

**Maharashtra Opposition Demands All-Party Meeting Over PM's Austerity Appeal**

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## Female passengers will no longer have to pay fares on government buses a major announcement by the Shubhendu Adhikari

Kolkata, 12 May : There were promises; there were pledges enshrined in the election manifesto. Immediately upon forming the government, the BJP administration has set out to fulfill these commitments. Taking charge as Chief Minister, Suwendu Adhikari made a major announcement: female passengers will no longer have to pay fares when traveling on government buses. This directive is set to come into effect on June 1st. During the campaign for the 2026 elections, central leaders had made numerous promises to the people of the state—ranging from the ₹3,000 grant under the 'Annapurna Bhandar' scheme to the waiver of bus fares for women. However, the people of the state harbored doubts regarding the extent to which these electoral promises would actually be realized. Yet, no sooner had the government been formed than it became evident that the BJP administration is firmly committed to fulfilling its pledges. On Monday itself, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari announced the specific dates regarding when the benefits of the 'Annapurna Bhandar' scheme would become available—though an official government notification has yet to be issued. On the very same day, the Chief Minister declared that women would no longer be required to pay fares on



government buses. It is worth noting that this is not a first for Bengal; residents of several other states have already experienced similar benefits. In Delhi, for instance, women do not have to pay fares on government buses. Since last August, female passengers in Andhra Pradesh have also been exempted from paying bus fares on government services. This facility is also available in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Starting next month, women in Bengal will likewise be able to travel on government buses free of charge. The state government has assumed responsibility for the families of the 321 slain BJP workers—those whose ultimate sacrifice paved the way for the establishment of this government. The second major

decision addresses the changing demographics of the state, emphasizing that border security has become an absolute necessity. Consequently, within the next 45 days, land will be handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) for the installation of barbed-wire fencing. The state has also decided to integrate itself with key central government schemes such as 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao,' 'Vishwakarma Yojana,' and 'Ayushman Bharat.' Previously, IPS and IAS officers serving in the state were unable to participate in training programs organized by the Central Government; henceforth, they will be permitted to do so should they wish. As of today, the \*Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita\* has come into force across the state. Until

now, the \*Indian Penal Code\* (IPC) had been applied in Bengal in a manner deemed unconstitutional. Furthermore, the recruitment process for government jobs within the state had been stalled since 2015. With the plight of unemployed youth in mind, the upper age limit for applicants seeking government employment has been raised by five years. Women, holding traditional winnowing fans (\*kulos\*), greeted Suwendu upon his arrival. Here, Suwendu concluded a round of organizational meetings. Having finished his organizational engagements, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari proceeded to Nabanna, where he was accorded a 'Guard of Honour.' The new Chief Minister then proceeded to his office situated on the 14th floor. Meanwhile, the five newly elected ministers—Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Khudiram Tudu, Ashok Kirtania, and Nishith Pramanik—had already arrived at Nabanna. Today marks the first cabinet meeting of the new BJP government. It has been reported that Suwendu Adhikari will conduct three administrative meetings at Nabanna today: first with the secretaries, followed by a meeting with the District Magistrates, and finally, in the afternoon, with police officials. According to sources, the Director General of State Police.

## 'A Land Policy for Industry is Essential': Dispelling 'Fear,' Samik Bhattacharya Urges Industrialists to Invest in Bengal

Kolkata, 12 May : During the 15-year tenure of the Trinamool government, no industries could establish themselves in Bengal. Industrialists from the state instead chose to invest in other states. The previous administration offered no cooperation whatsoever to the business community. State BJP President Samik Bhattacharya leveled these allegations today while attending an event organized by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. He stated that, following the change of power, the incoming state government would create ample opportunities for industrialists to invest. Samik further emphasized that a comprehensive land policy is essential to enhance the prospects for industrial growth within the state. Speaking at the event, the State President asserted that the law and order situation in the state had completely collapsed during the Trinamool regime; there was absolutely no security. However, Samik gave an assurance that such a situation would not recur under the new administration. Although he clarified that he was not speaking on behalf of the government \*per se\*, he nonetheless affirmed



with confidence that investments would flow into Bengal and industries would be established under the current state government. He noted that an atmosphere of fear had prevailed during the Trinamool era, but industrialists would now be able to overcome that apprehension and proceed with their investments. Samik further alleged that industrialists were subjected to harassment and intimidation, and they enjoyed no security whatsoever. Consequently, they faced significant hurdles when attempting to invest within the state. For this very reason, for a long time, the state's industrialists had opted to invest in other states—such as Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh—instead. As a result, a substantial amount of industrial capital and activity had drained away from Bengal. Samik attributed this exodus directly to the lack of cooperation from the Trinamool government. He concluded by appealing for a reversal of this trend and urged the business community to invest more extensively in Bengal. The 15-year rule of the Trinamool government in the state has come to an end following a change in political power. The dire state of industry in Bengal had served as one of the BJP's primary campaign tools against the Trinamool party. Now, having assumed power, the BJP has signaled its commitment to revitalizing the industrial sector. Samik Bhattacharya has pledged full cooperation and support to industrialists regarding their investment endeavors within the state.



National Students' Union of India (NSUI) members stage a demonstration against the National Testing Agency (NTA) over alleged paper leak concerns following the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination, outside Shastri Bhawan, in New Delhi, Tuesday.

## NEET Cancelled Amidst Paper Leak Scandal; CBI Launches Investigation—When Will the Exam Be Held?

Kolkata, 12 May: The NEET-UG examination has been cancelled following allegations of a question paper leak. This nationwide entrance test for medical courses was held on May 3rd. However, allegations regarding a leak of the examination questions began surfacing on Monday. Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, has also raised these allegations. In light of these circumstances, the entrance examination has been cancelled. The National Testing Agency (NTA) has announced that a fresh examination will be conducted. The CBI will investigate the allegations of the question paper leak. The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted the NEET-UG examination on May 3rd. Approximately 2.3 million students appeared for this examination. However, complications arose in Rajasthan. It was reported that at least one month prior to the examination, a "probable" question paper had fallen into the hands of certain students. Additional Director General Vishal Bansal stated that

this probable question paper contained 410 questions. Following the examination, it was observed that 120 chemistry questions from this probable paper matched the actual examination questions verbatim. Not only did the questions match, but the answer options



matched as well. Another source claimed that out of 281 questions in the probable paper, 135 matched the actual question paper exactly. Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has severely criticized the Central Government over this entire episode. AAP Supremo Arvind Kejriwal has also

raised his voice in protest. Allegations of widespread corruption regarding the NEET-UG question paper had surfaced in 2024 as well. Reports of question papers being sold for thousands of rupees emerged from various parts of the country. Rahul Gandhi and others have raised the question of whether this incident marks a repetition of those past events. Within a few hours of these developments, the National Testing Agency announced that the examination held on May 3rd was being cancelled. This decision was taken after a thorough review of the allegations regarding the question paper leak. The responsibility for investigating the leak has been handed over to the CBI. Students will now have to appear for the examination once again. Students will not be required to submit a fresh application to appear for the re-examination. No separate fee will be charged for this examination. The NTA has also stated that the fees paid by candidates for the previous examination will be refunded to them.

## 'Khamenei is Alive, But...' — Netanyahu Makes Explosive Claims About Iran's Supreme Leader

New Delhi, 12 May: Despite a temporary ceasefire, the Middle East continues to be engulfed in the flames of crisis. Against this backdrop, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made explosive claims regarding Iran's Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei. In an interview with a media outlet, he stated, "Khamenei has not yet been seen in public. He is injured. However, he is alive. He is being treated at a secret hideout. Yet, he is not as strong as his father; he is a weak leader." According to a report by the U.S. media outlet \*The New York Times\*, Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in a joint U.S.-Israeli strike on February 28—the very first day of the war. Missiles also struck his residence, where his son, Mojtaba, was present; however, he narrowly escaped with his life. The report further states that Mojtaba's condition is critical. He has

undergone three surgeries on one of his legs, and—what is more—he may require a prosthetic leg. The complications do not end there. Mojtaba has also undergone surgery on one of his hands, though it is slowly healing. His face and lips have suffered severe burns, rendering



him largely unable to speak. The report claims that he may require further plastic surgery. It also asserts that Iran's President, Masoud Pezeshkian—a cardiologist by profession—along with the country's Health Minister, are involved in Mojtaba's

medical treatment. However, out of fear that their whereabouts might be exposed—and apprehensive of potential attacks—neither of them is currently able to visit Mojtaba. Separately, Netanyahu also addressed the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global waterway. He admitted that neither

is removed and its enrichment facilities are dismantled. Although, we have now significantly weakened Tehran; the country's back has been broken." The new policy stipulates that the nation's entire nuclear arsenal will be under the absolute control of its leader, Kim Jong Un. The new policy also outlines, in comprehensive detail, the specific measures to be taken in the event of any form of attack directed against him. Article 3 of the new nuclear policy states that if attacks are launched against the country's nuclear program—including its nuclear research facilities—there shall be no restrictions on launching a retaliatory nuclear strike against the adversary. The policy further asserts that should the nation's leader be killed or incapacitated as a result of an attack by a foreign power, the country will launch a retaliatory nuclear strike against the enemy.

## 'Zero Tolerance for Corruption': Newly Appointed Minister Agnimitra Paul Promises Women's Safety and Fear-Free Governance

Kolkata, 12 May : The State Government will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption, irrespective of political affiliation or ideology. Upon assuming charge, Minister Agnimitra Paul announced this today—Tuesday—while visiting her office at Bikash Bhavan. She stated that, acting under the directives of Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, the government would henceforth operate strictly in accordance with this policy. Agnimitra further affirmed that her primary objective would be to ensure the safety and security of women in Bengal. Strict action will be taken against perpetrators involved in crimes against women, regardless of their political leanings. No offender will be spared, even if they happen to be associated with the BJP. The Minister gave an assurance that, under the current administration, women would be able to step



out of their homes without fear—whether it is 3 PM or 3 AM. On Monday, portfolios were allocated to a total of five ministers, including Agnimitra Paul and Dilip Ghosh. Agnimitra Paul has been entrusted with the charge of the Department of Women and Child Development, as well as the Department of Municipal and Urban Development. Agnimitra arrived at Bikash Bhavan the very next day after assuming her responsibilities—that is, on Tuesday.

Speaking from there, she declared that the days when women could not venture out after 8 PM are now a thing of the past. Until now, even when women approached police stations to report incidents of abuse, their FIRs were often not registered. However, such practices will no longer be tolerated. In cases involving violence against women, "Zero FIRs" will be registered. Previously, offenders holding the Trinamool flag would face no punitive action;

however, that will no longer be the case. Action will be taken against perpetrators regardless of their political affiliation or ideology. Furthermore, Agnimitra issued a stern warning regarding the reopening of files related to the "Abhaya" case, as well as cases involving coal and sand theft. She emphasized that all activities must be conducted in strict adherence to the law. She also issued a warning to new BJP supporters following the change of regime in the state. The Minister made it unequivocally clear that no acts of corruption or anti-social activities would be permitted under the guise of the party flag. However, transparency will be introduced in every instance. No deceased individual will receive scheme benefits. Furthermore, no 'non-Indian' national will be granted access to the benefits of these social welfare schemes."