

WEATHER

Partly cloudy. Hazy in the evening. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 30°C and 21°C respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max. 90% Min. 72%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 30.2°C Min: 21.3°C

SUN RISES


06:15 hrs 17:24 hrs

MOON RISES

07:35 hrs 19:20 hrs

Full Moon on 12 February

THUMBNAILS



A sculptor from Rajasthan gives the final touch to an idol of Goddess Saraswati Puja, in Amritsar. ■ ANI

Govt holds all-party meet ahead of Budget session of Parliament: Ahead of the commencement of the Budget session of the Parliament, an all-party meeting was held in New Delhi on Thursday during which the government appealed to all political parties to contribute through positive participation with high quality debates and discussions during the session. The Budget session of Parliament will begin on 31 January and, according to the schedule, will conclude on 4 April.

India's Shubhanshu Shukla to serve as pilot after NASA approves Axiom-4 mission to ISS

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, 30 JANUARY

ISRO astronaut and Indian Air Force (IAF) officer, Shubhanshu Shukla, will take on the role of pilot on the Axiom Mission 4, or Ax-4, that will fly to the International Space Station (ISS) from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida no earlier than Spring 2025, the US space agency said on Thursday.

Group Captain Shukla will make history as the first Indian astronaut to join the orbiting laboratory.

A serving officer in the IAF, he has also been chosen as an astronaut for India's Gaganyaan Mission.

Peggy Whitson, former NASA astronaut and Director of Human Spaceflight at Axiom Space, will command the commercial mission, while ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) astronaut Shukla will serve as pilot, said NASA.

The two mission specialists



are ESA (European Space Agency) project astronaut Sławosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary.

"I am excited to see continued interest and dedication for the private astronaut missions aboard the International Space Station," said Dana Weigel, manager of NASA's International Space Station Program at the agency's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

"As NASA looks toward

the future of low Earth orbit, private astronaut missions help pave the way and expand access to the unique micro-gravity environment," said the US space agency.

The first private astronaut mission to the station, Axiom Mission 1, lifted off in April 2022 for a 17-day mission aboard the orbiting laboratory. The second private astronaut mission to the station, Axiom Mission 2, also was commanded by Whitson and launched in May 2023 with

four private astronauts who spent eight days in orbit. The most recent private astronaut mission, Axiom Mission 3, launched in January 2024; the crew spent 18 days docked to the space station.

The Ax-4 mission is a significant collaboration between India and the United States, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the US last year.

As part of their preparation, Group Captain Shukla and his backup, Group Captain Prashanth Nair, have undergone extensive training with international partners, including NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

Meanwhile, NASA on Thursday said it is "working expeditiously" along with SpaceX to safely bring back Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams and astronaut Butch Willmore, currently stuck in the International Space Station (ISS) for 238 days.

Stampede-like scene at Kotla as Kohli fans flood Ranji match

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Broken phones, lost slippers and shoes lying around the Feroz Shah Kotla before a pitch invader breached security to touch Virat Kohli's feet were some of the unprecedented scenes that summed up the iconic batter's return to domestic cricket after more than 12 years.

The former India skipper's much-anticipated return to domestic cricket created a surreal atmosphere at the Kotla that houses the Arun Jaitley Stadium, witnessing unprecedented scenes on the opening day of the inconsequential Ranji Trophy contest between Delhi and the Railways.

On a chilly and foggy Thursday morning, thousands lined up outside the stadium for hours to make their way inside, creating an electrifying atmosphere, rarely seen in



domestic games. As the gates to the stadium opened up, a stampede-like situation emerged near Gate 17 with broken phones, lost slippers and shoes lying around, and an unfortunate incident which left a police bike badly damaged.

The Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) had anticipated around 10,000 fans for Kohli's return. However,

as the morning progressed, the numbers exceeded their expectations. The officials later confirmed that more than 15,000 fans were in attendance during the opening day.

Chants of "Kohli... Kohli" echoed through the stadium, electrifying the atmosphere as the local hero took the field. Amid the excitement, cheers of "RCB RCB" erupted,

a nod to his unwavering loyalty to Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) since joining the IPL franchise in 2008 following his U19 World Cup triumph. Once Delhi skipper Ayush Badoni elected to field, Kohli was spotted manning the slip cordon, amid loud cheers from the crowd. Acknowledging the support, the iconic cricketer occasionally turned back to respond to the cheers.

The excitement, however, reached a boiling point when an ardent Kohli fan ducked security, ran onto the field and touched Kohli's feet before being whisked away by the security guards. The incident occurred during the 12th over, momentarily disrupting the match.

As the fan stirred towards him, the crowd erupted in cheers. Security personnel rushed in to remove the intruder, but Kohli, ever composed, gestured for them to

go easy on him. The dramatic moment summed up the fervour around Kohli's first domestic appearance in more than a decade.

Despite the frenzy around Kohli's return, Delhi's bowlers maintained their focus, reducing Railways to 66/5. Railways recovered with half centuries from Upendra Yadav, who fell five shy of a century and veteran Karn Sharma to eventually reach 241. For Delhi, Siddhant Sharma and Money Grewal claimed two wickets each early in the morning session while Navdeep Saini and Sumit Mathur emerged the pick of the bowlers with three wickets apiece.

In response, Delhi lost opener Arpit Rana cheaply, but Sanat Sangwan and Yash Dhull went back undefeated with the hosts reaching 41/1 at stumps, thus keeping alive the excitement of Kohli turning up at the crease for Friday.



No survivors after US mid-air disaster

Jet with 64 on board collides with military chopper near Washington

AGENCIES
ARLINGTON, 30 JANUARY

At least 28 bodies were pulled from the icy waters of the Potomac River after an American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members collided with an Army helicopter while landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, officials said Thursday.

Crews were still searching for other casualties but did not believe there were any other survivors, which would make it the deadliest U.S. air crash in nearly 24 years.

"We are now at the point where we are switching from a rescue operation to a recovery operation," said John Donnelly, the fire chief in the nation's capital. "We don't believe there are any survivors."

The body of the plane was found upside down in three sections in waist-deep water. The wreckage of the helicopter was also found. "At this point, we don't believe there are any



Emergency response units assess airplane wreckage in the Potomac River near the Ronald Reagan National Airport, Washington, on Thursday. ■ AGENCIES

survivors from this accident," D.C. Fire Chief John Donnelly said Thursday. There was no immediate word on the cause of the Wednesday collision, but officials said flight conditions were clear as the jet coming from Wichita, Kansas, with US and Russian figure skaters and others aboard, was making a routine landing when the helicopter flew into its path.

The plane - American Eagle Flight 5342 - was carrying 60 passengers and four crew members while the US Army's Blackhawk helicopter had three service members.

"On final approach into Reagan National it collided with a military aircraft on an otherwise normal approach," American Airlines CEO Robert Isom said. "At this time we don't know why the military

aircraft came into the path of the ... aircraft."

Images from the river showed boats around the partly submerged wing and what appeared to be the mangled wreckage of the plane's fuselage.

President Donald Trump said he had been "fully briefed on this terrible accident" and, referring to the passengers, added, "May God Bless their souls."

Kejri suspects arrest in 2 days as ECI seeks explanation for Yamuna poisoning claims

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday made a sharp attack on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar, accusing him of acting in favour of the BJP in a "desperate bid" for a post-retirement job and stated that he suspects his arrest in the coming two days.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has responded to the AAP chief's reply sent on Wednesday night regarding his remark on Yamuna poisoning. The commission has granted him another opportunity to explain why action should not be taken over the serious allegations against him of promoting disharmony and enmity between different groups, and causing overall public disorder and unrest.

Mr Kejriwal further said that history will never forgive Rajiv Kumar for the irreparable damage he has inflicted on India's democratic system.

The AAP chief alleged that Delhi's election process has been reduced to a sham under the poll panel's watch, claiming that cash and blankets are being openly distributed to influence voters, with the ECI turning a blind eye to such anomalies.

In a fiery challenge, he dared Mr Kumar to step out of his bureaucratic cover and



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal in the presence of Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and party MP Sanjay Singh addresses a press conference on the 'Yamuna poison' row, at the party's HQ in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ ANI

contest an election against him if he wanted to engage in politics.

Senior AAP Leaders, including Satyendar Jain, MP Sanjay Singh, and CM Atishi, were also present at the interaction.

Responding to a media query at the party headquarters, Mr Kejriwal said: "Cash is being openly distributed in Delhi, but they fail to see it. Every day, blankets are being distributed—even yesterday evening, blankets were handed out. But they don't notice that either. We even pointed out whose house is being used to store the money, yet they turn a blind eye to it."

Asserting that the ECI is engaging in politics, he said that CEC Rajiv Kumar wants a post-retirement job after 28 February. "I want to tell Rajiv Kumar Ji—history will not forgive you. The amount of damage you have done to the Election Commission, I don't think the Election Commission has ever been tarnished this badly in India's history," Mr Kejriwal alleged.

He added: "I know that within two days, they will put me in jail. Go ahead, put me in jail. The kind of language the Election Commission has used today is unprecedented. This is not the job of the Election Commission."

India to develop its own AI model in next 10 months, says Vaishnaw

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

India's large language model (LLM) is expected to be ready within the next 10 months, said the Minister of Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday.

"We have created the framework, and it is being launched today. Our focus is on building AI models that maintain the Indian context and culture," he said at a press conference on the India AI Mission.

He said the project will be supported by the India AI Compute Facility which has procured 18,693 GPUs to facilitate the creation of an LLM designed specifically for India.

The minister also emphasised India's AI capabilities by comparing the country's infrastructure to global benchmarks.

"DeepSeek AI was trained on 2,000 GPUs, ChatGPT



was trained on 25,000 GPUs, and we now have 15,000 high-end GPUs available. India now has a robust compute facility that will support our AI ambitions," a media report quoted him as saying.

"The technical partners started working and investing well before the finalisation. This facility will be available for everyone to use," Mr Vaishnaw added. The IT minister also

praised Chinese startup DeepSeek for shaking up the sector with its low-cost AI assistant, likening its frugal approach to his government's efforts to build a localised AI model.

Mr Vaishnaw also said that Indian servers will host DeepSeek for India, which will address privacy concerns. "DeepSeek is open source and will host it on Indian servers soon. This will address the privacy concerns regard-

The minister said the project will be supported by the India AI Compute Facility which has procured 18,693 GPUs to facilitate the creation of an LLM designed specifically for India.

ing cross-border data transfer," the minister said.

DeepSeek has triggered a dramatic rethink on artificial intelligence spending around the world, claiming it took just two months and cost under \$6 million to build an AI model using Nvidia's less-advanced H800 chips.

Downloads of its app recently surpassed OpenAI's ChatGPT on Apple's App Store, while the cost and performance of its tools upended industry beliefs that China was years behind U.S. rivals in the AI race.

Sebi cracks down on finfluencers to end illegal advisory businesses

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

In a major blow to the financial influencers (finfluencers), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has restricted their use of live stock market data in educational content.

Stock market educators can now only use stock prices with a three-month lag, a Sebi circular said, effectively preventing them from offering real-time trading tips disguised as education.

"A person engaged solely in education shall mean that such person is not engaged in any of the two prohibited activities. Such person should not be using the market price data of the preceding three months to speak/talk/display the name of any security including using any code name of the security in his/her talk/speech, video, ticker,



screen share etc. indicating the future price, advice or recommendation related to security or securities," said the circular.

This move is expected to end the illegal advisory businesses that many finfluencers operate without Sebi registration. Sebi first restricted associations between registered and unregistered entities in its October 2024 circular, and the latest update on 29 January further tightens the rules.

"These regulations have come into force with effect from August 29, 2024," it said.

The circular said that the stock market educators cannot use live stock prices, allowing only data with a three-month lag. The registered market entities cannot associate with finfluencers in any way that involves monetary or non-monetary compensation.

Further, investor education is allowed, but educators must not give investment advice or make performance claims without Sebi's approval.

Educators cannot use stock names, codes, or price data from the past three months in any form that could imply investment advice, it said. Sebi said it is the responsibility of the persons regulated by Sebi to ensure that any person associated with them or their agents, directly or indirectly, does not engage in any of the above-mentioned two prohibited activities, directly or indirectly.

Regulation of trains in Sealdah South section

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

In yet another mega infrastructure development works, including the replacement of the existing route relay interlocking system (RRI) by electronic interlocking system (EI) at Ballygunge and Kankurgachi, the Sealdah division has decided to regulate trains from the midnight of 1 February to 4 a.m. on 3 February in Sealdah South Section.

Notably, Ballygunge Junction is one of the biggest and busiest junctions in the Sealdah Suburban section with movement in four directions. Also, Kankurgachi Road Junction is one of the important junctions in the Sealdah Suburban section which involves all movements in the Sealdah Main line and this is an inter-linking junction for Sealdah Main and Sealdah South Section. The existing Route Relay Interlocking (RRI) Systems at Ballygunge and Kankurgachi were commissioned in 1994 and 1993 respectively. The earlier systems were based on old technology and they were prone to failure because of its age.

According to the divisional railway officials, it is tough to provide spare material for day-to-day maintenance because of old technology. To overcome this challenge the divisional railway has decided to equip Ballygunge and Kankurgachi with the state-of-the-art electronic interlocking systems.

According to the divisional office, during the period, train services in Sealdah North/Main Line from Sealdah to Nahiti and beyond, Sealdah Central section from Sealdah to Barasat, Hasnabad, Bangaon Junction, Sealdah (South) towards different destinations like Diamond Harbour, Lakshmikanapur, Namkhana and Canning would be operated normally. However, frequency of services in between Sealdah South and Baruipur Junction would be reduced from six minutes to 12 minutes during the morning and evening hours while services in between Sealdah South and Budge Budge would be short originated/short terminated from to New Alipur instead of Sealdah South and run as per scheduled timings. Apart from this, direct EMU services via Kankurgachi Road Junction.

To minimise the hassles, the divisional railway has decided to run two numbers of Sealdah–Nahiti Passenger Specials during the evening peak hours along with six additional trains on Saturday and Sunday.

Two women from state died in Kumbh stampede

The victims are 65-year-old Basanti Poddar, a resident of Ashwini Nagar in Kolkata and Urmila Bhuniya from GodapiaIshal village in Midnapore

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

The sacred Mahakumbh witnessed a tragic incident on Wednesday during the Mouni Amavasya holy dip, as a stampede claimed the lives of two elderly women from West Bengal, among at least 30 victims. The victims were Basanti Poddar, a 65-year-old resident of Ashwini Nagar in Kolkata and Urmila Bhuniya from GodapiaIshal village in Salboni, West Midnapore.

Basanti had travelled to the Kumbh Mela with her sister, son and daughter. On Tuesday night, as she attempted to take a dip in the holy waters, chaos erupted due to an uncontrollable rush of devotees. She fell in the commotion, and despite her son's desperate attempts to lift her, she suffered fatal injuries. Her body has been sent for post-mortem, and efforts are being made to bring it back to Kolkata. Tapan Dasgupta, the local councillor, stated that the condition of her relatives remains critical, but officials are working to repatriate them as soon as



possible. Similarly, Urmila Bhuniya, who had travelled with her daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren, was caught in the same stampede. She was severely injured after being trampled in the crowd. Her family searched for her for hours before finally discovering her body at the morgue. The family has now started their journey back to Salboni with her remains. According to official reports, 30 people have died in the stampede, of which 25 have been identified. Authorities are still working to determine the identities of the remaining five victims. The incident has sparked political outrage, with CPM leader Sujan

Chakraborty demanding the immediate arrest of Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath. He criticised West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for not calling for Yogi's arrest, implying an "understanding" between the BJP and TMC. Mr Chakraborty pointed out that in 2017, a similar tragedy occurred at the Gangasagar Mela in West Bengal, where six female pilgrims suffocated to death in a stampede. At the time, then-Sundarbans development minister Man-turam Pakhira had taken responsibility for the mishap. Swami Paramatmananda, the Mahamandaleswar of Panchayati Mahanirvani Akhada, also condemned



the Uttar Pradesh administration for failing to manage the massive crowd despite promising "world-class crowd management." He stated that saints had demanded foolproof security for the millions of devotees attending the event. He criticised the Yogi government for failing to control the situation, despite the deployment of state police, the Rapid Action Force (RAF), and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which operates under the Union home ministry.

As questions mount over the handling of the stampede, many are now calling for the Indian Army to take over security arrangements at the Kumbh Mela to ensure the safety of the millions of pilgrims and saints who attend the world's largest religious gathering.

Mamata to meet MLAs on first day of Assembly



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has convened a meeting of party legislators to be held at the Nausar Ali Hall at the state Legislature on 10 February, the day when the Budget session of the state Assembly will get underway. The state budget would be presented on 12 February. The meeting of the party MLAs convened by Miss Banerjee ahead of the presentation of the vote-on-account would be a crucial one, said sources. The meeting would be

the last opportunity for the ruling dispensation before the Assembly polls in 2026, to look into their shortcomings and try to address those. Last year when the chief minister had held a meeting of her party MLAs at her Assembly chamber during the middle of the Winter Session of the Assembly. In the last meeting she talked tough to the party's Bharatpur MLA, Humayun Kabir, regarding his alleged anti-party rants, which was subsequently show caused by the party's disciplinary committee for breaching party discipline.

Upcoming Budget session of Bengal Assembly may end state gov't-Raj Bhavan tussle

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

The tussle between the West Bengal government and the Raj Bhavan is expected to end during the upcoming Budget session of the Assembly, scheduled next month. The state has already sent an invitation to the office of Governor C. V. Ananda Bose, requesting the latter to deliver the opening speech of the Budget session on 10 February. Last year, the Assembly's Budget session was held without the Governor's speech. Uncertainty had been looming over the opening speech of the Governor this time too, since the Winter Session of the House in the closing quarters of 2024 was just adjourned sine die. If the upcoming Budget session was shown as resuming the adjourned session, technically, the Governor's opening speech could have been avoided. However, state secretariat insiders said, the state

government has ended uncertainties by already sending the invitation to the office of the Governor. However, it is not yet clear whether the office of the Governor will give a positive reply to the invitation or not. While the opening speech of the Governor is scheduled to be on 10 February, the minister of state in charge of the Finance Department (Independent charge) Chandrima Bhattacharya is scheduled to present the Budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26 on the floor of the house on 12 February. Considering that this will be the last full-Budget before the state Assembly elections in 2026, there is a possibility of enhancement in allocation under different welfare and dole schemes offered by the state government, especially for those which are women and youth-specific besides a hike in the dearness allowance for the state government employees.

Book on Sister Nivedita's letters published

TARUN GOSWAMI
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

A collection of Sister Nivedita's unpublished letters and writings in Bengali, titled *Bhogini Nibeditar Aprakashito Potra-boli ebong Ananyo Aprakashito Rochona* was released at the Kolkata International Book Fair. The book has been penned by Sarada Sarkar, a teacher settled in the United Kingdom.

She took the initiative to instal a statue of the Sister in putting up a Blue Plaque in the house, where Sister had opened a school in Wimbledon.

She got in touch with the relatives of Sister Nivedita, who stayed in different countries. She brought Selendra Margot Giardin, great granddaughter of Richmond Noble, Nivedita's brother. Nivedita had a brother and a sister. It is interesting to note that the descendants of Richmond write 'Margot' as the middle name while the descendants of May Wilson write 'Bose', after Jagadish Chandra Bose as the middle name.

Nivedita died in Darjeeling on 13 October, 1911 and after her death, Lady Abala Bosu, wife of Jagadish Chandra Bose wrote a letter to Mrs Wilson on 4 January, 1912. She wrote: "How can we live without her? Before we went to Dar-



jeeling, we often would discuss who would die first but I never thought she would go so soon. Lady Minto has written a beautiful letter to Christine, which I want to send to you. Christine has at last come to Calcutta and means to take up the work."

In an unpublished account of Nivedita's niece Grancy Wilson, we get an account of how Swamiji came to the life of Margaret Elizabeth Noble. She writes: "The house in Wimbledon became a haven for advanced thinkers of the 1890s. Yeats (William Butler), (Samuel Taylor) Coleridge, (George Bernard) Shaw, (Aldous) Huxley, William Morris, (Henry Wadsworth) Longfellow, WT Stead were a few of these. They were settled

and established, and a brilliant career foreseen for Margaret in the journalistic world of free thinking, when a certain Indian walked into their drawing room, a gentleman called Naren Dutt. From that moment Margaret knew that she had at last met someone whose vision was enormous, whose intellect was greater than anything she had yet encountered or was likely to encounter, a person of such gift, religious uplifting that Margaret was on her way to her future."

An unpublished letter by Nivedita to Grancy written on 21 April, 1910 goes like this: "My darling Grancy, I am going to town to post this letter to you. I have put kisses into it. When you open it, they will all fly out of it to you. Kisses have wings. They fly home to your heart. Do you know these little birds? Your own loving ah—oh!" There is a letter written by George G Harrap Company, London who requested Nivedita to write on Indian religion and philosophy. The letter dated 22 December, 1910, reads: "Your name has been mentioned to us by Mr E.E. Havell in a very complimentary way, as being extremely well qualified to write such a book as we want and so we are inviting you to undertake the task if your other engagements permit."

Trial court slaps show-cause notice on CBI



AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

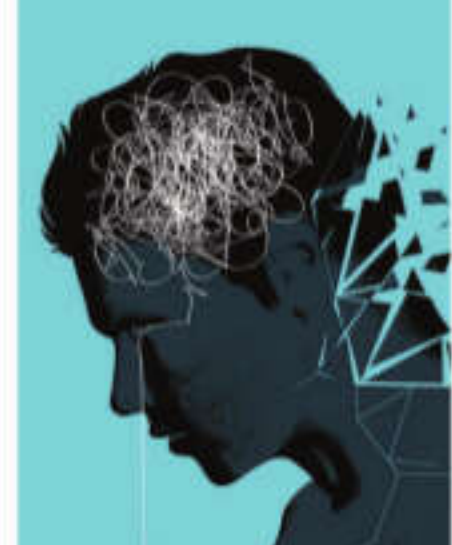
A trial court has slapped a show-cause on the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for procedural lapses in passing on information to the court about the West Bengal government's nod for framing charges and trial process against former R.G. Kar principal Sandip Ghosh in the case related to financial irregularities in the institution.

On 28 January, the CBI informed Calcutta High Court's single-judge Bench of Tirthankar Ghosh about the clearance from the state government to start the charge-framing and trial process.

Now, the trial court has taken objection as to why the CBI has not informed the same court about the development.

Human rights officials urge CM for mental healthcare facility in north Bengal

Mr Roy of the human rights council in his letter has pointed out that vast regions of north Bengal have no such facility.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 30 JANUARY

Organising secretary of the West Bengal state board of the International Human Rights Council Upal Roy has urged chief minister Mamata Banerjee to address the acute shortage of mental hospitals and government-run rehabilitation centres in north Bengal.

In a letter to the chief minister, Roy pointed out that West Bengal has six state-run mental hospitals – three in Kolkata and one each in Murshidabad, Purulia, and Cooch Behar. This leaves vast regions of north Bengal, including Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Malda, without adequate mental healthcare facilities.

He has proposed setting up mental hospitals in Siliguri, Raiganj, and Jalpaiguri to

address the region's growing mental health needs. Additionally, Mr Roy highlighted the absence of government rehabilitation centres, making de-addiction treatment unaffordable for middle and lower-income families. With north Bengal facing a surge in drug and alcohol abuse, he urged the government to establish rehab centres in Jalpaiguri, Siliguri and Malda to ensure accessible and affordable treatment. Mr Roy's appeal calls for immediate intervention to safeguard the mental well-being of north Bengal's citizens. (Representational Image)

T E N D E R

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
Corrigendum issued by the Executive Engineer, Nadia Arsenic Division-I, PHE Dte., on behalf of Governor of West Bengal vide Ref. No. WBPH/15/NAO-I of 24-25, ID-2025, PHED, 799434, 12 of Nadia Arsenic Division-I, PHE Dte., Kalyani, Nadia. Details will be available in the website wbtdenders.gov.in in the revised last date for online submission of tender is 03.02.2025 at 05.00 P.M. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Nadia Arsenic Division-I, PHE Dte. ICA- T2186(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Online tender is invited by the undersigned for the works: "Electrical work for Supply and Laying/Fixing cables and cable trays including S&F metering panel etc. of B1 Block at Bidhan Sishu Udyan, PHE". Tender No: WBPWD/EE/BE/D-NEIT-86/2024-25 & e-Tender ID No. 2025_WBPWD_807249_1. Document Download Closing Date: 11.02.2025 up to 15.00 Hrs. Details may be downloaded from etenders.wbnc.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Bidhanagar Electrical Division. ICA- T2186(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-RFP No. 11/SE/NC/SWM/KMDA of 2024-25
Online e-RFP in two part system is invited by the Superintending Engineer (Civil), North Circle, SWM Sector, KMDA, Umanay Bhavan, 5th Floor, Block-A, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091, from reliable, resourceful, bonafide and experienced firms / companies. / Individual contractors / Special Purpose Vehicle / Joint Ventures, for the work. Sl. No. of Work, Estimated Value of the work, Earnest Money Deposit, Time of Completion, (1) Biddinging of Kalyani waste and reclamation of land of dumpsite utilising scientific method located at Kargali Municipality in Nadia district, West Bengal on turnkey basis, Rate to be quoted, 2% of the contract amount. Initial EMD: Rs.4,75,000/-, 365 days, Last date of time for submission of Tender through online: 25.02.2025 up to 14.55 hrs, For details contact the above office or visit both websites. (KMDA-1096) www.kmda.wb.gov.in www.wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T2163(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. EE/OG&M-VI/7-47 of 2024-25
Two parts e-Tender is invited by the Executive Engineer (Dr.O&M-VI), WAS Sector, KMDA, from reliable, experienced and resourceful Agencies, for the work. Name of Work, Estimated amount, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Operation and Maintenance of valve to regulate and monitoring the flow of water of Morning, Evening and UCLR filling at different location of, Mubetala Municipality 184 days, Rs.5,54,324/-, Rs.11,087/-, 184 days, Bid submission closing date (On line): 12.02.2025 at 06.00P.M, for details contact the above office or visit both websites. www.kmda.wb.gov.in (KMDA-1095) www.wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T2162(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PW Dte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual Comprehensive Maintenance & Break Down Maintenance of Diesel generator Set (Make-Kirloskar) with AMF panel at R.G. Kar MCH Campus (2025-26)" e-NIT No. :- WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-159/2024-25. Tender Id :- 2025_WBPWD_807855_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) :05/02/2025, 1.05 PM Bid Submission Closing Date (online) :11/02/2025 upto 1.00 PM Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/-S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte. ICA- T2191(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
SOUTH 24 PARGANAS ZILLA PARISHAD
NIT-69 OF 2024-25 FOR E-TENDERING
E-tenders are invited by the District Engineer for 10 (ten) No. various works of different blocks under South 24 Parganas. Last date of online submission of tender document: Up to 2-00 P.M. on 17-02-25. Details informations may be obtained from the website: zps24pgs.wb.gov.in & wbtdenders.gov.in

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PW Dte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual Comprehensive & Breakdown maintenance of Diesel generator Set (Make-Kirloskar) with AMF panel at the S.K. Roy PGIPS, Phool Bagan. For The FY -25-26." e-NIT No. :-WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-158/2024-25 Tender Id :- 2025_WBPWD_807783_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) :06/02/2025, 1.05 PM Bid Submission Closing Date (online) :12/02/2025 upto 1.00 PM Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/-S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte. ICA- T2187(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PW Dte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual Comprehensive & Breakdown Maintenance of Diesel generator Set (Make-Kirloskar) with AMF panel at the B.C. Roy Polio, IDBG. For The FY-25-26." e-NIT No. :- WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-159/2024-25. Tender Id :- 2025_WBPWD_807838_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) :06/02/2025, 1.05 PM Bid Submission Closing Date (online) :12/02/2025 upto 1.00 PM Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/-S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte. ICA- T2189(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PW Dte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual Comprehensive & Breakdown maintenance of Diesel generator Set (Make-Kirloskar) with AMF panel at the B.C. Roy Polio, IDBG. For The FY-25-26." e-NIT No. :- WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-159/2024-25. Tender Id :- 2025_WBPWD_807838_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) :06/02/2025, 1.05 PM Bid Submission Closing Date (online) :12/02/2025 upto 1.00 PM Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/-S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte. ICA- T2190(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Tenders are invited by Executive Officer, Mathurapur-I Panchayat Samiti under MPLAD and MAME fund through the NIT No. 354 & 355. Last date of application of NIT No. 354 is 05-02-2025 and NIT No. 355 is 19-02-2025 up to 5-30 p.m. For details, please visit: www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Officer Mathurapur-I Panchayat Samiti South 24 Parganas

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
On behalf of the Governor of West Bengal, E-Tender is invited by the CMOH, Dakshin Dinajpur for following e-tender: (E-tender No. DHFWS/RNTCP/4326 dated 28.01.2025) from resourceful, eligible agency having experience in similar nature of works. Bid Submission Closing Date: 07.02.2025 at 04.00 PM. For details, (e-tender), please visit the website www.wbtenders.gov.in and Office of the Undersigned. Sd/-CMOH, D/Dinajpur ICA- T2176(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.(Roads) Directorate Notice Inviting e-Tender
SE/WHC-II invites online tenders for e-NIT No. 10 of 2024-25 for the work of "Restoration work of road pavement and hard shoulder damaged by PHE Department for their pipe laying work at Kalachara Bhagabatipur Road from 1.80 km to 7.20 km of Serampore Bridge Highway Sub-Division under Hooghly Highway Division No.-II, P.W.(Roads) Directorate. [2nd Call]. Estimated amount (Rs.): 1,88,30,691.00, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_808174_1. Bid Submission End Date: 20.02.2025 at 02.00 PM. Details may be obtained from the website <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> & Office Notice Board. For any clarification regarding upload & download, Bidder may contact PWD e-Tender Help Desk through Phone No. (033) 2223-6236. Corrigendum or Addendum if issued will be published only through Website. Sd/-SE/WHC-II, P.W.(R)Dte. ICA- T2218(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Superintending Engineer, South-Western Circle, P.W.Dte., Midnapore invites online e-tender for the work "Construction of paddy Godown (3000 M.T. Capacity) at Sabang in the District of Paschim Medinipur - Construction of internal road, Drainage system, Boundary wall with one gate and sensory post, Construction of toilet block for male and female, fixing fire extinguisher and other ancillary works during the year 2023-2024-Balance works (Civil). Project ID-F52425264245000". Estimated Amount : Rs. 1,37,18,615.00 NIT No. 11 of 2024-25 Tender Id : 2025_WBPWD_807869_1. Bid submission start date (online) : 04.02.2025 from 10.00 Hours. Bid Submission closing date (online) : 25.02.2025 at 15.00 Hours. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender documents may be downloaded from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/- Tarun Kr. Chakraborty, Superintending Engineer, South-Western Circle, P.W.Dte. ICA- T2203(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Superintending Engineer, Southern Highway Circle, Block-I, 2nd floor, WRITERS' BUILDINGS Kolkata-700001 e-NIT No 14 of 2024-25 (S-01 & 02) of SE/SHC, PWRD invites online e-Tender for the work of 1.Gocharan Dhoshat Road from 0.00 Km to 9.100 Km - Strengthening Work- under Baruipur Highway Sub-Division of South 24 Pgs. Highway Division in the district of South 24 Parganas under RIDF XXX. Estimated cost Rs. 17,98,16,095.00 Tender ID : 2025_SH_807284_1. 2. Hotor Amratata Road from 0.00 Km to 9.100 Km, strengthening works under South 24 Parganas Highway Division in the District of South 24 Parganas under RIDF XXX During the financial Year 2024-2025 Estimated cost Rs. 11,95,76,929.00 Tender ID :2025_SH_807284_2. Bid submission start date (online) 31.01.2025 from 3.00pm. Bid submission end date (online) 21.02.2025 upto 2:00 PM Corrigendum if any will be published in the website. Details of NIT and tender documents may be downloaded from : <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> & Office Notice Board. Sd/-SE/SHC P.W.(Roads) Dte ICA- T2210(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIADD. e-NIT
Executive Engineer (A-I), Berhampore-II(A-I) Division, Berhampore, Murshidabad invites e-NIT on behalf of the Governor of West Bengal for the work "Redrilling with allied works of Parasulla (IS&M) OTW at Parasulla mouza under Burwan Block of Murshidabad District under Executive Engineer (A-I), Berhampore-II (A-I) Division under Sarasari Mukhamant (Core-Sector) programme for the FY. 2024-25 vide e-NIT No. WBPWD/EE/A-I-01 of 20 of 2024-25 and Tender at 2025_WRDO_808667_3. Amount put to tender of Rs.1391683.38. Last date of online bid submission 17.02.2025 upto 02.00 P.M. For details please visit to website [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://wbtdenders.gov.in). Corrigendum if any, will be published website only. Sd/- Executive Engineer(A-I), Berhampore-II(A-I) Division Berhampore, Murshidabad ICA- T2240(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. SE/EPM/I/7-42 of 2024-25
Sealed two part item rate e-tender is invited by the Superintending Engineer (E/M)-I, E/M Sector, KMDA, 6th floor, Umanay Bhavan, Kolkata-700091, from reputed Contractors having Electrical Contractor's License, for the work. Name of Work, Estimated Amount, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Rejuvenation & Stabilization with supply, delivery, installation, repairing, overhauling and renovation of the Electromechanical equipment of 30 MGD Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Padmapukur under Howrah Municipal Corporation, Howrah by Replacement & Renovation of specified Electrical Mechanical Equipment with necessary Testing, Commissioning & Trial Run Operation, Item Rate (to be Quoted by the Bidder), Rs.10,00,00,000 (Ten Lac). (Differential amount of 2% of the Quoted amount & the deposited E.M.D. is to be submitted by the successful bidder after issuance of L.O.I. and prior to issuance of Work Order, 12 Months including the 03 month Trial Run, Last date & time of Online Bid Submission: 25.02.2025 upto 15.00 hrs., for details contact the above office or visit both websites. www.kmda.wb.gov.in (KMDA-1098) www.wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T2164(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE, Burdwan Divn., Social Sector, P.W.(Roads) Directorate invites e-NIT No. WBPWD/SS/EE/BDN/NIT_15/2024-2025 for the work of :1. Construction of shed over the roof of Office building and fixing some chajha on hostel building at Nursing promotes Training School in the dist. Purba Bardhaman, Project ID- HF2425242015000. Rs. 9,68,254/- Tender ID- 2025_WBPWD_808065_1. Bid submission Start date (Online)- 07.02.2025, 01.30 P.M. Bid submission closing date (Online)- 18.02.2024, 03:30 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT and tender Documents may be downloaded from : <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/- EE/BDN, DIVN/SS/PWD. ICA- T2222(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice Inviting Tender
On-line Tender is being invited by E.E, Birbhum Electrical Division, PWD, for – Annual Maintenance (Preventive & Breakdown) Contract of complete Electrical Installation including Sub-Station & Annual, Preventive & routine on-site maintenance of the complete Fire Detection system by engaging suitable qualified manpower at Rampurhat Govt. Medical College & Hospital, Rampurhat, Birbhum Rampurhat Electrical Sub-Division, PWD, (for One Year).Tender No: BIRED/147/e-NIT (1st call) of 2024-25, Tender ID:-2025_WBPWD_808217_1. Bid submission closing Date- 17.02.2025 upto 01.00 p.m. For more information Visit <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/- S.K. Mallick, Executive Engineer, PWD, Birbhum Electrical Division ICA- T2233(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.(Roads) Directorate Notice Inviting e-Tender
SE/WHC-II invites online tenders for e-NIT No. 09 of 2024-25 for the following 3 nos. works: Sl. No. 1 "Polba Kewara road 0.00 km to 5.14 km, Widening and Strengthening work under Hooghly Highway Division No.-I, P.W.(Roads) Directorate in the District of Hooghly under RIDF-XXX". Estimated amount put to Tender: Rs. 7,59,63,876.00, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_807610_1. Sl. No. 2 "Link Road of STK Road to Panchara -Dawarpara Road from 0.00 km to 4.584 km, Widening and Strengthening work under Hooghly Highway Division No.-II, P.W.(Roads) Directorate in the District of Hooghly under RIDF-XXX". Estimated amount put to Tender: Rs. 8,26,85,790.00, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_807610_2. Sl. No. 3 "Kabley Moloypur Highway Centre Road from 0.00kmp to 8.20 km, Strengthening work under Hooghly Highway Division No.-I, P.W.(Roads) Directorate in the district of Hooghly under RIDF-XXX". Estimated amount put to Tender: Rs. 9,55,17,326.00, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_807610_3. Bid Submission End Date: 20.02.2025 at 02.00 PM. Details may be obtained from the website <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> & Office Notice Board. For any clarification regarding upload & download, Bidder may contact PWD e-Tender Help Desk through Phone No. (033) 2223-6236. Corrigendum or Addendum if issued will be published only through Website. Sd/-SE/WHC-II, P.W.(R)Dte. ICA- T2194(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
CORRIGENDUM
It is to notify all concern that following changes has been made in NIT No. EE/SE/WSW/EE/NIT-28 of 2024-25 (Sl. No. 01) for Tender ID: 2025_PHED_798123_1of this office

Particulars	In place of	To be Read As
Both Technical and financial Bid Submission closing date (online)	28.01.2025 upto 02:00 P.M.	10.02.2025 upto 02:00 P.M.
Date and Time of Opening Technical Proposals (online)	30.01.2025 at 04:00 P.M.	12.02.2025 at 04:00 P.M.

Please log-in in the following website : <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> for details. ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS WILL REMAIN SAME Sd/- Executive Engineer Siliguri W/S Division P.H.E. Dte. ICA- T2181(4)/2025

Govt orders halt at IV fluid production unit at Baruipur

This is the second such company directed by the state government to stop production after the death of a mother

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY



After the Paschim Banga Pharmaceutical, the state health department directed yet another company, Pharma Impex Laboratories, in Baruipur of South 24-Parganas to stop production of all categories of medicines, including saline.

With the health department's directives to stop productions in the manufacturing units of the two major pharma companies that supply saline in most of the government hospitals and private healthcare facilities across West Bengal, there might be a huge crisis in supply of the life-saving IV fluids in the state.

About a month ago, Paschim Banga Pharmaceuticals on the directives of the state health department had stopped productions in its North Dinajpur unit after one new mother died and four others fell critically ill after giving birth to their babies at the Midnapore Medical College Hospital.

It is alleged that all the five mothers were given Ringer's Lactate saline manufactured by the company during their caesarean deliveries.

On 29 January, the Directorate of Drugs Control (DDC), under the health department, issued an order directing the Pharma Impex Laboratories to stop production of all kinds of medicines at its Baruipur unit.

"An inspection carried

out from 21-23 January by assistant drugs controller (I), CDSCO HQ, New Delhi and Inspectors of CDSCO HQ New Delhi and CDSCO (east zone) Kolkata along with inspectors of State Drugs Control Directorate of their manufacturing factory M/S Pharma Impex Laboratories Pvt Ltd of South Uttarbhag, Ramnagar, Baruipur, South 24-Parganas, West Bengal-743387 for Risk Based Inspection.

It was appeared grossly deficient (Critical 05 & Major 26) in compliance with the current GMP standards (Schedule L1, Schedule-M) of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules 1945," the DDC order stated.

CDSCO stands for Central Drug Standard Control Organisation under the Union ministry of health while the GMP stands for good manufacturing practice.

"In exercise of power conferred upon the Deputy Director of Drugs Control, Government of West Bengal as licensing authority for the purpose of the part VII of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act and Rules, the firm is hereby ordered to stop the manufacturing activity of all categories of drugs manufactured under the license no.

DL 2/SLA/CAA/WB dated 03.04.2017 at the site till the rectification of the reported deficiencies, as per Rule 85(2) of the Drugs Rules 1945 in the interest of the public service," it stated.

A senior official of the state health department feared that there would be a huge crisis in supply of saline across West Bengal. Other states where two companies supply their products may also be affected.

The Mamata Banerjee government had engaged the company in Baruipur through a tender selection process to supply their saline to government hospitals in the state after it suspended productions in the Paschim Banga Pharmaceutical following the death of a new mother and critical illness of four others in Midnapore Medical College Hospital.

"Government hospitals in the state require more than 1.2 crore bottles of saline every year. The two companies manufacture more than 75 per cent of the annual requirements in public healthcare units besides private sector facilities," an official of the central medical store (CMS), under the health department that procures saline.

Abhishek writes on Sebaashray camps' success

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

Trinamul Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee expressed satisfaction over the great success of the ongoing Sebaashray camps today. The camps had started in Diamond Harbour Assembly seat on 2 January and the camps entered the 28th day today.

Mr Banerjee wrote in his X-handle: "When Sebaashray was launched on January 2, 2025 from Diamond Harbour AS, it was driven by one simple conviction: every individual deserves access to quality healthcare. What has unfolded over the last 28 days has been nothing short of extraordinary.

"Surpassing every expectation, Sebaashray has touched the lives of over 5 lakh people - a number that



reflects not just the initiative's scale but the trust and faith placed in it by those it seeks to serve. Just today 9,862 individuals in Bishnupur received medical care, underscoring the unparalleled reach and impact of this effort.

"The response to Sebaashray is both humbling and inspiring. It strengthens our resolve to continue working tirelessly for the welfare of those who rely on us."

The camps started in Diamond Harbour and then moved to Falta and now being held at Bishnupur. It will be held in Metiabruz, Satgachia, Budge Budge and Maheshtala.

HC asked state med council registrar to resign by today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed Manas Chakraborty, registrar of the West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC), to resign from the post voluntarily by 5 p.m. on 31 January because he is holding the post illegally for more than five years even after his retirement in 2019.

Mr Chakraborty has been occupying the chair without taking any approval from the state government.

The HC has also directed the government to take necessary measures to remove him from the post if he does not resign within the deadline.

Today, the Chief Justice (CJ) T S Sivagnanam directed that he would be removed if he does not resign voluntarily.



The CJ also raised questions saying: "How did he hold the post for so many years without any approval of the state government?"

As per the Bengal Medical Act, the state medical council registrar must take clearance from the state government

if he or she holds the post after his retirement. Mr Chakraborty retired on 1 November in 2019.

Challenging Mr Chakraborty's portfolio as the WBMC registrar even after his retirement, a case was filed in the high court.

Earlier, different bodies of doctors had lodged complaints with the health department against the state medical council for allowing Mr Chakraborty to continue the post for so many years illegally.

Swasthya Bhaban, health department headquarters at Salt Lake, had also found irregularities in making him registrar again for another five years since 2019 keeping the state in the dark.

It had also ordered the council to appoint a new registrar.

Shaadi, Utsav ya Tyohar... Lijjat Papad Ho Harbar...

Karram Kurram... Kurram Karram...

Lijjat PAPAD

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LIJJAT AD AGENCY: BHIMSHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

SER review meeting: Hitendra Malhotra, member operations & business development, Railway Board visited South Eastern Railway (SER) headquarters, Garden Reach on Thursday and held a high-level meeting with Anil Kumar Mishra, general manager, South Eastern Railway. Soumitra Majumdar, additional general manager and other principal head of the departments of SER were also present during the meeting. Mr Malhotra also held a review meeting of operating and commercial departments of South Eastern Railway on Thursday.



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GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

Department of Science and Technology and Biotechnology
Bikash Bhavan (4th Floor), Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091

Notice

Advt. Memo No. BB-62/206823/eoffice Date: 29.01.2025
Applications are invited from in-service Govt. employees and faculties of Colleges and Universities of the State of West Bengal to the -

Advanced Course in Geoinformatics
(12th to 19th February, 2025)

For further details, please visit: dstbt.bangla.gov.in &
For any query, pl. send an e-mail to : wbsestrsrg@gmail.com
Last date for submission of applications: **7th February, 2025**

Sd/-
Special Secretary
to the Govt. of West Bengal

ICA- N 46(2)/2025

Maha Kumbh Mela 2025

Important Notice

Important Information for Assistance & facilities to Rail Passengers / Pilgrims

Main Bathing Days:

Mauni Amavasya - 29.01.2025
Basant Panchami - 03.02.2025
Maghi Purnima - 12.02.2025
Maha Shivratri - 26.02.2025

Passengers are requested to reach the concerned station to board the special trains scheduled towards their destination

In the Direction of-	Station
Towards Vindhyachal, Mirzapur, Chunar, Chopan, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. (Mughalsarai), Buxar, Patna, Gaya, Ranchi, Jasidih, Asansol, Howrah and Puri	Prayagraj Jn., Naini Jn., Prayagraj Chheoki
Towards Shankargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur, Chitrakut, Mahoba, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Gwalior, Bina, Satna, Maihar, Katni, Jabalpur, Itarsi, Bhopal, Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Nagpur, Kalyan and Mumbai	Prayagraj Jn., Naini Jn., Prayagraj Chheoki
Towards Sirathu, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Panki Dham, Etawah, Tundia, Agra, Aligarh, Meerut, Delhi, Chandigarh and Jammu	Prayagraj Jn., Subedarganj
Towards Unchahar, Raebareilly, Lucknow, Hardoi, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Janghail, Bhadohi, Jaunpur, Pratapgarh, Ayodhya, Gonda and Bahraich	Prayag Jn., Phaphamau Jn.
Towards Gyanpur Road, Varanasi, Mau, Bhatni, Gorakhpur, Ballia and Chhapra	Prayagraj Rambagh, Jhusi

Arrangement for Entry and Exit at Prayagraj Jn., Subedarganj, Naini Jn., & Prayagraj Chheoki stations prior to one day and after two days of the main bathing festivals.

Exit from Prayagraj Jn. - from Civil Lines side only
Entry to Prayagraj Jn. - from City side only through Leader Road
Passenger enclosures made for different directions at Prayagraj Jn.

Entry Gate No. & Colour	Enclosure No. & Colour	Direction	Platform No.
1 Red Colour	1 Red Colour	Towards Varanasi & Lucknow	7&10
2 Blue Colour	2 Blue Colour	Towards Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. (Mughalsarai)	4,5
3 Yellow Colour	3 Yellow Colour	Towards Manikpur, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Satna	1
4 Green Colour	4 Green Colour	Towards Kanpur, Agra, Delhi	2,3
5	-	For Reserved Ticket Passengers	From Announced Platform No.

Exit from Naini Jn. - from Maal Godam side only
Entry to Naini Jn. - from Station Road side only
Passenger enclosures made for different directions at Naini Jn.

Entry Gate No.	Enclosure No. & Colour	Direction	Platform No.
1	1 Green Colour	Towards Kanpur	2
1	2 Blue Colour	Towards Manikpur, Chitrakut, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi	3
1	3 Red Colour	Towards Manikpur, Satna, Jabalpur	3
2	-	For Reserved Ticket Passengers	From Announced Platform No.
3,4	4 B,A Yellow Colour	Towards Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. (Mughalsarai)	1

Exit from Prayagraj Chheoki Station - from GEC Road side only
Entry to Prayagraj Chheoki Station - from COD Road side only
Passenger enclosures made for different directions at Prayagraj Chheoki station

Entry Gate No.	Enclosure No. & Colour	Direction	Platform No.
1B	1 Green Colour	Towards Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. (Mughalsarai)	1,2
1A	2 Red Colour	Towards Manikpur, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Satna, Jabalpur	3,4
2	-	For Reserved Ticket Passengers	From Announced Platform No.

Exit from Subedarganj Station - from GT Road side only
Entry to Subedarganj Station - from Jhalwa side only
Passenger enclosures made for different directions at Subedarganj Station

Entry Gate No.	Enclosure No. & Colour	Direction	Platform No.
1	-	Towards Kanpur, Agra, Delhi	1
3	-	For Reserved Ticket Passengers	From Announced Platform No.

Important suggestions for pilgrims.

Do this definitely

- On a piece of paper, write the name, mobile number and complete address of a family member and keep it in the pocket of small children or elderly people accompanying you, so that if they are lost they can easily be traced and sent back to you. Similarly, also keep a slip with complete address in your suitcase and bag.
- Be cautious of pickpockets and unsocial elements and take care of your belongings. During train journey, keep your suitcases, briefcases etc. tied to a chain attached to the seat or berth and keep it locked.
- Carefully look at the people around you and observe if there are any suspicious person/item. In case of any suspicious object, seek help and inform the nearest policeman immediately.
- While the train is leaving the platform, passengers should be cautious about their jewellery they are wearing and secure their other valuables items.
- Carry your luggage only through porters or workers of the passenger facility centre and note down their badge numbers.
- In case of any incident or problem, immediately inform and seek help from Railway Police and Railway Protection Force.

Do not do this at all

- Do not touch any unclaimed object, it may be a bomb or any other explosive object. Immediately inform the Railway Police/Railway Protection Force personnel or call 139.
- Do not consume any food or consumables offered by an unknown person, it may contain poison. Buy food items only from authorized vendors.
- Pulling chain unnecessarily to stop a moving train is a crime. Offenders can be fined or jailed or both.
- Always buy tickets from the ticket window, ATVM or Mobile Ticket Vending Machine available with the railway employees, do not buy tickets from any unauthorized person.
- Do not spoil the station or train compartment, it is a punishable offense.
- Do not travel on the roof of the train, as the high voltage electrical wires can be fatal.
- Do not smoke on the station premises, it may cause fire and is also a punishable offence.
- For a comfortable journey, do not carry excess luggage.

Kumbh Rail Seva App 2025

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Shah asks Guj CM to implement new criminal laws across state by 30 April

Shah extensively discussed progress in implementation of BNS, BNSS, and BSA, replacing IPC, CrPC, Evidence Act

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on Thursday, directed the Gujarat government to ensure the implementation of the three new criminal laws across all the commissionerates of the state by 30 April 2025 and the entire state as well at the earliest.

Shah was chairing a review meeting in New Delhi on the implementation of the new criminal laws in Gujarat in presence of Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. He extensively discussed the progress in the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), replacing

the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Appreciating the work done by the state government in this regard, he said it should be reviewed on a monthly basis by the CM, fortnightly by the state home minister, and weekly at the level of the chief secretary, additional chief secretary (Home) and the director general of police (DIG).

In the meeting, the present status of the enactment of the legislation, and its various provisions related to the courts, police, forensics, and prosecution in Gujarat, were also reviewed.

During the discussion, Shah said the essence of the three new criminal laws introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi lies in the



provision of delivering justice within three years, from the filing of an FIR till the Supreme Court's verdict in any case.

He stated that Gujarat has commendably achieved timely filing of charge sheets in over 92 per cent of cases involving sentences of more than 10 years.

He emphasised that for

the remaining cases, a review should be conducted to ensure the utilization of the provision in the Act that allows seeking permission from the court.

Shah also mentioned that the state has also done a commendable job in converting Zero FIRs into 100 per cent regular FIRs, while he emphasised the need to

establish a system where FIRs can be transferred between two states through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), suggesting the Gujarat should adopt CCTNS 2.0.

On the provision of electronic evidence in the new laws, the home minister said the state's Home and Health Departments should conduct meetings in a bid to make sure that all medical reports regarding cases including post-mortem and others are received electronically from hospitals.

He laid emphasis on the need to put in place a system to record evidence through video conferencing in prisons, government hospitals, banks, forensic science laboratories (FSL), and other places premises, further stating that there

should be a video conferencing cubicle for every court in the prisons.

The Union Home Minister said the police should provide the details about the people detained for questioning on the electronic dashboard, along with the seizure list and the cases to be forwarded to the courts.

He also directed the DGP for continuous monitoring of these cases, and also asked to increase the network connectivity speed in police stations to 30 mbps over the prescribed standards.

The HM also emphasised the availability of at least two forensic science mobile vans in every district, while stating that efforts should be made to ensure that all 12 kits used in mobile forensic vans are manufactured in India.

JPC on Waqf (Amendment) Bill submits its report to Lok Sabha Speaker



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024 submitted its final report on the Bill to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024 aims to bring significant reforms, including digitisation of records, stricter audits, increased transparency, and legal mechanisms to reclaim illegally occupied Waqf properties.

JPC chairman and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, along with other panel members – Nishikant Dubey, Tejasvi Surya, Sanjay Jaiswal, and others, – submitted the panel's report to Birla at his Parliament House office. No Opposition members were present during the handing over of the report.

A meeting between members of the JPC and the Lok Sabha Speaker was held before the submission of the report. The panel, on Wednesday, adopted the draft report and the amended revised bill. However, the Opposition leaders also submitted their dissent notes on the report. The JPC on Tuesday cleared the Waqf Bill 1995 with 25 amendments across 14 clauses/sections.

The Bill is likely to be presented during the Budget Session of the Parliament. The Budget session of Parliament will commence on 31 January and continue till 4 April, with the Union Budget to be presented on February 1.

After submitting the report

to the Lok Sabha Speaker on Thursday, the JPC chairman lauded the members of the committee for their "significant contribution" to the constitution of the Bill.

Pal said over the last five months, the committee conducted several meetings and met hundreds of delegations across the nation, adding that a report has been made after detailed deliberation and several cross-examinations.

Talking to a news agency, the JPC chairman said: "In the last five months, we conducted 38 meetings, met 250 delegations and members, met former judges, vice-chancellors... Report has been made after detailed deliberations. Today we submitted that report... We did several steady tours and visited several states. All members of the JPC have made their contributions to the formation of the bill. I believe that the bill which was brought with the intention to benefit and for the welfare of the poor, will fulfil it."

When asked about Opposition MPs' absence during the submission of the report, Pal stated: "All have their own engagements. I had invited all of them. All opposition MPs participated in the important meetings of the amendment. They participated in the voting. They also came in the adoption. We concluded our meeting. All made significant contributions to the making of the bill and participated in the detailed deliberation and cross-examinations."

Thackeray-led Sena MP Sanjay Raut blames Centre, Yogi govt for Kumbh deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 30 JANUARY

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut blamed the central government and the Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, for the deaths of more than 30 people at the Prayagraj Mahakumbh Mela, where many children, elderly people and women have gone missing in a stampede on Wednesday morning.

"The count of those injured has not been done yet. Many people are missing, including many women. Who is responsible for all this? The central government is responsible. The Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh is responsible," Raut said.

Raut also raised concerns about the allocation of funds

for the event. "The budget for the Kumbh Mela was Rs 10,000 crore, but reports show that less than Rs 1,000 crore was spent. Where did the rest of the money go?" Raut asked.

Raut's statement came after a stampede-like situation was witnessed at the Mahakumbh on Wednesday morning, resulting in several people getting killed and injured. The incident took place when lakhs of devotees had gathered at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna rivers to take a holy bath on the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya, which is also the day of the second Shahi Snan.

Raut said that "Many mahamandaleshwars (holy men) suggested handing over management of the event to the army" and alleged



that the Mahakumbh was "politicised for publicity", which eventually resulted in increased deaths. He said that the Yogi government is responsible for the chaotic situation at the Mahakumbh. "If there was a properly

functioning system, these people would not have died. Hundreds of people have been injured," Raut said. He further criticised the BJP for politicising the event, adding, "The BJP is promoting politics through this. They want to

take advantage of the marketing of Kumbh and fight the elections".

Speaking about the stampede-like situation at the religious gathering, Raut said: "The administration and the government knew there would be a huge crowd, but they indulged in political marketing by claiming that 10 crore to 20 crore people would come daily". He also criticised the presence of political dignitaries at the Mahakumbh.

Raut said: "VIPs should stay away at such times. The entire area was closed for a day each for the Defence Minister, Home Minister and other Union ministers. This led to a situation of chaos". He further alleged that "There was no arrangement, no ambulance and no medical facility".

Raut also stated that the

visits of Union ministers and VIPs increased pressure on the system. "When Union ministers and VIPs visit, it puts pressure on the system," Raut said.

Raut criticised the arrangements made for devotees at the Mahakumbh, particularly in the wake of the recent stampede. He raised concerns about the lack of proper facilities and questioned the effectiveness of the administration's efforts.

"The Kumbh is a matter of faith. What arrangements have been made for the devotees there? Women are having to sleep on roads," Raut said. He pointed out that during Akhilesh Yadav's tenure, the arrangements at the Kumbh were much better, saying, "During Akhilesh Yadav's tenure, the arrangements at Kumbh were the best".

Modi govt has done nothing to address inequality: Chidambaram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Thursday asserted that the gap between rich and the poor is growing, and the BJP-led government at the Centre has done nothing to address this issue.

He made the statement after he along with Rajeev Gowda, Chairperson of Congress' Research Department and Chairperson of Social Media Department Supriya Shrinete released a report titled 'Real State of the Economy 2025' at the party headquarters here.

The report questions the Narendra Modi-led government about the country's growth.

Talking about the report,



the Congress MP said, "Many of the facts mentioned in the report are conveniently buried and completely ignored by the Union Government. The media doesn't get the opportunity to carry the truth. Therefore, Rajeev Gowda's

team decided to produce a comprehensive report on the real state of the economy. This report is well-documented and well-sourced."

Asserting that the economy is indeed facing significant challenges, he said the high unemployment rates among youth and graduates are alarming, with nearly 40 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively.

"This is exacerbated by stagnant wages, which have remained unchanged for four to five years, making it difficult for people to make ends meet. Meanwhile, inflation is on the rise, with food, education, and healthcare inflation increasing by double digits," the former Finance Minister said.

Attacking the ruling BJP,

the former Union finance minister further said: "There is huge inequality. Nobody is denying that the 'upper crust' of one per cent is completely wealthy. Even the middle class, the top 20 or 30 per cent may be better off, but what about the remaining 70 per cent population. The gap between rich and poor is growing. The government has done nothing to address this inequality."

"A budget analysis of the last six and seven years will show that the government expenditure on health, education, social welfare and rural development has fallen year after year. Allocations for major welfare programmes have fallen steeply over the last seven to eight years," he said.

Uttarakhand govt denies reports of mandatory religious certificates for live-in relationship registration under UCC

PR SINGH
DEHRADUN, 30 JANUARY

The Uttarakhand government on Thursday denied reports that the Uniform Civil Code mandates clergy permission for registration of live-in relationship or marriages.

UCC rules committee member Manu Gaur clarified: "Such requirements will be applicable in the cases where marriages are prohibited as specified in schedule one of the UCC manual. Only four documents are required at the time of live-in registration under UCC, residence proof, date of birth, Aadhaar details and rent agreement documents if applicable."

He said a legal divorce decree will be needed for



divorcees taking to live-in relationships. "Besides this those whose spouse has passed away or previous live-in relationship has ended will also have to provide relevant documents at the time of registration," he added.

The state government issued a statement and said that reports of mandatory

religious certificates under UCC for all live-in relationships were false and not in accordance with the new uniform personal law of the state.

According to Gaur, marriages in Uttarakhand falling in prohibited categories are very rare. He said less than one per cent UCC registrations will require a religious cer-

tificate in the state. However, as stated by Gaur, members of the communities where marriages can take place within the prohibited categories, as mentioned in UCC, can still register their relationship by providing a religious certificate.

Gaur said the format of religious certificates is mentioned in the UCC manual.

It is notable that the newly notified UCC manual claims that relations like cousin marriages and others as defined in Schedule One come under prohibited categories. However, as per Gaur, couples belonging to the communities where such marriages are allowed will have to produce religious certificates from clergy.

INSV Tarini passes through world's most remote point, Point Nemo, in historic voyage

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

In a groundbreaking achievement for maritime exploration, Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A, aboard the INSV *Tarini*, successfully passed through Point Nemo at 0030 hours (IST) today. The pair is currently sailing from Lyttelton, New Zealand, to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, as part of the third leg of Navika Sagar Parikrama II.

A statement from the Naval spokesperson stated that Point Nemo, located at coordinates 48°53'S 123°24'W, is known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility—arguably the most remote point on Earth. It lies about 2,688 kilometers from the nearest landmass, making it an extraordinary landmark in the South Pacific. The point is so isolated that the closest human presence is typically the International Space Station orbiting high above. Additionally, Point Nemo has earned a unique distinction as a



decommissioned spacecraft cemetery, where space agencies deliberately direct defunct satellites and space stations to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere and crash into the ocean, ensuring minimal risk to human life.

In 1999, the Spanish research vessel *Hespérides* became the first ship to reach Point Nemo, and since then, very few vessels have passed through this remote area. Remarkably, INSV *Tarini* achieved this feat purely by sailing, without the use of motors.

The officers also took the opportunity to collect valuable water samples from the vicinity of Point Nemo. These

samples will be analyzed by the National Institute of Oceanography, offering important insights into the ocean's conditions, including marine biodiversity and the chemical composition of the water. The findings will contribute to global oceanographic research.

Navika Sagar Parikrama II stands as a tribute to the unwavering spirit of India's women naval officers, highlighting their role in advancing scientific collaboration and pushing the frontiers of oceanic exploration. The journey continues as the officers head towards their next destination, Port Stanley.

BPSC aspirants take to streets demanding re-examination

IMRAN MOJIB
PATNA, 30 JANUARY

Thousands of students protesting over irregularities in the 70th Preliminary Test (PT) conducted by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) thronged the streets in Patna on Thursday demanding re-examination. This protest march was organised just one day before the next hearing in the case was scheduled in Patna High Court.

For the past six weeks the BPSC aspirants have been protesting at the designated site here in Gardanibagh. This was the first occasion when they took to the streets. The previous street protests were organised by political parties in their support.

The students said that they were hopeful of receiving support from political parties in their struggle. But none of them extended genuine support, be it Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Communist Party leader

Dipankar Bhattacharya, independent MP Rajiv Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav or Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor.

Since the government continued to ignore them, they decided to register their protest in a big way. The student leaders had given a call to job aspirants from across the state to gather in Patna on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary. They had announced the plan to meet Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with their demand of re-examination.

Since Kumar is busy with the Pragati Yatra, the students decided to march towards the BPSC office here. The sudden decision took the administration by surprise. They failed to stop the students, who thronged the main streets of the capital city including the Beer Chand Patel Path – a major thoroughfare in Patna where offices of all the major political parties are located.

Disclosure statements not strong enough to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt: SC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

The Supreme Court has reiterated that disclosure statements are not "so strong a piece of evidence sufficient on its own and without anything more" to prove the guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

A bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan was dealing with a criminal appeal, where the trial court had convicted the appellant under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and sentenced him to undergo life imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

As per the prosecution, the appellant stabbed the deceased with a knife. Allegedly, there was previous enmity between the appellant and the deceased as the latter was allegedly involved in the murder of the former's elder brother.

In the impugned decision, the conviction and sentence were confirmed in the appeal by the Kerala High Court. Before the apex court, the



appellant's counsel argued that the conviction was based on the testimony of two alleged eyewitnesses, appearing to be chance witnesses. Further, as per the version of these two witnesses, there were other eyewitnesses who were not examined by the prosecution, requiring an adverse inference to be drawn.

On the other hand, the state government's counsel argued that the evidence of both the eyewitnesses is believed by both the courts and no interference can be made with the impugned judgments. He also pointed out that the recovery of the weapon of the offence and bloodstained cloths was made

at the instance of the appellant.

In its judgment, the top court said: "There are material omissions which amount to contradiction. Coupled with the material omissions, if we consider the conduct of both the witnesses, their version does not inspire confidence. Once evidence of these two witnesses is disbelieved, the only remaining evidence against the appellant is of the recovery of the knife at his instance."

It disbelieved the testimonies on several counts, including not reporting the incident to the police and not taking the deceased to a hospital. Quashing the conviction and sentencing orders, the Supreme Court acquitted the appellant of the offences alleged against him.

"The appellant has undergone incarceration for more than twelve years. Hence, he shall be forthwith set at liberty unless he is required in connection with any other case," said the Justice Okale Bench, as it allowed the appellant's appeal.

Kumbh Tragedy

The tragic stampede at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, which claimed several lives and injured many others, is another stark reminder of the urgent need for better crowd management strategies at India's mega religious gatherings. The Kumbh Mela, recognised as the world's largest congregation of humanity, draws tens of millions of devotees who come with deep spiritual faith. However, with such unprecedented footfall at the Kumbh, ensuring safety requires more than just faith ~ it demands meticulous planning, cutting-edge technology, and proactive governance. This is not the first time a stampede has marred the sacred event. The 2013 Kumbh saw at least 36 people losing their lives in a similar tragedy. Despite advancements in surveillance and security measures, history seems to be repeating itself. This raises serious questions about the adequacy of existing crowd control mechanisms. Were the contingency plans robust enough? Were there clear exit strategies in place? These concerns must be addressed with urgency. Eyewitnesses from Wednesday's incident report that confusion and poor crowd flow led to panic. Some devotees, unable to exit safely, were forced to turn back, exacerbating the situation. The authorities had used AI-based crowd management systems, deployed special security forces, and increased medical personnel, yet these measures did not prevent the disaster. Clearly, something remains amiss in how these strategies are being executed on the ground. Public awareness is equally crucial in preventing such tragedies. Devotees must be educated on emergency protocols through announcements and signage. Even the best security measures can fail if crowds panic and do not follow safety guidelines in critical situations.

Religious gatherings in India, be it the Kumbh Mela, Sabarimala pilgrimage, the Tirumala darshan or the Vais-hno Devi yatra, often experience massive turnouts, making crowd control a complex challenge. The government, in coordination with religious bodies, must establish stricter crowd limits, create more regulated entry and exit points, and introduce real-time monitoring of congregation density. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath acted swiftly to review the situation and issue directives, but such reactive measures must give way to a more proactive approach. Authorities must anticipate worst-case scenarios and prepare accordingly rather than responding after a tragedy has already unfolded. The future of safe mass gatherings in India lies in the adoption of smarter, more efficient infrastructure. Temporary townships like the one at the Maha Kumbh need well-planned evacuation routes, AI-powered density alerts, and an adequate number of foot-bridges to disperse crowds smoothly. Global best practices offer valuable lessons. India must integrate similar, if not better, mechanisms. The Maha Kumbh is an event of deep cultural and spiritual significance, but ensuring the safety of devotees is just as sacred a duty. This tragedy should serve as a wake-up call ~ crowd management at India's religious gatherings must move beyond makeshift measures and become a national priority. Otherwise lives will continue to be lost, and ascribed to God's will when in reality it is man's folly that leads to such tragedies.

DRC conflict

The escalating crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is yet another grim chapter in a decades-long conflict that has claimed countless lives and displaced millions. The rapid advance of rebels toward Goma, a key economic and strategic hub, is not merely a local crisis ~ it has regional and international ramifications. The situation calls for urgent and decisive global intervention, as continued inaction will only deepen the humanitarian catastrophe and fuel long-term instability. At the heart of this crisis is the rebel offensive, which has seen government forces retreat and thousands of soldiers surrender. The capture of key infrastructure, including an airport, signals the growing strength of the armed group and the weakness of state control. Civilians are bearing the brunt of this escalation, with hospitals overflowing, food supplies looted, and streets littered with bodies. The indiscriminate use of heavy artillery in populated areas has resulted in severe injuries, particularly among children. The scale of suffering is staggering, yet the world's response remains limited to diplomatic statements and vague calls for peace. One of the most troubling aspects of the conflict is the alleged external involvement. Accusations of support for the rebels from neighbouring Rwanda have inflamed tensions, prompting diplomatic exchanges and emergency meetings. While denials of such involvement are routine, mounting evidence suggests that Rwanda is playing a significant role in sustaining the insurgency. This underscores the complexity of the conflict, which is not just an internal matter for the DRC but a broader regional issue with geopolitical implications. The role of Rwanda must be scrutinised, and those fuelling the violence must be held accountable. Meanwhile, the humanitarian cost continues to rise. The displacement of civilians, the destruction of essential infrastructure, and the targeting of peacekeepers indicate that the conflict is spiralling out of control. With peacekeepers from multiple countries already suffering casualties, it is clear that the crisis extends beyond the DRC's borders. Yet, the global response has been tepid at best. Protests in the capital targeting foreign embassies reflect the growing frustration among Congolese citizens who see international engagement as ineffective and insincere. This crisis cannot be resolved through half-hearted negotiations or diplomatic posturing. The international community must go beyond mere condemnation and take concrete steps. This includes enforcing sanctions on those financing and arming the rebels, ensuring accountability for human rights abuses, and strengthening peacekeeping efforts to protect civilians. Additionally, addressing the root causes of the conflict ~ such as resource exploitation, political instability, and ethnic tensions ~ is essential for a lasting solution. Goma's fate is not just about one city; it represents a critical moment in the broader struggle for stability in Africa. If the world continues to look away, the DRC will remain trapped in a cycle of violence, and the consequences will be felt far beyond its borders. Immediate and decisive action is the only path forward.

What to expect

A course correction is imminent even though we do not expect any ideological shift from a government committed to neo-liberal economic policies. A tax relief to middle classes and low income groups can be a big relief to them but not a big burden on the government since the revenue coming from those with incomes below Rs.10 lakh is only 6.22 per cent. The government may be happy with the increased filing of returns – 8.09 crore in 2023-24 (against 6.48 crore in 2020), but it should not ignore the fact that 4.9 crore of them were nil income returns which only increased the burden of both the IT Department and the citizens



What are we going to get in this budget? People want straight and simple answers. It is not difficult to make a close-to-accurate guess if one first addresses some key questions. What is a budget? Who are its architects? Which segment of people ~ poor, rich, middle classes, employed, unemployed, farmers, gig workers, etc. is seeking answers?

First things first. The budget is the government's estimated income and expenditure for the financial year ~ a financial statement. It is a constitutional requirement (as detailed under Articles 112, 114, 266, 266(2), and 270) of the executive to take the approval of the legislature, in other words of the people through their elected representatives in Lok Sabha to spend their money from the Consolidated fund of India.

The budget not only deals with income and expenditure estimates for the budget year but provides the space to the government to announce related decisions, policies, programmes, taxes and concessions, etc. It allocates money for various purposes including expenditure on salary and allowances to its own employees, armed forces et al. It earmarks spending on other essential items like interest payment on borrowed money, allocations to states and union territories of their tax share, grants etc. Then the government proposes spending in various other areas like health, education and other social sector components and subsidies.

All this suggests that the allocations to various sectors would be commensurate with the size of the budget, in other words higher the budget size, higher would be allocations for the people's welfare.

Unfortunately, the size of the Union budget as a percentage of the GDP has been shrinking over the years; it has come down from 17.43 per cent of the GDP in 2009-10 to 14.76 per cent in 2024-25. The upcoming budget is not going to be different given the government's excess concern with fiscal consolidation and lower-than-expected GDP growth.

We can make a rough estimate of the size of the budget taking the expected GDP in 2025-26. The GDP was estimated at

Rs. 326 lac crore in the 2024-25 budget; later it was brought down to Rs. 324 lac crore with nominal growth 9.7 per cent lower than the budget estimate of 10.5 per cent growth. Presuming the estimate of Rs.356 lac crore again with about 10 per cent increase forecast, and assuming that the budget size would be 14.5 per cent of the GDP, the budget size will be in the range of Rs. 51.62 lac crore against the current year's Rs 48.20 lac crore, representing about a 7 per cent increase, which is not a big sum after adjusting for current inflation.

The reason for the shrinking budget size is in alignment with the economic policies of the budget architects. The present government's neo-liberal economic policies vehemently oppose the increasing fiscal deficit which means the focus will be on spending cuts and tax increases. The 2024-25 fiscal deficit was 4.9 per cent of the GDP. The Finance Minister, Mrs Nir-mala Sitharaman, has said her aim is to bring it down to 4.5 per cent in the 2025-26 budget and to keep on reducing it in successive budgets hereafter.

The same liberal economic policies that have a penchant for a low fiscal deficit ~ that is low spending ~ believe in the theory that economic growth is more important because its proponents feel that growth trickles down in benefits to the poor and middle classes. So, the approach is to help industry and commerce rather than giving sops to the poor.

Based on income levels, the country has 134 million (9.7 per cent of the population) poor ~ with less than \$2 a day income ~ as per the Pew Research Centre's compilation. Similarly, 1,162 million (84 per cent) are in the low-income category with earnings between \$2 and \$10 per day; 66 million (4.8 per cent) are middle-income group people with \$10 to \$20 income; 16 million (1.2 per cent) are upper-middle-class persons earning \$20 to \$50 a day and 2 million (0.1 per cent) are high-income individuals earning above \$50 a

day. Most people's expectations in India are understandable with the poor and low-income categories accounting for 93.7 per cent of the population.

Whatever be the claims of growth and prosperity of the country, the gap between the rich and poor has been widening. The Gini coefficient of 0.410 in 2023 compared to 0.371 in 1955 as per a study of the People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE), shows the present worsening situation, worse than in the 1950s.

The World Inequality Lab (March 2024) similarly says that by 2022-23, the top 1 per cent of people accounted for 22.6 per cent of the country's income and 40.1 per cent of its wealth. Undoubtedly there has been growth but its fruits are not trickling down to the bottom but concentrating at the top whereby the number of billionaires and their wealth has been on the rise. Forbes billionaires' data show an increase in their number from just one in 1991 to 52 in 2011 and a further increase to 162 in 2022.

Unfortunately, the government's tax reliefs also benefit the rich and super-rich more than the ordinary. Not going into too many details, some reportage recently in reputed media showed Rs.3 lakh crore worth of tax concessions garnered by the largest corporates since 2019, while the revenue foregone by the government since 2012-13 was Rs.8 lac crore.

A course correction is imminent in this background with a practical approach as we do not expect any ideological shift from a government committed to neo-liberal economic policies. A tax relief to middle classes and low income can be a big relief but not a big burden on the government since the revenue coming from people with incomes below Rs.10 lakh is only 6.22 per cent while those with above Rs.50 lakh brought 76 per cent.

The government may be happy with the increased filing of returns ~ 8.09 crore in 2023-

24 (against 6.48 crore in 2020), but it should not ignore the fact that 4.9 crore of them were nil income returns which only increased the work burden of both the IT Department and the citizens.

Another ground to exclude this segment totally from the tax fold is the falling consumption expenditure which is not even in the economic interest of the affluent and corporates because low consumption demand leads to lower sales volumes and profits.

Similarly, the middle classes expect no tax on the interest of their bank deposits since they are their sources of income. The government should rather encourage more deposits into the system and should learn how to use them productively instead of discouraging them with taxes on the interest earnings. Naturally the rich want more sops. They want ease of doing business, simplified labour compliance, single window system, transparency etc. as listed in the CII's ten-point wish list.

As for others, the unemployed youth want employment and quality employment. Although some employment growth is shown, what is conveniently forgotten is its quality. Most of the employment generated has been in the informal sector; more than 90 per cent of employment in the country is in the informal sector.

Then there are the woes of the farmers and their poor incomes. A high 92 per cent of farm holdings are small and marginal. The monthly average farmers' family income is Rs 10,695. Of this, crop production provides Rs 5,298 and the rest comes from wage labour and from allied activities as per the NSS Survey 2019.

Similarly, everyone knows about the neglect of health and education, their poor quality and inadequacy. It may be concluded that the budget, poor in size due to excessive concern of limiting the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent of the GDP, coupled with the government's commitment to neo-liberal economic policies cannot be a pro-poor budget in reality. So, the majority of the population, cannot expect any drastic changes in the tax regime or other concessions except some paltry benefits here and there.

Are political parties relevant

Lately, there has been a surge in rightist nationalistic trends goaded by non-political dealers such as business tycoons, the mafia and 'bichauliya' (middle-men). Can the conventional parties face this? Answers to such questions can be attributed to the use and misuse of parties in the name of democracy. Generally, people see parties in liberal democracies with disdain due to manipulation by a small group of elites with dubious distinction. Parties, for them, are mere instruments for pandering to their vested interests as if they have overtaken democracy.

Political parties are declining all over the world. Bereft of ideology and commitments, political leaders rely more on attractive slogans, regardless of whether such slogans are translated into action after they come to power.

Dissatisfied with the conventional parties, evolving both within and outside Parliament, the "voter becomes more independent and autonomous, less controlled and blackmailed" by leaders whose sole objective is to capture power.

Even though, in a theoretical sense, the definition, objective and functional standards of parties remain the same, there has been a significant transformation in their political milieu. Parties in both developed and developing countries seem to be losing their space to non-political individuals and business tycoons with

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undemocratic proclivities and ambitious commitments.

Parties in liberal democracies, except the United Kingdom, are seemingly dysfunctional, if not entirely irrelevant, to be conducive to democratic governance. People's attitudes towards them are shifting; they seek alternatives to traditional parties' nominees during elections.

Parties that gain power through periodic elections have run out of steam as they have failed to renew and energise themselves to address people's basic needs. Yet, they continue to survive, though with reduced appeal and public dissatisfaction.

In conventional theory, parties' origin, evolution and functioning are determined by their experiences in legislatures.

In Britain, parties evolved within parliament; in the United States, they were innovated when certain inconveniences arose while implementing the constitution. In political scientist Maurice Duverger's term, the "mass bureaucratic parties" that evolved in parliament became dominant for a long time.

Such parties could be the link between the government and the people. On the other hand, the cadre-based parties, or what German political scientist Otto Kirchheimer has said, the 'catch-all party,' are opposed to Duverger's theory as parties have been formed in different environments and contexts.

Generally, in developing countries, parties are formed to achieve multiple objectives, such as national independence and democracy, depending on specific cases and contexts. Instant parties serve the purpose of achieving immediate goals or catapulting into a power structure.

The Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal were created for opposite purposes: The former for establishing a constitutional monarchy à la British variety by overthrowing the family oligarchy of the Ranas, and the latter to emulate the one-party communist model that was then being practised in the Soviet Union and China under Mao.

However, the communists in Nepal are not dogmatic in an ideological sense but want to maintain their identity under the masquerading rhetoric. Splintered frequently on personal grounds, many of them are on the brink of extinction.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Grave concern

SIR, It's a matter of grave concern that Uttarakhand has become the first state where the Uniform Civil Code(UCC) has been implemented with a view to provide uniformity in the laws of all religious communities living in the state.

Apparently it seems to be a good move where the disparity between the rights of both the male and the female genders are being equated but the question is whether the female and the male genders are equal in every respect and in every perspective?

The implementation of the UCC is indirectly an intervention

in religious affairs of different communities which will make the laws of the religions null and void. India is a secular country and in the Constitution it is clearly mentioned that every citizen of this country is free to practice and propagate the teachings of his/her religion without any trouble. The UCC goes against the principles of Muslim Personal Laws where the moral code of marriage, divorce, inheritance rights and adoption of children as well as the rights of "illegitimate children" have been clearly defined and there is no controversy

whatsoever.

The imposition of the UCC suggests that the laws of the religions are faulty which a religious

person will never accept. The Central government must reflect on the negative aspects of implementation of the UCC before

seeking to enforce it all over the country.

Yours, etc., Iftekhar Ahmed, Kolkata, 28 January.

NATIONAL TREASURE

SIR, It will not be an exaggeration to say that Jasprit Bumrah is a national treasure. He is excellence personified. In the last two decades, Bumrah is only the sixth Indian player and first pace bowler to receive the prestigious ICC Test Cricketer of the year award after Rahul Dravid, Gautam Gambhir, Virender Sehwag, R Ashwin and Virat Kohli. He has sublime control over his length but his real magic is his brain and cricketing intelligence which makes him the most lethal and feared bowler in world cricket today.

Bumrah has sprinkled his magic from Capetown to Kanpur, Dharamshala to Melbourne and Vizag to Perth. His true genius is recognised by his rivals who speak highly of him. His workload must be managed with utmost professionalism so that he remains fresh and fit for the key future series.

Yours, etc., Bal Govind, Noida, 28 January.



Will China's AI challenge impact US dominance?

SANTHOSH MATHEW

The global artificial intelligence (AI) landscape has witnessed a new shift with the emergence of China's DeepSeek, a powerful AI model developed to counter-balance American AI giants like OpenAI, Google, and Meta. The release of DeepSeek sent shockwaves through the stock market, causing NVIDIA, one of the biggest players in AI hardware, to lose nearly \$500 billion in market capitalization overnight.

The tremors from this event are still being felt, and it has reignited debates on AI valuations, market speculation, and the role of open-source AI models in reshaping technological dominance. DeepSeek's arrival signifies China's renewed push to challenge American tech supremacy. Unlike the walled-off approach of OpenAI, which requires massive computational resources and exclusive partnerships, DeepSeek claims to be open-source and highly efficient, requiring significantly lower costs for training AI models. This has raised eyebrows in the tech world, especially since China's AI developments are often seen as state-backed projects aimed at global tech disruption rather than pure innovation.

The market turbulence following DeepSeek's debut also revealed the fragility of AI valuations. While the hype around AI companies has led to sky-high valuations, real-world market corrections have exposed the speculative nature of these figures. The old investment adage holds true - valuation is not a story crafted by analysts but a function of tangible cash flows and sustainable yield. Investors who blindly jump into AI stocks based on YouTube hype or social media

narratives risk facing the brutal reality of market corrections. DeepSeek is not the only major AI development emerging from China. Alibaba has recently unveiled an AI model that it claims surpasses DeepSeek, further intensifying the competition among China's tech giants.

Alibaba's latest AI endeavor aims to outpace its domestic rivals and establish itself as a global AI powerhouse. While details of its model's capabilities are still emerging, its impact on the AI industry is undeniable. Alibaba's move could redefine the AI race, providing China with multiple competing AI entities rather than a single dominant player. Despite these advancements, China faces significant roadblocks in its quest for AI dominance.

Unlike the United States, which fosters innovation in an open, capitalistic environment, China's tech sector operates under state supervision, limiting the organic development of disruptive technologies. Historically, AI breakthroughs have thrived in free societies where data, research, and innovation flow without restrictions. This is where American AI firms, despite occasional regulatory challenges, maintain an edge over their Chinese counterparts.

The limitations of China's AI ambition become evident when one scrutinizes its political and cultural rigidity. AI development is as much about access to data and computational power as it is about intellectual freedom. A controlled society with heavy censorship struggles to innovate beyond state-approved narratives. The past has proven that nations that stifle open discourse ultimately fall behind in technological races.



A look at Soviet-era technological advancements in space and military technology illustrates how state-controlled science eventually hit a ceiling, unable to keep pace with democratic, innovation-driven economies. Another fundamental concern regarding China's AI growth is trust. Open-source AI models, while theoretically accessible to all, come with risks when backed by an authoritarian regime. A major question that arises is whether models like DeepSeek will allow unbiased access to information. Would DeepSeek truthfully answer politically sensitive questions, such as those related to Taiwan, Tibet, or the Tiananmen

Square massacre? Historical patterns suggest that AI models developed under state influence will inevitably serve the regime's interests rather than promote free knowledge.

Interestingly, while DeepSeek and Alibaba's AI models have stirred global interest, they still rely heavily on NVIDIA chips. The irony of this situation cannot be ignored - China's AI ambitions continue to be dependent on American hardware, exposing its vulnerability in the global AI supply chain. Until China develops its own semiconductor ecosystem that can rival NVIDIA's dominance, its AI push remains partially reliant on American technology.

The battle for AI supremacy is not just about building better models; it is about creating ecosystems that foster continuous innovation. China's latest AI developments may disrupt short-term market trends, but in the long run, open societies that encourage innovation, freedom, and transparency will continue to lead. The world watches as China pushes its AI boundaries, but history suggests that true technological revolutions thrive where ideas and competition flourish without state-imposed limitations.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Centre For South Asian Studies, Pondicherry Central University.)

Shifting sands in South Asia

SMRUTI S PATTANAIK

China has become a topic of discussion in South Asia over the past few days. Whether it is Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's state visit to China from January 14 to 17, during which he signed 15 MoUs; the India-China Foreign Secretary-Foreign Minister level talks; six Chinese nationals in Pakistan filing harassment cases against the Sindh police; China aiming to assist in training students studying in institutions managed by Jamaat Islami Bangladesh - media coverage like this speaks volumes about Beijing's growing engagement with South Asia and India's strategic gains and losses.

China is a vital destination for the political leaders in South Asia. It serves as a strategic signal to India and facilitates investment for new projects with a request to reschedule debts. During his visit to China, Dissanayake successfully signed a \$3.7 billion investment from Sinopec (a petroleum refining corporation) for an oil refinery in Hambantota, Sri Lanka. An agreement with the China EXIM Bank and the China Development Bank to restructure Sri Lanka's debt to China will likely help secure the release of the IMF's next tranche of \$2.9 billion disbursement.

The joint statement emphasised partnering on 'high quality' Belt and Road cooperation. Sri Lanka pledged to support China's position on Xinjiang and Xinjiang. They agreed to 'jointly open up new space for win-win development of higher standard, stronger resilience and greater sustainability'. This visit was viewed as Dissanayake's attempt to walk the 'tightrope' between India and China. He visited India last year, shortly after assuming the presidency.

In a public meeting in Katukurunda following his return from China, Dissanayake on 20 January said, "So

we have to forge strong links with other countries. In this, the most important is India". He also reflected on the discussions between an Indian company and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation regarding the construction of an oil refinery with 61 oil tanks jointly managed by India and Sri Lanka in Trincomalee, a port city on the northeast coast. India has agreed to supply liquefied natural gas to Sri Lankan power plants to generate electricity.

Interestingly, the wind energy project in Mannar and Pooneryn granted to Adani Green Energy Sri Lanka Ltd as part of the India-Sri Lanka governments' initiative is now being challenged in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. The pricing agreement to provide energy to consumers has been revoked. The project is under review by a committee appointed by the Sri Lankan government, ostensibly for high tariffs. This project, which is near India's coast, was earlier given to China. New Delhi has expressed concerns about the delays by Sri Lanka in all the joint venture projects, some of which, the most recent being the Eastern Container Terminal of the Colombo Port, were cancelled after an agreement was signed.

India's Foreign Secretary, Vikram Misri, visited Beijing on 26-27 January to participate in a meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Foreign Minister mechanism that exists between the two countries. The ties between the two countries had deteriorated following the Galwan incident (a series of clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley along the Sino-Indian border on 15 June 2020). India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr S Jaishankar, emphasised the need to detangle its relationship from the complications of post-2020 border situations with China and underlined India's approach based on 'mutual

respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests' as guiding principles.

In the Special Representative meeting on 18 December 2024, the two countries underlined that peace and tranquillity at the border would help the 'normal development of bilateral relations'. Both China and India shook on resuming direct flights between them. They have also agreed to operationalise the mechanisms to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and share data on trans-border rivers and border trade.

China also strengthened its bilateral ties after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina in a revolt against her regime in August last year. Immediately after the political change, China emphasised its 'all-round strategic partnership' with the new interim regime in Bangladesh, as the US appeared to be a close partner of the newly formed government. China swiftly engaged the religious political parties that were crucial in organising the street protests against Hasina.

In September 2024, the Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Yao Wen, met Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Dr Shafiqur Rahman at the party office in Mogh-bazar. China also hosted a 14-member delegation consisting of Jamaat Islami and its student front, the Islami Chatra Shibir and four other Islamic parties—Khilafat Andolon, Khilafat Majlis, Nezam Islam Party and Hefazat-e-Islam - in Beijing on November 26-28, 2024. It also hosted the Balochistan National Party leaders in the same month.

China has also trained students in Jamaat-run institutions and orphanages. It is also Bangladesh's largest trading partner. Meanwhile, Bangladesh remains the second largest recipient of Chinese-made weapons. China's infrastructure development in Bangladesh reflects 'genuine friendship', and Indian projects are portrayed



as unfair and unequal. As India has minimal interactions with Bangladesh, given its anti-Indian stances, the Chinese engagement shows how political change in South Asia does not affect China's relations, which is seen as a balancer to India. Bangladesh's recent overtures to Pakistan, which was accused of genocidal killings in 1971, is to send a message to India that played a major role in the 1971 liberation and is currently sheltering Sheikh Hasina.

The Chinese are facing difficulties in Pakistan due to security threats to their workers as there have been clashes between them and locals. On 27 January, four Chinese nationals petitioned against political harassment at the Sindh High Court. They also claimed they were not allowed to move out of their premises without being justified on the pretext of their 'security'. In 2018, such restrictions on Chinese workers working on a motorway project resulted in a scuffle between Chinese workers and the police in Punjab province. The workers were later deported to China. In

2019, Chinese and Bangladeshi workers clashed in Patuakhali (a town in Bangladesh) over the death of a local Bangladeshi.

Similarly, in 2021, clashes between locals and Chinese workers were reported in Banshkhal in Chittagong over unpaid wages to the local workers, leading to police firing, which killed five Bangladeshi workers. Such conflicts with local workers were also reported in Sri Lanka, where China is developing the infrastructure.

Despite challenges, China has become an important economic and strategic partner for South Asian countries. India is equally engaged in development projects in the region. Unlike China, Indian projects compete with domestic nationalist political narratives and are subject to intense political scrutiny. With the change of each ruling political regime in South Asia, the contours of their bilateral relations with India and China change as well.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

CHICAGO is a wonderful city, but the claim of its wheat ring to have gained control of 36,000 million bushels of grain is—like the report of Mark Twain's death which once emanated from the same centre—a trifle exaggerated. According to Sir James Wilson, formerly well known in India, the total yield of wheat in 1923-24 in those countries for which statistics are available was 430 million quarters, which is less than a tenth of the quantity said to have been cornered in Chicago. A corresponding discount may confidently be made in the case of the fortune of four hundred millions sterling said to have been amassed by Mr. Arthur Cutten in the past three weeks as the result of cornering operations. Even in America there is a limit to the toleration extended to the piling up of millions; and Mr. Henry Ford, by clearing more than four hundred million dollars on his last reported year's trading, was held to have gone perilously near that limit. At the same time it is an unpleasant fact that wheat has risen nearly 50 per cent, in England during the past year, and nearly 75 per cent, compared to its pre-war price. Apparently there is every prospect of its going still higher.

NEWS ITEMS

TANGIER CONVENTION NOT RECOGNIZED BY ITALY

THE Italian Government has declined to adhere to the new Tangier Convention. The Rome correspondent of The Times says the Cabinet bases its decision on the fact that Italy did not participate in the conference at which the Convention was drawn up. She repeatedly indicated her willingness to participate but the requests were unheeded. She therefore cannot do otherwise than refuse to recognize a Convention in the drawing up of which she was not consulted, and which she considers impracticable and not beneficial to Italian interests.

BOMBAY OUTRAGE MYSTERY OF RED MAXWELL CAR SOLVED

BOMBAY, JAN. 29.

THE mystery surrounding the Red Maxwell car alleged to have been used by the assailants in the Malabar Hill outrage is reported to have been solved by the Bombay police.

It is said that on its way to Bombay the car stopped for a little while at Lonavla, where its occupants engaged the services of a boy to bring a few bucketsful of water, for which he was given a few coppers as bakshish by Shafi Ahmad, who is now in Bombay in police custody. Shafi Ahmad was taken to Lonavla yesterday, when the boy is said to have picked him out from among many others.

'FLU' EPIDEMIC IN BRITAIN SCHOOLS & OFFICES AFFECTED

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, JAN. 30.

Britain is in the grip of a mild form of "flu." The epidemic has seriously affected offices and workshops, which are very short-handed, but so far few deaths have been recorded.

The complaint is largely of an intestinal form, and doctors state that the epidemic, which is due to a mysterious triennium cycle, is likely to reach its zenith in February. It will not be surprising if a large number of football matches are cancelled wholesale, and of the forty members of one Surrey League team only five are fit to play. A village in Hampshire with a population of 400 has no less than 260 under the doctors.

Many schools have been closed down in Kent owing to the absence of teachers, and at one school only forty out of 244 pupils put in an appearance. The Medical Officer for Buckinghamshire reports that one in every eight of the population is ill. Mills in Manchester are also greatly affected.

TROTSKY'S SUCCESSOR STORMY CAREER OF MICHEL FRUNSO

MOSCOW, JAN. 30.

MICHEL FRUNSO, who has been appointed to succeed Trotsky, is the son of a Moldavian peasant. Michel Frunso participated in the Moscow insurrection. He was prosecuted during the Tsarist regime five times, and was twice condemned to death, but finally he was sentenced to ten years' exile in Siberia. Escaping from Siberia he organized revolutionary "cells" to the Tsarist army in 1915, and later commanded armies against Koltchak and Wrangel.

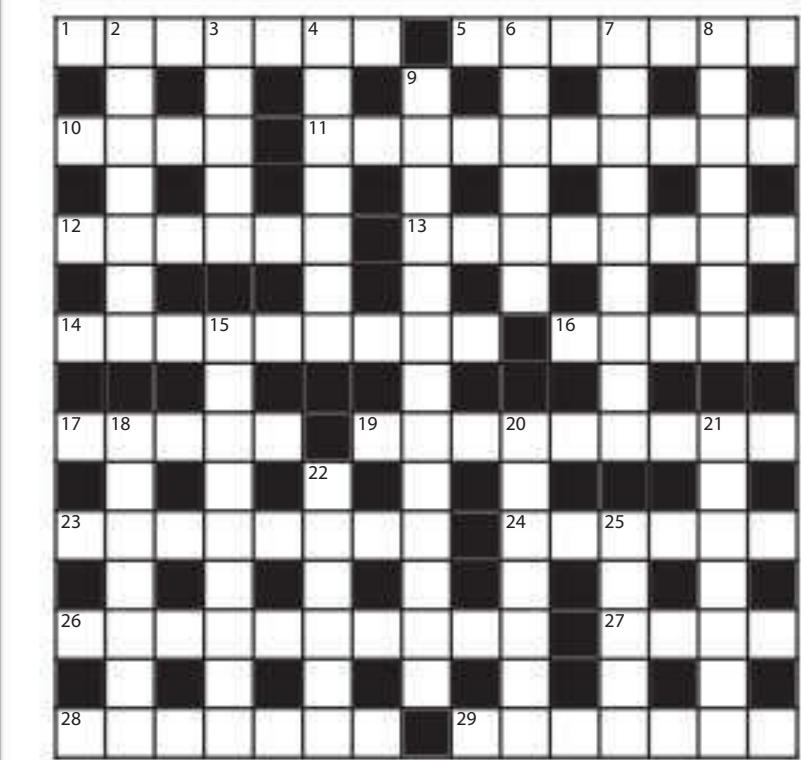
LOOTED EMBASSY FRENCH DISCOVERY IN LENINGRAD

A MESSAGE from Moscow states that members of the newly appointed French Embassy staff, on arriving in Leningrad to take over possession of French State property, found the building looted. Priceless tapestries, valuable silver plate and furniture were missing.

The Soviet authorities are investigating the disappearance of the property which is attributed to Zinovieff, who is said to have ordered its removal.

CROSSWORD

NO-293035



YETERDAY'S SOLUTION

USEFUL DECREASE
N A I R O T A
C O R N I C H E M U T I N Y
R T K A E I M
V E G A M A D O N N A
S S O I R
C O N T I N E N C E L O I N
C T A J U N A N
O T I C I N J U N C T I O N
A L L U E C U B E
G E N E S I S S O I
O O P T I L L U M I N E
A K C C A E G
G L A S S E Y E M O R S E L

ACROSS

- Gymnast needs this money in the bank (7)
- Decline what every player strives for (7)
- Part of the Scillies, eastern half redeveloped (4)
- Court investigation leader rejected for debate (2,8)
- Useless way to carry goods I imported (2,4)

- Ultimately fit and lithe, trained in Air Corps (8)
- Boxer's cunning with rows (9)
- Some rubbing out needed in this game (5)
- Comparatively adept sailor with large margins of error (5)
- Button container that needs refilling regularly (6,3)
- Old couple in Split, dancing perhaps (8)

- Team in taxi missing reserves (6)
- A blend of chats and spiel? (5,5)
- A good service was one of her strengths (4)
- Robin's mate defending small member of 24 before change in terminology (7)
- Son joins keener member of 24 at the back (7)

DOWN

- London 24 seen primarily in 3 on left (7)
- Area near ground, or the ground itself (5)
- Letter opposing drink (7)
- Part of course inspires old character to develop choppers (6)
- Location of member of 24's old theatre cutting (2,3,4)
- Stealing possible contents of mound in Suffolk? (7)

- Police aim to do this sport (6,7)
- Ring users with radical compounds, about 50 (9)
- A bit worried about old US lawman's CV? (7)
- Display of slippers rocks head office in Cornwall? (3,4)
- It's mean to state how old someone is (7)
- Crossing line, a bear raised game (6)
- Albatross beats this bird of prey (5)

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



Bodoland on the path to progress

Assam government is mulling plans to boost the tourism industry by improving rail connectivity

NISHAT NIZAMI

GUWAHATI, 30 JANUARY

Once a hotbed of insurgency, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in Assam is seeing a new dawn and ushering in a new era of development. The new phase of peace and prosperity is driven by multiple developmental projects including a crucial railway route connecting Bhutan, an expanded oil refinery and a defence corridor.

According to the chief minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, around 20,000 people had lost their lives in the conflicts that plagued the region for decades. However, after the signing of the Bodoland Accord in 2020, the region has witnessed a new phase of peace and is now heading on the path of development.

According to the government, in the past three and a half years, peace is prevailing in the region and there have been no incidents of violence. Around 6,000 people have



been brought into the mainstream.

As explained by the CM, the growth in the BTR region is quicker than that of the rest of Assam. "BTR is blessed because they have special funds coming from the Centre. The council gets funds from three sources, including the Union government, the state and its own money. So, development in BTR is faster than that of the rest of Assam," said Mr Sarma.

After ensuring peace, the local administration along with the state government is

now aiming at bringing an economic boost in Bodoland, driven by various mega projects. The Indian Railway is working on introducing a railway route from Guwahati to Bhutan via Bodoland. The Himanta Sarma government, which is in alliance with the Bodoland's ruling party United People's Party Liberal, headed by Pramod Boro, is seeking to introduce a Vande Bharat train between Guwahati and Chirang. At present, the journey between the two districts takes around five hours. With this upcoming route, the journey

time to Guwahati would be cut down by two hours. As informed by the CM, the railways also plans of setting up a railway coach manufacturing unit in the BTR.

Notably, the Bodoland area shares a border with Bhutan. The state government is mulling plans to boost the tourism industry by improving rail connectivity between the two nations. According to Mr Sarma, the BTR has a deep connection with the 'Land of Lamas'. "They share a very close cultural bond. In Bhutan, Gelephu, Mindfulness City, work has been started to establish a city like Singapore. Bodoland is around eight kilometres away from there. When such huge development takes place in the neighbourhood, the BTR would be an automatic beneficiary of the progress. I have had a talk with the king of Bhutan and their Prime Minister is also scheduled to visit Assam on 25 February. We are in touch for shared development," he said.

The state government is

also said to be in talks with the Centre for setting up of a 'Defence Industrial Corridor' involving the Bodoland region. According to the chief minister, discussions with the central government are on. "My discussion with the government of India is going on and I am sure that Assam will get a defence corridor," informed the CM.

Pointing out the challenges involved in building the corridor passing through Bodoland, he said: "BTR has the maximum land mass. So, it is very easy to set up industry in the region. But these are lands of tribal people. So, one has to be very careful because tribal people's first love is their land. If you invite industry and I ask these people to vacate lands, we may see turmoil. Tribal people can live and die for their land. This progression has to be very gradual and we should not unsettle the peace." "We have to be very careful. While negotiating with the tribal people, one has to be sensitive to their needs," he felt.

Senior UP govt officials inspect stampede site at Mahakumbh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR,
30 JANUARY

Normalcy is fast returning to the Mahakumbh mela area on Thursday after yesterday's stampede in which 30 pilgrims were killed and 60 others were injured.

While UP Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh, and DGP Prashant Kumar visited the Mahakumbh area on Thursday, members of the Judicial Commission led by Justice (Retd) Harsh Kumar are expected to arrive here on Friday.

As per government estimate, over 1.67 crore pilgrims have taken a dip in the Sangam and till 4 p.m. on Thursday and the total number of devotees to visit the Mahakumbh so far rose to over 290 million.

A minor incident of fire was also reported near Jhuni Chhatnag Ghat and Nageshwar Ghat in Sector 22 in which several tents were reduced to ashes but no one was hurt.

The chief secretary and the DGP arrived here in the morning and held several rounds of meetings with mela officials and police officers. Both the officials also inspected the site of the stampede and visited the Medical College to meet the injured.

Two senior officials from Lucknow have been rushed to the Mahakumbh to oversee the arrangements here.

The stampede took place between 1 and 2 a.m. on the occasion of the Mauni Amavasya as pilgrims rushed to take a dip in the river breaking barricades.

In all 30 devotees lost their lives while 60 others were injured. The injured were admitted to the medical college where they are undergoing treatment.

On the other hand, Justice Retired Harsh Kumar, chairman of the Judicial Committee on the Prayagraj Mahakumbh stampede, said: "We expect to submit a report within a month. Tomorrow morning, we will go for site

inspection, and although we cannot say how long it will take, we will try to complete the work as soon as possible."

"Site inspection for better accuracy should be done as soon as possible. It is too early to say anything before this," he said in Lucknow.

The Judicial Commission took charge today. The other two members of the Commission are ex-IAS D K Singh and retired IPS V K Gupta.

After the stampede on the Mauni Amavasya Amrit Snan, the administration has issued a new order regarding the traffic system in the fair. The entire fair area has been declared a no-vehicle zone and even two-wheelers are not allowed to enter the fair. VIP passes have also been cancelled and a one-way traffic system has been implemented to streamline the movement of devotees.

Vehicles from neighbouring districts of Prayagraj are being stopped at the district borders to reduce congestion.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender No. : SDSTE-TELECOM-GEARS-25, dated 29.01.2025.
Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, DRM Building, near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 invites Open e-Tenders against **Tender No. SDSTE-TELECOM-GEARS-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. **Name of Work:** Rehabilitation of Telecom Gears for improving reliability of the telecom assets over Howrah. **Bidding System:** Single Packet. **Advised Value:** ₹ 2,24,52,220.18. **Earnest Money/Bid Security:** ₹ 2,62,300.00. **Tender Document Cost:** ₹ 0.00. **Period of Completion:** 12 Months. **Validity of Offer:** 60 Days. **Date and Time of uploading Tender:** 29.01.2025 at 16:49 hrs. **Bidding Start Date:** 07.02.2025. **Tender Closing Date & Time:** 21.02.2025 at 15.00 hrs. The details are available at website www.ireps.gov.in HWH-574/2024-25 Tender Notices are also available at website www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at : [@EasternRailway](https://twitter.com/EasternRailway) [@easternrailwayheadquarter](https://www.facebook.com/easternrailwayheadquarter)

BARANAGAR MUNICIPALITY

87, DESH BANDHU ROAD (EAST), KOLKATA-700035
The Chairman invites e-Tenders (Online) for the work of 'Installation of Water Submersible Pump and Pipeline for Ladies Public Toilet in Rajabagan, Ward No.-03 under Baranagar Municipality (under BEUP Fund)'. NIT No.: WB/MAD / BM / PWD / NIT-103 (eBEP) / 2024-25 Dated: 30-01-2025. Tender ID No. 2025_MAD_809128_1. Bid submission of end date (online) is 10-02-2025 up to 6-00 P.M. For details please log on to www.wbtenders.gov.in and visit: www.baranagarmunicipality.org
Sd/-
Chairman

TENDER

An E-Tender has been published vide N.I.e.T No. 691 for 14 works under MDW. For detail information, bonafied contractors are requested to see the website wbtenders.gov.in up to 14-30 Hrs. on 15.02.2025.

Sd/-
Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

E-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Malda (Auction Conducting Officer), Malda Office Building, P.O.-Jhaljhalla, District : Malda, PIN-732102 (West Bengal) has published e-auction catalogue on www.ireps.gov.in for operation of Pay & Use Toilet lot at Munger and Pirpainti Stations over Malda Division. **Auction Catalogue No. : Pay-Use-02-2025. Auction Start : 14.02.2025 at 11:45 hours. (1) Lot No. : PnU-MLDT-MGR-Toi-37-24-1 and Station : Munger. (2) Lot No. : PnU-MLDT-PPT-Toi-34-24-1 and Station : Pirpainti.** Prospective bidders are requested to visit IREPS e-auction module for further details. MLD-206/2024-25
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at : [@EasternRailway](https://twitter.com/EasternRailway) [@easternrailwayheadquarter](https://www.facebook.com/easternrailwayheadquarter)

EASTERN RAILWAY

CANCELLATION OF TENDER

Open E-Tender No. SDSTE-EI-SHE-24-25, dated 15.01.2025 published earlier by Senior Divisional Sig. & Tele. Engineer-I, Eastern Railway, Howrah, DRM Building, Near Railway Station, Howrah-711101, to be opened on 06.02.2025, is hereby cancelled due to some technical reason.
HWH-575/2024-25
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
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Sd/-
Chairman

Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

Sd/-
Chairman

Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

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Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

Sd/-
Chairman

Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

Sd/-
Chairman

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Sd/-
Chairman

Block Dev. Officer
Jyognagar-1 Dev. Block
Baharu, South 24 Parganas

Sd/-
Chairman

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

e-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Asansol, Pin-713301 through IREPS portal vide website www.ireps.gov.in for awarding the contract. Details of which are as under : (A) Category of Auction : Commercial Publicity (Advertising). e-Auction Catalogue No. : ASN-ADVT-14-02. **Auction start date & time** : 14.02.2025, 14.00 hrs. **Name of station / Location / Train No. & SLR** : OOH : (i) At Jasidih : New circulating area. OSN : (i) At Dumka : Inside station, (ii) At Deoghar : Inside station. **Total 03 assets : No. of OOH assets : 01 and No. of OSN assets : 02. (B) Category of Auction** : Misc. Static Services Category. e-Auction Catalogue No. : ASN-MSS-MEDICAL. **Auction start date & time** : 14.02.2025, 11.30 hrs. **Name of station / Location / Train No. & SLR** : Misc. Static Services : Medical Store at Jasidih, Madhupur and Raniganj station. **Total No. of assets : 03.** All prospective bidders are advised to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in for full details and to participate against the above mentioned e-Auction as per schedule given. ASN-313/2024-25
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at : [@EasternRailway](https://twitter.com/EasternRailway) [@easternrailwayheadquarter](https://www.facebook.com/easternrailwayheadquarter)

West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited (WBFDCL), KB-19, Sector-III, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700106.

ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE

The undersigned publishes NITs on behalf of EOM, GPW, WBFDCL and DCE, URF Division as follows:

NIT No.	Name of Project	Bid Submission Start Date	Last Date of Bid Submission
68/GPW/WBFDCL/2024-25 (2nd Call)	Creation and Maintenance of Babla Plantation at the slopes of Embankments at identified places (over 2,00,000 sq.mtr or 20 Ha.).	31.01.2025	15.02.2025

Details of NITs can be seen at www.wbtenders.gov.in and www.wbfccl.com
Sd/-
DM, KFCB, WBFDCL

Government of Rajasthan

Office of Chief Medical & Health Officer, Pali (Raj)

E-Mail ID : cmho-pal-rj@nic.in E-Mail ID : nuhmpali@gmail.com
Sr. No./NHM/DrugSupply/2025

Notice Inviting E-Bid

E-Bids for Medicine and Consumable supply at CMHO office Pali through rate contract are invited from interested bidders upto 07-02-2025. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>) of the State.

UBN No. MHS2425GLRC04597

DIPRC/912/2025

Chief Medical & Health Officer, Pali

TPWODL

TP WESTERN ODISHA DISTRIBUTION LIMITED

Corporate Office : Burla, Dist.-Sambalpur, Pin-768017 (Odisha)
Website : www.tpwodl.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

T. Notice No. TPWODL/VP/O/SU/035 Date : 31.01.2025

TP Western Odisha Distribution Limited, invites tender quotations (in 2 part bidding) from eligible vendors for the following package :

Rate Contract for Supply of GI Flats.

Interested bidders to submit Tender Participation Fee and Authorization Letter through email on or before 8th February 2025, 15:00 Hrs, after which the link from e-Tender system shall be shared.

For detailed tender documents of the above-mentioned tender, please visit Tender section on website : www.tpwesternodisha.com. Further details for participating in tender is given in the tender document.

All future correspondence regarding the tender, bid submission, bid submission date extension etc. will take place with the participating bidders only through E-Tender system.

Sd /- Head-Contracts and Procurement

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

Public Works Department P.W. Division, Panvel

Telephone No. 022-27452778

E-Tender Notice No. 83 (Open ONLINE) Year-2024-25

E-mail address: panvel.ee@mahapwd.gov.in

Fax Number: 022-27467440

Executive Engineer, P.W. Division Panvel, invite B-1 Tender from Registered Contractor with Govt. of Maharashtra. Detail Tender Notice available on www.mahapwd.gov.in and www.mahatenders.gov.in portal.

Note: Total 1 work include in Tender Notice.

Online Tender Download & Bid Preparation Period: Date 30-01-2025 at 10-00 A.M. to Date 23-02-2025, 18-00 hrs.

Online tender bid preparation last date: 23-02-2025 at 18-00 hrs.

E-Tender/O.No./P.W./PNL/ Dy. Executive Engineer

Office of the Executive Engineer P.W. Division

Public Work Division, Panvel Panvel

Dist.: Raigad

Date:

DGIPR/ROC-6004/24-25

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

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Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at : [@EasternRailway](https://twitter.com/EasternRailway) [@easternrailwayheadquarter](https://www.facebook.com/easternrailwayheadquarter)

West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited (WBFDCL), KB-19, Sector-III, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700106.

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Details of NITs can be seen

Israel balks at prisoner release after hostage handover chaos

Hamas frees 8 hostages, including female Israeli soldier, 5 Thai nationals; Israel to release 110 prisoners

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KHAN YOUNIS, 30 JANUARY

Hamas-led militants freed eight hostages on Thursday as part of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, but the chaotic handover of some of the captives, who were shuttled through a rowdy crowd of thousands by masked militants, drew an angry protest from Israel. Israel's plans to release 110 Palestinian prisoners later in the day were put on hold by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who demanded that mediators assure the safe exit for hostages going forward. He said later that he had received that commitment, and Israeli media reported the releases would go ahead. Hamas released seven of the hostages in front of the

destroyed home of its slain leader, Yahya Sinwar, as thousands pressed in. The militant group called it a "message of determination," but it triggered the latest in a series of disputes that have sent US and Arab mediators scrambling to patch up the truce. The ceasefire is aimed at eventually ending the deadliest and most destructive war ever fought between Israel and Hamas, and securing the release of dozens of hostages abducted in the militant group's 7 October 2023, attack that ignited the war. The first hostage - female soldier Agam Berger, 20 - was released after Hamas paraded her in front of a smaller crowd in the heavily destroyed urban Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza. Hours later, a chaotic scene unfolded at a handover of the other seven in the



southern city of Khan Younis. Hundreds of militants from Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group arrived with a convoy, and thousands of people gathered to watch, some from the tilted rooftops of bombed-out buildings. Footage showed hostage Arbel Yehoud, 29, looking stunned as masked militants hustled her through the

shouting crowd, pushing people back. Also released were Gadi Moses, an 80-year-old Israeli man, and five Thai labourers, identified by Israel as Watchara Sriaoun, 33; Pongsak Tanna, 36; Sathi-an Suwankam, 35; Bannawat Seathao, 27; and Surasak Lamnau, 32. A number of foreign workers were taken along with

dozens of Israeli civilians and soldiers during Hamas' attack. Twenty-three Thais were among more than 100 hostages released during a weeklong ceasefire in November 2023. Israel says three Thais remain in captivity, two of whom are believed to be dead. Yehoud had been at the centre of a dispute earlier this week over the sequence in which the hostages would be released. The United States, Egypt and Qatar, which brokered the ceasefire after a year of tough negotiations, resolved it with an agreement that Yehoud would be released with the others on Thursday. Prime Minister Netanyahu condemned the "shocking scenes" and called on international mediators to ensure the safety of hostages in future releases.

While signing Laken Riley Act, Trump says he'll send 'worst criminal aliens' to Guantanamo



AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, 30 JANUARY

President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed the Laken Riley Act into law, giving federal authorities broader power to deport immigrants in the U.S. illegally who have been accused of crimes. He also announced at the ceremony that his administration planned to send the "worst criminal aliens" to a detention centre in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The bipartisan act, the first piece of legislation approved during Trump's

second term, was named for Riley, a 22-year-old Georgia nursing student who was slain last year by a Venezuelan man in the U.S. illegally. "She was a light of warmth and kindness," Trump said during a ceremony that included Riley's parents and sister. "It's a tremendous tribute to your daughter what's taking place today, that's all I can say. It's so sad we have to be doing it." Trump has promised to drastically increase deportations, but he also said at the signing that some of the people being sent back to

their home countries couldn't be counted on to stay there. "Some of them are so bad that we don't even trust the countries to hold them because we don't want them coming back, so we're gonna send 'em out to Guantanamo," Trump said. He said that he'd direct federal officials to get facilities in Cuba ready to receive immigrant criminals. "We have 30,000 beds in Guantanamo to detain the worst criminal aliens threatening the American people," the president said. The White House announced a short time later that Trump had signed a presidential memorandum on Guantanamo. Migrant rights groups quickly expressed dismay. "Guantanamo Bay's abusive history speaks for itself and in no uncertain terms will put people's physical and mental health in jeopardy," Stacy Su, program director of Detention Watch Network, said in a statement.

A Russian drone strikes an apartment building in Ukraine, killing at least 4

AGENCIES
KYIV, 30 JANUARY

A Russian drone blasted a hole in an apartment building in north-eastern Ukraine during a night-time attack, killing at least four people and injuring nine others, officials said Thursday. The Shahed drone blew out a wall and surrounding windows in the apartment block in Sumy, a major city, just after 1 a.m., the Sumy regional administration said. Four people were rescued from the rubble, and a child was among the injured, it said, adding that 120 people were evacuated. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called it "a terrible tragedy, a terrible Russian crime."



The war between Russia and Ukraine, which enters its fourth year next month and shows no signs of ending, has killed more than 10,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United Nations. Civilians have also endured hardship caused by Russian attacks on the power grid that have denied

them heating and running water. Many have been evacuated from areas along the roughly 1,000-kilometre (600-mile) front line where Ukrainian defenses are straining to hold the bigger Russian army at bay. The fighting has been especially fierce in recent times in the eastern Donetsk

region, which Russian forces partly occupy and appear bent on capturing completely in coming months. A Russian artillery strike on the Donetsk city of Kramatorsk injured eight people, including two young children, Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin wrote on his Telegram channel Thursday. "Anyone who still remains in the Donetsk region is putting themselves in mortal danger," Filashkin said. "Take care of yourself! Evacuate." Russia launched more than 80 drones at Ukraine overnight, the air force reported, in what are common nighttime barrages. Most of the drones were shot down or stopped by electronic jamming, it said.

Trump White House rescinds memo freezing federal money after widespread confusion

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, 30 JANUARY

President Donald Trump's budget office on Wednesday rescinded a memo freezing spending on federal loans and grants, less than two days after it sparked widespread confusion and legal challenges across the country. The memo, which was issued Monday by the Office of Management and Budget, had frightened states, schools and organisations that rely on trillions of dollars from Washington. Administration officials said the pause was necessary to review whether spending

aligned with Trump's executive orders on issues like climate change and diversity, equity and inclusion programs. But on Wednesday, they sent out a two-sentence notice rescinding the original memo. The reversal was the latest sign that even with unified control of Washington, Trump's plans to dramatically and rapidly reshape the government have limits. Administration officials insisted that despite the confusion, their actions still had the intended effect by underscoring to federal agencies their obligations to abide by Trump's executive orders. "The Executive Orders



issued by the President on funding reviews remain in full force and effect and will be rigorously implemented by all agencies and departments," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt (photo) said, blaming the confusion on the courts and news outlets, not the administration. "This action should effectively end the court case

and allow the government to focus on enforcing the President's orders on controlling federal spending." The vaguely worded order, legal pause and eventual cancellation left organisations confused and worried again about what might be next. Nourishing Hope, which runs foods pantries, home meal delivery and an online food market in Chicago, gets roughly 20 per cent of its food budget comes from the federal government. CEO Kellie O'Connell said the biggest issue when the memo surfaced was getting clear and accurate information so they could figure out how to plan for the coming months.

Congo's leader calls for massive military mobilisation as Rwanda-backed rebels expand their control

AGENCIES
GOMA, 30 JANUARY

Congo's leader called on young people to massively enlist in the army to help fight Rwanda-backed rebels who were attempting to seize more territory in the country's east as a crucial meeting of neighbours asked the Congolese government to talk with the rebels. Rwanda's leader also threatened to "deal" with any confrontation from South Africa regarding the conflict. In his first public remarks since the M23 rebels advanced into eastern Congo's largest city, Goma, on Monday, President Félix Tshisekedi late Wednesday vowed "a vigorous and coordinated response" to push back the rebels while reaffirming his commitment to a peaceful resolution. "Enlist massively in the army because you are the spearhead of our country," he urged young people. The M23 rebels in eastern Congo are backed by some 4,000 troops from neighbours ing Rwanda, according to U.N. experts, far more than in 2012 when they first captured Goma. They are one of more than 100 armed groups vying for control in Congo's mineral-rich east, which holds vast deposits estimated to be worth \$24 trillion and critical to much of the world's technology. After capturing much of Goma, a humanitarian hub critical for the more than 6 million people displaced by the conflict in eastern Congo, witnesses said Thursday morning that the rebels were advancing towards South Kivu's provincial capital Bukavu, causing fear and panic among residents. The rebels faced resistance from the Congolese military weakened after hundreds of foreign military contractors withdrew and handed over their arms to the rebels.

Rebels leader named interim president: The Syrian factions that toppled President Bashar Assad last month named former rebel leader Ahmad al-Sharaa as the country's interim president on Wednesday. ■ AGENCIES

NOTICE
That my client Vikash Kumar Kedia son of Bajrang Lal Kedia, residing at 69, Merlin Jaba Kusum, 28A, S.N. Roy Road, New Alipore, Kolkata : 700036 had lost Original Deed registered in the office of D.S.R Howrah and recorded in Book No. 1 and being No. 2779 for the year 2006 and also lodged a General Diary in Alipore Police Station vide G. D. Entry No. 833 dated 09-12-2013. Any person having any claim, share, right, title, interest, concerning the matter or any objection whatsoever must notify the same to the undersigned with supporting documentary evidence, within 03 days from this date where after the claim if any shall be deemed to be waived and no further claim shall be entertained.
Pallavi Karmakar
Advocate
Ph.no: 9007824957

NOTICE (Walk-in Interview)						
In terms of Memo No. 1704-LA-3M-07/06 dated 06-06-2006 of the Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal, applications in plain paper are invited from the Retired Government Employees (Surveyor) for engagement on contractual basis for different Land Acquisition Projects in the District of Malda. Details of the required post is given below:						
Sl.No.	Name of Post	No. of Post	Eligibility	Maximum Age limit	Last date of submission of application	Date & Time of Interview
1.	L.A. Surveyor	01	Retired Govt. Employee with working experience in L.A. / L.R. Setup	65 Years as on 01-01-2025	11-02-2025	12-02-2025 at 1-00 P.M.
Place of submission of application			: Land Acquisition Section, Malda.			
Venue of Interview			: New Annexed Administrative Building (3rd Floor), Malda			
Terms & Conditions			: Office of the District Land & Land Reforms Officer, Malda Rammagar Kachari, Malda.			
No T.A. / D.A. will be allowed for attending the interview.			: Contract for 1 (one) year likely to be renewed up to 65 years of age as per requirement.			
Memo No. 99/DICO/MLD, Dt. 30-01-2025			Sd/- Additional District Magistrate (L.A.) MALDA			

Form No. 3
See Regulation-15(1)(a) / 16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL KOLKATA (DRT 3)
8th Floor, Jeevan Sudha Building
42-C, Jawahar Lal Nehru Road
Kolkata - 700071
Case No.: OA/115/2024
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
Ext. No. : 4795
BANK OF BARODA VS M/S NEHA ENTERPRISE AND ORS.
To
(1) **M/s Neha Enterprise And Ors.**, Ideal Tower, Block-B, Flat No. 9H, 57, Diamond Harbour Road, Opposite Calcutta Hospital, CMRI, Ekbalpur, Kolkata, South Twenty Four Parganas, West Bengal - 700023, also at 8, Abanindra Nath Thakur Sarani, Ground Floor, Room No. 26, P.S. Shakespear Sarani, Kolkata - 700017
(2) **Mrs. Ishan Jalan**, 57, Diamond Harbour Road, Opp. Calcutta Hospital, CMRI, Ekbalpur, Kolkata - 700023
(3) **Sneha Tarewal**, Block-B, 5th Floor, 190, G T Road, P.O. Salikia, P.S. Malipanchghara, Howrah, Pin-711106
SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/115/2024 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/ Registrar on 22.08.2024.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under Section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of **Rs. 60,36,776.46** (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.
You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 10.01.2025 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 29.08.2024.
Signature of the Officer authorised to issue summons
Sd/-
Registrar-in-Charge
Kolkata Debts Recovery Tribunal-3

KOLKATA DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL No. 1
Jeevan Sudha Building, 9th Floor
42C, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Kolkata - 700 071
Case No. : RC No. 141 of 2022
arising out of OA / 50 / 2020
Union Bank of India - Vs - M/s. Swastik Oil Refinery Pvt. Ltd. & Ors.
SALE NOTICE
Pursuant to the Order No. 18 dt. 29.01.25 Passed by Ld. Recovery Officer, DRT-1, Kolkata there will be sale of the Immovable Properties as mentioned below "AS IS WHERE IS AND WHATEVER IS BASIS".

Properties	Reserve Price
Property of the CD No. 5 : EMDT of all that piece & parcel of Land with partly boundary wall admeasuring 05 Cottahs more or less lying and situated at Mouza - Madurdaha, J.L. No. 12, under Touzi No. 2998, comprising C.S. Khatian No. 133, C.S. Dag No. 448, R.S. Khatian No. 188 of R.S. Dag No. (P), P.S. formerly Tollygunge, then Kasba, at present Tiljala within the limit of KMC, covered under the Title Deed No. 4676 of 1992, dated 13.03.1992 in the name of the CD No. 5, butted and bounded by : On the North : Plot No. L/P-36, On the South : 20' ft. wide Road, On the East : Plot No. L/P-33 & 34, On the West : 20' ft. wide Road.	Reserve Price of the property: Rs. 1,23,00,000.00 (Rupees One Crore Twenty Three Lakh only) EMD, 10% of Reserve Price Rs. 12,30,000.00 (Rupees Twelve Lakh Thirty Thousand only).
Property of the CD No. 6 : EMDT of all that piece & parcel of Land with partly boundary wall admeasuring 05 Cottahs more or less lying and situated at Mouza - Madurdaha, J.L. No. 12, C.S. Dag No. 448, C.S. Khatian No. 133, R.S. Dag No. 455 (P), R.S. Khatian No. 188, Touzi No. 2998, Anandapur, P.O. - East Kolkata Township, P.S. - Anandapur (formerly Kasba), Kolkata - 700 107, within limit of Ward No. 107, KMC, District : 24 Parganas (South), which has been covered under the registered Deed No. 4677/1992, dated 13.03.1992 in the state of West Bengal in the name of CD No. 6, butted and bounded by : On the North : Plot No. L/P-38, On the South : Plot No. L/P-35, On the East: Plot No. L/P-33 & 34, On the West : 20' ft. wide Road.	Reserve Price of the property: Rs. 1,23,00,000.00 (Rupees One Crore Twenty Three Lakh only) EMD, 10% of Reserve Price Rs. 12,30,000.00 (Rupees Twelve Lakh Thirty Thousand only).

Note : Total Land Area is 10 Cottahs purchased through two deeds (05 Cottahs each deed) and 2.13125 Cottahs out of 10 Cottahs in Municipal Road at present (10 ft.) accordingly total area is approximately 7.6567 Cottahs more or less.
The sale will be done through e-auction. The intending purchasers will have to deposit an earnest money for an amount of 10% of the reserve price in the manner required for taking part in e-auction which shall be adjusted in the case of successful bidder and refunded to other bidders on the date of sale itself. Successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the sale proceeds after adjustment of EMD, on being knocked down, by next date i.e. by 3:00 P.M. after conclusion of the e-auction, failing which the earnest money deposited shall be forfeited. The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds within 15 days from the date of auction sale. The reserve price below which the property(ies) shall not be sold is indicated against the property as the reserve price. EMD / further payment should be made through DD in the name of **Recovery Officer, DRT-1, Kolkata**.
Notice is hereby given that in the absence of any order of postponement, the said property shall be sold by way of online Auction (e-auction) which will be conducted on **05.03.2025 between 2 P.M. to 3 P.M. with 3 minutes unlimited extension e-auction** platform at the prospective bidder is required to download the Sale Proclamation and sale notice from <https://drt.auctiontiger.net>, of M/s. E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (Auctiontiger), at B-704, Wall Street - II, Opp. Orient Club, Ahmedabad - 380 006, Gujarat, Contact Mr. Ram Sharma, Mob. : 80000 23297, email-id : support@auctiontiger.net & ramprasad@auctiontiger.net and register their names for participating in the auction with earnest money through Demand Draft in favour of **Recovery Officer, DRT-1, Kolkata payable at Kolkata** so as to reach the Tribunal on or before **03.03.2025 before 01:00 P.M.** The participants / intending purchasers are necessarily required to submit following documents / papers for registration because only registered participants / intending purchasers can login and participate in the E-auction (Note : Only Hardcopy of the documents will be entertained by this Tribunal).
1. Bid and Bid declaration form
2. Self attested copy of Pan Card and Aadhar Card.
3. Self attested Valid Residential proof.
4. Self attested Valid E-mail ID and Mobile No.
5. In case of Company go through the Sale Proclamation Notice.
However the undersigned will not be responsible for any error occurred through network at the time of Auction.
The user ID and password will be directly sent to Registered Participants / Intending purchasers with further directions, if any, for login and participating in the the auction through on-line. The other terms and conditions are same as per proclamation of sale issued by the undersigned on 29.01.2025.
The intending purchasers or representatives should contact **Mr. Ajay Kumar Burmal, Chief Manager, Union Bank of India, Assets Recovery Branch, Mobile No. 91110 13755, E-mail ID : ubn0554731@unionbankofindia.bank** for details & inspection.
Note : The Intending Purchasers are mandatorily required to submit physical copy of bid form before the Tribunal by 03.03.2025 before 01.00 P.M.
Sd/- Recovery Officer
Debts Recovery Tribunal No. 1
Kolkata
Date : 29th Day of January'25



THUMBNAILS

Collaboration between DFB, TCG Digital: There is strategic partnership between Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB), the governing body of football in Germany, and global technological pioneers TCG Digital. This innovation, featuring live translated commentaries in multiple languages, will soon be unveiled, offering football enthusiasts an enhanced viewing experience. Soon, Indian football fans will enjoy a similar experience, with matches featuring live AI-powered commentary in regional languages.

BoB's stall: Bank of Baroda's Bhubaneswar Region has exhibited a stall at Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 held at Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar from 28 to 30 January 2025.

Jan Aushadhi shines at trade fair: Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI) participated in the 14th edition of the East Himalayan Trade Fair (EHTF) at Chandmari, Guwahati, Assam, from 23 to 29 January and exhibited Jan Aushadhi stall model. As Northeast India's biggest trade fair, organised by ITPO in association with the Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Assam, the event served as a key platform to promote affordable, high-quality medicines.

Toyota sells 10.8 mn vehicles in 2024



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Toyota Motor remained the world's top-selling automaker for a fifth straight year in 2024 selling 10.8 million vehicles. Last year, the Japanese automaker posted a 3.7 per cent drop in global group unit sales including those of compact car maker Daihatsu and truck unit Hino Motors. It was largely due to a steep slump in sales in Japan where the automaker faced fallout from governance issues over certification test procedures, especially at Daihatsu. Sales of Toyota's parent-

Stock markets extend gains for third session

Optimism prevailed ahead of the Union Budget & the RBI monetary policy meeting



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Stock markets closed higher on Thursday extending their rebound for a third consecutive session. Optimism prevailed ahead of the Union Budget on Saturday and the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy meeting next week. At close, the Sensex gained 0.3 per cent (226.85 points) to 76,759.81, while the Nifty rose 0.3 per cent (86.4 points) to 23,249.5. Throughout the trading day, Nifty reached a high of 23322.05 and a low of 23139.2

while the Sensex traded within the range of 76962.88 and 76401.13. On Nifty, the gainers were Bharat Electronics (4.32 per cent), Power Grid Corporation of India (2.61 per cent), Hero Motocorp (2.59 per cent), Bharti Airtel (2.52 per cent), and Cipla (2.35 per cent).

On the losing side were Tata Motors (7.40 per cent), Adani Enterprises (2.85 per cent), Shriram Finance (2.75 per cent), Bajaj Finserv (2.52 per cent), and Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone (1.81 per cent).

Bank Nifty concluded at 49165.95, recording an intraday high of 49426.2 and a low of

49031.8. Bharti Airtel, Power Grid Corporation of India, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India, Mahindra & Mahindra were some of the gainers on Sensex while Tata Motors, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Wipro were on the losing side.

Among the sectors, with Nifty FMCG, Healthcare, Financial Services, Pharma, and OMCs indices ended higher by up to 1.55 per cent. Nifty IT index ended lower by 1.14 per cent dragged down by Coference and Mphasis.

Nifty Auto, Metal, PSU Bank, and Consumer Durables indices ended down by up

to 1.84 per cent. Among the broader markets, the Nifty Smallcap 100 index gained 0.12 per cent, while the Nifty Midcap 100 index edged lower by a marginal 0.01 per cent. The fear index, India VIX, which measures volatility in the markets, ended up 6.70 per cent at 17.39 points.

Among the individual performers, SpiceJet shares gained over 3 per cent after the airline was assigned a 'BB-' rating with a stable outlook by CARE Ratings.

Bajaj Finance shares climbed 6 per cent, reaching a record high of Rs 8,250.65. Shares of Suzlon Energy rose by about 5 per cent, extending gains for a third consecutive day. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares have declined following a senior retail banking executive has resigned.

On the global front, European stocks and US futures advanced as investors awaited Apple Inc.'s earnings and a potential European Central Bank (ECB) rate cut.

The Stoxx 600 rose 0.4 per cent, Nasdaq 100 futures climbed 0.8 per cent, and S&P 500 contracts gained 0.5 per cent.

Economic Survey to be presented today, setting tone for Budget 2025



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

The Narendra Modi-led NDA government is set to table the Economic Survey in the Parliament on Friday afternoon. As is the convention, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will table the pre-budget detailed state of the economy document in the Parliament, a day ahead of the Budget presentation for the next financial year - 2025-26.

The Economic Survey will be tabled in the Lok Sabha at 12 noon and at 2 p.m. in Rajya Sabha.

The Economic Survey document, prepared by the Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and formulated under the supervision of the chief economic adviser, gives insights into the state of the economy and various indicators of 2024-25 (April-March) and some outlook for the next fiscal. The Economy Survey may

also give some idea about the tone and texture of the actual Budget for 2025-26, to be presented on Saturday.

The most important feature that many will look out for is its central theme.

In 2022, the central theme was 'Agile Approach', which emphasised India's economic response to the Covid-19 pandemic shock. In 2023, it was 'recovery complete', when the economy staged a broad-based recovery from pandemic-induced contraction, Russian-Ukraine conflict, and inflation, and ascended to the pre-pandemic growth path. In 2024, it focussed on economic resilience.

All eyes will be on the key announcements and the government's forward-looking economic guidance for the remainder of the Modi 3.0 tenure. This upcoming budget comes against the backdrop of weak GDP numbers and weak consumption in the economy.

With this upcoming Budget Presentation, Sitharaman will

have presented seventh budget. She has already surpassed the record set by former Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who presented five annual budgets and one interim budget between 1959 and 1964 as finance minister.

Like the previous few full Union Budgets, the Budget 2025 will also be delivered in paperless form.

The Indian economy grew by 5.4 per cent in real terms in the July-September quarter of the current financial year 2024-25. The quarterly growth was quite lower than RBI's forecast of 7 per cent. In the April-June quarter too, India's GDP grew at a slower pace than was estimated by its central bank.

The Reserve Bank in its latest monetary policy had cut India's growth forecast for 2024-25 to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent. The government expects 6.4 per cent growth.

India's GDP grew by an impressive 8.2 per cent during the financial year 2023-24, and continued to be the fastest-growing major economy. The economy grew by 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22. The Economic Survey tabled in July 2024 "conservatively" projected India's real GDP growth at 6.5-7 per cent for 2024-25, acknowledging that market expectations were higher. Real GDP growth is the reported economic growth adjusted for inflation.

Bank of Baroda posts 5.6 pc rise in Q3 profit

MUMBAI, 30 JANUARY

State-run Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Thursday reported a 5.6 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase in its net profit for the third quarter of the financial year 2024-25 (Q3 FY25). The bank's net profit stood at Rs 4,837 crore, up from Rs 4,579 crore in the same quarter last year.

The bank's net interest income (NII), which represents the difference between interest earned and interest paid, rose by 2.8 per cent YoY to Rs 11,417 crore, compared to Rs 11,101 crore in the year-ago period. For the first nine months of the financial year (9MFY25), Bank of Baroda's net profit grew by 12.6 per cent to Rs 14,533 crore. The bank's operating profit in Q3 FY25 stood at Rs 7,664 crore, a 9.3 per cent YoY growth, according to its stock exchange filing.

Adani Ports & SEZ's Q3 FY25 profit after tax up by 14 pc YoY to ₹2,520 cr

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 30 JANUARY

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone's (APSEZ) consolidated net profit rose by 14.12 per cent to Rs 2,520.26 crore based on a 15.07 per cent increase in revenue from operations to Rs 7,963.55 crore in Q3 FY25 over Q3 FY24, according to a company statement issued here on Thursday.

Its profit before exceptional items and tax gained 11.17 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 3,047.72 crore in the quarter ended 31 December 2024. The company had reported an exceptional loss of Rs 27.85 crore in Q3 FY25.

APSEZ's Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA excluding forex) jumped 15 per cent to Rs 4,802 crore in the quarter of FY25, compared to Rs 4,186 crore registered in Q3 FY24.

Domestic ports contributed Rs 5,534 crore to



EBITDA, while the contribution of logistics was at Rs 529 crore. APSEZ claimed that with 70 per cent domestic port EBITDA margins, it is one of the most profitable port operators globally.

During the quarter, APSEZ recorded a cargo volume of 113 million metric tonnes (MMT), registering growth of 4 per cent YoY.

APSEZ stated that it has revised its FY25 EBITDA guidance upwards to Rs 18,800 to Rs 18,900 crore, from the earlier range of Rs 17,000 to Rs 18,000 crore.

November last, the port reached another significant milestone by handling 396 vessels and executing 845 vessel movements, making it the highest ever monthly achievement.

The company's operating revenue grew by 14 per cent YoY to Rs 22,590 crore, while its revenue from ports jumped 11 per cent YoY to Rs 17,172 crore and its logistics revenue increased by 22 per cent to Rs 1,852 crore in 9M FY25.

APSEZ has also successfully completed the acquisition of a 95 per cent stake in Gopalpur Port, in Odisha, strengthening its presence along the eastern coast of India. As a deep-draft, multi-cargo port, Gopalpur Port plays a significant role in supporting the growth of mineral-based industries in its hinterland.

APSZ has also acquired an 80 per cent stake in the Astro Offshore Group, aligning with its strategy to expand its footprint in the global

marine services market.

APSEZ's whole-time Director & CEO Ashwani Gupta said: "I am excited to share the fantastic momentum we have achieved during 9M FY25, driven by exceptional execution across three key areas of our business - market share gains coupled with volume-price mix increase, traction in logistics vertical, and operational efficiencies along with technology-led gains. On the logistics front, we launched a new trucking platform, which is being integrated across the rest of the logistics value chain and will make us a true integrated transport utility. We have also upgraded our FY25 EBITDA forecast to Rs 18,800 to 18,900 crores. Moreover, it is incredibly gratifying to be recognised by S&P Global CSA as one of the Top 10 companies globally in the transport industry. This prestigious recognition reflects our focus on imbining sustainability across our operations."

‘Air pollution is an insidious threat to cardiovascular health, contributing to global public health crisis’

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, 30 JANUARY

With more than four decades of experience, he is known as an expert in performing Angioplasties, Mitral Balloon Dilations, Peripheral Vascular and Carotid Interventions. As President-Elect of Cardiological Society of India (CSI), he has his priorities well cut-out—to educate and economically empower patients. He minces no word in admitting that Bengal's ambitious and much-hyped Swastha Sathi scheme have worked wonders in economically empowering patients from even the most vulnerable section of the society. 'Even a rickshaw-puller or a small sabjiwala can now avail of the best treatment and the best hospitals. That's the beauty,' he says. Some of the health schemes at the national level have also come in handy. Speaking to The Statesman, Dr Dhiman Kahali, Director of Interventional Cardiology, B.M Birla Heart Research Centre and President-elect of Cardiological Society of India, delves at length on wide-ranging issues—from heart diseases caused by air pollution, lifestyle aspects and the most modern treatment facilities that are coming up.

Excerpts:

Q: Pollution and air pollution, in general, is a hot topic now. Air pollution is increasingly recognised as a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease, contributing to a global public health crisis.

What do you have to say about it? How does air pollution affect cardiovascular health?

A: Actually, fine particulate matter (PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and other pollutants have been linked to the development and worsening of conditions such as heart attacks, stroke, and chronic heart failure. Prolonged exposure to these harmful substances can lead to inflammation, oxidative stress, and vascular damage, ultimately compromising heart health. Air pollution is an insidious threat to cardiovascular health, affecting millions worldwide. Prolonged exposure to pollutants, such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide triggers systemic inflammation, oxidative stress, and endothelial dysfunction, ultimately leading to heart diseases. As the Director of Interventional Cardiology at BM Birla Heart Research Centre, I have witnessed an alarming rise in cases of coronary artery disease among younger patients, many of whom live in high-pollution areas. Mitigating this risk requires a multi-pronged approach—improving air quality, raising public awareness, and early detection of cardiovascular risks. Advances in interventions, including angioplasties and peripheral vascular treatments, can address the damage caused, but prevention remains paramount importance. Air pollution is not just an environmental issue; it's a public health emergency. We must act decisively to

protect the heart health of future generations.

Q: You mentioned about chronic heart failure. Could you please explain this? What causes this?

A: Chronic Heart Failure (HF) is defined as inability in the heart to pump adequate blood to the different tissues of the body to perform their normal activities. So it is failure of the heart with broader connotations. Many patients, even young patients that we see today, complain about shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing. The complaints of shortness of breath or heaviness in the chest, fullness of the abdomen, edema of the legs, facial fluffiness are very common. These patients tell us: "Sir, previously I used to walk 4 to 5 km easily but now even after going 100 metres, I am getting out of breath." So these are the common symptoms apart from some chest heaviness, palpitation etc. HF is common. In the US also the number of such incidence is 60 to 70 lakh and within a few years it will touch one crore. The incidence of HF is more in women than in men, because of the increased lifespan of the women and it is increasing in the society because of the fact that our longevity is also increasing and there are several comorbidity conditions in the elderly population. There are three-four types of heart failure. No. 1- heart failure with the reduced rejection fraction where the heart doesn't pump



efficiently and the heart is dilated and it doesn't contract properly. So this is a very ominous disease and you know HF with preserve rejection fraction denotes where the heart failure is there but associated with the normal pumping function of the heart. But the complaints of the left ventricle or the left heart are less where blood doesn't come normally from the left atrium to the left ventricle because of increase in the stiffness of the heart. It occurs in cases of diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, atrial fibrillation, hypertension, heart diseases and so on. 3rd is mid ejection fraction. This occurs due to inefficient blood pump and it is called heart failure in the mid ejection

fraction. There can be 4th type of HF, which occurs with improved ejection fraction. This means the ejection fraction was 20 to 25 per cent and improved to 50-60 per cent sometimes. We should remember in this case that patients with improved ejection fraction, should not be indulged in having plenty of food or large quantity of food.

Q: There is also ischemic disease, right? What are the causes?

A: Coming to the causes of ischemic disease, it is one of the heart diseases, which is very common in our country. Hypertension and hypertensive heart disease is second common cause and then rheumatic heart disease. Rheumatic

heart disease is a condition in which the heart valves have been permanently damaged by rheumatic fever. Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory disease that can affect many connective tissues, especially in the heart. Untreated or under-treated strep infections put a person at increased risk. Though the number or instances of rheumatic heart disease is decreasing across many parts of the world, it is still rampant in our society and there are still a large number of rheumatic heart disease patients.

Q: So it is very important to identify the exact cause of HF. Isn't it?

A: Yes, while diagnosing HF, it is important to diagnose, whether it is the shortness of breath or chronic obstructive lung disease. So that's very important and we can differentiate the two in many ways, like a bedside echocardiogram, by x-ray of the chest, and also NT pro B, NP pro. These two are very sensitive and if they are elevated, that indicates symptoms and signs of heart failure. And it is very important to diagnose or differentiate from chronic obstructive lung disease because many of these patients have secondary lung disease and congestion in the lungs secondary to the primary pathology. So ischemic disease is very common and normally it occurs in the middle aged and elderly individuals. Ironically, in our country, we find it in lower age group patients as well. Sometimes we find that patients come with heart

attack even at the age of 21. Recently I came across and treated a patient of 21 years old and he had a heart attack. We also get many patients, who are in their prime age—early 30s or early 40s.

Q: It is also a lifestyle disease, right? And there is something called 'golden hour' in the context taking a patient to the doctor or hospital.....

A: Yes, I would like to mention here that our patients come to the emergency department of the hospital very late, and not as per recommendation - that is, within 2 to 3 hours, maximum. Sometimes, HFs are associated with obstructive sleep Apnea and for that, night sleep analysis is required. We, Indians, suffer from ischemic heart disease more than any other countries because of our very bad lifestyle modification measures like: we eat plenty and it contains deeply fried food like Luchi, Paratha and Samosa etc. And our food habit is not only bad, it also contains less of fibre, less of fresh fruit and vegetables and contains deeply fried foods. And then we do much less exercise. Majority of us do not go for exercise. And many of us smoke cigarettes and it is very common cause of heart attacks at a young age. Also, obesity is rampant in the society and many of us do not go for regular exercise, especially, cardiac training and that is very important. Many of our patients do not come immediately after heart attack to the hospital. They go here and there and go for finding

the doctor and if he is available then for the ECG machine. At times, they would like to believe that this is not from the heart. And all such dilly-dallies cause massive damage to the heart. Remember first 2-3 hours are called the Golden Hour. Unfortunately, many patients come much after that—sometimes, after 6 to 12 hours, that is after completely damaging the heart muscle. One must remember 50 per cent of the death caused by heart attacks can be avoided if patients are rushed to the hospital within the first 2-3 hours.

Q: Where does India stand vis-à-vis other developed and developing countries in terms of cardiac treatments?

A: I must say that the treatment is very robust now. There is what people call Sport Foundation Therapy. Then the medical treatment of chronic heart failure starts with a beta blockers, Diuretics as the cornerstone therapy. Then there is Mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists and they also reduce the mortality like the other two molecule significantly. Another group is Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors which are medications that help relax the veins and arteries to lower blood pressure. ACE inhibitors prevent an enzyme in the body from producing angiotensin II, a substance that narrows blood vessels. We have a new drug which is available in our country which improves with the heart muscle directly and it has lesser side effect.



Angad, Arshdeep in senior India hockey squad

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Hockey India on Thursday announced a 32-member men's squad ahead of the Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25, which will be held at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium.

Veteran drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will continue to lead the side with deputy Hardik Singh by his side. India will kickstart their campaign with matches against Spain, Germany, Ireland and England from 15 to 25 February, playing each team twice.

Impressive performances in the junior team and the ongoing Hockey India League have won 22-year-old Angad Bir Singh and 20-year-old Arshdeep Singh their first senior team call-ups for the upcoming FIH Pro League matches.

The squad includes first-choice goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak along with Suraj Karkera and Princedeep Singh. Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Captain Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Jugraj Singh, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, Varun Kumar and Yashdeep Siwach will be stationed in defence. In the midfield, the team features Rajkumar Pal, Shamsher Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vice Captain Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh and Rajinder Singh.

Playing in the attack will be Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Bobby Singh Dhami, Shilana and Lakra, Dilpreet Singh, Arajieet Singh Hundal, Uttam Singh and lastly, Angad Bir Singh and Arshdeep Singh make the cut.

Speaking on the squad selection, Indian Men's Team Head Coach Craig Fulton stated, "Extremely happy with the squad we have selected for the upcoming Bhubaneswar leg matches of the FIH Pro League 2024-25. I believe this team can win us games, perform in harmony, and most importantly, play an impressive brand of hockey. Looking forward to training with the players in the camp and starting our Pro League campaign on the right note."

"I have been scouting these players over the last few weeks and am excited to see what they do against some of the best international teams in the world," he added.

India squad:
Goalkeepers: Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Suraj Karkera, Princedeep Singh.

Defenders: Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Jugraj Singh, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, Varun Kumar, Yashdeep Siwach
Midfielders: Rajkumar Pal, Shamsher Singh, Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Rajinder Singh

Forwards: Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Angad Bir Singh, Bobby Singh Dhami, Shilana and Lakra, Dilpreet Singh, Arajieet Singh Hundal, Uttam Singh, Arshdeep Singh.

TENDER

e-TENDER NOTICE
OFFICE DAMDIM GRAM PANCHAYAT
Mal Development Block, Jalpaiguri
Notice Inviting e-Tender by the undersigned for different works vide NIT Nos. Publish of NIT No. eNIT-15 / DAMDIM GP / 2024-25, Dated 29-01-2025. For further information you may visit: <https://wbntenders.gov.in>
Sd/-
Pradhan
Damdin Gram Panchayat

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
Div. Rly. Manager, N.W.Rly. Bikaner for and on behalf of President of India invites open E-Tender for the following works up to 15:00 hours on 21.02.2025 as below:-
1) E-Tender Notice No.: 189, Name of Work with its Location: Suratgarh - Anupgarh - TRR (P) of 60kg-R260 for 43.251 Tkm under jurisdiction of ADEN/Suratgarh. Approx. cost of work: ₹ 6,78,83,897.23
2) E-Tender Notice No.: 191, Name of Work with its Location: Soft upgradation of Kalanwali railway station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme under ADEN/Sirsa. Approx. cost of work: ₹ 8,30,64,056.16
3) E-Tender Notice No.: 192, Name of Work with its Location: Soft upgradation of Kalanwali railway station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme under ADEN/Sirsa. Approx. cost of work: ₹ 5,65,300/-
Note: Other terms & conditions will be shown on the N.W.Rly. website www.nwrps.gov.in
135-AR/25
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Mumbai City FC, East Bengal aim to stay alive for playoffs

Having struggled throughout this season, both teams are struggling to qualify for the knockouts

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 30 JANUARY

Both Mumbai City FC and East Bengal FC will keen to retain their recent good form when they meet for an Indian Super League (ISL) clash at the Mumbai Football Arena on Friday.

The hosts must be pleased at returning to winning ways with a 3-0 triumph against Mohammedan SC last week.

They will aim to extend that stretch and stay amongst the playoff spots, since the team is currently placed sixth

with 27 points on the back of seven victories and six draws. The Petr Kratky-coached side has a chance to do a league double for the second time over the Red & Gold Brigade, having won the reverse fixture by 3-2 previously. However, Mumbai City FC haven't beaten them at home in the competition, even being unable to find the back of the net in both of their previous encounters against the Kolkata-based side in this stadium, losing and drawing once each. East Bengal FC, however, have struggled to find their feet

on the road this season. They have won just once in their last eight away games, drawing once and losing six times. Their last two away matches have given them 0-1 results against them. However, East Bengal FC's last game saw them bag a 2-1 win against Kerala Blasters FC, as they snapped their two-game goal drought.

Currently, the Red & Gold Brigade are at the 11th spot in the points table. They have won and drawn once in their previous five matches, losing thrice, and have 17 points from as many games. Trailing

the sixth-placed Islanders by 10 points, this is their chance to cut the gap in a direct contest and then hope to produce a winning run to make a late surge for the playoffs. Whether they succeed in doing so is something that remains to be seen, but they will take confidence from Mumbai City FC's recent 0-3 home losses to NorthEast United FC and Jamshedpur FC.

Defensively, Mumbai City FC have allowed the fewest touches (274) in their penalty area and conceded the least shots from inside the box (106). The team has kept six

clean sheets and given away 22 goals in ISL 2024-25.

However, the Islanders have not consistently been at the top of their game upfront. They scored the fourth-least goals in the ISL, netting 22 times, as Nikolaos Karelis leads the charts for them with nine strikes followed by Lallianzuala Chhangte at two goals.

After scoring eight goals and registering three assists last season, East Bengal striker Cleiton Silva has failed to find the back of the net even once in the current campaign.

Niko Kovac appointed new Borussia Dortmund manager

AGENCIES
DORTMUND, 30 JANUARY

Borussia Dortmund have appointed Niko Kovac as their new head coach, the Bundesliga club announced on Wednesday. The 53-year-old takes over from Nuri Sahin, who was dismissed on 22 January following a string of disappointing results in the Bundesliga and an early exit from the German Cup. Kovac, who previously managed Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg, has been out

of work since leaving Wolfsburg in March 2024. He now faces the task of revitalizing a struggling Dortmund side that currently sits 11th in the Bundesliga table with just seven wins from 19 games. In his first statement as Dortmund boss, Kovac expressed his excitement and determination to turn things around for the club. "All those responsible at BVB gave us a very good feeling during the talks, so I am convinced that we can achieve a lot together in the future."

Working Hours of Computerised Reservation Offices on the occasion of Saraswati Puja
All computerised reservation offices over Kolkata and Howrah area will function in the first shift only i.e. from 08:00 hrs. to 14:00 hrs. on 03.02.2025 (Monday) and will remain closed in the second shift i.e. from 14:00 hrs. to 20:00 hrs. on the occasion of "Saraswati Puja". However, current booking counters at Howrah, Sealdah and Kolkata Terminal will function as usual.
Dy. Chief Commercial Manager/DB
EASTERN RAILWAY
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वरीय पुलिस अधीक्षक का कार्यालय पूर्वी सिंहभूम, जमशेदपुर
लापता आन्वयक सूचना

मुमशुदा पुरुष करन मोराई, उम्र-22 वर्ष।
सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि आवेदक अजीत मोराई के द्वारा अपने पुत्र करन मोराई, उम्र-करीब 22 वर्ष को मुमशुदगी के संबंध में लिखित आवेदन दिया गया है। जिसमें आवेदक के द्वारा अपने पुत्र करन मोराई, उम्र-करीब 22 वर्ष, पिता-अजीत मोराई, पिता-वलखम बरती, घोड़ाबाया, थाना-मोविन्दपुर, जिला-पूर्वी सिंहभूम, जमशेदपुर जो दिनांक-13.01.2025 को करीब 01:30 बजे अपने घर से काफी दूरी के लिए मोटरसाइकिल से निकले थे लेकिन अपने घर वापस नहीं लौटे हैं। आवेदक एवं इनके परिवार के द्वारा अपने स्तर से काफी खोजबीन किया गया परन्तु कुछ पता नहीं चल सका है। मुमशुदा पुरुष का हलिया गिना प्रकार है :- उम्र-22 वर्ष, कद-05 फीट 06 इंच, पहनावा-नीला जोन्स और नीला जैकेट, भाषा-हिन्दी।
अतः आप सभी जन साधारण से अनुरोध है कि यदि उपरोक्त हलिये के संबंध में किसी प्रकार की जानकारी प्राप्त होती है तो इसकी सूचना वरीय पुलिस अधीक्षक के कार्यालय में निम्नांकित फोन नम्बर पर सूचित करें।
वरीय पुलिस अधीक्षक, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, जमशेदपुर
पुलिस अधीक्षक नगर, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, जमशेदपुर
पुलिस उपधीक्षक, नगर
थाना प्रभारी, मोविन्दपुर
PR 345433 Police(24-25)#D
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वरीय पुलिस अधीक्षक, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, जमशेदपुर

Commissioning of Auto Signalling for more Safety & Mobility
Non-Interlocking work at Ballygunge Jn. & Kankurgachi Road Jn. over Sealdah Division
Regulation of some Local Trains on Saturday & Sunday

For commissioning of Hot Standby Dual Visual Display Unit Electronic Interlocking system with two (02) nos. 65 inches VDU-Monitor to replace Old RRI Panel at Ballygunge Jn. and Kankurgachi Road Jn. with provision of Multi Section Digital Axle Counters (in place of Track Circuits) in connection with the commissioning of Automatic Section in between Ballygunge Jn. and Kankurgachi Road Jn. (Chord Line) in Sonarpur-Ballygunge Jn.-Kankurgachi Road Jn.-Dum Dum Jn. section of Sealdah Division, 52 hours Non-Interlocking work will be undertaken at Ballygunge Jn. from 00.00 hrs of 01.02.2025 (Saturday) to 04.00 hrs of 03.02.2025 (Monday) and 28 hours Non-Interlocking work will be undertaken at Kankurgachi Road from 00.00 hrs of 02.02.2025 (Sunday) to 04.00 hrs of 03.02.2025 (Monday). Consequently, arrangements in train operation will be as under :

ON SATURDAY (01.02.2025)	ON SUNDAY (02.02.2025)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● CANCELLATION : Sealdah-Baruipur Jn. : Up : 34611, 34613, 34617, 34621, 34623, 34601, 34625, 34627, 34629, 34649, 34633, 34651, 34637, 34639, 34643, 34645, 34647. Down : 34612, 34614, 34616, 34618, 34620, 34622, 34624, 34626, 34628, 34650, 34632, 34652, 34636, 34638, 34642, 34644. Sealdah-Sonarpur Jn.: Up : 34411, 34417, 34419, 34429, 34431. Down : 34412, 34414, 34416, 34418, 34432, 34434. BBD Bag-Baruipur Jn.: Up : 30451. Sealdah-BBD Bag : Up : 30411. Down: 30412, 30416. Canning-Barasat : Up : 33061. Champahati-Majerhat : Up : 30511. Majerhat-Ghutlari Sharif : Down : 30552. Madhyamgram-Majerhat : Up : 30357. Down : 30358. Sealdah-Barasat: Down : 33438. Sealdah-Naihati: Down : 31422, 31442. K Budge Budge-Naihati : Up : 31051, 31053, 31055.● SHORT TERMINATION/SHORT ORIGINATION : At New Alipore (Kolkata) : Up : 30111, 34165, 34111, 34113, 34115, 34117, 34119, 34121, 34123, 34125, 34127, 34129, 34133, 34137, 34141, 34167, 34145, 34149, 34151, 34153, 34155, 34161, 34163. Down : 30122, 34112, 34114, 34116, 34118, 34120, 34122, 34124, 34126, 34128, 34130, 34132, 34136, 34140, 34168, 34166. At Majerhat : Up : 34147. Down : 34152. At Sonarpur Jn. : Up : 30711, 34899, 34641. Down : 30712, 34898. At Barasat : Up : 30317, 30361. Down : 34062. At Prinsep Ghat : Up : 30313. Down : 30314. At Dum Dum Jn. : Down : 30142.● DIVERSION : (1) 30152 Naihati-Majerhat, (2) 30154 Naihati-Majerhat, (3) 34052 Naihati-K Budge Budge, (4) 34054 Naihati-K Budge Budge, (5) 34056 Kalyani Simanta-K Budge Budge will be diverted to Sealdah (Main & North).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● CANCELLATION : Sealdah-Baruipur Jn. : Up : 34611, 34613, 34621, 34623, 34625, 34627, 34649, 34633, 34651, 34637, 34639, 34643, 34645, 34647. Down : 34612, 34614, 34620, 34622, 34624, 34626, 34650, 34632, 34652, 34636, 34638, 34642, 34644. Sealdah-Sonarpur Jn.: Up : 34411, 34417, 34429. Down : 34412, 34414, 34416, 34432. BBD Bag-Baruipur Jn.: Up : 30451. Sealdah-BBD Bag : Up : 30411. Down: 30412, 30416. Canning-Barasat : Up : 33061. Champahati-Majerhat : Up : 30511. Majerhat-Ghutlari Sharif : Down : 30552. Madhyamgram-Majerhat: Up : 30357. Down : 30358. Sealdah-Barasat : Down : 33438. Sealdah-Naihati: Down : 31422, 31442. K Budge Budge-Naihati : Up : 31051, 31053, 31055.● SHORT TERMINATION/SHORT ORIGINATION: At New Alipore (Kolkata) : Up : 30111, 34165, 34111, 34113, 34115, 34117, 34119, 34121, 34123, 34125, 34129, 34133, 34137, 34141, 34167, 34145, 34149, 34151, 34153, 34155, 34157, 34161, 34163. Down : 30122, 34112, 34114, 34116, 34118, 34120, 34122, 34124, 34126, 34128, 34130, 34132, 34136, 34140, 34168, 34166. At Majerhat : Up : 34147. Down : 34152. At Sonarpur Jn. : Up : 30711, 34899, 34641. Down : 30712, 34898, 34641. Down : 30712, 34898. At Barasat : Up : 30317, 30361. Down : 34062. At Prinsep Ghat : Up : 30313. Down : 30314. At Dum Dum Jn. : Down : 30142.● DIVERSION : (1) 30152 Naihati-Majerhat, (2) 30154 Naihati-Majerhat, (3) 34052 Naihati-K Budge Budge, (4) 34054 Naihati-K Budge Budge, (5) 34056 Kalyani Simanta-K Budge Budge will be diverted to Sealdah (Main & North).

SPECIAL TRAINS (WITH STOPPAGE AT ALL STATIONS ENROUTE) : (1) Dum Dum Jn.-Barasat Special (from Dum Dum Jn. at 08:10 hrs.), (2) Sealdah-Ranaghat Special (from Sealdah at 19:00 hrs.), (3) Sealdah-Naihati Special (from Sealdah at 15:05 hrs.), (4) K Budge Budge-New Alipore (Kolkata) Special (from K Budge Budge at 17:30 hrs.), (5) New Alipore (Kolkata)-K Budge Budge Special (from New Alipore (Kolkata) at 20:12 hrs.), (6) Sealdah-Baruipur Jn. Special (from Sealdah at 17:43 hrs.).

There may be delay in train services during this period. Inconvenience which is likely to be caused to the commuters, is deeply regretted.

Divisional Railway Manager, Sealdah
EASTERN RAILWAY



SHARDUL CREATES RANJI TROPHY HISTORY

India seamer Shardul Thakur claimed a hat-trick for Mumbai against Meghalaya in a must-win Ranji Trophy match here at the Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy on Thursday. He became the second bowler to take a hat-trick during the 2024/25 Ranji Trophy season after Himachal Pradesh's Rishi Dhawan achieved the feat against Pondicherry. He became the fifth bowler from Mumbai to take a hat-trick in the Ranji Trophy.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Mohinder Amarnath backs PM Modi's 'Fit India Initiative', advocates for domestic cricket commitment: Former India cricketer Mohinder Amarnath has voiced his strong support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Fit India initiative, emphasizing that a nation's success is closely tied to its overall fitness levels. He also backed the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) move to make participation in domestic cricket mandatory for Indian players, stressing that the foundation of the sport lies in its grass-roots development. Amarnath believes that fitness is crucial not only for athletes but for the entire country. Speaking about the importance of health, he remarked, "A fit country is always a successful country. If you look at it, nations that prioritize sports and produce great sportsmen also produce great individuals. They are rich in every respect," Amarnath told the media. Highlighting the significance of caring for their well-being, he added, "Health is more important than anything. If you have health, you have life. It is very important to be a healthy nation. I completely agree with Mr. Modi's vision." Amarnath stressed that sports should be made compulsory at the school level, ensuring that children develop a strong foundation in fitness from a young age. "Sports is a must. I believe all schools should ensure that children actively engage in sports," he said.

4th T20I: Team India look to bounce back against resurgent England, seal series

Chastised by the defeat in the third tie, hosts aim to seal five-match series in Rajkot clash

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

India will be keen to make up for the lost opportunity in Rajkot, and bounce back with a win to seal the five-match T20I series when they take on a resurgent England in the fourth T20 International in Pune on Friday.

Sanju Samson's technical weaknesses against express pace along with Rinku Singh's dip in form and fitness issues will be the focus areas, India would seek to improve ahead of the Pune match. Suryakumar Yadav's men won the first two games in Kolkata and Chennai. Samson, the maverick keeper-batter from Kerala, who started the T20I season with three hundreds against Bangladesh and South Africa, hasn't been able to get the desired results in the ongoing series.

In the current rubber, he has had scores of 26, 5 and 3 but more than the numbers, the concerning factor is his palpable discomfort against anything bowled above 145 clicks.

Against Bangladesh at home, he faced Taskin Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan Shakib while in South Africa Andile Simelane and Lutho Sipamla were among the bowlers.

These are bowlers who fire in between 130 to 140



clicks and can be hit through the line on flat decks.

However, England fast bowlers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood are different beasts, bowling between 145 kph to 155 kph and that searing pace is creating a lot of problems for Sanju Samson.

During all three games in the series so far, the Kerala batter couldn't even get his bat down as deliveries would thud into Phil Salt's gloves.

While it is perceived that

Samson is one of the batters earmarked for next year's T20I World Cup, and in that case, he has to iron out his flaws against express pace with the help of Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir and new batting coach Sitanshu Kotak.

The Indian team will also be expecting the return of Rinku, who was out of the last two games due to back spasms.

In his absence, Dhruv Jurel came in as a replace-

ment for the No.7 position but he has looked out of place in this particular format unlike Test cricket.

But even Rinku, after a glorious start to his T20I career, has gone off the rails. The Indian middle order hasn't exactly played England spinner Adil Rashid well so far and with Shivam Dube back in the mix, it will be interesting to see if Gambhir takes a chance with him.

The third option is Ramandeep Singh, who also

looks exciting as a finisher and is a better seamer than Dube.

In the pace department, Arshdeep Singh will be itching to return to the XI after he made way for Mohammed Shami for the fourth match of the five-game series in Rajkot.

Shami needs a lot of bowling in match situations and the Rajkot game was a decent restart to his international career without being spectacular.

Lucy rallies Australia U19 eves for World Cup push



AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR, 30 JANUARY

Australia captain Lucy Hamilton believes her team's unexpected defeat to Sri Lanka in their final Super Six match in Bangi on Wednesday could serve as a turning point, inspiring them to go all the way at the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2025, according to International Cricket Council (ICC).

The Aussies (Australia) had already booked their place in the semi-finals of the U19 T20 World Cup prior to the match against Sri Lanka, but were undone by spin and failed to chase down 100 for victory as they lost their unbeaten status at the tournament.

Australia will need an improved performance when they face South Africa in a knockout semi-final in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, and Hamilton thinks her side can bounce back quickly from the loss to Sri Lanka and perform well against the Proteas at Bayuemas Oval.

Hamilton remains confident that her side can learn from the setback and put in a stronger performance when they face South Africa in the semi-final at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Friday.

Hamilton, who is playing in her second U19 T20 World Cup, remains optimistic about her team's chances against South Africa.

"I think today was a really good day for just bring us down to earth and reiterate that it's a really tight competition," Hamilton said after the defeat to Sri Lanka, as quoted from the official website of the ICC.

"All the girls are really excited and looking forward to getting out there and playing the semi-final," she added.

"We will take a lot from today's

game knowing other teams have a lot of spinners as well so just adapting to those conditions quicker," she said. Australia's bowlers did well to restrict Sri Lanka to just 99/8 with that bat, but the Aussies' high-profile top-order failed to cope with the slow conditions in Malaysia as the opposition spinners claimed all seven wickets available as the Australian run chase was restricted to 87/8.

It means Australia will enter the knockout stages of the event without any of their batters having scored a half-century and talented 15-year-old all-rounder Caoimhe Bray is the only member of the side to feature in the top 10 run-scorers at the tournament.

Hamilton, who is featuring at her second U19 T20 World Cup, thinks Australia's batters learnt a lot from the loss to Sri Lanka and is backing them to perform well against the Proteas (South Africa). "The girls are disappointed with the loss, but credit to Sri Lanka as they played really well and we got beaten with our batting," Hamilton said.

"I thought we bowled really well and put a lot of pressure on them, but just didn't carry it on with the bat," she noted. With none of Australia's batters yet registering a half-century in the tournament, concerns remain over their form heading into the knockout stage.

Talented 15-year-old all-rounder Caoimhe Bray is the only Australian player in the tournament's top 10 run-scorers, making her a crucial figure in the team's bid for success.

As Australia prepare for their semi-final clash, their ability to adapt to South Africa's bowling attack will be crucial.

Davis Cup 2025: Team India confident ahead of Togo clash

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 JANUARY

Backed by strong preparations over the previous week, including acclimatization, singles and doubles-specific training, and team cohesion building, Team India is confident of delivering a robust performance in their Davis Cup 2025 World Group I Playoffs tie against Togo at the DLT A Complex in New Delhi on 1 and 2 February.

Led by captain Rohit Rajpal, a former Davis Cupper and a member of the Indian tennis team at the 1990 Asian Games, Team India consists of five members: the experienced N Sriram Balaji, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Mukund Sasikumar, along with debutants Rithvik Bollipalli and Karan Singh. "We all got in early. I am grateful to Ashutosh, our coach, our physios, and all the boys. All of us got in early because we wanted to get going, everyone was coming in from different parts of the world. The idea was that we do not let up, we have a good camp through and through,



get used to the conditions, to the courts here, be sharp and well prepared," Rajpal said at the press conference on Thursday as quoted by a press release.

"It is Davis Cup, we do not and should not take anybody lightly. We (India) ourselves have beaten some very, very good teams in the past. We

are ready for everything, whatever comes our way," he added.

Returning to the team is India's highest-ranked Men's Singles player Mukund Sasikumar, who says he is already enjoying the team atmosphere here: "I have enjoyed a team atmosphere since I was young. Sometimes the individual tours

get too lonely, so I enjoy an ambience like this. I am extremely lucky to be part of the team with such seasoned players and so much to learn from. Each player is important to the team. Even the number six player is equally important in my eyes as the number one. If he does not provide that

level of intensity in practice, the number one player cannot practice. For myself, I am part of Team India, and that is the way I look at it."

Togo, currently ranked 73rd, 35 places below India (38), is on a ten-match winning run that has seen them beat higher-ranked opponents such as Latvia. Led by captain Alisama Agnamba, presiding over a four-member team of globally-based players Padio Isak, Thomas Setodji, Liova Ajavon and M'lapa Akomlo, the rising West African side will be hoping for an upset. "As a tennis player, you approach every game pretty much the same way. You expect your opponent to compete at the best level. We know India is a tough opponent, but we are very confident that if we compete at our best, the result will go our way," Agnamba said. "This group of guys have been playing together since 2022. It is always player against player, and you always expect your player to play the best, and if you have the right attitude, nothing can surprise you."

Rajpal also underlined Indian plans for creating a Davis Cup-

specific programme. "As far as our next steps go, we are internally discussing sending the whole team, along with the support staff, all over the world as a group, as many successful nations already do. We are also in discussions with the Rafael Nadal Academy in Spain to create a base for our training for overseas tournaments. We would want to train in the same ecosystem and play continuously at that level during the season. We have also called in the next generation of players to train with us. We want to create a solid pipeline, create a strong system with centres of excellence that can churn out talented players."

Thomas Setodji, a seasoned Davis Cupper, observed India's comprehensive preparations for the tie: "We arrived early on Monday morning. Most of the time last year, the team came together three or four days before matches. I think five days is enough to adapt to the conditions. But I was surprised that the Indian players were already here. I saw there were eight players, which I think is very good."

Galle Test: Khawaja, Smith along with Inglis power Australia to domination vs Sri Lanka



AGENCIES
GALLE, 30 JANUARY

A maiden double hundred by Usman Khawaja and terrific centuries from Steve Smith and Josh Inglis helped Australia end the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka on a high, posting their highest-ever total in Asia at Galle on Wednesday.

At the end of the day's play, Sri Lanka was 44/3, with Dinesh Chandimal (9*) and Kamindu Mendis (13*) unbeaten in reply to Australia's 654/6 declared in the first innings. They trailed by 610 runs.

Australia started the day at 330/2, with Usman Khawaja (130*) and Steve Smith (104*) unbeaten on the crease.

Khawaja and Smith offered no respite to Sri Lankan bowlers, soon bringing up their 200-run partnership and Khawaja reaching 150 runs in 223 balls, with 10 fours and a six.

Nishan Peiris, Prabath Jayasuriya and Jeffrey Vandersay had no reply for the Australian dominance as they kept being hit for boundaries now and then. Australia reached the 400-run mark in 99.1 overs.

The 266-run partnership between Khawaja and Smith was undone by Vandersay, who trapped the batter leg-before-wicket for 141 in 251 balls, with 12 fours and two sixes. Australia was 401/3 in 99.5 overs.

Inglis, the Test debutant was on the crease next and got off the mark in Tests with a boundary against Vandersay on his first-ever ball. While Inglis piled on runs against spinners, Khawaja made history by reaching his first-ever double century in Tests in 290 balls, with 16 fours and a six.

Australia ended the first session at 475/3, with Khawaja (204*) and Inglis (44*) unbeaten.

In the second session, Inglis raised his bat for a fifty in 51 balls, with five fours.

Australia reached the 500-run mark in 118.5 overs and both batters had a century stand in just 116 balls.

Inglis was racing towards his maiden ton but Australia faced a setback in the form of Khawaja being dismissed for 232 in 352 balls, with 16 fours and a six. He was caught behind by Kusal Mendis on a Jayasuriya delivery. Australia was 547/4 in 128.3 overs.

Inglis became the 21st Australian to score a century on Test debut, in just 90 balls, with 10 fours and a six. However, an easy catch to Kamindu Mendis at covers on a Jayasuriya delivery brought an end to his 94-ball 102-run knock. Australia was 570/5 in 133 overs.

All-rounder Beau Webster and wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey were the fresh pair on the crease, taking Australia to the 600-run mark in 142.4

overs. Webster lost his wicket to Vandersay after a 59-run stand, for 23 runs in 50 balls. Australia was 629/6 in 149.2 overs.

Australia declared their innings at 654/6, with Carey (46* in 69 balls, with a four) and Mitchell Starc (19* in 19 balls, with two fours and a six) unbeaten, breaching the score of 617 against Pakistan in Faisalabad in 1980 to establish a new record of their highest total in Asia.

In the first innings of Sri Lanka, the hosts had a nightmarish start as they lost Oshada Fernando (7) leg-before-wicket to Matthew Kuhnemann, Dimuth Karunaratne (7) caught by Nathan McSweeney to Starc, who completed his 700 international wickets and Angelo Matthews to Lyon (8).

Kamindu and Chandimal made sure Sri Lanka finished the day without any further loss of wickets.

