West Bengal
Current Affairs
January - September
2017

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SWADESH DARSHAN, 100% funding will be done by the central government for strengthening infrastructure, capacity building of staff and locals, finding new avenues to connect people with tourism activities

Ministry of Tourism – **PRASAD** - Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive and Swadesh Darshan

**Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) scheme** - Urban Development Ministry
PRASAD Scheme was launched in 2014-15 with 12 identified sites namely Ajmer (Rajasthan), Amritsar (Punjab), Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Dwarka (Gujarat), Gaya (Bihar), Kedarnath (Uttarakhand), Kamakhya (Assam), Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Puri (Odisha), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and Vellankani (Tamil Nadu).

During 2015-16, Patna (Bihar) and in 2016-17, 12 more sites were added in the scheme for development namely Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh), Badrinath (Uttarakhand), Belur (West Bengal), Deoghar (Jharkhand), Guruvayur (Kerala), Hazratbal and Katra (Jammu & Kashmir), Omkareshwar (Madhya Pradesh), Somnath (Gujarat), Srisailam and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), Trimbakeshwar (Maharashtra).
HRIDAY SCHEME
Deadline
November, 2018

Outlay of INR 500 Crores
the Scheme is being implemented in 12 identified Cities namely, Ajmer, Amaravati, Amritsar, Badami, Dwarka, Gaya, Kanchipuram, Mathura, Puri, Varanasi, Velankanni and Warangal.
4th National Summit on Good, Replicable Practices and Innovations in Public Health Care Systems was conducted in Indore, MP

Inaugurated by Lok Sabha speaker Sumitra Mahajan.

She also discussed on National Health Policy 2017 and how to achieve SDGs in Health

**SDG 3** – Good Health and Well Being
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Gobindobhog rice gets Geographical Indication status

West Bengal’s Gobindobhog rice recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) status from the Geographical Indications Registry (GIR). The state government had applied for the GI status for Gobindobhog rice on 24 August 2015.

The Gobindobhog rice is a speciality from Burdwan district of West Bengal. The region of Burdwan (now divided into the districts of east and west Burdwan) is known as the rice bowl of Bengal.
Nitasha Biswas crowned first Miss TransQueen India

On the other hand, Manipur’s Loiloi was crowned the first runner-up while Ragasiya.k from Chennai bagged the second runner-up position.

Biswas will now go to Thailand for Miss International Queen, while Loiloi will compete at Miss Transsexual Australia.
Former West Bengal Minister Gyan Singh Sohanpal dies

• He was elected to the West Bengal assembly for 10 times and was defeated in 2016 assembly election in the state.
• Between 1972 and 1977, he served as Transport Minister during the Chief Ministerial stint of Siddhartha Shankar Ray.
• He was sworn in as the Speaker of Legislative Assembly by Governor M K Narayanan in May 2011.
The 28th Dantan Gramin Mela was inaugurated in Midnapore district in West Bengal. It was inaugurated by Ex-President Pranab Mukherjee on 19th Jan.

The mela display the rural handicraft skills of the people of the region and the different goods ranging from textile to terracotta.
India’s first multi-sports museum Fanatic Sports Museum (FSM) was inaugurated at the Ecospace in New Town, Rajarhat, Kolkata.

It was jointly inaugurated by Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Abhinav Bindra, Deepa Malik and Devendra Jhajaria.

The museum spread over 6700 square feet has been launched jointly by sports historian Boria Majumdar and industrialist from Kolkata, Harshavardhan Neotia.

It is a first of its kind museum in India and is inspired by the MCC Museum at Lord’s and the IOC Museum in Lausanne.
Entry tickets to the museum have been priced at Rs 100 with a 50% concession for students.

India already has two cricket museums located at Pune and Chennai.

However the new multi sports museum would cover variety of games ranging from football, hockey, badminton, tennis, golf and athletics besides cricket.
Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has commissioned new 500 MW Thermal Unit in West Bengal

This was the second 500 MW at Sagardighi Thermal Power Station (TPS) Phase II project in Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

The first unit of the 1,000-MW project was commissioned in December, 2015. The project has been set up by West Bengal Power Development Corporation (WBPDCL).

The equipment for the project were manufactured at BHEL's Trichy, Ranipet, Haridwar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Bhopal plants, while the company's power sector - eastern region - undertook erection and commissioning of the equipment.
Vodafone India signed an MoU with the West Bengal government to invest Rs 3,000 crore.

The deal was signed for capacity augmentation and new business initiatives over next three years.


Aim: To improve Vodafone’s leadership position in the state by offering customers a Super Net experience through enhanced network.

Presently, BHEL is also executing 3 units of 40 MW each of Rammam hydro-electric project of NTPC Ltd, in West Bengal.
Parag Havaldrar won the prestigious Scientific & Technical Awards popularly called the 'Technical Oscar'.

It was given by the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences,

For the development of expression-based facial performance-capture technology at Sony Pictures Imageworks.

Havaldrar's popular works include 'Watchmen', 'Green Lantern', 'The Amazing Spider-Man', 'Beowulf' and 'Hancock'.

He was be awarded a certificate from the Academy at Beverly Hills, California.

The Scientific & Technical Awards were first presented at the 4th Academy Awards ceremony in November 1931.
UNESCO has registered Sitalpati or cool mat from the Cooch Behar district, West Bengal as an intangible cultural heritage.

The Sitalpati are the mats that are used for sitting or hanging on the doors or windows during summer season. They are made up of weaved green cane slips of murta plants widely found in the region.

Sitalpati has found a place in the UNESCO-sponsored Rural Craft Hub project. Under this project training and marketing centres, and museums have been set up in 10 locations across nine districts of the state to help promote and market crafts indigenous to those regions, to national and international tourists.

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Sundarbans National Park are two UNESCO World Heritage sites located in West Bengal.
Damodar Valley Corporation received NTPC award from the then Union Power Minister, Piyush Goyal.

DVC received NTPC award 20015-16

DVC chairman Andrew WK Langstieh, received the prize by Goyal amongst the power sectors under for implementation of Official Language.

The current Union Minister of State (Independent charge) is R.K. Singh
West Bengal Set to Give Legal Protection to Hilsa Fish

It has announced to protect the endangered Hilsa Fish from getting extinct

And thus has proposed to introduce law to arrest anyone found in illegal catching, buying or selling of Hilsa fish weighing less than 500 grams (also called juveniles)

With the introduction of the proposed provision, Hilsa Fish would become the first fish to get legal protection.

With each monsoon, schools of the migratory Hilsa or Indian Shad (Tenualosa ilisha) swim in from the Bay of Bengal to the network of rivers for breeding.
This migration has traditionally sustained the Hilsa fishery.

Government officials pointed out that presently, the department of fisheries has no punitive powers and the sale of small Hilsa, colloquially referred to as ‘khoka ilish’ needed to be stopped.

It wasn’t until 2013 that a specific notification was brought in by the West Bengal government to control overfishing and conserve the hilsa population.

The notification lay prohibitions on catching of the fish using a gill net having mesh below 90mm, prohibited catching, transport or sale of small hilsa.

It also declared five hilsa sanctuaries on the Hooghly river from Farakka to Sagar, covering a stretch of 250 km, where fishing has been banned between June-August and October-December.
Assessment of the production trends of hilsa from 1961 to 2013 in the middle stretch of the Ganga by Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI) revealed a significant decline in the annual average production from 36 tonness to 0.9 tonnes.

Findings by CIFRI reveal that during the period 1998-2012, the average catch of juvenile hilsa (2 to 20 grams) from the system was a staggering 85 tonnes per year.

Experts predict that saving even 1 per cent of these juveniles could enhance the hilsa production by 4000 tonnes per year.
India’s first advanced Homoeopathy Virology lab inaugurated in Kolkata

Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge), on 12 September 2017 inaugurated India’s first State of art virology laboratory at Dr. Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The laboratory has been established to develop new drugs and technologies in homoeopathy to combat emerging challenges of viral diseases.

- The laboratory is established at a cost of Rs. 8 crore is the only one in India for conducting basic and fundamental research in Homoeopathy for viral diseases like influenza, Japanese encephalitis, dengue, chikungunya and swine flu.
- New drugs and technologies would be developed at the laboratory to combat emerging challenges of viral diseases.
Zoological Survey of India released first compendium of animal diversity in Indian Sundarbans

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in September 2017 published a first ever exhaustive compendium of animal species in the Indian Sundarban and the threats it faces. The compendium is titled *Fauna of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve*. As per the publication, the ZSI estimates that there are 2626 of the animal species in the fragile island ecosystem. The listing includes a diverse 25 phyla, as they are biologically classified.

- The compendium is the first consolidated and updated information of the faunal diversity of the Sundarbans.
- It lists over 2600 species, including the new species described from the mangrove ecosystem as well as threats faced by them due to climate change.
  - The publication is encyclopaedic in its scope.
- The publication catalogues the entire faunal diversity of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve covering 9630 square kilometres spread over 19 blocks in South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas of West Bengal.
The compendium features famous tigers of these islands, which have adapted to aquatic conditions around, the human-tiger conflict, and behaviour of the big cat.

- It features 50 mammalian species including the Asian small-clawed Otter, Gangetic Dolphin, Grey and Marsh Mongoose and the wild Rhesus Monkey, the only primate in the Sundarbans.
- As per the publication, two Rhinos, Swamp deer, Barking deer and Hog deer and Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo are not found in Sundarbans anymore.
- It features 356 species of birds, the most spectacular being raptors, or birds of prey, that occupy the highest canopies of the forest. Osprey, Brahminy Kite and White-Bellied Sea Eagle are dominant, while Rose-ring parakeets, flycatchers and warblers are also found in the middle tier, while in the lower tier, kingfishers abound.
There are 11 turtles, including the famous Olive Ridley and Hawskbill sea turtles and the most threatened freshwater species, the River Terrapin.

- A crocodile, 13 lizards including three species of Monitor Lizards and five Geckos are also found the Sundarbans.
- The rivers, creeks channels and the islands together harbour about 30 snake species, led by the King Cobra, considered vulnerable by IUCN.

- Others documented in the publication are the Monocellate or monocled cobra, Russell’s viper, common and banded kraits.
- The mangrove ecosystem covers about 350 species of fish. Cartilaginous fish, which have skeletons of cartilage rather than bone, make up 10.3 per cent of the fish population. Also, there are 173 molluscs.
- In another indication of its richness, 753 insect species are encountered in the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve. Of these, 210 are butterflies and moths.
Bengal Clinches U-19 Cooch Behar Cricket Trophy for 2016-17 season

Won against Delhi in the final at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi

Bengal was declared winner in the drawn finals on the basis of a first innings lead with 79-run.

Earlier Bengal won the U-19 Cooch Behar Cricket Trophy title in 1997-98 season.
Veteran All India Forward Bloc leader and former West Bengal minister Saral Deb passed away.

He was the state Library Minister from 1977 to 1982 and held the Cooperative portfolio from 1982 to 1987.

He was a six-time state legislator, winning from Barasat constituency of North 24 Parganas district.
The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur is starting India’s first interdisciplinary School on Quality and Reliability (Q&R) in India.

The main aim to establish the school is to improve the quality of life for the people of India as well as develop quality conscious global citizens.

It wants to improve the trinity of Process, Planet and People (3Ps) targeting Engineering, Human and Natural systems.

The Q&R school, in collaboration with other academic units in the Institute will offer academic courses, research and mission-mode programmes in the area of Quality and Reliability for social transformation.
The school is being named after an IIT Kharagpur alumnus Quality guru Subir Chowdhury as the Subir Chowdhury School of Quality and Reliability.

He is the patron of the school who has offered $1 million fund for school.
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee declared Kalimpong as 21st district of West Bengal

The new district is from Darjeeling.
22nd – Jhargram
23rd - West Bardhaman district

She also announced two projects for the development of newly created Kalimpong

1. Rs 220 crore road link project to connect Kalimpong with Sikkim via the old Silk Route

2. Rs 50 crore water supply project to address Kalimpong’s water scarcity problem
India’s first hill station bicycle path was inaugurated in Darjeeling.

The 20 km long cycle route is developed at an altitude of over 2,000 meters and runs through thick pine forest and Senchal wildlife sanctuary.

The path also provides a view of the third-highest mountain in the world, Kanchenjunga.

The route starts from near Jorebunglow, south of Darjeeling and ends at a small local eco-village resort in Chatakpur.
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The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated the Indian Seed Congress 2017 in Kolkata

The theme of Seed Congress: Seed of Joy.

The theme is in line with vision of PM Modi government to bring happiness and prosperity in the lives of farmers by doubling their farm income by 2022.

The availability of certified / quality seeds in the country has increased from less than 40 lakh quintal during decade of 60 to 370 lakh quintal in 2015-16.

He asked the State Governments to prepare variety wise seed rolling plants to meet year wise, season wise requirements of quality seeds.

This seed rolling plant will fulfil the double purpose of improving the Seed replacement rate along with Variety replacement rate so that sustainable agricultural production and productivity could be ensured.
Agriculture Minister placed emphasis on 7 points programmes laid down by Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi to make the income of the farmers double.

The details thereof are as follow:

1) Big focus on irrigation with large budgets, with the aim of “per drop-more crop.

2) Provision of quality seeds and nutrients based on soil health of each field.

3) Large investments in warehousing and cold chains to prevent post-harvest crop losses.
4) Promotion of value addition through food processing.

5) Creation of a national farm market, removing distortions and e-platform across 585 stations.

6) Introduction of a new crop insurance scheme to mitigate risks at affordable cost.

7) Promotion of ancillary activities like poultry, beekeeping and fisheries.
Noted Bengali singer Banasree Sengupta passed away in Kolkata

She is well known for some of the most popular modern songs like Aaj Bikeler Daake Tomar Chithi Pelam, Amar Ange Jawle Rangmashal
Former Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Shibaji Banerjee passed away in Kolkata

The soccer legend Shibaji had played for the club for 11 years.

Banerjee won 34 trophies with the club.

He is also well known for stopping a free kick taken by Pele during the 1977 exhibition match against New York Cosmos.

Banerjee was part of Mohun Bagan’s three-man technical committee at the time of passing away.
The West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency) Bill, 2017 was passed by the state legislative assembly with full support.

The Bill replaces the West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Regulation) Bill, 2010.

The state will set up a 13 member West Bengal Clinical Establishment Regulatory Commission which will monitor private healthcare facilities, decide on charges for hospitals and deal with complaints from patients.
Key Feature of the Bill:

Hospitals cannot charge more than as stated in the Bill.

Hospitals cannot delay the release of a deceased patient even if the family cannot pay up immediately.

In case of death due to negligent treatment, hospital would be liable to pay Rs. 10 lakh as compensation.

Victims of accidents will have to be provided care even if he or she cannot immediately pay for it.

Hospitals that received land from the state government will have to provide free treatment to one in five outdoor patients, and one in 10 patients admitted to the hospital.
Every clinical establishment shall maintain a public grievance cell for lodging of complaints on treatment, improper billing, deficit service, behaviour of attending staff.

Offer free Cardiac surgery to children under Sishu Sathi Scheme

Sishu Sathi Scheme

In a major boost to child health care in West Bengal, the State Government has joined hands with three private hospitals and government hospitals to provide free paediatric cardiac surgery to 3,000 children each year under the initiative named 'Sishu Saathi' or friends for children that flagged off on Aug 21, 2013
The government has tied up with three private hospitals - BM Birla Heart Research Centre and RN Tagore Institute of Cardiac Sciences in Kolkata and Mission Hospital in Durgapur - for the free-surgery scheme.

Seth Sukhlal Karnani Memorial Hospital, B.C. Roy Memorial Hospital for Children and R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital are some of the government hospitals that have cutting-edge facilities for paediatric care.

**Salient features of this scheme include**

a) the State Govt conducts health tests in government schools to detect heart ailments,
b) the State Govt provides free cardiac surgery for children up to 12 years suffering from heart ailments,
c) All children are eligible irrespective of family income,
d) All expenses are borne by the State Government.
The West Bengal government has given an official status to Kurukh language

It has been listed as an endangered language by the UNESCO.

The language was given the official status on February 21 on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day.

Kurukh is a tribal language that belongs to the Dravidian family.

It is spoken by the Oraon tribal community living in Birbhum-Bankura-Purulia-Midnapore belt and the tea garden regions in north Bengal.
Experts say that while most of the tribal languages in the State have their origins in the Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Barman families, Kurukh is an exception.

The only example of a tribal language having its origin from the Dravidian family is Malto, which is not spoken in West Bengal, but in the Rajmahal hills of Jharkhand.

Santhali, Munda and Hoe languages belong to the Austro-Asiastic family, while the languages spoken by the Lepcha, Tamang and Bhutia tribes of the Darjeeling hills were of the Tibeto-Burman group.

Jharkhand has recognised Kurukh as a language, and students can write their school final examination in its script.
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur become the first academic institutions in India to receive a supercomputing facility of 1 Peta-flop computing power under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

National Supercomputing Mission envisages building supercomputing capacity and capability in the country with an estimated budget of Rs 4,500 crore over a period of seven years.

Peta-Flop is a measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.

The institute is setting up a new Centre for Computational and Data Sciences (CCDS) to build, manage, and operate the high-performance computing facility.
West Bengal was the top most state of India having highest number of arsenic-affected persons as on March 4, 2017

The total number of arsenic-affected persons in the state was more than 1.04 crore.
The State Minister of Public Health Engineering (PHE) Subrata Mukherjee informed that the state has 83 blocks in eight districts where ground water is affected by arsenic contamination.

These districts include Bardhaman, Malda, Hooghly, Howrah, Murshidabad, Nadia, North and South 24 Paraganas.

Bihar comes second with 16.88 lakh persons, with Assam in third spot with 14.48 lakh victims.

The total number of arsenic-affected people in the country is about 1.48 crore.
About Arsenic Contamination

Arsenic is a natural component in the earth’s crust. It is widely distributed throughout the environment in the air, water and land. It is highly toxic in its inorganic form.

Contaminated water used for drinking, irrigation of food crops and food preparation poses the greatest threat to public health from arsenic.

Long-term exposure to arsenic from drinking-water and food can lead to chronic arsenic poisoning.

It can cause cancer, skin lesions, developmental effects, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity and diabetes.
West Bengal beat Goa (1-0) to clinch the 71 Santosh Trophy for a record 32\textsuperscript{nd} time

Finals was played at the GMC Bambolim Stadium, Goa.

The maiden goal came from Manvir Singh in 119 minutes after playing a goalless 90 minutes to defeat Goa at home ground.

Last time West Bengal clinched the title in 2010-11 against Mizoram.
Popular Bengali folk music singer Kalika Prasad Bhattacharya died in a road accident at Palsit in West Bengal.

He was 47 years old

The accident took place at Gurap on Durgapur Expressway (NH2) in West Bengal’s Burdwan district.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declared Jhargram as the 22nd district of Bengal.

It has been bifurcated from West Midnapore.

April 4 will now be celebrated as Jhargram Diwas.

Jhargram, a part of the Jangalmahal area, was a hotbed of Maoists activities between 2008 and 2011.

The new district comprises eight blocks, nine police stations and one municipality. It has a population of around 11,37,000 and four Assembly constituencies — Jhargram, Gopiballavpur, Nayagram and Binpur.
West Burdwan has been declared as 23rd district of West Bengal as a Bengali New Year gift to the people.

West Burdwan district was carved out of Burdwan.

Every year, April 7 will be celebrated as the birthday of Paschim (West) Bardhaman district.
The country's oldest IIT (Kharagpur) is going to introduce Vastu Shastra classes for its architecture students.

Classes will be introduced from August, 2017

Vastu Shastra will be introduced to architecture students from the next academic session.

It will be introduced to undergraduate students as part of courses on basic design and history of architecture.
Phoenix India Research and Development Group in Kolkata has designed a bus that will run on biogas produced from cow dung.

The company has tied-up with Ashok Leyland to manufacture the 54-seater bus at a cost of Rs 13 lakh approximately.

The first bus was flagged off on April 7, 2017 and will run between Ultadanga in the north and Garia in the south in Kolkata.

The ticket will be charged Re 1 for the 17.5 km stretch, which will be the cheapest mode of transport for a passenger in the country.
Bengal government introduces Social Security Yojana converges 5 beneficiary schemes

The Bengal government has launched the scheme for unorganized sectors and self employed people.

Key features of the scheme

A common beneficiary programme is prepared for all the sectors and according to that workers from each of the sectors and their family members will be benefitted.

Children who will enroll in this scheme will also get education benefits.

5 crore people will get benefit from the Social Security Yojana and around 1 crore will get direct benefit.
People will be deriving more benefits with the introduction of the new one compared to that of the previous five different schemes.

workers from 46 different unorganised sectors including bidi workers, book binding workers, motor mechanics, boatmen and ICDS workers will be getting the benefit.

Self employed people from 15 different sectors including jewellery manufacturing sector and amins will also come under the yojana.

Beneficiaries will also get support for marriage of their two daughters besides getting health cards and other benefits.
Five schemes that are converged:

State Assistance Scheme for Provident Fund for Unorganised Sector

West Bengal Unorganized Sector Workers’ Health Security Scheme

Social Security scheme for Construction Workers

West Bengal Transport Workers Social Security Scheme

West Bengal Bidi Workers Welfare Scheme.

At present about 85 Lakh people are being benefited jointly by all the 5 schemes. The state government has spent about Rs. 880 crore between 2011 and 2016 for the implementation of these schemes.
The state government has also decided to introduce State Nutrition Mission.

The step has been taken to ensure distribution of nutritional food among pregnant women, lactating mothers, children below six years and adolescent girls.
The West Bengal government has made the Bengali language mandatory in all schools.

It was declared by the State’s Education Minister Partha Chatterjee on 15 May 2017.

The Bengali language is compulsory for all schools including English medium.

The students who select any of the other languages as their first language would need to pick up two other languages, among which one would have to be Bengali.

Other than Bengali, English and Hindi there are provisions for opting for Urdu, Gurumukhi, Nepali and Ol-chiki among other languages as the medium of instruction in schools of the State.
Kolkata will launch an underwater Metro which will pass through tunnels several feet under the Hooghly.

The first underwater transportation tunnel of India is ready with the second one nearing completion.

The tunnel has been constructed 30 meters below riverbed.

It will be connecting two main terminals: Howrah and Sealdah - each of which has a footfall of about 10-12 lakh passengers per day.

The track will be 16.6 km long and the train will run without a driver. There will be six air-conditioned coaches in the train and it will have a capacity of 1,000 passengers.
The project is built by Afcons Transtonnelstroy and implemented by KMRCL (Kolkata Metro Railway Corporation Ltd).

Afcons Transtonnelstroy is an Indo-Russian joint venture.

The project connects Howrah to the west and Salt lake to the east.

A massive tunnel boring machine called Rachna was used for boring the underwater tunnel.

The East West Metro with a length of 16.6 km will have 12 stations, six of which will be underground stations.

The total estimated cost of the project is said to be Rs 60 crore and it will be completed by December 2019.
Veteran Bengali film actor Soumitra Chatterjee has been conferred with the highest French civilian honour, the Legion d'Honneur.

Ambassador of France to India Alexandre Ziegler will be in Kolkata to present the honour.

It is to be noted that, exactly 30 years ago, Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray was awarded the Legion of Honor by then French President Francois Mitterrand in 1987.
Indian Institute of Technology of Kharagpur on has developed a wireless technology for remote monitoring of patients.

The technology has been developed in the SWAN lab of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) of the institute.

Ambu Sens is capable of wireless monitoring of various physiological parameters like ECG, heart-rate, temperature and blood-pressure.

It can be fitted in an ambulance to ensure remote monitoring of patient condition by the doctors even before they reach the hospital.
The system preserves patient's data confidentiality while simultaneously using the analytic and computing power of cloud computing.

The web interface of the AmbuSens system provides an easy-to-use graphical interface for doctors and paramedics alike with data visualisation tools such as real-time ECG graph rendering, and can be accessed from internet-enabled laptops, tablets and smartphones.
Legendary singer Sabita Chowdhury passed away.

She had done many playback for Bengali and Hindi films.

She suffered from lungs cancer and thyroid.

Her famous songs are Oi jhilmil jhauer boney, Jaare jaa jaa mono paakhi, Jhilmil jhilmil opaarero monjil
Union Cabinet has approved the creation of three posts of Directors for the three new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

These AIIMS are at:

- Mangalagiri near Guntur in Andhra Pradesh
- Kalyani in West Bengal
- Nagpur in Maharashtra.

The three AIIMS are being set up as part of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

As per the AIIMS Act 1956 Amended vide AIIMS (Amendment) Act, 2012, there shall be a Chief Executive Officer of the Institute.

He shall be designated as the Director of the Institute and shall be appointed by the Institute provided that the first Director of the Institute shall be appointed by the Central Government.
The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), in association with the West Bengal Government, will host Horasis Asia Meeting.

It will be a Global Business meeting.

The two-day business meet will start from 26th November, 2017.

It will focus on sustainable business practices in various areas, including power and energy.

Horasis - a global visions community committed to enact visions for a sustainable future - provides a unique platform for companies from emerging and developed markets to globalize their organisations.
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has signed an MoU with Government of West Bengal to set up a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence in Transfusion Medicine

The Centre of Excellence in Transfusion Medicine will be set up in Kolkata.

Government of India has approved this important initiative with an outlay of approximately Rs.200 Crores towards equipment, manpower and running costs.

The move intends to strengthen the blood transfusion services in the State and the surrounding region.
Metro Blood Bank Project is conceived to be a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to set up state-of-the-art Centres of Excellence in transfusion medicine in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

These centres are high volume blood collection centres.

Facilities for screening of collected blood by NAT would be made available at these centres and also extended to the other blood banks of the State.
Veterean Actress Shakuntala Barua Gets 'Mahanayak Samman 2017'

It was given by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

It was given for her contribution to the world of cinema.

For this year, Prosenjit Chatterjee and Nusrat Jahan took home the Best Actor and Best Actress awards.
The Best Director: Arindam Sil

Music Director: Pt Bickram Ghosh

Cinematographer: Shoumik Halder

Script Writer award: Padmanabha Dasgupta

Suparnokanti Karati for ‘Bisarjan’ film and Shiboprasad Mukhopadhyay of Windows Productions for ‘Praktan’ film were awarded in Best Film and Best Producer categories.
Former Bengal and Jharkhand First-Class cricketer Gour Ghosh passed away.

Gour was right-hand batsman and wicketkeeper.

He played 17 First-Class matches in a career spanning 1960-61 to 1970-71.
West Bengal Cabinet Approves Merger Of PSC And SSC

The step was taken to curtail costs and for better utilisation of manpower.

Partha Chatterjee, Education Minister stated that there will be no job loss and nobody will be affected.

The state SSC was set up by Mamata Banerjee government in 2012 for recruitment in Group C and D posts.
West Bengal hikes salaries of ministers, MLAs and Assembly Speaker

State ministers, who were earlier drawing a monthly salary of Rs 7,500, would get a hike of Rs 10,000 taking their total salary amount to Rs 17,500.

For MLAs and the Speaker, who were getting a monthly remuneration of Rs 12,500, the proposed hike was that of Rs 5,000 each, taking their salary to an equal platform with the ministers.

The cabinet gave its nod to incorporate South 24 Parganas Kolkata Leather Complex into the Kolkata Police jurisdiction, he said.

The cabinet also sanctioned five major bridge/Railway over bridge projects to improve communication and road safety at an estimated cost of Rs 251.51 crore.
Upgradation of WBCS officers: State bureaucrats hail CM move

Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee in the cabinet meeting decided to introduce West Bengal Higher Civil Service

West Bengal Civil Service (WBCS) officers working for 8 to 10 years can be selected as members of West Bengal Higher Civil Service (WBHCS).

She said that the state did not get IAS officers despite requesting the Centre and a WBCS officer here takes around 28 to 30 years to get promoted as an IAS officer.

The IAS officers who are working in Bengal at present are extremely talented. Thus, it has been decided to introduce WBHCS and a committee has also been formed to look into the entire process.
MSME sector merged with industrial department

West Bengal Government in its cabinet meeting decided to merge MSME with the industry department of the state for better functioning and administrative efficiency.

The state government December last year had merged 21 government departments to form 10 new ones.

The cabinet had passed the proposal to merge the directorate of sericulture that was under the MSME department with state agriculture department.

The West Bengal Government's fund for MSME was created jointly with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) about two years back
The West Bengal Government's Rs 200 crore venture capital fund for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

Bengal is number one in the MSME sector and this fund is being created to provide equity capital to start-ups with innovative business models or new products, services and technology.
West Bengal districts decline to accept new Re 1 coins

Four districts in West Bengal, shops and general people are refusing to accept Re one coin in transaction, putting the authorities in a quandary.

The four districts are:

Nadia and Murshidabad

Bankura and Hooghly

People in these districts said that the problem was only with the smaller shining variety of the Re one coin, and not with the older variety.
Trinamool MLA caps Rs 250 as consultation charge for doctors in Cooch Behar

West Bengal lawmaker has capped at Rs 250 the consultation charge for doctors in his constituency, the controversial move comes a week after chief minister Mamata Banerjee announced a crackdown on private hospitals for alleged overcharging.

On the second visit, the doctor charge would be halved to Rs 125, Udayan Guha (Dinhata MLA and ruling Trinamool Party leader) said, a day after he made his decision known to healthcare professionals.

He also said that no hospital, or nursing home can charge more than Rs 18,000 for a delivery case that involves caesarian operation.
Bengal Cabinet Approves Increasing Age Limit For State Civil Services Exam

The state government decided to increase the upper age limit for entry of Group A officers from 32 to 36.

For Group B officers, it has been increased from 32 to 39.
West Bengal govt tweaking act to directly recruit professors, associate professors.

Direct appointment was till now restricted only to assistant professors, who were then promoted to the senior posts through the Carrier Advancement Scheme.

The higher education department will place the West Bengal College Service Commission (Amendment) Bill 2017 in the current session of the assembly and modify the necessary sections to incorporate the changes.

As of now, the College Service Commission (CSC) has the mandate to recruit only at the level of assistant professors and principals. Appointment to the posts of associate professors were only possible through the Carrier Advancement Scheme (CAS) after receiving promotions.
Gati Dhara Scheme

The West Bengal State Government (Ministry of Labor and Employment) has initiated a new program called ‘Gati Dhara Scheme‘ for the unemployed youth of state.

The main motto of this scheme is to provide financial help for purchasing small business vehicle e.g. Taxi, Bus, Small trucks, Auto Rickshaw etc.

Benefits of the scheme:

The Gati Dhara scheme provides benefits in West Bengal state to buy small business vehicle to unemployed persons aged between 20 and 45

Under this scheme Loan is provided of amount Rs. 10,00,000 through all the Nationalize Banks, Co-operative Banks, Gramin Banks
30% or upto Rs. 1,00,000 subsidy provided over sanctioned loan while repaying the loan.

Easy availability of loan

No restriction of loan repayment

5 to 7 years are given to repayment of loan as a moratorium period

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant candidate must belong to age 20 to 45 year.

There is age relaxation for SC, ST and OBC. For SC, ST 5 year and for OBC 3 year

The applicant candidates family and overall income should not exceed Rs. 25,000 per month and he/she should able to earn money through transport service
Kanyashree Scheme For Girls In Bengal Wins UN Award

The government of West Bengal was the awarded institution for Kanyashree which aims to improve status of adolescent girls from disadvantaged families through small cash transfers.

India was named first in the Asia-Pacific group for the category: 'Reaching the Poorest and Most Vulnerable through Inclusive Services and Participation'.

"Kanyashree of Bengal now becomes "Kanyashree" of the world. The United Nations today, on the occasion of UN Public Service Day, awarded the United Nations Public Services first-place winner award to Government of West Bengal for "Kanyashree", out of 552 nominations from 62 countries," Mamata Banerjee wrote on Facebook
West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee has launched a new scheme named ‘Kanyashree Yojana’ to provide financial benefits to poor girl students.

Under this scheme, poor girls of the state will be benefited by the government. The government will transfer financial assistance direct to girl students bank account.

The government will provide 25,000 Rupees to girl students under Kanyashree Yojana Kolkata when they reach 18 years of age. The government will transfer Rs. 500 per year to girls bank account as financial assistance.

Around USD 500 million has been transferred directly to the beneficiaries' bank account through the scheme, which is being implemented through 16,000 institutes and schools.
Target Beneficiary

All girl children within the age of 13 to 19 years from families with annual income up to Rs 1,20,000/-

Girls regularly attending institutions for education or vocational/sports training.

Girls of Child Care Institutes registered under J.J. Act within the age of 18-19 years.

For the one-time grant, girls who are completing 18 years on or after 1st April 2013.

Approximately 18 Lakhs girl students for annual scholarship each year

Approximately 3.5 Lakhs girls for one-time grant each year

This scheme has also increased the number of girl students in the secondary examination. 19,000 girl students have registered in Kanyashree Yojana Kolkata in this financial year.
West Bengal Budget 2017-2018

The Budget was presented by state Finance Minister Amit Mitra.

The West Bengal government allocated funds for people affected by demonetisation and made adjustment to the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime in its 2017-18 Budget, which aimed at a tax revenue rise of 14 per cent over the revised estimates of 2016-17.

The plan outlay for the year has been proposed at Rs 64,733 crore
Changes proposed in WBVAT Act, 2003

Threshold for payment of tax

In order to give relief to the small businesses, it is proposed to increase the threshold for payment of tax from Rs. 10 lakh to Rs.20 lakh.

VAT Registration

A small section of dealers still have to submit hard copies of the registration documents in the VAT offices. It is proposed in the budget to completely dispense with the requirement of submitting hard copies of registration documents to the VAT offices.
Submission of separate audit report

It is proposed to completely abolish the provision of submission of separate VAT audit report. Instead the dealers may submit the income audit report which will be accepted as a VAT audit report as other purposes.

VAT Refund

In order to facilitate early refund, It is proposed that all pending refund cases will have to be disposed of and enclosed between 31st December 2017.
Composition scheme

Presently, only traders with annual turnover to less than Rs. 50 lakh are covered under the Composition Scheme in which there is a nominal VAT liability.

It is proposed in the budget to bring small manufacturers whose annual turnover is less than Rs. 50 lakh under the Composition scheme.

As a result these manufacturers will have to pay only a nominal tax. 33,000 small manufacturers will be benefitted from this measure.

Tax relief

It is proposed in the budget to exempt some environment-friendly items like Bio- diesel, Biomass Bricket, Solar water heater, plates and cups made up of Saal leaf, tiles of terracotta, etc and also some items for common use like kerosene stove, hair band and hair clip, etc.
Cess on tea

It is proposed in the budget to extend the exemption on payment of primary education and rural employment cess on tea for a further period of one year upto 31st March 2018.

Stamp Duty and Registration

It is proposed in the budget to reduce the Stamp Duty on Agreement to Sale from the present rate of 5 to 7 percent to 2 percent.

In order to get the benefit of the reduced rate, the registration has to be done within a period of 4 years from the date of agreement on payment of the balance stamp duty.
It is also proposed to reduce the rate of registration fee on all by 9 percent.

It is also proposed to incentivise early registration of properties by reducing the registration fee by 20 percent if the registration is done within one year from the date of completion of property.

Tax collection has increased by 103% from 2010-11 to 2016-17”, which is a record among States.”
An allocation of Rs 250 crore was also made towards onetime assistance to 50,000 skilled workers who were forced to return home on account of demonetisation fallout.

The assistance will be of Rs 50,000 each and district magistrates are working to prepare a list of the beneficiaries, according to Mitra.

A special fund of Rs 100 crore has also been proposed to help farmers tide over the crisis arising out of note recall.

The Budget also provided for an increase in the monthly honorarium of Rs 500 to ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and Asha workers of the state.

It will benefit 2 lakh Anganwadi workers and 50,000 ASHA workers.
Integrated Child Development Services

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is an Indian government welfare programme which provides food, preschool education, and primary healthcare to children under 6 years of age and their mothers.

The scheme was however launched on 2nd October 1975 but Morarji Desai Government discontinued it in 1978 but however from Tenth five year plan the central government started focussing more on its objective and relaunched it.

Tenth five year plan also linked ICDS to Anganwadi centres established mainly in rural areas and staffed with frontline workers.

In addition to fighting malnutrition and ill health, the programme is also intended to combat gender inequality by providing girls the same resources as boys.
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A 2005 study found that the ICDS programme was not particularly effective in reducing malnutrition, largely because of implementation problems and because the poorest states had received the least coverage and funding.

During the 2012–13 fiscal year, the Indian central government spent ₹159 billion (US$2.5 billion) on the programme.

The widespread network of ICDS has an important role in combating malnutrition especially for children of weaker groups.
Implementation

For nutritional purposes ICDS provides **300 kilocalories** (with 8-10 grams of protein) every day to every child below 6 years of age.

For adolescent girls it is up to **500 kilocalories** with up to 25 grams of protein everyday.

The services of Immunisation, Health Check-up and Referral Services delivered through Public Health Infrastructure under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

UNICEF has provided essential supplies for the ICDS scheme since 1975.
World Bank has also assisted with the financial and technical support for the programme.

The cost of ICDS programme averages $10–$22 per child a year.

The scheme is Centrally sponsored with the state governments contributing up to ₹1.00 (1.6¢ US) per day per child.
Postman Mobile App launched to track real-time delivery in West Bengal

The postal department has launched a new mobile application, Postman Mobile Application (PMA) in the head post office of West Bengal’s Siliguri.

The app enables the postman to capture real-time delivery tracking using their mobile phones.

Postman Mobile Application is an android based mobile app designed and developed by Centre of Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT), Mysore.

Currently, 36 mobile phones have been given to the postman and in the future more than 1800 phones will be given to every postman in the North Bengal circle.
WB Govt launches 'Pathadisha' App & fare smart card for buses

Launching the 'Pathadisha' mobile app, West Bengal Transport Minister Subhendu Adhikary said the launch was part of the initiative of the Vision 2016 of Transport department to provide smart, transparent and simple way of commuting.

Like Ola and Uber app-based cab service, where a commuter can verify the position of an approaching vehicle, 'pathadisha' will from now on enable a commuter to see location of a bus, it's next destination, the availability of seats, how much crowded it is inside - in short everything

The project, having World Bank and a Korean Green Growth fund as development partners, will also be extended from West Bengal Transport Corporation-run buses in city to two other state undertakings in next six months and will cover the entire state.
Coming to smart card, the pre-paid electronic transport card will be introduced in 700 buses now and another 300 buses in few months' time.

The prepaid card is modeled on London’s Oyster Card which is plastic pay-as-you-go card.

This will stop pilferage in expenses in state transport undertakings, save passengers and bus employees from small change crisis and bring more transparency in the transport system, he said.

The smart card facility and 'Pathadisha' app will also be extended to the waterways with World Bank as the development partner.
West Bengal tourism department launches app

The tourism department of the state has launched a mobile app based on the theme of 'Experience Bengal'.

Alongside information on places of tourist interest, the app would be loaded with other facilities like maps and directions.

Through some related links on the app, the users can also get access to Facebook, Twitter Page of West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation and Bengal cuisine website.

Online booking facilities would also be available through the app available on android.
West Bengal: Birbhum to get Baul Acadaemy.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced the setting up of the Baul Academy in Birbhum, which she said would serve to preserve and promote musical and religious traditions of the syncretic sect spread throughout the state, particularly in the district.

Mamata was speaking at the inauguration of the Jaydeb Mela — an annual fair that sees the pilgrimage of thousands of bauls and fakirs at Birbhum.

Bauls are a heterogeneous group with many sects, whose membership consists of both Vaishnava Hindus and Sufi Muslims, and their tradition was included in the list of ‘Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity’ in 2005.

State has started Lok Prasar Prakalpa for our folk artistes. 80,000 artistes have been registered under the scheme.
Calcutta High Court’s Order Paves Way For Asbestos Free West Bengal & India.

The Division Bench of Calcutta High Court has passed an order which can set the process of making West Bengal free of asbestos based products.

The order seeks removal of carcinogenic-asbestos that has been used for roofing in the Court’s buildings.

This order underlines the serious unprecedented environmental and occupational health crisis with regard to the unnoticed epidemic of asbestos related diseases in West Bengal in particular and in the country in general.
West Bengal to take part World Food India (WFI) 2017 as ‘focus State’.

West Bengal will take part in the World Food India (WFI) 2017 as ‘focus State’ and take full advantage of the platform that the Union ministry of food processing industries has created.

It was informed by Ms Nandini Chakrabarty, food processing industries and horticulture secretary of West Bengal at a road show organized on Friday by CII ahead of the World Food India 2017 billed for New Delhi from 3-5 November 2017.

WFI 2017 will be a “golden moment” for Bengal to showcase its potential as well as the huge success it has achieved in the sector. “It will be a platform to showcase its innovative food processing methods.
West Bengal starts organic farming activities across the state.

With an eye to frame an organic farming policy, Bengal agriculture department, food processing industries, and horticulture department have started organic farming activities in across the state.

The increasing demand for organic vegetables, especially among urban residents, has convinced the state government to formulate the organic farming policy.

The food processing industries and horticulture department has asked the rural agricultural farms to begin organic farming and assured them of technical assistance as well as help in promotion and marketing.
The department will supply greenhouses and pack houses along with organic fertilizers. It will also provide cars to ferry those farm products to the markets.

The department is also taking up organic farming at its own farms.

The agriculture department, on the other hand, has set a target to prepare **32 organic villages across Bengal** — especially in the districts of North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly.

It has set up 120 clusters, of 50 acres each, where organic farming is taking place. Around 194 farmhouses under the department are also farming organic vegetables separately.

This apart, the department under **Swanirbhar Krishi Prakalpa** is collaborating with private agencies on organic farming.
West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra said the state government was getting huge response from information technology (IT) firms in terms of occupying spaces in newly developed IT parks across the state.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the 15th edition of ‘Technology Senate — The Indian IT Leadership Conclave’, organised by The Express Group, he said earlier, we had eight IT parks. Twelve new IT parks have been set up.

The parks are located at Asansol, Barjora, Bolpur, Durgapur, Haldia, Howrah, Kalyani, Kharagpur, Purulia, Rajarhat, Siliguri and Taratala.
West Bengal government announces Rs 20 crore funds for non-NET students

Mamata Banerjee announced that her government will start a grant to aid scholarships for non-NET MPhil and PhD scholars from the state. An amount of Rs 20 crore has been earmarked for this.

The UGC has terminated the fellowship grant of Rs 5,000 and Rs 8,000 for non-Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) scholars pursuing MPhil and PhD courses.
The students have narrated with pain that many researchers do not have the money to even pay their hostel and mess fees, and some are even faced with the prospect of abandoning their dreams of pursuing research, due to stoppage of non-NET Fellowship,” Mamata said in a statement.

She alleged that the release of funds by UGC under NET-JRF fellowships has either been erratic or delayed and has caused “uncertainty and distress” to the recipients.
West Bengal govt's biotechnology department to set up state-of-the-art plant tissue culture laboratory.

The biotechnology department of the West Bengal government has decided to set up a state-of-the-art plant tissue culture laboratory at the Kolkata Biotech Park to enhance production and quality of plants and vegetables.

There will be scientists and research fellows who will carry out various kinds of research on plants and bio-fertilizers and how they can be used to increase the production of vegetables in the state.

Various medicinal plants will be conserved in the Biotech Park for research purposes. The department is also in the process of formulating the Biotech Policy for Bengal.
The state government has already taken the initiative to upgrade the infrastructure of Kolkata Biotech Park apart from setting up new Biotechnology hubs in Burdwan and Kalimpong.

The department has been focusing on the modernisation and expansion of the Common Instrument Facility Centre in the Biotech Park in the city.

The biotechnology department will tie up with other departments like agriculture, fisheries and food processing to strengthen organisational collaboration.
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Cabinet approves Rajbangshi board

The Bengal cabinet approved the formation of a development board for the Rajbangshi people.

A decision that is seen as an attempt by Mamata Banerjee to checkmate the growth of the BJP in Cooch Behar and other areas dominated by the community.

The West Bengal Rajbanshi Development & Welfare Board is the first of its kind for a community living in the plains of the state.

Earlier, the Mamata dispensation had created 15 development boards for different communities in the Darjeeling hills.
During her trip to Cooch Behar, Mamata had announced that a development council would be constituted for the Rajbangshis and members of the Cooch Behar royal family would be included in it.

In Cooch Behar and Alipurduar districts, the Rajbangshis form almost half of the population.
World Bank approves $210 million loan for West Bengal's gram panchayat development.

The World Bank today approved a US$ 210 million loan to strengthen Gram Panchayats (GPs) – the lowest tier of rural local governments – across the state of West Bengal.

Following the recommendations of the 14th Central Finance Commission and the 4th State Finance Commission, aggregate fund flows to these entities will more than double by 2020.

The West Bengal Support to Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayat Program – Phase II (ISGPP-II) will support all 3,342 GPs in the state to effectively utilize these untied/discretionary funds that is being provided to them under the inter-governmental fiscal transfer system.
Yuvashree Yuva Utsaha Prakalpa

Under this scheme government will provide unemployment allowances to unemployed youth of West Bengal.

The government will provide the unemployment allowances to help the job-seekers to upgrade their level of skills.

The government of West Bengal will provide Rs. 1500 per month to unemployed youth per month under the Yuvashree Scheme.
Eligibility Criteria for Yuvashree Yuva Utsaha Prakalpa

Only one member of a family will get financial assistance under this scheme.

Applicants between the age of 18-45 will be eligible for Yuvasree Scheme.

Applicants should be enrolled in employment bank.

Applicants should be the resident of West Bengal.

Applicants should be unemployed and enrolled as job-seeker.

Applicants should passed 8th class and above.
MGNREGA: West Bengal receives highest share of funds

West Bengal got the highest share of funds from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme for the year 2016-2017 up to last November.

West Bengal received over a tenth of the funds with the total allocation being Rs 3945.28 crore.

Rajasthan came in second with an allocation of Rs 3571.15 crore followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
Top 10 States under Central Funds Released for MGNREGA during 2016-17 as on 16.11.2016

- ANDHRA PRADESH: 355,592.02
- CHHATTISGARH: 183,272.13
- KARNATAKA: 149,754.94
- MADHYA PRADESH: 252,252.96
- MAHARASHTRA: 143,949.27
- RAJASTHAN: 357,158.15
- TAMIL NADU: 330,298.06
- TELANGANA: 149,993.87
- UTTAR PRADESH: 274,195.21
- WEST BENGAL: 394,528.98
Darjeeling writer, singer return West Bengal State awards

Stepping up the movement for separate Gorkhaland State, at least three personalities from the Darjeeling hills returned awards conferred on them by the West Bengal government at a public gathering.

On the occasion of Gorkha Exta Dibas, the birth anniversary of Nepali poet Bhanubhakta Acharya, Writer and translator Krishna Singh Moktan, musician Karma Younzon and Kurseong College Principal Prakash Pradhan returned their awards.

On July 8, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) had called on awardees to return their honours given by the State government.
West Bengal government to convert totos to e-rickshaws

In the ongoing operation to replace the totos plying in the state, one thousand e-rickshaws were introduced in North 24 Parganas

State Transport minister Suvendu Adhikari officially introduced the vehicles at an event in Barasat.

So far, 4,000 totos have been replaced by e-rickshaws all over Bengal.

This is a major step by the state government towards promoting e-vehicles.

There are around one lakh totos and another one lakh vanos, both of which are indigenously-built passenger ferrying vehicles, in the state. Steps have already been taken to replace the vanos by e-carts.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee had asked the Adhikari to ensure that no toto driver is rendered jobless after the totos are replaced.
West Bengal government to set a rice museum

West Bengal government is all set to get a rice museum shortly that will exhibit some of the finest rice varieties cultivated in the state.

The government is building the museum at Phulia in Nadia district.

The museum, which is under construction, will store 450 varieties of rice, including the aromatic varieties (like randhuni pagal, radha tilak, kanakchur, badshah bhog and others)

Even those on the verge of extinction as well as those newly created in the state government’s agricultural laboratories, for example, rice with more iron content, rice beneficial for anaemic women and children among others
West Bengal government to soon introduce new fishing method 'cage culture'

Taking a cue from the pisciculture practices in Norway, Thailand, Japan and the Philippines, West Bengal government is all set to introduce a new method of deep-sea pisciculture commonly known as cage culture.

As the name suggests, the practice consists of culturing fish inside big floating cages in the middle of the sea.

The project is at present in the pilot stage.

Two 4.5 metre-diameter cages made out of GI pipes and netlon mesh have been set up 2 km off the coast of Mandarmani at the northern end of the Bay of Bengal.
The cages are covered with nets to prevent seabirds from feeding on the fish.

They are tied down with buoys to provide stability. Each cage is going to last eight to ten years.

Hatchlings for the pilot project will be released in September, which will grow to the right size – 1 to 1.5 kg – within six months.

Mostly, bhekti and pomfret will be reared in these cages as these fishes in high demand and are expensive as well.

Such deep-sea culture in large numbers will bring down prices of these fishes and make them more affordable.

This will also help to bring down the pressure on the lakes and inland hatcheries.

Scientists are also researching the viability of pearl culture in t cages.
Will Make West Bengal The Number 1 State in the World: Mamata Banerjee.

Celebrating six years of the Trinamool Congress government in Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee pledged to make the state number one in the world

And expressed gratitude to Ma, Mati, Manush for supporting her all these years.

Two categories of awards were presented as part of Banga Samman – Banga Bhushan and Banga Bibhushan.
The recipients of **Banga Bibhushan** this year are YC Deveshwar, Dr Dhiman Ganguly, Dr Arun Prasad Mukherjee, Soumitra Chatterjee and Nirendranath Chakraborty.

The recipients of **Banga Bhushan** are Khidmat Fakir, Chapal Bhaduri, Lakshman Das Baul, Rezwana Chowdhury Bonya, Dr Abhijit Chowdhury.
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