

# The Telegraph



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## IN BRIEF

Pandits fume at J&K quota

■ SRINAGAR: The Centre's decision to reserve two seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly for nominated representatives of displaced Kashmiri Pandits has left sections of the community fuming at what they see as an admission that the government cannot bring them back to their homeland.

NATION

## SC/ST atrocities

■ NEW DELHI: BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number of crimes against Dalits and tribal people, respectively, last year among the states, the latest National Crime Records Bureau report shows.

NATION

## PM-Kisan data

■ NEW DELHI: The number of beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana has fallen 22 per cent from 10.45 crore families last year to 8.12 crore now, causing some MPs to seek an explanation.

NATION

## Crop damages

■ CALCUTTA: The Bengal government on Friday evening set the ball rolling to compensate farmers for the damage caused to crops by the sudden December rain and deputed officials of the agriculture department to assess the losses.

EAST

## QUOTE

It is a disgrace to parliamentary democracy. We condemn the expulsion of Mahua Moitra; the party stands firmly with her. Unable to defeat us in elections, the BJP has resorted to vendetta politics. Today marks a sad day and a betrayal of Indian parliamentary democracy

MAMATA BANERJEE

Hounded,  
Mahua vows  
dogged  
fightback

J.P. YADAV



Mahua Moitra, flanked by Congress MP Sonia Gandhi and other Opposition leaders, addresses the media in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI picture)

New Delhi: Trinamul Congress MP Mahua Moitra, who wouldn't stop raising questions on the astonishing expansion of the Adani empire in the Narendra Modi years, was expelled from the Lok Sabha on Friday without being given a chance to speak.

The treasury used a report of the House Ethics Committee that had indicted her of "unethical conduct" and "contempt of the House" in a "cash-for-query" case to banish Mahua amid protests over the violation of "fundamental principles of natural justice" and a walkout by the United Opposition.

"This Lok Sabha has presided over one of the most tenacious witch-hunts of one of 78 women MPs, a first-timer, a single woman with no political lineage..." a furious Mahua told reporters outside the gates of the new Parliament building. "You (BJP) hate minorities, you hate women, you detest naari shakti... I am 49 years old, I will fight you for the next 30 years, inside Parliament, outside Parliament, in the gutter, on the streets... We will see the end of you," she said, assured that the CBI will now be sent to hound her. She asked why the CBI-ED was not probing the coal scam and other charges against the Adani group. She also asked why no action had been taken against BJP member Ramesh Bidhuri for hurling flagrant communal slurs against BSP MP Danish Ali inside the House and iterated her resolve to fight.

Flanked by several Opposition MPs, and with Sonia Gandhi right behind her, Mahua ventured:

"The Ethics Committee, which was set up to serve as a moral compass for members, has been abused today to do exactly what it was never meant to do - which is to bulldoze the Opposition and become another weapon to 'thok do' us into submission."

Mahua — turned out in an off-white silk saree with thick blood-red borders -- had just taken the blow of the sword widely expected to fall on her; she was flushed with fury as she raged on against the Modi establishment. "You (BJP) hate minorities, you hate women, you detest naari shakti... I am 49 years old, I will fight you for the next 30 years, inside Parliament, outside Parliament, in the gutter, on the streets... We will see the end of you," she said, assured that the CBI will now be sent to hound her. She asked why the CBI-ED was not probing the coal scam and other charges against the Adani group. She also asked why no action had been taken against BJP member Ramesh Bidhuri for hurling flagrant communal slurs against BSP MP Danish Ali inside the House and iterated her resolve to fight.

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Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had earlier set aside fervent appeals by Opposition leaders in the name of the principles of natural justice to allow Moitra to defend herself against the charges levelled at her. The Speaker

used a past precedent, raised by the treasury bench, that in a similar case in 2005, the then Speaker Somnath Chatterjee had not granted an opportunity to 10 MPs to speak in a cash-for-query case.

The Speaker took up the resolution recommending Moitra's expulsion after the Opposition walked out in protest from the House. The resolution was moved by parliamentary affairs minister Prahlad Joshi and swiftly passed by a voice vote.

The Ethics Committee report held the Trinamul member guilty of "unethical conduct" because she had shared her parliamentary portal login credentials with others, and of "contempt of the House" because she allegedly accepted gifts from a businessman friend in exchange for favours.

Mahua has accepted sharing the portal login credentials with businessman-friend Darshan Hiranandani, but argued that it's common practice among MPs. She has also spoken publicly about accepting the odd gift from him, but asserted they did not involve any quid pro quo, or compromise her integrity as an MP.

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Gap between Jerusalem's declared intentions to protect civilians in south Gaza and the casualties: Blinken



Reuters editor-in-chief Alessandra Galloni.  
(Reuters file picture)

## Killing of Reuters scribe 'deliberate'

New York: An October 13 strike that killed a videographer for the Reuters news agency and injured six others in southern Lebanon was carried out by the Israeli military and appeared to be a deliberate attack, Human Rights Watch said on Thursday.

The watchdog group said that evidence it had reviewed — including dozens of videos of the incident, photographs and satellite images, and interviews with witnesses and military experts — showed that the journalists were not near areas where fighting was taking place and that there was no military objective near their position.

"The attack on the journalists' position directly targeted them," the report said, labeling the attack a war crime.

Israeli authorities did not immediately respond to the report.

Reuters published its own investigation on Thursday and said that an Israeli tank crew had killed its journalist and wounded the others.

"The evidence we now have, and have published today, shows that an Israeli tank crew killed our colleague Issam Abdallah," Alessandra Galloni, the editor-in-chief of Reuters, said. She called on Israel "to explain how this could have happened and to hold to account those responsible."

New York Times News Service

## Iran helping Yemen's Houthis: US

**Washington:** The US believes that Iran is involved in the planning and execution of drone and missile attacks by Yemen's Houthi group on Israel and ships in the Red Sea, a senior aide to US President Joe Biden said on Thursday.

The comments by deputy White House national security adviser Jon Finer are among the most explicit to date by a US official alleging Iranian involvement in the Houthi attacks.

Finer spoke hours after the US imposed new sanctions aimed at throttling what US officials say is Iranian financial support for the Houthi strikes.

The Houthi "would not have the weaponry, would not have the intelligence, would not have the motivation to do this, were it not for the role of the IRGC", Finer told an Aspen Security Forum conference in Washington, using the acronym for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"They're involved in the conduct of these attacks, the planning of them, the execution of them, the authorisation of them, and ultimately, they support them," he continued.

Iran has denied any involvement in the strikes.

The Houthis say they have been staging attacks against



Newly recruited fighters for the Houthi military force at a parade in Sanaa, Yemen, on December 2.  
(Reuters file picture)

Israel and Israeli ships in the Red Sea in response to the offensive Israel launched against Tehran-backed militant group Hamas in Gaza.

Washington has said that US warships have downed missiles and drones fired by the Houthis but the Pentagon says it is not clear that the American vessels were actually targeted. US warships also have intercepted attacks on commercial ships that the US military says were linked to multiple nations.

Finer said that the USS Carney, a destroyer, downed dozens of missiles and drones headed towards Israel early in the Gaza conflict, calling it a "remarkable act of defence of Israeli territory".

Asked whether US warships in the region were defending Israel, Finer said he did not know the munitions' ultimate destination. Biden has authorised US naval vessels to down munitions passing in their vicinities, he added.

The sanctions announced on Thursday by the US treasury were part of the US response to the attacks and "enablers of the Houthis' military capability out of Yemen", Finer said. The sanctions targeted 13 individuals and entities for allegedly funneling tens of millions of dollars in foreign currency to the Houthis from the sale and shipment of Iranian commodities.

The US treasury said in a statement that the IRGC, Iran's paramilitary and espionage force, backed the scheme involving a complex web of currency exchange houses and firms in multiple countries.

Reuters

## 5 killed in West Bank violence

**Near Tubas, West Bank:** Israeli forces killed five Palestinians on Friday during a raid in the occupied West Bank that touched off a gunfight, medics and witnesses said.

The army said it sent troops to Al Fara, near Tubas, to detain two suspected militants. They were shot at and fired back, killing at least two gunmen, the army statement said. A Palestinian witness confirmed seeing a gunman breaking down.

As the UN Security Council prepared for a vote over a demand for a ceasefire, and relief workers in southern Gaza were anxiously seeking more aid. Israel's increasing airstrikes and ground operations in the south have made relief efforts erratic and unpredictable, the UN said, and the enclave is facing shortages of food, water and medicine.

The West Bank has seen a surge in violence in parallel to Israel's war with Hamas.

Reuters

## Civil order breaking down in Gaza, warns UN

VICTORIA KIM

**New York:** UN humanitarian officials warned on Friday of an increasingly dire situation in the Gaza Strip, with aid operations all but incapacitated by the intensifying fighting in the south and civil order breaking down.

He said he had written to the UN General Assembly's president to relay that the agency's "ability to continue delivering its mandate in Gaza has now become very limited".

Aid workers describe the public's growing desperation for food, with one UN official saying that convoys had been looted and UN vehicles stoned. The streets "feel wild, particularly after dark", Thomas White, the Gaza director of

UNRWA said on social media on Friday, adding that "society is on the brink of full-blown collapse."

The Security Council is meeting for a vote on the situation after UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on the body to declare an immediate ceasefire. He did so by invoking a rarely used tool in the UN Charter that empowers the leader of the UN to recommend action to the Security Council.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Thursday that Israel would allow a "minimal" supply of additional fuel "to prevent a humanitarian collapse and the outbreak of epidemics", without specifying when it would be delivered.

New York Times News Service



A displaced Palestinian boy at a camp in Rafah on Friday. (Reuters)

## Rockets target US embassy in Baghdad

**Baghdad:** A rocket attack on the sprawling US embassy in Baghdad caused minor damage but no casualties Friday morning, US and Iraqi officials said.

The attack is the first on the embassy located in the heavily fortified Green Zone of Iraq's capital to be confirmed since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war. The Green Zone houses Iraqi government buildings and embassies on the west bank of the Tigris river.

Iran-backed militias in Iraq have claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks that targeted bases housing US troops in Iraq and Syria since Israel declared war on Hamas two months ago.

The US military says 78 attacks have been carried out against US facilities over the past weeks, of which 37 were in Iraq and 41 in Syria.

An Iraqi security official said 14 Katyusha rockets were fired on Friday, of which some struck near one of the US Embassy's gates while others fell in the river. The official said the rocket attack caused material damage but no casualties.

A US military official said a multi-rocket attack was launched at American and coalition forces in the vicinity of the embassy complex and the Union III base, which houses offices of the US-led coalition.

AP/PTI



An Israeli armoured personnel carrier near the Israeli-Gaza border on Friday. (Reuters)

Iran-backed Hamas militants, who control the enclave. The Hamas attack killed 1,200 people, with 240 people taken hostage, according to Israel's tally.

The Israeli military on Friday said 92 of its soldiers had been killed in Gaza fighting since its ground incursions began on October 20.

## UN ceasefire demand

Hundreds more Palestinians were killed as Israel fought Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip's biggest cities on Thursday — 350 people, according to Gaza health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra.

Israel said its forces killed a number of gun men in Khan Younis, including two who emerged firing from a tunnel.

Arab states have renewed their push for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, with the UAE asking the UN Security Council to vote on Friday morning on a draft resolution.

The US and ally Israel oppose a ceasefire, saying it would only benefit Hamas.

Reuters

'আলোটা জেলে বিছানার দিকে  
চোখ পড়তেই... কী ওটা?  
মানুষ, ছায়া নাকি অন্য কিছু?'

পডকাস্টে শুনুন বনফুল-এর গল্প



ইনস্টল করে রেজিস্টার করলেই আপনার জন্য থাকছে এমনই  
পডকাস্ট-সহ বাঙালি সংস্কৃতির বিশাল সভার।

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আরও  
আনন্দ

যা কিছু বাঙালির

An ABP Initiative

sosideas

## Putin to run for President again

VALERIE HOPKINS AND  
IVAN NECHEPURENKO

**New York:** President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that he would seek another term as Russia's leader at an election scheduled for March 17, setting in motion a campaign that is widely expected to result in another victory.

With the war in Ukraine as a backdrop, Putin's announcement was laden with symbolism.

According to Tass, a Russian state news agency, he made it during a military awards ceremony in the Kremlin, responding to a question posed by Artyom Zhoga, a Russian military officer and friend from Donetsk, a city in eastern Ukraine.

"I won't hide, I had different thoughts in different times," Putin said. "But now you are right, the time is such when a decision needs to be made," he said. "I will run for President of Russia."

It was a long-awaited announcement, awaited by observers at least since the



Vladimir Putin at a ceremony in Moscow on Friday. (Sputnik/Sergei Guneev  
Pool via Reuters)

election, this is the re-election of the same leader."

"Mr. Putin is essentially competing with himself — with the younger Putin," Petrov added. "It is important for him to show that he is not in a worse place than he was 25 years ago."

The invasion of Ukraine was perhaps the most consequential decision Putin had taken for Russia during his 23 years in power. He also ordered an unpopular mobilisation campaign last year, in which hundreds of thousands of men were called up to fight in the war.

So far, the conflict has not figured heavily in Putin's public appearances in the months running up to the election — a strategy that observers say is intentional.

After pinning the gold star "Hero of Russia" medals on the lapsels of soldiers who had fought in Ukraine, some of the men and mothers of the fallen rushed up to one of the best-guarded leaders in the world in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

Artyom Zhoga, a lieutenant colonel born in Soviet-era Ukraine who fights for Russia, asked Putin to run again: "You are our president, we are your team. We need you. Russia needs you."

Putin thanked him.

The case is believed to be among the first attempts in the nation to seek a court-approved abortion since the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last year.

Judge Maya Guerra Gamble of Travis County district court sided with the woman, Kate Cox, who is 20 weeks pregnant, and issued a temporary restraining order to permit her doctor to perform an abortion without facing civil or criminal penalties.

The judge, a Democrat, agreed with Cox's lawyers that the procedure was necessary to protect Cox.

New York Times News Service

## US chides Israel on civilian toll

Gaza/Washington: US secretary of state Antony Blinken, in his strongest public criticism of Israel's conduct of the war on Hamas in south Gaza, said there was a gap between the government's declared intentions to protect civilians and the casualties.

"As we stand here almost a week into this campaign into the south... it remains imperative that Israel put a premium on civilian protection," Blinken told a press conference after meeting British foreign secretary David Cameron in Washington on Thursday.

"And there does remain a gap between... the intent to protect civilians and the actual results that we're seeing on the ground."

Israel says it must wipe out the Hamas militant group after its attack on Israel two months ago and is doing everything possible to get civilians out of harm's way, including warnings about military operations.

US President Joe Biden spoke separately by phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jordan's King Abdullah on Thursday. Biden "emphasised the critical need to protect civilians and to separate the civilian population from Hamas including through corridors that allow people to move safely from defined areas of hostilities", the White House said.

More than 17,170 Palestinians have been killed and 46,000 wounded, according to the Gaza health ministry, since October 7, when Israel began bombing Gaza in response to a cross-border rampage by

## Texas judge grants rare abortion

New York: A Texas judge granted a request on Thursday to allow an abortion despite the state's strict bans, ruling in the case of a pregnant woman whose foetus was diagnosed with a fatal condition.

The case is believed to be among the first attempts in the nation to seek a court-approved abortion since the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last year.

Judge Maya Guerra Gamble of Travis County district court sided with the woman, Kate Cox, who is 20 weeks pregnant, and issued a temporary restraining order to permit her doctor to perform an abortion without facing civil or criminal penalties.

The judge, a Democrat, agreed with Cox's lawyers that the procedure was necessary to protect Cox.

New York Times News Service

Reserving 2 seats seen as govt's failure to keep its vow

## Pandits fume at J&K quota

**MUZAFFAR RAINA**

**Srinagar:** The Centre's decision to reserve two seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly for nominated representatives of displaced Kashmiri Pandits has left sections of the community fuming at what they see as an admission that the government cannot bring them back to their homeland.

The Lok Sabha this week passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to nominate to the Assembly two members from the migrant Kashmiri Pandit community and one representing displaced Hindus from PoK. These three seats will be added to the 91 seats for which elections will be held.

Migrant Kashmiri Pandits living anywhere in India are eligible to be nominated.

Valley-based political parties have opposed the decision, stressing that it gives an unelected lieutenant governor, and not an elected government, the power to nominate these members.

### BJP observers

FROM PAGE 1

For Madhya Pradesh, Khattar, OBC Morcha chief K. Laxman and BJP national secretary Asha Lakra have been appointed. Incumbent chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is a strong claimant but the leadership is learnt to be looking for a generational change.

In tribal-dominated Chhattisgarh, where the BJP snatched power from the Congress, Union tribal affairs ministers Munda, shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal and party general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam have been assigned. The likelihood of a tribal or an OBC leader getting the chief minister's post is high.

The results for four states — Telangana was the fourth — came out on Sunday. In Telangana, the Congress announced its chief minister on Tuesday and he took oath on Thursday.

Pandit leader Satish Mahal-

dar, who heads the Jammu and Kashmir Peace Forum, accused the BJP of "not keeping its promises to the Hindu majority nation as well as the Pandit community" despite being in power for nearly a decade.

"It appears the govt of India - the BJP has given up/bombed all commitments by proposing such a defective demonstration in the shadow (guise) of political strengthening to the Kashmir Pandits."

Mahaladar told The Telegraph that reserving seats for the displaced Pandits amounts to making their "displacement" permanent.

"Does it mean they will never come back, or, if they do, they will lose their political representation? The bill clearly shows the Centre is not interested in bringing the community

back," he said.

The BJP has always claimed that the return of the Pandits to Kashmir is high on its agenda. But the party has so far failed to convince the community to do so. Pandits claim the situation is not conducive to their return.

People's Democratic Party leader Naem Akhtar criticised what he called a "deeply flawed reservation", saying it takes the migrants farther away from their roots.

"Any reintegration looks like a distant dream with such legislation negating Kashmir's history of electing minority leaders," he posted on X.

Some Pandits, however, welcomed the move. Pandit leader Tej Krishan Bhat lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking an initiative that "no other party took in the past".

Hindu refugees from PoK have, however, expressed anguish at only one seat being reserved for "a 12-lakh-strong population of PoK refugees living in J&K".

"It's an insult to us," their leader Rajiv Chunni said.



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## Congress

► FROM PAGE 1

"The message is that nobody should dare raise his or her voice on Adani. If somebody crosses the line to expose the hidden truth, every single tool available with the government will be used to crush that person," Manickam said.

"They harassed Rahul Gandhi but failed to silence him. Mahua is another example. The Modi-Shah conspiracy to silence Mahua has won and democracy has lost."

The Congress had earlier this year argued vociferously that Rahul Gandhi had been expelled from the Lok Sabha (after conviction and sentencing in a defamation case) because he had spoken out against Adani. The party had claimed that the case about defaming OBCs was a sham. Rahul was later reinstated as MP after the Supreme Court stayed his conviction.

Rahul has himself said at every public meeting in the past few months that he was thrown out of Parliament because he had spoken about a Modi-Adani nexus. Moitra too had persistently raised incisive questions about Adani's business practices.

She had emerged as a powerful voice in Parliament, and not only on the subject of Adani. She had spoken on fascism, China, the Pegasus and Rafale controversies, the toxic political discourse aimed at polarising society, and the mismanagement of the Manipur crisis and the economy.

Not one to be frightened easily, the irrepressible young politician had declared: "Adani and (the) BJP and their kangaroo courts are never going to win. Disobedient women are here to stay. Get used to it."

While many veteran politicians gave in to pressure, the Trinamul MP had defiantly taunted the Prime Minister, accusing him of ordering an investigation into her "shoes and foreign trips" while ignoring gigantic violations by Adani that she had cost the exchequer thousands of crores of rupees.

Her fellow MPs on Friday alleged a vendetta against her and rued that Indian democracy was drifting into the abyss of lawless totalitarianism.

While Congress members Adhir Chowdhury and Manish Tewari put up a spirited defence of the Trinamul MP inside the Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi led the protest against Moitra's expulsion outside the House.

The Opposition parties rallied behind Moitra, using the opportunity to rekindle the spirit of a united fight against the Modi government.

"The government applies different rules to different people. Show me the face and then we will apply the law – that's their attitude," Congress Rajya Sabha member Rajni Patil said.

"If this is how Parliament works, then nobody will dare to open his or her mouth."

JMM Lok Sabha member Mahua Manjhi said: "There is no law, no code that defines how MPs work in the context of log-ins. Many MPs are not educated and they give (their) passwords to others for writing.... If that's a crime, let there be a comprehensive probe."

RSP parliamentarian N.K. Premchandran said: "The Ethics Committee doesn't have the right to expel a member. The government's mala fide intent was clear and Mahua was targeted because she had attacked Modiji and Adani."

Lok Sabha member Karti Chidambaram said the Ethics Committee had described Moitra's act as "heinous and criminal" and then recommended a legal and institutional inquiry. "That's contradictory in itself," he said.

Parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi told reporters outside Parliament that Moitra had confessed to "receiving gifts like costly scarf and perfumes," and wondered why she never asked questions relating to her constituency and focused on corporate matters instead.

MPs have absolute freedom to ask whatever questions they want. They need not focus on their constituencies because there are other instruments through which questions about their areas can be raised.

Even on Friday, for instance, the questions asked by various MPs across party lines included subjects such as malnutrition, menstrual health, psychiatry, drug inspectors, judges, the quality of medicinal products, Indians in foreign jails, staff shortage in the navy, vacancies in courts, child abuse cases, railway schools, data breaches, the Make-in-India programme and compensation for Manipur's farmers.

## Cong: UP-MP data lay bare divisive agenda

## BJP states top SC-ST atrocity list

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number of crimes against Dalits and tribal people, respectively, last year among the states, the latest National Crime Records Bureau report shows.

Uttar Pradesh, ruled by Yogi Adityanath, reported 15,368 crimes against the Scheduled Castes in 2022, followed by Rajasthan (8,752), Madhya Pradesh (7,733) and Bihar (6,509).

The figures include all crimes and atrocities committed against the Scheduled Castes and not just cases filed under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act.

Last year 57,428 crimes against Dalits were reported in the country, up from 50,744 in 2021 and 50,202 in 2020.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Madhya Pradesh has topped the list of crimes against the Scheduled Tribes for three years running: from 2020 to 2022. The state reported 2,979 such cases last year followed by Rajasthan (2,521) and Odisha (773).

Madhya Pradesh had reported 2,627 crimes against tribal people in 2021 and 2,401 in 2020.

A former director-general of Uttar Pradesh police said the NCRB data supported "the anecdotal accounts of repeated atrocities against Dalits and Scheduled Tribes in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh".

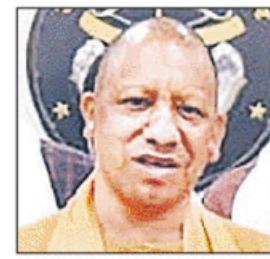
"The political leadership always claims it has taken measures for the welfare of the two deprived communities, but it often remains silent on crimes against them," the former DGP told *The Telegraph*.

In July this year, a video purportedly showed a man identified as Pravesh Shukla urinating on a tribal man, Dashmesh Rawat, in Madhya Pradesh. The incident triggered a national uproar, prompting chief minister Chouhan to call Rawat to his official residence, wash his feet as an act of atonement, and apologise to him.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday castigated the Narendra Modi government over the rising crimes against Dalits and tribal people in the country and alleged that this was part of the BJP's agenda of dividing society.

In a post on X, Kharge said that crimes against Dalits had increased by 46.11 per cent since 2013 and those against Adivasis by 48.15 per cent. He added that the continuing oppression of Dalits and Adivasis had exposed the hypocrisy of the BJP-RSS claims of inclusivity, as represented by the catchline "sabka saath".

"The latest report of the NCRB is not mere statistics, it is BJP's black letter to make the life of SC-ST community unsafe. Injustice, atrocities, and repression are part of the conspiratorial agenda of dividing the society by the BJP over the last decade," he wrote.



Yogi Adityanath. File picture



Shivraj Singh Chouhan. File picture

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- Anup Killa (Husband)
- Aayush and Nehal Killa  
(Son and  
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- Aanchal, Devansh and  
Viaansh Agarwal  
(Daughter, Son-in-law  
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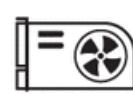
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## Govt to hold Pous Mela in Tagore abode

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

Calcutta: Birbhum district magistrate Bidhan Ray on Friday announced that the state government would organise Pous Mela in Santiniketan as Visva-Bharati and Santiniketan Trust had decided to stay off from the event this year.

"The state government will organise the Pous Mela this year. First, we will approach Visva-Bharati for the Pous Mela ground."

"If they refuse, we will organise the event following the tradition at Dakbunga-low ground like the past two years," Ray said after a meeting with district administration officials, Santiniketan Trust members and other stakeholders of the fair.

The government's Pous Mela is expected to begin on December 23 (7th Pous according to the Bengali calendar) and continue for five days.

Minister Chandranath Sinha, Birbhum zilla parishad chief Kajal Sheikh, police officers, and representatives of Bangla Sanskriti Mancha, an NGO, were present at Friday's meeting at the office of the subdivisional officer of Bolpur.

The district administration also formed a steering committee for organising the fair.

A senior varsity official said Visva-Bharati would decide only after receiving the proposal from the district administration.

Anil Konar, the honorary secretary of Santiniketan Trust, said: "We will certainly take part in the Pous Mela organised by the government."

Visva-Bharati and Santiniketan Trust had jointly decided not to hold the traditional annual event citing several constraints, including "paucity of time".

# Pay boost and school body revival for hills CM addresses 2 major demands

VIVEK CHHETRI

Darjeeling: Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced financial remuneration for around 4,000 employees of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and the revival of the School Service Commission for recruitment in the Darjeeling hills.

The GTA employees are not permanent and many of them had served in the erstwhile Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) that was formed in 1988. Their low salaries and the absence of a school recruitment body remained prickly issues for decades in the hills.

"Anit Thapa (GTA chief executive), Shanta Chhetri (former Trinamul Congress Rajya Sabha member) and Kalimpang MLA (Ruden Sada Lepcha) keep flagging these issues. I have a family in the hills and a blood relation now. I will have to fulfil (the demands)," Mamata said at a public service distribution programme held at Monteviot Ground in Kurseong.

The chief minister announced that every GTA em-

ployee would receive Rs 20 lakh on retirement as gratuity. "A 10-month leave encashment will also be allowed. The remuneration of GTA employees will be revised according to the 2019 payroll," she said.

The jobs of the GTA staff have not been regularised and they are termed as "pay-band" employees. They were only getting Rs 3 lakh on retirement.

The minimum salaries of the employees start from Rs 10,000 (Group D staff) and go up to Rs 22,000 (Group A employees such as engineers). The pay is far below the salary of regular government employees.

Soon after the announcement, GTA workers burst crackers on the streets of Kur-

seong. "We are grateful for this announcement as we will get a substantial amount of money on retirement. Once the notification is out, we will hold a massive rally in town," said Subash Basnet, the general secretary of the GTA Employees' Association.

"Our main demand is the regularisation of jobs and we believe this is the first major



Mamata Banerjee addresses the government programme in Kurseong on Friday

step in that direction."

The Left Front government had promised to regularise the jobs of DGHC employees but later backtracked.

Mamata also announced that the School Service Commission would be revived in the hills. "We will also set up the regional School Service Commission for the hills, where nearly 590 vacancies in 146 upper primary and secondary schools will be filled," said Mamata.

The SSC has remained defunct in the hills since 2003. Even though the SSC was introduced in 1997, it couldn't function in the hills because of

resistance from the GNLF that was running the DGHC.

### 'Blood relation'

In her public speech, Mamata stressed the "blood relation" she had established in the hills.

"Yesterday (Thursday), I established a blood relation with the hills. I have a family here now," said Mamata.

"Earlier, when I used to come to Kurseong, I would not find a place to stay here. I once stayed at a government place some four-five years ago," said Mamata. "I wanted a place and with God's grace, I have a blood relation here."

Mamata's nephew Abesh married Kurseong girl Diksha Chhetri on Thursday. Mama- ta is staying in the Makaibari tea garden. The chief minister said one-time soft loans of Rs 5 lakh each would be provided to youths start businesses.

The chief minister called for peace in the hills and asked industrialists to invest in the region because of the prevailing peace. "Industrialists agreed to invest around Rs 24,000 crore during a business meet held yesterday (in Siliguri)," said Mamata.

VIVEK CHHETRI

Kurseong: Suren Chhetri was settling at home after a joyous but tiring wedding ceremony of his daughter Diksha on Thursday when chief minister Mamata Banerjee decided to surprise the family by visiting them at their Naya bazar residence in Kurseong on Friday.

"I was completely unaware of her visit. I was settling in the house after yesterday's marriage when I suddenly got a few calls saying the chief minister was on her way to our residence," Chhetri told The Telegraph.

It is not every day that a chief minister pays a personal visit.

Mamata's nephew Abesh married Kurseong girl Diksha Chhetri on Thursday. Mama- ta is staying in the Makaibari tea garden. The chief minister said one-time soft loans of Rs 5 lakh each would be provided to youths start businesses.

Diksha had studied at Dow Hill, Kurseong, and St Joseph's School, Siliguri.

"I will go and visit Diksha's house. Her father is alone as her mother passed away. The daughter has left for Calcutta as is the custom. I know how lonely a father might feel when the daughter leaves after marriage," said Mamata, who expressed her happiness about the new "blood relation"

## Visit cements Mamata's hill bond



(From left) Diksha Chhetri, her father Suren Chhetri and younger sister Subeksha Chhetri. File picture

general secretary Abhishek Banerjee was present at the ceremony, along with other relatives.

"She (Mamata) said she had visited us to invite us to the Preeti bhoj which will be held in Calcutta on December 10," said Chhetri.

The chief minister has difficulty in walking because of an ailment on her legs and usually, a ramp is set up if she has to negotiate an elevation. Mamata, however, decided to walk the steps to Diksha's place to meet the Chhetri family.

"When she came, my younger daughter Subeksha was there along with other relatives who had come over for the wedding," said Chhetri.

The bride's family will host a marriage reception for guests on December 16.

Mamata spent around 20 minutes at the Chhetri household sipping a cup of Darjeeling Tea.

"It is definitely a matter of great honour that the chief minister visited our house. We are very happy," said Chhetri, who is a head clerk at the Kurseong municipality.

The chief minister said it was a "sheer pleasure to visit the hills and find myself surrounded by the love and warmth of people."

## Govt scurry to pay for crop damage

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

farming community of compensation.

The state witnessed a spell of rain on Wednesday and Thursday because of Cyclone Michaung that made its landfall in Andhra Pradesh.

During the winter months, farmers in districts like Nadia, Murshidabad and East Burdwan produce vegetables like cauliflower, coriander leaves, tomato, cabbage, beans and brinjal. Multiple sources said those crops had been affected by the showers.

"The damage can lead to a rise in vegetable prices shortly," said a trader.

A source in Nabanna said an internal meeting of the agriculture department was scheduled immediately after chief minister Mamata Banerjee had expressed her concern in Kurseong about the damage to the crops and assured the

On Friday, minister Sobhadeb Chattopadhyay and senior bureaucrats of the state agriculture department conducted a video conference with officials in districts across Bengal and asked them to complete the assessment of the crop damage within three or four days.

"We have asked our officials to assess the loss and initiate the process of paying compensations as soon as possible. The farmers who are under the crop insurance scheme of the state government will get their compensation according to the norms. The government

will also compensate the affected farmers who are out of the insurance scheme," said Chattopadhyay, the state agriculture minister.

"We hope to get a clearer picture of the actual damage within a few days," he added.

Around 60 lakh of a total of 72 lakh farmers in Bengal are under the state government's crop insurance scheme.

The districts like East Burdwan, Bankura, Hooghly, Howrah, Birbhum, North-24 Parganas and South-24 Parganas witnessed 80-100 mm of rainfall in two days since Wednesday, leaving thousands

of farmers in distress over the loss of the crops.

"A large number of farmers of our districts had sowed Aman paddy quite late because of the uncertainty of rainfall this year. As a result, huge amounts of almost ready-to-harvest paddy were on the fields, which got damaged," said Farid Mollah, a farmer from Birbhum's Bolpur.

According to a source, potato cultivation is also affected in districts like Hooghly and Bankura, which produce the highest amounts of the crop in Bengal.

## Nabanna plea to Centre for rice in February

PRANESH SARKAR

run the cheap grain scheme in February next year.

But sources said in the majority of the rice-producing districts, more than 40 per cent of paddy had already been harvested. The procurement of paddy has been hit because of several other reasons.

The letter assures significance as senior Bengal government officials said the state did not ask the FCI to supply rice for the cheap grain scheme in the recent past since the Mamata Banerjee dispensation had laid stress on the procurement of rice over the past few years.

"The letter indicates the state is worried over the progress of procurement of paddy and apprehends if it depends on the rice milled from the procured paddy, the government might not be able to supply cheap grain to beneficiaries ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. This is why rice has been sought from the Centre," said a senior government official.

The progress of the procurement that started on November 1 after the harvesting of the kharif (monsoon) season is slow.

"So far, the state could procure 3.38 lakh tonnes of paddy while its target is 70 lakh tonnes. The goal is to cover 80 per cent of the target by February next year. Last year, the state had procured more than 4.50 lakh tons by the same period. So, there is a reason to be worried for the state government," said another official.

In its letter to the FCI dated November 21, the food and supplies department said because of late monsoon and meagre harvesting of paddy to date, the pace of paddy procurement is comparatively slower than last year and that's why the state needs the rice from the central utility.

Also, government officials are checking all documents of the interested farmers before registering their names following the arrest of Jyoti Priya Mallick, former food and supplies minister, on charges of irregularities in the procurement and food grain distribution.

In the past, many farmers' names had been registered without some of the required documents but this year, the officials are not taking any chances.

Second, the rice mill owners have not shown interest in procuring paddy on behalf of the government since the arrest of Kabirul Rahman, a rice mill owner, on charges of irregularities in the public distribution system.

## Unacceptable: Mamata

FROM PAGE 1

Mamata said: "The party fully supports Mahua. She was elected by the people, and she is a woman belonging to the younger generation.... They did not allow Mahua to take her own stand, to explain her situation."

The chief minister appreciated the support Moitra had received from the INDIA constituents. "Today, I congratulate INDIA, all of them stood together. We are united. We fought back," she said.

Mamata said the BJP's attitude had saddened her. She wondered how MPs could be expected to go through the 500-odd pages of the Ethics Committee's report, make up their mind and participate in the discussion that preceded Moitra's expulsion -- all within a half-hour. She accused the

BJP of "vendetta politics" and wondered whether the party had any shame.

"In this, they have defrauded the people. If you are indeed that powerful, you could have defeated her in a fair, poll contest. Instead of that, with just two-three months remaining, what happened that you had to throw out a young woman MP?" she said.

"I thought the Prime Minister must have considered it. But just now... when I got all the information, I was shocked. It's a sad day for the Indian Parliament."

Mamata added: "So, only one session remains. For that, Mahua can attend the public parliament, outside the House. It will boost her moral image, and it will boost her morality. She should fight it boldly. We will fight it boldly. These two-three months, no matter,

Lalduhoma arrives to take oath in Aizawl. (PTI picture)

What matters is the decision."

She continued: "Politically, we will fight. People will give justice, I believe so. They (the BJP) will be defeated in the next election. It is my total conviction."

BJP Lok Sabha member Nishikanti Dubey had in October complained to Speaker Om Birla against Moitra on the basis of allegations levelled by Moitra's former partner, Supreme Court advocate Jai Anant Hadrav.

Trinamul's top leadership — Mamata and nephew Abhishek Banerjee — had remained silent for several weeks, triggering speculation whether Moitra enjoyed their backing. However, both spoke out in Moitra's favour last month, and she was appointed Trinamul district president for Krishnanagar as part of an organisational shuffle.

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"So far, the state could procure 3.38 lakh tonnes of paddy while its target is 70 lakh tonnes. The goal is to cover 80 per cent of the target by February next year. Last year, the state had procured more than 4.50 lakh tons by the same period. So, there is a reason to be worried for the state government," said another official.

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Guwahati: The first non-Congress, non-Mizo National Front (MNF) government in Mizoram took charge on Friday with the swearing-in of Zoram People's Movement

(ZPM) leader Lalduhoma as the chief minister and 11 of his ministerial colleagues.

Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati administered the oath of office and secrecy to Lalduhoma, 74, and the other ministers at Raj Bhawan.

Lalduhoma takes charge

UMANAND JAISWAL

Guwahati: The first non-Cons

ress, non-Mizo National

Front (MNLF) government in

Mizoram took charge on Fri

day with the swearing-in of

Zoram People's Movement

(ZPM) leader Lalduhoma as

the chief minister and 11 of his

ministerial colleagues.

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**GOOD MORNING****EVENT**

■ Specters, Specimens and Ships in Doubt, an art exhibition by Sahil Naik, at Experimenter, Ballygunge Place, 11am to 7pm. (Till January 6)

**Convocation**

■ NEW TOWN: The fifth convocation at St Xavier's University will be held on February 10. This year, 888 students have graduated and will receive their degree certificates at the convocation. Kandeh Kolle Yumkella, former under-secretary-general and special representative of the UN secretary-general for sustainable energy for all, will be the chief guest at the programme. He will deliver the convocation address. The governor, as visitor of the university, will preside over the function.

**Girls rescued**

■ HARIDEVPUR: Three teenage girls who were allegedly kidnapped from Ashoknagar, Barasat, were rescued from an apartment in Haridevpur on Thursday. Police said the three had left home along with another girl, who convinced them to go to an adjoining state to join a dance troupe. The owner of the apartment where the girls were staying has been arrested, the police said. A search has been launched for the girl who allegedly encouraged the three teenagers to flee home.

**Trains cancelled**

■ CALCUTTA: Multiple local trains in the Sealdah suburban section have been cancelled because of a "traffic and power block" at Majerhat station from 10.40pm on Saturday to 10.40am on Sunday. The 12-hour block is needed for electrical work in the Joka-Majerhat Metro corridor, railway officials said.

**YESTERDATE**

December 9, 1924

■ Maulana Azad College was founded on this day. Lord Bulwer-Lytton, then Governor of Bengal, laid the foundation stone, after a sustained effort by Muslim leaders such as A.K. Fazlul Huq, the then minister of education of Bengal.

The institution was then called Islamia College and its objective was to advance Islamic learning and general education among Muslims. Its first principal was A.H. Harley.

After Independence, the college was named Central Calcutta College and was opened to students of all faiths. In 1960, it was renamed Maulana Azad College in the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In 1990, the college became co-educational.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first President of Bangladesh, had studied at the college.

Chandrani S. Bhattacharya

**WEATHER**

■ YESTERDAY  
Maximum: 22.2°C (-5.6)  
Minimum: 19.4°C (+2.8)  
Rainfall: 0.5mm

■ HUMIDITY: Max: 96%,  
Min: 86%

**THE FORECAST**

■ Maximum 24°C Minimum 18°C  
EXPECTED:  
Partly cloudy sky  
SUNSET 4.53pm SUNRISE 6.05am

Experts blame construction sites and heavy traffic for high toxin levels in air

# 10 locations on pollution hotspot list

SUBHAJOY ROY

**Calcutta:** Ten locations in Calcutta have been identified as air pollution hotspots, scientists at the state pollution control board (PCB) said, citing huge traffic and the presence of multiple construction sites along the stretches as the reasons for the high toxin load of the air.

The 10 locations are Maniktala Main Road, Canal South Road, JBS Haldane Avenue (Bypass-Park Circus connector), Christopher Road in Tangra, Diamond Harbour Road, Anandapur near Ruby, Bara Khola, Mukundapur, BL Saha Road in Tollygunge, Manmohan Banerjee Road in Behala.

PCB officials said the hotspots have been identified based on data from air quality monitoring stations as well as sensor-based monitoring of air quality.

A scientist at the PCB said the National Clean Air Programme requires all non-attainment cities to identify their pollution hotspots.

Doctors and scientists repeatedly warn that air pollution can lead to a number of respiratory diseases as well as hypertension, stroke and heart attack.

The National Clean Air Programme has set a target to reduce the PM10 levels by 40 per cent of the 2017 levels by 2026.

"We have identified 10 hot-

spots in Calcutta. These are the places where air pollution levels are quite high," said Kalyan Rudra, chairperson of the state PCB. "Measures are being taken to improve the air quality of those places."

The PCB scientist said the steps that could bring down air pollution in high-traffic zones include regular sprinkling of water (to prevent resuspension of dust), fixing potholes, efficient traffic signalling (so vehicles do not wait at a crossing for long) and ensuring that vehicles comply with auto-emission norms.

Dust emanating from construction sites is a major cause for the presence PM10 in the air. PM10 refers to pollutants that can cause a host of serious ailments.

Over time they can break down into PM2.5, which are even worse.

Deadly particulate matters are also formed in the air when gases emitted by vehicles mix with gaseous compounds present in the atmosphere.

Doctors and scientists repeatedly warn that air pollution can lead to a number of respiratory diseases as well as hypertension, stroke and heart attack.

The National Clean Air Programme has set a target to reduce the PM10 levels by 40 per cent of the 2017 levels by 2026.

convinced her to share an OTP that came on her phone saying it was needed to update her KYC for her newly-opened salary account.

"I opened a bank account on November 17. It is my salary account. I received a call from an unknown number on Thursday. The caller claimed to be calling from the bank where I had my salary account and confirmed my banking details. Then he said it was the last date for updating the KYC," said Nag.

She got nervous and started sharing the details which the caller asked for fearing that her salary account would be blocked.

According to Nag, her salary was stolen by a caller who

"He asked for the banking details of my father, who is the nominee of my account. I couldn't share the details as I did not have it with me. Then he asked me about another bank account I had. I was so scared that I shared the details of that account, too," she said.

After disconnecting the phone, Nag found that only Rs 8 was left in her salary account and Rs 60 in the other account.

She reported the matter to Lake police station on Thursday. Police said they have initiated a probe.

"We have been trying to make people understand that it is extremely important that they should not share any personal details or any OTP with strangers over the phone," said a police officer.

**Metro** reported on Wednesday how an 83-year-old retired government official in Thakurpukur had panicked when he received a call from a stranger who claimed to be calling from "table number 3" of his bank.

The elderly man had lost around Rs 2.5 lakh. He was asked to get his KYC updated. Unable to do what he was being asked to, he handed over the phone to his 11-year-old grandson to follow the instructions, which possibly led the cheat gain remote access to his phone.

The elderly man had lost around Rs 2.5 lakh. He was asked to get his KYC updated. Unable to do what he was being asked to, he handed over the phone to his 11-year-old grandson to follow the instructions, which possibly led the cheat gain remote access to his phone.

About 1 lakh students will write their first-semester exams under the four-year programme, which are expected to be held in January if the regulations are approved by the syndicate, the highest decision-making body of the university, registrar Debasis Das said.

Once approved by the syndicate, the regulations need to be sent to 140 odd colleges affiliated to CU.

"We have sought permission from the higher education department to hold a meeting of the syndicate on December 12. If the regulations are not approved, we will face problems in scheduling the exams for January," Das said.

In another game, a rotating dartboard led participants to a box of questions related to property rights.

"Can a father deprive his daughter from the wealth he has inherited," was one question.

The answer was: "No".

"Can a father deprive his daughter from the wealth he has created," read another.

This time, the answer was: "Yes".

Women mentored by Parichiti, who have stood up to bias, are now at the helm of local groups, called Samadhan Dal (Solution Group).

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►**



A construction site with materials dumped on the pavement along Maniktala Main Road on Friday. Picture by Pradip Sanyal

## AREAS ON WATCH LIST

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ■ Maniktala Main Road                               | ■ Christopher Road in Tangra       |
| ■ Canal South Road                                  | ■ Diamond Harbour Road             |
| ■ JBS Haldane Avenue (Bypass-Park Circus connector) | ■ Mukundapur                       |
|   | ■ BL Saha Road in Tollygunge       |
|   | ■ Manmohan Banerjee Road in Behala |
|   | ■ Bara Khola                       |

so the movement of vehicles does not raise dust.

The guidelines also mention that construction materials like cement and sand should not be kept uncovered. The materials should not be kept on roads either.

The penalty for violation ranges from Rs 2,000 to Rs 50,000 a day. A site with a floor area between 200 and 500sq m will have to pay Rs 2,000 a day for not taking the measures. A project with a floor area of more than 25,000sq m will have to pay Rs 50,000 a day.

## Bratya seeks JU plan for convocation

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

**Calcutta:** Education minister Bratya Basu on Friday told Jadavpur University's officiating vice-chancellor to send details of their plans for the convocation, which is usually held on December 24.

The education department will take legal opinion on the matter and communicate its decision to the university, the minister told the VC during a meeting.

VC Buddhadeb Sau, pro-VC Amitava Datta and registrar Snehamanjari Basu met the minister at Bikash Bhavan, which houses the headquarters of the education department, to seek permission for the convocation.

"We requested the education minister to allow us to hold the convocation. The students who have graduated and are awaiting degree certificates will suffer if the event is not held. To hold the convocation, the executive council of the university needs to meet to approve certain formalities for the ceremony," Sau said after the meeting.

"The education minister has told us to send details of our plans for the convocation. He will take legal opinion and get back to us."

Minister Basu said: "They (the JU delegation) raised the issue of the executive council meeting and convocation. I told them these are legal issues. These issues are sub judice as they are being heard by the Supreme Court. We heard whatever they had to say. We will take legal opinion on this."

**Metro** reported on Friday that the university had written to the education department, seeking permission to hold the convocation.

As there was no reply to the letter from the government, the VC and other senior functionaries went to Bikash Bhavan to meet the minister, a JU official said.

The education department has so far barred JU from holding any meeting of its executive council on the ground that there is no "regular (full-term) VC".

The council, the highest decision-making body of the university, has to meet before the convocation to ratify certain formalities related to the programme.

"The university cannot have a full-term VC any time soon. So, the VC and others went to meet the minister," the official said.

An official in the education department had earlier told this newspaper that they did not consider Sau, who was handpicked by governor C.V. Ananda Bose in August as officiating VC, allegedly without consulting the state government, as regular VC.

The governor is the ex officio chancellor of JU.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee had gone to Raj Bhavan last Monday and discussed with the governor ways to solve what she called "pending problems" over the appointment of full-term vice-chancellors.

Mamata called on Bose three days after the Supreme Court had asked the governor and the chief minister to sit across the table and thrash out their differences over the appointment of VCs of state universities.

"The process of appointing a full-term VC will take time. We hope the department will allow JU to hold the convocation. Or else, the degree recipients will suffer," said a JU official.

## Minister's allegation

Education minister Basu said on Friday the representatives of Jadavpur University who called on him on Friday told him that those who have appointed them are pressuring them to take penal measures against the teachers and former vice-chancellors owing allegiance to the state government.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►**

## Nurse gets 'KYC call', loses salary

MONALISA CHAUDHURI

**Calcutta:** A nurse lost her first salary after a man allegedly called her posing as a bank official who wanted to get her KYC updated and cleaned out her salary account leaving only Rs 8 behind.

Payel Nag, a resident of Prince Anwar Shah Road, said she lost around Rs 26,000 from her two bank accounts, including the salary account.

She had joined duty in the middle of November and was paid a proportionate salary for 10 days, which was deposited in her salary account.

According to Nag, her salary was stolen by a caller who

"He asked for the banking details of my father, who is the nominee of my account. I couldn't share the details as I did not have it with me. Then he asked me about another bank account I had. I was so scared that I shared the details of that account, too," she said.

After disconnecting the phone, Nag found that only Rs 8 was left in her salary account and Rs 60 in the other account.

She reported the matter to Lake police station on Thursday. Police said they have initiated a probe.

"We have been trying to make people understand that it is extremely important that they should not share any personal details or any OTP with strangers over the phone," said a police officer.

## CU seeks nod for meeting, cites exams

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

**Calcutta:** Calcutta University has written to the higher education department for permission to convene a meeting of the syndicate on December 12 to approve examination-related regulations under the four-year undergraduate programme, said an official of the university.

"We had written to the higher education department earlier, too, seeking permission. But as the semester exams are barely a month away and there was no approval from the department, we have written again," the registrar said.

When asked about CU's appeal, education minister Bratya Basu said: "I won't be able to comment on this now. I have to look into the issue and then I will comment".

Tilak Chatterjee, principal of Bankim Sardar College in Canning, South 24-Parganas, and a member of the syndicate said the examination regulations committee of the university had framed the rules in September.

"But the rules can't come into effect unless they are approved by the syndicate. If this formality is not completed, it will be difficult to conduct the exams," Chatterjee said.

The university since June has been barred CU from holding a meeting of its syndicate because the university does not have a "regular (full-term) vice-chancellor". CU is being helmed by an officiating VC.

In the latest communication, addressed to the registrar on November 24, the department had said holding any meeting of its syndicate in the absence of a regular VC would be in contravention of rules.

The department has barred Jadavpur University from holding a meeting of its executive council, JU's highest decision-making body, on an identical ground, casting a cloud of uncertainty on the annual convocation, which is usually held on December 24.

"While JU is facing an impasse over the convocation, we hope the education department will take note of the interest of the students and allow the syndicate meeting to be held."

## EDUCATION IS A LADDER, CHILD MARRIAGE A SNAKE

DEBRAJ MITRA



Participants play the snakes-and-ladders board game at the programme in Dhakuria. Picture by Bishwarp

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## Game that mirrors reality

FROM PAGE 8

They reach out to vulnerable women in their neighbourhoods. A handful of men, who are breaking the stereotype by sharing domestic work with the women in their families, also volunteer for Parichiti.

Santi Mondal, 45, who lives in Chowbagan near the Ruby hospital, was a member of one such local group. She was at the forefront of a protest campaign when a woman from her neighbourhood — who worked in an apartment in a gated community off EM Bypass — was branded a thief when a chain went missing from the flat.

"Posters with her face had been put up in the lobby, as a warning to the residents."

But eventually the chain was found inside a sunglasses case in the same flat. The owner was forced to tender an apology. It felt like a victory for all of us," said Mondal.

"The nature of discrimination is similar, be it the Delhi or Bengal. The same people who have no problems in eating food cooked by these women cannot take the same lift with them," said Shilpa Bisht, executive director of (CHSJ), who attended the programme.

## Minister's allegation

FROM PAGE 8

VC Sau on Monday notified the formation of a four-member committee to probe a complaint against Omprakash Mishra, a professor in JU's international relations department and a former VC of North Bengal University.

A section of teachers in the international relations department had lodged a complaint with the chancellor accusing Mishra of irregularities in PhD admissions.

"I merely informed the minister that after receiving a communication from Raj Bhavan, I notified the formation of a four-member committee. No one put any pressure on me," Sau told this newspaper.

Civic body, PCB survey housing, commercial hubs

## Sewage plants under scanner at complexes

SUBHAJOY ROY

ching powers to impose penalties, said a CMC official.

The official said joint teams of the civic body and the green board visited a hospital off EM Bypass, near Mukundapur, and a large apartment complex near Ajoynagar on EM Bypass last week.

"We found that the hospital plant is operating but the plant in the housing complex is not.

We have told the apartment's residents welfare association that we will support them so they can restore the plant," said the CMC official.

Building Rules of the CMC and rules framed by the PCB have made it mandatory for buildings above a certain scale to treat their sewage.

Large buildings — over 2 lakh sq ft built-up area or those generating over 50,000 litres of sewage a day — are supposed to have treatment plants. The plants should treat the sewage before discharging it into the city's drainage lines.

But CMC officials said they suspect many buildings that set up their sewage treatment plants have stopped operating them. In some, the plants malfunctioned and were not repaired and in others, the residents did not want to bear the cost of running them.

"We have started joint inspections with the PCB of large apartment complexes and commercial establishments to check if the sewage treatment plants are functioning. The mayor has instructed us to ensure compliance," said Binod Kumar, commissioner of the CMC. "But we will also take action, if necessary," he added.

Officials said the CMC had limited powers to impose penalties on apartments or commercial establishments that have stopped running the plants but the civic body can forward complaints to the PCB. The PCB enjoys overar-

## Beleghata Bypass subway flooded

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: A portion of the underpass across EM Bypass, at the Beleghata crossing, got flooded after Thursday's rain and remained so for most of Friday.

Pedestrians who took the subway on Friday morning and afternoon had to either wade through ankle-deep water or go back up to cross the road.

An official of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), the custodian of the underpasses under the Bypass, said the waterlogging was because two pumps were not working. There are six pumps for the underpass. The water was cleared by Friday evening, the official said.

The official said water seeps into the underpass whenever it rains. There are pumps installed in the underpass to push up the water, which is then discharged into a garden above.

A woman who wanted to take the underpass on Friday morning said she had to turn



Pedestrians make their way through the waterlogged subway at Beleghata on Friday afternoon.

Picture by Pradip Sanyal

back after she saw the waterlogged stretch.

"I went out for some work, which took a few hours. When I was returning around 4pm, I tried taking the underpass again but it was still waterlogged. Both times I went back upstairs and crossed the road," she said.

"There were many like me who did not want to walk in the water. They went up and crossed the road. Some waded through the waterlogged floor."

When Metro visited the underpass on Friday afternoon, several pedestrians were found wading through the water.

## Alert for train disruption

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: A "mega traffic and power block" will be taken in the Howrah suburban section on Sunday for periodic maintenance of tracks, signalling system and overhead equipment, said the spokesperson of Eastern Railways.

"The power block has been planned in Howrah-Burdwan Chord, Howrah-Ban-del-Naihati, Burdwan-Howrah and Khana-Gumani sections.

The block will lead to the cancellation of a pair of Howrah-Tarakeswar and Howrah-Burdwan locals on Sunday.

The 13015 Howrah-Jamalpur Kaviguru Express, 31151 and 12338 Bolpur-Howrah Shantiniketan Express are likely to get delayed because of the maintenance work, said the official.

The power block has been planned in Howrah-Burdwan Chord, Howrah-Ban-del-Naihati, Burdwan-Howrah and Khana-Gumani sections.

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CURRENCIES

US \$	Rs 83.38
UK Pound	Rs 104.71
Euro	Rs 89.86

INDICES

BSE	Sensex	69825.60	+303.91
Midcap	35290.91	-56.68	
Smallcap	41104.37	-183.58	
NSE			
Nifty	20969.40	+68.25	
Next 50	50608.75	-311.85	
Nifty 500	18703.50	-0.35	

## Most active on NSE

Scrip	Price*	Traded value#
GMRInfra	69.15	3212.73
HDFCBank	1653	2780.72
TataPower	323	2445.94
ATGL	1153	2067.26
AdaniEnt	2829	1975.91

#In Rs; #In Rs crore

## COMMODITIES

Gold (10 gram in Rs)	Pure	62900	+50
Hallmark	60050		

\*per barrel in Rs; #per kg in Rs

## MONEY MARKET

	Yield (%)
Call rate	5.00-6.85
91-day T-Bill	6.97
1-year Gilt	7.19
5-year Gilt	7.24
10-year Gilt	7.26

## IN BRIEF

## Cabinet call on jute bags

**■ NEW DELHI:** The Cabinet on Friday approved mandatory packaging norms for Jute Year 2023-24, under which it will be compulsory to pack 100 per cent of foodgrains and 20 per cent of sugar in jute bags. A Jute Year is from July 1 to June 30.

## Kochhar blow

**■ MUMBAI:** The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain former ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar's plea seeking retirement benefits from the bank. PTI

## Titagarh Rail

**■ CALCUTTA:** The shares of Titagarh Rail Systems gained 1.98 per cent to Rs 1,002.60 per share on Friday at the BSE after it launched a qualified institutional placement issue to raise Rs 700 crore. The floor price is Rs 976.10.

## JSW Steel

**■ MUMBAI:** JSW Steel USA Ohio is planning to raise funds in the municipal bond markets in the United States, the company said. PTI

## BOTTOM LINERS



## OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: The RBI's growth and inflation forecasts indicate a Goldilocks Effect on the economy by the second quarter of the next fiscal – but analysts remain sceptical on whether such an outcome will play out over the next six to seven months.

The RBI, which wound up its bi-monthly meeting of the monetary policy committee (MPC) on Friday, has projected growth to hit 7 per cent this fiscal, while inflation will slide down to 4 per cent by the end of the second quarter next fiscal.

The twin prophecies have raised the prospect of the so-called Goldilocks Effect of growth without an inflation spike even as economists remain doubtful given the uncertainties surrounding inflation.

The biggest surprise of the three-day MPC meeting was the upward revision of GDP growth for this fiscal to 7 per cent with RBI deputy-governor Michael Patra saying the figure was a "conservative estimate".

"If you look at October and November high-frequency data, which we use for our forecasts now they are all very

## INFLATION FORECAST (%)

Period	Earlier	Now
2023-24	5.4	5.4
Q3 FY24	5.6	5.6
Q4 FY24	5.2	5.2
Q1 FY25	5.2	5.2
Q2 FY25	—	4.0
Q3 FY25	—	4.7

## GROWTH FORECAST

Period	Earlier	Now
2023-24	6.5	7.0
Q3 FY24	6.0	6.5
Q4 FY24	5.7	6.0
Q1 FY25	6.6	6.7
Q2 FY25	—	6.5
Q3 FY25	—	6.4

robust. If you just take these two months you will exceed 7 per cent. So the projected 7 per cent is like a conservative estimate," Patra said.

Vivek Kumar, economist, Quantico Research, said India is probably one of the major economies that is experiencing a Goldilocks scenario, marked by economic conditions being neither too hot nor too cold.

"An uptick in growth sans any inflation spike is possible as well as sustainable if the

## REPO RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5%

## Points to ponder

- Inflation outlook to be considerably influenced by uncertain food prices
- Intermittent vegetable price shocks could again push up headline inflation in November and December
- RBI confident of meeting external financing requirements comfortably
- RBI to remain vigilant and ready to act, as per the evolving outlook
- Proposed to hike e-mandate for



RBI governor Shaktikanta Das arrives with his deputy governors to address a press meet in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

recurring payments to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 15,000

■ RBI to set up a cloud facility for the financial sector to enhance data security, privacy

■ Next monetary policy committee meeting on Feb 6-8

same is led by investments rather than consumption, as is the case currently. This will hopefully remain supplemented by a cautious stance towards monetary policy, which takes a balanced approach between overtightening and a premature accommodation," he added.

Economists at CareEdge pointed to the risks of high inflation. "The positive economic data has brightened growth prospects, leading to an upward revision of growth

projections by the RBI. However, the central bank remains mindful of the downside risks stemming from expected muted agricultural output and potential spillovers from global uncertainties," they added.

Aditi Nayar, chief economist, at Icra, warned that while growth will moderate over the next two quarters, inflation is likely to chart a volatile trend.

"RBI's bet on resilient and high growth while keeping inflation contained is probably

In contrast, ITC fell the most by 1.95 per cent, MM&M by 1.48 per cent and Bajaj Finance by 1.18 per cent.

Meanwhile, the turnover of derivatives in BSE Sensex scaled a new milestone of Rs 200 lakh crore on the weekly expiry of Friday. The total turnover was Rs 213.9 lakh crore as 30.6 crore contracts were traded.

correct. Risks to headline CPI inflation now are largely from food prices, which depend on the vagaries of weather shocks, and to an extent on global agri commodities prices. These have to be addressed more by fiscal, farm and trade policies, like fertiliser subsidies, calibrated MSP hikes, export restrictions, imports, etc," Saugata Bhattacharya, an independent economist said.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das also pointed to the vagaries of inflation that may throw water on the Goldilocks situation.

"Going ahead, the inflation outlook would be considerably influenced by uncertain food prices. High-frequency food price indicators point to an increase in prices of key vegetables which may push CPI inflation higher in the near term. The ongoing rabi sowing progress for key crops like wheat, spices and pulses needs to be closely monitored. Elevated global sugar prices is also a matter of concern," Das said.

He said November CPI inflation could be on the higher side. The last time inflation was below 4 per cent was in September 2019, when it came in at 3.99 per cent. With inputs from Delhi Bureau

**“**The steady decline in core inflation indicates that monetary policy is working, but don't rush into any conclusion

Shaktikanta Das,  
RBI governor

XXCE

## Scepticism over Goldilocks Effect

## Connected lending rule

## OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## CLARITY CALL

■ Connected lending linked to loans to a director in a bank or in an entity which hold stake in bank

■ Current rules are very limited in scope. Arm's length principle required

after the monetary policy committee (MPC) retained the policy repo rate at 6.5 per cent for the fifth consecutive time.

According to the banking regulator, connected lending can be of concern, if the bank or lender does not maintain an arm's length relationship with such borrowers.

Moreover, such lending can involve moral hazard issues leading to compromise in pricing and credit management.

RBI added that the current guidelines on connected lending is not applicable uniformly to all regulated entities.

Therefore it will come out with a unified regulatory framework on connected lending for all the entities.

## Bid to check unsecured loans



Swaminathan J

tal write-ups.

"What we would like to curtail and expect the lending institutions to provide for more by way of additional risk weight, is some of those consumption-led segments or unsecured credit which do not have a defined end use," Swaminathan told reporters.

In his comments, Swaminathan clarified that the intent of the RBI is not to deny or ration credit.

Foreign institutional investors sold shares worth Rs 1,564.03 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

In the broader market, the BSE largecap index increased marginally by 0.10 per cent, while the midcap gauge slipped by 0.16 per cent and smallcap declined by 0.44 per cent. PTI

## Onion export banned

## OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## PRICE FEAR

- Onion export ban till March
- Stock limits on wheat lowered to 1000 tonnes for wholesalers
- Similar limits on retailers

## across the country.

The stock limit will be 5 tonnes instead of 10 tonnes for each retailer, 5 tonnes for each depot of a big chain retailer and a total of 1,000 tonnes for all their depots, he said.

In the case of processors, they can hold 70 per cent of monthly installed capacity multiplied by the remaining months of 2023-24, he added.

"This has been done to prevent artificial scarcity and curb hoarding. The revised stock limits will be applicable from immediate effect," Chopra said. The traders will get 30 days to reduce the stock to the revised limits, he added.

Chopra said the government is ready to offload an additional 2.5 million tonnes of FCI wheat to bulk consumers during January-March 2024.

To curb the hoarding of wheat and check its price rise, the central government on Friday further tightened stock holding norms for wholesalers, retailers, big chain retailers and processors with immediate effect.

"Export policy of onions is amended from free to prohibited till March 31, 2024," the notification said. Local vendors in the national capital are selling onions at Rs 70-Rs 80 per kg.

Onions, a vegetable that has political fallouts when expensive, have been placed under the "prohibited" category immediately for four months till March, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a notification.

"Food secretary Sanjeev Chopra said the Centre has reduced the wheat stock limit to 1,

# The Telegraph

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER 2023 VOL. XLII NO. 151

## FLAWED FORMULA

The performance of the national economy and the data on growth invariably get politicians excited. Ever since it was reported that India's gross domestic product registered a growth of 7.6% in the second quarter of 2023-24, there have been choruses from the powers that be that the Indian economy is doing rather well. The Opposition, of course, would have none of this self-congratulatory noise from the government. Members of the Opposition have pointed out that the economic growth, if there indeed is one, is not representative. They argue that the worker population ratio, according to the periodic labour survey data, is poor; prices of essential commodities remain sky-high; as does the unemployment rate, especially among young graduates. The sabre-rattling over economic data underscores electoral imperatives. Politicians assume that while an underperforming economy leads to change in governments, robust economic performances help the parties in power.

Yet, there is data to suggest that such a simple correlation — a directly proportional relationship between economic growth and electoral preference — may not always hold true. The relationship between the economy and national elections is far more nuanced. A glance at election results between the liberalisation of the Indian economy and, say, the first term of the Narendra Modi government would reveal some interesting paradoxes. In the first parliamentary elections post-liberalisation, the Congress regime that opened India's markets to usher in growth was removed from power; in 2004, it was the turn of the National Democratic Alliance government to bite the dust even though

Indian elections have often defied the assumption that economic growth would lead to electoral dividends

— of a government's economic performance matters as much as actual economic indicators when it comes to electoral contests. This, in turn, makes modern elections contingent upon — a hostage to? — strategies that are meant to create and control narratives. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's performance in this aspect has been enviable. It has succeeded in weaving in a host of factors — religious polarisation, geo-political triumphalism and selective welfare — to deflect public attention from the deteriorating economic situation on the ground. The Opposition's inability to effectively counter this deception also explains its own despair at the hustings.

The economy and the polity remain fascinating spheres. This is because the twain often do not meet.

## SCRIPPSI

*'Travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs.'*

SUSAN SONTAG

## EYE ON ENGLAND

### Foreign hand

A campaign is underway to stop *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Spectator* from being taken over by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of Abu Dhabi's ruling family. Lord Charles Moore, who has edited all three titles, has argued: "The Telegraph and the Spectator are great British institutions. They should not be controlled by a foreign power." Suzanne Moore, a *Telegraph* columnist, has also opposed the sale to the owner of the Manchester City football club. She has written that "Emirati culture is entirely different to ours in profound ways."

There is nothing new about foreigners buying British national newspapers. Roy Thomson (he bought *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*), William Max Aitken (he had the *Daily Express* and was a minister in Churchill's war

cabinet) and Conrad Black (he had the *Telegraph* group before he was convicted of fraud) were all Canadians. Evgeny Lebedev, who owns the *London Evening Standard*, is the son of a Russian KGB officer. All received peerages. And Rupert Murdoch, who now owns *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Sun*, is Australian.

Ownership of the *Telegraph* group reverted to the Barclay family after it paid off a loan of £1.15 billion from the Lloyds Banking Group. The money has come from RedBird IMI, a joint venture between RedBird, an American private equity firm headed by Jeff Zucker, the former CNN boss, and International Media Investments, an Abu Dhabi vehicle backed by Sheikh Mansour. The sale is on hold — for now — after the culture secretary, Lucy Frazer, issued a public interest intervention notice.



In other hands?

has become a very successful venture by attracting online subscribers from across the world. It has certainly had a go at Gautam Adani over the past year. I was rooting for Cobalt Red: *How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives* by Siddharth Kara, an Indian-origin author from America now based at Nottingham University, who was sitting at my table. The shortlist also included Elon Musk by Walter Isaacson which has been in

the supermarkets for weeks and will sell well for Christmas. In a separate exercise, the *FT* picked Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt among its 25 "most influential women of 2023".

### Rich and famous

■ Srichand Hinduja, who passed away earlier this year, told me back in 2000 that he was bidding to buy the *Daily Express*. But I don't think he was serious because he allowed

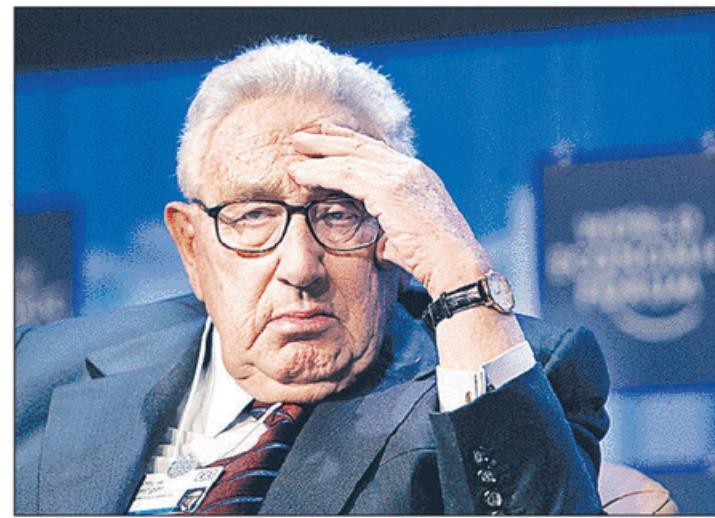
### Footnote

■ Christmas shopping is in full swing in London. For most Indians in the UK, Christmas is as important a festival as Diwali. I thought I would get some mince pies for a friend who invited me to lunch. To buy a packet of six from Tesco for £1.09 seemed very mean so I got them from Fortnum & Mason in Piccadilly for £12.95. When my friend's wife fell ill after eating vegetarian sausages, I got my uncle to gift the mince pies to his doctor. What's innovative is some Indian restaurants are offering tandoori turkey.

## Henry Kissinger's advice on returning Palestinian land is valid

# Prudent point

SUNANDA K. DATTA-RAY



As the year draws to a close with only darkness engulfing the tunnel of Gaza's agony, one recalls that even Henry Kissinger stressed at a top-secret breakfast meeting with Jewish bigwigs that "Israel should indicate what territory it was willing to give up." That was during the first anti-Israel Intifada (1987-1993) when, warning his co-religionists that "there are no awards for losing with moderation", Kissinger also urged Israel to suppress "the insurrection as quickly as possible — overwhelmingly, brutally and rapidly."

The "first step should be to throw out television", ban media coverage and ignore the inevitable international uproar, he told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Apartheid South Africa had done it. Why not Israel? Or India, for that matter, now that New Delhi spurns the attractive innocence of the high moral ground of non-alignment? In fact, Kissinger would have gloated over this newspaper's front-page second lead, "India sides with West", the day after Hamas's brutal attack on Israelis. Not because his West needed servile henchmen; but because by rallying to the winning side, India had publicly espoused "the practices of Realpolitik".

One assumes that he was not incapacitated on October 7 and also that Kissinger Associates' advisors deemed Narendra Modi's brave proclamation, "We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour", important enough to bring to his ears.

Some doubt is permissible because one didn't notice much excitement in the international media over Hindu Bharat's championship of the Zionist State. Given the *jihadist* commitment of the Hamas fighters, Modi's support for Benjamin Netanyahu may have been taken for granted. The silence may also have been another reminder that India is '*vishwaguru*' only to deluded ultra-loyalists. The world knows India as the most densely-populated nation that must get rid of as many citizens as it can, sending them to eke out a living in far-flung corners of the globe, because its ramshackle economy cannot offer them a decent livelihood.

Yet, India does set an example for a vengeful Israel targeting civilians (although Washington insists that this cannot be proved) in hospitals, camps and other places of shelter. Kissinger himself would have produced a frenzied I-told-you-so response if Indira Gandhi had treated East Pakistan like an Indian colony in December 1971. Instead, she told the Lok Sabha

that "Dhaka is the free capital of free Bangladesh." Netanyahu has much to learn from that unparalleled instance of enlightened self-interest. Israel seized East Jerusalem from Jordan in 1948 and still clings to it. Syria's Golan Heights were annexed during the 1967 war; the West Bank and Gaza Strip, variously called the armistice of Palestine and the world's biggest open-air prison, were conquered at the same time and are like apartheid South Africa's Bantustans. Only the Sinai Peninsula, taken during the 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, was returned in 1982.

Asian self-esteem and global stability demand that all fruits of conquest be relinquished, obviously under credible international auspices so that Israel too continues to prosper within secure borders. But the end of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory can be meaningful only as the last phase of an agreed timeline. The first need is a ceasefire leading to a permanent settlement instead of only brief, intermittent pauses in hostilities. The second is the reconstruction of the war's devastation, followed by the withdrawal of more than 450,000 Israeli settlers trespassing into the West Bank — which Israelis possessively call Judea and Samaria — and another 220,000 or more in East Jerusalem. Adding insult to injury, these intruders reportedly combine the most offensive aspects of white colonial bullies and terrorists.

Many in the government from which they draw their strength were weaned on the song by the American Jewish playwright, Ben Hecht, "Every time a British soldier dies, there's a song in my heart". Denying any debt to the Balfour Declaration's homeland promise or migration

under the British Mandate, Israeli veterans boast they achieved independence by fighting for it. Their heroes — David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin, Yigal Allon, Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Shamir and other Zionist fighters in Irgun, the Stern Gang, or the Sayeret Matkal special forces to which Netanyahu belonged — bombed Jerusalem's King David Hotel and massacred all the Palestinians in Deir Yassin village among many other atrocities. One man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter.

Whether official, collective or individual, terrorism is not the prerogative of any one community. Israel's invasion of Lebanon helped to create Hezbollah, the Shiite member of what Iran calls the "axis of resistance". As for Hamas, the villain of the piece, the evidence points to calculated Israeli patronage of a rival to Yasser Arafat's Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization. At the same time, the "struggle" against "occupation", as Ronald Reagan told the Afghans in 1982, "represents man's highest aspirations for freedom."

"Samson, in his time, took a drastic step, bringing down the columns of the shrines in Gaza," wrote Shimon Peres, Israel's eighth prime minister, ninth president and far more the *mukhota* for hard-line practices than Atal Bihari Vajpayee ever was. "There was no point in our repeating it." There is for Netanyahu whose determination to exterminate Hamas seems even more compelling than rescuing Jewish hostages. He can't be unaware of the dragon's teeth of Greek mythology which, when sown, sprouted armed warriors, but must be confident like Jason, the antique hero in search of the Golden Fleece,

of being able to kill them all.

In consequence, hapless Gazans are constantly urged to move on. But where to? No building, no fragment of land is safe from Israel's carpet-bombing. An Israeli joke mocks Palestinians for allegedly believing that a map of the Jewish State stretching "from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates" adorns the Knesset walls. Perhaps such a map does exist in Zionist hearts and minds. Perhaps the murderous campaign against Gaza is intended to achieve that dream by thinning out the population and weakening the human challenge of the future just as Palestinian lands are being whittled away so that the territorial challenge is minimal. Israel's insistence on a buffer zone is another ploy to further deprive Palestinians of their foothold.

Kissinger's much-reviled boss, Richard Nixon, seemed to take a more balanced view of international affairs, perhaps derived from his Quaker grandmother who gave him a book on Mahatma Gandhi when he was only seventeen and which he claimed to have read over and over again. Nixon argued as long ago as 1988 that a victorious Israel's first task should be a voluntary settlement with its neighbours "rather than waiting until their growing strength forces Israel to do so." Murmurs in the Beltway against continuing massive military aid to Israel makes the advice especially pertinent, drawing attention to Nixon's warning, "Despite our friendship, Israel cannot survive forever as an island in a sea of hatred."

I doubt if Kissinger with his lofty notion of statecraft would have placed that limitation on American might. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the ambassador with a monumental ego, writes that although protocol dictated that he should step out of Air Force One "behind the President and ahead of Kissinger... somehow Kissinger invariably reached the ground" first. The maestro of sleight of hand also got his comeuppance. When we last met at a formal dinner in Singapore in the 1990s, Kissinger understandably had no recollection of me as one of his Harvard seminarians. But he was warm and friendly, as he was to anyone who had spent a summer under his tutelage and could be called his 'student'. With the keen eye for public projection that Moynihan noted, he placed an arm around my shoulder and turned to where the photographers had been massed. But it was late and they had gone.

He is gone too now but his advice on returning Palestinian land remains more valid than ever if the new year is not to start in the darkness of the old.

challenges ahead. It has won the people's mandate against all odds, now it must ensure the development of the state.

**Khokan Das,**  
Calcutta

■ Sir — The impressive triumph of the Congress in Telangana has presented it with an opportunity to consolidate its support base in South India while laying the groundwork for a development model free from corruption. Anumula Revanth Reddy, who led the party's charge, has his task cut out to fulfil a slew of promises, ranging from a loan waiver for farmers to free travel on state-run buses for women. He needs to balance populism with pragmatism.

**M. Jeyaram,**  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

### Rights curbed

■ Sir — The editorial, "Truly free" (Dec 8), has rightly pointed out that dissent and free speech should be inalienable rights in a democracy. Yet both are under growing threat in New India. One of the many reasons for this is a delay in the delivery of justice. After the priest, Stan Swamy, the student, Umar Khalid, has now become a victim of the glacial pace of the justice system. Having already spent more than a thousand days in jail, he has now seen his bail plea further adjourned to January 2024. Khalid's wait for justice continues.

**Sujit De,**  
Calcutta

where 11 other politicians were appointed as ministers, including Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka as the deputy chief minister, was also attended by senior Congress leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and D.K. Shivakumar. Expec-



Novel approach

tations from Reddy will be high.

**Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee,**  
Faridabad

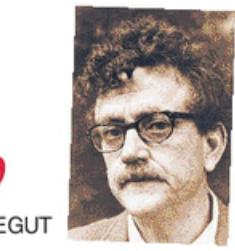
■ Sir — One of the most disliked features of the erstwhile BRS government in Telangana was the presence of metal barricades around the chief minister's residence, wherein common people were treated as intruders. In a symbolic move, these barricades were torn down just as Anumula Revanth Reddy came to power. But with such a sweeping change people's expectations will rise too. The new Congress government has enormous

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

CALCUTTA SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER 2023

No art  
is possible  
without  
a dance  
with death

KURT VONNEGUT



XXCE

# Glimpses of a dystopian world

## VISUAL ARTS

SRIMOYEE BAGCHI

**I**t is hard to imagine that *Bury Them and Keep Quiet*, one of the most disquieting works from Francisco Goya's Disasters series, can be more unsettling than it already is. But in the hands of Ushnish Mukhopadhyay, the first awardee of *Imaginarium 3.0* (on view at Emami Art), the horror of Goya's pile of cadavers is animated in a video installation titled *A Minute Of Banging* (picture, top). The bareness of the figure standing before the bodies which have been stuffed away into a stairwell, its rocking motion and the guttural keening emerging from it instantly bring to mind scenes of death from Gaza. Nothing is said, yet the tragic import of the scene is poignantly conveyed.

In stark contrast to the explicitness of Mukhopadhyay's work is the minimalist idiom of Aritra Majumder who painstakingly graphs the stains left behind by humanity's cavalier disregard for all things living. The polymorphous shapes that he plots by altering the directions of his graph lines, reducing or increasing the number of strokes and placing tiny black dots, transfix the viewer. Like the unravelling loops of a knitted garment, the gaps can be stitched back together if one tries.

Ali Nakbhi's language is as sparse; unlike Majumder, however, he opts for realism. Austerely urbanscapes devoid of all human presence (picture, second from top) mirror the debilitating loneliness of Hopper's cities. Nakbhi manages to coax a rare translucence and coarse texture out of oil and acrylic, adding to the pall of dullness that hangs over his deserted cities. Deepak Kumar's cities, on the other hand, are a sharp indictment of urban greed, with



birds and their carcasses being buried all over. In *Refused Habitat* (picture, third from top), an architectural blueprint becomes the ribcage of a sparrow — Kumar's depiction of birds is meticulous — that is caught in the scaffolding of a towering high-rise. Even these last vestiges of nature have been wiped out in Saroj Kumar Badatya's woodcuts. What is left behind are pale shadows

like the 'hitokage no ishi' left behind when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan.

The golden bounty in Sheshadev Sagaria's *Dhan* dwarfs and almost engulfs the minuscule figure raking through the seemingly abundant harvest. The emaciated figure that is responsible for producing this sea of grain will clearly not be able to partake of this sustenance. The effort that must have gone into creating the detailed etchings on the enormous 87.7 x 188.8-inch woodcut quadriptych — each grain of cereal is carefully carved out — is evident in this striking commentary on marginalisation, especially caste-based hierarchies in labour.

Richa Arya's lens also focuses on marginalisation, this time of women. Arya's choice of material — iron, brass and aluminium sheets — makes her works stand out. She cuts and pastes these sheets to form her metal paintings, depicting the peripheral lives that women live and the spaces they inhabit — the kitchen, for instance — in *Arrangement - II*, where the strictly-ordered utensil racks reveal the only domain of the home over which the woman has complete control. An even more terrifying fate lurks around women in Swapna Halder's tapestries of nightmares. Violent gashes, wounds, cheats, predators and monsters abound in these anxious representations of just how unsafe the world is for women. Is it any wonder, then, that women in Ahalya Rajendran's childhood reveries seek refuge in a verdant, pastoral Eden? Rajendran's portrayal of trees is a lovely tribute to the intricate, repetitive patterns of tribal art.

Sumon Mondal's landscapes are as intricate, stitched together into tapestries where varying threads, loops, knits, warps and wefts in diverse colours and tones impart three-dimensionality and conjure up a crowded world that celebrates differences.

# A tribute to the legends

## MUSIC

SAMARJIT GUHA

**G**iven her aspiration to figure among the legends and being blessed with a near-perfect pitch, Rituparna Chowdhury blended retro style with jazz in her collaborative presentation at a recent evening of Tagore songs organised at the Press Club. Most of the half-a-dozen songs that she rendered had a hymnal quality, especially in the higher notes. The recital was a tribute to the centenary celebrations of the Rabindrasangeet legends, Suchitra Mitra and Kanika Banerjee.

Choudhury and the two musicians, Tazmin Sheikh (keyboard) and Swarnabha Gupta (guitar), made the songs sound beautiful and brooding under the open sky. She brought in a surge in the momentum of "Amar je shob dite hobe", infusing the song with grace and force. Without the aid of any percussion instrument, she showed her prowess in connecting disjointed rhythms with infectious refrain. She spoke about her lineage to Kanika Banerjee (as one of her granddaughters) and interspersed her songs with prattle about her childhood memories. Through most of that, she was able to extract the beauty of "Aajemon kore gaiche oakash" and "Tumi kon pothejele".

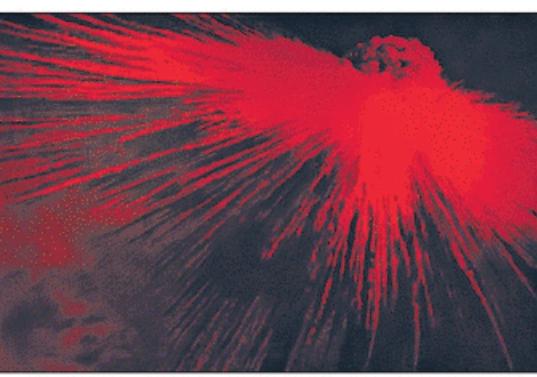
Earlier, Priyam Mukherjee and Rituparna Bhattacharya opened the session with songs like "Aaji e anandasandhya" and "Anandadhaba boiche" that didn't stray much from the conventional path. The surprise inclusions were "Chiroshka he" and "E porobash", which were not suitable for the audience that evening. But the singers complemented each other in systematic arrangements that drove music lovers into a reverie.



everything, from ecstasy to longing, and the tone can change and bring magic if she does not fall into the cattle trap. Both Gupta and Sheikh tailored their music to her style and brought an air of *jolie de vivre* in their individual rounds.

One wished that she raised her scale in "Phule dhole dhole" — a song that she picked up sitting on her grandmother's lap — because it restricted the frothiness of the song. In "Mori lo mori amay", she added texture through the application of her voice and, while one was delighted with the *Mayar Khela* song, "De lo sakhi de", one couldn't help but notice that the voice came in crunches, again in the lower notes.

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## Visual artistry

### VISUAL ARTS

SOUMITRA DAS

**T**he last time it was stark black-and-white charcoal. This time, he has added colour. Otherwise, Julien Segard's *Dark Was The Night* is not much different from his earlier exhibition held at the same venue in 2021. Segard tried to stretch ideas borrowed from the 2021 exhibition without being innovative enough in any significant manner. The exhibition under review was held at Experimenter, Hindustan Road, from September 29 to November 11. Segard, a French artist, was born in 1980 in Marseille. He lives and works in Goa.

It is easy to wax poetic about the "vast infinite spaces" and the "hazy apocalyptic backdrop" in Segard's work, to quote the press handout, but unless these find eloquent expression in the artist's *oeuvre*, such words ring hollow. The noteworthy virtue of Segard's work is that he has been able to retain his simplicity, although that didn't need much effort since little change is noticeable. The drawings on giant pieces of

dyed cotton fabric or canvas are standardised representations in comics of violent cosmic explosions, meteor showers, shooting stars and comets and other varieties of celestial fireworks blown up several times over to intensify their dramatic impact. The effect becomes even more startling as blue-green, crimson or white splashes are in stark contrast to the dark backdrop. A cluster of white strands with blobs at their end resembling some astral broomstick is a rather remarkable work. But there the resemblance with celestial phenomena ends.

Hanging a few inches beneath the ceiling and stretching right down to the floor, or stretching across walls, these pieces of fabric or canvas do catch the viewer's attention like any other striking, non-figurative work would. Technically, they must have been difficult to execute. After all, these are not mere splashes of colour as the application is multi-layered with several gradations of the same shade. Herein lies Segard's artistry. However, to read deeper meanings in these would be to exaggerate the visual effect of technically complex work.

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It is easy to wax poetic about the "vast infinite spaces" and the "hazy apocalyptic backdrop" in Segard's work, to quote the press handout, but unless these find eloquent expression in the artist's *oeuvre*, such words ring hollow. The noteworthy virtue of Segard's work is that he has been able to retain his simplicity, although that didn't need much effort since little change is noticeable. The drawings on giant pieces of

dyed cotton fabric or canvas are standardised representations in comics of violent cosmic explosions, meteor showers, shooting stars and comets and other varieties of celestial fireworks blown up several times over to intensify their dramatic impact. The effect becomes even more startling as blue-green, crimson or white splashes are in stark contrast to the dark backdrop. A cluster of white strands with blobs at their end resembling some astral broomstick is a rather remarkable work. But there the resemblance with celestial phenomena ends.



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# SPORT

KLOPP HAPPY LIVERPOOL 'NOT DOING TOO BAD' **P16**

CALCUTTA SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER 2023

XXCE

## IN BRIEF

## Ngidi out of India T20 series

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa seamer Lungi Ngidi will play no part in a three-match home T20I series against India that starts on Sunday. Ngidi, 27, has a left lateral ankle sprain and will be replaced in the T20 squad by Beuran Hendricks. Reuters

## IOC decision

**BERLIN:** Russians and Belarusians who qualify in their sport for the Paris 2024 Olympics can take part as neutrals without flags, emblems or anthems at the event next year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday. The athletes had initially been banned from competing internationally following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. Reuters

## Saudi Cup plans

**GENEVA:** Saudi Arabia is looking into the possibility of hosting the 2034 men's World Cup during the traditional months of June-July despite daily temperatures above 38 degrees Celsius. AP/PTI

## Relief for Shaji

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Friday stayed the operation of All India Football Federation's decision to sack Shaji Prabhakaran from the post of secretary-general for "breach of trust". The next date of hearing is December 20. PTI

## Malvika in semis

**GUWAHATI:** Malvika Bansod made the women's singles semi-finals of the Guwahati Masters Super 100 badminton tournament here on Friday. Malvika overcame Karupathavan Letshanaa of Malaysia 21-12, 21-16. PTI

## Bangar at Kings

**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab Kings on Friday appointed former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar as its head of cricket development. He was the IPL franchise's assistant coach in 2014. PTI

## FIA under fire

**BAKU:** Lewis Hamilton called for change at Formula One's governing body (FIA) on Friday after what he said was "unacceptable" treatment of his Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff's wife Susie over an alleged confidentiality breach. FIA had first named Susie, who runs the all-female F1 Academy series, in a conflict of interest case but backtracked on the probe on Thursday. Reuters

## THIS DAY THAT YEAR

**1936:** Australia are all out for 58 versus England at the Gabba for their lowest total on home soil in the 20th century. England win the Test by 322 runs.

**2022:** Two of the Qatar World Cup quarter finals — involving the South American giants — are decided on penalties, as Brazil leave in tears with a 2-4 loss to Croatia, while their fiercest rivals Argentina emerge victorious with a 4-3 victory over the Netherlands.

## Tightrope walk to build team for future

INDRANIL MAJUMDAR

**Calcutta:** India's three-match T20I series against South Africa, beginning on Sunday, could provide a sneak peek into the team composition for the World Cup in the West Indies and the US in June.

The team management needs to make some bold calls ahead of the showpiece event. The think-tank has been burdened with putting together a playing XI which will have to discard a few of the established names in world cricket if a new beginning is to be made.

More specifically, sources, either in the BCCI or associated with it, told The Telegraph, the team is looking to do away with their conservative batting policy and adopt a more dynamic approach in keeping with the demands of the format. India's last two defeats in the T20 World Cup have been blamed on their conventional batting style.

Sources told The Telegraph that the Board is wary of a backlash in case of a reversal of fortunes in the World Cup. Some in the Board also feel that what's best for IPL franchises may not always suit the national side.

Two selectors, Shiv Sundar Das and Salil Ankola, will be in South Africa and Agarkar is also expected to be there during the Test series. It's still not clear if the chief selector will speak to Kohli and convince him to skip the World Cup.

At the last meeting to pick the squads for the South Africa tour, the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee is understood to have discussed this tricky situation but no decision was made.

The selectors have kept the likes of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and KL Rahul out of the T20 side since the last World Cup in Australia. But they have been forced to consider Rohit as captain again since Hardik Pandya is injury-prone and Rohit's positive intent in the Powerplay overs of the 50-over World Cup has put him firmly back in the reckoning.

But it is the uncertainty over Kohli's selection that has put the selectors and the Board in a quandary. The question doing the rounds is: will they show the courage to leave him out of the squad?

With a record 765 runs from 11 matches in the just-ended World Cup at home, Kohli has reaffirmed that he is a player for the big occasion. He was India's highest run-getter in the last edition of the T20 World Cup with 296 though his strike-rate of 136.40 was way below the best in this format.

The perception among the



Virat Kohli. (PTI)



Rohit Sharma. (Reuters)

Some officials are of the opinion that the Board brass should initiate a dialogue with Kohli once the team returns home. A cricketer of his stature should be given the due respect and a proper communication process opened before taking any drastic steps.

"Imagine a situation where Rohit stays captain and Kohli is not part of the squad. It could affect the team in a lot of ways. Any such move will have to be well thought out by taking the seniors into confidence," someone in the know of things told The Telegraph.

The only way out of the awkward situation for the Board will be Kohli decides to withdraw himself from the shortest format of the game. As of now, there's no indication he

will take that route.

**Melbourne:** David Warner has decided to shoulder arms to the vicious delivery that Mitchell Johnson bowled to him a few days ago.

While former speedster Johnson, in a newspaper column, was scathing in his attack on Warner, questioning the latter's position for setting his own Test retirement date, the Aussie opener refused to engage directly in a war of words as he played down the criticism saying "everyone's entitled to their opinions".

The 37-year-old Warner had expressed his desire for a Sydney farewell after the third and final Test against Pakistan starting from January 3, 2024. The three-match Test series starts in Perth on December 14.

## Faf wants to be fitter to make comeback

**Bangalore:** While a return to the South African national team remains an enticing proposition for him, former captain Faf du Plessis wants to regain his peak fitness and game-touch before seriously nourishing such ambitions.

Recently, Proteas coach Rob Walter had indicated that doors to the national team are open for senior pros like Du Plessis, Quinton de Kock and Rilee Rossouw.

But for that, Du Plessis wants to reach his highest point of fitness after an elbow surgery that he underwent in September during the Caribbean Premier League.

"I wouldn't say the process is not on (his SA comeback). I mean, international cricket is still the pinnacle. You still feel like that's where cricket comes with the most pressure and that's what makes you really feel alive as a sportsman," Du Plessis said.

"But now, it's just about getting back into cricket after my operation, and a long layoff with my arm. So yeah, just taking the pressure off and just really enjoying playing some cricket again, and allowing my arm to get back to where it needs to get to," he said.



Faf du Plessis

The 39-year-old is currently playing in the Abu Dhabi T10 for Samp Army, and he wants to sharpen his skills and fitness, leveraging on that experience to impress the South African establishment.

PTI

## SAM DEAN

**London:** Mikel Arteta has said he would need to be tied to his dugout by a rope to stop celebrating goals as the Arsenal manager expressed his belief coaches should be free to enjoy the moment without the threat of touchline bans.

Like when your team scores a 97th-minute winner that keeps you atop the Premier League.

Arteta was shown a yellow card for "excessive celebrating" after Declan Rice scored the stoppage-time winner in the 4-3 victory at Luton Town in midweek.

It was the Spaniard's third yellow card of the season, which means he is now banned from the touchline for Saturday's match against Aston Villa.

Arteta said that he cannot stop his instinctive emotional reactions and added that, if he could, he would celebrate such moments with players on the pitch.

He also appeared to suggest that the rules on excessive celebrations have not been applied with consistency to other managers in the league.

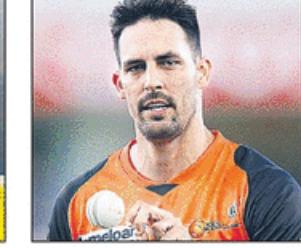
Asked if his yellow card shows that managers are not allowed to celebrate, Arteta said: "We are, but I think we have a boundary. Maybe we have to extend that boundary or we just need a very strong rope, or we do not move. But it means we don't move — all of us. I say we, not me."

Arteta said he "does not know how" to stop his exuberant celebrations. Asked

## Warner evades Johnson jab



David Warner &amp; Mitchell Johnson, teammates to foes



Since the summer of 2020-21, Warner has managed one Test century from 25 matches — a memorable double-hundred against South Africa in his 100th Test at the MCG in 2022.

Australian selectors have stuck to Warner though they will have to determine his replacement beyond Sydney.

"When you go onto the world stage and you don't realise what comes with that, it's a lot of media, a lot of criticism but a lot of positive."

Australia captain Pat Cummins also said that the Test team would be "fiercely protective" of the veteran opener in the face of external attacks.

"I think we protect each other a lot. We've been through a lot over the years... our boys, someone like Davey or Steve (Smith), I've played with them for a dozen years now, so we're fiercely protective of each other," Cummins said.

"We've had arguably our most successful year ever. We're going into a really exciting summer."

"There's so many positive things around Australian cricket I think we should be talking about and we're focusing on that (Johnson's column)."

With inputs from PTI

## Tough task for India Women

**Mumbai:** India women, in a bid to keep the three-match series alive, will look for an improved show, especially in the bowling and fielding departments, when they take on a rampaging England in the second T20I here on Saturday.

England extended their dominant run against India with a comprehensive 38-run win in the opener to the three-match series. It also was England's 21st victory in 28 T20Is against India and their eighth in 10 matches in the country.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led team failed to read the conditions adequately and also made glaring errors in the one-sided first game.

On a flat pitch not offering much to the bowlers, especially in the first innings, India used four different spinners — including the rookie Kaniha Ahuja — and England took them apart, scoring 121 runs from a collective 12 overs for three wickets.

The spinners bowled short as well as full tosses allowing the English batters to dominate. Both Danni Wyatt and Nat Sciver-Brunt were given lifelines which proved to be costly for the hosts as they went on to make big scores.

While Indian tweakers cut a sorry figure, England's spin pair of Sophie Ecclestone (3/15) and Sarah Glenn (1/25) exposed India's batters with probing line and lengths.

■ Match starts: 7pm, live on Sports 18 1 & JioCinema

## 2 players in top bracket at auction

**Mumbai:** A total of 165 players will go under the hammer for the second edition of the Women's Premier League in Mumbai on Saturday.

A maximum of 30 players — including nine foreigners — can be successfully bid for by the five franchises.

As expected, the three who made the knockouts in the inaugural WPL, winners Mumbai Indians (13), runners-up Delhi Capitals (15) and third-placed UP Warriorz (13), have retained most of their core group of players.

The fight will be between Gujarat Giants and RCB who have released most of their players and will be keen to include the best available at the auction.

An additional Rs 1.5 crore has been granted to each of the five teams' funds this year. West Indies all-rounder Deandra Dottin and Ireland's Kim Garth have been slotted in the top bracket of players — Rs 50 lakh. Most of the franchises will look to plug the loopholes at the auction.

According to a BCCI release, "out of 165 players, 104 are Indians and 61 are overseas players of which 15 players are from associate nations. The total capped players are 56, uncapped players are 109".

Written with PTI inputs

## Let's savour the big moments, says banned Arteta



An exuberant Mikel Arteta after Declan Rice (not in picture)'s stoppage-time winner against Luton Town on Tuesday, the celebration getting the Arsenal manager a yellow card. (Getty Images)

## SAM DEAN

Arteta said that he cannot stop his instinctive emotional reactions and added that, if he could, he would celebrate such moments with players on the pitch.

He also appeared to suggest that the rules on excessive celebrations have not been applied with consistency to other managers in the league.

Asked if his yellow card shows that managers are not allowed to celebrate, Arteta said: "We are, but I think we have a boundary. Maybe we have to extend that boundary or we just need a very strong rope, or we do not move. But if I was given the chance, I would be there jumping (with the players)."

"It was unfortunate because now I cannot be next to my team on the touchline, but it is a decision that they have made. If you look strictly at the rules, yes we cannot do that. But, the context is different and then the 'we' I think is

very important within the context."

Arteta is not the first manager to be banned from the touchline for accumulating three yellow cards this season. Pep Guardiola, Erik ten Hag, Mauricio Pochettino and Marco Silva have also served one-match suspensions in 2023-24.

Separately, Arteta is still waiting to hear the outcome of his Football Association charge for his furious outburst about referees last month. Arteta had a personal hearing at the FA on Thursday.

Arsenal leads Liverpool by a couple of points and third-place Villa by four. The Spaniard will have to watch the game from the directors' box at Villa Park.

The Daily Telegraph in London, AP/PTI

# On home turf, Rahil plays through pain

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: Tata Steel PGTI Ranking leader Om Prakash Chouhan and Rahil Gangjee, who is playing on his home turf, finished as joint clubhouse leaders with a total of five-under 139 at the end of Day II on Friday of the SSP Chawrasia Invitational 2023 presented by TAKE Sports being played at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club.

While Om Prakash posted a 69, Gangjee signed for a 70 as players enjoyed the balmy weather in overcast conditions. Rain, however, stayed away and there were no interruptions during play.

Earlier in the day, Round I, which was interrupted by rain twice on Thursday, resumed at 6.45am. The first round ended with Gangjee being the leader at 69, while Chouhan was second at 70.

Round II got underway at 8.35am. Out of a total of 122 players, only 59 could complete the round on Friday as play was suspended due to fading light at 4.55pm. Round II will now resume at 6.30am on Saturday.

OP, as Om Prakash is popularly known, said: "Yesterday (Thursday) it was quite wet and windy so one had to play conservatively. Today (Friday) it's been clear so overall the



Rahil Gangjee hits from the first tee during the second round of the SSP Chawrasia Invitational 2023 at RCGC on Friday. (Picture courtesy: PGTI)

conditions were easier."

Gangjee (69-70), originally from Calcutta but now settled in Bangalore, was on song on the back nine in Round II as he collected four birdies between the 13th and 17th, two being a result of long conversions. Then hampered by some discomfort in his right calf muscle, Gangjee had a contrasting front-nine where he dropped two bogeys.

Gangjee said: "I was feeling good on the back nine with that run of birdies but a niggling pain in my right calf just got worse as I walked and

it got pretty bad after I completed nine holes. Therefore, I was quite distracted and not flowing properly from there on and as a result, I did not have a good front nine."

Syed Saqib Ahmed (74-67) was third in the clubhouse at a total of three-under 141.

Among those out on the course with unfinished second rounds, Divyanshu Bajaj and Abhinav Lohar were at a total of one-under through 12 holes while defending champion Manu Gandas was at a total of even-par through nine holes.

Tournament host SSP Chawrasia was at a total of five-over through nine holes.

Rahm joins

LIV, deals blow to PGA

Toronto: Masters champion Jon Rahm jumped from the PGA Tour to Saudi-backed LIV Golf on Thursday in a big-money move that has sent another shockwave through the sport.

The 29-year-old becomes the biggest name to sign on with the rebel circuit funded by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) since Australian Cameron Smith joined after winning the 2022

British Open.

"I am proud to join LIV Golf and be part of something new that is bringing growth to the sport," said Jon Rahm in a statement from LIV Golf.

"I have no doubt that this is a great opportunity for me and am very excited."

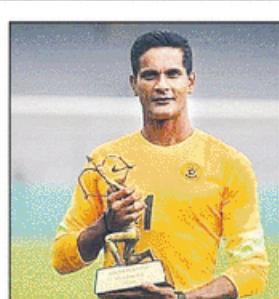
Rahm, in a statement from LIV Golf.

"Media reports said the world No. 3 will be paid at least \$300 million with some outlets putting the guarantee at closer to \$600 million."

Reuters

## 'Spiderman' hangs up his gloves

OUR BUREAU



Former India goalkeeper Subrata Paul. (AIFF)

Calcutta: Subrata Paul, one of India's finest goalkeepers, has decided to bring the curtains down on a glittering career spanning 16 years.

Paul, 37, sent a letter to the All India Football Federation on Friday announcing his retirement.

"I am filled with a mixture of emotions. There's a sense of accomplishment for the journey I've been on, coupled with a touch of sadness at leaving the beautiful game behind," Paul told *the-aiff.com*. "But more than anything, there's an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for the incredible opportunities and experiences football has given me."

Paul has an incredible 67 international caps to his name, keeping 19 clean sheets, the first of which was earned

## EB keep feet on ground

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: Fresh from their emphatic 5-0 romp against NorthEast United FC, East Bengal will hope for another three points against Punjab FC when they cross swords in the ISL-X match at the Salt Lake Stadium on Saturday.

The 5-0 win last Monday was East Bengal's biggest-ever win in ISL and fans would be hoping for something similar against a team who are still searching for their maiden victory in the league.

"We understand that it was just a victory at home. When you come from four winless games, one game is not going to put you in the sky. We are conscious that we have to keep doing our work," East Bengal coach Carles Cuadrat said at the pre-match news conference on Friday.

The hosts will be bogged down by Harmanjot Singh Khabra's left knee injury.

"Tests have revealed he has suffered a partial ligament tear. It's still not clear whether he would be out for the season," Cuadrat said.

Khabra suffered the injury early in the first half and was replaced by Mohammad Rakip.

East Bengal will be banking on Nandhakumar Sekar, who had a good game against NorthEast United.

Coming off the bench after the change of ends, Nandhakumar scored a brace and had an assist.

### ISL-X

#### RESULT

● Bengaluru FC 0 Mumbai City FC 4

#### TODAY'S MATCH

● East Bengal vs Punjab FC (8pm, Live on JioCinema)



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Sanctioned club piles on 'exhausted' Newcastle; Spurs lose again

## Hurt Everton out of drop zone

PREMIER LEAGUE	
EVERTON	3
NEWCASTLE	0
TOTTENHAM	1
WEST HAM	2

If you did not already believe Everton were good enough to get out of relegation trouble, this performance and result surely prove it.

Rather than dishearten, the 10-point penalty for breaking profit and sustainability rules appears to have inspired.

The Merseyside club, in the English top flight for the past 70 years, is not out of danger yet but on Thursday climbed above the drop zone with a 3-0 win against Newcastle United to underline its determination to battle its way to safety.

This was only Everton's second home win in the league this season, but it was their fifth in seven games in all competitions.



Dwight McNeil (in blue), who scored Everton's first goal, passes the ball under pressure from Newcastle United players during their Premier League match at Goodison Park on Thursday. (Getty Images)

After beating Nottingham Forest 1-0 on Saturday, goals from Dwight McNeil, Abdoulaye Doucoure and Beto secured victory against a Newcastle team that is hoping

to challenge for the top four again this season.

"The mentality is key for me. We took a knock, but there have been a lot of knocks here over the last couple of

years," Everton manager Sean Dyche said.

On the other hand, the exhaustion in the Newcastle camp is showing. Their 11 players have played almost

every minute of the last four games. "We have to do better. There are reasons behind every performance and we have struggled to change players," Howe said.

### Spurs setback

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou was also left to assess a latest setback for his team as their winless run extended to five games after a 2-1 loss at home to West Ham.

Cristian Romero put Tottenham ahead at home before second-half strikes from Jarrod Bowen and James Ward-Prowse sealed a comeback win for West Ham.

The Daily Telegraph in London, AP/PTI

### TODAY'S MATCHES

- Palace vs Liverpool
- Man United vs Bournemouth
- Brighton vs Burnley
- Sheffield United vs Brentford
- Wolves vs Forest
- Aston Villa vs Arsenal

## Golden pat for Suarez

Sao Paulo: Luis Suarez has won the golden ball as the player of the season in the Brazilian league.

The 37-year-old Uruguayan striker, who played with Lionel Messi at Barcelona for several seasons, scored 17 goals for the Brazilian league runner-up Gremio. The season ended on Wednesday with

Palmeiras defending the title.

Suarez scored two goals on the final day of the season in a 3-2 victory over Fluminense in Rio.

Playing 53 matches for Gremio, Suarez has scored 26 goals in three competitions this season. "This is the year I played the most times in my career. It was also the year I was most often distant from my family. This award belongs to them," a tearful Suarez said on Friday.

AP/PTI

Bangalore: Trainer Prasanna Kumar's Pneuma (S. Saqlain-up) scored an easy victory in the Dharmaprkasha L.S. Venkaji Rao Memorial Trophy, the main event here on Friday.

### RESULTS

(With RCTC dividends)

1st race: Indian Blues (Antony) 1,

Glow In The Dark 2, Twinkle Feet 3. NR: 2. Win Rs 22; (P) 10, 10, 12; 2nd race: Isabella (Rozario) 1; Bold Act 2, Chilliady 3. Win Rs 24; (P) 10, 10, 12. 3rd race: Top Dancer (Vivek) 1, Sea Blush 2, Aircraft 3. Win Rs 178; (P) 20, 18, 13; 4th race: Victoria Punch (Suraj) 1, Shubankar 2, Ruling Dynasty 3. Win Rs 23; (P) 10, 23. 5th race (Dharmaprkasha L.S. Venkaji Rao Memorial Trophy): Pneuma (Saqlain) 1, Fondness Of You 2, Nyaya 3. Win Rs 26; (P) 22, 19, 20; 6th race: Excellent Ray (Suraj) 1, Maroon 2, Chisox 3. NR: 2. Win Rs 16; (P) 13, 10, 16. 7th race: Southern aristocrat (Antony) 1, Star Citizen 2, Marco Polo 3. Win Rs 24; (P) 10, 20, 14.

## Pneuma strikes

### TITAN BOY

## Klopp praises team progress

Liverpool: Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp is satisfied with his team's progress in a season of transition where they brought in a host of new recruits, with the Anfield club sitting second in the standings after 15 games.

Liverpool's engine room was rebuilt in the close season with five midfielders leaving the club, while injuries have also made things difficult, but Klopp's side have weathered the storm to sit two points behind leaders Arsenal.

Although they were dealt another blow after losing Joel Matip to a potential season-ending injury, Klopp said other clubs could also be in the same boat with games coming thick and fast in the busiest period of the season.

"I wanted to create a basis early on in pre-season and then to become a real team, you have to overcome difficulties. We got that with red cards, being down in games — and we could overcome that," Klopp told reporters on Friday.

"I am just happy with the development up until this point. Our new leadership group are all experienced, world-class footballers, so that's helpful. All teams are probably



Reuters

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### METEOR M

Bajaj Pulsar 125, 150, 150 Twin Disc, 180, NEON, 200 (Old Model), 220

Hero Xpulse 200, Karizma ZMR

Honda CB200X, CBR 250R, CB Hornet, CB Hornet 2.0

Jawa 42 2.1

Royal Enfield Himalayan, Meteor 350, Classic 350, Classic 500, Hunter 350, Thunderbird 350/500, X 350/500, Bullet 500 New

Suzuki V-Strom SX

TVS Apache RTR 160/180

Yamaha YZF R3, FZ 25, FZS25, Fazer 25, YZF R15 V3.0 BS4, MT 15 BS4



### METEOR M2

KTM Adventure 250



### METEOR

Bajaj Pulsar 125, 150, 180, NEON, 200 (Old Model), 220, 150 Twin Disc

Hero Hunk

Honda Unicorn

Jawa 42 2.1

Royal Enfield Bullet Standard, Electra



### MOTO D

Bajaj Pulsar 150 (Old Model), Commuter Bikes

Hero Commuter Bikes

TVS Commuter Bikes



### ZAPPER S/S1

Bajaj Dominar 250, Pulsar NS200, RS200, AS200

Honda CB200X, CBR 250R, CB Hornet, CB Hornet 2.0, X Blade

Royal Enfield Meteor 350

TVS Apache RTR 160 4 Valve, 200 4 Valve

Yamaha YZF R3, FZ 25, FZS25, Fazer 25, YZF R15 V3.0 BS4, MT 15 BS4

TVS Apache RTR 180/160 (Hyper Edge), Commuter Bikes



### ZAPPER C

Bajaj Pulsar 125, 150, 150 Twin Disc, 180, NEON, 200 (Old Model), 220, NS160, AS150, Commuter Bikes

Hero Xpulse 200, Karizma ZMR, Commuter Bikes

Honda H'NESS, CB Unicorn, Commuter bikes

Royal Enfield Interceptor, Classic 350

Yamaha Commuter Bikes



### ZAPPER Y

Bajaj Avenger Cruise/Street 750

Harley Davidson Street 750

Hero XTREME Sports, Hunk, Glamour BS6

Honda CB Unicorn, Commuter bikes

Royal Enfield Interceptor, Classic 350

Yamaha Commuter Bikes

