



KTR GETS RELIEF FROM HIGH COURT TILL 30 DECEMBER



P6

'OPPN SHOULD RAISE ISSUES BY FOLLOWING RULES INSTEAD OF DISRUPTING PARL'



P5

'PEOPLE'S NEEDS DROVE ME'



P9

SAM KONSTAS JOINS OZ SQUAD FOR LAST 2 TESTS OF BGT SERIES



P16

SENSEX 78,041.59 ▼1,176.45

NIFTY 23,587.50 ▼364.20

₹ vs \$ 85.03

GOLD 77,820.00

SILVER 99,000

BRENT CRUDE (IN \$) 71.94 ▼0.51

WEATHER

Partly cloudy. Showers likely in the afternoon. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 36 °C and 29 °C respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max. 92% Min. 77%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 36.2 °C Min: 29.3 °C
SUN RISES 06:12 hrs SUN SETS 16:57 hrs
MOON RISES 22:38 hrs MOON SETS 10:43 hrs
New Moon on 31 December

THUMBNAILS



A crowd of devotees outside Ajmer Sharif Dargah in Ajmer on Friday. ■ ANI

Ex-Haryana CM Chautala dies at 89: Om Prakash Chautala, a five-time Chief Minister and towering figure of Haryana, passed away at the age of 89. The son of former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal, he died after suffering a cardiac arrest at his residence in Gurugram. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, expressed his anguish at the death of the former Haryana CM. The state funeral of the former CM shall take place at Teja Khara Farm, Sirsa, at 3 pm on Saturday.

Curtains come down on a stormy session

Both Houses of Parliament adjourned sine die amid escalating tensions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

The Winter Session of Parliament ended with the adjournment sine die of the two Houses on Friday without transacting any business amid escalating tensions between ruling NDA members and those on the Opposition benches over the Ambedkar issue.

Before the two Houses were adjourned, the two important Bills relating to 'One Nation, One Election' were referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on B R Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday have triggered a storm with Opposition Members demanding an apology from him or his dismissal, leading to frequent disruptions and frequent adjournment of the two Houses.

This morning, the Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die shortly after it began the proceedings, a day after a massive scuffle in



Speaker warns of action over protests on Parl premises

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Lok Sabha Speaker PM Birla on Friday warned the members that there should be no sort of protests at the 'dwar' of Parliament, and said that action will be taken in case this is violated. The House was adjourned sine die.

The Speaker said that there should be no protest at any of the 'dwar' of Parliament, adding that "it is not appropriate". He said Parliament will have to take appropriate action in case of violation. "Maintaining the dignity of Parliament is collective responsibility," he pointed out. The Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die shortly after it began proceedings for the day, a day after massive Parliament scuffle.

the Parliament premises which resulted in injuries to two BJP MPs--Mukesh Rajput and Pratap Chandra Sarangi.

Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal today moved a motion that the Bills to further amend the Constitution of India, the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 be referred to a JPC. The motion was approved by the House amid din.

The 27 Lok Sabha members on the JPC include P P Chaudhary, Dr C M Ramesh, Bansuri

Swaraj, Anurag Singh Thakur, Bhartruhari Mahtab, Dr Sambit Patra, Anil Baluni, Dr Sanjay Jaiswal, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Manish Tewari, Sukhdeo Bhagat, Dharmendra Yadav, Chhotelal, Kalyan Banerjee, Anil Yeshwant Desai, Supriya Sule and Dr Shrikant Eknath Shinde. There are 12 members from the Rajya Sabha.

In order to constitute a sitting of the Joint Committee, the quorum will be one-third of the total number of members of the JPC. The Committee will submit its report to the Lok Sabha by the first day of the last week of the next session.

TMC to hold protest rallies on Monday against Shah's Ambedkar remarks

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in a statement, accused the BJP of systematically demolishing the country's constitutional ethos and "tearing apart the democratic values and the principles that bind the Indians as a nation"



AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced that her Trinamul Congress will organise block-level and ward-level protest rallies on 23 December condemning the recent remarks by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah about Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

Noting that Ambedkar envisioned a nation built on values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, where all classes, castes, creeds, and communities could live in harmony, Miss Banerjee, in a statement, said: "This is not just an insult to Babasaheb but an attack on the entire Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, an assault on the legacy of our freedom fighters, and a betrayal of our Dalit and Adivasi brethren."

"To condemn this, we will organise protest rallies across all blocks of Bengal and every ward of Kolkata on 23rd December, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. I urge you to join us in this fight to defend Babasaheb's legacy and our Constitutional spirit. Let's unite to hold the BJP accountable for their unforgivable actions."

Miss Banerjee, who is also Trinamul Congress chairperson, further accused the BJP of systematically demolishing the country's constitutional ethos and "tearing apart the democratic values and the principles that bind the Indians as a nation".

According to her, the comments about Ambedkar are reflections of the BJP's culture of hate and intolerance. The Union Home Minister

was in West Bengal on Friday to address a programme at Siliguri in the Darjeeling district on the occasion of the 61st Raising Day of the Sashastra Seema Bal.

The Chief Minister had been quite vocal on Mr Shah's recent comments about Ambedkar. On Thursday, on two separate occasions for the forthcoming Christmas festival, she said that she was really shocked over comments made about Ambedkar.

Earlier on Wednesday, she had issued a statement where she claimed that as the Indian Parliament reflected on 75 years of the Constitution, the Union Home Minister chose to tarnish this occasion with derogatory remarks against Ambedkar and that "too in the temple of democracy".

'Intensify efforts against anti-India elements'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 20 DECEMBER

Union Home Minister Amit Shah today urged the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) to intensify its efforts to identify and take action against anti-India elements operating along the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders.

Addressing the SSB's 61st Raising Day Anniversary at Ranidanga in Siliguri, Mr. Shah commended the force's vigilance in guarding the unfenced 2,450-kilometre-long borders with the two neighbouring countries.

"SSB has been diligently securing these borders, but it is crucial to monitor and



curb anti-India activities along these regions. Identifying such elements and ensuring they are brought to justice is essential for national security," Mr. Shah said. He emphasised the strategic significance of the Siliguri Corridor, which connects the north-eastern states and lies between the Mahananda and Teesta rivers. "The Siliguri Corridor

(close to the Chicken Neck region) is extremely sensitive. SSB's responsibilities here are heightened, and I am confident in their ability to safeguard the nation's interests," he added. Highlighting the SSB's achievements, Mr. Shah lauded its role in maintaining border security and fostering trust and friendship with local communities.

During his speech, Mr. Shah highlighted the SSB's efforts in reclaiming significant tracts of government land that were allegedly encroached upon, doing so with zero tolerance and without any conflict, in line with the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty.

Delhi raises with Washington Pannun's threat to Indian envoy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

India has raised with the United States the threat issued by Sikh separatist Gurbhant Singh Pannun to Indian Ambassador to the USA, Vinay Mohan Kwatra and hoped Washington will take New Delhi's security concerns seriously.

"We take the threats very seriously and we raise it with the US government. In this case, also, we have raised it with the US government and it is our expectation that the US government will take our security concerns seriously,"

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a media briefing on Friday. In a recent video message, Mr Pannun accused Ambassador Kwatra of being the face of the "India-Russia terror nexus," claiming he is under surveillance by pro-Khalistan groups. Mr Pannun alleged that Mr Kwatra has been coordinating with Russian diplomats to counter Khalistani activism in North America. The US gov't, taking such threats seriously, has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the safety of Indian diplomats and others serving in the country.

India lodges protest with Dhaka over social media post of Bangladesh chief adviser's aide

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

India has registered a strong protest with Bangladesh over the recent comments made in a social media post by Mahfuz Alam, a close aide of Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, in which he reportedly threatened to capture parts of India on 'Vijay Diwas', the day that marks India's victory over Bangladesh in the 1971 war.

"We have registered our strong protest on this issue with the Bangladesh side. We understand that the post being referred to has report-



edly been taken down. We would like to remind all concerned to be mindful of their public comments," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal (photo) said at a media briefing. He said that while India

has repeatedly signalled interest in fostering cordial relations with the people and the interim government of Bangladesh, such comments underline the need for responsibility in public articulation.

In his social media post that he subsequently withdrew following widespread backlash, Mr Alam highlighted cultural similarities between his country and parts of India, which he claimed, transcend religious differences.

He also shared a map portraying the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, and Assam as territories of Bangladesh.

AP woman receives parcel with decomposed body

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 20 DECEMBER

A woman in Andhra Pradesh who was expecting a consignment containing electrical appliances for her home received a wooden crate containing a partially decomposed body and a threat letter demanding Rs 1.3 crore.

The incident occurred last evening at Yendagandi village in West Godavari district at the under-construction house of Naga Tulasi. The woman who had been abandoned by her husband previously, was building her own home at a site allotted to her by the government. She had requested aid from the Kshatriya Seva Samithi which had earlier sent her tiles and other construction material. This time she was expecting a consignment of electrical goods. She had earlier received a WhatsApp message which said the goods would be delivered to her. The consignment was delivered in an autorickshaw.

Upon opening the crate, she found a plastic-wrapped object which turned out to be the decomposed body of a man, approximately 45 years of age. Apart from



Police at the scene. ■ AGENCIES

the body, the crate also contained a letter demanding Rs 1.3 crore.

It claimed that the missing husband of Tulasi had borrowed Rs 3 lakh, which with interest had compounded to Rs 1.3 crore.

The family then called the police. The Superintendent of Police of West Godavari visited the site for investigations and the police removed the body to the Bhimavaram government hospital to conduct an autopsy. Initial investigations suggest the man has been dead for at least 3-4 days. Police are also investigating the philanthropic body to which Tulasi had reached out for help.

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SSB's role crucial in Darjeeling Hills, says MP Raju Bista

Highlighting the deep ties between India, Nepal, and Bhutan, Mr Bista said that the connection between their nations goes beyond political alliances



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 20 DECEMBER

Seema Bal (SSB) in safeguarding the Darjeeling Hills, Terai, and Dooars, which include the strategically significant "Chicken Neck" region of India. Speaking during the 61st Raising Day



celebrations of the SSB at its Frontier Headquarters in Ranidanga, Siliguri, Mr. Bista joined Union Home Minister Amit Shah to honour the contributions of the paramilitary force.

Highlighting the deep ties between India, Nepal, and Bhutan, Mr Bista said: "The

connection between our nations goes beyond political alliances. We are civilizational families sharing history, heritage, culture, and a strong people-to-people bond. Therefore, the SSB's role extends beyond border security to fostering and strengthening these relationships."

The SSB began guarding the India-Nepal border in 2001 and the India-Bhutan border in 2004. Since then, it has been securing the 2,450-kilometre-long open borders in diverse and challenging terrains, including mountains, forests, and rivers, under extreme weather conditions.



Quoting Home Minister Amit Shah, Mr. Bista said: "The Sashastra Seema Bal has played a pivotal role in securing our borders with friendly nations like Nepal and Bhutan. Its vigilance and presence have instilled a sense of security in the Siliguri Corridor and the Eastern

region." He further highlighted Mr Shah's appreciation for the SSB's efforts in promoting cultural integration. "The SSB has done commendable work by connecting the culture, language, and heritage of border villages with the nation's mainstream. This

initiative has strengthened the bond between India and its border communities," Mr Bista added. The event celebrated the SSB's dedication to national security and its efforts to foster cultural harmony and build stronger ties with neighbouring countries.

Siliguri Tourism Fair to be held till 22 December



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 20 DECEMBER

Raipur this year, receiving enthusiastic responses from the travel trade fraternity. Supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the three-day exhibition features Chhattisgarh Tourism Board and Gujarat Tourism as Gold Sponsors, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration as a Silver Sponsor, and Jammu & Kashmir Tourism as the Feature State. Regional Travel Trade Associations have also extended their support to this mega event.

The fair aims to highlight the diverse aspects of the "Incredible India" campaign, encouraging tourism and

providing visitors with essential travel-related information and booking facilities on a common platform. Organizers expressed confidence that the event would create new business opportunities, foster stronger networks among travel trade members, and promote the tourism industry in the region.

Tourism enthusiasts are expected to make the most of this platform, which provides an excellent opportunity to explore destinations and enhance connections within the travel industry. The event promises to be a grand success and a memorable experience for all participants.

Protest erupts in Siliguri against Amit Shah

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 20 DECEMBER

As Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited Siliguri to attend the Sashastra Seema Bal's Raising Day celebrations, the CPI (ML) Liberation, Siliguri Local Committee, staged a protest at Hashmi Chowk demanding his resignation and an apology for allegedly disrespecting Babasaheb Ambedkar in Parliament. The protest gained intensity with slogans like, "Amit Shah, the criminal; Amit Shah, the enemy of the Constitution and social jus-



ice, step down." The demonstrators highlighted their discontent against the Home Minister's

actions while asserting their commitment to safeguarding the principles of the Indian Constitution.

Aadhaar card selling: Two arrested in Purbasthali

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BURDWAN, 20 DECEMBER

Police sealed a Cyber Cafe on charges of selling Aadhaar cards for cash in Purbasthali in Kalna today.

Police received a tip off that the cafe was charging Rs 380 for online preparation of Aadhaar card and Aadhaar rectification using the Unique Identification Authority of India's portal. Police raided the Cafe and asked the operators to produce valid license documents allowing them



to run the business, but the youths failed. Police said that everyday at least two dozens such cards were issued from the Cafe near the Purbasthali Railway Station. Police also seized two laptops, mobile phones and arrested two individuals, Sahadev Biswas and Rajesh Sheikh. (Representational Image)

Migratory birds flock to water bodies at Haripal



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 20 DECEMBER

The water bodies at Koikala, Haripal, are now teeming with activity as migratory birds arrive. The Bolod badh Jhill (lake) is the main centre of activity for these avian visitors. The presence of a large number of migratory birds presents a spectacular view for curious eyes. The Koikala gram panchayat is seeking to develop the area adjacent to the Bolod badh Jhill into a tourist spot.

The abandoned deep sandbars adjacent to the Kana Nodi (river), which in the course of time have taken the shape of large deep water bodies, are commonly known as Jhills. The largest Jhill covers an area of 140 Bighas of land within the Koikala gram panchayat in Haripal.

Mr. Swarup Mitra, one of the owners of the then sandbars, said: "The evacuation of sand or sand mining created large deep hollows in the area under Koikala gram panchayat. The sandbars, which were left abandoned for more than five decades, have developed into large water bodies over time." The abundance of greenery in the area, the favourable ambience, and the large Jhill have become an ideal place for migratory birds to take refuge during the winter months, especially from November onwards till February. Lesser whistling ducks especially dominate the Jhill,

mined to preserve, conserve, and protect the Jhills and the migratory birds. "The very sight of these birds, which travel thousands of kilometres to reach the Jhill, fills our mind with utter joy and pride. We feel honoured at the very presence of these birds. They are our guests, and we need to take care of them with full attention so that they feel 'home away



from home' at Bolod badh Jhill."

The panchayat pradhan of Koikala gram panchayat in Haripal said: "We are ready with constructive plans to uplift the area surrounding the Jhill into a tourist spot. Work is being initiated in this regard. The panchayat is determined to safeguard the natural beauty of the Jhill as well as take necessary steps to be more attentive, careful, and concerned towards our migratory guests."

Nature activist Chandan Clement Singh said: "Migratory birds play a major role in maintaining the ecological balance, especially the whistling ducks. At night, they enter into agricultural land areas to feed upon the harmful insects and pests that destroy the standing paddy crops, other cereal vegetation, and vegetables. These migratory birds can save a huge amount of money spent on insecticides and pesticides."

EASTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. : ELD-300-WC-22-2024-25, dated 18.12.2024. E-tender is invited by the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Sealdah, Eastern Railway, Control Building, 1st Floor, DRM Office, Kaiser Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014 for the following work : **Tender No. ELD-300-WC-22-2024-25. Name of Work :** 25 KV OHE and allied electrical works in connection with "Sealdah - Barunipur Jn. - Rehabilitation of OHE in Sealdah - Barunipur section". **Tender Value :** ₹ 22,65,54,127.00. **Cost of Tender document :** Nil. **Earnest Money :** ₹ 12,82,800.00. **Completion period :** 24 (Twenty Four) months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance. **Date of closing :** 20.01.2025 at 15.00 Hrs. Details of tender notice and corrigendum issued from time to time are available at website www.reps.gov.in SDAH-281/2024-25. Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.easternrailway.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice For and on behalf of President of Republic of India, Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Construction-(1) North Western Railway, Jaipur invites E-Tender for the following works upto 15.00 hrs. on the mentioned date. **Tender No. ELCJ/AI/CNA/DL/T/18/24-25.1. Name of work :** Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Railway Electrification work of 2x25KV OHE system in Ajmer-Chanderya Section (178.28KRM) of Ajmer Division, NWR in connection with Doubling work. **2. Approximate cost of the Work :** ₹1506343645.00 **3. Earnest Money to be deposited :** ₹ 7681700.00 **4. Date of Completion of work:-** 18 Months **5. Date & Time of closing E-Tender :** 15.01.2025 Upto 15:00 Hrs. **Date & Time of opening E-Tender :** 15.01.2025 at 15:30 Hrs. **6. The details of above E-Tender are available on Website** www.reps.gov.in 1467-DK/24

EASTERN RAILWAY
E-AUCTION NOTICE **No. C/Park/E-auction Approval/2024 Dated : 19.12.2024** E-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Sealdah (Auction Conducting Officer) 2nd Floor, Control Building, DRM Building, Kaiser Street, Kolkata-700014 has published e-auction catalogue on www.reps.gov.in for operation of parking lot at Sealdah station of Sealdah Division. **Auction Catalogue No. PARK-JAN-25-86. Auction Start : 03.01.2025 at 10:00 hours. SI. No. : AAV1; Lot No. : PARKING-SDAH-SDAH-MX-1. Station :** Sealdah. Prospective bidders are requested to visit IREPS e-auction module for further details. SDAH-285/2024-25. Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.easternrailway.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

EASTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. : SG.Tender/DSTE/SDAH/522, dated 19.12.2024. e-tender is invited by Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Sealdah, Eastern Railway, 2nd Floor, Control Building, DRM Office, Kaiser Street, Kolkata-700014 for the following work : **e-Tender No. : SDSTE/TELE/T/20/24-25/RRSK. Name of work with its location :** Provision of Gate Telephone with Voice Recording facility at Interlocked LC Gate over Sealdah Division. **Tender Value :** ₹ 2,04,91,445.93. **Cost of tender document :** Nil. **Earnest Money/Bid Security to be deposited :** ₹ 2,52,500.00. **Completion period of the work :** 9 months. **Tender Submission Start Date :** 31.12.2024. **Tender Submission End Date :** 14.01.2025 upto 14.00 hrs. **Tender Bid Opening Date :** 14.01.2025 at 14.30 hrs. **Details may be available :** www.reps.gov.in **Technical Eligibility Criteria:** The tenderer must have successfully completed or substantially completed any one of the following categories of work(s) during last 07 (seven) years, ending last day of month previous to the one in which tender is invited: (i) Three similar works each costing not less than the amount equal to 30% of advertised value of the tender, or (ii) Two similar works each costing not less than the amount equal to 40% of advertised value of the tender, or (iii) One similar work costing not less than the amount equal to 60% of advertised value of the tender. **Financial Eligibility Criteria:** The tenderer must have minimum average annual contractual turnover of V/N or "V" whichever is less; where V = Advertised value of the tender in crores of Rupees, N = Number of years prescribed for completion of work for which bids have been invited. The average annual contractual turnover shall be calculated as an average of "total contractual payments" in the previous three financial years, as per the audited balance sheet. However, in case balance sheet of the previous year is yet to be prepared/audited, the audited balance sheet of the fourth previous year shall be considered for calculating average annual contractual turnover. The tenderers shall submit requisite information as per Annexure-VIB of GCC 2022 (Form-6 of the instant tender document), along with copies of Audited Balance Sheets duly certified by the Chartered Accountant/ Certificate from Chartered Accountant duly supported by Audited Balance Sheet. **Other document to be submitted:** As mentioned in the tender document. **Similar nature of work:** PI or RRI or EI or IBH or Automatic Signalling or LC gate Interlocking or Double Distance Signalling or voice logger or Data Logger at any S&T installation to be considered as similar nature of work for the instant tender work. **Note:** The tenderer shall submit along with the tender offer, documents in support of his/her claim to fulfill the eligibility criteria as mentioned in the tender document. Each page of the copy of documents/certificates in support of credentials, submitted by the tenderer, shall be self-attested/digitally signed by the tenderer or authorized representative of the tendering firm. Self-attestation shall include signature, stamp and date (on each page). SDAH-284/2024-25. Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.easternrailway.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

T E N D E R

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/E.C. Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in E-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways :- **SI.No. : 1. Tender Notice No. : TC-175-2024-SPJ. Name of work :** Maintenance of newly commissioned JDR-BMKI and BMKISRA Section. **Tender Value (in ₹) :** 8695235.62. **Earnest Money (in ₹) :** 173900.00. **Completion period of the work :** 12 Months. **SI.No. : 2. Tender Notice No. : TC-176-2024-SPJ. Name of work :** At Darbhanga - Special repair in staff qtrs. no. 141(16 units), 119(8 units), 116(14 units), 120(2 units), 121(4 units), 127(2 units), E/114, G/124, Block no. 1 to 12(48 units), L/112, L/113, L/114, L/115, 142(2 units), 143(10 units), 144(12 units), 145(18 units), 151-153(28 units) and campus area at DBG. **Tender Value (in ₹) :** 15993264.00. **Earnest Money (in ₹) :** 230000.00. **Completion period of the work :** 09 Months. **SI.No. : 3. Tender Notice No. : TC-177-2024-SPJ. Name of work :** Sakti-Jaynagar - TRR(P) - 14.007 Km. **Tender Value (in ₹) :** 17690707.65. **Earnest Money (in ₹) :** 238500.00. **Completion period of the work :** 12 Months. 1. Last Date & time for receiving of tender in E-Tender mode on IREPS web portal: 09/01/2025 upto 12:00 hours. 2. Opening Date & time for E-Tender : 09/01/2025 after 12:00 hours. 3. Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on Website: www.reps.gov.in. Amendments/modification if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be updated in the website. Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord E. C. Railway/Samastipur PR/01732/SPJ/ENGG/T/24-25/52

EASTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. : SG.Tender/DSTE/SDAH/521, dated 19.12.2024. e-tender is invited by Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Sealdah, Eastern Railway, 2nd Floor, Control Building, DRM Office, Kaiser Street, Kolkata-700014 for the following work : **e-Tender No. : SDSTE/TELE/T/16/24-25/RRSK. Name of work with its location :** Augmentation of conferencing system at DRM meeting room Sealdah. **Tender Value :** ₹ 67,35,189.25. **Cost of tender document :** Nil. **Earnest Money/Bid Security to be deposited :** ₹ 1,34,700.00. **Completion period of the work :** 03 months. **Tender Submission Start Date :** 31.12.2024. **Tender Submission End Date :** 14.01.2025 upto 14.00 hrs. **Tender Bid Opening Date :** 14.01.2025 at 14.30 hrs. **Details may be available :** www.reps.gov.in **Technical Eligibility Criteria:** The tenderer must have successfully completed or substantially completed any one of the following categories of work(s) during last 07 (seven) years, ending last day of month previous to the one in which tender is invited: (i) Three similar works each costing not less than the amount equal to 30% of advertised value of the tender, or (ii) Two similar works each costing not less than the amount equal to 40% of advertised value of the tender, or (iii) One similar work costing not less than the amount equal to 60% of advertised value of the tender. **Financial Eligibility Criteria:** The tenderer must have minimum average annual contractual turnover of V/N or "V" whichever is less; where V = Advertised value of the tender in crores of Rupees, N = Number of years prescribed for completion of work for which bids have been invited. The average annual contractual turnover shall be calculated as an average of "total contractual payments" in the previous three financial years, as per the audited balance sheet. However, in case balance sheet of the previous year is yet to be prepared/audited, the audited balance sheet of the fourth previous year shall be considered for calculating average annual contractual turnover. The tenderers shall submit requisite information as per Annexure-VIB of GCC 2022 (Form-6 of the instant tender document), along with copies of Audited Balance Sheets duly certified by the Chartered Accountant/ Certificate from Chartered Accountant duly supported by Audited Balance Sheet. **Other document to be submitted:** As mentioned in the tender document. **Similar nature of work:** Any telecom work involving provision of MIS/LAN/WAN/Helpdesk/UTS/PRS/F/OIS/value added enquiry system/video enquiry system/Data connectivity/Datacom equipment/video conferencing/ wireless communication/secured communication /W-LF/Telecom work involving computer based enquiry system to be considered as similar nature of work for the instant tender work. **Note:** The tenderer shall submit along with the tender offer, documents in support of his/her claim to fulfill the eligibility criteria as mentioned in the tender document. Each page of the copy of documents/certificates in support of credentials, submitted by the tenderer, shall be self-attested/digitally signed by the tenderer or authorized representative of the tendering firm. Self-attestation shall include signature, stamp and date (on each page). SDAH-283/2024-25. Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.easternrailway.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited (WBFDCL), KB-19, Sector-III, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700106.
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE The undersigned publishes NITs for the project 'Carriage of CFC produce 2024-25 from various mouzas/CFC areas' on behalf of the DM, MFCD, WBFDCL as follows:

NIT No.	Name of Project	Bid Submission Start Date	Last Date of Bid Submission
05/MFCD/2024-25	From Medinipur Division to Pirakata Timber Depot under Godapalasi Range.	20.12.2024	06.01.2025
06/MFCD/2024-25	From Medinipur Division to Godapalasi Timber Depot under Godapalasi Range.		
07/MFCD/2024-25	From Medinipur Division to Godapalasi Timber Depot under Godapalasi Range.		

Details of NITs can be seen at www.wbtdenders.gov.in and www.wbfdcl.com Sd/- DM, MFCD, WBFDCL

MP POORV KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
BLOCK NO.7, SHAKTI BHAWAN, RAMPUR, JABALPUR (M.P.)
Tel No.0761 2702473, Fax No.0761-2660048
CIN: U40109MP200250C015120, e-mail : repsure@yahoo.in
Jabalpur, dd:-18.12.2024
TENDER NOTICE
Online Tenders are invited for following items:-

Sr. No.	TS No. (For e-Tendering) Diacon-EZ/Pur	NAME OF ITEMS	APPROX. VALUE (Rs. in Lakhs)	TENDER FEE (in Rs)	Due date & time of opening of tender online (in *)
1	TS-1531 (e-Tender No. 2024_FKVVV_388887_1)	Strain Hardware Fittings	32	2360	08.01.2025

* For updated / extended due dates for opening of tender (EMD in cover-1 & Techno-commercial bid in cover-2) please refer to the online key dates. For other details visit Company's website:- www.mpeco.in or <https://mptenders.gov.in> SAVE ENERGY FOR BETTER TOMORROW " बिजली सँवो किसानों को रोज़ 1912 रुपये बर्से " C.G.M. (S&P)

HC allows sit-in demonstration by doctors at Metro Channel on R G Kar issue

While issuing the formal order, the court imposed several conditions on the doctors' group for organising its protest programme in the heart of the city.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

Calcutta High Court on Friday allowed the Joint Platform of Doctors to hold a sit-in demonstration at Metro Channel, opposite the Metro Cinema shopping plaza at Esplanade, on the incident of the brutal rape and murder of a young woman doctor at the R G Kar Medical College Hospital, until 26 December.

While issuing the formal order today, the court imposed several conditions on the JPD for organising its protest programme in the heart of the city.

On Thursday, the court had given verbal clearance to the group for the event.

Justice Tirthankar Ghosh, who passed the formal order today, said: "Yesterday, I had given verbal permission for the programme. The state government should not deny permission for the programme at a time when the doctors are mentally prepared to organise the protest show."

Justice Ghosh directed the administration to erect a guardrail of seven feet height so that no outsiders can enter the dais.

The court has also given several conditions to the effect that -

▶ the dais for the sit-in protest would be made 50 feet away from Dorina Crossing;

▶ the stage should be a maximum of 40 feet long and 23 feet wide;

▶ a maximum of 200-250 people can be allowed on the dais;

▶ the organizers would have to discuss with the police administration if the gathering of people increases in number;

▶ the programme would be allowed until 26 December;

▶ no derogatory statements can be made against anybody from the dais; and



▶ that no activities that could disturb the festive mood would be entertained.

Yesterday, Justice Ghosh had asked the lawyers representing the JPD and the state to discuss the size of the area to be cordoned off for the protest.

The JPD, an umbrella plat-

form of several senior doctors' organisations, had moved the court seeking consent to hold the sit-in at Metro Channel after police denied them permission for a sit-in at Dorina Crossing in Esplanade, citing possible traffic congestion during the Christmas-New Year season.

During Thursday's hearing, Justice Ghosh told the counsel for the JPD to restrict the assembly to a certain number after the state counsel, Amitesh Banerjee, expressed fear that the sit-in would disrupt traffic. The sit-in site is the same where junior doctors mainly had sat on a hunger strike to press for a charter of 10 demands, triggered by the R G Kar Medical College Hospital incident on 9 August.

Kolkata Police informed the JPD on Monday that it could not allow a sit-in at the busy Dorina Crossing.

The platform had written to the commissioner of police on Sunday seeking permission

to set up a dais at the intersection for the sit-in from 17 to 26 December.

The police had in its email to the JPD on Monday said: "There is every possibility of traffic congestion and inconvenience to the general public at large because of the said programme."

Soon after getting the HC order, JPD members assembled at the protest site at Metro Channel this afternoon to erect the dais there. Senior police officials also visited the spot and measured its length and width as per the HC directives. The JPD will hold the sit-in from this afternoon to press for two demands-

that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probing the incident submits a supplementary chargesheet against former R G Kar Medical College principal Sandip Ghosh and former Tala police station officer-in-charge Abhijit Mandal in connection with the rape and murder, and that the state government allows the prosecution of Dr Ghosh and former R G Kar house staff Ashis Pandey in a case related to alleged financial irregularities at R G Kar.

"This (the court order) is a victory for us," said a senior member of the JPD. "We will start the demonstration from this afternoon."

ED gets clues on how scam proceeds were diverted as donations to trusts

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has identified a new angle of money laundering in the multi-crore cash-for-school job case in West Bengal where a major part of the proceeds was diverted and shown as donations to certain charitable trusts.

Sources aware of the development said that the ED has mentioned this new style of money laundering in its last and fifth supplementary charge sheet filed at a special court of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Kolkata recently.

One such trust named in the fifth supplementary charge



sheet is the Babli Chatterjee Memorial Trust, named after the deceased wife of former West Bengal Education Minister and Trinamool Congress Secretary General Partha Chatterjee, who has been behind bars since his arrest by the ED in the school-job case way back in July 2022.

In the previous charge sheet, Chatterjee's son-in-law Kalyanmoy Bhattacharya had also been shown as a co-accused of the former

Education Minister in this game of fund diversion under the masquerade of donations.

Bhattacharya, who has settled abroad with his wife and Chatterjee's daughter Sohini Chatterjee Bhattacharya, was also questioned by the ED as well as the officials of the Income Tax department in the matter.

However, his wife had not been shown as an accused in the case though she was the Chairperson of the trust. Besides the trusts, the ED in their subsequent charge sheets had named a number of shell corporate entities linked to Chatterjee and his close associate Arpita Mukherjee.

Bengal school job case: CBI seeks Calcutta HC's permission to replace head of probe team

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday approached the Calcutta High Court seeking permission to replace the current head of its special investigation team (SIT) probing the multi-crore cash-for-school job case but was asked to move the apex court.

Since the CBI probe in the school job case is court-directed and court-monitored, the change of any member of the probe team concerned requires court approval.

However, the single-judge bench of Justice Amrita Sinha has refused to entertain the



plea and instead advised the central agency counsel to

approach the Supreme Court, since the matter is pending

there.

Currently, the SIT of CBI probing the school-job case is headed by Kalyan Bhattacharya, an officer in the rank of superintendent. Bhattacharya earlier replaced Dharamveer Singh in May this year and even then, the replacement was done with the permission of the court.

On Friday, CBI informed the court that with just one year left before his retirement, Bhattacharya expressed his wish to be transferred to Delhi where his family is staying.

The CBI has proposed the name of Angshuman Saha, another prominent member of the same probe team as the new head of the SIT.

However, with Justice Sinha refusing to hear the matter, the CBI is left with no other option but to move the apex court for permission.

The investigation by the CBI in the matter is currently at an extremely crucial stage with the agency having shown several accused in the case as arrested recently, especially those who have been granted bail in the cases registered against them by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is conducting a parallel probe in the matter.

Hence, sources said, the agency wants someone who had been a member of the investigating team for a long time like Saha, as the replacement for Bhattacharya.

Metro Railway holds Inter Railway Cultural Competition (Music) 2024

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

The Metro Railway hosted the Inter Railway Cultural Competition (Music) 2024 between 17 and 18 December at the Belgachia Auditorium.

P Uday Kumar Reddy, General Manager of Metro Railway, inaugurated the event by lighting a lamp. He emphasised the role of music in fostering well-being and highlighted the importance of such cultural gatherings.

Railway personnel from across the country participated in the competition, showcasing their talents in Vocal, Instrumental Light Music, and Indian Classical Music categories. A total of 66 contestants from 17 Railway Zones and Production Units impressed the audience with their captivating performances.

Mr Reddy returned for the concluding ceremony on 18 December, where he congratulated all participants. He commended the event for providing a platform for railway employees to showcase their talents and expressed hope that it would help discover promising new musical abilities.

Fund utilisation: Minister scolds Kalna Pradhans

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BURDWAN, 20 DECEMBER

Minister Swapan Debnath pulled up the Pradhans and the Upa Pradhans of nine Panchayats in Kalna today for failing to spend development funds.

Sonali Dhara - Pradhan of Kakuria Panchayat in Kalna was rebuked by Mr Debnath as her Panchayat failed to utilise Rs 39.68 lakh

of 15th Finance Commission money. Mr Debnath was annoyed when Chanchal Singha Roy, son of a Panchayat Samiti Karmadhyaksha was giving reply to queries raised by the Minister. The minister later said: "These Pradhans have assumed their charges only a year back. They needed some active guidance and so I'd attended the meeting today."

Body of maid found hanging in Durgapur village

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DURGAPUR, 20 DECEMBER

The hanging body of a 24-year-old maid was recovered from the house of a retired school teacher, sparking a sensation in a village in Durgapur this morning.

Shila Bagdi, the maid, was working at the house of Prabhat Mishra, a retired teacher from Sarpi village in the Laudoha police station

area here. Swadhin Bagdi, the deceased's father, said that his daughter had been serving at the house to look after the elderly Mishra for the past eight years. This morning, Shila was found hanging from the ceiling. A grieving Swadhin said he could not understand what provoked his daughter to commit suicide. He said: "My daughter never complained about the Mishras."

TMC MPs stage protest against HM Shah at Prerna Sthal, demand apology over his remarks

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs on Friday protested against the remarks of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on Ambedkar.

The MPs stood together with a picture of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution and chanted Jaibhim in front of his statue.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee (photo) mentioned that the party has opposed to comments of Ambedkar,

"Everyone has heard what Amit Shah has said about Ambedkar, we will not repeat that but the words and expressions he had used insulted Ambedkar. Our party has opposed this, and also our CM Mamata Banerjee has said about it," Banerjee told agencies.

He said that Shah should understand the position he has in the cabinet and what he should say and not say.

"He should understand being in the second position in cabinet on what to say and what not to say. Now the house has been closed but he could have apologised once," he said.



Senior TMC leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay also commented on the two BJP MPs getting injured on Parliament premises, while both Congress and BJP alleged that either side had insulted B R Ambedkar.

"What happened yesterday was neither expected nor desirable, BJP on one side, Congress on another side...people have not accepted it. So TMC thought it better to keep it isolated from it all and pay tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar," the senior TMC leader told agencies.

He also demanded an apology from Shah.

He added, "We firmly believe that Amit Shah, what he did, he should immediately apologise for it."

During a scuffle in Parliament premises, two BJP MPs, Pratap Sarangi, and Mukesh Rajput were injured

on their heads.

Both the parties have alleged that their party members had been pushed around. Moreover, an FIR has been registered against Rahul Gandhi by Delhi police regarding the incident.

Earlier, Congress' Pramod Tiwari alleged that the women MPs of the party were barred from entering the Parliament and pushed during the ruckus in Parliament yesterday.

"BJP has been charged with their lack of trust in democracy or Constitution. The recent events suggest, particularly the parliament session, that the BJP-led Modi government is a living example of fascism," Tiwari told reporters here.

Meanwhile, several BJP MPs launched a scathing attack on the Congress and their leader Rahul Gandhi.

"The arrogance of Rahul Gandhi that was seen yesterday and his attitude towards his fellow MPs is very unfortunate. The way he created a ruckus by violating all the rules and instead of going on the designated path, he deliberately took his supporters along and created a ruckus...this is not forgivable," Thakur said.

RKM spent ₹1,292 crore on social welfare in 2023-24

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

The Ramakrishna Mission spent Rs 1,292 crore on social welfare, education, and rural development in 2023-24.

The 115th annual general meeting of RKM was held at the Belur Math recently. Swami Gautamanandaji, president of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, chaired the meeting. The report of the governing body of Ramakrishna Mission for 2023-24 was presented by Swami Suvirananda, general secretary of Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

RKM spent Rs 712.89 crore on the education of students across the country. In Jhargram, it has taken over an Ekalavya Residential School meant for ST students. The students have secured excellent results in various



examinations. Most of the students are first-generation learners.

It has spent Rs 26.50 crore on Ramakrishna Vivekananda Vedanta literature. It is to be noted that the interest

in reading the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Vedanta literature is growing among the youths. The RKM is organizing youth conferences across the country to propagate the man-making char-

acter-building education of Swami Vivekananda.

RKM spent Rs 496.70 crore to provide medical assistance to 79.28 lakh people. It has a hospital, a post-graduate institute, and a nursing institute at the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan. Two full-fledged hospitals in Lucknow and Vrindavan, run by the RKM, are catering to lakhs of people.

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission, through their one hundred centers situated in 24 countries outside India, carried out various service activities.

The school at Viveknagar in Tripura was declared an exemplary CBSE school by the chairperson of CBSE. In 2023-24, six branch centers of RKM started in Gurugram, Kalyani, Kharupetia, Sakwar, Thirumukkudal, and Ujjain.

Bengal passport racket: Cops trying to track PDS dealers acting as roots of creating fake documents

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

Officials of investigating agencies probing the rackets engaged in arranging fake Indian passports for illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, are now trying to track the roots of this menace in a section of public distribution system (PDS) dealers in West Bengal.

Sources said that preliminary investigation has revealed such errant PDS dealers constitute the base of the pyramid structure in



the racket of the creation of fake passports.

Explaining the modus operandi of the crime, the

sources said that once an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant steps into the Indian side and contacts the agents of

such rackets, the process of creation of fake ration cards for the infiltrator begins.

The agents of such rackets contact the local PDS dealers for the list of ration cards that expired recently because of the demise of the cardholder concerned or for not collecting rations allotted for that card for a long time. Thereafter, one such particular card was selected and based on that, a general diary on its misplacement was filed.

Later, based on that general diary, the expired card was

revived showing the illegal infiltrator as the beneficiary of the card. Thereafter, the chain system of the next lines of creation of fake Indian documents starts first with EPIC cards, followed by PAN and AADHAAR cards and finally fake passports.

The sources said errant PDS dealers' involvement was the base of the pyramid structure of this menace and involving a section of the Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) was the peak of the same structure.

BOAT SHOW



Ananda, a boat show to rediscover the river and its vessels, is being organised by Sea Explorer Institute (SEI) at Prinsep Ghat on the Hooghly River in Kolkata on Friday. ■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

'Oppn should raise issues by following rules instead of disrupting Parliament'

The winter session provided 20 sittings of Lok Sabha and 19 sittings of Rajya Sabha spreading over 26 days

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Expressing concern over reduction in the productivity of Parliament's winter session, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said the Opposition should raise issues in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha by following established rules and procedures instead of disrupting both the Houses.

ference following the adjournment of the Winter session. The winter session of Parliament, which commenced on 25 November, was adjourned sine die on Friday. The session saw 20 sittings of Lok Sabha and 19 sittings of Rajya Sabha spreading over 26 days.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned sine die on Friday amid protests over Shah's remarks on BR Ambedkar.

Rijiju said two landmark Bills namely, The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth) Amendment Bill, 2024 and The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 to give effect to the mechanism of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State/Union Territory Assemblies under



Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday hit out at Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying that NDA MPs are very agitated over the conduct of the Congress lawmaker in the Parliament premises.

of Parliament's winter session had reduced due to disruptions caused by the Opposition and urged them to avoid similar interruptions in the upcoming Budget session.

'NDA MPs are very agitated over the conduct of Rahul Gandhi'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday hit out at Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying that NDA MPs are very agitated over the conduct of the Congress lawmaker in the Parliament premises.

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister said BJP MPs were deeply agitated by the Congress leader's actions on the floor, specifically a scuffle that resulted in injuries to two of their colleagues on Thursday.

Talking to mediapersons, Rijiju said, "He (Rahul Gandhi) insulted one of the MPs from Nagaland and then injured two other MPs. The Speaker has said that no protest should be done at Parliament gate. So, our MPs protested at the Mahatma Gandhi statue," he added.

On the health condition of the injured when they were allegedly pushed by Rahul Gandhi, Rijiju said: "Two BJP MPs were injured after being pushed by Rahul Gandhi. They are in hospital. Their condition is not very serious. They are stable. Our colleagues have met them."

Fadnavis faces opposition ire after Maharashtra family gets assaulted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, 20 DECEMBER

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced in the Maharashtra Legislative Council on Friday that senior Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) official Akhilesh Shukla whose goons allegedly assaulted his Maharashtra neighbours with iron rods in a suburban Kalyan-based housing society, has been suspended from his job with immediate effect.

The incident snowballed into a serious political issue after a video of the alleged assault on the Maharashtra family went viral quickly leading to political and social tension. According to the video, Shukla and his wife allegedly abused Maharashtra natives as "filthy", accused them of eating meat and fish, after which they were allegedly assaulted with iron rods by Shukla's goons. The victims of the assault had to be hospitalised later.

The incident snowballed into a serious political issue of non-Maharashtrians discriminating against native Maharashtra natives on the basis of their local language and food habits, even as the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties attacked the Fadnavis government. The latest case of alleged anti-Maharashtrian discrimination came close on the heels of a similar incident in Girgaum just a few days ago, where a Marwadi shopkeeper allegedly



asked a Maharashtra lady customer to speak only in the Marwadi language, since according to him, a "Marwadi party" like the BJP has come to power in Maharashtra. After the issue was raised in the Legislative Council, CM Fadnavis said that "Injustice will not be done to Marathi people under any circumstances" as he replied during a discussion on the issue under Legislative Council Rule 289 moved by Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad) member Advocate Anil Parakh.

"Akhilesh Shukla has been suspended from his service and an FIR has been registered against him and other accused," Fadnavis said showing a copy of the First Information Report (FIR) filed against senior MTDC official Shukla whose goons allegedly assaulted his Maharashtra neighbour family. "Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that Mumbai as well as Maharashtra always belonged to Maharashtra, it still does and it always will," Fadnavis said, as members of the house applauded his statement.

Eight burnt to death, 50 injured in LPG tanker truck explosion in Jaipur

JAIPUR, 20 DECEMBER

At least eight people were killed and around 50 sustained serious burns when a LPG tanker exploded with a big bang after collision with a truck near Bhankrota on the outskirts of the city Friday morning.

The tanker was taking a turn towards Bagru at the Ajmer Jaipur Highway when a speeding truck hit it from the rear causing the explosion in the tanker that instantly caught fire.

So intense was the blaze that it instantaneously engulfed several vehicles and some shops along the road. According to officials and hospital sources, bodies of the deceased were charred to such an extent that only three of them could be identified. SNS

2 troopers injured in IED blast

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE RAIPUR, 20 DECEMBER

Two security personnel were injured on Friday after an improvised explosive device allegedly planted by Maoists detonated in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh.

The injured personnel were promptly evacuated from the site and are being transported to the district hospital for treatment.

The incident occurred during a routine patrol to ensure the safety of an ongoing road construction project in the Maoist-affected region. The explosion, triggered when the personnel stepped on the pressure-sensitive IED, highlights the persistent threat posed by Maoist insurgents in the area. Recently, the police set up a new security camp in Kachhapal, a Maoist stronghold, to establish a stronger presence in the area. The construction of a road

Adani Group to invest ₹ 20,000 crore for thermal power plant in Bihar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

The Adani Group has planned to invest Rs 20,000 crore in setting up a super critical thermal power plant in Bihar.

The development comes amid its plans for expands its cement, food processing and logistics business in the state. Pranav Adani, Director, Adani Enterprises Ltd, while speaking at the Bihar Business Connect 2024 said the ports-to-energy conglomerate is invested in three sectors in Bihar - logistics, gas distribution and agri logistics, where it has already invested around Rs 850 crore.

"We are now going to invest another Rs 2,300 crore in these sectors. This investment will not only massively increase our warehousing and handling capacity and expand our presence in the EV, city gas distribution (CGD) and compressed biogas (CBG) space but will also generate an additional 27,000 direct and indirect local job opportunities," he said. The Director of Adani Enterprises said that another sector that the group is investing in is smart meter manufacturing. "As Bihar migrates from conventional electric meters to smart meters, we will invest Rs 2,100 crore to manufacture and install over 28 lakh smart meters to automate power-consumption monitoring in five cities - Siwan, Gopalganj, Vaishali, Saran and Samastipur - and this will generate at least 4,000 local jobs in this technology segment," he said. He shared that the group is also looking to potentially

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T E N D E R

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE e-Tender is hereby invited by Assistant Engineer, Uluberia Sub-Division, P.H.E. Dte. vide Ref: No WBPHED/AE/USD/ NIT-21/2024-2025 Memo No-1269/AE/USD, Dt: 14/12/2024. Details will be available in the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in and wbphec.gov.in Last date of application is 31/12/2024. Sd/- For Assistant Engineer, Uluberia Sub-Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA: T23564(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-TENDER NOTICE Tenders are invited from reputed firms for the Works abridged NIT No. - CMOH/SAMIT/1619 Dated 18.12.2024 related to schemes of Procurement of Vehicle (Model-TATA Winger DLX 13V AC BS6) for Blood Bank at Raghunathpur Sub-Divisional Hospital, Purulia. The last date & time of online bid submission: 06.01.2025 at 05:30 P.M. visit www.wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbphed.gov.in. Sd/- Secretary DHR&FWS & CMOH, Purulia. ICA: T23528(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL THE BURGAJUR PROJECTS LIMITED (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise) CN No. U40104WB1985SGC039154 NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) NIT No. (1) WBPD/L/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-022 BP/343/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_DPL_785579_1 for Procurement of Non-Return Valves and Ball Valves of various sizes. (2) WBPD/L/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-023 DJ/349/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_DPL_785580_1 for Procurement of High Flexible Trailing cables for Units-7 & 8 CHP. (3) WBPD/L/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-028 DJ/365/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_DPL_785569_1 for Procurement of Control Cable. SI. Nos. 1 to 3. Bid submission end date: 04.01.2025 Bid Opening date: 10.01.2025 respectively. Cancellation NIT No. (4) WBPD/L/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-066 SR/70/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_DPL_763323_1 (5) WBPD/L/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-068 SP/222/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_DPL_763339_1 are hereby treated as cancelled. Visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in/ www.dpl.net.in ICA: T23524(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL WRIDD, e-NIT eTenders Tender reference No. WBWRD/EAAM/BS/NT/13/24-25 (Tender ID: 2024_WRDD_787782_1 to 4) have been invited by the Executive Engineer, Barasat (A-M) Division, Barasat at Hatpukur Road, Barasat, WRDD Admin Bldg, Kolkata-700124 from Bonafide agency under Core Sector Programme. Last date & time of documents download is 04.01.2025 upto 10:00 Hrs. Other details may also be seen from the office notice board/website (wbtenders.gov.in). Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Sd/- Executive Engineer (A-M) Barasat (A-M) Division, Barasat, WRDD. ICA: T23541(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE & COLLECTOR, ALIPORE, KOLKATA Name of Work: Hiring of GPS Based Mobile Van (12 x 8 ft.) from 8th January, 2025 to 17th January, 2025 during Gangasagar Mela-2025 (3rd Call). Tender reference No.: 411/ITGS MELA-2025. Tender ID: 2024_DMSP_787216_1. SCHEDULE OF IMPORTANT DATES OF BIDS

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-TENDER NOTICE e-Tender is invited by the E.E., NTKMD, P.H.E. Dte. on behalf of Government of West Bengal vide Ref No. PHE/NTKMD/e-17 of 2024-25 and ID: 2024_PHE_787324_1 to 3 for different Electrical-Mechanical works under NTKMD. Details will be available in the website: wbtenders.gov.in. The last date for submission of tender is 28.12.2024 upto 12:00 P.M. Sd/- EE/NTKMD, P.H.E. Dte. ICA: T23589(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL PWD TENDER NOTICE Executive Engineer, PWD, Alipurdur Division invites online e-tender for the work of NIT No. 20 of 2024-25 of EE/PWD/APPD. New Construction of R/O. Plant room for proposed 10 bedded Dialysis Unit (PPP Model) over the roof of the Surgery Theatre at District Hospital, Alipurdur. Tender ID: 2024_WBPWD_787367_1. Estimated Amount: Rs. 6,95,993.00. Bid submission start date (online): 24.12.2024 from 02.00 PM. Bid submission closing date (online): 31.12.2024 up to 02.00 PM. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT & Tender documents may be downloaded from http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- EE, PWD, Alipurdur Division. ICA: T23583(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise) Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154 Registered & Corporate Office: Bidyut Unnayan Bhawan Plot No.-3, C. LA - Block, Sector-III, Bidhannagar, Kol-700106. Notice Inviting E-Tender WEDEL / EOT / W/ 24-25 / 060625 Dated: 19.12.2024 For "Work order for Network Infrastructure in Institute of Environmental Studies & Wetland Management Dept. of Environment, Kolkata". Due date of Submission: 14 Days from Publication. Interested parties may go through website https://wbtenders.gov.in and https://www.wbel.in For details or contact 033-23371706. ICA: T23538(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise) Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154 Bakraewar Thermal Power Project P.O. BKTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104. NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BKTPP/CC-2847 Dated: 17.12.2024 NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3469/24-25 E-Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BKTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 2 Part bid system for "Earthwork including roadway required for completion of reclamation of RHS of Ash Pond-1, BKTPS". Tender Document Download Start Date: 18.12.2024 at 10:00 AM. Bid Submission End Date: 08.01.2025 at 04:00 PM. Contact Person: Mr. Indrani Chakraborty, Dy. General Manager - CC, BKTPP, WBPDCL. Mobile: 8373055604, E-mail: cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in/cc.bktps@gmail.com For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA: T23535(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise) Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154 Bakraewar Thermal Power Project P.O. BKTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104. NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BKTPP/CC-2847 Dated: 17.12.2024 NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3461/24-25 E-Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BKTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 2 Part bid system for "Construction of New Fire Hall (with house with Shade at BKTPS Adjacent to Existing Fire Station)". Tender Document Download Start Date: 17.12.2024 at 10:00 AM. Bid Submission End Date: 06.01.2025 at 04:00 PM. Contact Person: Mr. Indrani Chakraborty, Dy. General Manager - CC, BKTPP, WBPDCL. Mobile: 8373055604, E-mail: cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in/cc.bktps@gmail.com For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA: T23537(2)/2024

PRINCIPAL BIDHANNAGAR COLLEGE Invites Tender a) e-Tender for Security Guards [Tender ID: 2024_DHE/787922_1 and Ref. NIT No. DHE/BNC/NIT-01/2025-2026 - Date: 19/12/2024] b) Sealed tenders for books and others [Notice No. 413/24 Date-20/12/2024] See wbtenders.gov.in for a and bidhannagarcollege.org for b Sd/- Principal

WBEIDC Webel Bhawan, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700 091. Notice Inviting e-Tender No. WEDEL / EOT / W/ 24-25 / 060625 For "Work order for Network Infrastructure in Institute of Environmental Studies & Wetland Management Dept. of Environment, Kolkata". Due date of Submission: 14 Days from Publication. Interested parties may go through website https://wbtenders.gov.in and https://www.wbel.in For details or contact 033-23371706. ICA: T23538(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL Abridged Notice Inviting 'e-Tender No. WBW/SDO/TSD-III/NIT02/24-25 Tender ID: [2024_IWD_786588_1] The Sub-Divisional Officer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III invites e-tender for a single work from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient, necessary credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature. Bid Submission Start Date is on 18th December 2024 from 14:30 Hours and Bid Submission End Date is on 28th December 2024 upto 17:30 P.M. Amount put to tender is Rs.1.07 Lakh. Scheme head - SODS(M). For further details regarding "Scope of work" & "Opening of tenders" Please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in (direct site). Sd/- SDO/Assistant Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III, Irrigation & Waterways Directorate, E-Mail ID: sdtdts3@gmail.com ICA: T23529(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL Abridged Notice Inviting 'e-Tender No. WBW/EE/TIDe/NIT-06/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_IWD_787237_1 The Executive Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Division invites e-tender for single work under SODS(M) at Teesta Pally, Assam More, Jalpaiguri from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient, necessary credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature. Bid Submission Start Date is on 18th December 2024 from 5:30 A.M. and Bid Submission End Date is on 30th December 2024 upto 5:30 P.M. Amount put to tender is Rs.5.85 lakh. For further details regarding "Scope of work" & "Opening of tenders" Please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in (direct site). Sd/- Executive Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Division, Postal Address: Assam More, Jalpaiguri, Pin-735102. Ph: 03561-235729. E-Mail: I.D.-eetidvn@gmail.com ICA: T23530(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL Tender Notice of I & CA Deptt Memo No. of NIT 4809 - ICA (N) dt 20/12/2024 and Tender ID 2024_ICAD_788362_1. e-Tender is hereby invited from intending bidders for feed to electronic media and installation of LED screen and LED TVs related to 26th January 2025. Bid submission closing date for the above e-Tender: 06/01/2025 at 12:30 pm. Other details may be available from the website: https://wbtenders.gov.in. Sd/- Director of Information, Information & Cultural Affairs Deptt., Govt. of West Bengal ICA: T23600(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-Tender Notice The Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Dist- Paschim Medinipur-721301, invites bids regarding e-tender vide e-tender Notice No. WBFOR/WPS-1/Field Survey for Preparation of Stock Maps on Mouza Maps For Vol-III of Working Plan of Medinipur Division/NIT02(e)/24-25. Bid Submission will be started from 23/12/2024 at 12:00 p.m. to 07/01/2025 at 12:00 p.m. Interested contractors/bidders are here by requested to check the website: www.westbengalforest.gov.in or contact the Office of the undersigned at M.M.Nagar, Police Line, Midnapore: 721101. Sd/- Ayan Ghosh, WBFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Midnapore. ICA: T23521(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL Abridged Notice Inviting 'e-Tender No. WBW/SDO/TSD-III/NIT02/24-25 Tender ID: [2024_IWD_786588_1] The Sub-Divisional Officer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III invites e-tender for a single work from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient, necessary credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature. Bid Submission Start Date is on 18th December 2024 from 14:30 Hours and Bid Submission End Date is on 28th December 2024 upto 17:30 P.M. Amount put to tender is Rs.1.07 Lakh. Scheme head - SODS(M). For further details regarding "Scope of work" & "Opening of tenders" Please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in (direct site). Sd/- SDO/Assistant Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III, Irrigation & Waterways Directorate, E-Mail ID: sdtdts3@gmail.com ICA: T23529(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL WRIDD, e-NIT Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division, WRDD invites e-tender for following work: "Renovation of Memari (A-M) Sub-Divisional Store & Lifting of Submerged Steel Pump Barge at Natungram G Govt. owned and Operated RI Scheme under Memari (A-M) & Kates (A-M) Sub-Division respectively under jurisdiction of Burdwan (AM) Division under Maintenance Fund in Purba Bardhaman District, FY. 2024-25". Internal wiring and other maintenance work at office of the Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division under Nonplan Programme in Purba Bardhaman District, FY. 2024-25, vide e-NIT No. 10/WRDD/EE (AM) /Burdwan (AM) DIVN/ of 2024-25 (E-A & B) & e-NIT No. 11/WRDD/EE (AM) /Burdwan (AM) DIVN/ of 2024-25 and Tender ID: 2024_WRDD_788413_1 & 2 & 2024_WRDD_788413_1, Tended value: Rs.2,90,094.00 Rs. 1,08,450,006.81, 3,00,079.00 Lakh each respectively. Bid Submission End Date: 31.12.2024 at 16:00 Hrs. respectively. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT & Tender documents may be downloaded to visit the website https://wbtenders.gov.in for details. Sd/- Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division Purba Bardhaman ICA: T23597(2)/2024

e-TENDER NOTICE OFFICE OF THE MAL PANCHAYAT SAMITY MAL, JALPAIGURI Notice Inviting Tender by the undersigned for different works vide NIT No. WB / 57 / EO / MAL PS / 2024-25, dated: 17-12-2024 Last date of online bid submission: 23-12-2024 up to 18-55 hrs. For further details you may visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Officer Mal Panchayat Samity Jalpaiguri

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-Tender Notice The Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Dist- Paschim Medinipur-721301, invites bids regarding e-tender vide e-tender Notice No. WBFOR/WPS-1/Field Survey for Preparation of Stock Maps on Mouza Maps For Vol-III of Working Plan of Medinipur Division/NIT02(e)/24-25. Bid Submission will be started from 23/12/2024 at 12:00 p.m. to 07/01/2025 at 12:00 p.m. Interested contractors/bidders are here by requested to check the website: www.westbengalforest.gov.in or contact the Office of the undersigned at M.M.Nagar, Police Line, Midnapore: 721101. Sd/- Ayan Ghosh, WBFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Midnapore. ICA: T23521(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL Abridged Notice Inviting 'e-Tender No. WBW/SDO/TSD-III/NIT02/24-25 Tender ID: [2024_IWD_786588_1] The Sub-Divisional Officer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III invites e-tender for a single work from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient, necessary credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature. Bid Submission Start Date is on 18th December 2024 from 14:30 Hours and Bid Submission End Date is on 28th December 2024 upto 17:30 P.M. Amount put to tender is Rs.1.07 Lakh. Scheme head - SODS(M). For further details regarding "Scope of work" & "Opening of tenders" Please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in (direct site). Sd/- SDO/Assistant Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Sub-Division-III, Irrigation & Waterways Directorate, E-Mail ID: sdtdts3@gmail.com ICA: T23529(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL WRIDD, e-NIT Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division, WRDD invites e-tender for following work: "Renovation of Memari (A-M) Sub-Divisional Store & Lifting of Submerged Steel Pump Barge at Natungram G Govt. owned and Operated RI Scheme under Memari (A-M) & Kates (A-M) Sub-Division respectively under jurisdiction of Burdwan (AM) Division under Maintenance Fund in Purba Bardhaman District, FY. 2024-25". Internal wiring and other maintenance work at office of the Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division under Nonplan Programme in Purba Bardhaman District, FY. 2024-25, vide e-NIT No. 10/WRDD/EE (AM) /Burdwan (AM) DIVN/ of 2024-25 (E-A & B) & e-NIT No. 11/WRDD/EE (AM) /Burdwan (AM) DIVN/ of 2024-25 and Tender ID: 2024_WRDD_788413_1 & 2 & 2024_WRDD_788413_1, Tended value: Rs.2,90,094.00 Rs. 1,08,450,006.81, 3,00,079.00 Lakh each respectively. Bid Submission End Date: 31.12.2024 at 16:00 Hrs. respectively. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT & Tender documents may be downloaded to visit the website https://wbtenders.gov.in for details. Sd/- Executive Engineer (A-M) Burdwan (A-M) Division Purba Bardhaman ICA: T23597(2)/2024

SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION E-TENDER NOTICE 01 (one) No. e-Tender Notice vide NIT 34 / WBMAD / SMC / PW / 24-25, dt. 13-12-2024 is / are hereby invited from reliable resourceful bona fide, eligible contractors. For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in or the Office Notice Board of SMC. Corrigendum or addendum if issued will be published only on website. Sd/- Commissioner, SMC

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL e-Tender Notice The Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Dist- Paschim Medinipur-721301, invites bids regarding e-tender vide e-tender Notice No. WBFOR/WPS-1/Field Survey for Preparation of Stock Maps on Mouza Maps For Vol-III of Working Plan of Medinipur Division/NIT02(e)/24-25. Bid Submission will be started from 23/12/2024 at 12:00 p.m. to 07/01/2025 at 12:00 p.m. Interested contractors/bidders are here by requested to check the website: www.westbengalforest.gov.in or contact the Office of the undersigned at M.M.Nagar, Police Line, Midnapore: 721101. Sd/- Ayan Ghosh, WBFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plan South-I Division, Midnapore. ICA: T23519(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL PWD TENDER NOTICE Executive Engineer- P.W. Dte., Central Kolkata Health Electrical Division, P-12, C.I.T Road (1st Floor), Kolkata-14 invites e-tender (online) for the work of (1) "Replacement of split type air conditioner machine (SAC) by concealed type Split Air Conditioner in ICU of RRM Building with in the campus of CNMC and H. (Electrical Works)" vide-tender no. WBPDW/EE/ICMED/ENIT-97/24-25. Tender ID: 2024_WBPWD_787199_1. Details may be obtained from office during working hours and also from http://www.wbpdw.gov.in & https://wbtenders.gov.in Bid submission start date: 18.12.2024 from 6:00 PM (IST), End date and time of submission bid proposal: 03.01.2025 upto 2:00 PM (IST). N.B.: Any corrigendum/ and addendum, if issued for this eNIT will be published in Online mode only. Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Berhampore Division-No II ICA: T23585(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL PWD TENDER NOTICE EE, P.W.D. Asansol Division invites online e-Tender for 05 nos. of Work: 1. Dressing and Chilling water of Road flank from 29.500 kmp to 44.000 kmp on Balganga-Guankhara-Mankar Road of Durgapur Sub-Division under Asansol Division, PWD, in the district of Paschim Bardhaman during 2024-2025. Estimated Amount: 4,95,962.00. Tender ID: 2024_PWD_777388_1. 2. Lithuria Road from Ch.0.40 Km to Ch.1.050 Km and Ch.1.75 Km to Ch.1.95 Km in stretches repairing work under Asansol Division, PWD in the District of Paschim Bardhaman during 2024-2025. Estimated Amount: 9,17,836.00. Tender ID: 2024_PWD_777388_1. 3. Asansol Barakar G.T. Road from 444.000 Km to 448.000 Km patch repairing work in stretches in the district of Paschim Bardhaman under Asansol Division, PWD, Berhampore, Murshidabad. Tender ID: 2024_PWD_787306_1. Details may be obtained from office during working hours and also from http://www.wbpdw.gov.in & https://wbtenders.gov.in Bid submission start date: 18.12.2024 from 6:00 PM (IST), End date and time of submission bid proposal: 03.01.2025 upto 2:00 PM (IST). N.B.: Any corrigendum/ and addendum, if issued for this eNIT will be published in Online mode only. Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Berhampore Division-No II ICA: T23585(2)/2024

KTR gets relief from HC till 30 December

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 20 DECEMBER

In a relief to BRS working president KT Rama Rao Friday, the Telangana High Court passed an interim order protecting him from arrest till 30 December in the Formula E race scam after he filed a lunch motion petition to quash the proceedings against him following an FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).

the BRS leader. Appearing for the BRS leader in High Court before the bench of Justice Shrivani Kumar, his counsel, CA Sundaram alleged a political vendetta pointing out that the FIR was registered after a delay of 14 months not even a preliminary inquiry took place in between. He argued that the state government had simply stepped in when the sponsor of the Formula E race had backed out.

The former minister had been booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Advocate General A Sudarshan Reddy submitted on behalf of the state. Any amount above Rs 10 crore requires sanction but more than Rs 54 crore was given without sanction and concurrence of the finance department.

He also mentioned that the Governor had given his sanction only after a preliminary inquiry. While the court passed the interim order shielding him from arrests till 30 December, it said that the investigation shall continue.

Meanwhile, the Telangana Assembly turned into a scene of chaos as BRS MLAs disrupted proceedings to protest against the FIR registered against Rao. At the beginning, the BRS MLAs urged the Speaker for a discussion on the Formula E case before the Bhu Bharathi Bill, but the Speaker said the case was relevant to an individual while the bill was relevant across the state.

The revenue minister started addressing the House but the BRS MLAs resorted to sloganeering.

SC seeks TN's response on plea for recall of bail order of Senthil Balaji

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on 15 January 2025

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from the Tamil Nadu government on a plea seeking to recall its 26 September 2024, judgment granting bail to the State Minister Senthil Balaji in an alleged money laundering case relating to the cash-for-jobs scam.

Seeking details if the cases pending against Balaji and the number of witnesses which are required to be examined in the cases, a bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice

Augustine George Masih also directed the State government to furnish details about how many victims' witnesses are public servants and how many are the common people.

The bench said: "We want to know from the state how many victims are there. If there are a large number of victims, then obviously this man occupying the position of cabinet minister, what will happen to the victims?"

The court sought details about the witnesses as Directorate of Enforcement (ED) told the bench that the reappearance of Balaji as a Cabinet Minister after his release from

prison has brought undue pressure on witnesses. The bench posted the matter for further hearing on 15 January 2025.

In the last hearing of the matter on 2 December 2024, the top court had expressed concern over Senthil Balaji being appointed as cabinet minister in the State government day after he was granted bail and the potential impact of his ministerial position on the witnesses.

"We grant bail, and the next day, you go and become a minister! This must stop. Anybody will be bound to think that witnesses will now

be under pressure because of your position as a senior Cabinet Minister. What is this going on?", the bench had observed hearing the plea seeking recall of the court's 26 September judgment that enlarged Senthil Balaji on bail.

The 26 September judgment granting bail to Balaji was grounded on the sacrosanct constitutional principles of the protection of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution and the need to curtail prolonged pre-trial detention under the stringent provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act



(PMLA).

"The law laid down in the 26 September decision is a salutary judgment that benefits others as well," the court said.

T E N D E R

B.I.T. SINDRI P.O.-SINDRI INSTITUTE DIST; DHANBAD (JHARKHAND) PIN: 828123 e-tender Notice - BIT/5/2024-25/El-1 Reference Number: BIT/5/2024-25/El-1 Dated :- 19-12-2024 Tender ID: 2024_DHTE_96832_1

GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL OFFICE OF THE P.O.-CUM-D.W.O.B.C.W.&TD MALDA NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER P.O.-CUM-D.W.O. B.C.W.&TD, MALDA, invites percentage rate tender vide e-NIT. No. 13 / BCW(MLD) / 2024-25, Dated: 19-12-2024 for 05 works as mentioned at Annexure-I of e-NIT.

NIT No. SFDC/MD/NIT-16(e)/2024-25 SFDC Ltd. Invites 1 (one) no. tender from the bonafide and resourceful contractors having experience for the work 'Construction of Fish landing Ghat at right embankment of Rupnarayan river near Kalimandir in G.P. Kola - I Block & P.S. Kolaghat, District.-Purba Medinipur'. Last date of (online) bid submission on 06/01/2025 upto 4.00 p.m. and date of opening technical bid on 08/01/2025 at 4.00 p.m. respectively.

INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Govt. of India) Notice Inviting Tender Bank To Bank Detailed Hydrographic Survey in West Coast Canal alongwith Champakara & Udyogmandal Canal (National Waterway-3).

Metro Railway, Kolkata Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/M/Blue Line Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender for the following work: Name of Work: Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of ON grid 654 KWp solar plants at vacant rooftops of various stations and service buildings of Metro Railway Kolkata.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Auction Notice On behalf of President of India, DRM (Commercial), E. C Railway, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division invites e-auction for leasing of parcel space in SLR Coach of under mentioned Coaching trains originating over Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya division. Details are as under:

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tendering Tender Notice Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work:

B.I.T. SINDRI P.O.-SINDRI INSTITUTE DIST; DHANBAD (JHARKHAND) PIN: 828123 e-tender Notice - BIT/3/2024-25/Che2 Reference Number: BIT/3/2024-25/Che2 Dated :- 19-12-2024 Tender ID: 2024_DHTE_96823_1

B.I.T. SINDRI P.O.-SINDRI INSTITUTE DIST; DHANBAD (JHARKHAND) PIN: 828123 e-tender Notice - BIT/1/2024-25/CCTV Reference Number: BIT/1/2024-25/CCTV Dated :- 19-12-2024 Tender ID: 2024_DHTE_96820_1

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER ABRIDGED NIT The Director General (C), KMC invites e-tender online percentage rate two bids system for the following work:

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender No. PU-CNB-ST-CPA-El-766-2024 Date: 17.12.2024 E-TENDER NOTICE Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/PU/Kanpur, North Central Railway for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-Tender from reputed contractors with adequate experience and financial capability, for the following work on Single Packet System up to 15.00 hrs. on the opening date of E-tender mentioned therein.

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER Tender Notice No.: MECHCKP-24-25-17, Dated: 19.12.2024. For and on behalf of President of India, Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), South Eastern Railway, Chakradharpur invites E-tender under two packet system for the under mentioned service contract.

GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL TENDER NOTICE e-Tender is invited for NIT No. 38 / POSTDLP / UD / SE / RRMU / MALDA / 2024-25 (1st Call) OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RRMU, MALDA CIRCLE, Date: 20-12-2024 (For 1 No. road works under WBRSDA, Uttar Dinajpur Division). Bid submission start date: 21-12-2024 at 11-00 hrs. Last date of bid submission: 13-01-2025 at 16-00 hrs. & Date of Technical Bid opening: 15-01-2025 at 16-00 hrs. Please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in & www.prd.gov.in for detailed tender notice and all necessary information.

EASTERN RAILWAY e-Tender Notice No.: O-AC-T-153, 175 & 179 to 181-24-25 (Open), dated 18.12.2024. E-Tenders (Open) are invited by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Pin- 713301 for the following work: SI. No. : 1; Case No. : O-AC-T-175-24-25. Name of the work : Open tender for replacement of damaged tanks with RCC OH tanks along with pipeline, ancillary works in platform at Asansol (ASN), Panagarh (PAN), Pandabeshwar (PAW), Kailpahari (KPK), Durgapur (DGR), Tapasi (TOP) etc. under Asansol Division. Tender Value : ₹ 6,86,39,847.76. Earnest Money : ₹ 4,93,200.00. SI. No. : 2; Case No. : O-AC-T-153-24-25. Name of the work : Open tender for minimum essential amenities for Divyanagar at Madhupur, Basukinath, Baidyanath Dham, Deoghar, Bhalua, Dhanpalthi, Girdih, Ghormara, Jagdishpur, Jamtara, Joramow, Kumrabad Rohini, Krishna Ballabh Sahay Halt, Kakbara, Maheshmunda, Madanaka, Mathurapur, Narganjoi Halt, RJ and Panagarh stations in Asansol Division. Tender Value : ₹ 6,01,46,942.06. Earnest Money : ₹ 2,55,500.00. SI. No. : 3; Case No. : O-AC-T-179-24-25. Name of the work : Open tender for construction of 8 Unit Type-II Quarters for engineering, running, operating and S&T staff at Baidyanath Dham colony on replacement basis under Senior DEN/2/Asansol. Tender Value : ₹ 1,90,12,360.44. Earnest Money : ₹ 2,45,100.00. SI. No. : 4; Case No. : O-AC-T-180-24-25. Name of the work : Open tender for provision of shuting Neck at Coaching Depot Madhupur under Sr. DEN/2/Asansol. Tender Value : ₹ 2,11,05,119.46. Earnest Money : ₹ 2,55,500.00. SI. No. : 5; Case No. : O-AC-T-181-24-25. Name of the work : Open tender for Construction of 50 bedded (double bed) staff barrack fully furnished with attach toilet/bathroom, kitchen etc. at 16BN/RPSP/Asansol under Senior DEN/1/Asansol. Tender Value : ₹ 1,89,78,725.64. Earnest Money : ₹ 2,44,900.00. Completion period for the work : 18 months for SI. No. 1 and 12 months for SI. No. 2 to 5. Date and time of closing : 13.01.2025 at 12.00 hrs. for SI. No. 1 to 5. Complete details can be seen in the Railway's website www.reps.gov.in ASN-278/2024-25 Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.e.indianrailways.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

DELHI JAL BOARD; GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI PRESS N.L.T.No.15(2024-25)/EE(D)-091 S. No. Name of work. Amount Put to Tender (Rs.) EMD (Rs.) Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution Last date / time receipt of tender through e-procurement solution

Kamarhati Municipality 1, M.M. Feeder Road, Rathala, Kolkata-56 Date : 17.12.2024 E-TENDER NOTICE E-Tender are invited by the Chairman, Kamarhati Municipality, North 24 Parganas for different works within Municipal area under Sth SFC, 14th Fin, Road Repairing, ULM, SEC.

EASTERN RAILWAY Tender No. : SDSTE-ALT-BWNRRI-24-25, dated 19.12.2024. Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, DRM Building near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 invites Open E-Tenders against Tender No. SDSTE-ALT-BWNRRI-24-25 for the following work. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice No.: ELD-300-WC-20-2024-25, dated 16.12.2024. E-tender is invited by the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Sealdah, Eastern Railway, Control Building, 1st Floor, DRM Office, Kaiser Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014 for the following work: Tender No. ELD-300-WC-20-2024-25. Name of work : 25 KV PSI and allied electrical works in connection "Biddhannagar - Augmentation of Traction Transformer at CP/TSS". Tender Value : ₹ 69,49,331.00. Cost of Tender document : Nil. Earnest Money : ₹ 1,39,000.00. Completion period : 12 (Twelve) months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance. Date of closing : 08.01.2025 at 15.00 hrs. Details of tender notice and corrigendum issued from time to time are available at website www.reps.gov.in SDAH-282/2024-25 Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.e.indianrailways.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

'Nadda equating Purvanchalis with Bangladeshis'



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

AP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused BJP chief J.P. Nadda of equating Purvanchalis with Rohingyas and Bangladeshis, and also deleting their names from voters' lists ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls.

Addressing a press conference, the AAP leader said, "We will not allow BJP to delete the name of any person from Purvanchal from the electoral roll."

Taking a dig at the saffron party, he claimed that AAP has worked to honour and settle the Purvanchal society on the other hand, BJP has made plans to displace them from the national capital.

"In Parliament, J.P. Nadda has called the people of Purvanchal as Bangladeshi, Rohingyas and infiltrators. In response to this, we will go to every house of the purvanchali community and show them the video and expose the saffron party," Kejriwal mentioned.

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP from Delhi and a Purvanchali face of the party, Sanjay Singh, will undertake "Ratri Pravas" (night stays) at Purvanchali dominated areas of the city

to expose the BJP's "well planned conspiracy", he said. Kejriwal also voiced the issue of law and order situation in Delhi targeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah over its deterioration. "Amit Shah ji, till when will you remain silent? Every day there are threats of bombing schools in Delhi. Children and their parents are scared. Amit Shah has failed to provide security to the people of Delhi, he should come among the public and answer", the AAP chief elaborated.

Meanwhile AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "People from UP, Bihar have been living in the city for the past 30-40 years, are they Rohingyas and Bangladeshis? I will go to every place where brothers, sisters and elders are living and show them the video of the insult done to them by JP Nadda."

Moreover, echoing similar sentiments, AAP leader and nominee from Patparganj assembly seat, Awadh Ojha said, "AAP has done development works for the people belonging to purvanchal society and JP Nadda has revealed the saffron party's intention by calling them infiltrators."

The issue of deletion of votes in Delhi was raised in Parliament by Sanjay Singh on Tuesday.

In reaction to this, Nadda had claimed the names of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas are being removed from the voters' list following the process laid down in the Constitution and asked the AAP if it was winning with their votes.

Jal Shakti minister calls for consensus on river interlinking projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Minister for Jal Shakti C R Patil asked the states to evolve a consensus on their respective river interlinking projects for the progress in the development of the country.

Chairing the 38th annual general meeting of the NWDA Society and 22nd meeting of the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers (SCILR), he mentioned the recent progress made on MPKC (Modified Parbati Kalisindh Chambal) and Ken Betwa Link Project and apprised about a programme organised in Jaipur for the inauguration of various projects of Rajasthan along with declaration of signing of

the MoA upon MPKC link project by the prime minister. The Secretary, DoWR, RD & GR, highlighted that substantial progress was made in the direction of interlinking of rivers during recent years. She specifically mentioned the Ken-Betwa Link project which is the first link of the National Perspective Plan under implementation.

The secretary stated that the management of the water resources has been one of the key priorities of the Central government Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) Programme.

During the meeting, a detailed presentation on the agenda items was made by the director general of the NWDA.

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted on 24.12.2024 from 10:00 AM at following district Centre **Tamluk-Manikta GI - IIFL Finance Ltd, Tamluk, Padumbasan, 1st Floor, Ward No.-10, Ps & Po-Tamluk, Dist Purba Medinipur, Idbi Bank Building, Near Manikta Bus Stand, Pin - 721636.** Any change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the auction cannot be held on the date mentioned here in or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

Gold Loan A/C No. : GL30576161, GL30749196, GL32330376, GL32422742, GL33357201, GL33844213, GL23022870, GL23359194, GL23370390, GL25998401, GL25998539, GL29729426, GL30428604, GL30430464, GL30589295, GL30667101, GL30685912, GL30729757, GL31945869, GL32046728, GL32331628, GL32415793, GL32592121, GL32596686, GL32716108, GL32907183, GL33046347, GL33214014, GL33471722, GL33562950, GL34057809, GL32360976, GL23299724, GL23317166, GL23318574, GL23412014, GL29520363, GL30430483, GL30435006, GL30608249, GL30628344, GL30654433, GL30700396, GL32317614, GL32342186, GL32359963, GL32572347, GL32584707, GL32697286, GL33096895, GL33103315, GL33104289, GL33118452, GL33120061, GL33811121, GL33820949, GL22897806, GL29485757, GL29499767, GL29740306, GL30691862, GL30715944, GL32379264, GL32407942, GL33107633, GL33121161, GL33438172, GL33657336, GL23252059, GL23170025, GL23261385, GL23470613, GL23530943, GL30327470, GL30346261, GL31382422, GL32277392, GL32285657, GL32430498, GL32442604, GL32573560, GL32588408, GL32607237, GL33724832, GL30405692, GL30592446, GL30646353, GL30743717, GL30761424, GL27008134, GL27023515, GL28030726, GL28056895, GL28441218, GL28849991, GL28866553, GL28973424, GL29334137, GL29352341, GL30026265, GL30241922, GL30254888, GL30440684, GL30447838, GL30492448, GL30512782, GL30592837, GL30634263, GL30658954, GL31309953, GL31488014, GL31975677, GL32077609, GL32098948, GL32787798, GL33571729, GL33591639, GL34194958, GL34216127, GL21820989, GL30474204, GL30525776, GL30545888, GL30747599, GL30761599, GL30962153, GL22284388, GL29187974, GL29199882, GL30018536, GL30493268, GL30516986, GL30521856, GL30728235, GL30739225, GL31151871, GL31175460, GL31698089, GL32425183, GL32442509, GL32877106, GL32893254, GL33219097, GL33232419, GL33723602, GL33815032, GL34296671, GL34318336, GL30013088, GL32652055, GL32662151, GL33226790, GL33235042, GL23250242, GL25597175, GL29420140, GL30669437, GL30685175, GL30807091, GL30823414, GL31134080, GL33039462, GL33363388, GL33373042, GL33757297.

The Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATSOEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regarding quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. IIFL, at its absolute sole discretion, may either postpone or remove, any of accounts from auction list and any proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason therefor and to reject any or all the bids or offers without assigning any reason for the same. Details of defaulting borrower(s) pledged ornaments and other details have been displayed at the respective branch. The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any.

For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Place: EAST MIDNAPORE
Date: 21.12.2024



Sd/
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

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Gold Loan A/C No. : GL29491726, GL30518124, GL31856118, GL31882275, GL32630126, GL33834699, GL23263494, GL23303319, GL23460891, GL23462322, GL25622729, GL26987745, GL29440143, GL29448909, GL30406809, GL30422315, GL30425849, GL30451284, GL30560002, GL30584102, GL30690489, GL30716080, GL31217244, GL31226018, GL32223603, GL32330451, GL32343378, GL33365803, GL33372122, GL33843758, GL34197174, GL29438008, GL29450790, GL30172677, GL31332442, GL31342856, GL32066863, GL32262556, GL32282996, GL32359789, GL32710256, GL32909278, GL32923634, GL32943513, GL32958954, GL33194738, GL33814306, GL25023095, GL28365026, GL29284302, GL31998286, GL32015138, GL33944943, GL33970184, GL34330193, GL30288163, GL30339333, GL31574612, GL31579057, GL32184625, GL32197875, GL33136092, GL33148491, GL33334237, GL33351817, GL34263463, GL22629937, GL23106231, GL23261647, GL23356188, GL23360192, GL23370965, GL23428565, GL29260412, GL29277536, GL29283329, GL30269277, GL30417638, GL30497364, GL30511729, GL30517445, GL30517884, GL30521489, GL30521777, GL30540248, GL30558405, GL30567324, GL30618606, GL30618998, GL30735901, GL30746135, GL30761459, GL30764571, GL32387208, GL32408000, GL33027272, GL33143037, GL33202587, GL33208175, GL33447877, GL33459138, GL33572832, GL33592166, GL33659542, GL33767185, GL34328954, GL31747607, GL27775557, GL28024154, GL28051983, GL33346686, GL21940099, GL23362456, GL23460404, GL30700505, GL31749252, GL32371557, GL33187371, GL33217750, GL29304040, GL29328581, GL33240336, GL33264352, GL22904386, GL22957530, GL29490306, GL29499414, GL30014379, GL30035330, GL30053453, GL30117759, GL30137397, GL30569974, GL30580418, GL30599388, GL30676482, GL30687859, GL23117060, GL26977368, GL29391710, GL29582483, GL30498948, GL30527814, GL30579967, GL32935253, GL32957335, GL33205658, GL33316303, GL33322035, GL33477713, GL33562448, GL33567514, GL33650709, GL33679121, GL33778695, GL33795863, GL33837922, GL33842471, GL34049726, GL34142763, GL34270640, GL31409570, GL31743598, GL31753820, GL33550180, GL33567063, GL33789977, GL29460739, GL29474671, GL30436584, GL30438919, GL30563425, GL30567880, GL23250948, GL23751809, GL26937639, GL30647563, GL30703359, GL30733478, GL32214345, GL22956828, GL23387879, GL28260859, GL28270751, GL29032886, GL30469531, GL30471088, GL30496193, GL30517661, GL30608049, GL30641315, GL30722419, GL30739276, GL31101767, GL31165622, GL32316424, GL32342381, GL33075188, GL33088511, GL33109627, GL33229509, GL33237711, GL33247870, GL33267204, GL33473890, GL33630577, GL33692205, GL33791303.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Place: NADIA
Date: 21.12.2024



Sd/
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

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Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23303701, GL29246250, GL29985558, GL29959245, GL30507793, GL30575661, GL30577338, GL30609765, GL30615834, GL32624877, GL33333228, GL33336835, GL33353601, GL33665797, GL34098543, GL34171007, GL26846328, GL26868527, GL29400858, GL30502156, GL30725017, GL30755648, GL30761630, GL32716653, GL32743802, GL3277044, GL30539834, GL30612082, GL30670478, GL32330248, GL32345203, GL32452315, GL32472239, GL32591542, GL34257213.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Place: BANKURA
Date: 21.12.2024



Sd/
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
**DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA HOSPITAL
ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
NEW DELHI-110001**

No.HA-II-11022/1/2023-HA-II Section-Dr. RMLH/3716

Recruitment Notice for the post of Senior Resident (Non-Academic)

The Medical Superintendent, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital & ABVIMS, New Delhi, invites applications from Indian National in the prescribed form available on website: rmlh.nic.in for the posts of Senior Resident (Non-Academic) on regular basis.

The detailed advertisement, numbers of posts, eligibility conditions, pay structure, age criteria, application form and other details can be seen in the full advertisement on the website: www.rmlh.nic.in Any corrigendum / modification order regarding this advertisement will be issued on the hospital website only. Candidates are advised to visit hospital website: www.rmlh.nic.in regularly for this purpose. Last date for submission of application is 15-01-2025 till 03-00 P.M.

CBC 17147/11/0005/2425

National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

Corporate Office : First Floor, Tower-A, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029
F. No. NHIDCL/2(25)/Rectt. CA/2024/HR
Dated: 21.12.2024

National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (hereinafter referred to as 'NHIDCL'), has been set up by the Government of India as a Corporation under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways to fast pace construction/up-gradation/widening of National Highways in the North-Eastern Region and areas that share international boundaries with neighboring countries.

Applications are invited from young, dynamic, effective and experienced eligible professionals from the open market for engagement as Consultant(s) in the Finance Division in NHIDCL at various locations as mentioned in para 2 on Contract basis for the following posts:

Sl. No.	Name of the Posts	No. of Vacancies	Remuneration per month (INR)*
1.	Associate	14	1,00,000/-
2.	Consultant	04	1,50,000/-

*Detailed advertisement may be seen at NHIDCL website: www.nhidcl.com.



CBC-37112/12/0009/2425

Col. Vivek Jain (Retd.)
Dy. General Manager (HR)

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDING THE NATION

India Post Payments Bank
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Corporate Office, Speed Post Centre Building, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi -110001

RECRUITMENT OF SPECIALIST OFFICERS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Advt. No. IPPB/CO/IIR/RECT/2024-25/04

Applications are invited for appointment to the following positions:

(a) Details of number of regular vacancies (tentative) including backlog reserved vacancies:

Dept.	Scale	Designation	No. of Vacancies	Vacancy reserved for				
				UR	OBC	EWS	SC	ST
Technology	JMGS-I	Assistant Manager IT	54	33	8	5	6	2
	MMGS-II	Manager IT - (Payment systems)	01	-	-	-	-	1
	MMGS-II	Manager -IT - (Infrastructure, Network & Cloud)	02	-	1	-	-	1
	MMGS-II	Manager -IT - (Enterprise Data ware house)	01	-	-	-	-	1
	MMGS-III	Senior Manager -IT (Payment systems)	01	-	1	-	-	-
	MMGS-III	Senior Manager -IT (Infrastructure, Network & Cloud)	01	-	-	-	1	-
MMGS-III	Senior Manager - IT (Vendor, outsourcing, Contract Management, procurement, SLA, Payments)	01	-	-	-	-	1	

(b) Details of number of contractual vacancies (tentative) including backlog reserved vacancies:

Department	Post/Designation	No. of Vacancies	Vacancy reserved for				
			UR	OBC	EWS	SC	ST
Information Security	Cyber Security Expert	07	4	2	-	1	-

Horizontal Reservation is applicable for Persons with Disability (minimum 40% Disability) as per Government of India norms.

IMPORTANT DATES:

(i) Opening date for On-line Registration of Applications	21.12.2024: 10.00 AM
(ii) Last date of On-line Submission of Applications with Fee	10.01.2025: 11.59 PM

For detailed advertisement, please visit our official website: <https://ippbonline.com/web/ippb/current-opening>

Place: New Delhi
Date: 21.12.2024
CBC-06346/12/0011/2425

Sd/
Chief HR Officer

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Manipur's Divide

The ethnic tensions in Manipur between the Kuki-Zo tribes and the Meitei community have brought the state's governance under intense scrutiny. The call by 10 Kuki MLAs, including seven from the ruling BJP, for direct routing of development funds to hill districts, bypassing the state government, reflects a breakdown in trust and governance. This situation is not merely an administrative issue but a political and humanitarian crisis that demands immediate attention from the Union government. At the core of the conflict lies the perception of systemic discrimination against the hill districts, predominantly inhabited by the Kukis. Allegations include deliberate exclusion from central financial assistance schemes, neglect of critical infrastructure projects, and even denial of essential supplies. Such grievances, if substantiated, point to a governance failure which risks exacerbating ethnic divides. The demand for autonomy and the creation of a Union Territory with a legislature for the hill districts underscores the Kukis' growing disillusionment. Their assertion that the state government has failed them since the ethnic violence erupted in May 2023 cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric. The continued clashes and displacement of communities from their homes underscore the urgency of finding a political resolution. The role of the Central government is pivotal in resolving this crisis. As the ruling party at both the state and national levels, the BJP has a unique responsibility to ensure inclusive governance. A federal system thrives when state governments act as equitable agents of development for all citizens. If allegations of bias are not addressed, they will undermine the credibility of both state and central administrations. Direct routing of funds to district-level authorities, as proposed by the Kuki MLAs, could be a temporary measure to ensure equitable resource allocation. However, such steps must be accompanied by transparent mechanisms to prevent misuse and promote accountability. Long-term peace requires more than administrative fixes; it demands a political solution that addresses the aspirations and fears of all communities involved. The Kukis' demand for expedited political dialogue and a renewed focus on the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement reflects their willingness to engage constructively. Delaying these dialogues risks alienating a significant portion of the population, pushing them further towards separatist sentiments. Manipur is a litmus test for India's commitment to federalism and inclusivity. Ethnic diversity is both a strength and a challenge for the country. Mismanagement of such crises can have ripple effects across the Northeast, a region already grappling with historical grievances and insurgencies. New Delhi must act decisively to rebuild trust. The failure to address these grievances risks creating a long-term rift between the communities. Without a clear commitment to fairness and justice from the government, the current situation could lead to further violence, displacement, and mistrust, ultimately destabilising the region for years to come. Equitable governance, transparent resource allocation, and sincere political dialogue are essential steps to prevent further erosion of unity and to chart a course toward sustainable peace in Manipur.

Policy balance

The recent appointment of Sanjay Malhotra as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), replacing Shaktikanta Das, signals a pivotal shift in India's monetary policy dynamics. Mr Das, widely respected for his steady leadership during crises like the Covid-19 pandemic and global geopolitical shocks, steps down at a time when India faces mounting economic challenges. His departure reflects the government's growing urgency to align the RBI's policies more closely with its immediate growth priorities. During his six-year tenure, Mr Das upheld the RBI's mandate of balancing inflation control with systemic stability. Despite mounting pressure from industrial lobbies and sections of the government, he resisted aggressive rate cuts, prioritising long-term economic health over short-term growth fixes. While this approach stabilised India's financial system, it also drew criticism for being inadequate in reviving growth, particularly as GDP slipped to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in the September quarter. The slowdown, marked by weak manufacturing and strained consumption, created a pressing demand for more growth-centric policies - something the government now expects from Mr Malhotra. His appointment signals a possible recalibration of priorities. Known for his close working relationship with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Mr Malhotra's elevation hints at the government's intent to exert greater influence over the RBI's policy framework. While this could lead to more coordinated fiscal and monetary measures, it raises concerns about the erosion of the central bank's institutional autonomy. Central banks must operate independently to safeguard long-term economic stability, even if their policies conflict with the short-term goals of the political leadership. The government's decision to replace the governor also reflects a growing trend of central banks globally facing heightened scrutiny and influence from political leadership. This development underscores the delicate interplay between policy independence and the need for economic coordination, especially in a volatile global economic environment. At the core of this shift is the government's dilemma: India's economic slowdown demands decisive action, but the available tools carry significant risks. Interest rate cuts, for instance, could spur consumption and investment but might fuel inflation, further burdening households. Similarly, loosening lending norms could stimulate short-term growth but at the cost of long-term financial discipline. Mr Das's caution in these areas, including his push for reforms like stricter bad loan reporting and higher risk weights for unsecured loans, prioritised stability. However, such measures often conflicted with the government's focus on immediate growth optics. As the new Governor, Mr Malhotra faces a formidable challenge. He must address India's sluggish growth while maintaining the financial prudence that Mr Das championed. Striking this balance is essential to ensure that short-term gains do not come at the expense of long-term stability. While the government's push for growth is understandable, preserving the autonomy and credibility of the RBI remains crucial for the sustainability of India's economic progress.

Means or end?

Creating sustainable work cultures requires systemic changes that prioritize employee well-being. In India, legislative reforms should ensure the right to disconnect, limit work hours, and mandate paid vacations, allowing workers the time to recharge. Alongside these legal changes, organizations must adopt policies that value employees as individuals, not just productivity units. Offering flexible schedules, mental health resources, and supportive leadership can empower employees to thrive both personally and professionally



The pursuit of professional success has often overshadowed the need for personal well-being. Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, a staunch advocate for hard work, recently reignited the debate on work-life balance by expressing skepticism about its feasibility. While his views resonate with those who value dedication, they also raise important questions about the cost of excessive professional commitment. Is employment merely a means to an end, or should it define our lives? The answer lies in understanding the need for balance between work and personal well-being.

Murthy's journey -working 14-hour days, six and a half days a week - embodies a traditional perspective. His belief that education and opportunities come with a responsibility to work hard echoes the post-war ethos of nations like Germany and Japan. However, in today's digital age, where mental health and productivity are closely linked, this mindset may not align with the realities of the modern workforce.

Murthy's suggestion of a 70-hour workweek for Indian millennials has sparked mixed reactions: while some see it as a call for a stronger work ethic, others argue it is impractical and harmful to personal well-being.

The tragic stories of young professionals like Anna Sebastian Perayil, Saurabh Kumar Ladda, Tarun Saxena, and Karthikeyan highlight the devastating impact of work-related stress in India. These cases expose the toxic work environments characterized by unrealistic expectations and the absence of adequate support systems, which push employees to their breaking points. Tarun's heartbreaking suicide note, where he revealed sleepless nights and overwhelming stress, serves as a stark reminder that work should never come at the cost of one's life.

While countries such as France, Portugal, and Australia have implemented laws to protect employees' private time, Indian workers remain vulnera-

ble to the pressures of a hyper-connected, always-on work culture. The lack of robust labour protections exacerbates this crisis, leaving workers exposed to exploitative practices and unable to find relief.

The human toll of overwork demands urgent attention and systemic change to safeguard the mental and physical well-being of employees. The relentless pursuit of professional success is taking a significant toll on public health. Chronic stress, long working hours, and inadequate recovery time are leading to an increase in lifestyle diseases, including hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions.

A study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found that the prevalence of diabetes in India has more than doubled in the last two decades, now affecting over 70 million people. Hypertension, another work-related health issue, affects nearly 30 per cent of the adult population in urban areas, with work stress being a key contributing factor. Mental health conditions are also escalating.

Anxiety, depression, and burnout have become widespread, with employees facing heightened pressure to perform in highly competitive environments. According to a 2023 report from the World Health Organization (WHO), India has the highest rate of depression in the world, with over 56 million people affected.

The suicide rate is similarly concerning: the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded 171,000 suicides in 2022, with a significant proportion attributed to work-related stress, unemployment, and societal pressures. Youth suicides are particularly alarming, with individuals under 30 making up over 40 per cent of all suicides in India. Pro-

fessional demands, academic pressures, and the rising cost of living are contributing factors to this tragic trend. Studies show that nearly 25 per cent of young people in India report experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, with many citing work-related stress and academic expectations as primary causes. These statistics underline the urgent need to address mental health and work-life balance in India to prevent further deterioration of public well-being.

Creating sustainable work cultures requires systemic changes that prioritize employee well-being. In India, legislative reforms should ensure the right to disconnect, limit work hours, and mandate paid vacations, allowing workers the time to recharge.

Alongside these legal changes, organizations must adopt policies that value employees as individuals, not just productivity units. Offering flexible schedules, mental health resources, and supportive leadership can empower employees to thrive both personally and professionally.

Education is essential in this transformation. Workers need to be informed about their rights and the importance of work-life balance. Training on time management, stress coping strategies, and healthy work habits will equip employees to navigate professional challenges without compromising their well-being.

A broader cultural shift is necessary, where success is redefined not just by career achievements but by personal fulfillment, family time, and overall well-being. Moving away from the outdated "hustle and grind" mentality, modern work is about efficiency, creativity, and strategic thinking. Research shows that overwork harms focus, stifles innovation, and undermines

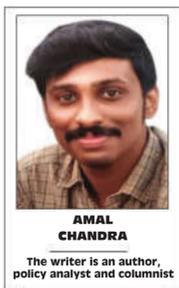
long-term performance. Smarter work strategies, like short intense work sessions followed by recovery periods, can sustain productivity without burnout.

Work should not overshadow life's broader purpose. It is a tool to achieve happiness, contribute to society, and live fulfilling lives. While Narayana Murthy's commitment to hard work is inspiring, it should not set a universal standard. Individuals should have the freedom to define success on their terms, balancing professional ambitions with personal joys.

As India progresses, it must learn from global examples that prioritize workforce well-being. France's "right to disconnect" law, which allows employees to ignore work communications outside of office hours, and countries like Belgium and Japan that have adopted a four-day workweek, demonstrate that reduced work hours can boost both productivity and satisfaction. Austria's mandatory vacation laws and Belgium's "time credit" system, which allows employees to take extended leave without jeopardizing job security, further highlight the importance of structured time off for worker rejuvenation.

In contrast, India's average workweek of 46.7 hours far exceeds global norms. Over half of Indian workers work more than 49 hours a week, often at the expense of their health. This highlights the urgent need for reforms that prioritize employee well-being and sustainable productivity. The WHO reports that work-related stress leads to a global productivity loss of \$1 trillion annually, underscoring the need for change.

As younger generations increasingly prioritize mental health and flexibility, India has an opportunity to embrace global best practices. By adopting thoughtful reforms, India can foster a compassionate, sustainable work culture that balances professional success with personal fulfillment. Ultimately, happiness is not defined by the hours we work, but by the quality of the lives we lead.



AMAL CHANDRA
The writer is an author, policy analyst and columnist

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

A new path

SIR, This refers to today's report "Won't allow our territory to be used against India." The meeting between Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi marks a critical juncture in Indo-Lanka relations.

As Sri Lanka rebuilds after years of economic and political turmoil, Dissanayake's visit signifies Colombo's trust in India's partnership for its recovery.

The meeting underscores his priority to deepen bilateral ties



with India and reaffirm Sri Lanka's commitment to a collaborative regional vision.

The island nation's significance as India's closest maritime neighbour ensures it occupies a central role in New Delhi's strategic outlook - from fostering trade to safeguarding regional security. Dissanayake known for his pragmatic leadership aligns well with Modi's own grassroots approach, offering opportunities for renewed cooperation, particularly in addressing economic rebuilding and ensuring regional stability.

The meeting underscored Delhi's support for Sri Lanka's economic recovery, recalling India's \$4-billion assistance during the 2022 crisis and its role in facilitating an IMF bailout.

By advancing mutual interests and focusing on sustainable solutions, India and Sri Lanka are poised to forge new paths for cooperation in a rapidly changing

geopolitical landscape.

Yours, etc., N Sadhasiva Reddy,
Bengaluru, 17 December.

PROACTIVE STEPS

SIR, Hindu minority communities in Bangladesh are being eliminated by state sponsored Islamic fundamentalist organisations like Jamaat-e-Islami (ban lifted post 5 August 2024), Harkat-ul-Jihad, etc, aided and abated prominently by ISI of Pakistan and covertly by China and the US. Prominent world media is mum.

Since 5 August, when Sheikh Hasina fled from Bangladesh, minority Hindu communities are being tortured, looted, raped and killed. India has a strong government in power and it must take proactive steps to protect Hindus. India must recalibrate its approach and foil China's plan of alienating the neighbourhood.

Yours, etc., Sumitra Das,
Guwahati, 19 December.

UNWORTHY CLAIMANTS

SIR, This refers to the front page report, "PM: Cong can't hide its insults to Ambedkar" (19 December). The Home Minister, while delivering his address, made remarks that insulted and disrespected Dr BR Ambedkar, the principal architect of our Constitution. This is a matter of grave concern, as it not only undermines Dr. Ambedkar's legacy but also tarnishes the ideals of justice, equality, and social harmony that our Constitution upholds.

Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar, on Wednesday criticised Shah for his remarks, describing them as reflective of the BJP's "same old mentality". PM Modi tried to defend the indefensible by accusing the Congress. Ambedkar was a great social reformer, but during his lifetime he did not get the recognition that Nehru or Patel had received.

The two main political parties - BJP and Congress - are vying for the legacy of BR Ambedkar, a Dalit icon. This is sheer political opportunism since during his lifetime Ambedkar actually had very little to do either with the Congress or the Hindu right-wing that later coalesced into the BJP. Ambedkar gave India a "secular" Constitution, but the BJP does not subscribe to its secular characteristics.

Yours, etc., S S Paul,
Nadia, 19 December.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

How climate change has hit our kitchens

The optimism we've employed in every climate Conference of Parties (CoP) over the last decade following the Paris Agreement to cut global carbon emissions by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030 has only dwindled and proven naive. While we call out the big emitters for failing to meet their mitigation obligations, the spine-chilling frequency and ferocity of floods, landslides and droughts in the last decade have increased unabated, with some scientists even warning that we are heading for dangers not seen in the last 10,000 years of human civilisation.

Let's imagine for a moment that Nepal meets its national climate goals of achieving net zero before the 2045 deadline and implements the adaptation activities spelt out in our national plans. Will we be shielded from the growing menace of such disasters in a world that continues to set new climate records every year? The answer is probably a big, resounding no.

While speaking at CoP29 in Baku last month, the former US Vice President, Al Gore, succinctly stated, "Some of the load-bearing elements of our entire earth ecological system are at risk" due to the relentless rise in global carbon emissions. We are to witness the consequences of these perpetually rising emissions on multiple fronts, from infrastructure to water and biodiversity to productivity. Perhaps its impact on agriculture has hurt civilians

THE KATHMANDU POST

and communities the most. Starting from the global food crisis of 2008, we have been paying noticeably more for food each year. Certainly, there are multiple reasons for the higher food costs, but a closer look points to climate change being at the issue's core. These climate impacts have entered our kitchens, weakening the family economy and subsequently affecting public health and nutrition - hitting the poorest sections of society the hardest. The implications of climate impacts on our agriculture are unfolding incredibly. A cursory comparison of vegetable prices over the years exemplifies how we pay more as climate impacts intensify. For example, the cost of cauliflower, a popular and common winter vegetable, was Rs45 per kg in November last year, while its price in the same period this year hovered around Rs150 per kg. The prices of other vegetables remain equally high.

The price hike is believed to be due to the devastating floods and landslides of late September that damaged crops. Traders in Kathmandu's vegetable market incurred a huge loss when their stock of vegetables was buried knee-deep under loads of silt twice this year. When landslides and floods disrupt transportation, as we saw during the September floods, farmers suffer losses as vegetables go bad quickly without proper refrigeration, raising market prices. Consequently, most vegetables have been out of reach for consumers, especially those with fixed incomes, such as pensioners, daily wage workers, service holders and so on.

The price of imported food also shoots up when floods or droughts affect crops in the countries we import food from. One may recall that onion prices increased fourfold when India banned its exports following the loss of onion crops due to continued rain until late September 2019.

The rainfall distribution in recent years has become skewed, bringing heavy rain for a short period, usually concentrated in small areas - most of which flows out as runoff, leading to debris flows and landslides that often bury or destroy farms in the hills, rendering them beyond reclamation.

People's needs drove me

Rajendra Singh, fondly called "Paani Baba" (waterman), is an acclaimed water conservationist. He is credited with bringing back water adequacy to villages, apart from fighting against illegal mining and taking up the cause of clean Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

This is the outcome of almost half a century's untiring work of training people on digging up water bodies, rejuvenating dried up ones, and educating them on farm techniques and suitability of crop patterns.

Singh and his team, Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS), have toiled hard with locals to create 15,800 water bodies and rejuvenate 23 rivers in various states of the country. His water-centric crusades are not restricted to India; his missions for restoration of water adequacy with indigenous knowledge-based revival or building water bodies have already left a mark in over 15 countries.

The 65-year-old Magsaysay award winner is now on a two-pronged mission - working in fields with locals and on campuses with academia - for propagating indigenous knowledge systems among the younger generation.

Satish Kumar Sharma of The Statesman talks to the versatile environmentalist on his work and persona.

Q: Tell us about your early life.
A: I was born on 6 August 1959 in Daula village of Baghat district in Uttar Pradesh. I came to Rajasthan 46 years ago, and became a follower of Vinoba Bhave and J P Narayan. I joined JIP's Tarun Shanti Sena. I did my first social welfare task in Jaipur

in 1974, helping 44 families whose huts were burnt in a slum near a university.

Q: When did you take up water conservation as your mission?

A: Fighting for this cause was born out of the need of the people. Since I am an Ayurvedic graduate, I used to treat villagers in Gopalpura where people were suffering from night blindness and other troubles. However, Maangu Kaka, my guiding soul in water conservation, whom I treated for night blindness, said, "Rajendra! We do not need your qualification or medicines, we need water, so give us water then there will be no diseases among us."

Then this gentleman, whom I have always regarded as my guru for imparting indigenous knowledge, taught me lessons on geographical and geological characters of the area and composition and types of earth crust, which guided me in selection of site for making water bodies, setting its course-route and deciding shape-design of dam/johad etc.

What he taught me in a typical indigenous method proved to me as good as a PhD in 'natural engineering and geo-hydro science'. Our overall efforts restored water adequacy in 2,500 villages spread over 19 districts, transforming lives for the better in more than 12.5 lakh rural households.

Q: Didn't you work for the upliftment of Ganga-Yamuna?

A: I have held many rejuvenation programmes for both the rivers. Around 2005-07, land along the banks of the Yamuna in Delhi was being given to companies, we fought against

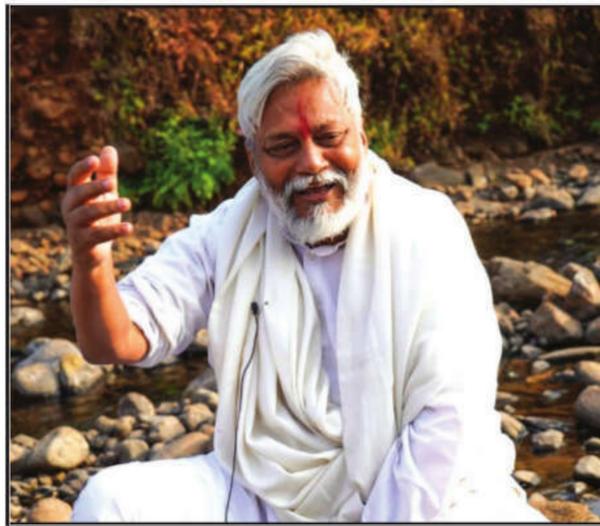
it in the Supreme Court. However, then Union minister Arjun Singh had persuaded then chief minister Sheila Dikshit and the Lt Governor for conceding to our demands. Accordingly, the Delhi government cancelled land deals of 370 companies and imposed a moratorium on allotment of the river land.

In 2008, renowned river environmentalist Prof G D Agrawal, former professor of IIT Kanpur, took me in for the cause of a clean and richly flowing Ganga. We led a successful yatra from Gangotri to Uttarkashi in 2008-09. The Centre accepted our demands, declared the Ganga as a national river, stopped all work on three dams along the Bhagirathi, assured of no new dams on this river, declared the stretch from Gaumukh to Uttarkashi as an eco-sensitive zone and inducted me in the National Ganga Basin Authority (2009-2014).

Q: You also worked against illegal mining and for rehabilitated dacoits?

A: Yes, we did resist illegal mining. After gaining success in Gopalpura, people from nearby villages approached me to replicate the work in their respective areas. I went there, and dug one 'johad' each in Palpur, Kilwadi and Khilpad villages. However, due to mining, the water from these johads receded down into mining pits. This emerged as a major issue as 478 mines were running in a 200 square km area along Sariska.

We moved the Supreme Court for closure of these mines. The court ordered the closure (October 1991). Encouraged by this success, we made



efforts for closing stone mines along the Aravali mountain range traversing four states - Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In fact, Parliament enacted the Aravali Protection Act 1992.

Another notable feature in our journey to success was the return of 3,500 dacoits in Dholpur, Karauli districts, to mainstream society. A woman (Bhagwati) of Chondakiya village, who was bought by dacoit chieftain Jagdish Gujjar alias Nirbhaya Singh for being his wife, very tactfully planned with us not only for rejuvenation of water resources in her husband's native village, but also brought her dacoit husband back home from the Chambal ravines.

Bhagwati and I persuaded Nirbhaya to lay down arms. He not just accepted our pleas, but also joined us in spreading the water mission and rehabilitation of fellow dacoits in mainstream life.

Q: What do you feel about your work leaving a mark across the globe?

A: I am happy my work is not just restricted to India. We have made strides in many other countries like Egypt, Kenya and Somalia. People in many villages in these countries have already adopted and launched, under my team's guidance, our programmes of water harvesting and conservation.

OCCASIONAL NOTE

It is well known that the discussions preliminary to the Treaty of Versailles, which was to make the world safe for peace and universal friendliness, were not themselves always carried on in peace and perfect friendliness, but it is nevertheless startling to be told that M. Clemenceau challenged Mr. Lloyd George to a duel with swords or pistols. Mr. Wickham Steed, who gives the story, points out that he would not have published it "without having verified it in advance from persons who were present." It reads like a romantic novel. M. Clemenceau accused the British Premier of repeating inaccurate statements—we are not told whether this is a literal translation of the French, or whether the words used were more colloquial; anyhow Mr. Lloyd George seized him by the collar and demanded an apology, but after President Wilson had separated them, received instead an offer of a duel. The story is incomplete from a literary point of view. It does not say what the fourth great man, Signor Orlando, did. He probably looked on with a smile of enjoyment. Mr. Lloyd George denies the story, and Mr. Steed does not wish to enter into controversy about it, so it is likely to remain one of the unsolved riddles of history.

NEWS ITEMS

SITUATION IN EGYPT

PREMIER AND UNLAWFUL PROPAGANDA

(* TIMES "SPECIAL SERVICE.")

THE Cairo correspondent of The Times states that the Governors of Provinces attended a specially summoned Council of Ministers, when Zivair Pasha, the Premier, who is also Minister of the Interior, addressed them. He reminded them that they were supreme under the Ministry of the Interior in their respective provinces and that they must administer without any outside interference. The Government looked to them to ensure that no political pro-paganda was carried out unlawfully.

These injunctions obviously refer to the state of affairs existing under the previous regime, when administrative officials were constantly interfered with by Zaghululist Senators and Deputies, who seemed to consider that their Parliamentary position gave them authority over official Government representatives, who were also subjected to other outside interference.

The new Government's action should conduce to terminate a condition of things which had become intolerable both to responsible officials and the people, and there is hope that hence-forward provincial government will follow a normal and regular course, as it did prior to the Zaghululists' accession to power.

EMERGENCY POWERS

THE ONLY MEASURE TO MEET THE CASE

"THERE has been much public condemnation of these organizations for violent crimes and of their deeds; but at the same time my action in issuing the Ordinance has been condemned. Yet I have been unable to find in the public statements of those who condemned both, any concrete suggestion of utility as to how the activities of these violent organisations, admittedly directed against orderly government and the lives and property of citizens, are to be checked and punished, and what effective steps, other than the action taken by me, and for which I accept the full responsibility, could have been adopted.

"We cannot shut our eyes to facts. We cannot stand by and merely wail and wring our hands while law and order founder in the flood. Condemnation of the violation of the code of civilization is not of itself sufficient. If civilization is to live, its code must be upheld and its sanctity must be vindicated.

CASTE CONFLICT

ALLEGATION IN MYSORE COUNCIL

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

DETAILS of a case of severe oppression of Panchamas (non-caste Hindus hitherto known as Pariahs) by the caste Hindus of a village about 30 miles away from Mysore City were narrated in the Mysore Legislative Council by Mr. M. Pillai, member for the depressed classes.

According to Mr. Pillai, the caste Hindu villagers entered the Panchama quarter of the village in a body, mercilessly beat their men and women and broke their household utensils. Not satisfied with this, they completely destroyed the only drinking water well of the Panchamas and filled it with debris. In consequence of this persecution, Mr. Pillai declared, the Panchamas were obliged to leave the village.

The reason for this oppression was said to be that the Panchamas refused to remove a carcass from the house of a caste Hindu. The Government replied that inquiries would be made into the matter and action taken, if necessary.

Rebuilding pillars of a relationship

SMRUTI S PATTANAIK

THE newly elected Sri Lankan President, Anura Kumara Disanayake (AKD), made his first official overseas visit to India. India emerged as an important partner for Sri Lanka during the Covid-19 and post-pandemic periods when the country faced an economic crisis leading to its bankruptcy. This ultimately ended Gotabaya Rajapaksa's presidency through a *Jana Aragalaya* (people's struggle).

Dissanayake embodies the aspirations of the marginalised. His party, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), transformed its electoral base (which was 3 per cent earlier) and secured massive votes with 160 seats in the 300-member Parliament. He visited India to discuss several Indian projects that are being implemented in Sri Lanka, the comprehensive economic partnership agreement that has been under discussion for several years, the Tamil issue and the larger security cooperation issue.

Emphasising the futuristic relationship, during Dissanayake's maiden visit to Delhi, Prime Minister Modi said, "Physical, digital and energy connectivity shall be the key pillars of our partnership."

For the past two decades, India has emphasised connectivity as a precursor to economic integration with its neighbours, including Sri Lanka. However, China's Belt and Road Initiative projects have helped construct ports and airports and emerged as a major competition to India's infrastructure activities. China-funded infrastructure projects and India-funded ones have significant differences. First, the public sector companies from India enter into a joint venture with such companies in the host country. Second, India-funded projects are based on the host country's needs. They play a leading role in identifying sectors that need investment.

Recently, Indian private sectors have begun investing in the

neighbourhood, bringing private capital. Sri Lanka has become a destination for India's public and private capital. India's line of credit is directed towards building rail networks and the energy sector, especially the Sampur solar power plant and the long-drawn project in Trincomalee, a port city on the northeast coast of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan president's visit should be seen in the context of the country's larger foreign policy framework and India's keenness to partner in developmental sectors. Sri Lanka is at the geopolitical fulcrum of the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific. As a small state, it wants to stay away from the conflicting and competitive geopolitical interests of major powers.

As a dominant player in the Indian Ocean, India, like Sri Lanka, is equally apprehensive of external powers' geopolitical interests toward seeking a firm foothold in the region. It is increasingly working with other economic players like Japan to collaborate on infrastructure projects, especially in developing ports. The Chinese have had a controlling stake in the Hambantota port for 99 years as the Sri Lankan government failed to repay debt to China.

Two important factors that could challenge bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka are the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) and the Tamil issue. Both have domestic political implications for Sri Lanka. Moreover, the JVP was opposed to them in the past.

India-Sri Lanka economic relations have a baggage of politicisation. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) the two countries signed in 1998 and implemented in 2000 tripled the bilateral trade despite initial resistance from the business community to trade in certain commodities in which they had competitive advantages. Interestingly, 60 per cent of Sri Lanka's exports to India benefit from the FTA, while 5 per cent of India's exports to Sri Lanka use FTA's provision to its advantage.

Despite FTA's success, negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) took eight years. They were finally abandoned due to excessive politics and the fear of the negative implication of India's domination of Sri Lanka's market on certain Sri Lankan industries. The Rajapakse regime politically manipulated this opposition in their strategy to oppose India while forging close economic cooperation with China. One also saw similar opposition from the Trade Union and the JVP to the trilateral Memorandum of Consent (MoC) between India, Sri Lanka and Japan in developing the Eastern Container Terminal, which cancelled the MoC. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna party and its new incarnation, the National People's Power (NPP), continued opposing Indian projects in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka also cancelled the wind power project on its northern island, which China was developing due to India's security concerns.

From 2016-18, there have been 11 rounds of talks between India and Sri Lanka. These talks were revived in 2023 and included trade in goods and services. Trade in services is more politically complicated than goods.

Sri Lanka has welcomed India's investment in renewable energy, especially in the solar and wind sectors, to reduce its dependency on electricity generated by fossil fuels. The country produces electricity using imported oil and coal, constituting 20 per cent and 35 per cent of energy production, respectively. This makes the unit cost of energy production expensive and impacts foreign exchange reserves. India's solar and wind energy investment would be a game changer in Sri Lanka's energy mix. During this visit by the Sri Lankan president, the two countries also agreed to connect their electricity grid and have a multi-product petroleum pipeline.

Unresolved Tamil political issues have always shadowed India's relations with Sri Lanka. The JVP, the



main constituent of the National People's Power party, has consistently opposed devolution of powers. However, this time, the NPP has won 3 seats in Jaffna, the capital city of the northern province of Sri Lanka. At one point in time, Jaffna was a stronghold of the Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Voices in favour of Tamil political aspiration are often raised in Jaffna, which is also the capital of the Northern province. The NPP has towed the Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian line that refused to recognise devolution as a means to the political solution of Tamil political aspiration.

Issues of militarisation of the North, including the occupation of Tamil lands, remain a potent point of dispute. After his victory, in the first rally addressing Tamils, Dissanayake

promised to gradually return their land grabbed by state agencies. With the closure of the Paruthithurai camp, some lands have already been handed back to the Tamil owners.

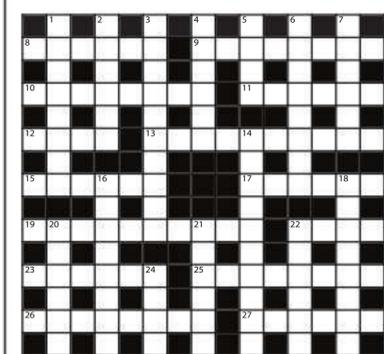
The important constitutional reform that will resolve ethnic conflict is yet to be implemented. With the NPP dominating parliament and the complete erosion of traditional political parties, Sri Lanka is expected to move to new politics that promise to be responsive to the marginal working class, who form the bulk of the voters for the NPP.

Given the challenges, India and Sri Lanka should be careful to advance their relations in a mutually beneficial way without giving in to nationalist fervour on both sides.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN.

CROSSWORD

NO-292996



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- 8 Slavers sold those captured in Troy off (6)
- 9 Person whose convictions limit his career (8)
- 10 Cast regularly wanting Tony Curtis to direct (8)
- 11 Football manager wears women's clothing for trip to see big game? (6)
- 12 Steal money from house? (4)

- 13 Means of releasing what's been bottled up by city's gangs (10)
- 15 Must have latrine emptied in sewer (6)
- 17 Spread the word about stopping chap going mad (6)
- 19 Star and moon could be central parts of her world (10)
- 22 Stop esteem being eroded by taking drugs at fixed intervals (4)
- 23 Old lady isn't fazed, being of pious attitude? (6)

- 25 Leave Islamic State for good, when the former limits the latter? (8)
- 26 Implement measure in court taking nothing from offence (8)
- 27 Go further than u-turn abandoned by leader of opposition (6)

DOWN

- 1 Press report of sport articles that were forged? (8)

- 2 Tories condemned offensive act (6)
- 3 Key French article about revolutionary doctor staying in to shield (10)
- 4 Tesco terrine contains duck (6)
- 5 Drunk almost topples over (4)
- 6 Voice in favour of church service (3,5)
- 7 Where old folk laid to rest argument in pub? (6)
- 14 Person who manages excellent coverage for viewers (10)

- 16 Helping to support start of Durham University's term (8)
- 18 Large organism with a trunk and head (8)
- 20 They're often battered by foreign character behind swindle (6)
- 21 This ultimately fills up part of the intestines (6)
- 22 Different levels in institute promoting right answer (6)
- 24 Seconds from assuming control of marginal seat (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



US diplomats in Syria on first visit since Assad ouster

The team is also the first group of American diplomats to formally visit Syria in more than a decade

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, 20 DECEMBER

The first U.S. diplomats to visit Syria since President Bashar Assad's ouster earlier this month are now in Damascus to hold talks with the country's new leaders and seek information on whereabouts of missing American journalist Austin Tice.



than a decade since the U.S. shuttered its embassy in Damascus in 2012.

"They will be engaging directly with the Syrian people, including members of civil society, activists, members of different communities, and other Syrian voices about their vision for the future of their country and how the United States can help support them," the State Department said.

The team is also the first group of American diplomats to formally visit Syria in more

Tice, who went missing in Syria in 2012. And they will push the principles of inclusion, protection of minorities and a rejection of terrorism and chemical weapons that the Biden administration says will be critical for any U.S. support for a new government.

The U.S. has redoubled efforts to find Tice and return him home, saying officials have communicated with the rebels who ousted Assad's

government about the American journalist. Carstens traveled previously to Lebanon to seek information.

Tice, who has had his work published by The Washington Post, McClatchy newspapers and others, disappeared at a checkpoint in a contested area west of Damascus as the Syrian civil war intensified.

A video released weeks after Tice went missing showed him blindfolded and held by armed men and saying, "Oh, Jesus." He has not been heard from since. Assad's government publicly denied that it was holding him. The rebel group that spearheaded the assault on Damascus that forced Assad to flee — Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS — is designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States and others. While that designation comes with a raft

of sanctions, it does not prohibit U.S. officials from speaking to its members or leaders.

The State Department said Rubinstein, Leaf and Carstens would meet with HTS officials but did not say if the group's leader Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was once aligned with al-Qaida, would be among those they see.

U.S. officials say al-Sharaa's public statements about protecting minority and women's rights are welcomed, but they remain skeptical that he will follow through on them in the long run. The U.S. has not had a formal diplomatic presence in Syria since 2012, when it suspended operations at its embassy in Damascus during the country's civil war, although there are U.S. troops in small parts of Syria engaged in the fight against the Islamic State militant group.

Russian missiles target Kyiv after Ukraine fires US-made missiles across the border

AGENCIES
KYIV, 20 DECEMBER

A Russian ballistic missile attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv early Friday killed at least one person and injured nine others, officials said. Moscow claimed it was in response to a Ukrainian strike on Russian soil using American-made weapons.

At least three loud blasts were heard in Kyiv shortly before sunrise. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted five Iskander short-range ballistic missiles fired at the city. The attack knocked out heating to 630 residential buildings, 16 medical facilities, and 30 schools and kindergartens, the city administration said, and falling missile debris caused damage and sparked fires in three districts.

"We ask citizens to immediately respond to reports



of ballistic attack threats, because there is very little time to find shelter," the air force said.

During the almost three years since the war began Russia has regularly bombed civilian areas of Ukraine, often in an attempt to cripple the power grid and unnerve Ukrainians. Meanwhile, Ukraine, struggling to hold back Russia's bigger army on the front line, has attempted to strike Russian infrastructure supporting the

country's war effort.

The Russian Ministry of Defense said the strike was in response to a Ukrainian missile attack on Russia's Rostov border region two days earlier. That attack used six American-made Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, missiles and four Storm Shadow air-launched missiles provided by the United Kingdom, it said.

That day, Ukraine claimed to have targeted a Rostov oil refinery as part of its campaign to strike Russian infrastructure supporting the country's war effort. The use of Western-supplied weapons to strike Russia has angered the Kremlin. Ukraine fired several American-supplied longer-range missiles into Russia for the first time on 19 November after Washington eased restrictions on their use.

Canada's Justin Trudeau will shuffle his Cabinet as he faces calls to resign and rising discontent



AGENCIES
TORONTO, 20 DECEMBER

Embattled Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will shuffle his Cabinet Friday.

The prime minister's office confirmed late Thursday that Trudeau will participate in the swearing-in ceremony and chair a meeting with his new Cabinet later Friday.

Trudeau is facing rising discontent over his leadership, and the abrupt departure of his finance minister on Monday could be something he can't recover from.

A rising number of Liberal lawmakers are calling on Trudeau to resign but new Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc said Thursday Trudeau has the "full support of his Cabinet."

LeBlanc said he respects the views of Liberal lawmakers who want Trudeau to resign.

"That's a view they are expressing. The prime minister listened carefully when that view was expressed to him," LeBlanc said. "He listened, in some cases responded to

specific things that were raised, and he said he would reflect carefully."

LeBlanc said the government will remain focused on work and addressing the threat by President-elect Donald Trump to impose a 25% tariff on all Canadian products when he is inaugurated next month.

"We shouldn't be looking inward. We shouldn't be worrying about ourselves," LeBlanc said.

LeBlanc said he will meet with Tom Homan, Trump's incoming "border czar," after Christmas to discuss Canada's plan to secure the border as part of a bid to avoid the tariffs.

Official says Wisconsin shooter was new student at Christian school where her victims had deep ties

AGENCIES
MADISON, 20 DECEMBER

The Wisconsin 15-year-old who shot and killed a teacher and a fellow student Monday was only in her first semester at the school but seemed to be settling in, a school official said Thursday as families of the victims remembered them as people of faith who had deep connections within the Christian school.

Abundant Life Christian School student Rubi Patricia Vergara, 14, of Madison and teacher Erin West, 42, of DeForest were killed Monday. Two other students who were shot remained hospitalized Thursday in critical



condition. Barbara Wiers, the school's director for elementary and communications, told The Associated Press that the attack lasted

sustained them as they struggle with the possibility that the shooter's motive might remain undetermined.

"Are we broken right now? Yes. Are we bruised and battered? Yes," she said. "But we will laugh again, and He will turn our mourning into joy again. And we will go on."

Police say student Natalie "Samantha" Rupnow shot herself at the school and died at a Madison hospital. Police have said her motivation for the attack remains a key part of their investigation.

This was Rupnow's first semester at ALCS, Wiers said. The school was working with

her family on attendance, but teachers had no significant concerns, she said.

"I pray for this family because right now they've lost a daughter and they are wounded," she said. "And they're dealing with the fact that their daughter did this terrible thing and hurt these other people. It has to be one of the loneliest, bitterest places to be."

Vergara's funeral is set for Saturday at City Church, which is adjacent to the school, and West's funeral is Monday at Doxa Church in Madison, where she was a member, according to obituaries published Wednesday and Thursday.

House rejects Trump-backed plan on government shutdown, leaving next steps uncertain

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, 20 DECEMBER

A day before a potential government shutdown, the House resoundingly rejected President-elect Donald Trump's new plan Thursday to fund operations and suspend the debt ceiling, as Democrats and dozens of Republicans refused to accommodate his sudden demands.

In a hastily convened evening vote punctuated by angry outbursts over the self-made crisis, the lawmakers failed to reach the two-thirds threshold needed for passage — but House Speaker Mike Johnson (photo) appeared determined to reassess, before Friday's midnight deadline.



"We're going to regroup and we will come up with another solution, so stay tuned," Johnson said after the vote. The cobbled-together plan didn't even get a majority, with the bill failing 174-235.

The outcome proved a massive setback for Trump and his billionaire ally, Elon Musk, who rampaged against Johnson's bipartisan compromise, which Republicans and Democrats had reached earlier

to prevent a Christmastime government shutdown. It provides a preview of the turbulence ahead when Trump returns to the White House with Republican control of the House and Senate.

During his first term, Trump led Republicans into the longest government shutdown in history during the 2018 Christmas season, and interrupted the holidays in 2020 by tanking a bipartisan Covid-relief bill and forcing a do-over. Hours earlier Thursday, Trump announced "SUCCESS in Washington!" in coming up with the new package which would keep government running for three more months, add \$100.4 billion in disaster assistance including

for hurricane-hit states, and allow more borrowing through 30 January 2027.

"Speaker Mike Johnson and the House have come to a very good Deal," Trump posted.

But Republicans, who had spent 24 hours largely negotiating with themselves to cut out the extras conservatives opposed and come up with the new plan, ran into a wall of resistance from Democrats, who were in no hurry to appease demands from Trump — or Musk.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats were sticking with the original deal with Johnson and called the new one "laughable."

International students urged to return to US campuses before Trump inauguration

AGENCIES
CONCORD, 20 DECEMBER

A growing number of U.S. colleges and universities are advising international students to return to campus before President-elect Donald Trump is inaugurated, over concerns that he might impose travel bans like he did during his first administration.

More than a dozen schools have issued advisories, even though Trump's plans remain uncertain. At some schools, the spring semester begins before Trump will take office, so students may have to be back in class anyway. But for anyone whose ability to stay



in the United States depends on an academic visa, they say it's best to reduce their risks and get back to campus before 20 January.

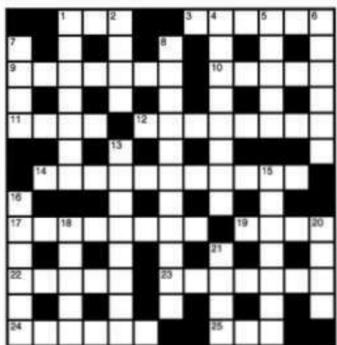
Trump issued an executive order in 2017 January banning travel to the U.S. by citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries — Iraq, Syria,

Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. Travelers from those nations were either barred from getting on their flights or detained at U.S. airports after they landed. They included students and faculty as well as business people, tourists and visitors to friends and family.

Trump later removed some countries and added others to the list — 15 nations were affected at some point during his presidency. More than 40,000 people were ultimately refused visas because of the ban, according to the U.S. State Department. President Joe Biden rescinded the orders when he took office in 2021.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Knight's title (3)
 - Unmarried (6)
 - Defeat utterly (7)
 - Wallpaper adhesive (5)
 - Stare in wonder (4)
 - Salad vegetable (8)
 - Supreme power (11)
 - Briskness (8)
 - Honey drink (4)
 - Supplement (3,2)
 - Unyielding (7)
 - Consented (6)
 - Era (3)
- DOWN**
- Zodiac sign (7)
 - Ladder step (4)
 - Skin disease (8)
 - Zest (5)
 - Happenings (6)
 - Male deer (4)
 - Respectful (11)
 - Frightening (8)
 - Adolescent (7)
 - Capital of Cuba (6)
 - Viper (5)
 - Palm fruit (4)
 - Information (4)

- SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**
- ACROSS**
- Due
 - Erse (Duty nurse)
 - Storeys
 - Rioja
 - Argumenta
- DOWN**
- Scaves
 - Round-the-clock
 - Shine
 - Aviator
 - Ruist
 - Stop
 - Run
 - Ornate
 - Dusmy
 - Enough
 - Eraser
 - Therm
 - Boater
 - Sk run
 - Chrp

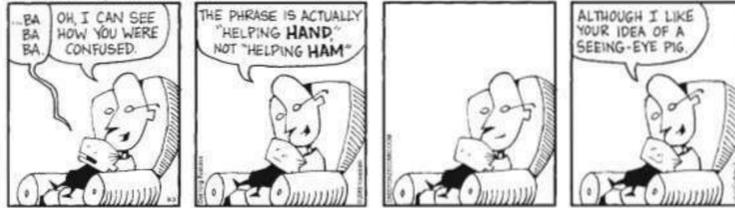
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski



NEED TO KNOW

- Ambulance**
FD Block Association (Amb) 9830452536, 9830181286
Happy Calcuttans 24400160
City Point Nurses Centre 2567-4113, 9831142623
People's Relief Committee 2280-4943/9444
- Life Care** 2284-6940
Peoples Blood Bank 2455-5164/5557
RK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39
- Police/Fire**
Lalibazar (Police Control Room) 22143230
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005
S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311
Bhawani Bhawan 24791761/9, 24791933
Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;
- Howrah** 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285
- Civic Services**
Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2286-1000
Water: 2543-1602
- Calcutta Telephones**
Changed Number Announcement: 1951,1952,1953
- Taxi Refusal**
SMS 575756: Complaint and registration
- Police Toll Free No.** 1073
Transport Deptt. No. 6451-6718
- CESC Fault Reporting**
1912 and 4403-1912
- Trains**
Howrah Station Old Complex: 1331/1332 (Auto Telephone Numbers), 1310, 2638-7412/3542/2581 (manual).
Sealdah: 2350-3335/3537
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

SCRABBLE



SUDOKU



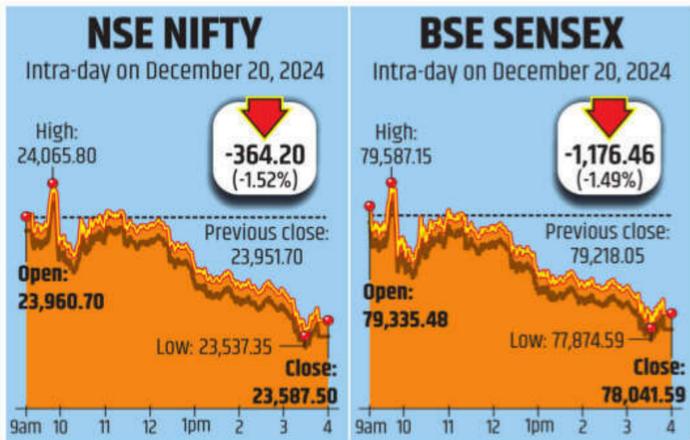
THUMBNAILS



Mr. Aniruddha Lahiri, President, Rising Asia Foundation, Mr. Rudra Chatterjee, Chairman, Obeete and Managing Director, Luxmi Tea, Mr. Arnab Basu, President BCC&I, Dr. Amit Mitra, Principal Chief Advisor to the Minister of West Bengal and Finance Department (in Cabinet Minister Rank), Government of West Bengal, Mr. Sanjay Budhia, Managing Director, Patton International Ltd. and Dr. Harish C. Mehta, Founder Chairman Rising Asia Foundation addressing on the topic "The Bengal Pivot to the East" at Rising Asia-BCC&I Summit 2024. (Left to Right)

Market records steepest weekly declines in over two years

At close, Sensex ended near the 78,000 mark, shedding 1.5 pc from the previous session



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Benchmark indices recorded their steepest weekly declines in over two years, dropping more than 5% amid global market volatility.

At close, Sensex ended near the 78,000 mark, shedding 1.5% from the previous session, while the Nifty fell below 23,600, also down 1.5%.

Throughout the day, Nifty reached a peak of 24,065.8 and dipped to a low of 23,537.35 while the Sensex fluctuated within a range of 79,587.15 and 77,874.59.

On Nifty, the top gainers were Dr. Reddys Laboratories (1.36%) and ICICI Bank (0.47%) while the top losers were Tech Mahindra (4.05%), Trent (3.98%), Mahindra & Mahindra (3.67%), Indusind Bank (3.58%), and Axis Bank (3.36%).

Further on BSE, the top gainers were Network 18 Media & Investments (7.31%), BASF India (4.41%), Bank of Maharashtra (4.29%), The New India Assurance Company (4.16%), Mahindra Life-space Developers (2.97%). On the losing side were Siemens (9.65%), RBL Bank (7.33%), Pfizer (6.75%), Brigade Enterprises (6.64%), Balrampur Chini Mills (6.38%). The rupee closed at 85.0150 against the U.S. dollar, up from its close at 85.07 in the previous

session, after hitting a low of 85.10 earlier in the session.

Mid and small cap segments suffered even deeper losses with the BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices dropped 2.43% and 2.11%, respectively. The overall market capitalisation of the BSE-listed firms dropped to nearly 441 lakh crore from nearly 450 lakh crore in the previous session.

In terms of key individual performances, the shares of General Insurance Corporation of India skyrocketed 17% driven by a gush of trading volumes.

Dr Reddy's Labs shares emerged as one of the top gainer on the Nifty 50, closing the day with 1.5% gains.

FM to attend the 55th GST Council Meeting in Jaisalmer

AGENCIES
JAIPUR, 20 DECEMBER

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has arrived in Jaisalmer for the 55th GST Council meeting scheduled to be held on Saturday at Marriott Hotel.

Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Ministers, and Finance Ministers from various states, along with Finance Secretaries and senior officials, also reached Jaisalmer on Friday. The dignitaries were welcomed at Hotel Marriott amidst tight security arrangements.

Jaisalmer Airport witnessed significant activity as leaders from across the country, including Deputy CM Diya Kumari, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini, J&K CM Omar Abdullah, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma, and Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi, arrived by special flights. Union Finance Minister Sitharaman was received at the airport by Rajasthan Deputy CM Diya Kumari.

Local officials, including MLA Chotu Singh Bhati, District Collector Pratap Singh and SP Sudhir Chaudhary, ensured smooth logistics and security for the event. Over 2,000 security personnel have been deployed across the city, with extensive arrangements in place to ensure the safety of more than 250 VIPs participating in the meeting.

The pre-meeting discussions at Hotel Marriott included Deputy CMs Samrat Chaudhary (Bihar), Jagdish Devda (MP), Chowna Mein (Arunachal Pradesh), Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu (Telangana), and T. R. Zeliang (Nagaland), alongside Finance Ministers from other states and Chief Economic Advisor Dr V. Anantha Nageswaran.

Environmental protection during mining remains core focus area for PSUs: Coal Minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Environmental protection during mining activities remains a core focus area for coal and lignite Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), said Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy.

He emphasized that these PSUs not only ensure compliance with the statutory provisions outlined in environmental laws but also actively exceed these requirements to uphold and enhance environmental standards in and around mining areas.

G. Kishan Reddy was chairing a meeting of Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Ministry of Coal in Parliament Annex, New Delhi on Sustainability and Green Initiatives undertaken by the coal sector.

At the meet, the minister



reiterated the government's commitment towards sustainable development and achieving the target of Net Zero emissions by 2070, as announced by Prime Minister.

He also informed the Com-

mittee members about the sustainable development activities adopted by Coal/Lignite PSUs where coal production goes hand in hand with environmental conservation, societal well-being, and biodiversity protection.

He emphasized that these efforts would ensure the coal sector remains a key driver of economic growth while aligning with India's vision of a sustainable and green future.

Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey also attended the meeting along with the senior officers of Ministry of Coal, CMD (CIL), CMD (NLCL) and CMDs of CIL subsidiaries.

A presentation was also made by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Coal highlighting various Sustainability & Green Initiatives being undertaken by the PSUs.

'Non-tariff barriers impeding trade': Piyush Goyal to EU Trade Commissioner

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in a conversation with European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security underlined that non-tariff barriers were impeding trade and emphasised the need to address long pending issues as a confidence building measure.

The remarks by Minister Goyal were made during a video conference with Maroš Šef ovi, European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency.

"Following nine rounds of intensive negotiations, FTA discussions require strategic political guidance to conclude a commercially



significant and mutually beneficial agreement, with due consideration given to each side's sensitivities," Piyush Goyal said.

Minister Goyal underlined that non-tariff barriers were impeding trade and emphasised the need to address long pending issues as a confidence building measure. Both sides agreed to explore a balanced, equitable, ambi-

tionous and mutually beneficial FTA.

Further, the two leaders committed to schedule a bilateral visit to understand each other's sensitivities and concerns at a date convenient to both sides, through diplomatic channels.

The conference was the first introductory meeting between the two leaders after the assumption of the charge of the new European Commission of the European Union (EU).

It was convened to discuss India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, High Level Dialogue, India-EU Trade and Technology Council, other high level engagements & trade and investment issues.

Commerce Minister Goyal welcomed that President Ursula von der Leyen was

elected for a second mandate by the European Parliament in July 2024.

He noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was given a historic and unprecedented third mandate by the people of India.

With continuity and stability, both sides would strive to deepen the relationship amidst growing uncertainty and turbulence, he said.

Goyal congratulated the EU Trade Commissioner Šef ovi on his new role in the European Commission and expressed confidence in working together to develop a new Strategic India-EU Agenda. Recognising shared values of democracy and rule of law, the two leaders agreed to explore ways to ensure greater wealth and prosperity for about 2 billion people of India and the EU.

Piyush Goyal calls for 100 pc integration onto govt platforms to improve logistics sector

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal called for a 100% integration of industry stakeholders onto the Government platforms to improve the logistics sector.

The minister called for leveraging the Government, private sector and the academia to enhance skill development in the logistics sector.

Noting that innovation in building infrastructure is needed, he said that better road building techniques, faster processes for bidding out contracts are required.

"Using Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics, we can make sure there is no time and cost overrun," he said.

Piyush Goyal was addressing the ULIP Logistics



Hackathon 2.0 Awards Ceremony.

He pointed out that Hackathon is the new style of governance model to solve problems in the country. It is inclusive, involves young minds, startups and innovators, he said.

He urged the participants to think about sustainability

and integrate green practices into India's logistics ecosystem.

"We have to adopt technology like electric mobility, biofuels, multimodal transport options to bring down overall carbon impact and make sustainability the core of our thinking," he said.

Speaking on skill devel-

opment in the logistics sector, the Minister called for collaborations with institutions to train and build a future ready workforce.

ULIP Logistics Hackathon 2.0 was launched in association with NITI Ayog and Start-up India, to provide a nationwide platform for startups, enterprises, and logistics service providers to address critical challenges in the logistics sector.

For the 2024 edition, the hackathon was scaled up significantly, receiving an overwhelming response of over 4,751 registrations.

Following a rigorous evaluation process, 72 participants were shortlisted to develop prototypes. Of these, 25 finalists were presented their innovative solutions during the Finale Event on 20th December 2024.

India now has 25,202 public charging stations for EVs: Minister

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

As many as 25,202 public charging stations for electric vehicles (EVs) have been installed in the country to date, the government said on Friday.

Karnataka leads with 5,765 EV public charging stations, followed by Maharashtra at 3,728 and Uttar Pradesh at 1,989. Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Steel, Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply. As per the information received from the Ministry of Power, 271 EV public charging stations are installed in Chhattisgarh. The govt has been promoting the adoption of EVs in India.

Urban sector investments in India surge 16-fold: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

The investments in the urban sector in India have increased 16-fold as the government aims to achieve the 'Viksit Bharat' goal by 2047, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said on Friday.

Under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), work orders have been issued in 8,066 projects amounting to Rs 1,64,669 crore, of which 7,352 projects (91 per cent of total projects) amounting to Rs 1,47,366 crore have been completed, as per the data provided by 100 Smart Cities.

Under the 'Swachh Bharat Mission,' in the past 6 months (since June 9, 2024), the government has released more than Rs 1,123 crore for projects in nine states -- Assam, Bihar,

Delhi, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal for solid waste and used water management, information, education and communication (IEC) and capacity-building projects.

According to the ministry, key accomplishments under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) include the creation of a 4,649 megalitres per day (MLD) water treatment capacity and a 4,429 MLD sewage treatment capacity.

Under 'AMRUT 2.0', the government is prioritising stormwater drainage systems to address waterlogging challenges, alongside continuing efforts to enhance drinking water availability and sewerage systems, said the ministry.

A new rental housing vertical has been introduced

under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) 2.0, benefiting the migrant population, working women, industrial workers, homeless, students and other beneficiaries.

"To streamline operations, sanctions to states will be finalised based on a demand survey received by March 31, 2025, providing clarity on yearly house allocations. In addition, in-principal approval has been given for more than 6 lakh houses under PMAY-U 2.0 which is a significant achievement in the implementation of the scheme," the ministry said.

According to the government, a revamped National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) will soon be launched, based on the results of a pilot project currently underway in 25 cities, including industrial hubs and migrant centres.

'We have been empowering MSMEs by providing accessible, innovative and customised financial solution'

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

Founded in 1911, Central Bank of India, the first Indian commercial bank, traversed a long way, to become what it is today - 'a great bank' with presence in Bengal, Sikkim, Port Blair with a wide network of 332 branches, 7 regional offices. Central Bank of India Kolkata Zonal Office, over the years, has been delivering excellence in MSME business through customer focus approach. We have been empowering MSME units by providing accessible innovative and customized financial solutions. The Kolkata zone, more recently, has seen increase in MSME advances by 15 per cent from March 31. On the NPA management front, it has adopted cluster approach in terms of recovery proceedings where mapping of branches has been done for effective follow up of NPA/SMA.

Speaking to The Statesman exclusively, P.C. Khurana, Zonal Head, Central Bank of India, Zonal Office-Kolkata, delves at length on wide

ranging issues- from its journey over the years, MSME empowerment focus, NPA management, arresting frauds to thrust areas and introduction of new schemes.

Excerpts:
Q: Where does your zone stand vis-à-vis Central Bank's overall financial performance? How did this Zone perform?

A: Established in 1911, today our bank is celebrating 114 years of its glorious existence as we are on a transforming path from 'good' bank to 'great' bank. Being the first Indian commercial bank, wholly owned and managed by Indians, we have come across a long way and have a remarkable presence in Bengal, Sikkim and Port Blair holding a very prominent place among other public sector banks on account of our wide network of 332 branches, 7 regional offices. We are the lead bank in three districts of North Bengal namely Siliguri, Jalpaiguri and Alipurdwar and one district in Sikkim largely and subsequently it

has contributed to our overall performance. Uttar Banga Kshetriya Regional Rural Bank operating in North Bengal is also sponsored by our bank.

Central Bank of India Kolkata Zone showed notable growth across various metrics in the latest financial results. Our zone's total business figure stands at 41400Cr as on November 2024 which is 4.1% over and above of March figure. It is also mention worthy that our zone has achieved its target of Agriculture and MSME as of November 2024.

Q: In terms of loan disbursal, what would be the percentage wise (and value wise) break up of large business loan, MSME loan, small business loan from zonal office?

A: Our bank has been delivering excellence in MSME business through customer focus approach. We have been empowering MSME units by providing accessible innovative and customized financial solutions. Our Kolkata zone has seen increase in MSME advances by 15% from 31st March 2024 as our figure



stands out at Rs 2719.46 Crores in MSME advances as on 30th November 2024

Q: What are your thrust areas for growth? Which segment of different types of loan products is growing faster?

A: Our Kolkata zone comprising of seven regions has been playing an increasingly active role in promoting the key thrust areas of agriculture, small scale indus-

tries and also medium and large scale industries.

We have been delivering excellence in MSME business through a Customer focused approach while

Empowering MSME Units by providing accessible, innovative and customized financial solutions. We have put equal focus on all kinds of Retail loans, MUDRA loans, advances to food processing industries, self help groups, Nari Shakti

schemes. We are also reaching out to people with our social banking schemes like PMJJBY, PMSBY, Atal Pension Yojana.

Q: How has your deposit grown over the last one years?

A: Our deposit has shown significant increase in the last three years. As far as our Kolkata Zone is considered, we have Savings deposit of Rs 12618 Crores as of 30th Nov 2024 against Rs 11653 Crores as of 31st March 2023 which shows a sharp increase by almost 8.3%.

Q: What is the bank doing towards technology adoption, fraud detection and control and improving operational efficiency?

A: We are continuously advancing our technology and processes to deliver greater efficiency and a seamlessly efficient banking experience. We have a robust risk management system which helps in early detection of frauds. Our competent and hardworking manpower supplemented by

our improved digital infrastructure caters to the diverse needs of all customers facilitating them in seamlessly onboarding to digital banking platform.

Q: What are you doing for better NPA management? How is it paying off?

A: We have adopted cluster approach in terms of recovery proceedings where mapping of branches has been done for effective follow up of NPA/SMA. Our effective SARFAESI follow up through Recovery portal maximizing use of Enforcement agencies / recovery agents has shown significant result as far as recovery is concerned. We are constantly strengthening SAM/Recovery Cells and providing financial counseling and guidance to help borrowers understand their obligations and explore restructuring options.

For borrowers who are in distress due to business failure or genuine reasons we are offering One Time Settlement Scheme to them in order to free them from the baggage

of bad loans.

In GNPA also the bank has done considerably well from 16.8% in FY 22 it has come down to 4.5% in FY 24.

Our Kolkata zone showed sharp decline of NPA by 12% as on 31st March 2024 from previous year.

Q: What are the schemes offered by your bank?

A: We have a diverse range of products for all age groups. Today we are launching Cent Salary Account for salary holder who are permanent employees of Central/State Govt, Quasi Govt / PSU s etc where we will be providing free personal accidental insurance of upto Rs 100 lakhs besides other attractive features. Our Cent Queen specially designed for women customers has gained popularity because of the attractive offers it brings with it. We have received huge response from women customers. Cent PM SURYA Scheme promoting use of renewable energy through installation of rooftop solar panel has also gained popularity among all other schemes.

Srijit Mukherji's *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr* is a cinematic reverie that pivots on razor's edge of morality

ANWESHA SANTRA

What do you get when the philosophical quagmire of capital punishment collides with the razor-sharp intellect of Bengal's most celebrated sleuth? Srijit Mukherji's *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr*—a tale that is equal parts cerebral and scintillating. Rest assured, retired Justice Siddheshwar Mullick (played by Rajatava Dutta) doesn't lapse into sanctimonious soliloquies about ethics. Instead, his torment manifests in a relentless moral haemorrhage—dragging our own three musketeers—Feluda, Topsy and Jatayu—into a labyrinth of guilt and intrigue that goes beyond the mortal realm.

The backdrop? None other than Kashmir—the land immortalised by Amir Khusrau's effusive verse: "Gar firdaus, bar ruhe zamin ast, hamin asto, hamin asto, hamin ast." (meaning, if there is paradise on this earth, it is here, it is here, it is here...)

Through six impeccably crafted episodes, *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr*

on *hoichoi* unfurls with a measured grace that mirrors the gentle sway of Kashmiri willows. Yet beneath this veneer of serenity brews an ever-rising tide of suspense—unhurried but unrelenting.

The narrative skillfully juxtaposes the idyllic allure of Kahwah-kissed mornings with the icy estrangement of a father and son. Add to this an ensemble of enigmatic figures, sessions of planchette and the jarring discord of gunfire that shatters Khusrau's paradisiacal dream.

The cast is nothing short of a revelation. Rajatava Dutta commands attention with his gravitas, while Debesh Chatterjee as Dr Majumdar and Riddhi Sen as Shushanto Shome lend their unique subtlety to the ensemble. Sawon Chakraborty as Bijoy Mullick and Aniruddha Gupta as Arun Sarkar deliver performances

as authentic as they are compelling.

As for the golden trio, Anirban Chakrabarti waltzes through the role of Lal Mohan Babu aka Jatayu with unmatched panache. He effortlessly embodies the comic relief with a carefree demeanour, yet surprises with keen erudition as he invokes Birinchi Baba's musings on the "Martanda mantra". Not stopping there, he engages Topsy in a fascinating discourse on the rare sun temples scattered across India—a delightful juxtaposition of levity and intellect. Kalpan Mitra, playing the role of Topsy, may have been sparing in his dialogues, yet his performance speaks volumes, delivering commendable flair. And when all

was said and done, Tota Roy Chowdhury masterfully dons the mantle of Pradosh Chandra Mitter, alias Feluda, in *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr*. Diverging from

his prior portrayals, Tota sheds the mantle of restraint, his craft now liberated and brimming with authenticity. He ideally transforms into the quintessential Feluda—charismatic, Charminar-smoking and wielding the iconic .32 Colt revolver with an effortless swagger.

As the grand curtain call to Srijit Mukherji's foray into the Feluda universe, *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr* stands not merely as an apposite swansong but as the crowning jewel of his adaptations. The cinematography is nothing short of spellbinding—a visual sonnet to the paradisiacal Kashmir—while the execution displays a finesse that borders on the orchestral.

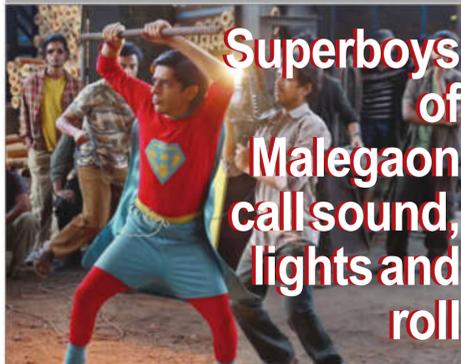
And then, there's the auditory magic—a hauntingly beautiful Feluda theme rendered on the Rabab, echoing through the valleys like a melancholic muse. To top it off, a kaleidoscopic homage to Feluda's

most "highly magnificent" cases like *Sonar Kella*, *Joy Baba Felunath*, *Gorosthane Sabdhan* and *Tintoretto Jishu*, provides a fitting crescendo to this magnum opus.

With *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr*, the genius of Srijit Mukherji weaves a touch of literary brilliance into the narrative as Tota's Feluda, amidst the trio's rapture over Kashmir's resplendent vistas, reciting lines about the Himalayas from Satyajit Ray's *Hirak Rajar Deshe*. This ingenious nod to Ray is not just an homage but a cleverly orchestrated poetic stroke of narrative elan.

Eventually, Mukherji deftly underscores the ominous spectre of terrorism in the series, culminating in Feluda's haunting final words: "Nothing seems right, Topsy. It will only get worse."

As the grand curtain call to Srijit Mukherji's foray into the Feluda universe, *Bhuswargo Bhoyonkawr* stands not merely as an apposite swansong but as the crowning jewel of his adaptations.



Superboys of Malegaon call sound, lights and roll

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Director Reema Kagti's basket has an interesting mix of movies. From *Honeymoon Travels Pvt Ltd* in 2006 to *Talaash* (2012) to *Gold* (2018)—they talk about a comic medley of couples, mystery and sports, respectively. In her latest outing, *Superboys of Malegaon*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and was last screened at Red Sea (where I watched it), she carts us to a small city in Maharashtra and throws us in the midst of a group of boisterous boys. It is another matter that some look older. But never mind. Kagti's is a feel-good work, which I wished had opened the Red Sea Film Festival. For it always makes sense to start a festival with something that is light, and Kagti's is also a lot of fun.

The subject, desire to make a movie and win fame and fortune, has lit the stars in many eyes, and so too in those of Malegaon boys. Based on actual incidents and a kick-off from the helmer's earlier documentary, *Supermen of Malegaon*, which was all about a bunch of boisterous youngsters taking a shot at filmmaking, her latest is a full-length feature.

Penned by Varun Grover, the movie plays like a spoof and is a subtle criticism of how unoriginal Bollywood cinema is. It certainly took guts for Kagti to make a film of this sort. And what is it all about?

Adarsh Gourav (whom we saw in Ramin Bahrani's *The White Tiger* in 2012) is Nasir, a photographer in 1990s Malegaon who videographs weddings and also takes still pictures using his brother's studio. He is also a keen movie buff and screens classic English works. But who in his town understands legends like Chaplin and his ilk? However, when he shows pirated versions of Bollywood features, the crowd swells. He is also innovative when he mixes films from Hollywood and Bollywood. As we know, good times do not last, and piracy is an offence. Gourav gets caught, and his copyright-infringing days end.

The rest of the movie is how Gourav ropes in Farogh (Vineet Singh) to write screenplays and other friends, including a local journalist, in an attempt to make his own film. There is also a romance brewing away from the screen: one of the boys, Shafiq (Shashank Arora), falls hopelessly in love with the movie's leading lady.

What is even more interesting is Farogh walking out of Nasir's group lamenting that writers are not given enough respect. How very true in India, where the man who wields the pen or pushes the button is often shunned to the sidelines; it is the actor who is invariably in the centre of the ring.

The writer is a senior film critic and author

A bolt from the blue

MEENA BANERJEE

Tabla wizard ustad Zakir Hussain (9 March 1951–15 December 2024) left for his eternal journey at a time when he was supposed to be in Kolkata as a much awaited participant in the Swara Samrat Music Festival. The world of art lovers, film lovers, even tea lovers, is shell shocked by this sudden bolt from the blue.

Born to tabla maestro Allarakha Khan, he grew up in a modest Mahim area mostly inhabited by musicians, was educated in a public school, and joined St Xavier's College. Apart from his formal education, he started his stage appearance as a seven-year-old at the prestigious Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Sammelan in Pune. SRA's founder director, Pandit Vijay Kichlu, spotted this bright gem. When the idea of organising pan-Indian classical concerts, "Music on Wheels", crystallised, Kichlu requested him to join the group to collaborate with top musicians like Shivkumar Sharma, VG Jog, A Kanan, and several others. The musicians mapped the length and breadth of the subcontinent to promote classical music.

It was Pandit Ravi Shankar who gave Zakir the real break on the international circuits. By the dint of his sheer talent and terrific hard work, he won the status of one of the most versatile tabla players and shaped him into the most sought-after Hindustani musician. His acting in films and a commercial clip to promote tea brought him to every Indian's living room, and he became a household name. An impressive orator, suave, good-looking, humble and a witty performer, he made the best of the limelight but always remained concerned about the talented gen-next and wished them well very sincerely. Such humane artists are counted as rare species today. This universal loss is irreparable.

PRESTIGIOUS SOIRÉE

The coveted ITC Samman 2024 once again established its credibility by honouring Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar, the unanimously respected "Musician of musicians." The heartwarming ceremony was held in the presence of all the Gurus of ITC Sangeet Research Academy on the inaugural day of ITC SRA Sangeet Sammelan (29 November–1 December) at SRA's sprawling lawns. Later, as the final artist of the same evening, Kashalkar too proved it once again—what makes him the indisputable master of *acchobhe*, *jod*, and rarely heard ragas.

Flanked by tabla maestro Yogesh Samsi, harmonium virtuoso Gourab Chatterjee, and disciples Sai Aishwarya Mahashabde and Adwait on the tanpuras, he portrayed

a widely neglected Malgunji with such loving precision that the raga, a heady blend of oft-heard Bageshri, Rageshri and Jajaiwanti, emerged out with its glowing individuality. Moreover, a soulful interpretation of the lyrics of a traditional bandish, "Ban mein charawat gaiyan", merged the raagrop with that of Krishna, the cowboy.

Simultaneously, Kashalkar's exemplary technique of creating dramatic tension before the arrival of Sam and presenting a raga with suitable embellishment was at work, and the result was electric! Encores from informed listeners resulted in a pristine Nat Bihag, followed by several other uncommon ragas.

The nightlong session of the Saturday (30th) evening peaked in piety in the wee hours of Sunday. The introspective, lingering, and slowly bending or oscillating notes of raga Bhairavi in *dhrupad* maestro Uday Bhawalkar's jawaridar-rich voice created a blissfully peaceful ambience, a cherished virtue of Hindustani classical music that is dwindling now. But his disciples, like Sagar Morankar, promise to keep the lamp burning. As a tanpura and vocal accompanist, he filled the breathing gaps very competently. Pratap Awad's *pakhawaj* very sensitively helped maintain the mood. There was no showmanship for a blissful change even when he sang "Narayan Hari tum" set to fast shoolta. The closing raga, Bhairavi's *alap*, was a brilliant example of pure raagrop without additional notes. Its deliberate portrayal, studded with the rich lyrics of Saraswati-stuti in *teevra*, was spiritually charged. Earlier, in the evening, Pandit Ajoy Chakarabarty, presently SRA's sole city-based senior-most guru, adorned the stage along with tabla wizard Yogesh Samsi, harmonium virtuoso Jyotirmoy Banerjee, and disciples Anol Chatterjee and Sudipto Chakraborty for vocal and tanpura support. The Master chose Chandra Kaushiki, a raga invented by Guru Jnan Prakash Ghosh. Only Nikhil Banerjee, also a disciple of Gururji, learnt and played this raga, but since there is no bandish, vocalists didn't sing it. I am offering myself-composed bandishes, he informed the listeners before venturing to delineate this strange raga—sporting Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni in equally strange manner. The longish *alap* seemed confused between *dhrupad* and *khayal*. The medium-paced *rupak* composition had some semblance to soothe the wrought nerves. Subsequently, his good old and sweet friend Bageshri did the rest by casting its spell. The following *thumri* displayed his interest in Purab Anga Gayaki.

Among the senior invitee musicians, sitar maestro Budhaditya Mukherjee was as brilliant as ever. So was the trio of Ojas Adhiya (tabla), Giridhar Udupa (ghatam)



and Milind Kulkarni (harmonium). Popular vocalist Shubha Mudgal, violinist Kala Ramnath, and flautist Rakesh Chaurasia were their usual selves. The senior ITC SRA alumni also lived up to its reputation. It included an engaging duet of renowned vocalists Sanjukta Biswas and Sabina Islam Rahaman, a scintillating sitar recital by Ayan Sengupta, and a mellifluous vocal rendition of Brajeshwar Mukherjee. As usual, SRA showcased its promising youngsters scholars Shreya Chatterjee (vocal), Anagha Bhat (vocal) and Koustav Roy (sarod) as the opening artists of all three days of the Sammelan.

WELCOME CHANGE

It is highly commendable that the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has relaxed the ban on women performing artists, and the celebration of the 157th birth anniversary of Sister Nivedita saw a dazzling recital of Kaushiki Chakraborty at Vivekananda Hall on 5 November.

Organised by Ramkrishna Sarada Mission and Sister Nivedita Heritage Museum and Knowledge Centre (16 Bosepara Lane, Baghbazar), the evening began with a melodious sarod recital of Abhishek Lahiri. He portrayed a beautiful version of *Bhim-palasi*, the raga of homecoming after a hard day of work. After evoking the intrinsic peaceful exposition of the raga in the initial *alap-jod-jhala*, Lahiri, with Debjit Patitundi's equally khilful tabla as a perfect match, played two jhaptaal gats of different gaits. While the first sported lots of *layachhandakari*, gamak phrases, and mukam-

based elaboration, the second, endowed with a mukhra of *tisra* phrases descending from *komal nishad*, was a beauty in itself. A few *bol*-orientated taans were enough to adorn it. The drut *teental gat*, starting from *mandra pancham*, highlighted another angle of the raga decked up with fast *ekhara taan* patterns but chose the clichéd extra fast *cacophonous* end.

According to Kaushiki, "To do music or to become one" is her goal. Like her world-renowned father, she too is open to every genre of music. Surrounded by a team of brilliant musicians like Debjit Patitundi (tabla), Omkar Dalvi (pakhawaj), Murad Ali (sarangi), and Jyotirmoy Banerjee (harmonium), she ventured out to sing *dhrupad* for the first time. Her *alap* delineated *raha Shree*, and with "Hari ke charana kamal," a famous composition set to *jhaptal*, it was well rendered, supported by a simple *theka* on tabla and *pakhawaj*.

But thereafter she entered her comfort zone of *khayal*, replete with varied taans leaping up to *atitaa* sa. In comparison, her second choice, a Chautal *dhrupad* in raga *Yaman* showcasing *jatis* and *gamaks*, was much better. Again, she followed it up with "Kinare kinare", a unique *khayal bandish* set to *ekwai* and extra fast taans kept running at the cost of *sur*. Persistent encores led her to sing *Aye na balam*, and she did it with superb facility. Her last offering was *Prabhu mai ghulam* in *Bhairavi*, a favourite bhajan of Swami Vivekananda.

The writer is a senior music critic

Carabao Cup: Newcastle fancy their chances vs Arsenal, Reds face Spurs

Newcastle looking forward to 'difficult' semifinal against Arsenal, defending champions Liverpool eye 2nd consecutive title

AGENCIES
NEWCASTLE, 20 DECEMBER

Newcastle United stormed through to the semi-finals of the Carabao Cup with a 3-1 win over Brentford. The Magpies will be facing Arsenal in a two-legged tie in hopes of reaching their second consecutive League Cup final.

Newcastle head coach Eddie Howe claims he is looking forward to face the Gunners in the tie but would have preferred if they were playing their home game in the second leg of the clash.

"I think we were guaranteed a tough game, whoever we got. When you get to this stage of the competition, you know the quality is very high. We play Arsenal and we've had some good games against them in the last couple of years, so I look forward to that. I don't think there's a whole lot in it but I think that (playing at home in the second leg) would've been our preference. Any game against Arsenal, home or away, is difficult. We've had some really competitive games and they've been really tight.

"That's something on the horizon for us to really look forward to and we're really excited by those two games. It's unique that they're separated so far apart but the



focus, very quickly after the game against Brentford, is on Ipswich," said Howe in a press conference
Newcastle United's 0-2

loss in the final of the 2023 Carabao Cup final will certainly play in the minds of the players as they look to overcome one of the longest

droughts in English football. The Toons, who are considered to be a club of rich heritage, have not won a major trophy since winning the

1955 FA Cup final after defeating Manchester City 3-1.

The date for the games against Arsenal has not been announced yet but the semi-

final first leg will be played in the week commencing 6 January, 2025, and the second leg in the first week of February.

In the other semi-final, defending champions Liverpool will face Tottenham Hotspur.

Liverpool have won the title a record 10 times and will fancy their chances of continuing their superb run in this season's tournament.

Liverpool kept their title defence alive by winning 2-1 at Southampton, with Darwin Nunez and Harvey Elliott the scorers in the first half for the leaders of the Premier League and Champions League. Liverpool has now gone 20 games unbeaten within a single season in all competitions for the first time since 1996, according to Premier League stats supplier Opta. Things could hardly be going any better for Arne Slot, who fielded a weakened, heavily rotated team—featuring Japan midfielder Wataru Endo at center back—that still had too much for Southampton.

Nunez particularly enjoyed his goal, which came after he had been jeered by Southampton fans for missing an early chance. After putting Liverpool ahead, he put his finger to his mouth in a "shush" gesture to the home crowd.

Liverpool coach Slot is a 'fan' of Tottenham's Postecoglou



AGENCIES
LIVERPOOL, 20 DECEMBER

Tottenham Hotspur moved into the semifinals of the Carabao Cup with a 4-3 victory over Manchester United on Friday (IST) following which they were drawn to face Liverpool in the next stage, the side they face in the Premier League on Sunday.

Ahead of the matchup Liverpool head coach Arne Slot claimed he is a fan of Spurs head coach Ange Postecoglou and claimed he 'hopes' that the Australian will be able to win a trophy with Tottenham with the team's last major title being the League Cup in the 2007/08 season. "I hope, hope, hope he wins a trophy. Not the League Cup but I am completely a fan of his team for

the Europa League. People talk about trophies, trophies, trophies and that is so important. For me his brand of football is more important and if he can combine it with winning something that would be so good for football in general because then people can stop talking about 'Is it too attacking?' How on earth can you play too much attacking football?" said Slot in a press conference.

Liverpool still sit at the top of the Premier League table with a two-point advantage, with a game in hand, over Chelsea.

However, Slot will be hoping his side recovers their form as they look to win their 24 league win coming on 28 November with two consecutive draws and the Merseyside Derby being postponed.

ISL: Jamshedpur FC eye league double against East Bengal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 20 DECEMBER

Jamshedpur FC will aim to register their first-ever league double over East Bengal FC when they face off in an Indian Super League (ISL) clash at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Saturday.

The Men of Steel secured a 2-0 victory in the first leg on 5 October and another clean sheet this weekend would mark the first time they achieve back-to-back shutouts against the Red and Gold Brigade in the competition.

Jamshedpur FC snapped their three-game losing streak and will come into this game on the back of consecutive victories in their last couple of encounters.

They have, however, given away the second-most goals in the ISL 2024-25 (21), only behind the 10th-placed Kerala Blasters FC.

A strong start and recent recovery mean that they find themselves within the playoffs spots (6th) right now, but the visitors will have to be at the top of their game since the tables can turn around



immediately given the slim margins separating teams in the table.

East Bengal FC have conceded multiple goals in each

of their last two home matches. If they repeat that trend, it will be their longest such streak in ISL history. The Red and Gold Brigade will have

to be wary of the same, since Jamshedpur FC have found the back of the net five times in their previous two games.

East Bengal FC come into this match with momentum, having won three of their last four ISL games, a sharp turnaround from their winless start to the season.

Another win would mark their joint-highest tally of wins (4) after 12 games in a season, matching their record from 2023-24.

Jamshedpur FC have faced struggles on the road, failing to score in each of their last two away games.

They have never gone three consecutive away games without scoring in ISL history, and the Red and Gold Brigade will aim to avoid this unwanted record. Jamshedpur FC have permitted an average of 26.8 touches per game in their own box, the highest of any team this season.

Additionally, they have conceded eight goals from outside the box, the most by any side this season, highlighting a vulnerability to long-range strikes.

In their nine matches so far, East Bengal FC and Jamshedpur FC have won two and four times respectively. Three matches have resulted in a draw with an average of two goals being scored per game.

East Bengal FC head coach Oscar Bruzon has asserted that he wants his team to approach matches with an offensive outlook.

Kalinga star Sanjay looking forward to HIL

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

India and Kalinga Lancers defender Sanjay Rana is excited to play for the defending champions in the upcoming Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25 season, commencing on 28 December.

Sanjay, who has risen through the ranks of the junior team, has become a consistent feature in the Indian men's hockey team in the recent years. The 2024 has been an instrumental year for the defender as he went on to win the highest accolade of his career—the bronze medal in the Paris Olympics—along with the title finish at the Asian Champions Trophy in China. He was also part of the team that won the gold medal in the Youth Olympic Games 2022 in Hangzhou, China. Sanjay who first tasted success with a silver medal in the Youth Olympic Games 2018, has established himself as a reckoning force among India's strong defence line-up consisting of captain Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas and Jarmanpreet Singh.

Jaipur qualify for PKL playoffs: The Jaipur Pink Panthers fought hard and came back from behind to defeat the Bengal Warriors, in a Season 11 match of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) and

confirmed qualification for the Playoffs in the Badminton Hall of the Balewadi Sports Complex here on Friday. The Jaipur are the fifth team to progress to the playoffs. AGENCIES

AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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It has been reported to AAI that unscrupulous elements / fraudsters / touts / agents have created false identity for themselves and have tried to deceive by pretending themselves as recruiters of Airports Authority of India, offering fictitious job opportunities through fake recruitment notices / messages / mobile phone calls for lucrative career in AAI.

Airports Authority of India urges potential job seekers to exercise caution and due diligence by verifying the authenticity of any job advertisement / messages / call letters / appointment letters on the careers section of AAI website: www.aai.aero and no other website.

All details regarding recruitment such as detailed advertisement, Application Verification / Interview Schedule, Final results, etc. are published on AAI's website: www.aai.aero

Application fees is payable only at the time of online application submission which is clearly mentioned in the advertisement and is payable only by male candidates belonging to Unreserved and OBC (NCL) categories. No other payments are sought at any stages of recruitment by AAI.

Any person dealing with such unscrupulous elements / agents / messages / mobile phone calls will be doing so at his / her own risk and cost. Airports Authority of India shall in no way be responsible for the consequences thereof.

If anyone falls prey to such fraud / fake recruitment racket, they are advised to file an FIR against the fraudsters with the local Police Station. For Hindi version please click on undermentation weblink: https://www.aai.aero/sites/default/files/aaipupload/AAI_NIT_%20No-03_Hindi_Dec_12_2024_0.pdf

NIT No.-03/2024-25
Executive Director (HR)
CBC 03111/12/0003/2425

Regulation of Trains for Traffic & Power Block over Sealdah Division

In connection with placement of R.C.C. box & base slab across the Railway tracks for Limited Height Subway, Traffic & Power Block for 06 hours 30 minutes (from 10.15 hrs. to 16.45 hrs.) will be required on both UP & Down lines at Level Crossing Gate No.113/E (at Km. 169/17-19) in Krishnanagar City Jn. - Lalgola section over Sealdah Division on **22.12.2024 (Sunday)**. Consequently, the following trains will be regulated as under:-

- **CANCELLATION OF TRAINS: On 21.12.2024 (Saturday):** Sealdah-Lalgola: UP 03191, On 22.12.2024 (Sunday): Krishnanagar City Jn.-Lalgola: UP 31861/DN 31864, Lalgola-Sealdah: DN 03190, Azimganj - Krishnanagar City Jn.: DN 03020/UP 03019
- **SHORT TERMINATION AND SHORT ORIGINATION OF TRAINS ON 22.12.2024 (Sunday):** (i) 31773 UP Ranaghat-Lalgola Passenger will be short terminated at Ranaghat and 31770 DN Lalgola-Ranaghat Passenger will be short originated from Ranaghat instead of Lalgola. (ii) 31769 UP Ranaghat-Lalgola EMU Passenger will be short terminated at Ranaghat and 31774 DN Lalgola-Ranaghat EMU Passenger will be short originated from Ranaghat instead of Lalgola. (iii) 03115 UP Sealdah-Lalgola MEMU Passenger will be short terminated at Plassey and 03196 DN Lalgola-Sealdah MEMU Passenger will be short originated from Plassey instead of Lalgola at 14:15 hrs. (iv) 31819 UP Sealdah-Krishnanagar City Jn. Local will be short terminated at Ranaghat and 31840 DN Krishnanagar City Jn.-Sealdah Local will be short originated from Ranaghat instead of Krishnanagar City Jn. • **RE-SCHEDULING OF TRAINS ON 22.12.2024 (SUNDAY):**(i) 03183 UP Sealdah-Lalgola Passenger will be re-scheduled for 20 minutes i.e. will leave Sealdah at 13:00 hrs. instead of 12:40 hrs. and controlled en-route up to Ranaghat till cancellation of Block. (ii) 03192 DN Lalgola-Sealdah Passenger will be re-scheduled for 75 minutes i.e. will leave Lalgola at 16:00 hrs. instead of 14:45 hrs. and will be controlled en-route up to Berhampore Court. There may be delay in train running during block period. Inconvenience is regretted.

Divisional Railway Manager, Sealdah

EASTERN RAILWAY

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EASTERN RAILWAY

NIT No. : 291/2024-25, dated 18.12.2024. Following e-Tender is invited online by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, DRM Building, Near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 [for the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/Howrah] from Tenderers having experience of similar nature of work and required financial capabilities including those registered with Irrigation/CPWD/ SEB/MES or any public sector undertaking for the following work: Description of work : Strengthening of multiple span arch Bridge No. 6 in between Nalhati-Bandel by conducting RCC jacking and other repair work in the jurisdiction of AEN/Bandel. Approx. Cost : ₹ 3,21,45,555.47; Earnest Money : ₹ 3,21,45,555.47; Cost of Tender Form : Nil. Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) Months. In case the date of closing mentioned in the Notice Inviting Tender is declared a holiday/bandhi/ strike on any account, the date of closing tender online will not be changed as the application in the website of IREPS does not permit submission of any offer after closing date and time of the tender. However, opening of tenders online will be done on the next working date. Closing date and time of tender : 07.01.2025 at 14.00 hrs. The detail of tender are available at website www.ireps.gov.in Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. Payment of EMD and TDC - Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender document cost (TDC) in respect of E-Tendering should be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. No manual offer will be accepted.

HWH-496/2024-25

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.ireps.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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T E N D E R

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-Tender are invited vide NIT Memo No: 4033/IM/2024 Dt-20/12/2024 of the undersigned intending bidders may participate through <http://wbttenders.gov.in> or may contact this Office for details.

Sd/-
Chairman
Islampur Municipality

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Dated: 20/12/2024

E-Tender Notice

E-tender is invited, from reputed and experienced contractor by the undersigned, for and on behalf of the President of India, for the following:-
Tender No.: ELECT-GEN-BPL-T-68-2024 **Name of Work:** Part (A) Guna: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (B) Ashoknagar: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (C) Bivavara Rajgarh: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (D) Shajapur: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (E) Sorali: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (F) Salamatpur: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (G) Sukhswaniya: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (H) Mandideep: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (I) Timari: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. Part (J) Harda: Upgradation of infrastructure at Goods shed. (Electrical work) **Completion Period:** 4 Months. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 3,09,26,174.80/- **Earnest Money** in Rs. 3,04,600/- **Date and Time for closing of tender:** 10/01/2025, 11:00 hrs.

The details of complete tender documents and its related information may be seen at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> and notice board of this office. Manual offer, for above said tender is not acceptable and if any manual offer submitted, will not be considered. Corrigendum/Updating, if required, will be uploaded on website, it may be seen at above said URL and notice board of this office, till the date of closing of tender. If cost of tender is above Rs. 50 lakhs then as per para 10 of GCC eligibility criteria will be applicable. Before participation in tender, contractor first read this condition. Documents for same should be uploaded on the IREPS website, by the contractor. Uploaded documents will be considered for finalization of tender. The brief of same has also been given in the special condition attached with the tender.

For Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) DRM's Office, West Central Railway, Bhopal
Near Rani Kamalapati Railway Station

Any Food Related Complaint, Please Call Toll Free Helpline 1800111321

HOWRAH MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

4, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, HOWRAH-711001

Abridged Tender Notice for Paper Publication

E-Tenders in prescribed form are being invited by Executive Engineer, Howrah Municipal Corporation for the works of Park & Garden Department of H.M.C. Area, from reputed resourceful & bona fide contractors who have sufficient experience in related nature of work. Related information in detail will be available from the E-Tender Notice & the Dept. of Executive Engineer <https://www.wbtender.gov.in> Bid submission closing date: 19-01-2025 up to 6:00 P.M. HMC authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

Tender Notice No. ED/05/P&G/24-25 Dated: 19-12-2024

Secretary
125/3/24-25
20-12-24
Howrah Municipal Corporation

EASTERN RAILWAY

NOTICE INVITING E-AUCTION

E-Auction Notice No. COM/PUB/HWH/DIGICHART-8/2024, dated : 19.12.2024. E-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, 4th Floor, Rail Yatri Niwas Building, near Howrah station, Howrah-711101 for awarding contract of Commercial Publicity Rights. **Catalogue No. : HWH-DIGICHART-8. Auction Start Date & Time : 03.01.2025 at 12.00 hrs. Seq. No. : AA/1. Lot No. : ADVT-HWH-HWH-OSD-130-24-1 [Advertising - On Station Premise (Digital)]. Description : Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Digital Passenger Reservation Chart Board Kiosk at Howrah Station Platform - 8 with scope of commercial advertisements on 50:50 time/space sharing basis. HWH-497/2024-25**

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.ireps.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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KLAASEN FINED FOR CODE OF CONDUCT BREACH
 South Africa batter Heinrich Klaasen has been fined 15 per cent of his match fee for committing a Level 1 breach of the ICC Code of Conduct. One demerit point has also been added to his disciplinary record for violating Article 2.2, which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match." The incident took place during the second ODI between South Africa and Pakistan.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

Oz replace McSweeney with Konstas, Richardson recalled

Australia make changes to squad for last two Tests of Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Australia made a couple of changes to their squad ahead of the final two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar series against India by adding teenaged opener Sam Konstas at the expense of Nathan McSweeney, besides drafting in pacer Jhye Richardson after a three-year hiatus as a cover for injured Josh Hazlewood although Scott Boland is expected to come into the XI at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Ever since the retirement of David Warner in January, Australia have struggled to sort out their top order conundrum, and had tried Steve Smith for sometime before opting for McSweeney in the lead-up to the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

However, McSweeney's struggles against India's pace ace Jasprit Bumrah in his debut series has led to his ouster from the squad, and opened the doors for teen sensation Konstas as the only other specialist opener alongside Usman Khawaja (with auxiliary batter Josh Inglis regarded a middle-order option). Allrounder Beau Webster is also retained in the 15-player group. Brendan Doggett, who was called in as cover when Hazlewood



was first injured in Perth, did not make this squad but Sean Abbott was retained.

If the right-handed Konstas, who turned 19 on October 2 this year, receive a Baggy Green cap on Boxing Day he would become Australia's youngest Test debutant since current skipper Pat Cummins when he took the field against South Africa at Johannesburg in 2011.

Konstas has made a blazing start to his first full summer in senior career cricket after

starring at the under-19 World Cup in South Africa early this year. He posted 152 and 105 in New South Wales' Sheffield Shield opener against South Australia, then made an unbeaten 73 for Australia A at the MCG against an India A attack that included incumbent Test allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy.

Selection chair George Bailey believes Konstas will perform well if he wins selection and thinks the inclusion of Webster, Abbott and

Richardson provides the team with better balance for the final two Tests of the series.

"Sam gets a call up to the Test squad for the first time. His style of batting offers a point of difference and we look forward to watching his game develop further. The squad provides options as to how we structure the XI for the final two Tests of the series. In the absence of Josh Hazlewood, Jhye provides further options in the fast bowling space. It has been

pleasing to see his successful return throughout the early part of the domestic summer," Bailey said.

Bailey also sympathised with McSweeney after the rookie right-hander was axed from the squad, and expressed confidence on the right-hander's ability to succeed at the Test level in the future. McSweeney, who had never opened in professional cricket before this season, has made 72 runs at 14.40 in the first three Tests.



India to host Para Athletics World Championships 2025

AGENCIES
 NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

The world's largest single Para sport event will take place from 26 September to 5 October 2025 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi, which will also host a World Para Athletics Grand Prix for the first time next March.

Next year's Para Athletics World Championships will take place in New Delhi, marking the first time the event will be hosted in India. The Para Athletics World

Championships, the world's largest single Para sport event, will be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium from 26 September to 5 October 2025. New Delhi 2025 will mark the 12th edition of the championships and the fourth time it is hosted in Asia, following Doha 2015, Dubai 2019 and Kobe 2024.

The WPA also announced that New Delhi will host a World Para Athletics Grand Prix for the first time next year, scheduled to take place from 11 to 13 March.

What stands out was Ashwin wanting to evolve all the time, says Ravi Shastri

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri said that the recently-retired Ravichandran Ashwin's constant drive to evolve was one of the reasons that made him stand out. Ashwin called time on his prolific career at the end of the Gabba Test, leaving a rich legacy as one of India's finest match-winners.

Shastri was on hand to witness many of those match-winning efforts in his role as India's head coach and the 62-year-old opened up on the tweaker's penchant to develop his game, working on new deliveries and his action even in the later stages of his career. "I think what stands out for me was his wanting to evolve all the time. He wasn't the kind of guy



satisfied as to where he started. He wanted new tricks to be learned. He pursued it, practiced hard at it and continued to look for new things as his career progressed, to keep up with the times," Shastri said at the ICC Review.

Ashwin's record, being the second-most successful India bowler in international cricket

with 765 wickets (537 of those in Tests), standing only behind Anil Kumble (953), spoke for itself as per Shastri.

"His legacy will be of being a terrific match-winner, a fabulous record, 537 sticks. I mean anyone over 500 (in Test cricket) is special," Shastri noted.

The former India all-

rounder also marked out Ashwin's improved numbers this decade, with the bowler picking up 175 Test scalps at an average of 21.18 (better than his career average of 24).

"And for him to do it in his span and the way he has done it, especially when it came to bowling in the last four or five years, I think in India, along with (Ravindra) Jadeja, I think they were a terrific pair, the real spin twins," Shastri said while also explaining how the spin pairing with Jadeja, meant that the duo supported each other in their quest for wickets.

"They complemented each other well and they spurred each other on you know so I would say a lot of Jadeja's wickets in the last you know five-six years have come because of Ashwin and vice-versa," Shastri added.

Rewind 2024: India's bittersweet campaign in Paris - Olympics and Paralympics

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
 NEW DELHI, 20 DECEMBER

Last minute preparations, exposure camps abroad, TOPs funding, overlooking administrative mess-ups to pick the crème de la crème of Indian sports for the biggest show on earth that unfolded in Paris three years after Covid-19 pushed the Tokyo edition of the Olympics by a year.

It turned out a hectic year for the Indian athletes dreaming of a podium finish in the French capital but only a handful, to be precise six, went all the way to script history.

In fact, the number could have swelled to double digits for the first time in Indian Olympic history, if only the six fourth-place 'near-misses' were converted but only "ifs and buts" had a place in sporting outcomes!

Among those six heart-breaks, the one that would



take some time to sink in was wrestler Vinesh Phogat's utterly dramatic disqualification, which snatched what appeared to be a certain silver medal, if not gold.

The Paris Games gave India more than one reason to cheer as the shooting contingent broke a 12-year medal drought, with a rare double from shooter Manu Bhaker, making up for the missed opportunity in Tokyo.

The 22-year-old came up with a remarkable show to

pick a bronze in women's 10m air pistol before teaming up with Sarabjot Singh to take the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze. Swapnil Kusale claimed another bronze in the 50 metre rifle three positions to complete the shooting success story.

Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra went into the Paris Games as the defending champion, and the only sure-shot medal contender from the Indian track and field contingent. The Panipat lad

didn't disappoint his millions of fans worldwide even though he had to settle for a silver after his friendly adversary Arshad Nadeem conjured an otherworldly performance with a monster 92.97m throw for the gold.

The rest of India's track and field contingent were reminded that they were hardly any match to the top athletes from across the globe.

The Indian men's hockey team brought back days of glory with a second consecutive Olympic bronze, for the first time in 52 years. Placed in the 'pool of death', Harmanpreet Singh's men displayed resilience by breaking the Australia jinx with a statement win and went on to punch above their weight against the other opponents to achieve back-to-back Olympic podium finishes for the first time since 1972, and mark a perfect send-off for their grand old custodian PR Sreejesh.

On the Occasion of **114th** FOUNDATION DAY
 21ST DECEMBER 2024
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