

Er sheds the old, embraces the gold: sealdah division achieves 100% safety milestone with extensive infrastructure makeover

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata, 8 June: Prioritizing absolute passenger safety and comfort, Eastern Railway successfully completed a series of massive infrastructure upgrades. Notably, the last failure-prone high-mast lattice structure in Sealdah Division was safely dismantled today, successfully concluding a 100% elimination target of all 27 such structures within 18 months. Every single upgrade is being executed under the dynamic leadership of Shri Milind Deouskar, General Manager, Eastern Railway, to ensure reliable, secure travel.

Supervising ground-level executions, Shri Rajeev Saxena, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Sealdah, emphasized that passenger comfort remains the ultimate benchmark. To prevent daytime passenger travel disruptions, Eastern Railway meticulously executed overnight traffic and power blocks over the weekend.

During a night-time mega block at Ballygunge (BLN) Central Yard, engineered with vital assistance from the

Signal & Telecom Department to elevate passenger safety, technical teams achieved five massive milestones on the Down Pass and Up Pass lines. First, they upgraded the Single Slip Diamond Point track structure (No. 120B/121) on the DN PASS line from the older 52 KG weight to the much stronger 60 KG steel standard, eliminating 8 redundant glued joints. Second, deep track cleaning and screening were executed using a specialized BCM-370 machine for MFI work on the DN pass line, completing 301 Track Meters (with less progress noted due to a temporary problem in the BCM screening unit). Third, precise track-firming point tamping was finished using an MFI-57120 machine on the UP pass line at Point Nos. 105, 106B, 108A, and 111B. Finally, departmental staff performed 6 Nos. SKV track welding works and completed extensive ERC lubrication greasing across 250 TM to eliminate uncomfortable jolts and guarantee smooth riding.

Simultaneously, a historic safety upgrade was executed on the Sealdah-Bidhannagar Route (SDAH-BNXX

Suburban Section). The aging 1921-era steel support structures (BGML non-standard, semi-through skew girders) of Bridge No. 3 (Road Under Bridge) were completely replaced with brand-new, high-strength welded steel girders designed to handle a heavy 25-Ton axle load on both UP & DN Suburban Lines. Working under acute urban space limitations and severe operational constraints, engineers used precise skew bridge planning to raise safety levels. The traffic block between Sealdah North and Dum Dum (SDAH(N)-DDJ) was safely wrapped up ahead of schedule, allowing passenger trains to resume early.

To maximize long-term commuter comfort and prevent future track shutdowns, engineers completed 12 interconnected safety works under the shadow of the bridge work between Kankurgachi Road Junction and Dum Dum (KGG-DDJ). These involved completing 708 Nos. Through Sleeper Renewal (TSR-P) inside the BNXX platform limit and 191.77 Tr.m of Through Rail Renewal (TRR-P) covering Bridge Nos. 13, 15, and 16A. Track

renewals also featured dismantling 15 Tr.m of 60 kg ISEJ rail, renewing 1 Set of TWSEJ expansion joints, laying 11 Nos. of TWSEJ with PSC concrete sleepers, inserting 200 Nos. PSC dolies, and unloading 338 Nos. PSC sleepers. Heavy asset-shifting was handled by specialized utility vehicles, with the UTV-69 machine moving 155 Nos. and the UTV-123 machine moving 83 Nos. wider PSC sleepers. Furthermore, 4 Nos. SKV welding jobs were finished at Km 6/15-19 along with protective, clean painting of both Foot Over Bridges over live OHE lines at BNXX on both UP Sub and DN sub lines.

Shri Shibrum Majhi, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO), Eastern Railway, stated: "Eliminating all failure-prone structures, modernizing a century-old bridge, and upgrading our tracks are direct reflections of our absolute commitment to passenger safety and comfort. We deeply appreciate our commuters' cooperation as we continuously build a stronger, smoother, and highly reliable rail network for tomorrow."

Students, citizens protest Delhi's pollution crisis, demand clean air

New Delhi, 8 June: Scores of people gathered at the Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday demanding clean air in the national capital, as the city continued to reel under prolonged "very poor" air quality. Students from Delhi University, JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia joined the demonstration, along with members of the Congress-backed National Students' Union of India (NSUI). Protesters held placards reading "Delhiites deserve AQI less than 50", "Clean air is a fundamental right" and "All have the right to breathe". Several local singers also performed at the venue to encourage the crowd. Neha, 26, one of the protesters, alleged that despite the BJP being in power at the Centre and in the MCD, the authorities had failed to curb pollution.

"Earlier, there used to be a blame game, but now there are no excuses. There have been reports of manipulation of AQI data, still the numbers remain in the very poor category. Who knows what the real AQI is? We will keep protesting unless major steps are taken. This is a matter of our fundamental right," she said. Delhi's air quality has largely remained in the "very poor" to "severe" range since Diwali. As per CPCB norms, an AQI between 301 and 400 is considered "very poor" and 401 to 500 "severe". The pollution crisis has drawn attention from both the Parliament and the Supreme Court.

On Monday, the apex court said air pollution in Delhi-NCR cannot be treated as a "customary" seasonal matter and directed that the issue be listed twice a month for monitoring short and long-term solutions. Chief Justice Surya Kant, sitting with Justice Joymalya Bagchi, also questioned the long-held assumption that stubble burning is the primary cause, noting that skies remained clear during the COVID-19 period despite continued stubble burning.

In Parliament, YSRCP MP Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla described Delhi's pollution levels as a public health emergency, citing data that nearly one in seven residents faces the risk of premature death due to pollution. He said over 17,000 deaths last year were linked directly to toxic air. Drawing a parallel with Visakhapatnam, where PM10 levels have risen 32.7 per cent in seven years, he criticised poor utilisation of funds under the National Clean Air Programme. "Unchecked air pollution costs India more than 3 per cent of its GDP annually," he said, urging stronger political will, accurate data, public awareness and real-time governance.

Pithampur residents oppose disposal of Union Carbide waste ash in their town

Pithampur, 8 June: On the 41st anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy on Wednesday, residents of Pithampur urged authorities not to dispose of the 900 tons of ash produced from the incineration toxic waste from the defunct Union Carbide plant in their town. According to officials, the ash is safely stored in a leak-proof shed at a private plant in Pithampur where 358 tons of toxic waste, including 19 tons of contaminated soil from the defunct Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, was incinerated using a scientific process. The government has planned to dispose of the ash by dumping it in a special multi-layered landfill cell being constructed at the same plant, even though the Madhya Pradesh High Court has said it can not be allowed.

When the government decided to incinerate the toxic waste at Pithampur, 250 km from Bhopal, the plan had faced considerable opposition from local residents who feared it would contaminate the environment

and lead to adverse health effects. The people are now expressing apprehension that any leakage of the ash from the landfill cell could cause serious harm to the local population and environment, and demanding that it be buried somewhere else. The disposal plant is located adjacent to Tarpura village in the Pithampur industrial area. Prakash Sarkate, who has lived in this village of about 20,000 for nearly 30 years, told PTI that his home is just 500 meters from the plant.

"We demand that the government address public concerns and relocate the Union Carbide waste ash," he said. Locals had strongly opposed the burning of Union Carbide waste at the plant, but to no avail, Sarkate said. Nirmala Panwar, who also lives in Tarpura, claimed that villagers frequently suffer from colds, fevers and eye irritation. "We do not drink water from the sources near our homes. The water looks dirty and makes one's throat sore," she said. State Pollution

Control Board officials claim that emissions of particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen fluoride and nitrogen oxides, as well as levels of mercury, cadmium and other heavy metals were found to be within standard limits during the incineration. They have

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also stated that the incineration did not cause any adverse health effects among the plant employees or resi-

dents of the surrounding areas. The matter of disposal of Union Carbide waste at the Pithampur plant is pending in the Madhya Pradesh High Court, and the disposal process is being carried out under the court's supervision. On October 8, the High Court's principal bench at Jabalpur rejected a proposal to dispose of the waste ash in a landfill cell being constructed on the plant's prem-

New Dawn for Commuters: Murarai Underpass Reopens with Monsoon-Proof Upgrades

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata, 8 June: In a major boost to local connectivity, the long-awaited Murarai Limited Height Subway (LHS No. 32) officially reopened for road traffic on June 7, 2026. This landmark completion was achieved under the dynamic leadership of Shri Milind Deouskar, General Manager of Eastern Railway, whose vision for safety and modern infrastructure guided the team through complex engineering challenges. The project received a crucial push under the close supervision of DRM Howrah, Shri Vishal Kapoor, who

ensured the successful execution of extensive developmental works. Initially opened on February 20, 2025, the underpass had to be closed on May 23, 2025, to address structural and waterlogging issues. Reopening after a meticulous one-year overhaul, the underpass now features a robust drainage system, a high-capacity water storage sump on the UP-line side, and repairs to vertical cracks. To ensure all-weather usability, workers installed durable concrete wearing courses and protective cover sheds over both approach roads. Barricading has also been completed on both the UP and DN sides to prevent ac-

cidents. This reopening brings massive relief to thousands of daily commuters and local businesses. By replacing the old level crossing gate, the modern underpass completely eliminates traffic congestion, slashes travel times, and guarantees safe, uninterrupted movement—even during heavy monsoon downpours. Highlighting the impact of the project, Chief Public Relations Officer Shri Shibrum Majhi stated, "This upgraded underpass reflects Eastern Railway's unwavering commitment to safety, smooth local transit, and delivering public infrastructure that truly stands the test of time."

Regulation of trains for limited height subway work over east central railway

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata, 8 June: For construction of Limited Height Subway between Nawada & Tilaya in Danapur Division over East Central Railway, 08 hours (from 09:30 hrs. to 17:30 hrs.) Traffic & Power Block has been planned on 09.06.2026. Consequently, following arrangements in train running have been made as under: 19604 Godda -

Daurai Express (journey commencing on 09.06.2026) will be diverted via Kiul - Patna - Jehanabad - Gaya instead of Kiul - Nadwan - Gaya. 63387 Jamalpur - Gaya MEMU (journey commencing on 09.06.2026) will be diverted via Sheikhpura - Bihar Sharif - Rajgir - Tilaya instead of Lakhisarai - Nawada - Manpur. 13024 Gaya - Howrah Express (journey commencing on

09.06.2026) will be diverted via Gaya - Jehanabad - Patna - Kiul instead of Wazerganj - Sheikhpura - Kiul. 15619 Gaya - Kamakhya Express (journey commencing on 09.06.2026) will be diverted via Gaya - Jehanabad - Patna - Kiul instead of Tilaya - Sheikhpura - Kiul. Moreover, 63388 Gaya - Jamalpur MEMU (journey commencing on 09.06.2026) will be rescheduled by 02 hours from Gaya.

Bengal's Rarest Nawabi Mangoes Take Centre Stage at Murshidabad Mango Festival 2026

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata, 8 June: The Murshidabad Mango Festival 2026 got off to a spirited start with its curtain-raiser at iLEAD, Kolkata, drawing heritage enthusiasts, food lovers and travellers for a preview of one of Bengal's most distinctive seasonal celebrations. Presented jointly by the Murshidabad Heritage Development Society

(MHDS) and House of Sheherwali, the month-long festival runs throughout June 2026 at Azimganj, Murshidabad.

The event brought Murshidabad's legendary Nawabi mango culture to the city, showcasing rare cultivars seldom found beyond the district's centuries-old orchards. Among the varieties on display were the Kohitur, once reserved for Nawabi courts, celebrated for

its saffron-like aroma; the Rani, floral and known as the "queen" of local mangoes; Bimli, small and intensely sweet with paper-thin skin; and the bold and deep-hued Kala Pahar. Also present were the varieties Bombai, Champa, Mularajam, Dilpasand, Anaras, Chandankosa, Rogni and Saranga providing a glimpse into Murshidabad's extraordinary treasury of over 150 cultivars.

Woman Arrested In 'Land Scam' Linked To Company Owned By Ajit Pawars Son

Pune, 3 December: Pune Police on Wednesday arrested Shital Tejwani, an accused in the case linked to the controversial sale of government land in Mundhwa area to a company owned by Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's son Parth Pawar.

It is the first arrest in the high-profile case. The Economic Offences Wing arrested Tejwani, said Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjan Kumar Sharma.

Tejwani allegedly entered into a Rs 300 crore deal to sell the 40-acre land parcel to Parth Pawar and Digvijay Patil's firm Amadea Enterprises LLP, acting as a power of attorney for 272 former

owners of the land. The land, in fact, is owned by the government which has leased it to the Botanical Survey of India.

Police had questioned Tejwani last month.

Besides her, Parth Pawar's business partner Digvijay Patil and suspended tehsildar Suryakant Yeole who allegedly misused his power by issuing eviction notices to the Botanical Survey of India are the accused in the case registered for cheating, criminal breach of trust, and other relevant offences. Parth Pawar was not made an accused as his name did not appear on the sale deed, police had said earlier.

Dog row: Renuka says 'Bhow Bhow' on reports of privilege motion against her

New Delhi, 8 June: "Bhow Bhow"! That was Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury's quick response on Wednesday to reports that some ruling party members are seeking to bring a privilege motion against her for bringing a dog to Parliament. The snappy reply quickly became fodder for social media memes and even a remix of the popular song "Who Let The Dogs Out" by the Bahamian band Baha Men with the MP's "Bhow Bhow" interspersed in rhythm. "Bhow bow...what else should I say," Chowdhury told PTI Videos outside Parliament when asked to comment on reports of the privilege motion.

"We will see when it comes...that is the problem. When it comes, I will give a befitting reply," she added when questioned further on what she would do. The often outspoken Rajya Sabha MP has been at a centre of a growing controversy for bringing a dog in her car in Parliament premises on Monday, the first day of the Winter session. She said the canine was a stray who she had rescued and was taking it to a vet. "Those sitting inside bite, dogs don't," Chowdhury told reporters when asked why she had done so. As debate escalated, her party colleague Rahul Gandhi joined in on Tuesday, saying that pets are not allowed outside but are "allowed inside". He said so while pointing to the Parliament House.

MP Cough syrup deaths: ED attaches assets of Coldrif promoter in Chennai

New Delhi, 8 June: Two flats in Chennai belonging to the promoter of Sresan Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of Coldrif cough syrup linked to the death of at least 20 children in Madhya Pradesh, have been attached under the anti-money laundering law, the Enforcement Directorate said on Wednesday. The assets, located at Kodambakkam in Tamil Nadu's capital city, are owned by G Ranganathan and his family members, it said in a statement. The value of the flats is Rs 2.04 crore, the statement said.

The agency alleged Sresan Pharma indulged in "rampant unfair trade practices to suppress its manufacturing costs and increase profits which are nothing but proceeds of crime (under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act)." Probe found that the manufacturer used industry-grade raw materials in the manufacturing of medicines instead of pharma-grade raw materials "without" proper quality checks. "Such materials were being purchased in cash without invoices to avoid creation of records," the ED said. Though the officials of the Tamil Nadu Drugs Control Department were in frequent touch with the proprietor of Sresan Pharma, the annual inspections mandated as per the Drug and Cosmetic Rules, were "not" conducted, it claimed.

The ED booked a money laundering case against the accused taking cognisance of two FIRs, one filed by the Madhya Pradesh Police and other by the Tamil Nadu Police. The MP Police complaint alleged that Coldrif contained toxic glycol compounds and caused multiple incidents of acute renal failure in children leading to the death of at least 20 children in the state. Laboratory findings confirmed the presence of "high" concentrations of Diethylene Glycol (DEG) and Ethylene Glycol (EG), far beyond the safe limit, according to the police FIR. "The negli-

gent and adulterated manufacturing practices adopted by Sresan Pharma manufacturer led to the poisoning of the cough syrup," as per the ED which quoted the police FIR.

The second complaint which the ED took cognisance of was filed by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) against P U Karthikeyan, director in-charge of the TNFDA (Tamil Nadu Food and Drug Administration) in an alleged bribery case.

Ranganathan was arrested by Madhya Pradesh Police in October. Karthikeyan was arrested by the DVAC in July. The two states suspended two drug inspectors each apart from a FDA deputy director of MP. Tamil Nadu also ordered the closure of the accused pharma company after the deaths. An undertrial prisoner lodged in the Gonda district jail on murder charges died while being treated at a hospital where he was taken following complaints of severe chest pain, officials said on Wednesday. Manoj (24), accused of killing a man named Indrasen in Datnagar Visen earlier this year, had been in Gonda jail for the past nine months. The case had come to light on March 16 after Indrasen's severed head was recovered from Khaira village. Jail Superintendent Prityunjay Kumar Pandey said the prisoner complained of severe chest pain and uneasiness on Monday, following which he was immediately taken to the district hospital. "He died during treatment. Prima facie, it appears to be a heart attack," Pandey said.

Soon after receiving the information, Manoj's family reached the hospital and created a ruckus. They alleged that the death was not due to a heart attack but the result of a conspiracy, accusing the jail administration of murdering him. The family demanded a high-level probe into the incident.