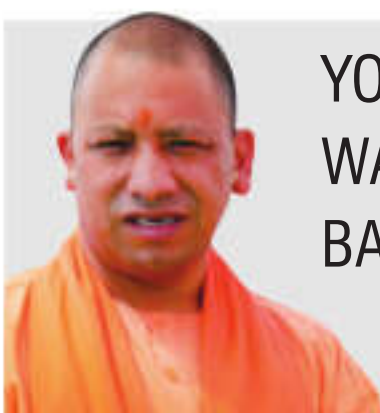




TOUGH BARGAINS
AHEAD IN TIES
WITH AMERICA

P9



YOGI SAYS SANGAM
WATER FIT FOR
BATHING

P13



'PARTY GENERAL SECYS
WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE
FOR POLL RESULTS'

P5

SHUBMAN REPLACES
PAKISTAN'S BABAR AS
TOP-RANKED ODI BATTER

P16



SENSEX 75,939.18 ▼ 28.21

NIFTY 22,932.90 ▼ 12.40

₹ vs \$ 86.95

GOLD 89,240.00

SILVER 1,08,000

BRENT CRUDE (IN \$) 76.45 ▲ 0.61

WEATHER

Scattered thunderstorms. Hazy in the evening. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 29°C and 21°C respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max. 86% Min. 75%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 29.2°C Min: 21.3°C

SUN RISES 06:04 hrs SUN SETS 17:35 hrs

MOON RISES 19:11 hrs MOON SETS 10:22 hrs

New Moon on 28 February

THUMBNAILS



People of the Mising community perform rituals during the celebration of the 'All-Aye-Ligang' festival 2025, marking the beginning of the sowing season, at Son-aihuilli in Guwahati on Wednesday. ■ ANI

Gyanesh Kumar takes charge as Chief Election Commissioner: Gyanesh Kumar took over as the 26th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Wednesday and said the Election Commission of India was, is and will always be with the voters. "The first step for nation building is voting. Therefore every citizen of India who has completed 18 years of age should become an elector and should always vote," Mr Kumar said.

ICC CT 2025: India look for strong start in campaign opener against Bangladesh

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

Fresh from recording a 3-0 whitewash over England in the recently-concluded ODI series at home, India will look to carry forward the momentum in their pursuit of a third ICC Champions Trophy title when they open their campaign against a tricky Bangladesh in Dubai on Thursday.

Despite being pre-tournament favourites, India faces a series of challenges. The absence of bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, the questionable batting form of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, and thus the onus will be on the likes of young turks Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana to make their mark in the high-stakes multi-nation tournament.

For Kohli, Rohit, and even head coach Gautam Gambhir ~ despite being just six months into his tenure, there is little room for error. The setbacks



against New Zealand and Australia continue to cast long shadows over Indian cricket.

However, recent performances offer glimpses of promise. Rohit's century and Kohli's fifty against England, coupled with Gambhir's strategic role in India's dominant 4-1 and 3-0 wins in T20Is and ODIs, hint at a resurgence. Gill's stellar performance as Player of the Series against England, where he scored two fifties and a hundred in three ODIs, further strengthens India's batting credentials.

But the Champions Trophy presents a starkly different challenge. Unlike a relatively passive England side, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and New Zealand—India's Group A opponents—are highly motivated. Even a single misstep could significantly alter the league stage dynamics.

Despite India's recent success in ODIs, key selection puzzles remain unsolved. A primary concern is KL Rahul's batting position. Should he continue at No. 5, where he has been most effective, or

shift to No. 6 to accommodate Axar Patel in the middle order? The team management is expected to maintain a flexible approach based on match situations.

However, the most pressing issues in the bowling attack, particularly in the absence of Bumrah. The choice of Mohammed Shami's new-ball partner is a crucial decision. While Harshit has impressed with his raw pace and bounce, Arshdeep's left-arm angle and variety give him an edge in the race for a starting spot.

India is also expected to field three spinners, with Hardik Pandya playing as the fast-bowling all-rounder. The battle for the third spinner's slot is another contentious point ~ should the team opt for the recent form of mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty or rely on the proven skills of left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav? Kuldeep's impressive net session against top-tier batsmen may tilt the scales in his favour.

Three of a family found dead at Tangra home, three others hurt in car crash

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

Three members of the same family were discovered dead in their home at Tangra in the city, two of them with their wrists slit, while three others of the same family were injured in a vehicle accident, in a shocking incident that has given rise to speculation of a possible suicide pact.

The incident has left the neighbourhood in shock, while the police probe whether this was a case of suicide or something more sinister.

According to police sources, the shocking discovery came to light while investigating a road accident near Abhishek More on the EM Bypass earlier in the day. In the accident, a car rammed into a Metro pillar, injuring three men. It is reported that police discovered the bodies of the women when they went to the address of



the injured persons.

Police Commissioner Manoj Verma visited the spot and said police are looking at all possible angles of these deaths to reveal the actual truth.

"Police recovered three bodies, one of them being a minor. No mark of injury was visible in the body of the minor. However both adult women's bodies bore injury marks. Post-mortem will reveal the details of the

deaths. Police are also looking for the CCTV footage," police commissioner Verma said.

Joint commissioner of police (crime) Rupesh Kumar disclosed that the six individuals were all from the same family.

Preliminary findings indicate that they had planned a collective suicide.

The entire family is said to have consumed a dessert laced with sleeping pills before attempting to take their own



lives. While two women and the teenage girl were found dead at home, the three injured men, identified as brothers Pranay Dey and Prasun Dey, along with another male relative ~ left the house and crashed their car in what police suspect was another suicide attempt.

"One of the injured men is conscious, while the other two are semi-conscious. Their statements indicate that they tried to end their lives by

Foreign Secretary briefs House panel on PM's US visit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, on Wednesday, briefed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs about the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United States and also on present foreign policy developments.

A meeting of the committee, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, was held in Samvidhan Sadan.

Talking to a news agency about the meeting, Mr Tharoor said since it was a closed-door meeting, they don't talk in detail about anything discussed during the meeting.

However, the Congress MP said the panel members had a "very good briefing" from foreign secretary on the current foreign policy developments. He said most of the discussion was in the US due to the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, DC.

Rekha Gupta to be next CM of Delhi

The new Delhi Chief Minister will take oath of office today

NIKHIL VYAS
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

Rekha Gupta, the newly-elected BJP legislator from Shalimar Bagh, will be the next Chief Minister of Delhi. She will be sworn in on Thursday, ending the prolonged suspense following the party's historic win in the Assembly elections in the national capital on 8 February.

The BJP's legislature party tonight elected Ms Gupta as its leader. Her name was announced by the party's two central observers ~ Ravi Shankar Prasad and Om Prakash Dhankhar ~ after a meeting of the BJP legislature party which was attended by all 48 newly-elected party legislators at the Delhi BJP office.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated Ms Gupta on her election as the leader of BJP legislature party.

The PM, other top BJP leaders and several NDA Chief Ministers will attend the swearing-in ceremony at iconic Ram Lila Maidan



on Thursday. Rekha Gupta will be the 9th Chief Minister of Delhi. The last BJP government in Delhi was from 1993 to 1998. A first-time MLA, Ms Gupta will be the fourth woman Chief Minister of Delhi. Sushma Swaraj (BJP), Sheila Dikshit (Congress) and Atishi (AAP) have held the position in the past.

The saffron party registered a landslide victory in the 5 February Delhi assembly elections, the results of which were declared on 8 February, winning a two-thirds majority by bagging 48

seats in the 70-member assembly.

The AAP suffered a rout with 22 seats while the Congress failed to score for the third consecutive time.

Earlier, hours ahead of the BJP's legislature party meeting in the national capital for electing a new Delhi Chief Minister, the parliamentary board of the party appointed Ravi Shankar Prasad, MP and former Union Minister, and Om Prakash Dhankhar, the party's national secretary, as Central observers for the elec-

The PM, other top BJP leaders and several NDA Chief Ministers will attend the swearing-in ceremony at iconic Ram Lila Maidan on Thursday.

tion of the Leader of the Legislative party in Delhi.

The new Chief Minister will take oath at a grand swearing-in ceremony at the city's iconic Ram Lila Maidan on Thursday. The event will commence at 10 a.m. The new CM will be administered the oath of office and secrecy by Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena.

Car drivers, auto drivers and slum-dwellers will be among the key invitees who will garner attention at the oath-taking ceremony. Twenty chief ministers from various NDA-ruled states will also participate in the oath-taking ceremony of the Delhi Chief Minister to be held at the Ram Lila Maidan tomorrow. (Photo: Subrata Dutta)

Major relief for Siddaramaiah in MUDA case as Lokayukta Police finds no evidence of graft

LAKSHMANA VENKAT KUCHI
BENGALURU, 19 FEBRUARY

In a significant relief for Karnataka Chief Minister S Siddaramaiah in the MUDA corruption case, the Lokayukta Police indicated on Wednesday that it found no proof of corruption against the Chief Minister and his wife Parvathi BM regarding the alleged fraudulent allotment of high-value residential plots in the year 2021.

In a notice issued to the RTI activist who filed the case against the Chief Minister, his wife, and two others, Snehamayi Krishna, the Lokayukta Police said that no evidence of corruption had been found. This notice is being viewed as an indication of a clean chit to the power couple and a preparation for closing the investigations, ordered by Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot and later ratified by the Karnataka High Court, which directed the Lokayukta to investigate the matter.

In its notice issued to the RTI activist today, the Lokayukta Police said: "As the allegations



against accused-1 to accused-4 are not proved due to a lack of evidence, the final report is being submitted to the competent court. The final report is being submitted to the court under section 173 (8) of the Criminal Procedure Code after investigations into the allegations over the grant of compensatory plots under the 50:50 scheme, from the year 2016 to 2024, by the Mysore Urban Development Authority."

Two days ago, the Lokayukta Police sought more time to file the final report on the investigations. But on Wednesday, the police issued a notice

to the RTI activist clearly stating that they could not find any proof of corruption against the CM and his wife and that they would be informing the court of this in its final report.

If the Lokayukta Police submits its final report when the matter comes up in a special court on 24 February, the final report could be contested by the complainant. Also, it is up to the court to accept or reject the police report.

The Lokayukta Police has examined over 100 witnesses in its investigation since the case was lodged against the accused in September last year after the Karnataka High Court upheld the decision of the Governor to order investigations into the MUDA scam.

The case pertains to 14 sites worth Rs 56 crore that were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife as compensation by MUDA in 2021 after around 3.16 acres of land gifted to her by her brother in 2010 had been "wrongfully" acquired by the authority in 2014.

EAM Jaishankar to attend G20 foreign ministers' meeting in South Africa

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit South Africa to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting being held on 20 and 21 February.

The minister's participation in the G20 meet will further strengthen India's engagement with the G20 countries and bolster the voice of the Global South in this important forum, the Ministry of External Affairs



said. Mr Jaishankar is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with some of his counterparts on the margins of the meeting.

South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency from 1 December 2024, through to November 2025.

Hon'ble Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee
will inaugurate

বাস্তুব শক্তি

A grand display of handicrafts from every district

7 well-equipped stores:

- 1 Biswa Bangla store
- 1 store for exhibition of GI tagged products
- 4 stores for the districts (to be rotated every 15 days allowing equal opportunity to each district)
- 1 store for Café Ekante

Hon'ble Chief Minister will also be naming the exhibition centre adjacent to Biswa Bangla Convention Centre as

Rupanno

20 February 2025 | New Town, Kolkata | 5 pm

ICA-D339(15)/2025

Government of West Bengal

Tea workers to protest, demand Minimum Wages Act

The Joint Forum's agitation underscores the workers' long-standing demands for fair wages, land rights, and government accountability, as they prepare to mark a decade of unfulfilled promises

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 19 FEBRUARY

The Joint Forum, a coalition of over 30 trade unions representing tea plantation workers of north Bengal, has announced an agitation programme to address critical issues in the tea industry.

Significantly, tea workers from Terai, Doarais, and the Hills will observe a protest day on 20 February, wearing black badges to demand the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. This protest marks a decade since 20 February, 2015 agreement, which promised the finalisation of minimum wages but remains unfulfilled.

Spokesperson of Joint Forum, Ziaul Alam stated: "Since chief minister Mamata Banerjee publicly announced that 30 per cent of tea plantation land will be transferred for other purposes, she must publicly withdraw her plan."



He also emphasised the need for the state government to uphold the statement of former chief secretary H K Dwivedi, who said on 22 February, 2023, that leasehold land would not be converted into freehold land in tea plantations due to the region's heritage and sentiments. Alam added: "The government should notify this through a gazette soon."

Mr Alam further criticised

the government's handling of land surveys for distributing land rights (patta) to tea workers. He said: "The administration has faced resistance during land surveys. The government must issue a gazette notification specifying the purpose of the survey for land where tea workers reside."

He noted that while a notification was sent to the Darjeeling District Magistrate

for surveys in GTA areas on an "as is where is basis," similar directives were not issued for Terai and Doarais, where workers have been demanding rights to their 'ancestral land'.

The Joint Forum also adopted a resolution urging the state government to enforce the Minimum Wages Act, which has been pending for over a decade.

Abhijit Majumdar, a leader of the Joint Forum, said: "The tea industry in North Bengal has a 170-year history. It is a scheduled employment sector. The state government must clarify its stand and implement the Minimum Wages Act for workers."

Another leader, Abhijit Roy, highlighted the government's inaction despite court rulings. He said: "In 2023, the high court directed the government to declare minimum wages within six months, but it was ignored. The Indian Labour Confer-

ence and Supreme Court guidelines clearly define the criteria for minimum wages, leaving no room for negotiation. Yet, the government claims nothing can be done without worker-owner consensus, which is unacceptable."

Roy also pointed out the dire financial situation of tea workers, stating: "Amid skyrocketing inflation, tea workers still earn Rs 250 per day (Rs 220 in hand), unchanged since June 2023. Wages in newly established gardens are even lower. This deprivation has persisted for years, but since 2015, a new chapter of deceit and betrayal began. On 20 February, this deception will mark its tenth year."

The Joint Forum's agitation underscores the workers' long-standing demands for fair wages, land rights, and government accountability, as they prepare to mark a decade of unfulfilled promises.

Ruckus in Assembly as BJP MLAs stage walkout on tea estate tourism issue

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

The West Bengal Assembly, on Wednesday, witnessed a ruckus as BJP legislators staged a walkout after the Speaker declined their demand for a discussion on an adjournment motion relating to an issue in the state's tea sector.

The adjournment motion was on the recent decision of the state government to use 30 per cent of land allotted to the tea gardens for the purpose of tourism. Opposing the move, BJP's legislative team wanted to move an adjournment motion seeking discussion on the issue.

However, as the discussion was denied, the BJP legislators started protesting, raising slogans and displaying placards in the House. Later they staged a walkout and continued their protest on the Assembly lawn.

The BJP had been opposing the decision of the state government to allow a portion of the tea garden land for tourism since the beginning. The Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, is likely to hold a rally in North Bengal



on 23 February on various issues related to the tea sector. At the rally, he is expected to launch an attack against the state government on this issue of tea garden land allotment for tourism.

The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha supremo Bimal Gurung is also likely to join the rally.

Debates on the West Bengal Budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26 are scheduled at the Assembly on Wednesday and Thursday. The LoP will not be able to participate in that debate as he was suspended from the House for a month on Monday allegedly because of unruly behaviour.

Participation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the debate on budget proposals in any of the two days is also unlikely.

Meanwhile, members of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) staged protests in front of the state Assembly against the Chief Minister's comments on the floor of the House on Tuesday where she described Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh as "Mrityu Kumbh".

There were scuffles between the police and ABVP supporters over the latter's protest demonstrations. Finally, the protesters were dispersed and some were taken away from the place in police vehicles.

TENDER

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Ltd. is inviting electronic bids for procurement of equipment / item for the Sub-Centre (SC), Primary Health Centre (PHC), Block Public Health Unit (BPHU) and Urban Primary Health Unit (UPHC) of the State of West Bengal as per details indicated in below:
Equipment Name (Qty): Foetal Doppler (1871). Bid Ref. No.: WBMSCL/NIT-119/2025; Dated: 12.02.2025. Last date of submission of online bid: 10.03.2025 upto 05:00 P.M. Interested Bidders may download the tender document and submit their bids online at the website [www.wbmtenders.gov.in](https://wbmtenders.gov.in). The tender document may also be downloaded from the websites www.wbhealth.gov.in and www.wbmsc.gov.in Sd/- General Manager, WBMSCL & Joint Secretary, H&FW Dept. ICA: T3437/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
e-NIT No.: WBW/EE/MD/ e-NIT-12/6/2024-25
On behalf of the Governor, West Bengal e-tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, Mograhat Drainage Division from the reliable bonafide and resourceful contractors for the work "Repairing of Wooden Bridge over Suryapur Inner Channel at Ct.169.00 near Hangshabaria Primary School of Mograhat Irrigation Sub-Division under Mograhat Drainage Division within Block-Mograhat-II, P.S.-Mograhat, Dist.-South 24 Parganas." Details may be had from the office of the undersigned on working days during office hours or on website: <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> & www.wbldw.gov.in Publishing date: 20.02.2025. Sd/- Executive Engineer Mograhat Drainage Division Baruipur, South 24 Parganas. ICA: T3448/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Bid ref. no.-WBMSCL/NIT-134/2025, Dated-17/02/2025
West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Ltd. is inviting online bids for - "Comprehensive maintenance contract for 3 years of the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) and RO Plant at Beldas SSH and Debra SSH (Package-A)". Last date of submission of bid (online) - 17.03.2025 upto 02:00 P.M. The tender document can be downloaded from www.wbmtenders.gov.in or after 01.00 P.M. on 20.02.2025. Details of the tender will also be available at www.wbmsc.gov.in Clarification requests, if any may be sent to ee.civil@wbmsc.gov.in or info@wbmsc.gov.in Sd/- Managing Director, WBMSCL. ICA: T3483/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.-09/2024-25 of E.E. Mid. Divn./55/P.W.Dte.
The e-Tender is being invited for (I) Sinking of deep tube well (200mm X 100mm) & installation of Pump (3HP) within the office campus of C.M.O.H. at Judge Court in the District of Paschim Medinipur. (II) Repair work of Academic cum Administrative Building & Student Activity Centre at Govt. General Degree College, Keshari in the District of Paschim Medinipur. against Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_916616_1 to 2. Last Date of Submission of Tender is on 10/03/2025 at 16:00. Other details and Corrigendum if any will be obtained from the website <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> & Departmental website only. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Midnapur Division, Social Sector, P.W.Dte. ICA: T3493/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. 25/SEA-III/R&KMDA of 2024-25 (2nd Call)
Online Bids are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Circle-III, R&B Sector, KMDA, Block-D, 3rd floor, Unsayan Bhavan, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091, from bonafide, reliable, experienced & resourceful firms / individuals contractors, for the work, Name of Work, Value of the work, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Construction of a Foot Over Bridge at Patuli Bazar crossing E. M. Bypass from East to West. Tender ID - 2025_KMDA_81517_31. Rs.3,80,68,136/-, Rs.7,61,363/- [Online through e-Procurement System of Govt. of W.B.], 365 days. Last date & time of Online Bid submission: 13.03.2025 upto 14.00 hrs., for details contact the above office or visit both websites (KMDA-1189) www.kmda.gov.in & [www.wbmtenders.gov.in](https://wbmtenders.gov.in) ICA: T3544/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-Tender Notice
The District Manager, West Bengal State Seed Corporation Ltd., Midnapore has invited e-tender for appointment of road transport contractor for WBSSCL, Midnapore District Unit office for transportation of different seeds and other agricultural inputs in bags and cartons pack within the District & outside the District and the State as well i) Tender Ref. No. WBSSCL/MID/NIT-01/2024-25 ii) Last date of Bid Submission 12/03/2025 upto 5:30 P.M. The details are available in website: wbmtenders.gov.in & Notice Board of WBSSCL, Midnapore. Tender related information including addendum/ corrigendum, if any, shall also be available in said website and Notice Board of WBSSCL, Midnapore. Sd/- District Manager, WBSSCL, Midnapore. ICA: T3463/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. 32/SEA-III/R&KMDA of 2024-25
e-Tender is invited by the Executive Engineer, DIV-III, GRWW, W&S Sector, KMDA, Bidhanagar, Kolkata-700066, from eligible reliable, resourceful, bonafied and experienced Firms / Companies / Individual contractors, for the work, Name of Work, Estimated Amount, Part of Tender, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Shifting and replacement of existing 600 mm dia D.I. (K-9) raw water rising main by 600 mm dia M.S. pipe at 6.0 MGD WTP under kancharpur municipality., Rs.47,02,733/-, Rs.94,055/-, 45 days. End date & time for online Bid submission: 17.03.2025 at 18:45 Hrs., for details contact the above office or visit both websites. (KMDA-1195) www.kmda.gov.in & [www.wbmtenders.gov.in](https://wbmtenders.gov.in) ICA: T3543/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Superintending Engineer, South-Western Circle, P.W. Dte., Midnapore invites online tender for the work "Link Road between Jhargram-Jamboni Road and Parhati-Jamboni-Fekoghat Road from 0.00 Km. to 3.50 Km.- Widening and Strengthening work in the district of Jhargram under Jhargram Division, P.W. Dte. under RID-XXX." Project ID : PD242529255000." Estimated Amount : Rs. 8,63,95,553.00. Nit No. 13 of 2024-25 (2nd Call). Tender ID : 2025_WBPWD_916952_1. Bid submission start date (online) : 24.02.2025 from 10:00 Hours. Bid Submission closing date (online) : 17.03.2025 at 15:00 Hours. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of Nit and Tender documents may be downloaded from <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> Sd/- Tarun K. Chakrabarty, Superintending Engineer, South-Western Circle, P.W. Dte. ICA: T3530/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING OPEN QUOTATION
N.O. No. 1. WBPWD/EE/NBTD/NIT-37 of 2024-25 2. WBPWD/EE/NBTD/NIT-38 of 2024-25 3. WBPWD/EE/NBTD/NIT-39 of 2024-25
Executive Engineer, North Bengal IT Division, P.W.Dte., Siliguri on behalf of the Governor of West Bengal, invites open quotation for the work: 1. Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of additional CCTV camera in the premises of Uttar Dinajpur Divisional Court, Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur. Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815519_1. 2. Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of CCTV camera in the premises of Islampur Sub-Divisional Court, Islampur, Uttar Dinajpur. Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815538_1. 3. Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of CCTV camera for additional safety & Security purpose in the premises of Burdwan Sub-Divisional Court, Burdwan, Dakshin Dinajpur. Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815556_1. Last date of submission of quotation(online) is upto 25/02/2025 upto 6:55 P.M. and will be opened on 28/02/2025 on 11:00 A.M. ICA: T3506/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.(Roads) Directorate
Notice Inviting e-Tender
Superintending Engineer, Eastern Highway Circle, Purba Bhawan, Salt Lake, 1st Floor, Room No. 104 & 105, Kolkata-700091 invites online Percentage rate eNIT No. 13 of 2024-25 of the SE/EHC, [Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_816511_1] for the works:- Construction of Masonry drain at 0.00 km to 1.80 km of Moyna Madhabnagar Road including Construction of 01 (one) no. RCC cross drain under Barasat Highway Division No.- II in the district of North 24 Parganas. Amounting to Rs. 1,92,55,272.00. Last date and time of submission of Bid is on 19.03.2025 upto 1.00 P.M. (Tender Application & Financial bid both concurrently). The details can be obtained from the website <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> & Office Notice Board. Corrigendum or Addendum if issued will be published only on website. For any clarification Bidder may contact PWD e-Tender Help Desk with following Phone No. (033) 2223-6236. Sd/- SE/EHC, P.W.Dte. ICA: T3486/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
Tender Ref. No. WBPHEH/EE/MAAD/ Nit-09 of 2024-25
Tender ID: 2025_PHEH_807561_1 to 2025_PHEH_807561_3
Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid (online) - 25/02/2025 upto 06:30 P.M. Tender invited by the undersigned for three nos. works under Malda Arsenic Area W/S Division, P.H.E. Dte. All details available in website: <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> & www.wbphed.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Malda Arsenic Area W/S Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA: T3486/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice Inviting e-Tender
NIT No. HST/IT-113-2025/PP/2025/339, Nit-09 of 2024-25
E-TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF BLEACHING POWDER FOR TWO YEARS FROM THE DATE OF AWARD OF CONTRACT (A/C) AND ITS EXTENSION, IF REQUIRED is invited from the bidders. Interested bidders may visit the website "https://wbmtenders.gov.in" or "www.wbhealth.gov.in" for further details. Bid submission start date (online): 25.02.2025. Bid submission closing date (online): 12.03.2025. Bid opening date (online): 12.03.2025. Sd/- D.D.H.S. (E&S), W.B. ICA: T3443/2025

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPPP, Dist.-Birbhum, Pin - 731104
Notice Inviting E-Tender
Ref No.: WBPDPCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BKTPPP/CC-3130 Dated: 08.02.2025
NIT No.: WBPDPCL/BKTPPP/NIT/E3559/24-25
E-Tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> by the General Manager - BKTPPP, WBPDPCL from eligible Agencies / Companies in bid system for "Overhauling of BHEL Make ESP of Unit No. #1, Unit #2 & Unit #4, BKTPPP". Tender Document Download Start Date: 01.02.2025 at 09:00 AM. Bid Submission End Date: 24.02.2025 at 05:00 PM. Contact Person: Mr. Indranil Chakrabarty, Dy. General Manager - Engg.-CC, BKTPPP, WBPDPCL. Mobile: 8373055604. E-mail: cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> ICA: T3595/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Tender is hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, PWD, Kolkata IT Division, Main Block, Ground Floor, Writers' Buildings, Kolkata-700001 from the eligible contractors for the following works. 1. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for the New and Old Hostel Buildings of GNM Training School, Jangipur Sub-Division Hospital situated at Jangipur, Raghunathganj, Midnapore, West Bengal - 7225 :- Contingencies Work. [Job No: KIT/OW/291 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-276/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_817312_1. Bid Submission Closing : 22.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 2. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for The Newly Constructed (G+7) GNM Students' Hostel Building, attached with GNM Training School, College of Medical & Surgical Sciences Hospital at 578, B.T. Road, Kamrathi, Kolkata-700058 :- Contingencies Work. [Job No: KIT/OW/292 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-277/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_817330_1. Bid Submission Closing : 22.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 3. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Howrah Govt. Model Madrasah [English Medium], Beldaha, Pancha, Howrah. [Job No: KIT/OW/294 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-278/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_813869_1. Bid Submission Closing : 01.03.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 4. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Gandhi Ghat, Barrackpore, Kolkata-700120 [Job No: KIT/OW/295 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-279/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815205_1. Bid Submission Closing : 04.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 5. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for The Sub Divisional Court at Diamond Harbour, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 331 [Job No: KIT/OW/296 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-280/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_814614_1. Bid Submission Closing : 04.03.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 6. "Providing Recharge of DTH (Direct to Home) Tata Sky TV Service (Direct Broadcast Satellite Television) with full HD & Non HD Mega packs at Banga Bhawan & WIP Guest House (Banga Bhawan, Chanakypur) at New Delhi during the year 2025-26. [Job No: KIT/RW/089 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-281/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815813_1. Bid Submission Closing : 03.03.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 7. "Upgradation of Unified Threat Management (UTM) Firewall for WBMDFC Police Building, Alipore, DD-27E, Sector-1, Saltlake, Kolkata-700064 upto to 03.00 P.M. [Job No: KIT/OW/297 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-282/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815979_1. Bid Submission Closing : 04.03.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 8. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Calcutta National Medical College & Hospital, 24, Gorachand Road, Kolkata-700 014 :- Contingencies Work. [Job No: KIT/OW/298 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-283/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815981_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 9. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for The I.P.G.M.E. & R. - SSKM Hospital at 244, AIC Bose Road, Kolkata - 700 020 :- Part A (Inside Main Campus of I.P.G.M.E. & R. - SSKM Hospital) :- Additional Work. [Job No: KIT/OW/299 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-284/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815983_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 10. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at RG Kar Medical College & Hospital, 1, Khudiram Bose Sarani, Kolkata-700 004 :- Contingencies Work :- Part A [Job No: KIT/OW/301 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-285/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815984_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 11. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at ID & BG Hospital, 57 Beliaghata Main Road, Kolkata- 700 010 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/304 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-287/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815988_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 12. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for Chittaranjan Seva Sadan COGN, 37 S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700 026 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/305 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-291/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815996_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 13. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Phoolbagan Campus of Dr. B.C. Roy, Post Graduate Institute of Pediatrics Sciences, Kolkata-700 054 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/307 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-292/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815998_1. Bid Submission Closing : 25.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 14. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Beldaha Campus of Dr. B.C. Roy, Post Graduate Institute of Pediatrics Sciences, Kolkata-700 054 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/308 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-293/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815999_1. Bid Submission Closing : 25.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 15. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for Chittaranjan Seva Sadan COGN, 37 S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700 026 :- Additional Work [Job No: KIT/OW/305 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-290/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815991_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 16. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of CCTV Surveillance System and Allied Infrastructure for Chittaranjan Seva Sadan COGN, 37 S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700 026 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/306 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-291/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815996_1. Bid Submission Closing : 24.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 17. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Phoolbagan Campus of Dr. B.C. Roy, Post Graduate Institute of Pediatrics Sciences, Kolkata-700 054 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/307 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-292/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815998_1. Bid Submission Closing : 25.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. 18. "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated CCTV Surveillance system along with allied infrastructure at Beldaha Campus of Dr. B.C. Roy, Post Graduate Institute of Pediatrics Sciences, Kolkata-700 054 :- Contingencies Work [Job No: KIT/OW/308 of 24-25]" e-TENDER No. WBPWD/EEKIT/E-NIT-293/24-25, Tender ID: 2025_WBPWD_815999_1. Bid Submission Closing : 25.02.2025 upto to 03.00 P.M. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kolkata IT Division, PWD ICA: T3582/2025

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)
Registered Office: Vidhyut Bhawan, Block-DJ, Sector-8, Bidhanagar, Kolkata-700 091
CIN: U40101WB1987SGC113474 & web: www.wbsedcl.in
E-TENDER FOR THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE INVITED:-
NIT No.: WBSETCL/TAOE/Tender/Civil/01 Dated: 20.02.2025
Sinking of 150 MM X 80 MM dia deep tube well with submersible pump for fresh water supply along with distribution network and separate pump house at the following locations:-
NIT No.: WBSETCL/TAOE/Tender/Civil/02 Dated: 20.02.2025
Tamilk 132 KV sub-station colony complex under Tamilk Area Office (NIT 01)
Tamilk 132 KV sub-station colony complex under Tamilk Area Office (NIT 02)
NIT No.: WBSETCL/TAOE/Tender/Civil/03 Dated: 20.02.2025
Sinking of 150 MM X 80 MM dia deep tube well with submersible pump for fresh water supply at Bakul 132 KV sub-station colony complex under Tamilk Area Office ICA: T3444/2025
[Bid documents can be downloaded from 20.02.2025, 08:00 P.M. and bids shall be submitted online till 03.00 P.M., 14.03.2025. Visit the following websites: [www.wbmtenders.gov.in](https://wbmtenders.gov.in) & www.wbsedcl.in for details.]

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office: Vidhyut Bhawan, Block-DJ, Sector-8, Bidhanagar, Kolkata-700 091
CIN: U40101WB1987SGC113474 & web: www.wbsedcl.in
WBSEDCL invites e-Tenders as follows:
(1) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/27, Dt: 12.02.2025 of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 14,37,704/- for (2" Call) "Emergency restoration of Zone-II of Rammam Intake along with thorough repair & maintenance of Zone-II Pebble Extruder under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL".
(2) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/28 (SI. No.: 1), Dt: 12.02.2025 (Tender ID: 2025_WBSED_815117_2) of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 12,21,057/- for (2" Call) "Repair, maintenance & minor civil works for the road in-between Link Road and 10th km Milestone towards Dhatriy under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL".
(3) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/28 (SI. No.: 2), Dt: 12.02.2025 (Tender ID: 2025_WBSED_815117_2) of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 10,85,180/- for (2" Call) "Day-to-day and preventive maintenance, guarding round-the-clock & cleaning of desilting basin at Lodhoma Intake under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL".
(4) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/29 (SI. No.: 1), Dt: 14.02.2025 (Tender ID: 2025_WBSED_815982_1) of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 17,28,373/- for "Repair, maintenance & minor civil works for Ct 1 type Quarters and Recreation Hall of Lodhoma Colony under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL".
(5) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/29 (SI. No.: 2), Dt: 14.02.2025 (Tender ID: 2025_WBSED_815982_2) of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 15,59,000/- for "Repair, maintenance & minor civil works, water supply along with operation and maintenance of water treatment plant of Power House, switchyard and Daman Store and Office Complex under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL".
(6) NIT No.: PM/RMM/e-Tender/CIVIL/24-25/29 (SI. No.: 3), Dt: 14.02.2025 (Tender ID: 2025_WBSED_815982_3) of the Project Manager, Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL. Estimated Cost: ₹ 12,49,972/- for "Repair, maintenance & minor civil works for the road from Lodhoma Car Point to Power House, switchyard, Penstock Road (Lower) under Rammam Hydrel Project, St-II, WBSEDCL". ICA: T3462/2025
For details, visit <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> & www.wbsedcl.in

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Sagarighi Thermal Power Project
P.O. Monirgan, P.S. Sagarighi, Dist. - Murshidabad, Pin - 742237
Notice Inviting E-Tender
Ref. No.: WBPDPCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/SGTPPP/CC-3145 Dated: 08.02.2025
NIT No.: WBPDPCL/SGTPPP/NIT/E3277/24-25 Dated: 28.12.2024
E-Tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> by the General Manager, SGTPPP, WBPDPCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in three (03) Part bid system for "Boiler Overhauling of Pressure Parts, Safety Valves, Soot Blowers for Boiler efficiency Improvement, Steaming Line Renewal of Unit No. 1 in August-September 2025". Tender Document Download Start Date: 15.02.2025 at 10:00 hrs. Bid Submission End Date: 10.03.2025 upto 10:00 hrs. Contact Person: Mr. Jaydeep Kundu, Dy. General Manager (Engg.), Mobile: 8336903930. E-mail: jkundu@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> ICA: T3570/2025

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Sagarighi Thermal Power Project
P.O. Monirgan, P.S. Sagarighi, Dist. - Murshidabad, Pin - 742237
Notice Inviting E-Tender
Ref. No.: WBPDPCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/SGTPPP/CC-3149 Dated: 08.02.2025
NIT No.: WBPDPCL/SGTPPP/NIT/E3253/24-25 Dated: 10.01.2025
E-Tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbmtenders.gov.in> by the General Manager, SGTPPP, WBPDPCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in three (03) Part bid system for "Eddy Current Testing & Fluorescent Test of all Condenser Tubes at Unit #1 during Overhauling in Aug, 2025". Tender Document Download Start Date: 16.02.2025 at 10:00 hrs. Bid Submission End Date: 12.03.2025 upto 10:00 hrs. Contact Person: Mr. Jaydeep Kundu, Dy. General Manager (Engg.), Mobile: 833690

Bengal BJP urges Governor to expunge Mamata's 'Mrityu Kumbh' remarks

BJP state chief Sukanta Majumdar wrote two letters to the Governor, urging elected representatives to respect religious sentiments and avoid causing division in society

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

West Bengal BJP has requested Governor C.V. Ananda Bose to expunge Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's remarks of 'Mrityu Kumbh' from the Assembly records and also intervene in revoking the suspension of four party legislators from the house including the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Suwendu Adhikari.

The BJP state chief Sukanta Majumdar, on Wednesday, wrote two separate letters to the Governor. In the letter regarding the Chief Minister's 'Mrityu Kumbh' comments, Majumdar pointed out that the elected representatives



should uphold respect for religious sentiments and refrain from making statements that might cause division in society.

"Through this letter, I urge you to expunge the statement from the Vidhan Sabha record,

take cognizance of the matter and seek a public apology from the Chief Minister," reads the letter.

Majumdar said that the Chief Minister, through her 'Mrityu Kumbh' remarks, has insulted the sentiments of



the crore of devotees who participate at Maha Kumbh with utmost reverence.

"It is unfortunate that a person holding such a high constitutional position has made a remark that not only disrespects religious traditions

but also creates unnecessary division in society," said Majumdar. In another letter, Majumdar pointed out that the suspension of the four BJP legislators including the LoP raises serious concerns about the fair representation

of the people and the democratic functioning of the Assembly.

"While I fully acknowledge the importance of maintaining decorum and discipline within the House, I believe that reconsidering this decision would foster a spirit of constructive dialogue and uphold the democratic principles of our legislature," he said.

He said that the absence of these MLAs deprives the constituents of representation and restricts diverse perspectives in legislative discussions.

"It has become an alarm in the pattern that the Speaker repeatedly suspends MLAs who voice the concerns of the people of West Bengal," he said.

Suwendu Adhikari disputes Mamata's claims on Jagannath temple in Digha

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari, challenged on Wednesday the claims made by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the floor of the Assembly on Tuesday that the proposed Jagannath Temple at Digha in East Midnapore has been modelled after the iconic Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri in Odisha.

"On Tuesday, the Chief Minister questioned my courage in questioning her claims about the proposed temple at Digha which she claims to have been modelled after the iconic temple of Puri. Now, I challenge her to answer my questions regarding her claims on this count," Adhikari said on Wednesday. According to the Leader of Opposition, the CM should clarify why

the proposed temple has been named as "Jagannath Dham Cultural Centre" and not as "Shree Shree Jagannath Temple".

"The Chief Minister should immediately give instructions so that the name is changed from 'Jagannath Dham Cultural Centre' to 'Shree Shree Jagannath Temple' in all the related state government documents. The name change should also be made in the tenders and documents of WBHIDCO, responsible for construction of the proposed temple at Digha, the cost of which is borne from the state government exchequer," the BJP leader said. Secondly, Adhikari referred to the traditional practice of only Hindus being allowed inside the Puri temple and suggested that a notification written in five languages is displayed at the main entrance gate of the upcoming temple.

Powergrid hands over equipment to Bankura Sammilani Medical College

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BANKURA, 19 FEBRUARY

Powergrid Medinipur Jeerat Transmission Ltd (PMJTL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Powergrid) as a responsible corporate citizen has taken a significant step towards public health by signing an MoU with the Bankura Sammilani Medical College and Hospital, Bankura to instal various medical equipments in the hospital under Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative of PMJTL.

The project, estimated at Rs 1.88 crore, will significantly enhance the hospital's ability to deliver critical healthcare



services, underscoring PMJTL's commitment to improving the public health-care system especially for the people from vulnerable backgrounds.

The MoU was formally signed by Prashant Kumar, general manager (HR), Powergrid and Dr Arpan Kumar Goswami, MSVP, Bankura Sammilani Medical College

and Hospital, Bankura. The event was also graced by Dr Panchanan Kundu, principal, Bankura Sammilani Medical College.

PMJTL's CSR initiatives continue to demonstrate commitment to uplifting public health infrastructure, supporting government hospitals, and ensuring better healthcare accessibility for all.

ER ensures smooth passage for passengers in Kumbh-bound trains

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
ASANSOL, 18 FEBRUARY

Kumbh Mela, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, attracts millions of pilgrims from across the country. To facilitate the smooth movement of devotees travelling to the sacred event, Asansol division of Eastern Railway implemented well-planned arrangements at Asansol station, ensuring a hassle-free and organised journey for passengers boarding Kumbh Mela Special trains.

Vehicle entry was restricted, and designated holding areas were developed to

streamline passenger flow. Temporary sheds were constructed to provide relief from the sun. Passengers were systematically segregated as per their respective trains, and CCTV surveillance was utilised for effective crowd monitoring. Queues were managed efficiently by



RPF personnel, ensuring an orderly boarding process. Passengers were guided from the holding areas, entering the station one by one under strict supervision.

Adequate drinking water facilities were made available, and a 'May I Help You' booth was set up to assist passengers.

RPF personnel, ensuring an orderly boarding process. Passengers were guided from the holding areas, entering the station one by one under strict supervision.

Adequate drinking water facilities were made available, and a 'May I Help You' booth was set up to assist passengers.

RPF personnel and railway staff provided necessary assistance to ensure a hassle-free and safe boarding experience for passengers of the 03505 Maha Kumbh Mela Special Train from Asansol to Tundla. Additionally, other special trains, including those passing through Asansol also witnessed well-coordinated crowd management.

The coordinated efforts of staff and officers of Asansol division/Eastern Railway ensured that all arrangements functioned smoothly, contributing to a seamless travel experience for pilgrims heading to the Kumbh Mela.

ESTATE OFFICER
SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE PORT,
KOLKATA (SMPK)
(Appointed by the
Central Govt. Under Section 3 of
Act 40 of 1971-Central Act)
Proceedings No. 2043/O of 2023
Order No. 05 dated 04.02.2025
To
Smt. Ambica Singh,
64 & 64/A, Chetla Railway Siding,
Kolkata-700027
AND
Vill: Dehuri, PO: Marhowrah,
Dist: Saran, Bihar, Pin-841481
AND Any person/s interested in the
property
As mentioned herein
Whereas proceedings against Smt.
Ambica Singh, the O.P. herein, have
been initiated u/s 7 of the P.P. Act for
adjudication of the prayer of Syama
Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata
(SMPK) for recovery of damages
alongwith interest in respect of Syama
Prasad Mookerjee Port's land
measuring about 38.648 Sq.m (under
Plate No. D-481) situated at Chetla
Railway Siding.
Whereas the next date of hearing/filing
reply to show cause etc., is fixed on
25.02.2025 at 12 PM at Office of the
Estate Officer, Shyama Prasad
Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, at the 1st
Floor of 'Fairlie Warehouse', 6 Fairlie
Place, Kolkata-700001, failing which
the matter would be decided ex-parte,
without further reference. For further
details please refer to SMPK's website
www.smp.kolkata.in
Date: 17.02.2025
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND & SEAL
(RANJAN MAHAPATRA)
ESTATE OFFICER

BiGo partners with BGBS to power sustainable mobility

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 19 FEBRUARY

Kolkata is alive, its streets are pulsating with a diverse tapestry of cultures and ventures. Yet, as traffic snarled, pollution thickened and logistics services deteriorated, the joy of exploration faded.

BiGo, India's first electric two-wheeler mobility service is making its presence in West Bengal with a bold vision – to introduce sustainable, business-first transport and mobility solutions.

BiGo's journey is led by its founders, Ankit Neutia, Ankit Jalan and Mr Prateek Agrawal, driven by a dynamic team with rich work experience in the automotive, business management and information technology industry.

At the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS), BiGo signed a MoU with the West Bengal government which will not only accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) but will also make West Bengal a key player in India's transition to electric vehicles. This MoU also paves the way for BiGo to rapidly expand its



services within the state and also create a solid foundation to launch all over the nation with its roots deeply grounded in West Bengal.

Ankit Jalan said, "BiGo is more than just a mobility service; it's a revolution. Our full-stack approach of owning the fleet, developing the right infrastructure, training drivers, and managing operations, ensures reliability and sustainability. BiGo is empowering businesses to move smarter and faster. We at BiGo would like to thank our chief minister and the government, for the support extended to us."

BiGo plans to invest up to Rs 375 crore by 2026 with larger investments in subsequent years. These planned investments will strengthen our infrastructure and pave the way to expand our fleet to about 2,00,000+ ebikes in the next five years, said an official.

OC, family members arrested for assault on med staff, vandalism

TATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

An officer-in-charge (OC) of district crime record bureau in Birbhum and his family members, including his wife were arrested on Tuesday night on charges of assaulting doctors, nurses and other medical staff of the state-run Lalghola Krishnapur Hospital in Murshidabad district and ransacking the hospital premises.

The accused, including the OC Asrafal Sheikh, were produced before the court on Wednesday.

Trouble started on Tuesday night when his mother was brought to the hospital. Asrafal, his wife and four other members of their family got involved in a heated exchange of words with an on-duty nurse at the hospital, alleging negligence in treatment of his mother.

He along with his family members turned violent and assaulted several nurses, doctors and other staff of the government hospital. They went on a rampage by damaging government properties at the hospital.

The hospital virtually

turned into a battlefield till midnight. Seeing the situation was getting out of control, a huge police force, led by Atanu Halder, OC of Lalghola police station (PS) rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control. But the violent family members, led by Asrafal, did not spare even his colleagues. They also allegedly attacked Mr Halder, sub-inspector (SI) Kalyan Singhary and civic volunteers.

Asrafal allegedly tried to throttle Mr Halder's neck and beat up Mr Singhary and two civic policemen with bamboo. Mr Singhary's one finger was fractured.

Locals alleged that Asrafal, a resident of Lalghola, was drunk and went on a rampage the hospital premises.

According to police sources in Murshidabad district, disciplinary action has been taken against him.

The superintendent of police (SP) in Murshidabad has suspended him, sources said.

Earlier, allegations of corruption had also been brought against him when he was posted at Kimahar PS in Birbhum district.

Dedicate life to service of nation: RKM monks

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

Monks of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission urged the young people to dedicate their lives for the development of the country and uphold the philosophy of service and sacrifice as propagated by Vivekananda.

They were speaking at Sealdah station to commemorate the return of Swami Vivekananda from the West on 19 February, 1897. The programme was organised by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Belur and the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture Gol Park.

A portrait of Swamiji was placed on a well decorated rath (chariot) which started from Sealdah and commenced at Alambazar Math where a meeting was held. Swami Suvaranandaji, general secretary of Ramakrishna Math and Mission addressed the gathering. At Sealdah, a



On this day, after attending the Chicago Religious Conference, Swami Vivekananda returned by train from Budge Budge. As every year, a journey began from Budge Budge station to Kolkata with Swamiji's statue to celebrate the occasion. ■ SNS

meeting was held which was addressed by Swami Balabhadranandaji, assistant general secretary of Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Young speakers spoke at the meeting

and portions from Swamiji's messages were read out. A huge procession followed the chariot. The chariot started from Sealdah and reached Maniktala from where it

reached College Street via Vivekananda Road. At Swamiji's ancestral residence, flowers were placed at Swamiji's feet. The rally then reached Shyam-bazar Five Point Crossing via Bhupen Bose Avenue and Girish Avenue.

Swamiji left Chennai on 15 February to reach Budge Budge by steamer. He boarded a special train to reach Sealdah station on 19 February, 1897. At Sealdah, the youth removed the horses of the carriage Swamiji was travelling in and pushed it themselves. Swamiji came to the house of Dr Pasupati Bose in Bagbazar. Swamiji was accompanied by Mrs and Captain Savier and J J Goodwin. Swamiji had huge influence over the youths. In the freedom movement there was not a single youth who was not influenced by Swamiji.

The messages of Swamiji still attract the youth, who do social service of different kinds across the country.



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THUMBNAILS

Jharkhand Govt puts Pooja Singhal back in key role: In a significant bureaucratic reshuffle, the Jharkhand government has appointed IAS officer Pooja Singhal as the Secretary of the Department of Information Technology and e-Governance, with the additional charge of Chief Executive Officer of Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd. (JCN), Ranchi. The decision, taken despite legal objections from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), has sparked considerable debate in political and administrative circles. A 2000-batch IAS officer, Singhal was recently reinstated after spending nearly 28 months in judicial custody over her alleged involvement in the MCNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) scam in Khunti district. The ED had arrested her in connection with a money laundering case, accusing her of amassing disproportionate assets through fraudulent means. The agency strongly opposed her reinstatement, arguing before the court that permitting Singhal to hold a sensitive government position could allow her to influence evidence and witnesses in the ongoing trial.

'General Secretaries will be accountable for poll results'

Kharge's statement comes in the wake of the party's performance in the recently concluded Delhi polls



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said general secretaries or in-charges will be accountable for the electoral outcome in their respective states, and emphasized on promoting people who stand with

the party like a rock even in adverse circumstances. The statement of the Congress chief comes in the wake of the party's dismal performance in the recently concluded Delhi Assembly polls. The party drew a blank in the polls. Chairing a meeting of the general secretaries and in-charges, in the presence of

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and party's General Secretary in-charge of Organisation KC Venugopal, Kharge while mentioning accountability said, "All of you will be accountable for the organisation and future election results of the states under your charge." Stressing on strengthening

the party, he said, "It is your responsibility to make the organisation strong from state headquarters to booth as soon as possible. You will have to go to the booth yourself for this work, work hard and interact with the workers. If you yourself go to the booth, mandal, block, district and state level, then you will be able to connect new people

there." Kharge said the party should promote people who are committed to the ideology of the Congress party and stand with it like a rock even in adverse situations. Claiming that voter list manipulation was happening on a large scale in elections, the Congress chief said Gandhi had also raised this in Lok Sabha. Kharge pointed out "how the names of Congress supporters were deleted from the voter list or the names were removed and added in a different polling booth. Accusing the BJP of adding fresh names just before the elections, he said, "This rigging has to be stopped at all costs." During the meeting, among others, he also mentioned recent "inhuman" deportation of illegal Indian immigrants from the US. Attacking the BJP-led government at the Centre over the matter, "Despite Modi's visit, America is sending back Indian citizens in handcuffs like before. Vegetarian passengers were given non-vegetarian food. Our government has failed to protest properly against this insult."

Government releases 15th Finance Commission grants for rural local bodies



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

The Union Government has released 15th Finance Commission Grants during Financial Year 2024-25, for the Rural Local Bodies of Bihar, Haryana and Sikkim. Bihar gets the 2nd installment of Untied Grants amounting to Rs 821.8021 crore and withheld portion of 1st installment of Untied Grants amounting to Rs 47.9339 crore. These funds would be utilised for all 38 District Panchayats, 530 eligible Block Panchayats and 8052 eligible Gram Panchayats which fulfilled the mandatory conditions for the release, according to a Panchayati Raj Ministry statement on Wednesday. The Rural Local Bodies in Haryana will get, 2nd installment of Untied Grants amounting to Rs 202.4663 crore and the withheld portion of 1st installment of Untied Grants amounting to Rs 7.5993 crore. These funds are for the 18 eligible District Panchayats, 142

eligible Block Panchayats and 6195 eligible Gram Panchayats. Sikkim will receive the 2nd installment of Untied Grants amounting to Rs 6.2613 crore during Financial Year 2024-25. These funds are for the four eligible District Panchayats and 186 eligible Gram Panchayats which fulfilled the mandatory conditions for release. The Untied Grants will be utilised by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) for location-specific felt needs, under the 29 Subjects enshrined in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, except for salaries and other establishment costs. The Tied Grants can be used for the basic services of sanitation and maintenance of ODF status, and this should include management and treatment of household waste, and human excreta and faecal sludge management in particular. The grants could also be used for supply of drinking water, rainwater harvesting and water recycling.

Three hardcore women Maoists killed in encounter in Madhya Pradesh



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 19 FEBRUARY

At least three hardcore women Maoists were shot dead in an encounter with security forces while some others managed to escape into the forest with injuries in the Maoist-infested Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh on

Wednesday. According to ASP Vijay Dabar, the anti-Maoist Hawk Force of MP Police and teams of the local police had an encounter with a naxal group on Wednesday morning in a forested area, about 90-km away from the district headquarters. The officer said that the

security forces succeeded in killing three hardcore women Maoists. As per a police statement, 'the Hawk Force and the police neutralized three hardcore Maoists in an encounter near the Ronda Forest Camp in Supkhar Forest Range under Garhi Police Station area.' 'Security forces have recovered an Indian Small Arms System (INSAS) rifle, a Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) and a .303 rifle, and other essential daily-use stuff from their possession,' the statement said. Some Maoists were injured in the encounter but they managed to escape taking advantage of the dense forest. Twelve police teams have launched combing operations to track down the remaining Maoists.

Rajasthan Budget 2025-26: Welfare and development takes centre stage

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, 19 FEBRUARY

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari on Wednesday presented the State Budget 2025-26 in the Assembly, aiming to address the needs of all sections of society while ensuring funds for development and good governance. Despite a revenue deficit of 31,009 crore and a fiscal deficit exceeding 84,643 crore, the Finance Minister prioritized infrastructure expansion in key sectors, including roads, water, power, urban development, and public amenities. Delivering her second consecutive budget speech, which lasted 2 hours and 17 minutes, Diya Kumari announced several welfare measures targeting youth, women, farmers, weaker sections, and senior citizens.

Emphasizing sustainability, the Green Budget concept was introduced, with an allocation of 27,854 crore for environment-friendly projects in urban development, roads, energy, and agriculture. The state government has earmarked 10 crore per assembly constituency for development projects, with an additional 5 crore for underdeveloped desert regions. She highlighted that the Barmer crude oil refinery is set to transform western Rajasthan's economy, with major work nearing completion and operations expected to commence by March 2025. Further, 1,000 crore has been allocated to build infrastructure in eight newly created districts, strengthening



administrative facilities at the district level. The "Clean and Green Eco Cities" project will be launched in 15 cities, including Bundi, Nathdwara, Khatu, Bikaner, Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Mandawa, Kishangarh, Bhi-

wadi, and Pushkar, modeled on the Smart Cities initiative. An allocation of 900 crore has been made for this project. To improve urban and rural water supply, the budget includes Urban Jal Jeevan Mission launch and CM Jal Yojana extension until 2028; 2 lakh new domestic water connections under the "Har Ghar Jal" scheme; 425 crore allocated for rural water supply expansion; 1,000 tube wells and 1,500 hand pumps to be installed for smaller settlements; Ramjal Setu Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project to be expedited, with work worth 9,400 crore already underway and tenders issued for 12,000 crore more. Key announcements in the energy sector include increase in free electricity from 100 to 150 units per

month under the CM Free Electricity Scheme, aligned with the PM Surya Ghar Free Power Programme; free solar panels for eligible families, with community solar plants for those without rooftop space; 5 lakh domestic power connections and 50,000 farm connections to be released; and the introduction of the Rajasthan City Gas Distribution Policy, targeting 1.25 lakh new piped gas connections in urban areas. Rajasthan's road and metro network will be significantly expanded. 12,000 crore allocated for road, metro, and public transport development. 9,600 km of roads will be built and strengthened. Jaipur Metro Phase-2 (Sitapura to Ambabari-Vidhyadhar Nagar) will be launched, with a DPR for extension to Vaishali Nagar and Jagatpura in progress.

U'khand cabinet passes new land law, will forbid outsiders to buy agri land

P R SINGH
DEHRADUN, 19 FEBRUARY

The Uttarakhand government on Wednesday cleared the much talked about land law to prevent non-state natives from buying large area and agricultural land in the hill state. Although the Dhami government did not share the details of the content of the law, officials informed that harsh provisions have been incorporated in the proposed land law with the aim to save agricultural and horticulture land of the Himalayan state. Key provision of the land law will be to forbid non Uttarakhand buyers to own agriculture and horticulture



lands in the hill areas but for Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar districts. In other words barring Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar the land will be applicable in all 11 districts of the state. Another important provision in the land law will be to create a portal for keeping

records of the purchasers from outside the state. The portal will have complete details of all the land purchases made by non Uttarakhand natives. Besides these provisions, the new land law, likely to be tabled in the house in next two days, strict action will be taken against

land buyers if they do not use land purchased by them for the intended purposes. In addition to this permission will not be granted to purchase more than 12.5 acres of land in the state. It also speaks for expediting the consolidation and settlement of agricultural lands

in the hill areas. Uttarakhand land law will also take away the power of district magistrates to give purchase permission and mandatory affidavit required for land purchases outside the municipal area by the people from other states. Their land will be linked to Aadhaar. In addition DMs will have to regularly submit reports as to the land purchases of all lands to the Revenue Council and the government. More than one person in a family will not be allowed to buy land in the state. Violation of this provision will lead to the purchased land being acquired by the government.

India-Egypt Joint Special Forces exercise CYCLONE-III kicks off in Rajasthan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

The third edition of the India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise - CYCLONE-III - is currently underway at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan. The 14-day military drill, which began on February 10, will culminate on February 23. Troops from both India and Egypt are undergoing intensive combat conditioning and tactical training to enhance their joint operational capabilities. The Special Forces from both nations are showcasing exceptional discipline, teamwork, and adaptability, reflecting their strong commitment to operational excellence and readiness for joint missions in

challenging environments. The exercise includes a range of high-intensity training sessions such as Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Drills, Survival Techniques, Demolition Training, and Combat Medical Skills. These drills are specifically designed to improve the soldiers' responses to complex operational scenarios, especially in desert and semi-desert terrains. Emphasis is placed on agility, endurance, and precision, ensuring that both contingents operate seamlessly as one cohesive force in real-world combat situations. Additionally, the exercise offers a valuable opportunity for Egypt's contingent to gain firsthand exposure to India's advanced defence

capabilities, showcasing the country's cutting-edge military technology and weapon systems. These collaborations not only boost tactical proficiency but also strengthen diplomatic and military ties between the two nations. The exercise will culminate in a rigorous 48-hour validation phase, during which both contingents will conduct simulated Counter-Terrorism (CT) operations. This final phase is designed to challenge the troops' ability to plan and execute tactical manoeuvres under high-pressure conditions. The soldiers will carry out joint tactical drills, neutralise simulated threats, and apply their newly acquired skills in a realistic operational environment.

Parents & daughter, returning from Mahakumbh, killed in NH accident



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 19 FEBRUARY

A couple and their daughter from Maharashtra returning from Mahakumbh in Prayagraj were killed after their SUV rammed into a stationary cement truck in the Maihar

district of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday. Two other family members were seriously injured in the accident. According to the police, the accident occurred at around 1.30 pm near Narora village on national highway

number 30. Maihar Kotwali police station in-charge Animesh Dwivedi said the deceased were identified as Sunil Kumar Upadhyay (62), his wife Sarojita Upadhyay (56) and their daughter Sneha Upadhyay (28). The two injured family members were admitted to the Maihar district hospital for treatment. According to information, the five occupants of the car were residents of Palawa near Mumbai.

Tiger's homecoming: Dalma's stray big cat to return to Palamau

SHASHI SINGH
RANCHI, 19 FEBRUARY

In a significant move aimed at wildlife conservation, the Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR) is preparing to bring back a tiger currently roaming the forests of Dalma. The reserve authorities have sought permission from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for this ambitious translocation, with plans to tranquillise and safely relocate the big cat once the green signal is received. A special monitoring team from PTR has been camping in Dalma, tracking the tiger's



movements closely. Interestingly, the feline is believed to have reached Dalma through a natural corridor connecting the two forested areas. PTR's Deputy Director, Prajesh Kant Jena, confirmed that according to information from the Wildlife Institute of India, the tiger originally

belongs to Palamau. "We have requested guidelines from the NTCA and are keeping a vigilant watch on its movement," Jena stated. The concern, however, lies in Dalma's scarcity of natural prey. With a dearth of deer, chital, nilgai, and bison in the region, the tiger

has been forced to prey on livestock, a situation fraught with risk, both for the animal and the local population. Compounding the issue is the proximity of urban settlements, raising serious concerns about the big cat's safety. Palamau Tiger Reserve, declared a secure habitat for tigers, forms a critical link in the larger landscape corridor that stretches as far as the Satpura forests. Wildlife experts view this translocation as a crucial step towards preserving the region's natural habitat and maintaining the ecological balance. This is not the first such

operation in the region. In a recent incident, the Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha tranquillised and rescued a tigress from the Jharkhand-Odisha border, though the animal eventually returned to the same territory. Experts note that tigers often establish and traverse corridors spanning 400 to 500 km, making their conservation a complex yet essential endeavour. As Palamau gears up for this delicate mission, all eyes are now on when and how Dalma's stray tiger will return home, adding another chapter to India's ongoing story of wildlife preservation.

THUMBNAILS

Prabhakar slams BJP: Telangana Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar on Wednesday defended the state government's decision to reduce work hours for Muslim employees during Ramzan, stating that similar provisions have existed for the past 25 years. Hitting out at the BJP for politicizing the move, he said, "When your (BJP's) coalition government is in Andhra Pradesh, a CO was issued on February 11 that all Muslim employees could go for Namaz during the month of Ramazan. This is not new; it has been happening for the last 25 years... We also issued a similar order, and now they are doing politics over it... There should be politics on development, and everything should not be about religion..." Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Prakash Reddy criticized the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments for their decision to allow Muslim employees to leave work an hour early during Ramzan, calling it an act of appeasement. BJP spokesperson Prakash Reddy suggested that, while acknowledging the respect for the 'Iftar' practice, similar consideration should be given to Hindu festivals, advocating for special leave during occasions like 'Ayyappa Swamy Pooja'.

Jagan criticises Andhra govt over farmer distress

He claimed that farmers are not receiving MSP for any crop from TDP-led govt



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 19 FEBRUARY

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday criticized Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, alleging that the state government had abandoned farmers to the mercy of middlemen and brokers.

He claimed that farmers are not receiving minimum support prices (MSP) for any crop under the current TDP-led coalition government. The former chief minister

visited the Guntur Chili Yard, one of the largest chili markets in Asia, and interacted with farmers. Chili farmers are distressed as prices have declined, making it difficult for them to recover their costs.

Speaking to the media, Reddy slammed the state government for failing to provide MSP to farmers for black gram, green gram, tomato, cotton, and other crops.

Brushing aside the discomfort caused by the pungency of chili, Reddy said,

"Guntur Mirchi Yard is hardly any distance from Chandrababu Naidu's secretariat. Farmers are not getting minimum support prices."

"Last year, chili prices were between Rs 21,000 and Rs 27,000. Today, farmers are not able to sell even for Rs 10,000 to Rs 11,000. That is the plight of the farmers," he said.

"All the promises that Chandrababu Naidu made, including Rs 20,000 beyond the PM Kisan scheme, have proven to be a lie. The Rythu Bharosa Kendras, which were

operational during our regime, are now dysfunctional," added Reddy.

He alleged, "Not only chili, even paddy procured earlier was at a lower price. There is no transparency in the system. It has become a broker procurement system, and Chandrababu Naidu is hand in glove with the brokers, subjecting farmers to losses."

The YSRCP claimed that under its government, a record 16.10 lakh tonnes of chili were exported, opening up international markets and stabilizing prices. The previous regime had introduced investment support schemes to reduce the financial burden on farmers.

The administration took steps to improve cold storage facilities and prevent middlemen from exploiting farmers. However, the area under cultivation has now fallen to 180,000 hectares from 241,000 hectares, production has declined by 34.8 per cent, and yield per hectare has fallen by nearly 11 per cent.

Rising input costs, pest infestations, and extreme weather conditions are among the causes of the hardship plaguing chili farmers.

Telangana Opposition takes cue from Nara Lokesh's 'red book'



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 19 FEBRUARY

The 'red book' of TDP leader Nara Lokesh in which he noted the so-called illegal acts of government officials during the YSRCP regime in Andhra Pradesh, seems to have caught the imagination of the Opposition in Telangana as well.

Both BRS MLC Kavitha and BJP MP Etela Rajender have threatened to note down the alleged irregularities of the government officials in their respective 'pink book' and 'saffron book'.

When he was in the Opposition, Lokesh often showed a red diary to his audience and declared he was noting down all the injustice meted out by the bureaucrats and the irregularities they per-

formed while carrying out the orders of their political masters. He had vowed retribution once TDP came to power.

The Opposition in Telangana seemed to be taking cues from Nara Lokesh and noting down the infractions in the Congress regime.

BRS MLC Kavitha issued a warning to the Congress for indulging in political vendetta and registering cases against BRS leaders during her visit to Jangaon. She said they were maintaining a 'pink book' to document all the misdeeds of the Congress. She said they would retaliate after coming to power and ensure consequences follow for such harassment.

BJP MP from Malkajgiri Etela Rajender also referred

to the "Saffron book" while issuing a stern warning to IAS and IPS officers working in Telangana.

While campaigning for MLC elections Etela Rajender advised the All-India Service officers to follow the law instead of the orders of their political bosses. "We are also maintaining a Saffron book. We are recording the names in it. We will reveal it at the right time with the statistics," said Etela Rajender.

He criticized the previous BRS regime for destroying the education system in Telangana. He further alleged Revanth Reddy was doing the same thing after Congress came to power. He said the people of the state will teach the Congress a lesson in the upcoming MLC elections.

KCR returns after long hiatus

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 19 FEBRUARY

Returning to the party headquarters after a long hiatus BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao today slammed the Congress government as a flop and said Telangana was regressing under current rule. Exuding confidence that his party will certainly return to power he also charted the future course of the party in the coming days. He claimed byelections in the constituencies where defections took place, were imminent. The return of the wily BRS chief to active politics after lying low for months was a boost for the party cadres, particularly with local body

polls around the corner.

Rao today chaired the meeting of the party's executive body at the Telangana Bhavan and more than what he said it was his presence at the party headquarters that boosted the morale of the rank and file, particularly after the dismal Assembly and Lok Sabha election results. The defections by party MLAs which had shaken the party have not only been arrested but Rao claimed the defectors will face disqualification and by polls will be held in those constituencies.

Plans are afoot to grandly celebrate its 25th anniversary, kicking off on 27 April which is its foundation day. The party will hold its plenary

on 27 April followed by a huge public meeting. The BRS will also begin its membership drive in April across the districts.

Rao today announced that with delimitation Assembly seats will go up to 160 from 117 and promised to reserve 53 seats for the women. He said a president for the party's women's wing will be appointed soon. He also promised training for the leaders and cadres. Upping the ante against the Congress government Rao said it failed in all sectors and the BRS would hold an agitation every month on key issues.

The former chief minister also submitted his diplomatic passport today and applied for a regular one.

If Hindi imposition is compulsory, its destruction too is compulsory: Stalin quotes Tamil poet

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 19 FEBRUARY

Keeping the heat on the Union Government over its rigid stand on the three-language formula and making it mandatory for the release of funds due for Tamil Nadu under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme, Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday warned that if imposition of Hindi is made compulsory, its destruction will become compulsory.

Quoting a poem of popular Tamil poet Bharathidasan, the Chief Minister made it clear that the manipulation to impose Hindi will never



succeed with the Tamils. Talking to 'X', he posted the poem, written during the anti-Hindi agitation of the late 60s.

A rough translation of the poem reads thus: "Hindi, if you step into the Dravidian land of happiness, your feet

will be chopped off

Coming to hinder us, Hindi, your manipulation will never succeed with us

Forcing it on our youth by making it mandatory, when they open their mouth to learn Tamil, the nectar, Your

destruction too is compulsory".

The Chief Minister's warning came a day after the ruling DMK and its allies staged a massive demonstration against the Modi Government's persistent attempt to thrust Hindi. It was a swift response to the Union Education Minister's stand that funds for Tamil Nadu will be released only if the state accepted the National Education Policy (NEP) and its three-language formula. It has invited condemnation from across the political spectrum barring the BJP.

Earlier, Stalin had questioned Pradhan that which clause of the Constitution

mandates a three-language formula and pointed out that Hindi imposition would undermine federalism.

Speaking at the protest, Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin had warned the 'fascist' BJP-led Union Government of another language war against Hindi imposition. He also said, "We are not seeking alms or demanding your property, but only our legitimate right."

Tamil Nadu has been following the two language formula - mother tongue Tamil and English. The state also boasts of the highest Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education in the country.

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE HONBLE 2ND SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE, PURI
C.S.No. 516 of 2023
(A.N. No. 205 of 2023)
Sanjib Sarkar vs. Plaintiff, -versus-
Shrabani Sarkar and others
Defendants.
To Shrabani Sarkar, aged about 39 years, D/o Late Anan Kumar Sarkar, At: 3, Misgondrali Mitra Road, Park Circus, P.O. Park Street, P.S. Beliaghata, Dist: 24 Parganas, Kolkata-700017, West Bengal
Whereas Sanjib Sarkar, aged about 59 years, S/o Late Anan Kumar Sarkar, resident of 3, Misgondrali Mitra Road, Park Circus, P.O. Park Street, P.S. Beliaghata, Dist: 24 Parganas, Kolkata-700017, West Bengal has instituted a suit against you for "declaration of Right, title, interest with recovery of possession and for permanent injunction" you are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person, or by pleader duly instructed, and able to answer all material questions relating to the suit, or who shall be accompanied by some person able to answer all such questions, on the 31st day of March, 2025 at 11 O' clock in the noon, to answer the claim, and you are directed to produce on that day the documents upon which you intend to rely in support of your defence. Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned the suit will be heard and determined in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this day of January 2025
2nd Senior Civil Judge, Puri

PUBLIC NOTICE

Change of Name



I, Asha Rani Kerketta, hereby declare that, I have changed the name and surname of my daughter according to the affidavit made before the Notary, dated 07-02-2025 and as 'Rini Anjela Prasad' and 'Aria Anjela Kerketta' is same one and identical person.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to all that my client Pratima Biswas, wife of Nirmal Kumar Biswas, residing at East Chandman, 3rd Lane, P.O. - N. C. Pukur, P.S. Ttagarh, Dist. North 24 Parganas, Kolkata- 700122, purchased land measuring 1 Cottah 2 Chittaks of Mouza- Chanak, J.L. NO 4, R.S. & L.R. Dag No. 7744 under R. S. Khatun No. 340 and L.R. Khatun No. 897 from Rabindra Nath Sannasi through his registered Constitutione Attorney (IV-304), Ajit Kumar Mondal Vide Deed No. 4816/1985. The above said 2 Deeds were duly registered before A.D.S.R.O. Barrackpore. Now my client is going to record her name before BL&LRO, BKP-II, Sodepur. If any objection regarding this matter respective person may apply before the BL&LRO, BKP-II, Sodepur, with corroborating supporting documents within one month from today.
Rabin Malo
Advocate
Barrackpur Court

LEGAL NOTICE

This to inform you that, my client, Smt. Supriya Singharoy, wife of Santi Singharoy, sold the property situated under Dist.: Hooghly, P.S.: Uttarpara, Mauza-Basai, J.L. No. 2, under R.S. & L.R. Dag No. 183, L.R. Khatun No. 104, by different deeds of sale, as the attorney of Sri Samit Singharoy, son of Santi Singharoy, Smt. Sanchita Chandra, wife of Amarjit Chandra & Sarita Singha (Singharoy), wife of Chandranath Singha, by registered Power of Attorney, vide Deed No. 184 for the year 2004, registered at A.D.S.R. Serampore, Dist.: Hooghly. So, if any person have any objection, then inform me within fortnight from the date of publish of this notice.

Sunit Sarkar
Advocate
Serampore Court
Serampore, Hooghly
Mob.: 9433136340

PUBLIC NOTICE

URGENT NOTICE

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This is to inform or declare that, we are intended purchaser/buyer of the premises as below mentioned:-
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CHANGE OF NAME

I, SWARUPA Barua, W/o. Subhabrata Banerjee, residing at 82, Sreerampur Road North, Garia, Post Office: Garia, Police Station: Patuli, Kolkata-700084, District: South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Swarupa Barua Banerjee as declared before the Ld. First Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore Court vide Affidavit No. 12478 dated 14th February, 2025. Swarupa Barua, Swarupa Banerjee and Swarupa Barua Banerjee are the same and identical person.

I, IC/ARMY No. 10212197-P, Rank-SEP, Name-Bablu Kumar Chakraborty, resident of Baishnab Para, P.S.: Sonarpur, Kol-700150, Dist.: 24 Pgs(S), do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that to change name of my spouse from Rita Roy to Rita Chakraborty as per affidavit (No. 12446) date 14-2-25 in the Court of the Ld. First Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore, 24 Parganas (South).

Readers are requested to make appropriate enquiries and seek appropriate advice before sending money, incurring any expenses, acting on medical recommendations or entering into any commitment in relation to any advertisement published in this publication. The Statesman Group doesn't vouch any claim made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, Editor and owners of The Statesman Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences, in the event such claims are not honoured by the advertisers. For any loss incurred, the onus lies entirely with advertisers and not with the publication.

TENDER

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PASCHIMBANGA AGRI MARKETING CORPORATION LIMITED
SUFAL BANGLA PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT 2nd Floor, Uttaraan Civic Centre, Manikata, Kolkata-700 054
sufalbangla@gmail.com
NIQ No: PD/PMU/SB/78/2024-25
Date:19.02.2025

Notice Inviting e-Quotations
The Project Director, Suful Bangla on behalf of Paschimbanga Agri-Marketing Corporation Ltd, West Bengal invites item rate (inclusive of all taxes) Quotation from the experienced and resourceful Fabricator who are working as a body builder of goods vehicle for "Fabrication of Light Goods Vehicles (LGV) (Newly Purchased) (Mahindra Supro Mini Profit Truck VX 856.2" as per specifications as detailed in the tender document to be received from and delivered to Suful Bangla Project Management Unit at Tapashi Malik Krishnak, Singur, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal. Date, Time and Place of Pre-bid meeting : Date 24/02/2025 at 12:30 P.M. at the Office of the undersigned. Bid submission closing date and time: 28/02/2025 at 03:00 P.M. The detail information regarding e-NIQ is available on the website: <https://wbntenders.gov.in> Sd/- Project Director, Suful Bangla. ICA- T3553(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
O/O the Superintending Engineer, PWD South-Western Electrical Circle, Sahid Naganand Pandey Sarani, Midnapur-721101
Notice Inviting e-Quotation
No.- WBPMW/SE/SWEC/NIQ/72/2024-25
Tender ID: 2025, WBPMW, 816601.1
Last date of submission of bid :- 25.02.2025 upto 14:30 Hrs. Name of Work: Servicing & Overhauling of Electrical Sub-Station of Midnapur Medical College under Medinipur Medical College Electrical Sub-Division, PWD. Further details can be seen in the resourceful Fabricator who are working as a body builder of goods vehicle for "Fabrication of Light Goods Vehicles (LGV) (Newly Purchased) (Mahindra Supro Mini Profit Truck VX 856.2" as per specifications as detailed in the tender document to be received from and delivered to Suful Bangla Project Management Unit at Tapashi Malik Krishnak, Singur, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal. Date, Time and Place of Pre-bid meeting : Date 24/02/2025 at 12:30 P.M. at the Office of the undersigned. Bid submission closing date and time: 28/02/2025 at 03:00 P.M. The detail information regarding e-NIQ is available on the website: <https://wbntenders.gov.in> Sd/- Project Director, Suful Bangla. ICA- T3553(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited by The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Electrical Division, Berhampur P.H.E. Dte vide Ref. No. WBPHED/EE/MEED/NieQ-41 OF 2024-25 and Tender ID : 2025, PHED, 808157.1 to 13 for Electro-Mechanical Works for Jal Jiban Mission in different W/S. Scheme. Last date for Submission of Technical and Financial bid (online) : 20.02.2025 upto 3:00 P.M. Dated of Opening technical proposal (online) : 24.02.2025 after 3:00 P.M. NB: All others of the above NieQ will remain unchanged. All details can be seen from the website: <http://wbntenders.gov.in> ICA- T3483(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM ZILLA PARISHAD
SURI, BIRBHUM.
Abridged Notice Inviting e-Tender
Tender Notice No. BHM-24-2024-33
Memo No-509/3(1)BJPZ Dt-18/02/2025
Online Tender ID-2025, ZPHD, 816329
Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad invites e-Tenders for 09 (Nine) no of works. Detailed information including downloading and uploading time are available from the website [www.wbntenders.gov.in](http://wbntenders.gov.in). Sd/- Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad. Memo No-31(3)/InfAdvt/9, Dated-18/02/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.D. TENDER NOTICE
EE, Cob Hwy. Divn, P.W. (Roads) Dte. invites online tender for the work of - 1) Emergent potholes Repairing of Kakina road from 14.00 km to 20.00 km (in stretches) under Cooch Behar Highway Division in the district of Cooch Behar during 2024-25. (2nd Call). NIT No. 13 (E) 2nd Cal of 2024-25. (B No.1) Estimated Amount: Rs. 25,14,398.48. Tender ID: 2025, SH, 816762.1. Bid submission end date (online) : 22/02/2025 Start Date (online) : 22/02/2025 from 9:00 A.M. Bid submission closing date (online) : 07/03/2025 upto to 06:00 P.M. NB: All details of the above NieQ will remain unchanged. All details can be seen from the website: <http://wbntenders.gov.in> ICA- T3483(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM ZILLA PARISHAD
SURI, BIRBHUM.
Abridged Notice Inviting e-Tender
Tender Notice No. BHM-24-2024-33
Memo No-509/3(1)BJPZ Dt-18/02/2025
Online Tender ID-2025, ZPHD, 816329
Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad invites e-Tenders for 05 (Five) no of works. Detailed information including downloading and uploading time are available from the website [www.wbntenders.gov.in](http://wbntenders.gov.in). Sd/- Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad. Memo No-31(3)/InfAdvt/9, Dated-18/02/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.D. TENDER CORRIPIGENDUM NOTICE
1st Corrigendum against NIT No. WBPMW/EE/HCD/ENIT (Item Rate)- 01/2024-25 of Executive Engineer, PWD, Howrah Construction Division. 1) Name of Work:- Engagement of Security Personnel on purely temporary basis for 24 Hours (Round the Clock) guarding at Howrah Construction Sub-Division & II and Office of the Executive Engineer, Howrah Construction Division, PWD. 2- M.G. Road, Howrah-711011. Tender ID: 2025, WBPMW, 811464.1. Bid Submission end date extended upto 3:00 P.M. of 01.03.2025. Details will be available from the website <http://wbntenders.gov.in> and notice board of this office on all working days within office hours. Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.D., Howrah Construction Division ICA- T3522(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
TENDER ID-2025, PHED, 805281.1 to 31 (JIM Work). Electronic Notice Inviting Tender No.-26/WBPHED/EE/BD-4/2024-25. Last date of Documents download/Nil closing date (Online) is on 03.03.2025 upto 11:00 A.M. Date of opening of technical Proposals (Online) on 05.03.2025 at 11:30 A.M. Further details will be available in our website: wbntenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Berhampur Division-I, P.H.E. Dte. ICA- T3483(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Irrigation & Waterways Directorate
ABRIDGED NOTICE INVITING TENDER (WBW/EE/e-NIT-17/EE/M.D.-II of 2024-25, Dated-17/02/2025)
Electronic submission of Bid is invited by the Executive Engineer, Metropolitan Drainage Division No.-II, Jalasampad Shwari, 7th floor, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-91.1, & W.Dte. on behalf of the Govt. of West Bengal from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient credential of execution of similar nature of works at least 30% of Sl. No.-1 of Amount put to tender for WBW/EE/e-NIT-17/EE/M.D.-II of 2024-25. Details of WBW/EE/e-NIT-17/EE/M.D.-II of 2024-25 and Tender document may be downloaded from www.wbiwd.gov.in or <https://wbntenders.gov.in> or seen at Office Notice Board on and from 20.02.2025 at 10:30 hours. The date of download start date on and from 20.02.2025 at 16:30 Hrs. and the last date of Bid submission on 06.03.2025 at 16:00 Hrs. Sd/- EE/MDD-II, I & W Dte., Govt. of West Bengal. ICA- T3436(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice Inviting e-Tender
NIT NO. HST/AT-114-2025/KITS/2025/340, Dated : 17-02-2025
e-TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF SOME KITS, CHEMICALS & REAGENTS FOR TWO YEARS FROM THE DATE OF AWARD OF CONTRACT (AOC) AND ITS EXTENSION, IF REQUIRED is invited from the Bidders. Interested bidders may visit the website "https://wbntenders.gov.in" or "www.wbiwd.gov.in" for further details. Bid submission start date (online):28-02-2025 Bid submission closing date (online) : 17-03-2025 Bid opening date (online): 17-03-2025
Sd/- D.D.H.S. (E&S), WB ICA- T3445(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
P.W.D. TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte., Central Kolkata Health Electrical Division, P-32, C.I.T Road (1st Floor), Kolkata-14 invites e-tender (online) for the work of (1) Electrical repairing and renovation work at Pediatric Medicine Department of the purpose of MUSQUAN at Calcutta National Medical College, Kolkata, vide e-tender no. WBPHED/EE/MEED/NIT137/24-25. Tender ID: 2025, WBPMW, 816655.1. Bid submission end date (online) for the job is 05/03/2025 upto 2:00 P.M. Detail information/download/upload will be available from the website: <http://wbntenders.gov.in>. Sd/- Executive Engineer-I, Central Kolkata Health Electrical Division, P.W.Dte. ICA- T3497(2)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM ZILLA PARISHAD
SURI, BIRBHUM.
Abridged Notice Inviting e-Tender
Tender Notice No. BHM-24-2024-33
Memo No-509/3(1)BJPZ Dt-18/02/2025
Online Tender ID-2025, ZPHD, 816322
Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad invites e-Tenders for 11 (Eleven) no of works. Detailed information including downloading and uploading time are available from the website [www.wbntenders.gov.in](http://wbntenders.gov.in). Sd/- Additional Executive Officer, Birbhum Zilla Parishad. Memo No-31(3)/InfAdvt/9, Dated-18/02/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. 196/STBT-15/1/2025-WBSSB (Notice No. 12)
e-Tenders (2nd Call) are invited by the Administrative Officer, West Bengal State Council of Science & Technology, Dept. of Science & Technology and Biotechnology, Go.W.B. for "Supply and installation of DM Water Treatment Plant of 1000 KLD capacity at Kolkata Biotech Park including 3 years CAMC" from the reliable bonafide resourceful suppliers. Details available at the website: <https://wbntenders.gov.in> <https://wbntenders.gov.in> Publishing date: 19.02.2025. Last Date of submission of e-tender: 05.03.2025 at 14:00 Hrs. Sd/- Administrative Officer, WBSCST. ICA- T3451(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited by The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Electrical Division, Berhampur P.H.E. Dte vide Ref. No. WBPHED/EE/MEED/NieQ-43 OF 2024-25 and Tender ID : 2025, PHED, 811514.1 to 8 Electro-mechanical works for Jal Jiban Mission in different W/S Scheme. Last date for Submission of Technical and Financial bid (online) : 22.02.2025 upto 10:00 A.M. Dated of Opening technical proposal (online) : 03.03.2025 after 11:00 A.M. NB: All others of the above NieQ will remain unchanged. All details can be seen from the website: <http://wbntenders.gov.in> ICA- T3484(3)/2025

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
E-Tender being invited by PBSSM, Howrah for procurement of IT Equipments. Details available in <https://wbntenders.gov.in> & <https://howrah.gov.in> with Tender ID 2025_DSE_814972_1, 2025_DSE_815137_1 & 2025_DSE_815339_1.

CM Omar warns of worsening water crisis across J&K

Jammu & Kashmir residents cannot take water for granted, he wrote on X

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 19 FEBRUARY

Anticipating a draught-like situation in Jammu and Kashmir due to negligible rain and snow this winter, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday warned of a worsening water crisis in the Union Territory (UT) and called for collective efforts to tackle the alarming situation.

“J&K residents cannot take water for granted,” he wrote on X.

Omar’s concern has come after reports of many natural springs and waterbodies drying up across the UT. This has resulted in a severe drinking water crisis in many areas of the Kashmir valley and also the Jammu region.

The Chief Minister wrote on X: “J&K is staring at a water crisis this year. It’s not a recent phenomenon, actually it’s been building up for a few years now. While the government will have to adopt a



more proactive approach for water management & conservation, it can’t just be a government-centric approach. All of us residents of J&K will have to change the way we take water for granted. I’ll be reviewing the measures the Jal Shakti (PHE) Dept intends to take to deal with the developing crisis & I’ll also be talking

to the people of J&K over the next few months about what we can do collectively”.

The prolonged dry spell has not only dried up water bodies but has also triggered forest fires in several areas.

Due to insufficient snowfall on the ski-slopes of Gulmarg, the government was forced to postpone the Kashmir edition

of the Khelo India Winter Games.

The meteorological department has predicted a possibility of drought in the Kashmir valley due to a dry winter and about 80% precipitation deficit in January and February. The river bed of Jhelum was visible at many places in Kashmir.

Several natural water springs

in South Kashmir, which flow into the lakes and rivers flowing across the valley, have already dried up.

Low water discharge in the Chenab river, which is otherwise known to be one of the most turbulent rivers in the world, is likely to hit power generation as most hydro-electric projects were located on this river. It will also hit drinking water supply in at least six districts of the Jammu region.

Protests by residents of villages affected due to drinking water shortage have already started particularly in South Kashmir. The Achabal water spring has dried up. The spring and the Aripith rivulet are the source of drinking water to at least a dozen villages. The Aripal spring has also reportedly dried up.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, has announced that “We will provide free of cost water through tankers to areas of Jammu which are facing shortage”.

India now a leader in innovations in multiple sectors: Jitendra Singh



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

India is no longer just a follower but is now setting global benchmarks, offering leadership and pioneering innovations across sectors, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Wednesday.

At a function here, he highlighted the remarkable advancements India has made in recent years, in the fields of space, biotechnology, and nuclear energy etc, positioning itself as a key player on the world stage.

Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that India’s space sector has witnessed an unprecedented transformation, with a surge in ambitious missions and international collabora-

tions. The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) is a testament to India’s technological progress, paving the way for future space missions, including *Gaganyaan*, *Chandrayaan-4*, and the Bhartiya Antriksh Station, India’s upcoming international space station.

India has also emerged as a preferred destination for satellite launches, earning global credibility. The nation has successfully launched 433 foreign satellites, of which 396 were deployed in the last decade alone, generating \$157 million and 260 million in revenue from 2014-2023.

The historic success of *Chandrayaan-3*, which made India the first country to land near the Moon’s south pole, has positioned ISRO at the

forefront of lunar exploration. The world’s leading space agencies, including NASA, are now awaiting India’s findings from the Moon’s southern pole, a milestone that underscores the nation’s rising dominance in space research.

The minister also highlighted India’s pioneering role in biotechnology and bioeconomy. India became the first country to develop a DNA-based COVID-19 vaccine, demonstrating its leadership in vaccine research and development. Furthermore, India has introduced the first herpesvirus vaccine for cervical cancer, reinforcing its position as a leader in preventive healthcare.

India’s bioeconomy has surged from \$10 billion in 2014 to nearly \$140 billion today, with projections to reach \$250 billion in the coming years. The number of biotech startups has skyrocketed from just 50 in 2014 to nearly 9,000 today, making India a global hub for biotech innovation. In bio-manufacturing, India now ranks third in the Asia-Pacific region and 12th globally, with its influence expanding rapidly.

Uttarakhand Assembly takes to digital e-Vidhan Sabha, MLAs face challenge to operate tablets

PR SINGH
DEHRADUN, 19 FEBRUARY

The Uttarakhand state Assembly’s move to go digital has apparently not gone down well with the legislators as they are unable to use their tablets beyond logging in. The Assembly Speaker had to organise a special training session for them to operate the tablets set up at their desks.

The Uttarakhand legislature for the first time took to ‘e-Vidhan Sabha’ under the National e-Vidhan Application (e-NeVA) beginning with its budget session 2025 on 18 February.

However the e-Vidhan Sabha has emerged as big challenge for the MLAs. Tablets mounted at their desks in the House have

Seeing the inability of the state legislators to explore digital services through e-Vidhan Sabha, Speaker Ritu Khanduri had to intervene to help them learn. Khanduri asked the Assembly secretariat to depute two Information Technology Development Agency (ITDA) officials to assist and teach the MLAs how to operate the tablets and use the e-Vidhan Sabha Portal smoothly

become too difficult a puzzle to be used by them.

More than 50 MLAs of the 70-member state Assembly could not even browse through these gadgets beyond logging in. On Day One, MLAs found it too difficult to read the governor’s address online on their tablets and preferred to leaf through the booklet provided to them.

It’s significant that the MLAs attempted once or twice to open the tablets

and watch the governor’s address online but found it too difficult to do so. As a result they gave up their efforts and read the governor’s speech through the hard copy kept at their desks.

Seeing the inability of the state legislators to explore digital services through e-Vidhan Sabha, the Speaker Ritu Khanduri had to intervene to help them learn.

Khanduri asked the assembly officials to depute two

Information Technology Development Agency (ITDA) officials to assist and teach the MLAs how to operate the tablets and use e-Vidhan Sabha Portal smoothly.

Later, Ritu Khanduri said: “e-Vidhan Sabha in Uttarakhand Assembly has just begun. It’s not possible to make session paperless completely. A one-hour training program has been arranged every morning to impart lessons as e-Vidhan application for the MLAs at the assembly campus.”

The Speaker added: “Presently only the day’s business agenda and questions to be taken up in the house are being made available on their tablets. The digital process will bring transparency along with improvement in the parliamentary functioning.”

NORTH EASTERN INDIRA GANDHI REGIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCES
Director's Block, Mawdlangdiang, Shillong
(An Autonomous Institute under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India)
F.No. EST-II-RFACOFSEL/1/2004-Est.II
ADDENDUM TO ROLLING ADVERTISEMENT FOR FACULTY POSTS
NO. EST-II-RFACOFSEL/1/2004-Est.II DATED 21-11-2024
In continuation to Institute's Rolling Advertisement for recruitment of faculty posts dated 21-11-2024, the following faculty posts have been added as vacancy:

Sl. No.	Departments	No. of posts		
		Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
1	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	1	-	-
2	Pharmacology	-	1 UR	-
3	General Surgery	-	-	1 UR

Mode of Recruitment :

Sl. No.	Post	
1	Professor, Obstetrics & Gynaecology	Deputation / absorption basis.
2	Associate Professor, Pharmacology	Direct recruitment failing which by
3	Assistant Professor, General Surgery	Deputation / absorption basis

For further details regarding prescribed application form, application fee, pay scale, age, reservation, relaxation, essential qualification, experience etc. is as per Rolling Advertisement No. EST-II-RFACOFSEL/1/2004-Est.II dated 21-11-2024 available on NEIGHRIHMS website: <http://neighrihms.gov.in> The other terms & conditions shall be as per Rolling Advertisement dated 21-11-2024.

All the applicants are advised to keep visiting NEIGHRIHMS, Shillong website on regular basis for any further updates. The last date for submission of application is **18th March, 2025 till 5-30 p.m.**

CBC 17119/11/0020/2425
Sd/-
Director, NEIGHRIHMS

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Poonam Das**, Father's Name - Vishnu Shankar Pandey, of A/14, Ramkrishna Park, PO- Sodepur, PS- Ghola, Near Bhuter Raja Dilo Bor Resturant, North 24 Parganas, who has been missing since 03.10.2024 at about 12.00 hrs. from Residence, Under Ghola PS. Description of this missing person is : **Age-31 Years, Complexion-Shallow, Height-5 Feet, Language-Bengali.** Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.

ICA-D 329(3)/2025

राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी
NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY
Excellence in Assessment

National Testing Agency

National Testing Agency (NTA) invites eligible and experienced service providers to submit their **Expression of Interest (EOI)** for providing various exam-related services. The brief scope of services includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- CCTV Surveillance:** Installation, monitoring, and management of CCTV cameras at exam centres for secure and transparent examination processes.
- Biometric Capturing:** Deployment of manpower to capture biometrics data of the candidates for candidate identification and verification.
- Frisking & Crowd Management:** Ensuring safety and order during exam events through professional frisking and effective crowd management.

For further details, visit tender section of NTA website i.e. <https://nta.ac.in/Tender>

CBC 21354/12/0008/2425
Sd/- Joint Director

NOTICE

This is to inform that Tahid Alam proprietor of M/S Reliance Stone Product has been accorded The Environment Clearance from the WBSEIAA for his proposed Darbardanga sand block, with production capacity 1st year 57,710 m3 & 2nd to 5th year 43,167.08 m3/Year, at Darbardanga, PS- Jamuria, Dist- Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal. EC Identification No. EC24C0107WB5266109N dated 11.09.2024. The copy of said clearance is available with the Parivesh Portal of MOEF&CC.

NOTICE

This is to inform that Rajkishore Yadav proprietor of Modern Industrial Infrastructure Private Limited has been accorded The Environment Clearance from the WBSEIAA for his proposed Telenda sand block, with production capacity 1st year 1,02,600 m3 & 2nd to 5th year 75,308.4 m3/Year, at Telenda, PS- Mejhia, Dist.- Bankura, West Bengal. EC Identification No. EC2480107WB5958252N dated 05.02.2025. The copy of said clearance is available with the Parivesh Portal of MOEF&CC.

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Tinku Das**, Father's Name- Pran Krishna Das of Satin Sen Road, Ramkrishnapur, PO- Batapur, PS- Ghola, PIN-700113, dist-24 Parganas (North), West Bengal who has been missing since 17.01.2025, at about 04.15 hrs, from his residential area, Description of this missing person is : **Age- 39 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 5 Feet, 8 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- Blue jeans pant and gray colour Jacket. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 325 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Anup Dey, @ Pintu**, Father's Name- Lt. Debendra Chandra Dey of 49/19, Kankul, PS- Kankul, PS- Ashoknagar, WB., who has been missing since 18.01.2025 at about 13.00 hrs. from Residential area, Description of this missing person is : **Age-38 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height-5 Feet, 5 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- White and Blue coloured T shirt and Black colour Bermuda. Identification Mark/ Nature- Mental imbalance. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 326 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Basudev Sanpui, @ Basudev**, Father's Name- Sudhama Sanpui of Vill Kadant, Narendrapur St. P.O Ramkrishna Pally, PS- Narendrapur, Dist- South 24 Parganas, who has been missing since 23.01.2025 at about 10.20 hrs. from Residence under Narendrapur PS. Description of this missing person is : **Age-75 Years, Complexion-Shyama, Height-5 Feet, 3 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- Yellow colour check full shirt & Meron colour jacket with Blue Pant & Green colour shoe. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 327(3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Sidhika Gupta, @ Basudev**, Father's Name - Lt. Subash Prasad Gupta, of 110, P.B. Ghar Road P.O. Kamarnati, PS- Kharda, Dist- North 24 Parganas, who has been missing since 08.09.2023 at about 09.30 hrs. from Residence, Under Kharda PS. Description of this missing person is : **Age-14 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 5 Feet, Language- Hindi, Wearing - Black colour top & jeans. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 328(3)/2025

Form No. 3
(See Regulation 15 (1)(a)/(18/3))

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL KOLKATA (DRT 3)
8th Floor, Jeevan Sudha Building, 42-C, Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700071
Case No.: TA/658/2014

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.

Exh. No.: 4707

BANK OF BARODA vs PIJUSH KUMAR KANODIA AND ORS

To:
(1) **RAJIB SARKAR**, 275, DAKSHIN DUMDUM, KOLKATA, NORTH TWENTY FOUR PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL-700074

SUMMONS

WHEREAS, TA/658/2014 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 01/07/2024

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 54,48,880/-** (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 and 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 **04/09/2024 at 10:30A.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: **06/08/2024**

Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons.
Registrar-In-Charge
Kolkata Debts Recovery Tribunal-3

NEXT DATE 09.04.2025

SELECTION & ENGAGEMENT OF SENIOR RESIDENT DOCTORS

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for a '**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW**' on **10.03.2025 (Monday) at 11 a.m.** at VIP Room of Medical Director's office, Central Hospital, South Eastern Railway, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 for selection and engagement of **06 (Six) post of Senior Resident Doctor (General Medicine-02, Plastic Surgery-02, General Surgery -01, G&O-01=06)**. Detailed advertisement with terms & conditions, format of application form, enclosures etc. are available on South Eastern Railway website (www.ser.indianrailways.gov.in under head Department Medical). Other terms & conditions are as follows: **1. Educational qualification:** Post Graduate Degree/DM/ McH/DNB or Diploma in the concerned speciality, from University recognized by State/Central Govt. If such candidate are not available in particular speciality, then without PG qualifications but having at least three years experience after MBBS out of which one year Junior Residency in Government Hospital or MCI recognized private hospital in the concerned speciality can be considered for a period of one year only subject to the condition that fresh selection process has to be done by end of one year. Extension for another year will be allowed to these MBBS doctor with three year experience if again no candidate with Diploma/PG/ DNB/DM/applies. The total period of such extension will be limited to three years of total senior residency as in senior residence scheme. *(See further details in website). **2. Age limit:** Not more than 37 years on the date of application and may be extended up to 45 years if no suitable candidates available & relaxation up to 5 years for SC/ST candidates. **3. Tenure:** The contract of appointment will be for one year which is renewable up to a maximum period of three years, subject to renewal/extension every year. **4. Emoluments:** According to 7th CPC pay level 11 and other allowances as admissible for senior residency scheme under Ministry of Railways. **5.** The candidates are required to bring the filled-in application form and all original documents, mentioned in the website, along with a set of attested photocopies while appearing for the Walk-in-Interview.

(PR-1151) **Medical Director, Central Hospital, Garden Reach**
South Eastern Railway
We serve with a smile

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Samir Samadder Chowdhury**, Father's Name- Late Nikhil Ranjan Samadder Chowdhury of 306/A, Ashoknagar, PO+PS= Ashoknagar Dist-24 parganas (North), West Bengal, who has been missing since 22.12.2024, at about 14.00 hrs, from Residential area, Description of this missing person is : **Age-68 Years, Complexion-Shyama, Height-5 Feet, 5 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- Chocolate colour full pant & Ghee colour Sweater. Identification Mark/ Nature- There is a mole on the left cheek under the eye. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 324 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Bijoy Sutradhar**, Father's Name- late Mahadeb Sutradhar of Pratapnagar Puja Mandap, PO- Natagarh, PS- Ghola, Dist- North 24 Parganas, who has been missing since 08.01.2025, at about 09.30 hrs, from Residence Under Ghola PS, Description of this missing person is : **Age-65 Years, Complexion-Shyama, Height-5 Feet, 9 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- White blue Shirt & Lungi. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 323 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Argha Bhattacharjee, @ Gamla**, Father's Name- Chandan Bhattacharjee of Vill/ Fultala Sachhi Dakshinat Apartment, PO- Fultala, PS- Baruipur, South 24 Parganas, who has been missing since 08.11.2024, at about 17.10 hrs. from Residence under Baruipur PS, Description of this missing person is : **Age-35 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 5 Feet, 5 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- Shirt & Pant. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 322 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Kartick Giri**, Father's Name- Nishikanta Giri of Vill Manikdip, PS- Khanakul, Dist- Hooghly, who has been missing since 21.11.2024 at about 16.00 hrs. from his rented house Rajhati, PS- Khanakul, Description of this missing person is : **Age-24 Years, Complexion-Shyama, Height- 5 Feet, 2 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing- Green Colour T-shirt & Jeans. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 321 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Arsana Khatun**, Father's Name - **Azad Molla**, of Narayani Rajarampur, PO- Kodalia Sibpur PS- Falta, Dist- Diamond Harbour Police District who has been missing since 04.07.2024 at about 10.00 hrs. from Residence, Narayani Rajarampur, PO- Kodalia Sibpur PS- Falta, Dist- Diamond Harbour Police District, Description of this missing person is : **Age-16 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 5 Feet, Wearing - Sky colour Churidar. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 317(3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Mosammat Ayesha Khatun**, Father's Name - **Mohabbat Ali Sk**, of Vill Kadipur, PS- Kalna, Dist- Purba Bardhaman, who has been missing since 07.10.2024 at about 17.10 hrs. from Residence under Kalna PS, Description of this missing person is : **Age-17 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 5 Feet, 2 Inch, Language - Bengali, Wearing - Green Salwar & Green Pant. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 318(3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Achinta Das**, Father's Name- Ashim Das of Vill Baki, PS- Bagnan, Dist- Howrah, who has been missing since 03.11.2024 at about 18.30 hrs. from Hauli Bagan under Pandia PS, Description of this missing person is : **Age-27 Years, Complexion-Dark, Height- 5 Feet, 6 Inch, Language-Bengali, Wearing-Full pant & half sleeve T-shirt. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 319 (3)/2025

INFORMATION WANTED

This is the photograph of **Archana Jha, @ Babita Debi**, Father's Name - **Paban Kumar Jha**, of Rania Sukanta Kanan, PO- Boral, PS- Narendrapur dist- 24 Parganas (South) who has been missing since 29.06.2024 at about 08.00 hrs. from Residential area, Description of this missing person is : **Age-35 Years, Complexion-Fair, Height- 6 Feet, Language-Hindi, Wearing - Red colour Sharare & Red Colour Blouse. Please Contact Officer in Charge, Missing Persons Bureau, C.I.D., West Bengal, Bhabani Bhaban, Kolkata-700027, Ph. No.-033-2450-6120.**

ICA-D 320(3)/2025

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Silver Dividend

India stands at a demographic crossroads. While much attention has been given to its youthful population, the country is also witnessing a significant rise in its elderly demographic. By 2031, over 13 per cent of India's population will be aged 60 and above. This shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity. If harnessed effectively, India's aging workforce could become a powerful economic asset – a "silver dividend." Unfortunately, current policies and labour market structures have yet to fully tap into this potential. Despite increasing life expectancy and improving health conditions, labour force participation among India's elderly remains low. According to recent surveys, only about a quarter of people aged 65 and above are part of the workforce, with stark differences between rural and urban areas. In rural India, labour force participation among the elderly has risen, more due to necessity than choice. Many older adults in villages continue working in agriculture, construction, or informal service jobs to supplement meagre pensions or inadequate social security benefits. Women, in particular, have seen a notable rise in workforce participation, often driven by economic compulsion. Conversely, in urban areas, elderly workforce participation has stagnated. Retirees from the formal sector often find themselves excluded from re-employment opportunities, despite possessing valuable skills and experience. Unlike developed economies that have structured programmes to reintegrate older professionals into the workforce, India lacks systemic efforts to facilitate second careers for its aging population. Several countries have successfully leveraged their aging workforce through innovative policies. Japan, for instance, has established Senior Human Resource Centres, offering part-time and flexible job opportunities for retirees in sectors like administration, maintenance, and community services. The United States has developed encore career programmes, which enable retirees to take up advisory or mentorship roles. European nations like Germany and Sweden have flexible retirement policies, allowing older individuals to extend their working lives voluntarily. India can learn from these models and tailor solutions to its own socio-economic realities. For instance, retired professionals from sectors like defence, education, and healthcare can be engaged in mentorship or consulting roles. The corporate sector can introduce phased retirement programmes, allowing employees to transition gradually rather than exiting the workforce entirely. To harness the silver dividend, India needs a multi-pronged strategy. First, social security programmes must be expanded to ensure financial stability, reducing the need for elderly individuals to engage in low-paying and physically demanding jobs. Secondly, reskilling programmes should be introduced to help older workers transition into new roles, especially in the digital economy. Thirdly, labour laws should be reformed to promote age-friendly workplaces and flexible work arrangements. India has long benefited from its youthful workforce, but the time has come to recognise the economic value of its aging population. With the right policies, the country can transform its growing elderly demographic from a perceived burden into a productive and engaged segment of the economy.

Ukraine's Future

The high-level talks between the United States and Russia in Riyadh marked a significant step in efforts to end the war in Ukraine. While Ukraine was not present at the meeting, US officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have assured that Kyiv and Europe will be part of the process moving forward. The key question now is whether the negotiations will lead to a lasting and just resolution that respects Ukraine's sovereignty. Following the talks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reiterated Moscow's firm stance, emphasising that Nato must not only keep Ukraine out but also formally revoke its 2008 pledge that Kyiv would one day join the alliance. He also made clear that Russia would not accept any military presence of Nato countries in Ukraine, even under "another flag" – of a peacekeeping mission. This signals that Moscow will continue to push for concessions that reshape the region's security architecture in its favour. For Ukraine, the negotiations ahead will test both its resilience and the strength of its alliances. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has consistently maintained that Nato membership remains the best security guarantee for Kyiv. However, with Washington and Moscow focusing on territorial discussions and long-term security arrangements, Ukraine will need to ensure that its core interests are not compromised. The challenge will be to balance diplomatic flexibility with firm red lines – ensuring that any settlement strengthens, rather than weakens, Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. On the US side, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz acknowledged that discussions in the coming weeks will involve issues of territory and security guarantees. While Washington has not explicitly ruled out Ukraine reclaiming occupied land, the focus on territorial negotiations suggests that compromises may be on the table. This pragmatic approach could facilitate progress in talks, but it also raises concerns about how any agreement might be perceived – especially if it appears to reward Russia's invasion. A key outcome of the talks was the decision of both sides to appoint high-level teams to continue working on a framework for ending the war. Mr Rubio emphasised that any final agreement must be acceptable to all parties, including Ukraine. While fears remain about Kyiv being sidelined, the US has signaled that Ukraine will be directly involved in the critical phases of negotiation. Looking ahead, European involvement will be crucial. With the European Union imposing its own sanctions on Russia and considering future security measures in the region, its role in shaping the peace process cannot be ignored. Meanwhile, Russia's push for broader concessions suggests that the path to a deal will not be straightforward. Ultimately, peace must be both sustainable and just. The diplomatic process is now gaining momentum, but the challenge remains to ensure that Ukraine's sovereignty and security are not undermined in the pursuit of an agreement. The coming weeks will be decisive in determining whether these negotiations can lead to a resolution that is not only practical but also principled.

Averting Disasters

One of the biggest challenges in crowd management in India is the absence of strong regulatory frameworks. To prevent future tragedies, India needs a robust policy framework that institutionalizes crowd management at all levels. A centralized body, possibly under the National Disaster Management Authority, should be established to research, develop, and implement crowd management guidelines. Event organizers should be required to submit comprehensive crowd control plans as part of the approval process, and real-time crowd monitoring should be made mandatory for religious events, festivals, and mass gatherings.

On 15 February 2025, a tragic stampede at New Delhi Railway Station claimed the lives of at least 18 people and left many others critically injured. The incident followed closely on the heels of another catastrophe at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, where over 30 people perished. These back-to-back disasters have once again exposed the glaring gaps in India's crowd management, raising urgent questions about public safety and administrative preparedness.

Mass gatherings are intrinsic to Indian culture – whether for religious events, political campaigns, or daily commuter traffic at transit hubs. However, frequent tragedies due to mismanagement, lack of planning, and infrastructural shortcomings show that lessons from past disasters are not leading to effective actions.

Despite recurring disasters, authorities continue to depend on short-term solutions rather than addressing underlying systemic vulnerabilities. To prevent future calamities, it is imperative to move beyond reactive measures and adopt proactive, sustainable, and technology-driven crowd management strategies.

India has a long history of stampedes at religious gatherings, railway stations, and public events. Over the past two decades, hundreds of people have lost their lives in such incidents. The Kumbh Mela, one of the world's largest religious gatherings, has witnessed multiple fatal stampedes, including the 1954 Allahabad tragedy which resulted in over 800 deaths.

Similarly, railway stations – especially those in major cities – frequently experience overcrowding, leading to chaos and tragedy. A 2013 stampede at Ratangarh Temple in Madhya Pradesh killed over 115 devotees, and in 2011, a tragedy at Sabarimala in Kerala claimed more than 100 lives.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, a total of 3,074 lives were lost due to stampedes across the country between 2001 and 2022. Of these, 2,169 victims (70 per cent) were men, while 900 (30 per cent) were women. Notably, four states – Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu – account for half of the total fatalities recorded during this period.

At New Delhi Railway Station, the stampede occurred due to an overwhelming influx of passengers trying to board trains to Prayagraj. Witnesses reported that railway authorities underestimated the crowd size and failed to deploy adequate security personnel.

Similarly, at the Maha Kumbh Mela, where millions of devotees gathered, inadequate crowd control measures failed to prevent a stampede on the most auspicious bathing day. Poor planning and insufficient



regulation of movement contributed to the loss of life in both cases.

Several countries that regularly host massive gatherings have developed effective crowd-management strategies. Saudi Arabia, which manages the annual Hajj pilgrimage, employs meticulous crowd simulation models to anticipate potential hazards.

Over 2.5 million pilgrims visit Mecca each year, and authorities use artificial intelligence (AI) and facial recognition to track crowd movement, ensuring smooth flow and early identification of risk areas.

Japan, known for its precision in crowd control, has implemented AI-based surveillance in Tokyo's bustling train stations to detect unusual crowd behaviour. The 2012 London Olympics demonstrated how smart infrastructure planning can ensure the seamless movement of large crowds.

Indian railway stations and event venues should implement similar infrastructural upgrades, ensuring multiple access points, automated crowd flow management, and staggered entry-exit mechanisms to prevent bottlenecks.

While India deploys security forces during large events, their training in crowd psychology and emergency response is often inadequate. Saudi Arabia employs over 100,000 security personnel trained in crowd control during Hajj, ensuring efficient management of millions of people. India should establish specialized crowd management units within its police forces and train personnel accordingly.

Additionally, countries like Brazil educate the public on safety measures through widespread media campaigns. Government agencies must proactively educate citizens on safety protocols, including what to do in case of overcrowding and how to navigate emergency exits during large events.

The lack of public awareness about safe movement and

emergency response remains a crucial factor in stampede fatalities.

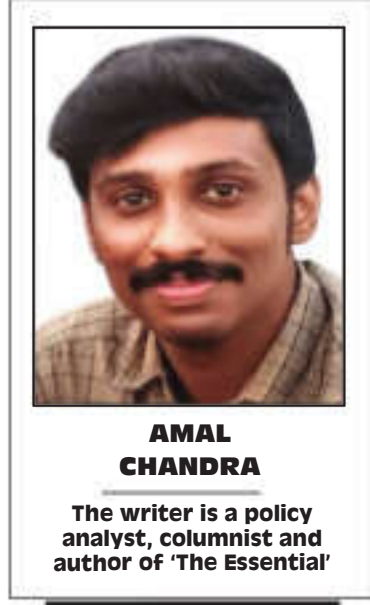
One of the biggest challenges in crowd management in India is the absence of strong regulatory frameworks. To prevent future tragedies, India needs a robust policy framework that institutionalizes crowd management at all levels. A centralized body, possibly under the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), should be established to research, develop, and implement crowd management guidelines. Event organizers should be required to submit comprehensive crowd control plans as part of the approval process, and real-time crowd monitoring should be made mandatory for religious events, festivals, and mass gatherings.

Urban railway stations and event venues must be redesigned to accommodate large crowds safely. Technologies such as automatic gates, digital ticketing systems, and real-time tracking of crowd density should be implemented.

AI-based surveillance and predictive modelling should be mandatory for all major public events and transit hubs. In the Mumbai suburban railway network, which carries over 7.5 million passengers daily, deaths due to overcrowding are common. The implementation of automated crowd control systems, similar to those used in Japan's Shinjuku Station – the world's busiest railway station – can significantly reduce risks.

Stampedes often occur due to a sudden surge in movement, panic, or misinformation spreading through crowds. Implementing real-time crowd communication systems – such as mobile alerts and public announcement systems – can help guide large crowds during peak congestion periods.

The use of drone surveillance to track crowd density and deploy security forces accordingly has been successful in large-scale events such as the



AMAL CHANDRA
The writer is a policy analyst, columnist and author of 'The Essential'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Injustice

SIR, This refers to Smruti Pattnaik's article "Erasing all traces of Awami League" (17 Feb). Bangladesh had snatched freedom from the iron clutches of West Pakistan under the leadership of Mujibur Rahman. This is history and nobody can distort it.

Those who are calling the shots today in Bangladesh are for-

mer Razakars; they vehemently opposed the creation of independent Bangladesh.

India, with Mrs. Indira Gandhi at the helm, extended a helping hand and East Pakistan was turned into Bangladesh. Now these Razakars are trying their utmost to erase the role of both the Awami League and Mujib from the pages of the history of Bangladesh. They should know that history cannot be wiped out by levelling a couple of buildings.

The right-thinking people of

Bangladesh must collectively raise their voice of protest against this ongoing injustice.

Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal, Siliguri, 18 February.

SCARRED SOULS

SIR, Apropos the edit 'Campus torture', watching school children bully the weaker ones even in lower classes makes me wonder if sadistic pleasures are a part of the human genetic make up.

This tendency may be disguised in later years but on occasion erupts in places like prisons and even colleges, especially if there are no consequences. Anti-ragging laws have had little effect in stemming the rot.

One thing about us is that we commit all kinds of brutalities in our homes but will never admit it. The college authorities are not so worried about the trauma such

brutalities cause but only if they are reported in the press and 'spoil' the good name of the college. It is also common to find the victims of ragging become the ragers in the next year.

Everybody needs to put their heads together including stu-

dents, their parents, college administrations and a host of academicians to try to put an end to this ever growing menace which leaves more marks on the soul than on the body.

Yours, etc., Anthony Henriques, Mumbai, 18 February.

WORSE, NOW

SIR, The present government has been the foremost critic of corrupt practices in the country. Over ten years of governance, the government has taken stringent measures to curb corruption in public offices. But India's recent standing of 96th position in the Corruption Perception Index tells a different story. To put things into perspective, India is still grappling with corruption and all these measures that the government has taken have turned out to be futile. It has dropped 20 places from 76th in 2015 to 96th in 2024. Big talk looks good when you have data to prove it and seems the present government has no positive data to prove that it has won the war against corruption. It has made things worse.

Yours, etc., Noopur Baruah, Tezpur, 18 February.

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Munich Security Conference needs reforms

The Munich Security Conference has become an important annual conference on global security. Launched in 1963, the conference organizes high-level discussions, and fosters agreements and transnational cooperation on global security. Despite these traits, the MSC needs reforms to regain its status in global security management.

The MSC operates in a center-periphery power structure: the G7 member states set the core agenda, while the countries of the Global South often remain passive recipients. Long-term Western dominance has led the MSC to neglect the views and interests of some non-Western countries, and turn into a platform for the West to promote its values and policies. As such, some developing countries are reluctant to take part in the conference.

The selective approach of the MSC, especially on key issues, exposes the structural flaws of the conference. The MSC claims to reach strategic consensus through closed-door meetings among developed countries. But in today's multipolar world, the platform lacks institutional power-sharing dialogue mechanisms and the capacity to check major power competition. Hence, it cannot meet the security demands of small and medium-sized countries. No wonder disagreements on multiple topics and doubts about the conference being fair and effective have increased. The conference's efficacy in

CHINADAILY

promoting agreements and suggesting viable solutions to burning issues has declined.

The international community still expects the MSC to promote fair and equitable security dialogues. For instance, in 2024, about 700 representatives from more than 120 countries and regions attended the conference, including about 50 heads of state and government, because they expected to find answers to their questions at the MSC. The MSC faces many challenges including geopolitical differences, increasingly complex security issues, and outdated security mechanisms because of the declining trust between countries. While the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Palestine conflict are new major geopolitical hotspots, emerging cybersecurity threats, artificial intelligence, national security issues and climate change have further complicated the security agenda.

The rising differences in the stances and interests of, and the lack of trust between Western and non-Western nations have made it even more difficult to reach a consensus, leading to a deadlock in dialogues at times.

The MSC's problems are a result of the rapid changes in the world order. Globalization is accelerating. Non-state actors have emerged. BRICS member states account for a bigger percentage of the global economy. Global South countries have refused to take sides between Western and non-Western nations. And the world is incapable of addressing the complex security challenges with traditional security mechanisms and geopolitical confrontation narratives.

The MSC must evolve beyond traditional thinking and frameworks to promote cooperation in security. Otherwise, it will become a club for the West to amuse itself. The MSC needs to expand the scope of security discussions. Traditional security thinking focuses on state-centric military confrontations and territorial security while underestimating economic, social and environmental security. Today, the impact of non-traditional security threats including cyberattacks, financial insecurity, resource shortage and climate change is as much as that of traditional security threats.



Tough bargains ahead in ties with America

GOURI SANKAR NAG AND ARPAN BHATTACHARYA

It's really difficult to describe the recently concluded compact between the two democracies with a suitable acronym although in practical ways the meeting between Donald Trump and Narendra Modi marked a new chapter in their relationship. So, the residue of the mega Howdy Modi show in 2019 could only be counted as a nostalgic factor while Trump 2.0 finds America's external affairs in a state of turbulence. It is like a prestige fight for Trump to appear in a new avatar in which his rhetoric to take Gaza, Panama Canal and Greenland has already evoked strong reactions.

In the circumstances, the Indian quandary has also accentuated because i) Trump appears to be excessively transactional, ii) the US has started scrutinizing its trade imbalances with different countries and iii) the US has already initiated steps to deport illegal Indians back to India, which will mount pressure on the MEA.

On the other hand, morally speaking India has no locus standi to protest against such Trumpian moves because Modi's government too had securitized the Rohingya issue and barred refugees from seeking security in India under the principle of non-refoulement. So, if Trump's decision is found to be precipitously harsh, India's stand on the refugee issue can't be exonerated from the charge of being equally discriminatory and contradictory.

However, for a middle power like India what is more important to understand is the direction of the transition of international politics. Here we find the emergence of new features that cannot be simply regarded as post-Cold War unipolarity but a uni-multipolar world where multiple great powers would vie for power to rejig the balance of power regionally but which ultimately will act as second fiddle to the sole superpower. So, it is simultaneously India's predicament as well as an

opportunity to strike a chord with the US-favoured world order which allows her space to dominate in South Asia while getting pressured and the Americans on the economic and trade fronts since India due to its sheer size offers an extensive market for the American business interests.

By now it is clear that Trump's second term would be fraught with major disruptions that might cause seismic shifts within the post-World War II liberal democratic spirit or the credo of the open market. However, this American exceptionalism should not be construed to ignore competitive capitalist growth because Trump's new entourage includes business magnets like Elon Musk of Tesla, while Vice President JD Vance's recent remarks at the Munich Security Conference that ignored the expected agenda of ending the Ukraine conflict were also startling.

Thus, signals we get from unexpected distractions create a kind of smokescreen underneath which the President's unsettling experiments with a new set of regulations, aid cuts, conservative protectionism with coercive tariffs and anti-foreigner discrimination, amount to a deep liberal paradox because more trade and globalization of communication are bound to give rise to a flow in terms of migration too. Hence whatever the aggressive posture might be, Trump's policies can't be nativist although it requires a regime of immigration reform because unauthorised migration is a liability altogether different from guest workers to whom one needs to be respectful.

But the problem arises from the contradiction when one prioritises the need to be economically open and leverage through the transportation revolution but politically behaves xenophobically. Thus, India's large market with its sizeable middle-class population has been drawing Uncle Sam to strike deals with New Delhi while it tightens its visa policy for Indian workers.

So, however we might wish to use window dressing with the rhetoric of

human rights or mutual trust or commitment to values of freedom, what brought both sides together was a pragmatic motive spanning across trade, defense and technology to lay the foundation of the comprehensive partnership. Undoubtedly there is a high probability that during Trump2.0, the US would be in the driver's seat while New Delhi's dealings with Washington would involve difficult bargaining.

Nevertheless, both sides must be prescient about the benefits of cooperation on critical and emerging technologies. This spirit was exhibited in the recent meetings that affirmed commitment to enhancing supply chain resilience. Here a point to be noted is that both India and the US want to reduce their dependence on the Chinese network of commodity supply chains. Similarly, the Modi-Trump talks emphasized sorting out tariff disputes.

The most significant recent development, however, is the plan to negotiate a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). Following challenging experiences with World Trade Organization talks and an unsuccessful attempt at a Bilateral Investment Treaty during the final months of George W. Bush's administration, there has been minimal enthusiasm for ambitious trade discussions. Even the near-completed "mini-deal" during Trump's first tenure was more akin to a ceasefire than an agreement to expand market access.

However, India's smart gesture was revealed as Prime Minister Modi demonstrated increased receptiveness to genuine trade negotiations. Regarding defense collaboration, the leaders have pledged to pursue new initiatives, including negotiating a mutual defense procurement agreement and collaborating on autonomous systems.

It is remarkable that the joint statement resonated with mutual faith and consensus of working together with express commitment "to break new ground to support and sustain the overseas deployment of the U.S. and Indian militaries in the Indo-Pacific". This



could indicate significant advancements in defense cooperation as the two nations enhance interoperability and jointly improve regional security.

Another key point in the joint statement was the U.S.'s intent to reassess its policy on sharing fifth-generation fighter aircraft and undersea systems. President Trump explicitly mentioned a potential pathway for selling F-35 fighter jets to India. Joint efforts to create defense equipment are still on the agenda, even though it was not inevitable. The leaders emphasized ongoing collaboration on nuclear energy for civilian purposes in sync with India's recent announcement to modify the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010.

The INDUS-X platform for expanding defense innovation cooperation has been renamed INDUS Innovation. Collaboration on "trusted and resilient supply chains" for critical and emerging technologies remains a bilateral priority. Space cooperation continues to be a crucial component of the agenda, bolstered by recent collaborative agreements. The Biden administration heavily promoted the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET). Noticeably while the joint statement echoes some priority sectors and workstreams, it does not explicitly mention iCET.

However, observers are rendered despondent because both sides were

reticent on climate cooperation, a burning issue of global governance on which President Trump has a dismal record. The statement also omitted mention of important dialogues such as the U.S.-India Forum, the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial, Trade Policy Forum, and the U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue, leaving their status uncertain. In conclusion, the meeting keeps alive optimism. Substantial work lies ahead, as most key announcements, including the potential trade deal, are expected to yield concrete results by year-end.

India might face additional trade pressures in the coming months, such as when the study related to the Trump administration's "Fair and Reciprocal Trade" policy concludes. However, regarding the overall U.S.-India relationship, the positive aspects at the start of President Trump's second term significantly outweigh the anticipated challenges. India will have to decide whether to stand by and watch from the sidelines or stand up to its principles and ideology, much like it did when the US tried to pressure India not to buy oil from Russia in 2022. The contours of India's approach may become clearer in days to come.

(The writers are, respectively, Prof & Head, Dept. of Political Science, SKB University, Purulia, and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Ramananda College, Bishnupur, Bankura.)

100 YEARS AGO OCCASIONAL NOTE

THE term Bolshevik is now applied to any demoralizing influence, and it does not follow because the adjective is used with reference to recent troubles in Shanghai and Hongkong that agents from Moscow have been busy in those quarters. It is, however, none the less serious that Japanese should have been attacked by a Chinese mob in Shanghai, and Indians by Chinese soldiers in Canton. Although civil war of one kind or another has been raging in China for the last thirteen years, the combatants have till quite recently agreed mutually to leave foreign residents undisturbed, for the reason that the Treaty Ports provided real cities of refuge, to which victors could resort to enjoy their spoils and the vanquished to escape death. Further, all parties in China were at one time anxious to obtain at least the moral support of the Foreign Powers. However antagonisms have now gone so far and demoralization is now so widespread that less and less respect is shown for foreign residents. Shanghai has only just escaped becoming a battle-ground. There are grave reasons to fear that events may take place in China in the near future to force a foreign intervention.

NEWS ITEMS RUHR INDUSTRIALISTS

PAYMENTS BY GERMAN GOVERNMENT

BERLIN, FEB. 17.

THE question of payments by the Government to Ruhr industrialists during the period of inflation has been attracting considerable attention in Germany along with other financial scandals.

A memorandum submitted to the Reichstag by the Government points out that these payments were in the nature of compensation to certain industrial firms in the Ruhr and other occupied territories on account of deliveries in kind made by them to the Inter-Allied Commission of Control over works and mines on the cessation of passive resistance. The memorandum denies the Press allegations that 700 million Reichsmarks were repaid in December, and says the agreement for immediate payment provided for a reduction of debt by over 200 million Reichsmarks, and out of 220 million Reichsmarks paid in December only one half was cash.

The Government has decided for reasons of economy to pay the balance and now asks the Reichstag to sanction payments already made.

ANGLO-GERMAN TRADE NEED FOR RECIPROCITY OF TREATMENT

HAMBURG, FEB. 17.

LORD D'ABERNON, British Ambassador at Berlin, in a speech at a banquet on the occasion of the opening of the British Board of Commerce at which prominent British and German merchants, the Burgomaster and Consular officials were present, referred to the danger to England of German competition, and said there must be absolute equality and reciprocity of treatment between the two countries.

The negotiators of the Anglo-German treaty had agreed that the liberal tariff and customs duty accorded to German goods by England should be reciprocated by Germany, whilst the arbitrary regime of prohibitions and licenses should be abolished. He was convinced that if the stipulations of the Anglo-German agreement were carried out in good faith, Anglo-German trade would exceed past records to mutual advantage. It was in these circumstances that the British Board of Commerce at Hamburg came into existence, and he felt sure that it would render service to both countries.

ENGLAND'S TEST VICTORY

AUSTRALIAN CHANGES FOR LAST MATCH

("TIMES" SPECIAL SERVICE.) LONDON, FEB. 18.

The Times cricket expert states that it would be difficult to over-estimate the moral value of England's Test match victory. Although the "rubber" is lost, Gilligan's men will be able to commence the final test with refreshed confidence in themselves, having proved that the Australians are not unbeatable.

It is useless, the writer adds, to regret the failure to get the dozen runs at Adelaide that would have made the final match the most inter-esting in the history of cricket. This may be said without admitting for a moment that these extended fights represent the best side of the great game. Something is lacking when batsmen can score at their own pace and not think of the clock. The Australian system assures a definite result but is a loss as well as a gain.

Words obliterated from the lexicon

GRACE KAO

Politically. Historical. Gender. Female. Women. Race and Ethnicity. Barriers. Cultural Differences. Equality. Inequality. Socio-Economic Status. LGBT.

These are words that appear regularly in sociological articles, books and classes. They are basic concepts that describe features of modern societies. Since sociology is the study of society, we cannot avoid these words and basic concepts.

They are also on the list of over 100 words and phrases that have been given to staff at the National Science Foundation (one of the US government agencies that awards research grants) to flag when reviewing grant proposals. The words have been published in many places, including a Washington Post article, and this initiative has been widely reported. This is part of President Trump's initiative to scrub all diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives from every government agency and non-government entities that receive government funds. These include schools, universities and non-profit organizations. However, these words and concepts go far beyond DEI initiatives. It makes it impossible for sociologists, other social scientists and humanities scholars to do their work. Even medical and public health researchers who study group differences in outcomes will be harmed.

Interestingly, white, male and heterosexual are still acceptable. This means we can still study white straight men. What a relief.

There are also sweeping changes to data availability and data collection. The US Census website was down for a day or two last week. The Centers for Disease Control also disappeared. The US Department of Education's Institute of Education Services, which, among its many tasks, collects and reports data on educational outcomes of Americans from preschool (actually birth) to Ph.D. graduates, information on teachers, school districts, disciplinary actions and every other facet of the educational experience, is being shut. I have spent my entire career studying young people and their educational outcomes and interactions by race, immigrant status, gender and class using the data sets produced by IES, so I feel this loss profoundly and personally.

Currently, many researchers are trying to download as many data sets as possible, but not everything is downloadable. We anticipate that even in the best-case scenario where data continues to be available, important measures such as race, gender, immigrant status and class backgrounds might disappear.

In that case, if you want to know about how Korean Americans fare relative to whites, you won't get to find out. If you want to gauge unemployment rates, income differences and health outcomes by race and gender,

you may no longer receive grant money to do your research. It's not just grant money, but we can't write about these subjects anyway because the data might disappear. What about health outcomes -- do we care if minority groups are more likely to die of certain cancers than whites? After all, if we do not measure race, gender, and class, we can pretend these differences no longer exist.

They also want to shut down the Department of Education.

There is so much else going on under the Trump administration that it is overwhelming for me and my fellow colleagues to follow. Many of us in the social science and general scientific community are scared and angry. I have never felt as hopeless as I do right now about the fate of scientific research and reporting in the US.

I'm terrified that our undergraduate students will be discouraged from learning about the society in which they live and inequalities by race, gender and class, among so many other subjects. I worry that our graduate students won't be able to do their work or will be blacklisted from receiving grants, publishing articles and books or jobs despite their Ph.D.s. The "America first" attitude of this administration is also a grave threat to our international student community. I suspect that student visas will be on the chopping block.

While they seem to be actively suppressing intellectual and scientific



activities, they (including Elon Musk) are promoting AI and bots as a way to replace federal workers. So, the American humans will become dumber while our machines will become smarter. I'm not sure who is going to operate the AI infrastructure - likely Elon Musk thinks it's him.

We can pretend everyone is fully employed if we don't measure unemployment. If we don't measure test scores, we can pretend that American children are the best in terms of math achievement. We can also pretend children are not going to die from measles or polio since we are going to discourage vaccinations if we don't measure child mortality. Better yet, let's just stop measuring mortality rates altogether and pretend that Americans are immortal. Problem solved.

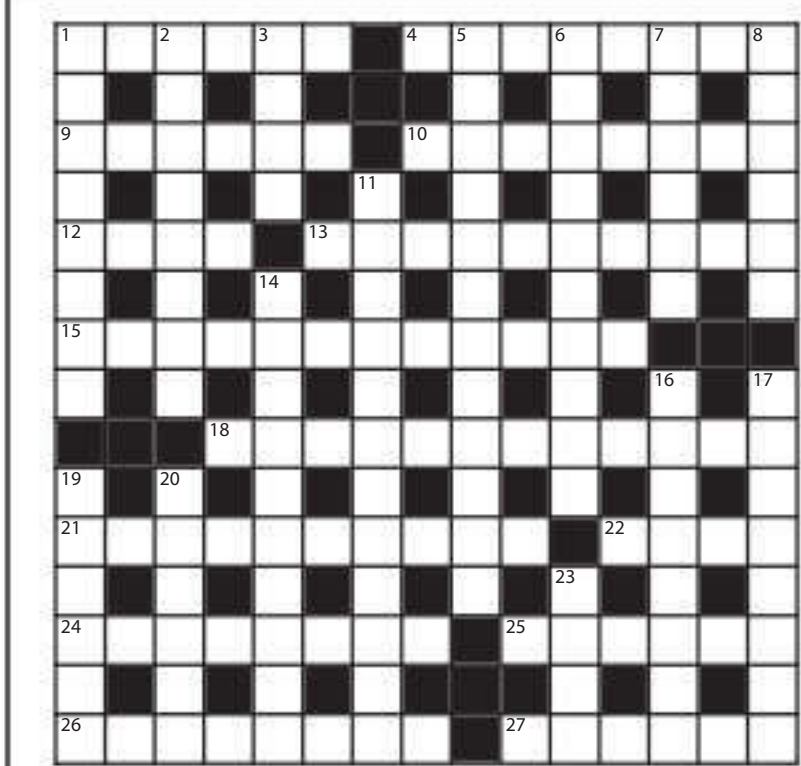
I don't know if President Trump has read Isaac Asimov's Foundation

trilogy, but I know Elon Musk has. He once said the first of the series was one of his favourite books, and this may be the only thing he and I have in common. Asimov describes a time when the Galactic Empire eventually outlaws scientific thinking. However, Hari Seldon, a "psychohistorian," uses models to predict the future of human response on a group level. Without his intervention, his models show that there will be a 30,000-year-long dark age, but with some intervention, he may be able to shorten that time period. It was already too late to prevent it altogether. I think of Hari Seldon as a sociologist since he modeled group-level behavior, so I hope we can move to at least minimize the damage that has already been done.

The Korea Herald/ANN.

CROSSWORD

NO-293054



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

CAROB JACARANDA
O E L U O E Y N
UNUSUALLY MOTTLED
NUSTLE AOR
TAROTICARD LINGO
E G U N I L L I
REEFER BALANCED
N L R N T O
BETJEMAN SEAMUS
L C M M P A
ORBIT BRILLIANT
S U O L L O N T
SAMURAI LATTICE
O B A N E U O T
MOONLIGHT SANDY

ACROSS

- 1/4 Flop about pitch, obscuring right of way (6,8)
9/10 Fairytale character getting ready to welcome new church cleaner (6,8)
12 Heartlessly ransacks building sites (4)
13 Side of stage for audience worth a full renovation (6,4)
15 School idiot left home for right direction (7,5)

- 18 Possibly magnolia, I'm thinking, is higher back in village east of the Shire (8,4)
21 Tin ore smelted by colleague from the east (10)
22 Official report advances conspiracy theory, angering leaders (4)
24/25 Capriciously, I held child's ear and arms here (8,6)

- 26/27 With these, Windows can hide death caught by the Spanish journalist (8,6)
DOWN
1 Work at university accepted by local area people (8)
2 Objectively, I would keep old Peruvian ready to meet deadline (2,2,4)

- 3 Small island's lifting gear has top missing (4)
5 Like impractical thinker who'd roll tyre round (12)
6 Train Henry to swim in a sea (10)
7/16 Suggesting lama in Marx Brothers film (6,8)
8/17 Selassie is again defended on air, being much respected (6,8)

- 11 Exchanging very small talk, maintaining historic buildings (12)
14 Angrily slam a large city's complaint (10)
16 See 7
17 See 8
19 Understood this classic old language (6)
20 Tops of mosques in Riyadh require gold reflector (6)
23 Author puts down a dish of lentils (4)

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

epaper.thestatesman.com

US tech giants supply Israel with AI, raising warfare concerns

Militaries have for years hired private companies to build custom autonomous weapons

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEL AVIV, 19 FEBRUARY

U.S. tech giants have quietly empowered Israel to track and kill many more alleged militants more quickly in Gaza and Lebanon through a sharp spike in artificial intelligence and computing services. But the number of civilians killed has also soared, along with fears that these tools are contributing to the deaths of innocent people.

Militaries have for years hired private companies to build custom autonomous weapons. However, Israel's recent wars mark a leading instance in which commercial AI models made in the United States have been used in active warfare, despite concerns that they were not originally developed to help decide who lives and who dies.

The Israeli military uses AI to sift through vast troves of intelligence, intercepted communications and surveillance to find suspicious speech or behaviour and learn the movements of its enemies. After a surprise attack by Hamas militants on 7 October, 2023, its use of Microsoft and OpenAI technology skyrocketed, an Associated Press investigation found.

The investigation also revealed new details of how AI systems select targets and ways they can go wrong, including faulty data or flawed algorithms. It was based on internal documents, data and exclusive interviews with current and former Israeli officials and company employees.

Israel's goal after the attack that killed about 1,200 people and took over 250 hostages was to eradicate Hamas, and



its military has called AI a "game changer" in yielding targets more swiftly. Since the war started, more than 50,000 people have died in Gaza and Lebanon and nearly 70 per cent of the buildings in Gaza have been devastated, according to health ministries in Gaza and Lebanon.

"This is the first confirmation we have gotten that commercial AI models are directly being

used in warfare," said Heidy Khlaaf, chief AI scientist at the AI Now Institute and former senior safety engineer at OpenAI. "The implications are enormous for the role of tech in enabling this type of unethical and unlawful warfare going forward."

Among U.S. tech firms, Microsoft has had an especially close relationship with the Israeli military spanning

Among U.S. tech firms, Microsoft has had an especially close relationship with the Israeli military spanning decades.

That relationship, alongside those with other tech companies, stepped up after the Hamas attack. Israel's war response strained its own servers and increased its reliance on outside, third-party vendors, according to a presentation last year by Col. Racheli Dembinsky, the military's top information technology officer. As she described how AI had provided Israel "very significant operational effectiveness" in Gaza, the logos of Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services appeared on a large screen behind her.

Pakistan wants to expel all Afghan refugees from the country, says Afghan embassy



AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD, 19 FEBRUARY

Pakistan wants to remove all Afghan refugees from the country and they face expulsion in the near future, the Afghan embassy in Islamabad warned Wednesday.

The embassy issued a strongly worded statement about Pakistan's plans, saying Afghan nationals in the capital, Islamabad, and the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi have been subjected to arrests, searches, and orders from the police to leave the twin cities and relocate to other parts of Pakistan.

"This process of detaining Afghans, which began without

any formal announcement, has not been officially communicated to the Embassy of Afghanistan in Islamabad through any formal correspondence," it said.

"Ultimately, officials from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that there is a definitive and final plan to deport all Afghan refugees not only from Islamabad and Rawalpindi but also from the entire country in the near future," the embassy said.

There was no immediate comment from the Pakistani government on the embassy statement.

The latest development follows Pakistan's threat to deport

Afghans living in the country illegally. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved a deadline of 31 March to deport those awaiting relocation to third countries unless their cases are swiftly processed by the governments who have agreed to take them.

The Afghan embassy criticized "the short timeframe" given and "the unilateral nature of Pakistan's decision".

Besides the hundreds of thousands living illegally in Pakistan, some 1.45 million Afghans are registered with the UNHCR as refugees. Pakistan says those who were registered earlier had their stay extended until June 2025, and will not be arrested or deported at least until the extension expires.

Earlier this month, Shafqat Ali Khan, the spokesman at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "This resettlement problem can't be indefinite. So, for us, the Afghans who are here, awaiting resettlement, also has to be a transitory phase. This is not a permanent thing."

Man who attacked Japan's ex-PM Kishida is convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison

AGENCIES
TOKYO, 19 FEBRUARY



A Japanese court on Wednesday convicted a man who threw a homemade pipe bomb at Japan's former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a 2023 campaign event, sentencing him to 10 years in prison, court officials said.

Ryuji Kimura, 25, was found guilty of attempted murder in the 15 April, 2023 attack on Kishida at a small fishing port in the western city of Wakayama, as well as four other crimes including violations of laws on explosives and other weapons.

At stake was whether Kimura intended to commit murder.

The Wakayama District Court said in the ruling that Kimura was aware of the potential for a fatality in his attack, according to the

Kyodo News agency. The ruling said the attack at an election campaign event was a serious challenge to democracy and posed a significant danger to many people, Kyodo said.

Kimura, at an opening session of the trial in early February, pleaded not guilty to attempted murder, saying he didn't intend to kill Kishida. He said he was dissatisfied

with Japan's election system and that he only wanted to get public attention by targeting a famous politician.

The then-prime minister was unhurt, but two people sustained minor injuries. Kimura was arrested on the spot.

The attack came about a year after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during a campaign speech in Nara, another city in western Japan.

Prosecutors said Kimura had a murder intent, noting that the bomb Kimura threw at Kishida was potentially lethal, and demanded a 15-year prison term.

Gun-related crime is rare in Japan because of strict gun control laws, but there has been a series of high-profile knifings and other attacks using homemade guns and explosives.

Residents say Rwanda-backed rebels are advancing on a third city in eastern Congo

AGENCIES
DAKAR, 19 FEBRUARY

Rwanda-backed rebels appeared to be heading toward a third major city in eastern Congo, residents said Tuesday, as international pressure rose over the M23's expansion in a mineral-rich region that's critical for global technology.

The M23 rebels on Tuesday attacked all the main Congolese army positions on the road to Butembo, a city of 150,000 people, and the situation was rapidly deteriorating, said Auguste Kombi, a civil society leader in Kitumbiro, a town along the road.

"We're afraid that the enemy will advance to Butembo," Kombi said.

Butembo is about 210 kilometres (130 miles) north of Goma, the city of over 2 million people that the M23 rebels seized last month as

about 3,000 people were killed.

The advance on Butembo means the rebels are spanning out both north and south of Goma. The rebels this week seized another provincial capital to Goma's south, Bukavu, near Burundi. The region is rich in gold and coltan, a key mineral for the production of capacitors used in most consumer electronics such as laptops and smartphones.

Also Tuesday, the M23 captured the town of Kamanyola, about 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Bukavu, after they overcame resistance from the Congolese army in the evening, said Steve Mubalama, a civil society representative in the town.

Mubalama expressed fears that the M23 rebels would advance a further 75 kilometres (45 miles) to the south to take the strategic city of Uvira.

The M23 is the most prominent of more than 100 armed



groups vying for control of eastern Congo's trillions of dollars in mineral wealth. The rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to U.N. experts, and at times have vowed to march as far as Congo's capital, Kinshasa, over 1,000 miles away.

"We're worried because we're in danger of experiencing a situation similar to that in Goma, with the loss of human lives," said Kambale Nyuliro, a Kitsombiro civil servant.

He told the AP that Lubero town, on the way to Butembo, was surrounded on three sides by M23 fighters but still under Congolese army control.

"Since the fighting began, the enemy has only advanced," he said.

Analysts have said the rebels are eyeing political power, unlike their brief capture of Goma, a major security and humanitarian hub, in 2012.

The rebel-appointed mayor

of Goma said Tuesday they would carry out a census, in a sign of their intention to maintain control of the city. And ferry service resumed between Goma and Bukavu, the only way to travel between them for now.

Rwanda has accused Congo of enlisting ethnic Hutu fighters responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus. M23 says it's fighting to protect Tutsis and Congolese of Rwandan origin from discrimination and wants to transform Congo from a failed state to a modern one. Analysts have called those pretexts for Rwanda's involvement.

On Tuesday, the U.K. Foreign Office summoned the Rwandan ambassador in London and in a statement condemned the rebel gangs, calling them "an unacceptable violation of (Congo's) sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Brazil's former President Bolsonaro charged over alleged coup that included a plan to poison Lula

AGENCIES
RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 FEBRUARY

Brazil's prosecutor-general on Tuesday formally charged former President Jair Bolsonaro with attempting a coup to stay in office after his 2022 election defeat, in a plot that included a plan to poison his successor and current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and kill a Supreme Court judge.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet alleges that Bolsonaro and 33 others participated in a plan to remain in power. The alleged plot, he wrote, included a plan to poison Lula and shoot dead Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, a foe of the former president.

"The members of the crim-

inal organisation structured a plan at the presidential palace to attack institutions, aiming to bring down the system of the powers and the democratic order, which received the sinister name of 'Green and Yellow Dagger,'" Gonet wrote in a 272-page indictment. "The plan was conceived and taken to the knowledge of the president, and he agreed to it."

Bolsonaro is often seen in Brazil's yellow-and-green national soccer jersey and the colours have become associated with his political movement.

Bolsonaro's defense team said it met the accusations with "dismay and indignation," adding in a statement that the former "President has

never agreed to any movement aimed at deconstructing the democratic rule of law or the institutions that underpin it."

Bolsonaro's son, Flávio Bolsonaro, who is a senator, said on the social platform X that the indictment was "empty" and there was no evidence of wrongdoing. He accused the Prosecutor-General's Office of serving "the nefarious interests of Lula."

In November, Brazil's Federal Police filed a 884-page report with Gonet detailing the scheme. They allege a systematic effort to sow distrust in the electoral system, drafting a decree to provide legal cover for the plot, pressuring top military brass to go along with the plan and inciting a riot in the capital.

Leading Myanmar opposition organisation blames local resistance group for killing of Catholic priest

AGENCIES
BANGKOK, 19 FEBRUARY

The main organisation coordinating resistance to Myanmar's military government says its forces have arrested 10 members of a local resistance group suspected in the killing of a Catholic village priest last week in the country's northwest.

Father Donald Martin Ye Naing Win, 44, is believed to be the first Catholic priest targeted for killing in the civil war that erupted after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi four years ago. He served in a village church in Shwebo township in Sagaing region, a strong-

hold of the armed resistance.

The Home Affairs and Immigration Ministry of the shadow National Unity Government, the leading opposition organisation, said in a statement Monday that the suspects were captured by the Shwebo branch of its armed People's Defense Force and other local resistance groups on Friday, the day of the killing.

The statement said an initial investigation found the suspects were members of a local defense force, and the shadow government's Defense Ministry will investigate further. It said nothing about a possible motive for the attack.

Migrant groups say racist attacks increase in German city after deadly Christmas market violence

AGENCIES
MAGDEBURG, 19 FEBRUARY

When Haben Gebregergish first immigrated to the German city of Magdeburg seven years ago, the Eritrean immigrant was walking to the supermarket with her child when an intoxicated woman approached her on the street.

At the time, Gebregergish did not speak German well enough to comprehend what the woman was saying. But Gebregergish says that when the woman threw a beer bottle at her head, she immediately understood.

It was one of her first encounters with racism, but certainly not the last. In the aftermath of a deadly attack at a Christmas market in Magdeburg late last year, Gebregergish and other migrants who have settled in the city say they have experienced a sharp increase in racism and anti-immigration

sentiments.

"We are the same as you," Gebregergish said earlier this month. "We are not different. Just like you, we have feelings. Sometimes we are sad, sometimes we are happy, just like everyone else."

The Christmas market violence was one of five high-profile attacks committed by immigrants in the past nine months that have made migration a key issue as the country heads toward an early election on Sunday. The suspect, a Saudi doctor, drove into the holiday market teeming with shoppers and left five women and a 9-year-old boy dead and 200 people injured.

The suspect arrived in Germany in 2006 and had received permanent residency, and authorities say the suspect does not fit the usual profile of perpetrators of extremist attacks. He is being held in custody as authorities investigate him.



Just one day after the 20 December violence, there was a large right-wing demonstration in Magdeburg, and verbal and physical attacks on people with a migrant background have increased significantly in the city since then, according to the German-Syrian Cultural Association in Magdeburg.

"The migrant community and the advice centers report that attacks have increased by more than 70% here in

the city," said Saeed Saeed, who came to Germany from Syria seven years ago and is a member of the association. "Racism already exists here and everywhere. But it has increased enormously since the attack."

Ketevan Asatiani-Hermann, newly elected chair of the board for the Advisory Council for Integration and Migration in Magdeburg, said victims of racist attacks in the city often do not feel

support from politicians or police.

"The hatred has always been there, people just didn't dare to say it so clearly before," said Asatiani-Hermann, who came to Magdeburg in 2011 from Georgia.

Officers sometimes target or search the victims first before the perpetrator, she alleged, and they also worry reporting an attack could have a negative impact on their residence status.

The Magdeburg Police Department did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Mayor Simone Borris, in a statement, said: "Cohesion and community are fundamental values of a city that are inviolable." The mayor also referred media to online services for migrants, and said the city's Cooperation with the Advisory Council for Integration and Migration will be expanded.

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- 700 071

Case No. : OA/674/2024
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.
Exh. No. : 5463

**STATE BANK OF INDIA
VS
ASHOKE BERA**
To,
(1) **ASHOKE BERA**
D/W/S/O - S/O Phanibhusan Bera
2-184C, BIJOYGARH COLONY,
74/2/153, SRI RAM THAKUR ROAD,
BIJOYGARH MARKET, Kolkata,
WEST BENGAL-700032

SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/674/2024 was listed
before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/
Registrar on 16/01/2025,
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. 2039134/-**
(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 and
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 21/05/2025 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 : 28/01/2025.**

Sd/-
Registrar-in-Charge
Debts Recovery Tribunal - 3, Kolkata

Stalls/Outlets at Stations over Sealdah Division
Under 'One Station One Product' Scheme
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Sealdah
hereby invites application in sealed packet (single) and in prescribed
format from Individuals, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Marginalized
or weaker sections of society etc. dealing with indigenous products
for participation in "One Station One Product" Scheme at 102
nos. stations over Sealdah Division. **Salient features of the
scheme:-** (1) **Duration of Project:** 30 days (2) **Tenure Start Date
of the One Station One Product Stalls at various stations:** Taki
Road - 30 days starting from 01.03.2025. Tala, Baranagar - 30
days starting from 03.03.2025. Majerhat, Taherpur, Aranghata -
30 days starting from 04.03.2025. Akra, Santoshpur, Komagata
Maru Budge Budge - 30 days starting from 05.03.2025. Dhubulia
- 30 days starting from 06.03.2025. Subhasgram - 30 days starting
from 09.03.2025. Dakshin Durgapur, Netra, Champahati, Ghutiani
Shariff, Magrahat - 30 days starting from 11.03.2025. Bongaon
Jn., Duttapukur, Bamangachi, Guma, Bira, Dakshineswar - 30
days starting from 12.03.2025. Baharu, Kakdwip, Dakshin Barasat,
Basirhat, Kalyani Simanta, Madanpur, Barasat - 30 days starting
from 14.03.2025. Kalyanpur, Hotor - 30 days starting from
15.03.2025. Majhergram, Bally Ghat, Eden Gardens, Lalgola,
Cossimbazar - 30 days starting from 18.03.2025. Chandpara,
Gangnapur, Bagbazar, Shasan Road, Surjyapur, Paglachandi,
Gede, Kalinarayanpur Jn., Habibpur, Jagaddal, Titagarh, Ichhapur
- 30 days starting from 19.03.2025. BBD Bag, Princepghat, Simurali,
Bidyadharpur, Piali - 30 days starting from 20.03.2025. Khashinagar
Halt, Bhagwanpola, Taldi, Muragacha, Beldanga, Bathudahari,
Debagram, Rejinigara, Plassey, Shantipur, Majhdia, Birnagar,
Payradanga, Brace Bridge, Nangi, New Alipore - 30 days starting
from 21.03.2025. Gopalnagar, Burra Bazar, Patipukur, Kalikapur,
Basuldanga, Dhapdhabi, Bagula, Banpur, Palpara - 30 days starting
from 22.03.2025. Badkulla - 30 days starting from 24.03.2025.
Gobardanga, Thakurnagar, Ashoknagar Road, New Barrackpore
- 30 days starting from 26.03.2025. Bisharpar Kodalia - 30 days
starting from 27.03.2025. Jagannj-30 days starting from 28.03.2025.
Krishnapur, Murshidabad, Berhampore Court, Phulia, Kalyani
Ghoshpara, Ballygunge Jn., Baghajatin, Gocharan, Namkhana,
Deula, Dhamua, Diamond Harbour, Sangrampur, Canning,
Jaynagar Majlipur, Mallickpur - 30 days starting from 29.03.2025.

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20 units of electricity per One Station One Product outlet shall be
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epaper.thestatesman.com

Many of the Trump administration's actions directly challenge the US Congress' 'power of the purse', says ZACHARY PRICE

Why does all of this matter?



Reflecting this history, James Madison, the fourth president and a leading figure in the Constitutional Convention, wrote in the *Federalist Papers* that the power of the purse was the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance,

Congress has also established a large Army, Navy, and Air Force over which the president is commander in chief. Presidents, moreover, have claimed the power to employ these armed forces in significant ways even without a declaration of war or other specific authorization

Likewise, Congress can deny funds for certain military operations or impose constraints on military activities—something it also does with some regularity. In the 1970s, Congress helped end the Vietnam War in part by withholding appropriations for military activities in Indochina.

Based on debatable legal claims,

James Madison would not have been pleased.

Changing laws to curb dissent

When laws meant to curb lies are used as political tools, the cure can be worse than the disease, says ASAD BAIG.

Albert Einstein famously equated insanity with repeating the same actions while expecting different results. While his words weren't specifically about politics, they fit the situation well. Time and again, governments enact policies



A new Social Media Regulation and Protection Authority will have broad discretion to block or remove content, raising concerns about selective enforcement. Meanwhile, FIA's Cybercrime

Whether it is the viral spread of fabricated rape allegations in Punjab or sensational claims of another 'Jallianwala Bagh massacre' in Islamabad, misinformation can have real-world consequences. So much so that the World Economic Forum has labelled disinformation a major global threat, warning that it has the potential to destabilise societies and erode democratic institutions. The simple answer is: when laws meant to curb falsehoods are vague, selectively enforced, or wielded

Opinions could also potentially fall under such vague laws. A columnist writing that government policies are responsible for worsening inflation despite official claims of economic

Secondly, and importantly, legislating against fake news isn't just a dangerous precedent, it's a futile exercise and a waste of time and resources. Misinformation isn't a legal problem; it is a societal and technological challenge rooted in education, media literacy, and evolving digital landscapes. When governments attempt to tackle misinformation through legal frameworks, they often end up creating laws that are either ineffective or dangerously broad, leading to selective enforcement



The most effective way to combat misinformation is through stronger media literacy programmes, independent fact-checking bodies, and transparent access to information. A well-informed public is far more resilient to fake news than a society where truth is dictated by legal authority. Existing civil defamation laws already provide an avenue for those seeking recourse against claims of reputational damage or tangible harm. Strengthening these frameworks ensures accountability without discouraging discourse. But when governments choose censorship over education, they are not fighting misinformation, they are fighting free speech.

(The writer is the founder of Media Matters for Democracy.)
Dawn/ANN.

ISL: Jamshedpur FC take on Mohammedan Sporting, aim to inch closer to second spot

Currently at the third position on the points table, JFC are aiming to finish the league stage on a high note

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 FEBRUARY

Jamshedpur FC will aim to reduce the gap with second-placed FC Goa when they face bottom-placed Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Kishore Bharati Kri-rangan in Kolkata in an Indian Super League (ISL) clash on Thursday.

The Red Miners are third in the points table with 34 points from 20 matches.

However, they have ended up losing thrice in their previous five encounters.

They are currently five points behind FC Goa.

Their away form has been concerning, having faced six defeats on the road, but Mohammedan SC have not really optimised their home advantage either.

In fact, the Kolkata-based side are presently on a four-game-long losing streak and have garnered just 11 points from their 20 games until now, with both of their wins coming away from home.

In the reverse fixture, the Khalid Jamil-coached team had clinched a convincing 3-1 win, and they will have to iron out their offensive concerns, having gone score-less in their previous two out-ings, to repeat that feat.

Another game without a goal would see them go three encounters without finding the back of the net for the first time since December 2022.

Mohammedan Sporting Club, on the other hand, eye their first win in 11 attempts at home—having drawn thrice and lost seven times in their backyard this season.

Jamshedpur FC are realistically chasing a second-placed finish, but they trail FC Goa (39) by five points.



Ending up in the second spot will see them qualify directly for the semi-finals and not participate in the one-legged knockout, but they cannot afford to drop any more points hereon for that.

Mohammedan SC have given away seven goals to substitutes in ISL 2024-25, with only Chennaiyin FC (8) having conceded more. This

shortcoming could prove costly if Jamshedpur FC banks on their bench strength for the game.

Mohammedan SC have struggled up front this season, but the 23-year-old is their joint-highest scorer with two goals.

He has also produced 17 goal-scoring opportunities and averaged 18 passes per

game at 76 per cent accuracy.

Jamshedpur FC have conceded 19 goals in away fixtures, which is their joint-worst defensive record in a single ISL season (matching the 2019-20 campaign).

They will take respite from Mohammedan SC being the least-scoring team (10) of the campaign.

Mohammedan SC's Indian assistant coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo praised Jamshedpur FC and the season they had had so far.

"We know Jamshedpur FC have performed well this season. It's not going to be an easy game for us, but we are going to try our best to put our best foot forward," he said.

Jamshedpur FC's head coach Khalid Jamil assured that his side is committed to getting a win from this game away against Mohammedan SC.

"It's an away game. We need to get a positive result. Everyone is working hard and the team needs to continue doing that moving forward," he said.

Hero WPGT: Shweta Mansingh takes one-shot lead after third leg



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, 19 FEBRUARY

Shweta Mansingh, who has more than once come close to winning her maiden title on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, put herself in pole position after the first round of the third leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour 2025 at the Poona Club Golf Course.

Shweta shot 2-under 69 and took a one-shot lead over Sneha Singh and Vani Kapoor, who carded 1-under 70 each. Experienced Neha Tripathi (71) was tied third with Hitaashee Bakshi, winner of the Hero OOM last year, but making her first start this season, who opened with a bogey but closed with a birdie for a round of 71.

Four players Amandeep Drall, Kriti Chowhan, Shagun Narain and Vidhatri Urs were tied for sixth place with scores of 1-over 72 each. Seher Atwal (73) was tied for tenth with the top amateur of the day, Saanvi Somu.

Shweta, who was tied for second with Sneha in Leg

16 of the 2023 season at TNGF, was also tied for second earlier at Leg 15 of the 2021 season at RCGC. Shweta, who is based out of Gurugram, dropped an early bogey on the second, but she made up with three birdies in four holes between the fourth and the seventh. She turned in 2-under and added another birdie on the 10th to go three-under. A late bogey on the Par-5 18th hole pulled her back as she finished at 2-under 69. Sneha, winner of the second Leg this season, had one bogey on Par-5 but made up with birdies on the 10th and the 13th to ensure she was under par for the day. Vani Kapoor, who was runner-up behind Sneha in the second leg, saw all the action on the front nine with one bogey on the third and birdies on the fourth and the ninth. She parred the entire back nine. Neha Tripathi's four birdies were undone by two bogeys and a double bogey, while Hitaashee Bakshi had two each of birdies and bogeys.

FIH Pro League: India ride Gurjant Singh strike to beat Germany

AGENCIES
BHUBANESWAR, 19 FEBRUARY

India won their second match in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men) season after beating World Champions Germany 1-0 on Wednesday.

Gurjant Singh scored the only goal of the match as India climbed to seventh in the standings. It was a good response from India after they had succumbed to a 4-1 loss to Germany on Tuesday. The Indian defence, marshalled by Captain Harmanpreet Singh, put in a solid display to secure an important win. After a bright start, India took the lead four minutes into the match as Gurjant Singh scored in back-to-back matches. Rajinder Singh sent the ball into the circle hoping for Mandeep Singh to put it into goal. Mandeep's effort was saved by Alexander Stadler but the German goalkeeper did not clear the loose ball away. An unmarked Gurjant dove in to sweep the ball into the empty goal.

India deployed a half-court



press as they looked to protect their lead and pounce on any German mistakes. Germany nearly got the equaliser as Thies Prinz showcased his incredible 3D skills to beat his markers. Krishan Bahadur Pathak stood tall and swatted away Prinz's attempt before Florian Sperling scooped the loose ball over the goal. Germany won the first penalty

corner of the match with 46 seconds left in the quarter but Gonzalo Peillat's drag-flick flew wide of the goal as the first quarter ended 1-0 in India's favour.

India resorted to sitting deeper in their half and forcing the Germans to try and find ways to penetrate the circle. Suraj Karkera, who replaced Pathak in the Indian goal in

the second quarter, was rarely called into action.

It was India who had the better chances from counter attacks as Shilanand Lakra, Nilam Sanjeet Xess and Raj Kumar Pal tested Stadler. India won three penalty corners in the final minute but the German defence made sure they went into the break trailing only by the solitary goal.

Germany began the third quarter with more urgency and it needed an instinctive save from Pathak to deny Prinz a goal in the 32nd minute. Pathak was called into action a couple of minutes later as he denied Peillat a penalty corner with a superb save with his foot.

India had a big chance to double their advantage towards the end of a cagey third quarter. However, Stadler pulled off an incredible double save to deny Sukhjeet Singh and Vivek Sagar Prasad.

The Indian defence was tested early in the fourth quarter as Germany won a penalty corner in the 46th minute. Karkera did well to save Peillat's drag-flick. India won a penalty corner two minutes later but Amit Rohidas sent his drag-flick wide.

With time against them, Germany upped the ante in the final five minutes. The World Champions won a penalty corner with four minutes to go but captain Harmanpreet successfully used India's review to reverse the decision.

Indian eves gear up for Pink Ladies Cup clash against Jordan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

The senior India women's national football team are back in action in the FIFA International Window, and are gearing up to face Jordan in the first match of the Pink Ladies Cup 2025 in Sharjah.

India head coach Crispin Chettri feels his side is currently in a transitional team and are breaking barriers by participating in the tournament as they strive to get better. "It's a transitional phase for the team, where we have brought in a lot of new players. We are all willing to suffer for the overall good of the team. I think it's important to support and encourage these girls because most of them are breaking a lot of barriers just by being here. We must focus on the positives right now," said Chettri.

The Indian team landed in Sharjah on Tuesday. The match will kick off at the Al

Hamriya Sports Club Stadium. India will play two more matches against Russia and the Korea Republic on 23 and 26 February respectively.

"Jordan have progressed in a good way over the last few years, but I think these are matches that we have to win if we want to progress," said Chettri. "We have a good mix of young and experienced players, so it will be a competitive game."

India women had a 10-day camp in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, before travelling to Sharjah, where they will have two training sessions before their first match. The 44-year-old feels that women's football, especially the national team, has benefitted from the shift to a longer Indian Women's League season.

"We could only get a 10-day camp before the Pink Ladies Cup, but the good thing is that the players are already in mid-season, so we don't have to spend any

time on their fitness," he said. "We could straight away get into working on certain tactical areas and how to organise as a unit."

Fullback Sanju was in agreement with the coach.

"This is something that we, the players, have benefited from. Playing regular matches is the most important thing, and we have been doing that in the IWL. Now that we are in the national team, we can straight away get into playing our system, rather than spend time on fitness. Every player is in peak physical form," she said.

India are ranked 13th in Asia (69th in the world), while Jordan are 14th in the continent (74th in the world). Chettri, however, brushed aside talks of the difference in rankings of the teams, choosing instead to focus on the fact that the Blue Tigresses are currently going through a transitional phase.

Cricket Branding: The ICC Champion's Trophy and IPL Mantra

CHAITANYA K. PRASAD
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

In India, cricket isn't merely a sport what started out as a gentleman's game has turned into a grand festival that brings life to a standstill, transforming ordinary days into celebrations and streets into stadiums. As the ICC Champions Trophy unfolds and the IPL season beckons in 2025, the nation once again readies itself for this magnificent carnival of cricket, where every match is a festival within itself, complete with its own rituals, heroes, and fervent devotees. Yet, beneath the dazzling lights and thunderous cheers that mark this seasonal euphoria, a profound metamorphosis has occurred. From a simple bat-and-ball game into a sophisticated marketing spectacle worth billion, where every boundary, every wicket, and every strategic timeout is tuned not just for sporting glory, but as a precisely

calculated branding opportunity. In a country of 1.4 billion people, where cricket flows through the veins of every generation, we find ourselves at a fascinating intersection where tradition meets commerce, and the sacred turf of cricket grounds increasingly resembles a canvas for corporate storytelling.

The relationship between cricket and branding has evolved dramatically over the decades. What began as modest sponsorships on cricket boards and team jerseys has exploded into an all-encompassing marketing spectacle. Today, cricket serves as a massive canvas for brand visibility, with every conceivable space from the pitch to the players carrying commercial messages. The numbers speak for themselves: IPL's brand value hit \$12 billion in 2024, up 13 per cent from last year and a giant leap from \$2 billion in 2009. IPL franchises are thriving too, with the top 10 teams more than doubling



their combined revenue to 6,797 crore in FY24. Even streaming platforms are cashing in as one major OTT player expects to rake in 6,000 crore from ads during the Champions Trophy and IPL alone. The IPL has revolutionized how cricket interfaces with commercial interests. Each team has been crafted as a distinct brand, complete with carefully chosen colour schemes, memorable anthems, and star-studded rosters of players and coaches. The tournament's

very identity, signalled by its iconic trumpet call, has become a brand in itself, instantly recognizable to millions across the nation. These elements work in concert to create deep emotional connections with viewers and fans, transforming casual watchers into passionate supporters who proudly display their team allegiances.

However, this transformation raises important questions about the balance between sport and commerce. The cricket field has become a

mosaic of corporate logos and sponsorships, ensuring that every camera angle captures some form of branded content. Players, once celebrated purely for their sporting prowess, now serve as walking billboards, their jerseys and equipment adorned with multiple sponsor logos.

This saturation of branding has reached a point where some argue it distracts from the game's essential nature.

The global reach of cricket, particularly in the digital age, has created unprecedented opportunities for brand engagement. Modern cricket tournaments operate on multiple platforms simultaneously—traditional broadcasts, social media, digital streaming, and mobile applications. This multi-channel presence allows brands to craft diverse campaign strategies and leverage influencer collaborations in ways that were unimaginable in previous eras.

For commercial brands,

cricket offers an unparalleled platform for reaching the masses. The sport's aspirational value, particularly in India, creates a perfect storm of visibility, engagement, and emotional connection.

Young cricketers dream of following in the footsteps of their heroes, while fans feel deeply connected to their favourite teams and players. This emotional investment makes cricket an incredibly attractive vehicle for brand messaging. The 2025 season promises to push these boundaries even further. Both the Champions Trophy and IPL are set to showcase new approaches to brand integration, utilizing advanced digital marketing interfaces and sophisticated segmentation strategies.

The challenge for strategic managers lies in achieving perfect placement and positioning of brands within this increasingly crowded space. Yet, this intensive branding

carries both opportunities and risks. While it has undoubtedly contributed to cricket's financial health and global appeal, there's a growing concern about saturation. The challenge lies in maintaining the delicate balance between commercial interests and the sport's integrity. Too much branding risks alienating purists and overwhelming viewers, potentially diminishing the very engagement that makes cricket attractive to sponsors in the first place. Nevertheless, cricket's position as India's beloved sport remains unshaken. The anticipation surrounding India-Pakistan matches continues to bring the nation to a standstill, and the IPL's twenty-over format has created its own unique brand of excitement. The sport's ability to unite people, generate passion, and create shared experiences remains its most valuable asset.

Looking ahead, the key for stakeholders will be to find innovative ways to integrate

brands without compromising the viewer experience. The future of cricket branding lies not just in visibility but in creating meaningful connections with audiences. Successful brands will be those that enhance rather than intrude upon the cricket-watching experience, adding value to both the sport and its followers. As we enter this new phase of cricket's commercial evolution, it's crucial to remember that at its heart, cricket remains a sport that captures imaginations and inspires millions. While branding and commercial interests are now inseparable from modern cricket, the game's essence—its ability to unite, entertain, and inspire—must always take centre stage. The challenge for the future will be maintaining this delicate balance, ensuring that the commercial aspects of cricket enhance rather than overshadow the sporting spectacle that continues to captivate millions around the world.



NAHID RANA ‘FOCUSED’ AHEAD OF CT 2025

Ahead of Bangladesh starting their 2025 Champions Trophy campaign against India, young fast bowler Nahid Rana said the bowling group will be focused on proper execution of their plans on pitches which could be great for batters to thrive. Bangladesh will begin their Group A campaign against India in Dubai on Thursday before facing hosts' Pakistan and New Zealand

For more updates

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KOLKATA
THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2025

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The Statesman Sport

THUMBNAILS

Former Mumbai captain Milind Rege passes away: Milind Rege, who returned to captain Mumbai in domestic cricket after suffering a heart attack at 26, passed away after a second attack on Wednesday, days after turning 76. He is survived by his wife and two sons. Rege, an off-spinning all-rounder who featured in 52 First-Class matches for Mumbai, was part of five consecutive Ranji Trophy title-winning seasons. His career was briefly cut short due to cardiac issues but he made a stellar comeback into the side, and went on to lead the Mumbai side. During his playing career, spanning between 1966-67 and 1977-78, Rege took 126 wickets with his right-arm off-break bowling. He also contributed with the bat, scoring 1,532 runs at an average of 23.56. Off the field, Rege also served Mumbai cricket in several roles through his career and was also associated with the Mumbai Cricket Association as a cricket advisor. He was among the first people to spot several cricketers, including batting legend Sachin Tendulkar. In a social media post, hailing the contribution of Rege, Tendulkar wrote, "Sad to hear about Milind Rege Sir's passing. He was a true Mumbai cricketer with immense contributions to the city's cricket. He and other CCI members saw potential in me and asked me to play for CCI, which, as I look back now, was a landmark moment in my career."

Champions Trophy: Dominant Kiwis snuff out brave fight by Pakistan

New Zealand defeat hosts by 60 runs in tournament opener to start campaign with a win

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KARACHI, 19 FEBRUARY

New Zealand made a strong start to their Champions Trophy campaign, defeating hosts Pakistan by 60 runs in a Group A clash in Karachi on Wednesday.

Chasing a target of 321 runs, the hosts put up a brave fight, riding halfcenturies by Babar Azam and Khushdil Shah along with a gutsy performance by the lower-order before the Kiwi bowlers managed to dismiss them for 260 runs in 47.2 overs.

Earlier, New Zealand posted a formidable total of 320/5. The innings was anchored by brilliant centuries from Will Young and Tom Latham, who guided the Kiwis to a challenging total after early setbacks.

After winning the toss, Pakistan opted to field first. Their decision seemed to pay off initially as spinner Abrar Ahmed struck first, dismissing Devon Conway for 10 with the score at 39. Just an over later, Naseem Shah removed Kane Williamson for a single, reducing New Zealand to 40/2 in 8.1 overs. The Kiwis reached 48/2 at the end of the first powerplay.

Daryl Mitchell was the next to fall, managing just 10 before being sent back by Haris Rauf. At 73/3 in 16.2 overs, New Zealand were in a tricky position. However, opener Will Young and wicketkeeper-batter Tom



Latham steadied the innings, forging a crucial 118-run partnership. Young led the recovery with a century, scoring 107 off 113 balls, including 12 fours and a six. His innings ended when Naseem Shah struck again, dismissing him when

New Zealand were 191/4 in 37.2 overs. Soon after, Latham made century, completing it in just 95 balls. He remained unbeaten on 118 off 104 deliveries, hitting 10 fours and three sixes. Glenn Phillips provided the finishing touch with a

quick-fire 61 off 39 balls, smashing three fours and four sixes to take New Zealand past the 300-run mark. The Kiwis made 113 runs in their last ten overs. Among Pakistan's bowlers, Naseem Shah was the standout performer, finishing with figures

of 2/63 in his 10 overs. Haris Rauf also picked up two wickets but was expensive as he finished with 2/83, while Abrar Ahmed claimed one. Shaheen Afridi had an off day, going wicketless in his 10 overs, conceding 68 runs.

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AMUL DOODH PEETA HAI INDIA

Gill replaces Babar as No.1 ODI batter ahead of CT 2025 opener

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 FEBRUARY

The ODI rankings witnessed a major shake-up on the opening day of the ICC Champions Trophy with India's Shubman Gill and Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana rising to the top of the batting and bowling charts, respectively in the latest update released on Wednesday. Shubman overtook Pakistan's Babar Azam to rise to the top of the ODI batting rankings while Theekshana took the premier position

among the ODI bowlers for the first time by surpassing Afghanistan tweaker Rashid Khan.

Gill slammed two half-centuries and a century in the recently-concluded home ODI series against England, that India won 3-0, making him the top run-getter in the series. He came up with scores of 87, 60 and 112 to aggregate 259 runs at an average of 86.33 and a strike rate of 103.60.

The next highest scorer, Shreyas Iyer, was 78 behind Gill with 181 runs.

Ranji Trophy: Rathod, Wadkar lead Vidarbha fighback against Mumbai after top-order wobble



AGENCIES
NAGPUR, 19 FEBRUARY

An unbroken 91-run partnership between Yash Rathod (59 batting) and Akshay Wadkar (31 batting) helped Vidarbha recover from a dramatic top-order collapse as they ended Day 3 of their Ranji Trophy semi-final against Mumbai at 147 for 4, extending their overall lead to 260 runs.

After being reduced to 56 for 4, Vidarbha looked in danger of squandering their first-innings advantage, but Rathod and Wadkar absorbed immense pressure to guide them to stumps unscathed. Their partnership came against a Mumbai attack that had its tail up, especially with spinners Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian exploiting a surface showing increasing signs of variable bounce and turn. Earlier, Mumbai's fightback was led by wicketkeeper-batter Akash Anand, who displayed remarkable resilience with a hard-fought 106 off 256 balls. Resuming at 188 for 7, Mumbai's hopes rested on Anand, and he delivered by forging a crucial 69-run stand with Tanush Kotian (33) for the eighth wicket. Anand, who had opened the innings and remained on the field throughout, was eventually dismissed as the ninth batter out. His effort was instrumental in

reducing Mumbai's deficit as they were bowled out for 270, conceding a 113-run first-innings lead to Vidarbha. Left-arm spinner Parth Rekhade, who had rattled Mumbai on Day 2, returned to take the key wicket of Kotian before the lower order folded quickly.

With a significant lead, Vidarbha's second innings began on a disastrous note as Shardul Thakur struck second ball, removing Atharva Taide right before the tea break. Danish Malewar (29) provided some fluency but fell to Mulani, chipping one back while attempting a flick against the turn.

Vidarbha's troubles deepened when Karun Nair and Dhruv Shorey fell in quick succession, both trapped lbw—Nair to Mulani and Shorey to Kotian—as the Mumbai spinners made full use of the wearing pitch. At 56 for 4, the match was evenly poised, with Mumbai sensing an opportunity to claw back into the contest. However, Rathod and Wadkar ensured Vidarbha finished the day on top with a determined stand that blunted a tiring Mumbai attack. Rathod, registering his second fifty-plus score in the match, played with composure, while Wadkar's gritty 102-ball stay frustrated the visitors.

Meanwhile in Ahmedabad,

Priyank Panchal's magnificent unbeaten 117 off 200 balls to lead Gujarat's strong response to Kerala's imposing first-innings total of 457. At 222 for 1 at stumps on Day 3, Gujarat now trails by just 235 runs, with the experienced opener firmly anchoring their chase. Panchal's knock was the centerpiece of Gujarat's resilient batting display, ensuring they stayed in control heading into a crucial Day 4 of the Ranji Trophy semifinal.

Gujarat's openers approached the innings with a clear game plan—maximise scoring while the pitch remained benign. Kerala, banking on early breakthroughs, opened with off-spinner Jalaj Saxena, setting an attacking field with a silly point and leg slip, expecting turn.

However, the rollers used before play had settled the surface, neutralizing much of the assistance the spinners had hoped for.

Taking full advantage, Panchal and Aarya Desai stitched together a 131-run opening stand, playing fluent drives and accumulating runs cleverly—particularly through the vacant third-man region.

Aarya, standing tall and elegant, played with confidence against Kerala's experienced spinners, reaching his half-century off 82 balls. However,

his innings was cut short when Basil N.P. got one to angle across, forcing an inside-edge onto the stumps. Dismissed for 57, Aarya's knock laid the foundation Gujarat needed.

Losing his partner didn't slow Panchal down. He took over the scoring mantle, cutting anything outside off-stump with precision. A rare moment of luck saw him survive an outside edge at 78, as the ball pierced the gap between the wicketkeeper and slip.

However, there was no stopping him as he lofted Aditya Sarwate over the ropes to reach his 29th First-Class century, Panchal let out a deafening roar, celebrating an innings of grit, patience, and class. His teammates rose in applause, acknowledging their skipper's invaluable knock. With Manan Hingrajia (30 batting off 108) providing steady support, Gujarat negotiated the tricky final phase without further damage. Both batters survived close calls, with edges falling just short of the slip cordon, but they ensured that only one wicket fell all day—a testament to their control over the innings.

Earlier, Kerala's plans to extend their total past 500 suffered an immediate blow, as Chintan Gaja struck in just the fourth over, clean bowling Aditya Sarwate to reach his 200th First Class wicket.

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