

Mega education overhaul: CM approves merger of three Kolkata colleges

In a significant development that could redraw the higher education map of South Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced the formation of a new autonomous university by merging three historic collage -Asutosh Collage, Shyama Pradesh Mukjerjee Collage and Yogmaya Devi Collage -all operating from the same campus at Hazra More. The announcement, made on the auspicious occasion of Saraswati Puja, has triggered wide discussion across academic and political circles, coming as it does in the midst of an election -bound atmosphere in the state. Standing on the premises of her alma mater, Autosh Collage, the CM gave her in -principal approval to the long -pending proposal to bring the three institution under a single university framework. While clarifying that the formal process could not be initiate immediately due to administrative constraints and the upcoming Assembly elections, Mamata Banerjee assured that groundwork for the new university would being once the polls are over. [PG 3](#)



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NOTICE

This is to inform our esteemed readers and well wishers that on the occasion of Republic Day our offices will remain closed on January 26, Monday. Hence no edition of Morning India would be published on January 27, Tuesday. The readers can access our editions from January 28, Wednesday.

Editor, Morning India

Combating SIR: ABHISHEK announces VOTE RAKSHA COMMITTEES

MI News Service, Kolkata: Abhishek Banerjee warmed up the rank and file of the Trinamool Congress for the

Committee (Save Vote Committee) at each of around 80,000 polling booths to assist voters during hearings re-

“We have around 22 days left for the SIR. We must use our full strength during this period. Once the list of voters with logical discrepancies is published (in accordance with the Supreme Court order), hearings will be held within the next 10 days. We will form Vote Raksha Committees to help every voter during the hearing process

a leader present at the virtual meeting quoted Abhishek as saying

final round of the special intensive revision (SIR), announcing the formation of a fresh Vote Raksha

lated to logical discrepancies in their enumeration forms. The national general secretary of Trinamool, at a



virtual meeting with party functionaries, also issued a fresh warning to MLAs and MPs that failure to perform during this crucial period could invite “action” “We have around 22 days left for the SIR. We must use our full strength during this period. Once the list of voters with logical discrepancies is published (in accordance with the Supreme Court order), hearings will be held within the next 10 days. We will form Vote Raksha Committees to help every voter during the hearing process,” a leader present at

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Govt announces PADMA AWARDS- 2026

MI News Service, New Delhi: The Centre on Sunday announced the Padma Awards for 2026, approving 131 civilian honours across the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri categories. This year, five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri awards were cleared, recognising contributions across public life, arts, sports, literature and public affairs. Among the Padma Vibhushan awardees are veteran actor Dharmendra Singh Deol and former Kerala chief minister VS Achuthanandan, both ho-

noured posthumously. Other recipients include classical violinist N Rajam, former Supreme Court judge K T Thomas and noted writer P Narayanan. The Padma Bhushan list features singer Alka Yagnik, actor Mammootty, industrialist Uday Kotak, former Uttarakhand chief minister Bhagat Singh Koshyari, advertising veteran Piyush Pandey (posthumous) and tennis legend Vijay Amritraj. The list includes 19 women, six foreign nationals or persons of Indian origin abroad, and 16 posthumous awards.

ECI snatching people's voting rights: MAMATA

MI News Service, Kolkata: Terming the Election Commission's celebration of National Voters' Day as a "tragic farce", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday accused the poll panel of bulldozing the opposition and destroying the foundation of the country's democracy on "behalf of the BJP". Banerjee alleged that the commission was working as "His Master's Voice" and was busy "snatching away" people's voting rights. "On behalf of BJP, their Master, they are busy in bulldozing the opposition and destroying the foundation of Indian democracy, and yet they have the guts to celebrate Voters' Day!!" Banerjee wrote on X. The chief minister has been accusing the EC of holding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal in undue haste.

"Election Commission of India (ECI) is celebrating National Voters' Day today,



and what a tragic farce that is! The Commission -- working as His Master's Voice-- is busy now in snatching away people's voting rights, and they have the temerity to celebrate Voters' Day! I am deeply distressed and disturbed by their conduct today," the Trinamool Congress chief wrote in the social media post. She also said, "EC is finding newer and newer pretexts in the name of logical discrepancy to harass the people and try to deny them and take away from them their electoral rights!"

INDIA envisages launching over 50 SPY SATELLITES

MI News Service, New Delhi: India plans to launch more than 50 new spy satellites with night-time imaging capabilities after surveillance blind spots were exposed during Operation Sindoor and the four-day conflict with Pakistan last year, according to a new report.

During the four-day standoff with Pakistan from May 7 to 10 last year, satellites were used extensively to identify and monitor targets. India's satellites were largely ineffective at night or in cloudy conditions, according to the Bloomberg report. Pakistan, which has far fewer satellites in space compared to India, had help from China whose satellites already have that capability. India's surveillance gaps over a given area can stretch into days and hence Delhi had to buy satellite imagery from US-based companies to plan strikes, according to Bloomberg.

At the heart of the satellite plan is a technological upgrade. India intends to move from electro-optical imaging to synthetic aperture radar, which allows satellites to capture clearer images at night and through cloud cover, per Bloomberg. Work is also underway to improve satellite-to-satellite data transfers, reducing reliance on ground stations and speeding up the flow of information during conflict situations. The first phase involves fast-tracking the launch of more than 50 satellites under the Space-Based Surveillance-3 programme. "We require a considerable number of satellites to safeguard our



“Our target is to add 100 to 150 satellites within the next three years. This will enable us to comprehensively monitor the entire country

V. Narayanan, Isro chairman

borders. The current fleet is insufficient," Isro chairman V. Narayanan was quoted as saying last year in April.

"Our target is to add 100 to 150 satellites within the next three years. This will enable us to comprehensively monitor the entire country," he had said. The estimated cost of placing 150 satellites is about Rs 260 billion (\$2.8 billion), the Bloomberg report said. The Times of India had reported in June last year that the government was accelerating the project and that the first batch could be launched as early as April 2026. The Rs 26,968-crore Phase 3 of the Space-Based Surveillance (SBS) programme, which was cleared by the prime minister-led

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Greeting to all fellow citizens on 77th REPUBLIC DAY

Soul of the Nation – Vande Mataram
Strength of the Nation – Aatmanirbhar Bharat

“The inherent spirit of the Constitution is 'We the People.' We must move forward, with the mantra of 'Sabka Prayas'. When Viksit Bharat becomes the shared dream of 140 crore citizens, collective resolve turns aspirations into achievements.

- Narendra Modi

Live telecast of Republic Day celebration from Kartavya Path 9:25 AM onwards on Doordarshan Network

Trinamool Congress wins a second cooperative election within seven days In Nandigram! Party giving credit to Abhishek Banerjee's 'Sebashray' initiative

MI News Service, Nandigram: Trinamool Congress has won again in Nandigram. Seven days after winning the cooperative society elections in Amdabad, the BJP was defeated again in the Ranipur Cooperative Society elections. Green abir (colored powder) was seen flying in that area of East Medinipur from Sunday afternoon. Local leaders are giving credit to Trinamool's All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee for this second cooperative society victory within a week in the assembly constituency of Suwendu Adhikari.

Trinamool had already won five of the 45 seats in the Ranipur Cooperative Society un-

opposed. The ruling party and the main opposition party were contesting the remaining 40 seats. Ultimately, the BJP was defeated in Suwendu's assembly constituency in this election as well. Out of 45 seats, Trinamool secured 27, while BJP got 18.

Although it was a cooperative society election, local leaders have commented that this victory is like a general election for the Trinamool Congress. This is mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the MLA of Nandigram is the Leader of the Opposition in the state, Suwendu Adhikari, against whom Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee herself contested in the last assembly elections.

Secondly, a few months before the 2026 assembly elections, the Sevaashray project, initiated by Abhishek Banerjee, the second most important leader of Trinamool, has been launched in Suwendu's 'stronghold'. Trinamool claims that this medical service program has received an 'unexpected response'. The results are also reflected in the cooperative elections. Sujit Roy, president of Trinamool's Tamluk organizational district, said, "Amdabad-2 Gram Panchayat is under the control of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Even in this year's Lok Sabha elections, the BJP was ahead there, but the people there have now elect-



Candidates exhibit their certificates of victory after the result.

ed the Trinamool-nominated candidates!" Sujit added, "This election has surpassed even a general election." He alleged that after losing the Amdabad cooperative society seven days ago, the BJP was desperate to win this cooperative society election. For this reason, they unleashed violence in the area from Saturday night. Several Trinamool workers were seriously injured. Despite all the efforts of Suwendu's party, the voters chose Trinamool.

In the afternoon, Trinamool leaders in charge of the Sebasray camp in Nandigram repeatedly called Ranipur to inquire about the election results. Around 3:45 PM, an

influential Trinamool leader was at the Sebasray camp. He called another party leader in Ranipur to find out the results. That leader informed him that the BJP had won 30 seats. In a threatening tone, the Trinamool leader said, "What nonsense are you talking? Come to Sebasray and let me check your ears!" Later, the leader from Ranipur informed him that he had misheard. The actual result was 27-18. Sitting in the Sebasray camp, the influential Trinamool leader breathed a sigh of relief and laughed. He said, "Well, at least you won't have to come to Sebasray this time."

Prosenjit Chatterjee receiving Padma Award; total 11 people from Bengal will receive Padma Shri

MI News Service, Kolkata: Actor Prosenjit Chatterjee is receiving the Padma Shri award. He is being given this honour in recognition of his special contributions to the arts. Besides Prosenjit, ten other individuals from Bengal are also receiving this honour this year.

Monday is Republic Day. As per tradition, the list of Padma Awards for 2026 was announced on Sunday, the day before. People from various professions—literature, arts, sports, medicine, agriculture—are being awarded the Padma honours. A total of 131 names from across the country are on the list.

In 2026, theatre personality Harimadhav Mukherjee, weaver Jyotish Debnath, tabla player Kumar Basu, Kantha artist Tripti Mukherjee, and santoor player Tarun Bhattacharya are receiving the Padma Shri award for their special contributions to the arts. From the field of education and literature, the recipients include Ashok Kumar Halder, along with Gambhir Singh Lonjon, Mahendranath Roy, and Rabilal Tudu. Cardiologist Saroj Mandal is receiving the award for his contributions to the medical field.

The renowned theatre personality Harimadhav Mukherjee has been posthumously awarded the Padma Shri. A resident of Balurghat in South Dinajpur, Harimadhav founded the Tritrittha theatre group in 1969. Under his direction, many famous plays, including 'Debangshi', 'Galileo', and 'Raktakarabi', created a sensation among theatre enthusiasts. He is considered a pioneer of the theatre movement in Balurghat. He passed away last year.

72-year-old tabla artist Kumar Basu is a prominent name in the international music scene. He received his initial training in tabla from his father, Vishwanath Basu. He also inherited musical talent from his mother, sitar player Bharati Basu. This artist of the Benaras gharana has accompanied many artists, including Pandit Ravi Shankar, on the tabla both in India and abroad.

Tripti Mukherjee is a Kantha artist from Birbhum. She received this honor in the field of arts. She has previously been awarded the Bangashree Award, the National Award, and the 'Shilpaguru' award from the Central Ministry of Textiles. Jyotish Debnath is a renowned weaver from Kalna in Purba Bardhaman district. His role in reviving the nearly extinct muslin and Jamdani weaving traditions of Bengal is highly significant. He has received several government recognitions for this work. His work is known for its intricate craftsmanship and traditional designs.

Ashok Kumar Halder is receiving this honor for his contributions to literature and education. This writer from Malda is being awarded for his special role in the promotion of Santali literature and education.

Professor Mahendranath Roy, a professor of chemistry, has made significant contributions to fundamental research. He is receiving this honor for his contributions to the field of education.

Rabilal Tudu is receiving this honor for his contributions to Santali literature. He previously gained recognition for his book 'Veer Birsa', a biography of Birsa Munda. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2015.

In cooperative election, the deputy head's group defeated the MLA's group

MI News Service, Tarakeswar: No matter who wins the election, green powder will be thrown in celebration. Yet, the fierce contest was between two factions of the Trinamool Congress. This led to heightened tension in Tarakeswar, Hooghly. The police struggled to restore peace in the area, separating the two warring factions of the ruling party. Tension flared again after the results were announced. The MLA's group was defeated by a margin of 9-0.

Sunday was the election for the Piyasrha Stationpatti Cooperative Agricultural Development Society in Tarakeswar. The internal conflict within the Trinamool Congress had already come to light surrounding this election. MLA Ramendu Singh Roy had been saying from the beginning that the rebels were not part of the party. But during the election, it was seen that



both sides were fighting! Their arguments, insults directed at each other, and even physical altercations created a tense situation. The police quickly intervened to separate the two sides. Section 163 was imposed around the polling station.

But why this situation?

Local Trinamool leader Munshi Badruza said, "We belong to Mamata Banerjee's party. We have fielded candidates from

the Trinamool party. One of our voters and an agent were standing outside. Suddenly, someone came from outside and started verbally abusing him. That's when the tension started." Rabin Bag from the other side stated that he is also from the Trinamool Congress. He claimed, "There are two factions of Trinamool here. They (Badruza's group) are the MLA's people. They were creating trouble in

the area. We protested against it."

The ruling party is in an awkward position due to the infighting between two factions within the party over the cooperative society elections. The MLA, however, said, "They have engaged in anti-party activities before. The Trinamool Congress lost by 2,500 votes in that panchayat from 2019 to 2021. The party has instructed us to maintain

Cooch Behar village tensed over minor rape allegations

Police officer injured, 8 arrested! 12-hr bandh observed

MI News Service, Cooch Behar: Tension has erupted in a village in Mekhliganj, Cooch Behar, over allegations of the rape of a minor girl. Local residents blocked roads and protested, demanding the death penalty for the accused. The officer-in-charge of the police station was injured by stones thrown by the protesters. Police have already arrested the man accused of the rape. However, local residents are observing a bandh (strike) in the area, demanding his punishment. Meanwhile, eight people have

been arrested on charges of attacking the police.

According to local sources, an 11-year-old girl had gone to the riverbank near her house last Thursday afternoon. It is alleged that at that time, an elderly man threatened her with a sharp weapon and raped her. A woman who was present at the scene rescued the minor girl.

Despite threats from the accused, the victim's family filed a complaint at the Mekhliganj police station. However, it is alleged that the accused was not being apprehended. The area

began to heat up over this issue from Saturday night. Residents blocked roads by burning tires in the local market. Upon receiving the news, the police arrived. This further escalated the tension. There were allegations of stones being thrown at the police, and the officer-in-charge was injured. The police resorted to a mild lathi charge.

A 12-hour bandh (strike) has been called in the area on Sunday. Shops are closed. Police patrolled the area under the leadership of the Addition-

al Superintendent of Police of Mathabhanga. The area is now tense. According to police sources, the accused was arrested by the police on Saturday night. The allegations are being investigated. Mathabhanga Additional Superintendent of Police Tanmoy Mukherjee said, "We have already received a complaint regarding the rape incident. Based on that, one person has been arrested under the POCsO Act. Eight more people have been arrested on charges of obstructing police work and attacking the police."

The forest department has revealed the 'rare sight', a pair of black leopards are roaming in Kurseong!

MI News Service, Kurseong: As part of the nationwide observation of the 16th National Voters' Day, the Kalyani Sub-Divisional Administration organised the "Kalyani Mini Marathon 2026" on Sunday to promote electoral awareness and youth participation.

The images of the two black leopards were recently captured by a trap camera. Forest department experts are discussing whether they are a mated pair or siblings. If they are a couple, there might be cubs as well. In that case, there would be two more black leopards in the Kurseong forest. Even if they are siblings, there is still a possibility of more black leopards being present. Debesh Pandey, the DFO of the Kurseong forest division, said, "Two black leopards or 'melanistic leopards'



have been sighted in the dense hilly forests of Kurseong. Black leopards have been sighted

multiple times before. We had installed trap cameras for monitoring. The pictures of both of

them together have been captured. We are hopeful that this will increase the number of black leopards."

Kaustav Chowdhury, the secretary of the forest and wildlife conservation organization, echoed the same sentiment. He said that whether the two black leopards are siblings or a mated pair can be determined by determining their gender or by examining their stripes. However, the sighting of two leopards together in this manner in Kurseong is truly a rare moment.

Experts say that a 'melanistic leopard' is essentially a leopard. Due to a genetic defect, the level of a hormone called melanin increases in their bodies. That is why they resemble black panthers. Black leopards have been spotted in the forests of Kurseong before. Recently, a 'melanistic barking deer' was also sighted.

Kalyani hosts mini marathon to mark National Voters' Day

MI News Service, Kalyani: As part of the nationwide observance of the 16th National Voters' Day, the Kalyani Sub-Divisional Administration organised the "Kalyani Mini Marathon 2026" on Sunday to promote electoral awareness and youth participation.

Held on January 25, the event—popularly referred to as the Democracy Run—was organised from the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Kalyani, under the theme "My India, My Vote." The mini marathon aimed to encourage registration among young and future voters and highlight the power of voting.

The run commenced from the SDO office, passed through ITI crossing and Central Park, and concluded back at the SDO office. Students from schools and colleges, local youth, police per-



sonnel and government officials participated in the event, with around 150 runners taking part.

The marathon was flagged off by Ashish Maurya, IPS, SP, Ranaghat PD; Abhijit Samanta, WBCS (Executive), SDO, Kalyani; Sanjay Kumar, IAS, DSP (Traffic); and Sougata Patra, WBCS (Executive), Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector-cum-Officer-in-Charge (Elections), Kalyani.

Prizes were awarded to the first, second and third place holders in both men's and women's categories. Following the run, the administration felicitated 84 top-performing Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and 10 Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) for their contributions.

Speaking on the occasion, SDO Abhijit Samanta said the initiative was aimed at moti-

vating young and prospective voters to actively participate in the democratic process. The programme was conducted by Suchandra Sadhu Saha, SDPM (Skills), Kalyani.

Meanwhile, the district administration has planned to call 8,30,307 voters across Nadia district for Special Intensive Revision (SIR) hearings. Of these, 4,46,987 voters have been called till June 24.

In Kalyani subdivision alone, 1,35,117 voters are slated to be called, of whom 81,121 have already been called to the 'hearing', officials said. The hearings are being conducted primarily to address logical discrepancies and unmapped-related issues.

The SIR hearings began on December 27, 2025, and are scheduled to conclude on February 7, 2026.

Panic due to sudden fire in a pile of bamboo pieces

MI News Service, kharagpur: Pieces of bamboo kept in an empty place in Jagannath Temple area of Medinipur city under Kotwali police station suddenly caught fire, due to which panic spread in the area. It is known that a large quantity of cut bamboo was lying in an empty place in the area. The people of the area first saw smoke coming out from the pile of cut bamboo. Within a short time, the fire engulfed the cut bamboo. It caught fire. Panic spread among the people of the area as the flames rose very high. Information about the incident was given to the police and fire department. A fire engine reached the spot and brought the fire under control. People of the area say that there was no fire, rather someone had mischievously set the fire.



The reason for the fire could not be known till the time of writing the news. The police is investigating the incident.

One killed, over 30 injured following the race of two buses



MI News Service, Karimpur:

A woman passenger was killed and over 30 others were injured, several of them critically, after a private bus overturned following a collision during an alleged race between two buses in Nadia's Karimpur area on Sunday afternoon, police sources said.

The accident occurred at Kathalia on the Krishnanagar-Karimpur State Highway. According to passengers and eyewitnesses, two private buses—Chalantika and Vivekananda—were travelling from Krishnanagar towards Karimpur and had been engaged in reckless overtaking for quite some time.

Eyewitnesses said the Vivekananda bus was attempting to overtake the Chalantika at high speed when it rammed into the rear of the bus ahead. Moments later, the bus veered off the road, hit a roadside tree and overturned.

Local residents rushed to the spot and began rescue operations even before police and fire

services from Karimpur police station arrived. Passengers were pulled out of the overturned bus with difficulty. A woman passenger was rushed to hospital but was declared dead by doctors on arrival.

Police said that the treatment arrangements were made for the injured, while those with serious injuries were shifted to Karimpur Rural Hospital. A search has been launched to trace the drivers of both buses, who reportedly fled the scene after the accident.

Passengers alleged that both buses had been moving dangerously and that repeated warnings to the drivers to slow down were ignored. It was also learnt that one of the passengers had been recording a video of the reckless driving on a mobile phone, and the moment of the accident was allegedly captured on camera.

But there is no official confirmation on the issue. However, an investigation into the incident is underway.

Health Awareness and Sanitary Napkin Distribution for School Students and Mothers, along with a Dental Treatment Camp

MI News Service, Kolkata: To increase health awareness among school-going girls and their mothers, and to raise awareness about women's menstrual hygiene, multiple health awareness and sanitary napkin distribution programs were organized by the ARM Foundation. The Jaygram Social Welfare Society and Threedentz Dental Lab & Clinic were collaborating organizations in this program.

On this occasion, health awareness camps and sanitary napkin distribution were conducted for the students of Barunhat High School, the disabled students and their guardians under the Jaygram Social Welfare Society, and at Afsar Gazi's doctor's chamber near Katakhalhi Bridge. Simultaneously, dental treatment camps were organized at two separate locations for over a hundred young students to promote children's oral health.

Through these multiple programs, sanitary napkins were distributed to more than 500 mothers across three locations.



According to the ARM Foundation, this initiative will play a significant role in improving women's menstrual hygiene and awareness.

The program, organized at the initiative of the ARM Foundation's Chairman, was attended by Chairman Ahana Majumdar, Treasurer Rani Majumdar, and Secretary Dr. Arghya Majumdar. Also present were ARM Foundation Life Member and Head of Arjanova 3D Ventures Private Limited, Dr. Tejaswini

Raut, and TCS Senior Manager (Sustainability) Moumita Saha. Other dignitaries present included the President of Jaygram Social Welfare Society, Kalyan Saha, Special Project Coordinator Afsar Gazi, Pulak Hossain, Past President of Rotary Club of Newtown Mridganku Banerjee, and others.

The ARM Foundation announced that similar health awareness and social welfare programs will continue in the future.

Renowned Journalist
Mark Tully Passes
Away; CM Expresses
Condolences

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Mark Tully, the eminent journalist and former BBC correspondent, who passed away recently. In a heartfelt message on her X handle, the Chief Minister described Tully as “a Calcutta-born newsman who worked for the BBC covering India and famously embraced the country as his own.” She added, “We saw him as one of our own,” and conveyed her condolences to his family, friends, and the countless admirers whose lives he touched through his journalism. Tully, widely respected for his decades-long reporting on Indian affairs, became a familiar and trusted voice for generations of viewers and readers. His nuanced reporting and deep engagement with India’s social and political landscape earned him admiration both in the country and abroad. The news of his passing has evoked tributes across the nation, with political leaders, media professionals, and readers mourning the loss of a journalist who bridged cultures and chronicled the story of India with integrity and empathy.

Winter ease,
Bengal sees
slight heat rise

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal is witnessing a gradual transition as winter loosens its grip, with meteorological reports indicating a slight rise in temperatures across the state over the coming days. According to the latest bulletin from the Alipore Meteorological Department, Sunday and Monday are expected to see a marginal increase in daytime mercury levels, though early morning fog will continue to blanket most districts. In Kolkata, the minimum temperature on Saturday was recorded at 15.4 degrees Celsius, slightly above normal, while the maximum reached 26.4 degrees. Relative humidity fluctuated between 41 and 95 percent, reflecting lingering moisture in the atmosphere. Although fog will persist in districts such as Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum, Murshidabad, and the two Burdwan regions, skies are expected to clear by the afternoon, allowing the sun to raise daytime temperatures moderately. Northern districts, particularly Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar, are experiencing dense fog, significantly reducing visibility. Minimum temperatures in the hilly areas are hovering between 3 and 5 degrees Celsius, while the lower plains of North Bengal are expected to record lows between 10 and 15 degrees.

INDIA envisages
launching over 50
SPY SATELLITES

From PG 1
Cabinet Committee on Security in October last year, includes the launch of more than 50 satellites — some to be built and launched by Isro and some by three private Indian companies. Bloomberg had reported in September last year that India is also developing “bodyguard satellites” to detect and counter threats to its spacecraft in orbit. The Narendra Modi government is also exploring the creation of overseas ground stations to relay intelligence faster and with wider coverage, the Bloomberg report said quoting unnamed sources. The proposed locations of these ground stations could be in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Scandinavia – subject to approval from host governments – according to the report.



Book enthusiasts flock to a stall at the 49th International Kolkata Book Fair in Kolkata on Sunday.



Children seen engrossed in books at a book stall in IKBF arena on Sunday.

Mega education overhaul: CM Mamata
approves merger of three Kolkata colleges

MI News Service, Kolkata: In a significant development that could redraw the higher education map of South Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced the formation of a new autonomous university by merging three historic collage -Asutosh Collage, Shyama Pradesh Mukherjee Collage and Yogmaya Devi Collage -all operating from the same campus at Hazra More. The announcement, made on the auspicious occasion of Saraswati Puja, has triggered wide discussion across academic and political circles, coming as it does in the midst of an election -bound atmosphere in the state. Standing on the premises of her alma mater, Autosh Collage, the CM gave her in -principal approval to the long -pending proposal to bring the three institution under a single university framework. While clarifying that the formal process could not be initiate immediately due to administrative constraints and the upcoming Assembly elections, Mamata Banerjee assured that groundwork for the new university would being once the polls are over. The CM arrived at the Collage campus after paying tributes to Netaji Shubhas Chandra Bose and Red Road and participate in the Saraswati Puja celebrations at Yogmaya Devi Collage.



During her inspection, she noted -half in jest, half in intent -that it would have been more fitting if the three collages had organized of single Sarawati Puja instead of separate ceremonies. That remark was widely interpreted by faculty members as a clear signal of her intent to bring the three institutions under one administrative umbrella. The proposal to merge the colleges into a full -fledged university has been under consideration for several years.

University of Calcutta, have a shared legacy, infrastructure and academic ecosystem. Together, they cater to nearly 15,000 -18,000 students across more than 50 department spanning Arts, Science and Commerce. Educationists argue that their combined academic strength in comparable to that of move would significantly ease the mounting pressures on Calcutta University. The CM acknowledged the procedural hurdles ahead, stating that no new bill could be table in the Assembly at this juncture.



The 10th West Bengal Inter-School Karate Championship and Bengal Little Legends Cup, organised under the initiative of Hanshi Premjit Sen of the All India Seishinkai Shitoryu Karate-Do Federation, was attended by former cricketer and ex-CAB administrator Sambaran Banerjee. The event, held on Sunday at South City International School, saw participation from around 1,200 students representing 120 schools across the state. The one-day sporting spectacle unfolded across seven Tatami (competition arenas) and was officiated by a panel of 70 National Judges, ensuring high technical standards and fair play. Addressing participants and spectators, Hanshi Premjit Sen said, “Through martial arts, thousands of young athletes can find direction, discipline, and the confidence to dream big. This championship is not only a competition but a celebration of discipline, character building, and sporting excellence, aimed at shaping the future generation of champions.”

Drones, watchtower in action
R-Day: 125 security sectors for kolkata

MI News Service, Kolkata: Kolkata will remain under unprecedented security cover on Republic Day, with major traffic restrictions and a multi-layered safety plan in place as the city prepares for large public gatherings. The heightened alert comes amid the return of spectators to the Red Road Republic Day parade after the pandemic and the simultaneous observance of Saraswati Puja. According to a Kolkata Police notification, Red Road will be closed to all traffic from 10 pm on Wednesday. On Thursday, vehicular movement will be heavily restricted across central and south Kolkata from early morning. South-bound traffic from Moulali More to AJC Bose Road will remain closed between 5

am and 1 pm. Freight movement has also been suspended on several key routes, including stretches from St George’s Gate Road and Strand Road to Raja Woodmount Street, from Ganesh Chandra Avenue to Chittaranjan Avenue, and on both carriageways of Jawaharlal Nehru Road. With spectators returning to the Red Road parade, Lalbazar has issued a high-security alert, citing potential sabotage threats. The situation is further complicated by Saraswati Puja coinciding with Republic Day, a combination expected to draw large crowds to streets, schools and colleges across the city. Police surveillance has been intensified since Tuesday at hotels, shopping malls, parks and major public

spaces, with naka checking underway at 50 critical locations. Around 3,000 police personnel will be deployed for Republic Day duties, including senior officers and additional commissioners. Special Commissioner Damayanti Sen has been appointed overall in charge of the celebrations. The Red Road area has been divided into 18 zones and 125 sectors. Security measures include 10 sandbag bunkers, 10 watchtowers, drone surveillance, three quick response teams, 11 radio flying squads, 58 PCR vans and 11 police assistance centres. Fourteen ambulances and special bike patrols will remain on standby. Thirteen additional quick response teams will operate citywide.

Election commission
faces criticism over
sensitive summons

MI News Service, Kolkata: In a deeply emotive incident in Alipore, Kolkata, Zayida Khatun, recently widowed, voiced strong outrage after receiving a notice under the Special Investigation of Records (SIR) process, highlighting the human cost of procedural enforcement. According to reports, Zayida was summoned to appear at a hearing on a day that coincided with her late husband’s funeral arrangements, forcing her into a distressing situation she described as harassment. The incident occurred in Ward 74, which includes parts 83 and 84, where the Booth Level Administration (BLA) has been displaying lists of voters flagged for logical discrepancies. Trinamool representatives in the area also reportedly notified residents whose names appeared on these lists. Zayida’s daughter stated that while her mother’s name is present in the official 2002 voter list, the online SIR portal displayed only an EPIC number without a corresponding name, creating confusion and distress for those summoned. Speaking at the hearing center, Zayida described the ordeal in emotionally charged terms, emphasizing the insensitivity of the process. “Today is my husband’s final rites. Yet they summoned me for a hearing. This is harassment. People are real; their grief cannot be ignored,” she said, appealing for compassion in the conduct of electoral procedures. She added that the incident should serve as a cautionary example to prevent others from facing similar hardships. Election officials have previously maintained that alternative dates are available for individuals unable to attend hearings on the first day. However, the case of Zayida Khatun underscores potential gaps in communication and enforcement at the local level.

SIR controversy: Netaji's
honorific under spotlight

MI News Service, Kolkata: A video circulating widely on social media has thrust Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose once again into the political spotlight, following a controversial interaction at a recent SIR (Special Investigation of Records) hearing. Posted by the handle Banglar Gorbo Mamata, the video shows a staged reenactment in which Netaji himself is “summoned” over a purported discrepancy regarding the use of his honorific in official records. The clip has ignited discussion in political and grassroots circles, coinciding with the real-life summons received by Netaji’s great-grandson, Chandra Kumar Bose. According to sources, the video dramatizes the postal commission questioning why “Netaji” appears in front of Subhas Chandra Bose’s name. In the clip, Netaji appears to react angrily to the inquiry, and the proceedings escalate into a theatrical exchange before the officers reportedly abandon the demand for documentation. While the video is largely symbolic, it reflects a growing narrative among certain political groups challenging the Election Commission and alleging inconsistencies in voter record procedures. The summons for Chandra Kumar Bose, issued earlier this month, has triggered a storm of controversy. The state CEO’s office clarified that the SIR notice was issued because the “linkage” section in Bose’s enumeration form was incomplete. He was called for the hearing in accordance with standard procedures, as with other voters, but the timing has fueled political debate in the state. TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee herself weighed in during a visit to Netaji’s statue on Red Road last Friday, coinciding with his birth anniversary.

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State election blueprint: Commit-
tee constituted to shape manifesto

MI News Service, Kolkata: A high-level 11-member committee has been constituted in West Bengal to draft the upcoming state election manifesto, signaling a strategic push ahead of the polls. Veteran leader Tapas Roy has been appointed as the chairman, with former Prime Minister’s Economic Advisor and Balurghat MLA Ashok Lahiri serving as convener. Agnimitra Pal has been named co-convener, while other prominent members include Alipurduar MP Manoj Tigga, Debjit Sarkar, Vaishali Dalmia, Shishir Bajoria, and Anirban Gangopadhyay. The committee brings together leaders from diverse sectors

and social backgrounds, aiming to craft a comprehensive document that outlines precise plans for governance and sectoral development if the party comes to power. The manifesto is expected to address the concerns of multiple layers of society and incorporate expert perspectives on economic and policy matters. While the committee has begun preliminary work at the state level, the final draft will require central leadership approval before being finalized. In the interim, the national leadership is scheduled to visit the state, with a public meeting planned in Barasat on January 31.

Combating SIR: ABHISHEK announces
VOTE RAKSHA COMMITTEES

From PG 1
the virtual meeting quoted Abhishek as saying. To activate the party’s rank and file across the state, he asked leaders to organise block-wise rallies on National Voters’ Day, which falls on Sunday. Abhishek chaired the mega virtual meeting with over one lakh party functionaries, including booth-level agents appointed by Trinamool, to outline the final course of action for the last phase of the SIR. He described this phase as the most crucial period leading up to the election. During a meeting in November last year, Abhishek had said that the fight for the 2026 Assembly elections would span six months, unlike the usual three months for other elections. At Saturday’s virtual meeting, he reminded Trinamool workers and leaders that three months had already passed and the remaining three months must be spent on the ground to defeat the BJP, without any lackadaisical attitude. A source in Trinamool said the objective of forming Vote Raksha Committees at the booth level is to ensure that no voter whose name appears on the logical discrepancy list is left unat-

tended and that no one faces the hearing process alone. “The BLAs and party workers have been directed to find out why a person has been marked in the logical discrepancy list. Leaders will scan the list, meet the individuals concerned, identify the reasons behind the discrepancies, help them gather the required documents, and accompany them to the hearing centres,” said a Trinamool leader explaining the purpose of the grassroots committees. “According to Abhishek, this will also help the party reach out to affected families and send a message that Trinamool stood by them during a crisis,” he added. During the nearly 80-minute-long virtual meeting, Abhishek expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of a section of party MLAs and MPs who allegedly failed to follow party instructions during earlier rounds of the SIR. He had earlier directed them to remain active in “war rooms” set up in all 294 Assembly segments, with MLAs in charge of their own constituencies and MPs tasked with monitoring all Assembly segments under their respective parliamentary constituencies.

Voter Rights in
Peril: CM Slams
ECI's Alleged
Partisan Conduct

MI News Service, Kolkata: On the occasion of National Voters’ Day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a fierce attack on the Election Commission of India (ECI), accusing the body of systematically undermining citizens’ voting rights while celebrating the very day meant to honor democracy.

In a strongly worded post on her X handle, the Chief Minister described the Commission as “working as His Master’s Voice,” alleging that it is being used to further the interests of the ruling party. “Instead of complying with the Hon’ble Supreme Court’s verdict and protecting the democratic rights of citizens, the ECI is inventing pretexts to harass voters and deny them their electoral rights,” she said. Mamata Banerjee highlighted that elderly citizens, including those over 85, 90, and 95 years of age, as well as physically challenged individuals, are being compelled to appear in person to verify their credentials—a move she called “torture” leading to stress, suicides, and deaths. She claimed that over 130 deaths have occurred due to such procedural harassment. “The ECI has turned the electoral process into a trial akin to the NRC, disproportionately affecting minorities, scheduled castes, and tribes,” she alleged. The Chief Minister accused the Commission of dispatching micro-observers to further compound citizen harassment, describing these actions as a direct attack on the foundations of Indian democracy. Elections, Mamata Banerjee asserted, are meant to be “festivals of democracy,” but partisan conduct and unilateral procedural irregularities have, in her view, transformed the process into an instrument of intimidation. She condemned the ECI for celebrating Voters’ Day under these circumstances. Her statement adds to growing criticism of the Commission’s functioning and raises urgent questions about the protection of electoral rights, particularly for vulnerable sections of society.

Kolkata's intellec-
tual hub stands
the test of time

MI News Service, Kolkata: College Street, Kolkata’s iconic 1.5-kilometer thoroughfare, stands today as a bustling hub of students, bookshops, and intellectual activity, but its origins date back to the early 19th century, shaped by colonial administration and the city’s growing educational landscape. Established following the founding of Hindu College, the street was conceived as part of broader British efforts to modernize infrastructure, improve governance, and connect the city’s educational institutions. Historical records indicate that between 1806 and 1836, under the initiative of Lord Wellesley, arterial roads were laid across Kolkata to facilitate commerce, administration, and public movement. College Street emerged as a focal point for academia, linking the intellectual heart of the city with its civic and cultural framework. By the time the Coffee House was established in 1927, the street had already become a gathering space for students, poets, writers, and thinkers, transforming into an open stage for discourse and debate. Magazines and newspapers from the 1930s document a vibrant scene: young minds and literary figures would congregate here over cups of coffee, discussing poetry, literature, and the politics of the freedom movement. Revolutionary students plotted activities and distributed political literature from the very tables that still stand in the Coffee House.

[illegible]

President's Medal for Distinguished and Meritorious Service Awarded to RPF/RPSF Personnel

MI News Service, 25 Jan 2026, New Delhi: On the occasion of Republic Day, 2026, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu has awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM) and the Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM) to officers and personnel of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) in recognition of their dedicated service, professionalism and exemplary contribution to railway security.

President's Medal for Distinguished Service
Aroma Singh Thakur, Inspector General, South Central Railway
Medal for Meritorious Service
Uttam Kumar Bandyopadhyay, Assistant Security Commissioner, South Central Railway
Kalyan Deori, Assistant Commandant, Railway Protection Special Force
Balwan Singh, Inspector, Northern Railway
Praful Chandra Panda, Inspector, East Coast Railway
Prakash Charan Das, Inspector, East Coast Railway
Mukesh Kumar Soam, Inspector, Railway Protection Special Force
Pappala Srinivasa Rao, Sub Inspector, East Coast Railway
Anwar Husain, Sub Inspector, Western Railway
Srinivas Ravula, Sub Inspector, South Central Railway
Shiv Lahari Meena, Sub Inspector, Railway Protection Special Force
Dikkala Venkata Murali Krishna, Assistant Sub Inspector, East Coast Railway
Sanjeev Kumar, Assistant Sub Inspector, Northern Railway
Maheswara Reddy Karnati, Head Constable, South Central Railway
C. Ilaya Bharathi, Head Constable, Southern Railway
Mohd Rafique, Constable/Dhobi, Railway Protection Special Force
PSM is awarded for a specially distinguished record of service, while the MSM is awarded for valuable service characterized by resourcefulness and devotion to duty.

These awards are conferred twice a year, on Republic Day (RD) and Independence Day (ID), to honor and inspire RPF/RPSF personnel to uphold the highest standards of service in safeguarding Indian Railways.

CRS inspects newly laid 3rd line between Ladda-Jimidipeta stations



MI News Service, 25 Jan 2026, Bhubaneswar: Brijesh Kumar Mishra, Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), South Eastern Circle, conducted a thorough inspection of the newly constructed 3rd line between Ladda and Jimidipeta stations on 24.01.2026. This 7.181 km stretch forms part of the Titlagarh-Vizianagaram 3rd line project in Waltair Division, East Coast Railway.

The section features 60 kg rails and a major bridge, constructed to conform to 25T axle load standards. The inspection concluded successfully, with speed trials passing without issues, leading to authorization for full-fledged commissioning.

This milestone reflects the dedicated efforts of the Civil Engineering, RVNL, Signal & Telecom, and Electrical departments of the Construction organization, in close coordination with Waltair Division's operations and traffic planning teams.

Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair and Higher Officials from Construction Organization, RVNL, Engineering and other senior officers from Waltair Division also took part in the inspection.

5 dead in Nampally fire; Telangana Minister announces Rs 5 L ex-gratia to kin of deceased

MI News Service, Hyderabad: Telangana Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Sunday expressed deep sorrow at the fire incident at Nampally in Hyderabad in which five people, including two children and an elderly woman, died of suspected asphyxiation. Describing the incident as extremely "unfortunate" the minister announced an of 5 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

A fire broke out in a four-storey building housing a furniture showroom in Nampally Station Road, officials said on Sunday.

Those who died were identified as B.B. Amma, 60, mother of watchman Sameer from Karnataka; Akhil, 7, and Praneeth, 11, children of Yadaiah from Nampally; Mohammad Intiaz, 31, also from Nampally; and Syed Habib, 30, an auto driver from Sastri Puram, Rajendranagar.

"I have instructed Hyderabad District Collector Harichandana to take immediate action and ensure the assistance reaches the families," Minister Reddy said.

He further directed the Collector to enforce stringent measures to ensure compliance with fire safety norms and security protocols to prevent similar incidents in the future. "Preliminary investigation indicates the fire was caused by the shop owner's negligence, and the shop owner has been taken into custody. Legal action will be taken against those responsible," Minister Reddy added.

The Minister assured the families of the deceased that the government will stand by them, promising a full inquiry and strict regulatory measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Telangana Fire DG Vikram Singh Mann said earlier today, "As we were informed yesterday, five people were trapped. So we have recovered all five bodies. The first body was recovered this morning at around 9:15, and just now, the fifth body has also been recovered. All the bodies have been sent to Osmania Hospital,"

Koraput administration revokes non-veg ban on Republic Day

MI News Service, Koraput: The Collector and District Magistrate of Koraput District on Sunday revoked the order to impose a one-day ban on the sale of non-vegetarian food items on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

In a letter issued today, the Collector and DM clarified that the restriction was not a standard law but was based on a suggestion from the "District Level Republic Day Preparatory Committee." After consideration, the January 23 letter is revoked. It instructed all Tahsildars, Block Development Officers and Executive Officers across the Koraput district about the same.

"In continuation of this Collectorate Letter No. 93, dated-23.01.2026 regarding prohibition on sale of Meat, Chicken, Fish, Egg and other non-vegetarian food items on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day Celebration, 2026 in Koraput District, and whereas the said instruction was issued purely on the suggestion of the District Level Republic Day Preparatory Committee. Now, after due consideration, the aforesaid Letter No. 93 dated 23.01.2026 is hereby revoked with immediate effect," the letter read.

Since the prohibition is no longer in effect, meat and non-vegetarian items can be sold as usual on Republic Day 2026 in Koraput. Earlier, the Collector and DM issued a letter on Friday to enforce a ban on the sale of meat, chicken, fish, eggs and other non-vegetarian items in Koraput on January 26.

According to the communication, officials were asked to issue formal notifications within their respective jurisdictions to ensure strict compliance with the order.

Meanwhile, Ayodhya Food Commissioner Manik Chandra Singh announced on January 10 a strict ban on non-vegetarian food in hotels and restaurants within Ayodhya Dham.

The ban includes online deliveries, and authorities will penalise platforms violating the rule.

Speaking to ANI, Food Commissioner Ayodhya Manik Chandra Singh said, "Non-vegetarian food has been banned from being served in hotels and restaurants in Ayodhya Dham."

REPUBLIC DAY-2026 : General Manager's Message

MI News Service, 25 Jan 2026, Bhubaneswar: As we celebrate the 77th Republic Day of our great nation, I wish you all prosperity, success, and joy. This significant day stirs within us a profound love for our motherland and strengthens our patriotic spirit. It also serves as a powerful reminder of our commitment to fulfilling the aspirations and ideals that our Constitution's architects envisioned for India.

It gives me immense pleasure to share that this financial year has witnessed outstanding performance across our operations. By loading 200 Million Tonnes of freight in 263 days, East Coast Railway has scripted fastest ever loading in history and in 27 days earlier than last year. Our performance for this financial year includes 222 Million Tonnes of loading and 199 Million Tonnes of unloading.

Our operational metrics reflect strong performance across the board. Freight loading in the first three quarters has gone up by 11.3%. Gross Revenue of ₹18,920.57 crores through December 2025 represents a 9.21% increase. Passenger operations show equally encouraging results, with 73.13 million passengers carried—a 5.74% rise—and earnings of ₹1,865.34 crores, up 6.87% from last year. Capital expenditure utilization stands at ₹9,659.39 crores, representing 91.63% of our allocated budget, while our Operating Ratio is maintained at 58.20%.

These outstanding achievements are a testament to the hard work, commitment, and dedication of every member of our Railway family. I take this opportunity to congratulate all our railway personnel and express my deepest gratitude to those working in challenging conditions, particularly our colleagues serving in difficult and critical sections.

Passenger convenience and comfort remain at the heart of East Coast Railway's operations. This financial year, we have successfully operated 1,523 special trains to accommodate seasonal travel surges during festivals and holidays. We have also augmented 200 mail/express trains with 4,050 additional coaches, while permanently adding 19 coaches to our fleet for sustained service enhancement.

In our continued effort to improve travel safety and passenger experience, we have introduced 2 trains with LHB rakes during the current financial year. Expanding our network, three new express services now connect important destinations: Boudh-Bhubaneswar-Boudh Express, Sambalpur-Boudh-Sambalpur Express, and Brahmapur-Udhna-Brahmapur Amrit Bharat Express. To further improve accessibility, 21 trains now have additional stops, 3 train pairs have been extended to serve more locations, and the frequency of one train pair has been enhanced.

The Rath Yatra festival this year witnessed unprecedented passenger movement, with East Coast Railway facilitating the safe travel of over 4.91 lakh devotees. A total of 368 Rath Ya-

tra Special trains were operated across Odisha and adjoining states to meet the surge in demand. Our comprehensive arrangements encompassed not only efficient transportation but also improved passenger amenities, simplified ticketing procedures, flexible train scheduling, and robust crowd management measures to ensure a smooth and comfortable journey for all pilgrims.

Numerous passenger amenity initiatives have been implemented during the current financial year up to December 2025. These enhancements include the installation of ATMs, QR Code payment facilities, and economy meal counters at select stations. We have provided Coach Indication Boards at 10 stations, Train Indication Boards at 7 stations, and Digital Clocks at 11 stations. Infrastructure improvements include upgraded waiting halls at 10 stations, enhanced circulating areas at 11 stations, and additional platform shelters at 26 stations. To ensure accessibility, ramps for Divyangjan passengers have been installed at 18 stations, platform raising completed at 63 stations, Foot Over Bridges constructed at 9 stations, and lifts provided at 9 stations. Additionally, a new passenger halt at Taraboi has been inaugurated on the Khurda Road-Balangir new rail line, situated between Khurda Road and Khurda Town.

We are maintaining number one position on Indian Railways in Rail Madad.

Major milestones in infrastructure expansion have been achieved this financial year. Several critical multi-tracking projects have been commissioned which include:

- Koraput-Suku (11.16 km), Darliput-Padua section (9.77 km)
- Hindol Road-Meramundali section (26.82 km)
- JajpurKeonjhar Road-Baitarani Road section (11.63 km)
- Parvatipuram-Sitanagaram-Bobbili-Donkinavalasa section (36.06 km)

Additionally, engine rolling operations have commenced on 24.71 km across three sections: Talcher-Talcher Road (6.5 km), Manabhar-Jarati (9.21 km), and Karakavalasa-Shimiliguda (9 km). These achievements mark substantial progress in our network enhancement.

Our operational infrastructure has been significantly reinforced with the commissioning of station yards at six key locations—Sambalpur, Donkinavalasa, Bobbili, Sitanagaram, Parvatipuram, and Rajathagarh—facilitating improved traffic flow and logistics capabilities. The electrification program has achieved 160.49 TKM within ECoR's jurisdiction through December 2025, while modern station buildings at Baitarani Road and Meramundali now serve our passengers.

East Coast Railway has achieved significant milestones with breakthrough completions in tunnels across key ongoing projects. Notable among these are T-4 tunnel (4.183 m) in the Adenigarh-Charichhak section—the longest railway tunnel in ECoR's jurisdiction, T-2 tunnel (1.775 m) in the



Daspalla-Buguda section, both part of the Khurda Road-Balangir new line project and T-35 tunnel (628 m) in the Sikarpai-Keutiguda section of the Koraput-Singapur Road doubling project. These landmark accomplishments will significantly accelerate the completion of vital public-centric rail infrastructure.

Important new sanctioned projects that will strengthen our network infrastructure include the 3rd and 4th lines between Jharsuguda-Sasan, Sambalpur City-Jarapada and 4th line between Ranital Junction Cabin and Bhadrak station. A rail flyover at Cuttack has also been sanctioned to improve traffic mobility and safety. East Coast Railway is fully committed to the swift and effective implementation of these transformative projects.

ECoR has designated 170 Road Over Bridge (ROB) projects as Special Railway Projects to improve infrastructure and public safety. Land acquisition under the Special Act is underway. Two ROB in the Talcher-Bimalagarh new line project have been completed during this period.

Safety remains the cornerstone of our operations and we have achieved substantial progress in safety infrastructure this year. Auto Signalling spanning 72.91 RKM has been commissioned, while 19 LC gates have been interlocked and 5 closed with Limited Height Subway provisions. For enhanced road user protection, sliding booms have been installed at 29 LC gates, and voice logger phones have been provided at all non-interlocked LC gates.

Our signalling infrastructure has been significantly strengthened with the commissioning of 9 new Electronic Interlocking systems and 31 modifications to existing EI/PI stations. Ten Hot Axle Box Detectors have been deployed across the network.

Our track renewal achievements include 356 TKM of Through Rail Renewals, 446 TKM of Through Sleeper Renewals and rehabilitation of 160 bridges. Safety has been further reinforced through ultrasonic testing of 21,265 km of track to identify and address rail and weld defects.

Preparedness and vigilance remain high priorities. Full-scale Joint Disaster Management Exercises were conducted

in all three divisions, complemented by a Zonal Civil Defence Exercise at Bhubaneswar. Our commitment to safety compliance is reflected in 1,004 ambush checks and 14,436 safety inspections conducted to verify staff alertness and adherence to safety regulations.

In an effort to improve safety of rail and road users ECoR has implemented innovative Auto P N generation system at 4 non-interlocked Level Crossings. Further Sambalpur Division has deployed a system which gives alert regarding approaching trains to field staff.

Significant strides have been made in improving train mobility and infrastructure quality. During this financial year, we have relaxed 15 Permanent Speed Restrictions and increased sectional speeds across 13 sections spanning 310.24 Route Kilometres.

East Coast Railway has made remarkable progress in sustainable operations. Solar power installations totalling 11.41 MWp have been commissioned across our network, delivering cost savings of 5.87 crores. The deployment of Head-On Generation technology in 97 rakes has resulted in impressive savings of 219.25 crores by minimizing diesel consumption this financial year.

Our environmental stewardship extends to water conservation, with 2.33 lakh kilolitres of fresh water saved through recycled water utilization. Groundwater recharge capacity has been enhanced with 18 new rainwater harvesting pits, while over 3.28 lakh saplings have been planted across our railway premises, strengthening our green initiatives.

The Security department has achieved remarkable results in maintaining law and order while serving passengers. Enforcement actions under the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act led to 116 case detections, recovery of stolen materials worth 12.53 lakhs, and 275 arrests. Ticketless travel and related offenses resulted in 49,645 apprehensions with 99.83 lakhs in fines collected.

Anti-tout operations yielded 66 arrests with the seizure of illegally booked tickets valued at ₹15.88 lakhs. Narcotics enforcement under the NDPS Act produced 213 cases, contraband recovery worth ₹5.58 crores, and 319 criminal arrests.

Beyond enforcement, our security personnel have excelled in passenger welfare. They rescued 889 minors and 205 senior citizens, reuniting them with their families, and recovered 2,138 items of left-behind luggage for passengers. The Meri Saheli team assisted 2,04,082 women passengers with safety and comfort. Most notably, under Operation Jeevan Raksha, our personnel saved 52 precious lives—efforts that received widespread public and media acclaim.

I am delighted to share that East Coast Railway's Material Management has achieved the first position across Indian Railways for the fastest release of Purchase Orders, with an average processing time of just 3 days. During the current financial year, we have

achieved cumulative scrap sales worth 183.46 crores. Further strengthening our quality standards, our Stores Department has been certified under ISO 9001:2015 for its Quality Management System.

Healthcare infrastructure has witnessed substantial upgrades across East Coast Railway. Modern medical equipment has been deployed and staffing gaps addressed at all our hospitals and health units. A network of 48 empanelled private hospitals and 6 diagnostic centres ensures access to advanced tertiary care. Our medical accomplishments up to December 2025 include 71 specialized procedures such as hip and knee replacements, 805 major surgeries, and 469 cataract operations. Beyond serving our railway family, we extended medical assistance to 4,496 ailing passengers at trains and stations.

East Coast Railway remains committed to the welfare of railway employees and their families. We have signed Memoranda of Understanding with nationalized banks to provide comprehensive benefits and insurance packages for our workforce. During this period, 16,931 non-gazetted staff members received training across various categories to enhance their professional skills.

To create a safe and respectful workplace, awareness drives and sensitization workshops have been conducted at headquarters and divisional levels to educate employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, 2013.

East Coast Railway has achieved an outstanding track record in sports this year. I am delighted to share that several of our athletes have excelled at both international and national levels. Notable among them is Shri Amit Rohidas, who represented India at the Asia Cup held in Bihar and won the Gold Medal. Our boxer Miss Savita secured a Gold Medal at the BFI Cup-2025 and a Silver Medal at the All India Railways Boxing Championship. Weightlifter Sk. Lal Bashir won a Bronze Medal at the All India Railways Weightlifting Championship. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our sports persons for their remarkable achievements.

I sincerely acknowledge the positive and constructive contributions of our trade unions in resolving workplace issues amicably, creating a harmonious work environment across East Coast Railway. The ongoing welfare and social initiatives undertaken by the East Coast Railway Women Welfare Organization (ECoRWVO) deserve special appreciation for their commendable impact on our railway family.

Let us advance with renewed commitment and conviction, guided by sincerity and devotion, powered by dedication and determination. Our goal is not simply to achieve targets but to transcend them. Reforms and innovations in our working shall enable it. I am confident that with your unfailing support and collective resolve, East Coast Railway will achieve new frontiers of excellence.

Empowered participation of woman extremely important for development: President Murmu

MI News Service, New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday stressed the importance of women's "empowered participation" in the country's development, highlighting key initiatives taken by the central government for their upliftment.

In her address to the nation on the eve of the 77th Republic Day, the President underlined the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign and the 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana' contribution to empower women.

"The active and empowered participation of women is extremely important for the development of the country. National efforts towards their health, education, safety, and economic empowerment have increased women's participation in many areas," she said.

"The 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign has encouraged the education of girls. Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana', more than 57 crore bank accounts have been opened so far. Nearly 56 per cent of these accounts belong to women," she stressed.

Murmu further emphasised that women have "broken traditional stereotypes" through their active contribution in self-help groups and staggering progress in other fields such as agriculture, space, armed forces, self-employment, sports and others.

"Our women are breaking traditional stereotypes and forging ahead. They are actively contributing to the overall development of the country. More than ten crore women associated with self-help groups are redefining the process of development," she said.

"Women are making their mark in every field, from agriculture to space, from self-employment to the armed forces. In the field of sports, our daughters have set new benchmarks globally," she added.

She mentioned India's win in the Women's Cricket World



Cup and the participation of two women in the Chess World Cup final.

"Last year in November, the daughters of India scripted a golden chapter in sporting history by winning the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup and subsequently the Blind Women's T20 World Cup. Last year, the final match of the Chess World Cup was played between two Indian women. These examples are a testament to the dominance of India's daughters in the world of sports. The people of the country are proud of them," she said.

She also mentioned increased women's participation in Panchayati Raj institutions.

"The number of women representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions is nearly 46 per cent. The 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', which seeks to take political empowerment of women to greater heights, will provide unprecedented strength to the idea of women-led development. The role of Nari Shakti will be crucial in the making of Viksit Bharat. With increasing contribution by women, our country will set an example of an inclusive Republic based on gender equality," she said.

President Murmu also hailed the farmers' contribution to India's society and economy. She said that the central government has prioritised ensuring fair prices for the produce, access to loans at lower interest rates, and effective insurance coverage to help farmers.

"Our Annadata farmers are

the backbone of our society and economy. Generations of hardworking farmers have made our country self-reliant in food grains. It is due to the hard work of our farmers that we are able to export agricultural products. Many farmers have presented highly impressive examples of success," she said.

"Priority is being given to ensuring that our farmers receive fair prices for their produce, access to loans at lower interest rates, effective insurance coverage, good quality seeds, irrigation facilities, fertilisers for increased production, access to modern agricultural practices, and encouragement for organic farming. The 'PM Kisan Samman Nidhi' is honouring the contribution of our farmers and strengthening their efforts.

"Efforts are also being made to ensure that they do not fall back into the poverty trap. The world's largest scheme of its kind embodying the spirit of Antyodaya, the 'PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana', is based on the idea that no one should go hungry in our country of over 140 crore people. This scheme is providing succour to nearly 81 crore beneficiaries. By constructing more than 4 crore pucca houses equipped with electricity, water, and toilet facilities for poor families, they have been provided with a foundation for living a dignified life and making further progress," she added.

Republic Day marks a defining milestone in India's national journey. It marks the day the Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950, formally establishing the country as a 'Sovereign Democratic Republic'.

While independence on August 15, 1947, ended colonial rule, it was the adoption of the Constitution that completed India's transition to self-governance based on law, institutional accountability, and the will of the Indians.

IndiGo cancels, changes international flights in view of Iran situation

MI News Service, New Delhi: IndiGo Airlines on Sunday issued an advisory on cancellations or certain "proactive" changes in its international flights, as deemed necessary, owing to recent developments in Iran.

IndiGo flights scheduled to operate on January 25 from Delhi to Tbilisi and from Mumbai to Almaty and return have been cancelled. IndiGo flights scheduled to operate on January 26 to and from Tbilisi, Almaty, Baku and Tashkent may take a brief halt, for refuelling, at Doha, the advisory said.

In a post on X, IndiGo said, "Travel Advisory: As a follow up to our first advisory, and in view of the recent developments around Iran, we are making certain proactive changes to our flight schedules as part of our continued focus on safety. IndiGo flights scheduled to operate on 25 January 2026 from Delhi to Tbilisi and from Mumbai to Almaty and return have been cancelled. Please visit <https://goindigo.in/plan-b.html> to explore alternate options, including future available flights or a full refund."

"IndiGo flights scheduled to operate on 26 January 2026 to and from Tbilisi, Almaty, Baku and Tashkent may take a brief halt, for refuelling, at Doha. Please keep a tab on your flight status <https://www.goindigo.in/check-flight-status.html>. We

continue to closely monitor the situation and will share further updates. We appreciate your patience and understanding," it added.

Earlier in the day, IndiGo asked its passengers to keep monitoring the flight status.

In a post on X, IndiGo said, "In view of the ongoing situation around Iran, some of our flights may experience longer travel times or cancellations. These precautionary and proactive measures are being taken as part of our continued focus on safety."

"We are closely monitoring the dynamic situation and in view of that some of our flights may be changed or cancelled in a phased manner, with regular updates to minimise inconvenience to our customers. We recommend that you check your flight status regularly. If your flight is impacted, alternate options can be easily explored through our website. We appreciate your patience and understanding," it added.

The development came as US President Donald Trump said on Thursday (local time) that the United States is closely monitoring Iran as a "massive fleet" of naval forces moves toward the Gulf region, underscoring rising tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One after attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Trump described a

significant naval deployment that he said was intended to keep pressure on Iran's leadership.

"We're watching Iran," the president said, adding that the flotilla's presence was meant to act as a deterrent. "I'd rather not see anything happen, but we're watching them very closely."

Earlier, Iranian state television has released the first official death toll from the recent anti-government protests that engulfed the country, reporting that 3,117 people were killed during the crackdown, as reported by Al Jazeera.

However, the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) has said 4,519 were killed during the wave of demonstrations, including 4,251 protesters, 197 security personnel, 35 people aged under 18 and 38 bystanders who it says were neither protesters nor security personnel.

HRANA also said 9,049 additional deaths were under review, as per Al Jazeera.

The demonstrations, which began in late December with shopkeepers protesting against the failing currency and the cost of living, snowballed into a widespread anti-government movement, as per Al Jazeera.

The government crackdown was widely condemned, with US President Donald Trump threatening to intervene in support of the protesters.

"Govt has created a situation of confusion": Virendra Singh on Manikarnika Ghat row

MI News Service, Varanasi: On the demolition drive at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi, Samajwadi Party MP Virendra Singh on Sunday criticised the government, stating that they have created confusion among the public by saying that the video was AI-generated. MP Singh further alleged that the government has arrested a few members of the party, emphasising that the "truth" should come out. "We are going for the inspection of Manikarnika Ghat. The government has created a situation of confusion. They are trying to prove the public wrong; they are saying that the video was created by AI. For this reason, they have arrested some of our colleagues. The truth should come out in

front of the country," he told ANI. Earlier, on Tuesday, Congress leader Nana Patole on Tuesday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the demolition drive at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi, calling it an "insult to Hindus." Addressing a press conference, Patole said that he will visit the Manikarnika Ghat on Wednesday to hold a protest against the demolition drive. "Tomorrow I am going to Manikarnika Ghat in Kashi. I am going there because there is a ban on entering that area, but we will go there and also hold a strong protest. The BJP Government has done an insult to Hindus. BJP people destroyed age-old heritage," he stated.

AI systems must be tested on diverse, population-scale datasets before deployment: NHA CEO

New Delhi : Artificial intelligence models in healthcare must be tested on large and diverse population datasets before being deployed on the ground to ensure trust, accuracy and inclusion, National Health Authority (NHA) Chief Executive Officer Dr Sunil Kumar Barnwal, said on Sunday.

Speaking at the Federated Intelligence Hackathon on Health AI, organised as a pre-event to the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at IIT Kanpur, Dr Barnwal said India is now moving from experimentation to building benchmarked and reliable AI models for healthcare.

He stressed that federated and consent-driven AI systems allow innovation to scale without centralising sensitive health data, thereby protecting privacy and strengthening public trust.

Referring to Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), he said AI solutions must be context-ready and reflect India's demographic and regional



diversity. The national-level hackathon was organised by the National Health Authority in collaboration with the ICMR-National Institute for Research in Digital Health and Data Science (NIRD-HDS) and IIT Kanpur.

It was held from January 19 to January 24, 2026, with a focus on developing secure, privacy-preserving and scalable Digital Public Goods for Health AI. The inaugu-

ral session also saw addresses by Prof Sandeep Verma, Head of the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology, IIT Kanpur Director Manindra Agrawal, and Ritu Maheshwari, Secretary, Medical Health and Family Welfare and State Mission Director, ABDM-Uttar Pradesh.

The speakers highlighted the growing role of technology, research institutions and govern-

ments in shaping India's digital health ecosystem.

Dr R S Sharma, Distinguished Visiting Professor at IIT Kanpur and former CEO of the National Health Authority, said Digital Public Infrastructure and interoperable Digital Public Goods are key to building secure, scalable and citizen-centric health data systems.

He underlined that such frameworks ensure both innovation and accountability. Vivek Raghavan, CEO and Co-founder of SarvamAI, spoke about the importance of India's layered digital health architecture in enabling AI-driven healthcare at both population and individual levels.

He said high-quality data, strong privacy safeguards and security are essential for effective AI adoption.

He also stressed the need for indigenous, open-source AI models to ensure local AI sovereignty and reduce dependence on external systems.

Rahul Gandhi invites citizens to share air pollution impact stories on 'Awaaz Bharat Ki'

New Delhi : Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday urged citizens across the country to share their personal stories on how air pollution is affecting their health and the well-being of their loved ones through a portal titled 'Awaaz Bharat Ki'.

'Awaaz Bharat Ki' is an initiative launched by Rahul Gandhi to offer a direct platform for people to convey their thoughts, suggestions and concerns to his office, according to details available on its official website. In a post on X, Gandhi highlighted the human and economic cost of worsening air quality, saying, "We are paying a heavy price for air pollution -- with our health and with our economy. Crores of ordinary Indians bear this burden every day."

Underlining the urgency of addressing the issue, he said that the most vulnerable sections of society are suffering the worst consequences.

"Children and the elderly suffer the most. Livelihoods, especially of construction workers and daily wage earners, are severely impacted. This crisis cannot be forgotten until next winter. The first step towards change is to raise our voices," Gandhi said. Calling on people to participate, he added, "Share your story of how air pollution has affected you or your loved ones at Awaaz Bharat Ki. Your voice matters, and it is my duty to raise it."

The appeal comes at a time when New Delhi and several surrounding cities have been grappling with severe pollution levels over the past few months, leading to serious respiratory and other health-related problems among residents.

Dense smog and persistently high pollution levels have made it increasingly difficult for people, particularly children and the elderly, to step outdoors.

Over the past few months, schools in the national capital have also been forced to shift to online classes on multiple occasions due to the Air Quality Index plunging into the 'severe' category. In December last year, residents of Delhi staged protests against rising pollution levels and demanded a concrete action plan



to tackle the crisis. More than a hundred protesters, including students, activists and concerned citizens, gathered at Jantar Mantar, urging both the State and Central governments to take immediate steps to curb deteriorating air quality in the national capital.

The Congress party, during the Winter Session of Parliament last year, repeatedly raised the issue of air pollution in both Houses. The party leaders also held protests, carrying placards and demanding accountability from the ruling dispensation over the worsening environmental and public health situation.

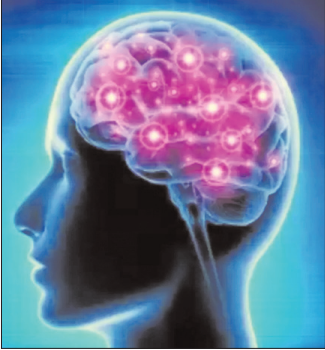
Artificial intelligence decreases barrier to treating ultrasonic brain illness

Focused ultrasound technology is a non-invasive therapy procedure that employs ultrasound energy to treat neurological problems by focusing it on a few millimetres of the brain, even deep regions, without opening the skull. It has been used to treat a variety of refractory brain illnesses, including depression and Alzheimer's disease because it has a low impact on surrounding healthy tissue and lowers side effects like problems and infections.

However, its application has been limited thus far since it is difficult to reflect the distortion of ultrasound waves generated by the varied shapes of patients' skulls in real time. A research team led by Dr. Kim, Hyungmin of the Bionics Research Center at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) has developed a real-time acoustic simulation technology based on generative AI to predict and correct the distortion of the ultrasound focus position caused by the skull in real-time during focused ultrasound therapy. Until now, the clinical applicability of AI simulation models in the field of non-invasive focused ultrasound therapy technology has not been validated.

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To predict the location of the invisible acoustic focus, navigation systems based on medical images taken before treatment are currently utilized, which provide information about the relative position of the patient and the ultrasound transducer. However, they are limited by their inability to account for the distortion of ultrasound waves caused by the skull, and while various simulation techniques have been used to compensate for this, they still require significant computational time, making them difficult to apply in actual clinical practice.

The research team developed a real-time focused ultrasound simulation technology through an artificial intelligence model based on a generative adversarial neural network (GAN), a deep learning

model widely used for image generation in the medical field. The technology reduces the update time of three-dimensional simulation information reflecting changes in ultrasound acoustic waves from 14 s to 0.1 s, while showing an average maximum acoustic pressure error of less than 7% and a focal position error of less than 6mm, both of which are within the error range of existing simulation technologies, increasing the possibility of clinical application.

The research team also developed a medical image-based navigation system to verify the performance of the developed technology in order to rapidly deploy it to real-world clinical practice. The system can provide real-time acoustic simulations at the rate of 5 Hz depending on the position of the ultrasound transducer, and succeeded in predicting the position of the ultrasound energy and focus within the skull in real-time during focused ultrasound therapy.

Previously, due to the long calculation time, the ultrasound transducer had to be precisely positioned in a pre-planned location to utilize the simulation results. However, with the newly developed simulation-guided navigation system, it is now possible to adjust the ultrasound focus based on the acoustic simulation results obtained in real-time. In the future, it is expected to improve the accuracy of focused ultrasound and provide safe treatment for patients by being able to quickly respond to unexpected situations that may occur during the treatment process.

Nearly 4,000 HIV-positive children in Pakistan's Sindh expose systemic failure in infection control: Report

Islamabad : As many as 3,995 registered HIV-positive children in Pakistan's Sindh, and more than 100 new cases reported in Karachi in 2025, expose systemic failure of infection control and regulation, a report has stated. Nearly 4,000 children in Sindh living with HIV, many of them not infected at birth or through personal behaviour but in healthcare facilities where patients undergo treatment, making negligence a crime, according to a report in Pakistan's leading daily, The Express Tribune.

The Express Tribune report stated, "The Pakistan Medical Association's (PMA) 'high-level alert' on the alarming rise in paediatric HIV cases should jolt authorities out of their habitual inertia. The numbers alone are damning: 3,995 registered HIV-positive children in Sindh and over 100 new cases reported in Karachi in 2025. These numbers point to a systemic collapse of infection control and regulation."

This is not the first warning for Pakistan, as the 2019 Ratodero tragedy, where hundreds of children were infected, was considered to be a turning point, triggering investigation and promises of reform. However, six years later, PMA is compelled to reveal the rising number of HIV cases among children. The report in The Express Tribune said, "What makes this crisis particularly disturbing is that it is largely prevent-



able. Unsafe injections, reused syringes, unregulated blood banks and illegal clinics run by quacks continue to operate with impunity. Inability - or unwillingness - to enforce minimum standards has turned clinics into sites of contagion. The PMA rightly warns that this is no longer just a medical emergency but a socio-economic catastrophe in the making."

In December last year, another report stated that the deepening HIV crisis in Pakistan is not only a medical emergency but also demonstrates institutional rot and showcases the consequences of years of neglect, the failure to implement basic health standards and the human cost of corruption. According to regional data, Pakistan, with a sharp increase in

HIV cases, is ranked second among nations in the Asia-Pacific, a report has stated. The shocking statistics highlight the use of contaminated syringes, unregulated blood transfusions, fake doctors and violations of medical rules. Health officials have reported 3,995 registered HIV-positive children in Sindh, a figure that only represents documented cases, according to a report in European Times. According to the data, more than 600,000 fake doctors practise in Pakistan, with 40 per cent of them based in Karachi. The figure demonstrates the deepening medical malpractice crisis in Pakistan. With insufficient oversight, these fake doctors operate freely, reusing syringes, mishandling blood, and conducting unsafe pro-

cedures that further increase the spread of HIV.

"Pakistan's healthcare system, long burdened by underfunding and mismanagement, has repeatedly failed to uphold global standard operating procedures (SOPs) for infection prevention and control. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNAIDS have established clear protocols for safe blood transfusions, syringe disposal, and patient management," the European Times report stated. The few HIV treatment centres that are present in Pakistan face shortages of testing kits, antiretroviral medicines, and trained staff, resulting in diagnosis and treatment delays. Patients often suffer as they have to move from one hospital to another in search of basic care.

"Pakistan's deepening HIV crisis is more than a medical emergency; it is a reflection of institutional rot. It exposes the consequences of years of neglect, the failure to enforce basic health standards, and the human cost of corruption. The tragedy of nearly 4,000 HIV-positive children in Sindh, the epidemic of quack doctors, and the routine use of contaminated medical tools together form a damning indictment of the state's indifference. This is not a story of a virus spreading silently; it is a story of systemic failure that allows the virus to thrive," the report added.

Researchers reveal impact of aldehydes on DNA damage, ageing

A team of researchers from Nagoya University in Japan determined that aldehydes are metabolic waste linked to premature ageing. Their findings, published in Nature Cell Biology, shed light on premature ageing illnesses as well as prospective techniques for combating ageing in healthy people, such as limiting exposure to aldehyde-inducing chemicals including alcohol, pollution, and tobacco. Aldehydes can have a negative impact on one's health. However, the group's findings indicate that these negative impacts also include ageing, which was discovered by Yasuyoshi Oka, Yuka Nakazawa, Mayuko Shimada, and Tomoo Ogi of Nagoya University. "DNA damage is linked with ageing phenotypes," said Oka. "However, for the first time, we propose a relationship between aldehyde-derived DNA damage and premature ageing." The researchers hypothesised that there might be a link between aldehydes and ageing since individuals with premature ageing disorders, like AMeD syndrome, exhibit inadequate activity of enzymes, like ALDH2, that break down aldehydes. For healthy individuals, ALDH2 is also important in our response to alcohol. When a person drinks wine or beer, the liver metabolises the alcohol into aldehydes so it can be eliminated from the body. The activity of ALDH2 is important for converting the aldehydes into a non-toxic substance. Aldehydes are harmful because they are highly reactive with DNA and proteins. In the body, they form DNA-protein crosslinks (DPCs) that block

important enzymes in typical cell proliferation and maintenance processes, causing these processes to malfunction and the patient to age. Focusing on DPCs caused by aldehyde, the scientists used a method called DPC-seq to investigate the link between aldehyde accumulation and DNA damage in premature-ageing disease patients. In a series of experiments, the researchers discovered that the TCR complex, VCP/p97, and the proteasome are involved in the removal of formaldehyde-induced DPCs in actively transcribed regions. This was confirmed by a mouse model lacking both aldehyde clearance processes and the TCR pathway that showed worse AMeD syndrome symptoms.

These processes are important because they are related to the clearance of aldehydes. It suggests an association between premature ageing diseases and aldehyde accumulation. Professor Ogi is hopeful about the implications of their findings, stating: "By elucidating the mechanism by which DNA damage heals quickly, we have revealed part of the cause of genetic premature ageing." "Our research opens up new avenues for understanding the underlying mechanisms of premature ageing diseases and offers potential targets for therapeutic intervention," Oka said. "By elucidating the role of aldehydes in DNA damage and ageing, we are paving the way for future studies aimed at developing novel treatments and interventions."

STUDY SHOWS SLEEP DEPRIVATION MAKES US LESS HAPPY, MORE ANXIOUS

Sleep deprivation does more than just make us sleepy. According to a study released by the American Psychological Association that synthesised more than 50 years of research on sleep deprivation and mood, it may hinder our emotional functioning, diminish good emotions, and increase our risk of anxiety symptoms.

"In our largely sleep-deprived society, quantifying the effects of sleep loss on emotion is critical for promoting psychological health," said study lead author Cara Palmer, PhD, of Montana State University. "This study represents the most comprehensive synthesis of experimental sleep and emotion research to date, and provides strong evidence that periods of extended wakeful-

ness, shortened sleep duration, and nighttime awakenings adversely influence human emotional functioning."

The study was published in the journal Psychological Bulletin.

Palmer and her colleagues, including co-lead author Joanne Bower, PhD, of East Anglia University, analyzed data from 154 studies spanning five decades, with 5,715 total participants. In all those studies, researchers disrupted participants' sleep for one or more nights. In some experiments, participants were kept awake for an extended period.

In others, they were allowed a shorter-than-typical amount of sleep, and in others, they were periodically awakened through-

out the night. Each study also measured at least one emotion-related variable after the sleep manipulation, such as participants' self-reported mood, their response to emotional stimuli, and measures of depression and anxiety symptoms.

Overall, the researchers found that all three types of sleep loss resulted in fewer positive emotions such as joy, happiness and contentment among participants, as well as increased anxiety symptoms such as a rapid heart rate and increased worrying.

"This occurred even after short periods of sleep loss, like staying up an hour or two later than usual or after losing just a few hours of sleep," Palmer said. "We also found that sleep loss increased anxiety symptoms and



blunted arousal in response to emotional stimuli."

Findings for symptoms of depression were smaller and less consistent, as were those for negative emotions such as sadness, worry and stress.

One limitation of the study is that the majority of participants were young adults - the average age was 23. Future research should include a more diverse age sample to better understand how sleep deprivation affects people at different ages, according to the researchers.

Other directions for future research could include examining the effects of multiple nights of sleep loss, looking at individual differences to find out why some people may be more vulnerable than others to the effects

of sleep loss, and examining the effects of sleep loss across different cultures, as most of the research in the current study was conducted in the United States and Europe, according to the researchers.

"Research has found that more than 30 per cent of adults and up to 90 per cent of teens don't get enough sleep," Palmer said.

"The implications of this research for individual and public health are considerable in a largely sleep-deprived society. Industries and sectors prone to sleep loss, such as first responders, pilots and truck drivers, should develop and adopt policies that prioritize sleep to mitigate against the risks to daytime function and well-being."

US urge Israel to move into second phase of Gaza ceasefire

MI News Service, Gaza: American officials met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday, urging Israel to move into the second phase of the ceasefire that stopped the war in Gaza.

Netanyahu met with President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and Middle East adviser, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

The US is anxious to keep the Trump-brokered deal moving, but Netanyahu is facing pressure from within Israel not to progress to the second phase until Hamas returns the body of the last hostage it is holding in Gaza.

The Rafah border crossing is both a symbolic and logistical step that is the biggest signal of the commencement of second phase, and many outside Israel are eager to see it open.

Ali Shaath, the head of a new, future technocratic government in Gaza that is expected to run the day-to-day affairs, announced on Thursday that the Rafah border crossing will open in both directions



this coming week.

There was no confirmation from Israel, which said only that it would consider the matter next week. The Gaza side of the crossing, which runs between Gaza and Egypt, is currently under Israeli military control.

The family of Ran Gvili, the hostage whose body is being held in Gaza, urged the pressure to be focused on Hamas. "President Trump himself stated this week in Davos that Hamas knows exactly where our son is being held," the family said on Saturday. "Hamas is deceiving the international community and refusing to return our son, the last remaining hostage, in what constitutes a clear violation of the agreement it signed."

Syria extends ceasefire with Kurdish forces by 15 days to support IS detainee transfers

MI News Service, Damascus: Syria on Saturday extended a truce with Kurdish forces by 15 days to support the transfer of Islamic State (IS) detainees from Syria to Iraq, as tensions in the country's northeast continue, the Syrian defense authority said in a statement.

"The ceasefire across all sectors of Syrian army operations" has been extended by 15 days, starting at 11:00 p.m. local time (2000 GMT) on Saturday, according to the statement.

It said that the decision was taken in support of a U.S.-led operation to relocate IS detainees from prisons previously run by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The extension came amid mutual accusations between the Syrian army and the SDF of violations and preparations for renewed fighting, underscoring the fragility of recent de-escalation efforts after weeks of clashes in northeastern Syria.

Earlier on Saturday, the army's operations authority accused the SDF of bringing reinforcements from Kurdistan Workers' Party



(PKK) militias based in Iraq's Qandil Mountains into the northeastern province of Hasakah, warning that such movements threatened regional stability.

The SDF, for its part, accused Damascus of moving toward escalation despite the ceasefire. In a statement issued Saturday evening, the SDF said Syrian forces were conducting systematic mili-

tary preparations and logistical movements in Syria's Jazira region and around the town of Kobani.

The SDF said its forces had come under two separate attacks earlier in the day in the region, describing the incidents as clear violations of the ceasefire.

Meanwhile, Syria's foreign affairs official Mohammad Taha al-Ahmad told state media that there

had been no positive response from the SDF to the authority's proposals, accusing the group of repeatedly seeking truces to gain time.

The latest developments come as northeastern Syria remains on edge, with international efforts focused on preventing the collapse of the ceasefire, securing detention facilities holding IS suspects, and averting a broader escalation that could further destabilize the region.

Tensions between the Syrian interim authorities and the SDF have recently intensified in the northeast, including areas near detention facilities holding IS suspects, despite several ceasefire arrangements and internationally mediated talks.

The latest flare-ups followed a fragile agreement under which SDF units were to withdraw from areas west of the Euphrates River, allowing state institutions and security forces to return to key locations. Disagreements over the scope and timing of the withdrawal quickly led to renewed clashes.

Charity chief arrested for stealing 23 million USD in homelessness funds

MI News Service, Los Angeles: A man was arrested Friday on federal wire fraud charges for allegedly stealing more than 23 million U.S. dollars in public funds intended to address homelessness in Los Angeles and using millions of dollars to finance a lavish personal lifestyle, authorities said.

Alexander Soofer, 42, executive director of the charity Abundant Blessings, is accused of diverting taxpayer money for luxury travel, designer shopping, private school tuition and real estate purchases, including a vacation property in Greece.

He was taken into custody Friday and made his initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Santa Ana. If convicted, he will face up to 20 years in prison.

Federal prosecutors said Abundant Blessings received more than 23

million dollars in homelessness funding between 2018 and 2025. More than 5 million dollars came directly from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, while over 17 million dollars flowed through another non-profit, Special Service for Groups Inc.

Abundant Blessings was contracted to provide housing and supportive services for more than 600 people experiencing homelessness across multiple sites in South Los Angeles. Investigators said conditions at some Soofer-operated sites fell far short of contractual obligations.

Investigators alleged Soofer systematically misrepresented how public funds were spent and diverted them for personal use. According to a press release by the U.S. Department of Justice, he fabricated bank statements, invoices and other financial documents to conceal transfers of public money into his

personal accounts.

"He was living the high life while people he was meant to serve were suffering on the streets with no shelter and no food," Bill Essayli, First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California, said at a Friday news conference. "Instead of providing three nutritious meals a day, what he was providing was ramen noodles and a microwave -- and pocketing the rest of the money."

Akil Davis, assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office, accused Soofer of placing personal greed above the needs of the city's most vulnerable residents. Tyler Hatcher, special agent in charge of IRS Criminal Investigation Los Angeles Field Office, said the case underscored law enforcement's commitment to holding accountable those who misuse taxpayer dollars for self-enrichment.

Five killed in fire at furniture shop building in Hyderabad

MI News Service, Hyderabad: Five bodies, including that of a woman, were retrieved from a four-storey furniture shop building in Nampally here where a fire broke out, officials said on Sunday, January 25.

Rescue operations have been underway for the past 21 hours to save five people, including two children, who are feared to be trapped in the basement of the building after a major fire broke out on Saturday, officials said.

"Five bodies, including that of a woman, were retrieved from the building. The search and rescue for others are ongoing," a senior police official told PTI. Multiple agencies, in-



cluding police, fire, NDRF personnel and Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA), launched rescue operations after the fire erupted on Saturday afternoon.

Efforts were underway to rescue those who are be-

lieved to be trapped, they said.

Although the fire was brought under control, thick smoke billowing out from the building made the operation difficult. Those who were trapped are the family members of a security guard and other workers.

U.S., Russia, Ukraine to resume talks in Abu Dhabi: U.S. envoy

MI News Service, Moscow: U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said Saturday that U.S.-Russia-Ukraine trilateral talks will continue next week in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), TASS news agency reported.

"On Friday and Saturday, the United States coordinated a trilateral meeting alongside Ukraine and Russia, graciously hosted by the United Arab Emirates. Talks were very constructive, and plans were made to continue conversations next week in Abu Dhabi," Witkoff said in a post on the social platform X.

The meeting, held on Friday and Saturday in the UAE capital, is the first trilateral talks since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in February 2022.

Although no concrete agreements or joint statements were announced following the two-day meetings, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the talks as constructive in an X post. The Russian side has not yet officially commented on the outcome of these talks.

Canadian PM calls for "buy Canadian" in response to Trump's new tariff threat

MI News Service, Ottawa: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Saturday called for "buy Canadian" and "build Canadian" in response to a new tariff threat from U.S. President Donald Trump. Carney published a pre-taped video on his personal social media account about buying and building Canadian to combat economic threats from other countries. "With our economy under threat from abroad, Canadians have made a choice: to focus on what we can control," Carney said at the beginning of the video. Though Carney did not mention the United States directly, the prime minister said: "We can't control what other nations do."

Israel to found 5 new towns in Negev, including one named for final slain hostage Ran Gvili



MI News Service, Jerusalem: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announces during today's cabinet session that one of five new communities to be established in the Negev will be named after the final slain hostage held in Gaza, Police Master Sgt. Ran Gvili, according to Hebrew media reports. The reports say that the premier announced that five new communities will be built along the Beersheba-Dimona corridor in Israel's south.

"I have decided that one of the communities in the Negev will be called 'Renanim' ('rejoicing') in memory of an Israeli hero, the last hostage, the late Ran Gvili," Netanyahu is quoted as saying. Netanyahu's office has not yet confirmed the decision. In recent months and years, the government has approved several plans to promote development and new construction in southern Israel, including a 2022 plan to establish five new communities in the Negev. It was not immediately clear whether the communities Netanyahu referred to are part of that existing proposal or represent a separate initiative.

Recitation of the Constitution in a United Voice



Nurul Islam Khan : India's secularism, democracy and constitution, as well as the fundamental rights of common citizens, are being destroyed. When ministers of the state and the country take their oath of office, they promise to uphold the constitution and provide justice to all, regardless of religion or caste. However, this promise has not been implemented in practice. Leaders of the Constitution Implementation Platform organization have alleged that numerous complaints regarding this failure are circulating in society. The event, "Recitation of the Constitution in a United Voice," raised its voice against those who are disrespecting this sacred constitution. At the Y-Channel in Dharmatala, Kolkata, this gathering organized by "Save Democracy, Save the Constitution, Save the

Country," roared with various demands, ranging from addressing the harassment of SC, ST, OBC communities and SIR candidates to other issues. Speakers also protested against the new Waqf Act. Several invited speakers expressed their anger and demanded an end to the oppression and injustice against Dalits, Adivasis and religious minorities. Those present at the meeting included Pirzada Sawban Siddiqui of Furfura Sharif, prominent activist Mohammad Kamruzzaman, Dr. Firoz Ahmed, Intiaz Molla, Maulana Anwar Hossain Kashemi, Mufti Imdadullah, Biren Mahato, Milan Mridha, Hossain Gazi, and Sachin Mondal, among others. On this day, everyone recited the constitution together and took an oath. The constitution was also recited in English in a collective voice.

Moscow condemns Kiev over ambulance attack that kills 3 medical workers

MI News Service, Moscow: Moscow on Saturday condemned Kiev for attacking an ambulance and killing three medics in the early hours of Saturday. An ambulance with its medical crew en route to a critically ill patient came under attack in the Kherson region on early Saturday.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement that the vehicle was clearly marked as medical transport. However, it



Zakharova added. "We demand that international relevant bodies issue an objective and impartial assessment."

was targeted by a Ukrainian drone. "Three medical workers on board the ambulance were killed. It must be stressed that attacks on civilian medical transport are prohibited under international law," she said.

"We firmly condemn the direct attack by the Ukrainian Armed Forces on civilians,"

Turkish intelligence chief meets Hamas delegation in Istanbul

MI News Service, Ankara: Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization Director Ibrahim Kalin met with Hamas Political Bureau member and chief negotiator Khalil al-Hayya in Istanbul on Saturday to discuss implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to work together on increasing humanitarian aid, opening the Rafah Border Crossing in both directions, and supporting the newly-formed Palestinian technocratic committee, Anadolu reported, citing anonymous Turkish sources.

The Hamas delegation expressed gratitude to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for



Türkiye's mediation and efforts to secure peace in Gaza, according to Anadolu.

The Trump administration last year unveiled a 20-point, three-phase peace plan aimed at ending the Israel-Hamas conflict that broke out in October 2023. A ceasefire between Hamas and Israel took effect in October

2025. However, during the first phase of the deal, both sides repeatedly accused each other of violations.

Earlier this month, Trump's administration announced the launch of the second phase of the peace plan, shifting the focus from ceasefire to demilitarization, technocratic governance and reconstruction.

UP: Wrongly Imprisoned for 24 Years, Azad Khan Finally Walks Free

MI News Service, Lucknow: Azad Khan is free now. He can breathe, walk, eat what he wants, and pray as a free man. But this freedom comes after 24 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. Arrested in 2000 in a dacoity case, Khan spent nearly a quarter of a century behind bars before the Allahabad High Court acquitted him on December 19, 2025.

When he finally walked out of Bareilly Central Jail, his eyes were silent. He did not speak a single word, not even to the family who had come to receive him. His eyes questioned everything—who would return his 24 years of innocence? It was not just a number. It was the loss of youth, the absence from family milestones, the slow erosion of health, hope, and dignity.

While the world outside moved on—children



grew up, parents aged and died, cities changed—Azad Khan remained frozen in time, waiting for a justice system that would take decades to admit its mistake.

The Allahabad High Court, while acquitting Khan, strongly criticised the functioning of the police and the prosecution. Justice JJ Munir, while delivering the judgment, categorically observed that a confessional statement alone is not sufficient to prove criminal guilt. The

court noted that the police had failed to present any concrete or corroborative evidence against Azad Khan. Consequently, he was acquitted of all charges related to the robbery case.

Despite the acquittal, Khan could not be released immediately due to legal and financial hurdles. Under Section 437-A of the Criminal Procedure Code, he was required to furnish two sureties of ₹20,000 each, which he was unable to arrange.

Jail authorities also pointed out that Azad had an earlier conviction under Section 307 (attempt to murder), for which he had already completed a 10-year sentence. However, a fine of ₹7,000 imposed in that case remained unpaid. Senior Jailer Neeraj Kumar said that failure to pay the fine could have resulted in an additional

year of imprisonment. The family's extreme poverty meant they were unable to arrange even this amount, despite having exhausted all resources during the prolonged legal battle.

Jail Superintendent Avinash Gautam moved swiftly by submitting a representation to the court and requested that the remaining formalities be completed through email to avoid further delay. Around the same time, Parul Malik of the NGO "Chhoti Si Asha" stepped in and deposited the ₹7,000 fine on humanitarian grounds.

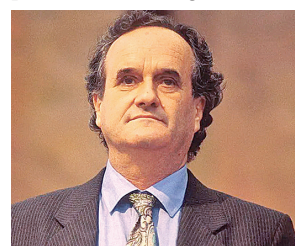
After completion of all formalities, a release order was emailed late at night from the Mainpuri Sessions Court to Bareilly Central Jail. The jail administration released Azad Khan immediately and handed him over to his brother, Mastan.

Journalist and Padma Bhushan awardee Mark Tully passes away at 90

MI News Service, New Delhi: Veteran journalist Mark Tully, a chronicler of India and an acclaimed author, breathed his last at a private hospital here on Sunday, January 25, his close friend said. He was 90.

The award-winning journalist was ailing for some time and had been admitted to the Max Hospital in Saket for the past week. "He (Tully) was admitted to Max Hospital, Saket, on January 21, and died today. He (Tully) was admitted under the head of the nephrology department," a hospital source told PTI.

Satish Jacob, veteran journalist and a close friend of Tully, told PTI, "Mark passed away at Max Hospital Saket this afternoon." Born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on October 24, 1935, Tully was the chief of bureau for the



BBC, New Delhi, for 22 years.

An acclaimed author, Tully was the presenter of the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Something Understood'. He was also part of several documentaries on subjects ranging from India and the British Raj to the Indian Railways.

Tully was knighted in 2002 and received the Padma Bhushan from the government of India in 2005. He wrote several books on India, including 'No Full Stops in India', 'India in Slow Motion', and 'The Heart of India'.

Ranji Trophy: Madhya Pradesh thrash Karnataka, Maharashtra emerges victorious over Goa

BENGALURU : Spinners Saransh Jain and Sagar Solanki combined to pick six wickets as Madhya Pradesh thrashed Karnataka by 217 runs on the final day of their 2025/26 Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match at the Alur Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Resuming at 204/6, MP declared their second innings at 229/8, setting Karnataka a stiff target of 362. The hosts folded for 144 in their reply, with off-spinner Jain (3-37) and left-arm spinner Solanki (3-20) running through the famed batting line-up.

Opener KV Aneesh, who had scored 92 in the first innings, led the resistance with a 142-ball 57, but the absence of injured Karun Nair hurt Karnataka's chances. Nikin Jose, drafted in as a concussion substitute, battled for making 26 off 101 balls before falling lbw to Jain.

Jose and Shreyas Gopal added 61 runs, but once the stand was broken, Karnataka collapsed rapidly. The huge victory has lifted MP to second place in Elite Group B with 22 points, while Karnataka are at third place with 21 points.

Aus Open: Djokovic gets walkover into quarterfinals after Mensik withdraws with injury

Melbourne : The 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic received a walkover in the fourth round of the Australian Open after an abdominal injury forced rising Czech star Jakub Mensik to withdraw on Sunday.

Mensik withdrawal means Djokovic advanced to his 16th quarterfinal at the Australian Open, a tournament he has gone on to win a men's record 10 times. Their highly anticipated fourth-round clash was a rematch of their 2025 Miami Open final, which Mensik won to hoist his first Masters 1000 trophy.

"This is a tough one to write," Mensik wrote in a post to Instagram. "After doing everything we could to keep going, I have to withdraw from the Australian Open due to an abdominal muscle injury that has progressed over the last matches. After a long discussion with my team and doctors, we decided not to step on court tomorrow."

"Even though I'm disappointed, making the fourth round here for the first time is something I will carry with me for a long time," said Mensik, who rises to 16th in the ATP Live Rankings.

"I felt so much energy from the fans and the atmosphere in Melbourne was truly special. Thank you to my team for being with me every step, and to everyone sending messages and cheering - it means more than you know. Now it's time to recover properly," the post read. Djokovic, who is pursuing his record 25th major trophy, will face the winner of Monday's fourth-round match between Lorenzo Musetti. and Taylor Fritz.

Historic Fit India Sundays on Cycle unfolds at Attari Border on Republic Day Eve

NEW DELHI : The 58th edition of the Sundays on Cycle was flagged off in Karaikal in Puducherry by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, who met and felicitated first-time voters and cycled with them to celebrate the 58th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle which was dedicated to National Voter's Day.

Speaking at the event Dr. Mandaviya said, "Our Honourable Prime Minister has given a clarion call to celebrate first-time voters and motivate them to cast their votes towards building a stronger Bharat. Today, I interacted with more than 100 first-time voters and was impressed by their interest in contributing towards a Viksit Bharat. Being the youngest democracy in the world, it is imperative that we harness the energy of the youth to make India a global superpower."

The 58th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle unfolded on an unprecedented nationwide scale, underlining how the initiative has evolved into one of India's largest people-led fitness movements. On the eve of Republic Day 2026, major events of the Sundays on Cycle unfolded from the southern coast of Puducherry to the landmark institution of IIT Roorkee and from the historic Attari Border to the national capital New Delhi. Dr. Mandaviya, who launched the Fit India Sundays on Cycle event in December 2024, called upon MY Bharat to take the lead in creating awareness about the importance of voting and democrati-

ic participation. In one year's time, the event has brought together over 25 lakh citizens across more than two lakh locations. From students and young professionals to senior citizens, athletes and personnel from uniformed services, the initiative continues to cut across age, profession and geography, embedding fitness into everyday life.

One of the most stirring chapters of the 58th edition unfolded at the Attari Border in Amritsar, where Sundays on Cycle was celebrated on the eve of Republic Day and National Voters' Day, alongside Central Armed Police Forces and young voters. Set against the backdrop of the Attari-Wagah ceremonial stretch, this morning saw a rare confluence of jawans, young first-time voters, athletes, celebrities and ordinary citizens riding together with a shared sense of pride. On the eve of Republic Day and on National Voters' Day, the symbolism was unmistakable: a unique triumvirate of fitness, freedom and civic duty. Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha N. Khadse led a series of meaningful moments that defined the morning. She felicitated IG Border Security Force (BSF) HQ Jalandhar and honoured first-time voters under the #MyBharatMyVote campaign, followed by a solemn voters' pledge. At the nation's border, the act of celebrating young voters sent out a powerful message of both democracy and fitness.



Maharashtra, who beat Goa by eight wickets, thanks to Arshin Kulkarni hitting 52 not out in a successful chase, climbed to the top of points table with 24 points.

With Saurashtra also in contention on 19 points, Group B has turned into a four-way race for

two knockout spots. Karnataka must beat Punjab in their final league game at Mullanpur starting on January 29 to stay in the hunt. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu secured a decisive 207-run victory over Odisha in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A clash at the KIIT

Stadium. Set a daunting target of 455, Odisha were bowled out for 247 despite a determined effort from Anil Parida, who faced 220 balls for his 98 before falling just two runs short of a century.

Captain Subhanshu Senapati added 55, but the rest of the bat-

ting faltered against Tamil Nadu's attack. Tamil Nadu's win was shaped by all-rounder Sonu Yadav, named Player of the Match for his spell of 5-30 in the first innings and a brisk 74 off 75 balls with the bat in the second innings.

His efforts helped Tamil Nadu post 316 in their second innings, leaving Odisha with little chance in the chase. Though Tamil Nadu collected valuable points to strengthen their position in the standings, they are already out of reckoning in the knockouts.

Brief scores: Madhya Pradesh 323 and 229/8 declared beat Karnataka 191 and 144 all out (KV Aneesh 57; Saransh Jain 3-37, Sagar Solanki 3-20) by 217 runs Goa 209 and 248 lost to Maharashtra 350 and 109/2 (Arshin Kulkarni 52 not out) by eight wickets

Tamil Nadu 286 and 316 all out (Athish SR 88, Guruswamy Ajitesh 49; Badal Biswal 3/56) beat Odisha 148 and 247 all out (Anil Parida 98; Nidhish Rajgopal 2/9, R Sai Kishore 2/43, P Vidyuth 2/46, Sonu Yadav 2/39) by 207 runs

3rd T20I: Bumrah, Bishnoi come in as India ask NZ to bat



GUWAHATI : India won the toss and elected to bowl first in the third T20I of the five-match series here at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium on Sunday. The Men in Blue lead the series 2-0, having clinched comfortable victories in the previous two games played in Nagpur and Raipur.

The second T20I highlighted New Zealand's frustration in the series: despite scoring 190 while chasing, or over 200 batting first, these totals proved insufficient against India's deep batting lineup. Although New Zealand showed dominance at times in Raipur and appeared poised for a big total, they were ultimately overwhelmed as India caught up comfortably and went on to win convincingly. New Zealand have shown the right intent and skill set for conditions in India but have

struggled to sustain their execution. In contrast, India appear to be peaking at the perfect time, with their batting depth firing across the order and momentum building ahead of their home World Cup defence. The previous T20I was a revelation heading into the home World Cup, where Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav found his mojo back, Hardik Sharma showcased his usual prowess, and Rinku Singh played the finisher's role that he has always wanted to as India chased a 200+ total in less than 16 overs. Winning the toss, skipper Suryakumar opted to chase and said that the wicket looked good and acknowledged that there was dew as well. When asked about his message to the team, he said, "Take calls, be humble." Meanwhile, visiting.

KIWG 2026: History-making Chandigarh becomes talk of town ahead of Republic Day men's ice hockey final vs Army



LEH (LADAKH) : Completely against the script, the Chandigarh men's team has become the darling of the ice-hockey loving community in Ladakh. In a thrilling semifinal on Friday night, Chandigarh stunned favourites Ladakh 3-2 to enter their first-ever KIWG ice-hockey final.

The come-from-behind victory not only won them thousands of local fans but it also highlighted how youngsters from the plains are utilising their in-line hockey skills on ice rinks.

Like how roller skaters switch to ice and figure skating, hockey in India is also seeing youngsters 'converting' from hard wooden or concrete surfaces to ice. In-line hockey is played on wheels while ice-skaters use blades. Both versions involve pace, stamina and skills to score and defend.

While players in regions like Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh have the luxury of ice surfaces and frozen ponds, teams like Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Telangana are not

so fortunate. Most of them play in-line hockey and then train on ice surfaces ahead of events like Khelo India Winter Games or similar national events. Chandigarh's upset win against Ladakh thus makes it extra-special. And they started playing ice hockey only in 2025. Chandigarh's head coach Gaurav Raheja was ecstatic after the triumph against Ladakh. "Before the match (vs Ladakh), we were only playing for performance and thinking only about giving our best. But the way each and every player played, and with the crowd cheering for us, we did it. You only get a few chances in life to be part of history leave alone writing it and Chandigarh did that today. We wrote history today," said Raheja to SAI Media.

There was double joy for Chandigarh on Saturday. Their women won the ice-hockey bronze medal defeating Himachal Pradesh 4-3 in extra time. That win spurred the men's team, said Raheja. "Because of them, we believed we could do it. That belief

inspired our boys, and they did it too. This day will be remembered by Chandigarh, the Chandigarh Sports Department, and our Ice Hockey Federation for a lifetime," said Raheja.

"The 2025 Khelo India Winter Games was our first experience of playing hockey on ice. We don't get many chances to practice ice hockey because we don't have an ice rink in Chandigarh. We travel to Dehradun on weekends to practice, but even then, not all team members can join due to college and other commitments. So we take turns and practice whenever possible. Hockey is our life. We don't think much about financial constraints-we manage somehow. I'm really excited about tomorrow's match (versus Army) and looking forward to giving our best performance," said Chandigarh team captain Unnatveer Singh to SAI Media.

Team Chandigarh have been quick learners. "At the 5th Khelo India Winter Games, it was our first experience playing

hockey on ice. was more about understanding ice and getting used to it.

We couldn't perform well, but losing was also a big learning experience. For KIWG 2026, we prepared much better and had stronger practice sessions. During the semi-final, I wasn't nervous at all and was actually excited to perform in front of such a big crowd, whether they were cheering or not. My focus was only on giving my best," said goalkeeper Ujjawal Pratap Singh Matharu to SAI Media.

"I really admire the Ladakh team, especially their speed and how naturally they perform on ice. This win is not just.



RAJA WARSI SPORT SECRETARY
(Chairman) Ward No (63) Trinamool Congress Minority Cell & (INTTUC VICE PRESIDENT) South Kolkata Hawkers Union.
Courtesy: COLLIN STREET WELFARE COMMITTEE & ALL MEMBERS

