

In Stalin's announcement of panel for Tamil Nadu's autonomy, a dig at Centre & a push for 'all states'

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K.Stalin followed the foot-steps of his late father M. Karunanidhi, as he announced the formation of a high-level committee to examine and recommend measures to strengthen state autonomy and enhance Centre-State relationship as enshrined in the Constitution. The announcement comes exactly 50 years after Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) patriarch Karunanidhi, a five-time chief minister, passed the state autonomy resolution in the assembly on 16 April 1974. "At a time when no other state in India had tak-

en such initiatives, nearly half a century ago, in 1969, our revered leader Kalaingar (read, Karunanidhi), as chief minister, constituted a high-level committee under the chairmanship of retired chief justice P.V. Rajamannar to examine Union-state relations," Stalin recalled Tuesday in the assembly. The newly formed high-level committee headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Joseph Kurian will have former IAS officer and former vice-chancellor of Maritime University Ashok Vardhan Chetty and former vice-chairman of Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission Professor M Naganathan.



After reviewing the constitutional provisions, Stalin told the assembly that the panel would submit its draft report by January next year and a comprehensive report within two years. The high-level committee, he said, would examine con-

stitutional provisions, laws, orders, policies, and arrangements affecting Union-State relations, and reassess them and recommend measures to restore the subjects shifted from State List to the concurrent list. It would also address chal-

enges in delivering good governance and "recommend steps to ensure maximum state autonomy in administration, legislatures and judiciary without compromising national unity." An IAS officer told ThePrint that the panel would also consider the Rajamannar Committee's recommendations submitted in 1971, along with political, social, economic and legal developments since then. The Rajamannar Committee had identified imbalances in the Centre-State relations and made several recommendations—to transfer education, agriculture and public health from the Concurrent list to the State

list, increase states' share of Union tax revenue and grant them greater taxing powers, among others. Based on the recommendations made, then Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi wrote to then prime minister Indira Gandhi. However, none of the proposals were considered. Nevertheless, later, in 1983, Indira formed the Sarkaria Commission to review and analyse the Centre-State relationship, which submitted its report in 1987. Stating that the committee is not just for Tamil Nadu's welfare, Stalin told the assembly that it is to protect the rights of all the states.

Separated by faith, united in loss. Two families grope in dark after Waqf protest violence in Murshidabad



MURSHIDABAD: On the surface, the streets of Jafrabad in Shamsheganj—the epicentre of recent protests against the Waqf Act at Murshidabad in West Bengal—offer little trace of the violence that tore through the area last Friday and Saturday. Municipal workers moved quickly to sweep away bricks, shattered glass, and the charred remains of vehicles. The administration erased the physical signs of arson that had pushed this district, nestled beside the fertile plains of the Ganga, to the brink on 11 April. But one house still bears the scars. The ransacked two-storey home of Haragovind Das, 70, and his son Chandan Das, 40, remains a grim testament to the frenzy that engulfed Jafrabad town, where Muslims make up more than 93 percent of the population according to the 2011 Census. "From 10 am on Saturday, for nearly two hours, they kept banging on the front gate and door. They were on a rampage across the area," recalled Parul Das, Haragovind's widow. "Eventually, they broke it down. My husband and son tried to

dragged them off, but they were dragged out and hacked to death." Broken pieces of bricks, furniture, and utensils lie strewn across the entrance and inner courtyard of the house. Just next to the Das household, a neighbour's kitchen has been reduced to ashes. Where the mob came from remains uncertain. "We don't know," said Vishwajeet Das, Haragovind's son-in-law, who works as a mason. "They must have come from the Muslim pararas (neighbourhoods) that surround this small Hindu settlement. But their faces were covered. We could only see their eyes." Ten kilometers away, in Kashimnagar, a predominantly Muslim neighborhood, another family mourns a death—also violent, also unexplained. Ejaz Ahmed, 21, was described by his relatives and neighbours as the family's sole breadwinner. His young wife, Salma Khatoun, sits in silence. His mother, Saima Bibi, struggles to understand how her son—who had planned to leave to rejoin work at a Chennai hotel just a day later—could have become a target.

Just 8% of country's police officers are women, 12% in IPS, finds India Justice Report 2025

NEW DELHI: Although more women have joined the judiciary and the police over the years, they continue to remain concentrated at the lower echelons of the institutions, according to the India Justice Report 2025. Released Tuesday, the report notes that women's representation is even lower at the officer-level ranks in the police. Nationally, there are just 25,282, or eight percent, women officers. Of these, 52 percent hold the position of sub-inspector, and 25 percent are designated as ASIs. At the constabulary level, women constitute 13 percent of the total strength. Only 12 percent of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers are women, it added. This data is current up to January 2023. Taking note of the numbers, former IPS officer Kiran Bedi asserted that the low represen-



tation of women in policing is the result of long-standing social and systemic handicaps. "Socially, there remains a deeply ingrained perception that policing is a masculine profession, associated with physical strength and long, unpredictable hours — making it appear unsuitable or unsafe for women," she told ThePrint.

According to Bedi, family and societal expectations also often discourage women from pursuing such careers, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. She points out the systemic barriers in place as well. "There is a glaring lack of gender-sensitive infrastructure—including secure housing,

proper sanitation, childcare facilities, and safe working conditions—which makes it harder for women to enter and sustain a career in policing," she asserted. Other issues, such as inadequate recruitment drives targeting women, limited mentorship, and slow career progression, further exacerbate the issue, Bedi said, adding, "Unless these foundational issues are addressed, women's entry into policing will continue to be limited." She also has suggestion on how these numbers can be increased. "Why not try an Agniveer concept in policing constabulary too for young women—Catch them young. Carry on with those wanting to and letting go those not," Bedi told ThePrint. Former IPS officer Meeran Chadha Borwankar points out that most states and Union Territories have 30 percent or more reservation for women.

"I find all of them are serious in inducting more women. Slowly our number is increasing," she told ThePrint, pointing out that some States like Bihar even held special recruitment drives for women. This, she added, was the way to expedite an increase in their numbers. However, she says that their study of the Maharashtra Police conducted through the Centre for Police Research, Pune (2016) shows that the induction alone is not enough. "Women police officers with a sample of around 400 had sought better infrastructure and training. They had flagged the issue of not getting enough co-operation from uniformed male staff. So, to my mind along with induction of more women in police, their training and sensitisation of men in police stations need urgent attention and action," she explained.

Model Town ASI caught taking bribe from retired Delhi Police inspector



NEW DELHI: The vigilance unit of Delhi Police has arrested an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) posted at Model Town Police Station for accepting a bribe of Rs 2 lakh from a retired inspector of the force, an official said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as ASI Sudesh Kumar Yadav, was caught red-handed while receiving the bribe, a statement of the vigilance unit read. The sleuths swung into action after receiving a complaint on April 14 from the retired officer, a resident of Mahendru Enclave in Model Town. The complainant alleged that ASI Sudesh was demanding a Rs 4 lakh bribe to allow him to carry out repair work at his residence. The retired officer claimed that the ASI had stopped the civil work at his house and threatened

that it would only be allowed after payment of the bribe, read the statement. Despite approaching the Station House Officer (SHO) with the grievance, the complainant was redirected back to ASI Sudesh. The matter was eventually negotiated and settled at Rs 2 lakh, following which the ASI called the complainant to deliver the money, it alleged. The complainant submitted a detailed complaint to the vigilance unit, along with a pen drive containing audio recordings of conversations allegedly supporting his claims. A raiding team was quickly formed and a trap was laid at Model Town Police Station. "At around 6:30 pm on April 14, ASI Sudesh summoned the complainant to his room on the first floor of the police station.

Congress intensifies protest over Kerala's Muthalappozhi harbour blockage, seeks action

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Congress activists laid siege to the residence of Kerala Fisheries Minister Saji Cheriyan on Tuesday, demanding immediate intervention to resolve the blockage of the estuary at Muthalappozhi harbour, caused by the accumulation of tonnes of sand. The agitators squatted on the road in front of the minister's official residence and raised slogans demanding urgent action. Sources said the minister was not at home when the protest took place. The opposition protest came amid reports that the government was considering shutting down the Muthalappozhi harbour—where the estuary has been blocked due

to sand accumulation—and relocating fishermen to other harbours. Local fishermen and various trade unions have announced they will oppose any move to cease operations at the harbour. They also accused the state government of "failing" to remove the sand from the estuary. A local Congress leader who led the protest said both the lives and livelihoods of fishermen have been severely affected. "Seawater entered many households, placing them under flood threat," he said. "This is no longer just a concern for fishermen—it threatens the employment of people across the entire region. That's why we or-



ganised this siege protest to draw the minister's and government's attention," the Congress leader added. He also warned that the Congress

would intensify its agitation if the government failed to address the issue seriously and find a permanent solution. Meanwhile, trade union activists,

including those from CITU and INTUC, staged a protest in front of the harbour assistant executive engineer's office in Muthalappozhi on Tuesday morning. They reportedly locked up the office and placed a wreath there as a mark of protest. Muthalappozhi in Perumathura is where the Vamanapuram River and Kadinamkulam Lake meet the Arabian Sea. The area has become hazardous for fishermen both while setting out to sea and on their return. The coastal hamlet has recently been in the news for several fishing boat accidents. The Centre recently approved the long-awaited comprehensive development of the fishing harbour.

TMC, BJP take out colourful processions to herald Bengal New Year



KOLKATA: The ruling Trinamool Congress and opposition BJP on Tuesday took out colourful 'shobhayatras' (processions) to herald the

Bengali New Year amid the political storm over the violence in Murshidabad district. Senior TMC leader and

West Bengal Finance minister Chandrima Bhattacharya led the party's rally in south Kolkata where many of the participants, a large number of them women wore traditional Bengali attire. Amid the beating of the dhak (drum) and singing of 'Banglar Mati Banglar Jol' (we love the soil of Bengal, the rivers of Bengal), Bhattacharya and the participants walked along Rasbehari Avenue. "On this day of 'Bangla Nabobarsho' (New Year) let us take the pledge to defeat

forces which want to disrupt the centuries-old amity and peaceful co-existence of Hindus and Muslims and other communities in Bengal. The land of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam will never support any divisive ploy. This had also been asserted in unequivocal terms by the chief minister Mamata Banerjee earlier," she said. Without directly naming the BJP, she said "Those peddling hatred and division in society will never be accepted by the people of Bengal despite plotting con-

spiracies." The BJP took out a rally in central Kolkata. Former BJP state president Dilip Ghosh participating in the rally said, "Let's take the pledge to dislodge the appeasement-practising TMC government from Bengal which have looked the other way as Islamist jihadis have wreaked havoc in Murshidabad district and elsewhere and turning Bengal into another Bangladesh." "Bengali Hindus are fleeing from their residences in Murshidabad district and the TMC MP and MLAs did precious little to ensure their safety.

This Nabobarsho assumes another significance in the backdrop of the riots and attacks on properties and Hindus in Murshidabad and elsewhere in the state," Ghosh, flanked by party leaders Agnimitra Paul and Shamik Bhattacharya said. Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari in another Nabobarsho rally in Tamluk, gave call "to end the current situation of lawlessness and attack by jihadi elements in many parts of Bengal and end the misrule of Mamata Banerjee regime."

PWD plans road revamp work near new Delhi BJP office

NEW DELHI: With the Delhi BJP office shifting soon to new premises on the Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Marg, the PWD will carry out road improvement work and beautification works in the area, officials said on Tuesday. The timeline to complete the project is one month and the cost is Rs 2.23 crore, which includes civil and electrical works, they said. The Delhi BJP office, which is situated in a bungalow on Pandit Pant Marg in Lutyens' Delhi, will move closer to the party's national headquarters on DDU Marg. The swanky new office of



Delhi BJP is under construction from 2023 and is likely to be completed soon. The multi-storey office will have more space than its existing office, to accommodate more people and party functionaries. It will also have modern facilities like

a basement parking, conference room and meeting room. "Currently the state office is very small compared to our needs, there is hardly any space for parking vehicles, keeping all these things in mind, the new office is be-

ing constructed, the work is likely to take one to two months to complete," said a BJP functionary. According to the revamp plan, the area will be cleaned and any defects like potholes and cracks on the road will be repaired. "The approach road is in poor condition," said a senior PWD official. The road stretch will be properly illuminated as new LED streetlights will be installed and road marking and painting work will be done. The work will include the improvement of road pavement and drain cleaning and repair.

Man held for poisoning, killing 18-year-old friend out of jealousy in Nagpur

NAGPUR: A man has been arrested for allegedly poisoning and killing his 18-year-old friend and neighbour in Maharashtra's Nagpur city out of jealousy over his wealthy background, police said on Tuesday. The police on Monday arrested Mithlesh alias Manthan Rajendra Chakole (19), a resident of Nilkanth Nagar in Hudkeshwar, for the death of Vedant alias Vijay Kalidas Khandate, who lived in the same neighbourhood, an official said. He said while the victim came from a wealthy background and his family had recently built a two-storey house with modern amenities, the accused lived in a smaller home and was jealous of him. On April 8, Manthan called Vedant to a nearby 'paan' shop, where they both had soft drinks. The accused allegedly spiked the Vedant's drink with a cockroach-repellent gel, the official said. He said the victim later returned home



and complained of dizziness, and his condition quickly worsened. He was rushed to a hospital in Sakkardara, where doctors suspected that he was poisoned and began treatment. Vedant didn't regain consciousness and passed away on April 12, he said. The official said the police initially registered a case of accidental death, but the medical report showed he had poison in his body, and doctors said it was un-

likely he had consumed such a substance knowingly. On tracing Vedant's final movements and phone calls, the police discovered that his last phone call was to the accused, who admitted that they had met at a 'paan' shop and had soft drinks, he said. Manthan was taken into custody on suspicion, and during interrogation, he confessed to having poisoned the victim out of jealousy, the official said. He said the accused claimed that he had only planned to make the victim sick to teach him a lesson and did not intend to kill him. The official said the accused, during the interrogation, also claimed that he panicked when Vedant's condition became serious, and wrote a fake ransom note and left it on a car belonging to the victim's father to mislead the police and make the incident appear like a case of kidnapping or extortion attempt.