

BALAKNAMA

UNIQUE NEWSPAPER FOR AND BY STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama is the newspaper presented by Street and Working children themselves to fight for their own rights and problems because they are being completely ignored.

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SPORTS CARNIVAL HELD IN DELHI

Over 500 Children Participate in Traditional Games like Kho-Kho and Kabaddi

Balaknama Reporters: Kishan, Nancy, Deepak, and others.

Just as education is considered extremely important for progress in life, sports also play an equally significant role. Sports not only keep the body healthy but also help develop self-confidence, teamwork, courage, and discipline. Every year, Indian athletes represent the country in various sports such as bat-and-ball games, kho-kho, hockey, and kabaddi, and through their outstanding performances, they fill Indians with pride and joy. With the aim of strengthening this spirit, a grand Sports Carnival was organized by Chetna Sanstha on 29 November 2025 at the DDA Netaji Subhash Sports Complex in Jasola, Delhi. In this festive sports event, many games such as kho-kho, kabaddi, stapoo (hopscotch), hula hoop, musical chairs, sack race, and others were organized. More than 500 child participants took part with great enthusiasm, energy, and confidence. Along with Chetna Sanstha, children from several organizations such as Udayan Care, Ghar, Aabhas, Dr. A. V. Baliga, Matru Sudha, and others also participated. Children from Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, and nearby areas enjoyed the games with full energy. Chetna



Sanstha's Director, Sanjay Gupta, and an international rugby player of UL origin, currently living in Hong Kong, Toby, who supports the organization, attended the event as special guests. The children gave Toby a warm welcome, honored him, and expressed their gratitude. In his address, Sanjay Gupta shared that the idea for this Sports Carnival was conceived two years ago. He said that India has a rich heritage of traditional games such as kho-kho, kabaddi, hockey, poshampa, and tag games, but in modern times children are gradually moving away from them. This event was organized to keep culture and traditional games alive, so that children can learn teamwork, sportsmanship, discipline, and self-confidence. Several

teams were formed for the sports festival, with names such as OP Player, Gali Smart, Active Champion, Bahubali, Tara, Little Champions, Damdar Khiladi, Dhakad, Aag, Maharathi, Chhote Ustad, and others. Exciting kho-kho and kabaddi matches were held in both junior and senior categories. In senior kho-kho, the Eagle team won by five points, while in junior kho-kho, the Panther team secured an impressive victory by nine points. In senior kabaddi, the Maharathi team won with 14 points, and in the match between Gali Smart and Chhote Ustad, the Chhote Ustad team won by 22 points. After these victories, smiles, confidence, and pride were clearly visible on the children's faces. During the games, Sanjay

Gupta and Toby continuously encouraged the children. Spectator children, fellow players, and organization workers danced and sang to the beats of drums. Workers from the Street to Strength project presented beautiful music, to which the children danced enthusiastically and enjoyed themselves. The ground was filled with happiness, excitement, and celebration. In the final stage of the program, trophies were awarded to the winning teams, and all participating children were honored with T-shirts. Senior mentors who trained the children in kho-kho and kabaddi were honored with bouquets, dupattas, and Rajasthani turbans. Sharing his experiences, Toby said that sports are important in everyone's life. Whether a

child or an adult, everyone should be connected to sports because they teach discipline, confidence, and cooperation. He said he observed that some teams looked small and weak, yet they did not lose courage, played with strategy, and achieved victory. This was truly an inspiring sight. During the event, children also shared their experiences. A 16-year-old girl, Anju (name changed), said that the game taught her the importance of teamwork. A 14-year-old boy, Rahul (name changed), shared that he did not expect to reach the finals, but through courage and smart play, they achieved victory. A 13-year-old girl, Jubeda (name changed), said that she was feeling physically weak, yet the team stayed motivated and won. An 11-year-old girl, Jenny (name changed), said that learning from mistakes and playing better ahead was her biggest takeaway. In the end, the entire ground was filled with joy, applause, and a sense of achievement. With sports, music, and happiness, the children made the day truly memorable. Editors from Balaknama were also present at the event, and this entire information is being shared with you as the voice of the children.

EHSAAN SHINES WITH SOAP-BASED INNOVATION, SECURES SECOND PLACE IN KBUSINESS BLASTERS

Reporter: Preeti

Under the Delhi Government's ambitious program kBusiness Blasters, 14-year-old student Ehsaan from Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya, Keshavpuram (Delhi) showcased his exceptional talent by securing second place and successfully qualifying for the next round. This achievement has brought pride not only to his family but also to the entire school. As part of the program, Ehsaan presented

an innovative soap-based startup model, in which he proposed the concept of manufacturing soap from raw materials. The selection committee found his idea not only practical but also aligned with future market needs. During the selection process, Ehsaan impressed the panel members with his confidence, clear thinking, and business-oriented approach. The objective of the kBusiness Blasters program is to identify and encourage entrepreneurial talent hidden



among school students. After being selected, Ehsaan will

now receive seed funding from the government, enabling

him to further develop his business model on a larger scale. He will also receive guidance from experienced teachers and group mentors. Expressing his happiness over his success, Ehsaan said that he never imagined his small idea would receive such a big platform. The school principal and teachers also congratulated him, stating that such achievements inspire other students to innovate, think beyond conventional boundaries, and become self-reliant.

CHILDREN COLLECT DEBRIS TO EARN MONEY FOR THEIR DAILY EXPENSES

Talkative Reporters: Rehmat and Reporter Kishan

When street and working children do not receive enough money from home for their personal expenses, they begin engaging in other forms of work. One such case emerged in a settlement near a statue in Noida. During a conversation with reporters, Rahul (name changed), a 13-year-old boy living there, shared his situation. Rahul explained that he lives with his parents in a rented settlement. His parents leave for work in the morning and return home

around 6 p.m. When children ask them for money for daily expenses, they usually give only 2 or 5 rupees, which is not enough to meet their needs. Rahul further shared that after seeing other nearby children working and feeling the desire to buy food and small items, he also started going out to work. Near the settlement, large buildings are under construction, and tractors bring in debris. Most children from the settlement collect debris there, and Rahul also joins them. When the tractor arrives, many children try to climb onto it, which often

leads the tractor owner to beat or scold them. The children use small tools and their hands to collect debris. Those who use their bare hands often suffer cuts, wounds, and skin injuries. By collecting debris throughout the day, children earn around ₹100 to ₹150 per day. Rahul keeps some of this money for himself and gives some at home to help run the household. Because of this, many children are unable to attend school, as parents cannot give proper attention and the children remain engaged in such labor throughout the day.



ONLINE EDUCATION BECOMES A CHALLENGE AMID SMARTPHONE SHORTAGE AND RISING POLLUTION

Reporter: Preeti

Due to increasing pollution levels in Delhi, the administration has closed schools from nursery to fifth grade and shifted classes to the online mode.

This decision was taken to protect children's health, but in communities like N/86, it has created several challenges. In low-income and densely populated areas, online education has emerged as a major problem. Many families have only one mobile phone, which parents usually take with them to work, leaving children unable to attend online classes.

The situation of Noor (name changed), an 11-year-old girl living in one such settlement, reflects this reality. Noor's mother shared that she is the sole earning member of the family and has two children. She works in private homes, and the responsibility

of running the household rests entirely on her. Since schools closed, the children have not been able to attend online classes regularly. Even when they manage to join classes occasionally for a day or two, Noor struggles to respond when asked questions in class.

Another serious social issue has also surfaced: in many households, men do not trust their wives and do not allow them to keep a smartphone, which completely deprives children of access to online education. On the other hand, some children have begun treating online classes as a school holiday and spend their day playing games like pithu on the railway tracks, which further prevents them from attending classes. Thus, this decision taken due to pollution, while aimed at protecting health, is also creating serious challenges for education.

CHILDREN DRIFTING TOWARD SUBSTANCE ABUSE DUE TO PARENTAL NEGLECT

Report: Amrit

In the settlements along Lawrence Road in Delhi, a 13-year-old boy named Murad (name changed) spoke about the condition of a child living near his home. He said that Aman, a 14-year-old boy (name changed), is struggling with substance addiction. When Murad visited Aman's home and spoke with him, Aman shared his painful story. He said that his mother no longer lives with him and that he stays with his father. Although his father works,



he does not give Aman any money, forcing him to earn his own living. Aman explained that sometimes he works as

a cleaner in a factory and at other times collects garbage to survive. When asked why he started using drugs, Aman said that bad company led him into addiction and gambling. During the conversation, he also revealed that whatever money he earns is taken away by his father. When asked about his father's income, Aman said that his father also uses drugs. Speaking about his mother, Aman shared that frequent quarrels at home due to his father's addiction troubled her so much that she eventually left the house.

CHILDREN FORCED INTO OPEN DEFECATION DESPITE HAVING A GOVERNMENT TOILET

Talkative Reporters: Golu and Reporter Kishan

Children living in the settlements near Noida Sector 14 shared their distress about being forced to defecate in the open despite the availability of a toilet facility. The children said that there are more than 100 slum huts in the area, and a government toilet is located in front of the settlement. When the toilet was newly built, the children were allowed to use it. However, some older and mischievous children started going inside the toilet, leaving taps open and tampering with light switches and other fittings. Because of these actions, the toilet caretaker became upset and now refuses entry not only to those children but also to well-behaved children who have done nothing wrong. The children said that while adults in the settlement are allowed to use the toilet, children face discrimination. Many times, the caretaker chases the children away from the toilet entrance, forcing them to go for open defecation. The children have repeatedly tried to explain to the caretaker that they are not mischievous and that the wrong acts are done by a few older children, but despite this, the caretaker scolds all children equally. The children also shared that whenever an officer or inspection team visits the toilet, they are temporarily allowed to use it. However, once the inspection officials leave, discrimination against them begins again.

CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PLAY TAKEN AWAY DUE TO THEIR CLOTHES AND PLACE OF LIVING

Balaknama Reporter - Asif

For children living in West Delhi, even playing has begun to feel like a struggle. Everyone loves to play, but when a child is stopped from playing simply because of their clothes and where they live, it deeply hurts their feelings. One such incident came to light involving Rohan (name changed), a 14-year-old boy living in Kamla Nehru Camp, West Delhi. When Rohan went to a nearby park to play, the people present there stopped him from playing solely because his clothes were not good and he came from a slum settlement. Some people in the park clearly told him, 'Children from slums are not allowed to play here.' This statement deeply broke Rohan emotionally. When Balaknama reporter Asif spoke with Rohan, he shared his pain, saying, 'I also want to play, but people say that since I live in a slum, I cannot play here.' While saying this, Rohan looked extremely



disappointed and sad. He said that even though he may not have good clothes, his love for playing is no less than anyone else's. Another nearby resident, Shiv (name changed), aged 12, also shared that children living in slums often face such discrimination. We believe that children should be judged not by their clothing or living conditions, but by their rights. Playing not only makes

children physically strong but also builds confidence and a sense of equality. Keeping slum children away from play is like tampering with their childhood and future. During the discussion, community members also emphasized that all children should have equal rights in parks, regardless of which class or settlement they come from, because the right to play belongs to every child.

SEARCHING FOR WATER, EDUCATION LEFT BEHIND

Talkative Reporter: Ravina & Reporter Kishan

The whole world knows that water is life, but children living in a settlement in Delhi experience daily how difficult life becomes when there isn't even drinking water available. When reporters spoke to the children, they shared their hardships with deep sorrow. Sana (name changed), a 9-year-old girl, explained in detail the problems caused by water scarcity. The children said they live in the Kirti Nagar settlements of Delhi, which include more than 1,000 slum huts spread across a large area. These settlements face a severe shortage of water, causing

children to struggle with many challenges every day. Water is supplied through pipelines, but only from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. People gather near the taps with containers an hour before water arrives to ensure they get some. When water starts flowing, a heavy crowd forms. Adults often push and shove, and abusive language is sometimes used. Many people leave without filling water, which often leads to quarrels. Sana said that children are rarely allowed to fill water. When they stand in line, adults scold them and push them away. If children try to speak up, they are treated harshly. Since not everyone gets water during the scheduled



time, children often arrive late at school. Sometimes, there is no water at all, and they cannot go to school. Families living

near the pipelines often assert dominance and refuse to give water to others. Children said they have thought of installing

a motor, but the narrow lanes make it impossible, and even if they try, people do not allow it. The morning water is only suitable for washing utensils and clothes; it is not safe for drinking. For drinking water, children have to walk more than a kilometer, where fights also occur over water. Carrying water containers on their heads takes a lot of time, further delaying school attendance. As a result, many children cannot attend school regularly. The children said that if pipelines supplying sufficient water were installed in every house in the settlement, they wouldn't have to travel far for water and could reach school on time.

CHILDHOOD GROWING UP BESIDE RAILWAY TRACKS, DANGER LURKS EVERY MOMENT

Balaknama Reporter - Asif

The lives of children living in Kamla Nehru Camp, located along the railway tracks in West Delhi, pass under the constant shadow of danger. Surrounded day and night by the noise of fast-moving trains, dust, and chaos, these children are forced to play, study, and live in unsafe conditions. During a conversation with Balaknama reporter Asif, 11-year-old Mohan (name changed) said, "The trains pass very close. Many times, while playing, we feel scared, but there is no safe place to play." Because of this, children also face mental insecurity and fear. Many children in the settlement are often seen playing extremely

close to the railway tracks, which could lead to a major accident at any time. During the discussion, 15-year-old Salim (name changed), who also lives there, said, "We are poor, but children's lives are valuable. We are forced to live here because we have no other option. Every day passes in fear." Living near railway tracks is not only physically dangerous for children but also mentally harmful. Constant noise and fear are negatively affecting their mental development. Children living near the railway line hope that the government will provide them with safe playgrounds and better living arrangements so that their childhood does not pass in fear and danger.

TEARS IN A CHILD'S EYES AS BLANKET BURNS

Talkative Reporter: Arjun & Reporter Kishan

As the cold intensifies, street and working children are trying in every possible way to protect themselves from the chill. But when the only means of warmth is destroyed, pain and anger are natural. One such distressing incident occurred in a settlement, which Satbir (name changed), a 12-year-old boy, tearfully shared. Satbir explained that he is originally from Bihar and currently lives with his parents in a rented room near a statue in Noida. In the same house, a caretaker also lives, who is often intoxicated. About ten days



before the cold began, Satbir's mother bought a blanket worth ₹1,000 from a nearby market, purchased with great difficulty from the little money they had. This blanket was the family's only protection against the cold. One day, Satbir's mother

put the blanket on the roof to dry in the sun. During this time, the intoxicated caretaker set the blanket on fire. When Satbir went to pick up the blanket from the roof, he saw it burning. Witnessing this, his mother's eyes filled with tears, as the blanket was extremely precious to the family, and they could not afford to buy another one. Satbir said that the family was deeply saddened after the blanket burned. When they asked the intoxicated caretaker to compensate for the loss, he abused them. The landlord also did not provide any solution and simply dismissed the matter by saying, "Now that it's burned, it's burned."

YOUNG HEROES HONORED ON KVEER BAL DIWAS AT VIGYAN BHAVAN



Balaknama Reporter

A grand national ceremony was held at Vigyan Bhavan in the capital on the occasion of Kveer Bal Diwas. Thousands of children from schools across the country participated in this prestigious event. The parents of the children being honored were also present at the ceremony. On this occasion, two children from our community, Ehsaan and Preeti, were part of the program. Both children belong to the N-86 community. Preeti is a reporter for Balaknama newspaper from the N-86 community. She is 16 years

old and studying in 11th grade. The chief guest of the event was Hon'ble President Smt. Draupadi Murmu. Preeti shared that the most emotional and proud moment for her was when the President presented the Prime Minister's National Children's Award (Veer Bal Diwas Trophy) to the brave and talented children from across the country. Ehsaan said that during the ceremony, children associated with various organizations and special schools were honored for their courageous acts and extraordinary talents. One child had lost their life while saving a friend from

an electric shock, and the parents came to receive the award on their behalf. Another child had saved their father from a crocodile, while someone else had scored an outstanding century in cricket. A young girl was honored for singing the Kande Mataram song, whose video was viewed more than 20 million times. In total, around twenty children excelling in different fields were honored. President Smt. Draupadi Murmu met the children and addressed them, saying that today's children are the builders of a developed India tomorrow. She also inspired them to be fearless, courageous, and value-driven, recalling the sacrifices of the Sahibzadas. Preeti and Ehsaan appeared extremely happy to see the President up close and to be part of this historic occasion. They enthusiastically shared this experience with other children and parents in their community.

HARDSHIP DOES NOT SPARE CHILDHOOD

Talkative Reporter: Chhotu Reporter: Kishan

Hardship does not look at age. When a family has to survive, suffering becomes unavoidable. When reporters visited some settlements in Noida and met a 12-year-old boy, he shared that most people in his settlement work as waste pickers and scrap sorters. The boy is originally from Bihar and has four family members—two brothers, one sister, and his mother. His father has passed away. When his father was alive, the children did not have to work, but after his father's death, the problems increased, making it necessary for him to start working. His elder sister is married, and he now lives with her in Noida. From there,

he goes to work sorting scrap at different places. He works from nine in the morning until five in the evening. The scrap arrives in the settlement and contains various materials such as cardboard, plastic, iron, and more, which have to be separated and sorted. Scrap that comes from buildings often contains all kinds of waste and emits a foul smell, but he has to endure it and continue working. At present, he lives with his sister, eats and stays there, and from the monthly earnings he receives, he gives some money to his sister to help with household expenses. The remaining money he sends home to his mother, whose health is not good. This money provides some support to the household.

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

**CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE
NUMBERS IF YOU FACE ANY
PROBLEM.**

Child line Number
1098
Police Helpline Number
100

BADHTE KADAM LEADERS SUBMIT LETTER TO CHILD RIGHTS COMMISSION OVER DOCUMENTATION ISSUES



Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Rahmat

Balaknama reporter Damini visited the Jaisinghpura Khor settlement in Jaipur, where it was revealed that the leaders of Badhte Kadam Sangh submitted a letter to Ms. Naseem Khan, Secretary of the Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, highlighting major obstacles in education—especially the lack of Aadhaar cards,

birth certificates, and other essential documents. In this context, 12-year-old Rahmat (name changed) shared that he first learned about the Commission's work during a Children's Day program held on 14 November, where he was informed that the Commission assists in resolving children's problems. He was told that if there were issues with his documents, he could seek help from the Commission. Rahmat said, "The Secretary told me to

bring my old documents to the Child Commission, assuring me that the problem of my school admission would be resolved. With this hope, my friends and I wrote a letter to the Commission. Many other children in the settlement face similar challenges. Some do not have any documents, some have errors in theirs, and several children are orphaned, making it even more difficult to verify their identity. The names of all these children were also attached with the letter submitted to the Commission. Through the letter, the leaders requested that the department take special initiatives to simplify the process of creating or correcting documents, so that children can attend school regularly and continue their education. This effort by the children not only reflects their awareness of their rights but also demonstrates how serious and vigilant they are about their education.

AMREEN SHAPES HER FUTURE THROUGH SKILL

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Amreen



Balaknama reporter Deepak visited the Bagrana slum in Jaipur, where he learned several important details about the life of 12-year-old girl Amreen (name changed). Amreen shared that, alongside her studies, she helps support her family financially by setting gemstones in earrings and jhumkas at home. She attends school regularly, is interested in learning, and actively engages with her teachers. She also maintains positive interactions with her classmates and is making new friends. At home, Amreen works with her mother to prepare earrings and jhumkas by inserting gemstones. She is able to complete one pair of jhumkas, which sell in the market for approximately ₹30 to ₹40. On average, she makes about 10 pairs of jhumkas per day. While her education provides a strong foundation for her future,

this jewelry-making skill has become an additional and valuable talent. Balancing school and household work remains a significant challenge for her. Due to her family's weak financial situation, Amreen has had to contribute economically from a young age. If she is given opportunities to learn new skills and receive proper guidance, she could play an important role in improving her family's financial situation in the future. This young girl from Bagrana slum is striving to build a better life through her hard work, dedication, and sense of responsibility.



CHILDREN FORCED TO CARRY FLOWER POTS AND LIGHTS AT WEDDING FUNCTIONS

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Kumud

Many children living in various informal settlements of Jaipur are still forced to shoulder responsibilities far beyond their age. Due to financial hardship and the need to meet daily household expenses, these children work at wedding ceremonies carrying flower pots, lights, and other decoration materials. While this work provides them with some income that helps support their families, it comes at the cost of their childhood, education, and health. One such scene was observed in an informal settlement near Agra Road, where several girls were seen waiting along the roadside with their mothers and elder sisters to carry lights. When the reporter asked the girls why they did this work and how much they earned in a day, 14-year-old Sarojini (name

changed) shared that she earns around three hundred rupees for carrying lights for three to four hours. She explained that her father's daily wages are not enough to run the household, so during the wedding season she has to go to work. Thirteen-year-old Payal (name changed) said that she wants to study, but many times she is forced to work because there is a shortage of money at home. Meanwhile, 11-year-old Priya (name changed) said that many boys and girls from their settlement work during the wedding season carrying lights along with neighbors or family members. The work is very tiring, but if they do not work, the difficulties at home increase. The children's words bring to light the harsh reality of their lives, where at an age meant for play and education, they are compelled to carry the heavy burden of flower pots and tangled wires.

FORCED TO WORK UNDER THE BURDEN OF DEBT

Talkative Reporter: Raman
Reporter: Kishan

Despite facing many hardships, street and working children do not give up. They continue to work in one way or another to improve their family's financial condition so that their household can survive. Fourteen-year-old Golu (name changed), who lives in Gurugram, shared his life story.

He said, "I am originally from Bihar and used to live there earlier. There are six members in my family. My father worked as a mason and my mother stayed at home. Suddenly, my sister's marriage was fixed, but we did not have enough money to arrange it properly. So my father took a loan for her wedding. The loan amount was quite large, and he was unable to repay it. Because of this, our family moved to Gurugram. After coming here, we searched for a place in a slum and started living there on rent. The burden of debt was on the entire family. To repay the loan as soon as possible, I also started working at a bicycle repair shop. Just as we were slowly repaying the loan, an order was issued to demolish the slum, and our hut was broken down. After the demolition, we faced many difficulties.



Then we searched for another nearby place where slums existed and started living there again. After our hut was demolished, I also lost my job at the bicycle shop. To manage household expenses and repay the loan, I began collecting scrap. One day, on the way, I met workers from Chetna Sanstha. They asked me to come and study at their center. But my mind was filled with worries about problems at home. I told them that I would ask my parents and let them know. In the evening,

when I spoke to my parents, they agreed. Then I started going to the Chetna Sanstha center. Seeing other children there made me very happy. I joined the center, learned drawing, and learned many new things. I started liking it a lot and began going to the center every day. After a few days, the organization's workers also got me enrolled in the fourth grade of a government school. Now I go to school every day and feel very happy. Today, our loan has also been fully repaid.

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PARENTS' AWARENESS IS KEY TO CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Sonu

It is extremely important for parents to be aware of and responsible for their children's education, nutrition, and health. But what happens when parents decide that they are not responsible for anything and use going to work as a shield to avoid their duties? What direction will children receive then? One such incident came to light from Bapu Basti in Jaipur. In a ground filled with stones, bricks, construction debris, and heaps of garbage, two children were seen extracting iron rods from cement blocks using hammers. When Balaknama reporter spoke to the children—12-year-old Tonu and 10-year-old Monu (both names changed)—it was revealed that the two brothers live in Bapu Basti and work daily in this dumping yard, separating leftover iron pieces from construction debris

and selling them. In this way, they earn around 100 rupees a day, sometimes even more. What was more shocking was that both children are enrolled in school, and their school is located just a short distance from this dumping yard. When asked why they were working instead of going to school, the children said that they sometimes do go to school. Further inquiry revealed that due to extreme negligence and irresponsibility of the parents, the children had started skipping school to collect iron scrap. The father is addicted to alcohol and has illicit relationships elsewhere, which leads to frequent fights at home. The mother chews gutka and does not fulfill any responsibilities such as preparing the children for school, cooking meals on time, or washing clothes. The father often returns late at night after drinking, and as soon as arguments begin, both children leave the house, with



the dumping yard becoming their only escape. The children shared that their names are registered in Classes 4 and 5,

but they have not attended school for the past two months. The ground where the children work emits an unbearable

stench, yet the children work at heights where there is a risk of falling, along with constant dangers of illness, harassment, and exploitation. When the Balaknama reporter spoke to the children's mother, she made excuses about going to work and tried to avoid responsibility by blaming the children for not wanting to study. This is how a child who should be going to school ends up collecting scrap or iron, eventually gets his or her name removed from school, and then finds returning to school to be a major challenge. The story of Tonu and Monu shows that when parents turn a blind eye to their children and see them merely as beings who come home in the evening to eat and sleep, children lose direction. Children can certainly change with guidance, advice, and education—but is it not equally necessary for parents to change as well?

SUPPORT FROM KBADHTE KADAML BRINGS RELIEF TO A FAMILY IN CRISIS

Talkative Reporter: Shazia
Reporter: Kishan

If everyone receives information before a disaster strikes, perhaps the problem would not become so severe. At a time when the monsoon was at its peak and devastation was visible everywhere, a family living in Punjab came to West Delhi because they were unable to sustain themselves there and could not find work. Out of compulsion, they arrived in Delhi with only a few clothes and some basic belongings. However, the very next day after reaching Delhi, they received the news that due to heavy rainfall, floods had hit Punjab. As a result, their house was washed away, and all their household belongings were swept away by the strong floodwaters. On hearing this,



the family could not stop crying. When some people from the settlement spoke to them and asked why they had come there, the family shared that there was no work in their village, so they had come to Delhi in search of livelihood. They had no idea that such a disaster would strike. They had no money, no work, and no familiarity with the place. They had thought that if any problem arose while staying

here, they could seek help from people in their village, but now those people were also affected by the floods and were in no position to help. Hearing this, some residents of the settlement stepped forward to help the family. They gave them some money so they could buy ration items and also provided clothes to wear and cover themselves. The very next day, arrangements for work were also made for them, which gave the family significant support. All this information was shared by 12-year-old Shivani (name changed), a member of Badhte Kadam, with her family and neighbors, after which everyone came together to help the family. After receiving help, the smile that returned to the family's faces was the true measure of the success of this collective effort.



FATHER ABANDONED AFTER MOTHER'S DEATH, GRANDPARENTS AND UNCLE TOOK CHARGE

Balaknama Reporter: Kishan

It is often said that when a father's protective presence is there, no problem can harm his children. But when a father's behavior itself is unstable, a family can begin to fall apart. The story of 14-year-old Vihan (name changed), who lives in Gurugram, reflects this reality. When reporters spoke to him in detail about his life, the boy shared that he currently lives in Gurugram with his maternal grandfather. His family consists of six members—two sisters, one brother, his grandfather, and two maternal uncles. He lives with his grandfather and uncles. Vihan explained that when he was about six years old, his mother passed away. After that, his father took care of the children for a year or two, but later he decided to remarry and, in the process,

abandoned the children. After this, his maternal grandfather became their support. Today, the boy has no relationship with his father and does not communicate with him at all. At present, Vihan goes to school and also attends the education club run by Chetna Sanstha for his studies. After returning from his classes there, he helps his grandfather and uncles sell snacks such as samosas and bread pakoras, which helps run the household. The boy shared that sometimes, when he makes a mistake and his grandfather or uncles scold him, he starts missing his mother. However, his grandfather and uncles never let him feel that he has lost his mother's care and protection. After his father left, he received both a mother's and a father's love from his grandfather and uncles, and today he feels happy living his life with them.

CAN ANYONE KNOW ABOUT A DISASTER BEFORE IT STRIKES?

Talkative Reporter: Shivani
Reporter: Kishan

Does anyone really know before a disaster arrives? Everyone knows that a disaster can strike at any time, but how can one say that it should not happen from now on? A 15-year-old girl, Ruhi (name changed), who lives in a rented building near Noida Sector 5, shared an incident that occurred close to her home. She said that her family lives in a rented building with three floors and more than 30 rooms. All the families in the building use large gas cylinders for cooking. A few days ago, a very dangerous accident took place in the building, which she wanted to share. In a house near hers, a woman had received a new gas cylinder. Usually, her

daughter installs the regulator on the new cylinder. That day, the girl had stepped out for a while to buy household items. In her absence, the woman tried to fit the regulator herself. The regulator got attached partially but was not fitted properly, which caused gas to start leaking. She did not realize this and lit the stove. Within minutes, the gas spread rapidly and the cylinder caught fire. In no time, a massive fire broke out. People nearby tried their best to control the fire. Some poured water, others used wet sacks, but the fire did not extinguish. While trying to put out the fire, several people burned their hands and arms. Eventually, the fire brigade was called. After arriving, the fire brigade managed to control the fire

after a lot of effort. However, by then, a great deal of damage had already occurred. All the household ration, clothes, stove, and refrigerator were completely burnt to ashes. The family had no money, so they borrowed money from the owner of the place where they worked, bought new items, and managed to cool food again. When the fire broke out, the landlord did not even come to check what had happened or whether any help was needed. He came only in the evening after everything was over and merely scolded them, warning that such an incident should not happen again in the building. The girl said that although it was considered their fault, they were the ones who had to bear the punishment and consequences.

THE FLIGHT OF DREAMS BECOMES A BARRIER TO EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak

Balaknama reporter Deepal visited various informal settlements in Jaipur. During the visit, some children were seen riding new bicycles in a slum on Agra Road. When the reporter asked them where they got the bicycles and why they were not going to school, the children explained that they had saved the money themselves to buy the bicycles. About 10-year-old Rahul (name changed) shared, "We all pooled our money together and bought bicycles. Earlier, we used to watch others ride bicycles and really wanted one. Now that we

have our own bicycles, we are very happy. Many children in the settlement had a passion for cycling, but due to lack of money, not all could afford one. So, they collected money together and finally purchased bicycles. Currently, about ten children in the settlement own bicycles. While this fulfilled the children's dream, it has had a negative impact on their education. Now, the children spend the entire day riding bicycles and do not feel inclined to go to school. Some children fall and get injured while riding. Younger children ride larger bicycles, which poses significant risks. School



authorities have expressed concern over declining attendance and lack of focus on studies. Many children leave home under the pretext of going to school but end up wandering on the streets with their bicycles, leaving parents unaware of their actual whereabouts. School staff have also observed children riding bicycles on roads during school hours. Alarming, some of the children riding bicycles are supposed to appear for board exams this year. Spending more time cycling than studying is seriously affecting their education, and they are unable to complete their textbooks.

FIRE IGNITED BY NEGLIGENCE: CHILDREN BURNED IN GAS SHOP, BUT BRAVERY SAVED LIVES

Balaknama Reporter: Preeti Kumari

On Saturday evening, a severe fire broke out in a gas shop in the N-86 community, causing panic. In this tragic incident, some children operating the shop were caught in the flames and suffered burns. However, quick thinking and brave action by a nearby individual prevented a major disaster and saved the children's lives. Negligence was a major factor behind the accident, as some children had opened the shop in the absence of their parents. In the evening, a few customers came to refill gas cylinders. While filling the gas, safety rules were ignored,



and during this time, one child lit a matchstick. Gas had already accumulated inside the shop, causing the fire to flare up suddenly. The fire spread so quickly that several children inside were caught in it. Some suffered severe burns on their hands, while others

had their feet burned. Panic ensued immediately, and a large crowd gathered at the scene. Amid the chaos, a man nearby recognized the severity of the situation and, without regard for his own safety, ran into the flames and rescued the children. The man also suffered burns on his hand while saving them. Local residents joined in extinguishing the fire and assisting with relief efforts. The injured children were immediately taken to a nearby hospital and admitted in serious condition. Doctors placed them under intensive care. After four days of treatment, all the children are now out of danger and have returned home healthy.

A SMALL NEGLIGENCE, A BIG DANGER

**Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Gautam**

When Balaknama reporter Deepal visited the Mangyawas settlement in Jaipur, Baatuni reporter Gautam shared an incident that occurred on Diwali night. While all the children were joyfully bursting firecrackers, a small accident happened to about 10-year-old Rohit (name changed), a Class 4 student. Rohit was playing with firecrackers along with his friends when suddenly one firecracker exploded in his hand, causing severe burns. To understand the incident in detail, the reporter met Rohit. Rohit explained that while



lighting firecrackers one by one with his friends, he thought one firecracker had gone out, but suddenly it exploded in his hand. Rohit said he would never light firecrackers without adult supervision again. His family immediately took him to the hospital, where doctors provided first aid and advised rest for several days, which caused him to miss school. He is still unable to hold a pen properly or protect his hand fully. When the reporter asked him again to understand the situation, Rohit said that this Diwali became a big lesson for him. It has been almost a month since he has been unable to attend school, and he is facing difficulties in performing daily tasks. The clear lesson from this incident is that firecrackers should never be lit without adult supervision, and safety rules must always be followed. With caution, festivals bring joy—not pain or accidents.

THE APPEAL OF CHILDREN FROM A NOMADIC SETTLEMENT: ENSURE THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter: Damini

When Balaknama reporter Damini spoke with the Badhte Kadam leaders at the Jaysinghpura Khor Center, she learned that a Nomadic Community Employment Fair had been organized a few days earlier. On this occasion, Honorable Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari and MLA Balamukund Acharya participated and were welcomed in the settlement with great enthusiasm. During the program, children

presented handmade paper flowers and bouquets to the guests. The leaders of the Badhte Kadam collective submitted a petition to the Honorable Deputy Chief Minister highlighting issues related to children's education. The key points raised in the petition were that the long distance between the settlement and schools creates obstacles to regular attendance; the benefits of the Transfer Voucher Scheme, as per the Education Department's guidelines, are not being provided; and

due to the lack of documents, more than 100 children from the settlement are deprived of school admission and education.

About 12-year-old boy Abhishel (name changed) shared that he does not have an Aadhaar card or other documents, which is why he has been unable to enroll in school. He expressed his wish for the government to help them so that they too can study. The children requested the Honorable Deputy Chief Minister to take prompt action to resolve these issues. Thirteen-

year-old girl Sakshi said that getting the opportunity to speak with leaders made her feel that her voice was truly being heard. Sakshi shared that she wants to continue her education and become a teacher in the future, and she was provided with financial encouragement of 1,000 rupees to support her studies. This program not only gave children a platform to present their problems but also instilled new hope and confidence in them, assuring them that their voices have now reached the government.

FATHER'S CARE TAKES PRIORITY, BOY LEAVES SCHOOL

**Talkative Reporter: Arman
Reporter: Kishan**

Compulsions and hardships surround us in many forms, and no one knows when painful problems may arise. When a child is focusing well on education and a sudden crisis occurs, attention is inevitably diverted away from studies. This is exactly what happened with a boy named

Titu (name changed), who lives in Noida. When reporters met the boy and asked whether he was currently continuing his education, he shared his story. In his own words, the boy said that he is currently 15 years old and, until three months ago, he used to attend school every day. He was studying in Class 7. His family consists of only his father and himself, as his mother has

passed away. His father works as a house painter and would leave daily for work, while Titu would go to school in the morning. One day, while painting a house, his father suddenly fell from the third floor, resulting in a broken leg and severe injuries to his body. At that time, the boy was at school. As soon as he received the news, he rushed to the hospital. Seeing his

father's condition left him deeply distressed. There was no one at home to earn or to take care of his father. His father was unable to stand or walk. As a result, Titu had to stop going to school and began taking care of his father. This also led to financial difficulties at home. Later, he started working for a contractor in the settlement where he lived, doing earth-filling work in

slum areas. For this work, he earned 300 rupees per day and continued it for about six months. After six months, his father's condition improved somewhat. At present, Titu works while also attending the Education Club run by Chetna Sanstha to continue his studies. His father is now slowly recovering and is making efforts to return to work.

ELDER SISTER'S MARRIAGE FORCES GIRL TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Balaknama Reporter

Street and working children face numerous challenges in their lives, yet they are always ready to fight against every difficulty. Sudden circumstances sometimes force them to make decisions that directly impact their future and life.

During a conversation with approximately 15-year-old Rozi (name changed), who lives near Noida Sector 76, her life story came to light. The girl shared, I am 15-16 years old. I am still a

child myself, but I have to take care of other children. The reporter was momentarily taken aback by this revelation. On discussing further, she explained that until a few months ago, she used to attend school regularly for Class 7. However, some time later, her elder sister's marriage was fixed. Due to financial constraints, her father stopped her from going to school, saying that money was needed for the wedding, and she would have to work temporarily to help with her sister's marriage. Rozi now works at a nearby building,

taking care of children. She works from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and in return earns 9,000 rupees per month, which she gives to her parents for her sister's wedding. She mentioned that the lady at the house where she works takes good care of her, ensuring her health, food, and other needs, which gives her some relief. However, she also stated that she is unable to continue her studies, and her education has been put on hold. Her father has promised that once her sister's wedding is over, she will be re-enrolled in school.



TINY HANDS CLEANING GARLIC, A CHILDHOOD DRIFTING AWAY FROM RIGHTS

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak Talaklive Reporter: Payal

Balaknama reporter Deepak visited various informal settlements in Jaipur. During this visit, in Bagrana settlement, he saw a nearly 13-year-old girl, Noopur (name changed), cleaning garlic. The reporter spoke with the girl and asked why she was doing this work. The girl shared that several other girls in the settlement also do the same work. For this task, the girls are paid at the rate of 40 rupees per kilogram and are required to clean four to five kilograms of garlic, through which they earn approximately 140 to 200 rupees a day. This

work has a negative impact on the girls' education, as they do not get enough time to complete schoolwork or study. The girl, Payal (name changed), explained that her father is no longer alive and her mother alone bears the responsibility of running the household, which makes the family's financial condition weak. To support her family, she does this work, and the income helps meet small household expenses. Along with this, the work involves a great deal of physical labor, which can be harmful to the girls' health. To free girls from such labor, it is necessary to connect them with government schemes and support programs.

UNCONTROLLED INTERNET USE IS HARMING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



Balaknama Reporter - Sandhya

During a survey conducted in a slum area of Shivaji Park, Delhi, Balaknama reporters found that many children are drifting away from their studies due to excessive use of mobile phones, online gaming, social media, and watching video reels. Because of the growing misuse of the internet, children are not attending

school regularly. Most parents remain busy earning a livelihood throughout the day, which children take advantage of by keeping mobile phones under the excuse of online studies. Children lie to their parents and spend time playing games and watching reels with friends, while parents are often not aware of what their children are actually watching on mobile

phones. Excessive addiction to the internet and mobile phones is diverting children's focus from studies, negatively impacting their discipline, education, and behavior, and in some cases, leading them to drop out of school. Considering this situation, the Balaknama reporter gathered all the children for a meeting and explained the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phone usage. Children were informed that excessive mobile use at a young age harms eyesight, causes lack of sleep, and diverts them from their goals, leading to various health problems. They were also educated about the positive use of the internet, such as children's poems, educational stories, study materials, and information on child rights. At the end of the meeting, all the children pledged that they would not play games on mobile phones and would use the internet only for education and learning.

HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITY TURNS TRAGIC FOR A TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Balaknama Reporter - Ritika Child Reporter - Nandini

A painful incident came to light in Nathupur settlement, Gurugram, where a 10-year-old girl Ruhi (name changed), who migrated from a village in Bihar with her family, was severely burned while making tea. During a visit by Balaknama reporter Ritika, child reporter Nandini shared that the girl was helping her mother with household chores as usual. Her mother was busy



knitting a sweater, so Ruhi took responsibility for making tea. While removing the vessel of

boiling tea, her hand slipped, and the entire pot fell on her hand, causing severe burns. After the incident, there was chaos at home, and the family immediately took the child to a nearby health center for first aid. Doctors said the burns were deep and would take time to heal, requiring regular dressing and medication for several days. Local residents said Ruhi is very mature for her age and often helps her mother, but a small mistake resulted in a serious injury.

DOMESTIC STRIFE AND WRONG DECISIONS SNATCHED AWAY A CHILD'S MATERNAL CARE

Bureau Report

Every person makes countless mistakes in life, but we rarely realize the consequences of our actions in time. When a mistake turns into a tragedy, it can devastate the lives of the youngest and most vulnerable. In Noida, a 9-year-old boy, Ramesh (name changed), who lives in a rented house near a statue, shared his story. His family consists of only him and his father. About eight or nine months ago, his mother was still alive and living with them. Ramesh recalls that life was much better when his mother was around. His mother is a mother; she shields her children from sorrow before it even reaches them, he said. But then, his father worked as a mason, and his mother did labor in small houses, while Ramesh attended fourth grade. Of whatever his father earned, he would give some to his mother and keep some for himself, which he spent on alcohol. His mother was unhappy with this and often tried to reason with him. One day, his father, heavily intoxicated, fell on the road. When his mother found out, she went to bring him home. She was furious and distressed, scolding him for his behavior.

However, his father did not listen and, in his drunken state, physically assaulted her. The next day, his father went to work, and Ramesh went to school. But that night, his mother's anger and heartbreak overwhelmed her, leading her to make a tragic decision. With no one else at home, she hanged herself from the ceiling fan. When neighbors discovered what had happened, chaos ensued. His father rushed home, and Ramesh was called back from school. Upon witnessing the scene, he fainted. Police were informed, and the situation left everyone shocked. His father, distraught, eventually fled. Afterward, Ramesh's grandparents arrived and handled the funeral and other arrangements. Now, Ramesh lives with his grandparents. Despite this, the trauma continues to haunt him, and he misses his mother deeply. Whenever he remembers her, he cries to find some relief. Journalists comforted him, explaining that everyone has their own time in this world and that, for now, his grandparents are his guardians and caregivers. They encouraged him to remain happy with them and cherish the love and support they provide.

CHILDREN USE PUPPETS, POSTERS & RALLIES TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak,
Talkative Reporter: Kanha

In Jaipur's various informal settlements, a special awareness program for street and working children was held on World Day Against Child Labor. The goal was to educate children against child labor, raise awareness of their rights, and stress the importance of education. With active participation, children created posters expressing their views and feelings clearly. Then they performed a poignant puppet play featuring a boy and girl, showing how working in hotels instead of attending school can rob a child of their entire childhood. The play conveyed to children and the

community that child labor disrupts not just education but health, self-esteem, and future dreams. Poetry readings and speech competitions were also held, where children shared their thoughts on children's rights, the importance of education, and the harmful effects of child labor. Their voices carried pain from experience and glimpses of hope and change. A public awareness rally was also organized where children raised slogans like "Not work—we want education!" and "Stop child labor!", energizing the atmosphere with resolve. The rally's aim was to convey clearly to the community that every child has the right to study, play, and live their dreams.

Children also wrote letters to the Child Labor Department sharing their thoughts and suggestions. 13-year-old Siya, who took part in the puppet play, shared: "When I took the role of that girl who left school to work, I remembered my difficult times. It felt good doing this because now we are raising our voice." Likewise, 14-year-old Kanha told: "I wrote to the Child Labor Department asking them to plan for children who leave school to work so they can go to school like me." This program became a platform for children to speak, and a strong signal to the community and relevant departments: children are now aware and ready to assert their rights.



HARSH WINTER HAS INCREASED THE HARDSHIPS OF STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter - Anjali
Child Reporter - Nandini

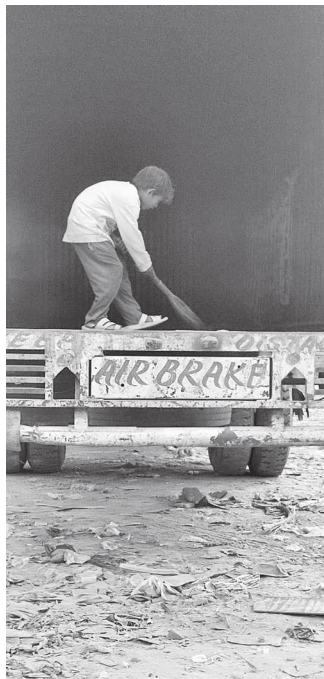
The severe cold being experienced in Haryana has further increased the difficulties of street-connected children and those living in slum settlements. When Balaknama reporter Anjali visited the Goga Colony slum in Badshahpur, Gurugram, the impact of the harsh winter was clearly visible. Due to the lack of basic facilities, the winter season becomes extremely challenging for residents. Water is supplied to the settlement only once a day at a fixed time, which people store, but due to the cold, the stored water becomes extremely cold. Because of financial constraints, families cannot afford to heat water repeatedly using gas and are forced to drink cold water and bathe with it. Children shared that if they were in their native villages,

they could light fires to protect themselves from the cold, but here firewood is so expensive that it can only be purchased for cooking purposes. Children encountered on their way to school said that the winter season has become longer, and most of them own only one sweater, which takes a long time to dry after washing. As a result, many times they are unable to go to school without a sweater or are forced to take leave. Due to a lack of money, parents are unable to provide additional warm clothing on time, which is affecting both the children's education and health. Many children suffer from cold and cough frequently. The children also shared that there is no proper arrangement to safely store clothes in the huts, and due to rats and harsh weather conditions, clothes get damaged quickly.

STOLEN CHILDHOOD: A YOUNG CHILD FORCED INTO TRUCK CLEANING

Child Reporter - Laxmi
Balaknama Reporter - Rajkishore

Recently, when Balaknama newspaper reporter Rajkishore visited the settlements near the ghat area, discussions with children revealed that a 10-11-year-old child lives in a nearby settlement. The child is originally from Bengal and has been living there with his parents for several years. Children said that the child goes daily to a nearby parking area to clean trucks, where he cleans two to three trucks and earns money to manage his food and basic needs. When children from the Chetna organization's education center asked him why he works at such a young age, he said that he needs money to buy food and essential items,



which is why he works. The children also mentioned that

he sometimes encourages other children to join him in working and earning money. When the Balaknama reporter reached the site, he observed that the child was indeed engaged in the risky task of cleaning trucks, which clearly falls under the category of child labor. Later, when the reporter visited the child's home, it was found that his parents had gone out for daily wage labor. The reporter informed the local residents that he would return the next day to speak directly with the parents. This incident highlights that even today, many children are forced to engage in dangerous work to meet their basic needs, and the Balaknama team will take further action to connect such children with safety and education.

FORCED TO WORK, DENIED EDUCATION: THE REALITY OF STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter - Rajkishore
Child Reporter - Rohit

When Balaknama newspaper reporter Rajkishore visited a market in Gurugram, he observed two to three small children pleading with passersby to buy pens. The children were repeatedly heard saying, "Brother, please buy a pen. We haven't eaten for days, our sister is also hungry. It's just a 10-rupee

pen." If someone refused to buy a pen, the children would ask for money for food and, in many cases, follow the person until they received something. During conversation with the reporter, the children shared that their parents also work at traffic signals and on roads, where they earn small amounts of money by cleaning vehicles. The parents themselves provided the children with pens and

instructed them to sell them to people and bring home whatever money they earned so that food arrangements could be made. Because of this, the children are unable to attend school and spend most of their time working on the streets. This situation clearly shows how poverty is forcing street-connected and working children to leave education and engage in labor at a very young age.

UNSAFE STREETS ENDANGER WORKING CHILDREN: CHILD HIT BY SPEEDING AUTO

Balaknama Reporter - Ritika
Child Reporter - Vicky

Severe negligence in road safety in Chakkarpur settlement of Gurugram is becoming a major threat to children's lives. During a recent area visit by Balaknama reporter Ritika, it was found that many children play and work near roads where there is a constant fear of accidents due to speeding vehicles. Local child reporter Vicky said that autos, rickshaws, and bikes move at very high speeds here, and drivers do not slow down even after seeing small children, putting their lives at risk every moment. Recently, due to this negligence, a serious accident occurred when Jeet, a child studying at Chetna NGOs center, was

going on his bicycle to bring household items. A speeding auto driven by an elderly man hit his bicycle from behind. The impact was so severe that Jeet fell on the road and suffered a deep injury to his hand, causing heavy bleeding. Nearby children and people immediately helped him, but the auto driver fled the scene without stopping. Vicky stated that this was not an isolated incident, as there are no speed breakers, warning signs, or traffic monitoring systems in Chakkarpur lanes. As a result, children remain in serious danger while going to school, working, or playing. If road safety measures are not improved soon, such accidents may endanger more children's lives in the future.

You can also support in the publication of the Balaknama newspaper. For more info please contact : info@chetnango.org

This newsletter is for limited delivery only. All the pictures are printed by the approval of the children.

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