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weather report

Kolkata Weather

28 °C | °F

Precipitation 0%

Humidity 58%

Wind 6 km/h

Sunny

Indian Indices

NIFTY 50		
26013.45	103.40	0.40
SENSEX		
84950.95	388.17	0.46
NIFTY BANK		
58962.70	445.15	0.76
NIFTY IT		
36375.20	73.95	0.20
BSE SMALLCAP		
53443.23	312.55	0.59

Gold Rates

Today gold price in Kolkata
1,25,400 1,14,950
»
Today gold price in Bangalore
1,25,400 1,14,950
»
Today gold price in India
1,25,400 (₹320) 1,14,950 (₹300)

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People take part in the Unity March held to mark Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 150th birth anniversary, in Ahmedabad, Monday.

Fresh Clash Over Hills Mediation:
CM Mamata Accuses Centre of 'Unconstitutional Overreach' as Appointed Interlocutor Begins Work

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: A renewed confrontation has erupted between the West Bengal government and the Centre after the Union Home Ministry's appointed interlocutor for the Darjeeling and Terai-Dooars region reportedly began his work. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has once again written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, strongly objecting to what she calls an "unconstitutional" and "politically motivated" move that undermines the federal structure of India. With this latest development, the long-standing debate surrounding authority, autonomy and administrative control in the hill regions has intensified, pushing the Centre-state relationship into fresh turbulence. According to official reports circulated in Delhi and Kolkata, the centrally appointed interlocutor, former Deputy National Security Advisor and retired IPS officer Pankaj Kumar Singh, has commenced his responsibilities under the



guidance of the Union Home Ministry. His role is to engage with various stakeholders and groups in the hills and adjoining areas and facilitate dialogue on long-standing demands raised by the Gorkha community. The Centre has described him as a seasoned security specialist with decades of experience in border management and diplomatic coordination. But the Bengal government remains steadfast in its opposition to the appointment, asserting that it had no consultation or prior communication regarding the decision. In her latest letter to the Prime Minister, Mamata Banerjee expressed sharp surprise and disappointment, referring to media reports suggesting that Pankaj Kumar Singh has officially started his duties from November 10. She noted that it is "very disturbing" that despite the state's earlier objections, the Centre proceeded with the appointment without responding to her concerns. The Chief Minister reiterated that such unilateral action violates India's federal spirit, undermines the authority of the state government and risks destabilising the sensitive political balance in the region. The conflict traces back to early October, when the Centre first announced Pankaj Kumar Singh as the official interlocutor for the hills. The decision immediately sparked controversy in the state. Mamata Banerjee had sharply criticised the move, arguing that such an appointment without state consent was tantamount to sidelining constitutionally mandated principles.

18 Members Of Hyderabad Family - 3 Generations - Killed In Saudi Bus Crash

Staff Reporter, Hyderabad, 17 November: Eighteen members of one family, nine of them children, are among the 42 Indian pilgrims killed in a road accident near Medina in Saudi Arabia. The Hyderabad-based family was to return on Saturday, their relatives told.

"My sister-in-law, brother-in-law, their son, three daughters and their children went (for Umrah). They left eight days ago. The Umrah was done, and they were returning to Medina. Around 1.30 am, the accident occurred, and the bus was destroyed in the fire. They were supposed to return on Saturday," Mohammed Asif said.

Asif said they were in constant touch with their relatives before the tragedy struck. "Eighteen members of one family -- nine adults and nine children -- have died. It is a terrible tragedy for us," he said.Asif identified some of his relatives as Naseeruddin (70), his wife Akhter Begum (62), son Salauddin (42), daughters Amina (44), Rizwana (38), and Shabana (40), and their children.At the Ramnagar home of Naseeruddin and his family, someone brought in the keys from a neighbour, and it was loud wails as his sister entered the home that was her brother's home till now. "My brother's entire family has been wiped out," she cried out.

Most of the 42 people killed in the road crash were from Hyderabad. The bus they were travelling in collided with a diesel tanker about 30 km from Medina, according to reports. The accident occurred late at night when most passengers were sleeping. So they could not escape in time as the vehicle caught fire after the crash.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he was "deeply saddened" by the incident. "My thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones. I pray for the swift recovery of all those injured. Our Embassy in Riyadh and Consulate in Jeddah are providing all possible assistance. Our officials are also in close contact with Saudi Arabian authorities," he said in a post on X.

The Indian consulate has set up a control room and a helpline after the incident. "In view of a tragic bus accident near Medina, Saudi Arabia, involving Indian Umrah pilgrims, a 24x7 Control Room has been set up in Consulate General of India, Jeddah. The contact details of the Helpline are as under: Toll free number - 8002440003," the consulate said in a post on X.



President Droupadi Murmu receives the 16th Finance Commission's report for 2026-31 from Commission's Chairperson Arvind Panagariya, in New Delhi.

'In-Laws' House Is Not a Woman's Only Home': Chirag Paswan Supports Rohini as Rift Deepens in Lalu Prasad Yadav's Family



Staff Reporter, Patna, 17 November: The long-simmering rift within Lalu Prasad Yadav's family has burst into the public sphere, drawing national attention and emotional reactions across party lines. As accusations, emotional messages and silences ripple through the household of one of India's most influential political families, Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan has come forward expressing solidarity with Lalu's daughter, Rohini Acharya. His words — particularly his remark that "the in-laws' house is not a woman's only home" — have sparked discussions far beyond politics, touching upon gender norms, family rights and societal expectations. The controversy ignited soon after the conclusion of the Bihar Assembly elections, in which the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) suffered a major setback. Rohini Acharya, who has often stood out as one of the most vocal supporters of her father, took to social media with an emotionally charged post that startled supporters of the Yadav family. Without naming anyone, she revealed that she had faced humiliation so severe that she was forced to leave her family home in Patna. In her message, she claimed she was abused in unacceptable language and even alleged that shoes had been hurled at her in an attempt to assault her. The emotional weight of her words suggested deep-rooted turmoil, stating she had "not compromised her self-respect," nor abandoned the truth. She wrote that she was compelled to leave "crying parents and sisters," declaring she now felt "orphaned." The post stirred not only her followers but the entire political fraternity. Within just a day of Rohini's message, three of Lalu Prasad Yadav's other daughters — Rajalakshmi, Ragini and Chanda — left the Patna residence along with their children, reportedly departing for Delhi. Their sudden exit further fueled speculation that a major rupture had taken place within Bihar's first family. For decades, the Yadav household has been seen as a source of unmatched political clout, but the emerging signs of internal conflict have reshaped public perception overnight. Amid this unfolding crisis, Chirag Paswan chose to transcend political boundaries. Sharing his thoughts with reporters, he said he considered Lalu's children to be his own siblings. His unusual intervention emphasized empathy rather than political strategy. "I do not believe that after marriage a woman's only home is her in-laws' house," he said firmly, rejecting outdated societal norms that often force married women to endure mistreatment.

NIA Arrests Another "Active Co-Conspirator" Of Delhi Suicide Bomber

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: The National Investigation Agency has arrested Jasir Bilal Wani in Srinagar, who was an "active co-conspirator" of suicide bomber Umar un Nabi, in connection with the car blast near the Red Fort last week that claimed 13 lives, officials said on Monday. A resident of Qazigund in Anantnag, Wani allegedly provided technical support for carrying out terror attacks by modifying drones and attempting to make rockets ahead of the deadly car bomb blast, the agency said in a statement. Wani, who also goes by the alias of Danish, was arrested in Srinagar by an NIA team, it said."The accused, a resident of Qazigund in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, was an active co-conspirator behind the attack and had worked closely with the terrorist, Umar un Nabi, to plan the terror carnage," the NIA statement said.

The agency is exploring "various angles" to unravel the conspiracy behind the November 10 blast in the national capital."Several teams of the anti-terror agency are pursuing multiple leads, and are conducting searches across states to identify every person involved in the terror attack," it said. The NIA has described Umar Un Nabi, who was behind the wheel when the car exploded near the Red Fort, as a "suicide bomber". Also, NIA has used the term "vehicle-borne IED" for the car. It has forensically established the identity of the driver of the "vehicle-borne IED" as Umar Un Nabi, a resident of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir and an assistant professor.

Party in Ruins, Family in Turmoil: Tejashwi Yadav Secures Opposition Leader Post Amid Chaos in Bihar

Staff Reporter, Patna, 17 November: The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), once a formidable force in Bihar politics, is reeling from one of its most disappointing electoral performances in recent years. The party, swept aside by a powerful saffron wave in the recently concluded assembly elections, is now battling internal turmoil that has erupted dramatically within the family of its patriarch, Lalu Prasad Yadav. In an unexpected twist, even as the organisation faces disintegration and the party's future remains uncertain, Tejashwi Yadav has managed to emerge as the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly. His victory, however, has not come without controversy, with the Congress—RJD's own ally—casting doubts on the integrity of his win. Tension escalated within the Yadav household over the weekend after Lalu's daughter, Rohini Acharya, publicly declared that she had severed ties with both the party and her family. Her announcement, delivered through a deeply emotional and accusatory social media post, shocked supporters and political observers alike. Rohini claimed she had endured humiliation and mistreatment within the family and felt compelled to walk away. The fallout grew even more severe when three other daughters of Lalu—Rajalakshmi, Ragini and Chanda—subsequently left the family home in Patna, further signaling a dramatic rupture within one of Bihar's most influential political dynasties. This personal crisis unfolded at a time when RJD leaders were already struggling to come to terms with their poor performance in the ballot box. The impact of the election results was devastating for the party, which secured only 25 out of the 243 assembly seats in Bihar—just enough to retain the status of the principal opposition party under the legislative rules. In Bihar, a party must



hold at least 10 percent of the total seats to be officially recognized as the Leader of the Opposition. With 10 percent equating to 25 seats, the RJD only narrowly met the threshold, allowing Tejashwi Yadav to occupy the position. Tejashwi's own victory in the Raghopur constituency was both dramatic and contentious. Early trends in the counting process showed him trailing significantly in the first round, creating a wave of anxiety within his camp. However, as the counting progressed through subsequent rounds, the trend shifted in his favour. By the final tally, he defeated the BJP's Satish Kumar by a margin of 14,532 votes, a result that allowed him to salvage personal political credibility despite the broader collapse of his party's fortunes statewide. His ability to secure the position of Leader of the Opposition now gives him a platform to continue shaping the political discourse in Bihar, even as the RJD struggles with an uncertain future. Yet, the controversy surrounding his win refuses to settle. On Monday, Congress leader Udit Raj levelled serious allegations, asserting that Tejashwi's victory was orchestrated through collusion between the BJP and the Election Commission of India.

Telemedicine Touches 7 Crore Lives: Mamata Banerjee Hails a New Milestone in Rural Healthcare

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: West Bengal has marked a significant achievement in its healthcare journey, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announcing that the state's telemedicine services have reached a new milestone. In a statement shared on her official X handle, the Chief Minister expressed profound satisfaction, stating that telemedicine has now benefited as many as seven crore people, most of whom live in rural and remote areas. Mamata Banerjee described the achievement as a testament to the dedication of thousands of doctors and healthcare workers who have supported the initiative since its inception.

The success of telemedicine in West Bengal has its roots in the unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, when lockdowns and mobility restrictions brought routine healthcare services to a standstill, the Chief Minister conceptualised this digital medical system to ensure that residents, especially those in far-flung regions, continued receiving essential medical care. Telemedicine rapidly transformed into a lifeline, connecting patients with qualified doctors over video calls, reducing the need for travel, and preventing lapses in early diagnosis and timely treatment.

Highlighting the journey of this service, Mamata Banerjee reminded the public that the idea was born during one of the world's most difficult health emergencies. As hospitals struggled with the surge of COVID-19 patients, teleconsultations provided relief to people suffering from other ailments, ensuring they did not have to risk infection by visiting medical facilities. Even during the peak months of the pandemic, residents from isolated villages were able to consult specialists located in district hospitals or even premier urban medical centers. Medical prescriptions sent digitally enabled patients to purchase medicines without any delay. For many, this system was not just an alternative but the only available pathway to proper treatment.

The Chief Minister's update reveals the scale and infrastructure that the service has now achieved. According to the data she shared, telemedicine is currently operational from more than 11,000 health centers across the state. Over 9,000 doctors are associated with the initiative, supported by a network of around 80,000 trained consultants and health workers. This massive healthcare backbone now operates not merely as an emergency measure but as a routine support structure for people living in rural Bengal.

Healthcare officials recall that in the early days of the pandemic, the introduction of telemedicine was met with both curiosity and skepticism among villagers. The concept of speaking to a doctor through a mobile phone or video call was new to many. However, as word spread about successful consultations and timely treatment, participation grew rapidly. Certain districts, particularly those where transportation remained limited, saw unprecedented usage of the system. Over time, the service evolved into an integral part of the state's public health delivery mechanism.

Doctors associated with the service explain that telemedicine has had a deep social impact as well. Many patients who normally hesitated to visit outdoor departments due to crowding, travel cost, or social stigma found it easier to open up during online consultations. Women, elderly people, and those with chronic diseases were among the biggest beneficiaries. Healthcare workers who assisted during these sessions often acted as a bridge between village communities and modern medical services.

'Operation Sindoor Was Only a Trailer': Army Chief Upendra Dwivedi Speaks on Future Preparedness and China Relations

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi declared that "Operation Sindoor was only a trailer," signalling that the Indian Army's recent counter-terror and border security actions are part of a broader, ongoing preparedness strategy. Speaking to journalists during an interaction on national security issues, General Dwivedi outlined the Army's evolving approach to modern warfare, India's long-term defence posture, and the delicate but crucial relationship with neighbouring China. General Dwivedi's remarks come at a time when the country continues to grapple with security threats along both its western and northern borders. His comments were perceived as both a message of reassurance to citizens and a firm warning to hostile actors across the region. According to him, the Army's actions in recent months demonstrate not an isolated operation but a glimpse of the meticulously planned strategic capabilities that India is ready to deploy whenever required. Without disclosing classified details, he emphasised that Operation Sindoor had showcased India's ability to strike with precision, coordination and operational synergy across multiple domains. He underlined that the operation served as an example of the Army's readiness to meet threats head-on, whether they originate from terrorism, infiltration attempts or conventional military provocations. The general noted that as India faces increasingly complex security dynamics, swift and decisive action has become a necessity rather than an option. General Dwivedi also reflected on the Army's technological transformation, pointing out that modern warfare extends far beyond physical troop deployment. In his words, India is investing heavily in surveillance systems, battlefield automation, cyber-defence architecture, and integrated communication networks, ensuring that the Army remains capable of responding to any threat with unmatched efficiency.

He explained that future operations will rely not only on manpower but on a combination of advanced platforms, real-time intelligence and multi-theatre coordination. Describing the present moment as a "decisive phase" in India's defence modernisation, he assured that every formation of the Army is undergoing rapid capability enhancement. A significant portion of his statement focused on the relationship with China, a topic that has remained central to India's security discourse since the Ladakh border standoff began several years ago. General Dwivedi acknowledged that while diplomatic engagement continues through established military and political channels, the Army remains vigilant along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). He emphasised that India desires peace but will not tolerate any unilateral attempts to alter the status quo. He further elaborated that the northern borders have witnessed substantial infrastructure development, from advanced forward posts to improved supply routes and habitat facilities for troops stationed in high-altitude areas. According to him, these measures were essential to ensure that Indian forces remain acclimatised, fully equipped and capable of sustaining long deployments in harsh terrain. He added that "peace comes through strength," stressing that the Indian Army's improved logistical and operational posture serves as a stabilising factor in the region. In discussing engagement with China, General Dwivedi maintained a tone of strategic clarity. He confirmed that dialogue mechanisms are functioning and that both countries have channels to address friction points.

Russian Strikes Kill Five In Ukraine, Destroy Kindergarten



Staff reporter, Ukraine, 17 November : Russian aerial strikes on Monday killed five people and destroyed a kindergarten in eastern Ukraine, authorities said.Moscow has been intensifying its daily drone and missile barrages in recent months, targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure and hitting a number of civilian sites ahead of winter. Three were killed and 13 wounded in a strike on a residential area of Balakliya, a frontline city in the northeastern Kharkiv region, Ukraine's emergency service said, adding that four children were among those wounded.

"The aggressor destroyed several apartment buildings and a kindergarten. An inhuman attack that cannot be justified," she said on social media.Photos published by the local administration showed a partly damaged Soviet-era apartment block with all of its glass windows blown out.A later Russian strike killed two other civilians in the Dnipropetrovsk region, the local governor said. A gas cargo vessel sailing under a Turkish flag also caught fire after Russian drones pummelled the city of Izmail in the Odesa region on the Black Sea, the Ukrainian port authority said.The attack comes a day after President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a deal with Greece to import natural gas via the Trans-Balkan pipeline, which runs through Odesa.

In October, Moscow launched its biggest bombing campaign against Ukrainian gas facilities since the start of the 2022 invasion, halting 60 percent of the production of the country's main source of fuel for heating.Kyiv has regularly targeted Russian fuel depots, oil refineries and other energy facilities that it calls retribution for Moscow's barrages.

The Moscow-backed governor of the occupied Donetsk region said around 500,000 subscribers had faced a temporary power cut early Monday after a Ukrainian attack.

"Didn't Work In 1971, Won't Now": Sheikh Hasina Aide Calls Trial "Scripted"



Staff reporter, Dhaka, 17 November : The trial against Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was "scripted" and a "sham", claimed Mohammad Ali Arafat, the South Asian nation's former information minister. The Awami League leader, who is considered a close aide of Hasina, alleged that the interim government led by Nobel laureate Mohammed Yunus is trying to turn Bangladesh into "East Pakistan".

Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia on Monday for her deadly crackdown on student protesters last year. The verdict by the International Crimes Tribunal - a court that Hasina set up to try war crimes from Bangladesh's 1971 war for independence from Pakistan - marked a dramatic turn for a political career that began when she avoided death during the 1975 coup because she happened to be in Europe.

"This is a scripted, sham trial... The entire proceeding was controlled by Muhammad Yunus and his administration," he said while talking to .

Arafat claimed that Bangladesh has fallen into the hands of "jihadists" who are being "headed" by interim chief Muhammad Yunus.

"The country has gone into the hands of the jihadists, and Yunus is heading them. We have to defeat the entire group with the help of people, politically. We have no reason to do anything about this tribunal verdict. Jammat-e-Islami has infiltrated into administration. They have captured it," he said. "At its core, they are trying to radicalise the country. They are trying to turn Bangladesh into East Pakistan. For Yunus to continue to grab his power, he needs support, and he is deriving this from the jihadists," he said.

Despite criticism of her years in power, Hasina, 78, was credited with turning around the economy and the massive garments industry of the Muslim-majority nation of 170 million, while winning international praise for sheltering Rohingya Muslims fleeing persecution in neighbouring Myanmar. But her downfall - she was ousted less than seven months after winning a fifth term as leader - was the protests that began over job quotas and swelled into a movement demanding her removal.Arafat further claimed that the nationwide elections in Bangladesh, which are set to take place in February next year, were already "rigged" and their outcome was already decided.

"Yunus is going ahead with a rigged election. The outcome is decided. They are blocking not only the Awami League but also other progressive parties. Awami League has more than 20 million active members and is the biggest party in Bangladesh. Awami League is the reason why Bangladesh came into being. If you want to suppress this group, there will be a natural ramification. There will be a backlash. It did not work out in 1971. It will not work out now," he added.

Hasina was ousted on August 5 last year and fled to India. Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus took over as the head of an interim government three days after her fall. Yunus vowed to punish Hasina and banned the activities of her Awami League party.

Yunus said his interim government would hold the next elections in February, and that Hasina's party would not get a chance to contest the race.Born in 1947 in the southwest of the country, which was then East Pakistan, Hasina was the eldest of five children. After getting a degree in Bengali literature from Dhaka University in 1973, she gained political experience as a go-between for her father and his student followers.

Exiled to India after the coup, she returned in 1981 and was elected head of the Awami League, Bangladesh's oldest political party and a force in the struggle for independence. Hasina joined political foe Khaleda Zia, chief of the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party, to lead a popular uprising for democracy that toppled military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad in 1990.

Governor Orders Raids in Raj Bhavan After Explosive Allegations by TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 17 November : A political storm has erupted in West Bengal after Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee levelled sensational allegations claiming that bombs and guns were being stockpiled inside the Raj Bhavan to target TMC workers. The controversy, already raging across the state's political circles, intensified further as Governor C.V. Ananda Bose ordered a full-scale combing operation inside Raj Bhavan, summoning the bomb squad and Kolkata Police for an extensive search.

The flashpoint began after the Governor recently praised the SIR (Special Summary Revision) process in the aftermath of the Bihar election results. He remarked that the SIR mechanism was crucial for "free and fair elections" and expressed confidence that the people of Bengal, like those in Bihar, would respond positively to the procedure.

These comments triggered a sharp counterattack from Kalyan Banerjee, the TMC MP from Srerampore, who accused the Governor of harbouring BJP criminals within the Raj Bhavan premises. In a strongly worded statement, he alleged, "Tell the Governor first that he should stop keeping BJP's criminals inside Raj Bhavan. He is giving them guns, giving them bombs, and instructing them to kill Trinamool workers. Let him stop this first. He is an incompetent Governor! As long as BJP's servant-like Governor stays in West Bengal, nothing good can happen."





The accusations sent shockwaves through the state's political fraternity. Governor Bose responded sternly, warning that if Kalyan Banerjee failed to substantiate his claims, action would be taken against him. In an unprecedented move, the Raj Bhavan opened its gates to the public at 5 AM on Sunday, inviting up to 100 citizens to inspect the premises and verify whether any arms or ammunition were being stored, as alleged by the TMC MP. Officials stated that if the accusations were proven false, an apology from Banerjee would be expected.

Amid mounting tension, the Governor cut short his scheduled tour of North Bengal and returned to Kolkata on Monday to oversee the situation personally. According to Raj Bhavan sources, Governor Bose has ordered a "zero-tolerance probe" into the allegations. The bomb squad and Kolkata Police were summoned to conduct a meticulous, room-by-room search of the historic estate. The Governor is expected to remain present during the operation, underlining the seriousness with which he is treating the accusations.

This is the first time in recent political memory that such a high-level security search has been conducted inside the Raj Bhavan based on allegations made by a sitting Member of Parliament. Officials within the Governor's Secretariat have called the claims "baseless, irresponsible and politically motivated," while maintaining that the transparency of the search will "speak for itself."

Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress has stood by Kalyan Banerjee, with several party leaders stating that his remarks reflect a widespread mistrust between the state government and the Governor's office. TMC insiders argue that the Governor's remarks on election processes frequently align with the BJP's political stance, which they claim has undermined his neutrality.

On the other side, state BJP leaders have condemned Banerjee's accusations as "outrageous, defamatory and unbecoming of a parliamentarian." They have demanded strong punitive action against him if the search reveals no wrongdoing.Political observers say the episode marks a new low in the strained relationship between the Raj Bhavan and the ruling party in West Bengal.

Hasina, Kamal to death for July crimes against humanity

Shaymol Sanyal

Dhaka, 17 November: The International Crimes Tribunal-1 (ICT-1) today convicted and sentenced ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death for crimes against humanity committed during the July Mass Uprising, holding them guilty under the doctrine of superior command responsibility.

The three-member panel, headed by Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, delivered the verdict after finding them guilty on multiple charges. The tribunal also found former Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun guilty, but awarded him a "lenient sentence,of five years' imprisonment for making a full disclosure of the events and cooperating with investigators as approver.

"Sheikh Hasina had control status over Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, and it was her responsibility to stop the atrocities carried out nationwide. Likewise, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal held superior command responsibility over IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun and other senior security officials. But in all the cases, they not only failed but also incited and abetted the commission of the crimes," the tribunal observed.

The court found the ousted prime minister guilty of charge number one-inciting crimes through provocative speech-and sentenced her to imprisonment till natural death.

It also found her guilty of charges two and four-ordering the deployment of helicopters, drones and lethal weapons against protesters, and orchestrating the murder of six unarmed students in the capital's Chankharpul area-and sentenced her to death for these offences.

The tribunal found the former home minister guilty on four counts of crimes against humanity and sentenced him to death accordingly.

It also ordered the confiscation of all properties owned by Sheikh Hasina and Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal in favour of the state and directed authorities to provide adequate compensation to the families of July martyrs and those injured.

The tribunal began pronouncing the judgment at 12:50 pm. "This judgment is 453-page, divided into six parts. We will read out the summary in parts, and I will read the final portion.This will take around 40 minutes," Justice Mozumder said.

Judge Md Mohitul Haque Enam Chowdhury read his portion until 1,10 pm, followed by Justice Md Shafiul Alam Mahmood, who continued the middle section until 1:56 pm. The tribu-



nal chairman then read out the sentencing portion, concluding the delivery at 2:45 pm.

Before beginning the verdict, Justice Mozumder thanked the Attorney General, the prosecution, the investigation agency, tribunal staff and journalists for their contributions to the trial.

Prison authorities produced accused-turned-approver Abdullah Al-Mamun at the tribunal at around 9 am. Tight security was enforced in and around the premises, with personnel from the Bangladesh Army, BGB, RAB and police deployed at all entrances.

This is the first ICT case related to the state's crackdown during the July Mass Uprising to reach verdict. Bangladesh Television (BTV) broadcast the proceedings live, with most private television channels simulcasting the feed.

On October23, the tribunal set November13 to pass the order fixing the verdict date after Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam completed his rebuttal. Defence arguments concluded on October,22, with state-appointed counsel Advocate Amir Hossain representing fugitive accused Sheikh Hasina and Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and Advocate Jaiad Bin Amjad defending Abdullah Al-Mamun.

The defence argued for three consecutive days, while the prosecution placed arguments over five days, presenting documentaries, audio recordings of alleged conversations involving Sheikh Hasina, and other evidence.Chief Prosecutor Tajul also relied on witness testimonies to establish what he termed "systematic" crimes committed to suppress the uprising.

A total of 54 prosecution witnesses-including the father of July martyr Abu Sayed, National Citizens,Party Convener Nahid Islam, and journalist Mahmudur Rahman-testified and were cross-examined. Former IGP Al-Mamun earlier pleaded guilty and became an approver.

On June17,the tribunal published notices in two national dailies ordering Hasina and Kamal to surrender by June 24 under Rule 31 of the ICT Rules of Procedure (Amendment 2025), warning that the trial would proceed in absentia under Section 10A of the ICT Act,1973.The notices were issued a day after the tribunal took cognizance of the formal charge filed on June 1.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul informed the court that both accused were absconding, citing intelligence reports suggesting they were in India.

The prosecution filed five charges of crimes against humanity and mass killings against Hasina, Kamal and Abdullah Al-Mamun based on a probe report submitted on May 12. Charges were framed against them on July 10.

Tragedy on the Road to Medina: 42 Indian Umrah Pilgrims Killed in Saudi Arabia Bus–Tanker Collision

Staff reporter, Saudi Arabia , 17 November : Saudi Arabia has claimed the lives of at least 42 Indian Umrah pilgrims, all reportedly residents of Hyderabad. The fatal collision took place late Sunday night near Mufrihat, on the route from Mecca to Medina. The tragedy unfolded when a passenger bus carrying the pilgrims crashed into a diesel tanker, triggering a massive blaze that engulfed the vehicle within moments.

According to local media reports, the accident occurred at around 1:30 a.m. on Sunday night. The bus, ferrying the pilgrims after their visit to Mecca, was travelling along the Mufrihat stretch when it rammed into a diesel tanker approaching from the opposite direction. The impact caused the tanker to rupture and the leaking fuel ignited instantly, causing an intense fire that spread rapidly through the bus. Most passengers were reportedly asleep when the collision occurred, leaving them little time to react or escape.

Emergency teams, including Saudi firefighting units and rescue personnel, rushed to the spot and battled the flames through the night. By the time the blaze was brought under control, the bus was charred beyond recognition. Rescuers recovered several severely burnt bodies from inside the vehicle. Initial reports indicate that many of the deceased were women and children who were unable to evacuate in time.

Although Saudi authorities have not yet released the official list of victims, Indian government sources have confirmed that 42 of the dead are believed to be Indian nationals from Hyderabad. Several others have sustained serious injuries and are undergoing treatment at local hospitals.News of the tragedy has sent shockwaves across India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief in a message posted on X (formerly Twitter), saying, "Deeply saddened by the accident involving Indian citizens in Medina. My heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones. Wishing the injured a speedy recovery. Our embassy in Riyadh and consulate in Jeddah are providing all possible assistance and are in close touch with Saudi authorities."

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also expressed shock at the incident. In his post on X, he wrote, "Deeply shocked by the news of the tragic accident involving Indian pilgrims in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Our Embassy in Riyadh and Consulate in Jeddah are actively assisting the families of the victims. Praying for the swift recovery of those injured." He added that Indian officials are continuously coordinating with Saudi authorities to ensure that survivors receive proper medical care and that the deceased are identified and repatriated without delay.

The Indian Embassy in Riyadh has opened a dedicated helpline for families seeking information about their relatives. Officials said that coordination teams have been sent to the accident site and nearby hospitals to gather accurate details of casualties and survivors. The Consulate General of India in Jeddah is also monitoring the situation round the clock.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, upon learning that the deceased were likely from Hyderabad, expressed deep sorrow and instructed the state's Chief Secretary and Director General of Police to closely monitor developments. He assured that the state government would extend all necessary support to the families of the victims. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi also conveyed his condolences, saying he had spoken with Abu Methen George, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indian Embassy in Riyadh, who confirmed that details were still being compiled.

SLST-2 Tension Escalates: Education Minister Indicates Vacancies May Increase Amid Fresh Protests by New Aspirants

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 17 November : West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu on Monday hinted that the number of vacancies under the ongoing School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment process could be increased if required. His remarks come at a time when protests by first-time aspirants of the SLST-2 examination have intensified, following the publication of interview panels for the higher secondary category.

Speaking at Bikash Bhavan, Bratya Basu said the government would take a decision only after the entire recruitment process reaches its final stage. Responding to questions on the possibility of expanding vacancies, he stated, "Let the recruitment process conclude first. I have certainly discussed the matter of vacancy creation with the Chief Minister. But unless the entire process is over, I cannot speak about it legally, nor am I allowed to. The discussion is fundamentally about ensuring opportunities for deserving candidates. The Cabinet will surely consider it in a proper manner."

The minister's comments come at a crucial juncture, as the declaration of Class XI–XII results, followed by the publication of the interview panel, has sparked controversy once again. With thousands of candidates vying for limited posts, the SLST-2 recruitment has turned into a battleground between experienced aspirants from the 2016 SSC cycle and new candidates sitting for the exam for the first time.

The fresh wave of discontent is rooted in the allocation of 10 marks for teaching experience — a provision that many first-time aspirants say has placed them at an unfair disadvantage. Several new candidates argue that although they scored 100 percent marks in both written tests and academic qualification benchmarks, they were still not called for interviews. According to their claim, candidates from the 2016 cycle, who reappeared for the exam, were automatically positioned ahead because of the additional 10 marks awarded for prior experience.

The frustration of the new candidates reached a peak on Monday when they gathered outside Bikash Bhavan in protest, demanding an immediate increase in vacancies. They questioned the rationale behind awarding the 10 experience marks, calling it discriminatory. Many held placards asserting that their career prospects were being destroyed despite high merit. Their primary demand was clear: with the advantage enjoyed by experienced candidates, the only way to ensure fairness was to expand the number of available posts.

In response to the unrest, Bratya Basu acknowledged that discussions regarding vacancy expansion were underway at the highest level of the state government. He confirmed having spoken with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about the possibility but reiterated that any decision would depend on legal scrutiny. "The matter is entirely subject to legal procedures. Increasing vacancies is being considered, keeping in mind that no deserving candidate from the 2016 SSC batch should be left out," he clarified. The state government has made it clear that it intends to prioritise ensuring that all "eligible" candidates from the earlier recruitment cycle receive due consideration, in compliance with legal norms and past court judgments that have repeatedly emphasised fairness and transparency in SSC recruitments.



Today's Horoscope



ARIES : Career decisions and money matters will keep you busy today. And after all the work, you will want to spend some leisure time and take it easy. A leisure trip may materialise.



TAURUS : You will win the heart of your family members today, forecasts Ganesha. Try and delay auction bids or sealed tenders. Job aspirants may look forward to belated success in interviews.



GEMINI : Your business rivals may compete with you in sales and deals today, warns Ganesha. Care and concern must be the two watchwords in all your dealings.



CANCER: Today, you may have to do a lot of multi-tasking at work, predicts Ganesha. And you are likely to do it with the dexterity of a juggler. You will finish your pending tasks with ease.



LEO : You will exercise your will today and will be in the mood to soar like a free bird today. You will not be in the mood to listen to anyone. Work related travel will be beneficial.



VIRGO: Today you need to carry on with your success without resting on your past laurels. You will also need to stay focused and organised to continue with the same success level that you enjoyed in the past.



LIBRA: If there's a knock on your door today, there's a very strong possibility it might be a marriage proposal. Don't get startled, and grab opportunities that come knocking (literally!).



SCORPIO: It seems, the book, 'How to win friends and influence people' has left a great impact on your mind, bringing about a lot of change in your practical life too.



SAGITTARIUS: Running helter-skelter and muddling of affairs is on the menu. Expect not to find even a moment's peace. But take a break, says Ganesha.



CAPRICORN: Impulsiveness, which is not really your trait, will be very evident in whatever work you do today, say Ganesha. Money matters will keep you preoccupied for major part of the day.



AQUARIUS: Lady Luck gazes lovingly upon you today! Bosses are pleased, colleagues are happy, and this makes work seem like leisure. You may want to get in touch with old friends who have moved far away.



PIECES: You will have frequent mood swings today but you will still manage to fix a work related goal. Your mood will be better if you focus on work.

Did Sushmita Roy Just Confirm Her Relationship With Saheb Bhattacharya? Birthday Post Sparks Buzz in Tollywood



Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: Bengali actors Saheb Bhattacharya and Sushmita Roy has been circulating in Tollywood for months. While the duo has neither confirmed nor denied the rumours, a new social media post from Sushmita on Saheb's birthday has intensified chatter and raised eyebrows across the industry. Saheb and Sushmita reportedly grew close during the shooting of the popular television series Kotha. Their on-screen chemistry quickly drew attention, and whispers soon followed that the affection may have extended beyond the sets. However, both actors maintained a dignified silence, keeping the nature and depth of their bond carefully guarded. That silence may have cracked at the stroke of midnight on 17 November, Saheb Bhattacharya's birthday. As the clock turned, Sushmita shared a heartfelt birthday post that many fans believe is the clearest indication yet of a deeper, more intimate relationship between them. In her message, Sushmita wrote: "Happy Birthday King Bhattacharya. May the universe and Radharani shower you with joy, happiness and love… You are so positive… Stay the same." The post, affectionate yet measured, initially read like a warm message from a close friend or colleague. But it was the final line that set social media abuzz and gave gossip mills all they needed to ignite fresh speculation. Sushmita ended her tribute with the striking sentence: "Everyone deserves a Saheb Bhattacharya in their life." To fans and followers, this line felt too personal, too emotionally loaded, to be addressed to "just a friend." The sentiment, steeped in admiration and affection, hinted at deep emotional significance— something people typically reserve for someone very special in their lives. Within minutes, screenshots of the post began circulating online, with fans discussing whether Sushmita had just made their relationship "Instagram official" without explicitly stating it. Several commenters noted that such a heartfelt declaration is rare unless two people share a truly meaningful bond. Industry insiders say the two have been close for quite some time, often spending breaks together on set, attending private gatherings, and maintaining a comfort level that goes beyond mere friendship. While neither has publicly acknowledged a romantic relationship, their warmth toward each other has been evident in public events as well as behind-the-scenes glimpses shared by fellow cast members. Sushmita's post has now added fuel to that long-running speculation. Many believe the actress finally allowed her emotions to slip through, her affection too strong to be hidden behind the curtain of subtlety any longer. In a world where celebrity relationships are often tightly guarded and carefully choreographed, her candid message felt refreshingly honest—and perhaps unintentionally revealing. Tollywood, familiar with love stories that transcend the screen, has seen several successful partnerships blossom from on-screen collaborations. Fans now wonder whether Saheb and Sushmita will follow in those footsteps, especially since their rapport on and off the camera appears to strengthen with time. For now, the actors have chosen to remain silent, neither clarifying nor contradicting the speculation surrounding them. Whether Sushmita's message was a heartfelt note to a dear friend or a soft launch of a real-life romance is known only to the two involved. What is certain, however, is that her emotional post has left audiences intrigued and invested.



Actors Mahesh Babu, front, and Priyanka Chopra Jonas during the announcement of their upcoming film 'Varanasi' in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Malaika Arora Breaks Silence After Being Trolled for 'Obscene' Dance Moves in Honey Singh's Latest Music Video



Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 17 November: Bollywood actor, model, and dance icon Malaika Arora has once again found herself at the centre of online criticism—this time over her performance in Honey Singh's recently released music video Chilgam. The actress, who has often been subjected to trolling over her age, her personal life, and even her divorce, is now being targeted for what a section of social media users describe as "indecent" and "inappropriate" dance moves.

A short clip from the music video surfaced online earlier this week, triggering a barrage of comments. In the snippet, Honey Singh is seen singing while Malaika dances beside him—chewing gum, sticking her tongue out, and performing high-energy steps that some viewers found too bold for her age. A part of the online community questioned how she could dance in such a manner when she is "a mother to a 23-year-old son." One comment read, "There is no elegance, no charm in this performance. It can only be called obscene."

This is not the first time Malaika has faced harsh scrutiny. Despite delivering iconic dance numbers like Chaiyya Chaiyya, Munni Badnaam Hui, and Anarkali Disco Chali, she continues to battle ageist remarks and moral policing on social media. But this time, the trolling was particularly intense, forcing the actress to address the controversy directly.

Speaking to the press, Malaika dismissed the criticism with characteristic composure. "I focus only on the truth in my life. I don't pay attention to negativity. People who want to troll will always find a reason to troll. I keep myself and my family away from these unpleasant comments," she said, making it clear that she refuses to let online hate dictate her choices or her identity.

She also addressed the criticism aimed specifically at her dancing, reaffirming the personal importance it holds for her. "Dance gives me the peace and fulfilment that acting never did. For me, dancing is a return to my home, my safe space," the actress added, asserting that what she does on screen is an expression of passion, not a response to public expectations.

Malaika's statement has drawn support from fans and fellow artists who argue that the trolling reflects deep-seated sexism and ageism in the entertainment industry and the audience at large. Many have pointed out that male actors, including senior stars, often perform bold or flamboyant dance sequences without facing the same level of scrutiny. Critics of the trolling also highlight the hypocrisy of shaming a woman for her age while simultaneously expecting her to remain glamorous, fit, and camera-ready.

For Malaika, however, such reactions are nothing new. Her personal life—especially her divorce from actor Arbaaz Khan and her subsequent relationships—has frequently been subjected to public judgement. The actress has repeatedly taken a dignified stand, choosing not to respond to every remark but speaking when she feels compelled to reclaim her narrative.

The Chilgam controversy also reflects a recurring pattern of moral policing in the digital age, where celebrities—particularly women—are judged on their body language, attire, and personal choices instead of their professional achievements. While negative comments continue to circulate, Malaika's clear and calm response signals her refusal to allow societal expectations to dictate her artistic expression.

Malaika remains unapologetic, continuing to embrace dance as an integral part of her identity. Her message stands firm: she will not be shamed for expressing herself through an art form that has shaped her career and brought her joy for decades.

Huma Qureshi Reveals the Untold Story Behind the Scrapped Kiss Scene With Madhuri Dixit in Dedh Ishqiya

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 17 November: Bollywood actor Huma Qureshi has opened up about her long-standing admiration for Madhuri Dixit and the unique journey that led her to share screen space with the legendary star in the 2014 film Dedh Ishqiya. Speaking in a recent interview, Huma recalled how Madhuri had been her inspiration since childhood, and how a dream she had cherished for years eventually came true—albeit with an interesting twist involving a much-talked-about kiss scene that never made it to the final cut.

Huma shared that Madhuri Dixit was not just a star she looked up to, but a phenomenon who shaped her perception of beauty, style, and performance in Indian cinema. "From childhood, Madhuri Dixit has been my inspiration. I used to be mesmerized by her dancing," Huma said. She fondly remembered how the iconic "Ek Do Teen" number became a cultural moment for young girls across India. "I think every little girl must have tied her shirt and danced to 'Ek Do Teen'. I was one of them," she added with nostalgia.

Years later, when Huma was offered the role of Madhuri Dixit's lover in Dedh Ishqiya, it felt like a surreal moment. The film, a sequel to the acclaimed Ishqiya, featured Madhuri as Begum Para and Huma as her close companion, Muniya. Their relationship in the film, shaded with subtle romantic undertones, was one of the most discussed aspects of the narrative.

Describing the experience of playing Madhuri's on-screen love interest, Huma said, "It was a dream come true. You just need to know what dream you are chasing. I genuinely wanted to work under the same roof as Madhuri one day, and it happened." She also credited her fluency in Urdu for helping her secure the role with ease, given the film's poetic and linguistically rich dialogues.

However, what has drawn fresh attention is Huma's revelation about an intimate scene that was originally part of the script. According to her, the first version of the script she read included a kiss between her character and Madhuri's. The idea of such a scene between two mainstream female actors was bold for the time, and it generated considerable curiosity.

But Huma confirmed that the kiss was ultimately removed during the filmmaking process. "There was a kissing scene in the script, but it did not make it to the film," she explained. The decision, she revealed, was taken by the makers who felt the scene might be too provocative for a Bollywood film in 2014. The creative team reportedly believed that audiences might not be ready for such explicit representation of same-sex affection in a mainstream commercial release.

The final film maintained the emotional intensity and subtle chemistry between the two women without including any explicit physical intimacy. Despite the omission of the kiss, Dedh Ishqiya was widely praised for its nuanced portrayal of female bonding and its layered storytelling. Directed by Abhishek Chaubey, the film also starred Naseeruddin Shah and Arshad Warsi, reprising their roles from the original installment.

Released in 2014, Dedh Ishqiya received critical acclaim for its performances, screenplay, and aesthetic finesse. While Madhuri's classical elegance and Huma's sharp presence stood out, the film's treatment of their relationship became one of its defining elements.

Huma's latest comments offer rare insight into the creative decisions behind the film and highlight a chapter of Bollywood history that remained behind closed doors for years. Her candid remarks also underscore the evolving landscape of Hindi cinema, as conversations around representation and inclusivity gain prominence today.

Fresh Legal Trouble for Actor Ajaz Khan: Indore Police File FIR Over Alleged Fake and Objectionable Social Media Posts

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 17 November: Actor Ajaz Khan, long known for controversies that often overshadow his work, has once again found himself entangled in legal complications. Weeks after the uproar surrounding his provocative reality show House Arrest, the actor now faces a fresh FIR in Madhya Pradesh's Indore over allegations of circulating fake and objectionable information on social media. The case, officials say, dates back nearly two months. According to Rajesh Dandotia, Additional Police Commissioner of Indore Crime Branch, a formal complaint was lodged accusing Ajaz of spreading misinformation and inappropriate content online. Following the complaint, police issued a notice summoning him for questioning. Ajaz appeared at the Crime Branch office where he was interrogated for nearly three hours, and his statement was formally recorded. Dandotia confirmed that the investigation extends beyond the actor alone. At least 68 social media accounts are under scrutiny for amplifying or being connected to the allegedly misleading content. Of these, authorities have already blocked 32 accounts as part of the ongoing probe. Officials suggest the case may widen further if more accounts or individuals are found linked to the dissemination of the posts in question. Ajaz Khan's career in entertainment began in 2003 with the film Path, but he struggled to secure significant roles in mainstream Bollywood. Over the years, he portrayed minor villainous characters in Hindi and Telugu films and appeared in supporting roles in several Hindi television serials. His biggest public recognition came from his stint in Bigg Boss 7, where his outspoken and often confrontational persona kept him in the spotlight. Despite the limited success of his acting career, Ajaz has consistently remained in headlines—most often for the wrong reasons. The turning point came after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, when the Narcotics Control Bureau launched a widespread investigation into alleged drug links in the film industry. Ajaz became one of the names that surfaced during the inquiry. He was arrested and spent nearly two years in jail on drug-related charges before being released on bail in 2023. Even after his release, the shadow of controversy refused to leave him. More recently, his newly launched reality show House Arrest, styled after the format of Bigg Boss, triggered a wave of backlash. The show, accused of being sexually explicit, allegedly required participating couples to enact various intimate positions before the camera. Clips from the show went viral, prompting fierce criticism from viewers and social organisations alike. The uproar soon escalated into legal action, with Shiv Sena (Uddhav faction) and the Bajrang Dal filing FIRs against him for promoting obscenity and degrading content. The latest FIR in Indore adds another layer of legal woes for the actor, who has repeatedly claimed that controversies follow him unfairly. However, law enforcement officials maintain that the allegations against him are serious, particularly the charge of spreading false information that could mislead or harm the public. Sources indicate that investigators are currently examining metadata, communication trails, and content histories associated with the 68 accounts under review. The focus is on determining whether Ajaz personally created the objectionable posts, coordinated their distribution, or was merely tagged or mentioned in them. Police say they will also look into whether any organized network was involved in promoting the disputed content. While Ajaz has not issued any formal public statement yet, people close to him suggest he may soon address the allegations. For now, the actor remains under the scanner, and further action will depend on the findings of the Crime Branch. Ajaz Khan's already tumultuous public image faces renewed scrutiny. With multiple controversies piling up—from drug allegations to explicit content accusations and now the spread of fake news—his attempt at a career revival appears increasingly fraught with challenges. Whether this latest case results in formal charges or another protracted legal battle remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the chain of disputes surrounding Ajaz Khan is far from over.

American Singer Akon Faces Harassment During Bengaluru Concert, Viral Video Sparks Outrage

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 17 November: Just days after Indian playback singer Shreya Ghoshal fainted during a performance in Odisha due to extreme mismanagement, another disturbing incident has shaken the entertainment circuit—this time involving internationally acclaimed American singer Akon. The artist, who was in India for a series of concerts, faced an alarming situation during his Bengaluru performance, leaving many shocked and prompting widespread criticism on social media. Akon arrived in India on 9 November, landing in New Delhi before travelling for scheduled events across the country. His final performance of this tour was held in Bengaluru on 15 November. What should have been a celebratory culmination of his India visit quickly turned into an uncomfortable and embarrassing episode for the singer. A video from the concert has gone viral online, capturing the moment Akon experienced what many are calling clear harassment by overenthusiastic fans. The footage shows Akon performing with his microphone in hand, fully immersed in his music, while a large crowd gathered directly in front of the stage. Several fans stretched out to shake his hand, but the situation escalated when one individual tugged at the singer's pants with enough force to expose his undergarments. In the video, Akon is visibly startled and uncomfortable as he tries to maintain his composure. Despite the awkward situation, he attempts to adjust his clothing repeatedly while continuing to sing, making every effort to keep the performance going. His professionalism stood out, but the distress was unmistakable. The disturbing visuals triggered an immediate backlash online. Social media users from across the country expressed outrage at the behaviour of the crowd, calling it shameful and disrespectful. Many argued that such actions not only ruin the experience for



performers but also tarnish India's international image. Several comments highlighted that no artist—especially a visiting foreign performer—should be subjected to such behaviour. "This is harassment, plain and simple," wrote one user. "Incidents like this ensure foreign artists think twice before visiting India again." Others criticised the event's organisers and security personnel for failing to control the crowd. They argued that the individuals responsible should have been removed immediately to prevent the situation from worsening. "Akon was left to manage the situation on his own," one commenter noted. "Where was the security? This is unacceptable." Some even warned that incidents like these could discourage international performers from choosing India as a concert destination. "If foreign singers see this video, many will be terrified. They may decide not to come at all," a concerned fan wrote. Discussions also surfaced about the need for better crowd control, stricter event regulations, and improved performer safety measures. The incident comes at a time when similar concerns have been raised regarding mismanagement at high-profile events across the country. Earlier this month, renowned singer Shreya Ghoshal fainted on stage in Odisha due to mismanagement and extreme conditions, sparking debates on whether India's event organisers are failing to ensure performer safety and comfort. Akon, known globally for chart-topping hits and electrifying stage presence, has previously performed in India without incident. His return this year was met with excitement from thousands of Indian fans eager to experience his music live. However, this final-night mishap has cast a shadow over what should have been a successful tour. While Akon has not yet issued an official statement about the incident, fans worldwide are expressing support and hoping the experience does not deter him from returning to India in the future. The incident has now opened up a larger conversation about concert etiquette, fan behaviour, and the responsibilities of event organisers.

Editorial

"Nitish Kumar's Fourth Return: A Mandate Wrapped in Uncertainty"

Nitish Kumar's political career has long been defined by resilience, reinvention, and an instinctive ability to read Bihar's shifting currents. His return to power for the fourth consecutive term—marking the tenth time he could potentially be sworn in as Chief Minister—should, by all conventional measures, be a crowning moment in a long public life. Yet this victory feels less like triumph and more like an uneasy inheritance. The mandate delivered by the people of Bihar has opened the doors for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to form a government with ease, but it has also handed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) the latitude to imagine a future beyond Nitish. Despite the NDA's comfortable majority, the post-poll landscape presents a paradox. The BJP, along with Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and other allies, commands enough seats to form a government without relying on Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United). The saffron party, however, appears disinclined—for now—to take that leap. The reluctance is not for want of ambition, but rather a calculated pause. The BJP has learned from its experiments in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and elsewhere: consolidation of power is most effective when timed precisely. This undercurrent of ambition ensures that Nitish Kumar's next five years, should he indeed be sworn in again, will be anything but comfortable. With the BJP growing stronger in Bihar and the LJP under Chirag Paswan emerging with renewed relevance, Nitish will have to navigate a landscape where allies may double as potential successors. Chirag Paswan, in particular, stands poised to inherit the political space Nitish once dominated—especially among Dalits and extremely backward classes. Both groups shifted decisively toward the NDA this time, propelled jointly by Nitish's social welfare schemes and Chirag's targeted appeal. The re-entry of Chirag Paswan into the NDA fold marks a profound shift. In the last election, the BJP tacitly encouraged Chirag to chip away at Nitish's influence, a move that significantly weakened the Chief Minister's standing. Today, Chirag returns stronger, more influential, and backed by a national party that sees him as a potential long-term investment. His ascent gives the BJP a credible alternative to Nitish—one who aligns more naturally with their political ideology and social engineering strategies. The paradox grows deeper when one looks at the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Tejashwi Yadav's party secured the highest vote share despite winning a paltry number of seats. The consistency in the RJD's support base—particularly among Yadavs and Muslims—reveals a party that retains its core but struggles to expand beyond it. Their seat tally underscores how the first-past-the-post system can flatten the numerical advantage of a concentrated but limited support base. For Nitish, this means that the possibility of future alliances with the RJD is effectively closed. The numbers simply do not add up. The JD(U)'s own performance carries a mixed message. Nitish's party saw a notable increase in vote share—nearly four percentage points greater than in the previous election. Much of this can be attributed to the significant rise in women voters.

Over the past decade, Nitish has painstakingly cultivated a gendered trust in his governance: the prohibition of alcohol, financial incentives for girls' education, schemes for bicycles and uniforms, and policies aimed at enhancing safety and mobility. These initiatives have earned him the moniker 'Sushasan Babu', and they continue to pay electoral dividends. Women's votes, once ignored in Bihar's caste-centric politics, have emerged as decisive. In this election, they became the strongest stabilising factor in the NDA's sweeping victory.

Yet the question looms: what does stability mean when the central pillar is itself under threat? Nitish Kumar enters this term with diminished maneuverability. Having switched alliances multiple times over the past two decades, he has now reached a juncture where alternate options are nearly exhausted.

"The Hasina Extradition Crossroads: Law, Politics, and the Perils of Precedent"



The conviction of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by the country's International Crimes Tribunal on charges of incitement to violence, issuing orders for killings, and instructing police to remain inactive during episodes of repression marks one of the most polarising legal developments in South Asia in years. The judgment has immediately reverberated across the region, not only because of its severity—capital punishment—but also because of its geopolitical implications. Hasina, currently in India since her ouster following the mass student-led uprising in August 2024, now stands at the centre of an extradition tug-of-war between Dhaka's interim government and New Delhi. Bangladesh has formally asked India to return Hasina under the bilateral extradition treaty, signed in 2013 and revised in 2016. India has acknowledged receiving these communications but has maintained a careful, deliberately measured silence. The Narendra Modi government, through statements from the Ministry of External Affairs and Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra, has repeatedly emphasised that the matter is both legal and judicial—requiring discussion, verification and "careful examination" before any concrete action can be taken. The caution is understandable. The India–Bangladesh extradition treaty contains several clauses that allow a country to withhold extradition if certain conditions are met. And most experts believe Hasina's case falls squarely within those exceptions. One of the most significant protections in the treaty is the bar on extradition in cases where the offence is "political in character," or where the trial is driven by ulterior motives rather than a bona fide pursuit of justice. Although crimes such as murder, abduction and torture are explicitly excluded from being classified as political, the process leading to the prosecution can still be scrutinised for political malice. Academics such as Professor Anindya Jyoti Majumdar and Professor Imankalyan Lahiri have underlined this very point: India is not obligated to extradite Hasina if it believes the trial stems from political vendetta or if returning her would endanger her life. Indeed, the danger to life is crucial. Another principle—embedded not only in the bilateral treaty but also in international humanitarian law—states that an individual cannot be sent back to a country where they face a credible threat to their life or freedom. As Rabindra Bharati University's Professor Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury notes, Monday's verdict has sharply increased the threat perception for Hasina. The doctrine of non-refoulement, widely accepted in global human rights law, strengthens the argument that India is not compelled to return her. Legal experts inside India echo this view. Advocate Arindam Das of the Calcutta High Court has pointed out that Hasina still has the right to appeal in the Bangladesh Supreme Court. If, because of her exile, she is prevented from exercising that right, it would amount to a violation of fundamental justice norms. Although Bangladesh may transmit a copy of the tribunal's verdict to India, New Delhi is under no legal compulsion to act solely on the basis of that document. Should India decide to refuse extradition, it can legally invoke both humanitarian and procedural grounds. The backdrop of the extradition treaty further complicates things. When the original agreement was signed in 2013—under Manmohan Singh in India and Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh—the objective was to prevent insurgents and terror operatives taking advantage of the porous border. Several militant groups had used the neighbouring territories as safe havens, particularly in the Northeast and the border regions. The treaty was never designed to serve as a tool for political score-settling. The 2016 amendment, which allowed extradition based solely on an arrest warrant without evidentiary submissions, was also premised on expediting the return of criminals, not political adversaries. Hasina's fall in 2024 came amid an unprecedented student uprising, one that dismantled the Awami League government and reshaped Bangladesh's political future. The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has since sought to distance itself from the political structures of the past. But the decision to prosecute Hasina under charges that carry the death penalty raises the spectre of selective justice. Hasina has repeatedly claimed that the trials against her are politically motivated—an argument that India may find difficult to dismiss outright. For New Delhi, the decision carries profound diplomatic weight.

India and Bangladesh have forged one of the region's most successful bilateral partnerships over the past decade, marked by cooperation on security, connectivity, trade and migration. Returning Hasina might signal India's support for Dhaka's interim government but at the cost of appearing indifferent to due process, humanitarian risk, and the political context surrounding the charges.

Refusing extradition, on the other hand, may irritate Bangladesh's current authorities but uphold global legal norms. The dilemma is not new. Democracies around the world often face similar decisions when dealing with political leaders who flee regimes that have recently undergone dramatic shifts. The question is not whether Hasina is guilty or innocent; that is for the Bangladeshi judiciary to decide through an independent, transparent appellate process. The real question is whether India can be confident that returning her would ensure a fair trial, free of retribution, and fully compliant with international human rights standards.

The tribunal's death sentence heightens these concerns significantly. Capital punishment—particularly when awarded in a politically volatile environment—casts a long shadow on due process. If India determines that extradition could expose Hasina to political persecution or irreversible harm, it would be both legally and morally justified in refusing Bangladesh's request. Bangladesh's leadership must recognise that justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done. Unless the process inspires confidence beyond its borders, calls for extradition will continue to encounter friction.

India, for its part, must navigate this moment with prudence, empathy and adherence to law. The Hasina extradition issue is not merely a bilateral dispute; it is a test of India's commitment to humanitarian principles and the rule of law. It is also a test of Bangladesh's ability to reassure the world that its pursuit of justice is free from the shadow of political reprisal.

"Farewell to the American Penny: The Death of a Coin and the Survival of a Symbol"



After 232 years of circulation, the American penny has finally been laid to rest. Born in 1793 at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia, the copper-coated zinc coin carrying Abraham Lincoln's profile printed its last batch at the very same facility last Wednesday. With the final press of the minting button, U.S. Treasury Secretary Brandon Beach announced what many Americans had long predicted: discontinuing the penny would save taxpayers nearly 56 million dollars annually. It was a pragmatic decision, driven by economics, but it comes wrapped in layers of memory, symbolism, and cultural lore. For decades, the penny has occupied an odd space in American life—ubiquitous yet functionally obsolete. As inflation rose and consumer habits changed, a single cent lost its purchasing power; nothing in modern America can be bought with one penny. A recent survey revealed that 65 percent of Americans would not bother picking up a penny lying on the street. Its material worth had collapsed, its everyday usefulness evaporated. But like many relics of history, the penny's value was never purely economic. Generations grew up hearing the quaint, comforting adage: "It may be a penny from heaven that an angel has tossed to you." The superstition encouraged people to stoop and pick up even the smallest coin, believing it carried a blessing. And while the penny will vanish from minting machines, it lives on in stories, idioms, and metaphors that have shaped the American imagination. To be "penniless" remains a painful reality for many; "a penny saved is a penny earned" continues to be offered as a moral principle of thrift; Jeffrey Archer's Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less immortalizes the coin in the world of literature. Even in artistic and theatrical memory, echoes remain—such as Brecht's Threepenny Opera, which travelled across time and cultures to become Teen Poyshar Pala on the Bengali stage. The death of the penny is not simply the end of a coin; it is part of a larger transformation reshaping the world. Small denominations across countries have been disappearing for decades. India once had the "futo poisha"—the holed copper coin—whose faint clink still rings in the memories of older generations. Two-paise, five-paise, ten-paise coins were once part of everyday transactions; now they rest only in forgotten drawers and nostalgia-filled conversations. These coins died not because they were unloved, but because the economy outgrew them. Their purchasing power fell below the threshold of relevance. And now, even physical currency itself is fading. The rise of digital payments has made the jingle of coins and the texture of paper notes feel almost archaic. With a smartphone and an app—PhonePe, Google Pay, or Apple Pay—one can make purchases worth thousands without carrying even a single coin. In a strange twist, people today are quite literally "penniless," yet far from powerless in economic activity. Cashlessness has grown into a new norm, where the weight of currency has been replaced by the lightness of technology. The disappearance of the penny, then, is not merely an American story. It is part of a global shift in how societies understand money, value, and exchange.

But amid this sweeping technological transition, human memory clings stubbornly to the old symbols. In Bengali culture, even today, brides and grooms begin their married life by "playing with kori"—a tradition reaching back centuries. The ancient copper kori no longer circulates in markets, but its symbolic purity persists, called upon to invoke the blessings of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. The coin becomes a metaphor, a prayer, a link to heritage. This is the paradox of currency: it is at once the most practical of objects and one of the most poetic. Economists reduce it to numbers, minting costs, and circulation efficiency. But for ordinary people, coins are tokens of memory—small anchors of time. A penny in the hand of a child becomes a talisman; a forgotten coin in an old purse becomes a portal to another era. Money, when stripped of its purchasing power, becomes something more intimate, more human. This is why the farewell to the American penny feels bittersweet. It is rational, even necessary, in a digital era that prefers frictionless transactions and minimal economic waste. But it is also melancholic, for a tiny piece of copper has carried nearly two and a half centuries of stories. From the pockets of workers in the Industrial Revolution to the hands of children slipping coins into piggy banks, the penny has passed through millions of lives. And while inflation defeated its monetary relevance, it never diminished its emotional or symbolic value. The penny's death is not really a death. Coins disappear, but language remembers. Culture remembers. Literature remembers.

"The Age of Digital Disguise: How Likes, Dislikes and Silent Judgements Shape Our Online Selves"



In the Bengali classic Dui Bhai, Hemanta Mukhopadhyay's velvet voice delivers a haunting paradox: "Tare Bole Dio, Se Jeno Aase Na Amar Dware." The melody is cheerful, almost playful, yet the lyrics whisper something darker—an emotional contradiction sung with a smile. This same paradox now defines our digital lives. On social media, we "react" with a single tap—thumbs up, thumbs down, heart or angry face—masking complex emotions beneath simple symbols. We speak without speaking, judge without confrontation, express pleasure or cruelty without consequence. This digital shorthand has turned into a psychological playground—sometimes harmless, often unsettling. Now, with Facebook preparing to introduce the long-speculated "thumbs down" button in India, the conversation about our online behaviours becomes even more urgent. Facebook insists the feature isn't meant to signal disapproval but to help flag spam and irrelevant content. Mark Zuckerberg argues it will improve moderation, not provoke negativity. But will users accept this sanitized narrative? Or will the button inevitably become another tool for emotional signalling, passive aggression, or quiet cruelty? India, with over 491 million active social media accounts in 2025, represents one of the largest digital populations on the planet. With such a massive, diverse pool of users spending nearly 2.5 hours daily on social platforms, the meanings we attach to digital gestures—likes, dislikes, reactions—cannot be dismissed as trivial. They are shaping friendships, perceptions, relationships, and even self-worth. And the contradictions are everywhere. A friend who laughs with you over coffee may casually tap a "thumbs down" on your post moments later. A stranger who avoids your gaze on the street may secretly follow every update on your profile, generously sprinkling likes without your knowledge. Fake profiles add another layer—hidden identities indulging in the voyeuristic thrill of watching without being seen. This culture of digital disguise offers anonymity and a subtle, almost mischievous pleasure: being present without being exposed.Even platforms built around transparency aren't immune to emotional complexity. WhatsApp, for example, shows who has viewed your status. It labels forwarded messages. It even exposes when someone deletes a text—with the notorious "This message was deleted" marker. Yet this clarity often generates more chaos than comfort. Why delete a message after it's been seen?Why delete before it's seen? What was written—and why was it withdrawn? These tiny, seemingly insignificant actions spark spirals of doubt, suspicion and hurt. In an era where communication has become easier than ever, misunderstandings now multiply at lightning speed. YouTube presents another layer of contradiction. Yes, it openly embraces the "dislike" button. The purpose is transparent: press thumbs down if you didn't enjoy the video. Simple enough. But since 2021, YouTube has hidden the total number of dislikes from public view. Only creators can access the data in their backend studio. The rationale is to reduce harassment and prevent hate campaigns. But for users, a peculiar frustration emerges. You press dislike—but never learn what impact it had.You act, but see no consequence.This lack of feedback dulls the emotional payoff, making users less reactive, less expressive. The psychology is simple: if a reaction yields no visible effect, people eventually stop reacting at all.

Then there is X, formerly Twitter—a platform that thrives on immediacy, outrage, and hyper-targeted content. Only 7% of the world's population uses it, yet its influence is disproportionately large. X's algorithm is deeply personalized, showing users what it believes they want—based on activity, location, associations and networks. This creates an illusion of individuality, a sense that "I am being targeted specifically," which is both flattering and unsettling.

More interestingly, X has evolved into a kind of digital grievance desk. Users file complaints publicly, tagging official handles in hopes of faster resolutions. And often, astonishingly, it works. In this sense, X functions as a parallel bureaucratic system—an arena where visibility becomes power. Across all these platforms, one theme recurs: our outward behaviour and inner intent rarely match. We scroll for one reason, think another, and do something entirely different. We mask emotion with emojis. We express opinions through symbols. We hide behind anonymity yet crave validation. The online world has become a theatre of contradictions.

"Historic First: India Signs Landmark LPG Deal with US, Secures 10% of Nation's Import Needs"



New Delhi has signed its first-ever long-term Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) import agreement with the United States—marking a significant geopolitical and commercial milestone. The landmark pact, involving the supply of 2.2 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of LPG, is expected to meet about 10% of India's total LPG import requirements, strengthening the nation's fuel supply chain at a time of rising global volatility. This deal signals a new chapter in India–US energy cooperation, positioning both countries as stronger partners in the global energy matrix.

India, the world's second-largest LPG consumer after China, has been expanding its LPG consumption rapidly over the past decade, with government schemes boosting household access across rural and urban sectors.

While domestic production has increased, imports still constitute a substantial share of India's demand. The latest pact is therefore a crucial step in diversifying supply sources and reducing dependence on traditional West Asian exporters. Under the agreement, US producers will begin shipping LPG cargoes to India on a long-term basis, giving New Delhi a more predictable and stable stream of fuel at negotiated prices.

The move is particularly significant considering the uncertainty of global energy markets, where conflicts, sanctions, and fluctuating production levels often disrupt supply routes. Energy analysts say the deal serves multiple purposes: it strengthens India's bargaining power in the international market, reduces risk associated with over-reliance on any single region, and enhances domestic supply stability—especially as consumption grows in sectors ranging from cooking fuel to petrochemicals. This is the first time India has entered into a long-term LPG contract with the United States, a nation that has rapidly emerged as one of the world's top LPG exporters following the shale gas revolution. For the US, this partnership opens the door to one of the globe's fastest-growing LPG markets, cementing its presence in South Asia's energy landscape.Government sources highlight that the deal aligns with India's broader push for secure, cleaner, and more reliable energy supplies.

Over the past few years, the country has undertaken sweeping reforms to expand LPG coverage through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, pushing millions of households to transition from traditional biomass to cleaner cooking fuels. As demand grows, long-term supply commitments become indispensable.Moreover, energy experts note that the timing of the agreement is significant. Global fuel markets are grappling with supply disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions and production shifts. By entering into a multi-year deal with a stable partner like the US, India gains an important buffer against unpredictable market swings.'

The pact also reflects the strategic deepening of India–US relations. While both nations have collaborated extensively in sectors such as defence, technology, and trade, long-term energy cooperation adds a new dimension to this partnership. American fuel exporters gain a large and reliable customer, while India secures a diversified energy basket—mutually reinforcing economic and strategic benefits. Industry insiders believe the agreement could pave the way for additional long-term contracts in the future, not only for LPG but possibly for LNG and other hydrocarbons as well. The scale of India's energy demand offers massive commercial opportunities, and the US—one of the world's top producers—is well-positioned to supply.

For Indian consumers, stable imports translate into smoother domestic supply chains and potentially steadier prices, although the final impact will depend on global benchmarks and internal distribution efficiencies. Nevertheless, officials emphasise that increased energy security ultimately benefits households and industries alike.LPG will remain a cornerstone of its energy strategy for years to come.

The historic pact with the US is therefore more than just a trade deal—it is a powerful signal of India's evolving global energy diplomacy.

"Global Equities Set for 7.7% Annual Returns This Decade, Says Goldman Sachs in Bullish Long-Term Outlook"

Global equities are likely to deliver average annual returns of 7.7% over the coming decade, according to a new long-term outlook released by Goldman Sachs, which cites stronger corporate earnings, stable payout ratios, and improving global economic fundamentals as key drivers behind the optimistic projection. The investment bank's latest forecast provides a reassuring counter-narrative to concerns over geopolitical instability, inflation cycles, and slowing global growth. Goldman Sachs analysts say the decade ahead will be defined not by economic turbulence, but by a steady expansion of corporate profitability. The report highlights that global companies are expected to maintain robust earnings growth, supported by technological advancements, productivity gains, and increased capital expenditure across major economies. The 7.7% return forecast includes both price appreciation and dividend income—two factors that Goldman believes will remain resilient even in a more mature, slower-growing global economy. In comparison, the previous decade delivered slightly higher total returns due to ultra-loose monetary policies and unusually low interest rates. But analysts argue that even in a normalised rate environment, equity markets across the US, Europe, and Asia will continue to offer solid long-term value.

According to the bank's projections, corporate earnings are expected to expand steadily over the next ten years. While growth is likely to moderate from the blistering post-pandemic pace, factors such as productivity-enhancing technologies, rising global consumption, and ongoing digital transformation are expected to support performance.Sectors including technology, healthcare, finance, and industrials are expected to contribute most to this decade's earnings expansion. Goldman Sachs notes that companies with strong balance sheets and pricing power will be particularly well-positioned to sustain margins, even if inflation remains volatile.

Another key element of the 7.7% return outlook is stable shareholder payouts, including dividends and share buybacks. With many global companies generating significant free cash flow, Goldman Sachs expects payout ratios to remain healthy—contributing meaningfully to total returns. In the US, buybacks are projected to play a significant role in enhancing shareholder value, particularly in the technology and financial sectors. In Europe, where dividends traditionally form a larger share of returns, stable corporate earnings should support consistent payouts.

A REPORT ON KOLAHOL- A FAIR ORGANISED FOR THE STREET CHILDRENBYGANA UNNAYAN PARSHAD

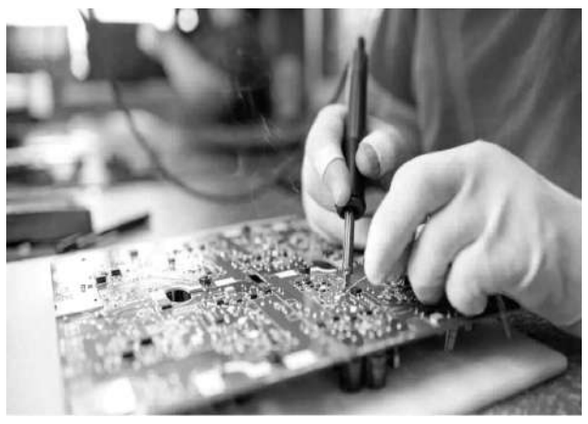


GANA UNNAYAN PARSHAD (GUP), a voluntary organisation registered under West Bengal Society Registration Act, 1961, has been working for comprehensive development of the socio-economically disadvantaged people, especially for the women and children who are the poorest among the poor, relentlessly in collaboration with different Govt. and Non-govt. organisations, institutions, business houses and individuals across the state of West Bengal since its inception in the year 1984.Prime objective of our organisation is to ensure parity and equal opportunities among the children of all social stratum and none of them should feel inferior from others under any socio-economic perspective of our society. The hidden strength of creativity among the children and their sense of innovation need to be uncovered before the society as a whole. On the basis of performance of the children of our two residential schools – one at Bagbazar and the other at Sahid Smriti Colony , near Peerless Hospital , we realised that on given a chance every child can prove his/her uniqueness and latent strength. GUP has been running one Open shelter for the boys named UTTARAN (mainly for the street and slum children) at Bosepukur under Kasba area with the tentacles of three Outreach centers in three different places under Anandapur-Kasba- Ballygung area to identify the street children in need and working for their comprehensive development as well as their rehabilitation in collaboration with the concerned departments of the Govt. of West Bengal for last more than a decade. GUP also organise children's camps, educational tours, historical places sightseeing for the street children periodically to enhance their knowledge and information.

GUP organise coaching classes for the first generation learners, provide scholarships to the potential children in financial crisis for continuation of their basic education and technical education for their self employment. Unlike other years GUP organised a "Children's Fair" on 15th November in this year of 2025 to commemorate the National children's Day on 14th November on the occasion of celebrating the birth day of Pandit Jawharlal Neheru, the first prime minister of our country. This children's fair named "Kolahal" was organised at Bosepukur Shitala Mandir Club ground near Kasba Police station. Mr. Supriya Sarkar, Ex- Joint director of DCRT, WCD&HW Department, GoWB, inaugurated this Mela in the presence of Ms. Kamala Saha, Ex Deputy Director of DCRT, WCD&HW Department, GoWB, Ms. Mohua Sur Roy, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee of Kolkata, Md. Nadim, DCPO-Kolkata, Mr. Subrata Das, Member of Juvenil Justice Board, Mr. Maloy Dewanji, Secretary of GUP, Ms. Sutapa Sarkar, Director of GUP and many others dignitaries and representatives from different NGOs, Voluntary organisations with the children from their respective organisations. Representatives from LAMP, GPFC, Trinita, Hope foundation, BSS, CSP, IPER, JABALA and also from various project areas of GUP participated in this programme.

PadmaShri and Shiksha Ratna awarded and Headmaster of Haronath High School , Kazi Masum Akhtarsaid that being with every marginalized child is like going to a temple , mosque or church. We never think that it is possible to reach God by doing good to people . God children are roaming around with us.A complete picture of the basic needs of every child in our countryToday, this will be the last oath for Children's Day."A better world for the development of children".

"Centre Clears ₹7,172-Crore Boost for Electronics: MeitY Approves 17 New Component Manufacturing Projects"



The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has approved 17 new electronic component manufacturing projects worth a combined investment of ₹7,172 crore. The move marks a major step in India's ongoing effort to reduce import dependence, accelerate domestic production, and position itself as a global hub for electronics and semiconductor-linked components. The approval is part of the government's broader strategy under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes and the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), which aim to develop a resilient supply chain within the country. With the electronics industry becoming increasingly critical to India's economic and strategic future, the latest decision signals New Delhi's intention to rapidly scale up capacity and capability.According to officials, the newly sanctioned projects cover a wide spectrum of components essential for modern electronics—ranging from semiconductor parts, passive components, and display modules to advanced assemblies used in consumer electronics, automotive electronics, and industrial equipment. By encouraging local production of these high-value parts, MeitY hopes to plug long-standing gaps in India's electronics ecosystem. The ₹7,172-crore investment commitment reflects growing interest among domestic manufacturers and global suppliers seeking to expand their footprint in India. Several of the approved proposals come from companies that are already part of the existing PLI ecosystem, while others represent new entrants aiming to participate in India's rapidly growing electronics market.

Officials say these projects are expected to generate thousands of direct and indirect jobs, while also creating opportunities for small and medium enterprises that supply raw materials, testing services, and logistics. The government believes that strengthening the component manufacturing segment is essential if India is to move up the global value chain, reduce import dependence—especially on China—and become export-competitive.

India currently imports a substantial percentage of its critical electronic parts, leading to high trade deficits in the electronics sector. With domestic demand for smartphones, laptops, wearables, data-centre hardware, electric-vehicle electronics, and telecom equipment growing exponentially, the need for a robust component ecosystem has become urgent. MeitY's latest approvals come at a time when global tech companies are actively seeking to diversify their supply chains away from single-country dependence. India's expanding infrastructure, improving logistics, and favourable policies are strengthening its appeal as an alternative manufacturing destination. The Centre believes that with consistent investments, India can capture a significant portion of global electronics production over the next decade.

The government has been clear that building a complete ecosystem—from basic components to advanced semiconductor fabrication—is essential to achieving long-term self-reliance. While semiconductor fabs may take years to materialise, the development of upstream and downstream component industries is seen as an important intermediate step. The newly approved projects will also complement India's recent investments in ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging) units and compound semiconductor facilities.

"India's Trade Deficit Hits $41.68 Billion in October, Widest in Several Months as Imports Surge"

India's trade deficit widened sharply to $41.68 billion in October, driven by a significant rise in imports combined with slower export growth, according to the latest government data. The figure marks one of the highest monthly trade deficits recorded this fiscal year, raising concerns over the pressure on India's external balance at a time of global economic volatility.

The widening gap reflects a combination of factors: increased purchases of crude oil, electronics, gold, and key industrial inputs, alongside subdued performance in several export categories. Economists note that while higher imports point to strengthening domestic demand, they also underline the persistent structural vulnerabilities in India's trade profile.India's imports for October saw a notable jump, led by the rise in global crude prices and strong demand for petroleum products. Crude oil remains one of India's largest import items, and even small increases in global prices tend to significantly impact the monthly import bill. Analysts point out that geopolitical tensions, OPEC+ production decisions, and supply disruptions have kept energy costs elevated throughout the year. Gold imports also rose during the month, driven partly by festive demand ahead of the wedding season. Retail gold demand typically spikes between October and December, and the trend was reflected in the surge in inbound shipments. Electronics imports—including mobile phones, semiconductors, and consumer devices—remained robust as well, supported by strong consumption and rising digital penetration across the country. Industrial machinery, chemicals, and components used in manufacturing also contributed to the import surge. With India's manufacturing sector showing signs of expansion, demand for intermediate goods has moved upward in tandem.

আমি সেখ জুলফিকার আলি, পিতা সেখ মুস্তার আলম, বিলকুলি উত্তরপাড়ার নিবাসী আমমোক্তার গ্রহিতা আমি ইংরাজী ২৪.০৭.২০২৪ তারিখে এ.ডি.এস.আর. চন্দননগর সাব রেজিষ্ট্রি অফিসে ১নং বহির ০৬০৪০২৩৭০ নম্বর আমমোক্তার নামা দাতা সেখ মুস্তার আলম, পিতা মরহুম সেখ আব্দুল সামাদ নিকট হইতে বিগ ইংরাজী ২৪.০৭.২০২৪ তারিখে আমমোক্তার রেজিষ্ট্রি করিয়া লইয়াছি। মৌজা-বেলকুলি, জে.এল.-২, হাল খতিয়ান-১১৯৩, হাল দাগ- ৬৯৪, জমির পরিমান- ২৭ শতক বা ০.২৭ একর বাঁশ বাগান সম্পত্তি হইতেছে। এই আমমোক্তার নামায় যদি কাহারও আপত্তি থাকে তাহা হইলে সংশ্লিষ্ট সিঙ্গুর থলিসানী (মানকুন্ডু) বি.এল. এন্ড এল.আর. ও অফিসে ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে সত্বর যোগাযোগ করুন।

Name Change
I, Md Samiruddin Sarkar (Old Name) S/O–Zuber Mondal residing at Bhikanpur , Lochanpur , Islampur , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742304 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Md Samiruddin Sarkar to Samiruddin Sarkar and henceforth I shall be known as Samiruddin Sarkar (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Samiruddin Sarkar & Md Samiruddin Sarkar both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, JAINUR BIBI W/o Md. Naimuddin, D/o Late Abdus Sattar residing atKankramari Chandnichak, Kakramari, Suti-II, Murshidabad, Pin-742223, do hereby solemnly affirm & declare my actual name JAINUR BIBI instead of JAHANARA BEGUMand which is wrongly written in my PAN Card no. DKRPB4434H and voter card No. ZST2531275 and my husband's actual name Md. Naimuddin instead of Md. Naimuddin Biswas, which is wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card No. 3785 0401 2213 and one Kolkata gazette notification, vide an affidavit sworn before the Ld. Judicial Magistrate 1st Class at Alipore dated 17/11/2025. JAINUR BIBI and JAHANARA BEGUM both are same and one identical person. Md. Naimuddin and Md. Naimuddin Biswas both are same and one identical person.That my actual name is JAINUR BIBI WIFE OF MD.NAIMUDDIN

Name Change
I, Saheba Bibi (Old Name) W/O–Sahabuddin Sk residing at Jamna , Mahalandi , Kandi, Murshidabad, West Bengal 742136 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Saheba Bibi to Sairabanu Bibi and henceforth I shall be known as Sairabanu Bibi (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Sairabanu Bibi & Saheba Bibi both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Safikul Islam (Old Name) S/O–Late Abdul Khalil Mandal residing at Vill-Charpara , PO-Muktarpur , PS-Karimpur , Nadia, West Bengal 741152 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Safikul Islam to Safikul Islam Mandal and henceforth I shall be known as Safikul Islam Mandal (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Safikul Islam Mandal & Safikul Islam both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Uttam Dulai (Old Name) S/O–Habal Dolui residing at Vill-Bagachhra , PO-Benipur , PS-Kandi , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742140 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Uttam Dulai to Uttam Dolui and henceforth I shall be known as Uttam Dolui (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Uttam Dolui & Uttam Dulai both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Piarun Bibi (Old Name) W/O–Masiuddin Sk residing at Vill-Belaipara , PO- Khairati , PS-Sagardighi , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742226 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Piarun Bibi to Piyarun Bibi and henceforth I shall be known as Piyarun Bibi (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Piyarun Bibi & Piarun Bibi both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Jyotsna Bibi Mondal (Old Name) W/O–Dukhu Mandal residing at Vill- Enayetpur , PO-Sadikhanrdiar , PS-Jalangi , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742303 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Jyotsna Bibi Mondal to Josna Bibi and henceforth I shall be known as Josna Bibi (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Josna Bibi & Jyotsna Bibi Mondal both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Delsad Sk (Old Name) S/O–Rahim Sekh resident of Belaipara , Khairati , Sagardighi , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742226 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Delsad Sk to Delsad Sekh and henceforth I shall be known as Delsad Sekh (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Delsad Sekh & Delsad Sk both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Raimohan Bala, my father's (Old Name) Brojen Bala, resident of Parbatidanga , Habibpur, Malda , West Bengal 732138 do hereby declared that I have changed my father's name from Brojen Bala to Brojendra Nath Bala and henceforth my father's shall be known as Brojendra Nath Bala (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My father's name Brojendra Nath Bala & Brojen Bala both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Aynal Haque (Old Name) S/O–Habijul Sk residing at Vill-Khordikipara , PO-Jibanpur , PS-Ranitala , Murshidabad, West Bengal 742135 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Aynal Haque to Ainal Hoque and henceforth I shall be known as Ainal Hoque (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/11/2025. My name Ainal Hoque & Aynal Haque both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Aboo Salim Mohammad Abdul Hai (Old name) s/o-Mahbubur Rahaman, Resident at, Vill-Raninagar, Po-Diar Raninagar, Ps-Raghunathganj, Dist-Murshidabad, 742227, West Bengal, I have changed my name A S M Abdul Hai (New name) I shall be known as A S M Abdul Hai vide affidavit no. 05AC437199 before the Notry at Berhampore on 15/11/2025 A S M Abdul Hai & Aboo Salim Mohammad Abdul Hai same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Rayan Islam (Old name) S/o-Monirul Islam, Resident at, Vill-Kamadpur, Po-Shyamnagar, Ps-Nawda, Dist-Murshidabad, 741156, West Bengal, I have changed my name Rayan Islam to Raiyan Islam (New name) I shall be known as Raiyan Islam vide affidavit no. 05AC 353741 before the Notry at Berhampore on 15/11/2025 Raiyan Islam & Rayan Islam same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, TAPAN KUMAR CHATTERJEE & TAPAN S/O- LATE NIKHIL CHANDRA CHATTERJEE residing at RAMKRISHNAPALLY PO-MALDA , P.S- ENGLISHBAZAR , DIST-MALDA PIN-732101, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from (old name) TAPAN KUMAR CHATTERJEE & TAPAN to (new name) TAPAN CHATTERJEE and henceforth I, shall be known as (new name) TAPAN CHATTERJEE in all purpose , vide an affidavit sworn beforethe notary public at Berhampore court dated on 17/11/2025.(new name) TAPAN CHATTERJEE (old name) TAPANKUMAR CHATTERJEE & TAPAN both name are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Raiyan Islam (Old name) S/o-Monirul Islam, Resident at, Vill-Kamadpur, Po-Shyamnagar, Ps-Nawda, Dist-Murshidabad, 741156, West Bengal, I have changed my name Rayan Islam to Raiyan Islam (New name) I shall be known as Raiyan Islam vide affidavit no. 05AC 353741 before the Notry at Berhampore on 15/11/2025 Raiyan Islam & Rayan Islam same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, SHIRINA AKTARBANU MANDAL (old name) W/O -REJAUL KARIM MONDAL residing at VILLTEJSINGHAPUR PO-TEJSINGHAPUR PS-RANINAGAR DIST-MURSHIDABAD PIN-742304.West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changed My name from (old name) SHIRINA AKTARBANU MANDALtoSHIRINA AKTARBANU MONDAL (new name) and henceforth, I shall be known as SHIRINAAKTARBANU MONDAL (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn beforethe notary public at Domkal court dated on 17/11/2025. (new name) SHIRINA AKTARBANU MONDAL&SHIRINAAKTARBANU MANDAL (old name) both name are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I,SK ANSER ALI (OLD NAME) S/O SABUR AL SEKH, RESIDING AT, MANSADANGA, P.O &P.S - JAMALPUR, PIN-713408 ,DIST-PURBA BARDHAMAN, W. B, INDIA , HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS SK ANSAR ALI (NEW NAME) , AS DECLARED BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA , DATED 17 /11/2025 , SK ANSAR ALI (NEW NAME) AND SK ANSER ALI (OLD NAME) BOTH ARE SAME AND IDENTICAL PERSON,

Name Change
I,SK RAMJAN ALI (OLD NAME) S/O SK TAHER ALI RESIDING AT, MADHYA HIJLA,P.S - SINGUR , HOOGHLY , PIN-712407 , W. B, INDIA , HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS SK ROMJAN ALI (NEW NAME) , AS DECLARED BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA , DATED 17/11/2025 , SK ROMJAN ALI (NEW NAME) AND SK RAMJAN ALI (OLD NAME) BOTH ARE SAME AND IDENTICAL PERSON,

Name Change
I,MOJID SK & MAJIT SK & SEIKH MAJIT AND MAJIT SEKH (old name) S/O -MATLEB SK residing atVILL-HATGACHHA PO-SUNDIPUR PS-BERHAMPORE DIST-MURSHIDABAD PIN-742133.WestBengal, do hereby declare that I have changed My name from (old name) MOJID SK to (new name) MAJID SK andhenceforth, I shall be known as MAJID SK (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit swornbefore the SDEM court Berhampore dated on 04/11/2025. (new name) MAJID SK & MOJID SK (old name) both name are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I,YAJUL SEKH (old name) S/O -ALI SEKH residing at VILL-RASULPUR PO-RASULPUR PSNABAGRAM DIST-MURSHIDABAD PIN-742181. West Bengal, do hereby declare that I have changedMy name from (old name) YAJUL SEKH to (new name) YAJUL SK and henceforth, I shall be known asYAJUL SK (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn beforethe Notary public at domkalcourt dated on 17/11/2025. (new name) YAJUL SK & YAJUL SEKH (old name) both name are same andone identical person.

Name Change
I, Md Nasiruddin (old name) son of Noor Mahammad, residing at Kalali Road, P. O - Barakar, P.S - Kulti, Dist: Paschim Bardhaman, Pin : 713324, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Nasiruddin Mia (new name) as declared before the Ld. 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Asansol vide affidavit No. 13239 date 01/11/2025. Md Nasiruddin and Nasiruddin Mia both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I Mamata Puri Debi ,D/o-Late Manmatha Gupta, Residing at Saradeswari Ashram, Buroshibtala Road, P.o-&-P.s- Nabadwip, Dist-Nadia. W.B,That my Correct name is "Mamata Puri Debi," That in Savings account of Buroshibtala Post Office Being Account No.7147273900 my name has been Written as Subhodita Puri Debi in place of "Mamata Puri Debi" due to mistake. That Mamata Puri Debi and Subhodita Puri Debi,D/o-Late Manmatha Gupta are the same and one identical person. Vide affidavit No -4006 In the court of the J.M (1st Class) at Nabadwip, Dist- Nadia.W.B, Date-17/09/2025

Name Change
I. Madhabi Devi. spouse of No. 1473718H, Rank Ex -NK, Name -Sukumar Dey.resident of vill-Uttar Srirampur, P.O.-Srirampur, Dist.-Purba Bardhaman (WB), Pin-741316. have change my Name from Madhabi Devi to Madhabi Dey vide affidavit No-46 dated 14/11/25 before the court of the Ld. Judicial Magistrate (1st class) at Kalna, Purba Bardhaman.

Name Change
I Mamata Puri Debi ,D/o-Late Manmatha Gupta, Residing at Saradeswari Ashram, Buroshibtala Road, P.o-&-P.s- Nabadwip, Dist-Nadia. W.B,That my Correct name is "Mamata Puri Debi," That in Savings account of Buroshibtala Post Office Being Account No.7147273900 my name has been Written as Subhodita Puri Debi in place of "Mamata Puri Debi" due to mistake. That Mamata Puri Debi and Subhodita Puri Debi,D/o-Late Manmatha Gupta are the same and one identical person. Vide affidavit No -4006 In the court of the J.M (1st Class) at Nabadwip, Dist- Nadia.W.B, Date-17/09/2025

Name Change
I. Madhabi Devi. spouse of No. 1473718H, Rank Ex -NK, Name -Sukumar Dey.resident of vill-Uttar Srirampur, P.O.-Srirampur, Dist.-Purba Bardhaman (WB), Pin- 741316. have change my Name from Madhabi Devi to Madhabi Dey vide affidavit No-46 dated 14/11/25 before the court of the Ld. Judicial Magistrate (1st class) at Kalna, Purba Bardhaman.

Matua Leader Mamata Bala Thakur Falls Ill Just Hours Before Ending 13-Day Hunger Strike Against SIR

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: Matua Mahasangha chief and Rajya Sabha MP Mamata Bala Thakur fell seriously ill just hours before she was scheduled to withdraw her 13-day-long hunger strike. The protest, launched against the implementation of the SIR (Specific Information Report) process, has stirred significant political and social discourse within the Matua community.

On Sunday night, Mamata Bala Thakur announced that the hunger strike would be called off, citing her respect for the letter sent by Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee. The withdrawal was officially scheduled for Monday at 12 noon. However, before the formal conclusion of the movement, her condition deteriorated sharply due to prolonged fasting.

During the morning hours, Thakur complained of extreme weakness, dizziness, and physical discomfort. Doctors present at the protest site immediately rushed to her aid. In full view of followers and community members gathered at the agitation venue, medical volunteers administered saline to stabilise her condition. Shortly afterward, she was transported by ambulance to the Bongaon Super Speciality Hospital, where she is currently undergoing treatment.

The hunger strike had begun nearly two weeks earlier with Mamata Bala Thakur and her faction of the Matua Mahasangha voicing strong opposition to the SIR system. According to the group, the process could lead to the deletion of many community members' names from official records, causing widespread fear among the Matuas—particularly those who have long sought clarity and security over their citizenship status.

For the past 13 days, Mamata Bala Thakur, along with a group of devoted Gosaipagols and followers, sat on a hunger strike in front of the room of "Boroma" (the late Matua matriarch) inside Thakurbari. Initially, 25 protestors had joined the indefinite fast, but due to health complications, 15 had already withdrawn over the last few days. The remaining 10 members, including Mamata Bala herself, had continued the demonstration until Monday morning.

On Sunday, a delegation from the Trinamool Congress arrived at Thakurbari carrying Abhishek Banerjee's message urging the protesters to call off their fast and assuring them that their concerns would be addressed. Later that night, Mamata Bala Thakur announced her decision to end the hunger strike, stating that she was honouring Abhishek's appeal and trusting the assurances given.

But before the scheduled withdrawal ceremony could begin on Monday, her health worsened. In an emotional moment at the protest site, other Gosaipagols stepped forward to help break the fast for Mamata Bala and the remaining protestors. They offered her lemon water—traditionally used to end a long spell of fasting—while doctors continued monitoring her condition.

Speaking briefly from the stage before being taken to the hospital, Mamata Bala Thakur said, "I have been without food for so many days. Naturally, my body has weakened. I am feeling unwell, and there are other complications." Her words reflected the physical toll the prolonged hunger strike had taken.

Matuas at the site expressed deep concern, with many saying that her illness highlights the intensity of the protest and the seriousness with which the community views the SIR issue. According to them, the process poses a threat to thousands of Matua families, many of whom worry that bureaucratic lapses could strip them of essential identity documentation.

The Matua Mahasangha's agitation has already drawn attention from political parties across West Bengal. Given the community's significant electoral influence, the unfolding developments could carry implications for the state's broader political landscape.

Hospital authorities have stated that Mamata Bala Thakur is under close observation and that further medical evaluations are underway. Her supporters remain gathered outside the facility, anxiously awaiting updates on her condition.

The withdrawal of the hunger strike marks a temporary pause in the movement, but Matua leaders have made it clear that they will closely monitor the government's response to their concerns. For now, the community's focus is on the recovery of their leader, whose health crisis has added a dramatic and emotional chapter to an already tense protest.

Workload Boils Over: West Bengal BLOs Storm Treasury and CEO Office with Long List of Demands

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: West Bengal's Booth Level Officers (BLOs) as they protest what they allege to be an unbearable and ever-increasing workload. On Monday, BLOs from several Assembly constituencies including Behala East, Behala West, Kasba, Jadavpur, and Metiabruz gathered at the Alipore Treasury Office to submit a deputation to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). On the same day, another delegation of the Shikshanuragi Oikya Manch (BLO Wing) marched to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of the state to press for a series of urgent demands.

According to BLOs, excessive workload, lack of technical training, and administrative negligence have made their duties almost unmanageable. They claim that these pressures have already caused severe health complications for several BLOs across the state.

At the Alipore Treasury Office, BLOs highlighted three primary issues before the ERO. First, many BLOs reported that they still had not received official letters or appointment documents from higher authorities — essential papers needed to formally undertake assigned tasks. They demanded immediate distribution of these documents.

Second, the workers stressed that they are not trained or skilled data entry operators. Despite this, they are being forced to handle digitisation work, which requires precision and technical competence — that too within extremely tight deadlines. They argued that expecting flawless data entry in such circumstances is not only unrealistic but also unfair.

Third, they urged the commission to appoint additional BLOs in areas where a single officer is currently responsible for more than a thousand voters. Without added manpower, they said, it is impossible to complete the ongoing workload without errors or burnout.

Meanwhile, representatives of the Shikshanuragi Oikya Manch (BLO Wing), led by their general secretary Kinkar Adhikari, submitted a separate deputation to the state's CEO. They demanded an extension of the deadline for submitting SIR (Specific Information Report) forms, which BLOs say cannot be completed accurately within the present timeline. They also insisted on receiving formal on-duty notices so that their responsibilities are acknowledged officially by their respective departments.

The delegation further pointed out that states like Bihar had appointed dedicated data entry operators during extensive voter list revision exercises. They argued that West Bengal must adopt the same system instead of shifting the technical burden onto BLOs who are already stretched thin.

A major concern raised was the alleged public disclosure of BLOs' personal mobile numbers. According to the organisation, this has led to continuous calls and pressure from voters and political activists, affecting BLOs' safety, privacy, and mental health. They demanded immediate corrective action from the commission.

The unrest among BLOs has been escalating over the past week, with reports pouring in from multiple districts. BLOs claim they are being assigned tasks far beyond their primary responsibilities, including distributing forms, collecting them, filling SIR forms on behalf of voters, and even entering sensitive data on official portals. Many said the workload has become so severe that it has started to impact their physical health.

Recent incidents appear to validate their concerns. In Memari, Bardhaman, a BLO named Namita Hansda reportedly suffered a brain stroke and later died. Her family alleged that excessive workload and mounting pressure were major causes behind her deteriorating health. Several BLOs in other districts have also been hospitalised in recent days, further intensifying resentment within the workforce.

With the revision of electoral rolls underway and the state preparing for upcoming electoral timelines, the role of BLOs has become more critical than ever. However, their increasing agitation indicates a widening rift between field-level staff and election authorities.

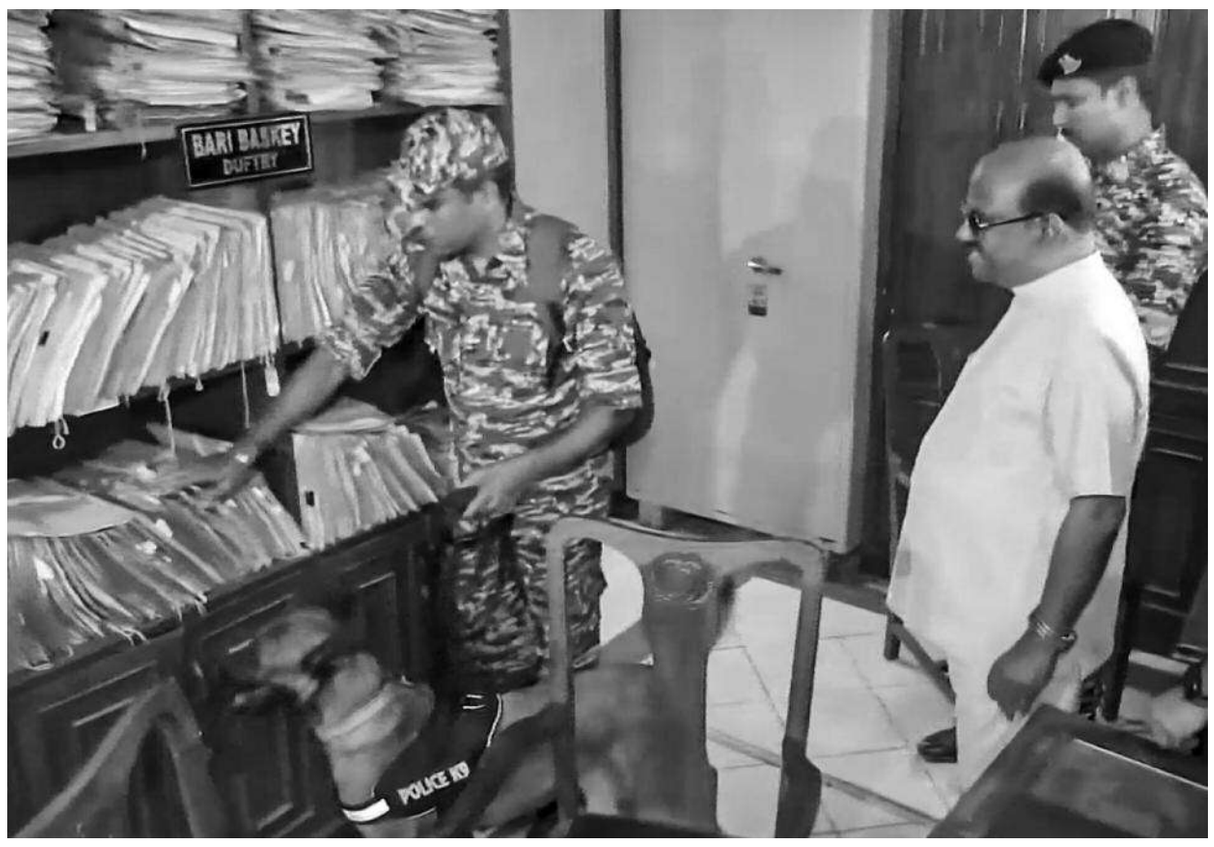
KMC Set to Re-assess Property Taxes After Shockingly Low Levy on 45-Cottah Plot Sparks Inquiry

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 17 November: Kolkata's property tax administration may be on the horizon after a startling revelation during the Kolkata Municipal Corporation's (KMC) public grievance programme prompted Mayor Firhad Hakim to order an immediate probe. The development has triggered discussions within the civic body about a comprehensive reassessment of land and property taxes across the city, especially in recently added municipal areas.

The issue surfaced during the latest edition of Talk to Mayor, a live interaction initiative where citizens can call directly to raise civic complaints. Among the usual concerns, a call from a resident of Borough 13's Haridevpur region left the Mayor visibly surprised. The woman caller reported that a sprawling 45-cottah plot in the area was being taxed just ₹104 annually — an amount that seemed wildly disproportionate, even for older tax brackets.

Taken aback by the anomaly, Mayor Hakim immediately instructed the KMC's Assessment and Collection Department to conduct an urgent investigation. The Mayor said it was "inconceivable" that such a large property could be assessed at such a minimal annual tax and suggested that something was clearly amiss in the records. His reaction set off a chain of internal discussions, with officials in the tax department scrambling to review similar long-pending assessments. Following the Mayor's instruction, the Assessment Department has already begun scrutinising records related to land holdings, tax slabs, and historical valuation updates. According to KMC sources, the civic body is now considering a broad-based re-evaluation of land and property taxes across the city to ensure accuracy, transparency, and proper revenue collection.

Initial investigations indicate that the unusually low tax on the Haridevpur property may be the result of outdated assessment practices. A senior KMC official, speaking on condition of anonymity, revealed that the property in question — an expansive 104-cottah plot in Ward 122 — had likely not undergone reassessment for many years. As a result, its tax continued to be calculated at the old rates, which are no longer reflective of current market values. "If a property is not reassessed for decades, such discrepancies can naturally arise," the official explained. "We have already initiated measures to ensure such incidents do not recur." The issue has also brought renewed focus on areas that were added to the KMC jurisdiction over the past decade. Civic officials argue that regular tax assessments are crucial in these areas to reflect current land use, market value, and property development patterns.



Security personnel conduct searches at Raj Bhavan in the presence of West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose in the wake of TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee's allegation of Raj Bhavan allowing the stacking of arms and ammunition, in Kolkata, Monday.

Passenger Shortage Forces NBSTC to Curtail Volvo Services; Winter Strategy Under Review

Staff reporter, Siliguri, 17 November: The ambitious Volvo bus service launched by the North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC), connecting several North Bengal districts to Kolkata and Digha, is facing severe operational challenges due to a drastic fall in passenger numbers. Despite initial enthusiasm and strong ridership, the service has now reached a point where multiple trips are being cancelled and certain routes have been temporarily shut down.

NBSTC officials have confirmed that Volvo buses operating from Raiganj and Maldah have already been withdrawn because of persistently low passenger turnout. These buses, instead of lying unused, are now being reassigned to high-demand routes within North Bengal—particularly those connecting Siliguri with Alipurduar, Cooch Behar, and Kolkata.

Chairman of NBSTC, Parthapratim Roy, acknowledged the setback and explained the situation in detail. "In the beginning, we saw good passenger numbers. At present, four buses are running from the North Bengal districts to Kolkata and then onward to Digha. While the Kolkata-bound demand is steady, hardly any passengers are travelling all the way to Digha. So we have temporarily suspended the Raiganj and Maldah services," he said. Roy added that to prevent the corporation from incurring significant losses during the winter season, alternative operational strategies are already being planned.

The corporation's concerns stem not just from the longer routes but also from declining interest across several North Bengal districts. Even Volvo buses originating from Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, and Siliguri—which were once popular—are now reporting sharply reduced passenger



numbers. In some cases, NBSTC has been forced to cancel entire trips due to insufficient bookings.

Sources within NBSTC revealed that the buses used for this long-distance service were provided under a special initiative by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who had allocated six Volvo coaches to the corporation. The service was launched with optimism and, initially, the response was overwhelming. However, as months passed, passengers gradually began opting out—despite NBSTC lowering fares to attract travellers.

Several Kolkata-bound trips from North Bengal districts have been cancelled in recent weeks. Officials say that on certain days, only a handful of people booked seats, making it financially unviable to operate an entire Volvo bus. In such cases, NBSTC has been arranging alternate travel facilities for the few passengers who do turn up, often shifting them to regular buses or combining trips where possible. The unexpected dip in demand has prompted NBSTC to reassess both its long-distance and regional operations. With winter approaching—a period when travel demand typically increases due to tourism—the corporation is keen to prevent heavy financial losses.

Part of the new strategy involves redeploying underutilized buses to intra–North Bengal routes that show steadier passenger movement. The corporation is also evaluating alternative scheduling patterns and promotional efforts to revive public interest in the premium service. Discussions are underway to introduce seasonal packages, improve service frequency on popular routes, and redesign less profitable ones. Transport analysts suggest multiple reasons behind the declining demand: increased availability of low-cost private travel options, shifting passenger preferences, and economic constraints in rural pockets of the region.

Howrah Man Assaults Neighbour With Scissors Over Alleged Affair Suspicion; Victim Hospitalised, Accused Absconding

Staff reporter, Howrah, 17 November: A shocking incident of violent assault, driven by suspicion of an alleged extramarital affair, has rocked Howrah's Bankra area. A local tailor allegedly attacked his neighbour with a pair of scissors, inflicting severe injuries. The victim, identified as Mohammad Sarwar, is currently undergoing treatment at Howrah District Hospital.

According to police sources, the accused, Sheikh Shah Rukh, is a resident of West Para in Bankra and works as a tailor. He got married nine years ago and had been living in Mumbai for work. Approximately two years ago, he returned to his home in Bankra. Following his return, he reportedly began suspecting that his wife was involved in an illicit relationship with a neighbour—Sarwar—who also lives in the same locality.

The situation escalated on Monday afternoon when Shah Rukh allegedly spotted Sarwar and launched an unprovoked attack. Armed with a large pair of scissors typically used for cutting cloth, the tailor reportedly pounced on Sarwar and repeatedly stabbed and slashed him. Sarwar's screams drew the attention of local residents, who rushed to the spot and intervened.

Residents quickly transported the grievously injured Sarwar to Howrah District Hospital, where he has been admitted in serious condition. Local accounts suggest that the altercation and subsequent attack were captured on CCTV cameras installed in the vicinity. Police are expected to review the footage as part of their investigation.

Family members of the accused claim that Shah Rukh had been harbouring suspicions about his wife's conduct for the past six months. According to them, domestic quarrels had become increasingly frequent, as Shah Rukh repeatedly confronted his wife about her alleged involvement with Sarwar. His mother stated, "My son suspected his wife. He believed she had a relationship with Sarwar."

However, relatives of the injured Sarwar have firmly dismissed these accusations, calling them completely baseless. "There is no such relationship between them. Shah Rukh acted impulsively and violently based only on suspicion. Sarwar could have lost his life," said a family member.

The incident has sparked alarm in the neighbourhood, with residents expressing shock over the brutality of the attack and the ease with which it unfolded in broad daylight. They emphasised that such extreme violence, fuelled purely by suspicion, has created an atmosphere of fear in the locality.

Meanwhile, police from Bankra Police Station have lodged a formal complaint and initiated an investigation into the assault. Officers have already visited the scene, spoken to several eyewitnesses, and begun examining CCTV footage to establish the sequence of events.

However, the accused is currently absconding. Police teams are conducting searches to track him down. Investigators believe that Shah Rukh fled the locality immediately after the attack, anticipating legal consequences.

Authorities have reiterated that no form of vigilantism or personal retaliation can be justified, regardless of the suspicions involved. They stressed that the law will take its course once the accused is nabbed. Medical officials at Howrah District Hospital have confirmed that Sarwar's condition remains stable but critical, and he continues to receive treatment for multiple stab wounds. The incident has once again highlighted the dangers of unchecked suspicion, domestic tension, and impulsive violence that often erupt in close-knit urban neighbourhoods.

Winged Winter Guests Arrive Early: Migratory Birds Transform Jalpaiguri's Landscape

Staff reporter, Jalpaiguri, 17 November: Jalpaiguri has already welcomed its seasonal visitors—the migratory birds whose arrival each year marks the true onset of the colder months. The otherwise quiet settlements of Bhatakhana and Shobhabari, located on the outskirts of Jalpaiguri town, have come alive with the calls and fluttering of these winged guests who travel thousands of kilometres to reach the region's tranquil waterbodies.

According to local residents, a large abandoned brick kiln with an expansive waterbody has served as a winter home for numerous species of migratory birds for several decades. The arrival of these birds is regarded as the first sign of winter in the region. Despite the long journey from lands as distant as Europe, Eurasia and Mongolia, the birds return year after year, transforming the rural landscape into a vibrant natural habitat.

This year, several species have already been spotted, including the Common Teal, Northern Teal, Northern Lapwing, Hen Harrier, Common Moorhen and flocks of wild ducks. Their presence has drawn birdwatchers, nature photographers and curious visitors from across Jalpaiguri and neighbouring districts, eager to witness the spectacular display of avian diversity.

Residents say that the waterbody at Shobhabari and similar sites nearby are now synonymous with birdlife during winter. The skies fill with flocks flying in perfect synchronisation while the water shimmers under the soft winter sun, dotted with colourful birds resting, feeding or nesting.

For the villagers, these birds are



more than seasonal visitors—they are honoured guests. But alongside the excitement and affection lies a serious responsibility. Locals remain vigilant throughout the season to protect the birds from hunters who may attempt to target them for illegal game hunting.

Lipika Sarkar, a homemaker living near the site, recalls earlier days when bird hunters used to frequent the area. "There was a time when poachers would come here often," she says. "But now the villagers have organised themselves in groups to keep watch. Our continuous vigilance has ensured that the hunters don't dare come near the waterbody anymore."

Another resident, Nityananda Barman, explains that the arrival of these birds typically begins in November. "Every year, many species arrive. People from faraway places come here just to watch them. Their presence has given our village a new identity," he says. "We consider it our duty to protect them. Day and night, we ensure they remain safe."

Environmental activists and researchers have also taken note of the villagers' dedication. Dr. Raja Raut, secretary of the Jalpaiguri Science and Nature Club, expresses admiration for the community's protection efforts. "Species like the Common Teal, Northern Teal, and Ruddy Shelduck (Chokhachokhi) migrate here every winter. Thanks to the hospitality and vigilance of the villagers, the number of birds visiting the area has increased significantly over the years," he observes.

Dr. Raut emphasises that the early arrival of these birds this year is an encouraging sign for the local environment. "The presence of migratory birds indicates favourable ecological conditions. Their timely arrival reflects the health of the wetland and surrounding habitats," he adds.

The annual migration is more than a seasonal event—it is a celebration of biodiversity, community responsibility and environmental harmony. As winter deepens, the flocks are expected to grow larger, further enriching the district's natural charm and drawing nature enthusiasts from all corners.

Bomb Threat Email Sparks Panic at Tamil Nadu CM Stalin's Residence; Police Launch Statewide Search, Call It Likely Hoax



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin sent shockwaves through the state on Sunday night, prompting an extensive security sweep across multiple high-profile residences in Chennai. The alarming message, which also claimed that bombs had been planted at the homes of leading South Indian actor Ajith Kumar, actor Arvind Swamy, and actress-politician Khushbu Sundar, triggered immediate action from the Tamil Nadu Police. According to police sources, the threatening email was received at the office of the Director General of Police (DGP), Tamil Nadu, late on Sunday. The sender alleged that explosive devices had been placed at the four locations, creating a sense of urgency and concern within the security establishment. Given the stature of those targeted—including the sitting Chief Minister and three widely-known public figures—the police treated the threat as credible until proven otherwise. Within minutes of the email's arrival, the state police swung into action. Bomb squads, sniffer dog units, and anti-sabotage teams were dispatched to all four residences. The searches were conducted for several hours overnight, with officers combing through every accessible area, including parking spaces, gardens, and adjacent buildings. Despite the thorough search operations, no explosive devices or suspicious materials were found at any of the locations. Following the negative results, senior officers indicated that the threat was most likely a hoax. However, investigations into the origin of the email are ongoing. Police officials confirmed that cybersecurity experts have been roped in to trace the IP address, origin, and routing of the email. Given the repeated nature of such incidents in recent months, investigators are also exploring whether a single individual or group is behind the series of false alarms. This is not the first time that the Tamil film industry and its prominent personalities have been targeted with hoax bomb threats. Just last week, actor Ajith Kumar's residence in Injambakkam received a similar threat via email, prompting a police search that ultimately yielded nothing. Another well-known actor, Arun Vijay, reported receiving a comparable email warning earlier this year. In October, legendary music composer Ilaiyaraaja's T. Nagar studio was also subjected to a bomb scare triggered by a threatening email. The frequency of such incidents has raised serious concerns within the Tamil Nadu Police about a trend of digital harassment aimed at celebrities. Yet the escalation of threats to include the chief minister's residence has elevated the matter to a new level of seriousness. Officials noted that targeting the Chief Minister—who is constantly under high-security cover—indicates either a deliberate attempt to cause widespread panic or a reckless prank that has crossed into dangerous territory. Security at the Chief Minister's residence was further strengthened following the incident. While routine security protocols are already stringent, additional checks and surveillance measures have been temporarily introduced. Police sources said that the chief minister had been updated on the situation and briefed on ongoing investigations. The state government has not yet issued an official statement on the threat, but senior bureaucrats have privately acknowledged that such incidents strain law enforcement resources and divert attention from critical duties.

After Family Rift Explodes, Another Shock for RJD: Senior Leader Questions Lalu as Daughter Rohini Leaves Home and Politics

Staff Reporter, Patna, 17 November: The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar is facing one of the most turbulent moments in its recent history. Days after the party suffered a major defeat in the Bihar Assembly elections, a deepening family feud within the Yadav household has now spilled into the political arena—culminating in public criticism of RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav by one of the party's former senior leaders, Shivanand Tiwari.

The crisis entered a dramatic phase when Lalu's daughter, Rohini Acharya, announced that she was leaving not only her home but also active politics. She subsequently left India. Rohini, who just a few years ago donated a kidney to her father, broke down publicly while accusing her younger brother and former Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav of physical intimidation and humiliating behaviour. She alleged that Tejashwi even attempted to attack her with a shoe—an accusation that has jolted Bihar's political circles.

Rohini's emotional exit has now been followed by strong criticism from former RJD vice-president Shivanand Tiwari, who has openly sided with her and raised pointed questions about Lalu Prasad Yadav's silence. Speaking to a media outlet, Tiwari asked, "What was Lalu Prasad doing when his daughter was crying and leaving the house? Does he not see what is happening?" According to him, Rohini left home in tears while making serious allegations, yet Lalu and his wife Rabri Devi "sat and watched."

Tiwari's remarks have fuelled speculation that the rift in the Yadav family may soon extend into a structural split within the RJD itself. The party is already reeling from its electoral setback—winning only 25 seats despite forming a coalition with the Congress and Left parties. Critics within the party have begun to question Tejashwi's leadership, who was the face of the RJD campaign.

Rohini's accusations have also found support from Lalu's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav, who has long had a strained relationship with his younger brother Tejashwi. His endorsement of Rohini's claims suggests that the family divide is far from a minor domestic dispute—it may be morphing into a multi-pronged power struggle within the party.

Tiwari also used the opportunity to slam the internal structure of the RJD, calling it a "one-man show." He claimed that he was made the party's vice-president only because Lalu asked him, though he had never sought any position. "What is the job of a vice-president in such parties? One person takes all decisions," he said, hinting that the concentration of power at the top has weakened democratic functioning within the party.



Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray pays tribute to party's founder Balasaheb Thackeray on his death anniversary, in Mumbai.

Operation Sindoor Was 'Only a Trailer': Army Chief Warns Pakistan as India Hardens Stance on Cross-Border Terror

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday issued a sharp and unmistakable warning to Pakistan, asserting that India will not hesitate to act decisively against cross-border terrorism. Speaking at a public event, the Army Chief declared that Pakistan continues to push militants across the border, and India is fully prepared to respond with force whenever required. He described the May 2025 military action, codenamed Operation Sindoor, as "only a trailer," indicating that a larger and stronger response awaits if Pakistan does not halt its attempts to destabilize India.



General Dwivedi's remarks come at a time of renewed tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), where Indian forces have repeatedly intercepted infiltrating groups allegedly backed by Pakistan-based terror outfits. His comment reflects a heightened security posture following a series of terror incidents that have claimed civilian lives.

"Pakistan is still indulging in cross-border terrorism," he said, underscoring the persistent threat India faces. "When Pakistan attempts to incite terrorist activities, it becomes a matter of concern for us. We speak of development and progress, but whenever Pakistan tries to obstruct that path, we are compelled to take action. We will act firmly against terrorists and their handlers. Even if there is any threat message, we know exactly whom to respond to."

General Dwivedi directly referenced the Pahalgam terror attack of 2025, in which 26 tourists were brutally killed. According to Indian security agencies, terrorists selectively targeted victims after identifying their religious identity. The incident triggered widespread national outrage and prompted the Indian Army to launch a retaliatory strike across the border.

In Operation Sindoor, Indian forces targeted several terror camps located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The operation specifically focused on dismantling infrastructure linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)—terror outfits long accused of orchestrating attacks on Indian soil. Multiple camps were destroyed, significantly denting their operational capabilities, according to intelligence sources at the time.

Labeling the operation as just a preview, the Army Chief's remarks suggest India's increasing readiness to adopt proactive strategies in counterterror operations, moving beyond defensive posturing. The statement also signals to Pakistan that India will not allow repeated provocations to go unanswered.

In contrast to the tense dynamics with Pakistan, General Dwivedi indicated a notable improvement in India's relationship with China. He stated that ties between New Delhi and Beijing have "thawed" significantly since October 2024, following a period of heightened friction along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"When political direction is clear, coordination at all levels becomes easier," he explained. Over the past year, both nations have engaged in sustained diplomatic and military dialogues aimed at reducing border tensions. The Army Chief emphasized that continued discussions about boundary issues are essential for ensuring long-term stability and preventing conflict.

He also noted that "ground-level cooperation" with Chinese troops has strengthened, suggesting that local commanders on both sides have been able to manage potential flashpoints more efficiently. The improved communication mechanisms have helped avoid escalation and contributed to a more predictable environment along the high-altitude frontier.

General Dwivedi's comments reflect India's evolving security outlook in a region marked by shifting power equations and persistent threats. While the India–China border remains sensitive, structured diplomatic engagement has led to partial disengagement in several friction zones. Meanwhile, Pakistan's alleged support for terrorist groups continues to be India's primary security challenge along its western border.

By positioning Operation Sindoor as merely an initial step, the Army Chief has delivered a calibrated yet strong message: that India will no longer tolerate any attempts by Pakistan to use terrorism as a strategic tool. His remarks aim not only to caution Islamabad but also to reassure Indian citizens that the country's security forces remain fully empowered and prepared.

As Pakistan continues to grapple with political instability and economic distress, experts believe its reliance on asymmetric warfare may persist. India's response, as outlined by General Dwivedi, signals a willingness to undertake swift and punitive action whenever national security is threatened.

Samajwadi Party Leader Azam Khan, Son Get 7 Years' Jail In Dual PAN Case

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: Senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Mohammad Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam were on Monday convicted and sentenced to jail terms of seven years each by a special MP/MLA court here in a 2019 case related to obtaining two PAN cards using different dates of birth, a prosecution officer said.

After the sentencing, Khan was taken from the Rampur court to the district jail under heavy security. While being taken to prison, he said, "What is there to say now? It is the court's decision." Asked about the court awarding a seven-year sentence each to him and his son, the 77-year-old leader replied, "It is fine. If they have considered me guilty, they have given the punishment."

Delivering the verdict, Special Magistrate (MP/MLA Court) Shobhit Bansal held both father and son guilty after examining documentary evidence and witness testimonies. Prosecution Officer Rakesh Kumar Maurya, who represented the prosecution along with advocate Swadesh Sharma, told reporters.

The veteran SP leader was released from the Sitapur jail on September 23 after 23 months. Before this, he was in jail for a straight 27 months. According to the prosecution, the seven-year jail term of Khan has been decreased by the number of days already spent in judicial custody in this case.Maurya also said the prosecution would review the judgment and may consider filing an appeal if it feels the punishment is inadequate.

Asked whether Azam Khan and Abdullah would be taken into custody following the conviction, Maurya responded, "Yes, absolutely". The case was lodged in 2019 at Rampur's Civil Lines police station by BJP leader Akash Saxena under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 468 (forgery for cheating), 471 (using forged document) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy).

According to the prosecution, Abdullah obtained a PAN card from the Income Tax Department mentioning January 1, 1993, as his date of birth, which matched the date in his school and High School certificates.The same date was also used in the records of his State Bank of India account operated by him.

The court held that Abdullah had procured the forged PAN card "in conspiracy with his father" and submitted it in official records.Maurya said the court awarded varying prison terms under different sections of the IPC. For cheating under Section 420, the court sentenced both accused to three years' simple imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000, with an additional three months' imprisonment in case of non-payment.

Under Political Pressure? Election Commission Finally Launches Special Revision in Assam Amid NRC Uncertainty

Staff Reporter, Bengaluru, 17 November: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has decided to begin a Special Revision (SR) of electoral rolls in Assam—an announcement that has triggered political debate across the country. Although officially labelled as "SR," the process mirrors the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) currently underway in 12 other states and Union Territories. This move has raised questions about whether the Commission has bowed to political pressure after initially excluding Assam from the nationwide revision.

In a notification issued on Monday, the Commission laid out a detailed schedule for the electoral roll revision in the northeastern state. According to the notification, training for election personnel will take place from November 18 to 21. From November 22 to December 20, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will conduct door-to-door verification, reorganise polling stations, and carry out voter card corrections. The draft electoral roll will be published on December 27. Citizens will be allowed to file objections or claims from December 27 to January 22, 2026. The final voter list is scheduled for publication on February 10.

Although the ECI insists that this is a standard electoral exercise, there is a significant caveat: names and addresses of D-voters (Doubtful Voters) will not be altered during the process. Moreover, the Commission reiterated that the names of such individuals cannot be removed from the voters' list without explicit directions from the Foreigners' Tribunal or a relevant court.

The political controversy began on October 27, when the ECI announced SIR in 12 states—including West Bengal—but pointedly left Assam out. At the time, Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar argued that Assam's unique situation justified a separate approach. He had stated, "The NRC in Assam is nearing completion under the supervision of the Supreme Court. The state also has its own set of rules. Therefore, Assam will be excluded from the SIR for now." He added that Assam would receive special guidelines and a separate timeline for the process.

This explanation, however, failed to satisfy political parties—particularly in West Bengal—who accused the Commission of favouritism. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee publicly questioned the decision, asking why Assam had been exempted when every other state was undergoing intensive revision. Opposition parties across the country echoed her concerns, accusing the ECI of selectively avoiding Assam due to political sensitivities linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Assam's NRC has long been a contentious issue. The Commissioner had revealed that 95 percent of the NRC work had been completed, and the remaining portion would be finalised before SIR could be initiated. However, with the current SR announcement, doubts have resurfaced: has the NRC actually been completed, or has the ECI simply chosen to proceed despite pending work?

Many political observers believe the timing of the decision is telling. The SR notification came just 21 days after the nationwide announcement of SIR—fueling speculation that mounting political pressure forced the Commission to align Assam with the rest of the country. Critics argue that if NRC-related concerns justified the delay earlier, then the sudden shift indicates a possible compromise under scrutiny and public criticism.

Political circles are now abuzz with theories that the Centre and the ECI were compelled to act after facing strong objection from opposition leaders. With national attention on voter lists, NRC, and electoral transparency, the Commission may have deemed it risky to keep Assam outside the loop indefinitely.

Despite the political noise, what remains unclear is the precise status of the NRC process in Assam. There has been no official confirmation regarding the completion of the remaining 5 percent of the work. Without clarity, the SR announcement presents a paradox: if NRC was the barrier preventing SIR earlier, has that barrier now been removed—or simply overlooked?

Mehbooba Mufti Blames Centre for 'Toxic Environment' After Delhi Blast; BJP Slams Remarks as Irresponsible

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and president of the Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (JKPDP), Mehbooba Mufti, has stirred a major political controversy by indirectly blaming the central government for the recent explosion near Delhi's Red Fort. Speaking at a public gathering in Srinagar, Mufti accused the Centre of creating a "toxic environment" across the country, which she claimed is pushing Kashmiri youth down "dangerous paths." Her remarks come at a time when investigations into the Delhi blast are underway, and no official link to Kashmir has been established. However, Mufti argued that the event reflects deeper issues the government has failed to address. "The toxic atmosphere that has been deliberately created in this country is the reason why Kashmiri youth are being driven off their path and onto dangerous roads," Mufti said during her address. She told the gathering that the problems faced by Kashmir today "echoed before the Red Fort," suggesting that the explosion was a manifestation of the unrest and alienation she believes the Centre has fostered in the region. Reaching out directly to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti urged them to refrain from actions that could harm their future. "I want to again appeal to the young people—what you are doing is wrong. After receiving so much education, taking such steps is a mistake," she said. But she insisted that the government bears the larger responsibility. "The government has created a crisis in Kashmir. They commit atrocities and then claim everything is normal. But the situation in Kashmir has revealed itself right in front of the Red Fort." Mufti further intensified her attack by accusing the central government of promoting religious polarization for political gain. "You may win votes by doing Hindu-Muslim politics, but where is the country heading? Does Delhi understand this? The nation is far bigger than any elected position," she declared. Her comments drew immediate and sharp criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which accused her of attempting to provoke instability in Jammu and Kashmir. BJP leader Ravinder Raina dismissed Mufti's remarks as "condemnable" and "irresponsible." "She is trying to create an atmosphere of unrest in Jammu and Kashmir," Raina said. "As a former chief minister, she should know better than to make such statements. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done a tremendous amount of work for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and her comments show nothing but political desperation." Raina also argued that linking the Delhi blast to Kashmir without any official findings was an attempt to politicize a sensitive security issue. "Investigations are ongoing. Instead of standing with the country at a time like this, she is spreading false narratives," he added. The political clash between Mufti and the BJP highlights the long-standing tensions between regional parties in Kashmir and the central government, especially in the years following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Mufti has consistently criticized the Centre for what she describes as "suffocating governance," increased security crackdowns, and attempts to silence regional political voices. Her latest statements have reignited debates about the Centre's Kashmir policy, national security handling, and the rising political polarization in the country. The Delhi blast, meanwhile, remains under investigation, with security agencies yet to issue an official report on its origins or perpetrators. As political fault lines deepen, Mufti's comments and the BJP's counterattack signal that the debate over Kashmir's future remains as heated as ever—intersecting national politics, regional identity, and concerns over youth radicalization. The aftermath of the Delhi blast has now become the latest flashpoint in this ongoing discourse, drawing renewed scrutiny over the government's approach to both security and social cohesion.



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India's Sumit (in blue) and South Korea's Kim Hyeontae during the men's 75kg quarter-final match at the World Boxing Cup Finals 2025, in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Monday.

KL Rahul Takes Subtle Dig at LSG Owner Sanjiv Goenka: 'Those Who Haven't Played Cricket Can't Understand What Happens on the Field'



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November : KL Rahul still appears to be carrying the weight of his controversial exit from the franchise. Now a part of the Delhi Capitals camp, the Indian batter has once again stirred debate with remarks that many believe are a veiled criticism of LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka—a figure with whom Rahul's relationship deteriorated sharply during the 2024 IPL season. In a recent interview, Rahul opened up about the immense pressure and off-field strain that comes with leading an IPL side. His comments, however, seemed to hint at the tumultuous chapter of his time at LSG. Describing the most difficult aspect of IPL captaincy, Rahul said, "The hardest part of being an IPL captain is all the meetings. You have to keep explaining what's happening to people who own the team. It drains you of all your energy. By the end of an IPL season, I feel more physically and mentally exhausted than after 10 months of international cricket." Rahul didn't stop there. He went on to point out the unique scrutiny and relentless questioning captains face in the franchise-based league: "In the IPL, every decision is questioned. Why was that call taken? Why was that player selected? If the opposition scores 200, why did we score only 120? Why did they get more spin? In international cricket or state cricket, you barely face such questions. There you answer only to the coach and maybe selectors—people who have played the game and understand that nothing in sport is guaranteed." Then came the line that triggered fresh controversy: "But someone who has never played any sport… it's hard to explain things to them." This indirect remark was immediately interpreted by many as a reference to LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka, who became the centre of a storm in 2024 after a viral incident in which he was seen publicly reprimanding Rahul after a heavy defeat. The image of a visibly agitated Goenka confronting the skipper on the ground sparked widespread criticism on social media, with fans and former cricketers calling the owner's behaviour disrespectful and inappropriate. The incident dominated headlines during the season and reportedly created a rift between the two. Although Goenka tried to diffuse the situation by hosting Rahul for a private dinner soon after, the tensions never fully resolved. Rahul later visited Kolkata to meet Goenka once again, but by then the damage had been done. Ultimately, Rahul exited the franchise, and the Delhi Capitals acquired him thereafter. The latest remarks suggest that the emotional and professional strain from that period may not have faded. Rahul's suggestion that owners who haven't played sport fail to understand on-field realities seems to align closely with the criticisms fans had levelled at Goenka during the 2024 dispute. Under Rahul's captaincy, Lucknow had performed reasonably well in their first two seasons, reaching the playoffs both times. But injuries, inconsistent form, and internal pressure shaped a much rougher 2024 campaign for the franchise. The public confrontation only added fuel to the fire, leading to speculation that the relationship between captain and management had become untenable. Rahul's comment about IPL captaincy being more mentally exhausting than almost a full year of international cricket also sheds light on the intensity of franchise involvement, where owners often play hands-on roles in strategy and team management—sometimes to the discomfort of players.

After 28 Years, Haaland Leads Norway Back to the World Cup as Italy's Nightmare Deepens

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November : Norway have finally broken a 28-year drought, securing their long-awaited return to the FIFA World Cup. The Scandinavian nation last appeared on football's grandest stage in 1998, but a new era has dawned—powered by the brilliance of their global superstar, Erling Haaland. Their 4–1 victory over Italy not only sealed Norway's qualification but also plunged the Azzurri into yet another crisis, leaving one of world football's most decorated nations staring at the possibility of missing a third consecutive World Cup. The qualification scenario was simple: Norway needed only a draw to advance, while Italy faced a near-impossible task—victory by a margin of nine goals. Yet Roberto Mancini's side began the match with urgency. In the 11th minute, Francesco Pio Esposito gave Italy a 1–0 lead, raising faint hopes of an extraordinary comeback. The Italians dominated the early phases, creating chances and showing intensity that has often been missing in recent years. However, their inability to extend the lead in the first half—despite multiple opportunities—left them vulnerable. The second half told a completely different story. Norway regrouped, reorganized, and returned with renewed attacking ambition. Their pressure paid off in the 63rd minute when Antonio Nusa scored the equalizer, a goal that dramatically altered the rhythm of the match. With Italy now forced to chase an increasingly improbable scenario, gaps began to appear at the back. That was all the invitation Erling Haaland needed. In a devastating two-minute spell, the Manchester City striker struck twice—once in the 78th minute and again in the 79th—effectively ending the contest.

Pressure Mounts on Gautam Gambhir as Former Cricketers Slam India's Selection and Pitch Strategy After Eden Defeat



Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 17 November : India's defeat at Eden Gardens has unleashed a wave of criticism directed at head coach Gautam Gambhir, with former cricketers openly questioning both the pitch strategy and the team selection. The loss, which has intensified scrutiny over India's approach to Test cricket, has sparked strong reactions from ex-players such as Venkatesh Prasad, Wasim Jaffer, and even earlier comments from former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, all of whom believe the team is drifting away from the fundamentals that once made it dominant at home. The Eden pitch itself became the first point of controversy. Designed to assist spin from the early stages, the surface backfired dramatically, exposing India's vulnerability and reducing the gap between their spin attack and that of the opposition. But beyond the pitch debate, what has angered many former cricketers is the perceived lack of clarity in the team's selection process—something they believe has been an issue for months. Former India pacer Venkatesh Prasad did not mince words while expressing his disappointment on social media. In a strongly worded post, he wrote, "We are exceptional in white-ball cricket, but due to lack of planning we are unable to make ourselves the best in Tests. There is no clarity in selection. Excessive experimentation is coming back to haunt us. Except for drawing the Test series in England, our red-ball results have been poor for the past year." Prasad's remarks were seen not only as criticism of Gambhir but also a warning to chief selector Ajit Agarkar, suggesting that the accountability must be shared. His comments reflect a broader frustration among fans and analysts who feel the constant chopping and changing has broken the continuity that once defined India's Test success. Former opener Wasim Jaffer echoed similar sentiments but focused more on the pitch strategy. Jaffer argued that India has failed to learn from earlier mistakes—particularly the disastrous Test loss to New Zealand on an excessively spin-friendly track. According to him, India repeated the same strategic blunder against South Africa at Eden Gardens. "It seems we learned nothing from the New Zealand series," Jaffer wrote. "On such pitches, the difference between our spinners and the opposition's spinners reduces drastically. We should return to the kind of pitches used in 2016–17, when Virat Kohli was captain and New Zealand and England toured India." Jaffer highlighted how those pitches offered a balanced contest—spin came into play, but not at the cost of basic batting technique, allowing India's superior skill to shine through.

Rajasthan Royals Appoint Kumar Sangakkara as Head Coach Ahead of IPL Season, Replacing Rahul Dravid



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November : Rajasthan Royals have entered the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season with a series of bold structural and strategic changes, the most prominent of which is the appointment of Sri Lankan cricket legend Kumar Sangakkara as the franchise's new head coach. The announcement comes in the wake of Rahul Dravid's departure from the role after a challenging season in which the Royals struggled to find momentum. Dravid, who took over as head coach last season, had a difficult tenure at the helm. Under his leadership, Rajasthan managed to win only four out of their 14 league-stage matches, finishing ninth on the points table. The underwhelming performance prompted the Royals' management to rethink their leadership direction ahead of the mini-auction and the 2025 IPL season. Dravid, who previously served as the franchise's mentor years earlier, stepped away from the position amid the reshuffle. In addition to the change in coaching personnel, Rajasthan Royals also made significant decisions regarding player retention. In a surprising move, the franchise released several key names, including captain Sanju Samson, Sri Lankan spinner Maheesh Theekshana, and star all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga. These decisions indicate that the Royals are preparing for a deeper rebuild, possibly eyeing a new core for the upcoming competition. Sangakkara, who has been associated with the franchise in a leadership role since 2021, now finds himself elevated from Director of Cricket to Head Coach, a dual responsibility that reflects the management's trust in his strategic vision. His tenure as Director of Cricket has been one of the most successful phases for the franchise in recent years. Under his mentorship, Rajasthan Royals reached the IPL final in 2022 and secured playoff berths in both the 2022 and 2024 editions. Although the team fell short of securing a title, the consistency they achieved under Sangakkara was seen as a sign of solid progress. The 46-year-old former Sri Lankan captain has long been celebrated for his cricketing intelligence, calm temperament, and ability to build cohesive teams. The Royals appear confident that the blend of his experience, tactical depth, and familiarity with the squad will steer them toward a fresh competitive edge.

Jannik Sinner Ends Season in Style, Defeats Carlos Alcaraz in Straight Sets to Win ATP Finals in Turin

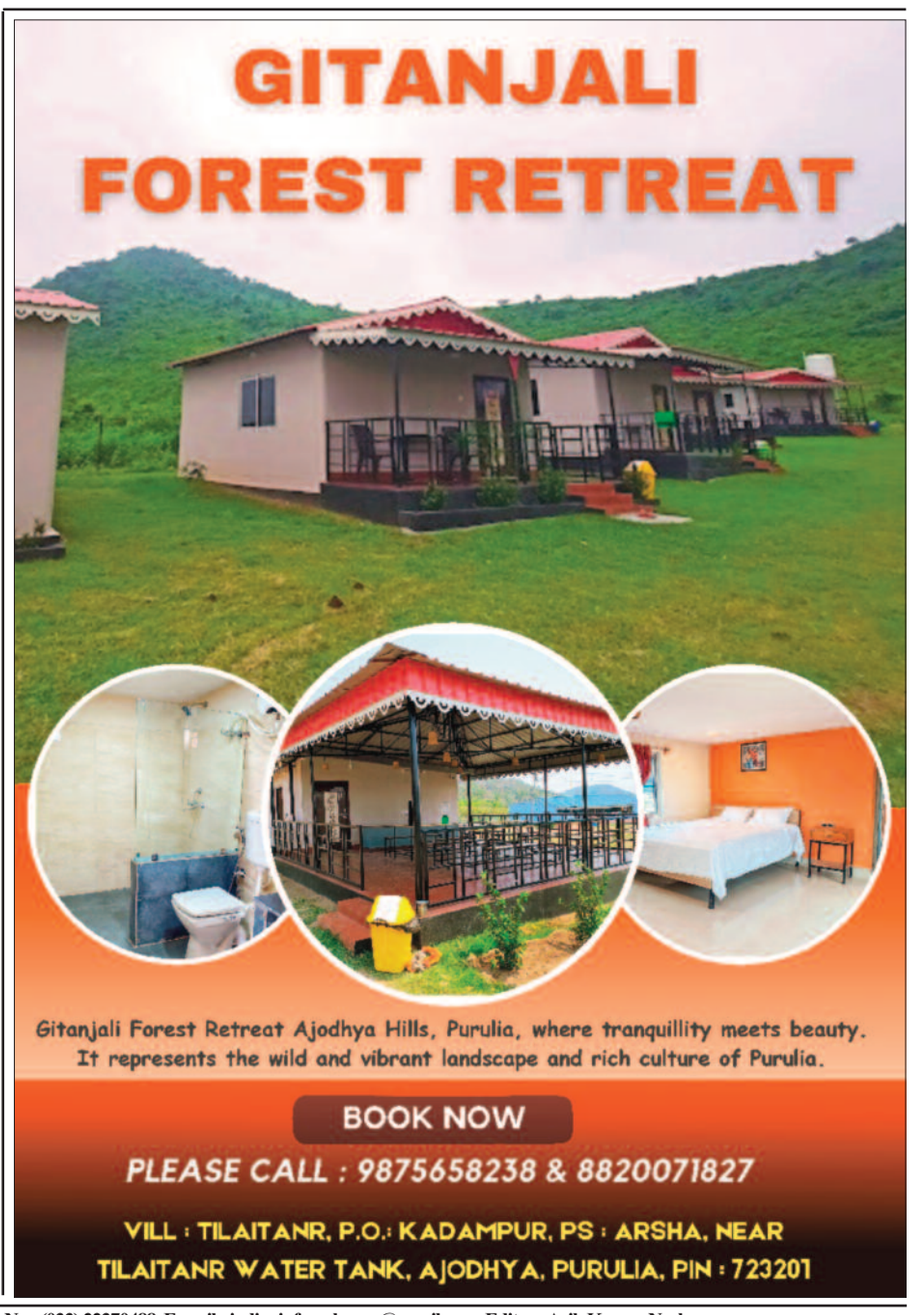


Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 17 November : Jannik Sinner closed out his year on a high note, delivering a commanding performance to defeat world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets (7-6, 7-5) at the ATP Finals in Turin. The victory held special significance for the Italian star, who had previously fallen to Alcaraz in a dramatic four-set battle at the US Open final. This time, however, buoyed by a roaring home crowd and backed by his entire family, Sinner avenged that loss in emphatic fashion. For Sinner, the atmosphere inside Turin's cavernous Pala Alpitour was unmatched. Although his family rarely attends his matches at Grand Slams or international tournaments, they made a rare full-strength appearance for the year-end championship on home soil. In front of them—and thousands of passionate Italian fans waving flags, chanting his name, and turning the arena electric—Sinner produced tennis of the highest quality. The opening set was closely contested, with both players holding serve to force a tiebreak. Sinner, calm under pressure and showing remarkable control on the indoor court, edged ahead in the breaker, taking the first set with precision hitting and tactical patience. His ability to absorb Alcaraz's pace and counter with depth made the difference in crucial moments. The second set brought its own drama. Sinner faltered early, conceding a service break due to a couple of unforced errors. For a moment, the match threatened to tilt in Alcaraz's favour. But Sinner, who has demonstrated tremendous mental growth this year, quickly steadied himself. Refusing to let the slip disrupt his rhythm or momentum, he broke back to level the set. With the crowd surging behind him, Sinner elevated his game further, attacking Alcaraz's serve and sealing the match with a decisive break at 6-5. Following the defeat, Alcaraz was gracious in his praise, acknowledging that he had lost to one of the best indoor players of the modern era. "I played well today," he said, "but I was up against someone who hasn't lost an indoor match in nearly two years. It's never easy to beat him. Sinner deserved the win. My congratulations to him." The respect between the two young stars was evident—a rivalry that promises to shape the future of men's tennis for years to come. Sinner, meanwhile, was visibly moved as he addressed the crowd after being crowned champion. "It's been a long week," he said. "The atmosphere was incredible every single day. I am happy that I could finish with a smile on everyone's face." His humility resonated with the fans who had supported him tirelessly through the tournament. This victory caps off a remarkable year for Sinner, who reached all four Grand Slam finals—a rare feat in the modern era. He claimed the Australian Open and Wimbledon crowns, but suffered losses in the French Open and US Open finals. These results, combined with his extraordinary consistency, had kept him in contention for the world No. 1 ranking for much of the season. However, consecutive misses at Roland Garros and Flushing Meadows meant that Alcaraz retained his grip on the top spot, with Sinner finishing the year ranked No. 2. Despite that, the Italian's triumph in Turin marks another milestone in his meteoric rise. The ATP Finals had not always been kind to him; the last time he reached the final in 2023, he lost to the legendary Novak Djokovic.

East Bengal Women Shine in AFC Champions League Debut, Beat Iranian Giants Bam Khatoon FC 3–1



Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 17 November : East Bengal's women's football team has carried forward the momentum of their remarkable previous season, beginning their AFC Women's Champions League main-round campaign with a spirited and commanding victory. The Kolkata giants registered a 3–1 win over Iran's formidable Bam Khatoon FC in their opening group-stage match in Wuhan, China, marking a historic start to their maiden appearance in the competition's main phase. Having already impressed by defeating Cambodia's Phnom Penh Crown FC and Hong Kong's Kitchee SC in the qualifiers, East Bengal entered the main round with confidence—but the challenge awaiting them was far tougher. Bam Khatoon FC are no ordinary opponents; the Iranian powerhouse has won its domestic league title 11 times and is known for its structured, physical style of play. Yet, it was East Bengal who looked like the seasoned side on the continental stage. Head coach Anthony Andrew's squad stepped onto the pitch with aggression, precision, and tactical discipline, refusing to play the underdog. From the very first minute, the red-and-gold brigade pressed high, moved quickly, and dominated possession with fearless attacking football. The pressure paid off almost immediately. In just the fourth minute, East Bengal took the lead through Shilki Hemam, who delivered one of the finest goals of the match. After Fazila Ikwaput's initial shot was blocked by the Iranian defenders, the rebound fell kindly to Shilki outside the box. With perfect technique and power, she unleashed a blistering strike that crashed into the net—her first-ever goal in the competition. The early breakthrough set the tone for East Bengal's aggressive approach. As the match progressed, Bam Khatoon attempted to regroup, but East Bengal continued to dictate the tempo. In the 32nd minute, the Indian side doubled their lead through Fazila Ikwaput, who displayed outstanding speed and composure. Collecting the ball near the halfway line, Fazila accelerated past the Iranian backline, evaded the goalkeeper with a smooth touch, and slotted the ball into the net with a low finish. It was a moment of pure brilliance that showcased the Ugandan forward's exceptional quality and striking instinct. Despite East Bengal's dominance, Bam Khatoon managed to pull one back before halftime. A handball inside the penalty area by an East Bengal defender earned the Iranian side a spot kick. Mona Hamoudi made no mistake from the penalty spot, sending her shot confidently past the goalkeeper to make it 2–1. The first half ended with the Indian side holding a narrow but well-deserved lead. The second half turned into a tight, physical contest, with both teams creating opportunities and pushing hard to control the midfield. Two minutes after the restart, Fazila came agonisingly close to restoring East Bengal's two-goal cushion. Using her strength and skill, she cut through the Iranian defence with a solo run and fired a goal-bound shot—only for a Bam Khatoon defender to pull off a last-second clearance right on the goal line. As the minutes ticked by, East Bengal maintained their shape and resisted the Iranian waves of attack. Their patience paid off in the 87th minute, when Resty Nanziri sealed the contest with a spectacular long-range strike. From well outside the penalty area, Nanziri unleashed a powerful shot that soared into the net, catching the goalkeeper by surprise and igniting celebrations among the East Bengal contingent. The 3–1 victory is not just a strong start—it is a statement. East Bengal have proven that they are not merely participants in the AFC Women's Champions League; they are competitors capable of defeating seasoned continental teams. The win will undoubtedly boost the confidence of the players and reaffirm the tactical acumen of head coach Anthony Andrews.



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