peacefully. However, according to the police, the crowd refused to engage in dialogue and resorted to vandalism. With the situation spiralling out of control, police were compelled to use batons and tear gas shells to disperse the mob at Barua. On the tracks, cops caned the protesters. Both blockades were cleared and at least 30 persons were arrested for their alleged involvement in the violence. District superintendent



A three-day cricket tournament titled "Pariwar Premier League – Season 3" was ceremonially inaugurated near Nagerbazar in the Dumdum area, on the initiative of residents of the Diamond City Housing Complex.

Truck loaded with sand
overturns, two people injured



Manish Ramtke (Kharagpur, West Midnapore) : A truck laden with sand overturned in the middle of the road in Patibandh area of Keshiari police station under West Medinipur district. During this, two people were injured. It is known that while coming from Rohini towards Keshiari, the truck laden with sand went out of control and overturned on the roadside. The driver and

the passenger narrowly escaped and got injured in the accident. After getting information about the incident, the police of Keshiari police station reached the spot. Both the injured were rescued and sent to the hospital for treatment. The police normalized the situation in the area by removing the truck laden with sand with a crane. The police is investigating the incident.

Grand Ganga Aarti on the Banks of the Kalnagini River Draws Devotees at Dholahat

MI News Service, Kolkata, 18 Jan.26 : A spiritually uplifting Ganga Aarti was held on the banks of the Kalnagini River at Bashtala River Ghat under Dholahat Police Station in South 24 Parganas district, marking the Shree Shree Pranab Sanskriti Mela. Organised on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti, the event transformed the riverbank into a vibrant centre of devotion, spirituality, and cultural harmony. Modelled on the famous Ganga Aarti rituals performed on the banks of the Ganga at Haridwar, Varanasi, and along the Sarayu River, this sacred ceremony aimed to restore the spiritual sanctity of the Kalnagini River, revered as a patia-pavani (redeemer of the fallen). The Aarti witnessed the participation of esteemed priests from Varanasi, Dakshineswar, Belur Math, and Onkar Math, lending the occasion a pan-Indian religious significance. The rhythmic chanting of Vedic mantras, the resonant sound of conch shells, and the synchronized movements of the priests created a deeply devotional



atmosphere. As hundreds of lamps illuminated the river, the Kalnagini appeared bathed in divine radiance, evoking profound spiritual emotion among the gathered devotees. This year's Ganga Aarti held special significance as it coincided with the 131st auspicious birth anniversary of Shreemad Swami Pranabanandaji Maharaj, Acharya of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha. To commemorate this milestone, a unique and visually striking Aarti was performed by women devotees, who offered 1,001 earthen lamps, along with 131 dhunachis (incense burners) and 131

Ganga Aarti was conducted in the spiritual ambience reminiscent of Gangasagar during Makar Sankranti. The event received an overwhelming response from the public, reinforcing its significance as a major spiritual and cultural gathering in the region. The four-day-long celebration also featured a series of cultural programmes aimed at engaging devotees of all ages. Devotional songs, kirtans, classical music, and dance performances highlighted the rich cultural heritage intertwined with spiritual traditions. The Shree Shree Pranab Sanskriti Mela thus emerged not only as a religious observance but also as a platform promoting unity, devotion, and cultural enrichment. The successful organisation of the event was widely appreciated, with organisers and volunteers receiving praise for their dedication and meticulous planning. Devotees and locals expressed hope that the Ganga Aarti on the banks of the Kalnagini River would grow into a larger annual spiritual tradition in the years to come.

State –of –the –
art motorbike
steals spotlight
at Science fair

MI News Service, Kolkata: North Kolkata's historic Hedua Park has turned into a hub of scientific curiosity and innovation with the commencement of the Acharya Satyendranath Bose Memorial Science and Technology Fair, which opened on January 17 and will continue till January 20.

The fair was inaugurated in a formal ceremony near Scottish Church College, paying tribute to the enduring legacy of Acharya Satyendranath Bose, whose contributions to modern physics continue to inspire generations of scientists. Conceived with the objective of fostering scientific temper among students, the event has, since its opening, witnessed a remarkable turnout of science enthusiasts, students and members of the general public. This year, participation has reached an impressive scale, with around 40 schools and over 15 colleges showcasing their work. The fairgrounds are abuzz with youthful enthusiasm, reflecting a growing interest in science and technology beyond textbooks. Stealing the spotlight is a state-of-the-art 'one-wheel motorbike', a striking example of new-age engineering that has emerged as the fair's biggest crowd-puller. The futuristic vehicle has sparked widespread curiosity, drawing long queues of onlookers eager to understand the technology behind its balance and motion. Equally compelling are the anatomy department exhibits, which offer visitors a closer look at the human body through detailed scientific displays.

ABHISHEK vehemently
counters Modi's 'PALTAO'
pitch in Bengal

From PG 1 that money seized by central agencies would be returned to the public. "Two years have passed. Has anyone received even one rupee?" he asked. During the roadshow, Abhishek briefly halted his speech after an elderly woman fell ill in the crowd. He arranged for water and later ensured she was taken for medical attention in his vehicle.

RED FORT BLAST: ED
files charge-sheet
against AL-FALAH UNIV

From PG 1 following which she issued formal appointment letters. The VC is also understood to have told the ED that "no police verification or scrutiny" was conducted during the appointment of these doctors. Muzammil and Shaheen were arrested by the NIA and are in judicial custody. Siddiqui, in his statement before the agency, is stated to have denied having "any connection" with terrorist or banned organisations. He was arrested by the ED in November on money laundering charges.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a rally at Singur in Hooghly on Sunday.

Pic: Prabir Bhattacharya

Nipha fear returns: State
issue fresh health guideline

MI News Service, Kolkata: With fresh Nipah virus cases triggering renewed alarm across West Bengal, the state Health Department has reintroduced quarantine protocols and issued stringent guidelines to contain any possible spread of the deadly infection. A five-member expert medical team has drawn up detailed advisories for both high-risk contacts and healthcare workers involved in the management of suspected and confirmed cases.

According to the guidelines, any individual who has come into contact with the blood, bodily fluids, respiratory secretions, sneezes or droplets of a Nipah-infected person—or someone showing Nipah-like symptoms—will be considered "high risk" and placed under mandatory home quarantine. The Health Department has categorically stated that sharing a closed or confined space with a suspected or confirmed Nipah patient also falls under the high-risk category. Quar-



West Bengal issues Nipah virus advisory after two nurses test positive, outlines precautions for patients, caregivers and health workers

antined individuals have been instructed to monitor their health twice daily and report immediately if any symptoms appear. The guidelines make it clear that even the slightest sign of ill-

ness must lead to immediate hospital admission, where the patient will be kept in a separate isolation ward. The state has also laid down strict testing and discharge protocols.

Maa Flyover collision
leaves 4 people injured

MI News Service, Kolkata: Panic and traffic disruption struck the Maa Flyover on Monday evening after a four-wheeler lost control, hitting the divider and colliding with multiple vehicles, leaving three passengers in critical condition. The accident occurred around 6:30 pm, prompting an immediate response from emergency services and the police.

According to eyewitnesses, the vehicle, traveling from the Ruby intersection side towards Science City, first struck the flyover divider, then continued forward, colliding with another four-wheeler and a bike. The force of the impact resulted in serious injuries for three passengers of the primary vehicle. All injured were rushed to SSKM Hospital's Trauma Center, where they are currently receiving intensive care. The driver of

the first car, though physically uninjured, was reportedly in a distressed and unstable mental state and was also admitted to the hospital. In total, four passengers from the primary vehicle are under treatment. Police from Pragati Maidan Police Station, present at the scene, are investigating the cause of the accident. Preliminary inquiries suggest that excessive speed or possible alcohol consumption could have contributed to the crash, though investigations are ongoing. Authorities are examining the scene, collecting statements from witnesses, and assessing vehicle damage. This incident adds to a growing list of accidents on Maa Flyover, raising concerns over speeding, reckless driving, and road safety measures on one of Kolkata's busiest elevated corridors.

Sister Murdered Over Love
Affair, Brother on the Run

MI News Service, Kolkata: In a shocking and deeply disturbing incident in Narkeldanga, Kolkata, 22-year-old Pushpa Kumari was found dead under suspicious circumstances, sparking fears of familial violence and igniting police investigations. The young woman, who lived with her father Raj Narayan Shak in Shibatala Lane, was discovered unconscious inside her home on January 14 around noon. Despite immediate efforts to save her at NRS Hospital, she was declared dead.

Initial police investigations reveal alarming signs of injury on Pushpa's neck, pointing toward a violent assault. Sources indicate that the suspicion primarily falls on her brother, who has been missing since the discovery of her body. Neighbors reported seeing

him enter the house shortly before the murder. Investigators are examining the possibility that the tragedy stemmed from familial opposition to Pushpa's relationship with a friend of her brother. Reports suggest that the brother could not tolerate the relationship and had repeatedly pressured Pushpa to end it, culminating in a fatal confrontation. Pushpa had been residing in the rented house in Shibatala Lane for over a year and a half, with her father present, while her brother visited intermittently. The police have launched a detailed probe into the incident, treating it as a potential case of premeditated murder. In a separate but equally disturbing development, serious allegations have emerged against a Kolkata Police officer.

Fog alert in
five Southern
districts, North
Bengal freeze

MI News Service, Kolkata: Kolkata and large parts of Bengal are waking up to a biting cold as winter asserts its hold, with temperatures continuing to dip and dense fog shrouding several districts. The Alipore Meteorological Department has reported a sharp fall in the mercury, while the India Meteorological Department has issued a statewide fog advisory, warning of significantly reduced visibility in both northern and southern districts.

In the city, the minimum temperature on Sunday settled at 13 degrees Celsius, 1.5 degrees below the seasonal norm, while Dum Dum recorded 12.9 degrees.

The maximum temperature barely touched 24 degrees, nearly two degrees below average. South Bengal's chill, though less severe than the north, remains persistent, with Bankura and Bishnupur registering 9.5 degrees and Sriniketan in Birbhum dropping to 9.7 degrees. Meanwhile, North Bengal continues to shiver, with Darjeeling's night temperatures lingering between 3 and 5.5 degrees and Kalimpong recording a low of 8.5 degrees. Meteorologists warn that North Bengal will see little relief, with nighttime temperatures holding steady for the next five days.

South Bengal, however, may witness a slight rise in minimum temperatures by two to three degrees over the next four days, offering modest respite just ahead of Saraswati Puja next Friday. Dense fog has engulfed five southern districts — East Burdwan, West Burdwan, Birbhum, Murshidabad, and Nadia — significantly reducing visibility to as low as 50 meters in some areas.

Witness attack case:
Court gives relief to
Shahjahan's wife

MI News Service, Kolkata/Barasat: Even as jailed strongman Sheikh Shahjahan remains at the centre of multiple serious investigations, the Barasat court on Saturday granted anticipatory bail to his wife Taslima Bibi in the sensational Basanti Highway accident case, citing lack of prima facie evidence linking her to the alleged conspiracy.

The case stems from a deadly incident on December 10 on the Basanti Highway, where Bholanath Ghosh, a key witness in case against Sheikh Shahjahan, narrowly escaped death after a truck allegedly tried to mow down his vehicle. While Ghosh survived, the attack proved fatal for his son and the car driver, both of whom died on the spot. Following the incident, Bholanath Ghosh lodged a complaint at the NIAAT police station, naming eight accused, including Sheikh Shahjahan and Taslima Bibi. The FIR invoked sections of murder and attempt to murder, alleging that the attack was a deliberate, pre-planned attempt to eliminate a crucial witness. According to the prosecution narrative in the charge sheet, Sheikh Shahjahan allegedly shared details of the conspiracy with his wife first, after which the plan was executed with the help of his associates. Investigators claimed the post was aimed at silencing Bholanath Ghosh due to his role as prosecution witness. However, while hearing Taslima Bibi's anticipatory

bail plea, the Barasat court observed that the police had failed to establish any direct or indirect connection between her and the execution of the alleged attack. On those grounds, the court granted her anticipatory bail on bond of Rs5,000. The relief, however, comes with strict conditions. The court made it clear that Taslima Bibi must cooperate fully with the investigation and participate in the trial process. The protection from arrest does not amount to clean chit, the judge noted. The development has triggered fresh debate, especially as Taslima Bibi's name has surfaced in multiple enforcement probes. She was earlier questioned for nearly 11 hours by the ED in connection with the attack on ED officials during a raid in Sandeshkhali — an incident that brought national attention to alleged lawlessness and political patronage in the region. While the court's order offers temporary legal relief to Shahjahan's wife, investigators maintain that the large conspiracy angle remains under scrutiny. With Sheikh Shahjahan still behind bars and multiple agencies probing his network, the Basanti Highway deaths continue to cast a long shadow — raising troubling questions about witness safety and the reach of alleged criminal influence in Sandeshkhali. From now, the case stands at a critical juncture: Judicial relief on one hand, and unresolved allegations of a deadly conspiracy on the other.



Bhudia shopkeepers reopen and set up their winter clothing stores in Wellington days after a fire gutted the area.

MODI gives a clarion call for regime change in BENGAL

From PG 1 He said this obstruction has deprived youth, farmers, women and fishermen of benefits they are rightfully entitled to. Citing the fisheries sector, PM Modi alleged that despite Bengal's vast potential, the state government has prevented fishermen from being registered on national digital platforms, denying them access to schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). He further accused the TMC of endangering the future of Bengal's youth, stating that while PM SHRI schools are being developed across the country, students in Bengal are being denied access to quality modern education.

Drawing a parallel with Delhi, the Prime Minister said voters there have already punished a government that stalled development, enabling the implementation of Ayushman Bharat, which now provides free healthcare to the poor. He expressed confidence that Bengal's voters would similarly remove what he termed a "ruthless and lawless" TMC regime, paving the way for Ayushman Bharat in the state. Emphasising the need for a "double-engine government", PM Modi said states with BJP governments at

both Centre and state levels have witnessed remarkable results. He cited Tripura, where households with tap water connections under the Har Ghar Jal scheme rose from 4 percent to 85 percent.

In one of his strongest remarks, the Prime Minister said Bengal must be freed from what he described as "Maha Jungle Raj", and guided instead by the ideals of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He voiced grave concern over women's safety, corruption, mafia control over education, and syndicate raj. Appealing directly to Bengal's women voters, PM Modi said one vote for the BJP would end violence, restore law and order, prevent a repeat of incidents like Sandeshkhali, and ensure dignity and security for women. He promised the complete eradication of syndicate tax and mafia rule, calling it a "Modi Guarantee" and asserting that only the rule of law can bring industry and investment back to Bengal. On national security, the Prime Minister accused the TMC of shielding illegal infiltrators for vote-bank politics, facilitating fake documentation and ignoring repeated requests from the Centre over the past 11 years for border fencing and land acquisition.

Inauguration of Shree Shree Gaura Nitai Temple at Sreenathpur, Mayapur

MI News Service, Kolkata: Four-Day Religious Festival Draws Devotees in Large Numbers on the auspicious occasion of Makara Sankranti, the newly constructed Shree Shree Gaura Nitai Temple was inaugurated at Sreenathpur in Mayapur, Nadia district, under the initiative of the Gaudiya Vaishnava Association. Following the guidance of Shreea Bhakti Swarup Tirtha Maharaj, a four-day-long series of religious and cultural programmes was organised to mark the occasion. Immersed in devotion and festivity, the temple environment turned into a vibrant centre of spiritual congregation. In the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is revered as Gaura, while His intimate associate and principal companion Nityananda Prabhu is known as Nitai. As Mayapur is the birthplace of Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu,



the establishment of a Gaura-Nitai temple in its vicinity is considered especially significant by devotees of the Gaudiya Vaishnava community. The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of numerous saints and devotees not only from nearby areas but also from different parts of the state as well

as devotees from the rest of India and foreign countries. Daily worship, nama-sankirtan, and continuous distribution of mahaprasad drew hundreds of devotees each day. In the evenings, religious dramas performed by artists from Vrindavana particularly captivated the audience. From after-

noon till late night, devotional songs, kirtans, and theatrical presentations centred around the philosophy and life of Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu remained the main attractions. Three temple servants—Radharamana Dasa, Raasabihari Dasa, and Vishvak-sena Dasa — stated that the founding acharya of the Gaura-Nitai Temple, Shreea Bhakti Swarup Tirtha Maharaj, has been spreading the message of the Lord Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu across the world for more than three decades. During this long journey, he observed a gradual decline in people's faith and trust in God. With the aim of reviving that faith, he decided to establish this temple near the birthplace of Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Built over nearly five acres of land, the construction of the temple complex was completed within one and a

half years. The ground floor houses a banquet hall, while staircases on both sides lead to the second floor. On the left side stands the photograph of Gurudeva Shreea Bhakti Swarup Tirtha Maharaj. The temple also enshrines the deities of Jagannatha, Balarama and Subhadra, Gaura-Nitai, Narasimhadeva, Prahlad Maharaj, and Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya 108 Shree Shreemad Bhakti Shreerup Bhagavat Goswami Thakura. According to the organisers, this newly established temple and its associated religious activities are expected to play a significant role in shaping the spiritual and cultural life of the region in the coming days. Devotees unanimously believe that the inauguration of the Gaura-Nitai Temple marks the beginning of a new chapter on the sacred pilgrimage map of Mayapur.

Name Change
I, Sk Rohail (Old Name) S/o Sk Raason Residing at Sridharpur, Po+Ps - Nandakumar, District- East Medinipur, Pin- 721632, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be Known as Sk Rabiul (New Name) as declared before the Notary public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 16-01-2026, Sk Rohail (Old Name) and Sk Rabiul (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Indrajit Das Chowdhury (Old Name) S/o Late Upendra Chowdhury Residing at Vill- Natunpally, Po- Subhasgram, P.s- Sonarpur, District- South 24 Parganas, Pin- 700147, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be Known as Indrajit Chowdhury (New Name) as declared before the Notary public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 14-01-2026, Indrajit Das Chowdhury (Old Name) and Indrajit Chowdhury (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Sanjay Kumar Jana (Old Name) S/o Nema Chandra Jana Residing at Vill+Po- Deulia, P.s- Kolaghat, District - Purba Medinipur, Pin - 721154, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be Known as Sanjay Jana (New Name) as declared before the Ld. Executive Magistrate (1st Class) at Tamluk, Purba Medinipur vide affidavit no 12426 Dated 16-01-2026, Sanjay Kumar Jana (Old Name) and Sanjay Jana (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Neha Singh Phool Singh (Old Name) W/o Mahendra Singh Residing at Flat No - 2D, Tower 1 Diamond Residency, 38 Ho-Chi-Minh, Po- Sarsuna, District- South 24 Parganas, Pin- 700061, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Neha Singh (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 16-01-2026, Neha Singh Phool Singh (Old Name) and Neha Singh (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Jabir Ali Ansari (Old Name) S/o Md Zamiruddin Residing at 7 Kasai Para Lane, Circus Avenue, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700017, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Mohammed Zahir Ali (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 16-01-2026, Jabir Ali Ansari (Old Name) and Mohammed Zahir Ali (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Saumyabrata Sarker, Soumyabrata Sarker (Old Name) S/o Sudhir Kumar Sarker Residing at 30/4, Nabalia Park Road, Po- Barisha, District- Kolkata, Pin- 700008, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Saumyabrata Sarker (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit no 11 Dated 16-01-2026, Saumyabrata Sarker, Soumyabrata Sarker (Old Name) and Saumyabrata Sarker (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Manju Devi Shaw (Old Name) W/o Late Ganga Shaw Residing at M-110/C, Trenching Ground Road, Garden Reach, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700024, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Manju Shaw (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 16-01-2026, Manju Devi Shaw (Old Name) and Manju Shaw (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Banamali Dutta (Old Name) S/o Tushspada Dutta Residing at Parabagnan, Parabagnan, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712413, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Banamali Dutta (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public Kolkata vide affidavit Dated 16-01-2026, Banamali Dutta (Old Name) and Banamali Dutta (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Change of Name
I, ABHISHEK KUMAR, residing at Village- Malsiwas, Tehsil- Laxmangarh, District - Sikar (Rajasthan) have changed my son's name from SAMIKSH to SAMIKSH CHAUDHARY vide affidavit no.- 1610/25, Dated 12/08/2025 Before the Notary Public at Sujangarh.

Name Change
I, SUKTRA BIBI, W/o- BAJLU DALAL, D/o- Late RAMJAN GAZI, R/o- VIII. + P.O- Hakimpur, P.S- Swarnpnagar, North 24 Parganas, do hereby declare that my father RAMJAN GAZI (Deceased) and RAMJAN SARDAR is the same and identical person vide Affidavit No. 961 sworn before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate Barasat Court on 13-01-2026.

NAME CHANGE
In my birth certificate (Regi-No-60, date of registration 27-05-2002), my name is recorded as SUMAN HOSSIN, S/O ESARAT HOSSAIN. On 15/01/2026, in the Basirhat, 1st Class Judicial Magistrate Court, through affidavit no 2117, it was declared that IFRAN HOSSAIN S/O ESARAT ALI & SUMAN HOSSIN S/O ESARAT HOSSAIN is the same one & identical person.

Name Change
In my daughter REMISA PARVIN's birth certificate (Vide Regd No- 1637, date of registration 05-12-2003), the father's name is recorded as ABDUL JABBAR. On 12-12-2025 through an affidavit (No. 31224) at the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate Court, Basirhat, I affirm that ABDUL JABBAR MANDAL & ABDUL JABBAR is the same & one identical person.

Name Change
I, MIRATUN NEHER (old name) W/O SK JAKIR HOSSEN, residing at 235, DOGACHHIVA, PASCHIM MEDINIPUR, WEST BENGAL- 721150, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as MIRATUN NAHAR (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, MIRATUN NAHAR (new name) and MIRATUN NEHER (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Qamar Islam (Old Name), Wife Of Nurul Islam, Residing At 30/4b, Jhowtala Road, P.O.- Jhowtala, P.S.-Karaya, Kolkata- 700017, West Bengal, India, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Qamar Jahan (New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026. Qamar Islam And Qamar Jahan Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change
I, Md Zaid Islam (Old Name), Son Of Nurul Islam, Residing At 30/4b, Jhowtala Road, P.O.- Jhowtala, P.S.-Karaya, Kolkata- 700017, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Mohammad Zaid Islam (New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026. Md Zaid Islam And Mohammad Zaid Islam Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change
I, Rohit Kumar Jaiswal (old name), son of Ratan Lal Jaiswal, residing at 131 Girish Ghosh Road, Vivekananda Colony, Liluah, Howrah- 711204, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Rohit Jaiswal (New Name) vide an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 16/01/2026, Rohit Kumar Jaiswal and Rohit Jaiswal both are the same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, POMPY MUKHERJEE (old name) W/O SVO MUKHERJEE, residing at 12 REF-EGG ESTATE, ABRIR APARTMENT, FLAT-102, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL, PIN- 700092, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as POMPY GHOSH MUKHERJEE (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026. POMPY MUKHERJEE (new name) and POMPY MUKHERJEE (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Tapan Kumar Paul (old name) S/O Biswanath Paul, residing at 3A, Iswar Mill Lane, Kolkata- 700006, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Tapan Paul (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, Tapan Paul (new name) and Tapan Kumar Paul (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Raj Kumar Pal (old name) S/O Tapan Pal, residing at 3A, Iswar Mill Lane, Kolkata- 700006, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Raj Kumar Paul (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, Raj Kumar Paul (new name) and Raj Kumar Pal (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Suresh Sultania (Old name), S/o.Late Ram Nirjanjan Sultania, residing at 167 Jessore Road, CLUB TOWN GREENS, Block-3, Flat-1F, 1st floor, Po-Bangur Avenue, Ps-Lake Town, Dist- North 24-pgs , South Dum Dum Municipality, Pincode - 700055, West Bengal, changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Suresh Kumar Sultania (New Name) as declared sworn before The Notary Public at Kolkata, affidavit at CMM'S Court, 2&3, Bankshall street, Kolkata - 700001, West Bengal, on dated 17/01/2026, Suresh Kumar Sultania (New Name) and Suresh Sultania (Old Name) both are the same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Ditika Bhowmick (Old name), D/o, Late Dulal Roy, W/o, Sanjib Bhowmick, residing at CA-24/C, Deshbandhu Nagar, Ps-Bagutiati, Po-Deshbandhu Nagar, Dist- North 24-pgs, Rajarhat Gopalpur Municipality, Pincode- 700059, State- West Bengal, changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Dipika Bhowmick (New Name) as declared sworn before The Notary Public at Kolkata, affidavit at CMM'S Court, 2&3, Bankshall street, Kolkata- 700 001, West Bengal, on dated 16/01/2026, Dipika Bhowmick (New name), And Ditika Bhowmick (Old Name) both are the same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Ramesh Mohanty (old name) son of Sallendra Narayan Mohanty, residing at 107B, Gholar Ghat Road, Parnasee Pally, Kolkata - 700060, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Ramesh Chandra Mohanty (new name) as sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata vide affidavit no. 14 dated 16/01/2026, Ramesh Mohanty (old name) and Ramesh Chandra Mohanty (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Angana Gupta (Old Name) W/o Arindam Gupta Residing at 1174, Chak Garia Dimension Tower 4th Floor, Flat- 4A Panchasayar, District- Kolkata, Pin- 700094, West Bengal, India, have Changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Angana Gupta Barman (New Name) as declared before the Ld. Judicial Magistrate (1st Class) at Alipore, vide affidavit no 7385 Dated 07-01-2026, Angana Gupta (Old Name) and Angana Gupta Barman (New Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Asgar Ali Mirza, son of Late Dolu Mirza, declare that my father said name Doulat Mirza (old name), residing at Gulhatia, Salu, Salar, Murshidabad, Pin- 742401, West Bengal, India, have changed my father name and he shall henceforth be known as Dolu Mirza (new name), as declared Before The Ld. 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Kolkata, vide an affidavit No. 80, dated 02/01/2026, Dolu Mirza (new name) and Doulat Mirza (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I,Anup Chowdhury, son of Sudhir Ranjan Chowdhury, residing at 3rd floor, FL- C-1, 38, Debaipukur Road,Nandankanan Durga Mandir, Hindmott Uttarpara Kotrung(m) Hooghly,Pin -712233 , West Bengal, I hereby notified that my Father Sudhir Ranjan Chowdhury (old name) have changed his name and he shall henceforth be known as Sudhir Ranjan Chowdhury (New Name) vide an affidavit No 34 sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 16/01/2026, Sudhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Sudhir Ranjan Chowdhury both are the same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Kartik Ch Patra (Old Name), Son Of Late Debendra Patra, Residing At Krishna Nagar, Po- Arisanda, Purba Medinipur- 721139, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Kartik Patra (New Name) Vide An Affidavit No 38 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026, Kartik Patra And Kartik Ch Patra Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change
I, Ashis Das (old name) S/O Late Tara das Das, residing at 4/A, South Kulla Road, P.O. & P.S.- Belegata, Kolkata- 700010, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Ashis Kumar Das (new name), as declared Before The Ld. Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class at Sealdah, vide an affidavit No. 267, dated 05/01/2026, Ashis Kumar Das (new name) and Ashis Das (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Sushanto Ganguly (old name) S/O Dinesh Chandra Ganguly, residing at 37, Dhakuria Station Lane, Dhakuria, Kolkata- 700031, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Susant Kumar Ganguly (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 16/01/2026, Susanta Kumar Ganguly (new name) and Sushanta Ganguly (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Kajem Sardar (Old Name), Son Of Ombar Sardar, Residing At Nebukhali, Mollapara, Basant, South 24 Pgs- 743329, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Najem Sardar (New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026, Kajem Sardar And Najem Sardar Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change
I, Sahnaj Ali Molla (old name) S/O Sahadat Ali Molla, residing at Paschim Kumirmura, Majher Aint Mollapara, Kumirmura, P.S.- Chanditala, Dist- Hooghly, Pin- 712704, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Sahanaj Ali Molla (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, Sahanaj Ali Molla (new name) and Sahanaj Ali Molla (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Sk Tamim (old name) S/O Sekh Sahabuddin (father) & Toshima Begum (mother), residing at Vill- Azabnagar, P.O.- Paschimtajpur, P.S.- Chanditala, Dist.- Hooghly, Pin- 712706, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Sekh Tamim (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, Sekh Tamim (new name) and Sk Tamim (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Nazrul Mondal (Old Name), Son Of Manik Miya, Residing At Harinaghat, Haripukuria, Nadia- 741257, West Bengal, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Najrul Mondal (New Name) Vide An Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026, Nazrul Mondal And Najrul Mondal Both Are The Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change
I, SARABAT ALI (old name) son of IVASIN MALLICK, residing at Paschim Bhagabatipur Tarafdarpara, Chanditala, Hooghly, Pin- 712701, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as SARABAT ALI MALLICK (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 13/01/2026, SARABAT ALI MALLICK (new name) and SARABAT ALI (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, EMRAN ALI (old name) son of SARA-BAT ALI MALLICK, residing at Paschim Bhagabatipur Tarafdarpara, Chanditala, Hooghly, Pin- 712701, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as IMRAN ALI MALLICK (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 13/01/2026, IMRAN ALI MALLICK (new name) and EMRAN ALI (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Sharma Dineshkumar Nepal (Old Name) Son Of Nepal Kashi Sharma, Residing At A-2/202, Flower Valley, 493/B, G.T.Road (South), P.S.- Shibpur, Dist- Howrah, Pin- 711102, West Bengal, India, Have Changed My Name And Shall Henceforth Be Known As Dinesh Nepal Sharma (New Name) As Declared Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 16/01/2026, Sharma Dineshkumar Nepal (Old Name) And Dinesh Nepal Sharma (New Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Indian Railways Makes Major Strides in Track Modernisation and Safety

● Sustained Investment Strengthens Rail Safety as 6,851 km of Track Renewal Is Completed in 2024-25 and Works Accelerate with Over 7,500 km Underway and 7,900 km Planned Over the Next Two Years

● High-Speed-Capable Track Length Nearly Doubles from 31,445km in 2014 to 84,244 km Now, Enabling 110 kmph+ Operations Across About 80% of the National Rail Network

MI News Service, New Delhi, 18 Jan.26 : Indian Railways has recorded significant progress in strengthening its track infrastructure and enhancing safety standards through sustained investment and focused execution over the last eleven years. These efforts have contributed to safer, faster and more reliable train operations across the country.

During the financial year 2024-25, Indian Railways carried out track renewal over 6,851 track kilometres. In the current financial year 2025-26, more than 7,500



track kilometres of track renewal work is underway. Further, track renewal covering 7,900 track kilometres is planned for 2026-27, reflecting continued emphasis on asset reliability and safety.

Substantial progress has also been made in turnout renewal, which is crucial for smooth train movement. In 2024-25, 7,161 Thick Web Switches and 1,704 Weldable CMS Crossings were provided. In 2025-26, over 8,000 Thick Web Switches and more

than 3,000 Weldable CMS Crossings are being provided.

Mechanised deep screening of ballast, essential for maintaining track stability and improving ride quality, has been carried out consistently. During 2024-25, 7,442 track kilometres of deep screening was completed, while over 7,500 track kilometres of deep screening work is being undertaken in 2025-26.

To support mechanized maintenance and improve productivity,

Indian Railways has significantly expanded its track machine fleet. More than 1,100 track machines have been procured since 2014, enabling faster and more efficient maintenance of the railway network.

Safety fencing along railway tracks has been taken up on priority to minimize cattle run-over incidents and trespassing, thereby enhancing overall safety. About 15,000 kilometres of fencing have been provided so far, leading to improved safety on sections where trains operate at speeds exceeding 110 kmph.

As a result of these sustained efforts, Indian Railways has achieved remarkable progress in upgrading tracks. The length of track permitting speeds of 110 kmph and above has increased from 31,445 kilometres (about 40 per cent of the network) in 2014 to 84,244 kilometres (about 80 per cent of the network) at present, enabling faster and more efficient train operations.

VBSA Bill brings end to 'DEEMED VARSITIES'

MI News Service, New Delhi: All deemed universities will lose the "deemed" tag and function as full-fledged universities with the formation of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan. The government will also authorise top-performing colleges to award degrees.

Under the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, universities set up by central laws, state laws, and deemed-to-be-universities established under the UGC Act are allowed to award degrees to students on completion of their academic programmes.

The proposed VBSA law will repeal the UGC Act, All India Council for Technical Education Act and the National Council for Teacher Education Act. With the repeal of the UGC Act, the provision for the creation of deemed-to-be-universities will no longer exist.

There are 150 deemed-to-be-universities in the country. The number of such institutions saw a sharp increase between 2000 and 2010. The UPA government in 2009 set up a panel to suggest the withdrawal of the deemed tag from undeserving institutions. The panel proposed the withdrawal of the tag from 44 out of 126 such institutions functioning at that time. However, these insti-

tutions moved the Supreme Court and got relief.

While the present bill advocates doing away with the deemed-to-be-university concept, it brings in a new mechanism empowering the Union government to authorise leading colleges to award degrees. The VBSA will have a regulatory council, which will study the applications of aspiring colleges and allow them to award degrees.

"The regulatory council may authorise any accredited higher educational institution, other than a university, to grant degrees in such manner as may be specified by the regulations of the regulatory council, with the prior approval of the central government," said the bill. The council will have the power to revoke authorisation accorded to the colleges with the approval of the Centre, if such colleges violate the provisions of law, it said.

A Delhi University professor said: "The NEP advocated the creation of a separate council to release grants to universities. The VBSA Bill says that the education ministry will have the power to release grants. The NEP recommended an end to the system of affiliated colleges. Now the affiliated colleges will stay and some colleges will get degree-granting powers."

Sponsoring terrorism is very expensive affair: Punjab & Haryana HC

MI News Service, Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court has denied bail to two men in a case related to the smuggling of narcotics, arms and explosives from Pakistan via drones to fund terrorist activities in India. The court denied bail to Gurmukh Singh, the son of former Akal Takht Jathedar Jasbir Singh Rodhe, and Gurnej Singh. The division bench of Justices Gurvinder Singh Gill and Ramesh Kumari passed the order on December 5 last year. The bench observed that sponsoring terrorism is an "expensive affair" and the charge is that heroin is smuggled into the country from across the border to fund terrorist activities. "The facts brought on record by the respondent NIA prima facie prove the involvement of the appellants in the terrorist activities. The trial is in progress.

PNG & CNG adoption: BPCL rules the roost

MI News Service, Kolkata: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a Fortune Global 500 company and a Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG), is leading PNG Drive 2.0, a nationwide, industry-led initiative to accelerate the adoption of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) across households, transport, and industrial and commercial segments.

Anchored by a unified industry theme "Har Ghar PNG, Har Gaadi CNG - Jiyo Non-Stop Zindagi", PNG Drive 2.0 reflects the collective commitment of the City Gas Distribution (CGD) industry, under the guidance of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB).

Subhankar Sen, Director (Marketing), BPCL, emphasised, "PNG Drive 2.0 represents the power of industry coming together with a shared purpose." PNG Drive 2.0 has been conceptualised as a collaborative, pan-India movement, bringing together CGD entities on a common platform with harmonised messaging, shared creative assets, and a coordinated outreach framework.

PNG Drive 2.0 is witnessing strong momentum on the ground, with CGD teams across regions actively engaging consumers through awareness programmes, community outreach initiatives, digital engagement, and on-ground activations.

The initiative aligns with India's vision on clean energy transition and supports the national objective of increasing the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix from approximately 6.5% at present to 15% by 2030.

Name Change
I, Bablu Mondal (old name) S/O Ramjan Ali Mondal, residing at VILL+P.O.- Gachha, P. S.-Basirhat, DIST-North 24 PGS, PIN:-743292, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Bablu Rahaman Mondal (new name), as declared Before The Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 17/01/2026, Bablu Rahaman Mondal (new name) and Bablu Mondal (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Najmul Islam S/O Late Aliur Rahman Molla, declare that my father said name Aliur Rahaman Molla and Molla Aliur Rohoman (father old names) residing at Vill- Uttar Debpur Dakshinpara, P.O.- Champapukur, P.S.- Basirhat, Hal-Matia, Dist.- North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India, I have changed my father name and he shall henceforth be known as Aliur Rahaman Molla (father new name), as declared Before The Ld. Executive Magistrate, 1st Class at Basirhat, North 24 Pgs, vide an affidavit No. 7683BC-1/25, dated 19/12/2025, Aliur Rahaman Molla, Aliur Rahaman Molla and Molla Aliur Rohoman all are same and one identical person (myfather).

Lost and Found
My client, Shri Montu Roy, son of Late Amulya Charan Roy, residing Sang- Ankuti, P.O. Dilakash, P.S.- Jangipara, District Hooghly, PIN- 712404, executed a gift deed bearing document number 2194 in the Jangipara Additional Sub-Registry Office in the year 2022. The said document was lost on January 5th, 2026, at 11:00 AM in the Jangipara market. In this regard, I have filed a General Diary (GD) at Jangipara Police Station, GD No. 499, dated 09/01/2026. If any kind person finds the said document, please contact this mobile number: 9002923663.

Mumpy Sarkar
Advocate,
Kolkata High Court.

Lost and Found
I, Shuvam karmakar Son of Manick karmakar Address - p.c street, biswas para, ranghat, Nadia. Pin : 741201, No. - 578407Index No - 1145739/055, GDE NUMBER- 1215, LOST my -- ICSE (CLASS - XII) YEAR - 2014 1. REGISTRATION CARD, 2. ADMIT CARD, 3. REPORT CARD / MARKSHEET. My School name is CONVENT OF JESUS AND MARY HIGH SCHOOL, RANAGHAT, NADIA. Mobile number: 9153109536, 8250692590

PM Narendra Modi Inaugurated New Rail Line From Jayrambati-Barogopinathpur-Maynapur And Also Flagged Off Three Amrit Bharat Express Trains & Jayrambati-Maynapur Passenger Train



press will provide faster and more reliable rail connectivity between Eastern India and the National Capital Region, covering West Bengal, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

At Santragachi station, Shri Ravneet Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Railways, Shri Satish Kumar, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board, along with other senior railway officials and dignitaries, were present to witness the flagging-off ceremony.

At Jayrambati station, Shri Dibakar Gharami, Hon'ble MLA, Shri Nirmal Kumar Dhara, Hon'ble MLA, and Swami Yugeshwarananda Ji, Upadhyaksha, Sri Sri Matri Mandir, Jayrambati, was present to witness the auspicious occasion.

The inauguration of the Jayrambati-Maynapur new railway line and the introduction of a new passenger train on this section have fulfilled a long-standing demand of the local residents. The new connectivity will improve access to the important pilgrimage centres of Jayrambati and Kamarupukur, boosting tourism and the local economy. The project will also enhance regional connectivity in Bankura district, improving access to education, healthcare and socio-economic opportunities.

These transformative rail initiatives reflect Indian Railways' commitment to strengthening connectivity across states, empowering regions and advancing the vision of Bikhoshito Bangla, Bikhoshito Bharat.

Federal Bank delivers strong for Q3

MI News Service, New Delhi: Federal Bank reported a strong and well-rounded performance for the quarter ended 31 December 2025 (Q3 FY26), marked by sustained margin expansion, improving profitability, disciplined cost management, and further strengthening of asset quality. The results reflect the Bank's continued focus on building a stable, margin-led, and resilient franchise. KVS Manian, Managing Director & CEO, said: "Our Q3 performance reflects the continued strengthening of the Bank's underlying fundamentals.

Regulation of Trains for Power & Traffic Block over Howrah Division

For re-girdering work of Bridge nos. 202, 206, 210, 212, 236, 264 in Nalhati-Gumani section and for the work of Limited Height subway at Level Crossing gate no. 25 between Rampurhat & Swadinpur stations over Howrah division, **Power & Traffic Block** will be necessary on **25.01.2026 (Sunday)**. Consequently, the following Trains will be regulated as under :-

● **Cancellation of MEMU train on 25.01.2026 : 63434** Rampurhat-Azimganj MEMU Passenger. ● **Rescheduling of down Express trains from source station** at (1)**13032** Jaynagar-Howrah Express (JCO 24.01.2026) by 4 hours. (2) **13174** Sabroom-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express (JCO 24.01.2026) by 4 hours. (3) **12364** Haldibari-Kolkata Intercity Express (JCO 25.01.2026) by 3 hours. (4) **13018** Azimganj-Howrah Ganadevata Express (JCO 25.01.2026) by 1 hours 15 minutes. ● **Rescheduling of Up Express train from source station** : **13031** Howrah-Jaynagar Express (JCO 25.01.2026) by 1 hour 55 minutes. ● **Diversion of Up Express trains** : (1) **12509** SMVT Bengaluru-Guwahati Superfast Express (JCO 23.01.2026) will be diverted via Andul-Howrah-Bandel-Katwa-Azimganj-New Farakka with stoppages at Bandel, Nabadwip Dham, Katwa, Khagraghat Road, Azimganj & Jangipur Road Station. (2) **13053** Howrah-Radhikapur Kulik Express (JCO 25.01.2026) will be diverted via Bandel-Katwa-Azimganj-New Farakka with stoppages at Bandel, Nabadwip Dham, Katwa, Khagraghat Road, Azimganj & Jangipur Road Station. ● **Short-termination/Short-origination on 25.01.2026** : **63063/63064** Bardhaman-Sahibganj- Barddhaman MEMU Passenger will short-terminate at/Short-originate from Rampurhat and **63007** Katwa-Rampurhat MEMU Passenger will short-terminate at Azimganj.●**Controlling of Express trains on 25.01.2026** : **22503** Kanyakumari-Dibrugarh Vivek Express will be controlled for 30 minutes in Kharagpur Division and **13427** Howrah-Sahibganj Intercity Express will be controlled for 15 minutes between Howrah & Rampurhat.

Special Note : (1) Special or late running trains & any further newly introduced train/Parcel train/TOD during the block period, if any, will be controlled/ diverted suitably enroute. Passengers are requested to follow the public address system of stations. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Divisional Railway Manager, Howrah

EASTERN RAILWAY

PM lays foundation stone for **KAZIRANGA CORRIDOR**, flags off **2 AMRIT BHARAT** trains

MI News Service, Kaliabor: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the Rs 6,957-crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor, and virtually flagged off two Amrit Bharat trains in Assam's Nagaon district. Modi, who arrived here from Guwahati in the final leg of his two-day visit to the state, performed 'Bhoomi Poojan' of the Kaziranga project. The corridor is aimed at ensuring safe wildlife movement across the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, reduce road accidents on National Highway-715, and boost ecotourism, while generating local employment opportunities, an official said. It forms part of the four-laning of the Kaliabor-Numaligarh section of NH-715, and includes around 34.45 km of elevated wildlife-friendly corridors, along with by-passes at Jakhlabandha and Bokakhat, he said. Modi also reviewed a model of the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor. The Prime Minister also virtually flagged off two Amrit Bharat Express trains – Dibrugarh-Gomti Nagar (Lucknow) and Kamakhya-Rohtak. These trains will significantly enhance long-distance rail connectivity between Assam and multiple states, including West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Haryana, reduce travel time, and provide modern passenger amenities, the official said. In a post on X, the PM had earlier said he was looking forward to being in Kaliabor for the 'Bhoomi Poojan' of key development projects. "Looking forward to being in Kaliabor, Assam today for the Bhoomi Poojan of key development works, including the 35 km elevated corridor across Kaziranga. This will go a long way in safeguarding animals, particularly in the monsoon season," Modi had said. During the programme, Amrit Bharat trains will also be flagged off, which will improve connectivity for the people of Assam, he added.

Planning 12-fold rise in induction of women officers: **GENERAL DWIVEDI**

MI News Service, New Delhi: Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi said women officers were doing "exceedingly well" and "I want them to be strong officers, maybe like Kali Mata ka roop" (the embodiment of Goddess Kali). He said the army was looking at a 12-fold increase in women's induction into officer ranks by 2032. In October last year, a senior-rank army officer had written a controversial five-page letter to eastern army commander Lt General Ram Chander Tiwari, listing a series of issues impacting army units commanded by women officers in the eastern sector. "Today we have 115 (women) officers who are commanding and 18 are ready to join. I have firsthand experience to say that you will always find all kinds of officers. Wherever I have seen, the women officers have been very mature, very considerate, very kind and if I can say that, up and above," General Dwivedi said. He said the army wants strong officers and it needs to create a gender-neutral environment. "As far as women officers are concerned, we want strong women officers. Does it mean Kali Mata ka roop? Maybe," he said. Several women officers are now helming units at forward locations, including in areas under the Northern and Eastern Commands which are tasked with guarding India's frontier with China. The army broke the glass ceiling following a Supreme Court order in 2023 by assigning women officers to command roles outside the medical stream for the first time.

Indian Army is closely watching B'Desh situation: **ARMY CHIEF**

MI News Service, New Delhi: Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi said India was closely watching the developments in Bangladesh and keeping military communication channels open to avoid any "miscommunication or misunderstanding". He said Bangladesh military actions were not targeted at India. "I want to assure you that, as of today, whatever actions are being taken are not directed against India in any way," the army chief said. On the situation across the eastern border, he said India's immediate response would depend on the nature of the government in Dhaka.

"First of all, it is important for us to understand what kind of government is in place in Bangladesh. If it is an interim government, we need to see whether the actions it is taking are meant for the next four-five years, or only for the next four-five months. We have to judge whether there is any need for us to react immediately or not," he said.



General Upendra Dwivedi

"Secondly, as of today, all three services have kept their communication channels fully open. The Indian Army has multiple channels of communication open and I remain in regular touch with their chief there. In the same way, we are also in contact through our other channels as well," Gen.

Dwivedi added. He said India had already sent a team to assess the situation there. "We (army) had sent a delegation there, which met everyone. Similarly, the chief of the naval staff and the chief of the air staff have also spoken," he said, stressing that the intention is to avoid any "miscommunication or

misunderstanding".

Responding to the increased Pakistan-Bangladesh engagement, Gen. Dwivedi described capability development as routine for all countries. "As far as capability development is concerned, it is something that is an ongoing process. India is also doing it, and other countries are also doing it. As far as our preparation is concerned, we are closely monitoring.... We are having our training exchange programme. There is no problem in our military relationship with Bangladesh," he said. New Delhi's ties with Bangladesh have come under strain since Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime was ousted in August last year following a violent protest. The simmering tension between the two countries has escalated with diplomatic protests and a sports boycott. Both countries have suspended visa services in several cities and accused each other of failing to ensure adequate security for their diplomatic missions.



People participate in Tata Mumbai Marathon 21st edition, in Mumbai on Sunday.

Iran fiasco hits India's **BASMATI RICE** exports

MI News Service, New Delhi: Civil unrest in Iran has begun affecting India's basmati rice exports to the country, triggering a sharp fall in domestic prices as exporters grapple with payment delays and growing uncertainty, an industry body said. The Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) has advised exporters to reassess risks linked to Iranian contracts and adopt secured payment mechanisms, cautioning against over-leveraging inventories earmarked for the Iranian market.

Trade data showed that India exported basmati rice worth USD 468.10 to Iran during April-November of the 2025-26 fiscal, amounting to 5.99 lakh tonnes. Iran remains India's largest destination for basmati rice, but the current financial year has witnessed increasing stress on order flows, payment cycles and shipment schedules due to the prevailing instability. The impact is now visible in domestic mandis, where prices of key basmati varieties have fallen sharply over the past week, reflecting buyer hesitation, delayed contracts and heightened risk perception among exporters. The domestic price of basmati rice variety 1121 has de-

clined to Rs 80 per kg from Rs 85 per kg last week, while varieties 1509 and 1718 have dropped to Rs 65 per kg from Rs 70 per kg. "Iran has historically been a pillar market for Indian basmati. However, the current internal turmoil has disrupted trade channels, slowed payments and dented buyer



confidence," IREF National President Prem Garg said in a statement. He said exporters must exercise heightened caution, particularly with respect to credit exposure and shipment timelines.

According to the federation, importers have conveyed their inability to honour existing commitments and

remit payments to India, creating uncertainty for exporters. IREF has issued an advisory and appealed to stakeholders to diversify into alternative markets across West Asia, Africa and Europe to cushion the impact of any prolonged slowdown in Iran-bound shipments.

"We are not sounding an alarm, but urging prudence. In periods of geopolitical and internal instability, trade is often the first casualty. A calibrated approach is essential to protect both exporters and farmers," Garg noted. The federation also addressed concerns arising from recent remarks by US President Donald Trump, who indicated that countries continuing trade with Iran may face a 25 per cent tariff. IREF clarified that Indian rice exports to the US are already subject to a 50 per cent tariff, up from 10 per cent earlier. Despite this, exports have remained resilient, with India shipping 2,40,518 tonnes of basmati and non-basmati rice to the US during April-November 2025-26, compared with 2,35,554 tonnes in the entire 2024-25 fiscal. The US is the 10th largest market for Indian rice globally and the fourth largest for basmati rice.

Kashmir clergies allege invasive surveillance of Mosques

MI News Service, Srinagar: Kashmir's Muslim clergy and politicians claimed that the region's security establishment had launched a Valley-wide "unprecedented and invasive data collection" exercise related to mosques, imams, preachers and those associated with these places of worship. They said it was an attempt to control and regulate religious institutions through "coercive means and checks". The allegations of surveillance came at a time the administration led by lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha continues to terminate the services of government employees for suspected terror links, taking the total number of dismissals to 87 since 2019.

The five government employees who were sacked on Tuesday were Mohammad Ishfaq, a teacher; Tariq Ahmad Shah, a laboratory technician; Bashir Ahmad Mir, an assistant line-man; Farooq Ahmad Bhat, a field worker in the forest department; and Mohammad Yousuf, a driver in the health department. The Muthahida



Hazratbal in Srinagar. File Photo

Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), the largest conglomerate of Islamic religious organisations in Jammu and Kashmir, in a statement said the police were distributing detailed multi-page forms among mosque managements "seeking highly personal and sensitive information, including private identification details, family particulars, financial information, phone details, digital and social-media profiles,

passport details and travel history". "Besides, the mosque's ideological sect identification — Barelvi, Hanafi, Deobandi or Ahle-Hadith — is also being sought. Such an unprecedented and invasive data-collection exercise has caused widespread anxiety among religious institutions, imams, khateeb and the public in general," the conglomerate added. The Muslim clergy said the exercise was a "com-

plete violation of fundamental rights and the right to privacy and personal information guaranteed under the Constitution". "Mosques are sacred institutions meant for worship, guidance and community service, and their internal religious affairs cannot be subjected to arbitrary surveillance and intrusive scrutiny. The nature and depth of information being sought go far beyond any routine administrative requirement, raising serious questions of intent, reflecting an attempt to control and regulate religious institutions through coercive means and checks," the statement said. The outfit accused the administration of picking only Muslim religious institutions for such surveillance, making it even more suspect. "The MMU strongly feels that the elected government must immediately intervene in this matter. Such an exercise must be stopped forthwith, as it undermines trust, creates fear among religious functionaries and sends a disturbing message to the Muslim community of the state.

BJP backs CPIM move to re-name Kerala as '**KERALAM**'

MI News Service, Kochi: The Kerala unit of the BJP has extended support to the CPIM led LDF government's proposal to rename the state "Keralam" and has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to formalise the change.

Party state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar wrote separate letters to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, outlining the BJP's position on the issue. Chandrasekhar said the renaming would help curb attempts by extremist forces raising demands for the division of the state into separate districts on religious lines. In his letter to the Prime Minister, he noted that the Kerala Legislative Assembly had already passed a resolution seeking to change the state's name in official records from "Kerala" to "Keralam". Stating that the BJP's ideology is rooted in protecting linguistic culture and traditions, Chandrasekhar said the party has always viewed the state as "Keralam", reflecting thousands of years of heritage and cultural continuity. The leader, in the letter, expressed hope that with the renaming of the state, all political parties will work together to revive and preserve the state's rich traditional heritage and also work to create a "Vikasita, Surakshita Keralam" where the faith and tradition of all people cutting across their religion is protected and respected. "A Keralam deeply rooted in its history, whilst working for a bright, prosperous future for all Malay-

alees, will also serve to blunt the efforts of some radical elements in our society, who continue to raise demands for carving out more 'separate districts' based on religion to fragment our State," he said.

"We respectfully request your intervention to ensure that our state is named the Malayalam-rooted name (Keralam)," Chandrasekhar added in the letter to PM Modi. The BJP state president reiterated the same stand in his letter to the chief minister and expressed hope about creating a 'developed and safe Kerala' where the faith of all Malayalis living with different religious beliefs is protected and respected.

The Kerala assembly, in August 2024, had unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Centre to officially change the state's name to 'Keralam'.

The resolution was moved by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who urged the Union government to change the state's name to 'Keralam' in all languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Presenting the resolution, the CM had said that the state was called 'Keralam' in Malayalam, but in other languages it was still Kerala. He had said that the need to form a united Kerala for the Malayalam-speaking communities had strongly emerged since the time of the national freedom struggle. The BJP does not have a member in the state legislative Assembly.

ODISHA clears 5-yr plan to restore **CHILIKA LAKE** ecology



MI News Service, Puri: The Odisha government has approved a five-year integrated plan to restore and protect Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, with a focus on ecological recovery and sustainable livelihoods. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting of the Chilika Development Authority chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in Bhubaneswar. "Chilika is a treasure trove of our biodiversity and all possible steps need to be taken for its protection," Majhi said.

The proposed plan includes excavation of the lake's mouth, dredging of feeder channels at Balugaoon, Magarmukha and

Palur, and removal of accumulated silt to improve water flow and salinity balance. It also envisages setting up fish landing centres to strengthen fisheries resources, along with new development and research infrastructure aimed at improving biodiversity and long-term ecological stability. The implementation of the plan is expected to take five years, officials said. The chief minister also directed officials to prepare a separate plan for tourism development in the lagoon. Proposals discussed included organising bird, seafood and boat festivals, installation of a lighthouse and setting up an interpretation centre at Chilika.

Over 23K inmates gain literacy in **TELANGANA** prisons

MI News Service, Hyderabad: More than 23,000 prisoners have gained literacy under the "Thumb In - Sign Out" initiative, while 28 inmates completed graduation last year through prison study centres in Telangana, Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services Soumya Mishra said. In a press release, Mishra said that under the programme, 108 inmates — including eight women — have been enrolled with the National Institute of Open Schooling to appear for the Class 10 examination. "Under Thumb In - Sign Out motto, 23,220 prisoners were made literate. Under this programme, 108 inmates, including 8 women inmates, have been enrolled in NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) to appear for class X examination," the release said. It added that through study centres at Cherlapalli Prison,

run by Dr B R Ambedkar Open University, 28 inmates completed their graduation in 2025. Seeking to provide an opportunity for employment and impart employable skills to prison inmates, the Telangana Prisons Department has established 32 fuel outlets in partnership with oil companies like IOCL, BPCL and HPCL. These are operated by around 57 semi-open prisoners, 165 released prisoners, 269 civilians, 14 retired staff apart from jail staff. Telangana prisons witnessed 42, 566 admissions, both male and female in 2025 up 11.8 per cent compared to 38, 079 in 2024. As many as 4,176 people lodged as in-mates under the POCSO Act in 2025 up over 11 per cent compared to 3,750 in 2024. There were 109 women booked under POCSO Act in 2025, while it was 95 in 2024, the release added.

Study gives more insight into risk of obstetric anal sphincter injury



WASHINGTON [US] : When a first-time mother needs medical assistance during childbirth, the chance of obstetric anal sphincter injury--a serious kind of perineal trauma between the vulva and anus--is more than halved when a lateral episiotomy (angled incision) is made in the tissue between the vaginal and anal opening.

Researchers from Stockholm's Danderyd Hospital and Karolinska Institutet conducted a randomised clinical trial, the findings of which were reported in The BMJ.

Anal incontinence and trouble holding onto gas and excrement

can result from obstetric anal sphincter injury (OASI), which affects the anal sphincter muscles. In addition, it can lower quality of life and lead to sexual issues. In Sweden, around 5% of all first-time women who give birth vaginally suffer from this severe type of perineal damage.

"Women giving birth for the first time and requiring instrumental birth are at the highest risk of sustaining OASI," said Sophia Brismar Wendel, associate professor in obstetrics and gynaecology at the Department of Clinical Sciences, Danderyd Hospital, Karolinska Institutet and senior consultant at the

Department of Women's Health, Danderyd Hospital. "Therefore, we wanted to assess if such injury could be prevented in this group with a lateral episiotomy (angled cut in the perineum) when the baby's head is crowning."

Participants were recruited to the EVA (Episiotomy in Vacuum Assisted delivery) trial at eight Swedish hospitals between 2017 and 2023. Over 6 100 pregnant women expecting their first child agreed to take part if the delivery required vacuum assistance. A total of 702 women with a vacuum assisted delivery were randomly assigned to receive a later-

al episiotomy or no episiotomy.

The lateral episiotomy reduced the risk of OASI by an average of 53 per cent. Among the women assigned to the procedure, 6.1 per cent sustained an OASI, compared to 13.1 per cent in the comparison group. Moreover, the procedure did not increase the risk of severe blood loss, negative birth experience, prolonged hospitalisation or additional complications. However, the risk of wound complications such as wound infection and wound dehiscence was increased in the episiotomy group. "Episiotomy as a medical intervention is controversial as it has historically also been used for normal births, sometimes without the woman's consent," said Sophia Brismar Wendel. "The use of episiotomy is highly variable in different countries, and in Sweden we've practised restrictive use given the lack of evidence. However, these results may impact obstetric care both in Sweden and elsewhere." The trial is also gathering data on the women's self-reported symptoms at one and five years after childbirth. The results from the one-year follow-up will soon be analysed, which might give some answers about any differences in symptoms, such as anal incontinence and sexual function.

"This may help doctors and pregnant women in shared informed decision-making regarding the use of a prophylactic lateral episiotomy," said Sophia Brismar Wendel.

Researchers discover new approach against fatty liver

WASHINGTON [US]: The failure of the liver as a crucial organ is becoming more common due to fatty liver disease, often known as steatotic liver disease or SLD for short. Researchers have now found that a saturated fatty acid in blood vessels causes the synthesis of the signalling molecule SEMA3A, which shuts the blood vessel 'windows.'

This makes it more difficult for fat to go from the liver to the adipose tissue. The researchers write in the journal Nature Cardiovascular Research that when SEMA3A is suppressed, the windows open again and the amount of fat in the liver decreases.

Team of researchers Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf (HHU)'s Institute of Metabolic Physiology, working with the German Diabetes Centre (DDZ) and other partners

In particular, 'metabolic dysfunction-associated SLD' (MASLD for short) can develop due to adverse lifestyle factors such as a high-energy diet and little exercise. It already affects around a third of all people worldwide. Initially, MASLD has no pathological effects, but it can develop into inflammation of the liver. In the long term, this may lead to liver cirrhosis, liver failure or even liver cancer. There is no substitute procedure that can take over the function of the liver in the long term, such as dialysis for kidney failure. Those affected are at high risk and may only be cured by a liver transplant. In addition, people with MASLD have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes mellitus or dying from cardiovascular diseases. Obesity favours MASLD, but not all obese people are affected. And conversely, slim people can also develop the disease.

The molecular causes of the development of MASLD are not fully understood. A team of researchers from HHU, the DDZ (Leibniz Centre for Diabetes Research at HHU), Dusseldorf University Hospital (UKD) and Forschungszentrum Julich (FZJ) have now discovered an important aspect that explains how MASLD develops.

The leading role is played by windows (Latin: fenestrae) in the endothelial cells of blood vessel, through which substances are exchanged between liver cells and blood. The liver uses these tiny windows to release excess fat particles into the adipose



tissue via the bloodstream. The researchers discovered that these windows are closed by a mechanism in which the signalling molecule SEMA3A (semaphorin-3A) plays the central part. This molecule is produced in blood vessels when they are overly exposed to the saturated fatty acid "palmitic acid".

Sydney Balkenhol from the Institute of Metabolic Physiology at HHU and the DDZ, first author of the study now published in Nature Cardiovascular Research, points to a discovery made by the team using scanning electron microscopy: The "windows" in the smallest blood vessels of the liver were also closed in mice with fatty liver and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Dr Daniel Eberhard, the other first author, adds: "We were also able to reverse the effect. By inhibiting the signalling molecule, we could defat the liver and thus improve its function again."

Corresponding author Dr Eckhard Lammert, Professor and Head of the Institute of Metabolic Physiology at HHU and the Institute of Vascular and Islet Cell Biology at the DDZ, hopes that the discoveries will also lead to a therapeutic approach for humans in the long term: "It may be possible to use the SEMA3A signalling molecule we identified to prevent MASLD and its consequences at an early stage. However, we first need to investigate the processes in humans in detail."



Study sheds more light on ability of cancer drug to lower blood sugar

OKLAHOMA [US] : The efficacy of a medication to prevent liver fat accumulation--a condition that frequently coexists with obesity and can result in dangerous fatty liver disease--has been further explored by researchers at the University of Oklahoma.

Their research, which highlights the intricacy of metabolic illnesses, is published in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), the organization's peer-reviewed magazine.

The publication builds on a previous discovery made by Tiangang Li, PhD, and a team of researchers at OU Health Harold Hamm Diabetes Center: A drug developed to suppress cancerous tumours can also improve insulin sensitivity and lower blood glucose (sugar) levels. The drug, known as MLN4924, works by preventing the degradation of a specific protein needed for all cells to respond to insulin. After the finding, Li earned a grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue his research.

In the recently published study, conducted in mice, his research team eliminated a gene in the liver called Cul 3. When Cul 3 is present in the body, the drug inhibits it to prevent the degradation of the protein. Eliminating the gene provided a fuller understanding of what would happen when mice become obese on a high-fat diet.

His discovery was both anticipated and surprising. Without the gene, the mice eating a high-fat diet did not accumulate fat in their livers, despite being obese.

However, the lack of fat build-up in the liver instead prompted fat to enter the bloodstream and into other tissues like muscle, where it's

not supposed to be stored. As a result, the muscle - the largest organ in the body - had a poorer response to insulin, and the mice developed high blood sugar.

"By eliminating the gene, we aggressively prevented fat accumulation in the liver, but this actually worsened insulin resistance in the muscle, which tells us that fat metabolism in these organs is interconnected," Li said.

"These findings suggest that, in addition to lowering liver fat, the simultaneous reduction of obesity and improvement of insulin sensitivity are important for treating fatty liver disease. That's because these improvements outside the liver are critical for preventing the fat that enters the liver from also building up in other tissues."

The research also illustrates why treating chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease is never simple - an improvement in one area may trigger negative effects in another. Even so, the study was extremely helpful for understanding the process by which fatty liver disease occurs and what the drug is doing in the context of that disease, said study co-author Jed Friedman, Ph.D., director of OU Health Harold Hamm Diabetes Center and a professor in the OU College of Medicine.

"We have some promising ideas going forward to target potential pathways to lower liver fat accumulation while also improving insulin sensitivity," Friedman said. "Drug repurposing like we're doing in this study is exciting because so much is already known about the drug and its safety. We believe it holds a lot of possibility."

Do you know lung cancer screening significantly improves long-term survival?

New York : A comprehensive international study that was published in Radiology found that employing low-dose computed tomography (CT) screening to identify early-stage lung cancer greatly increases the disease's cure rate over a 20-year span.

According to the findings, those who receive a CT screening-based diagnosis of lung cancer have an approximate 81 percent 20-year survival rate, or cure rate. Of the 1,257 individuals who received a lung cancer diagnosis, 81% had stage I illness, and 87% of them had an 87 percent long-term survival rate. Ninety-five percent of cases were diagnosed in the initial stage I (<=10mm).

In the United States, the average five-year survival rate for all lung cancer patients is 25.4 percent because only 21 percent of lung cancers are diagnosed at an early stage. More than half of the people with lung cancer die within one year of their diagnosis, making it the leading cause of cancer deaths. By the time symptoms appear, it is often too late.

The findings are the latest to demonstrate the importance of routine early screening in detecting cancers when they are small enough to be cured.

Unfortunately, fewer than 6 percent of the people who are eligible for screening are currently getting it. "While screening doesn't prevent cancers from occurring, it is the major tool to identify lung cancers in their earliest stage when they can be cured," said the study's lead author, Claudia Henschke, PhD, MD, Professor of



Diagnostic, Molecular and Interventional Radiology and Director of the Early Lung and Cardiac Action Program (ELCAP) at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. "Ultimately, anyone interested in being screened needs to know that if they are unfortunate enough to develop lung cancer, it can be cured if found early."

While treatments of more advanced cancers with targeted therapy and immunotherapy have come a long way, the best tool against lung cancer deaths is early diagnosis through low-dose CT screening before symptoms occur, according to the study authors. "Symptoms occur mainly in late-stage lung cancer," said co-author Rowena Yip, PhD, MPH, Senior Biostatistician of ELCAP. "Thus, the best way to find early-stage lung cancer is by enrolling in an annual screening program."

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual lung cancer screening with low-

dose CT in adults aged 50 to 80 years who have a 20-pack-year smoking history, which equals at least a pack a day for 20 years, and who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.

Dr. Henschke and colleagues have been studying the effectiveness of cancer detection with low-dose CT screening for years. The efforts of the researchers to advance CT screening for early lung disease led to the creation of the International Early Lung Cancer Action Program (IELCAP). Started in 1992, this multi-institution, multinational research program has enrolled more than 89,000 participants from over 80 institutions.

In 2006, the researchers identified a 10-year survival rate of 80 percent for the patients whose cancer was identified by CT screening. For this study, they looked at 20-year survival rates.

"What we present here is the 20-year follow-up on participants in our screening program who were diagnosed with lung cancer under annual screening and subsequently treated," Dr. Henschke said. "The key finding is that even after this long a time interval they are not dying of their lung cancer. And even if new lung cancers were found over time, as long as they continued with annual screening, they could be cured." "Ultimately, the critical clinically relevant information for people interested in screening relates to understanding their chance of being diagnosed with lung cancer.

Study finds cell-based therapy to fight cancer

Pennsylvania [US], December 28 (ANI): Wistar researchers successfully evaluated a simple intervention that could unlock higher anti-tumour potential in T-cell therapies, a strategy known as "cell-based therapy," which uses specifically tailored T cells to combat cancer.

Dr. Hildegund C.J. Ertl, a professor in The Wistar Institute's Vaccine & Immunotherapy Centre, led the team that demonstrated an exciting concept: that the common cholesterol drug fenofibrate can boost T cells' ability to destroy human tumours, as described in their new paper, "Treatment with the PPAR agonist fenofibrate improves the efficacy of CD8+ T cell therapy for melanoma."

CD8+ T cells work very well in fighting liquid tumors, but for solid tumors like melanoma, the cell-based therapy approach can stall due to the physical structure of the cancer.

The T cells infiltrate the tumor, but the cancer adapts and saps the T cells' energy by hijacking the form of metabolism that the T cells use: glycolysis, which turns sugar into energy. Without energy, the T cells first lose functions and then die, and the cancer continues to grow.

But Dr. Ertl's team has been able to circumvent this problem by forcing T cells to use a different energy source than glucose. They used fenofibrate because, as a cholesterol-lowering compound, the drug is a PPARa agonist.

When PPARa is upregulated, cellular metabolism is switched from glycolysis to fatty acid oxidation, or FAO.

This mechanism works to

improve cholesterol levels in human patients, but for Dr. Ertl's purposes, the fenofibrate-induced switch to FAO provided T cells with a form of energy that cancer couldn't exploit -- which is how Dr. Ertl proved that fenofibrate has been able to boost the killing power of T cells deployed against cancerous cell lines.

In this paper, the authors wanted to see whether this kind of cancer-killing improvement would have similar effects when deployed against not just cancer cell lines but solid human tumor fragments -- a more challenging proposition.

The group treated T cells with fenofibrate, and the hypothesis held: Dr. Ertl's team watched the T cells treated with fenofibrate survive longer and kill more cancer in preclinical models with human solid tumor masses than the T cells that didn't receive the treatment.

"Treating T cells with fenofibrate before using them as a cancer treatment flips a switch of sorts in their metabolism," said Dr. Hildegund Ertl.

"Once that switch is flipped, T cells can destroy the cancer much more effectively. And we've confirmed that this holds for larger human tumor masses."

As a result of these findings, Dr. Ertl and her team think this intervention shows great promise for future anti-tumor therapies. "Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer. Anything we can do to chip away at the cancer and destroy more of it -- even a simple pre-treatment step like this one -- can make a world of difference."

Senescent immune cells promote lung tumor growth

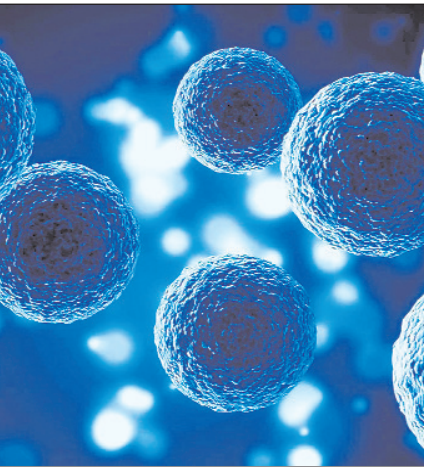
Minnesota: Macrophages are white blood cells that serve as the body's first line of defence against infection. Macrophages can launch a reaction against tumours in addition to destroying dangerous germs. However, macrophages, like other cells, can reach a state known as senescence, which is associated with ageing, disease, and a variety of physiological issues. When cells become senescent, they stop dividing, but they do not die and are not always eliminated from the body. They can linger and accumulate in tissues and may secrete molecules that are harmful. This is why senescent cells have been called "zombie cells." The reason why healthy cells become senescent is not well understood. In a new Cancer Cell study, researchers discovered

senescent macrophages in the lung that not only lingered but also promoted tumor growth.

"Conceptually, the idea that a macrophage can become senescent and be tumor-promoting is unexpected," says Darren Baker, Ph.D., a Mayo Clinic senescent cell biologist and senior author of the study. "This finding brings us one step closer to better understanding how tumors and cancer form at the cellular level."

Dr. Baker and his colleagues found that senescent macrophages appear to block the immune system from being able to respond to and eliminate the abnormal growth of cells. This leads to a tumor.

"Through different experiments and analyses, we could distinguish those



senescent macrophages from the other macrophages. We found that if we eliminate them, through genetic or pharmacological approaches, we delay tumor formation," says lead author Luis Prieto, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow and recent graduate of the Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The researchers reasoned that precancerous cells communicated with the surrounding cells, including

macrophages, and triggered the macrophages to become senescent. In turn, the senescent cells then appeared to alter the surrounding area in a way that promoted tumor growth.

Single-cell sequencing points in a new direction

Initially, the researchers thought removing the senescent cells would result in more adenomas, the type of lung tumor studied. But the results of their early experiments showed otherwise.

"It was very challenging, because every time we would do an experiment, it was just the opposite of what we'd expect," Dr. Prieto says. "If one removes tumor suppressors regulating senescent cells, one would expect to have more tumors, but it actually just happened to have the opposite results. There were

fewer tumors in the absence of those tumor suppressors."

The researchers worked with study co-author Hu Li, Ph.D., an individualized medicine researcher at Mayo Clinic, and conducted single-cell RNA sequencing in his lab. This work helped them identify lung macrophages as a key cell type driving tumor growth. Now, they believe the macrophages are responding to the precancerous cells as they begin to cause tumors.

"We had to rethink our initial ideas as we learned a lot more about what cells can do. Then, it started to make a lot more sense about how senescent macrophage cells can influence other cells, the environment and the immune system in this case," Dr. Baker says.

Uganda restores internet connection after five-day shutdown



MI News Service, Kampala: Uganda restored internet services on Sunday after a five-day nationwide shutdown imposed during the general elections, a move authorities said was intended to curb the misuse of online platforms.

Ibrahim Bbosa, a spokesperson for the Uganda Communications Commission, confirmed the restoration. "Yes, the internet is back," Bbosa told Xinhua. Telecommunications companies also sent messages to subscribers notifying them that services had resumed. The restoration followed the announcement on Saturday that incumbent President Yoweri Museveni had won the 2026 presidential election, securing more than 7.9 million votes out of about 11.3 million valid ballots cast.

Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei says Trump responsible for killings, damages during Iran unrest



MI News Service, Tehran: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that US President Donald Trump is the "main culprit" behind the casualties and damage caused during recent protests across the country.

Speaking to a gathering in the capital Tehran, Khamenei said that during the recent "sedition," the US president intervened personally and "issued threats, and encouraged and supported the seditionists."

"I say this firmly that America's goal in the recent sedition was to swallow up Iran," he said. Anti-government protests over the deteriorating economic situation and a record depreciation of the national currency, the rial, broke out in Tehran late last month and gradually spread to other cities across Iran.

On Jan. 8, the protests took a violent turn after the US-based son of a former Iranian monarch urged people to take to the streets in protest against the government.

Amid fierce street clashes between protesters and security personnel, hundreds of casualties were reported, especially in the western provinces. Police said the peaceful protests were "hijacked by rioters," who, they claim, were supported by the US and Israeli intelligence agencies.

Attacks were reported on government buildings, police stations, shops, banks, and mosques across the country, including in Tehran, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage, according to initial estimates. The official

death toll is not known yet, but unofficial estimates range from hundreds to thousands. Khamenei said the US has, since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, sought to "restore its dominance" in Iran, adding that all administrations in Washington have followed this policy toward the country.

He said that in the past, Western media figures would be involved, but this time, the president of the US "himself encouraged seditionists," referring to armed protesters. He accused the US and Israel of "identifying and training"

certain individuals inside Iran "to create fear and carry out destruction," adding that law enforcement forces had arrested "a large number of them."

Khamenei also said the "rioters" burned 250 mosques across the country and attacked banks and shops as well. Iran, he insisted, does not want war but will not let "the domestic and international criminals" go unpunished.

He also spoke about the economic situation in the country, noting that conditions are not good and people's livelihoods are "truly under strain." Khamenei called on the authorities to work with "greater seriousness" in providing essential goods, livestock feed, food, and supplies needed by people.

His remarks came after Trump said he had shelved plans to strike Iran, that the country had stopped executing protesters.

Iran's judiciary has said that so far, no one involved in the recent protests has been sentenced to death.

Hindu businessman in Bangladesh beaten to death over bananas



MI News Service, Dhaka: A Hindu businessman was beaten to death in Bangladesh's Gazipur by three members of a family following a dispute over bananas, local media reported.

It has not been confirmed whether the incident that occurred on Saturday in the Kaliganj area of Gazipur district is related to the recent spate of violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. The deceased, Liton Chandra Ghosh, 55, was the owner of 'Baishakhi Sweetmeat and Hotel', The Daily Star reported.

According to Zakir Hossain, Officer-in-Charge of Kaliganj Police Station, three members of a family — Swapan Mia, 55, his wife Majeda Khatun, 45,

and their son Masum Mia, 28 — have been detained for their suspected involvement in the killing.

Police stated that Masum owns a banana plantation, and a bunch of bananas went missing from it. He spotted the bananas in Liton's hotel while searching, and an argument started between the two parties over this.

"The accused punched

and kicked Liton, causing him to fall to the ground and die on the spot," police said. Liton's family said Masum came to the hotel around 11:00 am. At that time, he had an argument with a hotel employee over a trivial incident. Later, Masum's father and mother came to the spot and got into a fight.

Police are investigating the incident, the report said.

Iraq takes full control of Ain al-Asad after complete US withdrawal

MI News Service, Baghdad: US forces have fully withdrawn from the Ain al-Asad air base in western Iraq, marking a key milestone in the bilateral agreement with the Iraqi government, Iraqi officials announced on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

Under a 2024 pact between Washington and Baghdad, the US-led coalition combating the Islamic State group agreed to wind down operations in Iraq by September 2025, including the departure of American troops from various bases.

Initially, the plan called for a complete pullout from Ain al-Asad by that deadline. However, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani noted in October that "developments in Syria" necessitated retaining a small contingent of 250 to 350 US military advisers and security personnel at the site temporarily.

That remaining unit has now departed, with all US personnel gone and all American equipment removed from the base, according to a senior Iraqi Ministry of Defense official speaking anonymously due to lack of authorization for public comment. The Iraqi Army has assumed full control, as confirmed by the defense ministry.

Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah visited the base on Saturday to oversee the transition. He directed military units to intensify coordination, boost joint efforts, and maximize the facility's strategic capa-



bilities and location.

No immediate statement was issued by the US military regarding the withdrawal. US troops continue to maintain a presence in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region in the north and in neighboring Syria.

This development is expected to bolster the Iraqi government's position in ongoing negotiations to disarm non-state armed groups. Some factions have cited the US military presence as justification for retaining weapons outside state control.

In a July interview with The Associated Press, Prime Minister al-Sudani emphasized that a complete coalition withdrawal would eliminate any rationale for such groups to bear arms beyond the state's authority. The handover underscores Iraq's push toward greater sovereignty in security matters amid evolving regional dynamics.

Fighting intensifies in N. Syria as Kurdish forces' withdrawal deal falters

MI News Service, Damascus: Military tensions between Syria's interim authorities and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) sharply escalated on Saturday across northern Syria, as clashes erupted despite a withdrawal agreement announced a day earlier.

The day began with renewed fighting in eastern Aleppo countryside after the SDF accused the Syrian army of entering the towns of Deir Hafer and Maskanah before a 48-hour withdrawal period had expired.

The Syrian army, meanwhile, said it was deploying to secure the area following what it described as SDF violations of the agreement, including attacks on its troops that killed two soldiers.



As the confrontation widened, Syrian forces announced advances beyond eastern Aleppo toward Raqqah province, declaring all territory west of the Euphrates a closed military zone.

State media reported that the army had seized key sites near Tabqa, including the Safyan and al-

Thawra oil fields, the al-Rasafa junction, and several towns and villages, while beginning to enter Tabqa from multiple axes and encircle the military airport.

As of Saturday night, fighting remained ongoing in parts of eastern Aleppo countryside and western Raqqah.

Vast protests against U.S. push on Greenland held in Denmark, Greenland



MI News Service, Copenhagen: Vast protests against U.S. actions and remarks suggesting control over Greenland were held on Saturday in multiple cities across Denmark and Greenland.

In Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, a large crowd gathered at City Hall Square in central Copenhagen around 12 p.m. local time before marching toward the U.S. Embassy, about 2 km away. Protesters included people from both Denmark and Greenland, many of whom carried Danish and Greenlandic flags as they marched through the city.

In Nuuk, Greenland's capital, people began gathering from early afternoon, chanting "Greenland belongs to Greenlanders." The protest drew broad participation, including Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen, who waved a Greenlandic flag as demonstrators chanted slogans and traditional Inuit songs under light rain. Many participants wore caps bearing the words "Make America Go Away."

Similar protests were held or planned in the Danish cities of Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg, as well as in the Greenlandic cities of Aasiaat, Qaortoq and Ilulissat, according to Danish media. Later in the afternoon, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that the United States will impose 10-percent tariffs on all goods from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands and Finland over Greenland starting on Feb. 1.

Those tariffs would increase to 25 percent on June 1, and would continue until a deal is reached for the United States to purchase Greenland, Trump said on social media. Greenland is a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, with Copenhagen retaining control over defense and foreign policy. The United States maintains a military base on the island.

Qatar says it's taking part in Gaza Executive Board to help achieve 'prosperity for the people of Gaza'

MI News Service, Doha: Qatar says that its representative on the US-backed Gaza Executive Board, Ali Al Thawadi, is on the body to support "international efforts aimed at effective governance and the achievement of long-term, sustainable peace, stability, and prosperity for the people of Gaza."

Thawadi, strategic affairs minister in Qatari PM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani's office, "has been a key figure and effective facilitator in Qatar's mediation efforts, engaging in sustained dialogue with Israel, Hamas, and mediation partners," says Qatar in a statement, adding that he was central to Qatar's contributions to US President Donald Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza.

Unveiling of Netaji's Statue



Nurul Islam Khan: The Bengali people's reverence for the heroic Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is eternal. His birth anniversary will be celebrated across the country this month. Keeping this in mind, a statue of Netaji was unveiled and inaugurated at the Netaji Sports Welfare Association grounds, an initiative spearheaded by Mayor-in-Council member Mr Swapan Samaddar. The inauguration was performed by former Member of Parliament, distinguished academic, professor, and member of the Netaji family, Mr. Sugata Bose. He said that Netaji is our national treasure. His contributions are universal. He fought many battles for the country's communal harmony, peace, and prosperity. Now the country is going in a different direction, and the country's glory is being destroyed. On this day, a drawing competition and a voluntary blood donation camp were also organized by the Netaji Sports Association.

Hindutva activist Puneeth Kerehalli granted bail after arrest for vigilante intimidation of migrant tenants

MI News Service, Bengaluru: Hindutva activist Puneeth Kerehalli was released on bail on Saturday after a brief detention by Karnataka Police. He was accused of trespassing into a private residence in Doddathoguru on January 13 and threatening the homeowner, Siddesh, for renting his house to migrant workers.

The incident followed a formal complaint filed on Friday by the Campaign Against Hate Speech with the Karnataka Director General of Police, demanding immediate criminal action against Kerehalli. The group accused him of unlawful entry, criminal intimidation, promoting communal hatred, and interfering with police duties.

Kerehalli, the main accused in the March 2023 murder of cattle transporter Idrees Pasha in Ramnagara district, has repeatedly posted videos of

himself and associates conducting nighttime raids on migrant settlements.

In these clips, he is seen demanding Aadhaar cards, questioning residents' nationality, and branding Muslim workers as "illegal Bangladeshis." A video uploaded on January 14 shows him asking occupants, "Which country are you from?" while his supporters accuse them of being foreign nationals and threaten officials from the Foreigners Regional Registration Office.

Civil rights activists condemned these actions as communal profiling and vigilante intimidation rather than legitimate immigration checks. They warned that such behaviour risks escalating into mob violence against vulnerable migrant and working-class communities. The complaint highlighted a disturbing pattern, citing recent killings and assaults

of migrant workers in Kerala, Odisha, and Karnataka, where victims were first targeted over alleged "Bangladeshi" identity.

The group expressed particular concern that some incidents occurred in the presence of police personnel, suggesting possible tacit approval or failure to enforce law. It alleged Kerehalli pressured officers to conduct inquiries at the site in his presence instead of following standard procedure at police stations, thereby emboldening vigilante activity.

A purported video showed Kerehalli's supporters protesting outside the police station during his court appearance. Rights organisations have urged swift and firm action to curb the growing threat of private militias conducting identity-based harassment under the guise of nationalism.

Presidents of Turkey, Egypt invited to Trump's Gaza 'Board of Peace'

MI News Service, White House: US President Donald Trump invited the Presidents of Egypt and Turkey to be a part of the controversial Gaza peace board, the leaders said on Saturday, January 17, a day after the White House released a list of seven people who will "redevelop" the besieged Strip.

The "Board of Peace" for Gaza is touted as a "redevelopment" under Trump's comprehensive plan to end the conflict. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Trump has sent them a letter inviting them to become members of the Gaza board.

On the Board of Peace are Indian-American president of the World Bank Group, Ajay Banga, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law

Jared Kushner, former UK prime minister Tony Blair, private equity firm Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan and US Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gabriel.

Trump will head the board as its chairman. The White House said the board comprises leaders with "experience across diplomacy, development, infrastructure, and economic strategy." "Each Executive Board member will oversee a defined portfolio critical to Gaza's stabilisation and long-term success, including, but not limited to, governance capacity-building, regional relations, reconstruction, investment attraction, large-scale funding, and capital mobilisation," it added. None of the current board members are either Palestinian, Arab or Muslim, journalist Mehdi Hassan said in a post on X. "Only one non-American: Tony Blair," he said.

In rare criticism, Israel objects to US Gaza 'Board of Peace'

MI News Service, Jerusalem: Israel's government is objecting to the White House announcement of leaders who will play a role in overseeing the next steps in Gaza.

The rare criticism from Israel of its close ally in Washington says the Gaza executive committee "was not coordinated with Israel and is contrary to its policy," without details.

Saturday's statement also said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told the foreign ministry to contact Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The committee announced by the White House on Friday includes no Israeli official but has an Israeli businessman, billionaire Yakir Gabay.



Other members announced so far include two of US President Donald Trump's closest confidants, a former British prime minister, an American general and a collection of top officials from Middle Eastern governments.

The White House has said the executive commit-

tee will carry out the vision of a Trump-led "Board of Peace." The members are Indian-American president of the World Bank Group Ajay Banga, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, former UK prime minister Tony Blair, private equity firm Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan and US Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gabriel. The White House also announced the members of a new Pales-

stinian committee to run Gaza's day-to-day affairs, with oversight from the executive committee.

Committee members also include a diplomat from Qatar and an intelligence chief from Egypt — both countries have been ceasefire mediators — as well as a Cabinet minister for the United Arab Emirates and Turkey's foreign minister.

Minutes after the statement from Netanyahu's office, Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, in a

statement, backed the prime minister and urged him to order the military to prepare to return to war. The Trump administration earlier in the week said the US-drafted ceasefire plan for Gaza was now moving into its challenging second phase, which includes the new Palestinian committee in Gaza, deployment of an international security force, disarmament of Hamas and reconstruction of the war-battered territory.

The ceasefire took effect on October 10, with the first phase focusing on the return of all remaining hostages in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian detainees, along with a surge in humanitarian aid and a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces in Gaza.

Saudi Arabia departs over 14,000 illegal residents in a week

MI News Service, Riyadh: Saudi Arabia announced that it detained 18,054 illegal residents in a week from January 8-14, 2026. Out of which, 14,621 have been deported.

The arrests were made following a joint inspection by security forces and government agencies. Among the arrested offenders, 11,343 violated the residency law, and 3,858 violated the border security law. According to a report by Saudi Gazette, 2,853 people violated the labour law.

As many as 19,835 offenders were referred to their diplomatic missions to secure travel documents and 3,936 violators were referred to complete their travel reservations.

At least 1,491 people were arrested while trying cross Saudi Arabian borders illegally. Among them 40 per cent were Yemeni nationals, 59 per cent were Ethiopian nationals, and one percent belonged to other nationalities. A total of 18 people were arrested while attempting to leave the Kingdom ille-



gally.

At least 23 people who facilitated illegal transport, shelter and employment were also arrested. As many as 18 people were arrested for trying to leave Saudi Arabia illegally. A total of 27,518 expatriates, including 25,552 men and 1,966 women, are currently under trial to enforce legal measures.

The Kingdom's Ministry of Interior warned that any person, who facilitates the illegal entry of individuals into Saudi Arabia, transports them on its territory, provides them with shelter or any other assistance or service, will be sentenced to 15 years in jail and a penalty of up to Saudi Riyal 1 million. Moreover, the vehicles used for transportation or houses used for giving shelter will be confiscated.

3rd ODI: New Zealand overcome Kohli's valiant 124 to secure 2-1 series win

INDORE : New Zealand overcame a valiant 124 off 108 balls from the talismanic Virat Kohli to clinch a 41-run victory and seal a historic 2-1 win in the ODI series decider at the Holkar Stadium in Indore on Sunday.

Knocks of 137 and 106 from Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips took New Zealand to a commanding 337/8 on a two-paced black soil pitch, before the visitors held their nerve to overcome Kohli's valiant 54th ODI century, and bowl out India for 296 in 46 overs.

Kyle Jamieson and Zakary Foulkes picked three wickets each as the result gave New Zealand their first-ever ODI series win on Indian soil, after being 1-0 behind last week.

India's chase faltered early as Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, and KL Rahul departed cheaply, leaving the hosts reeling at 71/4. Kohli (124 off 108 balls) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (53) revived hopes with a fighting 88-run partnership, while Harshit Rana added late fireworks

via a 43-ball 52. But the target eventually proved to be out of India's reach, as the result marked India's fifth home ODI series defeat since 2010.

India's chase began brightly, as they raced to 28 runs in the first three overs. But Rohit's innings ended in the fourth over when he tamely lobbed a flick to mid-on off Foulkes. Jamieson then produced a sharp nip-backer from outside off, which beat Gill's defence and deflected off the pad to crash into the stumps.

Kohli, after being troubled by Jamieson's bounce and movement, pulled and walloped his way to hit four quick boundaries off Foulkes, Jamieson, and Kristian Clarke. But wickets continued to fall from the other end as Iyer miscued a short delivery straight to mid-on off Clarke, while Rahul was deceived by grip and turn from Jayden Lennox and was forced to give a catch off a check drive to extra cover.

Taking charge in the chase, Kohli reached his fifty in 51 balls,



and his impeccable timing was on display when his trademark flick sped past deep square leg despite being played as a strike-rotation shot. From the other end, an assured Reddy complemented Kohli by striking four boundaries while his swivelling pull off Foulkes and a slog-sweep off Glenn Phillips, fetching him sixes, were the standout shots, with the second one getting him a maiden ODI fifty.

The duo's run-a-ball partnership of 88 runs for the fifth wicket ended when Clarke dismissed him with a short ball that cramped him for room, and Reddy couldn't keep the pull down, giving mid-wicket a simple catch. Ravindra Jadeja's attempt to counter Lennox backfired as his lofted shot failed to clear deep mid-wicket. But Kohli responded with a burst of boundaries, striking three fours and a wristy six over backward square leg in the space of 11 balls. From the other end, Rana provided valuable support with assured strokeplay, with his inside-out drive through the covers off Foulkes being the standout.

Much to the delight of the

crowd, Kohli reached his century in 91 deliveries and kept India's hopes alive. Jamieson endured a rare hammering when Kohli struck him for two sixes - one straight down the ground off a full toss and another over midwicket. Rana added to the fireworks with a towering hit over long-on off Foulkes to reach his maiden ODI fifty in just 41 balls. But Rana's innings ended soon when he holed out to long-on off a high full toss from Foulkes, who removed Mohammed Siraj on the very next ball, leaving India needing 61 runs from 37 deliveries. The crowd's hopes rested on Kohli, who responded with back-to-back boundaries in the 46th over to keep the chase alive. But two balls later, he miscued a lofted stroke to long-off for 124. Though he got a standing ovation from the crowd, it was destined to be in vain. India's resistance ended swiftly as Kuldeep Yadav was run out while taking a risky single, handing New Zealand a historic series triumph and adding another feather in

their cap after achieving a remarkable 3-0 Test sweep just over a year earlier.

Previously, inserted to bat first, New Zealand were at 58/3 before Mitchell and Phillips powered the visitors to a strong total with a commanding 219-run stand off 186 balls. Mitchell, reprieved on one after a missed run-out chance from Kuldeep Yadav, looked assured throughout as he registered his fourth ODI hundred against India, with the help of 15 fours and three sixes. Mitchell now holds the record for the most runs by a batter in a men's three-game ODI series against India.

Phillips, meanwhile, overcame a slow start - taking 37 balls for hitting the first boundary - before accelerating to a fluent 83-ball century laced with nine fours and three sixes. Though the duo fell quickly, captain Michael Bracewell played a fine cameo of an unbeaten 18-ball 28 and set India on the path of a stiff chase.

Simdega Girls' Hockey Team Reaches Rajgir for Mahamana Hockey Gold Cup



RAVIKANT MISHRA

SIMDEGA: The Simdega district girls' hockey team has reached Rajgir, Bihar, to take part in the All India Mahamana Hockey Gold Cup Under-16 tournament, scheduled from January 19 to 21, 2026. The event is being jointly organized by the Hockey Association of Bihar, Kreedaa Bharati Bihar, the Bihar Sports Authority, and the Mahamana Malviya Mission Bihar Unit.

Teams from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh,

and other states are participating in the tournament. The Simdega team will start its campaign on Monday.

Hockey Simdega continues to promote young talent by providing exposure to national-level competitions, helping players improve their skills and gain confidence. Several players from the district have already gone on to represent the country at the national level. The team includes 18 players, coached by Raju Manjhi, with Kunul Bhengra serving as manager.

Aus Open: Alcaraz begins career grand slam quest with win against Walton in first round

MELBOURNE : World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz opened his Australian Open campaign in commanding fashion, defeating Australia's Adam Walton 6-3, 7-6, 6-2 in a first-round match at the Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne on Sunday. The top-seeded Spaniard needed just under two hours to outperform the home favourite, displaying his trademark blend of power, precision, and court coverage to take control of the contest. Alcaraz struck eight aces and committed only one double fault, underlining his efficiency on serve throughout the match.



Alcaraz dominated the opening set, breaking Walton early to establish a strong lead. The Australian raised his level in the second set, pushing the Spaniard into a tie-break, but Alcaraz responded with authority, winning seven of the nine points to claim the breaker and move two sets ahead. The third set followed a similar pattern to the first, with Alcaraz breaking serve at key

moments to seal the match comfortably. He finished with 101 points won compared to Walton's 73 and claimed 19 games to his opponent's 11. The Spaniard was particularly effective on serve, winning 76 per cent of points on his first delivery and 70 per cent on his second. Walton struggled to capitalise on his chances, converting just one of his break-point opportunities, while Alcaraz broke serve four times from

10 chances. Alcaraz also outperformed Walton in receiving points, winning 40 compared to the Australian's 22, and maintained control during longer rallies, highlighted by his ability to string together a maximum of eight consecutive points. Carlos Alcaraz is chasing the historic Career Grand Slam at the 2026 Australian Open, which would make him the youngest man ever to win all four majors.

Ethiopia's Tadu Abate and Yeshi Kalayu crowned champions at Mumbai Marathon 2026

MUMBAI : Ethiopians Tadu Abate Deme and Yeshi Kalayu Chekole achieved notable wins at the 21st Mumbai Marathon, a World Athletics gold label event, held here on Sunday. The leading Indian finishers were Sanjivani and Kartik.

The top three finishers each took home USD 50,000, USD 25,000, and USD 15,000, respectively. It was Yeshi Chekole's first career win in a major marathon, although she had been running this distance since 2019. The 28-year-old neatly executed what she had revealed earlier during a pre-race media interaction, staying relaxed and finishing strongly.

About a dozen Ethiopian women started the race together. Among them were last year's

third-place finisher, Medina Deme Armino, and Shure Demise, the fastest entrant, who clocked a PB of 2:20:59 eleven years ago in Dubai. Armino wanted to triumph this time in the absence of the top two from last year -- Joyce Chepkemoi and Shitaye Eshete. Drawing on her knowledge of the Mumbai roads from her previous sojourn, Armino was in command during the first half of the race. However, she faded and began to lag behind the leader, Kidsan Alema, thereafter. Yeshi stayed with Kidsan and two other compatriots, Gojjam Tesgaye and Birke Debele, until the runners covered three-fourths of the distance. She then broke away from the group a few kilometres later and ran solo for the rest of the race. Ultimately,

she won with a time of 2:25:13, the fifth-fastest among Mumbai winners to date. "I am very happy to be the Champion today. I came here expecting to break the course record, but I was a little shaky in the weather. However, I am very happy with the result. I felt strong and positive throughout, especially on both the uphill and downhill sections", Yeshi said after the race. Kidsan shared that she was encouraged by the spectators' support throughout the course. "In the middle of the race, my body started to feel a bit warm and I dropped slightly behind the leading group", she further added.

In the men's elite marathon, Kenyan Leonard Kiproch Langat was in a tight race with last year's runner-up Merhawi Kesete from

Eritrea and Tadu Abate from Ethiopia right from the beginning. Uganda's 2023 World Marathon Champion Victor Kiplangat and Ethiopian Gada Gemsisa stayed close behind until reaching the halfway point. Both Abate and Langat traded the lead until reaching 40 km, with Kesete about 50 metres behind. Abate sped up in the final kilometre, while Langat had difficulty closing the gap. The Ethiopian finished first in 2:09:55, with Langat crossing 15 seconds later as the runner-up. Kesete finished third in 2:10:22. With the victory, the Ethiopians secured both the men's and women's titles simultaneously in Mumbai for the seventh time.

"It was a very competitive and tactical race from start to finish.

The course was challenging, but it was well organised, and the roads were in good condition," said Langat. A joyful Tadu explained, "I am delighted to win this race and grateful to the organisers for the competition, and for all our partners. The hills were tough, but once I settled into the rhythm after the halfway point, I focused on conserving energy and choosing the right moments. My body felt in good condition, and I am glad to be here in Mumbai and to win the race". Sanjivani Jadhav's name has been associated with distance running in the country for well over a decade. However, excelling in a marathon on her debut at the distance brought her immense joy. She clocked 2:49:02 on her maiden attempt.

Mandaviya pedals Fit India vision from Gondal as 'Sundays on Cycle' marks 57th edition

NEW DELHI : The 57th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle unfolded across the country on Sunday, once again drawing citizens from all walks of life into a shared celebration of fitness and sustainability. Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya spearheaded the movement in Gondal near Rajkot, while Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy led the Hyderabad leg of the event, which saw participation from over 1,000 cyclists.

Launched in December 2024, Fit India Sundays on Cycle has rapidly evolved into a nationwide people's movement, uniting communities across more than two lakh locations and engaging over 22 lakh participants so far.

In Gondal, around 250 cyclists turned up in high spirits, reinforcing the initiative's growing grassroots appeal. Sharing his thoughts on social media, Mandaviya wrote, "To make India fit, we have to participate in Sundays on Cycle."

Interacting with participants, the Union Minister heard first-hand accounts of how cycling has strengthened community bonds. Hiten Patel, a 48-year-old businessman, said regular group cycling had become an integral part of his life over the past three



months. "It keeps us energised and connected in the midst of busy schedules," he said.

Addressing the gathering, Mandaviya underlined cycling's universal appeal and environmental benefits. "Cycling is an ideal form of exercise for all age groups. It not only improves health but also reduces carbon footprints. When people come together to cycle, it builds a sense of community that is vital for a healthy society," he said.

Emphasising the larger national vision, he added that a physically and mentally fit population is essential to realise the dream of Viksit Bharat, as envisioned by PM

Modi. "A country is only as strong as its citizens. If we have to create a Viksit Bharat of our dreams, we will have to ensure that every Indian is at their best physical and mental fitness so that everyone can contribute to the development of the nation. This is the vision that Honourable Prime Minister Modi has for us," He said.

In Hyderabad, the event at Gachibowli Stadium was attended by prominent dignitaries and sporting icons, including badminton legend and Dronacharya Awardee Pullela Gopichand, Arjuna Award-winning shooter Esha Singh, and Paralympic bronze medalist Deepthi Jeevanji.

Several athletes, Fit India Ambassadors and cycling leaders were felicitated for their contributions to promoting fitness.

Speaking at the venue, G. Kishan Reddy highlighted the need to consciously reintroduce physical activity into modern lifestyles, echoing the Prime Minister's call to combat obesity, lifestyle diseases and mental stress through daily movement.

"A Healthy India is our Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi's ultimate goal, and through the Fit India Mission, we are working to reverse the health issues caused by modern lifestyles. Today, changes in our diet, lack of physi-

cal activity, and environmental factors are leading to rising obesity and mental stress," he said.

"To combat this, the Prime Minister has even called on citizens to reduce cooking oil consumption. We must remember that while technology has made life easier, it has reduced the physical labour that kept previous generations healthy; we must consciously reintegrate movement into our daily lives," he added.

Pullela Gopichand praised the consistency and scale of the initiative, calling it a testament to the leadership of PM Modi and the Sports Minister. "Sustaining such a movement for 57 weeks across lakhs of locations shows how sport and fitness can drive personal and national growth," he said.

The Hyderabad event also featured Zumba, yoga, rope skipping, Kudo martial arts and Mallakhamb demonstrations, creating a vibrant fitness carnival atmosphere. Launched on August 29, 2019, the Fit India Movement aims to make physical activity a way of life and bring about lasting behavioural change. Sundays on Cycle continues to advance this mission while aligning with the Prime Minister's call of 'Fitness Ki Dose, Aadha Ghanta Roz' and promoting eco-friendly, low-carbon living.

Manu Bhaker, Swapnil Kusale and 150 other shooters set for national trials

NEW DELHI : The Indian domestic shooting season continues on Monday as the country's top rifle and pistol shooters, more than 150 competitors across eight Olympic events plus the exclusive 50m rifle prone event for men and women, gather at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range (DKSSR) in the national capital for the Group A National Selection Trials 1&2, set for January 19 to 25.

Day one will feature the two T1 prone finals and the first day of men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (RFP) T1 qualification. Incidentally, the men's RFP has the fewest starters, with about a dozen of India's top competitors, including Olympian and world championship silver medalist Anish Bhanwala. Among other top shooters participating at the esteemed DKSSR will be the reigning world champion Samrat Rana in men's 10m air pistol, double Olympic bronze medalist Manu Bhaker, and her fellow Paris Olympic bronze medalists Swapnil Kusale in men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) and Sarabjot Singh, also competing in men's air pistol. Esha Singh, a former mixed team world champion and last year's individual world championship bronze medalist, will compete in both women's pistol events alongside Manu. Additionally, Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil, the former world champion in 10m air rifle, will compete in both men's rifle events. In addition to world championship medalists Anjum Moudgil, Mehuli Ghosh, and Akhil Sheoran, participants will also compete in the women's Air Rifle and 3P events.

Also featured will be Suruchi Phogat, world number two and winner of the World Cup finals, turning the women's air pistol event into the main highlight of the trials. The National Trials will feature group A rookies - young, talented shooters who have recently made a strong impact and advanced to the elite level. Competitors like Jonathan Gavin Antony in men's pistol, Adriyan Karmakar and Mahit Sandhu in men's and women's 3P, respectively, and Suraj Sharma in men's RFP are expected to challenge the seasoned stars. Among the experienced shooters, Olympian and former Asian Games champion Rahi Sarnobat will compete in both women's pistol events. She will be joined by notable athletes like ONGC's Shweta Singh, an Asian Games bronze medalist, Indian Navy's Omkar Singh, and Gujarat's Lajja Gauswami, who have been part of India and junior India teams for two decades and remain prominent in the sport. With the 68th National Shooting Championship Competitions (68th NSCC) having concluded in the first week of the new year, top shooters, particularly those who missed out on the nationals on the scores front, will look to make strong comebacks as the international season ends in March, begins in April, and the race to make the Indian team heats up. To qualify for the first National squad of 2026, scores from the initial two trials are essential, emphasising their significance. Top shooters will want to compete in premier international events early to assess their skills and identify.