

Mamata accuses BJP of stoking fight among different sections of society to loot country

BELDA: Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused the BJP of stoking fights among all sections of society and claimed the saffron party wants to loot the country by taking advantage of such situations.

Addressing a poll rally here, the chief minister expressed strong reservations about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's political 'chargesheet' against the TMC government.

"The first chargesheet should be filed against (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi and Amit Shah, who came to power by stoking riots," she said.

"The BJP is stoking fights among all sections of society. It wants to loot the country by taking advantage of the situation evolving from such strife," she alleged while addressing the rally in Paschim Medinipur district.

She accused the BJP of trying to divide all -- from Hindu and Muslims to the administrative and police services. Several government officers, including members of the civil service, who "used to work brilliantly", are now humiliated, Banerjee said.

The West Bengal chief minister has been claiming that several senior officers have been "arbitrarily" removed to other poll-bound states by the poll panel on the insistence of the BJP, and has termed it



a "political interference of the highest order".

"We love and respect all faiths, but the BJP is a hypocrite. It does not love any religion," the TMC supremo said. "The way they are running the country, I feel they will have to flee Delhi within another one or two months."

She alleged that nearly 200 people died while waiting in queues during the 2016 demonetisation process.

Banerjee also claimed that the names of a large number of Muslims were deleted from the voter list during the SIR exercise. "Even Hindus and tribals were not spared," she alleged.

The TMC supremo reiterated that her party will provide free legal assistance to those whose names have been deleted from the electoral rolls.

Listing the development works undertaken by her government in the past 15

years, the chief minister claimed the BJP-led Centre has stopped funds for welfare schemes like 100-day job guarantee, pucca house construction and roads.

Banerjee said her government continued these projects with its own funds and sought to know why the Centre has "not released the Rs 2 lakh crore due to the state".

Addressing an election rally in Panskura Paschim constituency, the TMC chief took umbrage over Shah's political chargesheet against her party and said, "The party of thieves has come with thousands of crores of rupees (for the polls). But the people will give a charge sheet against you."

Banerjee said that her government has introduced several welfare schemes, and maintained that it does not differentiate between any religion while giving such benefits.

She asserted that the Rs 1,500 monthly financial assistance to the unemployed youths under the Banglar Yuva Sathi scheme was not a dole, but "pocket money" for them till they find employment.

"They (BJP) had promised two crore jobs every year. In reality, joblessness has risen by 40 per cent in the country, while in Bengal we have reduced it," Banerjee said. She told the gathering that the TMC's loss in the polls "will mean the BJP will snatch everything from you".

Bihar CM inaugurates newly built Admin, Arts faculty building of Patna University



PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday inaugurated the newly built administrative and arts faculty buildings at Patna University. The buildings were constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 147.29 crore.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, Kumar said, "Strengthening the foundational structure of the university will help improve the education system and ensure organised operation of administrative work."

Students will also be provided with quality educational environment and

amenities, he added.

Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, Education minister Sunil Kumar, and other officials were present during the occasion.

Meanwhile, student union leaders and several students raised slogans against Samrat Choudhary and Sunil Kumar for not formally inviting Vice Chancellor Ajay Kumar Singh, Shantanu Shekhar, president of Patna University Students' Union (PUSU), said, "We have come here to protest because our vice chancellor was not invited formally at the event, and his name is not there on the inauguration stone."

The VC said, "Everything happened on short notice, and communication was made through mobile phones."

Never disrespected Biju Babu: Nishikant Dubey defends remarks, targets Nehru-Gandhi family

NEW DELHI: BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Monday refuted allegations that he disrespected Biju Patnaik, asserting that he always held the former Odisha chief minister in high regard.

"There has never been any lack of respect for Biju Patnaik. When the Congress treated Biju Babu unjustly, it was the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party that stood by him. What I said that day, and what I repeat again today, is that I am running a continuous series exposing the deeds of the Nehru-Gandhi family and the Congress," Dubey told reporters in the Parliament House complex.

"What allegation did I make against Biju Babu? ...I was speaking about the actions of the Nehru family, and that is all I said. If anyone has been hurt by it, I can only try to explain my

position to them," he added.

Dubey said the country's biggest problem is the tendency to view people through the prism of region and caste, arguing that even great personalities have been reduced to narrow identities.

"What is the biggest problem in this country? People divide everything based on region and caste. Even great personalities are pushed into such narrow categories. Was Biju Babu not a matter of pride for Bihar as well? In 1936-37, when Odisha was separated from Bihar, does that mean he is not a source of pride for Bihar too?"

"For your information, Bidhan Chandra Roy, who became the first Chief Minister of Bengal, was born in Patna. He was Bihari," Dubey said.

This came after the Biju



Janata Dal (BJD) on Monday staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha, protesting purportedly disparaging remarks by Dubey against Patnaik.

Soon after the official listed papers were laid on the table, BJD leader Sammit Patra rose to record a "serious protest against the disparaging, false and

concocted statements made by MP Nishikant Dubey against Biju Patnaik".

"He (Dubey) has called Biju Patnaik a CIA agent. This is the level to which the ruling party has fallen," Patra said.

"This is utterly shameful. Biju Janata Dal strongly opposes it and in protest we are walking out."

Delhi govt releases Rs 20 crore for cow welfare, 10 'modern' gaushalas envisaged

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday released over Rs 20 crore for cow welfare and said her government will develop 10 "modern" gaushalas.

At an event at her official residence, Jan Seva Sadan, Gupta handed over lease extension certificates to gaushala (cow shelter) managers.

Funds were provided for setting up modern biogas infrastructure at these facilities, according to a statement from the Chief

Minister's Office.

The Delhi government released Rs 20.26 crore — Rs 7.64 crore towards pending liabilities for the period from June 2024 to March 2025, and Rs 12.62 crore towards fodder expenses from April 2025 to January 2026.

The initiative also aims to promote clean energy (biogas) generation through the use of cow dung, the statement said.

Gupta said that in the first phase, focus will be on developing 10 modern

gaushalas where protection and welfare of stray cows will be ensured.

According to the statement, the government will equip 40 gaushalas with all necessary facilities, such as clean energy generation and sanitation.

The chief minister distributed orders related to fodder payments, clearance of pending dues, and renewal of licences and lease agreements to representatives of four gaushalas operating un-

der the Delhi government's Animal Husbandry unit.

These gaushalas in Sultanpur Dabas, Rewla Khanpur, Harewali, and Surhera are responsible for the care, feeding and medical treatment of stray cattle brought in by local bodies.

The chief minister stressed that the management of gaushalas cannot rely on government funding alone and requires sustained cooperation from society.

Woman Maoist surrenders before Police in Rourkela

ROURKELA: A woman Maoist surrendered before Odisha Police on Monday, a day ahead of the March 31 deadline to make India "Naxal-free", officials said.

The 19-year-old, identified as Mongdi Honhaga, is a native of Marangponga village within Chhotanaggar police station limits in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district.

She initially worked as a logistics supplier for Maoists operating in the Saranda forests along the Odisha-Jharkhand border before being recruited into the outlawed outfit by a leader identified as Anmol, who was recently killed, police said.

DIG, Western Range, Brijesh Rai, said Honhaga was involved in the Banko stone quarry loot case, in which Maoists looted

about five tonnes of explosives.

"We got information about her intention to surrender and contacted her. She was disillusioned with Maoist ideology and disturbed by corruption and physical and mental harassment within the outfit," he said.

Rourkela SP Nitesh Wadhvani said so far her involvement has been established in four cases, including a railway track blast at Renjda and an IED blast targeting CRPF personnel at Banko.

"She is a category 'B' Maoist and is entitled to financial assistance of up to Rs 2.65 lakh. Benefits related to marriage, skill development and health will also be provided under the Odisha government's rehabilitation scheme," Wadhvani said.

Retired Army brigadier killed in cross firing in Dehradun road rage

DEHRADUN: A retired Army brigadier was killed here after he was caught in cross firing between two car occupants during a road rage incident on Monday, police said.

The incident took place in Johri village on Mussoorie Road when an argument broke out between the occupants of a Delhi-registered Fortuner and a Scorpio N over giving way, they said.

As the argument escalated, the occupants in the Scorpio allegedly chased the Fortuner and opened fire at its tyres, but a bullet struck retired Army brigadier Mukesh Joshi (74), who was out for his morning walk, police said.

Joshi was taken to a hospital, where he died during treatment, they added.

According to the police, after a bullet hit the Fortuner's tyre, the driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed it into a roadside

tree near the Government Primary School in Johri.

The occupants of the Scorpio then assaulted the people inside the Fortuner and vandalised the vehicle, police said.

Two occupants of the Fortuner were injured in the incident and were taken to a hospital by their co-passengers. After the incident, all the accused travelling in the Scorpio fled the scene, a senior police officer said.

Upon receiving information, Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pramendra Singh Dobal, along with other officials, visited the spot to take stock of the situation and then visited the hospital to gather details from the victims.

Dehradun Superintendent of Police (City) Pramod Kumar said roadblocks have been set up across the entire district, and an intensive search operation is underway to arrest the accused.

Foundation stone laid for one megawatt solar power plant at IIT Indore

INDORE: The foundation stone for a one megawatt solar power plant was laid at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore campus on Monday.

Once operational, the plant will lead to savings of approximately Rs 75 lakh annually in electricity bills, an IIT Indore release said.

"The foundation stone for the solar power plant was laid during a ceremony chaired by Dr K Sivan, chairperson of Board of Governors of IIT Indore. The one megawatt solar plant is being set up on a 3.15 acre plot," it said.

Sivan, former head of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), laid the foundation stone for a 63,840 square foot Kendriya Vidyalaya building on the IIT campus, and also inaugurated a research complex spread over 1,662 square feet that includes 10 advanced laboratories, it added.

The complex, estimated to cost approximately Rs 11.8 crore, will provide a conducive environment for high-level scientific research, the release said.

IN-SPACE opens applications for Model Rocketry, CAN-7USAT competitions

NEW DELHI: The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre or IN-SPACE has opened applications for the second edition of IN-SPACE Model Rocketry and the third edition of CAN-7USAT India student competition 2026.

The competitions involve the design, development and launch of a model rocket and a can-size satellite of 1 kg, which must reach an altitude of 1,000 metres above the launch site.

Undergraduate student teams from engineering and science streams across India can apply for the competitions, with April 30 as the last date for submitting applications.

In a statement, Vinod Kumar, director, promotional directorate at IN-SPACE, said, "The Model Rocketry and CAN-7USAT competitions are designed

to give students a realistic exposure to the challenges of building and executing space missions.

"By working on real engineering problems, students will develop technical capabilities and learn the value of teamwork, project management and problem solving."

Constituted in June 2020, IN-SPACE, a nodal agency under the Department of Space, is responsible for the promotion, enabling, authorisation and supervision of various space activities of non-governmental entities (NGEs).

In the 2024-25 edition of the competitions, 67 student teams comprising nearly 600 students, faculty members and mentors qualified for the national finale, with 36 teams competing in the CAN-7USAT category and 31 in Model Rocketry.

MCD Standing Committee meeting adjourned amid opposition protest

NEW DELHI: The meeting of Municipal Corporation of Delhi's Standing Committee, in which nine members were set to retire, was adjourned on Monday amid protests by opposition councillors.

The Aam Aadmi Party councillors alleged that the House did not provide minutes of the last Standing Committee meeting, which was in violation of rules.

They also alleged Rs 650 crore corruption in the extension of bio-mining contracts at the landfill sites of Okhla, Bhalswa and Ghazi-pur, saying that the Standing Committee has not given

financial approval for such extensions.

AAP councillor and Standing Committee member Praveen Kumar alleged that the committee's rules were violated as minutes of the last meeting were not provided, and the extension of contracts was provided without taking up the matter in the Standing Committee.

Officials said the adjournment of the Standing Committee meeting has left them in a fix, as half of the members were set to retire in the current meeting, and that not happening leads to a violation of the law.

36 injured as private bus plunges off bridge

SHIVAMOGGA: Thirty-six people were injured on Monday after a private bus allegedly went out of control and plunged off a bridge in the district, police said. The incident occurred at around 1.30 pm near Kagehalla in Veerapura village of Bhadravati taluk, they said. According to police, the bus was travelling from Channagiri in Davanagere district to Bhadravati when the driver allegedly lost control of the vehicle near a bridge across a stream. The bus hit the bridge's side barrier and overturned into the stream below, which had a very low water level. A total of 36 people, including the driver and conductor, were injured in the accident, a senior police officer said. Of them, 25 sustained minor injuries and were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment, he added.

Mahua Moitra's remark about role of Gujaratis in freedom struggle 'ridiculous display of wisdom': BJP

GANDHINAGAR: The BJP on Monday launched a scathing attack on Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra over her statement comparing contributions made by Bengalis and Gujaratis to the freedom struggle, accusing her of questioning India's integrity with a "ridiculous display of wisdom".

The Gujarat BJP said that although the Opposition party has ignored Sardar Vallabhai Patel's role in the freedom struggle, insulting Mahatma Gandhi, who hailed from the state, is an insult to the entire country.

"People of every state, language and community fought for the freedom of the country, and more than six lakh people were martyred. This statement made by Moitra ji is baseless and

a ridiculous display of her wisdom," the BJP's state vice-president Gautam Gediya said.

During a recent press conference in Kolkata, the Lok Sabha MP from Krishnanagar had said that Bengalis are a very proud race who led the "war for independence" against the British, and claimed that not a single Gujarati was at Kala Pani, the Cellular Jail built by the British in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, except for their "big hero" V D Savarkar, who only wanted to sit and write apology letters.

Gediya alleged that Moitra had a habit of asking questions in Parliament for money, and asked if she had made the statement comparing Gujaratis with Bengalis after taking money.

"Moitra ji has a history of asking questions in Parliament based on the money she receives for them. She has a divisive mindset. I wish to ask her whether this statement has also been made after taking money," he said, apparently referring to the cash-for-query scandal she was embroiled in.

"This is a question of the country's integrity. And it is important. This is not for politics, but for the unity and integrity of India," he said.

Gediya said Sardar Patel launched the freedom movement from Bardoli in present day Gujarat, which led to different movements across the country.



It is obvious that the Congress has neglected and insulted him. Still, after the independence, people

revere Sardar Patel, who dreamt of an undivided India by uniting 562 kings (princely states)," he said.

Apart from Sardar Patel, many freedom fighters from Gujarat made valuable contributions to the freedom struggle, but many incidents from the state were not included in books.

"We are all familiar with the Jallianwala Bagh

massacre (in Punjab). But in Gujarat, there is a hill near Santrampur, where the British had killed more than 1,500 tribals," he said.

The BJP leader further alleged that it was the Opposition's "sick" mentality to ignore the contributions of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel and Savarkar, and scores of others who lost their lives in the fight for independence.