

The Telegraph



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FIESTA

10 trends to look out for next year P2



THE TELEGRAPH
WISHES ITS READERS

HAPPY DIWALI

LONG
STORY

All that bamboo, ever wonder where it comes from? P15

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CALCUTTA SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023 ₹ 7.00

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IN BRIEF

3 die in houseboat fire

SRINAGAR: Three tourists from Bangladesh died in a massive fire that broke out in a group of house-boats in Srinagar on Sunday. Five houseboats and seven houses were burnt down. **NATION**

PLAY OF THE DAY
The first ball, a half volley, that Mitchell Marsh faced from Bangladesh was despatched through extra cover for a four. A cracking start that would lead to a sparkling innings of 177 not out off 132 balls. The all-rounder hit 16 more boundaries and nine sixes as Australia chased down 307.

QUOTE

The ED today has become a wing of the BJP.... First, they call a person corrupt but when he joins the BJP, they become fine

MEHBOOBAMUFTI

Lights out on largest hospital

Gaza babies bear bombing brunt

RAJA ABDULRAHIM

Jerusalem: Gaza's main hospital suffered a complete power outage on Saturday as Israeli forces closed in on it and the Gazan health ministry said a number of patients had died there, including a premature baby.

Al-Shifa and some other Gaza City hospitals have increasingly come under Israeli siege over the past few days. Hundreds of seriously ill and wounded patients and displaced people have been stranded on the grounds while intense, close-quarters combat between Israeli troops and fighters from Hamas, the armed Palestinian group that controls Gaza, rages in areas around them.

Israeli tanks and troops have surrounded several hospitals in the territory and attacked them, hospital administrators and the health ministry said on Saturday. An Israeli military spokesman said on Friday



A woman holds a child as Palestinians are evacuated from the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. (Reuters picture)

day of the hospitals that "we're slowly closing in on them" and urged people to leave.

The Israeli military has accused Hamas of operating an underground command centre below Al-Shifa, using the hospital as a shield. Both the hospital's administration and Hamas have denied the allegation.

By Saturday, Al-Shifa was

struggling to keep patients alive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

Double curtain comes down on Babar's men

INDRANIL MAJUMDAR

Calcutta: The end of the Pakistan cricket team's World Cup campaign has also meant the abrupt end of their stay in India.

The entire contingent, including players, support staff and journalists, will have to leave India within 48 hours of the conclusion of their match against England on Saturday. The team is scheduled to leave the city on Sunday morning on their way home via New Delhi.

The boy's father said the Muzaffarnagar district administration had arranged for the Class I student's admission to a school in Muzaffarnagar City shortly after the apex court raped the state government for failing to comply with orders to find a new school for him.

He said the new school was 15km from their home, but the district authorities would bear all the costs and arrange transport.

What this means is that Babar Azam and his team will not be allowed to stay back and watch the final or visit places of their choice before returning home.

Only a day ago, former



Mick Jagger, singer, songwriter, actor, filmmaker, dancer and one of the founder members of the Rolling Stones, watching the ICC World Cup England vs Pakistan game at the Eden Gardens on Saturday.

Picture by Sanat Kr Sinha
India opener and regular Pakistan batsman Virender Sehwag had trolled Babar's men: "Pakistan Zindabhaag! Have a safe flight back home... Bye Bye Pakistan."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ►

Pous Mela on way back

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

Calcutta: The acting vice-chancellor of Visva-Bharati, Sanjoy Kumar Mallik, has within two days of assuming office initiated the process of organising the annual Pous Mela, which had not been held for three consecutive years during the tenure of his predecessor Bidyut Chakrabarty.

The possibility of the resumption of the fair — one of the biggest events in the varsity town — not only brought relief to local artisans, hoteliers and traders but elicited loud cheers from the residents of Bolpur and Santiniketan to whom it's an event as big as the Durga Puja.

"The VC spoke with the Karmi Parishad (the outfit that helps organise Visva-Bharati events) on Saturday regarding the Pous Mela. A formal meeting will be called soon to discuss the issues relating to organising the event," said Mahua Banerjee, the university's officiating public relations officer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 ►

INDIA'S LARGEST SELLING HERBAL BODY OIL



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jac OLIVOL BODY OIL



Sikh man, son killed in Canada gang clash

Ottawa: An Indian-origin Sikh man, described as a "higher-level figure" in the organised crime scene in Canada, and his 11-year-old son were shot and killed in what police have called a "sick and twisted" escalation of gang violence in the city of Edmonton.

Harpreet Singh Uppal, 41, and his son were gunned down outside a fuel station on Thursday afternoon in a brazen, daytime shooting, Edmonton Police Service acting Superintendent Colin Derksen told the media on Friday.

The boy's young friend, who was in Uppal's car at the time, survived with no physical injuries. Derksen said the police do not know whether the shooter or shooters knew children were in the car when they began following Uppal.

"But what we do know, sadly, is that once the shooter or the shooters learned that the son was there, they intentionally shot and killed him," the *Edmonton Journal* quoted Derksen as saying.

He added killing children was once a "line in the sand" gang members refused to cross, but that is changing.

"That is sick and twisted," Derksen said. "I think most gang members would agree."

Police have not released the name of the boy, pending an autopsy. Derksen said a suspect vehicle — a stolen 2012 BMW X6 — was located on fire north of Beaumont. No one was located inside the vehicle and no injuries were reported.

PTI

DEAR WEEKLY LOTTERY ₹1 CRORE WON BY NORTH 24 PARGANAS RESIDENT

Mr. JAYANTA BISWAS from NORTH 24 PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL has won Rs. 1 Crore as first prize

in Dear Weekly Lottery in the draw held on 29.09.2023. His winning ticket number is 93A 93832. He has submitted his prize-winning ticket along with the prize claim form to the Nodal Officer, Nagaland State Lotteries located at Kolkata. "It gives great impact on the life of anyone who has become Crorepati through Dear Lottery. I feel extremely happy and financially comfortable after winning One Crore rupees of prize money in Dear Lottery. I extend my gratitude to Nagaland State Lotteries", said the winner.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL PWD TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer, PWD, Alipurduar Division invites online e-tender for the work of NIT no. 14 of 2023-24 of EE/PWD/APDD. Setting up of one vulnerable witness deposition room (VWDR) including toilet and lift Facility at Addl. District and Session Judge Court, Alipurduar. Project ID: JD-10232406953000. Tender ID: 2023_W3PWD_602140_1. Estimated Amount 10,59,473.00. Bid submission start date: 11.11.2023 from 12.00 PM. Bid submission closing date: 25.11.2023 at 04.00 PM. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT & Tender documents may be downloaded from http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/-EE/PWD, Alipurduar Division. ICA-T23148/Q/2023

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Bid ref. no.: WBMSC/NIT-651/2023; Dated: 08/11/2023
"Annual Comprehensive Maintenance of Two nos. 90 kVA online UPS after initially one time repair of 30kVA JPS module for the period of One year at Bolpur SHH, Birbhum." Last date of submission of bid (online): 22.11.2023 upto 3.00 PM. The tender document can be downloaded from www.wbmsc.gov.in or after 09.11.2023 at 2.00 PM. Clarification requests, if any, may be sent to cpe@wbmrc.gov.in Sd/- General Manager, WBMSC & Joint Secretary to the Govt of W.B. ICA-T23126(2)/2023

Reuters

doubt on the figures of health officials in Gaza, given Hamas' control over the territory.

But in recent days, several top officials in the Biden administration have acknowledged that thousands of Palestinian civilians have been killed since Israel's bombardment of Gaza began.

They have declined to offer their own estimates, saying they are unable to verify the data provided by Gaza's health ministry.

On Tuesday, the US national security spokesperson, John Kirby, told reporters,

"There have been many thousands killed," and on Wednesday, Barbara Leaf, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, told a House committee that the civilian death toll in Gaza could be even higher than the numbers that Gaza's authorities have released.

The UN, rights groups, and aid organisations have continued to cite the ministry, while also saying that they cannot independently confirm its figures.

But they say the ministry's death tolls have been found to be consistent with their own investigations after past conflicts, and a US state department report this year cited the ministry's figures.

New York Times News Service

Proposals include asking militants to free all abductees in exchange for pause in hostilities

Gaza babies bear bombing brunt

FROM PAGE 1



A shell-shocked Palestinian girl is helped as others search for casualties after an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. (Reuters)

The hospital has 37 premature babies in incubators, Medhat Abbas, the director-general of Gaza's health ministry, said in a text message on Saturday, adding that medical staff had been performing manual artificial respiration on some of them for three hours.

The power outage is the result of an Israeli siege of Gaza for the past month that has cut off water, food, electricity and fuel.

Israel imposed the siege days after an attack on Israel by Hamas that killed more than 1,000 people, according to the Israeli authorities.

The lack of power has forced surgeons to operate by flashlight and doctors and nurses to run ventilators by hand to keep patients alive.

Food, water and medicine are also in extremely short supply and medical workers have reported that they have had to perform some surgeries, including amputations and brain operations, without anaesthesia.

New York Times News Service



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Riyadh on Saturday. (Iran's Presidency/WANA via Reuters)

Iran hails Hamas for its resistance

Dubai: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday hailed the Palestinian group Hamas for its war against Israel and urged Islamic countries to launch sanctions against Israel.

"There is no other way but to resist Israel, we kiss the hands of Hamas for its resistance against Israel," Raisi said in his address to a joint Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh. He also called on Islamic countries to impose oil and goods sanctions on Israel.

"Gaza is not an arena for words. It should be for action," Raisi said at Tehran airport before departing for the summit.

"Today, the unity of the Islamic countries is very important," he added.

It is the first visit to Saudi Arabia by an Iranian head of state since Tehran and Riyadh ended years of hostility under a China-brokered deal in March.

"The summit will send a strong message to warmongers in the region and result in the cessation of war crimes in Palestine," Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, who is accompanying Raisi, was quoted as saying by the Padotat government website.

"America says it doesn't want an expansion of the war and has sent messages to Iran and several countries [to this effect]. But these statements are not consistent with America's actions," Raisi said in the televised comments at Tehran airport.

"The war machine in Gaza is in the hands of America, which is preventing a ceasefire in Gaza and expanding the war. The world must see the true face of America," Raisi said.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Friday condemned "what the Gaza Strip is facing from military assault, targeting of civilians, the violations of international law by the Israeli occupation authorities".

Reuters

Israel mulls Hamas deal on hostages

New York: Hamas and Israel are negotiating two hostage release proposals, one involving a small number of people and one that could involve 100 or more civilians being held in the Gaza Strip, according to officials briefed on the talks.

Hamas and other Palestinian groups are holding around 240 people hostage in Gaza, according to Israeli officials and others briefed on the talks. A little less than half of them are civilians, and the larger deal being negotiated would involve the release of all of those, one official said.

Under one proposal being discussed, Hamas would release 10 to 20 civilian hostages — Israeli women and children as well as foreigners, including Americans — in exchange for a brief pause in hostilities, one official briefed on the talks said. That could be followed by a larger release of about 100 civilians if terms are met.

In

exchange for releasing all the civilians, Hamas is asking for a brief pause, more humanitarian aid, fuel for hospitals and the release of women and children in Israeli prisons, the official said, adding that Israeli authorities had expressed uncertainty about releasing their prisoners.

Qatar, which hosts the political offices of Hamas, has been the main mediator in the talks, and senior US officials are also involved.

US officials have broadly endorsed the notion of Israel pausing its attacks in Gaza for a hostage release, saying this would allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza and the hostages to leave. On Friday, secretary of state Antony Blinken said at a news conference in New Delhi, "We'll continue to focus our efforts on getting our hostages home."

The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel declined to comment. Hamas has refused to release any of the military-age Israeli men it is holding in Gaza, according to the officials.

One official said a complicating factor was that Hamas had told Qatari negotiators that it held 20 or fewer civilians and that the others were being held by Palestinian Islamic Jihad or other groups or individuals in Gaza who are not part of the Hamas command structure. The official said the governments involved in the talks had not independently

reached a deal.

William Burns, the CIA director, and David Barnea, the chief of Israel's Mossad, were in Doha, Qatar, on Thursday for talks on the hostages.

While US officials have not met with Hamas directly, Qatari officials have been negotiating with them on the proposed hostage release.

US and Israeli officials are deeply sceptical of various Hamas claims about the hostages in Gaza, including the group's assertions that they do not hold many of the civilian captives, according to officials briefed on the talks. Among the foreign hostages were 23 Thai citizens who were working on kibbutzim in southern Israel.

Hamas fighters killed 32 Thai workers on October 7.

New York Times News Service

Israel lowers Oct. 7 death toll to 1,200

New York: Israel revised its estimated official death toll of the October 7 Hamas attacks, lowering the number to about 1,200 people, down from more than 1,400, a spokesperson for the Israeli foreign ministry said on Friday night.

The spokesperson, Lior Hayat, said the original figure had been an "initial estimate" that had now been updated. He declined to provide further details on the change.

For weeks, Israeli officials had said that more than 1,400 people were killed in the attacks launched from Gaza, in which Hamas-led gunmen swept into more than 20 Israeli towns and military bases and opened fire on people in their homes, on the streets, at a music festival, and at other locations.

Others were killed when the attackers set their cars and homes on fire.

Israeli health officials say they have struggled to identify many Israelis and foreigners who were killed in the attacks and to exclude the remains of those they considered to have been attackers from the official toll.

Some of the people killed were burned alive or their bodies were otherwise mutilated, requiring extensive testing to establish their identities, according to officials at Israel's main forensic institute.



Smoke rises over Gaza as seen from southern Israel on Saturday. (Reuters)

Reuters

Israel's original official toll from the attacks had not come under the level of scrutiny that the US has applied to the death toll compiled by the authorities in the Gaza Strip, where thousands have died in weeks of heavy Israeli bombardment and a ground invasion.

The health ministry in the Gaza Strip, which Hamas controls, has said that more than 11,000 people have been killed since the war began last month, including more than 4,500 children.

The Gaza death toll has been subject to debate among US and Israeli officials.

Some, including US President Joe Biden, have cast

Place : Kolkata
Date : 11th November, 2023

Cong congratulates 'son of Yediyurappa'

'Dynasty' boot on BJP foot

K.M. RAKESH

Bangalore: The oft-repeated dynasty politics allegation that the BJP has been heaping on the Congress has come back to bite it with B.S. Yediyurappa's son Vijayendra Yediyurappa being appointed as the Karnataka-BJP president.

Never to lose an opportunity to slam dynasts in Opposition parties such as the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, the allegation has boomeranged on the BJP in Karnataka ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

The state Congress unit congratulated the "son of Yediyurappa" in a tongue-in-cheek comment on X, in a clear indication that Vijayendra would find it tough to shake off the dynast label.

"Congratulations to 'son of Yediyurappa' who has been appointed as the new state president of BJP because he is the 'son of Yediyurappa'. We appeal to the people of the state to believe the lie that 'there is no family politics in the BJP,'" the Congress commented in Kannada.

The second son of Yediyurappa, 47-year-old Vijayendra, who was elected from his father's long-nurtured Shikarpura Assembly constituency in May, was appointed party president on Friday.

Lavanya Ballal Jain, state Congress general secretary in charge of media and communications, gave a long list of dynasts in the BJP. "It's easy for the PM to make fun



BS Yediyurappa with son Vijayendra on Friday

NCTE allows maternity leave to students

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has allowed students of its approved colleges to avail themselves of maternity and childcare leave during the course of their study.

The duration of their course will be extended accordingly, the NCTE has said in a recent letter to state governments. It has relaxed the duration under the norms and standard of all teacher education programmes.

The eligible candidates shall be entitled to avail the maternity leave/child care leave as per guidelines issued by UGC/State/UT government/Affiliating body concerned," the letter said.

Nearly 17,000 colleges have been approved by the NCTE for running teacher education courses.

Under the MPhil/PhD regulations 2016, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already provided the benefit to research students in the universities for up to 240 days.

In 2021, the commission extended the benefits to undergraduate and postgraduate students. It requested all higher education institutions to frame rules for granting this facility to students. The institutions have been asked to allow relaxations or exemptions in attendance and date for submitting examination forms for such students.

3 tourists die in houseboat fire

MUZAFFAR RAINA

Srinagar: Three tourists from Bangladesh died in a massive fire in a group of houseboats in Srinagar on Sunday that also reduced five houseboats and seven residential houses to ashes.

The houseboats caught fire early in the morning, prompting authorities to launch an operation to rescue the civilians and douse the flames.

"The fire has killed three Bangladeshi tourists, who were all male. I don't have their names as their documents got burnt during the fire," Mohammad Asif, owner of the Safina group of houseboats, told **The Telegraph**.



The houseboats after the fire in the Dal Lake on Saturday. (PTI picture)

"We have lost five houseboats and the seven adjoining residential structures worth around Rs 20 crore. I was in Delhi and returned in the afternoon following the tragic incident."

Police identified the deceased tourists as Anindaya Kowshal, Das Gupta and Mohammad Moinud.

The police said the conflagration quickly spread and engulfed five houseboats — Safina, Sabreena, Young Gulshan, Lala Rukh and Khar Palace.

"Seven residential huts and neighbouring houses in the vicinity were also gutted in the ensuing blaze," a police spokesman said.

During the day, deputy commissioner of Srinagar Ajiaz Asad, who visited the spot, had said they had rescued all the civilians.

"Five houseboats opposite Ghat number 9 and some adjoining huts were damaged

in the fire. All the agencies including the SDRF (State Disaster Response Force), Jammu and Kashmir police and the fire and emergency services department tried to bring the fire under control. Residents and tourists were immediately rescued and taken to safe places," Asad told reporters.

"Additionally, four more houseboats could have caught fire but were immediately relocated because of which further damage was prevented. As I said, no loss of life was allowed."

The death of three foreign tourists has put a question mark on the claims of authorities of doing enough to prevent the loss of lives.

Twin suicides at Brahma Kumaris ashram in Agra

PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA

Lucknow: Two sisters who used to stay at a Brahma Kumaris ashram in Agra committed suicide on Friday night, leaving behind two notes alleging extortion and illegal activities at the spiritual organisation that has its branches across the country.

Police said the sisters — 37-year-old Ekta Kumari and 34-year-old Shikha Kumari — addressed their suicide notes to other members of the Jagner ashram and appealed to chief minister Yogi Adityanath to ensure that the culprits got life sentence like godman-turned-convicted rapist Asaram Bapu.

The police said the sisters had named four persons from Agra Dholpur and Gwalior's Brahma Kumaris ashrams and blamed them for their suicide.

"They have stated that a man cheated both of them and brought them to the ashram in Agra after fraudulently taking

Rs 7 lakh from them. Ekta has stated that the same person took Rs 18 lakh from older women members by one or the other means in the name of development of the ashram but he never did any work there. Some persons sexually exploited some other inmates in some ashrams. Ekta has written that such persons and their associates should be awarded life term the way it happened with Asaram," said a police officer in Lucknow on the condition of anonymity.

Sonu Kumar, the younger brother of the two women, told reporters in Agra on Saturday: "A senior inmate called me at 11.18pm last night and told me that my sisters had committed suicide. My sisters had sent the suicide notes to the WhatsApp group of the ashram. I rushed to the ashram from my village Jagner and found them hanging from the ceiling with their saris."

Sonu's ancestral village is 13km from the ashram in Agra district.

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Website: www.veedolindia.com; www.veedol.com
CIN: L23209WB1992PLC004357

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Company at its 342nd Meeting held on Saturday, 11th November, 2023 has approved payment of First Interim Dividend on the ordinary shares of the Company @ Rs. 20/- per share (1000%) for the financial year 2023-24. The dividend will be paid within 30 days of its declaration to those shareholders whose names appear –

a. as Beneficial Owners as on Tuesday, 21st November, 2023, as per the list to be furnished by the Depositories in respect of the shares held in electronic form; and

b. as Members in the Register of Members of the Company as on Tuesday, 21st November, 2023, in respect of the shares held in physical form.

By Order of the Board
For TIDE WATER OIL CO. (INDIA) LTD.
Sd/-
(Saptarsi Ganguli)
Company Secretary
FCS 12416

Place : Kolkata
Date : 11th November, 2023

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Kolkata-700 032
66th ANNUAL CONVOCATION
Recipients of Degrees for Examination Results published after 06th December 2022 and to be published within 05th December 2023 are eligible to apply for attending the forthcoming Annual Convocation in person, to be held on 24th December, 2023. Recipients of degrees who are willing to attend the Convocation are requested to visit our website : www.jadavpuruniversity.in and www.jaduniv.edu.in for detailed information & login. Registrar

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and will be closed on 13th & 14th Nov for Diwali/Bhai Dooj. Stores will reopen from 15th Nov.

Mamata Banerjee

Chief Minister, West Bengal

New Delhi: The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has allowed students of its approved colleges to avail themselves of maternity and childcare leave during the course of their study.

The duration of their course will be extended accordingly, the NCTE has said in a recent letter to state governments. It has relaxed the duration under the norms and standard of all teacher education programmes.

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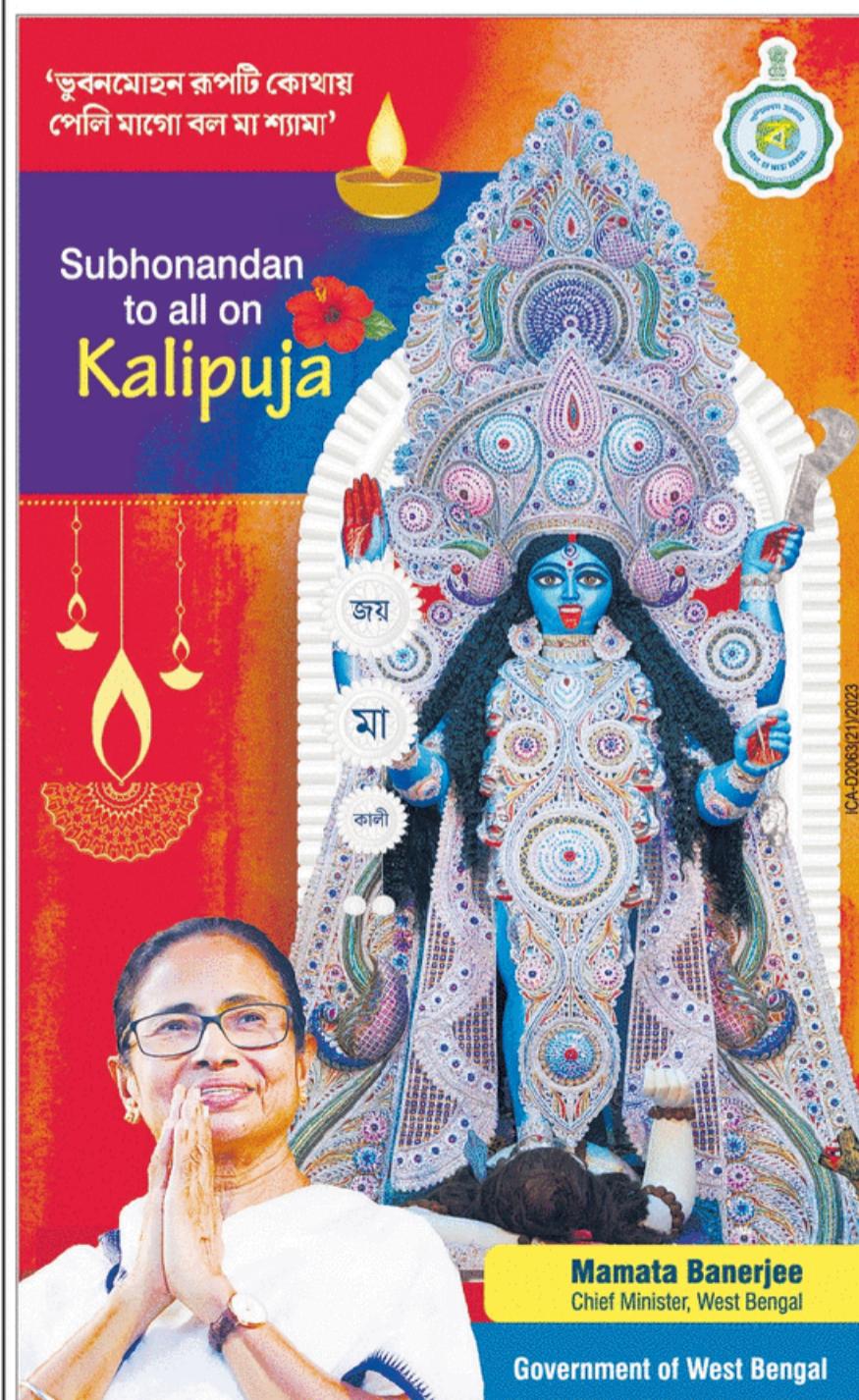
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In 2021, the commission extended the benefits to undergraduate and postgraduate students. It requested all higher education institutions to frame rules for granting this facility to students. The institutions have been asked to allow relaxations or exemptions in attendance and date for submitting examination forms for such students.

Subhonandan to all on Kalipuja

'ভূবনমোহন কাপটি কোথায়
পেলি মাগো বল মা শ্যামা'



Mamata Banerjee
Chief Minister, West Bengal

Government of West Bengal

Khushiyon ki Bahar

Apke Dwar

Happy Deepavali

Canara HOME LOAN 8.40% p.a.*

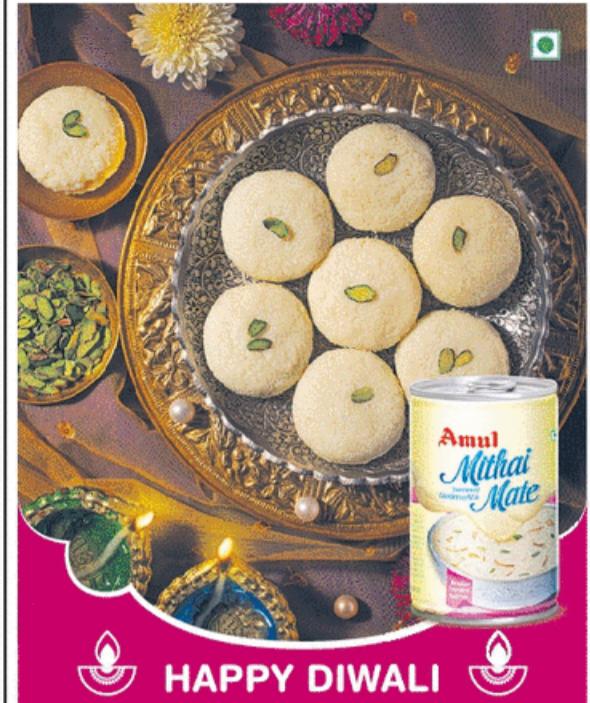
Canara VEHICLE LOAN 8.70% p.a.*

SCAN TO APPLY & GET INSTANT APPROVAL

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Together We Can

*T&C Apply



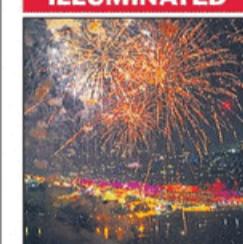
IN BRIEF

Student's finger chopped

■ NEW DELHI: A Class XII student was allegedly assaulted and his finger chopped off by his senior for talking to a female classmate in Delhi's Dwarka South, police said. The accused had studied in the same school and already graduated. The alleged incident occurred on October 21. The victim was so scared that he did not tell his parents about the assault and had claimed that his finger was chopped off by a motorcycle chain, the police said. On Friday, he disclosed the incident to his parents, who lodged a police complaint. PTI

5 die in collision

■ VANIYAMBADI (TN): At least five people were killed and around 60 passengers injured when a state government bus and an omnibus collided head-on on the Chennai-Bangalore national highway on Saturday, police said. PTI

ILLUMINATED

Fireworks during Deepotsav in Ayodhya on Saturday. (PTI)

Jumbo kills 1

■ BHAWANIPATNA: A 45-year-old woman was trampled to death by an elephant in Odisha's Kalahandi district, police said on Saturday. Nilanti Majhi, a tribal, came face to face with the wild elephant when she was going to a stream for washing clothes on Friday evening. The elephant chased her and trampled her to death. PTI

Fishermen freed

■ AMRITSAR: Eighty Indian fishermen who were recently released from a jail in Pakistan have been handed over to the BSF at the Attari-Wagha border here, officials said on Saturday. The fishermen were held three years ago after their boats slipped into Pakistan through territorial waters in the Arabian Sea, an officer said. PTI

UP FOR SALE

A vendor sells flowers in New Delhi on Saturday. (PTI)

Septic tank death

■ BHAVNAGAR: A sanitation worker of Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation died, while another took ill while cleaning a septic tank on the campus of a government laboratory in Bhavnagar city of Gujarat, an official said on Saturday. The incident occurred on the campus of the Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute on Friday. PTI

Firecrackers seized

■ BHADOHI (UP): Illegal firecrackers worth over Rs 15 lakhs were seized from a house in a densely populated area here and two people were arrested, police said on Saturday. Santosh Yadav and Ankur Baranwal tried to escape by jumping from the roof but were caught. The duo did not have any licence for selling the firecrackers, the police said. PTI

Manipur's students cry for help

UMANAND JAISWAL

the tribal-dominated hills.

A JSB leader said the march was held to highlight the alleged negligence of Kuki-Zo students by the state government and seek immediate central government intervention to address concerns that they have been flagging repeatedly.

They submitted to the deputy commissioner a two-page memorandum meant for Union home minister Amit Shah that said "even our students have been victimised in the ongoing unrest and have been subjected to ethnic cleansing in the (Meitei-majority) valley districts".

It added that "the lack of any tangible steps in addressing the grievances of our students has been spawning an increasing feeling of alienation and disaffection".

The "March Against Education Negligence" was organised by the Joint Students' Body (JSB), a federation of students' organisations belonging to the larger Zo community and headquartered in Kuki-Zo-majority Churachandpur because of the unrest," he said.

A NIT Imphal student said that 51 displaced students of the institute were struggling to adjust to the sporadic online classes.

"There is no place for us to attend offline and practical classes in Churachandpur. We have sent at least 19 representations to the authorities in the state and at the Centre but to no avail," he said.

Efforts to contact state government spokespersons and officials proved futile.

The memorandum to Shah, signed by JSB convenor N. Tonsing and joint secretary S. Taithul, said Saturday while most Meiteis have left

the violence between the largely Hindu Meiteis and the mostly Christian Kuki-Zo tribals, continuing since May 3, has left at least 181 people dead and over 67,000 displaced. Kuki-Zos have largely fled the Meitei-majority Imphal Valley while most Meiteis have left

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Tribals pile Sarna code heat on PM

ANIMESH BISOOE

Jamshedpur: Tribal groups of Jharkhand continue to pile heat on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a formal announcement on the separate Sarna religious code for tribals ahead of his visit to Khunti to launch Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra on November 15.

On Saturday, two tribal leaders of the state threatened self-immolation on the evening of November 15 if Modi did not make any announcement on the Sarna religious code.

"Kanhu Ram Tuddu, a native of Sonua block in West Singhbhum district, and Chandra Mohan Mardi from Peterwar block in Bokaro district have threatened of self-immolation at 4pm on November 15 if the Prime Minister fails to make any concrete announcement on the Sarna dharma code," said former BJP MP from Mayurbhanj (in Odisha) and Adivasi Sengh Abhiyan national president Salkhan Murmu in Jamshedpur.

Mardi said: "So far the Prime Minister has only spoken about his *Mann ki Baat*. However, he is the first Prime Minister to be visiting Ulihatu, the birthplace of tribal icon Birsa Munda, on November 15 (the birth anniversary of Birsa). We hope he would heed the longstanding tribal demand and make an announcement on a separate Sarna religion code in the morning. If he fails, I will immolate myself at Birsa Chowk in Bokaro at 4pm."

Tuddu said he would also immolate himself at 4pm in Ulihatu if Modi failed to make any announcement on the Sarna code.

The tribals in Jharkhand, a majority of whom are Sarna followers and nature worshipers, have been fighting for a separate religious identity in India for decades.

Tribals argue that a Sarna code in census surveys would allow them to be identified as followers of the Sarna faith. Tribal outfits claimed that with the Centre dropping the "Others" option from the religion column for the next census, Sarna adherents would be forced to either skip the column or declare themselves members of one of the six specified religions — Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh.

Transporter 'caught' repackaging PDS items

Ration theft stink in Nadia arrest

SUBHASISH CHAUDHURI

Calcutta: Police in Nadia's Birnagar town arrested a transporter on Saturday for allegedly "packing afresh" government-supplied wheat flour and rice in sacks for sale to retailers in the open market amid the ongoing Enforcement Directorate probe into the "ration scam".

Prasanta Roy, a small-time transporter and allegedly a middleman between ration distributors and private retailers, was nabbed by residents in Charakpara, Birnagar, on Saturday morning when he was "transferring flour and rice from bags supplied by the state food and supplies department to other sacks secretly inside a banana orchard".

Prasanta owns the banana orchard, sources said. The police seized over 400 sacks filled with packets of fortified whole meal flour and over 150 sacks of rice. These items were reportedly exclusively meant for the sale and distribution among people through the ration shops. They will also find out how the man (Prasanta) received the consignment."

BJP MP from Ranaghat, Jagannath Sarkar, who visited the spot on Saturday, said: "The ED rightly said that a big part of ration items was being diverted to the open market." The BJP MP also alleged that the entire operation wasn't possible without the support of food and supplies department officials, the police and Trinamul leaders.



Residents in Nadia's Birnagar crowd around the vehicle with "ration items packed afresh". Picture by Abhi Ghosh

ing ration items again but he failed to give any reply," a local resident said.

They then alerted the police, who arrested the transporter.

Over a few hundred sacks with logos of local brands were seized from the spot. These sacks were used to illegally supply items sold in ration shops to the local retail markets, the police said.

Police sources said Prasanta had a strong nexus with distributors, who packed ration items afresh and sold them to private retailers.

As the incident comes in the backdrop of the ongoing ED probe and the arrest of former food and supplies minister Jyoti Priya Mallick, the state food and civil supplies department has ordered a probe into it.

Current food and supplies minister Rathin Ghosh told The Telegraph: "I directed senior officials of the department to examine the seized packets to confirm if they were meant for ration shops. They will also find out how the man (Prasanta) received the consignment."

BJP MP from Ranaghat, Jagannath Sarkar, who visited the spot on Saturday, said: "The ED rightly said that a big part of ration items was being diverted to the open market."

The BJP MP also alleged that the entire operation wasn't possible without the support of food and supplies department officials, the police and Trinamul leaders.



Baro Maa Kali Pujo steps into its 100th year of celebrations in Naihati (left); huge crowds outside the Nabapalli Amra Sabai pandal at Barasat in North 24-Parganas on Saturday.

Baro Maa, the 21-foot-tall Kali idol, is adorned with over 12kg of gold ornaments. Naihati and Barasat are famed for their Kali Puja pandals, but Barasat more for its theme pandals.

This year, the Barasat KMC Regiment Club tops the charts for its theme "Tridev" on Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu. Among others, Nabapalli Amra Sabai Club has recreated Badrinath temple and the Pioneer Club celebrates Harry Potter.

Report by Subhasish Chaudhuri, pictures by Ankit Mukherjee



Suvendu pension salvo at Abhishek

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

Calcutta: Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday mounted a scathing attack on Trinamul national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee over the latter's announcement to raise funds from party workers to help 70,000 elderly people not getting old-age pensions in his Diamond Harbour constituency.

"Bhaipo's 'Diamond Harbour Model' exposes Pishi's deceitful Duare Sarkar initiative!!! Applicants of the Old Age Pension scheme were forced to stand in the queues of back to back Duare Sarkar Camps, but they didn't receive Pensions. Bhaipo bursts the 'Duare Sarkar' Balloon," Adhikari wrote on his X handle.

At an event to distribute Puja gifts among people in his constituency's Falta on Friday, Abhishek said he decided that Trinamul workers would raise funds to provide old-age



Suvendu Adhikari.
File picture

pensions to those not getting the benefit from the state government over some technical issues.

"I give my word today from that in Diamond Harbour, we will take help from Trinamul workers here and provide financial assistance to these 70,000 elderly residents from January 1.... We will help them every month," Abhishek said.

Countering this, the BJP's Nandigram MLA wrote on X: "By the way, even if Rs. 500 is paid to 70,000 people, the

amount remitted would be Rs. 3,50,00,000/- (Three & a half crores) per month. Compared to the amount amassed, it's peanuts."

"Already perturbed by the constant hounding by the investigating agencies, someone has decided to fork out the accumulated proceeds from Coal & cow smuggling, Teacher Recruitment Scam & Ration Distribution Scam. If a small portion can be handed over to 70 thousand beneficiaries for a few months before the Lok Sabha elections, it would be like using proceeds of crime to influence the electorate. Double bonanza!" Adhikari added.

"LoP@SuvenduWB why not look into the growing factionalism within your own Party and then worry about others? And since you have such good relations with those ruling at the Centre, then why not ask them to release dues of 21+ lakh poor workers of Bengal?" Trinamul state general secretary Kunal Ghosh shot back.

Central freeze on border funds

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Jalpaiguri: Residents in Jalpaiguri district who live near the international borders of Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"Projects were drawn up to build certain roads and bridges near both international borders. We sent detailed project reports to the Centre but funds were not approved in the past two fiscal years. Hence, we have not seen any project in the current fiscal (2023-24)," the source added.

Mahua Gope, the Jalpaiguri district Trinamul chief, said it was yet another glaring example of the Centre's apathy towards Bengal.

"Along with stopping funds to Bengal for MGNREGA (100-day job scheme) and Awas Yojana (housing scheme), the BJP government has also stopped funds for the development of bordering villages. This clearly indicates BJP's political vendetta," she said.

Bapi Goswami, the BJP chief of Jalpaiguri district, countered this.

"Funds of different central schemes given to the Bengal government were siphoned off. That is why the Centre stopped giving funds. People know it," he said.

Anmol tyohaar,
Anmol mithaas



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IN KOLKATA POLICE - 2022

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The date of final Written Examination for recruitment to the post of Constables/Lady Constables in Kolkata Police - 2022 has been scheduled on 03.12.2023 (Sunday). The e-Admit Cards will be available on the websites of West Bengal Police Recruitment Board (<https://prb.wb.gov.in>), West Bengal Police (www.wbpolice.gov.in) and Kolkata Police (www.kolkatapolice.gov.in) from 18.11.2023. Candidates are requested to download their e-Admit Cards on keying of their Application Sl. No. and Date of Birth. Paper Admit Cards will be issued in respect of offline candidates only. The candidates are strongly advised to follow the instructions given in the Admit Card and to visit the above-mentioned websites for getting further update.

ICA-N 599(6)/2023

Pous Mela on way back

FROM PAGE 1



The fair, started by Rabindranath Tagore's father Maharsi Debendranath in 1894, was stopped in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, Visva-Bharati did not organise the Mela, again citing the pandemic.

That the varsity authorities were not interested in the fair became clear last year when Chakrabarty passed a resolution in Visva-Bharati's executive council and court — ignoring opposition from a section of the campus community — that the university would not associate itself with the annual fair. An order from the National Green Tribunal and a purported lack of the infrastructure to hold such a large fair were cited as the reasons behind the decision.

Traditionally, the Pous Mela is a three-day affair, beginning from December 22 or 23 (7th Pous in the Bengali calendar). Over the years, the duration of the fair had got extended — albeit unofficially — to around two weeks. In 2018, after a slew of NGT orders, the authorities decided to wrap it up within six days from then onwards.

A source said Mallik, the acting VC, told Visva-Bharati officials that he wanted to resume the Pous Mela this year as it was part of Santiniketan's culture. As an alumnus of the varsity, he felt it was his responsibility to resume all the cultural events that had been stopped in the past few years, the source quoted Mallik as saying.

Although the Pous Mela began as a rural fair, its scale and scope expanded over the years, attracting lakhs of peo-

ple from across the country and abroad who came to witness Bengal's rural life and folk culture.

The fair's importance grew over the years as the huge turnouts began creating positive spin-offs for the local economy, offering a platform to local artisans to sell their products.

Although there have been no official studies on the economic impact of the fair, a state government official said the six-day event had generated revenues of around Rs 100 crore in 2019.

Local businessmen said the fair had always had a positive impact on the local economy as it created short-term employment opportunities for the youth and ensured brisk business for the hospitality sector.

"We are happy that the acting VC is trying to revive the Pous Mela this time. There will be full cooperation from our side."

Chakrabarty was also accused of stopping another big festival of Santiniketan, the Basanta Utsav (festival of colours), started by Rabindranath Tagore himself.

There are around 3,000 local artisans in Santiniketan who make Dokra and Kantha Stitch artefacts, leather bags, and showpieces made of bamboo, cane and other materials.

"The fair will bring happiness to them and the local people.... We are eagerly awaiting the resumption of the fair," Huda said.

There are around 400 hotels and resorts in Santiniketan apart from homestays. Traditionally, the bookings for the Pous Mela started soon after

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IN BRIEF**Pedestrian run over by truck**

BURRABAZAR: A pedestrian was crushed to death by a truck on Rabindra Sarani, near its intersection with KK Tagore Street, on Friday night. The woman, who police could not identify, was declared dead at the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital. The truck was impounded and the driver detained, the police said.

Trains for Chhath

CALCUTTA: Two special trains will be run between Bengal and Bihar for Chhath festival, said an official of Eastern Railway. One train will run between Howrah and Raxaul and another between Chitpore (Kolkata) and Patna, said the official. The first will leave Howrah at 11pm on November 13 and 16 to reach Raxaul at 2.15pm the next day. In the return direction, the train will leave Raxaul at 4.55pm on November 14 and 17 to reach Howrah at 8.50am the next day. The Kolkata-Patna special will leave Chitpore at 11.55pm on November 14 and 16 to reach Patna at 10.30am the next day. In the return direction, the train will leave Patna at 2.30pm on November 15 and 17 to reach Chitpore at 12.25am the next day, the official said.

Scooter skids

KASBA: A man riding a scooter was injured after the two-wheeler skidded off the Rashbehari Connector, near Gitanjali Stadium, on Saturday afternoon. Raju Halder, 38, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered multiple injuries, police said. He was admitted to Ruby General Hospital, the police said.

YESTERDATE

November 12, 1969

Writer and teacher Ajit Kumar Guha, who had championed the Bengali language in East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), passed away on this day.

Guha had studied at Comilla (now in Bangladesh), where he was born, and got his MA from Calcutta University. He also attended Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan from 1940 to 1942.

He taught at Jagannath College in Dhaka (in Bangladesh) for many years.

He was one of the leaders of the campaign for Bengali that started in East Bengal (later East Pakistan) against the Pakistani authorities.

He was jailed in the 1950s more than once for taking part in the movement for Bengali. He was one of the main organisers of the East Pakistani literary meet in 1954.

Guha wrote extensively on Rabindranath Tagore and his works.

Chandrima S. Bhattacharya

WEATHER

YESTERDAY
Maximum: 29.8°C (-1.2)
Minimum: 21.3°C (+0.1)
RAINFALL: Nil

HUMIDITY: Max: 95%,
Min: 50%

THE FORECAST
Maximum 30°C Minimum 22°C

EXPECTED:
Mainly clear sky
SUNSET 4.54pm **SUNRISE** 5.47am

Your guide to a safe Diwali**OUR BUREAU**

Calcutta: Celebrate Diwali but with care and caution.

If Friday night was any indication, Calcuttans not so fond of crackers may not like what could follow.

The air quality has already dropped to very poor in many monitoring stations.

Metro gives a low down on what's allowed and what's not.

Is bursting crackers okay?

Calcutta High Court has said only green fireworks are allowed and they can be burst within a two-hour window on Diwali day.

"There shall be a complete ban on the sale and bursting of all kinds of firecrackers, except green crackers in the state of West Bengal," the court said. The state pollution control board has issued orders mentioning the high court's directives.

What are green crackers?

The website of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) mentions that green crackers are "made with reduction in size of shell, elimination of ash usage etc., reduced usage of raw materials in the compositions, of uniform acceptable quality, and/or use of additives as dust suppressants to reduce emissions." It adds that these fireworks ensure at least a 30 per cent reduction in the emission of particulate matter (PM).

Is there a time limit for bursting green crackers?

Yes. The court's order mentioned that green crackers can be burst only for "two hours during Deepawali festival from 8pm to 10pm".

How would I identify a green cracker?

The only way to identify a green cracker is by scanning the QR code on the box.

Any scanner can be used for this. On scanning the code, a certificate should be generated mentioning the name and nature of the fireworks, details like the name and address of the manufacturer, chemical composition of the fireworks and the percentage of reduction in emission, a police officer said.

The certificate generated should be on the letterhead of the Council Of Scientific And Industrial Research (CSIR)-NEERI and should bear the official seal of the authorised

signatory of CSIR-NEERI. What is the punishment for not following the orders?

A person found bursting a banned cracker can be prosecuted under The Explosives Substances Act. "If found guilty, the person can be imprisoned for a term that may go up to three years," said a police officer.

If anyone is found bursting a cracker beyond the stipulated hours, the person will be booked under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code for disobeying an order by a public servant. "The person can be imprisoned for up to 6 months," said the officer. The Explosives Substances Act can be added if the person is found bursting a banned cracker.

Where can I complain if the orders are not followed?

Complaints can be lodged with the police or the state pollution control board.

Emergency phone numbers:

Calcutta police control room: 2214230

Calcutta police traffic control room: 22143644

Bidhannagar commissionerate control room: 23358788

Howrah city police control room: 2637-4761, 2637-4762,

2641-5614, 2640-4001

Barrackpore city police: 2593-

2647, 2545-5030

Emergency helpline: 100

Fire brigade control room: 22861570, 22521165

State pollution control board control room: 22023064,

22023057 (these numbers will remain in operation between 5pm and midnight on Sunday and between 5pm and 11pm on Monday)

Metro services on Diwali

Nothing special. Metro Railway will run 132 trains on the North-South corridor on Diwali instead of the usual Sunday count of 130. The first trains will leave Dakshineswar and New Garia at 9am. The last trains will leave the terminal stations at 10pm, said an official. There will be no services on the East-West and Joka-Majerhat corridors.

What is the weather going to be like?

The Met office has ruled out rain on Sunday. But the sky is likely to be gloomy in parts because of the pollution. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 30 and 21 degrees Celsius, according to the Met forecast.

In an order dated October



Dakshineswar temple lit up on Saturday for Kali Puja. Picture by Pradip Sanyal



Customers buy sweets for Diwali in Ballygunge on Saturday. Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

On eve, cracker noise across city**SUBHAJOY ROY**

Calcutta: Sounds of crackers filled the air in multiple pockets of Calcutta since late afternoon on Saturday and their frequency increased in the evening.

Metro spoke with residents in several parts of the city and most of them said they could hear sounds of crackers bursting. "It is not a continuous sound but I can hear it quite often," said a resident of Beleghata.

Residents of Kasba and Behala also said they could hear the sound of crackers. A Ballygunge resident said he heard firecrackers bursting in his neighbourhood since afternoon.

Calcutta High Court has banned the use of all kinds of crackers except green crackers, which reduce the emission of particulate matters by 30 per cent compared to conventional crackers.

In an order dated October

11, 2022, the court said: "There shall be a complete ban on the sale and bursting of all kinds of firecrackers, except green crackers in the state of West Bengal."

The court's order said green crackers can be burst only for "two hours during Deepawali festival from 8pm to 10pm".

The noise was not the only problem. The air turned foul by 6pm on Saturday. There was a haze across the city.

Scientists and air quality management specialists said that any cracker that produces colours, even if it does not emit a strong sound, is very bad for health. The light produced when a cracker is burst is the result of heavy metals used in manufacturing it.

Residents of Kasba and Behala also said they could hear the sound of crackers. A Ballygunge resident said he heard firecrackers bursting in his neighbourhood since afternoon.

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In an order dated October

"Breathing this air is extremely harmful," he said.

Scientists explained that owing to prevalent weather conditions, as winter approaches, the pollutants hang close to the ground. The same pollutants are dispersed by greater wind speed, warmer temperature that causes the air to rise, and rain during summer and monsoon.

"Lead can impact the central nervous system, cadmium affects the kidneys and magnesium can lead to fever. Exposure to nitrate can cause mental impairment," Rudra said.

He added that sodium can lead to problems in the skin, zinc can cause vomiting and copper can lead to respiratory tract irritation.

At 7pm on Saturday, the air quality in the monitoring station in Bidhannagar and Howrah's Ghosuri was "very poor".

"Aluminium produces white colour, carbon or iron produces orange, sodium compound produces yellow, copper compounds produce blue and strontium carbonates

produce red colours," said Rudra.

"My appeal to people is to shun crackers and celebrate Diwali in other ways," he said.

Some of the other metals commonly used in crackers are lead, cadmium, sodium, zinc, copper and magnesium.

"Lead can impact the central nervous system, cadmium affects the kidneys and magnesium can lead to fever. Exposure to nitrate can cause mental impairment," Rudra said.

Poor air quality, according to the CPCB, may lead to "breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure", while very poor air may cause "respiratory illness on prolonged exposure".

Chatterjee said people should avoid bursting firecrackers on narrow roads as far as possible. He said water needs to be sprinkled in the late afternoon on Diwali day to minimise the re-suspension of dust from the bursting of firecrackers.

The CPCB data shows Calcutta's AQI has been rising sharply over the past few days as winter sets in. The air quality turned from "moderate" to "poor" between November 5 and 10.

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should avoid bursting firecrackers on narrow roads as far as possible. He said water needs to be sprinkled in the late afternoon on Diwali day to minimise the re-suspension of dust from the bursting of firecrackers.

"When the driver stopped at a traffic signal, I went and asked him if this was the way to drive an autorickshaw? What would have happened if my daughter had been seriously injured?" police officers quoted Bera as saying.

A resident of Selimpur, Bera does odd jobs in a private company and brings his daughter home from school every day on his bicycle.

"When I asked the driver these questions, he stopped the vehicle, asked the passengers to get off and then attacked me. I resisted and a clash followed," Bera told officers at Lake police station.

Onlookers who had gathered at the site close to South City Mall asked Bera to lodge a police complaint since the autorickshaw driver had first attacked him, the man in his 40s told the police.

Till Saturday evening, the autorickshaw driver remained untraced, an officer said.

Bera said his little daughter fell when the autorickshaw hit his bicycle from behind and he stopped to protest, ask-

ing why he was driving recklessly.

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"When I was heading towards the police station, the driver suddenly picked up a piece of brick and hit my head from behind. I sat down with



The tiger, clicked on the trap camera at 4.53am on Saturday. Picture courtesy: West Bengal Forest Department

FORESTERS LOOKING FOR BIG CAT FOR 11 DAYS**Tiger caught on trap camera at last****DEBRAJ MITRA**

Calcutta: A tiger that had eluded foresters for over 10 days was at last clicked by trap cameras set up at an island at the southernmost tip of Bengal.

The big cat is suspected to have strayed from the larger Dhubilhasani forest — a known tiger habitat in the Ramganga range of the South 24-Parganas forest division. On November 1, pugmarks were found near Sridharpur village, on the other side of the Thakur river.

The pugmarks led a team of foresters to Dhubil, a small forest island on the eastern side of G-Pot beach on the edge of the Bay of Bengal.

"Our men had been coming across indirect evidence like pugmarks and scat samples for days. The trap cameras were set up a few days ago. Early on Saturday, the trap cameras clicked pictures of the tiger, which looked like an adult male," said Milan Mandal, the divi-

sional forest officer of South 24-Parganas forest division.

The tiger had eluded a team of over 100 foresters for 11 days. A drone equipped with a thermal camera designed to pick up infrared radiation emitted by various objects was brought in from Odisha's Keonjhar. The drone could not spot the tiger but found deer and wild boar on the island.

"The pictures taken by

are Dhubilhasani and Chulkathi.

Chandni Chowk fire, building evacuated

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: A fire at a multi-storeyed building on Madan Street in the congested Chandni Chowk area on Saturday morning prompted police to evacuate the residents to facilitate fire fighting and cordon off the area.

It took two hours for the firefighters and a team from the Calcutta police's disaster management group to bring the fire under control.

The police said no one was injured despite the area being a congested market, which would usually teem with several thousands turning up for Diwali shopping.

Eyewitnesses said the fire was spotted around 10.30am with thick black fumes emanating from the first floor of the building, which has several shops selling mobile phones, electronic items and other gadgets on the ground floor in the Chandni Chowk market. Some of the residents called for fire tenders while a few others informed the police who arrived shortly and cordoned off the area.

With a part of the building meant for residents and the rest for commercial activities, a police team began evacuating the residents from the partly dilapidated building.

Loudhailers were used to inform the residents to step out and the police control room at Lalbazar was asked to send additional personnel.

Within a short time thick black fumes billowing out of the first floor covered the area and firefighters were forced to pull out oxygen cylinders and sport special masks before trying to reach the seat of fire.

"Initially, two fire tenders were sent but later it was ramped up to five tenders. Since most of the shops on the ground floor and those adjoining it were stacked with inflammable articles and the area was congested, we had to work fast to bring the fire under control," said a senior divisional officer of the fire and emergency services department. "It wasn't clear why the fire broke out."

A part of the Chandni Chowk market remained shut till well past noon with fire fighting work continuing from all sides apart from spraying of water from outside to reduce the building's temperature, senior officials said.

Sometime past 1pm, several shops lifted their shop shutters as reports reached that the fire had been brought under control.

"We have sealed the sites and forensic experts have been asked to examine the seat of fire on Saturday," said a senior police officer.

Packets have fake green cracker stickers printed at Sealdah presses

Banned fireworks in markets

KINSUK BASU

Calcutta: Chocolate bombs at Rs 250 per packet of 100. Three-piece shells at Rs 350 each and packs of Dodoma (crackers that burst twice in quick succession) containing 500 pieces each for Rs 4,500.

A day ahead of the festival of lights, retailers from parts of Nungi and Maheshtala in South 24-Parganas were ready with their stock of banned crackers. And with their words of assurance: "the packets would come with green stickers on them".

The stickers have been made locally from printing presses in Sealdah, a trader told this newspaper.

"The packets come with a logo. The green cracker logo. Police dhorley (if police catch) no problem. The sound is like the old variety," said a trader from Nungi Bazaar. He claimed he was one of the 10-plus authorised cracker sellers in the region.

"You just need to be a bit careful with the chocolate bombs while returning with the crackers," he said.

"Since the chocolate bombs are risky, many have stayed away from manufacturing them locally. The rest of the crackers are all available."

A few of the retailers that the newspaper spoke to said the logos were made in exact replicas of the authorised logo for green crackers, including the QR code.

"If you place orders in advance, we will keep the crack-

ers ready so that you don't have to wait," said another dealer. "While returning, take a detour from Parnasree and Behala and you are safe. Police crackdowns are mostly on those selling crackers on footpaths."



Diwali shopping in Bhowanipore on Saturday. Picture by Gautam Bose

draw when customers mostly from Calcutta and Howrah reach out to buy crackers, a section of traders said.

"It's only a week-and-a-half back that we began making our homemade chocolate crackers because of the police crackdowns. Just a handful of houses have made their brand of chocolate crackers this time," Bapi said.

"Trucks with raw materials from Sivakasi didn't turn up in enough numbers this time. What we are selling are mostly from our old stock and they are not green crackers."

In other areas around Maheshtala, retailers said they were ready with banned shells and Dodomas but would only sell the stuff to "genuine buyers" who were ready to spend money.

"We have just changed the packets with a logo. Maal sab ek (the products are the same as before)," a retailer in Maheshtala said reassuringly.

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ers ready so that you don't have to wait," said another dealer. "While returning, take a detour from Parnasree and Behala and you are safe. Police crackdowns are mostly on those selling crackers on footpaths."

Senior police officers from the Diamond Harbour police district said over 450kg of banned crackers were seized from parts of Budge Budge, Maheshtala, Nungi and Champhati.

"Almost all the key exit points have a strong police presence and vehicles are

being checked randomly in coordination with Calcutta police," said a senior police officer.

"The number of households making banned crackers has gone down and over time, this number will go down even further."

Green cracker hurdle to traders setting up shops

JAYANTA BASU

Budge Budge: Two out of three fireworks manufacturers and traders in Budge Budge and Maheshtala, in South 24-Parganas, the biggest hub of fireworks manufacturing and trading in Bengal, did not apply to set up shops to sell fireworks before Kali Puja because of the lack of locally made green crackers.

Many of these traders said procuring green crackers from places like Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu and selling them here did not make business sense for them.

"Although there are around 800 fireworks manufacturers and traders in Budge Budge and Maheshtala and Budge Budge, according to a recent list prepared by the local administration with the help of police, around 250 have applied and around 150 units have so far got clearances to set up shop," said a representative of local administration.

The local fireworks association said the absence of locally made legal fireworks has made the majority reluctant to apply as they cannot afford to procure costlier Sivakasi fireworks.

"In our area, most have not applied for setting up shop as they do not have green fireworks to sell. Normally, these people sell locally made cheaper fireworks but the government has allowed only a handful of the units to manufacture green fireworks. There are three such licensed units in Maheshtala and Budge Budge now. Hence, there are hardly

any local green fireworks," said Sukdeb Naskar, secretary of the Pradesh Atabazi By-absayi Samity.

"A section of big firework traders, who can readily procure fireworks from places like Sivakasi are killing off the local industry; several small fireworks manufacturers and traders have complained to the chief minister," said another fireworks trader.

Santanu Dutta of Burabazar Fireworks Association, which has recently started the Bazi Bazar near Shahid Minar, said: "Overall Sivakasi imported fireworks are dominating the market."

Subhankar Manna of Tala Bazi Bazar said "around 95 per cent of the fireworks this year have come from Sivakasi".

During a coordination meeting at the Police Training School few days back, a local fireworks trader complained to a representative of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) that most of the Sivakasi fireworks had fake QR codes.

NEERI was mandated by the Supreme Court in 2018 to prepare QR codes for valid green fireworks which should be affixed on all packets.

"A couple of weeks ago we went to Sivakasi and found that many of the manufacturers are printing QR codes prepared by them rather than using the NEERI-produced QR codes as mandated by the court. All these fireworks are showing 'invalid' while testing with the NEERI app," a trader told the meeting.

Restoring The Last Supper

ANASUYA BASU

play at St John's Church in Calcutta.

Alipore: It was a full house at the seminar hall of Alipore Museum on Tuesday where the architect and former director of Museo Nazionale del Cenacolo Vinciano (The Last Supper Museum) in Milan, Chiara Rostagno, was speaking. The full attendance prompted her to remark: "How many people are touched by the genius of da Vinci." She herself surely is.

The team leader of the international The Last Supper Restoration project between 2016 and 2018, Rostagno herself led an impassioned masterclass-type lecture on the epic project of restoring one of the world's most iconic pieces of art, titled Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper — A Timeless Archetype.

Work on the conservation and restoration of da Vinci's The Last Supper mural has been carried out over many centuries.

Completed in the late 15th century by the Renaissance artist showing the reactions of the Twelve Disciples at the Last Supper to Jesus's announcement that one among them will betray him, the mural had started deteriorating by 1517. Da Vinci had painted it between 1495 and 1498.

"People across continents came to see the painting and most of them wanted to catch



(From left) Italian Consul General Gianluca Rubagotti with former director of The Last Supper Museum Chiara Rostagno and Alipore Museum director Jayanta Sengupta

the artist in action," Rostagno said.

The corrosion of the work was partly due to da Vinci's unconventional painting technique, moisture absorption by the outer wall on which it was painted, the heat and smoke of the convent's kitchen and candles, a flood in 1800 and finally, bombardment during

World War II. An architect specialising in conservation, Rostagno, who also studies the impact of climate change on the conservation of cultural heritage, believes in minimal intervention while restoring important works of art.

Explaining the different elements of The Last Supper, Rostagno showed how large parts of the master's painting have been lost to the natural elements.

"We have not intervened and left it as it is after removing the dirt. This is because, from a particular angle, the painting looks complete. It is only when you peer into it, do you see the ravages of time," said Rostagno, who practically lived at the site during the restoration process.

"As the layers of dirt were peeling away, the beauty of the painting was emerging," she said.

Public Notice for the Homebuyers of Unitech Group

1. It is hereby notified that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has, vide its Order dated 03rd November, 2023, (also available on the website of Unitech) permitted those homebuyers, who had earlier opted for 'Refund' on the Amicus portal, to change their options from 'Refund' to 'Possession' as a one-time measure by sending their particulars at the Company's dedicated email ID refundtopossession@unitechgroup.com for the purpose, on which the homebuyers may send their details. For further details, please refer to the Process Note dated 06.11.2023 uploaded on the website – www.unitechgroup.com.
2. The Homebuyers of various projects who had been given partial refunds and who wish to change their options from Refund to Possession are also required to deposit the refunded amount with the Company within a period of 08 weeks (i.e. by 30.12.2023). The details of amount to be paid back and the Process Note in this behalf is also in the process of being uploaded on the website. All concerned Homebuyers are requested to visit the Company's Website for all further details.

Public Notice for the Contractors/Construction Agencies

1. It is for the information of the Contractors/ Construction Agencies that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has permitted to award Contracts in respect of 49 Tenders finalized as part of Lot-1 and Lot-2 vide its orders dated 03rd November, 2023.
2. Going further, the new management has also floated a total of about 50 Tenders as part of Lot-3 and 18 Tenders for Retrofitting Works on the website of the Company for Unitech Group projects situated at Ambala, Bengaluru, Chennai, Gurugram, Mohali, Noida and Greater Noida.
3. The Contractors/Construction Agencies who may be interested in bidding for these projects may visit the website www.unitechgroup.com for further details.

Chief Executive Officer
Unitech Group of Companies

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION	No. ADM(2)(3)/AIMS BPL/RC/DR/2023/5103 Following person/persons claim mutation of name in respect of the holding as mentioned below within the Barrackpore Cantonment. Sr. Superintendent of Post Offices, East Kolkata Division Phone : 033-4000-7277, Email: ek014@rediffmail.com , dokolkataeast.wb@indiapost.gov.in	Date: 10.11.2023
PUBLIC NOTICE	Following person/persons claim mutation of name in respect of the holding as mentioned below within the Barrackpore Cantonment.	Date: 10.11.2023
Sl. No.	Name of applicants claiming mutation	Holding No.
1	The St Augustine Education Society represented by Amitava Chowdhury.	Bungalow No.-50, Middle Road Barrackpore, Kol-700120.
Objection, if any, may be filed with documentary evidence within 30 days of publication of this notice, failing which the mutation for the purpose of taxation may be accorded under section 81 of the Cantonments Act, 2006.		
Sd/- Chief Executive Officer Cantonment Board, Barrackpore		
Date: 10/11/2023		

Information & Public Relations Department Government of Jharkhand	Request for Proposal (RFP) Tender No.: 2421 Dated 11.11.2023	Off-line tenders (RFP) under QCBS (Quality and Cost Based Selection) method are invited in Two Bid System from competent Company/Firm/Agency, who satisfy the eligibility criteria enumerated in the Tender Documents (RFP), and having experience of similar nature of work of Conceptualisation, Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Temporary Projection Mapping and/or Multimedia Show on the occasion of Jharkhand state foundation Day on the 15th of November 2023 and the coinciding launch of the next phase of 'Apki Yojna, Apki Sarkar, Apki Dwar' campaign at different locations and/or districts in the state of Jharkhand
SCHEDULE:		
1	Bid Document Published Date	12-11-2023
2	Bid Document Download Start Date	12-11-2023
3	Bid Submission Start Date	14-11-2023 12.00 Noon
4	Bid Submission End Date	14-11-2023 1.00 p.m.
5	Technical (Techno-Commercial) Bid Opening Date	14-11-2023 1.00 p.m.
6	Date Place of Technical Presentation	14-11-2023 2.00 p.m.
7	Financial Bid Opening Date	14-11-2023 2.30 p.m.
PR NO: IPRD Jharkhand 311280		Director

It is hereby informed that the Advt. No. ADM-2(3)/AIMS BPL/RC/DR/2023/5103 published in the Newspapers on 27/10/2023 and also uploaded on Institute's website for filling of 357 Group-'C' Non-Faculty Domain Specific Posts of 26 different cadres on Direct Recruitment basis has been cancelled due to administrative reasons. Application fee of Candidates who have already applied against this advertisement, shall be refunded.

This is issued with the approval of the Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS, Bhopal vide file no. 56825 dated 10/11/2023.

Sd/-
Dy. Director (Admin.) AIIMS, Bhopal

It is hereby informed that the Advt. No. ADM-2(3)/

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The Telegraph CLASSIFIED

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educated established
working in Bangalore, small
family Liberal
with in 35-39
groom.

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Bride Kolkata based
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Ph.D, Post Doctorate
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Researcher in Israel.
Looking for a Ph.D/
Post Doctorate
(Science) groom
within 35 yrs. of age.

Mobile-
8240533487/
8001234217

কাম্পহ 31/5'3"
মধুম বর্ণা, সুন্দী
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হায়ড্রোবাদে কর্মরতা
9.0 LPA পাত্রীর
জন্য অনুর্ধ্ব 35
(Min. 10 LPA)
হায়ড্রোবাদ/
ব্যাঙ্গালোর / পুনে /
কলকাতাতে কর্মরত
পাত্র চাই।
M/WA: 9831859428

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Fair beautiful
Bride needed
well Educated
established
Groom.
M+Wapp:
9831447374
9830105965

পঃবঃ যদুব ঘোষ,
বুরুশি, 26+/5'2"
M.Sc, B.Ed ফর্মা,
সুন্দী পাত্রীর জন্য
অনুর্ধ্ব 33 পঃবঃ
সংচাঃ/বেংসংচাঃ
প্রতিষ্ঠিত ব্যাবসায়ী 8-10
Lac বার্ষিক সং/অসং
SC, ST ব্যাটাত কলিশ
নেশান সুপ্ত কাম্প
M-7980026622

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Lic Retd, পাত্রীর জন্য
অনুর্ধ্ব 35/5'7" উপযুক্ত
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মেদিসিন্স নিবাসী 32+/5'1" নৱগণ
কুৰুৱাশি শাস্ত্ৰিয় গোত্র, কৰ্পোৱেট সেটৰ
অথবা অনুৱৰ্প-ফিল্ডে কর্মরত সুযোগ
উচ্চশিক্ষিত, সুল শিক্ষক বাদে ত্ৰাপণ অথবা
কাম্প পাত্র কাম্প। কুটি বিচাৰে বিশ্বাসী নই,
রঞ্জনীকায় বিশ্বাসী পাত্র ও পাত্রী উভয়ে কথা
বলে সহজত হলে পারিবারিক সাক্ষত হবে।
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Bride E.B Mahisya 30/5'4" BSC, MBA,
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established businessman require
suitable, established groom within
Kolkata and near by.
9038219817(7PM-11PM)

EB কাম্প 44/53" MA ব্যাট
সুন্দী, পুনে, দেবারি
উপযুক্ত পাত্র চাই
50-এর মধ্যে সংচাঃ/ বেং
বেংসংচাঃ কলকাতা মধ্যে
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7439336377

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Pretty, Fair,
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90 lakhs), parents
(working) resides
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bride seeks educated,
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from Mumbai and
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1 crore) within
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8910714123

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মধুম বর্ণা, সুন্দী
দেবগণ B.Tech
হায়ড্রোবাদে কর্মরতা
9.0 LPA পাত্রীর
জন্য অনুর্ধ্ব 35
(Min. 10 LPA)
হায়ড্রোবাদ/
ব্যাঙ্গালোর / পুনে /
কলকাতাতে কর্মরত
পাত্র চাই।
M/WA: 9831859428

WB বৈশা কপালী Gen নবীয়া
26/5'3" MA D.E.L.D
মীনোৱা নৱগণ রাঃসং
জেজেটেড অফিসারের
একমাত্ৰ কন্যাৰ জন্য
সংচাঃ/ ব্যাঙ্ক/ শিক্ষক
34 মধ্যে উদার মনো
উপযুক্ত পাত্র চাই।
9051707809

WB বৈশা কপালী
28+/5'3" M.Sc
Geo, B.Ed, 1st
Class, টেট পাশ,
উচ্চ শ্যামৰ্বনা পাত্রীৰ
জন্য উপযুক্ত
সংপ্রতিষ্ঠিত সৱকারী
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9831266173

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Bengali girl
29/5'01". Graduate
- Working in an
IT Company.
Caste no bar

E-mail ID
amitbanerjee2004
@gmail.com
Ph: 9880434206

D/O Teacher couple
(HS), Kayastha
(General) 28/5'3" Ph.D
pursuing, Govt College
Prof. (WBPSCL) GI-A
gaz. officer, fair pretty.
Wanted groom General,
Kalyani-Sodepur,
Serampore-Bandel Govt.
Officer/ Prof/ Dr/ Bank/
Engr (No MNC)
progressive family,
demandless, unadicted
suitable groom within
35yrs. Agency/ mediator
unnecessary.
M: 6298974454
WA-8282947327
(4-10pm).

EB Kayastha
28/5'2" Debgon
fair slim younger
daughter, Larato
college MA (Geo)
JNU, M.Plan
CEPT, working in
WRI. Seeking
suitable groom
from B.Tech &
M.Tech from IIT,
NIT, ISI, JU,
Shibpur like
reputed institutions,
IIM Civil Servant,
Doctor, Advocate
(NLSs)
9903569181

The Telegraph Classified
• 7044400205

WB Kayastha 33/5'5", B.Tech,
M.Tech, Ph.D (Comp. Sc) fair,
pretty Asst. Prof. Bride looking
for Groom Bengali Kayastha
33-38 yrs good education
and family background.
M : 9804123329/ 8337026255

পঃবঃ কৰ্মকার
31/5'-6"
M.A (Eng)
B.Ed কুস্ত, দেবারী,
সুন্দী পাত্রী, কৰ্মকার
ডিভোৰ্সী (১২ দিন)।
সং/অসং ডিভোৰ্সী/
কুস্ত মনো
অবিবাহিত সু-চাকুৰে
36-40 মধ্যে নেশা হীন
সুপ্ত চাই।
M-9836073453

EB কাম্প 31/5'3" MA ব্যাট
সুন্দী, পুনে, দেবারি
উপযুক্ত পাত্র চাই
50-এর মধ্যে সংচাঃ/ বেং
বেংসংচাঃ কলকাতা মধ্যে
বাস্তু ব্রাহ্মণ পাত্র কাম্প
9830875264

34/5'9" Groom, Kulin
Kayastha, Tech (Mech),
working in BARC Mumbai
(Central Govt. Class-1
Gazetted Officer) seeks
work within 32Y, staying in/ready
to relocate to Mumbai.
M:9820565158
3863973

WB মহিস্যা 33/5'1"
NET-JRF, SET,
GATE, Ph.D
Final yr, Asst.
Prof, Gr. I (Eng)
চুবনেৰে কুইট
কৰ্মতা পাত্রীৰ জন্য
সুন্দীৰ উপযুক্ত
পাত্র কাম্প।
7001283543/
7980502440

WB Brahmin
27/5'2" দেব গং, তুলা
রাম, ফুরা, সুন্দী
MSW (PGDPD) ভানুকুনি
নিবাসী, NGO তে
কৰ্মতা পাত্রীৰ জন্য
সুন্দীৰ উপযুক্ত
পাত্র কাম্প।
M: 7479066020

WB Brahmin 33/5'1"
NET-JRF, SET,
GATE, Ph.D
Final yr, Asst.
Prof, Gr. I (Eng)
চুবনেৰে কুইট
কৰ্মতা পাত্রীৰ জন্য
সুন্দীৰ উপযুক্ত
পাত্র কাম্প।
90072141670

WB Brahmin 33/5'1"
NET-JRF, SET,
GATE, Ph.D
Final yr, Asst.
Prof, Gr. I (Eng)
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কৰ্মতা পাত্রীৰ জন্য
সুন্দীৰ উপযুক্ত
পাত্র কাম্প।
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পাত

Hawkers set up stalls in parking zones in New Town

SNEHAL SENGUPTA

New Town: Parking spaces across New Town are disappearing as hawkers are setting up stalls in designated parking zones across all three action areas.

The stalls, some of which also occupy bicycle tracks and carriageways of the roads and streets of the township, are hard to miss.

Many hawkers have rendered the designated bicycle tracks and paved walkways useless.

Now, hawkers are setting up their vans in the parking areas with bamboo and plastic structures to sell their wares.

The dangers posed by these structures came to fore multiple times when fires broke out at several spots, including in front of the Sukhabrishti Housing Complex and near the Unitech Crossing.

Last week, Metro drove around New Town and spotted



Hawkers sell their wares on the pavement, the parking space and the cycling bay near Rail Vihar Housing Complex on Wednesday. Pictures by Bishwarup Dutta



Vendors take up the cycling bay and the pavement in Greenwood Park, New Town, on Wednesday



A stall takes up a portion of the cycling bay near Nazrul Tirtha in New Town on Wednesday

tended several stalls that have cropped up in many parking zones from where agencies deployed by the New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) collect parking fees from motorists.

The parking lot in and around the Axis Mall in Ac-

tion Area I, around 1.5km away from the New Town bus stand, is one of the busiest in the area.

There are several places in this area where ropes are being used by hawkers, who have set their stalls in the parking lot, to prevent vehicles

from parking there.

There are several vans selling vegetables and fast food in the parking zone near the Aircraft Museum next to the New Town police station, opposite the Tata Medical Centre, in the evening.

Stalls made of bamboo and

plastic sheets block bicycle tracks, take up walkways and spill onto the carriageway of main roads behind Nazrul Tirtha in front of the Rail Vihar Housing Complex and in front of Greenfield Heights.

A senior NKDA official said they have started a re-

habilitation drive and more than 500 hawkers who used to peddle their wares from pavements have been relocated to temporary markets across New Town.

According to the official, several hawkers have shifted the temporary market com-

TCS office in New Town.

Around 50-odd hawkers who mainly used to operate food stalls have been shifted to the hangar near the Candor building.

Hawkers who had set up stalls in the service lane in front of the Sukhabrishti Housing Complex in Action Area III have also been shifted.

"Despite a section of hawkers getting shifted we are now seeing new hawkers who are again settling on the service road," said Hrituparna Chakraborty, a resident of DLF New Town Heights, a housing complex opposite the Sukhabrishti Housing Complex.

A senior NKDA official said that they have initiated a process to start the New Town Town Vending Committee and are working to rehabilitate such hawkers.

"We already have a list of hawkers from each area," said the official.

The Telegraph CLASSIFIED

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MANIPUR: 1.00;
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bride willing to
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EB Baidya, 68/5'7"
handsome, BE, FIE
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daughter (studying
abroad). Looking for
an issueless bride
54- 62 yrs. of age.
Interested in early
marriage.
Phone
8420911205

Groom Kayastha
Bose, 62/5'4" just
retired from an MNC
as higher position
officer, having own
flat and car in
Kolkata (separated
from wife and son.)
Required pretty,
suitable bride with
good family
background 40-45
yrs. of age.

Mobile
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Groom WB Mahishya
30/5'7", fair, Debari
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B.Sc(Hons), MBA well
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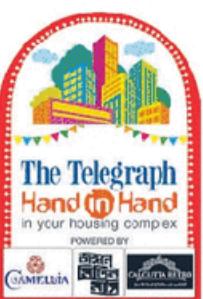
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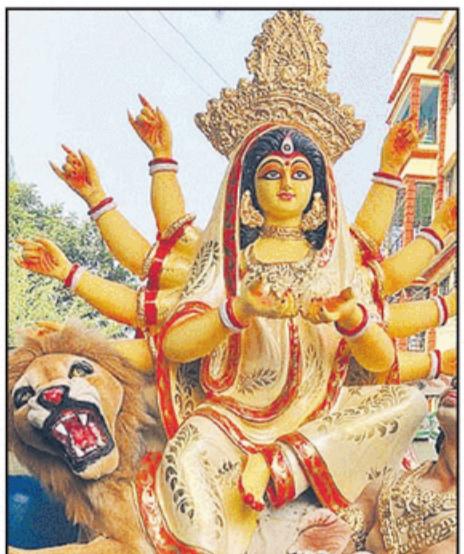
100 HOUSINGS

The essence of the campaign is four days of festive fun to make pujas at housing complexes special. Starting off with 15 apartments in 2003, the Hand In Hand family has grown to 100 complexes in and around the city, Salt Lake to Southern Avenue and Bangur Avenue to Behala.

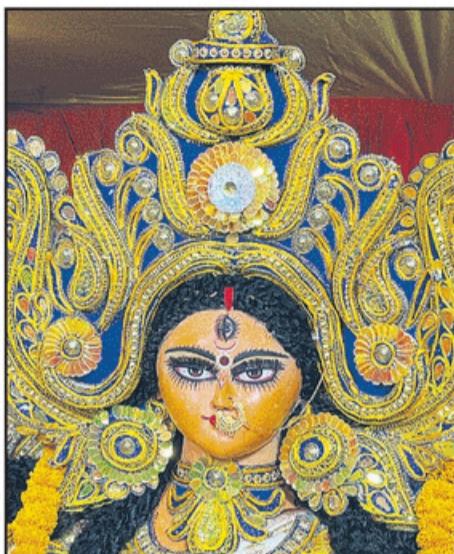
The Telegraph Hand In Hand
in your housing complex, powered by Camellia, Jongole Mitin Mashi and Calcutta Retro



GREENFIELD AMBITION
Action Area, New Town



GREENWOOD ELEMENTS
Action Area 2D, New Town



SHRESTHA GARDEN
Kalipark, Rajarhat Main Road



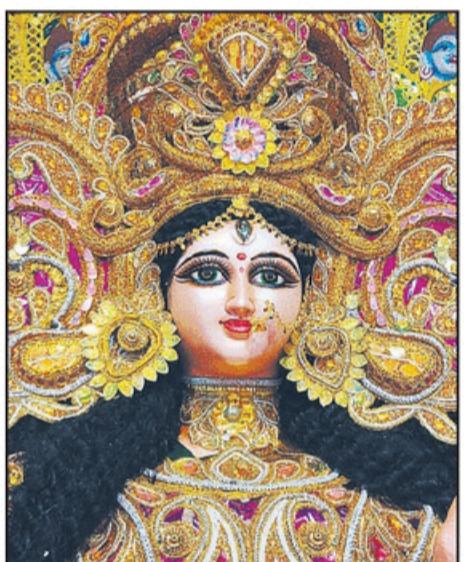
SUN VALLEY
671 Sahid Hemant Kumar Basu Sarani



CLUBTOWN ESTATES
87 Dum Dum Road



RAMKRISHNA PURAM
156/1 MNK Road, Baranagar



BELCHARIA CLUBTOWN
57/3 MM Feeder Road



SALTEE SPACIO
1 Mall Road, Nagerbazar



CUSTOMS & CENTRAL EXCISE RESIDENTS
179 Shantipally



REGENT SONARPUR COMPLEX
Kusumba Road, Shimultala



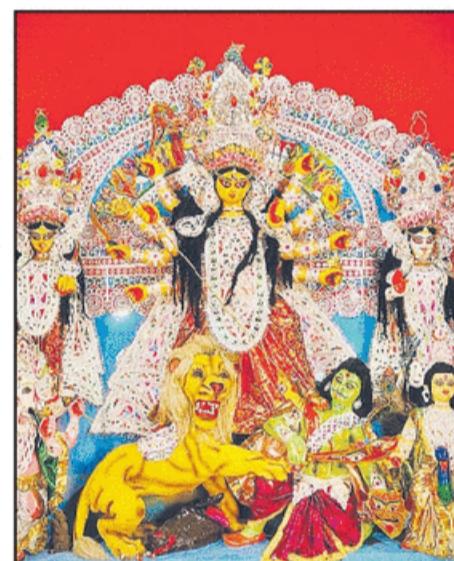
OZONE
2060 EM Bypass



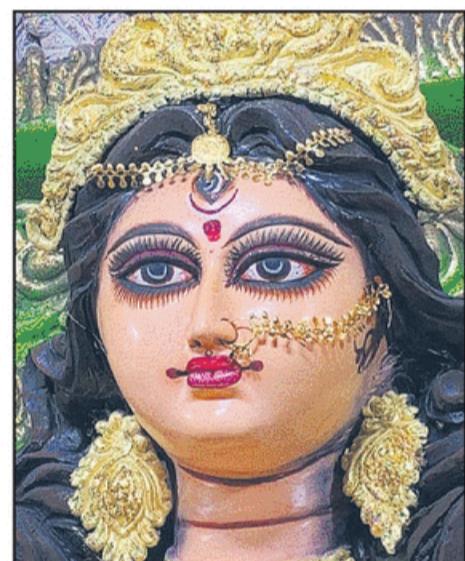
UDITA (HIG)
1050/1 Survey Park



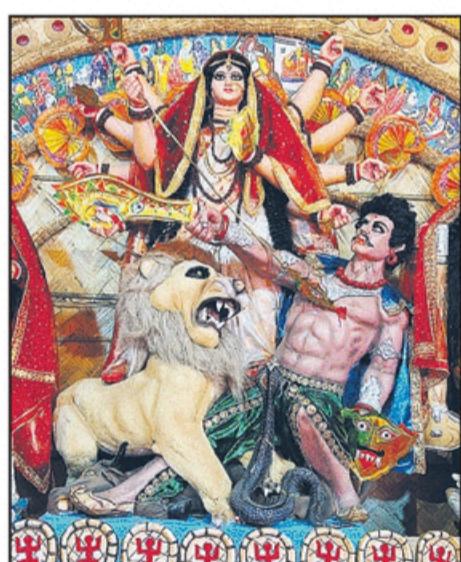
PRASAD EXOTICA APARTMENT
71/3 Canal Circular Road



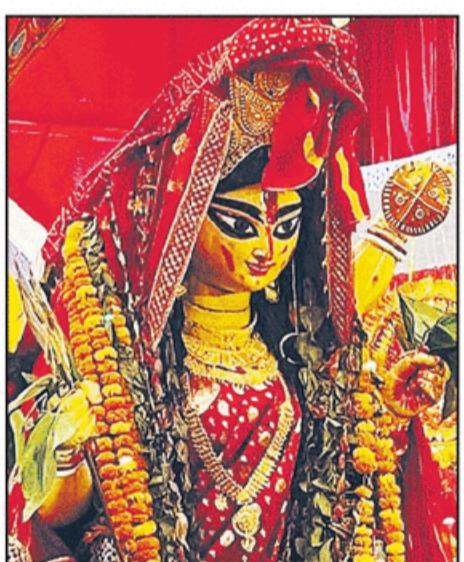
MERLIN ESTATES APARTMENT
25/8 DH Road



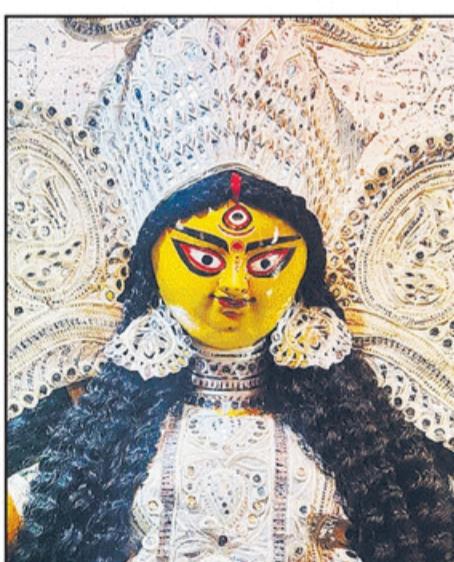
SNEHA GARDEN
28 Rai Bahadur Road



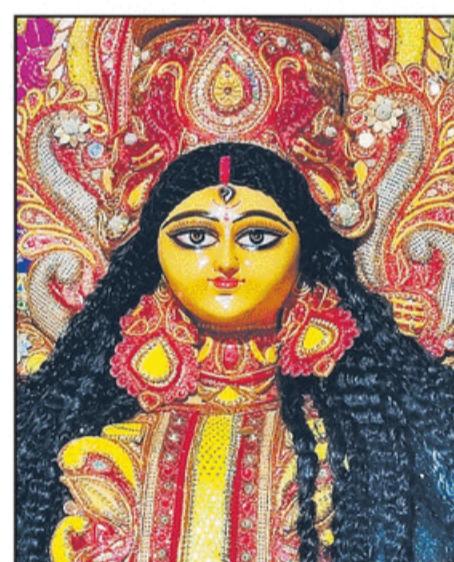
SOUTH CITY GARDEN APARTMENT
61 BL Saha Road



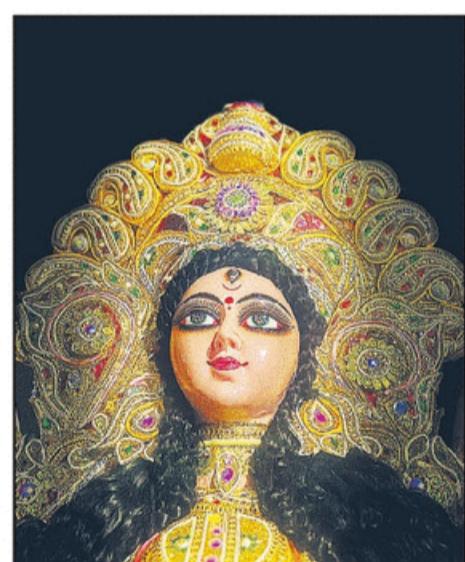
PARNASREE GREEN
1476 Upendra Nath Banerjee Road



UPOHAR (E & C) APARTMENT
C2-1014 Chargaria



AVIDIPTA HIG
Mukundapur



IDEAL AURUM
Sonarpur Station Road



MANJURI GARDEN
Narendrapur



COSMOPOLIS APARTMENT
Baisnabghata Patuli



SUCASA GREEN APARTMENT
370 SN Green Avenue



RAJWADA SPRINGFIELD
57 Vivekananda Sarani, Paikpara

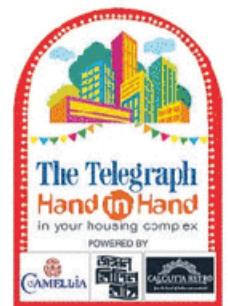


SONARPUR PRANTIK RESIDENTIAL WELFARE
Prantik, Sonarpur

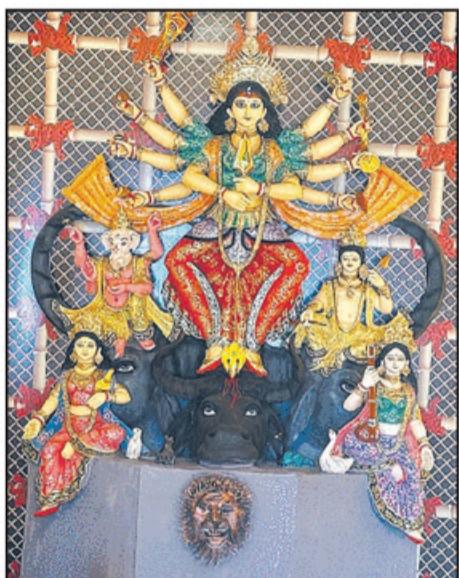
AND THEIR DURGA

If *dhunuchi naach* was the top draw at one puja, a culinary contest turned heads at another and a sit-and-draw competition among children was the winner at the third. In short, the campaign had something for everyone.

The Telegraph Hand In Hand
in your housing complex, powered by Camellia, Jongole Mitin Mashi and Calcutta Retro



MANJULIKA-B ABASIK SHARADATSVA COMMITTEE
Sector H, East Kolkata Township



OM SKYLARK ASSOCIATION OF APARTMENT OWNERS
59 BT Road



MALANCHAB ASIK PUJA COMMITTEE
211 BT Road, Ananya bus stop



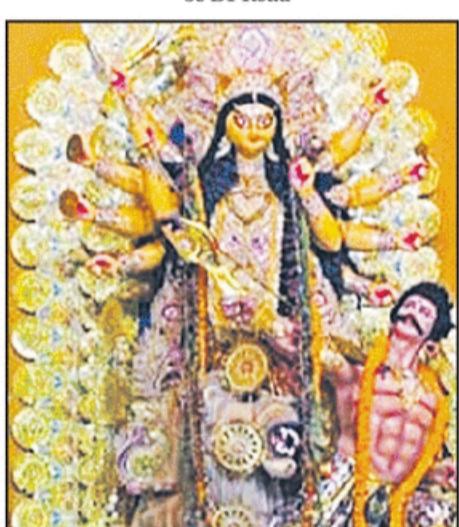
PURBA ABASAN
1582/1 Rajdanga Main Road



KALINDI APARTMENT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
Kalindi B Block, Puja Ground



SGIL RESIDENZA FLAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION (SGIRFOA)
66/63 Jangalpur Road, Airport Gate No 3



CALCUTTA GREEN PHASE 1
1050/2 Survey Park, Ajaynagar



WESTWIND RESIDENTS WELFARE ASSOCIATION
78, Raja Subodh Chandra Mallick Road,
near Ramgarh bus stop



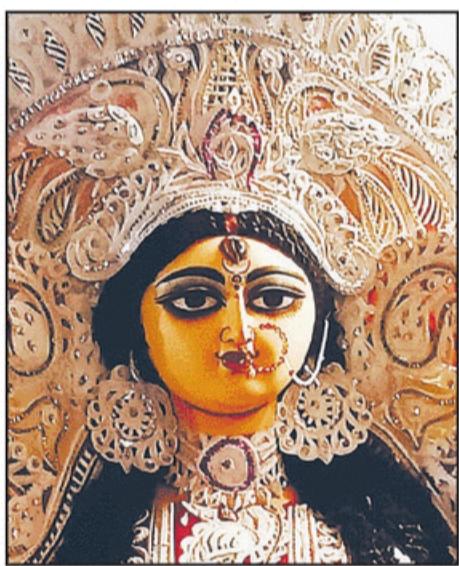
GARDENIA ASSOCIATION
227 NSC Bose Road



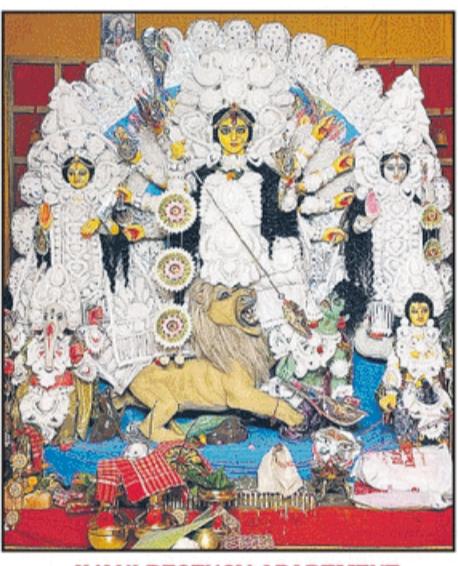
GREENLAND PARK
Sonarpur Station Road



RAJWADA LAKEBLISS RESIDENTS WELFARE
Sonarpur Station Road



SUNNY BLOOM
526 Purbapara



AVANI REGENCY APARTMENT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
1 Dr Radha Govinda Nath Sarani



EDEN TOLLY LAKE SIDE
319 MG Road, Kobordanga



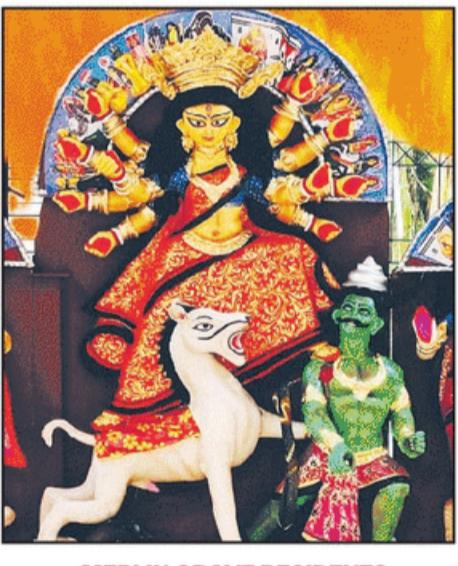
ORBIT CITY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
82A Raja SC Mullick Road



SAMADRITA CO-OP ASS SOC LTD
A Type, Phase 2, behind Vivanta Hotel



HAPPY NOOK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD
Phase 4, East Kolkata Township



MERLIN GROVE RESIDENTS WELFARE SOCIETY
211 & 517 Raja Rammohan Roy Road



SUNRISE HEIGHT APARTMENT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
134A Beliaghata Main Road



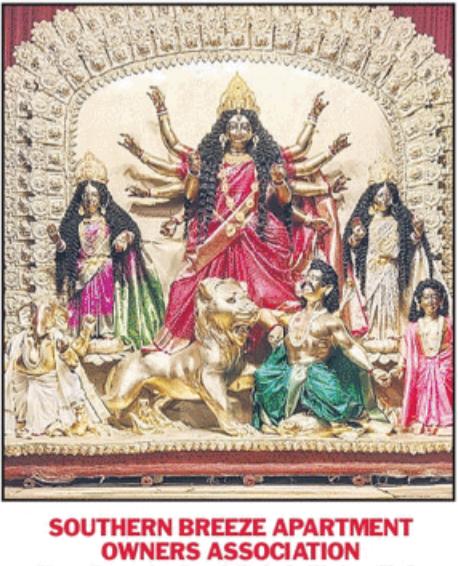
MEGHAMALLA SANKRITI KRIPA SAMSAD
18/3 Gariahata Road, Meghamallar



GIRKUNJ RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
390 SN Roy Road, New Alipore



ABHYUDAY SARODATSVA COMMITTEE
EKTP-Phase 4, B Type Complex



SOUTHERN BREEZE APARTMENT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
Upper Banerjee Road, Behala Flying Club,
opposite Parnashree Green



IDEAL REGENCY APARTMENT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
46 DH Road



SOUTH CITY RESIDENCY
375 Prince Anwar Shah Road

IN BRIEF**Forex kitty jumps by \$4.6bn**

MUMBAI: India's forex reserves jumped by \$4.672 billion to \$590.783 for the week ended November 3, the Reserve Bank said on Friday. Foreign currency assets, a crucial part of the reserves, rose by \$4.392 billion. PTI

Shyam Metals

NEW DELHI: Shyam Metals & Energy on Saturday reported a more than four-fold jump in its consolidated profit after tax to Rs 481.97 crore in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 despite a fall in revenue. It had clocked a Rs 110.91 crore PAT a year ago. PTI

BSE profit jumps

NEW DELHI: BSE has reported a four-fold jump in net profit at Rs 118.4 crore for the quarter ended in September 2023. In comparison, the exchange had posted a net profit of Rs 29.4 crore in the year-ago period. PTI

Fund raiser

NEW DELHI: Realty firm Anant Raj on Saturday announced plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore through an issue of securities to institutional investors. PTI

IceMake profit

CALCUTTA: Ice Make Refrigeration Limited has reported a 27.07 per cent increase in its H1FY24 consolidated net profit at Rs 9.81 crore against Rs 7.72 crore a year ago.

BOTTOM LINERS

"Let's order and eat fast, because there's no fake friends!"

The Telegraph

BUSINESS

CALCUTTA SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023

Upbeat mood ahead of Samvat 2080**OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT****FESTIVE FEVER**

Mumbai: Bourses will hold a special one-hour session on Sunday to ring in the new Hindu year — Samvat 2080 — that may turn out to be an eventful one given the upcoming general elections. The central banks may also have to take a call during the year if they should reverse the interest rate tightening cycle.

While stocks could face speed breakers on the global front because of the conflict in West Asia and erratic oil prices, a resilient Indian economy coupled with better corporate balance-sheets (read deleveraging) should see India among the outperformers.

This comes after a rather mixed Samvat 2079 during which the Sensex rose over 9 per cent, while the broader markets outperformed with the BSE Midcap index gaining more than 31 per cent and the small-cap index by 34 per cent.

While the valuations of the mid and small caps have now corrected, analysts believe that large caps may steal the show next year.

"We embark on this new Samvat with a narrative marked by 'higher for longer' interest rates, volatile bond yields, geopolitical conflicts in West Asia, and fluctuating oil prices," said Pranav Haridasan, MD & CEO, Axis Securities. Haridasan, however, added that on the domestic front, the prospects for the Indian economy appear brighter

and more promising. This he says will lead to Indian equities delivering double-digit returns in the next 2-3 years with the support of double-digit earnings growth.

Brokerages feel investors should take exposure in discretionary segments such as auto, hotels, real estate, and Jewellery, apart from infrastructure and a few banks.

A Motilal Oswal report said the Nifty is trading at a 12-month forward P/E (price to earnings) of 17.6 times, which is at a 13 per cent discount to its 10-year average, thereby providing comfort in valuations.

"The markets want a stable government where the lead party has enough numbers," an analyst with a foreign brokerage said. He added that another key development in 2024 may be that central banks could not only halt their interest rate hikes, but also start to look at lowering rates, which could buoy the global economy.

Morgan Stanley said there could be a rally of up to 10 per cent in the run-up to the general elections. It, however, cautioned that the Sensex could swing in a +5 to -40 per cent range based on the outcome.

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has reported a 20 per cent drop in the September quarter net profit on a decline in oil prices and lower output.

The company reported a net profit of Rs 10,216 crore in July-September quarter compared with Rs 12,826 crore in the same period last year.

This is the second consecutive quarter of decline in net profit for ONGC, India's top crude oil and natural gas producer.

Usha Martin unit in Saudi Arabia

New Delhi: Homegrown wire ropes manufacturer Usha Martin on Saturday said it has incorporated a step-down joint venture subsidiary company in Saudi Arabia.

Brunton Wire Ropes Industrial Company will carry distribution, manufacture, sale, and application of wire ropes, slings and allied products.

The entity was incorporated on November 10.

Two directors and one of the promoters of Usha Martin are board members of BWR.

Usha Martin is a leading global manufacturer of wire ropes. Usha Martin's wire rope manufacturing facilities in Ranchi, Hoshiarpur, Dubai, Bangkok, and the UK produce the widest range of wire ropes that find application in various industries across the world. PTI

REPORT CARD

Quarter ended September

(Rs crore)

2022 2023

Revenues 38320 35163

Net profit 12826 10216

the preceding quarter.

Oil prices globally had risen sharply in April-June 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to uncertainties over supply and demand. Rates have cooled this year. They were in the \$80-90 range in the second quarter.

ONGC director (finance) Pomila Jaspal said the main reason for the decline in net profit is lower oil prices. Oil and gas production was slightly lower than last year. This will, however, reverse in the current quarter (October-December) as the company brings to production a prolific

oilfield in the KG basin.

"We will be starting production from KG-DWN-98/2 this month and this will help raise the output and thereby earnings," she said.

Last year, the company had a Rs 1,900 crore reversal of impairment which had boosted earnings. This year there is no such exceptional income.

Gross revenue fell 8.2 per cent to Rs 35,163 crore mainly because it realised lower oil prices. ONGC said crude oil production was 1.9 per cent lower at 4.54 million tonnes, while gas output fell 3 per cent to 5.01 billion cubic meters.

ONGC profit drops 20%**OUR BUREAU**

Calcutta: Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), India's largest hospitality chain, plans to have a portfolio of 50 hotels in the east and north-east with Calcutta as the hub of operations. The Tata promoted chain, which owns the iconic Taj brand, has 35 hotels in the region at present.

Puneet Chhatwal, managing director and CEO, IHCL, on Saturday said Bengal is the launchpad of the company's growth in the east and north-eastern part of India. He was speaking at the launch of the 75-room Taj Taal Kutir in Eco Park in partnership with the Ambuja Neota Group.

"We will have the management, sales and marketing from Calcutta in the short to medium term for the east and entire north-east," he added.

The recent decision of the

IHCL to expand hotel portfolio to 50 in East**OUR BUREAU**

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO of IHCL, and Harshwardhan Neota, chairman, Ambuja Neota Group, at the launch of Taj Taal Kutir in Calcutta on Saturday.

Bengal government to accord infrastructure status to the hospitality industry is expected to fuel growth and create job opportunities, he noted.

Overall, the company said it will meet the guidance of 325 hotels by 2025-26.

With the addition of Taj Taal Kutir, IHCL will have six hotels across its four brands in Calcutta, including one under

development. The company is also looking to add properties in Durgapur and Asansol under the Ginger brand as well as a renovated Ganga Kutir under its management.

Harshwardhan Neota, chairman of the Ambuja Neota Group, said there has already been an investment of around Rs 1,000 crore across hospitality projects from his group, including Rs 160 crore towards the development of Taj Taal Kutir, the third Taj hotel in the city.

The upcoming projects include a 124-room Taj Hotel Ambuja City Centre in Patna and the relaunch of Ganga Kutir at Raichak in Bengal.

"We have taken yet another step forward in our partnership with IHCL, adding our third hotel in Calcutta," Neota added. While Ambuja owns the properties, IHCL will manage them.

Future Retail heads for liquidation

New Delhi: Future Retail, once the crown jewel of Kishore Biyani-led Future Group, is now heading for liquidation as its lenders could not get any reasonable buyer for the debt-ridden firm.

As the Committee of Creditors (CoC) rejected the sole resolution plan submitted by Space Mantra after four extensions in the deadline to complete the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP), the RP of the company has now approached NCLT to initiate liquidation of Future Retail (FRL).

"The resolution plan submitted by Space Mantra Private has not been approved by the CoC of FRL... the Resolution Professional (RP) has filed an application before the National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench, for initiation of liquidation of FRL," said a regulatory filing from FRL.

Last month FRL had informed that a Rs 550-crore bid submitted by Space Mantra for FRL had failed to get the required number of votes in the e-voting process of the CoC.

The NCLT had granted four extensions to FRL for completion of the CIRP and the last date was September 30. After that there was no extension in the deadline. The insolvency proceedings against FRL were started by the tribunal on July 20, 2022.

The Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC) mandates the completion of CIRP within 330 days, which includes time taken during litigations.

Under Section 12(1) of the Code, the CIRP shall be completed within a period of 180 days from the date of initiation. PTI

Dont Let Words Kill

Words, spoken knowingly or unknowingly can hurt a gender, race, community or an individual and affect their mental wellbeing.

Let's be mindful of what we say because if words are insensitive, they might kill.

If words have hurt you, post about it using #DontLetWordsKill or write to us at dontletwordskill@abp.in



বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, পরম্পরাম ও গঙ্গেন্দ্র কুমার মিত্রের

গৱ. অবলম্বনে

শ্রেষ্ঠ আসছে

তনুশী চক্রবর্তী | অনিবার্য চক্রবর্তী | অভিষেক সিংহ | কিঞ্জল নন্দ | জিলা তরফদার

প্রযোজনাম

শ্রেষ্ঠ এন্টারটেইনমেন্ট এবং এজি এন্টারটেইনমেন্ট

ইনস্টল করে সাবস্ক্রাইব করলেই আপনার জন্য থাকছে এমনই আরও ওয়েব সিরিজ-সহ বাঙালি সংস্কৃতির বিশাল সভার।

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DEADLY IMITATION

Art often attempts to imitate reality. The endeavour is usually benign. But modern technology's projects of imitation are turning out to be far more sinister. The rising concern with deepfakes is a case in point. Deepfakes are images and videos of real people that are created by using a form of Artificial Intelligence called 'deep learning'. Two Indian actresses, Rashmika Mandanna and Katrina Kaif, were targeted by deepfake technology recently and their morphed, objectionable videos disseminated for consumption. Interestingly, the transgressions took place even as nations around the world met in Britain and signed a global pact against the risks posed by 'frontier AI' — highly capable, generative AI models that pose severe risks to public safety.

India, one of the signatories to the pact, has been a witness to deepfake's sinister powers for a while. Last year, a deepfake photograph was created to erroneously depict wrestlers

The rising concern with deepfakes mirrors technological and existential challenges for human society

protesting against the chief of the Wrestling Federation of India posing for a selfie inside a police van. In July this year, a man in Kerala was robbed of Rs 40,000 in a deepfake scam. It has taken the targeting of two celebrities for people to wake up to the threat. But the threat, data suggest, has been worsening. Researchers have observed a 230% increase in deepfake usage by cybercriminals and scammers and have predicted that the technology would replace phishing in a couple of years.

The State seems to have been jolted to action too. Earlier this week, the Indian government declared deepfakes to be a violation under the IT Rules 2021. Any company that does not take down content flagged as deepfake within 24-36 hours would be liable to

refinement and the weaponisation of technology are increasingly making it difficult to differentiate the real from the artificial, the concept of deepfakes is also being invoked to make the real appear fake. For instance, in 2019, the army in Gabon launched and won a coup against an elected government on the suspicion that a video of the then president was a deepfake even though subsequent forensic analysis did not find traces of alteration or manipulation. All this points to the unfolding of a deeper — existential — crisis in which human society, at the mercy of technology, is losing its ability to separate the real from the uncanny. This will have profoundly destabilising implications on the future of the species.

SCRIPPSI

'Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.'

SAMUEL SMILES

DELHI DIARIES

Star performer

■ The author, Shashi Tharoor, was seemingly in greater demand than the member of Parliament, Shashi Tharoor, while campaigning in Aizawl for the recently-concluded Mizoram assembly polls. In between meeting party workers, entrepreneurs and citizens to mobilise support for his party, which is trying hard to regain some lost ground in the state, the Congress' star campaigner was in his element, signing his books, posing for photographs with his fans and admirers and participating in an impromptu reunion of Stephanians, among other activities. Even at the airport, while returning on the Aizawl-Guwahati flight, he was swarmed by admirers for selfies. Inside the flight, the cabin crew, too, wanted a photograph with him. Tharoor smilingly obliged one and all. Such was his aura and fan base that a lady observed that he would have won hands down had he been the chief ministerial candidate for Mizoram. Clearly, there are politicians and there is Tharoor, a star campaigner and a star in his own right.

Whipping boys

■ Campaigning during the elections brings out the best and the worst, the funny and the bizarre in politicians. One saw all the above traits in the Assam CM, Himanta Biswa Sarma, at a rally in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh. Sarma, who is one of Bharatiya Janata Party's coveted campaigners, was at his best. Taking a dig at the Congress, Sarma said that he had become CM to tighten the screws against Babur and his ilk or what use would his chief ministership be. During elections in Assam, it was Aurangzeb and the Battle of Sariahat. The Mughals have been his favourite whipping boys during elections ever since he joined the BJP. That is not all. He even attacked the Congress veteran, Kamal Nath, for according the 'most favoured nation' status to Pakistan when he was the Union commerce minister. Sarma added that the BJP does not have to improve

ties with Pakistan. Rather it can teach Pakistan a lesson if it messes with India. Anything goes in India — the more bizarre, the better.

Rowdy bunch

■ The recently-concluded winter session of the Bihar legislative assembly had several incidents that left legislators and people red in the face. One of them was an incident of physical assault that did not draw much attention and got brushed under the carpet with just a warning amid the hullabaloo over other things. The Opposition members from the BJP frequently rushed to the well of the assembly, raising a din, waving placards, tearing papers, littering, toppling chairs, and protesting about everything possible. The marshals were constantly on their toes, try-

ing to control the situation as directed by the speaker. However, several of them were hit, kicked and punched by the BJP legislators.

"Such incidents were an exception previously, but have become a norm now. These MLAs are unimaginably rude and uncouth. They have no sanskar. They don't even know that we are just doing our duty," one of the marshals said, sharing his angst. Another described how three legislators kicked and punched him from behind. When it became too much, they complained to the Speaker, who then issued a warning to the BJP members of the legislative assembly that stern action would be taken if such cases of physical attack happen again. The incidents have stopped, but legislators from other parties wondered whether

some strict action should have been taken.

Sleepless nights

■ The former Karnataka CM and Lok Sabha member, DV Sadananda Gowda, dropped a bombshell by announcing his retirement from electoral politics. Another occupant of the same chair, BS Yediyurappa, immediately attributed the decision to a nudge from the party leadership to douse speculations about the reason. Instead, Yediyurappa has fuelled doubts in the minds of many Lok Sabha members from Karnataka about the BJP looking for fresh faces for the 2024 polls. This will surely give them sleepless nights ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Footnote

■ The Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and convener of the Left Democratic Front, EP Jayarajan, has declared his party's "love" for every other party. It's no secret that the CPI(M) is desperately trying to lure the Congress ally, the Indian Union Muslim League, into its fold. With the Congress wary of overtures such as the CPI(M) inviting the IUML to its Palestine solidarity rallies and other events, Jayarajan said that his party "loves" everyone. In fact, his party has been so liberal with its love that it even supported a Congress leader who defied his party's diktat to organise a pro-Palestine rally recently.

Timothy Garton Ash's most recent book is *Homelands: A Personal History of Europe*

With the US distracted, Europe must do more for Ukraine

Time to step in

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH



The Romanian president, Klaus Iohannis, the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, the former Italian prime minister, Mario Draghi, the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, and the French president, Emmanuel Macron, in Ukraine, June 2022

the issue is now fatefully entangled with hyperpolarised US politics.

I was told it's unlikely that Ukraine will get its invitation to join NATO at the 75th anniversary summit in Washington next July because that might cost Joe Biden — or, if he steps aside, another Democrat candidate — votes in November's presidential election. 'You're getting us into another forever war!' Donald Trump would shout. And a second Trump presidency would be a disaster for Ukraine.

All this was before Hamas' attack on Israel began another terrible war which will be at the very centre of American attention. It will absorb most of Washington's diplomatic and political time and may take some of the funding and the military equipment that might otherwise have gone to Ukraine. In signalling his unconditional support for the US in its battle against Hamas, the Ukraine president, Volodymyr Zelensky, is obviously well aware of that danger.

What's the right conclusion from these two worrying trends, one on the Russo-Ukrainian battlefield and the other in distant Washington? I think it's clear: Europe must do more. That's also how we persuade the US to stay the course and go on offering the kinds of weapons, ammunition and other equipment that only the world's

only military hyperpower has.

Europe should do more in terms of military support. Britain has led in this respect, but its own — anyway diminished — stocks of arms and ammunition are running low. Germany, following a very slow start, has overtaken Britain to become Ukraine's second-largest supporter after the US. Honour to a country which, to do this, has had to jump over its own shadow. But Chancellor Olaf Scholz is still given to nervous hesitation about each particular weapon system — most recently, declining to send German Taurus missiles, even though the United Kingdom, France and the US have already sent comparable weapon systems. Of course, the escalation risks always have to be weighed carefully. But this is not how you help a country win a war.

As important is gearing up European defence industries so we can continue to supply the almost Second World War-levels of arms, ammunition and other equipment that Ukraine will need. When I met the then Ukrainian defence minister earlier this year in Kyiv, with a delegation from the European Council on Foreign Relations, we were already discussing the country's needs for the next counteroffensive — in the summer of 2024 — and quite possibly one after that. The heavyweight champi-

on Vladimir Klitschko, the brother of the mayor of Kyiv, put it vividly. If you can't land a knockout blow, he said, you need to have the stamina to go twelve rounds.

Above all, though, Europe needs to lead on economic, social and political support for Ukraine. In moments like this, people always reach for the metaphor of a 'Marshall Plan', but by its very name, that suggests the US will play a leading role. The American public is just not ready for that any more. Nor do I see why Europe should expect the US to do the lion's share nearly 80 years after the end of the Second World War. Ukraine is in Europe, after all, and Europe has a very large economy of its own. If we succeed in the reconstruction and European integration of Ukraine, a bread basket of the world with a significant potential for economic development, Europe will be the biggest beneficiary.

The metaphor of a Marshall Plan is also wrong because this has to be done very differently. What might be called the 3Rs — reconstruction, reform and reaching for EU membership — have to be conceived of and implemented together. Reconstruction can't wait until the end of the war. People need homes, schools and hospitals now. Nor can reform of the Ukrainian State. On that, there are some concerning signs, such as an apparent reversal of the decentralisation, which was an important element of the country's post-2014 renewal. Nor can the first steps of getting closer to the EU. The EU needs to start an incremental process which, at each stage, creates a positive incentive: you reconstruct, you reform, you gain more access; you gain more access, that helps you reform further; that boosts reconstruction; and so on.

I returned from Ukraine and, before that, the US, strongly persuaded that this is what we in Europe must do. The alternative — unfortunately, now almost as probable as it is bad — is that the West will eventually settle for a so-called 'peace' which involves Ukraine effectively losing a large chunk of its sovereign territory. This would not be peace, but a semi-frozen conflict. Just a pause before another round of war, very much as we have seen it for decades in the Middle East. In the meantime, however, it would enable Vladimir Putin to declare victory at home and, therefore, stay in power longer; send precisely the wrong message to Xi Jinping over Taiwan; and feel like a terrible defeat to every Ukrainian. The memory of soldiers like Yevhen, who have paid the ultimate price, and the sacrifices of those like Vasyl and Makym, demand better.

Cracker of a grandma

■ Sir — There will be few Bengalis who have not heard of Burima's Chocolate Bomb — it is an inseparable part of our childhood. But with growing air pollution and bans on polluting crackers, Burima Fireworks, a company that was once a household name, is now struggling

to survive. The eponymous Burima, Annapurna Devi, was an East Pakistani refugee, who struggled to raise her children before carving out a niche for herself in the thriving market for crackers. Her story is a lesson in adaptability. Surely, the company she started, too, can adapt to the times and switch to making green crackers?

Sanjana Sanyal,
Calcutta

student owing to suicide have stagnated. No action has been taken against the culprits named in the report of an internal probe. The media should look into such cases in which justice is yet to be delivered and highlight them.

Avinash Godbole,
Dewas, Madhya Pradesh

Leading lady

■ Sir — The legendary cricketer, Meg Lanning, who led the Australian women's team to five World Cup victories in one-day internationals and Twenty20s, has unexpectedly announced her retirement from international cricket ("Captain of 5 World Cup triumphs retires", Nov 10). She is one of the most successful captains in the history of cricket. Fans of cricket across the globe will surely miss seeing her play.

Sourish Misra,
Calcutta

■ Sir — Meg Lanning's contribution to women's cricket is colossal. She had scored 8,352 runs in 241 matches and was a part of the Australian team during seven World Cup victories. She may be retiring but her career will remain an inspiration.

Jayanta Datta,
Hooghly

■ Sir — While she may be retiring, Meg Lanning still has a lot left to give to cricket. Women's cricket would benefit from her guidance.

Aranya Sanyal,
Calcutta

huge debts on these gaming platforms.

N. Mahadevan,
Chennai

Justice delayed

■ Sir — The failure of Jadavpur University to take action



Unjust hindrance

against those found guilty by an internal committee of ragging a first-year student to death has understandably left the father of the dead student aggrieved ("3 months on, no action against JU accused", Nov 10). The report has been shuttling back and forth between the university's anti-ragging committee and the anti-ragging squad. This kind of lacklustre attitude will lead to the recurrence of such ghastly events.

Jahar Saha,
Calcutta

■ Sir — The proceedings against the death of a JU

Letters should be sent to:
The Telegraph
6 Prafulla Sarkar Street,
Calcutta 700001
teedit@abp.in



Library for All:
In remote Arunachal, books on the streets and on trees too!
P16

The Telegraph graphic

SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023

XXCE

"The river has great wisdom and whispers its secrets to the hearts of men"

Mark Twain

INSIGHT

It runs through a river

It is common enough in the cityscape, but the story of its journey is anything but.

Moumita Chaudhuri on the bamboo trail



Come Durga Puja and suddenly Calcutta is full of bamboo. It stays that way right through to the end of winter and Saraswati Puja. Bamboo pandals, bamboo scaffolding for hoardings and bamboo barriers to shepherd crowds. If you were not so busy negotiating your way past and around these, you might have stopped to wonder — where do the bamboos come from?

The answer is not one that would come to mind easily.

You see, a large number of these bamboos are floated down the Hooghly river. A few thousand of them, over a period of one-and-a-half months, travel down the waterway.

From Murshidabad, down the Bhagirathi and Jalangi rivers, borne by the Hooghly in their final leg and collected at Kuti Ghat in Barranagar. From Ghatal in Midnapore — actor Dev's constituency — down the Shilabati, Rupnarayan and Hooghly. The distance between Murshidabad and Barranagar by road is 200 kilometres and Ghatal and Barranagar, 120 kilometres. In both cases, a mini-truck laden with bamboo would make the journey in under 24 hours.

But bamboos have been taking the riverine route ever since one can remember, claims Amarendra Halder who has been in this business for more than two decades. Halder has a shop at Kuti Ghat. He buys bamboo from the districts and sells them all over Bengal.

There are two kinds of bamboo. Raw/green bamboo is

used for making pandals. They come in trucks from Basirhat in North 24-Parganas, Siliguri and other pockets in North Bengal. Seasoned bamboo is used to make idols, for scaffolding for hoardings and lights, fencing, construction work, building makeshift stalls and hutments in the fringes of the city, for making furniture, wicker baskets... These bamboos are floated down as rafts.

This floating bamboo business is not as random as it sounds. There is an entire network in motion.

Bengal's bamboo growing districts are Nadia, West Midnapore and Murshidabad. Other than these, bamboo grows in Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and Alipurduar districts. The bamboo that grows naturally is harvested by locals hired by agents or middlemen. These middlemen know the small-time traders in Calcutta who are in this business. The bamboo that is cultivated is sold by the farmer concerned to one or more agents.

The agent employs labourers to make bamboo rafts. Each raft is made up of 6,000 bamboos. The agent also hires boatmen. Each raft is then hooked to a rowing boat.

The boatmen belong to the regions from where the bamboo travels; for the rest of the year these men work as daily wagers or farm hands in their villages. Some also go out to fish.

The boatmen have to ensure they don't go against the current. "So, while sailing out from Midnapore to Calcutta they will wait



BROWNLAND: (Top) A bamboo raft anchored at Kuti Ghat in north Calcutta; (1, 2) a raft being dismantled; (3, 4) the seasoned bamboo unloaded on the river bank; (5) remains of a puja scaffolding in a city lane. Photos by Moumita Chaudhuri

for high tide, and while setting out from Murshidabad or Nadia they wait for the low tide," says Halder. On any given day, the boatmen — there are four per raft — have to row for eight hours with a break in between. During breaks, they anchor

somewhere close to

human habitation as it is safer.

There have been incidents when they have been robbed," says Halder.

Every boat has a covered area. Inside it, the boatmen cook, eat and sleep. "These men would have typically started out as boys. They come with their father or uncle or elder brothers and learn to read the weather and the currents," says a worker at Kuti Ghat. "They do not need to refer to any almanac or smartphone to know when there will be a high tide or a low tide," he adds.

The person who buys the bamboo also pays these men; someone like Halder.

That day in October, Kuti Ghat had just received a fresh consignment of bamboo.

"It is illegal to bring long bamboo in trucks. The fines are very high," says Halder. The reasons are many. First, a good-sized bamboo is 29 feet long and will stick out of the vehicle — that can cause accidents. Then, there is the matter of weight, a single truck can carry about 600 bamboos, any more and the truck may overturn.

"The rainy season is about to end and that is why the bam-

boos have started coming in," says Halder. "Bamboos are not harvested during the monsoons as that is when they bloom. Also, this is the time when the rivers are too full and it is very difficult and risky to row a boat."

Just where the flight of steps disappears into the river, there is a bamboo raft tied tightly to a pole with a thick rope. Some distance away, there is another raft parked below a banyan tree. Some men are pulling out the bamboo from the river with their bare hands, some others are dragging them up the stairs.

The bamboos are covered with alluvial soil. The soil adds to the weight of each bamboo, which are sold per piece — anything between Rs 150 and Rs 200.

The bamboos float down between October and June.

They are collected along the riverbanks in Uttarpara, Salkia, Metiabruz, Nazirganj, Batanagar, Budge Budge and Sankrail.

The street adjacent to Kuti Ghat has several shops that deal in the buying and selling of bamboo. Halder's is one of them, it overlooks the river. Behind it, a man is busy making a contraption. It is for a multistorey that is coming up across the road. "They are sturdy, the masons use them for support. The green bamboo will bend and break if someone stands on them, but the seasoned bamboo last a decade," says the labourer.

And that's how the bamboo continues to travel.

There is a third kind actually. Pronounced *bumbo*, it is more common than the greens and browns, invisible and strictly experiential... but then you know that already.

Why not to say 'cheese' in Ayutthaya

Uddalak Mukherjee on his travels through an ancient city — all that he saw but could barely capture on camera

I was reminded of the uselessness of the state-of-the-art phone camera — its lofty claims notwithstanding — when it comes to capturing great art, once again, ironically a few days after World Photography Day. The setting was distinctly photogenic.

I was visiting Ayutthaya — the old capital of imperial Siam — and stood surrounded by the hypnotic splendour of the architectural remains of Buddhist shrines that had begun to be built by gifted artisans, one brick at a time, from around the mid-13th century. But the artworks — impossibly ornate columns, stupas embellished with bewitching murals, geometric arches, walls studded with motifs, statues, spires — even though they were only a few metres from where I stood, were proving to be deceptively elusive: they simply refused to be caged within the lens of the camera.

Consider the problem posed by the monumental statue called the Reclining Buddha at Wat Lokayasutha, a figurine depicting the Enlightened One in a state of repose. The astoundingly crafted Buddha, its solemn head supported by an open palm, runs for a length of over 40 metres. When the camera zoomed in to capture it from head to toe, the feet jutted out of the frame; a close-up of the toes, quite naturally, left the head out. For a moment, struck by art's ability to deceive technology, I thought the Buddha was smiling.

But then I was struck by what I thought was my moment of enlightenment. I decided to tip-toe backwards, one gingerly step at a time, in a bid to visually imprison the Buddha in a

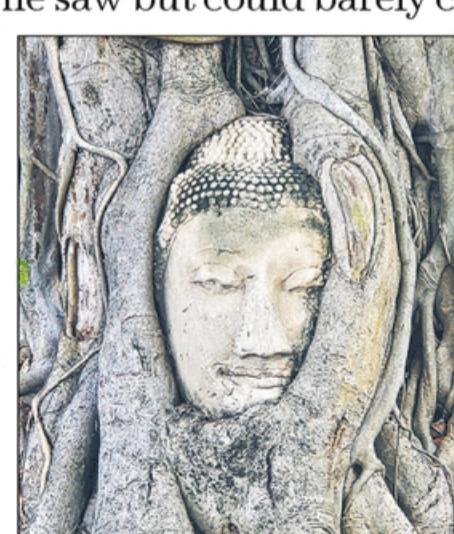


WAT SHOT: In one corner of the Wat Mahathat temple complex in Thailand is the head of a Buddha statue (right) ensconced by the roots of an old fig tree. Photos by Uddalak Mukherjee

wide-angle shot. Alas, after a while, even though it seemed that I had walked backwards almost out of Ayutthaya, the reclining one still wouldn't fit in the frame.

Wat Phra Ram, another relic of bedazzling medieval art, put the phone camera in its place equally comprehensively. If the camera managed to catch a single figure carved on a particular stupa, there would be 10 others — with gently mocking countenances — on the same structure that would stay out of the frame. The ritu-

al of a failed courtship between art and camera was, of course, not limited to Ayutthaya: it had been played out in other historical sites in other corners. In Konark, I remember the danseuse, carved at an astonishing height, staying on my mind but out of the camera's sight; in Bhubaneswar's Rajarani shrine, the yakshi — they say Feluda had retrieved it on one of his adventures — had remained a blurry dot defying digital wizardry; Ajanta and Ellora's luminescence could never quite be reproduced by the mechanical



third eye; Varanasi and Kanchipuram, two cities of shrines, agreed to lend only miserly glimpses of their artistic abundance to the camera.

So in Ayutthaya, I did what great art demands of us: disengage from the frenzied but futile pursuit of camera-trapping the shrines and try and absorb their sublime beauty through the human eye. It was a surreal moment, the moment of surrendering one's sensory faculties — eye and ear for sight and ambient sound — to architecture that is simultaneously capacious and precise.

But then art also has the ability to conceal or deflect realities from the field of human vision. In Ayutthaya, as one walks around the splendid remains of the edifices, it is easy to be lulled into a sense of harmony, forgetting that this very place, once a bustling, cosmopolitan capital, had been razed to the ground by the invading Burmese army, never to recover its former sheen.

As with art, so with nature.

While crisscrossing Thailand's countryside, tucked away from Bangkok and its urbane, hedonistic pleasures and marked by emerald stretches of fields and vegetation, meandering waterways, and a seemingly laconic way of life, it is equally easy to forget that the people, warm and hospitable to a fault in spite of their hardships, have had two of their popular leaders dismissed from power, in 2006 and 2014, by the Establishment.

But as I jostled with chatty Chinese visitors and sombre Thai monks to photograph — there, I did it again! — the famed Buddha head entwined in the roots of a tree at Wat Mahathat, another of Ayutthaya's enduring wonders, I forgot about Thailand's evolving and not-quite-perfect tryst with democracy. That is because, for a moment, I could not quite believe what I was seeing as I peered into my camera. The Buddha head, unlike numerous other artefacts, fit perfectly in the frame!

And there I stood, momentarily transfixed, a solitary Indian with a distinctly un-Buddha-like smile, amidst a throng of solemn East Asian neighbours.

Stopping by the books

Once upon a lockdown, two siblings in Arunachal Pradesh decided to grow... an interest. Sudipta Bhattacharjee tells their story

When C. Lawmzuala of Mizoram University's Central Library and Lallaisangzuali, a deputy librarian there, decided to set up a tiny non-profit roadside library in the capital Aizawl in 2020, they could barely have imagined the range of inspiration their magnanimity would ignite. The duo had seen similar reading nooks during their trips to the United States and decided to replicate them once they returned home.

Their venture in a state with a fairly high literacy rate has led two sisters in the border state of Arunachal Pradesh to follow suit by establishing mini roadside libraries in three remote districts — Papum Pare, Kurung Kumey and Tirap.

Nurang Meena, a 33-year-old schoolteacher, and her younger sister Reena, a PhD scholar at JNU, New Delhi, had launched the Ngurang Learning Institute (NLI) in 2014. When all activities came to a standstill during the pandemic, Meena, who had seen a Facebook post on the Mizoram roadside libraries, decided to open one in her village.

The hurdles were many. As Reena says, unlike Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh lags behind on many parameters. "The state is the worst performing compared to all its 'sister' states, and most of the Indian states, notably in literacy. It is also the second lowest performing state on NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals index on gender equality and among the lowest performers in quality education," she points out.

In a span of three years, the siblings have done the state proud. The United Nations General Assembly recently recognised their Free Street Library Initiative



NEW LEAF: Some of the street libraries in Papum Pare, Kurung Kumey and Tirap are just racks in the crevices of trees. Photo, courtesy Nurang Reena

as an exemplary project. The articulate Reena, when asked about the UN accolades, says, "Our journey to the United Nations General Assembly has been possible due to several factors, distinctively the love and support from Arunachal society, friends and well-wishers such as writers, human rights defenders, and cultural institutions in India and abroad. With the recent UN recognition, I am convinced that NLI will continue to persist with its humanitarian and educational efforts, notably with the co-operation from the international community."

Started with an initial fund of Rs 10,000 for books and an equal amount for wooden shelves, today the 26-odd street libraries, some simply comprising racks in the crevices of trees, have their own stories to tell. Meena, who is teacher at Kimin Higher Secondary School, had to devise ways to inculcate the reading habit in children.



This included luring them with treats and gifts, once the excitement of seeing new books had faded.

Meena says, "Since I had a lot of free time during the lockdown, I started leading many children in and around my neighbourhood to read books from this free street library. I had a firm conviction of introducing them to books. Only a few days after the library became functional, I saw so many children spending a considerable amount of time with books. It was so liberating for me to see them read. When I saw the library having many positive effects, I

got even more encouraged to extend this idea of mine. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded our efforts in *Mann Ki Baat*."

The initial pitfalls were the vagaries of nature that resulted in the collapse of one such library. Sometimes books were stolen. Now, with international recognition, the sisters hope to extend their venture to all districts in the state, especially the remote border ones. As Reena says, "There is now focus on infrastructure development in areas bordering China, since those are of strategic importance. That is a blessing since there is no WiFi in villages like ours. It is difficult to sustain on phone data. Often there is no electrification or network is poor."

On the ground, it is primarily Meena and Disang who run the project from their base in Nirjuli town in Papum Pare district. The Arunachal government even honoured Meena this year as part of International Women's Day celebrations. Those who frequent these open-shelf roadside repositories of books are mostly children under 10 and working women. Reena explains that they "approach local government schools to research the reading habits of students and seek donations on social media to keep this unique venture viable".

As the first woman in her family to pursue higher education, Meena values books because she had limited access to them while growing up. Today, as a teacher, she is concerned over the poor writing skills of students and is determined to inculcate the reading habit in them to overcome this handicap. The UN feather in their caps will hopefully propel the library dream to take wings and help the state tiptoe out from the "worst performer" box!



CELEBRITY CIRCUS

BHARATHI S. PRADHAN

F for flying colours

The lesson learnt last weekend was, Virat *ho ya* Vidhu, never write them off.

Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *12th Fail*, a Rs 25 crore film scoring high in cinema halls, emits three strong messages: Never cheat. *Haar nahi mananga* (I'll never accept defeat). Restart.

All three were on display last Sunday at Eden Gardens. Written off for poor form (2019-22), topped with a controversial step down as captain, Virat Kohli's masterly birthday present to himself was a reminder. Never forget that this was the 18-year-old Delhi boy who'd scored 40 runs at the end of play in a match with Karnataka in 2006, had lost his father the same night at 3.54am, had returned to the crease the next morning and attended the funeral only after being dismissed for 90.

From the paratha-loving Punjabi boy to the leanest-meanest poster boy of fitness. From teetering as a has-been to a match-winning record-setter. Undeterred determination. Unmatched self-belief. Passion, aggression. We saw it this week on the field and at the movies.

The weakening graph from *Kareeb* (1998) and *Broken Horses* (2015) to *Shikara* (2020) had made Vidhu seem a filmmaker whose only recent claim to fame was that he'd backed a gem called *Raju Hirani*.

Pre-Diwali is known as a dead period when producers dump their duds in the theatres. The Rs 300 crore Tiger Shroff film *Ganapath* flickered out with a box-office figure of Rs 9 crore. Kangana Ranaut's Rs 60 crore *Teraaj* crash-landed with a Rs 5 crore collection. And Vikrant Massey's *12th Fail*, made by Vidhu, who hadn't ignited the box office in decades, hit it out of the park. Rs 25 crore, not out.

Virat, Vidhu. Men who never give up. Men with much in common. Virat's fitness is legendary. And when there was talk of how Vidhu delivered a hit at age 71, "My assistants look older than me," he chuckled. "Health. Family. Cinema. The three clear priorities of my life. I work out every day in my gym at home."

Vidhu also practises *yognidra* — takes an afternoon nap. "Even during shoot-

ing when there were 5,000 people waiting for me, I did my daily *yognidra*."

Virat too has talked of his afternoon nap as an important "Reset".

Stretching the similarities, they have an Amu each in their lives — Anushka Sharma, Anupama Chopra. Hardworking career women with a calming influence on their ebullient husbands.

Incidentally, when a Vidhu wanted to celebrate the unexpected success of *12th Fail*, the venue One8 Commune, the restaurant where Virat's illuminated signature is the most popular mural.

Based on the real story of IPS officer Manoj Kumar Sharma and his wife Shraddha, it's not just the box-office numbers that are animating Vidhu. "I'm happy that a small film with an important message is doing better than films full of gas. That will inspire more filmmakers to make films like this."

When a teacher at a school in Almora (where Shraddha studied) asked her students what they learnt from *12th Fail*, the kids chimed, "No cheating." Then they said, "*Haar nahi mananga*." And they recalled, "Restart".

"That's what gave me the greatest feeling of happiness," beamed Vidhu. "That apart from grown-ups and others, school kids

are getting the message of the film. 'All izz well' Munna Bhai life change that a movie can make is a great feeling."

"I'm 71 and I have enough money to live happily till I'm 101. Money doesn't give me a high. People low on self-esteem walk tall when they're rich. But if you respect who you are and love what you do, your self-esteem doesn't come from your bank balance."

Vidhu, producer and co-writer of *Munna Bhai MBBS*, has again used the same winning formula of entertain and educate. "Say something important with a smile."

Virat has said that he wants his fitness and his focus to inspire the young. *12th Fail* has sent home the right lessons. It has been an inspirational week.

Bharathi S. Pradhan is a senior journalist and author

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This included luring them with treats and gifts, once the excitement of seeing new books had faded.

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We saw it this week on

the field and at the movies.

The libraries thrived dur-

ing the pandemic because

schools were closed. Once

the educational institu-

tions reopened, the footfall

dropped considerably, from

nearly a hundred visitors

a day to between 20 and 40.

Meena, along with her par-

ner Diwang Hosai, continues to spearhead this unique liter-

acy campaign.

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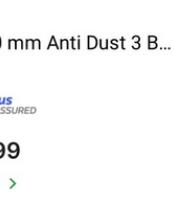
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