

Controversy ignites over IAS Meenakshi Singh’s viral “Caste Identity” remarks



Bhopal: The bureaucracy in Madhya Pradesh finds itself in the eye of a storm following back-to-back controversial statements by senior officers. Closely following the backlash against IAS Santosh Verma for his provocative comments regarding the Brahmin community, a new video featuring IAS

Meenakshi Singh has gone viral, further fueling the debate on caste and social harmony.

Asserting tribal identity and solidarity

Speaking at the AJAKS (Scheduled Caste/Tribe Officers & Employees Union) provincial convention—the same event where Santosh Verma made his remarks—Meenakshi Singh urged attendees to instill a strong sense of caste identity within their families. “We must tell our children that we are tribals and embrace our caste identity,” she stated, adding that being “caste-conscious” is a necessity in the current era to ensure community support and progress.

Allegations of bias against the “Upper Caste”

The controversy intensified as Singh launched a direct critique of the “Upper Caste” (Savarna) society. She alleged that surnames often dictate professional and social treatment, leading to systemic bias. Claiming that a “casteist mindset” exists among others, she encouraged her community members to seek out and prioritize helping one another to counter this perceived favoritism. This series of statements from high-ranking officials has sparked a heated public discourse across the state, raising critical questions about the conduct of civil servants and the deepening of social divisions within administrative circles.

MP Mahila Cong protest, demands Vijay Shah’s resignation

By Special Correspondent Bhopal: Hundreds of women Congress workers were detained by police on Friday as the Madhya Pradesh Mahila Congress staged a strong protest demanding the resignation of state minister Vijay Shah over his alleged derogatory remarks about women beneficiaries of the Ladli Behna Yojana.

Led by Pradesh Mahila Congress president Reena Bourasi Setia, the demonstrators attempted to march to Shah’s residence at Shyamla Hills. The protesters had assembled at the Pradesh Congress office and proceeded in a procession, raising slogans against the minister and the state government. Anticipating unrest, the police erected barricades and blocked the route, preventing the march from moving forward. As slogans intensified, the police used force and detained the



women protesters, including Setia, who courted arrest along with her supporters. The protest followed remarks reportedly made by Shah during a meeting of officials in Ratlam, which the Mahila Congress described as insulting and unacceptable. Over the past two days, the party had organised statewide

demonstrations, including the burning of Shah’s effigies in several districts. After her arrest, Setia said derogatory language against women would not be tolerated under any circumstances and demanded that the Chief Minister immediately remove Shah from the cabinet, warning of intensified agitation in the coming days.

7th Vahini conducts riot control drill



By Special Correspondent Bhopal: With the objective of strengthening preparedness for maintaining law and order and enhancing effective crowd control capabilities, the 7th Battalion of VISHBAL, Bhopal, organised a comprehensive riot control drill at Motilal Nehru Stadium on December 19 at 10 am. The exercise was conducted under the guidance and supervision of Commandant Hitesh Chaudhary, in the presence of senior officers and a large number of personnel from the battalion.

During the drill, officers and staff undertook practical training focused on crowd management, maintaining public order and responding swiftly and effectively to riot-like situations. Hundreds of police personnel were deployed, forming specialised riot control teams and simulated agitator groups. A planned confrontation scenario was created, during which riot control units implemented tactical measures, including the controlled use of tear gas, to disperse the crowd. A few personnel sustained minor injuries during the exercise and were provided immediate first aid. All officers and staff remained safe by the conclusion of the drill. Commandant Chaudhary issued detailed instructions during the exercise, emphasising restraint, alertness and strategic decision-making in real-life situations. Following the drill, a soldiers’ conference was held. In the first phase, three officers and personnel were honoured under the Discipline and Moderated Life Campaign for adopting positive lifestyle changes by pledging complete freedom from substance use. They were presented with commendation certificates and awards. In the subsequent session, the Commandant heard personnel grievances and issued directions for their redressal, while urging all ranks to perform their duties with integrity, discipline and responsibility. The programme significantly boosted morale, discipline and operational efficiency within the battalion.

Rs 1.18 crore development works launched

► Boundary wall, open gym will be constructed on ITI staff campus



Bhopal: Minister of State for Backward Classes Krishna Gaur, on Friday performed the ground-breaking ceremony for various development works worth about Rs 1.18 crore in Wards 65 and 68.

She said facilities such as open gyms, roads, and community structures will enhance both the beauty of the area and the quality of life of residents. In Ward 65, works worth around Rs 27 lakh were launched at the ITI Staff Campus, including a boundary wall, pathway, open gym equipment, and a concrete road. Similar ceremonies were held in Geet Ganesh Colony and Sagar State Colony for boundary walls, cultural facilities, paving blocks, beautification, and open gyms. In Ward 68, projects worth approximately Rs 53 lakh include paving blocks, RCC drains, platforms, concrete roads, and sheds in Ayodhya Nagar, Sector areas, and several residential colonies. During the visit, Gaur heard public grievances and directed officials to immediately remove road encroachments.

Consignment linked to UP, seized meat samples sent for Lab tests

► Arera Hills Police launch investigation

Bhopal: A high-stakes investigation has been launched after a truck loaded with suspicious meat was intercepted directly across from the Madhya Pradesh Police Headquarters in Jahangirabad. The case has now been officially transferred to the Arera Hills Police for a detailed probe. The incident unfolded late Wednesday night when members of a local organization intercepted the vehicle, suspecting it was transporting beef. Upon inspection, the truck was found packed with numerous meat consignments originating from a company based in Uttar Pradesh. To settle the controversy

surrounding the nature of the meat, Station House Officer Sunil Sharma confirmed that samples have been dispatched to a specialized laboratory in Mathura via a police constable. While the bulk of the “follow-up” consignment has been handed over to the concerned company for now, the truck remains part of the evidence. Authorities have maintained a cautious stance, stating that further legal action will depend entirely on the forensic results from the Mathura lab. The proximity of the seizure to the state’s highest police office has added significant urgency to the ongoing inquiry.

Hindu outfits demand strict action against former HoD

► Suicide attempt by AIIMS doc

Bhopal: The case of Dr. Rashmi Verma, an assistant professor at AIIMS Bhopal, who attempted suicide, has taken a new turn. The Hindu Utsav Samiti and Sanskriti Bachao Manch have leveled serious allegations against the AIIMS administration and the former Head of the Trauma and Emergency Department, Dr. Mohammad Yunus. The organizations argue that merely removing him from his post is not enough; a criminal case should be registered against Dr. Yunus for allegedly

harassing the female doctor and driving her to attempt suicide. The committee’s president, Chandrashekar Tiwari, alleged that Dr. Rashmi Verma was being mentally harassed by Dr. Yunus. He claimed that this pressure and harassment led her to attempt suicide. Tiwari further claimed that Dr. Yunus has a history of controversies and faced serious allegations at the Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (IGRIMS) in Shillong before joining AIIMS Bhopal.

Dr. Rashmi Verma attempted suicide by taking a high dose of anesthesia. She was rushed to AIIMS in time, where she is still receiving treatment. According to doctors, her condition remains critical, and she is fighting for her life. Following this incident, the AIIMS management removed Dr. Mohammad Yunus from his post. However, the Hindu Utsav Samiti says this action is insufficient. The organization has demanded a fair criminal investigation into the entire matter and that strict legal action be taken against the person responsible.

Special Hyderabad–Ajmer Express to run via Bhopal to clear holiday rush

Bhopal: To accommodate the surge in winter travel demand, West Central Railway has announced a special one-trip service between Hyderabad and Ajmer via the Bhopal Division. **● Train 07731 (Hyderabad–Ajmer):** Departs Hyderabad on Dec 23 at 11:30 AM, reaching Ajmer at 02:15 AM on the third day. **● Train 07732 (Ajmer–Hyderabad):** Departs Ajmer on Dec 27 at 18:50 PM, arriving in Hyderabad at 11:00 AM on the third day. Equipped with Sleeper and General Second Class coaches, the train will halt at major hubs including Itarsi, Bhopal, Ujjain, and Ratlam. Commuters are advised to check the official 139 helpline or railway website for booking details.

WCR accelerates track renewal to bolster rail safety and speed

Bhopal: Under the leadership of General Manager Shobhana Bandoopadhyaya, West Central Railway (WCR) is rapidly executing critical track maintenance to ensure smoother and safer journeys. Transitioning into high gear, the Engineering Department has completed significant upgrades between April and November 2025. Key achievements include 291.03 km of rail renewal, 184.26 km of sleeper replacement, and over 447 km of deep screening. By prioritizing Complete Track Renewal (CTR) and sleeper upgrades during scheduled traffic blocks, WCR is significantly strengthening its infrastructure. These synchronized efforts not only enhance safety standards for passenger and freight trains but also pave the way for higher operational efficiency across the zone.

BHEL Ladies’ Club distributes blankets, fruits

By BHEL Correspondent Bhopal: In a humanitarian initiative aimed at providing relief during the harsh winter months, the Skill Development Society and the BHEL Ladies Workers’ Welfare Society, under the leadership of BHEL Ladies’ Club President Rosy Upadhyay, distributed fruits and blankets to 52 residents at the Mahatma Gandhi Leprosy Ashram. Addressing the gathering, Rosy Upadhyay underlined the importance of welfare-oriented initiatives and said that extending help to the destitute and the underprivileged is a noble act that not only strengthens social harmony but also helps individuals grow into more compassionate human beings. She stressed that such ef-



forts contribute to building a stronger and more inclusive society. Vice-President (Skill) Yogita Baghel stated that the objec-

tive of skill development extends beyond making unemployed individuals job-ready. It also encompasses supporting those sections of society who are deprived of basic daily resources. Vice-President (Workers) Manju Patel echoed similar sentiments, remarking that every individual has a role to play in society and that the poor and destitute are an integral part of the social fabric. Several office-bearers from both societies were present on the occasion, including Ritu Arya, Veena Shishir, Nisha Meena, Anuja Majumdar, Manju Shauri, Dipali Goswami and Sarita Prasad. The programme was conducted and concluded with a vote of thanks by Khairunnisha.

Mystery surrounds videographer’s suicide at Upper Lake

Bhopal: A 30-year-old man, Hemant Rai, ended his life by jumping from the Bhadbhada Bridge into Upper Lake on Thursday night. Before the fatal leap, Rai posted a chilling update to his WhatsApp status, stating: “I am taking my own life of my own free will. There is no pressure from anyone. I am at the Bhadbhada bridge.” A resident of Nehru Nagar, Rai worked as a professional wedding videographer and managed a snack shop in the Ratibad area. His family, who had been actively searching for a marriage proposal for him, expressed profound shock. They said he had never mentioned any personal or financial distress. Police recovered his body on Friday morning. Following a post-mortem examination, the remains were handed over to his grieving relatives. The Kamla Nagar police have initiated an investigation, focusing on Rai’s Call Detail Records (CDR) and family statements to uncover the motive behind the act, as no suicide note was found.

Evergreen classics enthrall crowds at Bhopal’s International Forest Fair

► Melodies in the woods



Bhopal: The aroma of forest herbs met the sweet notes of nostalgia as the International Forest Fair (Van Mela) at Lal Parade Ground transformed into a vibrant mu-

sical arena. The JK Musical Group hosted a captivating “Sangeet Sandhya,” turning the evening into a rhythmic celebration of Bollywood’s golden era. The musical journey began with a series of soulful solos that had the audience humming along. Dr. Santosh Tiwari struck a chord with Mohammad Rafi’s “Dekha Hai Teri Aankhon Mein,” while Kuldeep Singh channeled Shailendra Singh with the iconic “Main Shayar Toh Nahin.” The magic of Kishore Kumar came alive through Uday Bhandare’s rendition of “Chehra Hai Ya Chand Khila Hai,” and Pradeep Saxena paid a moving tribute to Mukesh with “O Mehbooba.” The energy reached a crescendo during the duets. Performances of timeless hits like “Shokhiyon Mein Gholi Jaye,” “Tere Chehre Se Nazar Nahin Hatti,” and “Ghoonghat Ki Aad Se” kept the listeners spellbound. In total, a bouquet of 20 classic songs filled the air, bridging the gap between nature and art. The evening concluded with Group Coordinator Pradeep Saxena expressing gratitude to the Minor Forest Produce Federation and the enthusiastic crowds for making the forest fair a melodic success.

Rakshaan Shamim and Meeta Wadhwa Honored with ‘Vishisht Seva Samman’

► The occasion of Nirbhaya Diwas



Bhopal: In a moving tribute to resilience and social change, Rakshaan Shamim Zahid and Meeta Wadhwa were conferred with the prestigious ‘Vishisht Seva Samman’ on the occasion of Nirbhaya Diwas. The ceremony was a collab-



orative initiative by Madhya Pradesh Tourism, the Police Commissionerate, the Department of Women and Child Development, and Sangini. The awards recognize extraordinary contributions to women’s

empowerment and social welfare. Rakshaan Shamim Zahid was honored for her dual commitment to empowering women while tirelessly preserving cultural heritage and legacy. Meeta Wadhwa received the distinction for her impactful work in social development and community service. The honors were presented by Additional Chief Secretary Shivshekhar Shukla and ADGP (Women Safety) Anil Kumar. Beyond the accolades, the event served as a powerful platform to reinforce messages of gender safety and collective social responsibility. By celebrating these trailblazers, the state reaffirmed its commitment to building a safer, more equitable environment for all women.