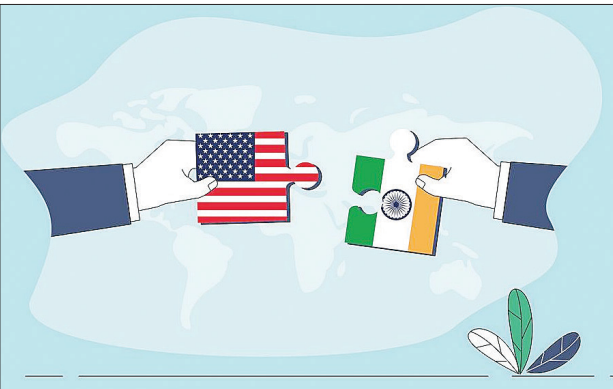


# Morning India

## INDIA & USA to hold 4-day trade talks from June 1



**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The chief negotiators of the US and India will begin four-day talks here on Monday on finalising the details of the interim trade pact, whose framework was agreed upon in February.

The US team will be led by its chief negotiator Brendan Lynch. India's chief negotiator is Darpan Jain, who is an additional secretary in the Department of Commerce. The two sides are "proposed to finalise the details of the interim agreement and take forward the negotiations under the broader BTA on multiple areas such as market access, non-tariff measures, customs and trade facilitation, investment promotion, and economic security alignment," the commerce ministry has said.

India and the US issued a joint statement finalising the contours or framework of the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA) or an interim trade agreement. Now, both sides will have to finalise the legal text for that deal.

The framework reaffirmed the countries' commitment to the broader India-US BTA negotiations. According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent from 50 per cent. It had removed the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But, on February 20 this year, the US Supreme Court ruled against President Donald Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs, which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). After that, the US President announced the imposition of 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days, starting February 24. In light of these changes, a meeting between the chief negotiators of India and the US scheduled for February was postponed. The two sides then met in Washington in April, when the

Indian team, headed by Jain, visited America from April 20-23, 2026.

To carry forward those discussions, the US team is visiting India from 1-4th June. As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may wish to revisit the agreement's framework. Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

New Delhi has also expressed its intentions to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years. Also Read - PSU banks asked to adopt prudent expenditure & maintain resilience. This meeting will be important, as India enjoys a comparative advantage over its competitor countries. Now, with all US trading partners facing a uniform 10 per cent tariff, the pact requires recalibration. Further, in March, the US Trade Representative (USTR) also launched two unilateral Section 301 investigations against a number of countries, including India, over excess capacity and failures to eradicate forced labour in global supply chains.

India has strongly rejected allegations made by the US Trade Representative in those two investigations and has requested that the probes be initiated, as the initiation notice has failed to provide a cogent rationale to substantiate the claims. The US was the second-largest trading partner of India in 2025-26. India's outbound shipments to the US grew marginally 0.92 per cent to USD 87.3 billion during the last fiscal year, while imports increased 15.95 per cent to USD 52.9 billion. The trade surplus declined to USD 34.4 billion in 2025-26 from USD 40.89 billion in 2024-25.

## BENGAL received Rs 42K Cr from Centre in 3 weeks: SUVENDU

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Chief minister Suwendu Adhikari said that Bengal had received over ₹42,000 crore in central assistance within three weeks of the formation of his government and urged Union housing and urban affairs and power minister Manohar Lal Khattar to help rebuild the state in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision.

"I want to assure the people of the state that we will work jointly with every department of the Union government. The benefits of the double-engine government that people in 20 states of India are receiving have now begun reaching our state as well," Suwendu said in the presence of Khattar here.

"With the assistance of Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar ji, we will undertake every possible initiative for the benefit of the people in the fields of urban development and the power sector," he added.

Khattar and Suwendu were at an event where they jointly launched the Swachhha mobile application.

Launched as a pilot project in eight municipalities and Asansol and Durgapur municipal corporations, the app will be people-driven and help residents get garbage cleared from their areas within two hours by simply uploading a photograph of the site.

State urban development minister Agnimitra Paul hosted



The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Suwendu Adhikari, listened to the 134th episode of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' via digital media on Sunday.

The eight municipalities are Basirhat and Madhyamgram in North 24-Parganas; Pujali in South 24-Parganas; Tufanganj in Cooch Behar; Contai in East Midnapore; Krishnanagar in Nadia; Nalhati in Birbhum; and Baidyabati in Hooghly.

"Over the past three weeks, we have virtually signed agreements worth ₹39,000 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission with Union minister C.R. Patil ji. We have also signed agreements with Union health minister J.P. Nadda ji regarding the National Health Mission and Ayushman Bharat. Under these two projects, the health

ministry has sanctioned ₹2,193 crore under the NHM and ₹776 crore under the Ayushman Bharat scheme," said the chief minister, highlighting how the double-engine government has been working for the welfare of Bengal.

Suwendu held discussions for nearly one and a half hours with Khattar on how the Centre and the state could work together on urban development and power infrastructure.

"He spoke about how Bengal can stand on its own feet. Our Prime Minister has also said that the level of development Bengal deserved did not take place in the past," Suwendu

said in his address to the gathering at the launch of the app.

He requested the Union minister to allocate funds from the new Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) under his ministry for all small and medium municipalities in Bengal.

The UCF is a ₹1 lakh crore initiative of the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs. It seeks to shift urban development from traditional government grants to a competitive, market-driven model.

Suwendu said that after he took the oath as chief minister on May 9, Khattar was the first to call him and assure him of full assistance.

"He called me and said that the Prime Minister had directed that Bengal must now be rebuilt," he said.

Suwendu directed the urban development department to prepare detailed project reports for setting up metro services in urban areas with populations of 25-30 lakh.

"We have a lot of work to do in the power sector. Half of Bengal's population is poor, and many people receive high electricity bills. We also have large hilly and adivasi-dominated regions. We need to work on the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Yojana in these areas. A team from our state

will visit Delhi regarding this matter and hold meetings with the Union minister and his officials. We want to work together," he said.

Khattar said that he was saddened that many initiatives and schemes implemented in other parts of India could not be carried out in Bengal in the past 10-12 years.

"I don't need to explain the reason behind the backlog, as you all know it. Whatever shortcomings remain, we will complete the pending work in the shortest possible time by working together with the Bengal government and Suwendu ji," he said.

The chief minister said that the previous Trinamool Congress government had repeatedly blamed the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) for floods, but his government was working jointly with the central agency to address issues during the monsoon season.

Though Suwendu did not name Mamata Banerjee, she had repeatedly accused the DVC of not informing the state government before releasing water from its dams, which, according to her, led to flooding in districts such as Hooghly, Howrah and East Burdwan. "DVC officials are present here as well. The days when the previous government used to blame the DVC are over. Before the monsoon, DVC and our government are working together," said Suwendu.

## 35 new faces to join Suwendu's 'Full Shaped' Cabinet on Monday

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** It has been almost a month since the formation of the new government after the political upheaval in the state. Even so far, the BJP government has not been able to form a full-fledged cabinet. In the initial phase, apart from Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, 5 MLAs took oath as ministers at the Brigade Parade Ground. They were handling the responsibilities of certain important departments till now. Most of the remaining ministerial posts are still vacant or vacant.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari wrote on social media, "Tomorrow, 35 ministers of the West Bengal government will

take oath at Lok Bhavan at 11 am for the purpose of expanding the cabinet. His Excellency the Governor RN Ravi will administer their oath at Lok Bhavan."

It is learnt that Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari's new cabinet may have a total of 35 ministers. The outline has been prepared with the aim of forming a full-fledged state cabinet of these 35. The possible list of new MLAs who can take oath as ministers on Monday has already started intensive discussions in political circles with several heavyweights and well-known names.

The potential list of new ministers is reportedly focused on

political experience and regional balance. Informed sources believe that the new list could include several veteran politicians as well as young and new faces.

One of the most important names in this possible list is the name of senior BJP leader Swapan Dasgupta. He became an MLA after winning the traditional Rash Behari constituency of Kolkata in this assembly election. There is intense speculation that he may be given a very important and weighty portfolio in the cabinet to utilize his long political and social experience. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari has already given him the special responsibility

of looking after the state's education department. Keeping that political equation in mind, there is a strong feeling among informed circles that after the formal expansion of the cabinet, Swapan Dasgupta may be given the responsibility of the full-fledged education minister of the state.

At the same time, the name of veteran politician Tapas Roy, who won from Maniktala assembly constituency in North Kolkata, is very strongly in the list of possible ministers. After the formation of the new government, he has handled the duties as the pro-tem speaker of the assembly very efficiently. Tapas Roy managed all the

activities of the assembly in a very orderly manner until the election of the new speaker or chairman was completed. Even, he had the important responsibility of administering the oath of office to the newly elected MLAs. According to BJP sources, as a reward for his long parliamentary and political experience, he may be given an important and cabinet-level ministry in the state cabinet.

Apart from these two heavyweight names, several other familiar faces are making the rounds in the BJP's list of potential new ministers. Several MLAs from North Bengal and South Bengal have reportedly been included in the list.

## CENSUS in Bengal on AUGUST 1

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** The first phase of the census in Bengal will start with the self-enumeration of common citizens between August 1 and 15.

"The first phase of the census has already started in other states, but Bengal is lagging only because the previous government had not issued the notification regarding the census, which is a constitutional obligation. After our government took the oath on May 9, the census notification was issued on May 11. I request all to come forward and participate in the exercise as it is important to prepare government schemes and plans," chief minister Suwendu Adhikari said at Nabanna.

According to the chief minister, the Centre had sent a letter to Nabanna on June 16, 2025, to issue the census notification in the state.

"This could have been done by the then chief secretary. Unfortunately, he waited for the political approval. As the notification was issued on May 11 after we came to power, all other states have gone forward, leaving Bengal behind. Now we have to work hard to catch up with other states," said Suwendu.

According to the schedule, the house listing would be done in the first phase between August 16 and September 14, when enumerators would visit house-to-house to collect data after self-enumeration is completed on August 15.

In the second phase, population enumeration would be done between February 1 and 21 next year, and the exercise would be completed by midnight of February 28.

The chief minister said that the census was important to prepare development plans for the government as demography was changing fast in Bengal.

"We have 6,000km of borders with Bangladesh where fencing could not be put up because of the lackadaisical approach of the previous government in providing land to the BSF for erecting fencing. You can also see how people are making a beeline for the borders to leave our country. In this background, the census is important for making development plans and schemes," said Suwendu.

Sources in the administration said the Bengal government would face a stiff challenge in completing the exercise on time as all other states started the first phase of census — mainly listing of houses — and the process was nearing

● Continued to Pg 3

## Indian Navy ready for '2-front' challenge: CHIEF ADMIRAL TRIPATHI

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The Indian Navy has significantly enhanced its anti-submarine warfare capability, underwater surveillance, and network-centric operations to counter emerging maritime challenges posed by the growing China-Pakistan nexus in the Indian Ocean region, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi said, citing conflicts in West Asia to argue for greater military integration.

Admiral Tripathi said the Navy remains prepared to deal with any "two-front" challenge in the maritime domain and emphasised that ongoing conflicts in West Asia underscore the direct link between maritime security, energy security and economic resilience.

His remarks come amid the growing presence of China's PLA Navy in the Indian Ocean region and Beijing's deepening maritime cooperation with Pakistan, including the transfer of submarine capabilities and the modernisation of the Pakistani Navy.

"We are fully aware that the Indian Ocean Region is witnessing increasing strategic contestation and greater extra-regional presence, moving us from an 'era of cooperation' into an 'era of intense competition'," he said.

"As a professional maritime force, the Indian Navy monitors all regional developments very closely, and our approach remains strictly capability-based and threat-informed."

There has been a significant increase in maritime collaboration between Pakistan and Chi-



Indian Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

na in recent years. Last month, the two countries announced the commissioning of the first of four Chinese-built diesel-electric attack submarines for the Pakistan Navy, as Beijing continues to play a major role in strengthening Islamabad's naval capabilities.

Responding to a question on India's maritime security challenges, Admiral Tripathi said the Navy continuously assesses the evolving strategic environment and adapts its force structure, operational concepts, deployment patterns and preparedness levels accordingly.

"Our efforts are not aimed at any specific nation, but rather at ensuring the absolute security of India's maritime interests and contributing to a stable, free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The Navy's answer to any complex or two-front challenge is credible deterrence backed by capability," he said.

"To achieve this, the Indian

Navy has significantly enhanced its surveillance architecture, maritime domain awareness, anti-submarine warfare capability, underwater surveillance, long-range maritime reconnaissance, network-centric operations across sensors and shooters, and integrated operational response capability," he added.

Admiral Tripathi said the Navy's mission-based deployments across critical choke points and shipping lanes ensure sustained operational presence, persistent surveillance and rapid response capability across the region.

"Importantly, deterrence is not built merely through numbers. It is built through credible capability, operational readiness, technological integration, sustained presence, and the ability to impose costs, if required," he said.

The Navy Chief expressed confidence in the force's modernisation plans, including the Project 75 India programme for

six stealth submarines and the broader objective of expanding to a 200-plus ship Navy.

After outlining the maritime challenges closer home, Admiral Tripathi also pointed to the lessons emerging from ongoing conflicts in West Asia and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"The first and most critical lesson is that maritime security is directly linked to economic security, energy security, and national resilience," he said.

"Disruptions to shipping routes, energy flows, and maritime logistics chains have immediate strategic and economic consequences, affecting insurance costs, shipping patterns and the strategic balance across entire regions."

The Navy Chief argued that these developments strengthen the case for greater military integration and a dedicated maritime theatre command bringing together capabilities of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

"Jointness and integration are no longer optional - they are an absolute operational necessity in the modern battlespace. Future conflicts will demand seamless coordination across land, sea, air, cyber, space and information domains," he said.

According to Admiral Tripathi, no single service can operate effectively in isolation under increasingly complex conditions, making tri-service integration central to India's future defence architecture.

He, however, stressed that theatre commands must be

driven by operational effectiveness and enhancement of military capability rather than organisational restructuring alone.

"Regarding a dedicated maritime theatre command, the maritime domain, by its very nature, inherently requires the integrated application of naval, air, land and coast guard capabilities," he said.

"Short war" myth debunked

The Navy Chief also said the character of warfare is undergoing a profound transformation, with the maritime battlespace now extending from the seabed to space, while cyber, electromagnetic, informational and cognitive domains have become equally important.

To prepare for future conflicts, he said the Navy is aggressively incorporating artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and autonomous systems, while refining operational concepts, space-based communications and cyber resilience.

Reflecting on recent operations, Admiral Tripathi described Operation Sindoor as a demonstration of the Navy's combat readiness, operational reach and deterrence capability, noting that the deployment of a Carrier Battle Group in the northern Arabian Sea helped shape the strategic environment during tensions with Pakistan.

He said the operation also highlighted the growing importance of tri-service synergy and validated the need for deeper integration among the armed forces.

## Centre slashes tax on petrol exports; reduces duties on diesel, ATF

**MI News Service, New Delhi:** The government has halved windfall gains tax on export of petrol to Rs 1.5 litre, while reducing the levy on diesel to Rs 13.5/litre and aviation turbine fuel to Rs 9.5/litre effective June 1.

The finance ministry in a notification said road and infrastructure cess will be nil on export of petrol and diesel.

Also, there is no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

The special additional excise duty (SAED) on petrol at Rs 3/litre was imposed on May 16 and the fortnightly review slashed it to Rs 1.5/litre from June 1.

The duty on export of diesel has been reduced to Rs 13.5 per litre, from Rs 16.5 per litre, and aviation turbine fuel to Rs 9.5 per litre, from Rs 16 per litre from June 1.



The government had on March 26 imposed an export duty of Rs 21.50 a litre on diesel, and Rs 29.5 a litre on ATF. In the review on April 11, the duties were hiked to Rs 55.5/litre and Rs 42/litre. In the April 30 review, they were cut to Rs 23/litre and Rs 33/litre, and further slashed to Rs 16.5/litre and Rs 16/litre on May 16.

The windfall tax was levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the US-Israel and Iran war.

It was also aimed at not allowing exporters to take undue advantage due to price differences as globally crude oil prices had risen since the beginning of the war.

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran.

Crude oil prices have remained above USD 100 per barrel over the past week, from the about USD 73 per barrel before the war. The windfall tax was to ensure domestic availability of petroleum products by disincentivising exports against the backdrop of the West Asia crisis, the ministry said.

### 119 women attended free cancer detection camp org by Taherpur police Stn



**MI News Service, Nadia :** In a significant public health outreach aimed at promoting early detection of cancer among women, a free breast and cervical cancer screening and awareness camp was organised in Nadia's Taherpur on Sunday. The initiative was jointly undertaken by Taherpur Police Station under Ranaghat Police District, in collaboration with the Chittaranjan Cancer Research Hospital and social welfare organisation We... With Everyone.

Held at a local Lodge, the camp was open to women aged 20 years and above and witnessed an encouraging response from local residents.

According to organisers, 119 women underwent health screening during the day-long programme.

Medical specialists and trained healthcare personnel conducted examinations and counselled participants on the symptoms, risk factors and preventive measures associated with breast and cervical cancers. Jay Das, IC Taherpur police station, said.

Awareness sessions highlighted the importance of regular screening, self-examination and timely medical consultation in reducing cancer-related mortality.

Jay Das, said the initiative was aimed at increasing awareness among women and encouraging early diagnosis. He noted that many cases of breast and cervical cancer can be effectively treated if detected at an early stage, making regular screening a crucial component of women's healthcare.

The programme was attended by Ranaghat Uttar Paschim MIA Parthasarathi Chatterjee, who lauded the collaborative effort between the police administration, healthcare institutions and civil society organisations. He stressed that preventive healthcare and awareness campaigns remain essential in combating lifestyle and non-communicable diseases.

Representatives of 'We... With Everyone', including founding members Shantanu Roy and member Dipali Singh Roy intimated details about the program to the media persons. They underlined the need for sustained community-level awareness initiatives, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas where access to preventive healthcare services often remains limited.

Health experts at the camp pointed out that cervical cancer remains one of the most common cancers affecting women in India despite being largely preventable through regular screening and vaccination.

Similarly, breast cancer continues to be the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women, with early detection significantly improving treatment outcomes.

Residents of the area welcomed the initiative, describing it as a timely intervention that brought specialised healthcare services closer to the community. Organisers indicated that similar awareness and screening programmes may be conducted in the future to expand access to preventive healthcare and strengthen public awareness regarding women's health issues.

The camp concluded with a renewed call for regular health check-ups and community participation in preventive healthcare programmes, reinforcing the message that awareness and early detection remain the strongest tools in the fight against cancer.

### Sankrail Police Achieves Double Success: Two Arrested in Illegal Liquor Trade and Petroleum Smuggling Cases, Vehicle Seized

**MI News Service, Kharagpur :** Police of Sankrail Police Station in Jhargram district have achieved a major success in their ongoing crackdown against illegal activities in the Sankrail Block. In two separate operations, police arrested two individuals on charges of illegal liquor sale and petroleum product smuggling without valid documents. A Maruti car used in the smuggling operation was also seized. According to police sources, acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted in the Bakra Chak area of Sankrail Block. During the operation, police caught Swapan Mahato (43), a resident of Angarnali village, red-handed while allegedly selling liquor illegally. He was taken into custody and produced before the Jhargram Court. Police have launched an investigation to identify other individuals who may be linked to the illegal liquor trade. In a separate operation, police were conducting routine vehicle checks at the Kultikri Naka Point when they intercepted a suspicious Maruti car traveling from Ragra towards Keshiary. During the search, a large quantity of petroleum products was recovered from the vehicle. The products were allegedly being transported without any valid documents. The driver, Dulal Sahu (52), a resident of the



Ragra area, was arrested. He was also produced before the Jhargram Court, where police sought his custody for further investigation. The Maruti car used in the smuggling operation was seized. Police officials stated that transporting highly flammable petroleum products without proper authorization and safety measures poses a serious threat to public safety. Therefore, strict surveillance, special drives, and naka checking operations will continue to curb illegal liquor trade and petroleum smuggling in the region. The continuous action by the police has created panic among those involved in illegal businesses in the area. The investigation is ongoing, and police are searching for other possible suspects connected to the cases.

### Karim and other eminent people received doctorates



**Nurul Islam Khan:** Friday, at the Mahabodhi Society Hall in Kolkata, Jangipur Manab Shiksha Research and Training Institute, Bengali encyclopedia author and children's writer Abdul Karim received the PhD and D.L. honors. He has collected biographies of about 4000 people from different parts of the world. In addition, six other people who are experts in various fields were given this honor. They are Pandit Debashish Mukhopadhyay, Sangeet Dewanji, Arup Kumar Sarkar, Ramesh Chandra Sabu, Balam Nath, Ratikant Malakar. The program was presided over by poet and writer Debanjan Chakraborty. Honorable guests included IAS Dr. Subhovrata Roychowdhury, India Radio's DD1 host Rajiv Bhattacharya, Rabindra Prasad, Dr. Asim Kumar Maiti, Nripen Ochakraborty Shilbadan Chattopadhyay, etc.

It is worth noting that this organization, founded by former Finance Minister and President Pranab Mukherjee, honors individuals who have contributed to society in special ways. The attendance at the event was impressive.

## Nabadwip Ghat Rail Extension Project Gets Fresh Push; MLA, Railway Officials Conduct Ground Survey

**MI News Service, Nadia :** After years of uncertainty and administrative delays, the long-pending Amghata-Nabadwip Ghat railway extension project has received a renewed boost following a joint field inspection by railway authorities, local administration and elected representatives.

Nabadwip MLA Shruti Shekhar Goswami, accompanied by senior railway officials including the Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM), traffic department representatives and local administrative officers, visited the proposed railway corridor from Amghata Halt to Nabadwip Ghat to assess the status of the incomplete project. Members of the Nabadwip Ghat Rail Station Bachao Committee, which has been campaigning for the completion of the project for several years, were also present during the inspection.

The delegation walked along the proposed alignment and examined areas that could be affected by the extension. Officials interacted with local residents, landowners and business operators to understand ground realities and gauge public opinion regarding the project.

### Police arrest Nabadwip Municipality Chairman

**MI News Service, Nabadwip:** Police arrested Biman Krishna Saha, the chairman of the Trinamool-run Nabadwip municipality, after a large quantity of relief materials meant for government distribution was recovered from near a club beside his residence.

Residents alleged that the relief materials, which the government had sent for distribution among poor people, were misappropriated by Trinamool leader Saha and kept in his possession.

Picture by Dibakar Das Nabadwip municipality chairman Biman Krishna Saha being taken to a court in Krishnanagar



Members of the Nabadwip Ghat Rail Station Bachao Committee described the inspection as a positive development. Joint secretary Sudip Deb Nath said that the committee had been pursuing the issue for more than two years through public campaigns, memorandums and meetings with government departments. According to him, the direct involvement of senior railway officials has raised hopes that the project may finally move beyond the planning stage.

Local panchayat representatives also expressed optimism. Swarupganj Gram Panchayat deputy chief Kanai Das said that previous attempts to revive the project had failed due to various administrative and logistical hurdles. He added that public sentiment currently favours the railway extension and that coordinated efforts by the Railways and the state administration could help accelerate implementation.

### MP and MLA attend blood donation camp in Kalyani; 171 people donate blood



MP and MLA attend blood donation camp in Kalyani; 171 people donate blood. The chief guest of the event was Shantanu Thakur, Member of Parliament, Bongaon. He encouraged the donors and emphasized that importance of blood donation. He stated that it is a social responsibility that plays a vital role in saving countless lives. He stated that regular blood donation not only helps overcome blood shortages but also enables individuals to directly serve humanity.

### TMC leader & workers accuse vandalism

**MI News Service, Malda:** A woman entrepreneur in Malda alleged that a group of Trinamool Congress workers stormed into her furniture showroom and ransacked it in the Bhawani More area of the town. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras, she claimed. Sudha Kundu, who owns the furniture showroom, filed a complaint at the Englishbazar police station against Trinamool leader Indrajit Seth and his associates. Police have initiated an investigation. The businesswoman shared CCTV footage of her shop on social media, which quickly went viral. "Indrajit Seth, who is a close associate of a Trinamool councillor, entered my showroom along with some others, vandalised the premises and threatened to kill me," she said. Sources said Kundu's showroom is located adjacent to the party office of late Trinamool leader Dulal Sarkar in the Bhawani More area. As part of regular business operations, furniture is frequently loaded and unloaded at the showroom. An argument broke out between two

of Kundu's employees and Seth over the unloading of furniture in the area. "After a while, Seth entered the showroom, abused me and issued death threats. The incident took place in the presence of local Trinamool councillor Chaitali Sarkar, but she did not intervene," Kundu alleged. The incident left her and her employees concerned, she added. She kept the showroom closed. Seth, however, denied the allegations and claimed he was being falsely implicated. "The allegations are false. In fact, one of her sons previously threatened me over the phone, and I had been to the showroom for that issue," he alleged. Chaitali Sarkar, the local TMC councillor, said she noticed commotion while returning home from the party office. "The businesswoman (Kundu) deliberately provoked the altercation. Similar disputes had occurred in the past," she alleged. Officials at the Englishbazar police station said they have received the complaint. "We are examining the CCTV footage and have started a probe," said a police officer.

has raised hopes that the project may finally move beyond the planning stage.

Local panchayat representatives also expressed optimism. Swarupganj Gram Panchayat deputy chief Kanai Das said that previous attempts to revive the project had failed due to various administrative and logistical hurdles. He added that public sentiment currently favours the railway extension and that coordinated efforts by the Railways and the state administration could help accelerate implementation.

While the inspection has generated optimism among residents, many remain cautiously hopeful. Several locals pointed out that similar assurances had been made in the past without tangible progress. They believe that the success of the latest initiative will ultimately depend on a clear execution roadmap and the commencement of construction work on the ground.

For now, the high-level field visit has revived expectations that one of Nadia district's most anticipated infrastructure projects may finally be moving towards implementation after years of delay.



Samik Bhattacharya (State President- West Bengal BJP) and other senior members of BJP can be seen hearing PM Modi's 'Maan Ki Baat' in Kolkata on Sunday.

### Women Donors Join 242-Strong CPI(M) Drive

**Nurul Islam Khan :** MI News Service Kolkata: The state committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) organized a large-scale voluntary blood-donation camp today at Comrade Mozaffar Ahmad Bhavan, drawing 242 donors, including 15 women.



Senior party leaders who attended to encourage donors included Comrades Biman Basu, Mohammad Selim, Robin Dev and Kollol Majumdar. Addressing the gathering, state secretary Mohammad Selim said the camp is held annually to help alleviate a growing shortage of blood across the state. He described the drive as a people-centric initiative that sends a message of peace and communal harmony to the state.

Selim used the platform to mount a sharp critique of the state government, condemning what he called escalating law-and-order breakdowns and the administration's use of so-called "bulldozer" tactics. He appealed for the preservation of the state's historical and cultural heritage and warned against policies that, in his view, erode civil liberties and civic life.

The event underscored the party's dual focus on welfare work and political opposition, combining a humanitarian service with a pointed public challenge to current governance.

### Public Anger Erupts Against Illegal Liquor and Ganja Trade, Residents Demand Strict Administrative Action



**MI News Service, Kharagpur :** Local residents of the Radhanagar-Jakpur area under Kharagpur Local Police Station in West Medinipur district staged a strong protest against the alleged long-running sale of illegal country liquor (chola) and ganja in the locality. A large number of villagers and residents took to the streets, demanding immediate intervention by the administration to shut down the illegal trade. The protesters alleged that illegal and locally brewed liquor, along with ganja, is being sold openly at several locations in the area. They claimed that these activities are not only deteriorating the social environment but are also affecting public safety and peace. According to local residents, many people from outside the area frequently visit the locality on motorcycles at high speeds and are allegedly involved in drug-related activities, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among residents. Locals including Sarathi Nayak, Jyotsna Mallick, Mousumi Mallick, and Santona Nayak alleged that concerns regarding the issue have been raised several times in the past, but no permanent or effective action has been taken by the authorities so far. They warned that the situation could become more serious if timely measures are not implemented. The protesters demanded immediate legal action against those involved in the illegal sale of liquor and ganja and called for increased and regular police surveillance in the area. They also stated that a written complaint would be submitted to the police authorities regarding the matter. Villagers warned that if prompt action is not taken, they would be compelled to launch a larger movement. They emphasized that the public campaign would be expanded further to make the area drug-free and secure. However, as of the filing of this report, no official response had been received from the concerned police or district administration. The allegations made by the protesters could not be independently verified. Residents have urged the administration to intervene without delay, curb the illegal narcotics trade, and strengthen law and order in the area.

## Oral Screening, Awareness Programme Mark 'No Tobacco Day' Event at HCG Kolkata

**MI News Service, Kolkata :** HCG Cancer Hospital, Kolkata, commemorated World No Tobacco Day with an awareness programme and oral hygiene screening initiative for students and faculty members from educational institutions around the hospital today, underlining the importance of early detection, tobacco cessation and preventive cancer care. Close to 1 lakh new oral cancer cases are detected in India annually, and many of them in an advanced stage, given that tobacco is a "silent killer".

The screening focused on identifying warning signs in the oral cavity and head-and-neck region that may need further evaluation. Participants were checked for red or white patches on the buccal mucosa, or inner wall of the cheeks, palate, tongue and lips, counselled about the dangers of non-bleeding

ulcers, swelling and changed voice. The initiative formed part of HCG's centre-wide Prevent Addiction AVOID Nicotine (PAAN) campaign, launched ahead of World No Tobacco Day. The campaign uses paan shop-inspired kiosks to draw attention to the risks of tobacco, conduct oral screenings and reinforce prevention messaging through hard-hitting visual communication.

The chief guest at awareness programme, Prof Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Pro Chancellor, Techno India Group Universities & Central Academic Leader, expressed concern over the growing incidence of disease associated with tobacco abuse despite the knowledge of the harmful fallouts of tobacco abuse. "Let us all take a vow to stay away from tobacco and with conviction spread the message to all in our circle," he said.



In a bid to portray how deep the tobacco abuse menace is, Prof Jacob Islay, HOD, Master of Social Work, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, recounted organising a similar event 15 years ago in Assam. "I had a trying time convincing doctors there not to chew gutka just before they were to conduct a screening cum awareness programme. Thank god no one is chewing tobacco in this hall," he said in a lighter vein.

Dr Shreya Bhattacharya, Senior Consultant, Head & Neck Oncosurgery, HCG Kolkata, said: "Of the OPD patients I see, 80% are suffering from oral cancer and of them 50% succumb to the disease because they come to us in advanced stages." "Believe me there is nothing cool about smoking," she added. "We focused our screening initiative on young people because they can be powerful partners in helping

society stay a step ahead of head-and-neck cancers. Scientific awareness and conviction in one young mind can travel far — to families, peer groups and the wider community," said Dr Rupali Basu, Regional Business Head, East & AP, HCG Cancer Hospitals. Oral Screening: Checks & Counselling. Screening checks. Red or white patches on the inner cheeks, palate, tongue and lips; Non-bleeding ulcers. Swelling in the head-and-neck region. Persistent change in voice. Counselling focus. Participants advised that both chewing tobacco and tobacco smoke can increase the risk of head-and-neck cancers, besides lung cancer and cardiovascular disease. About HCG Cancer Hospital, Kolkata

HCG Cancer Centre, Newtown, Kolkata, is a dedicated single-specialty cancer hospital offering comprehensive cancer care across medical, surgical and radiation oncology. Part of HCG — Healthcare Global Enterprises Ltd., one of India's largest cancer care networks — the Kolkata centre follows a multidisciplinary approach, bringing diagnosis, treatment, technology and specialist expertise under one roof. Accredited by NABH under the 5th edition standards, the hospital is equipped with advanced facilities including robotic surgery, CAR-T cell therapy, LINAC and PET-CT, among others. With a strong focus on patient-centric care, early detection, screening and innovation, HCG remains committed to adding "life to years" through specialised cancer care.



Children are seen wearing skeleton masks during "World No Tobacco Day" awareness campaign in Kolkata on Sunday.

PIC:Prabir Bhattacharya

### 3,000 illegal constructions identified in the city

MI News Service, Kolkata: The number is one, not two. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation's building department has identified about 3,000 illegal constructions across the city. According to municipal sources, out of these, a thousand building have been constructed in such a way that their illegal parts can be demolished at any time. Many illegal constructions have sprung up in the area adjacent to the EM Bypass!



Among the six boroughs of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, most of the illegal construction has taken place in areas like Belegghata, Tangra, Tiljala, Barabazar, Tapsia, Kasba, Garden Reach, Metiaburuj, Kashipur, Chitpur. Some of these areas have been identified as 'red zones' by the municipality's building department. During the

investigation, the municipal officials have come to know that the illegal construction has taken place across the city with the help of local promoters and syndicates.

After the change of government in the state, the government is now in the hands of the BJP. Although the Kolkata Municipal Corporation is under the control of the Trinamool Congress, the municipal administrators are monitoring the city to identify illegal constructions following the message of the state administration. Within this one month, bulldozer action is underway on illegal constructions that have sprung up with the support of Trinamool Congress leaders in Tiljala, Belegghata, and Kasba. Now let's see which illegal constructions on the 'red' list of the municipality are being bulldozed.

According to the municipality sources, if a promoter or construction company gets the approval of the municipality for the construction of a 'G plus four' building and later builds a 'D plus five' there, then not only is there an opportunity for additional profit from that extra 'illegal' floor, but the amount of material for building construction also increases significantly. The profit money is shared among

### Mithun Chakraborty to receive Dada Saheb Phalke Award



MI News Service, Kolkata: New Delhi: Legendary actor Mithun Chakraborty to be honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award at the 70th National Film Awards ceremony next month. Announcing this in a social media post, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, from the streets of Kolkata to Cinematic Heights, 'Mithun Da's' remarkable cinematic journey inspires generations. He said, the Dadasaheb Phalke Selection Jury decided for this top award in Indian cinema for Mithun Chakraborty for his iconic contribution to Indian Cinema.

Speaking to media, Vaishnaw congratulated Mithun Chakraborty saying his life is combination of struggle and achievement.

Speaking to media, Mithun Chakraborty expressed happiness on receiving the news. He dedicated the award to his family and fans across the world.

### CENSUS in Bengal on AUGUST 1

Continued from Pg 1: completion in most states.

"But Bengal could not even start training the officials and enumerators yet. The training of the officers and enumerators would take a few weeks, as the collection of data would be uploaded onto smartphones or tabs directly by the enumerators this year," said a source.

After the training of the enumerators, self-enumeration will be undertaken for 15 days. Once that is done, the listing of houses will be undertaken, and those who did not participate in the self-enumeration exercise will be enlisted.

Once these two data sets are available, the verification of the enumeration process will be undertaken in the second phase.

"So, Bengal would have to run the extra mile within the next few months as all other states have already completed the training of the officials and enumerators, and house listing is almost complete in a majority of the states," said an official.

### 'He made a mistake' Trinamool supremo pressured private hospital CEO to admit Abhishek!

MI News Service, Kolkata: In the attack on Trinamool MP and All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee, a famous private hospital in the city has also been caught in the 'net' of politics. The CEO of the hospital has had to face threats from the opposition Trinamool Congress! On Saturday night, party leader Mamata Banerjee went to Minto Park Hospital to get Abhishek Banerjee admitted. It is alleged that Trinamool supremo 'pressured' the CEO to get him admitted and the audio was posted on social media by the BJP.

State BJP chief spokesperson Debjit Sarkar has strongly condemned the role of the Trinamool leader by posting the audio on his X handle. Mamata is heard saying to the CEO, "You made a mistake. Remember how we helped you. Now you are being misled by the words of the BJP." Although the authenticity of the audio has not been verified by Morning India.

However, Mamata's action is being criticized after the public outcry over Abhishek.

On Saturday, public anger was directed at MP Abhishek Banerjee in Sonarpur. Eggs, bricks, stones, and shoes were pelted on him on his way to the house of the slain party worker. It is alleged that Abhishek was beaten up by the collar of his shirt. His shirt, glasses, and watch were damaged. The Trinamool MP came out of that situation with the help of central forces and police, and upon returning to Kolkata, the party rushed to admit him to the hospital.

On Saturday evening, he was first taken to a renowned private hospital on the bypass. Mamata Banerjee and other top party leaders went there. After initial examination and treatment at that hospital, the doctors said that there was no need to admit Abhishek. Hearing this, Mamata Banerjee took him

to another renowned hospital in Minto Park. But there too, the doctors said that given the MP's physical condition, he should be treated at home, there was no need to admit him to the hospital.

Trinamool leaders alleged that the ruling BJP is pressuring various hospitals to ensure that Abhishek does not get proper medical services. In this situation, the audio of Trinamool supremo pressuring the CEO of the renowned hospital in Minto Park is going viral. It is heard that Mamata is telling him, after he refused to admit Abhishek, "You made a mistake. Remember how we helped you. God will not forgive you. You should be ashamed! Now you are being misled by the words of BJP. You are running the hospital. But when the BJP government is not there, then we will understand." As soon as her audio went viral, severe criticism started from various quarters.

### Trinamool councilor's close aide arrested in East Jadavpur

MI News Service, Kolkata: Suman Mondal, a close associate of Trinamool councilor, arrested in East Jadavpur. The youth has been arrested on charges of attempted murder and assault. A firearm has been recovered from the arrested person. Sources say that Suman, who was arrested, is close to Trinamool councilor Ananya Banerjee. The East Jadavpur police station has started an investigation into the incident.

Recently, a complaint of attempted murder and assault was filed against him. Based on that complaint, the police of East Jadavpur Police Station arrested him. It is alleged that he committed one crime after another. After that, he was arrested.

On the other hand, a Trinamool leader has been arrested in Bhagwanpur, East Midnapore on charges of storing explosives. The police have arrested Robin Mondal, a member of the East Midnapore Zilla Parishad and block president of Bhagwanpur. A case has been

registered against him under several sections of the Indian Penal Code.

It is worth noting that after the change of government in the state, several allegations have been made against the Trinamool leaders and their party changes, including threats, beatings, extortion. That anger is also present in Kolkata and adjacent areas. Several allegations are coming to the fore. The police are also taking steps as per the instructions of Chief Minister Subhendu Adhikari and the new government.

### Will Abhishek go to Bhawani Bhavan on Monday?

MI News Service, Kolkata: After being subjected to severe harassment in Sonarpur, South 24 Pargana, Abhishek reached a private hospital on the bypass on his way back to Kolkata. Trinamool Congress Supremo Mamata Banerjee quickly picked him up in her car and took him to another hospital, saying, 'He is not receiving treatment.' However, the second hospital also informed him after the examination, 'He does not have any serious injuries. There is no need for admission.' After both hospitals gave him a 'fit' certificate, Abhishek returned to his house on Kalighat Road that night. A hospital infrastructure has been practically set up there. It is learnt that Mamata also stayed at Abhishek's house till late at night.

At home for a few days. However, it is learnt that further steps will be taken after monitoring his physical condition. Sources say that restrictions have also been imposed on people visiting Abhishek's house for now.



Meanwhile, the CID summoned Abhishek to Bhawani Bhavan on Monday. On Saturday afternoon, CID officials first

## Messi case: FIR registered against former state sports minister Aroop Biswas

MI News Service, Kolkata: A new twist in the Messi case! An FIR was registered against former state sports minister Aroop Biswas at Bidhannagar South police station on Saturday night for vandalizing the Yuva Bharati Stadium in December. The police have registered an FIR based on the complaint filed by the main organizer of the Messi event, Satadru Dutta, on May 17. Messi Got Tour organizer Satadru Dutta has filed a complaint against the former sports minister under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, i.e. black marketing of tickets, extortion, criminal intimidation, cheating, etc. The former state minister may be summoned by the Bidhannagar Commissionerate very soon, according to sources. The complainant further



claimed to the Bidhannagar Commissionerate Police that the former minister had black-marketed about 22,000 tickets for the Messi event. Based on that allegation, the Bidhannagar South Police Station police have started an investigation. Incidentally, the new Sports Minister of the state, Nishith Pramanik, had threatened to open a file

in the Messi case after taking charge. In that atmosphere, the allegations brought by the main organizer of the event are considered very indicative by the informed circles. On the other hand, after the police filed an FIR against former state minister Aroop Biswas, Satadru Dutta posted a post thanking Chief Minister Shuvendu Adhikari. Where

he posted a copy of the FIR and wrote, 'Satyamev Jayate'. In that post, the businessman from Konnagar also thanked the Chief Minister, Sports Minister Nishith Pramanik and the DGP of the state police.

It is worth mentioning that after the formation of the new government in Bengal, Satadru opened up about the chaos surrounding Messi in Yuva Bharati. He said that Aroop Biswas had surrounded Lionel Messi by entering the field without permission. He had come close to Messi by influencing him. Not only him, but the organizer of the Messi Got Tour has also made one complaint after another against former state minister Aroop Biswas. Not only that, he also claimed that there was deliberate negligence in the security of Messi's event.



Debris remain at the platform of the Dum Dum Railway Station in Kolkata on Sunday after 'illegal hawker eviction drive'.

### 2 MP's face public outrage for two consecutive days!

MI News Service, Kolkata: Two Trinamool MP's have been subjected to public anger for two consecutive days. After the unprecedented beating, egg-throwing and collar-pulling incident around Abhishek Banerjee in Sonarpur on Saturday, almost the same incident took place in Chanditala, Hooghly on Sunday. It is alleged that stones were hurled at Serampore MP Kalyan Banerjee, and slogans were also raised. In a series of such incidents, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee directly targeted the BJP and posted on her X handle. She wrote, 'BJP is the killer of democracy'.

### BENGAL eyes job boost through unused govt warehouses

MI News Service, Kolkata: The West Bengal government is considering a major initiative to generate employment opportunities for unemployed youth by utilising vacant government-owned warehouses and market stalls. State Agricultural Marketing minister Dilip Ghosh on Saturday held a meeting with his department officials at the Netaji Subhas Training Institute in Baidyabati, following which he said that around 25-30 per cent of government warehouses and nearly 450 government stalls across the state remain unused.

The government now plans to invite applications from unemployed young men and women, as well as women associated with self-help groups, to operate businesses from these facilities. Ghosh said that the department currently has around 1,600 government stalls, of which approximately 450 have never been used. "In areas where it has been difficult to find tenants, unemployed youth and women from self-help groups would be encouraged to use the vacant stalls and warehouses for business activities. The government is also considering allowing them to use the facilities without charging rent," said Ghosh.

The minister added that discussions were also held on addressing staff imbalances within the department, as some districts have a surplus of employees while others face shortages. Officials deliberated on ways to improve coordination and ensure efficient functioning across districts. The minister also discussed measures to expand departmental activities and increase revenue generation. The government is also planning steps to strengthen the operation of "Sufal Bangla" outlets. Through Sufal Bangla, the state government purchases directly from farmers and sells them through outlets, providing access to fresh produce at lower prices.

### Youth dies in road accident in city

MI News Service, Kolkata: The son had returned to the city from Dubai for his father's treatment. But he could no longer be by his father's side. On Saturday afternoon, the young man named Shah Alam (31) was hit by a reckless minibus on CGR Road in the West Port Police Station area of Kolkata. The young man, a resident of Metiaburuj, had come to Kolkata just three days ago for the treatment of his father Muktar Alam.

Saturday afternoon to get some test reports related to his father's physical condition. When biker Surjit Bhar (31), a resident of Chandanagar, arrived with the bike, the two were moving along Circular Garden Reach Road. Both were wearing helmets. Eyewitnesses said that around 1 pm, a minibus on the Metiaburuj-Howrah route came at a very reckless speed near the Sinarhati petrol pump and lost control and hit the app-bike hard. Due to the intensity of the impact, both of them were thrown off the bike and

onto the road. Despite wearing helmets, both of them suffered serious injuries to their heads and bodies.

After the accident, the police of West Port Police Station rescued the two people in a bloody state and took them to SSKM Hospital. However, the doctors there declared both of them dead. The doctors said that the death was due to severe head injuries. None of the family members can accept the sudden death of their son.

The police have also seized the bus and arrested the driver.

### Police raided Trinamool MLA Madan Mitra's Kamarhati house

MI News Service, Kolkata: Since the change of government in the state police are in action mode. On Sunday afternoon a large police force led by Deputy Commissioner (South) of Barrackpore Police Commissionerate Duteeman Bhattacharya

of the house. It is reported that several documents have been seized from Uday Villa.

Allegedly, the land on which the house is built belongs to a central agency. Has that land been occupied? That ques-



tion has arisen. It is learnt that women are taught various self-reliance skills at that place. Allegedly, the place was occupied since the Trinamool Congress government was formed in 2011. There have also been allegations that ille-

gal activities were being carried out at that place.

What is the reason for this raid on the Trinamool MLA's house? After the change of government in the state, Trinamool leaders are being arrested in various places on charges of multiple corruption and post-poll violence. Meanwhile, the police have also started an investigation into the signature case of Trinamool MLAs. CID officers have appeared at the houses of Trinamool MLAs Kunal Ghosh and Naina Banerjee for that investigation. On Monday, Trinamool All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee has been called to Bhawani Bhavan for questioning in this incident. In that atmosphere, speculation has started as the police went to the house of the Trinamool MLA in Kamarhati.

Bihar govt gives employees tourism mission every 3 months

MI News Service, Patna: The Bihar government has directed all state government employees to undertake mandatory visits to tourist destinations across the state every three months with their families and submit reports on how to promote them, officials said. In a letter, dated May 20, issued to departmental heads, divisional commissioners, DMs and SPs, Additional Chief Secretary (General Administration) B Rajender said government employees must travel with their families for two days and two nights to tourist, eco-tourism or rural tourism destinations in districts other than their home districts.

"Water Conservation" Drive at CLW

MI News Service, Kolkata, May 31, 2026 : The World Environment Day campaign (spanning from May 15 to June 5, 2026) at Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) is currently underway, having commenced on May 15, 2026, with a pledge-taking ceremony. Various programs are being organized throughout this period. Under this campaign related to environmental protection and awareness, a 'drive program' was organized in front of the Water Department office today on 31.05.2026. Everyone present pledged to make an active contribution towards



maintaining a healthy water cycle through water conservation efforts. This water conservation drive commenced at the Water Department office and concluded near the

Kolkata gets advanced Rifle Shooting Arena

MI News Service, Kolkata: Kolkata gets a new 'Advanced Rifle Shooting Arena' for the budding rifle shooters at Hindusthan Club. The club inaugurated the "Bulls Eye Rifle Shooting Arena", a modern 10-Metre Air Rifle & Pistol Shooting Arena, in the esteemed presence of representatives from the West Bengal Rifle Association (WBRA). The grand inauguration ceremony was attended by Solomon Nesakumar, IPS Additional Commissioner of Police Kolkata, Deb Kumar Samanta, Secretary General of West Bengal Rifle Association, Hindusthan Club President Sanjay Goenka, C.S. Sarda, Sanjay Goenka, President of Hindusthan Club, along with distinguished club officials including Kamal Ghelani, Honorary Secretary, Swati Bihani, Joint Secretary, Mr. Jigar Malani, Sports Chairperson, and Mr. Vaibhav Nahata, Sports Chairperson. Designed to meet professional training standards, the facility aims to provide aspiring shooters with access to structured coaching, modern infrastructure, and opportunities to develop competitive skills in one of India's fastest-growing precision sports.

Continuation Of The Service Of Bhagalpur - Katihar - Bhagalpur Unreserved Special Train Till 04.06.2026

MI News Service, Kolkata, May 31, 2026 : In a major relief for commuters traveling between south and north-east Bihar, the Railway has decided to continue the service of 03407/03408 Bhagalpur - Katihar - Bhagalpur Unreserved Special train with existing path, timings and stoppages upto 04.06.2026 . This vital rail link was initially introduced following severe disruptions to road connectivity

Eastern Railway Seeks Public Cooperation as Private Land Tree Issues Delay Pre-Monsoon Safety Drive

MI News Service, Kolkata, May 31, 2026 : Following a severe spell of heavy rain and stormy weather that crippled train movements across the Sealdah Division on 29.05.2026 , Eastern Railway has issued an urgent awareness appeal to citizens residing along railway tracks. The railway is calling on local residents to proactively cut vulnerable tree branches on their premises or cooperate fully with railway teams to prevent life-threatening overhead wire entanglements and massive passenger delays.



private banner festoons fell onto tracks and Overhead Equipment (OHE) power lines at twelve critical locations—including Dum Dum, Kalyani, Barasat, and Sonarpur. While Eastern Railway's emergency rapid action teams worked under treacherous conditions to clear the tracks and restore power safely, the incident highlights a critical vulnerability: many of the hazardous trees belong to private properties adjacent to railway land.

convenience caused to commuters today and stresses that passenger safety is a non-negotiable priority. For the greater public good, it is imperative that citizens cooperate with the railway administration. Moving forward, the railway urges the public to recognize that a single untrimmed branch on private property can snap high-voltage overhead lines, halting thousands of commuters and risking severe accidents. Commenting on the vital need for civic partnership, Shri Shibram Majhi, Chief Public Relations Officer of Eastern Railway, stated , "Our field teams demonstrated incredible agility in restoring services after today's storm, but nature's onslaught requires a collective defense. We earnestly appeal to citizens living near railway tracks to inspect their properties, ensure the mandatory 3-meter safety margin is maintained, and cooperate with our engineering teams when approached. For the ultimate public good, safeguarding our overhead lines must be a shared responsibility."

New Railway Division Set to Unlock South Odisha's Untapped Economic Potential

• Rayagada poised to become the nerve centre of rail connectivity in the region; operationalisation from 01.06.2026. • New cargo terminals and ₹20,020-crore project pipeline signal a transformative leap from tribal hinterland to industrial corridor. MI News Service, Kolkata, May 31, 2026 : The Rayagada Railway Division of East Coast Railway is set to commence functioning from 1st June 2026, ushering in a new era of railway led infrastructure growth and regional development in South Odisha and adjoining areas. The new division is expected to strengthen railway operations, improve project monitoring, enhance infrastructure planning and accelerate execution of development initiatives across the region. With a dedicated Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) stationed at Rayagada, coordination with State Government agencies, district administrations, industries and local communities is expected to become faster and more effective. Administrative Strengthening and a New Engine of Local Economy Basic infrastructure required for commencement of operations has already been put in place, while development of the divisional headquarters, office buildings and staff facilities is progressing in phases. The division will be headed by a DRM and supported by around 40 officers and nearly 600 railway employees, making Rayagada a key railway administrative and operational centre in South Odisha. The establishment of the divisional headquarters is expected to provide a significant boost to the local economy through increased demand for housing, transportation, education, healthcare and commercial services, creating new opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs. Tapping Untapped Freight Potential Strategically located in one of India's most mineral rich regions, the Rayagada Division is poised to emerge as a major freight growth centre

within Indian Railways. Iron ore from the Kirandul-Bacheli mining belt will continue to dominate freight traffic, while movement of alumina, bauxite, steel products, slag, fly ash and other industrial commodities is expected to increase steadily. The division is projected to handle more than 40 million tonnes of freight annually, underlining its growing importance as a logistics and freight hub. Improved connectivity is also expected to support increased movement of foodgrains and essential commodities to tribal and remote regions. Expanding Freight Infrastructure Through GatiShakti Cargo Terminals A major growth driver for the division will be the development of GatiShakti Cargo Terminals (GCTs) at Singam, Tikiri, Bhansi, Mallividu and Bheja. These facilities will strengthen rail-based logistics for mining, aluminium, steel and other core industries. The proposed Bhansi and Mallividu terminals are expected to handle around 7 MTPA and 5 MTPA respectively. Additional freight facilities, including industrial sidings and bulk cargo infrastructure, will further enhance logistics efficiency and industrial connectivity. The division is also expected to unlock freight potential from agricultural produce and forest products across the region. ₹20,020 Crore Railway Infrastructure Pipeline The newly created division is expected to accelerate execution and monitoring of railway infrastructure projects covering nearly 1,360 kilometres with an estimated investment of about ₹20,020 crore. Major projects include: • Jaypore-Malkangiri New Line (130 km) • Jaypore-Nabarangpur New Line (38 km) • Junagarh-Nabarangpur New Line (116.21 km) • Malkangiri-Pandurangapuram via Bhadrachalam New Line (173.61 km)

• Gunupur-Therubali New Line (73.62 km) • Kottavalasa-Koraput Doubling Project (189.278 km) Capacity enhancement works on the KK Line and other operational improvement projects are also expected to gain momentum under the new divisional setup. Better Monitoring, Faster Project Execution The establishment of the divisional headquarters at Rayagada will bring railway administration closer to project sites and operational centres, facilitating quicker decisions and better monitoring. The DRM's office will play a key role in coordinating major industrial connectivity projects, including those linked to NMDC, NALCO, UAIL and other industries. Closer coordination with State Government departments is expected to expedite land acquisition, clearances and other project-related issues, reducing delays and improving execution efficiency. From Tribal Hinterland to Economic Opportunity Zone The districts served by the Rayagada Division, including Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Gajapati and Kandhamal, are expected to benefit significantly from improved railway connectivity, freight infrastructure and accelerated project implementation. These developments are likely to generate employment opportunities, attract logistics and warehousing investments and stimulate industrial and commercial growth. With enhanced connectivity, stronger freight infrastructure and faster project execution, the Rayagada Railway Division is poised to play a pivotal role in transforming South Odisha into a vibrant economic and logistics corridor. Operationalisation of the division reflects Indian Railways' commitment to decentralised administration, regional empowerment and inclusive infrastructure led development, ensuring that the benefits of growth reach even the remotest parts of the region.

Name Change I, Manash Kumar Mukhopadhyay (Old Name) S/o Chandrasekar Mukhopadhyay Residing at 3/4, Raghunathpur, Po - Deshbandhunaagar, Ps - Baguati, District - North 24 Parganas, Pin - 700059, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Manash Kumar Mukhopadhyay (Old Name) to Manas Mukhopadhyay (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Manas Mukhopadhyay (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata on Dated 29/05/2026. Manas Mukhopadhyay (New Name) and Manash Kumar Mukhopadhyay (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Md Asjad Ali (old name) S/o Agjar Ali Molla, residing at MOLLA PARA, CHOU MATHA, RAIGACHI, NORTH 24 PGS-700135, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Asjad Ali (new name), as declared before the notary public at Kolkata, vide an affidavit dated 28/04/2026. Asjad Ali (old name) and Md Asjad Ali (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Paresh Nath Mallik (old name), S/o Narayan Mallik, residing at Paramananda Mission Road, Banagram, Purb Bardhaman, Pin- 713407, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Paresh Nath Mallik (Old Name) to Paresh Nath Mallik (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Paresh Nath Mallik (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Paresh Nath Mallik (Old Name) and Paresh Nath Mallik (Old Name) both are same and one identical person (my father).

Name Change I, Alamgir Sekh S/o Late Golam Kader Sekh, residing at Vill: Mirpur, Po: Chak Enayetnagar, Ps: Bishnupur, Dist:-South 24 Parganas, Pin- 743503, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Alamgir Sekh S/o Late Golam Kader Sekh (father Old Name) to Alamgir Sekh (father New Name) and henceforth he shall be known as Alamgir Sekh (father new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Alamgir Sekh and Alamgir Sekh (father New Name) both are same and one identical person (my father).

Name Change I, Raju Mujibar (Old Name) S/o Molla Nuruddin Residing at Mollapara Maheshatala, Po - Chatakalkapur, Diamond Harbour, West Bengal - 700140, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Raju Mujibar (Old Name) to Raju Mousur (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Raju Mousur (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Raju Mousur (New Name) and Raju Mujibar (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Mohammed Shamim (Old name) s/o Shaikh Hashim residing at 13/H/27 Mayur Bhanj Road Pin 700023 in state West Bengal INDIA, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mohammed Shamim (old name) to Md Shamim (new name) and henceforth I shall be known as Md Shamim (new name) in all purpose, as declared before the Notary public at Kolkata dated 29/05/2026. Md Shamim (old name) and Mohammed Shamim (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Md Yousuf Siddique (old name), S/o Md. Julfikar Ali Siddique, residing at VTC: Furlura, P.O. - Furlura, Sub Dist.- Jangipara, Dist.- Hooghly, Pin- 712706, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Md Yousuf Siddique (Old Name) to Mohammad Yousuf Siddique (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Mohammad Yousuf Siddique (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Mohammad Yousuf Siddique (Old Name) and Md Yousuf Siddique (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Amit Ray (Old Name), Son of Nitai Roy, Resident Of 183/3, Uttarrayan, North Barrackpore, Dist- North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743122, Do hereby Declare That I Have Change My Name From Amit Ray (Old Name) To Amit Roy (New Name) And Henceforth I Shall Be Known As Amit Roy (New Name) In All Purpose Vide Affidavit Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 29/05/2026. Amit Ray (Old Name) And Amit Ray (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change I, Mujibar (Old Name) S/o Samsuddin Residing at Mollapara Maheshatala, Po - Chatakalkapur, Diamond Harbour, West Bengal- 700140, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mujibar (Old Name) to Molla Nuruddin (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Molla Nuruddin (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Molla Nuruddin (New Name) and Mujibar (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Prabir Manna (Old Name) S/o Sasanka Sekhar Manna Residing at P37/A, Diamond Park, Diamond Tower, Flat No - 2C(S), Po - Joka, Ps - Haridevpur District - Kolkata, Pin - 700104, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Prabir Manna (Old Name) to Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) and Prabir Manna (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Brijesh Gupta (OLD NAME), SON OF Sitaran Gupta, RESIDENT OF Sulanagar, ghuni, rajarhat gopalpur(M), north 24 parganas- 700157, west bengal, DO HEREBY DECLARE THAT I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM Brijesh Gupta (OLD NAME) TO Brijesh Kumar Gupta (NEW NAME) AND HENCEFORTH I SHALL BE KNOWN AS Brijesh Kumar Gupta (NEW NAME) IN ALL PURPOSE, VIDE AFFIDAVIT NO 28 SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 26/05/2026. Brijesh Kumar Gupta (NEW NAME) AND Brijesh Gupta (OLD NAME) BOTH ARE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

Name Change I, Sunil Kumar Adak (old name), S/o Shital Adak, residing at Vill: Barnan, Po: Barnan, Ps: Kolaghat, East Medinipur, Pin- 721137, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Sunil Kumar Adak (Old Name) to Sunil Adak (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Sunil Adak (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Sunil Adak (New Name) and Sunil Kumar Adak (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Rubina (Old Name) W/o Molla Nuruddin Residing at Mollapara Maheshatala, Po - Chatakalkapur, Diamond Harbour, West Bengal- 700140, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Rubina (Old Name) to Momtaj Bibi (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Momtaj Bibi (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Momtaj Bibi (New Name) and Rubina (Old Name) both are same and one identical person..

Name Change I, Prabir Manna (Old Name) S/o Sasanka Sekhar Manna Residing at P37/A, Diamond Park, Diamond Tower, Flat No - 2C(S), Po - Joka, Ps - Haridevpur District - Kolkata, Pin - 700104, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Prabir Manna (Old Name) to Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Prabir Kumar Manna (New Name) and Prabir Manna (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (old name), S/o Abdul Gaffar, residing at 4, Mcleod Street, Circus Avenue S.O.Kolkata- 700017, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (Old Name) to Izhrah Ahemd (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Izhrah Ahemd (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, on 22/05/2026. Izhrah Ahemd (New Name) and Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Sangeeta Sharma & Sangeeta Kumari Sharma (old names), W/o Vikash Sharma, residing at 38 & 39, O.T. Road, Russiabari, Near Badaranta, Kolkata - 700044, West Bengal, Dist- Paschim Medinipur, Pin- 721305, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Sangeeta Sharma & Sangeeta Kumari Sharma (Old Names) to Geet Sharma (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Geet Sharma (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Khargapur, vide an Affidavit dated 28/04/2026. Geet Sharma (New Name) and Sangeeta Sharma & Sangeeta Kumari Sharma (Old Names) all are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, (Old Name) RAJAT KUMAR BASU S/o- KALIPADA BOSE Residing at - Vill- Panchanantala Karbala Road, Post- Cossimbazar, Ps- Berhampore, Dist- Murshidabad, Pin- 742102, West Bengal. Do hereby declare that I have changed my name from RAJAT KUMAR BASU TO RAJAT KUMAR BOSE (New name) and henceforth I shall be known as (New name) RAJAT KUMAR BOSE in all purpose. Vide an affidavit No- 2279 On Date 25 May 2026 Sworn before the Notary Public at Berhampore Murshidabad, RAJAT KUMAR BOSE and RAJAT KUMAR BASU both are Same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Indrani Bhattacharya (Old Name) D/o Mintu Das Residing at 208/17/A, Parui Kancha Road, Nandankanan, Po - Sarsuna, Ps - Parnasree, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700061, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Indrani Bhattacharya (Old Name) to Indrani Das (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Indrani Das (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Indrani Das (New Name) and Indrani Bhattacharya (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (old name), S/o Abdul Gaffar, residing at 4, Mcleod Street, Circus Avenue S.O.Kolkata- 700017, West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (Old Name) to Izhrah Ahemd (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Izhrah Ahemd (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, on 22/05/2026. Izhrah Ahemd (New Name) and Izhrah Ahemd & Izhrah Ahemd (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Md Inamul Hak (old name), S/o Ainul Haque, residing at Vill.- Mahadev Simariya, P.S.- Sikandra, Jamui, Bihar- 811307, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Md Inamul Hak (Old Name) to Mohammad Inamul Haque (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Mohammad Inamul Haque (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Mohammad Inamul Haque (New Name) and Md Inamul Hak (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, (Old Name) ASHIMA BASU W/o- RAJAT KUMAR BOSE Residing at - Vill- Panchanantala Karbala Road, Post- Cossimbazar, Ps- Berhampore, Dist- Murshidabad, Pin- 742102, West Bengal. Do hereby declare that I have changed my name from ASHIMA BASU TO ASHIMA BOSE (New name) and henceforth I shall be known as (New name) ASHIMA BOSE in all purpose. Vide an affidavit No- 2278 On Date 25 May 2026 Sworn before the Notary Public at Berhampore Murshidabad, ASHIMA BOSE and ASHIMA BASU both are Same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Halima Mondal (Old Name) W/o Sahajan Mondal Residing at Kamdebpu, Po - Goripur, Ps - Gopalnagar, District - North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743710, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Halima Mondal (Old Name) to Halima Khatun Mondal (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Halima Khatun Mondal (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary public at Kolkata on Dated 29-05-2026. Halima Khatun Mondal (New Name) and Halima Mondal (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Yoghesh Agarwala (old name), S/o Raj Kumar Agarwala, residing at CB - 130, Bidhannagar, Near Tank No 2, Salt Lake City, Sector - 1, Bidhannagar (M), North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 700064, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Yoghesh Agarwala (Old Name) to Yoghesh Agarwal (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Yoghesh Agarwal (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Yoghesh Agarwal (New Name) and Yoghesh Agarwala (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change I, Chahat Yasuphan (old name), W/o Sd Sk Inteez, residing at 15/1E, Sir Syed Ahmed Road, P.O.- Entally, Kolkata- 700014, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Chahat Yasuphan (Old Name) to Chahat Yasufun (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known as Chahat Yasufun (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata, vide an Affidavit dated 29/05/2026. Chahat Yasufun (New Name) and Chahat Yasuphan (Old Name) both are same and one identical person.

DRI recovers over 100 kg ganja in Bihar, two arrested

MI News Service, Patna: In continuation of its sustained efforts to curb drug trafficking and dismantle narcotics supply networks across India, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized 104.9 kg of ganja (cannabis) in Bihar and arrested two accused, an official said. The two accused were involved in the illicit transportation of the contraband. They were arrested under the relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

Kolkata leads in Indian Health Insurance report

MI News Service, Kolkata: Health Insurance report that came out recently revealed that youngsters in Kolkata are amongst the most financially and medically prepared in the country. The report is based on a comprehensive survey of 2,400+ respondents across 35+ urban and rural centres spanning Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 towns, and villages. This has been done by Niva Bupa Health Insurance. It introduces Health Protection Score (HPS)—a first-of-its-kind composite metric designed to measure how prepared Indians are to manage medical emergencies.

The score evaluates individual's basis four key dimensions: 1) Lifestyle discipline, 2) Family health history, 3) Self-assessment of health status and preventive care 4) Financial adequacy. Based on this composite score (0-10), individuals are categorized into three segments: Very Vulnerable (0 - 2.99) Somewhat Vulnerable (3-5.99) Safe & Secure (6 and above). Kolkata emerges as a standout market. Against this national backdrop, Kolkata demonstrates significantly stronger readiness. -HPS of 5.87 vs. India average of 4.54, indicating

higher overall preparedness -21% ownership of personal health insurance, well above the national average of 14% -Only 2% policy lapse rate, compared to 6% nationally -54% classified as "safe and secure", more than double the national average of 24% -Just 3% fall under the "very vulnerable" category, among the lowest in the country These findings underline Kolkata's strong financial discipline and consistent commitment to maintaining health protection.

Rally organized demanding justice for Jain Saints

MI News Service, Kolkata: Deeply anguished and disturbed by the tragic death of two revered Jain Aryika Matajis in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, under highly disturbing circumstances during a recent road incident, Sakal Jain Samaj, Kolkata has strongly condemned the incident and demanded urgent intervention to ensure justice, accountability, and long-term safety for Jain saints and ascetics across the country. To express grief, solidarity, and peaceful protest against repeated incidents affecting Jain saints and

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# What is uranium enrichment, and how is it used to build a nuclear bomb?

Israel targeted three of Iran's major nuclear facilities—Natanz, Isfahan, and Fordow—killing several Iranian nuclear scientists. These facilities are highly secure and largely subterranean; consequently, there are conflicting reports regarding the extent of the damage sustained.

Natanz and Fordow serve as Iran's uranium enrichment sites, while Isfahan supplies the raw materials; therefore, any damage to these sites would curtail Iran's capacity to produce nuclear weapons.

But what exactly is uranium enrichment, and why is it a cause for concern?

To understand what it means to "enrich" uranium, one requires a basic grasp of uranium isotopes and the process of splitting an atom during a nuclear fission reaction.

What is an isotope? All matter is composed of atoms, which, in turn, consist of protons, neutrons, and electrons. It is the number of protons that endows atoms with their specific chemical properties, thereby distinguishing one chemical element from another.

Atoms typically contain an equal number of protons and electrons. For instance, uranium possesses 92 protons, whereas carbon has six. However, the number of neutrons within atoms of the same element can vary, giving rise to different isotopic forms of that element.

While this distinction is of little consequence in chemical reactions, the behavior of

these isotopes in nuclear reactions can differ significantly.

The Difference Between Uranium-238 and Uranium-235

When uranium is extracted from the ground, 99.27% of it consists of Uranium-238, which contains 92 protons and 146 neutrons. Only 0.72% of the extracted material is Uranium-235, comprising 92 protons and 143 neutrons (the remaining 0.01% consists of other isotopes). For nuclear energy reactors or weapons, we must alter the ratio of isotopes. This is because, of the two main isotopes of uranium, only Uranium-235 makes a fission chain reaction possible: a neutron splits an atom, generating energy and additional neutrons, which trigger further fission and this process continues.

This chain reaction releases an immense amount of energy. In a nuclear weapon, the objective is to trigger this chain reaction within a fraction of a second, resulting in a nuclear explosion.

In civilian nuclear power plants, the chain reaction is controlled. Nuclear power plants currently generate 9% of the world's electricity. Another significant civilian application of nuclear reactions lies in the production of isotopes used in nuclear medicine for the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases.

So, what exactly is uranium enrichment?

To "enrich" uranium means taking the naturally



## How is uranium refined?

The process of extracting uranium from mines and rendering it suitable for use (as fuel or in weapons) is carried out in several stages. Primarily, this involves ore extraction, chemical refining (producing "Yellowcake"), and enrichment. The complete process of refining uranium is outlined below: 1. Mining and Milling: The raw ore extracted from mines contains a very low concentration of uranium (approximately 0.2%). This ore is crushed into a fine powder and dissolved in an acid (such as sulfuric acid). Subsequently, through a series of chemical reactions, it is dried to form a powder known as "Yellowcake" (U<sub>3</sub>O<sub>8</sub>). This substance contains approximately 75% to 80% uranium.

2. Conversion: The Yellowcake is converted into uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) gas through a specialized chemical process called hydrofluorination. Upon being heated slightly above normal room temperature, this substance transforms into a vapor or gas, which serves as the basis for the enrichment process. 3. Enrichment (Uranium Enrichment): Natural uranium contains only 0.7% of the energy-producing isotope, Uranium-235 (U<sup>235</sup>), while the remaining 99.3% consists of Uranium-238 (U<sup>238</sup>). Through enrichment, the percentage of U<sup>235</sup> is increased. Gas Centrifuge Technology: This process utilizes cylindrical tubes known as centrifuges. Inside these tubes, UF<sub>6</sub> gas is spun at extremely

high speeds. Separation: Since U<sup>238</sup> is heavier, it accumulates towards the outer walls of the centrifuge, whereas the lighter U<sup>235</sup> concentrates in the center. This process is repeated thousands of times to achieve the desired level of purity. For Nuclear Reactors: The uranium is enriched to a purity level of 3% to 5%. For Nuclear Weapons: It must be enriched to a purity level of up to 90%. 4. Fuel Fabrication: Following the enrichment process, the enriched uranium gas is converted into a solid form (specifically, uranium dioxide powder). This powder is then molded into small ceramic pellets. These pellets are packed into metal tubes (known as cladding) to form fuel rods.

occurring element and increasing the proportion of Uranium-235 within it, while removing Uranium-238.

What level of enrichment is required for nuclear weapons?

To achieve an explosive chain reaction, Uranium-235 must be concentrated to levels significantly higher than those used in nuclear reactors for generating electricity or producing medical isotopes.

Technically, a nuclear weapon can be constructed with as little as 20% Uranium-235 (referred to as "highly enriched uranium"); however, the higher the level of uranium enrichment, the smaller and lighter the resulting weapon can be. Nations possessing nuclear weapons typically utilize "weapons-grade" uranium, enriched to approximately 90%.

This method functions much like a salad spinner, which flings water to the outer edges while keeping the salad leaves concentrated in the center. The heavier Uranium-238 moves toward the outer edges of the centrifuge, leaving the Uranium-235 concentrated in the center. This process is only moderately effective; therefore, the spinning procedure is repeated multiple times to increase the percentage of Uranium-235.

Most civilian nuclear reactors utilize "low-enriched uranium," which has been enriched to between 3% and 5%. This means that 3-5% of the total uranium present in the sample is now Uranium-235. This concentration is sufficient to sustain a chain reaction and generate electricity.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has enriched a substantial quantity of uranium to 60%. In fact, progressing from 60% enrichment to 90% enrichment is considerably easier than achieving the initial 60% enrichment level. This is because the quantity of Uranium-238 that needs to be separated out gradually decreases.

For this very reason, Iran is considered to pose a significant risk regarding the potential development of nuclear weapons—and it is also why centrifuge technology used for enrichment is kept highly classified. Ultimately, the same centrifuge technology used to produce fuel for civilian reactors can also be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

## What is the difference between modern nuclear bombs and earlier ones?



Modern nuclear bombs are significantly lighter, safer, and use multi-stage thermonuclear reactions to achieve yields vastly superior to the first-generation weapons dropped during World War II. While early bombs relied on the simple splitting of atoms (fission), modern arsenals harness a combination of fission and fusion, packing exponentially more destructive power into a fraction of the physical size and weight.

1. The Core Reaction Mechanism

Early Bombs: First-generation weapons (like those used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki) used nuclear fission. They relied on splitting heavy, unstable elements like Uranium-235 or Plutonium-239 through a chain reaction.

Modern Bombs: Modern devices are thermonuclear weapons (hydrogen bombs). They utilize a two-stage process:

1. Primary Fission Stage: A primary fission stage (the "trigger") generates the extreme heat and radiation needed to ignite a secondary stage, which harnesses nuclear fusion (the fusing of hydrogen isotopes like deuterium and tritium).

2. Yield and Efficiency

Early Bombs: These weapons had lower and highly restricted yields. The Hiroshima bomb (Little Boy) yielded approximately 15 kilotons of TNT, while the Nagasaki device (Fat Man) yielded about 21 kilotons.

Modern Bombs: Thermonuclear weapons have explosive yields measured in megatons (millions of tons of TNT). Despite being much smaller in physical volume, their efficiency allows them to be up to thousands of times more powerful than earlier weapons.

3. Size, Weight, and Delivery

Early Bombs: These weapons were massive, bulky, and weighed several tons,

requiring heavy, slow-moving bombers to deliver them to their targets.

Modern Bombs: Modern nuclear weapons are highly miniaturized. Thanks to advancements in engineering, they are lightweight and compact enough to be fitted onto Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), allowing a single intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) to carry several warheads for different targets.

4. Precision and Targeting

Early Bombs: These were "gravity bombs" dropped from aircraft. Because of the limitations of mid-century aviation, they relied on immense explosive force to destroy a wide area rather than surgical targeting.

Modern Bombs: Modern thermonuclear warheads are integrated with advanced, highly accurate guidance systems. This pinpoint accuracy allows militaries to destroy hardened military targets with much smaller explosive yields, significantly reducing collateral damage compared to the indiscriminate flattening of whole cities. 5. Safety and Reliability

Early Bombs: The triggers on early atomic weapons were notoriously dangerous. The gun-type assembly used in Little Boy had a constant risk of accidental detonation if the aircraft crashed. Modern Bombs: Modern warheads feature sophisticated Permissive Action Links (PALs) and electronic safety devices. They require complex, perfectly timed electrical sequences to detonate, virtually eliminating the risk of accidental nuclear explosion.

If you are interested, I can: Detail the physics behind the Teller-Ulam design of thermonuclear weapons

Explain the history and impact of the Cold War arms race.

Provide a comparative breakdown of modern nuclear delivery systems (ICBMs, SLBMs, and strategic bombers)

## Study reveals how intake of ultra-processed foods associated with increased risk of death

CHICAGO : Older persons who reported consuming more ultra-processed foods were nearly 10 per cent more likely to die after a median follow-up of 23 years than older adults who reported consuming less processed food, according to a recent study.

The results are drawn from a sizable study that followed more than 500,000 persons in the United States for about thirty years. The findings showed that consuming more ultra-processed foods was linked to slight increases in deaths from heart disease and diabetes, as well as deaths from all causes. However, there was no correlation observed in deaths from cancer.

"Our study results support a larger body of literature, including both observational and experimental studies, which indicate that ultra-processed food intake adversely impacts health and

longevity," said Erika Lofffield, PhD, Stadtman Investigator at the National Cancer Institute. "However, there is still a lot that we don't know, including what aspects of ultra-processed foods pose potential health risks."

Lofffield will present the findings at NUTRITION 2024, the flagship annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition held June 29 to July 2 in Chicago.

The research drew data from more than 540,000 people who provided information about their eating habits and health in the mid-1990s, when they were between 50 and 71 years of age. Over half of the participants have since died. The researchers analyzed overall rates of death among those who were in the 90th percentile for consumption of ultra-processed foods at baseline versus those in the 10th percentile, and also looked at

associations with specific foods and specific diseases.

"We observed that highly processed meat and soft drinks were a couple of the subgroups of ultra-processed food most strongly associated with mortality risk and eating a diet low in these foods is already recommended for disease prevention and health promotion," said Lofffield. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sugar-sweetened beverages and processed meats such as hot dogs, sausages and deli meat. For this study, researchers used multiple strategies to classify the level of processing for various food items. This included breaking down food frequency questionnaire data into particular food and ingredient types in addition to incorporating expert consensus to categorize dietary components according to a rubric known

as the NOVA classification system.

The researchers also accounted for other factors that can increase a person's risk of death, such as smoking and obesity. They found that people who consumed more ultra-processed foods also tended to have higher body mass index and a lower Healthy Eating Index score (a measure of diet quality based on how closely a person's diet aligns with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans). However, the analysis showed that the associations between ultra-processed food consumption and increased mortality were not explained by these variables, as the associations between higher ultra-processed food intake and mortality risk persisted among people categorized as having better or worse diet quality as well as among those classified as normal weight or obese.

## Study finds chemo medicine may cause significant hearing loss in longtime cancer survivors

FLORIDA : Researchers from Indiana University and the University of South Florida performed an interdisciplinary study that produced important results regarding the long-term consequences on cancer survivors of one of the most widely used kinds of chemotherapy.

The study, which tracked a cohort of testicular cancer survivors who received cisplatin-based chemotherapy for an average of 14 years, was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Oncology. It found that 78 per cent of the survivors have significant difficulties in everyday listening situations, which negatively affects their quality of life. This interdisciplinary study is the first to examine hearing loss progression and real-world listening problems in cancer survivors over an extended length of time.

"It's important that we understand the real-world effects of patients' sensory problems and if we can understand that, then we can develop better therapeutic strategies and preventive measures to improve the long-term quality of life for cancer survivors," said Robert Frisina, distinguished university professor and chair of the USF Department of Medical Engineering.

Cisplatin is commonly used in chemotherapy treatments for a variety of cancers, including bladder, lung, neck and testicular. It is administered intravenously and affects various parts of the body. However, the ears are particularly vulnerable as they have little ability to filter out the drug, causing it to become trapped. This leads to inflammation and the destruction of sensory



cells that are critical for coding sound, causing permanent hearing loss that can progressively get worse well after cisplatin treatments are completed.

Lead author Victoria Sanchez, associate professor in the USF Health Department of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery, said that despite the known risks, there's a nationwide lack of routine hearing assessments for patients undergoing chemotherapy. "Most patients still do not get their hearing tested prior to, during or after chemotherapy. Our study highlights the need for regular auditory evaluations to man-

age and mitigate long-term hearing damage."

The research team found higher doses of cisplatin led to more severe and progressing hearing loss, especially in patients with risk factors, such as high blood pressure and poor cardiovascular health. They also experienced increased difficulty hearing in common environments, such as a loud restaurant. "It will be critically important to follow these patients for life. Their current median age is only 48 years, and eventually they will enter the years at which age-related hearing loss also begins to develop," said Dr. Lois B. Travis, Lawrence H. Einhorn

## Study finds key steps in stem cell therapy for rare bowel disease

LONDON : Hirschsprung disease patients may benefit from stem cell therapy, according to a recent study conducted by scientists at the Universities of Sheffield and UCL.

In the case of Hirschsprung disease, a small number of nerve cells in the large intestine are absent. Due to the intestine's inability to contract and transport stool, blockages may occur. This may result in constipation and, in rare cases, a dangerous intestinal infection known as enterocolitis.

Around 1 in 5000 babies are born with Hirschsprung disease. The condition is usually picked up soon after birth and treated with surgery as soon as possible however patients frequently suffer debilitating, lifelong symptoms, with multiple surgical procedures often required. Alternative treatment options are therefore crucial. One option that has been explored by researchers involves using stem cell therapy to generate nerve cell precursors, which then produce the missing nerves in the intestine of those with Hirschsprung disease after transplantation. This in turn should improve the intestine's functionality. However, this procedure has not been carried out on human tissue from people with Hirschsprung disease until now. The research, published in Gut and funded by the Medical Research Council, is a collaborative effort between researchers at UCL and the University of Sheffield which began in 2017. Researchers at the University of Sheffield focused on the production and analysis of nerve precursors from stem cells. These were then shipped to the UCL team, who prepared the patient gut tissue, undertook the transplantation and maintenance of the tissue and then tested the function of the tissue segments.

Professor of Cancer Research at Indiana University School of Medicine and a researcher at the IU Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. This research is part of The Platinum Study, an ongoing research effort led by Dr. Travis and funded by the National Cancer Institute to study cisplatin-treated testicular cancer survivors.

The hope is that this study will inspire further investigation into alternative chemotherapeutic protocols and preventive measures, such as FDA-approved drugs to prevent or reduce hearing loss.

"This research gives oncologists the information they need to explore alternative treatment plans that could reduce the long-term side effects, such as altering the dosages and timing of the cisplatin in the treatment, when that could be an appropriate option," Frisina said.

Innovative solutions, such as Pedmark, a new FDA-approved injection that mitigates cisplatin-induced hearing loss in children, represent promising steps forward, according to Frisina.

"We want to protect our hearing or treat a hearing loss if hearing damage occurs," Sanchez said. "Hearing allows us to connect to the world we love. Staying connected through conversations with family and friends, enjoyment of music and entertainment, staying safe and finding pleasure in our vibrant surroundings. Promoting optimal hearing for overall wellness is essential for healthy living."

# US and Iran are nearing a "very good deal": Donald Trump

**MI News Service, Washington:** President Donald Trump said the US and Iran are nearing a "very good deal", but warned that if Washington's demands are not met, it would "end it in a different way."

Trump's remarks came during an interview to his daughter-in-law Lara Trump.

"We're close to a very good deal. If you're going to be in a hurry, you're not going to make a good deal, and slowly but surely, we're getting what we want - and if we don't get what we want, we're going to end it a different way," Trump said.

Trump said the Iranians are "good negotiators," but argued that the United States now holds "all the cards" because



Iran has been "militarily defeated."

"But we're close to a very good deal. If we can make it, good. Otherwise, we just start up with the Department of War, as we call it," the US President said.

Trump said the Iranians had stated they were not developing a nuclear weapon, but he countered

by asking what if they bought one.

"I said, well what happens if you buy a nuclear weapon? So now it says we will not develop or in any way purchase a military weapon. That's a big difference," he said.

The American leader insisted that the US has "significant leverage" over Iran, as their navy and air

force were "completely destroyed".

However, he said, the US has not fully dismantled Iran's military because some of the leadership was more moderate. Trump said the US had targeted Iran's more extreme elements and key leadership.

The US President held a meeting with his top cabinet colleagues and officers of the armed forces in the situation room on Friday but it concluded without any clarity on future actions.

Sources said that Trump asked for several amendments to the deal his envoy's reached with their Iranian counterparts.

Trump wants the deal and expects to finalize it soon, but is keen to strengthen several points

that are important to him particularly around Iran's nuclear material.

Trump's request has launched another round of back-and-forth between the parties that could last several days.

"It's more specifics about how the US gets the material and the timing," a senior administration official said, referring to the enriched uranium.

Another source said that Trump also wants to amend some of the wording around the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which hosts roughly one-fifth of the world's energy supplies in normal times.

The US official said Trump was told it would take around three days before the Iranians get back with a response.

# Israeli troops captured strategic castle in Lebanon

**MI News Service, Beirut:** Israeli forces have captured a strategic mountain topped with a Crusader-built castle in southern Lebanon in their deepest incursion into the country in more than a quarter century, the military said on Sunday.

The capture of Beaufort castle near the city of Nabatiyeh came after days of intense fighting and airstrikes in nearby villages where Israeli troops fought Hezbollah members in the rugged area.

It marks a major gain for Israel in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war, which began in early March. Israel and Lebanon have been at war since Israel was created in 1948, and are currently holding direct talks in Washington.

The Israeli push came despite a nominal ceasefire that has been in place since April 17 and just days before the next round of talks are set to be held at the State Department on June 2 and 3.

The Israeli army's Arabic spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted a photograph on X showing Israeli troops walking outside the castle, and Defense Minister Israel Katz wrote on X that they had raised an Israeli flag over the castle. It



is worth to mention that Israeli troops previously captured the castle in 1982 and held it until they withdrew from Lebanon in 2000.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it launched an operation a few days ago in the Beaufort Ridge and the Suluki valley further south with the aim of dismantling Hezbollah infrastructure and removing "direct threats to Israeli civilians." The statement said the army is ready "to expand the operation if needed."

In recent days, Israel has expanded the scope of its operations in Lebanon sending troops across the Litani River, which previously served as a de facto boundary, and demanding that residents leave much of southern Lebanon.

Israel has designated the area from the Litani up to the Zaharani River a combat zone. Some residents have already left the area due to the intense strikes in recent days, but people remain in many of the area's towns.

Israeli troops have been advancing for days in villages close to Beaufort castle after crossing the Litani River, which the Israeli military previously used as a de facto boundary. They are now about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the city of Nabatiyeh, a major center in southern Lebanon, and have called on all its residents to leave, as well as the residents of the coastal city of Tyre, the country's fourth largest city, and its surroundings.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah or the Lebanese government on the Israeli push.

## Japan ethylene plants' utilization rate hits record low in April as Middle East conflict disrupts supply

**MI News Service, Tokyo:** Japan's ethylene production plants recorded their lowest operating rate on record in April, as conflict in the Middle East choked off supplies of crude oil and its key derivative naphtha, a primary raw material for ethylene making, local media reported Saturday. The utilization rate dropped to 67.3 percent, the weakest level since records began in 1996, breaking the previous record low of 68.8 percent in March, Kyodo News reported, citing the Japan Petrochemical Industry Association.

The country's ethylene output in April also dropped 37.1 percent from a year earlier. With naphtha supplies from the Middle East becoming increasingly difficult to secure, major chemical manufacturers have turned to alternative sources within Japan and from regions other than the Middle East. The shift has pushed up procurement costs, adding pressure to downstream industries and leading to higher retail prices for consumer products. Resource-poor Japan had relied on the Middle East for around 80 percent of its naphtha supply. Ethylene is a key petrochemical feedstock used in the manufacture of a wide range of products, including plastics, synthetic fibers, detergents, and paints.

## IAEA chief voices concern over reported drone strike at Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant

**MI News Service, Vienna:** International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi on Saturday expressed serious concern over a reported drone strike on a turbine building at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), warning that attacks on nuclear facilities are "like playing with fire."

The IAEA said it had been informed by the ZNPP that a drone struck a turbine building at the facility earlier in the day, reportedly causing a hole in one of the building's walls. The agency disclosed the incident in a post on social media platform X.

"There should be no attacks of any kind from or against a nuclear facility," Grossi said, reiterating his call for restraint to avoid jeopardizing nuclear safety and security. He added that the IAEA



team stationed at the plant had requested access to the affected turbine building to conduct a first-hand assessment of the reported damage.

According to the IAEA, the incident would mark the first drone attack within the perimeter of the ZNPP since April 2024. The Zaporizhzhia plant, one

of Europe's largest nuclear power facilities, has been under Russian control since March 2022. Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the IAEA has repeatedly warned of the risks posed by military activities around the site and called for the protection of nuclear infrastructure.

## Israel shuts schools near Lebanon border amid repeated Hezbollah rocket, drone attacks

**MI News Service, Jerusalem:** Schools in towns and cities near the border with Lebanon were shuttered starting Sunday, as the IDF Home Front Command tightened its restrictions in light of intensified Hezbollah drone and rocket attacks on northern Israel over the weekend.

No educational activities were taking place in communities along the Lebanon border, including Kiryat Shmona, as well as Meron, Bar Yohai, Or HaGanuz, Safsufa, Yesud HaMa'ala, Kisra-Sumei, Beit Jann and Sde Eliezer. In the Upper Galilee and northern Golan, along with Katzrin and Kidmat Tzvi, educational activities were permitted only inside a building or in an area where a shelter can be reached in time, according to the guidelines issued Saturday evening.

Workplaces can operate in all of those areas, provided an adequate shelter can be reached in time. According to the guidelines, gatherings are restricted to 50 people outdoors and 200 indoors, and beaches are closed. The guidelines were to remain in effect until Monday at 9 p.m., by which time the Home Front Command was to conduct another assessment.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry an-

nounced Saturday that the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya would be moving operations to an underground protected area. The developments came as Hezbollah fired multiple rockets and drones at Israel on Saturday afternoon and evening, and as the IDF expanded operations in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli military told AFP that more than 25 projectiles were launched from Lebanon towards Israel on Saturday. Incoming rocket sirens sounded in the northern cities of Karmiel and Safed for the first time since the ceasefire, as well as in Kiryat Shmona and other northern communities that were targeted repeatedly. Multiple rockets were intercepted throughout the day, while others struck open areas, according to the military.

Air defenses intercept a Hezbollah rocket launched from Lebanon at northern Israel on May 30, 2026. (Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

Hezbollah also launched several drones, with one striking a military zone near the border community of Shomera, while two others were intercepted, the military said. Another apparent drone did not cross the border, the IDF stated. No injuries were caused in the attacks.

## Meteor likely causes loud boom heard in parts of U.S. Northeast

**MI News Service, San Francisco:** A loud boom heard across eastern Massachusetts and other parts of the U.S. Northeast on Saturday afternoon was likely caused by a meteor entering the atmosphere and producing a sonic boom, according to U.S. media reports.

The boom was reported at around 2:30 p.m. local time by residents in eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and other areas. The American Meteor Society said the incident was likely caused by a meteor about 3 feet, or 0.9 meters, wide entering the atmosphere near the New Hampshire-Massachusetts border.

Massachusetts public safety officials said they had received reports of an audible boom and ground tremors in eastern Massachusetts, but there were no known emergency police or fire requests connected to the reports, and they did not believe there was a public safety threat.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) said many people submitted "Did You Feel It?" reports, but no seismic event was recorded on USGS seismographs, indicating the shaking was not caused by an earthquake. A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather satellite also captured a burst over the Boston area, appearing to support the meteor theory, reports said.

An American Meteor Society expert said the meteor likely burned up in the atmosphere, and if any fragments survived, they probably fell into the ocean. No injuries, damage, hazards or evacuations have been reported in connection with the boom.

## Israeli soldier killed in Hezbollah drone strike in Lebanon

**MI News Service, Beirut:** A soldier was killed and four others were lightly wounded in a Hezbollah explosive drone attack in southern Lebanon, the IDF announced on Sunday, while the military captured the historic Beaufort Castle and

the surrounding strategic ridge as it pushed deeper into Lebanon. The soldier, Staff Sgt. Michael Tyukin, 21, of the Givati Brigade's Reconnaissance Unit, was an only child who moved to Israel from Ukraine with his mother in 2020.

## WHO chief calls for reconsideration of travel bans as DR Congo battles Ebola outbreak

**MI News Service, Bujumbura, DR Congo:** World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Saturday called on countries that have imposed travel bans or closed borders in response to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda to reconsider such measures.

Speaking at a joint press conference in Bujumbura, the capital of the northeastern Ituri Province and the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak, Tedros said such restrictions could complicate response efforts and risk discouraging transparency and trust, which are essential to saving lives.

"I call on countries that have imposed travel bans or border closures to reconsider. These measures make the response harder, and they discourage transparency and trust that saves lives," Tedros said.

Despite the lack of approved vaccines and specific medicines, the WHO chief said patients could still recover if they receive timely, quality medical care.

Tedros said his visit to Bujumbura was also aimed at engaging directly with affected



communities in this outbreak, in which over 1000 suspected cases have been reported.

Uganda has also reported nine confirmed cases after detecting two new infections in the capital, Kampala, the Ugandan health ministry said on Friday.

DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba said the country aims, "in the best-case scenario," to contain and end the outbreak within "four to six months," based on its experience in responding to epidemics and the known course of the Ebola

virus disease.

He said the immediate priority is to contain the virus within the three affected provinces -- Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu -- and prevent further spread.

Kamba also highlighted the country's strengthened laboratory testing capacity, with no backlog of samples remaining. Around 900 samples had been tested, of which about 260 were positive, he said, adding that the country now has the capacity to process all incoming samples, even if daily testing rises to 200 or 300 samples.

## Soaring fuel prices during the Iran war jeopardize travel to tourism-dependent countries in Asia

**MI News Service, Bangkok:** With summer around the corner, soaring fuel prices and other complications from the war with Iran are straining the tourism-dependent economies of countries in Southeast Asia, including Thailand and Vietnam.

The region's peak tourist summer season is at risk as elevated jet fuel costs coupled with ceasefire uncertainties prompt flight cancellations and higher ticket prices.

Tourism in Asia has yet to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, many countries are coping with the war's repercussions for global energy supplies and prices, which hit Asia first and hardest. Some families are pulling back on travel as visiting gas stations and grocery



stores gets more expensive worldwide. Crowds have thinned at some places once synonymous with travel.

"With gasoline prices rising and tourism declining, how can we make money?" asked Siv Pech, a 58-year-old tuk-tuk driver in Siem Reap, home to Cambodia's centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex.

the ground violently.

According to a post on Substack, the man, identified as Wesam Mekdad, was from Gaza, facing deportation proceedings in Germany, and the assault took place inside a refugee centre. Police defended the officers' action, clarifying that they were responding to a report of vandalism and threats involving a knife. However, the claims remain unverified.

The footage is part of the events that unfolded on May 19, when officers responded to a threat on Kamwed in Zeist, the Dutch police said in a

statement. "In a dynamic situation, they (officers) wanted to act quickly for the safety of those present and themselves," the statement read.

The video was widely circulated online, sparking severe backlash and prompting more information to surface about the arrested man.

Screenshots of a Facebook post allegedly shared by Mekdad surfaced on social media. He claimed that Dutch authorities want to deport him to Egypt since he is "a danger to the public system and Europe."

are more critical than ever as war-driven spikes in oil prices push up the cost of fuel imports, especially for parts of the world that relied on the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's coast as a conduit for much of their oil and gas.

The war will determine which tourism businesses can survive long enough to benefit from the eventual return of travelers, said Jitsai Santaputra of The Lantau Group, an energy industry consulting firm. "This, happening within five years of each other, first the pandemic and now the war, is horrible for the tourism industry," she said.

Jet fuel shortages and surging costs have led many airlines to cut their flights or re-adjust schedules. European carriers face a squeeze from similar

issues.

Airspace closures across the Persian Gulf early in the war and the intermittent closures of certain Gulf airports cut off key layover locations for Asia-bound flights or forced commercial airplanes to take longer, costlier routes.

Sandra Awodele, a freelance travel writer in the Washington area, often plans year-round international trips and hoped this summer would finally be the one she crossed Asia off her bucket list.

In March, she began planning a long-awaited vacation to Thailand, envisioning one to two weeks of exploring. Her plans hit a wall when she checked airfares.

"I looked at flight options and that's where it ended," Awodele said.

## Satwik-Chirag end title drought with historic Singapore Open crown

SINGAPORE : India's star men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty made history on Sunday by becoming the first Indian duo to win the men's doubles title at the Singapore Open.

They fought back from a game down to defeat Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri 18-21, 21-17, 21-16 in the final of the BWF Super 750 event.

The former world No. 1 pair made a strong comeback in a match that lasted one hour and 13 minutes.

This victory marked their first title in two years and the ninth World Tour crown of their careers. It also marked their third Super 750 title. This win ended a frustrating period where they had finished as runners-up in four finals since their last victory at the Thailand Open in 2024.

Before the final, the Indian pair trailed 1-2 in their head-



to-head record against the Indonesian team. They had lost to them in the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Open in January. This history seemed to weigh heavily in the opening game as Alfian and Fikri

secured a narrow win. However, Satwik and Chirag responded like champions.

They raised their tempo and took control of the longer rallies. Their aggressive play

and better court coverage began to trouble the world No. 3 Indonesians. The Indians leveled the contest by winning the second game 21-17.

With momentum on their

side, the Indian duo kept their intensity high in the final game. Satwik and Chirag pressured their opponents with powerful smashes and quick interceptions at the net. They sealed the third game 21-16, completing a remarkable turnaround.

The title capped a fantastic week for the world No. 4 pair, who had previously shocked reigning world champions and top seeds Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae in the semifinals to reach the championship match.

The emotions were clear once the winning point was scored. Satwik and Chirag fell to the court in celebration before embracing. Satwik then celebrated with a baby-themed gesture, while an ecstatic Chirag jumped onto his partner in joy. The pair later danced on the court as they enjoyed a long-awaited return to the winner's podium and a historic win in Singapore.

## French Open: Kostyuk ends Swiatek's run to storm into maiden QF

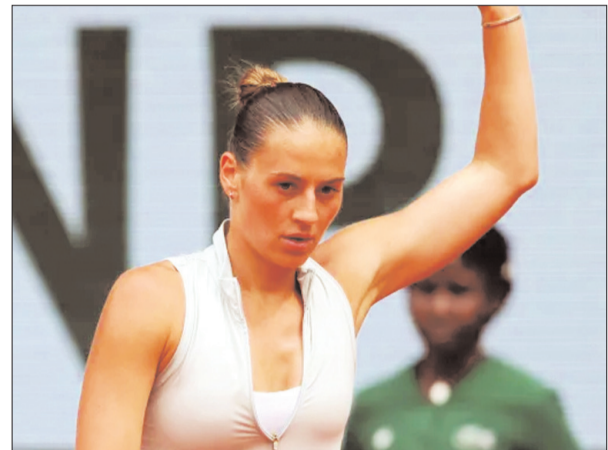
PARIS : Marta Kostyuk delivered one of the biggest shocks of this year's Roland Garros on Sunday, dismantling four-time champion Iga Swiatek in straight sets to secure her first French Open quarter-final berth.

The Ukrainian, seeded 15th, produced a fearless display to overcome Swiatek 7-5, 6-1, extending her remarkable clay-court winning streak to 16 matches and ending the Pole's hopes of another deep run in Paris.

For Kostyuk, the victory represents another milestone in a season that has transformed her into one of the most dangerous players on clay. Having already captured titles in Rouen and Madrid, she now finds herself among the final eight at Roland Garros for the first time, and just one win away from a maiden Grand Slam semi-final.

The contest initially appeared to be following a familiar script. Swiatek, a four-time champion on the Paris clay, settled into the match with authority and earned the opening break midway through the first set after a tactical baseline exchange that exposed Kostyuk's backhand side. When the former world No. 1 moved ahead 5-4 with the chance to serve out the set, momentum seemed firmly in her favour.

Instead, the match took a dramatic turn. Kostyuk refused to allow the set to slip away, immediately breaking back before producing a



string of aggressive winners that rattled her opponent. With Swiatek serving to stay in the set at 5-6, mounting pressure began to show as a pair of costly double faults handed the initiative to the Ukrainian. Kostyuk seized the opportunity, firing a stunning backhand winner to snatch the opener.

That breakthrough shifted the balance of the contest completely. Although Swiatek managed an early break in the second set, she struggled to establish any rhythm behind her serve. Her first-serve percentage dipped below 50 percent and errors continued to pile up as Kostyuk increasingly dictated play from the baseline.

The Ukrainian's confidence soared as the match progressed. She weathered a lengthy service game to consolidate her advantage before launching a decisive surge that left Swiatek with no route back into the contest.

Powerful forehands, clean ball-striking and relentless court coverage allowed Kostyuk to reel off six consecutive games. By the closing stages, the momentum had become overwhelming, with the 22-year-old striking winners from both wings while forcing repeated mistakes from a visibly frustrated Swiatek.

The statistics reflected the one-sided finish. Swiatek managed just 13 winners while committing 39 unforced errors, a combination that proved impossible to overcome against an opponent playing with supreme confidence. Kostyuk finished the afternoon having recorded her first victory over Swiatek in four meetings and one of the most significant wins of her career. The reward is a place in the Roland Garros quarter-finals, where she will face either Belinda Bencic or fellow Ukrainian Elina Svitolina.

## After beating Vinesh, Meenakshi opens up on mother's cancer battle and financial struggles

NEW DELHI : Wrestler Meenakshi Goyat has defended her decision to challenge the outcome of the women's 53kg final at the Asian Games selection trials, saying she was dissatisfied with the verdict despite putting up a strong performance in the bout against Antim Panghal, which she lost by a narrow margin of 3-2. Meenakshi, whose complaint has already been acknowledged by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), said she believed she had wrestled well enough in the final and therefore sought a review of the decision. "I am not satisfied with the decision because I felt I wrestled really well in that match. That is why I raised a challenge. The matter will now go to the concerned authorities and whatever decision comes after the review, I will accept it," Meenakshi told IANS. The 53kg category emerged as one of the most talked-about events of the trials, with Meenakshi first upsetting former World Championship medalist Vinesh Phogat before losing to Antim in the final. Reflecting on her victory over Vinesh, Meenakshi said she was unaware until the trials that she would get the opportunity to face one of India's most accomplished wrestlers, though she had long hoped for such a contest. "I did not know beforehand that I would be wrestling Vinesh in the trials. But somewhere in my mind, I always wanted to compete against her. When the bout happened, I was fully confident," she said. Meenakshi admitted that she made an error during the match that allowed Vinesh to score points but was pleased with the way she fought back. "At one point, I gave away points because of my own mistake. But I made a comeback and eventually won 6-4. I trusted my preparation and stayed confident throughout the match," she said. The wrestler also opened up about the personal challenges that continue to shape her journey in the sport. Coming from a modest background, Meenakshi revealed that her family has been dealing with financial hardship while her mother is battling cancer.



## French Open: Cirstea turns back the clock on farewell tour, brushes past Wang to reach QF

PARIS : 17 years after first breaking into the latter stages of Roland Garros, Sorana Cirstea returned to familiar territory on Sunday, defeating China's Xiyu Wang 6-3, 7-6(4) to secure a place in the quarter-finals and continue a remarkable late-career resurgence.

For a player preparing to retire at the end of the season, the achievement represented another milestone in what is becoming the most memorable campaign of her career. The Romanian 18th seed arrived in Paris carrying strong form and left Court Suzanne-Lenglen with a third Grand Slam quarter-final appearance to her name, and her first at the French Open since 2009.

The contest was expected to test Cirstea's consistency against a dangerous qualifier who had not dropped a set throughout the tournament. Instead, the Romanian's experience proved decisive in key moments as she controlled long stretches of the match before holding her nerve when Wang mounted a late challenge.

Cirstea established her authority early. Using her depth of shot and superior court positioning, the 36-year-old broke serve twice in the opening set to race into a commanding 5-1 lead. Wang, whose season only resumed in March after a lengthy shoulder injury layoff, eventually settled into the contest and recovered one of the breaks to narrow the deficit.

The momentum shift, however, proved temporary. Cirstea quickly regrouped and closed out the opening set 6-3, ensuring that Wang's revival never fully gathered



pace. The second set developed into a far tighter battle. Once again, Cirstea appeared headed for a comfortable finish after securing two breaks and moving within a game of victory at 5-2. Yet Wang produced her best tennis of the afternoon when facing elimination, stringing together an impressive run of games to level the score at 5-5 and suddenly place the Romanian under pressure.

With the match threatening to slip into a deciding set, Cirstea leaned on her vast experience. She steadied herself in the closing stages, protected her serve and guided the contest into a tiebreak. There, the gulf in big-match experience became increasingly evident. While Wang struggled to sustain her

momentum, Cirstea remained composed, winning the breaker 7-4 to seal victory after one hour and 55 minutes.

The result continues an extraordinary season for the Romanian veteran. Having already broken into the world's top 20 and claimed the first victory of her career over a reigning world No. 1 by defeating Aryna Sabalenka in Rome, Cirstea has now added another landmark achievement to her farewell campaign.

Still yet to drop a set in Paris, she advances to the quarter-finals, where she will face either eighth seed Mirra Andreeva or Switzerland's Jil Teichmann, with a place in the final four now within touching distance.

## Tyler Fletcher replaces injured Billy Gilmour in Scotland's World Cup squad

EDINBURGH : Scotland have drafted Manchester United teenager Tyler Fletcher into their FIFA World Cup 2026 squad after midfielder Billy Gilmour was ruled out with a knee injury sustained during Saturday's 4-1 friendly victory over Curacao at Hampden Park. Fletcher, 19, made his senior international debut in the same match, coming on as a half-time substitute. The midfielder was initially part of Scotland's training group and has now earned a place in the final squad following Gilmour's withdrawal.

The son of former Scotland captain Darren Fletcher, Tyler has enjoyed a rapid rise in recent months. Despite limited first-team opportunities at Manchester United, where he has made two substitute appearances this season, the youngster has already featured twice for the national side. His twin brother, Jack Fletcher, represents England at youth level.

Gilmour, who plays for Napoli, suffered the injury during the opening half against Curacao and was subsequently withdrawn

from the squad. The setback comes as a major blow for Scotland ahead of the World Cup, with the midfielder having played a significant role in the team's qualification campaign.

"We regret to announce that the knee injury sustained by Billy Gilmour in today's win over Curacao will rule him out of participation in the FIFA World Cup 2026. Everyone involved with the Scotland Men's National Team wishes Billy a speedy recovery. He will now return to his club, SSC Napoli, to commence rehabilitation," the team said in an official statement.

"I am devastated for Billy because he has been an integral part of our World Cup qualifying campaign. The timing of this injury is so, so cruel and we all feel for him. He knows what we all think of him as a footballer and a person, and while no words will give him any comfort tonight, I am certain Billy will have many major tournaments ahead of him in the future," head coach Steve Clarke added.

## 1800 ATHLETES GATHER IN GANDHINAGAR FOR THE 4TH PAFI NATIONAL ARMWRESTLING & PARA ARMWRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

GANDHINAGAR : The 4th National Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championship commenced at the Rashtriya Raksha University, Gandhinagar, bringing together over 1,800 athletes from across the country in one of the largest Armwrestling competitions in India.

Organised by the Armwrestling Sports Association Gujarat with the leadership of President Rajendrasinh Parmar and Treasurer Mayank Patel, under the aegis of the People's Armwrestling Federation India (PAFI), the four-day championship will run from May 30 to June 1 and features competitions across male and female sub junior, junior, senior, youth, para, master across various weight categories. Athletes from multiple states have assembled at the university campus, where all participants are being accommodated throughout the duration of the event.

The championship also serves as a platform for several leading stars of the Pro Panja League to lock horns again, who are representing their respective states and competing for national honours.

The Athletes who win the top two positions across categories here will qualify for the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championship taking place in New Delhi from October 29-November 7th 2026. The most exciting category has turned out to be the 90kgs senior men with several Pro Panja League athletes like Denic Lalruatlunanga, Tawheed Shaikh, Dara Singh Handa, Asker Ali, Pranjit Saikia, Satnam Singh and Pramod Mukhi all vying for the Championship medals and a chance to represent India at the World Championships. Speaking on the occasion, Preeti Jhangiani, President of the People's Armwrestling Federation India (PAFI) and vice president of the Asian Armwrestling Federation (AAF) said.

## Indian Open of Surfing: Sensational double by Kamali Moorthy lights up final day

MANGALURU : Tamil Nadu's gifted teenage surfer Kamali Moorthy made a significant mark by earning India's surfing quota for the Asian Games and achieving a notable double victory. She won both the Women's Open and Surfing Juniors U-18 Girls titles at the finals of the seventh Indian Open of Surfing.

This prestigious event on the national surfing schedule also acts as a crucial selection platform for India's team for the 2026 Asian Games. Additionally, Tamil Nadu's Kishore Kumar claimed the Men's Open title, while local favourite Pradeep Pujar took Karnataka's sole championship with a win in Surfing Juniors U-18 Boys. Harish P and Dhamayanthi Sriram also won the new U-14 Boys (Groms) and U-14 Girls (Groms) categories, respectively. The winners received cash prizes, certificates, and mementoes.

After the championship concludes, the Indian surfing team for Aichi-Nagoya 2026 will be selected based on results from the Indian Open of Surfing 2026, the inaugural

Andaman Little Pro 2026, coaching camps, international event performances, and overall rankings.

The championship was organised by the Mantra Surf Club and Surfing Swami Foundation, under the Surfing Federation of India. It received support from the Government of Karnataka and the Karnataka Surfing Association. The New Mangalore Port Authority was the title sponsor for the third consecutive year, and Cycle Pure Agarbatti and Deconstruct Skincare joined as Gold Sponsors. Deconstruct also served as the official SPF partner. Their ongoing support highlights the expanding institutional and corporate investment in India's surfing growth.

Kamali Moorthy defended her title with an impressive comeback, winning the Women's Open category with a score of 13.17. Sugar Shanti Banarse finished close behind in second place with 11.73, and Shrishu Selvam came in third with 8.50. As the two favourites entering the final, Kamali and Sugar delivered



an exciting contest. Sugar started strong with an early wave, but Kamali, the defending champion and current national series winner, stayed composed and executed a crucial scoring ride late in the heat to take the lead and secure her title.

Kishore Kumar, a teenage talent from Tamil Nadu, met expectations by winning the Men's Open category with a score of 15.20. In a highly

competitive final, he beat Ramesh Budihal (12.87), Sivaraj Babu (11.90), and Srikanth D (9.93). The decisive heat showcased some of the best surfers in the country vying for top honours. While Ramesh started strong with two quality waves, Kishore quickly responded with impressive scores on his first rides and kept his composure, gradually extending his lead. Sivaraj aggressively chased

the title with daring moves but couldn't land them cleanly, ultimately finishing third.

After clinching the Men's Open title, Kishore Kumar said, "Winning the Men's Open title at such an important championship is a very special feeling. With the Asian Games on the horizon, I look forward to the team selection process and will stay focused on representing India to the best of my ability."

The home crowd cheered loudly as local favourite Pradeep Pujar delivered an outstanding performance to win the Surfing Juniors 18 & Under Male title and earn the host state's only championship trophy. His second-to-last wave, featuring bold manoeuvres and executed with confidence, was the highlight of the final, boosting his lead and ending with a score of 12.17. Tamil Nadu's Tayin Arun put up a strong fight throughout the heat, finishing second with 11.26 points, while Prahlad Sriram took third with 9.50.

Pradeep Pujar said, "Winning my first national championship title, especially

in front of my home crowd, is an incredible feeling and a moment I will always cherish. The competition was very tough, and all the finalists pushed each other to perform at their best. I would like to thank my coach, the Surfing Swami Foundation, my family and everyone who has supported me throughout my journey". Fresh from her success in the Women's Open category, Kamali Moorthy achieved a championship double by winning the Surfing Juniors U-18 Girls final with a dominant performance.

Kamali took the lead early on with a series of powerful rides and maintained her advantage, ending with a winning score of 14.83. Saanvi Hegde from Karnataka excited local supporters by securing second place with 5.67 points, while Aadya Singh came in third with 2.73 points.

Kamali, after completing her double, said, "I'm thrilled to have won both the Women's Open and U-18 Girls titles at the Indian Open of Surfing 2026. I would like to thank the Surfing Federation of India, the organisers, spon-

sors and everyone involved for putting together such a fantastic event. Congratulations to all the winners and competitors who pushed the level of competition so high. With the Asian Games selection process approaching, I'm excited for what's ahead and will continue working hard to earn my place in Team India."

The newly introduced Surfing Juniors U-14 Boys (Groms) and U-14 Girls (Groms) categories showcased India's emerging surfing talent. In the boys' division, Harish P dominated the final with 17.23 points, finishing comfortably ahead of Sheikh Davudh S (12.97) and Prahlad Sriram (8.40). In the girls' division, Dhamayanthi Sriram delivered a composed performance to claim the top spot with 10.50 points, followed by Arabolu Nethra (8.13) and Sanvita Kunder (5.54). The inaugural U-14 events highlighted the depth of young talent in Indian surfing, with the winners standing out for their consistency, smart wave selection, and high-scoring rides.