

THUMBNAILS



TMC candidate for Chowringhee AC, Nayana Bandhopadhyay, at a campaign rally in Kolkata. On Thursday. © Dilip Dutta

Pickpocketers held: Police on Thursday arrested four pickpocketers and seized eight cell phones from them. The accused hailed from Jharkhand and had robbed Metro Railway passengers. **SNS**

Train services: With a view to clear extra rush of passengers during ensuing festive season, South Eastern Railway will run nine pairs of Weekly Superfast Premium Specials between Santragachi and Puri. **SNS**

Disappearance: Rohit Mishra, a first year engineering student at a Durgapur polytechnic, has gone missing last night. He was last spotted at J K Nagar bus stop near Raniganj town on Wednesday evening. **SNS**

V-B VICTIM GIVES STATEMENT IN COURT

Santiniketan, 11 September: The statement of the sexually harassed and blackmailed girl of Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati was recorded in front of the ACJM, Bolpur, today. The girl also identified the spot where the incident took place. The victim was released from Burdwan Medical College and Hospital yesterday. The investigating officer of the case, Nandita Das, appealed before the ACJM, Bolpur to record her statement. ACJM Sanghamitra Poddar accepted the request. The girl gave her statement before judicial magistrate Saurav Nandi. The girl was sexually harassed by three senior students of her Bhavana at the bank of Kopai. Police also collected information about the fourth accused from the girl today. The fourth accused is still absconding. **SNS**

Luxury taxi operators threaten to go on strike

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 11 September

Government administration could be hit on 19 September as luxury taxi operators have threatened not to ply their vehicles if the hiring rates are not hiked by then. Members of the Luxury Taxi Association placed a proposal before the state transport minister Madan Mitra yesterday at a meeting in Parivahan Bhavan to hike the hiring rates. The taxi operators asked the government to pay Rs 650 for hiring a six seater vehicle for ten hours and Rs 850 for vehicles of higher capacity instead of the present Rs 445 and Rs 495 respectively. The Luxury Taxi Association provides cars to the state government. Mr Saikat Paul, secretary of the association, said that hiring charges for luxury taxis have not been hiked for more than six years. Fuel price, road tax, registration fees and insurance have tripled over the years, Mr Paul alleged. Members of the association also alleged that a section of senior IAS and IPS officers in the state are hiring vehicles that do not have commercial licence. They requested the minister to seize such vehicles. They have also requested the minister to reduce road tax. To resolve the impasse, state transport department had sent a proposal to the state finance department to hike the hire rates for luxury taxis a few months ago, a senior official of the transport department said. But the finance department is yet to give a nod in this regard, the official said.

TMC women supporters protest at CBI office

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 11 September

With demands for the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee becoming strident after her name was dragged into the multi-crore Saradha chit fund scam, state minister Chandrima Bhattacharya along with TMC women wing activists today demonstrated outside the CBI office. They were protesting against what they called politicisation of the investigation on instructions from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP and the CPI-M, the minister alleged, had joined hands to shield the actual conspirators of the Saradha scam. On the other hand, thousands of Saradha chit fund depositors, backed by Left and Congress leaders, held a rally in the city where the speakers claimed CBI investigation had already revealed



Chit fund sufferers at a rally in Kolkata. On Thursday. © Dilip Dutta

“Mamata is Saradha and Saradha is Mamata since the two have become synonymous.” They demanded the duped depositors be refunded their money through sale of Saradha group property, and the perpetrators of the fraud, including top ruling party leaders and officials of the state special investigation team “who stonewalled the probe” be brought to book. BJP national general

secretary and Bengal in-charge, Mr Siddharth Nath Singh, asked why the chief minister wasn't resigning in the wake of CBI revelations in the Saradha fraud the way she had severed her ties with the NDA-government after the Tehelka expose in 2001. When asked why she is agitating by blocking the road, despite being the state law minister, Chandrima Bhattacharya said: “This

is how the people of West Bengal protested on different issues and we would continue the agitation tomorrow. The protest will be intensified if the CBI do not interrogate the actual people, who are involved in the Saradha scam. Officials and Sebi and RBI have not been summoned yet.” Mr Singh accused the Trinamul of using ill-gotten money of the Saradha chit fund to seek help from Bangladesh based terrorist outfit Jammate-Islami to rig polls and threaten voters in the Assembly poll of 2011 and the recent Lok Sabha election. The Intelligence Branch, Enforcement Directorate and the CBI are aware of hundred of crores of the chit fund money having been used, Mr Singh alleged. Trinamul secretary general Partha Chatterjee rubbished Mr Singh's charge and said he was only trying

to instigate communal violence in the state as directed by the BJP national president. He warned the BJP leadership “not to play with fire”. He further said “rejected leaders of the Congress, BJP and the CPI-M and candidates whose deposits were forfeited in the last Lok Sabha poll” held a rally in the name of depositors. Mrs Sikha Mitra, former TMC MLA, who quit the party, said the Trinamul's demonstration showed how the party top leadership got scared by CBI disclosures. “It was Mamata Banerjee who got the main accused arrested and her government has been trying to give back money to the investors,” Mr Chatterjee said. Asked why nearly 50 ambulances sponsored by Saradha group was taken by the government, he said “the scam had not been unearthed when the ambulances were received.”

BJP-TMC CLASH MARS BY POLL CAMPAIGN

CHOWRINGHEE ASSEMBLY BY POLL IS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 11 September

A violent clash between Trinamul Congress and BJP supporters today marred the last day of the campaign for the Chowringhee Assembly bypoll segment scheduled for Saturday. Six people were injured in the clash that occurred in front of Hind Cinema on Ganesh Chandra Avenue turning the entire area into a mini battlefield. Panic-struck shopkeepers downed their shutters and commuters scurried for safety. At around 11.30 a.m; the saffron party took out a bike rally from Subodh Mallick Square led by party's Chowringhee candidate Ritesh Tiwari. Coinciding with this, the Trinamul took out a rally from College Square led by local councillor Sanchita Mondal in support of party candidate Nayana Bandhopadhyay.

Trouble broke out when both rallies came face to face near the movie theatre. BJP activists alleged that Trinamul workers attacked them without any instigation and beat them with sticks, iron rods and other sharp weapons. They alleged that the attack was led by Indranil Kumar, the election agent of Nayana Bandhopadhyay. “Unruly supporters of the ruling party manhandled me and caught me by the collar. They beat up the party workers causing serious injury to one of them who had to be hospitalised,” alleged Mr Tiwari. Sensing the situation going out of control, RAF and Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel rushed to the spot who had a tough time to contain the situation as the activists from both sides continued to confront each other despite the cops' being there.

Local councillor Sanchita Mondal was rushed to SSKM after she fainted during the clash. She was later transferred to a private hospital in Taitala. The BJP soon took up the matter with the Election Commission, accusing the Trinamul of trying to intimidate voters. It accused the local cops of being a mute spectator to the violence and demanded their immediate suspension. The saffron party said that the incident depicts the desperation of the ruling party which was losing ground. “We demand that the suspension of the on-duty police personnel who remained mute spectators during the incident,” senior leader Siddharth Nath Singh later told a Press conference. He said, the party would serve a memorandum to the Governor and the workers would stage a gherao outside the police stations

across the state demanding the resignation of the Chief Minister over the Saradha Scam. The Trinamul contested the claim and alleged that the saffron party had first attacked its workers without instigation. “It is a joint conspiracy of the rival parties to tarnish the image of the Trinamul Congress,” said Ms Dola Sen, senior Trinamul leader. She said such a clash was “nothing new” in politics. Mr Partha Chatterjee, Trinamul Congress secretary general, today said that the BJP has become so desperate to win the Chowringhee seat, that it deliberately clashed with the Trinamul Congress party activists who are campaigning for the party's candidate Naina Bandopadhyay. The attackers, alleged Mr Chatterjee, have injured the local Trinamul Congress councillor and eight others.



A BJP supporter who was attacked and injured by TMC activists during their campaign at Subodh Mallick Square area in Kolkata. On Thursday. © Biswajit Ghoshal



BJP supporters after an attack by TMC activists at Subodh Mallick Square area in Kolkata. On Thursday. © Biswajit Ghoshal



BJP candidate for Chowringhee AC Mr Ritesh Tiwari campaigning at Subodh Mallick Square area in Kolkata. On Thursday. © Biswajit Ghoshal

Mamata recalls Vivekananda's message on 9/11 anniversary

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata 11 September

Chief Minister Miss Mamata Banerjee today recalled the terror attack at World Trade Center in New York, twelve years ago on this day and termed it as a scar that still leaves an indelible mark on people's mind. Addressing a programme of the commemoration of

Swami Vivekananda speech organised by Ramkrishna Mission, she said while the attack on World Trade Center at New York has left a scar on people's minds, Swami Vivekananda has preached the essence of universal brotherhood to the world on this day. His message is still relevant to the present day society. Vivekananda's speech



channeled the spirit and sense of universality of the Parliament of the world's religions. According to Miss Baner-

jee, Vivekananda's Chicago speech marked the beginning of Western interest in Indian values. The content of the speech has an irresistible appeal even today. A section of Western and Islamic societies, which are filled with religious chauvinism, still have much to learn from Swami Vivekananda's Chicago address. Swami Vivekananda's

Chicago speech continues to have the potential to bring about genuine universal brotherhood. It may be mentioned that twelve years ago, on this day, two hijacked aircraft crashed into the North and South towers of World Trade Center in New York City of America. A third smashed into the Pentagon, the headquarters

of the United States Department of Defense. The fourth, targeted at Washington DC, crashed into a field near Shanksville in Pennsylvania. The series of four coordinated terror attacks, executed by Islamist terror organisation Al Qaida against the USA, snuffed out the lives of 2,996 innocent people.

BJP LEADER THRASHED BY 'TMC MEN'

Khanakul 11 September: A BJP leader was thrashed and his house was damaged because of his allegiance to the party. Mr Bikas Hazra, a resident of Tantipara in Khanakul, Arambagh and a BJP leader of Khanakul was allegedly badly thrashed by a TMC leader Sisir Hazra and his men. They damaged his house and even prevented him from going to the hospital. Mr Bikas Hazra said: “My only fault is that I am a BJP person and I did not succumb to their pressure to switch over to the TMC.” He said: “Sisir Hazra, the TMC local leader and his men brutally thrashed me, inflicting serious injury. They caused extensive damage to my home. I was even prevented to go to the hospital. The police who rescued me, admitted me to the hospital. I have a lodged complaint with the police.” Seikh Kajo, a local TMC leader however, denied all the allegations of the BJP leader. He said none of our TMC men were involved in such kind of violent activities. The CPI-M men are responsible for such kind of unruly anti social activities. **SNS**

THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER, THANKS TO PPP PROJECT

That life-giving drop

SHIBA NANDA BASU
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Kolkata, 11 September

Some 500-odd schools in West Bengal are now enjoying access to safe water and better sanitation thanks to a public private partnership project between the state government and various stakeholders including NGO and local communities. Water For People, an international NGO, first took the initiative way back in 1996 to provide sanitation and safe drinking water to schools and areas which are arsenic affected. Now the project is drawing international

attention as it showed how a collaboration of local entrepreneurs, civil society, governments, and communities can successfully provide long term solution for safe water and sanitation system. In North and South-24-Parganas local community and school authorities are successfully running water supply and sanitation projects, including some in the arsenic affected areas. Students of Ichapur High School and Panchagram High School in North 24-Parganas and Laxman Parabesh High School and S B High School in Pathar Pratima



in South 24-Parganas have access to safe water and better sanitation system because of this project. State Public Health Engineering minister Mr Subrata Mukherjee said: “We are encouraging such initiatives and already started Nirmal Gram Aviyan to promote safe water and sanitation across the state.” Ms Katja Neubauer, regional programme officer (Africa and Asia) of Water For People said: “we are working to pro-

vide water, sanitation, hygiene and education in a sustainable manner. We install infrastructure, but the important part is to get the community, government and private sector involved in maintaining the infrastructure.” She said that support from business houses like Xylem, who supported the project and could open new avenues in public private partnership. Mr Arumugam Kalimuthu, country director of Water For People, said that initially they faced some constraints. “But when the state government got to know about the projects and local people started

getting the benefit, we got huge support. The success of the project is that after implementing and providing initial infrastructure, it is the communities that run the projects.” Even the communities have their own bank accounts to meet the maintenance cost of the projects, said Mr Kalimuthu. The projects that are gaining momentum in rural parts of both the Parganas include community drinking water supply programme, school water and sanitation programme and Jalabandhu (Friends of Water). The community water

supply programme involves the installation of arsenic removal filters as well as the installation and restoration of tube wells. Huge number of arsenic affected people in North-24-Parganas are benefited from this project. To continue the maintenance of the projects the NGO has created Jalabandhu or “Friends of Water”, who is a local person trained to undertake regular maintenance and timely repair of hand pumps. This showed the way for sustained access to safe water and created jobs for local youths and unemployed. **SNS**