



THUMBNAILS



Rains spoil the day for a group of friends on the occasion of the International Friendship Day in Kolkata on Sunday. © Biswajit Ghoshal

Fire alarm: A short-circuit in a doctor's chamber adjacent to an operation theatre in Bidhannagar SD hospital caused chaos even as a few patients were evacuated. The situation was quickly brought under control. **SNS**

Woman gangraped in a vehicle, four arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Maheshtala, 3 August

A woman was allegedly gangraped at Maheshtala in South 24-Parganas. Four persons have been arrested; however, the prime accused is still absconding.

The woman, a divorcee and a mother of two, lives with her mother. She had gone out to buy some items when five youths forced her into a vehicle on Thursday evening.

The vehicle did not have any numberplate.

The woman lodged a com-



plaint with Maheshtala police on Friday alleging the youths had raped her in the vehicle. They allegedly made her drink cold drinks laced with drugs and she lost consciousness. Local people rescued her at 11 p.m. from Akra and sent her to

Vidyasagar hospital at Behela. She was discharged after medical tests.

Police said four of the accused persons were arrested based on the woman's complaint. One of them is Sheikh Ziaur Rahman alias Chottu, the driver of the vehicle used to commit the crime. The three other accused are Sukur Ali Mollah, Bijoy Mallick and Taj. The prime accused, Sheikh Saffi alias Raju, is still absconding. The victim reportedly was acquainted with him. Police have started a case of gangrape.

SHOULDERING RESPONSIBILITY



A man carries a child during a pilgrimage to Tarkeshwar from Sheoraphully in Hooghly on Sunday. © Dilip Dutta

VERMA'S KIN TO MOVE CONSUMER COURT

WILL FIRST APPEAL TO MEDICAL COUNCIL OF INDIA: DAUGHTER

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 3 August

The family members of former Chief Justice of India (CJI) J S Verma have decided to appeal to National Consumer Court, after the Delhi Medical Council (DMC) ruled out medical negligence as a reason behind the death of the former CJI.

At a programme on Medical Negligence, Mrs Subhra Verma Bhatnagar, daughter of the former CJI, today said that they would appeal to National Consumer Court as Delhi Medical Council has ruled out medical negligence in the case.

"We will first appeal to Medical Council of India, and if they also reject our case we will appeal to Nation-

al Consumer Court," she said.

According to her, her father was admitted at Bharadwaj Hospital in Noida with swollen feet, but in the end he was suffering from multiple co-morbidities due to change in medicines.

His family contended that Verma, despite his old age, was a very active and healthy individual.

"He worked 18-20 hours a day for 28 days from December 26 to January 23 to prepare a report on reforming and invigorating the anti-rap law in view of the Nirbhaya gangrape case. His only significant medical condition was asymptomatic Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), which was managed by diet and exercise," a family member said.



J S Verma

According to DMC, the patient, in addition to Coronary Artery Disease, had multiple co-morbidities such as longstanding hypertension, longstanding diabetes mellitus on glyciophage SR, longstanding dyslipidemia on statins for the last 14 years and bleeding piles grade III, and the council found no irregularity on the part of doctors for providing the medical treatment.

The Delhi Medical Council also mentioned that there is no definite evidence to sug-

gest blood transfusions were poorly monitored at Escorts Hospital. The patient was given four units packed cells and two units of fresh frozen plasma over 24 hours. Further, patient had serum calcium 0.9 mmol/L which did not necessitate immediate calcium therapy, the DMC claimed.

Even doctors' relatives are being faced with the same situation in Bengal, it was disclosed by other participants. While recalling her experience, Mrs Shefali Lahiri a doctor of Calcutta Medical College said that she had appealed to West Bengal Medical Council, after her daughter's death due to alleged medical negligence, but they failed to take any action against the errant doctors.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 3 August

Police were sent into a tizzy after a 22-year-old woman and her two-and-a-half year old son went missing from Sealdah station yesterday while the woman's husband was buying tickets. However, both of them were later found today in their house in Burdwan.

A senior officer of the Government Railway Police (GRP) said yesterday Mr Hyder Ali Mondal, his wife and son took a train from Canning and reached Sealdah station around 11.45 a.m.

They live at Bedbaria

village near Canning in South 24-Parganas with Mr Mondal's in-laws. Yesterday they had set out for Golsi in Burdwan, which is Mr Mondal's native place.

After reaching Sealdah station, Mr Mondal asked his wife, Mrs Tarrannam Mondal, to wait along with their two-and-a-half-year old son Tanvir Mondal and went to get tickets. He had to stand in a queue and it took around four minutes to get the tickets. When he returned with the tickets his wife and son were not there where he had left them.

The couple had been married for four years and had gone to their Burdwan home

quite a few times. So initially he thought his wife had gone to some shops. When he couldn't find them even after searching for over an hour, he contacted his in-laws. They advised him to go to the GRP.

Mr Mondal allegedly had a bitter experience when he went to the GRP at Sealdah Station. Some officers allegedly misbehaved with him and refused to help him find his wife and son.

Finding himself in a helpless situation he once again contacted his in-laws and asked them to come to Sealdah station. They reached the station around 2.30 p.m. and searched all pos-

sible places near the station complex. They even contacted their relatives, but no one was able to give them any clue.

Finally, they went to the GRP officers once again in the evening and lodged a complaint.

Mr Utpal Naskar, superintendent, GRP, Sealdah, said: "An investigation was started and necessary steps taken to find the woman and her son. But, no complaint against any officers alleging misbehaviour has been lodged. This evening the woman's relatives informed us that the missing woman had turned up at their Burdwan house."

TEAM SETS OUT TO CLIMB MOUNT RAMJAK

Kolkata, 3 August: Agriculture Marketing Minister Arup Roy today handed the Tricolour to a 17-member mountaineering expedition team which will climb mount Ramjak.

Ramjak (6813 metres) is located in Himachal Pradesh. The team members from Howrah District Mountaineering and Trekkers' Association, including Swaraj Ghosh, Avrajit Chatterjee, Subrata Banerjee Kiron Mukherjee, Utpal Sen, Surajit Ghosh, who took part in several expeditions, will start from Howrah tomorrow for Manali.

Mr Roy wished the team a successful expedition and handed the flag to Mr Subrata Banerjee. The team will start for final expedition on 10 August and the expedition will continue till 20 August. Mr Banerjee said they will distribute books, pens and bags to the poor students of the mountaineering region. **SNS**

Girl abducted by neighbour youth

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 3 August

A Class VII girl was abducted from Rabindra Sarani at Girish Park while she was on her way to school on 1 August.

Police suspect a local youth, Raghuvir Singh Surana, is behind the crime.

Police said the victim's father lodged a missing complaint on the night of 1 August. "We had to initiate a kidnapping case following the present rule and regulations as the girl is a minor. We went to the victim's residence and came to know that another youth from the same building is also missing," an officer posted at Girish Park police station said.

Some of the victim's friends also told police that they had seen Surana and the girl in an auto-rickshaw.

The youth stays with his sister in the same building where the victim's family resides in a rented house. Police came to know from

WITNESSES

■ The victim's friends told police they had seen the youth and the girl in an auto-rickshaw. They also said there were two more youths with them

the school authorities that no one had seen the girl in the school on 1 August. Police are also trying to identify the auto-rickshaw in which the youth was reportedly seen with the girl. The victim's friends have also told police that there were two more youths with Surana.

Police tried to contact both the victim and the youth but their mobile phones were switched off.

Police said Surana's brother-in-law stays in Chennai and they suspect the youth may take the girl there. They have contacted the brother-in-law and a team comprising officers of the city police will be sent there.

Small tea planters to pay workers on hourly basis

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Siliguri, 3 August

As almost all trade unions prepare to demand minimum wage structure for tea workers in the fifth round of tripartite talks scheduled to be held in Uttarkanya on 7 August, the North Bengal Small Tea Planters' Association (NBSTPA) today announced that it would pay wages on an hourly basis.

Addressing the 20th annual general meeting of the NBSTPA at the Kanchenjunga stadium here today, the secretary of the association, Nitai Majumdar, said: "There is no culture of eight-hour duty in small tea plantations. The wage agreement for workers has been terminated, and we have invited recognized trade unions to begin dialogue

for settlement of the wages. But this time, we have decided to strike a new agreement in which workers will be paid on a per-hour basis.

"We have been paying remuneration to workers as per a wage settlement of the organised tea sector, in which eight hours of work is mandatory. But workers do not maintain the work culture of eight hours in many small plantations," he added.

Citing an example, Mr Majumdar said: "If a worker is entitled to get Rs 120 a day, we will pay him/her Rs 15 for an hour of work. "We have decided to adopt such a resolution just to bring about a work culture in the small sector and to maintain quality of leaves. We will follow the rate of the wages, which will be settled through the tripartite talks for the organised sector.



The time of recess will be settled through dialogue with the trade unions," he added.

Notably, tea cultivation expert Niranjana Chakraborty said he had noticed a very "dangerous trend" during plucking of green tea leaf in many small plantations, where workers do not pluck quality leaf by hand and collect the leaf by using sharp weapons to meet the target within a short span of time.

Criticising the state government, NBSTPA secretary Mr Mujumdar said: "Many small growers have applied to Land and Land Re-

forms Department, but they have not yet received tea cultivation certificates and lease deed for vast land. Owing to a lack of no objection certificate from the state government, small growers are being deprived of financial assistance and other benefits from the Tea Board and other organisations."

Mr Majumdar thanked state Finance Minister Amit Mitra for waiving the cess during 2013-14 financial year and urged the state to waive the total agriculture income tax and cess in the future.

Deputy director of the Tea Board, CS Mitra, said: "The Tea Board is keeping a close eye on bought leaf factories so that small tea growers get the minimum support price. But small growers should also produce and supply quality green leaf."

MAN KILLS SON



Tarkeshwar, 3 August: Kalyan Samanto (38) of Bishnu Bati village in Tarkeshwar died after his father, in a fit of rage, hit him on the head. On Saturday night Samanto returned home drunk and quarrelled with his father, Mahadev, who lost his cool and hit Samanto in the head with a bamboo. Samanto fell down unconscious on the ground and was rushed to Tarkeshwar Gramin Hospital where he was declared brought dead. Police arrested Mahadev and registered a murder case against him. **SNS**

LF GOVT DIVERTED FUNDS WITHOUT CENTRE'S APPROVAL: REPORT

A can of worms

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata, 3 August

The erstwhile Left Front government allegedly diverted Rs 2.94 crore for constructing a tourist lodge complex and Rs 75.14 lakh for constructing a shed at Sagar Island for which no approval was taken from the Centre.

A performance audit report relating to government companies revealed that a government company under the Left Front government neither got approval for the project nor did it properly explain why funds of Rs 2.19 crore had been diverted.

The audit report said

the company, which was run under the state government, diverted Rs 2.94 crore in January 2008 for construction of a new building (cost: Rs 2.19 crore) at Bakkhali tourist lodge complex and Rs 75.14 lakh for constructing a shed at Sagar Island for which no approval was taken from the Centre. However, the management involved in the project stated in October 2012 that no funds were diverted for work at Bakkhali.

The management had further explained that all work was taken up for creating a high-class tourist complex at the



Bakkhali

specified location. The Centre, however, was not satisfied with the reply as the Central government had sanctioned funds specifically to "develop infrastructure" including for activities like landscaping, development of parks, illumina-

tion of tourist areas, construction of budgeted accommodation, tourist reception/interpretation centre and other activities related to tourism for tourist circuit connecting Bakkhali, Fraserganj and Sagar Island. But instead of completing

works at these three destinations, the state diverted funds for a tourist complex at Bakkhali.

Meanwhile, development of other two locations - Fraserganj and Sagar Island - of the circuit, as included in the scheme, was not taken up, the audit report observed.

Bakkhali, Fraserganj and Sagar Island are famed tourists spots but the infrastructure, especially accommodations, are very poor. Tourists have also been demanding the development of infrastructure in these areas.



PALL OF GLOOM

Family members of TMC leader Hanif Shaikh who was murdered on Saturday night at Bhandarkhola in Nadia mourn their loss. © SNS