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RANJAN SARKAR, DEPUTY MAYOR, SILIGURI

ON THE FIRE THAT GUTTED SEVERAL SLUM HOUSES THAT STOOD ON LAND OWNED BY THE RAILWAYS

Fire in Siliguri renders several homeless, 4 hurt

SANKHA GHOSH
SILIGURI, 21 JANUARY

A major fire razed at least 13 houses to the ground, rendering around 50 persons homeless in a slum area at Dharam Nagar near the diesel shed at the Siliguri Junction under ward-1 today. Around four persons were injured while trying to douse the flames.



has suggested the damage to some lakh rupees.

It is suspected that the fire broke out when a person named Pappu Ram was cooking in an earthen oven in his home. It is said that he had not doused the fire while also keeping dry wood on them. Sources said that the dry wood helped the fire to spread and within a few minutes it engulfed the shanties located on the railway land. The locals said at least three gas cylinders had also exploded.

Sources said four persons, Guddu Ram, Anil Ram, Kalu and Sayeed, sustained burn injuries when they mounted on a tin shade and watered the flames. They fell on the ground when a cylinder exploded, a source said. "Gudu Ram was admitted in the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, while Anil Ram is undergoing treatment in the Siliguri District Hospital," sources said. According to ward councillor Sanjay Pathak, the Siliguri Municipal Corporation had ensured support to victims under disaster management and distributed clothes, blankets, utensils and tarpaulins.

Officials of the fire and emergency services, however, said investigations had started to ascertain the cause of the fire.

This is the second fire incident in two months. A devastating fire had gutted at least 41 houses, displacing around 300 people in the slum on railway land at Khudiram Colony under ward 18 on 19 November.

Frequent incidents of fire in slums have raised questions on people's alertness. Locals said the fire broke out at around 10 am. The houses were made of tinsheds.

The jewellery that I had made for her, the money I had saved, everything was destroyed and stolen," she said. The woman earns her livelihood by picking rags and selling them.

Three fire tenders brought the fire under control within one hour, it is learnt.

Another resident Taniza Begum said she was planning for her marriage early next year in Kishanganj.

Preliminary assessment

"The silver jewellery that I had saved for the bid day had melted in the fire," she said.

Officials of the fire and emergency services, however, said investigations had started to ascertain the cause of the fire.



day announced the establishment of an Open Stage (Mukta Manch), named as 'Freedom Square' in the campus, which will be operative from April this year.

When the Calcutta High Court Bench of Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajeshwar Bhadraraj has dismissed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by a petitioner on the issue of setting up a State Institute of Hotel Management in the North Bengal University (NBU) campus, University authorities have decided to establish a 'Freedom Square' within it so that the academic community of the varsity can express their thoughts.

Addressing the students in an inter-departmental extempore speech competition titled 'Freedom to Express' held at the Rabindra-Bhanu Manch, Professor Om Prakash Mishra, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, announced the innovative idea, officials said.

NBU authorities yesterday announced the establishment of an Open Stage (Mukta Manch), named as 'Freedom Square' in the campus, which will be operative from April this year.

To take this effort of the students forward and to make this more engaging, the University will start 'Freedom Square' where any teacher, official or student can express their thoughts and ideas for holistic growth of the University. The

stage can also be used for cultural programs and different discourses," said Prof Mishra.

The square will be constructed in a prominent place in the University and will become operational from 1 April this year, sources said.

A total of 36 students across different departments participated in the extempore speech competition. Ananya Roy and Paramita Saha from the Education Department secured the first position in the competition, while Bishal Raj Biswas from the English Department won the best speaker award.

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My name is Sulakshana Joarder, my husband name is Asok Joarder. Before marriage my name was Sulakshana Das. In my all documents my name is Sulakshana Das. Hence I am declaring that, I am changing my name from Sulakshana Joarder to Sulakshana Das. Affidavit No. 76AB 260746 date: 11-01-2023, Kalyani.

I, SIMRAN Rajani, wife of Ricky Rajani and daughter of Lt. Pramanand Hotwani, Nationality - Indian and permanent resident of 53B, Dr. Lal Mohan Bhattacharjee Road, Kolkata-700014, P.S.: Entally, have changed my name to Dwisha Rajani for all future purposes by swearing an affidavit before the Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate at

Calcutta on 17th January, 2023 vide Affidavit No. 1171.

I, NICOLA Beatrice Joseph and Nicola Bearder born on 08-10-1970 W/o. G.A Joseph, R/o. 16, Royd Street, Kolkata-700016, is same and one identical person, vide Affidavit No. 78AB 997796 1st Class Magistrate, Kolkata.

I, KEVIN Norman Paul Bearder and Kevin Bearder born on 18-08-1964, S/o. Terence Stanley Bearder, R/o. 79, Dr. K D Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700060, is same and one identical person, vide Affidavit No. 78AB 997798 1st Class Magistrate, Kolkata.

US national held at Bagdogra Airport with satellite phone

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 21 JANUARY

A US citizen, Thomas Esroh Seitz, was arrested near Siliguri for carrying a satellite phone. Mr Seitz was caught at the Bagdogra Airport during security check by personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) when he and two other US citizens wanted to board a flight to Delhi yesterday. Bagdogra police station has arrested Mr Seitz. The Siliguri court, however, released him on personal bond today.

Sources said the foreign national has told officials that he was not aware of the rules about carrying a satellite phone in India without permission, unlike in his country. He had carried the phone from America.

The 46-year-old resident of Texas was booked under section 6 (1) A of the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, 20 of the Indian Telegraphy Act 1885.

Sources said preliminary investigations had suggested that Mr Seitz had arrived

in Delhi from the US on 12 January on behalf of Shield AI-an American aerospace and defense technology company based in San Diego, California. It develops artificial intelligence-powered drones, aircraft, and software to assist defense operations. Its clients include militaries of the United States and Brazil.

"He told investigators that the US-based company and an Indian company were working with the Indian Army in some projects. He had travelled to Sikkim also for this purpose. Mr Seitz also produced documents to substantiate his claims," a source said.

It may be recalled here that the Jalpaiguri police had arrested a British, German and Belgian for possessing 22 satellite phones that were being operated without permission from Chalsa on 9 February, 2014.

Indian Embassy notices say that use/carrying of satellite phone by foreign nationals (irrespective of category of passport) without prior approval is illegal/unauthorised.

The Consulate General of India New York, USA, says in an advisory, "This is to bring to the attention of general public that under section 6 of The Indian Wireless Act and section 20 of Indian Telegraph Act carrying/use of satellite phones, by foreign nationals (irrespective of category of passport) without prior approval, is illegal/unauthorised." A senior police officer said it appeared that the offender had suppressed the fact to immigration officials that he had been carrying the phone.

"A foreigner has to submit a declaration to immigration officials at the airport confirming, if he or she is carrying a satellite phone. In this case, he did not mention the fact to immigration officials that he was carrying the phone," the officer said.

Mr Seitz was produced in the Siliguri additional chief judicial magistrate court today.

Assistant public prosecutor of the court Sudip Roy Basunia said the court had released him on a personal bond.

Teacher held for promising jobs, taking cash

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 21 JANUARY

A teacher of the Siliguri Baradanakta Vidyapith (HS), Pankaj Barman, was arrested by the police on Saturday on charges of taking money from people on the pretext of providing jobs in upper primary schools.

Mr Barman's name cropped up following the arrest of a teacher of the Ambari Falakata Chintamohan High School,



Santosh Barman, recently for allegedly taking around Rs 17 lakh from aspirants while promising jobs. Sources said he would hand over the money to Pankaj Barman.

The headmaster of the

Siliguri Baradanakta Vidyapith Biplab Sarkar said the incident could affect the image of the school and that the teachers were upset with the arrest.

"It is not clear to us as to why he has been actually arrested," Mr Sarkar said. A resident of Cooch Behar district, Mr Barman has been teaching Sanskrit in the school since September 2021.

Police arrested him from his Hakim Para residence in Siliguri, sources said.

NBU campus to have a 'Freedom Square'

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NBU authorities yesterday

Six of family injured in Malda clash

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MALDA, 21 JANUARY

Six members of the same family were seriously injured in violent clashes between two groups over land related issues in the Bijli area of Bhado gram panchayat under the Ratua police station in Malda.

Among the injured are family members, including two brothers and two women. All the six seriously injured have been admitted to the Malda Medical College and Hospital for medical treatment.

The victim's family has filed a written complaint against the alleged "attackers"



Mukhlesur Rahman and Sadiqul Sheikh, and their group, at the Ratua police station. While the accused are absconding, the police said they have started investigations into the matter.

According to police and local sources, six persons, including Abu Taher, 45, and

Mojibur Rahman, 42, were injured in the attack. Among the injured, two women are undergoing treatment in the Ratua Rural Hospital. The rest are undergoing treatment in MMCH. Mujibur Rahman bought a total of 16 shatak of land in two spots in Bhado area.

When over thirty people led by the accused Mukhlesur Rahman, Sadiqul Sheikh, Shafiq Sheikh attacked that place with sticks and sharp weapons. A total of six people including Abu Taher, Mujibur Rahman were injured in the attack. Two women were admitted to Ratua Health Centre. "The remaining injured persons have been admitted to the Malda Medical College and Hospital with serious injuries," a source said.

According to the injured Mojibur Rahman, he, along with his brother had bought a plot of land together a few days ago, and that the accused had been trying to take possession of that land by force. "When they went to fence the land that day, the accused attacked them with their gang. They were beaten with sharp weapons," Mr Rahman said.

According to the police at the Ratua police station, an investigation has started into the incident.

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