

AT A GLANCE

TMC MP presses for state's name change
NEW DELHI: A TMC MP today demanded change of name of West Bengal to 'Bangla' saying the existing name was pushing the state 'backwards'. "The name West Bengal is pushing the state backwards. I demand that the state be renamed as Bangla as people of the state want it." Soumitra Khan (TMC) said in Lok Sabha during Zero Hour. The West Bengal Legislative Assembly had in August last year passed a resolution changing the name of the State to 'Bangla' in English and 'Bangla' in Bengali.

Prez opens 'Namami Brahmaputra' fest
GUWAHATI: President Pranab Mukherjee today inaugurated 'Namami Brahmaputra' festival at Guwahati today. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the President said India would soon celebrate 25 years of its link with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). "The development of this national waterway can give Assam access to international ports like Chittagong in Bangladesh", he said. (Details on Page 2)

Violent protests in Valley against Budgam deaths

SRINAGAR: Violent protests took place at several places in Kashmir today against the deaths of three youths in firing by security forces near an encounter site even as several separatist leaders were placed under house arrest. Protesters pelted stones at security personnel at Main Chowk Sopore in Baramulla district. Maimuna, a Parimpora in Srinagar, Muran Chowk, Billo-Rajpora and Prechono in Pulwama district, are being fired. He said police offered tear smoke shells and resorted to baton charge to chase away the protesters. While police officials said no one was injured in the clashes, eyewitnesses claimed several protesters were hurt in police action.



Mayor Sovan Chatterjee (right), TMC MLA Nayana Bandopadhyay and state power minister Sobhan Babu Chattopadhyay walking in the TMC rally in protest against alleged vendetta politics by BJP.—Arijit Ganguly

TMC takes out 2nd rally against BJP's vendetta politics

KOLKATA, MARCH 31 /-/- Trinamool Congress today took out its second rally here in two days against what it called BJP's "vendetta politics" and accused it of trying to malign its leaders in false cases. TMC senior leader and minister Sovan Chatterjee addressing the rally said: "The people's struggle will intensify in days to come. Whenever we have been under attack - be it in the Left regime, the Congress rule, or BJP rule, the people have stood by us and have supported us. As our party supremo Mamata Banerjee has raised her voice against demonization, they are trying to malign us." "A large number of TMC activists led by Chatterjee, power minister Sovan Babu Chatterjee, TMC MLA and wife of arrested

TMC MP Sudip Bandopadhyay, Nayana, marched from Sealdah to Esplanade carrying placards against the Narendra Modi-led Union government. The party has planned three rallies to oppose the alleged "witch hunting" against its leaders, who are purportedly seen accepting money in a sting operation. The first rally took place yesterday and the third rally is scheduled on April 3. Sovan Babu Chatterjee said Union government agencies were out to malign the TMC by making false cases against them. "Harassing TMC leaders or threatening them won't stop them from raising their voice against the anti-people decisions. The Left Front government which had given birth to chit funds, have remained untouched" he said. (PTI)

Life term for cow slaughter in Gujarat; Assembly clears Bill

GANDHINAGAR, MARCH 31 /-/- Punishment to those found guilty of cow slaughter in poll-bound Gujarat has been enhanced to life term under a more stringent law passed today by the state Assembly. With the passing of the amendment Bill, Gujarat becomes the first state in the country to make cow slaughter punishable with life term. Cow slaughter has also been made a non-bailable offence. The Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill approved by the Legislative Assembly also has a provision for 10-year imprisonment for transportation, storage or sale of beef. The legislation, which envisages permanent forfeiture of vehicles involved in transportation of progeny of cows and beef, bans transportation of animals from one place to another during the night. The Bill, which seeks to amend the Gujarat Animal Preservation Act, 1954, by introducing stringent punishments, was passed in the absence of the Congress MLAs who were suspended for a day for creating a ruckus in the House. The Gujarat Assembly passed a cow protection bill, among the most stringent in the country, making cow slaughter a life time punishable offence. Chief minister Vijay Rupani tweeted shortly after the passage of the bill. Assembly elections in Gujarat are due towards the end of this year. Introducing the bill, the minister of state for home Pradeepsinh Jadeja said: "Cows do not have only a religious significance, but also have an economic significance in our society. It is utmost necessary to increase the punishment to deter those involved in slaughtering of cows." As per the Bill, those involved in the slaughter of cows, calves, bulls and bullocks, would face imprisonment up to life, but not less than ten years. In the present Act, which was amended in 2011, the maximum jail term for such acts was seven years, but not less than three years. The Bill also proposes imprisonment up to 10 years but not less than seven years for those found to be involved in transportation,



sale and storage of beef. Earlier, the maximum punishment for the same offence was three years. In 2011, when Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat, the state government had imposed a complete ban on slaughter of cows, transportation and selling of cow meat by amending the said Act. Since then, the crimes related to cow slaughter in Gujarat are covered under the Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act of 2011. Under this Act, those found involved in slaughtering cows and related crimes are fined Rs 50,000, besides the jail term up to seven years. In another change, the present Bill proposes that all offences shall be considered 'bailable' as well as non-bailable. In the present Act, such offences are considered only "cognisable" and not "non-bailable". To deter transportation of beef, or bovine for the purpose of slaughtering, the state government has proposed to permanently "forfeit" vehicles. At present, such vehicles are liable to be "seized" for a period of six months, or till the final judgement of the court, said the Bill document. (PTI)

SC refuses urgent hearing on Ayodhya land dispute case

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31 /-/- The Supreme Court today refused to accord an early hearing on a batch of civil appeals pertaining to the Ayodhya Ram Temple-Babri Masjid land dispute. A hearing bench headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar told BJP leader Subramanian Swamy that the court was made to believe that he was a party to the ongoing litigation. This had led to the Chief Justice of India offering to mediate between the parties to the litigation, the court said. "You did not tell us that you were not a party to the case, we only got to know that from the press," the bench said. Swamy, however, said that he had made it clear that he was on the issue of his Fundamental Right to worship. "My Right to Pray is affected by the pending case and I had filed an interfering application," Swamy said. The bench then said that it was not going to fast track the matter. Earlier on March 21 the apex court had suggested an out-of-court settlement to the lingering Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute at Ayodhya, observing that issues of "religion and sentiments" can be best resolved through talks. Chief Justice Khehar had also offered to mediate even as the bench headed by him suggested that the parties to the dispute adopt a "give a bit and take a bit" approach for a meaningful and sincere negotiations to resolve the vexatious issue. The Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court had in 2010 ruled for a three-way division of the disputed 2.77 acres area at the site in Uttar Pradesh. The three-judge bench, by a majority of 2:1, had said the land be partitioned equally among three parties, Sunni Waqf Board, Niraoj Khurana and the Ram Lalla. On February 26 last year, the apex court had allowed Swamy to intervene in the pending matters relating to the Ayodhya title

China warns India again on Dalai visit

BEIJING, MARCH 31 /-/- China today warned India of "serious damage" to bilateral ties if it allows Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama to visit Arunachal Pradesh next week and asked New Delhi to make a "strong warning" in its second warning to India in a month, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. It was seriously concerned about India's decision to allow the Dalai Lama to visit Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing claims as part of south Tibet. "We are seriously concerned about the news on the eastern section of the China-India border, China's position is clear and consistent," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told media here, responding to a question on the Dalai Lama's upcoming visit to Arunachal Pradesh. "The Dalai clique has long been engaging in separatist activities with inglorious record. India should be very clear with the true nature of the Dalai clique," Lu said. "But despite this India still invited the Dalai Lama to visit the region. This will have serious damage on bilateral relations," Lu said. The Dalai Lama will visit Arunachal Pradesh from April 4 to 13. This is the second time this month Chinese foreign ministry has aired its objections to the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh. "China is gravely concerned over information that India has granted permission to the Dalai to visit Arunachal Pradesh," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on March 3. China has protested to India last year also when New Delhi cleared his visit to Arunachal Pradesh. He said India should not provide any platform for the "Dalai clique and only that way can China-India relationship move forward in a sound and steady way." "China and India are two major developing countries and we are close neighbors." It is very important for the two peoples to maintain sound and steady China-India relations. But such relationship has to be built on certain foundation," Lu said. (PTI)

Actor Ranodeep Bose injured in road mishap

KOLKATA, MARCH 31 /-/- Bengali actor and grandson of thespian Soumitra Chatterjee, Ranodeep Bose was seriously injured in a road mishap in the city early today. Ranodeep, who was returning home from a show, was pillion riding on a friend's two-wheeler. He suffered serious head injuries when the bike rammed into a concrete wall in New Alipore area at around 2 am, police said. His friend Joydeep, who was on the



driver's seat, was also injured and suffered serious fractures, police said. Ranodeep is under treatment at a private hospital in Park Circus area, a film director, who worked with him, said. The 35-year-old actor had been critically acclaimed for his roles in Anjan Dutta's 'Dutta Vs. Dutta' (2012), Moink Bhowmik's 'Family Album' (2015) and Kamalakar Mukhopadhyay's 'Khwah' (2016). (PTI)

CBFC cites 'confusion' on category and not content for halting release of 'Shunyota'

DEBANJAN MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, MARCH 31 /-/- It was content so far for which quite a few films faced hurdles at the Censor Board. But what flummoxed Suwendu Ghosh, director of 'Shunyota' (emptiness), a Bengali film with three plots showing the perils of the note ban, was that the regional office of the CBFC stood in the way for the release of the film, saying they were in a fix about what category they would put the film under and for that they sent it to the CBFC's main office at Mumbai where the chairman would take a call on this issue. Speaking exclusively to The Echo of India, Ghosh said: "After projection of the movie on March 27, the jury members said they could not decide whether the film should come under category U or U/A. Since

only four days were left before the film's release I told them that I had no objection even if they put it under U/A. Instead of U and I was ready to sign the necessary document. But they said the movie had to be sent to Mumbai for the opinion of the chairman." Asked whether the jury members objected to any scene or dialogue in the movie, Ghosh said: "They said nothing. Had they made any such comment that would have been more logical. They simply said they were sending the film to the Mumbai office." The director admitted he had shown scrapped notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 but there were no comments about those from the jury members. Asked what could be the possible next step from his side if the CBFC bans 'Shunyota', the film's director gave a clear indication that they were contemplating a legal action. "We have invested our money in the project and that's not for keeping the movie confined within the can. I am confident that today or tomorrow the film will definitely be released," Ghosh said. What was more intriguing for Ghosh was that two short films that are part of 'Shunyota' have already got the Censor Board's nod. Ghosh said: "I had screened the first story of 'Shunyota' under Short Film category at Nandan 3 on December 23, the day after it got the Censor's certificate. There was no negative response for the second short film also. So how could you explain this sudden objection?"

My editor has just placed those two short films in the film's reel. Since the third film is a bit lengthy we decided to release the series as a feature film containing three short stories," the filmmaker told Echo of India. The first short story is about a colliery labourer who makes all arrangements for her daughter's wedding including keeping some cash ready that her in-laws had demanded for repairing of a water pump. As demonetisation is announced, the entire cash is returned by the groom's family and what happens next forms the story line of the film. The second story is about harassment that a Sikkimese family faces in a Kolkata hospital where their ailing little son has been admitted and the third one is the story of a man in Kakdwip whose small savings were in doldrums because of the note ban.



Director Suwendu Ghosh (Left). A still from 'Shunyota'.