



Mahua Moitra appears at Hogalberia police station in alleged religious insult case



Heavy Rain Alert Across Bengal on Independence Day

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NOTICE



This is to inform our esteemed readers, well-wishers and advertisers that on the occasion of 80th Independence Day, our offices will remain closed on August 15, 2026 (Saturday). Hence no edition of Morning India would be published on August 16, 2026 (Sunday). Readers can access our editions as usual from August 17, 2026 (Monday). We extend our heartfelt greetings to all our readers, well-wishers and advertisers on the occasion of 80th Independence Day.

Editor, Morning India

7 dead in tunnel tragedy in Uttarakhand, search on for 3 missing

MI New service, Dehradun Seven workers died when water gushed inside an under construction tunnel at a hydroelectric project site in Chamoli district, officials said on Friday. Search for three missing persons is currently underway, they said. The accident occurred in the tunnel, situated at Mayapur (Pipalkoti), when landslides and subsidence caused debris and water to fill half of the tunnel, trapping workers inside. District Disaster Management Officer N K Joshi said 22 people were inside the tunnel at the time of the incident on Thursday. Of them, 19 were rescued overnight, seven died, and a search for the three missing is on, he said. According to a statement, the deceased were identified as Pradeep Singh Pawar of Tehri, Mukesh of Chamoli, Durlabh Sharma of Bihar, Vijay and Jitendra Kumar of Jharkhand, and Lokeshwar and Bhuneshwar, whose native place could not yet be ascertained. The injured were taken to the Gopeshwar District Hospital. Six rescue personnel entered the tunnel, which is still filled with water. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and the police are carrying out the rescue. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami landed at Pipalkoti in a helicopter to oversee operations. District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar, who was at the site, has called for marshalling all resources needed to locate the missing persons.

Suvendu Adhikari praises Barrackpore police chief for new arrests in RG Kar case

MI News Service, Kolkata West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Friday praised the Barrackpore police commissioner for arresting two persons, including former Panihati TMC MLA Nirmal Ghosh from Odisha, in connection with the alleged "cremation scam" linked to the rape and murder of the RG Kar lady doctor. Another person has also been arrested on same charges over the "hurried cremation" of the RG Kar Hospital rape-murder victim. The accused, identified as the victim's neighbour and former TMC Councillor Sanjeev Mukherjee, was arrested from a house in Chinara Park area late on Thursday night, a police officer said, adding earlier he was at



large. Nirmal Ghosh was assaulted by a mob outside a police station in North 24 Parganas district on Friday. Ghosh was greeted with blows and kicks by the crowd when security personnel were escorting him to a prison van outside the Khardah Police Station to take him to Barrackpore sub-divisional court for production. A visibly distraught Ghosh was also

pelted with footwear, eggs and even muck by the mob despite the tight cordon of police and RAF personnel who covered his head with a helmet to minimise damage caused by the attack. Meanwhile, talking to reporters on the sidelines of a football tournament in his Bhabanipur constituency, Suvendu Adhikari also said BJP MP Ananta Maharaj, who had made "unsavoury" comments about Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, had deleted his Facebook post and should refrain from making comments against national icons in future. Earlier on August 9 the Chief Minister had directed the Barrackpore Police Commissionerate to launch a fresh

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'State govt implements 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' central scheme in Bengal : Suvendu Adhikari

MI News Service, Kolkata West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Friday said that the state's girls will come under the central scheme 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' which had not been implemented by the previous TMC government. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao project, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, is an initiative to arrest and reverse the decline in child sex ratio. Launching the 'Kanyatna Divas' here, the Chief minister said the BJP government has taken several steps for empowerment and education of girls and to stop dropout of girl students. During the previous Trinamool Congress government, August 14 was observed as the 'Kanyashree Divas' to mark the success of the Kanyashree financial assistance scheme. The state government has recently rebranded the initiative, doubled the annual scholarship for school girls from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 effective from the next academic session, and kept the one-time financial grant of Rs 25,000 for unmarried women turning 18 intact. "From now on, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao will be implemented in West Bengal unlike the past when the previous government did not do it," he said. Listing steps by his government, the chief minister said Rs 50,000 will be given to every girl for higher edu-



West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari greets and interacts with students on the occasion of Kanyatna Divas 2026, organised by the Women and Child Development and Social Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium in Kolkata on Friday. pic Prabir Bhattacharya

cation while 20,13,000 girls will be covered under the Kanyaratna scheme for which Rs 400 crore has been allotted. The TMC government had run the Kanyashree pro-

gramme for empowerment of girls in the state, but did not implement the central project, 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', initiated by the Modi government, Suvendu Adhikari

said. "For students – both boys and girls – wishing to study abroad, there will be another scheme by the name of Swami Vivekananda for which Rs 100

crore has been allotted," he said adding that more state-run Women's Colleges will also be set up. He said that emulating the ideals of 19th-century polymath and social reformer Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the state will give more emphasis on female education and work on women's safety. "In our budget, we have pledged our commitment to empowerment of women and see there is no case of dropout," he added. Hailing the services rendered by lady IAS officer Smita Pandey as the KMC administrator, Suvendu Adhikari said "she is performing her role so efficiently." Exhorting the girls and young women to be inspired by the spirits of patriotism and nationalism, he reminded them of freedom fighter Matangini Hazra who gave her life for the motherland. Speaking at the event held at the Dhanadhanya Auditorium in Alipore, the Chief Minister stated, "We have renamed the existing 'Kanyashree' scheme to 'Kanyaratna'. Our young girls are all gems (*ratna*). I want them to pursue their education diligently and grow up to be personalities like Matangini Hazra. The government will provide all necessary support to facilitate this. A helpline number—181—has been launched for the convenience of school-going girls.

HC seeks balance between Census duties and students' education

MI News Service, Kolkata The Calcutta High Court on Friday said it wants both the Census exercise and education of students to continue smoothly, while hearing petitions by school teachers who claimed difficulties in performing Census duties within the prescribed timings. A section of teachers challenged a government notification appointing them as enumerators and supervisors for the Census exercise. Justice Krishna Rao said the court wanted the Census work to continue without affecting the education of students, but the administration should ensure that those assigned the task are able to perform it despite their personal difficulties. The High Court has also observed that assigning such duties after school hours could leave teachers with little time for their regular responsibilities and personal obligations. Earlier, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has urged the District Inspector of Schools



(Primary Education), Kolkata, to issue a circular directing all headmasters, headmistresses, teachers and school clerical staff to mandatorily participate in Census 2027 work, citing reluctance from some educational institutions to release personnel for the exercise. In a letter dated July 8, the KMC's Special Municipal Commissioner and Additional Principal Census Officer said the Census had commenced in West Bengal, including areas under the civic body's jurisdiction, and that requisitions for teachers and assistant teachers to serve as enumerators and supervisors had already been placed. The letter noted that a database of the required

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Independence Day alert amid heightened security across the country

MI News Service, New Delhi / Kolkata Security across the country has been tightened ahead of the Independence Day 2026 celebrations with para-military and Police personnel conducting vehicle checks at key locations round the clock as part of heightened security measures in vulnerable locations across cities. As the entire country is gearing up to celebrate the 80th Independence Day tomorrow with unmatched pomp and gaiety, authorities in every state have stepped up surveillance and checks to ensure total safety for citizens across the country. Multiple anti-militancy operations were launched in parts of Jammu and Kashmir during the past couple of days, as security was heightened ahead of the Independence Day in the Union Territory (UT). Officials said an anti-militancy operation was initiated in Poonch's Mendhar Sector after a security guard spotted suspected movement



near an under-construction tunnel, connecting the Pir Panjal valley with Kashmir. Officials said the security guards opened three to four rounds of fire "as a precautionary measure" and Security forces cordoned off the jungles of Bhatta Dhurian and Sangiot after the incident. In the Chenab valley, security forces launched another anti-terror operation after locals reported move-

ment of terrorists in upper reaches. Officials said locals suspected movement of four terrorists at Ramtund area of Bhaderwah, Doda. Acting on a tip-off, the security forces have launched an operation to trace the hiding terrorists. In the Kashmir valley, frisking and searches of vehicles and markets were intensified throughout the day. Major markets like Lal Chowk

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West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari felicitates a student during Kanyaratna Divas 2026, organised by the Women and Child Development and Social Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, in the presence of state minister Agnimitra Paul, at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium in Kolkata on Friday. PIC: Prabir Bhattacharya

15 voter cards recovered from deserted patch, allegations of fake voters surface

MI News Service, Shantipur: Allegations of voter-list irregularities surfaced in Nadia's Shantipur after around 15 voter identity cards were reportedly recovered from a deserted, overgrown patch behind shops near New Ghosh Market in Ward 21 of Shantipur Municipality. The recovery, made after residents spotted the cards lying in the area on Thursday night, has triggered questions over their origin and the process through which they were issued.

According to local sources, resident Prashanta Mondal noticed several voter cards lying in the abandoned area on Thursday night and informed BJP's Ward 4 mandal president Piklu Biswas. On



Friday morning, Biswas informed Shantipur police and subsequently visited the spot with police personnel. The cards were then recovered, sources said.

Several residents whose names allegedly appear on the recovered cards have questioned how the documents reached the deserted area. One of the cards reportedly bears the name of Maya Sarkar, a resident of neighbouring Ward 10. Her family

claimed that she had voted twice using the acknowledgement slip issued after applying for a voter card and later received a new card. However, the date printed on the card recovered from the jungle allegedly predates her application.

Another recovered card reportedly carries the name Manju Banik Mondal and an address in Haripur. Locals have questioned the existence of the address mentioned on the card. A card bearing the name of Pabitra Biswas was also reportedly found. Her husband, Sushanta Biswas, claimed that although they had applied for a digital voter card, the new card never reached them and the old card remained with

the family. He questioned how the new card allegedly reached the abandoned site.

The incident has also triggered a political dispute. BJP leader Gobinda Bhowmik alleged that a large number of fake voters had been created in the area and claimed that voter cards were now being discarded amid fears of detection. He further alleged that the cards could have been prepared with the intention of facilitating double voting and demanded a detailed investigation and action against those responsible.

The allegations, however, are yet to be independently established. The recovery of voter cards from an abandoned location, by itself,

Centuries-Old Kadam Tree Uproots, Damaging Several Shops and Toto-Rickshaw Union Office

MI News Service, Kharagpur: A huge and reportedly centuries-old Kadam tree suddenly uprooted and fell near Kukai Bus Stand under Keshiary police station in West Medinipur district, damaging several roadside shops and a Toto and rickshaw union office. The incident triggered panic and chaos in the area. According to local residents, the massive tree had been standing there for many years and had been leaning dangerously to one side for some time. Residents claimed that the administration had earlier been informed about the condition of the tree and had been requested to either remove it or take necessary measures to ensure its safety. However, they alleged that no

concrete action was taken in time. The tree suddenly came crashing down with a loud noise in the morning. Several nearby shops were hit by the falling tree, while the office of the Toto and rickshaw union was also damaged. Fortunately, no casualties were reported as the incident occurred in the early hours when there were relatively few people around. The fallen tree and its large branches completely blocked a portion of the road connecting Kukai to Gagnevar, disrupting vehicular movement for a considerable period. Electricity supply in the surrounding area was also affected for a long time. Local residents believe that continuous rainfall over the past few days may have softened



the soil, weakening the tree's roots and eventually causing it to be uprooted. However, officials said the exact cause of the incident can only be established after an investigation by the concerned departments. Soon after receiving information, officials from the block administration and Forest Department reached the spot. They assessed the situation and initiated the process of removing the massive tree from the road. Necessary steps were being taken to clear the road and restore

normal traffic movement as soon as possible.

The administration was also assessing the damage caused to the shops, the Toto and rickshaw union office and other properties.

Meanwhile, local residents have demanded regular inspection of old and potentially dangerous trees standing along roadsides to prevent similar incidents in the future. They said that had timely steps been taken to remove or secure the dangerously leaning tree, the extent of the damage could have been significantly reduced. The incident has once again raised questions about the administration's role in monitoring and managing old and hazardous trees along roadsides.



Police personnel are conducting rehearsal of Police Medal in Kolkata on Friday.

Mahua Moitra appears at Hogalberia police station in alleged religious insult case

MI News Service, Krishnanagar: Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Maitra appeared at Hogalberia police station on Friday in connection with a case alleging that remarks made during a Facebook Live had hurt religious sentiments and threatened communal harmony. Maitra, the Krishnanagar Lok Sabha MP, reached the police station at around 2pm in compliance with an order of the Calcutta High Court and left at about 3.15pm after appearing before the investigating officer.

The case was registered following a written complaint lodged at Hogalberia police station on June 16 by Hiral Bhattacharya, general secretary of the BJP's Karimnagar Mandal-4. Bhattacharya alleged that Maitra's Facebook Live broadcast on June 15 contained



remarks that were objectionable and detrimental to communal harmony.

Following registration of the case, Maitra approached the Calcutta High Court seeking interim protection from arrest. On July 21, a bench of the high court granted her protection from arrest till October 5, or until further orders, while directing her to cooperate with the investigation. The court also directed her to appear personally at Hogalberia police station on August 14.

Maitra subsequently ap-

proached the Supreme Court challenging the high court's direction, but her plea did not result in any immediate relief. She therefore appeared before the investigating officer on Friday as directed by the high court.

During an earlier hearing, Maitra's counsel had expressed apprehension that eggs could be thrown at the MP when she visited the police station. Justice Dipankar Datta, referring to the risks associated with political life, had observed: "When you have entered politics, why are you afraid of eggs? Our freedom fighters took bullets on their chests."

Maitra remained at the police station for around 75 minutes before leaving. The investigation into the allegations is continuing.

JIS College of Engineering holds Har Ghar Tiranga rally in Kalyani

MI News Service, Kalyani: More than 200 students, faculty members and non-teaching staff of JIS College of Engineering participated in a 'Har Ghar Tiranga Rally 2026' in Kalyani on Friday, ahead of Independence Day. Organised by JIS Group Educational Initiatives, the rally was aimed at promoting respect for the national flag and spreading awareness about national unity, patriotism and responsible citizenship.

The rally began from the JIS College of Engineering campus at around 10.30am and proceeded towards Kalyani Main Station. Participants carried the Tricolour and interacted with people along the route to spread the message of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative. The organisers said the programme also sought to encourage students to uphold the dignity of the national flag and understand the values associated with it.

The event saw participation from senior administrative and police officials. Kalyani Sub-Divisional Officer Nilanjan Tarafder, Ranaghat Police District Superintendent of Police Aashish Maurya, Deputy Superintendent of Police Mohtashim Akhtar and Kalyani police station Inspec-



tor-in-Charge Arindam Mukhopadhyaya were present. Members of 49 Bn Battalion NCC also participated in the rally.

The programme was conducted under the leadership and guidance of JIS College of Engineering principal Dr Partha Sarkar, registrar Dr Debashish Sanki and dean academics Dr Saumyabrata Saha. CTO, NCC SD Biswamoy Pal, CTO, NCC SW Jayshree Bhattacharya and NSS officer-in-charge Shubhamoy Singha Roy played key roles in coordinating the event.

The rally maintained a strong focus on the dignity and proper use of the national flag. Students and staff carrying the Tricolour conveyed the message of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' to residents and urged them to respect the national flag.

College authorities said the rally was conducted peacefully and in a disciplined manner, with arrangements made to minimise inconvenience to regular pedestrian and vehicular movement. They also said the programme was conducted while adhering to applicable guidelines concerning the display and use of the national flag.

The college said the initiative was intended not merely as an Independence Day event but also as an effort to connect students with values of national unity, civic responsibility and public awareness. The participation of students, faculty, staff, NCC personnel and members of the administration turned the rally into a community-oriented patriotic programme in Kalyani.

Ananda Marga Discusses National Seminar on Anandamurti's Philosophy

MI News Service, Kolkata: Representatives of Ananda Marga Pracharaka Samgha on Friday met Prof. Harekrishna Mishra, HOD, Department of Sanskrit, Visva-Bharati University, along with Prof. Niranjana Jana, Prof. Sanjay Mandal and Dr Priti Laxmi Swain, Associate Professor, Department of Sanskrit. The meeting discussed Shri Shri Anandamurti's contributions through Anandasutram and his ideas and ideology. Acharya Divyachetana Advaduta, Central Public Relations Secretary, explained the concepts of centrifugal and



centripetal movements, describing the movement from subtle to crude and crude to subtle. The discussion also highlighted Ananda philosophy's basis in non-dualism and dualism. The

university representatives will submit a detailed proposal for a national seminar on Shri Shri Anandamurti's contribution to humanity for consideration and consent.

Police Seize Large Quantity of Firecrackers in Dantan

MI News Service, Kharagpur: A day ahead of Independence Day, Dantan police carried out a major crackdown against the illegal manufacture and storage of firecrackers. Police raided the Turka Dakshin Basti area under Dantan police station and seized a large quantity of raw materials used for making firecrackers, along with ready-made firecrackers, equipment and other materials used in their manufacture.

According to police sources, the quantity of raw materials recovered during the raid is estimated to be several quintals. Various types of equipment and other materials used for preparing firecrackers were also taken into police custody. The recovery of such a large quantity of firecracker-making materials created a stir in the area. Increased Vigilance Ahead of Independence Day. In view of Independence Day on August 15, the police administration has intensified surveillance against the illegal manufacture, storage and sale of firecrackers. As part of this drive, police received information that firecrackers were allegedly being manufactured illegally in the Turka Dakshin Basti area. Acting on the information, a police team conducted a raid there on Friday morning. During the operation, the team searched the suspected locations and recovered a large quantity of raw materials and other items used in firecracker manufacturing. The action is being viewed as an important step by the police against the illegal firecracker trade ahead of Independence Day.

Operation Conducted Under Supervision of Senior Officers. According to police sources, the entire operation was conducted under the supervision of Belda SDPO Anand Mondal and Dantan police station Officer-in-Charge Subir Majhi. The police team carried out the operation in a planned manner and searched suspected locations in the area. All the recovered materials were seized and taken into police custody. However, the police are yet to officially disclose the exact quantity of the seized materials and other details related to the operation. Crackdown on Illegal Firecracker Manufacturing. Illegal manufacture and unsafe storage of firecrackers can pose a serious threat to people living in surrounding areas. Any fire or explosion at such locations could result in significant loss of life and property. Keeping this danger in mind, police and administrative authorities conduct special drives against illegal firecracker manufacturing and storage ahead of festivals and national celebrations. The latest action by Dantan police indicates that authorities are likely to adopt a stricter approach towards illegal firecracker manufacturing and storage in the area. Police to Continue the Drive. Police officials said that the crackdown against those involved in illegally manufacturing and storing firecrackers would continue.



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari attends the 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' event at Mouli, in Kolkata on Friday.

Chaitanya Birthplace Row Resurfaces as Bengal Tourism Website Lists Nabadwip, Mayapur

MI News Service, Nabadwip: A long-standing dispute over the birthplace of 15th-century Vaishnavite saint Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has resurfaced after the West Bengal Tourism Department's website allegedly listed both Nabadwip and Mayapur under "Birth Place of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu".



The reference has triggered objections in Nabadwip, with the authorities being urged to clarify whether the listing is a factual error or reflects a particular historical interpretation.

Advaita Das Babaji, head of the Nabadwip Prachin Mayapur Nimai Janmasthan Temple, said the matter would be brought to the notice of the state administration. "There should be no confusion over the birthplace of Mahaprabhu," he said, adding that a written complaint would be submitted to Chief Minister and the concerned authorities.

The issue has also drawn the attention of Nabadwip MLA Srutisekhar Goswami, who is a member of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Environment, Forest and Tourism. Goswami said he had already informed the Tourism Depart-

ment about the matter and maintained that the information on the government website should be corrected if it was factually inaccurate.

The controversy, however, is rooted in a much older historical and religious dispute. While Nabadwip is widely identified with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birthplace, the Mayapur claim is strongly associated with the Gaudiya Vaishnavite tradition. The two locations are geographically close and are both major pilgrimage centres associated with Chaitanya and the Vaishnavite tradition. Government and institutional sources have themselves used different formulations in describing the two places. A Union government publication, for instance, had referred to Mayapur as the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, while the Nadia district administration currently states that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nadia in AD 1486.

The historical dispute is

further complicated by changing river courses and differing interpretations of the old geographical boundaries of Nabadwip. Mayapur is regarded by the Gaudiya Vaishnavite tradition as the site of the Yog Peeth, identified as Mahaprabhu's birthplace, while Nabadwip has long been recognised as the larger historic and pilgrimage centre associated with his life and teachings.

Against this backdrop, the Tourism Department's alleged use of both names has given the old dispute a fresh administrative dimension. The key question now is whether the website entry was the result of an editorial or data-management error, or whether the department deliberately used both names to accommodate the competing historical traditions.

With the issue now raised before the administration, attention is on the Tourism Department's response. Any clarification from the government could determine whether the latest controversy ends as a website correction or reopens the much older debate over the exact geographical identity of Mahaprabhu's birthplace.

Chhattisgarh Gets Investment Proposal for Semiconductor, Biomedicine and Solar Projects



MI News Service, Raipur: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai held a 52-minute meeting at his official residence in Raipur with industrialists who proposed investments worth several thou-

sand crore rupees in semiconductor, biomedicine and solar projects in the state.

The meeting was held in the presence of revered Shri Samireswar Brahmachari. US-based industrialist Ram

Gopal Reddy, a devotee and follower of Shri Samireswar Brahmachari, and Anjani Kumar, Vice-President of the Indian operations of R.S. Semiconductor and Ram Power Project, presented the investment proposals.

During the detailed discussion, the participants discussed the proposed projects and their potential for development in Chhattisgarh.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed his gratitude to Shri Samireswar Brahmachari for taking the initiative to facilitate investment in the state. The proposed projects are expected to contribute to the growth of the semiconductor, biomedicine and renewable energy sectors in Chhattisgarh.

Kanyaratna Divas : CM Announces Rs 2000 Grant From 2027

MI News Service, Kolkata Kanyaratna Divas was observed at DhonoDhanyo Stadium in Kolkata on Friday with a focus on promoting girls' education, empowerment and opportunities for women. The programme was organised by the West Bengal Women and Child Development and Social Welfare Department. Chief Minister SuwenduAdhikari, Minister Agnimitra Paul and Minister MalatiRava Roy were present at the event. Addressing the gathering, Adhikari said the government was committed to expanding women's education and empowerment in line with the vision of social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He said provisions had been made in the state budget to prioritise women in employment opportunities and strengthen women's education, including support for colleges, universities and higher education. The Chief Minister further announced that the monthly grant received by Kanyaratna beneficiaries would be doubled from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 from the

2027 academic year, aimed at providing greater financial support to girl students.

He said financial assistance would also be provided to ensure that no girl student is forced to discontinue her studies midway due to financial constraints. Referring to the Centre's BetiBachao, BetiPadhao programme, Adhikari said West Bengal had now joined the initiative.

"We have taken a commitment to stand by our daughters," Adhikari said, urging students to play a leading role in education and in strengthening society. He said he wanted girls to make a contribution to society like freedom fighter Matangini-Hazra. According to the Chief Minister, financial assistance under an existing government programme would be provided to 20.13 lakh girl students during the current academic year. He said payments to more than 10 lakh students were being released after verification, adding that schools completing the verification process quickly would enable students to receive the benefits sooner.

Suwendu Adhikari praises Barrackpore police chief for ► Continued from page 1

probe and register an FIR regarding the controversial hurried cremation surrounding the 2024 RG Kar Medical College and Hospital case. Following which former TMC MLA Nirmal Ghosh and others were arrested from outside the state by the local police. After Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari ordered the Barrackpore City office to investigate the circumstances and irregularities of the victim's cremation and acting on a complaint filed by the victim's father, an FIR was registered at the Khardah police station under the Barrackpore Police Commissionerate. Within 24 hours former Trinamool Congress MLA and the party's Chief Whip in the Assembly Nirmal Ghosh, local councillor Somnath Dey, and resident Sanjib Mukherjee were arrested in connection with the alleged destruction of evidence and related charges. The investigation into the RG Kar case has gathered renewed momentum following a change of government in West Bengal, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) accelerating its probe. A fresh FIR has now been registered based on a new complaint filed by the victim's father at the Barrackpore Police Commissionerate on Monday, bringing serious charges including criminal conspiracy and destruction of evidence. The developments follow a memorial meeting held on Sunday at Lokasanskriti Bhavan in Panihati, North 24 Parganas, marking the second death anniversary of the doctor-student. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari attended the event along with the victim's parents and announced the formation of a Special Investigation Committee (SIT), led by the Barrackpore Police Commissioner, to pursue a parallel probe through a newly instituted case. At the meeting, the Chief Minister raised questions over the circumstances of the victim's cremation, alleging that it was carried out in undue haste on the day of the incident. He identified three individuals — former TMC MLA Nirmal Ghosh, Somnath Dey, and Sanjib Mukherjee — whose roles at the cremation ghat, he said, appeared suspicious and required detailed scrutiny. Following these remarks, an FIR was registered against them and several others.

Authorities have also initiated a separate inquiry into why no cremation fees were charged to the family. The alleged irregularities pertain to the cremation conducted at the Natagarh Kadamtala Crematorium, which falls under the jurisdiction of Ghola Police Station near Panihati. According to the Chief Minister, the cremation — originally scheduled for the third slot — was rescheduled to the first slot, allegedly to expedite the process. He further claimed that mandatory procedures were bypassed, including the non-payment of stipulated charges and the absence of a close relative's signature. At the memorial, the Chief Minister confirmed that three senior police officials had already been suspended for alleged dereliction of duty. The administration stated that the parallel investigation — alongside the ongoing CBI probe and court proceedings — is aimed at addressing all unresolved aspects of the case.

Independence Day alert amid heightened security

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in Srinagar saw security forces conducting searches of hotels and shops, as part of the stepped-up security. A purported online threat to Pandits has left security forces on tenterhooks. Officials said Kashmiri Pandits working in the Kashmir valley were allowed to go on leave till August 20, in the wake of the online threats by a little-known outfit United Liberation Council. The J-K police were looking into the online threats, apparently emanating from across the border. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V. K. Birdi assessed the security situation in Srinagar and took stock of "multi-layered security arrangements". "For the main function on August 15 in Srinagar, all security arrangements and preparations for the parade are going on. Security arrangements were not confined to the main venue but had been extended across Srinagar city and all districts of the Valley," said IGP Birdi. In the National capital Delhi, Police has stepped up security arrangements around the Red Fort ahead of the Independence Day celebrations on August 15, with around 15,000 to 20,000 personnel from multiple security agencies are being deployed in the area. For the first time, the Delhi Police will use the Abhigyaan app along with its Facial Recognition System to strengthen security and identify people with criminal backgrounds in crowded areas.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) North Raja Banthia said the preparations have been underway for several days and will involve personnel from the Delhi Police, paramilitary forces, National Security Guard (NSG) and other agencies.

The security plan includes CCTV cameras equipped with video analytics and the Facial Recognition System. The system can capture facial profiles from a distance and compare them with police records and databases to identify wanted suspects, absconders, repeat offenders and other people with criminal antecedents. The FRS database currently contains information on nearly three lakh individuals with previous criminal backgrounds. Police have used the system at several crowded locations in the past. The Abhigyaan app will provide police personnel with access to criminal records through biometric verification. The app is linked to the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System and can help officers check the records of convicts, accused persons and inmates during field operations. Police personnel can use the app on smartphones along with portable biometric scanners to verify identities and check criminal histories within a short period.



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari during the inauguration of the MLA Cup Football tournament in the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, Kolkata on Friday.

Ayushman Bharat Services to Launch From Aug 16 :Health Minister

MI News Service, Kolkata West Bengal Health Minister SharadwatMukhopadhyay on Friday announced that Ayushman Bharat services will be formally launched in the state from August 16, which will be observed as Ayushman Day. He said the move would bring Bengal in line with the rest of the country under the central health insurance scheme. According to the minister, around 1.5 crore families, covering nearly six crore people, will be brought under Ayushman

Bharat. Those left out of the scheme will continue to receive coverage under the state's SwasthyaBimaYojana. "On August 16, we are formally launching the scheme in the state," Mukhopadhyay said, adding that all existing beneficiaries of the MukhyamantriSwasthyaBimaYojana would receive the same benefits under Ayushman Bharat.

He said around 3.4 crore people would receive Ayushman Bharat benefits from August 16. All people

aged above 70 years would also be covered under the scheme and no eligible person would be left out, he said. To make access to the scheme easier, e-KYC facilities will be available at hospitals, allowing beneficiaries to complete the verification process at the hospital itself.

The state Health Department has already held several rounds of discussions with private hospitals over the implementation of the scheme. Mukhopadhyay said agreements with private hospitals had initially

been signed for 90 days. The arrangements will be reviewed after the period and the agreements renewed accordingly.

A total of 1,903 hospitals are registered under the scheme, including 1,303 private hospitals that will provide Ayushman Bharat services, the minister said.

The state government will gradually phase out the existing health insurance arrangement as Ayushman Bharat coverage expands across West Bengal, he added.

Heavy Rain Alert Across Bengal on Independence Day

MI News Service, Kolkata The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued yellow alerts for heavy rainfall in four districts of north and south Bengal on Saturday, August 15, Independence Day. Isolated thunderstorms accompanied by light to moderate rain are also expected in several areas, with gusty winds reaching 30-40 kmph. The low-pressure system over Gangetic West Bengal is moving west-northwest towards Jharkhand and is currently positioned over parts of Medinipur, Purulia and Jharkhand as a deep depression. The weather system is expected to influence rainfall across Bengal over the next few days.



In south Bengal, partly cloudy skies and scattered thunderstorms are likely across all districts. On Friday, an orange alert for heavy rain is in place in coastal and western districts, while yellow alerts have been issued for Jhargram, East Midnapore, West Midnapore, South 24 Parganas, Purulia and West Burdwan. Isolated areas of South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore may experience gusty winds of up to 50 kmph.

A yellow alert for thunderstorms, light to moderate rain and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph has been issued across south Bengal. From Saturday, rainfall is expected to decrease in intensity and coverage, although South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore may still receive heavy rain. On Sunday, rainfall activity is expected to remain relatively low in south Bengal, though isolated thunderstorms and winds of up to 40 kmph are likely. Kolkata, North and South 24 Parganas, East Midnapore, Nadia, Murshidabad and Birbhum may receive more rain. Scattered light rain is possible on Monday and Tuesday, with no major weather alert issued.



Dr Indranil Khan, Minister of State with Independent Charge of the Departments of Youth Services and Sports and Consumer Affairs, West Bengal, leads a Tiranga Yatra and Consumer Awareness Rally from Khadya Bhavan in Kolkata on Friday.

Kolkata Police Warns Cops Against Mobile Phone Use During Red Road Duty

MI News Service, Kolkata Kolkata Police has issued strict instructions to personnel deployed for the Independence Day parade at Red Road, asking them to remain alert and avoid using mobile phones while on duty. Senior officers at Lalbazar have told police personnel that they are not spectators and must focus entirely on security and surveillance during Saturday's Independence Day celebrations. Chief Minister SuwenduAdhikari is scheduled to hoist the national flag at Red Road, where several VIPs and VIPs are expected to attend the programme. The



security arrangements have been intensified amid intelligence inputs following the recent arrests of alleged members of terror organisations and a suspected Pakistani spy from areas on the outskirts of Kolkata.

Investigating agencies have not ruled out the possibility of Independence Day events being targeted by ex-

tremist elements. As a result, intelligence officials have alerted Kolkata Police and advised heightened vigilance ahead of the celebrations. Lalbazar officials have particularly stressed the need for discipline among personnel deployed along the parade route. In previous years, several policemen on Independence Day duty

were reportedly found using their mobile phones during the programme. Some were also seen taking photographs and videos of the parade, much like spectators, and posting them on social media. Others were reportedly seen taking selfies while deployed for security duty. Taking note of such incidents, senior police officers this year have adopted a stricter approach. Officers-in-charge of police stations and traffic guards, along with other senior officials, were instructed to brief all personnel deployed at Red Road about the directives.

SMPA Hoists Kolkata's Highest National Flag at Netaji Subhas Dock

MI News Service, Kolkata Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMPA) hoisted one of Kolkata's tallest National Flags at Netaji Subhas Dock under the HarGharTiranga initiative, celebrating patriotism, national unity and pride. The monumental Tricolour has been installed on a 60-metre (around 197-feet) high flagmast and measures 30 ft x 20 ft, making it a prominent addition to Kolkata's historic port landscape. The initiative highlights SMPA's commitment to the HarGharTiranga campaign and the vision of a Viksit Bharat. The towering flag also reflects the port's longstanding

contribution to India's maritime heritage and nation-building.

Designed as a permanent installation with a 25-year design life, the flagmast features a tapered, hot-dip galvanised, 20-sided polygonal high-tensile steel shaft supported by an RCC bored cast-in-situ pile foundation. A motorised double-drum winch system operates the flag.

The Tricolour is expected to become a lasting symbol of national pride, inspiring port employees, workers, stakeholders, citizens and visitors while strengthening Kolkata Port's association with India's growth and aspirations.



Rathendra Raman, Chairperson of SMPK, leads a patriotic event as SMPA hoists Kolkata's highest National Flag at Netaji Subhas Dock under the Har Ghar Tiranga Initiative.

Woman Health Worker Attempts Suicide at Cal Med College

MI News Service, Kolkata A woman health worker at Calcutta Medical College and Hospital allegedly attempted suicide by consuming blades late on Thursday night, triggering concern among hospital staff. She was rescued in a critical condition and is currently undergoing treatment in the emergency department, where doctors began treatment. Hospital sources said her condition remains critical.

HC seeks balance between Census duties and

► Continued from page 1

manpower had already been received from the education authorities. The civic body, however, said several school heads had informed it that they were unable to spare teachers because of staff shortages. It also noted that many teachers had submitted applications seeking exemption from census duties on various grounds. Referring to the Census Act, 1948, KMC said enumerators and supervisors are appointed under statutory provisions and that refusal to perform census duties is punishable with a fine of up to Rs 1000. In the event of conviction, imprisonment of up to three years may also apply. The letter also sought to reassure schools that Census 2027 would be conducted in two phases rather than as a continuous exercise. It said the work schedule would be flexible, allowing teachers to discharge census responsibilities within the prescribed time frame. KMC requested the District Inspector of Schools to immediately communicate the directive to all schools so that deployed teachers and clerical staff report for census duties as scheduled. Reacting to the development, Animesh Halder of the Secondary Teachers' and Employees' Association (STEA) opined that the large-scale deployment of teachers for Census 2027 would further strain government schools already facing acute staff shortages due to years of inadequate recruitment. He said assigning most teachers and non-teaching staff from schools to census work would disrupt classes, examinations, evaluation and completion of the syllabus.

Name Change

I, Reema Singh, wife of Bijay Kumar Singh, Indian Army No.4292544P, Rank:NK, residing at Vill: Kurur, PO:Kurur, Dist:Rohtas, Bihar-802212, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my actual name is Reema Singh and Reema Singh and Rima Devi is the same person and identical one via affidavit before the Ld 1st Class executive Magistrate at Howrah dated 12th August 2026.

NAME CHANGE

I, DEBASIS DUTTA (Old Name), S/o- Madhab Chandra Dutta, R/o/ 11/12/2, Kal Banerjee Lane, Hira (M.Corp.), Howrah, West Bengal- 711101, shall henceforth be known as DEBASIS DUTTA (New Name) as declared before the Notary Public, Kolkata, dt. 04.08.2026. DEBASIS DUTTA (Old Name) and DEBASIS DUTTA (New Name), S/o- Madhab Chandra Dutta is the same & one identical person.

Name Change

I Umme Sharia Farhatas Saba (old name), D/O Sk Ali Asgar, Resi of Vill- Sathatia, P.O- Bhaslia, PS- Deganga, Dist- 24 Parganas (N), Pin - 743423, W.B. Also My name has been recorded in my all documents such as Aadhar card, Epic card, Pan card, Birth certificate as Umme Sharia Farhatas Saba, also my name has been recorded in my Old passport no L7378430 & Secondary certificate as Umme Sharia Farhatas Saba, D/O- SK Ali Asgar, I declared shall hence forth be known before the affidavit first class judicial Magistrate in Alipore Court, Kolkata, WB. dated as on 24/07/2026, as Umme Sharia Farhatas Saba, Umme Saharia Farhatas Saba, D/O- SK Md Ali Asgar, SK Ali Asgar both are the same and one identical person in eye of law.

Name Change

NAGMA HARI @ NAGMA YASMIN, wife of Abinash Hari, residing at 5/H/19, Saha Rajab Road, Hastings, Kolkata-700022, West Bengal do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that by an affidavit (no 70722) in the Court of the first Cals Judicial Magistrate at Alipore on 10.08.2026 that NAGMA YASMIN and NAGMA HARI is the same and one identical person.

নাম পরিবর্তন

আমি স্মট. ডিপালি রানি মন্ডাল, স্বামী স্রী অতিথ রান্জান মন্ডাল, পিতা লি. স্রীকান্তা মন্ডাল, আমার মারনিক এডমিট কার্ড, মারনিক এবং পুত্র নিলাদ্রি সেকহার মন্ডাল এর এডমিশন কার্ডে আমার নাম ডিপালি মন্ডাল রেজিস্ট্রেশন, পাত 12.8.2026 এর ডি. ফার্স্ট ক্লাস জুডিশিয়াল ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট অলিপুর কোর্টে। L.d. 3rd court, S. L. No. 71917 বলে ডিপালি রানি মন্ডাল এবং মন্ডাল মন্ডাল এক ও অভিন্ন ব্যক্তি হিসাবে পরিচিত হয়েছি।

NAME CHANGE

I Rabindranath Manna s/o of late Surendra Manna residing at Vill Jalchak PO. Jalchak PS Pingla Dist Paschim Medinipur shall henceforth be known as Rabindra Manna as declared before the Court of Ld JM 1st class at Midnapur Dist. Paschim Medinipur vide affidavit no 21168 dated 12.08.26. Rabindranath Manna and Rabindra Manna both are same and identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, SAHBINA PARVEEN (old name) W/o- Abdul Haleem, resident of 118, Elliot Road, Police Station-Park Street, Kolkata-700016 WB do hereby declare that I have changed my name from SAHBINA PARVEEN (old name) to SHABINA PARVEEN(new/correct name) and henceforth I shall be known as SHABINA PARVEEN(new/correct name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Ld. Judicial Magistrate 1st Class at Calcutta on 14/07/2026 SHABINA PARVEEN and SAHBINA PARVEEN both are same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, ABDUL HALIM (old name) S/o-Late Mohammad Kaleem, resident of 118, Elliot Road, Police Station-Park Street, Kolkata-700016 WB do hereby declare that I have changed my name from ABDUL HALIM (old name) to ABDUL HALEEM(new/correct name) and henceforth I shall be known as ABDUL HALEEM(new/correct name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Ld. Judicial Magistrate 1st Class at Calcutta on 14/07/2026 ABDUL HALEEM and ABDUL HALIM both are same and one identical person.

NAME CHANGE

I, No. 15154570L Rank Ex HAV Name Tarak Nath Ghosh resident of Vill.-Dogachhia, P.O.-Saligram, P.S.-Nakashipara, Dist.- Nadia (WB), Pin-741154 have changed my son name from Tanmoy Ghosh to Tanmay Ghosh vide Affidavit dated 31 July 26 in the Court of the Ld. Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Krishnagar, Nadia.

Name Change

I, SANGHAMITRA CHAKRAVARTY, W/o Raudrad Mukherjee, (Name), resident of B-402, Lake Gardens, Kolkata - 700045 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from SANGHAMITRA CHAKRAVARTY to SANGHAMITRA MUKHERJEE and henceforth I shall be known as SANGHAMITRA MUKHERJEE in all Purpose, vide Affidavit S.No. 19 sworn before the Notary Public at Alipore Police Court dated on 13.08.2026. SANGHAMITRA MUKHERJEE and SANGHAMITRA CHAKRAVARTY both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, RABIYA BIBI (OLD NAME), D/O- MOZZAMMEL HAQUE, W/O-ABDUL HAKIM Residing at Tentulia, Bora, Chhoto Jagulia, Duttapukur, North 24 Parganas, W.B.PIN-743294, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as RABEYA BIBI (NEW NAME) as declared before the First Class Executive Magistrate Barasat Court, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal vide affidavit No 14196, Dated 13/08/2026. RABIYA BIBI (OLD NAME) and RABEYA BIBI (NEW NAME) both is same and identical person.

Name Change

I, Manusura Bibi (old name), wife of Late Md Sofuddin Molla, residing at X-63/10, Khaldhari Road, P.O. Bartala, P.S. Nadial, Kolkata-700018, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Manusura Bibi (Old Name) to Majeda Bibi (New Name) and henceforth shall I be known as Majeda Bibi (new name), as declared Before The Ld. 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore, South 24 Pgs, vide an affidavit dated 05/08/2026. Majeda Bibi (new name) and Manusura Bibi (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, SUJAUDDIN MOLLA son of Late Md Sofuddin Molla, Resident of X-63/10, Khaldhari Road, P.O. Bartala, P.S. Nadial, Kolkata-700018, West Bengal, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my father's name from Mohammed Safiuddin Molla, Sofi Mallick, Sofikul Molla (Old Name) to Md Sofiuddin Molla (new name) and henceforth he shall be known as Md Sofiuddin Molla (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 05/08/2026. Md Sofiuddin Molla (new name) and Mohammed Safiuddin Molla, Sofi Mallick, Sofikul Molla (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sonchari Mukherjee (Old Name As Per School Certificate), Wife Of Samir Sinha, Resident Of Tno Govt. Colony, Hariharpur, Hridaypur, Po-Hridaypur, PS-Barasat, North 24 Parganas-700127, West Bengal Do Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Sonchari Mukherjee (Old Name) To Sanchari Sinha (New Name) And Henceforth I Shall Be Known As Sanchari Sinha (New Name) In All Purpose, Vide Affidavit No 26 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 12/08/2026. Sanchari Sinha (New Name) And Sonchari Mukherjee (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Sumit Mukherjee (Old Name), Son Of Late Akhil Bandhu Mukherjee, Resident Of 43/D/7, Narayan Roy Road, Purba Barisha, South 24 Parganas-700008, West Bengal Do Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Sumit Mukherjee (Old Name) To Sumit Mukherjee (New Name) And Henceforth I Shall Be Known As Sumit Bandhu Mukherjee (New Name) In All Purpose, Vide Affidavit No 11 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 14/08/2026. Sumit Bandhu Mukherjee (New Name) And Sumit Mukherjee (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Rajasree Sarkar, Rajasree Biswas, Rajasree Sarkar Biswas (Old Name), Wife Of Kanak Sarkar, Resident Of 85h, Rajpur Road, P.O.-Regent Estate, PS-Netaji Nagar, Kolkata-700092, West Bengal Do Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Rajasree Sarkar, Rajasree Biswas, Rajasree Sarkar Biswas (Old Name) To Rajasree Biswas Sarkar (New Name) And Henceforth I Shall Be Known As Rajasree Biswas Sarkar (New Name) In All Purpose, Vide Affidavit No 10 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 14/08/2026. Rajasree Biswas Sarkar (New Name) And Rajasree Sarkar, Rajasree Biswas, Rajasree Sarkar Biswas (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Mohammed Salim (Old Name) Son Of Md Ramzan, Resident At 22/1, Madar Talla Lane, 4th Floor, Pilkhana, PO-Howrah, District -Howrah, Pin - 711101, West Bengal Do Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Mohammed Salim (Old Name) To Md Salim (New Name) and henceforth I shall be known As Md Salim (New Name) In All Purpose, Vide An Affidavit No 19 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 14/08/2026 Md Salim (New Name) And Mohammed Salim (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Mohammed Sohrab (Old Name) Son Of Md Salim, Resident At 22/1, Madar Talla Lane Pilkhana, PO- Howrah, District -Howrah, Pin - 711101, West Bengal Do Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Mohammed Sohrab (Old Name) To Md Sohrab (New Name) Henceforth I Shall Be Known As Md Sohrab (New Name) In All Purpose, Vide An Affidavit No 18 Sworn Before The Notary Public At Kolkata On 14/08/2026. Md Sohrab (New Name) And Mohammed Sohrab (Old Name) Both Are Same And One Identical Person.

Name Change

I, Jeet Bahadur Rai (Old Name), S/o Daula Bahadur Rai, Resident of SOURENI FOREST VILLAGE SAKAM FOREST FAGU DARJELING 735231, West Bengal, India. do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Jeet Bahadur Rai (Old Name) to Jit Bahadur Rai (new name) and henceforth I shall be known as Jit Bahadur Rai (new name) in all purpose, vide affidavit No 30256 sworn before the Ld 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore on 12/08/2026. Jit Bahadur Rai (new name) and Jeet Bahadur Rai (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sunita Sherpa (Old Name), W/o Pas-sang Sherpa, Resident of 8TH MILE RISHI ROAD NEAR CLUNY WOMEN COLLEGE KALIMPONG 734301, West Bengal, India. do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Sunita Sherpa (Old Name) to Sunita Gurung Sherpa (new name) and henceforth I shall be known as Sunita Gurung Sherpa (New Name) in all purpose, vide affidavit No 30247 sworn before the Ld 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore on 12/08/2026. Sunita Gurung Sherpa (new name) and Sunita Sherpa (old name) both are same and one identical person.

Restaurants seek extended hours in Kolkata

MI News Service, Kolkata: Restaurants and bars in the city could get a longer window to serve customers this festive season if the state accepts an industry proposal to make late-night operations the norm, with the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) seeking an automatic extension of serving hours till 2 am and permission to stay open till 4 am on special occasions.

The Calcutta chapter of the NRAI has met finance minister Swapan Dasgupta and state excise officials with a clutch of proposals aimed at easing regulatory restrictions that could boost business, including during the festive season in October. The association has sought an additional two hours by default for licensed restaurants and bars. At present, establishments are permitted to serve alcoholic beverages till midnight. During festive periods, they can extend operating hours with permission from the state excise department.

The association has

also proposed that establishments be allowed to serve till 4 am on occasions such as New Year's Eve, Christmas Eve and other notified festivals and public celebrations. NRAI has argued that longer operating hours would support tourism, raise consumer spending and increase collections from excise duty and GST.

The proposal comes against the backdrop of the state government's decision, announced in the June budget, to explore round-the-clock operations for shops, restaurants, offices, logistics services and hospitality establishments. The reform is proposed to be rolled out initially on a pilot basis in Calcutta as part of the state's efforts to project Bengal as a modern and investment-friendly destination.

"We had a fruitful meeting with the government on various issues, including extending operational hours for restaurants and bars, streamlining time-bound issuance of licences and easing the process of obtaining lab (low alcoholic beverage) licences," said Piyush Kankaria, chapter head, NRAI-Calcutta chapter.

Government sources said the proposal would be examined primarily from the revenue and law-and-order angles. The state will assess whether longer operating hours can generate higher excise revenue compared with the existing system, while ensuring law and order safeguards.

NRAI has also sought a time-bound mechanism for issuing excise licenses. The industry has proposed that a letter of intent be issued within 15 days of site inspection and law-and-order clearance, followed by the final licence within 90 days of submission of complete documentation.

Industry sources said the current process may take around six months or even longer. By then, restaurants may have completed construction, hired employees and incurred substantial costs but remain unable to start operations because of pending licence approvals.

The association has further sought uniform excise norms across hospitality formats, including clubs, hotels, restaurants, lounges, pubs and night-clubs, which currently operate under different rules governing timings, dry days and other regulatory requirements.

Kharagpur Division Holds Grand Tiranga Bike Rally as Part of Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign and 150 Years of Vande Mataram

MI News Service, Kharagpur: The Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway organised a grand Tiranga Bike Rally in Kharagpur as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign and the third phase of celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram' ahead of Independence Day. The initiative aimed to spread the message of patriotism, national unity and respect for the national flag among the people.

The rally began from SERSA Stadium in Kharagpur, with railway officers and employees participating enthusiastically. Sanjiv Kumar Singh, ADRM/Infrastructure, Kharagpur, and Prakash Kumar Panda, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner/ RPF, Kharagpur, along with RPF personnel and employees from various departments of the Kharagpur Division, took part in the rally carrying the Tricolour. The participants conveyed a message of patriotism and respect for the national flag during the rally. The sight of the Tricolour-covered bike rally passing through Kharagpur further strengthened the spirit of national unity, pride and



patriotism in the city. The rally concluded at Kharagpur Railway Station. Cultural programmes held on Partition Horrors Remembrance Day. The Kharagpur Division also organised cultural programmes and other activities at various locations to observe Partition Horrors Remembrance Day. Members of the Divisional Cultural Association presented cultural programmes at different stations, including Kharagpur, Medinipur and Jhargram.

Through these programmes, memories of the pain, struggles and sacrifices endured by people during the Partition were brought to the forefront. The events also conveyed messages of peace, unity, harmony and brotherhood.

Special programmes marking 150 years of Vande Mataram. The Kharagpur Division is also organising various activities to mark the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram'. As part of the celebrations, instrumental renditions of 'Vande Mataram' are being played at various railway stations across the division. The railway administration has ensured that these special musical presentations do not interfere with regular train announcements or important operational information. Passenger facilities and essential railway announcements continue uninterrupted during the celebrations. Railway premises illuminated in Tricolour. To add to the grandeur of the Independence Day celebrations, various railway premises under the Kharagpur Division have been illuminated in the colours of the national flag. Station buildings, station premises and the divisional office have been decorated with Tricolour lighting. The illuminated railway premises are reflecting the festive spirit of Independence Day and the sense of patriotism associated with the national celebration. The decorations have also generated enthusiasm and a sense of pride among railway employees, passengers and the general public. Through these programmes, the Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway is making efforts to involve railway employees, passengers and the general public in the Independence Day celebrations. The Tiranga Bike Rally, cultural programmes, instrumental renditions of 'Vande Mataram' and Tricolour illumination are aimed at promoting patriotism, national unity, harmony, remembrance and national pride, while paying tribute to the national flag and the glorious history of the country and honouring the rich legacy of 'Vande Mataram'.

India's exports surge 19.6%

MI News Service, New Delhi: The country's merchandise exports surged 19.63 per cent to \$44.24 billion, driven by a jump in shipments of petroleum products, while higher imports pushed the trade deficit to a six-month high of \$31.98 billion. Imports rose by about 17.52 per cent year-on-year to \$76.22 billion in July due to increase in the inbound shipments of crude oil, which grew by 17.64 per cent to \$18.31 billion, according to the data released by the commerce ministry. Brent crude oil prices ranged between \$72 and \$95 per barrel during July. Crude oil imports accounted for about 24 per cent of the total imports during the month. The growth in exports in July was the highest since June 2022, when shipments had risen 30.12 per cent. During April-July this fiscal, exports jumped 17.04 per cent to \$173.78 billion, and imports climbed 19.27 per cent to \$292.38 billion.



At the Khuti Puja of Manicktala Chaltabagan Lohapatty Durga Puja, marking the start of its 84th year in Kolkata on Friday present Rajesh Bihani, Rajesh Jaiswal, Ashok Jaiswal, Bhikram Ghosh, actor Rituparna Sengupta, Vijay Ojha, MLA Sundeep Bhutoria, Chairman brand strategist Suhel Seth and industrialist Shishir Bajoria.

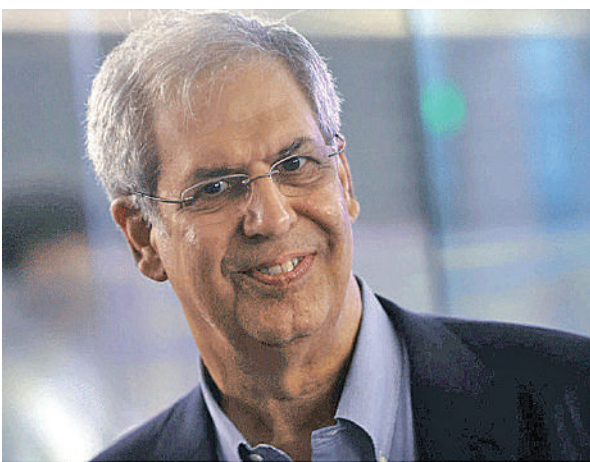
Exports to West Asia region rise 8.62 pc: Commerce Secy

MI News Service, New Delhi: India's exports to the West Asian region rose by 8.62 per cent year-on-year to USD 5.7 billion, despite global uncertainties, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Thursday. Exports to the West Asian countries

stood at USD 5.2 billion in the same month last year, as per the government data.

The shipments to the region had declined for the first time in March due to the US-Iran conflict, but improved in April and further in May and June.

NOEL TATA emerges as key power broker in Tata Group



MI News Service, Mumbai: For decades, Noel Tata built retail and trading businesses out of the spotlight that followed his half-brother Ratan Tata. Now, as chairman of Tata Trusts, he is set to influence two of the biggest decisions facing the Tata group: who leads it next and whether it ever goes public.

Noel's stewardship of the trusts, influence over Tata Sons' succession process and role in the listing debate could shape the future of one of India's best-known and biggest conglomerates.

Tata Sons, the holding company of the group with a combined market value of around \$277 billion, must choose a new leader to succeed Chairman N. Chandrasekaran when his tenure ends in February 2027. Tata Trusts hold great sway over the decision with a controlling stake in Tata Sons.

Long overshadowed by his half-brother Ratan Tata, the public face of the conglomerate for decades, Noel, 68, rose through less prominent corners of the business, building credentials in retail and trading rather than the group's flagship companies.

Though rarely visible publicly, Noel spent years serving on boards across the group. Unlike Ratan Tata, one of India's most recognisable corporate

leaders, Noel largely shunned publicity despite his growing influence within the group. He emerged as a central figure only after Ratan's death in October 2024.

Trustees unanimously appointed him as chairman of Tata Trusts and he subsequently joined the Tata Sons board as a non-executive director. He now occupies one of the most powerful positions in Indian corporate governance.

"The job is to find the most effective allocation of the resources we have, make choices on how to deploy those resources meaningfully, and do what is best for India," he said at an event this month.

"We must serve the purpose for which the founders of the Trusts left their shares – to improve

life in India."

Two issues will shape the future of the 158-year-old conglomerate: the selection of Tata Sons' next chair and whether the privately held company should eventually pursue a public listing.

Tata Sons has faced pressure from minority shareholder Shapoorji Pallonji Group to pursue a public listing, while regulatory requirements could also eventually revive the issue unless the company secures an exemption.

Noel has not made public comments, but media reports said he and other trustees unanimously opposed listing last year. He sought clarification from Tata Sons on four to five issues, including the group's business performance, its five-year plan, capital expenditure and the rationale

for remaining unlisted, accessed to a source with direct knowledge of the matter.

With regard to the next chairman, his influence is likely to be decisive. While the Tata Sons board will oversee the selection process, the trusts' control of the holding company means Noel will have a significant say in choosing a leader capable of balancing commercial ambitions with the group's distinctive governance structure. The trusts appoint a third of Tata Sons directors, who hold veto powers over key decisions.

Noel spent most of his career away from the public eye after graduating from Britain's Sussex University. He built his reputation within the group through retail and trading businesses rather than its flagship steel, IT and auto companies.

He joined Tata International, the group's trading arm, before moving to Trent, then a relatively small retail business. As managing director from 1999, he helped transform Trent into one of India's biggest retail success stories through brands such as Westside and, later, value-fashion chain Zudio.

The success established him as a respected operator within the Tata group and paved the way for broader leadership respon-

sibilities. "Noel is well versed with how Tata businesses are run. In retail, many people thought how will Tata compete with the big retailers. Noel has shown it," Sanjay Singh, a former Tata Sons executive who retired in 2019, told Reuters in 2024.

Unlike Ratan Tata, he built influence quietly and remained very private, with his office serving as the main conduit for his views and public statements, the source with knowledge of the group said.

In August 2010, Noel became Tata International's managing director. During his tenure, the company's turnover grew to more than \$3 billion from roughly \$500 million as it expanded across geographies and businesses.

He stepped down as managing director in November 2021 after reaching the group's retirement age for senior executives but remained its non-executive chairman.

He accumulated other boardroom responsibilities across the conglomerate, including chairmanships at Voltas and Tata Investment Corporation, and vice-chairmanships at Tata Steel and Titan.

"He has kept a low profile so the outer world doesn't know him well, but he is quintessential Tata," Singh said.

Addressing health, lifestyle variables might minimise the risk of young-onset dementia: Study

A wide range of risk factors for young-onset dementia have been found by researchers. The findings call into question the concept that genetics is the only cause of the disease, paving the way for novel preventative techniques.

The large-scale study identified 15 risk factors, which are similar to those for late-onset dementia. For the first time, they indicate that it may be possible to reduce the risk of young-onset dementia by targeting health and lifestyle factors.

Relatively little research has been done on young-onset dementia, though globally there are around 370,000 new cases of young-onset dementia each year.

Published in JAMA Neurology, the new research by the University of Exeter and Maastricht University followed more than 350,000 participants younger than 65 across the United Kingdom from the UK Biobank study. The team evaluated a broad array of risk factors ranging from genetic predispositions to lifestyle and environmental influences. The study revealed that lower formal education, lower socioeconomic status, genetic variation, lifestyle factors such as alcohol use disorder



der and social isolation, and health issues including vitamin D deficiency, depression, stroke, hearing impairment and heart disease significantly elevate risk of young-onset dementia

Professor David Llewellyn of the University of Exeter emphasized the importance of the findings: "This breakthrough study illustrates the crucial role of international collaboration and big data in advancing our understanding of dementia. There's still much to learn in our ongoing mission to prevent, identify, and treat dementia

in all its forms in a more targeted way. This is the largest and most robust study of its kind ever conducted. Excitingly, for the first time it reveals that we may be able to take action to reduce risk of this debilitating condition, through targeting a range of different factors.

Dr Stevie Hendriks, Researcher at Maastricht University, said: "Young-onset dementia has a very serious impact, because the people affected usually still have a job, children, and a busy life. The cause is often assumed to be genetic, but for many people we

don't actually know exactly what the cause is. This is why we also wanted to investigate other risk factors in this study."

Sebastian Kohler, Professor of Neuroepidemiology at Maastricht University, said: "We already knew from research on people who develop dementia at older age that there are a series of modifiable risk factors. In addition to physical factors, mental health also plays an important role, including avoiding chronic stress, loneliness and depression. The fact that this is also evident in young-onset dementia came as a surprise to me, and it may offer opportunities to reduce risk in this group too."

The study's support was supported by Alzheimer's Research UK, The Alan Turing Institute/Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Alzheimer Nederland, Gieskes Strijbis Fonds, the Medical Research Council, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration South West Peninsula (PenARC), the National Health and Medical Research Council, the National Institute on Aging, and Alzheimer Netherlands.

Dr Janice Ranson, Senior

Research Fellow at the University of Exeter, said: "Our research breaks new ground in identifying that the risk of young-onset dementia can be reduced. We think this could herald a new era in interventions to reduce new cases of this condition."

Dr Leah Mursaleen, Head of Clinical Research at Alzheimer's Research UK, which co-funded the study, said: "We're witnessing a transformation in understanding of dementia risk and, potentially, how to reduce it on both an individual and societal level. In recent years, there's been a growing consensus that dementia is linked to 12 specific modifiable risk factors such as smoking, blood pressure and hearing loss. It's now accepted that up to four in 10 dementia cases worldwide are linked to these factors. "This pioneering study shines important and much-needed light on factors that can influence the risk of young-onset dementia. This starts to fill in an important gap in our knowledge. It will be important to build on these findings in broader studies."

The full study is entitled 'Risk factors for young-onset dementia in the UK Biobank: A prospective population-based study', published in JAMA Neurology.



Study finds how type of allergy remedy help treat lung cancer

NEW YORK [US] : Researchers at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine have discovered an allergy route that, when inhibited, activates antitumor immunity in animal models of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

In preliminary human research, combining immunotherapy with dupilumab - an Interleukin-4 (IL-4) receptor-blocking antibody widely used to treat allergies and asthma - improved patients' immune systems, with one out of six patients having substantial tumour decrease.

The findings were described in the December 6 issue of Nature.

"Immunotherapy using checkpoint blockade has revolutionized treatment for non-small cell lung cancer, the most common form of lung cancer, but currently only about a third of patients respond to it alone, and in most patients, the benefit is temporary," says senior study author Miriam Merad, MD, PhD, Director of the Marc and Jennifer Lipschultz Precision Immunology Institute and Chair of the Department of Immunology and Immunotherapy at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

"A big focus of our program TARGET is to use single cell technology and artificial intelligence to identify molecular immune programs that can dampen tumor immune response to checkpoint blockade."

Also known as a PD1 inhibitor, checkpoint blockade is a type of cancer immunotherapy that can unleash the cancer-killing activity of T cells.

"Using single cell technologies, we discovered that the immune cells infiltrating lung cancers, as well as other cancers we studied, exhibited characteristics of a 'type 2' immune response, which is commonly associated with allergic conditions like eczema and asthma," said first study author Nelson LaMarche, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow in the lab of Dr. Merad.

"These results led us to explore whether we could repurpose a medication typically used for allergic conditions to 'rescue' or enhance

tumor response to checkpoint blockade," says Thomas Marron, MD, PhD, Director of the Early Phase Trial Unit at Mount Sinai's Tisch Cancer Center, and co-senior author of the study.

"Strikingly, we found that IL-4 blockade enhanced lung cancer response to checkpoint blockade in mice and in six lung cancer patients with treatment-resistant disease. In fact, one patient whose lung cancer was growing despite checkpoint blockade had nearly all their cancer disappear after receiving just three doses of the allergy medication, and his cancer remains controlled today, over 17 months later."

The researchers are encouraged by the initial results but emphasize the need for larger clinical trials to validate the drug's efficacy in treating NSCLC.

Beyond the clinical trial findings reported in the current Nature paper, the investigators have now expanded the clinical trial, adding dupilumab to checkpoint blockade for a larger group of lung cancer patients, and Dr. Marron recently received a grant from the Cancer Research Institute to study the effects in early-stage lung cancer as well.

Through these trials, they are searching for biomarkers that can predict which cancer patients might benefit from dupilumab treatment and which may not.

"In our relentless pursuit of progress, the Cancer Research Institute (CRI) proudly supports the visionary team at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Their findings validate our commitment to funding research across the entire discovery continuum, from the lab to clinical implementation, driven by cutting-edge technology and data. We're eager to witness our support delivering new hope by uncovering pathways to enhance checkpoint blockade responses. We champion this discovery and take pride in being part of its journey from lab to clinic, reinforcing our commitment to transforming lives," said Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD, CEO and director of scientific affairs at CRI.

Researchers reveal impact of aldehydes on DNA damage, ageing

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

ments in shaping India's digital health ecosystem.

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

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

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

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

Artificial intelligence decreases barrier to treating ultrasonic brain illness

Focused ultrasound technology is a non-invasive therapy procedure that employs ultrasound energy to treat neurological problems by focusing it on a few millimetres of the brain, even deep regions, without opening the skull. It has been used to treat a variety of refractory brain illnesses, including depression and Alzheimer's disease because it has a low impact on surrounding healthy tissue and lowers side effects like problems and infections. However, its application has been limited thus far since it is difficult to reflect the distortion of ultrasound waves generated by the varied shapes of patients' skulls in real time. A research team led by Dr. Kim, Hyungmin of the Bionics Research Center at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) has developed a real-time acoustic simulation technology based on generative AI to predict and correct the distortion of the ultrasound focus position caused by



the skull in real-time during focused ultrasound therapy. Until now, the clinical applicability of AI simulation models in the field of non-invasive focused ultrasound therapy technology has not been validated. However, its application has been limited thus far since it is difficult to reflect the

distortion of ultrasound waves generated by the varied shapes of patients' skulls in real time. A research team led by Dr. Kim, Hyungmin of the Bionics Research Center at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) has developed a real-time acoustic simulation technology based on generative AI to predict and correct the distortion of the ultrasound focus position caused by the skull in real-time during focused ultrasound therapy. Until now, the clinical applicability of AI simulation models in the field of non-invasive focused ultrasound therapy technology has not been validated. To predict the location of the invisible acoustic focus, navigation systems based on medical images taken before treatment are currently utilized, which provide information about the relative position of the patient and the ultrasound transducer. However, they are limited by their inability to account.

STUDY SHOWS SLEEP DEPRIVATION MAKES US LESS HAPPY, MORE ANXIOUS

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

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

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

The study was published in the journal Psychological Bulletin.

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

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

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

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

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



blunted arousal in response to emotional stimuli."

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

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

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

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

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

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

India dispatches first tranche of 20 tonnes of relief material to earthquake-hit Colombia

MI News Service, Delhi: India has dispatched the first tranche of a 20-tonne consignment of relief supplies to Colombia to assist the nation in its ongoing post-earthquake recovery and relief operations after the disaster left 265 people dead and 3,494 injured.

In a post on X, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated that the humanitarian assistance package includes essential medical equipment, medicines, temporary shelter materials, hygiene kits, and other critical supplies designed to meet urgent ground requirements following the disaster.

Reaffirming New Delhi's commitment to humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), Jaishankar expressed solidarity with the South American nation as it navigates the aftermath of the severe quake.

Dispatched the first tranche of the 20 MT relief supplies to Colombia to support ongoing post-earthquake recovery efforts. The assistance includes medicines & medical equipment, temporary



shelter & hygiene support, and other essential items needed in the aftermath of the disaster. India stands in solidarity with the people of Colombia during these difficult times," the External Affairs Minister posted on X.

The swift delivery of aid underscores India's continuing role as a first responder in global crisis situations and highlights growing diplomatic and humanitarian ties between New Delhi and Bogota.

Earlier, Colombian President Abelardo De La Escriella on

Wednesday (local time) invoked an "economic emergency" to enable exceptional measures for earthquake relief and reconstruction.

Addressing the media, De La Escriella described the situation as a tragedy of "great dimensions", noting that the government was preparing measures to support affected families and businesses while accelerating reconstruction.

He said the government would provide support, including pay-

ment of public services, rental subsidies, tax relief and economic assistance for vulnerable families and small merchants.

"It is undoubtedly a tragedy of great dimensions, but it is precisely in these moments when we must unite under the flag of Colombia," the President said."

Taking into account the severity of the circumstances, a tragedy like this forces us to take exceptional measures. This crisis hits us at a difficult time, in the midst of the most complex fiscal crisis in our republican history, with a high level of debt and limited resources. We are structuring measures such as the government paying for public services, rental subsidies, tax relief, and economic support for the most vulnerable families and small merchants. I have decided to invoke the economic emergency provided for in our Constitution," he added.

De La Escriella said that 25,872 families, or 53,816 people, had been affected by the 7.4 magnitude earthquake that struck the country early on Monday.

Iran President Pezeshkian to travel to Delhi for BRICS Summit: Sources

MI News Service, Delhi: Iranian President Masoud-Pezeshkian will travel to New Delhi to attend the upcoming BRICS Summit, Iranian sources said on Friday.

Pezeshkian's participation in the summit is scheduled to be held in the national capital in September.

The visit assumes significance as India is hosting the 18th BRICS Summit under its 2026 chairship. The summit will be held under India's theme of "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability". India assumed the BRICS chairship from Brazil at the beginning of 2026.

In October 2024, Pezeshkian met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, where the two leaders discussed bilateral and regional issues.

Iran became a full member of BRICS in 2024, along with Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. Indonesia joined the grouping in 2025, taking the total number of full members to 11.

Earlier in June, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in India to attend the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

Addressing a press conference in the national capital following the meet-



ing, Araghchi highlighted New Delhi's growing influence as a global peace-maker and asserted that India can play a "greater role" in de-escalating the volatile situation in West Asia. Araghchi made it clear that Tehran sees no future in armed conflict.

He stated that there is no military solution to the current crisis and that a "negotiated settlement" remains the only viable path forward.

Underscoring Tehran's openness to Indian mediation, he remarked, "We will welcome any constructive role by India." Araghchi also held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar where he affirmed that friendly nations can rely on Iran for commercial security. Araghchi clarified that Iran will always carry out its historical duty as protector of security in Hormuz.

In a post on X, he said, "In fruitful engagement

with my host External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, discussed regional developments and clarified that Iran will always carry out historical duty as protector of security in Hormuz. Iran is a reliable partner of all friendly nations, who can rely on safety of commerce."

Meanwhile, the Iranian government said in a post on X, "FM Seyyed Abbas Araghchi delivers Iran's statement at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in India. He highlighted the importance of breaking Western hegemony and ensuring that international institutions remain free from political manipulation."

The developments come as West Asia remains locked in a cold, precarious stalemate amid the ongoing hostilities following the eruption of conflict on February 28, which pitted the combined forces of the United States and Israel against Iran.

SOUTH AFRICA changes strategy to tackle migrant problem

MI News Service, Johannesburg: South Africa is asking several other African governments to reimburse it for the cost of sending tens of thousands of their citizens back home. The request comes after South Africa deported or helped repatriate more than 80,000 immigrants, following protests and violence against illegal immigration. According to the country's Home Affairs department, which briefed lawmakers on Tuesday, the country has spent nearly \$18 million accommodating and transporting immigrants who demanded to return to their home countries. The foreign ministry has sent written requests for compensation to Malawi, Ethiopia and Nigeria, officials said. The money covered buses to transport the immigrants, temporary repatriation centers and staff overtime, among other expenses. Tommy Makhode, the director-general of the Home Affairs department, described the costs as "unforeseen and unavoidable." Some municipalities and government departments involved in the repatriation are demanding compensation from the Home Affairs department, since the costs had not been budgeted for.

Railway Minister Leads Tiranga Rally at Rail Bhawan on the Eve of Independence Day

● **Indian Railways Celebrates 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign with Special Cultural Programmes on Patriotism.**

MI News Service, Delhi, August 13, 2026 : The Union Minister for Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, led a Tiranga Rally within the premises of Rail Bhawan on the eve of Independence Day. Chairman & CEO, Railway Board, Shri Satish Kumar, Board Members, DGs and other senior officials participated in the rally, reaffirming the collective spirit of patriotism and national unity.

Indian Railways is actively participating in the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, celebrating the spirit of patriotism, national pride and unity across the railway organisation. The campaign is being organised in integration with the third phase of the commemoration of 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', with a series of programmes being organised at Rail Bhawan to highlight the historical, cultural and national significance of the iconic national song.

As part of the celebrations, a quiz competition on '150 Years Journey of Vande Mataram' was also organised on 10 August 2026 at Rail Bhawan. The programme provided an opportunity for officials to engage with the rich history and enduring legacy of the national song.

A special cultural programme



on 'Patriotic Songs' was organised on 11 August 2026 at Rail Bhawan. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation and celebrated the spirit of patriotism through musical performances.

As part of the celebrations on 14 August 2026, a Mass Singing of 'Vande Mataram' was also organised at Rail Bhawan.

Celebrating Patriotism, Unity and National Pride

Through these programmes, Indian Railways is reinforcing the spirit of patriotism, national pride and unity among its officials and employees while commemorating the historic legacy of 'Vande Mataram'. The celebrations under the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign reflect the collective participation of Indian Railways in celebrating the nation's heritage and its aspirations for a modern and progressive India.

Eastern Railway To Run More Unreserved Special Trains During Shravani Mela

MI News Service, Kolkata, August 13, 2026 : To clear the extra rush of passengers, Eastern Railway has decided to run following Shravani Mela special trains:

03569 Basukinath – Gorakhpur Shravani Mela special (unreserved) will leave Basukinath at 15:05 hrs. on 17.08.2026 & 24.08.2026 to reach Gorakhpur at 04:20 hrs. on the next day. The train will stop at Deoghar station over Eastern Railway jurisdiction enroute.

03570 Gorakhpur – Madhupur Shravani Mela special (unreserved) will leave Gorakhpur at 06:30 hrs. on 18.08.2026 & 25.08.2026 to reach Madhupur at 19:30 on the same day. The train will stop at Jasidih station over Eastern Railway jurisdiction enroute.

03571 Asansol – Gorakhpur Shravani Mela special (unreserved) will leave Asansol at 11:30 hrs. on 18.08.2026 & 25.08.2026 to reach Gorakhpur at 01:30 hrs. on the next day and 03572 Gorakhpur – Asansol Shravani Mela special (unreserved) will leave Gorakhpur at 05:15 hrs. on 19.08.2026 & 26.08.2026 to reach Asansol at 21:00 hrs. on the same day. The train will stop at Chittaranjan, Madhupur & Jasidih stations over Eastern Railway jurisdiction in both directions enroute.

Moreover, 03565 Basukinath – Patna Shravani Mela special (journey commencing on 18.08.2026 & 25.08.2026) will be extended upto Gorakhpur. The train will leave Basukinath at 10:30 hrs. to reach Gorakhpur at 03:30 hrs. on the next day. And in the opposite direction Gorakhpur – Jasidih Shravani Mela special (journey commencing on 19.08.2026 & 26.08.2026) will leave Gorakhpur at 06:10 hrs. to reach Jasidih at 18:45 hrs. on the same day.

Prs Counters At 50 Locations To Be Opened In Morning Shift On Sundays/Holiday Between 15.08.2026 & 06.09.2026

MI News Service, Kolkata, August 13, 2026 : Eastern Railway's Sealdah Division has decided to keep open the PRS counters in 50 locations in the morning shifts on 15.08.2025 (National Holiday) and Sundays i.e. 16.08.2026, 23.08.2026, 30.08.2026 & 06.09.2026 as the passengers can book tickets on ARP (Advanced Reservation Period) dates falling on above Sundays & Holidays.

Continuation Of Service Of Madhupur – Gaya – Madhupur Shravani Mela Special

MI News Service, Kolkata, August 13, 2026 : To clear the extra rush of passengers, Railway has decided to continue the service of Shravani Mela special train between Madhupur & Gaya as per its existing path, stoppages & timings. 03654 Gaya – Madhupur Shravani Mela Special will leave Gaya from 17.08.2026 to 28.08.2026 (12 trips) and 03653 Madhupur – Gaya Shravani Mela Special will leave Madhupur from 18.08.2026 to 329.08.2026 (12 trips)

Bhumi Puja Held at Sealdah Station for Memorial Dedicated to Victims of Partition

MI News Service, Kolkata, August 13, 2026 : A Bhumi Puja ceremony was held at Sealdah Railway Station for the installation of a memorial statue dedicated to the victims of the Partition of India, organized in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and IGNCA. The proposed memorial will pay tribute to the countless people who endured displacement, suffering, violence, and loss during one of the largest forced migrations in modern history.

The programme was conducted in the august presence of Smt. Agnimitra Paul, Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs of West Bengal, Smt. Purnima Chakraborty, Hon'ble Minister of State for Information & Cultural Affairs, Shri Tapas Roy, Hon'ble Minister of Public Enterprises, Industrial Reconstruction and Non-Conventional and Renewable Energy Sources, Ms. Gitika Pandey, General Manager of Eastern Railway, and Shri Rajeev Saxena, Divisional Railway Manager of Sealdah Division. Prof. K. Anil Kumar, HoD, IGNCA, Ministry of Culture along with senior railway officials and other dignitaries.

As part of the programme, a special photo exhibition was also organized in memory of the victims of Partition. The exhibition showcased pho-



tographs depicting the Partition, the mass migration of people, the hardships faced by displaced families, and their journey towards rebuilding their lives. Among those present was Shri Himangshu Gangopadhyay, an eye-witness of these Partition horror days, whose presence added a poignant and emotional weight to the occasion. The exhibition served as a visual tribute to those who suffered and highlighted their courage, resilience, and determination in the face of immense adversity.

Sealdah Railway Station occupies a unique place in the history of Partition. Following Independence in 1947, the station emerged as one of the principal gateways for refugees arriving in West Bengal from across the newly drawn border. Thousands of people reached Sealdah after leaving behind their homes, families, belongings, and familiar surroundings in search of safety and a new beginning. For many refugees,

Sealdah was more than a railway station—it was the first point of arrival in an unfamiliar and uncertain life.

The station witnessed the immense hardships and struggles faced by displaced families, as well as their courage, hope, and determination to rebuild their lives.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Gitika Pandey, General Manager of Eastern Railway, said that Sealdah is a living witness to the history of Partition and to the immense human suffering associated with it. She noted that this memorial will be a humble tribute to those who were displaced and suffered unimaginable hardships, while reminding us of their extraordinary courage and resilience in rebuilding their lives, adding that it is our responsibility to preserve these memories for future generations. Adding to this, Shri Rajeev Saxena, Divisional Railway Manager of Sealdah Division, stated that Sealdah

Division is deeply honored to host this sacred memorial, which stands as a permanent tribute to the millions who passed through these platforms under the most trying circumstances. He emphasized that the division remains dedicated to maintaining this space as a dignified sanctuary of remembrance and resilience for all visitors.

The memorial at Sealdah will thus be more than a statue—it will be a symbol of remembrance, resilience, and hope. Along with the photo exhibition, it will help preserve the memory of the people who passed through Sealdah during one of the most challenging periods in the history of the Indian sub-continent and honor their determination to begin anew. Eastern Railway is committed to preserving the historical significance of Sealdah Station and ensuring that the stories associated with this important chapter of history continue to be remembered by generations to come. Reaffirming this commitment, Shri Shishram Majhi, Chief Public Relations Officer of Eastern Railway, stated that through initiatives like this memorial and photo exhibition, Eastern Railway ensures that the poignant history and spirit of endurance attached to Sealdah Station remain forever etched in the public consciousness.

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Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Mijanur Mollah/ Nowsar Molla/ Hasanur Molla/ Naduria, P.O. Srikrishnapur, Thana Ashoknagar, District North 24 Parganas, West Bengal Suro- 743711/ TBCAL00006961486/ LBCAL00006973763/ LBCAL00006974010/ LBCAL00006974599	R.S. And L.R. Dag No. 430, Nij Khatian No. 226, Hal Krishi Khatian No. 63, L.R. Khatian No. 485, J.L. No. 2, RE. SA. No. 2, Touzi No. 2296, Hal 14, Mouza Naduriya, P.S. Ashoknagar, Shrikishnapur, Gram Panchayet, A.D.S.R. Office Kumra, District North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Admeasuring An Area of 4 Satak North: 20 Feet Wide Pucca Road South: Land of Abu Bakkar Mondal East: Land Of Noor Mohammed Mondal West: Land of Ajit Mondal/ Date of Physical 12/08/2026	October 24, 2025/ Rs. 44,63,293.00/-	North 24 Parganas

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: August 15, 2026
Place: North 24 Parganas

Sincerely Authorised Officer,
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank

Branch Office : ICICI Bank Ltd., BP-4, Technopolis Building, 4th Floor, Sector V, Salt Lake City, Kolkata West Bengal- 700091, CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.
Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Santu Das/ Tapati Mondal Das/ S/o Sufal Chandra Das Babubazar, P.O. Jangipur Raghunathganj, Near Mahabir Tala, District Murshidabad West Bengal Raghunathganj- 742213/ LBSGI00005554818	L.R. Khatian No 4867, R.S. Dag No.1186 And 1182, L.R. Dag No. 391 And 392, R.S. No.1650 And 1681 Thana- Raghunathganj, Mouza-7 No Jangipur, Jangipur Municipality, Ward No 5, A.D.S.R. And Mahakuma- Jangipur, District- Murshidabad, West Bengal., Owned By Santu Das (Admeasuring An Area of Measuring Area 5 Satak North: Land of God South: Asim Das East: 6 Feet Wide Municipality Dhalai Road West: Joy Chand Das/ Date of Symbolic 12/08/2026	April 27, 2026 Rs. 37,54,351.24/-	Raghunathganj
2.	Santu Das/ Tapati Mondal Das/ S/o Sufal Chandra Das Babubazar, P.O. Jangipur Raghunathganj, Near Mahabir Tala, District Murshidabad West Bengal Raghunathganj - 742213/ LBSGI00006178573/ LBSGI00006230687	Sabek Khatian No 321,962, Hal L.R. Khatian No. 6572, Dag No 54, Thana Raghunathganj, Sub Registry Office And Mahakuma Jangipur, Mouza No. 114, District Murshidabad, West Bengal, Owned By Santu Das (Admeasuring An Area of Measuring Area 4.82 Satak North: Binash Kumar Das Ding South: Original Owner Kept 7 Feet Wide Road Towards East West, East: 6 Feet Wide Road Keep By Original Owner West: Autro Mouza 57 No. Dag/ Date of Symbolic 12/08/2026	April 27, 2026 Rs. 40,81,532.00/-	Raghunathganj
3.	Santu Das/ Tapati Mondal Das/ S/o Sufal Chandra Das Babubazar, P.O. Jangipur Raghunathganj, Near Mahabir Tala, District Murshidabad West Bengal Raghunathganj- 742213/ LBSGI00005927896/ TBSGI00006559411/ LBSGI00006579870/ LBSGI00005959091	Dag No. 54, L.R. Khatian No. 321, Thana- Raghunathganja, Sub Registry Office And Mahakuma- Jangipur, Mouza No. 114, District- Murshidabad, West Bengal, Owned By Santu Das (Admeasuring An Area Of Measuring Area 3.31 Satak North: Sajal Kumar Singha Roy or Sub Plot No. 20 South: Dutta Argha Seller 22 No. Sub Plot East: Kashi Nath Dutta West: 6 Feet Wide Road Release By Sellers/ Date of Symbolic 12/08/2026	April 27, 2026 Rs. 53,85,752.00/-	Raghunathganj
4.	Id Abdus Sattar/ Mahobuba Begam/ Vill Jyokrishnapur, J.L. No.104, Joladipur Po Jyokrishnapur, Nimitita District Murshidabad, Near Jumma Masjid West Bengal Nimitita- 742224/ TBSGI00006358388/ TBSGI00006808291/ LBSGI00006380184/ LBSGI00006814594	Sabek Dag No. 1399 Hal Dag No. 2301, Present Hal 4549, Sabk Dag No. 1401, Hal Dag No. 2302, Present Hal 4317, Settlement Hal Khatian No. 171, 1395, 1315, 527, 662, 1014, 1103, 1211, 1912, Mouza 104 No. Dushipara, Thana Samserganj, A.D.S.R. Office Nimitita, District Mushiadabad, West Bengal (Admeasuring An Area of 6.054 Satak/ Date of Symbolic 12/08/2026	January 20, 2026 Rs. 35,90,164.64/-	Nimitita

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: August 15, 2026
Place: Raghunathganj & Nimitita

Sincerely Authorised Officer,
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

JHARKHAND JAVELIN PRODIGY SHILPA KUMARI EYES YOUTH OLYMPICS PODIUM, DREAMS OF OLYMPIC GLORY

PC JHA

RANCHI : Inspired by Neeraj Chopra's historic Olympic triumph, Jharkhand's teenage javelin sensation Shilpa Kumari is nurturing an ambitious dream - to become an Olympic medallist herself.

The 17-year-old from a humble farming family in Gumla has emerged as one of the country's most promising young talents in women's javelin. The SAI Ranchi trainee currently holds the national U-17 record, having thrown an impressive 55.62 metres at the 69th National School Games in 2025.

For Shilpa, Chopra's Tokyo Olympic gold medal was more than a sporting achievement. Watching the historic moment with villagers at her village chaupal proved a turning point in her life.

"I watched Neeraj Chopra



win gold at the Olympics. That inspired me to take up javelin. I want to emulate Neeraj sir and win an Olympic medal," Shilpa said during an interaction with SAI Media.

Her journey gathered momentum after she appeared for an athletics trial at the Sports Authority of India centre in Ranchi nearly three years ago. Coach Binod

Singh immediately recognised the youngster's raw throwing ability and decided to take her under his wing.

"When I first spotted her, she was a total novice. But her natural throwing ability was exceptional. I could see the potential in her," Singh recalled.

Under systematic training at SAI Ranchi, Shilpa made remarkable progress. Coming

from a family of farmers with limited financial means, she has relied heavily on the facilities, coaching, equipment and nutritional support provided by SAI.

Her breakthrough performance came at the 2025 National School Games, where she sent the javelin to 55.62m to establish a new U-17 national mark. The distance was also better than India's U-18 record of 55.19m set by Haryana's Deepika in 2023.

The mark, however, was not officially recognised by the Athletics Federation of India because the competition was not sanctioned by World Athletics.

Shilpa remains unfazed by the technicality. At the 2025 Junior Nationals, she recorded 45.90m and finished fifth.

"As an athlete, my focus is to keep improving. If my earlier throw was not officially

recognised, I will try to produce an even better throw in an official competition," she said.

Coach Singh, meanwhile, believes her best is yet to come.

"She is not worried about whether her throw has been officially recognised. We know her ability and she will achieve that mark again," he said.

Shilpa's immediate objective is to make a mark at the 2026 Summer Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal, scheduled from October 31 to November 13.

"My first goal is to win a medal at the Youth Olympics. But my ultimate goal is an Olympic medal," she said.

And if that dream comes true, Shilpa already knows whom she wants to thank.

"I will dedicate my Olympic medal to Neeraj sir," she said.

JAIBIR SINGH KANG CLINCHES A&B TITLE AT IGU JUNIOR BOYS CHAMPIONSHIP

CHANDIGARH : Continuing Roundglass Golf Academy's (RGGA) highly successful run, Jaibir Singh Kang showcased unmatched endurance and skill to win the combined Boys Category A & B title at the IGU Northern India Junior Boys Golf Championship, hosted at the Chandigarh Golf Club, in Chandigarh on Friday.

The RGGA standout was a force to be reckoned with throughout the 72-hole event, cruising to a clear four-stroke win. After an opening under-par 71, Kang separated himself from the pack on day two with a breathtaking, tournament-best round of 66. He maintained his firm grip on the leaderboard with a steady 74 in the third round and safely sealed the championship with a clinical 71 on the final day.

His exceptional ball-striking resulted in a highly impressive aggregate score of 282 (6-under-par), ensuring no other competitor could challenge his spot at the summit.

Kang bested a talented field, leaving Delhi's Chaitanya Pandey to settle for the runner-up position with an aggregate of 286 (77-67-71-71). Maharashtra's Shashank Sachin Gadre took the third spot on the podium, signing for a 289 (71-71-75-72).

Kang's commanding win comes just a day after fellow RGGA athlete Sohraab Singh Talwar captured the Category C title, highlighting the academy's exceptional and continuous success at the prestigious tournament.

Based at the prestigious Chandigarh Golf Club, the Roundglass Golf Academy continues to establish itself as a premier destination for elite Indian golfers, offering a world-class training environment mentored by India's No. 1 professional golfer and Brand Ambassador, Shubhankar Sharma.

Earlier on Thursday, RGGA's Sohraab Singh Talwar delivered a masterclass in precision and composure to secure his maiden career title, capturing the Boys Category C crown at the highly competitive IGU Northern India Junior Boys Golf Championship.

Showcasing remarkable control across all three days of the tournament, Sohraab registered a hard-fought 3-shot victory over his closest competitor. He opened his championship campaign with a solid round of 74, keeping him right in the mix at the top of the leaderboard.



PGA Tour: Theegala placed 26th, Spieth opens with bogey-free 65 in Play-offs

MEMPHIS (USA) : It was not the best of starts for the Indian origin quartet as they had modest opening rounds at the FedEx St. Jude Championship, the first of the three play-off events on the PGA Tour. Sahithi Theegala was the best of the four at T-26 with a round of 1-under 69, while Sudarshan Yellamaraju, who had a double bogey and an eagle on successive holes, was the next best at T-37 with a card of even par 70. Akshay Bhatia (72) and the PGA Champion Aaron Rai (72) were tied at 53rd.

Meanwhile, Jordan Spieth, who is winless in more than four years, showed that he could be a winner this week, as he was bogey-free for a 5-

under 65 that gave him a share of the five-way lead in the first round. It also increased his chances of making it to the next event in the play-offs.

The Rocket Classic champion Michael Thorbjornsen, Jake Knapp, Michael Kim and Kurt Kitayama also opened with 65s in the sweltering heat at TPC Southwind.

Spieth and Kim are outside the top 50 in the FedExCup, which advances to the BMW Championship next week. So, they need decent finishes to stay on in the Play-offs. Last year Spieth was 48th and then fell out of the top 50 ahead of the second event.

Theegala opened and closed with a birdie, and in between he had two

other birdies and then bogeys, including back-to-back dropped shots on the 14th and 15th. Bhatia, also supported by Hero, had two birdies against four bogeys, three of which came between the 10th and the 14th on the back nine.

Yellamaraju had an eventful round with an eagle, a birdie, a bogey and a double bogey and 14 pars. He is T-37 and needs an upward move to stay in the Play-offs and get into the Top-50 from being T-57 at the start. Rai had four bogeys and two birdies in his round of 72. Behind the top five at 65, there was a crowd of seven players, including defending FedExCup champion Tommy Fleetwood, Hideki Matsuyama, Gary Woodland and

Jemimah Rodrigues ruled out of Asia Cup and Asian Games due to hamstring injury



NEW DELHI : In a major blow to the Indian team, star right-handed batter Jemimah Rodrigues has been ruled out of the upcoming ACC Women's Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Asian Games in Japan after sustaining a high-grade right hamstring tear.

Jemimah, 25, picked up the injury on August 3 while representing Southern Brave in The Hundred in England and was ruled out of the remainder of the tournament. "Jemimah Rodrigues sustained a right hamstring injury on 3rd August while playing in The Hundred in

England.

The BCCI Medical Team clinically assessed her at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, and the assessment confirmed a high-grade tear. Consequently, she has been ruled out of the upcoming ACC Women's Asia Cup in the UAE and the Asian Games in Japan," the BCCI said in an official statement on Friday.

Following her exclusion, the Women's Selection Committee has named top-order batter Pratika Rawal as Jemimah's replacement for the Women's Asia Cup.

Pratika is yet to be capped in

T20Is, but she has featured in 27 ODIs and amassed 1189 runs, including being a member of the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup-winning team.

She made a fifty on her Test debut against Australia at Perth earlier this year. Pratika missed India's historic Lord's Test victory against England after sustaining a cut on her knee while fielding during India A's second one-day game against England A in Taunton in July.

Pratika was supposed to begin her One-day Cup stint with Warwickshire on August 19, but she will have to let go of it after her selection for the Women's Asia Cup. India, the seven-time champions, will start their campaign against Thailand on August 30 before facing Hong Kong-China on September 3.

The marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan will take place on September 5.

All matches of the tournament will be played at the Dubai International Stadium, as the UAE plays host to the tournament for the first time. The semi-finals will be held on September 10 and 11, with the final to be played on September 13.

India's updated Asia Cup squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Bharti Fulmali, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (wk), G. Kamalini (wk), Arundhati Reddy, Prema Rawat, Radha Yadav, Sree Charani, Renuka Thakur, Nandini Sharma, Kranti Gaud, and Pratika Rawal

'ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN': MARESCA REFUSES TO RULE OUT RODRI EXIT FROM MAN CITY

CARDIFF : Manchester City manager Enzo Maresca refused to rule out Rodri's departure from the club, insisting that 'anything can happen' with the transfer window still open as Barcelona prepare a third bid for the midfielder. City have already rejected two offers from Barcelona for Rodri, who has entered the final year of his contract. The Spanish giants are expected to return with an improved proposal as they look to prise the midfielder away from the Premier League champions.

After an injury-disrupted spell

over the past two seasons, the Spanish midfielder returned to top form on the international stage at the FIFA World Cup earlier this year. He was instrumental in Spain's title-winning campaign, controlling matches from midfield with his composure, distribution and defensive work, and was named the tournament's Best Player after helping his side lift the trophy. Rodri returned to City on Friday after his extended break following Spain's triumphant World Cup campaign. Maresca said he had met the midfielder but

remained unwilling to speculate on what the future holds. "The transfer window is open, we can buy players, we can sell players, anything can happen. I just saw Rodri now in the building; I gave him a big hug, he looks good, so we'll see what happens," Maresca said in a press conference as quoted by the BBC. Maresca is preparing for his first major match as City manager when his side face Arsenal in the Community Shield in Cardiff on Sunday, but the former Chelsea boss acknowledged that his squad could still undergo.

Adam Scott, all at 66.

Four others were another stroke back. There is a lot of emphasis on getting into the top 50 because that locks up all the \$20 million Signature Events for next season. Spieth has been on the outside the last two years.

More than half the field, however, already is assured of heading to Bellerive in St. Louis for the BMW Championship. For the likes of Woodland and Scott - both just inside the top 30 - a good week could lock them up for the TOUR Championship and a shot at playing for the FedExCup, which comes with a reward of getting into all the majors next season.

India's 600th Test: A look back at 5 greatest wins of the Indian team

NEW DELHI : A new milestone beckons Shubman Gill's Indian cricket team as the Men in Blue are set to turn up for their 600th Test match, becoming just the third Test-playing nation to have ever achieved the mark.

The upcoming first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle from Saturday onwards is not just a game crucial for India's World Test Championship chances, but a match that will enable them to join Australia and England in an elite list of nations that have won 600 or more Test matches.

The start of the Test on August 15 is in itself a historic occasion for India as the nation celebrates its 80th Independence Day.

India's current Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill has been left overwhelmed by the occasion, admitting that leading the side in the 600th Test "is an honour and doing so on Independence Day is an even bigger honour." As the Indian team gears up for its 600th red-ball game, IANS takes a look at five of the country's five greatest wins in Test cricket's history.

The marathon Port of Spain chase of 1976

Chasing a target of 403 in that time against West Indies in their own backyard is surely a dream. Only once before had a team hunted down a target of over 400, and that was by the invincible Australian side in 1948 against England.

Even the great Sunil Gavaskar had never thought that India could win it. In his autobiography, Sunny Days, Gavaskar wrote, "I was confident that we could save the game, because the wicket was still good, but the thought of winning never



entered my mind."

But India defied the logic.

Needing 269 more to win on the last day of the match, the Little Master scored a sublime century (102), while Gundappa Viswanath made 112 as Bishan Singh Bedi's team chased down the huge target in a marathon chase. The next day, the Trinidad Express had the headline, "India defy history, whip West Indies." Indeed, it was a logic-defying victory.

The Kolkata follow-on

magic If the marathon chase at Port of Spain was a historic one, India's victory over Australia in the Kolkata 2001 Test was one of the greatest wins in Test cricket history by any team too. Bundled out for 171 in the first innings after the Aussies had piled up 445 in their first innings, India needed more than magic. First to shrug off a mammoth 271-run deficit and then hoped to pile a target that they could defend.

Then came an epic partnership between VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid, a picture frame of the two walking off the field that remains so close to Indian fans' hearts. A 376-run partnership for the fifth wicket that powered India to

657/7d. Australia were suddenly in choppy waters as a rampant Harbhajan Singh, who claimed a hat-trick on the first day, ran through the visitors' batting line-up on the fifth day to hand the hosts a 171-run come-from-behind win. A win that still gives goosebumps to the die-hard fans.

Rahul Dravid's heroic

outing in Adelaide

Another memorable win for India in the format came against Australia two years after the Eden Miracle in Adelaide. Ricky Ponting led the way for the Aussies to pile up 556 in the first innings. Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman stepped up yet again, putting up a 333-run partnership to remind the Aussies of that epic Kolkata fight. Dravid's 233 and Laxman's 148 propelled India to 523.

In the second innings, Ajit Agarkar came to the party, picking up six wickets in a masterful spell. His 6/41 laid the foundation as the hosts were bowled out for 196.

Asked to chase 230 in the last innings, Dravid stood up once again. A cool-headed and unbeaten 72 took India home with four wickets in hand on the final day.

