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Kolkata Set to Launch Its First Water Metro

Suvendu Adhikari Unveils Ambitious Water Transport Project to Transform Urban Mobility Along on the Hooghly

Kolkata, 4 June : In a landmark announcement that could redefine urban transportation in eastern India, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari has unveiled plans to introduce Kolkata's first-ever Water Metro service, bringing West Bengal into the national Sagarmala maritime development framework. The project is being hailed as a transformative step toward sustainable mobility, reduced road congestion, and the modernization of river-based transport across the state. The proposed Water Metro network will utilize the vast potential of the Hooghly River and adjoining waterways, connecting key urban and suburban locations through a modern fleet of environmentally friendly passenger vessels. Officials believe the initiative will offer commuters a faster, cleaner, and more efficient alternative to overcrowded roads and rail networks. Speaking at a public event, the Chief Minister described the project as a "new chapter in Bengal's transportation history," emphasizing that waterways have long been an underutilized asset despite Kolkata's unique geographical advan-



tages. He stated that the Water Metro would not only improve daily commuting but also strengthen tourism, commerce, and regional connectivity. The announcement comes at a time when Indian cities are increasingly exploring multimodal transport systems to address growing urban challenges. Inspired by the success of similar initiatives elsewhere in the country, the Bengal government aims to create an integrated transport ecosystem where metro rail, buses, ferries, and water metro services operate in coordination. According to preliminary plans, several strategic

routes along the Hooghly are being considered for development. Modern terminals equipped with digital ticketing systems, passenger amenities, and seamless last-mile connectivity are expected to form a key part of the project. Authorities are also examining opportunities to integrate the service with existing ferry networks to maximize efficiency and minimize infrastructure costs. Urban planners believe the project could significantly ease traffic pressure in Kolkata, one of India's most densely populated metropolitan regions. Daily commuters often spend hours navigating

congested roads, particularly during peak periods. The Water Metro is expected to provide an alternative transport corridor that bypasses many of these bottlenecks. Economic experts have welcomed the initiative, noting that improved river transport can stimulate investment along waterfront areas, generate employment, and encourage commercial development. New terminals and supporting infrastructure could create opportunities for local businesses while enhancing connectivity between industrial zones and residential hubs. Tourism stakeholders are equally optimistic. With iconic landmarks lining the banks of the Hooghly River, the Water Metro could offer visitors a unique perspective of Kolkata's heritage and cultural landscape. Officials envision the service becoming both a practical commuting option and a major tourist attraction. The project's inclusion under the broader Sagarmala vision is particularly significant. The national programme seeks to harness India's coastline and waterways to drive economic growth, improve logistics, and strengthen maritime infrastructure.

West Bengal Government Restructures Tarakeswar Develop Board, Appoints Administrator for the Fresh Oversight

Kolkata, 4 June : In a significant administrative decision that has sparked widespread political and civic discussion across West Bengal, the state government has dissolved the existing Tarakeswar Development Board and appointed an administrator to oversee its functioning. The move, announced under the direction of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, marks a major restructuring of the body responsible for planning and executing development projects in the historic temple town of Tarakeswar. The decision has drawn particular attention because senior state minister Firhad Hakim had been closely associated with the board's activities and developmental agenda. Political observers view the move as an indication that the state government is seeking a more centralized and streamlined administrative mechanism to accelerate infrastructure projects and improve governance standards in the region. Tarakeswar, home to the revered Taraknath Temple, attracts millions of devotees every year and remains one of the most important religious destinations in West Bengal.



Over the years, the Development Board played a crucial role in managing civic infrastructure, pilgrimage facilities, traffic systems, sanitation projects, and urban modernization initiatives designed to accommodate the growing influx of visitors. According to government officials, the appointment of an administrator is intended to ensure greater efficiency in decision-making and project implementation. The administrator will be responsible for overseeing ongoing development works, reviewing pending projects, coordinating with various government departments, and ensuring that public services continue without disruption. Sources within the administration suggest that the restructuring comes at a time when the state is placing renewed

emphasis on urban development, religious tourism, and infrastructure expansion. Authorities are reportedly keen to fast-track several projects related to transportation, public amenities, drainage systems, beautification efforts, and improved facilities for pilgrims visiting Tarakeswar throughout the year. The dissolution of the board has naturally triggered speculation within political circles. While government representatives have described the move as a purely administrative decision aimed at enhancing efficiency, opposition leaders have questioned the timing and rationale behind the restructuring. Critics argue that greater transparency regarding the reasons for the board's dissolution would help address public concerns.



Chief minister Suvendu Adhikari, minister for women and child development and social welfare, urban development and municipal affairs Agnimitra Paul and others present during the launch of the Annapurna Yojana at Nabanna.

Trump Faces Major Setback: U.S. House Passes Iran War Powers Resolution, Republicans Break Ranks

New Delhi, 4 June : In a significant political blow to U.S. President Donald Trump, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a war powers resolution aimed at limiting the administration's ability to continue military operations against Iran without explicit congressional authorization. The move marks one of the strongest challenges yet to Trump's foreign policy strategy and highlights growing unease within both political parties over America's involvement in the ongoing conflict. The resolution passed by a narrow vote of 215-208, with several Republican lawmakers joining Democrats in a rare bipartisan rebuke of the president. The vote reflects mounting concerns in Congress that the executive branch has exceeded its constitutional authority by continuing military actions without obtaining formal approval from lawmakers. The measure would require the president to either seek authorization from Congress for

continued military engagement with Iran or begin withdrawing U.S. forces from the conflict. While the resolution's ultimate legal impact remains uncertain and still faces hurdles in the Senate, its passage sends a powerful political message that congressional patience with the war is wearing thin. Several



Republicans broke party ranks to support the resolution, underscoring divisions within the Republican Party over the administration's handling of the conflict. Their votes signal growing discomfort among some conservatives regarding the expanding

scope and cost of the military campaign. Democratic leaders hailed the vote as a victory for constitutional checks and balances, arguing that Congress—not the president alone—holds the authority to declare war. They contend that prolonged military action without legislative approval risks undermining democratic

accountability and dragging the country deeper into an open-ended conflict. The vote comes against the backdrop of increasing public concern over the economic consequences of the Iran conflict. Rising energy prices, disruptions in global shipping

routes, and uncertainty surrounding the Strait of Hormuz have fueled criticism from both lawmakers and voters. Analysts suggest that economic pressures have played a key role in strengthening congressional opposition to continued hostilities. President Trump reacted angrily to the House action, dismissing the resolution as a "meaningless vote" and accusing opponents of undermining ongoing efforts to secure a diplomatic settlement. The White House maintains that military pressure has strengthened America's negotiating position and insists that talks with Iran are progressing toward a possible agreement. The resolution now heads to the U.S. Senate, where lawmakers will decide whether to advance similar restrictions on presidential war powers. Even if Congress ultimately approves the measure, the administration could challenge it or seek to block its implementation, setting up a potentially

Modi-Venezuela Summit Sparks Energy Hope: Can New Delhi Secure Fuel Lifeline Beyond Hormuz?

New Delhi, 4 June : As global energy markets continue to grapple with disruptions caused by tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial diplomatic meeting in New Delhi has drawn international attention. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held high-level talks with Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez, with energy security emerging as the central theme of discussions. The meeting comes at a time when India is actively searching for alternative crude oil sources to reduce dependence on traditional Gulf suppliers and shield its economy from geopolitical shocks. The visit is being viewed as more than a routine diplomatic engagement. With oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz facing repeated disruptions and uncertainty, Venezuela has emerged as a strategically important partner for India. Possessing some of the world's largest proven oil reserves, the South American nation is increasingly being seen as a reliable source capable of helping India diversify its en-

ergy basket. During the discussions, both sides reportedly explored cooperation across the entire energy value chain, including crude oil supply, refining, downstream petrochemicals, and potential investments in energy infrastructure. Indian officials described the relationship as one of "perfect complementarity,"



highlighting the natural fit between Venezuela's vast energy resources and India's enormous fuel demand. The timing of the summit is particularly significant. India has sharply increased imports of Venezuelan crude in recent months as disruptions in West Asia have forced re-

finers to seek alternative sources. Industry data indicates that Venezuela has rapidly climbed the rankings of India's crude suppliers, becoming one of the country's most important energy partners during the ongoing crisis. Energy analysts believe that a stronger India-Venezuela partnership could provide New Delhi with greater flexibility in managing future supply shocks. Unlike Gulf oil routes that remain vulnerable to geopolitical tensions, Venezuelan supplies offer India an opportunity to diversify sourcing and reduce excessive dependence on any single region. Such diversification has become a key pillar of India's long-term energy security strategy. Beyond oil, the two leaders also discussed broader economic cooperation in areas such as trade, pharmaceuticals, transportation, technology, and renewable energy. Officials from both countries indicated that the relationship could evolve into a wider strategic partnership extending well beyond the energy sector.

Railways Back on Track? Ashwini Vaishnaw to Lead Crucial Nabanna Summit on Bengal's Stalled Projects

Kolkata, 4 June : In a development that could significantly reshape the future of railway infrastructure in West Bengal, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is set to arrive in Kolkata on Saturday for a high-level meeting at Nabanna aimed at resolving long-pending railway and metro projects across the state. The meeting is expected to bring together top officials from the Railways and the West Bengal government in an effort to remove bottlenecks that have delayed several key connectivity projects for years. The discussions will be held at Nabanna with West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari and senior railway officials, including the General Managers of Eastern Railway, South Eastern Railway, Northeast Frontier Railway, and Metro Railway Kolkata. Officials indicate that the primary focus will be on accelerating work on projects stalled due to land acquisition issues, administrative hurdles, and



pending clearances. The meeting assumes added importance as several major rail and metro projects in Bengal have remained delayed for years despite substantial investments. Recent breakthroughs in infrastructure works, including progress on the New Garia-Airport Metro corridor, have renewed hopes that long-standing disputes between state and central agencies may finally be resolved. Railway officials believe that closer coordination between the Centre and the state government could unlock progress on dozens of

projects that are critical for improving passenger mobility, freight movement, and regional economic growth. According to recent assessments, more than sixty railway projects in Bengal have faced varying degrees of delay, largely due to land-related and administrative challenges. Political observers are also viewing the meeting as a significant test of Centre-State cooperation. With railway infrastructure emerging as a major development issue, the outcome of Saturday's discussions could determine the pace of future

investments in Bengal's transport network. The presence of senior railway executives and members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways further underlines the strategic importance of the deliberations. If concrete decisions emerge from the Nabanna meeting, Bengal could witness renewed momentum in several long-awaited railway expansion and metro connectivity projects, potentially benefiting millions of commuters and strengthening the state's role as a major transportation hub in eastern India. Experts argue that periodic inspections, stricter enforcement mechanisms, and improved accountability are essential to prevent similar tragedies. In the aftermath of the disaster, government agencies have launched a comprehensive inquiry to identify responsibility and assess whether officials or private operators failed to comply with mandatory safety requirements.