

Tribal woman branded as witch knocks Malda SP's door

EOI PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENT

MALDA, JUNE 30 /- / A tribal woman along with her son met the Superintendent of Police (SP) alleging that they were socially boycotted and driven out of village by their relatives and some locally influential people who allegedly branded her as a witch.

Tala Soren and her son Joseph Murmu from Malancha village of

Hatimgram panchayat under Gazole police station alleged that despite seeking help from police, no action was taken for their safe return to village.

"I was held responsible for death of three persons at our village and surrounding areas. My sister-in-law Sarala Hansda and her relatives branded me as a witch and drove me out of the village in connivance with some redoubtable locals," Soren said.

"They actually aimed at capturing our land, he becomes easier for them if they brand my mother as a witch. They stole mangoes from our groves and ransacked our house too claiming that they were punishing my mother," Murmu said. He alleged that primary complaint lodged with Gazole police station did not yield any result, the encounter aged accused were threatening the mother and the son with dire consequences.

"We are now running from one village to another in search of a shelter. He accused are always after us. We sought justice from the superintendent of police today," the helpless tribal woman said. Police said that the complaint lodged by the tribal woman allegedly branded as witch was taken into consideration. "We are acting on it. Efforts of helping the woman and her son are on," SP, Malda Arnab Ghosh said.

Siliguri mayor accuses SJDA chairman of crossing Constitutional limit

EOI CORRESPONDENT

SILIGURI, JUNE 30 /- / Mayor of Left Front (LF) run Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) Asok Bhattacharya accused the chairman of Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority (SJDA) Chakraborty of interfering into the activities of the civic body violating the Constitution. Bhattacharya held a

press-meet on Saturday to raise allegations against Chakraborty who is also an MLA of Trinamool Congress from Alipurduar constituency. "Paying to heed to his Constitutional limitations the SJDA chairman has been trying to interfere into the activities of SMC. It has come to our notice that Chakraborty made statements on different occasions that SJDA would take up the

work which SMC failed to take over or accomplish," the mayor said. Claiming that SJDA chairman was oblivious of his Constitutional jurisdiction, Bhattacharya said, "It seems that the SJDA chairman has political motive. He is a Trinamool MLA. But as the chairman of the developmental authority he must abide by the rules and regulations before passing such

remarks." However, Chakraborty paying no heed to Bhattacharya's accusations, said, "Siliguri residents, have every right to enjoy their civic right. The LF run board in SMC has miserably failed to render services to citizens. SJDA is accountable for the development of the city. Hence, if SMC fails to work for the city's development, SJDA should fill the gap."

State to have country's first lightning-forecast centre, says minister

SOUMIYA DE SARKAR

MALDA, JUNE 30 /- / The state is going to launch country's first lightning-forecast system, claimed Javed Ahmed Khan, minister for disaster management and civil defence in Malda today. Khan said that the foundation laying ceremony of a private school at Narsiyapur at old Malda area. Other dignitaries who were present at the function include PB Saïm, chairman of West Bengal Minority Financial Development Corporation and secretary of the department of state Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Asish Kundu, chairman of district primary school council, Mozammel Hossain, district Trinamool Congress president and Azizur Rahman, chairman of proposed Teetsiyapur Cambridge International School.



Disaster management & civil defence minister Javed Ahmed Khan in a programme in Malda on Saturday..... Sudip Roychowdhury

"The project of forecast lightning was taken up in 2017. Pilot projects are underway at 20 locations in the state. The entry is now being done by an American concern. We have asked them to complete the project by running their system from the state. It will be country's first lightning-forecast system," the minister said. Referring to the infrastructural development of his department Khan further said, "During

the Left Front regime the disaster management department had infrastructural lapses. In seven years of the Trinamool run state government, we have changed the situation. Along with constituting 'quick-response team' in all districts of the state, training in disaster

management has been imparted to 20000 volunteers already. "All districts would have a barracks for vehicles that would rush to the spot of the disaster. Trained staff would move to the spot by those well-equipped vehicles. Rs 60 lakh would be spent in each district for this programme," he added.

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Arunachal landslide: Death toll-5

ITANAGAR, JUNE 30 /- / One ITBP personnel, among the eight injured in Friday's landslide in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, succumbed to his injuries today, raising the death toll to five, a police officer said. Out of the eight injured, the condition of two personnel were critical, the officer said. The two critically injured and Tibetan Border Police (TBP) personnel were initially taken to the Army Hospital at Likabali, and later, referred to a hospital in Assam's Dibrugarh on Friday. Superintendent of Police (SP) of Lower Siang Singdaga Singh said, "It has come to our notice that one of them died there this morning. The other six personnel with minor injuries were treated at the local community health centre, Singpho said. Four TBP personnel were killed when a huge boulder, loosened by monsoon rains, rolled down a mountain and hit their vehicle on the Basakaj road in Lower Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Friday. The boulder rolled down the mountain slope and smashed the mini bus carrying 20 TBP personnel. The incident occurred at 2.30 pm, about 5 km from Likabali, the district headquarters of Lower Siang, when they were on way to it from Basar in West Siang district. This was the second landslide-related incident in the state within five days. The toll due to landslide this monsoon has raised to nine. On June 24, five labourers were buried alive when a retaining wall of an under-construction RCC building collapsed on a labour barrack at Donyi Colony here. (PTI)

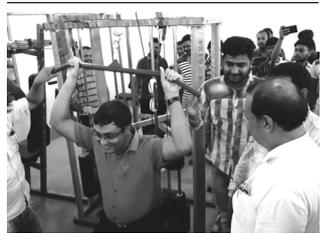
Four killed in road accident

KEONJHAR, JUNE 30 /- / At least four persons, including three women were killed and three others critically injured when the car in which they were travelling collided against a roadside tree on Karanja-Anandapur road near Bankhidi in Odisha's Keonjhar district today, police said. While two persons died on the spot, two others succumbed at the government hospital in Anandapur, it said. The mishap took place around 6 am when the victims, residents of Salabani and Sainkula villages under Anandapur police limits, were returning home in a car after attending a wedding at Thakurmunda area in neighbouring Mayurbhanj district, the police said. The car driver lost control over the vehicle which rammmed into a tree. The injured including a woman were shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack, it added. (PTI)

Fishermen hunt tiger at Sunderbans: Police to take action

KOLKATA, JUNE 30 /- / With a video of a tiger being tormented by fishermen in a river at Sunderban going viral, the forest department today said it would take action against those involved. The video showed a group of fishermen on a trawler hounded a tiger with bamboo poles and other sticks when the animal was swimming across the river towards Kendo Island. The tiger finally managed to wriggle away from the attacks by the fishermen on Thursday. Field Director of the Sunderban Tiger Reserve Nilanjan Mallick told PTI that according to reports received, the tiger was swimming towards Kendo islands on the western fringes of the Sunderban when it was hit with bamboo poles by fishermen.

"We will take action under Wildlife Protection Act against those found involved in the incident. We are empowered to take such action," Mallick said. Sunderban Biosphere Reserve director R P Saini said "we have taken note of the incident. The forest department is taking measures as per provisions laid down to prevent man-animal conflict in the Sunderban and protect the Tiger population in the forest reserve." State Wildlife Board member Joydip Kundu said while conservation work was taking place satisfactorily in the Sunderban, such incident was uncalculated. (PTI)



'Fit body for a fit administration...' Kaushik Bhattacharya, district magistrate, Malda trying the instruments of a newly inaugurated gymnasium at Malda College on Saturday says Nilaj Ghosh, M.L.A. of the ruling chairman looks on. The gymnasium was built spending Rs 2.5 lakh from the student fund..... Santosh Karmakar

In brief

Result of UGB part-III UG Exam published

MALDA, JUNE 30 /- / University of Gour Banga (UGB) published the results of part-III honours Undergraduate (UG) examinations within a record 24 days. In 2017 the same results were published after 36 days. Vice-Chancellor Prof Swagata Sen said that despite the panchayat elections, the results were published in much less time than the last year. Rate of success has increased by five percent compared to last year for the examinees who wrote papers under new syllabus. But for the examinees pursuing the old syllabus the success rate has been reduced by 20 percent. Among 5485 candidates under new syllabus 525 got first class and 3549 passed with second class. Three students got back. Success rate of female students under new syllabus (86.32%) is little higher than their male-counterparts (84.01%). (EOIFC)

Hul holiday demanded

EOI CORRESPONDENT

JALPAIGURI, JUNE 30 /- / The tribal community demanded that state government should declare paid holiday to join 'Hul festival', an auspicious occasion of the community. The demand was voiced from the venue of the festival at Adibasi Sanskriti Charcha Kendra at Nagrakata block in Jalpaiguri, Sukra Munda, M.L.A., Nagrakata, Sange Pema Bhutia, BDO, Nagrakata, sub-divisional information and culture officer of Mal block Khandma Bhutia, Amarnath Jha, forest karmadashya of zilla parishad, Hemanta Roy, sabhapati of panchayat samity were present in the programme.

The tribal community members alleged that many of their wages was deducted as they had to join the festival by seeking leave from the tea-garden authorities. They claimed that if the state government declared the 'Hul day' as a holiday, their wage would be saved. Local MLA Munda, during his speech, promised to draw the attention of the Chief Minister in this regard. (EOIC)

Unfair means reported at Jalpaiguri school exam

JALPAIGURI, JUNE 30 /- / Invigilation was tightened today after a section of gross unfair means was alleged at Panindrabur institution of the district while conducting examinations for students of Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya on Friday. It has been alleged that a section of examinees went unruled while they were prohibited from adopting unfair means during the examinations.

The civic volunteers, who prevented illegal supply of answer-chits, were targeted by those hostile examinees. Few civic-volunteers were allegedly roughed up by those examinees and their relatives too.

A large contingent of police from Kotowali police station had to rush to the spot to bring the situation under control. After the incident came to media on Saturday, authority of the school intensified the invigilation to prevent similar unrest. (NA)

Ex-Jharkhand minister convicted of murder

SIMDEGA, JUNE 30 /- / A court here today found former Jharkhand minister Enos Ekka guilty in a murder case. Additional District Judge Neeraj Kumar Srivastava convicted Ekka under sections 302 (murder), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of an offence committed), 364A (kidnaping for ransom), 171F (undue influence at an election) of Indian Penal Code and under the Arms Act. The court will deliver the quantum of sentence on July 3. The case pertains to the kidnapping of a teacher, Manoj Kumar, on November 26, 2014. His body was found near a school the next day.

The police had arrested Ekka, on November 27, 2014, from Thakurtoli in Simdega district, in connection with the case. Ekka is a member of Jharkhand Party and is the MLA from Kolibera constituency. (PTI)

Container truck overturned

KOLKATA, JUNE 30 /- / A container truck turned turtle after hitting a post on the second Hooghly bridge here today, the police said. Nobody was injured. The incident occurred at about 5.30 am. It appeared that the driver of the Kolkata-bound truck lost control over the vehicle causing the accident, they said. (PTI)

Assam to give financial aid to pregnant tea garden workers: CM

GUWAHATI, JUNE 30 /- / Assam government would give financial assistance to pregnant tea garden workers, chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal said today. The state government would set up one hundred high schools in tea garden areas and would also provide smart mobile phones to the 'line sardars' in the tea garden areas, Sonowal said.

"The state government will extend financial assistance of Rs 12,000 each to around 47,000 pregnant tea garden workers per year for nutritional purpose during the period of their pregnancy," the chief minister said while reviewing the implementation of programmes for the welfare of tea tribes. It was also decided in the meeting to provide the financial assistance in phase manner upto two deliveries through direct benefit transfer to the beneficiaries. The chief minister also emphasised on generating employment in the tea gardens and presently 80 MMUs are put into service to cover 320 tea gardens in the state. The chief minister also asked the Education department to expeditiously transfer Rs six hundred each to girl students aged 12

to 20 years for procurement of sanitary napkins as announced in the state budget. Stating that lack of proper educational infrastructure at the tea gardens affects academic interests of the tea tribes' students, Sonowal asked the Secondary Education department to take up speedy measures for setting up one hundred high schools in the tea gardens.

He also directed the department to develop the new schools as model institution and engage modern construction technology for early completion of construction work. The chief minister directed the tea tribes' welfare department to provide the line sardars with smart phones so that it could be utilised as a multi-purpose device.

The smart phone will enable the line sardars to establish contact with concerned authorities to address any emergency situation and they should also be apprised about different welfare schemes of the government as well," he said. The chief minister asked the department to introduce an app with information in Assamese. He also directed the officials to take steps for setting up a new department to look after plantation and commercial issues of tea, rubber and other such products to conduct newer research and innovation and successfully project tea and other products in the global market. (PTI)

Odisha scheme to provide more nutritious food for women, children

BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 30 /- / The children, pregnant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls will be provided with additional nutritious food in different Anganwadi Centres across Odisha from July 15, official sources said.

Chief Secretary A P Padhi directed the district collectors on Friday to keep a strict vigil over the quality and quantity of nutritious foodstuff supplied to various categories of beneficiaries and implement the revised menu in letter and spirit, the sources said. According to women and child development secretary Anu Garg, the hot cooked meal served in AWCs to the children be-

tween age group of 3 to 6 will have at least five eggs per week per child. In addition to this, the new menu for morning snacks include ragi & besan laddoo on Monday and Thursday, groundnut, chuda laddoo on Tuesday and Thursday and sprouted moong with jaggery or seasonal fruits on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The Take Home Ration (THR) for children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years has been revised to 12 eggs, 1.5 kg of dry ration consisting of suji /ragi /maize /besan/ sugar and 2.45 kg of chhatua per month, she said.

Similarly, the THR for pregnant women and nursing mother per month has been revised to 12 eggs, 25 chikki or laddoo made of groundnut /rasi /jiggery (each piece of 24.4 gm) and 4.9 kg of chhatua, she said. The adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 will get 16 eggs, 4 kg of chhatua and 25 pieces of laddoo, she said. The revised menu for severely underweight children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years includes 12 eggs along with 83 pieces of fish snack and 4.9 kg of chhatua while THR for severely underweight children in 3 to 6 years includes hot cooked meals and morning snacks at AWC daily along with additional 1.8 kg of chhatua and 42 pieces of laddu as THR per month, an official release said. She

Record number of crocodile nesting sites found at Bhitarkanika



KENDRAPARA, JUNE 30 /- / The Bhitarkanika National Park has become the largest habitat of the endangered estuarine crocodiles in the country with a record number of their nesting sites spotted in it, a forest official said. Altogether 101 nesting sites of estuarine crocodiles were found this time by enumerators, divisional forest officer, Rajnagar Mangrove (wildlife) Forest Division, Bimal Prasanna Acharya told PTI.

Stating that the figure was 80 last year, he said the nesting spots had registered 25 per cent rise this year. A female crocodile lays 50 to 60 eggs and the hatchlings usually emerge from the nests after 70 to 80 days of incubation period, he said. At least 1696 crocodiles, including albino species, were counted this year along the water-bodies of Mahanadi delta region, while the figure recorded last year stood at 1682.

Estuarine crocodiles are also found in West Bengal's Sunderban areas being country's largest mangrove cover. Besides, the mangrove wetlands in Andaman Islands are home to these species, but those cannot match the density and population of crocodile available in the wild habitats of Bhitarkanika, he said. (PTI)

Post of housewife's private photos on social media creates tension

EOI PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENT

MALDA, JUNE 30 /- / Excitement gripped Bhatnagar village under Kalaiachak police station today after a garments trader and his henchmen allegedly attacked locals summoned him to discuss his alleged action of recording bathing-scene of a housewife and that viral on social media recently. The housewife and her family reportedly lodged a written police complaint against Imrul Sheikh, the accused trader.

Police officials said that the accused and his companions were absconding and searches continued to arrest them. Mohammed Moïnu Khan, general secretary of Gayeshbari zonal Trinamool committee said that Sheikh secretly installed a spy-cam at the bathroom of his neighbour and recorded the bathing-scene of the neighbour's wife. Later, he allegedly posted different private photos of the housewife on social-media.

After those photos published publicly were noticed by the locals on June 18, they collectively protested and sought clarification from Sheikh for his allegedly heinous act. Ac-

ording to locals, the accused and his father Ataul Sheikh admitted his guilt in front of them. They even offered to bury the matter against money. However, the housewife's family lodged a complaint before police on June 18. Husband of the victim, a self-seller in occupation said, "Imrul is our neighbour and he used to come to our house every now and then. We had no idea that he had such a filthy motive. My wife's social life has been badly affected. We want his exemplary punishment."

S Mohammed Khan, an elected panchayat member of Trinamool said, "A meeting of senior and respect-

able inhabitants of the locality was convened today to discuss the issue. But the accused and his henchmen attacked those who attempted to meet the police. "We want that police should immediately trace the accused and arrest him. Otherwise we would knock the door of the superior court of police," Khan said. Senior police officials said that a probe was initiated. "All attempts are being made to arrest the accused," a police official said.

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