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Abhimanyu Singh goes grey for Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Lahore 1947'

Actor Abhimanyu Singh will be seen as an antagonist in Rajkumar Santoshi's upcoming film 'Lahore 1947' starring Sunny Deol. The filmmaker said that Abhimanyu's intensity, voice, and... **12**



Celebrating Innovation and Sustainability MEI and NMDC host National Seminar

The National Seminar on 'Advanced Iron Ore Beneficiation and Sustainable Low Grade Iron Ore Utilization' concluded... **02**



Google launches 2nd fund worth \$10 mn for Ukraine-based startups

Google on Saturday announced a second startup support fund for Ukraine worth \$10 million, to allocate equity-free cash awards throughout 2024 and 2025. Since the devastating... **07**

Bhatti Vikramarka slams BRS leaders

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : Finance Minister & Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka today said irrigation projects built by the previous government, including Kaleswaram project had turned out to be useless.



CM wishes KCR on his birthday

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy today wished the first Chief Minister of Telangana, Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao, on his birthday. "Happy birthday to KCR, who played a key role in

State and Central politics for 40 years," the CM announced in the assembly and said he wanted KCR to play the role of the leader of the Opposition efficiently in the reconstruction of Telangana.

Kaleshwaram project now useless: Uttam

Hyderabad, Feb.17 (IANS) : Minister for Irrigation Uttam Kumar Reddy has informed that the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) has been damaged due to poor design, quality and corruption and the project is currently useless and cannot be filled with water.

Uttam Kumar Reddy released a white paper on the Telangana Irrigation projects and later made a power point presentation on the subject in the Assembly on Saturday.

Addressing the House, the Minister said that the destructive irrigation policies adopted by the previous government put the State under a great risk and the wrong policies, huge debts and corruption incurred huge burden on the Telangana State. He said former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao had acted as the chief engineer and chief designer for the Kaleshwaram project.



India successfully puts into orbit its 3rd Gen Meteorological satellite - INSAT-3DS

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), Feb 17 (IANS) : India successfully put into orbit its third generation meteorological/weather satellite INSAT-3DS on Saturday evening in a copybook style. The 2,274 kg INSAT-3DS was carried by Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) rocket code-named as GSLV-F14.

The INSAT-3DS is India's third generation meteorological satellite and is fully funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

It is designed for enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning. The satellite has a life span of 10 years.

INSAT-3DS augments the Meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR in-orbit satellites, said Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

At around 5.35 p.m., the three staged GSLV rocket standing 51.7 metre tall and weighing 420 tonnes rose up into the skies from the second launch pad here.

Breaking free from the Earth's gravitational pull, the rocket went up and up with a bright orange fire at its tail.

As the GSLV rocket ascended towards the skies, its engine roar reverberated over the rocket port like a rolling thunder much to the thrill of the people there.

In the rocket mission control room, Indian space scientists at ISRO were glued to their computer screens watching



the rocket's flight progress. Just over 19 minutes into the flight, the rocket slung INSAT-3DS into the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

From there the satellite will be taken up by firing its on-board motors to its final position-the Geo-Stationary Orbit (GSO).



Seethakka inaugurates RTC base camp at Medaram temple

Medaram, Feb 17 (IANS) : Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka on Saturday inaugurated the TSRTC base camp set up at Medaram temple in Mulugu district for the convenience of devotees on the occasion of Sri

Sammakka Saralamamma Jataru. As the biennial Sammakka Saralama Jataru is scheduled to be held from Feb 21 to 24, the State govt is initiating all kinds of measures so that the devotees do not face any inconvenience during the fair.



BRS-BJP alliance likely for Lok Sabha elections

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : An alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) is likely in Telangana for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Few leaders in BRS have not ruled out an alliance or an understanding between the two parties to check the ruling Congress party. BRS leader K. Kavitha's reply to a question from media persons on Saturday appears to have given credence to the buzz in the political

circles. "This is beyond my understanding or capacity in the party," she said when asked about the talk of a likely alliance between BRS and BJP. "I have no awareness about the discussions happening between both these parties," said Kavitha, daughter of BRS president and former chief minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

Unlike in the past, Kavitha did not straightaway rule out alliance with the BJP, which itself indicates a shift in the party's approach.

Resolution on caste survey is eyewash : Kavitha

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K. Kavitha has termed as eyewash the resolution passed in Telangana Assembly for conducting caste census in the state. She alleged that the resolution was moved by the Congress government with an eye on the Lok Sabha polls. Stating that the government is not sincere in providing political reservation for OBCs, she asked why

it did not bring a Bill for caste census. "However, the Congress made the most insincere effort yesterday in the Assembly by placing the resolution. This shows the insincerity of the Congress government towards OBC sections. This is very unfortunate. The resolution is an eyewash. This won't work. It will not stand anywhere in the court and it will not empower the government to conduct the survey," she said. The BRS leader said if the Congress government was sincere, it should

bring a Bill in the Assembly on the lines of Bihar, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The BRS MLC noted that there have been demands from across the country for caste census. She said the BRS completely supported the demand. She claimed that it was only after the demand from BRS and the pressure from people that the government passed a resolution.



Ex-minister Niranjan Reddy catches Uttam Kumar Reddy wrong

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : Former agriculture minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, in a statement, responded to Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy's remarks in connection with Saralasar project in Wanaparthy district, in the assembly.



Jupally demands Harish Rao's resignation from MLA post

Hyderabad, Feb 17 (IANS) : Minister for Excise and Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao has demanded that former minister Harish Rao resign from his MLA post for taking a responsi-



bility that huge scale corruption has been taken place during the execution of the Kaleshwaram project.



Celebrating Innovation and Sustainability MEAI and NMDC host National Seminar

Hyderabad, 17 February 2024: The National Seminar on 'Advanced Iron Ore Beneficiation and Sustainable Low Grade Iron Ore Utilization' concluded on Saturday, making meaningful strides towards the sustainable growth of the industry. Leaping into the future of iron ore processing, this Seminar was organized by the Mining Engineers' Association of India, Hyderabad Chapter and the country's largest iron ore producer - NMDC. At its valedictory function, Chief Guest Shri Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge) NMDC said, "Advanced beneficiation and the sustainable utilization of low-grade iron ore represent a critical challenge and an opportunity for our industry. We at NMDC, have a special focus on maximum resource utilization and circularity. By pushing the boundaries with innovation and technology transfer while committing to ESG, we can not only meet the demands of the present but also secure a resilient and responsible future for the iron ore industry." Guests of Honour Shri S.N. Mathur, President MEAI; Shri P.R. Tripathi, Former CMD, NMDC; and Shri M. Narsaiah, Secretary General, MEAI along with Presiding Officer Shri Vinay Kumar, Director Technical NMDC and Chairman MEAI, Hyderabad Chapter were also present at the Valedictory ceremony.

SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED

Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032 Administrative office: 6th Floor (Level 2), Building No.02, Aarum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of Shriram Finance Limited, (Formerly known as Shriram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shriram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shriram Transport Company Limited name Changed as Shriram Finance Limited, by its Incorporation dt.30-11-2022) under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules, on this 17th day of February, 2024.

Borrower Name and Address	Amount due as per Demand Notice
1) Manoj Kumar Darla S/o Govind, Age:46yrs, Occu:Petrol Bunk, R/O:Prudhvi Residency, Flat No.301, Kousalya Colony, Mourya Restaurant, Ivos Petrol Bunk, Opp Bachupalli, Hyderabad. Pincode:500090	Rs.1,83,92,388/- (One Crore Eighty Three Lakhs Ninety Two Thousand Three Hundred And Eighty Eight Rupees Only)
2) Darla Swetha Chandra W/o Manoj Kumar, Age:40yrs, R/O:Prudhvi Residency, Flat No.301, Kousalya Colony, Mourya Restaurant, Ivos Petrol Bunk, Opp Bachupalli, Hyderabad, Pincode:500090.	Three Lakhs Ninety Two Thousand Three Hundred And Eighty Eight Rupees Only
3) Cherukuri Sridhar S/o Hanumanth Rao, Age:43yrs, Occu:Granite & Agriculture, R/O:H.No.11-10-325/C, Ward No.4, Raparthi Nagar-1, Khammam. Pincode:507001	

MDHR11F1602250001 - DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:
Property Holder Name: Darla Swetha Chandra With Document No: 750/2016 Open Land to an extent of 405.60sq.Yards or 338.13sq.Mtrs Part of H.No.17-766/1 Situated At Madhira Village, Grampanchayath And Mandal, Khammam District Registration District, Khammam and Sub-District, Madhira Bounded As Under: Towards East: GP Road Towards West : R & B Road, Towards North :Open Land of Thummuluri Narayana & Sons, Towards South : Sites of Darla Srinivas Rao, Darla Murali Mohan & Darla Laxmi Narayana

This notice is also hereby to caution the general public at large that the authorized officer of SFL is in the lawful Symbolic Possession of the immovable property mentioned herein above and the Borrowers or any person shall not after receipt of this notice transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise deal with/ alienate any of the above mentioned secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of SFL.

Place: Madhira
Date: 17-02-2024

- Sd/- Authorized Officer
Shriram Finance Limited



KCR's birthday celebrations were grand in Sirisilla

Rajanna Sirisilla, Feb 17 (TIM Bureau) : The 70th birthday celebrations of Telangana State's first Chief Minister and State President of BRS Party Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao were celebrated in Sirisilla. On this occasion, BRS Party District President Thota Agaiah, Nafcab Chairman Konduri Ravinder Rao and State Secretary Guduri Praveen celebrated the birthday by cutting a cake and planting saplings at Telangana Bhawan in Siricilla on Saturday. On this occasion, Thota Agaiah, Konduru Ravinder Rao and Guduri Praveen spoke and wished the people of the district to live long and healthy for KCR's achievements in Telangana. Later special pooja was performed at Agraharam Anjaneya Swamy Temple. Akunuri Shankaraiah, Manya Ravi, Vengala Srinivas, Kumbala Mallareddy, Bairi Prabhakar, Sabbani Harish, Virabattini Kamalakar, Sattar, Aggie Ramulu, Miryalakar Bhaskar, Jawahar, Diddi Raju, Gundlapalli Purnachander, Kalluri.Raju, Tumma Raju, Pathuri Rajireddy, Bolli. Rammohan, Shyam, Sikander, Porandla Ramesh, Manala Arun, Proj, Chotu, Cherala Swati, Vanaja, Lakshmi, as well as BRS party chief leaders, public representatives, former public representatives, members of the president's committee of affiliated societies, activists and fans participated.



Life is precious and vehicles should be driven carefully

Rajanna Sirisilla, Feb 17 (TIM Bureau) : District SP Akhil Mahajan revealed that people who drive vehicles without a license are prone to accidents due to lack of knowledge about road safety. A license fair was held at Sirisilla road transport department office on Saturday. District SP Akhil Mahajan said that with the aim of ensuring that every driver in the district has a license, a 'License Mela' will be organized under the auspices of the District Police Department and Road Transport Department to hand over the license to the young men and women of the rural areas. In the villages under the Rudrangi police station, awareness was created about the license fair, applications were received from them, they were made aware of the online test for driving license and 50 young women and men were handed over the district SP learning license at the RTO office on Saturday. On this occasion, the SP said that nowadays there is no house without a two-wheeler, even if there is a vehicle, many people are coming on the roads with their vehicles without a driving license. Those who drive vehicles without a license are prone to accidents due to lack of knowledge about road safety. He also said that accident insurance will not apply to those who drive vehicles without a license and are involved in accidents. He said that with the intention of getting a driving license in the district, a license fair will be organized and licenses will be handed out to the young men and women of the rural areas under the auspices of the district police department.



In the ongoing Aadi Mahotsav at Delhi's Dhyanchand Stadium, Rajasthan's craftsman Gitanjali Meena is showing her hand-made products to the customers. Huge enthusiasm of the customers is being seen at the stall of Geeta Handicraft. Customers are liking the Ashoka Pillar made of wood.



For the elderly in Sirisilla, The free medical camp was a success

Rajanna Sirisilla, Feb 17 (TIM Bureau) : Free medical camps for the elderly were organized under the auspices of the Indian Red Cross Society Karimnagar branch for the welfare of the elderly as per the directives of the state government. As a part of this, this program was organized at Vasavi Nagar in Sirisilla town on Saturday. District Welfare Officer Lakshmirajam attended this program and suggested that medical camps are organized for the elderly by the Indian Red Cross Society and they should take advantage of it.

UNION BANK OF INDIA

DMRL CROSS ROADS BRANCH (156291)
DMRL Cross Roads Branch, No.15-266 Plot No-32 Sy No 77, Near Maruthi Nagar, Dmrl Cross Roads, Hyderabad-500059, Telangana, Mobile: +91-93216-15921

[Rule - 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, DMRL Cross Roads Branch, (Sri Sai Vigna Towers, Pochammagadda, Hyderabad - 500058) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 21/11/2023 calling upon the borrower Shri Yempella Mahipal Reddy & Ms Yempella Aparna to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 34,13,537.45 (Rupees Thirty four lakhs thirteen thousand five hundred and thirty seven and forty five paise only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this 14th February of the year 2024.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank Of India, DMRL Cross Roads Branch for an amount Rs. 34,92,061.45 and interest thereon and other expenses.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13of the Act, in respect of time available to the borrower to redeem the secured assets.

Description of Immovable Property.

All that piece and parcel of the house bearing Municipal No. 11-127, consisting of ground and first floor, having a total plinth area of 1260 Sq.ft., constructed on land bearing plot no. 3/A, admeasuring 186 Sq. Yards, equivalent to 155.5 Sq. Meters, in survey Nos. 258/4, 259, and 260, situated at Sahiti Nagar, P & T Colony, Gaddanaram Village, Saranagar Revenue Mandal, Raga Reddy District, under Gaddanaram Circle, GHMC, Bounded as follows: North: Neighbours House (Land of Shri Hakeem Sathaiiah) South: Neighbours House on Plot No.4 East: Neighbours Houses, West: Neighbours House on Plot No. 3

Date: 14-02-2024, Place: Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, UNION BANK OF INDIA

UNION BANK OF INDIA

Survey of India Branch, Address: Uppal 'X' Road, Uppal, Survey of India Complex, Hyderabad
Phone No: 9391485118, Mail Id: ubin0563871@unionbankofindia.bank

POSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Survey of India (Uppal X Road, Uppal, Survey of India Complex, Hyderabad) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 23.11.2023 calling upon the borrower Shri Mr. Banothu Hoja to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.48,12,587.32 (Rupees Forty eight lakhs twelve thousand five hundred and eighty seven and thirty two paise only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this 16th day of February, 2024.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India for an amount Rs.48,15,340.32 and interest thereon and other expenses.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13of the Act, in respect of time available to the borrower to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of plot no.114, Sy.No 86, admeasuring 266.6 sq yards, or 224 Sq.Mtrs, situated at Boduppal village, Under Boduppal Municipality, Medipally Mandal, Medchal - Malkajgiri, Telangana. Bounded by: North: Plot No.113, South: Plot No.115, East: 25' Wide Road, West: Plot No.123.

Date: 16-02-2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer
Place: Hyderabad Union Bank of India

Canara Bank

DPDO BRANCH (13051), Masab Tank, Hyderabad

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR BREAK OPEN OF LOCKERS

A Public notice is hereby given to all the persons concerned and public in general that the persons named under this notice have available the facility of safe deposit lockers at the below mentioned Branches of Canara Bank (including Branches of e-Syndicate Bank). The respective Branches have already addressed individual letters/ Notices by registered post with acknowledgement due (AD) to locker hirers/ LOA at the latest available address as per our bank records with a request to remit the arrears of Locker rent. Despite of these notices, the locker hirers/ LOA have not contacted the Branch and have not remitted the locker rent arrears.

Below named Locker Hirers and their legal heirs are requested to consider this as the Final Notice and contact the Branch concerned with necessary documents and remit the locker rent arrears within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the Bank will break open the lockers without any further notice or intimation, at the cost and sole risk of the hirers or their legal representatives/ heirs.

Sl. No.	Branch Name/ Contact No.	Locker Number	Locker Rent Arrears	Locker hirer Name & Address
1	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	350	31,955.00	Mohd Athar Najmuddin, H.No.13-6-437/7/2B, Bahadur Yar Jung Colony, Near Padhabhanabha Nagar, Khader Bagh, Hyd-500008.
2	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	433	17,700.00	Dr. Taiyaba Shahid Masood, H.No.10-2-289/24, Shanti Nagar, Hyderabad-500028
3	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	2030	15,694.92	Syedta Fatimaunnisa, C/o. S.G. Quadri, 10-1-123 A/3, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028.
4	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	432	17,695.23	Mohammed Azam, H.No.19-4-340/57/B, Mahmood Nagar Colony, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.

Date: 17.02.2024, Place: Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

DPDO BRANCH (13051), Masab Tank, Hyderabad

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Below named Locker Hirers and their legal heirs are requested to consider this as the Final Notice and contact the Branch concerned with necessary documents and remit the locker rent arrears within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the Bank will break open the lockers without any further notice or intimation, at the cost and sole risk of the hirers or their legal representatives/ heirs.

Sl. No.	Branch Name/ Contact No.	Locker Number	Locker Rent Arrears	Locker hirer Name & Address
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Date: 17.02.2024, Place: Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

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Below named Locker Hirers and their legal heirs are requested to consider this as the Final Notice and contact the Branch concerned with necessary documents and remit the locker rent arrears within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the Bank will break open the lockers without any further notice or intimation, at the cost and sole risk of the hirers or their legal representatives/ heirs.

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3	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	2030	15,694.92	Syedta Fatimaunnisa, C/o. S.G. Quadri, 10-1-123 A/3, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028.
4	DPDO MASAB TANK HYD 7382932220	432	17,695.23	Mohammed Azam, H.No.19-4-340/57/B, Mahmood Nagar Colony, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.

Date: 17.02.2024, Place: Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

UNION BANK OF INDIA

Tandur Branch (Sol Id: 05651) - Mahabubnagar Region
12-159/D, Gunj, Chincholi Road, Tandur, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141, Phone: 8511323132, e-mail Id: ubin0805653@unionbankofindia.bank
Lr.No.: 05651/SARFAESIA/Demand Notice/23928333/2023-24, Date:30.01.2024

DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

To,

Applicant: Mr. Uday Shanker Navani, S/o Guru Lingaiah, Address-1: H.No.3-1-70,71 & 72, Kodangal Road, Indira Chowk, Tandur Post and Mandal, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141; Address-2: H.No.3-1-54/4, Behind JFCM Court Building, Tandur Post and Mandal, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141; Mobile No. 7780574090, 9833992555 & 9866992555.

Co-Obligor: Ms. Renuka Navani, W/o Uday Shanker Navani, Address-1: H.No.3-1-70, 71 & 72, Kodangal Road, Indira Chowk, Tandur Post and Mandal, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141; Address-2: H.No.3-1-54/4, Behind JFCM Court Building, Tandur Post and Mandal, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141; Mobile No. 7780574090, 9833992555 & 9866992555

Sir/Madam,
SUB: Enforcement of Security Interest Action Notice - In connection with the credit facilities enjoyed by you with us - Classified as NPA

We have to inform you that your accounts Mr. Uday Shanker Navani (Borrower), S/o Guru Lingaiah & Ms. Renuka Navani (Co-Obligor), W/o Uday Shanker Navani, with Tandur Branch (Sol Id: 05651), has been classified as NPA account on 29.01.2024 pursuant to your default in making repayment of dues/ interest / instalment. As on date a sum of Rs.14,52,279/- (Rupees Fourteen Lacs Fifty Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy Nine only) + Interest +Other Charges till date is outstanding in your accounts as shown below:

Name of Facility	Limit Amount in Rs.	Applicable Rate of Interest (% p.a.)	Outstanding Amount (in Rs.)
TLRLE-056530100065712	11,50,000	11.70	Rs.7,35,061/- Interest and other charges till date
MLGLEN-056530100059784	15,00,000	13.20	Rs.7,17,218/- Interest and other charges till date
Grand Total			Rs.14,52,279/- Interest and other charges till date

In spite of our repeated demands you have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account / you have not discharged your liabilities.

We do hereby call upon you in terms of section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, to pay a sum of Rs.14,52,279/- (Rupees Fourteen Lacs Fifty Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy Nine only) + Interest + Other Charges till date together with contractual rate of interest as stated above from 29.01.2024with monthly rest as per the terms and conditions of loan documents executed by you and discharge your liabilities in full within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice, failing which, we shall be constrained to enforce the following securities created by you in favour of the bank by exercising any or all of the rights given under the said Act.

Primary Security: Nil
Collateral Security:

Schedule of the Property

All that the Residential Housewith H.No.3-1-70,71 & 72, admeasuring 675.00 Sq. Yards is equivalent of 564 Sq. Meters, situated at Kodangal Road, Indira Chowk, Tandur, Vikarabad District, Telangana State-501141, belonging to Mr. Uday Shanker Navani (Borrower), S/o Guru Lingaiah. Boundaries: East: Kodangal Road; West: House Property and compound of Late Smt. Saraswathamma; North: House and Shops of Kalva Suresh; South: House Property of Kalva Prabhakar and his sons.

1] Please note that if you fail to remit the dues within in 60 days and if Bank exercises all its rights under this Act and if the dues are not fully satisfied with the sale of proceeds of the secured assets, we shall be constrained to take appropriate legal action against you in a court of law/Debt Recovery Tribunal for recovery of the balance amount from you.

2] You are requested to note that as per Section 13(13) of the Act, on receipt of this notice you are restrained from disposing of or dealing with the above securities except in the usual course of business without the consent of the Bank. Please note any violation of this section entails serious consequences.

3] Please note that as per Section 13(8) of the said Act, you may redeem the secured assets by remitting the amount demanded above together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred us at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tenders from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets.

Sd/- CHIEF MANAGER & AUTHORISED OFFICER TANDUR BRANCH(SOL ID: 05651) UNION BANK OF INDIA

The ultimate goal is to provide super specialty medical services to the people of the district

Adilabad, Feb 17 (TIM Bureau) : Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) Director Jai Singh Rathod clarified that their ultimate goal is to provide better super specialty medical services at the corporate level to the people of the backward Adilabad district.





Farmers protest : Shops, commercial establishments closed in Punjab, Haryana

Chandigarh, Feb 17 (IANS) : Expressing solidarity with the protesting farmers, the employees of state-owned Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS and private public transport bus operators in Punjab on Saturday went on strike, leaving many commuters stranded as over 5,000 buses stayed off the roads. The impact of the shutdown, named 'Bharat Bandh', from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. was also seen in neighbouring Haryana as shops and commercial establishments stayed closed. Petroleum dealers in Punjab closed filling sta-

tions to back the call for the shutdown. The activists of several farmer associations were seen asking traders at several places in the AAP-ruled Punjab to keep their shops and business establishments closed to mark the protest. Farmer leaders said they would block key roads and occupy toll plazas during the shutdown. Reports of total shutdown of shops and other establishments were received from Patiala, Ludhiana, Bathinda, Moga, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar and other places.



Weather office issues adverse advisory for 4 days in J&K

Srinagar, Feb 17 (IANS) : Day temperatures are expected to drop across J&K in the coming days as the Meteorological (MeT) department said rain/snow will lash the union territory from February 18.

Weather office advisory has asked people to exercise caution and avoid journeys on highways in the higher reaches which are likely to witness heavy snowfall from February 18 till February 21.

SP warns of action against those who defy party whip in RS polls

Lucknow, Feb 17 (IANS) : Samajwadi Party leader Prof Ram Gopal Yadav has warned of action against those who defy the party whip in the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls. He said on Saturday evening that members will have to show their vote and those

who do not vote as per the party line, are liable to lose their membership in the Assembly. Prof Yadav's warning was clearly aimed at SP MLA and Apna Dal(K) leader, Pallavi Patel, who had voiced her opposition to the Samajwadi Party's choice of candidates for the Rajya Sabha. Responding to Prof Ram Gopal



Yadav's comment, Pallavi recalled that Mulayam Singh had criticized Ram Gopal when the battle for supremacy was at its peak within the Yadav clan. While responding to the allegations of some SP lead-

ers that she was betraying the party, Pallavi said she has always seen Akhilesh Yadav as her elder brother and will never cross the line. "But SP leaders should refrain from using words like betrayal for me," she said. On allegations that she wanted a ticket for her mother to the Rajya Sabha, she said even if she did, what was wrong in that. The biennial polls are scheduled for February 27.



Shoot down Cong MP remark: K'taka High Court stays FIRs against BJP leader Eshwarappa

Bengaluru, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Karnataka High Court on Saturday issued a stay on the FIRs against senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister KS Eshwarappa in connection with his controversial remark regarding shooting down of Congress MP DK Suresh over his separate nation for south India comment. The Bench headed by Justice Krishna S. Dixit issued the orders and pulled up politicians for issuing objectionable statements. "Why are our leaders not using good language? Why don't they reflect good culture while issuing statements? Why do they commit atrocities on language?" he observed. "Politicians should be careful as Karnataka state has people from different ideologies. They must be aware that schoolchildren will be watching them," the Bench stated. Eshwarappa, while participating in a BJP function stated that Congress MP DK Suresh and MLA Vinay Kulkarni were anti-national. "I will appeal to PM Modi to enact a law to shoot down such persons who speak about dividing the country," he declared. Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara had vowed legal action against the BJP leader for controversial statements on Congress leaders.



Third round of talks with farmers' bodies meaningful: Anurag Thakur

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Youth & Sports Affairs, Anurag Singh Thakur, said on Saturday that the third round of talks with the farmers' organisations was meaningful. "We will sit together again on Sunday," Thakur said. "The government had invited farmers' organisations for talks. Many farmer leaders came and very meaningful discussions took place. We together have scheduled the next talks for Sunday. I am confident that there will be a good atmosphere on Sunday as well. There will be talks and we will move towards resolving the issues," the minister told reporters here. Commenting on the work done by the Centre, Thakur said, "No government has done more than what the Modi government has

done in the last 10 years on fertiliser, water, procurement at MSP, cheap loans from banks and compensation. "In 2013-14, when the UPA government was in power, the agriculture budget was Rs 27,662 crore. Now the agriculture budget of the Modi government is more than Rs 1,25,000 crore, which is five times more than the agriculture budget of the UPA period. "At that time there was no Kisan Samman Nidhi. We have transferred Rs 2,81,000 crore directly to the bank accounts of more than 11 crore farmers through Kisan Samman Nidhi."

Govt significantly enhanced financial assistance for farm sector in last 10 years

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : Farmer unions in Punjab are accusing the Central government of doing injustice to them, however, official data has revealed that the present regime has provided financial assistance to the farming community more than ever. According to the official data, in 2013-14, the budget allocation for the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Ministry was Rs 27,662.67 crore. This has been increased to Rs 1,25,035.79 crore in 2023-2024. The food grain produc-

tion has also increased from 265.05 million tonnes in 2013-14 to a record 329.69 million tonnes in 2022-23, which is the highest-ever food grain production. The horticulture production was 351.92 million tonnes in 2022-23 which is also the highest ever (as per second advance estimates). The data showed that the Agri and allied exports have increased from \$50.24 billion in 2021-22 to \$53.15 billion in 2022-23 which is an increase of 5.8 per cent. The government has also increased the minimum support price (MSP) for all mandated

Kharif, Rabi and other commercial crops with a return of at least 50 per cent overall India weighted average cost of production, each year, since 2018-19. Similarly, the MSP for Paddy (common) has increased from Rs 1345 per quintal in 2013-14 to Rs 2203 per quintal in 2023-24. The MSP for Wheat increased from Rs 1350 per quintal in 2013-14 to Rs 2125 per quintal in 2023-24. The figures also showed that since 2018-19, 115.32 LMT of pulses have been procured under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) hav-

ing the MSP value of Rs 63,034.55 crore paid to 63,11,631 farmers. Since 2018-19, 51.75 LMT of oilseeds have been procured under the PSS having the MSP value of Rs 26,328.41 crore benefitting 23,55,876 farmers. Further, during the Kharif 2023-24 season, 2,29,382.92 MT of oilseeds, pulses and copra have been procured till date from 1,37,957 farmers having the MSP value of Rs 2,228.55 crore. Since 2018-19, a quantity of 44.77 LMT was sanctioned for implementation of the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procure-



ment of perishable agricultural and horticultural commodities such as apple, potato, onion, garlic, mango and turmeric. As many as 5,679.7 lakh farmer applications have been insured under the

scheme from 2016-17 till 2023-24. A total of Rs 1,55,977 crore has been paid as the claim against the farmers' premium of Rs 31,139 crore, the data showed.

Woman, mother-in-law, paramour kill man in Odisha



Bhubaneswar, Feb 17 (IANS) : A man was killed by his mother-in-law, wife and her paramour in Komanda village in Odisha's Nayagarh district, and the accused

have been arrested, police said on Saturday. The body of the deceased identified as Prakash Nayak was exhumed from a room in his in-laws' house on Saturday

evening. Prakash had married Jyotsna around 14 years back and used to stay at his in-laws house in Komanda village. Recently, Jyotsna developed an illicit relationship with a youth of the same village, which often lead to argument between the couple. As Prakash's family did not met him for long, they went to his in-laws' place to meet him. Somehow Prakash's father sensed that his son has been killed and buried in the house after which he lodged a police complaint.

Tejashwi joins Rahul's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Bihar

Patna, Feb 17 (IANS) : RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav joined Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' on Saturday in Bihar's Rohtas district. This was the first time when the two top leaders of Congress and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) were seen together after Nitish Kumar severed ties with the INDIA bloc. The two were seen in a red SUV on the GT Road (NH 19) in the district. Former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and Chenari MLA of the Congress party, Murari Gautam, were also seen in the vehicle.



"People of this region have been waiting for Rahul Gandhi for a long time. It is a historic place and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will also turn historic here. It is the workplace of Babu Jagjivan Ram. Rahul Gandhi has taken to the streets to bring justice for the people of the country," said Meira Kumar.

OPINIONmail

TRADE ROUTE AGREEMENT
LINKING EUROPE TO INDIA IS A
WIN FOR MODI

India and the United Arab Emirates inked a deal to establish a trade route designed to link Europe and India via certain regions of the Middle East by both sea and rail. This grand project has received support from both the United States and the European Union. India is highly interested in this project as it sees it as the one competing with China sponsored Belt and Road Initiative (BTI) which is already in operation as a global project covering a large number of nations. The agreement was disclosed following a visit to the Gulf nation by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as per a statement from the Indian foreign ministry, although specific details of the agreement were not extensively shared.

The ministry's statement highlighted that this initiative would enhance existing collaborations and mutual understanding between India and the UAE, promoting greater cooperation and regional connectivity. Announced in September during the G20 summit held in New Delhi, the corridor is planned to stretch from India, across the Arabian Sea to the United Arab Emirates, then onwards through Saudi Arabia, and link up through Jordan and Israel to Europe. In its statement, the ministry did not reference any nations other than India and the UAE, a key Gulf Arab nation, with which India shares a history of trade relations spanning over a hundred years. The pact concerning the India-Middle East Economic Corridor emerges during an ongoing conflict in Gaza exceeding four months, which has disrupted efforts supported by the U.S. to enhance Israel's integration with surrounding Arab countries. Consequently, Saudi Arabia has put its plans for normalization on hold. During his visit, Modi had a meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, whom Modi frequently calls his brother. "In these challenging times for our region, our strong ties with you bring us much optimism and pave the way for a future with India that aligns with our aspirations," Sheikh Mohamed expressed in a meeting with Modi on Tuesday, as shown in a video posted on Modi's YouTube channel. In 2020, the UAE established diplomatic ties with Israel as part of the Abraham Accords, a move supported by the U.S. that also saw Bahrain and other Arab nations forming connections with Israel.

Throughout the conflict, while maintaining relations with Israel, the UAE has also consistently criticized the airstrikes in Gaza and advocated for a ceasefire. The agreement between India and the UAE indicates both countries are keen on proceeding with the corridor project, potentially challenging China's Belt and Road Initiative that aims to expand global trade and infrastructure links. Furthermore, the agreement was reached amid assaults by Yemen's Houthi faction on ships navigating the Red Sea, actions claimed by the Iran-supported group as a protest against Israel's actions in Gaza. These attacks have posed risks to maritime trade in the region. Additionally, the UAE and India finalized a treaty on bilateral investment and exchanged agreements to collaborate in areas including electrical connectivity, commerce, and digital infrastructure. This marks Modi's seventh journey to the Gulf country since his tenure as Prime Minister began almost ten years ago, reinforcing the relationship with one of India's leading trade allies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his two-day trip to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), opened Abu Dhabi's inaugural Hindu temple on Wednesday. Located near Al Rahba in Abu Mureikhah, the temple, developed by the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), spans approximately 27 acres. Construction has been underway since 2019, with the UAE government providing the land for the temple. In anticipation of PM Modi's speech at the World Government Summit, the BurjKhalifa displayed the message – "Guest of Honour - the Republic of India."

By Girish Linganna

EDITORIAL
the indian mail

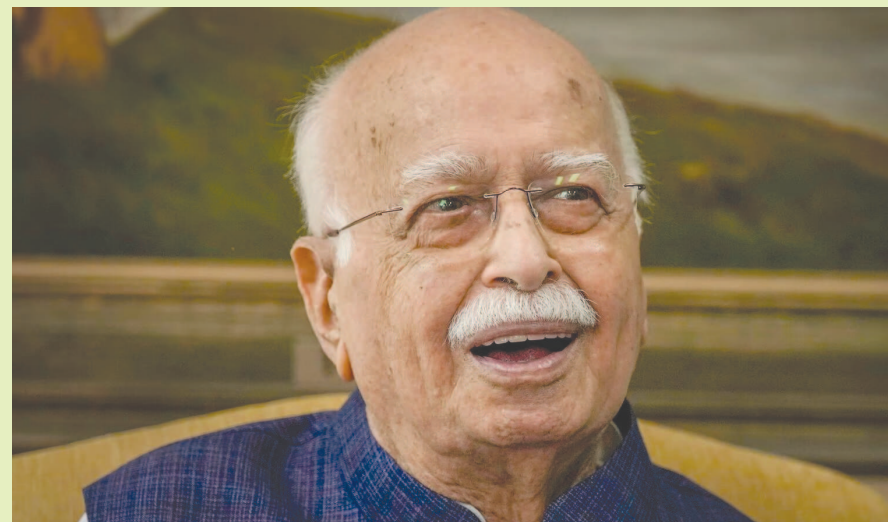
PRIYANKA GANDHI CONTESTING
FROM RAE BARELI TO BOOST CONGRESS
MORALE IN UTTAR PRADESH

With AICC president Mrs Sonia Gandhi going to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan, stage is set for Priyanka Gandhi to contest from her mother's constituency Rae Bareli. It may be mentioned that the family members of Nehru-Gandhi have represented Rae Bareli since 1952. Capt Satish Sharma was an exception but he was a very close friend of Rajiv Gandhi. Right from Indira Gandhi's husband



Feroze Gandhi, Indira herself, then Mrs Sheila Kaul and family friend Capt Satish Sharma and finally Mrs Sonia Gandhi. Rae Bareli has always been a Gandhi family seat. Local people of Rae Bareli still remember the magic of Priyanka Gandhi in 1999 Lok Sabha polls when she turned the table for Congress candidate Capt Satish Sharma with her maiden public speech. It only due to that speech Congress candidate Capt Satish Sharma close friend of her father Rajiv Gandhi won and pow-

erful BJP candidate Arun Nehru who was front runner in opinion polls, was placed third. Now it is to be seen how Priyanka Gandhi weaves magic for herself and ensure victory to retain the hold of family in prestigious Rae Bareli seat. Much significance is being attached to participation of Samajwadi Party national president and former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav to join ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra of Rahul Gandhi at Rae Bareli. With RLD joining NDA, now Congress and Samajwadi Party are major partners in INDIA alliance in UP.

L K ADVANI WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE
AFTER HEARING BHARAT RATNA ANNOUNCEMENT

Civilian Honours such as Padma awards and Bharat Ratna are usually declared prior to January 26, even though the award ceremony is held later. However, the announcement that veteran BJP leader L K Advani was to be honoured with the nation's highest civilian award was made on February 3, a week after Republic day. The Advani family was taken by surprise when PM Modi first tweeted the news and followed up by a telephone call to his residence. The belated announcement was reportedly due to pressure from Sangh Parivar veterans, that to ignore the

man who initiated the yatra for restoration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya while honouring Opposition leaders like Karpoori Thakur and Pranab Mukherjee (in 2019) seemed incongruous. Shortly after Narendra Modi became PM in 2014, Atal Behari Vajpayee was decorated with the Bharat Ratna, while Advani and M M Joshi were honoured with the lower order — Padma Vibhushan. Although Advani was originally Modi's mentor, their friendship soured after 2013, when, in the run up to the 2014 general elections, Advani had to per force give up his PM ambitions to make way to youthful and more popular Modi. Once the Advani award announcement was made, PM realized it could make use of the awards to win over farmers and voters in Andhra by adding P V Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh and M S Swaminathan to the exclusive Bharat Ratna club. (IPA Service)

TIME TO REVIVE DEBATE ON
STATE FUNDING OF ELECTIONS
BEYOND ACADEMIC REALM

Considering the bitter results of uninhibited political funding to the ruling party through the obnoxious electoral bond scheme, leading to the subversion of democratic processes, it may be time to go back to the concept of state funding of elections if democracy is to survive in the country.

It is perhaps the most appropriate time to do this, as a constitutional bench headed by chief justice D Y Chandrachud is set to decide on a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the electoral bonds scheme. The delay in a decision, which the court reserved in November last year, has no doubt disappointed pro-democracy activists and enthusiasts, but the Supreme Court can make amends by making a meaningful intervention and set things right by suggesting a more equitable and fair arrangement. In doing this, the court may have to go beyond the scope of the present petitions, but such an approach would go a long way in preserving democracy in the country, which otherwise stands threatened.

The electoral bond scheme, criticized for facilitating uninhibited political funding to the ruling party, has increasingly come under scrutiny. BJP has pocketed most proceeds from the scheme, leaving other parties, including the main opposition Congress party, with as little as one-tenth of the total. The disproportionate money power has emboldened the ruling party to embark on some of the most outlandish destabilisation plans against opposition-ruled states, manifesting in the ouster of legitimately elected governments and installation of its own puppet outfits with the help of blatant defections. Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar stand out as worst caricatures of BJP's subversive politics.

CONGRESS CONTINUES
FACING CHALLENGES IN KEEPING
INDIA BLOC TOGETHER

Indian National Congress as the major party of the opposition INDIA bloc continues facing challenges in keeping allies together. Not only desertions of the JD(U) led by Nitish Kumar in Bihar and RLD led by Jayant Chaudhary in Uttar Pradesh from the INDIA bloc, but also announcement of going solo by TMC led by Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and AAP led by Arvind Kejriwal in Punjab, have put the Congress in a politically delicate situation.

Real-time political scenario has been fluctuating with fast changing permutations and combinations of political parties, both at national and regional level, their respective posturing on the eve of election, and also on the ground level that seems not in sync with the political posturing of both the ruling and opposition leaders. Therefore, despite perceptions for or against NDA or INDIA bloc.

FLYING UNDER THE RADAR : CHINA TIGHTENS
GRIP ON UIGHUR MUSLIMS THROUGH NEW RULES

China's northwestern province of Xinjiang has taken advantage of the international community's focus on Gaza and US support for Israel, to tighten control of the region's Turkic Muslim Uighur population, reshape Islam, and engage in social engineering. As the international community grapples with the Gaza carnage, Xinjiang's authori-

ties updated regulations designed to further isolate religious communities from their counterparts abroad, align their religious doctrine with Chinese Communist Party principles, and weaken separate ethnic identities. Intended to bring Xinjiang's regulatory framework in line with national Chinese laws and regulations adopted since 2014, the revised rules came into force this week, days after China published

a white paper outlining the legal framework for its counterterrorism efforts. The regulations affect all religious groups, including Christians, Taoists, and Buddhists. However, they particularly affect Muslims who account for at least 50 per cent of Xinjiang's 26 million people. Activists charge the updates legalise various aspects of Chinese repression.



WHO trying to get access to Gaza's Khan Younis hospital amid IDF raid

New York, Feb 17 (IANS) : The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Saturday said that it was trying to get access to the biggest functioning hospital in Gaza, the Nasser Hospital, after an Israeli raid, media reports said. "There are still critically injured and sick patients that are inside the hospital," WHO spokesperson Tarik Jasarevic said as quoted by the Times of Israel report. "There is an urgent need to deliver fuel to ensure the continuation of the provision of life-saving services... We are trying to get access because

people who are still in Nasser medical complex need assistance." Israel's military called the raid on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis area "precise and limited" and said it was based on information that Hamas had kept hostages in the facility, with some bodies of captives possibly there. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) later on Thursday said it had arrested more than 20 Hamas terrorists, who took part in the October 7 massacres inside the compound and found weapons, including mortar shells and grenades.



Israeli rappers call for Dua Lipa, Bella Hadid, Mia Khalifa to be killed in chart-topping track

Los Angeles, Feb 17 (IANS) : Singer Dua Lipa, model Bella Hadid and former pornstar Mia Khalifa have received death threats in an Israeli song. Named Ness Ve Stilla, the Israeli hip-hop duo called for the death of the stars on their song titled 'Harbu Darbu', which was actually released in December 2023. The song, which now takes the top spot on Israel's Mako chart, criticised celebrities who publicly showed support for Palestine. The rappers fired off an apparent kill list of people whom they hold accountable for the October 7 attack, reports

aceshowbiz.com. While Lipa and Hadid have yet to comment, Khalifa took to her X account to address the Hebrew track shortly after its release. "Y'all that song calling for the IDF to kill me, Bella, and Dua is over a DRILL beat, they can't even call for genocide in their own culture, they had to colonise something to get it to #1," the former porn star wrote at the time. Lipa, who is British-Albanian, and Bella, who is of Palestinian descent, have always been open with their support for Palestine in the Hamas-Israel conflict.

Foreign students falsely accused in UK test scandal to pitch TV drama on lines of 'Mr Bates...'

London, Feb 17 (IANS) : Indians and several other international students unjustly accused of cheating in English language tests in the UK, are creating a television drama pitch on the lines of 'Mr Bates vs the Post Office', to highlight their struggles and seek justice in a decade-long unresolved issue. The recently released ITV drama series showed how hundreds of Post Office employees fought back to clear their names after they were falsely prosecuted for theft and fraud because of faulty accounting software, forcing politicians to sit up and take notice. The Home Office abruptly terminated the visas of 35,000 international students, making their stay in the country illegal overnight, after a 2014 BBC documentary reported allegations of cheating at two of the UK's language testing centres for overseas students. While some 7,200 students left

the country after detention threats, many stayed protesting "flawed evidence" as they struggled with homelessness, huge legal fees and stress-induced illnesses. According to The Guardian, students from India, Pakistan and several other countries, met recently to begin chronicling their prolonged struggle in a final attempt to bring politicians' and the public's attention to the issue, which largely went unnoticed in the mainstream. "If it takes a drama to make people understand, then we'll make a drama. We've been inspired by how people have responded to the Post Office drama, and there are so many parallels," Nazek Ramadan, Director of Migrant Voice, told the Daily. The charity has been fighting for these students since 2017 and is now helping them to write their stories and has sought the advice of a film director, who previously showed interest in the charity's work.

"This is a huge injustice that most people still don't know about. Thousands of students, young men and women who came here in good faith, had their lives ruined. We want people to empathise and support them. What they went through must be documented," she told The Guardian. Abdul Qadir Mohammad, 36, who left India in 2010 to study business in London, spent more than 20,000 pounds trying to clear his name in the scandal, pushing him and his family into debt. He said he gets "panic attacks" and feels ashamed to face my family back home who ask him: "Abdul you have lived in the UK for 14 years. What have you achieved?"

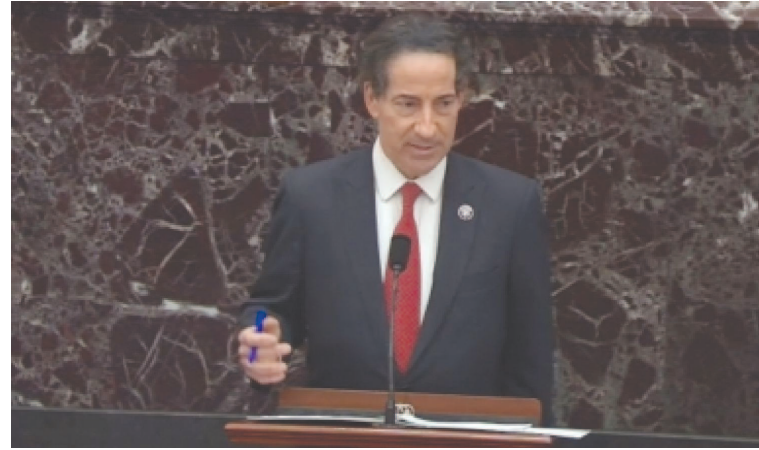


According to the news report, 33-year-old Navjot Kaur, who came to Britain from Amritsar to study tourism management when she was 19, is looking forward to converting her experiences into drama. "I had no need to cheat in the English test... This has ruined my life and my career," she said. Meanwhile, fresh evidence has been presented in the court this month that questions the Home Office's move against the foreign students. The students had also approached and presented a petition to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in March last year, seeking his help to clear their names. In their petition to the Prime Minister, the students called for a simple, free mechanism to apply for a decision or reconsideration of their case.



Lina Khan-led US FTC aims to modify rule to curb deepfakes

Washington, Feb 17 (IANS) : Alarmed by a surge in impersonation fraud or deepfakes around the globe, the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has sought to modify a rule that would prohibit the impersonation of individuals. The Lina Khan-led agency said in a statement that it is taking this action in light of public outcry about the harms caused to consumers and to impersonated individuals. The proposed rule changes would extend protections of the new rule on government and business impersonation that is being finalised by the Commission. "Fraudsters are using voice cloning and other AI tools to impersonate individuals with eerie precision and at scale," Khan posted on X early on Saturday. "FTC proposes to expand its impersonation rule to cover impersonation of individuals, so these fraudsters would pay hefty penalties," she added.



Top Democrat demands dropping of impeachment proceedings against Biden, but GOP says probe to continue

Washington, Feb 17 (IANS) : US House Representative Jamie Raskin, a top Democrat from Maryland, a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, has called for an end to the Republican-led impeachment inquiry against President Joe Biden after the Justice Department special counsel indicted a witness for making "false" statements to the FBI. Alexander Smirnov, an informant with the FBI since 2010, was indicted for allegedly making false claims to the bureau in 2020 about the Ukrainian energy company Burisma paying off the President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden \$5 million

each. The alleged "false claim" has been central to House Republicans' corruption allegations against Biden. Representative Raskin said the indictment from special counsel David Weiss showed "how key evidence at the heart of House Republicans' impeachment inquiry is based on a lie". "In a detailed indictment, Special Counsel David Weiss--who was appointed by former President Donald Trump--has demonstrated how key evidence at the heart of House Republicans' impeachment inquiry is based on a lie," Raskin said in a statement. "Special Counsel Weiss's investigation is just the most recent to debunk the Ukraine-Burisma conspiracy theory at the heart of this fraudulent impeachment inquiry."

"It is an undeniable fact that Republicans' allegations against President Biden have always been a tissue of lies built on conspiracy theories, and I formally call on Speaker Johnson, Chairman Comer, and House Republicans to stop promoting this nonsense and end their doomed impeachment inquiry," Raskin was quoted by the Washington Examiner. House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer (Representative from Kentucky), key investigator in the impeachment efforts against Joe Biden, said on Thursday that the indictment of Smirnov doesn't undermine the House GOP's impeachment inquiry. "To be clear, the impeachment inquiry is not reliant on the FBI's FD-1023. It is based on a large record of evidence, including bank records and witness testimony, revealing that Joe Biden knew of and participated in his family's business dealings," Comer said in a statement, referring to the document he subpoenaed the FBI for last year. In response to Raskin's statement, the GOP Oversight Committee wrote on X, "We have over \$30 million reasons to continue this investigation and not one of those reasons relies on the corrupt FBI or an informant. Bank records don't lie."

Attack on Indian students: US says 'working very hard' to address the issue

Washington, Feb 17 (IANS) : Asserting that there is no excuse for violence based on race or gender, the White House has said that the US is working very hard to thwart and disrupt attacks on Indians as well as Indian-origin students. A series of attacks beginning this year has put the focus back on the security and safety of the Indian students across the country which has witnessed more than four deaths from the community. "There's no excuse for violence, certainly based on race or gender or religion or any

other factor. That's just unacceptable here in the United States," John Kirby, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council in the White House, said on Saturday. Allaying the fears of parents in India as well as in the US, Kirby said President Joe Biden and his administration are working "very hard" to address the situation. "The President and this administration have been working very, very hard to make sure we're doing everything we can to work with state and local authorities to try to thwart and disrupt those kinds of attacks and make it clear



to anybody who might consider them that they'll be held properly accountable," Kirby said in response to a question. Five Indian students have died in quick succession in the US since the start of this year, including Shreyas Reddy Benigeri in Cin-

cinnati and Purdue University's Neel Acharya in Indiana. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that the welfare of Indian students abroad is one of the foremost priorities of the government.

Hamas says 112 killed in Gaza in last 24 hours, Palestinian death toll rises to 28,775

Gaza, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry says 112 people were killed in the Strip in the last 24 hours, bringing the Palestinian death toll in the war to 28,775, media reports said. These figures cannot be independently verified, and are believed

to include both civilians and Hamas members killed in Gaza, including as a consequence of the terror groups' own rocket misfires, The Times of Israel reported. The IDF says it has killed nearly 11,000 operatives in Gaza, in addition to nearly 1,000 terrorists inside Israel on October 7.



DAC nod to Anti-Tank Mines, radar, torpedoes worth Rs 84,560 cr for armed forces

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Saturday approved the proposal for procurement of new generation Air Defence Tactical Control Radar (ADTCR) and heavyweight Torpedoes for the armed forces. The MoD has also given its approval for Medium Range Maritime Reconnaissance and Multi Mission Maritime Aircraft, Flight refueling aircraft and Software Defined Radios. The MoD said that its Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, accorded ap-

proval for Acceptance of Necessity (AoNs) for various capital acquisition proposals amounting to Rs 84,560 crore. The approval lays special emphasis on procurement of equipment from Indian vendors. The DAC has given approval for Anti-Tank Mines having seismic sensors and provision for remote deactivation with additional safety features. In order to enhance operational efficiency and domination in the Tactical Battle Area for engaging targets that are Beyond Visual Line of Sight by the Mechanised Forces, the AoN under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category has been accorded for procurement of Canis-

ter Launched Anti-Armour Loiter Ammunition System, the MoD added. The ministry said that to strengthen the Air Defence Systems, especially the capabilities to detect slow, small and low-flying targets as well as surveillance, detection and tracking of different targets, the AoN has been accorded for procurement of ADTCR under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category. It has also approved strengthening of the surveillance and interdiction capabilities of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) over the country's vast maritime area. Further, to keep the Indian Navy's ships one step ahead of the threats

posed by adversaries, the AoN under Buy (Indian) category has been accorded for procurement of Active Towed Array Sonar having capabilities to operate at low frequencies and various depths for long range detections of adversary submarines. The AoN has also been accorded for procurement of heavyweight torpedoes for enhancing the attacking capabilities of Kalvari-Class submarines. The DAC accorded AoN for procurement of Flight Refueling Aircraft for enhancing the operational capabilities and reach of the Indian Air Force. The AoN under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category for procurement of Software Defined



Radios for the ICG has also been granted. This will fulfill the requirement of the ICG for high-speed communication with secure networking capability for seamless information exchange between the ICG and the Indian Navy units, the MoD added. The MoD said that to create a friendly Defence start-up ecosys-

tem and promote procurement of advanced technologies from start-ups and MSMEs developed under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Technology Development Fund (TDF) schemes, the DAC has approved amendments in the Defence Acquisition Procedure.



US Consulate signs MoU with CUSAT to open American Corner in Kochi

Kochi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The US Consulate General Chennai and the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Saturday to establish an American Corner on CUSAT campus here.

US Consul General Christopher W. Hodges and CUSAT Registrar V. Meera signed the MoU in the presence of CUSAT Vice Chancellor P.G. Sankaran on the sidelines of a visit by a US education trade delegation of 18 US universities to CUSAT.

The new American Corner at CUSAT will eventually join a network of more than 600 American Spaces spread across India, Asia and around the globe. The American Spaces programme is a flexible partnership model the US runs

globally. The American Corner will renew the vibrant programmes of an American cultural space in Kerala since the 1970 closure of the USIA cultural centre in Thiruvananthapuram.

"We are delighted to partner with CUSAT to open a new American Corner right here in the heart of Kochi. This faculty and student-led project will enable the people of Kerala to build a closer relationship with the United States, while at the same time, open the door for us to support the amazing work that CUSAT and the Centre for Science in Society is doing to inspire and empower the next generation of STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics] enthusiasts, future scientists, researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs,"

said Hodges. The American Centre Chennai will directly support the new American Corner, which will offer reliable academic and research resources via its eLibraryUSA platform, English language, skills and professional development programmes, media literacy workshops, exchange opportunities with US institutions and advising services for study in the US.

The American Corner partnership will also serve as a basis to create more opportunities for student exchanges and research partnerships between CUSAT and American universities.

Like all American Corners around the world, the activities at CUSAT will be free of charge and open to all.

Big names discussed by Kerala CPI-M for Lok Sabha polls

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 17 (IANS) : With the high stakes Lok Sabha polls around the corner, the ruling CPI-M in Kerala on Saturday discussed names at a meeting of the top leadership of the party. As the polls are a prestige issue for Pinarayi Vijayan, big names were discussed at the meeting that was attended by the Chief Minister, state CPI-M Secretary MV Govindan, party polit-

bu members MA Baby and A Vijayaraghavan. Kerala has 20 Lok Sabha seats and in the 2019 polls the CPI-M managed to win just one seat despite making tall claims earlier of doing well in the elections. While the

CPI-M contests 15 seats, the CPI fights on four and the Kerala Congress (M) on one. Soon after the morning meeting of the party leadership the meeting of the state secretariat also took place. According to sources, at the first meeting the names of likely candidates from each of the 14 districts that were discussed included giants like former state ministers Thomas Isaac, KK Shailaja, AK Balan, PK Sreemathi, sitting legislators Kadakampally Surendran, V Joy, M Noushad, actor-turned-legislator Mukesh and former legislators A Pradeep Kumar, Raju Abraham, Aiysha Potti, M Swaraj, TV Rajesh and Rajya Sabha member Elamaram Kareem.



Hopeless budget, leaves debt burden of Rs 44K on every citizen : K'taka BJP

Bengaluru, Feb 17 (IANS) : The budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for 2024-25 lacks commitment and direction, said leader of opposition R. Ashoka on Saturday.

"This is a hopeless budget on all fronts and there is no vision for development of the state contrary to what was claimed by the Congress leaders," said the BJP Leader.

Speaking to reporters here, Ashoka said, "This budget lacks foresight, fails to instill confidence in the public and has no new initiatives to address the needs of farmers, women, poor, youth, and industry. It is only decorated with empty slogans and fancy titles. In Siddaramaiah's first term Karnataka's debt rose from Rs 1,39,000 crore to Rs. 2,86,790 crore in just five years.



Woman loses Rs 80 lakh to fraud she met on matrimonial app

Lucknow, Feb 17 (IANS) : An employee of a multi-national company lost Rs 80 lakh to a conman she met on a matrimonial application, who even staged his death. According to the complaint, the woman met the man on the app in 2019, when he introduced himself as Sameer Chadha. There was telephonic and online communication for over months, during which he posed as a highly successful professional owning property in Bangalore and Noida. The woman got impressed and considered him for marriage, said the police on the basis of the complaint. The man fabricated a story about quitting his job and said that he needed assistance to pay EMIs of loans for his car and flat, and talked the woman into transferring a total of Rs 80 lakh to him through Paytm between 2020 and 2023.

Bihar Education Dept approves 86,476 posts in third phase of teachers' recruitment

Patna, Feb 17 (IANS) : Bihar Education Department on Saturday approved 86,476 teachers' posts in the third phase in Bihar, an official said.

He said that the Education Department has sent the details to the General Administration Department for approval. "After the approval, it will be sent to Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) for implementation,"

the official said. He said that at least 28,028 posts have been approved for class 1 to 5 while 19,057 posts have been approved for class 6 to 8; 17,018 posts for 9 and 10; and 22,373 posts for 11 and 12 class.

The BPSC has not given any age relaxation to candidates, who were waiting for this recruitment. In the first and second phase, BPSC had given 10-year-age relaxation for women.

Many students have said as the age

relaxation was not given in the third phase, they have missed out on the opportunity. When the notification was issued, the maximum age in the unreserved category was 37 and OBC-EBC was 40-years and for SC/ST candidates was 42 years. The same age criteria had been also been applied during the first and second phase of the recruitment drive.



Six held for swindling over Rs 1 cr from Kanya Vivah Yojna in UP

Kanpur, Feb 17 (IANS) : Six people have been arrested on swindling off over one crore in the Kanya Vivah Yojna in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district. Those arrested on Saturday include one couple and an assistant accountant of the labour department.

Police claimed that with the help of an assistant accountant, the mastermind hacked the web portal while his alleged girlfriend and associates transferred money to the accounts of fake beneficiaries before transferring it into his

account and distributed it among the gang. Labour department had outsourced the assistant accountant, Udit Mishra, to resolve other issues related to the accounting software. DCP (Crime) Ashish Srivastava said Mishra ran a business centre in Sajeti area of the district.

"An ethical hacker, he used to earn money by pointing out shortcomings in government and private websites and portals and had developed links with officials of Labour department," he said.

Paytm shifts nodal account to Axis Bank: What does this mean?

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : In a bid to maintain seamless merchant settlements as before, financial services company Paytm has announced to shift its nodal account to Axis Bank, which was previously used with the Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL). In a regulatory filing with the stock exchanges, the company said the new arrangement has been executed by opening an escrow account with Axis bank to ensure merchant settlements continue without any hassle. The move came as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) instructed the termination of the nodal accounts of One 97 Commu-

nications Limited (OCL) and Paytm Payment Services Ltd (PPSL), which were maintained by PPBL. The RBI terminated this because of "persistent non-compliances" and "continued material supervisory concerns" within the bank. PPSL, OCL's wholly-owned subsidiary, has been using the Axis Bank services since its inception. "The shift of the nodal account to Axis Bank (by opening an Escrow Account) will ensure seamless merchant settlements as before. We strive to continue to empower Indians, contributing significantly to the country's financial inclusion journey," a Paytm spokesperson said in a statement. As per the RBI mandate, the intermediaries receiving online pay-

ments need to collect the money in a nodal account and payments to the seller happen from this account without delay. Nodal account is a special purpose account created for receiving funds from participating banks and remitting to specific merchants, created as per the nodal account guidelines issued by the RBI. When it comes to an escrow account in India, it is a bank account with conditions on ownership of funds. In simple terms, an escrow account's meaning is a safe house for assets while the transaction process is still ongoing. "In case there is a need to shift the escrow account from one bank to another, the same may be effected



in a time-bound manner without unduly impacting the payment cycle to the merchants. The migration should be completed in the minimum possible time and with the prior approval of RBI," said

the RBI. The balance in the escrow account should, at no time, be lower than the value of outstanding prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) and payments due to merchants. "The amount so main-

tained in the escrow account shall be used only for making payments to the participating merchant establishments and other permitted payments," according to the RBI.



First AI-based free mobile tele-clinic attends to 13K remote patients in J&K : Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels, a first-of-its-kind Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven free mobile telemedicine clinic has attended to nearly 13,000 remote patients from Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency in Jammu and Kashmir, said Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh on Saturday. Inspired by the Digital Health Mission and Ayushman

Bharat, the first super-specialty mobile hospital is providing door-step consultation with doctors and has helped bridge the urban and rural divide in preventive healthcare, said Singh. The Union Minister said that the mobile telemedicine service is the first healthcare service that is delivered via digital mode, and is purely from non-government sources by two startup groups belonging to North India and South India. Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels

functions on the latest methodology wherein a patient can narrate his illness or complaint in his native language and the AI Doctor understands the language and responds to the patient in the same language, said Singh. At the clinic, the patient is also screened thoroughly, investigated and then the consultation is obtained from the concerned super-specialist doctor in one of the leading hospitals in metros like Hyderabad and Bengaluru. This entire exercise of patient examination and providing a prescription is accomplished in around 45 minutes which may otherwise take several days if the patient has to physically go to the hospital, Singh said, noting that it is also done free of cost through the funds raised from voluntary sources. "The majority of beneficiaries of the 'Doctor on Wheels' initiative are women," said Singh, stating that out of a total of 11,431 beneficiaries in Doda, Hiranagar and Kathua -Billawar areas, 6,643 were women. The mobile clinic currently in the fourth phase from January 17, in remote Dudu Basantgarh in the upper reaches of Ramnagar block of district Udhampur, is seeing a

similar trend. As many as 835 women have, so far, availed consultation out of a total of 1,452 beneficiaries in 56 villages under 22 Panchayats, the minister said. Singh, who represents the Udhampur parliamentary constituency that also covers Kathua and Doda districts, said, the first phase of this facility covered more than 60 villages in the far-flung Gandoh area of district Doda where it spent three months. The second phase was conducted along the Zero Line villages of the International Border, and the third phase was held in the upper reaches of Bilawar. Singh said the free telemedicine facility overcomes the problems of 'accessibility, availability and affordability'. For the convenience of patients, the prescribed medicines are also being provided free of cost and in addition, medicine kits containing commonly used drugs are being distributed across the constituency free of cost to all the families in general, Singh informed.



Oil prices not rising despite Middle East tensions as demand wanes

New York, Feb 17 (IANS) : When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the price of oil jumped to over \$100 a barrel. But despite the threat of an escalation of tensions in the Middle East and attacks on Red Sea shipping, oil markets have yet to see such moves this time around, media reported. Oil prices spiked last month following US-led strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen in response to repeated attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea. Crude prices have been volatile as Wall Street assesses the path for interest rates, the US dollar and geopolitical strife, CNN reported. Still, they remain well off their 2022 highs. West Texas Intermediate crude futures, the US benchmark for oil, settled at \$77.59 a barrel on Thursday, while international benchmark Brent crude futures settled at \$82.86 a barrel. One factor that could be keeping the cap on oil prices is wan-

ing demand. A new monthly report from the International Energy Agency released on Thursday forecasts that growth in global demand will slow to 1.2 million barrels per day in 2024 from 2.3 million bpd in 2023. That comes after demand growth fell to 1.8 million bpd during the fourth quarter of 2023 from 2.8 millions bpd the prior quarter, CNN reported. "Global oil demand growth is losing momentum," said the agency in its February report. "The expansive post-pandemic growth phase in global oil demand has largely run its course", CNN reported. For some economies, however, that period of growth was lackluster. China's economy was supposed to have a blockbuster recovery in 2023 after shuttering during the Covid pandemic. Instead, a property crisis, weak spending and high youth unemployment have caused it to stall out, and some economists believe the country could face decades of stagnation.

Kerala to promote state as venue for global meets : Tourism Minister

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 17 (IANS) : After inaugurating the two-day annual conference of Soft Power Club, a leading global organisation headed by Francesco Rutelli, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, at the Technopark here on Saturday, Kerala Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas said the state government will soon come out with initiatives to promote Kerala as a preferred venue for global conferences. In the context of hosting the event by Kerala Tourism, Riyas said the state has immense opportunities in this segment considering its picturesque landscape, eclectic history and rich cultural heritage. "The beautiful locales, including hill stations, beach and backwater destinations, in various parts of the state make it the most ideal location for international meets. The soft power at our disposal, which is tourism, is the most potent component and it has to be harnessed in a sustainable manner," said Riyas. G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, a former Kerala cadre IAS officer who took Kerala Tourism to newer heights, said the country blends both its soft and hard powers to project itself and to ensure that the nation retains its very unique civilisational approach.



Google launches 2nd fund worth \$10 mn for Ukraine-based startups

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : Google on Saturday announced a second startup support fund for Ukraine worth \$10 million, to allocate equity-free cash awards throughout 2024 and 2025. Since the devastating war in Ukraine started, Google said it has committed over \$45 million in cash and \$7 million in kind to support humanitarian relief efforts for people in Ukraine and those fleeing the war. "We've also sought to use our products to help people affected by the war, like protecting against cyber attacks and fighting misinformation," said Agnieszka Hryniewicz-Bieniek, Senior Director, Google for Startups. The second 'Google for Startups Ukraine Support Fund' will select startups on a rolling basis and give up to \$100,000 in non-dilutive funding, as well as ongoing Google mentorship,

product support and up to \$300,000 in Cloud credits. "This hands-on support is designed to help Ukrainian entrepreneurs maintain and grow their businesses, strengthen their community and build a foundation for post-war economic recovery. Applications will open later this year," the company announced. In March 2022, the company first announced the fund to support Ukraine-based startups, which has gone on to provide \$5 million in equity-free cash awards to 58 recipients.



FPI selling stands at Rs 29,519 crore for this year

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The spike in US bond yields triggered by the higher-than-expected consumer price inflation led to sustained selling by FPIs in the cash market, says V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. In February through 16th,

FPIs had sold equity worth Rs 6112 crores through the exchange. But buying through 'the primary market and others' reduces the net sell figure for February through 16th to Rs 3775 crores. For the year 2024, the total FPI selling stands at Rs 29519 crores, he said.

SC orders reinstatement of Class IV staff axed for sending direct representation to senior officials, UP CM

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Supreme Court has reinstated in service a Class IV staff of the district judiciary who was dismissed for sending direct representations to the Registrar General of the Allahabad High Court and other officials of the Uttar Pradesh Government, including the then Chief Minister, without going through proper channels. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and Prashant Kumar Mishra said that a Class-IV employee, when in financial hardship, may represent di-

rectly to superiors but that by itself cannot amount to major misconduct, for which punishment of termination from service should be imposed. Holding that the finding of the guilt recorded by the Enquiry Officer is perverse, the Bench proceeded to reinstate the appellant in service with all benefits. It said, "We deem it appropriate to set aside the impugned judgment of the High Court as well as the order dated 30.04.2007 whereby the appellant was terminated from service." Earlier in 2019, the Allahabad High Court had dismissed the writ

petition of the appellant as being devoid of merit. The petitioner – Chatrapal – was appointed on a permanent basis to the post of Ardly, a class IV Post, in the Bareilly District Judgeship. Later, he was transferred and posted as Process Server in the Nazarat of an outlying court of Bareilly. Though the appellant joined the Nazarat Branch, he was being paid the remuneration of Ardly. Aggrieved, he made several representations. In June 2003, he was placed under suspension and a departmental enquiry was initiated against him. The appellant was

served with a charge sheet that first, he had used derogatory language and made false allegations against the District Judge and other officials, and second, the appellant communicated letters and representations to the Registrar General and other officials of the state government, including the then Chief Minister. Post enquiry, the appellant was dismissed from service in 2007. Before the apex court, the counsel for the appellant contended that the quantum of punishment imposed was not commensurate with the guilt even if it is presumed that the



language used in the complaint constitutes flagrant breach of the UP Government Servant Conduct Rules. Among other considerations, the Supreme Court took note of the

fact that several other employees of the Bareilly District Court had sent representations directly to the superiors, but no action was taken against them.



Petition filed in Calcutta HC seeking CAPF deployment in Sandeshkhali

Kolkata, Feb 17 (IANS) : A petition was filed at a division bench of the Calcutta High Court on Saturday demanding the deployment of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali which has been on the boil since last week following protests by local women alleging sexual harassment by the close associates of absconding Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan. The division bench of Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Gaurang Kanth has admitted the petition filed by Sangjukta Samnta, who is herself a counsel of the Calcutta High Court. The matter will come up for hearing on February 19. The deployment of CAPF personnel at Sandeshkhali was earlier raised by BJP's state unit in West Bengal since the time tension started mounting there. BJP's claim was that the safety and security of the protesting women

could not be ensured in the absence of CAPF deployment since the district police was allegedly giving protection to those accused by the women of sexual harassment. The state unit of BJP has also accused a section of the local police of threatening some of the women protesters who narrated their experiences in the hands of the accused persons both in front of camera as well as to Governor C.V. Ananda Bose when the latter visited Sandeshkhali earlier this week. Shahjahan, the accused mastermind behind the attack on ED and CAPF personnel at Sandeshkhali on January 5, has been absconding since then. On Thursday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee virtually gave a clean chit to Shahjahan after accusing the ED officials of going to Sandeshkhali to target him with the intention of creating tension there.

Centre releases Rs 235 cr installment for Karnataka farmers

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Centre has released Rs 235.14 crore to the Karnataka government as the third installment under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) for the financial year 2023-24, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shobha Karandlaje said on Saturday. The amount approved on Thursday is to be utilised for the improvement of infrastructure in the agriculture sector, construction of godowns, water harvesting structures, establishment of primary demonstration units, procurement of tractors,

power tillers and drones, promotion of integrated farming, soil health fertility and setting up of custom hiring centres, etc. The minister also said that the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has allocated a total amount of Rs 761.89 crore for the year 2023-24 under RKVY to Karnataka to implement these schemes for the welfare of the farmers. On January 25, the Centre gave an additional allocation of Rs 178.65 crore to Karnataka under the RKVY scheme. The initial allocation under the RKVY scheme was Rs 583.24 crore which has been increased to Rs 761.89 crore for the year 2023-24, she added.



Till date, the Central government has released a total amount of Rs 526.75 crore out of the total allocation of Rs 761.89 crore, and the remaining balance amount will be released after utilization of the amount already released to the state.

The Centre has also issued the approval for the procurement of Bengal Gram (Channa) in Karnataka under the price support scheme at MSP of Rs 5,440 per quintal for a maximum quantity of 1,39,740 MTs for the rabi season.

Maratha quotas : BC Commission panel submits survey report to Maha govt

Mumbai, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission on Saturday submitted to the state government its voluminous survey report on ascertaining the backwardness of the Marathas ahead of the Special Legislature Session on February 20 to finalise the community's quotas. MSBCC Chairman Justice (retired) Sunil Shukre and other members submitted the bulky report to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde at his official residence

'Varsha', in the presence of Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, this morning. Justice Shukre said this was the biggest survey ever conducted anywhere in the country for which around three-four lakh surveyors contacted over 2.25 crore community people across the state.



Retired officers, educationists to brief youth about employment policies : Yogi

Lucknow, Feb 17 (IANS) : Retired officers and educationists in Uttar Pradesh will visit universities to brief youth about employment policies and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision.

For this, the chief minister has constituted a special team including 12 retired officers from the Indian Administrative Service, four from the Indian Police Service, and seven from the Indian Forest Service (all retired), along with 19 senior educationists. This team will engage in discussions with youth at different universities/colleges, addressing their queries related to jobs, employment, and career planning on February 17-18. Additionally, they will raise awareness about the Global Investors Summit-2023 and GBC-4.0.

The chief minister, on Saturday, engaged in a dialogue with the 42-member special team, comprising retired officers and senior educationists where he said, "You are all aware of the success of the Global Investors Summit held in February last year. We received investment proposals of nearly Rs 40 lakh crores, and now, within a year, these proposals are being implemented." This will immensely contribute to the overall development of the state and provide abundant employment

and career opportunities for our youth. You all have witnessed and contributed to the success of this state, and you have been supportive collaborators in this journey. You can interact with the youth and tell them about the progress we have made in the past seven years."

He further said, "Each of you possesses extensive experience in public life, having shouldered significant responsibilities. It is expected that our youth will benefit from your experiences, and your support in this endeavour is highly appreciated." The Global Investors Summit-23 is crucial in the sense that it has attracted investments for every district in the state. Now industrial development is not limited only to the NCR or some selected cities, but every district is benefiting from it. The Ground Breaking Ceremony will benefit all 75 districts of the state.

Rahul Gandhi 'insulted' party legislators, claims Assam Congress MLA

Guwahati, Feb 17 (IANS) : Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha, a three-time MLA, who resigned as Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president and "extended" support to the BJP, has revealed that the grand-old party leader Rahul Gandhi "insulted" the party MLAs when he was in northeast during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. "When Congress went to forge an alliance with 15 parties in Assam, many of us resisted the decision because most of the parties do not have any strength on ground. Raijor Dal chief Akhil Gogoi met Rahul Gandhi in Jorhat district and told him that Congress legislators remain mute spectators in the assembly

which was not at all true. However, Gandhi scolded his own party legislators badly," Purkayastha said. Purkayastha told IANS: "The leadership is the root cause of Congress' downfall. When Gandhi arrived in Dhubri during his yatra, he misbehaved with the party legislators on Gogoi's provocation. Gandhi threatened the party MLAs of suspension from the Congress. My fellow MLAs felt very much insulted at that time." He also claimed, "Most of the Congress legislators in Assam are with the BJP government whether they openly admit the fact or not." Two Congress MLAs -- Purkayastha and Basanta Das -- on Saturday went to meet Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during the ongoing budget session of



the assembly and tendered their support to the ruling party. Das was a minister in the Tarun Gogoi-led Congress government in Assam.

However, both the legislators have announced that they are not resigning from the Congress party and will continue to support the BJP government in the state despite being a primary member of the opposition party. The legislators chose this way of supporting the

BJP to avoid by-elections in their constituencies. Sarma said, "Showing faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development politics, the two Congress MLAs have chosen to support the government."



SC to consider listing Sharad Pawar's plea against EC decision on 'real' NCP

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Saturday said that it will consider urgent listing of the plea filed by Sharad Pawar challenging the decision of Election Commission of India (ECI) which had recognised the faction led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar as the 'real' Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and allotted it the party's 'clock' symbol. A bench presided over by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to list the matter at the earliest after senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Sharad

Pawar, sought directions for urgent listing of the plea on February 19. Singhvi said that a strange situation would arise if Sharad Pawar faction is subjected to party whip in the Assembly session commencing this weekend. "Our case is worse than Uddhav Thackeray as we have not been allotted any alternate poll symbol," he explained to the apex court. The plea arraying Ajit Pawar as respondent was filed by Sharad Pawar on February 12 through advocate Abhishek Jebaraj

Yogi govt renovates 300 temples under its spiritual tourism policy

Lucknow, Feb 17 (IANS) : As part of its spiritual tourism policy, the Uttar Pradesh government has been renovating ancient temples in various districts. Around 300 temples in all the 75 districts of the state are being renovated. A sum of Rs 50 lakh for each of these temples has been allocated for the refurbishment and renovation. In case of big temples, a separate fund of up to Rs 2 crore each has been allocated. The work to renovate the temples was reportedly undertaken soon after the formation of Yogi government 2.0. Uttar Pradesh tourism and culture Minister Jaiveer Singh said, "Several temples are centuries' old and required repair but remained neglected under successive governments. The Uttar Pradesh government decided to restore the glory and fame of the temples. The district administrations and people's representatives were directed to send the list of the temples in their areas that required renovation." Then, the list was handed over to the construction agencies to prepare the estimate of the works. Some of the reconstructed and renovated temples include Bateshwar Dham temple in Agra district, Rupani Devi temple in Firozabad, Aamani Baba temple in Aligarh, Kailash temple in Etah, Taragarh temple in Hathras, Lalpuri temple in Mainpuri and Laxmi temple in Mathura, Hathiram Baba temple in Ayodhya. The Shiva Baba temple in Ambedkar Nagar, Mahadev temple in Barabanki, Ram Janaki temple in Amethi, Jalhidham temple in Gonda, Baba Bihari Das temple in Bahraich, Maa Pateshwari temple in Balrampur and Jharkhand Mahadev temple in Gorakhpur are also on this list.



The minister said, "We have hired architects for the restoration works in the temples. The funds were released accordingly to the agencies to complete the restoration work." The minister further said that "Apart from the structure of the temples, their premises and boundary walls have also been reconstructed. Sheds have been erected, arrangements for drinking water have been made and benches installed in the temple area. The link roads connecting the temple to the nearby highways or villages have been repaired to facilitate the visit of pilgrims and tourists. Guest houses are being constructed near prominent temples." The infrastructural development around these temples will facilitate the movement of tourists in the area. "These temples are centres of religious and cultural activities. Along with performing religious rituals, the local people assemble for cultural activities, including bhajan, kirtan and Ram katha," he said.

Not encroached on the land allotted to the Delhi High Court, AAP tells SC

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has filed an application before the Supreme Court saying that it has not encroached on the land allotted to the Delhi High Court and the premises was officially allotted to it by the Delhi government in May 2015. The application said that such allotment of office space for official party work is an essen-

tial element of public funding of elections in India and is designed to level the electoral playing field. It added: "The applicant (Aam Aadmi Party) has risen to become a national political party. This change in the applicant's character and status has further enhanced its need for, as well as its entitlement to, office spaces in the New Delhi Municipal Area, at par with the 5 other national parties each

of which are enjoying, at least, similar allotments in similar locations." Referring to the guidelines issued by the Union government's Land & Development Office, the ruling party in the national capital said that it is entitled to two office spaces -- one for its National Unit and another for its Delhi State



Unit. However, as of now, it said that it has been allotted office space only for its Delhi State Unit. "Far from being an instance of 'encroachment', the Subject Premises were officially allotted to the Applicant (Aam Aadmi Party) by the government of NCT of Delhi on 31.12.2015 for its State Unit Office.



'No change in exam schedule': CBSE warns against fake notice

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Saturday said that there is no change in the examination schedule and also issued a stern warning against the fake notice over re-scheduling of exams in wake of farmers' protests. "The misleading notice has been issued on fake letterhead of CBSE. Such notices are completely fake. There is no change in the class X and XII board exams," the CBSE said. Earlier, Controller of Examinations Sanyam Bhardwaj has said that it has been observed in the past also that during exam time certain unscrupulous elements make an effort to spread rumours

on social media platforms about paper leak and claim to have access to question papers of exams. "Miscreants also circulate fake links of sample papers with the claim that questions will be from these sample papers," Bhardwaj said. He said that all this is done to mint money from the students. "These persons, groups and agencies intend to fleece the gullible students and parents as they demand money in return. Such irresponsible activities also create confusion and panic among the students and public," he said. Bhardwaj said that if anyone comes across any such news, the student or the parent must inform the CBSE on e-mail ID info.cbseexam@cbseshiksha.in



549 children reunited, over 200 rescued: An account of Railways' 'life-saving' act in January

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Indian Railways, over the years, has played a pivotal role in ferrying people and commercial goods from one part of the country to the other. The Railway Protection Force (RPF), a dedicated unit for safeguarding rail passengers, has done a remarkable job over the recent years, rightfully earning the goodwill of the travellers. The national carrier did a marvelous in January this year, as it achieved many milestones and set new benchmarks in providing not just safe and secure, but also comfortable and convenient journey to lakhs of passengers. Sharing data of its 'life-saving' acts, the Railways on Friday informed that it reunited close

to 550 children with their estranged family, saved lives of more than 200 individuals under 'Jeevan Raksha', and also cracked down on the hooligan elements and seized narcotics worth more than Rs 4 crore in January 2024. Railways' rescue acts * Under the mission 'Nanhe Faristey', RPF played a pivotal role in reuniting more than 549 children with their families. These children were separated from their families for various reasons. * Under 'Operation Jeevan Raksha', the RPF's swift action saved the lives of 233 passengers who had accidentally fallen while de-boarding or boarding moving trains, narrowly avoiding being caught under the wheels at platforms and railway tracks. * The RPF launched the 'Meri Saheli' initiative for the safety of

women passengers. About 229 'Meri Saheli' teams attended 13,615 trains and provided security assurance to 4.1 lakh lady passengers. * Under 'Operation Uplabdh', the RPF swooped down on touts and arrested 379 individuals in January and took legal action against them as per the law. Additionally, they seized future reserved railway tickets valued at Rs 44.46 lakh. * Under 'Operation NARCOS', RPF arrested 76 individuals and seized narcotics valued at Rs 4.13 crore in January. These criminals were handed over to government agencies. * Under 'Operation Yatri Suraksha', the RPF arrested 225 criminals involved in offences against passengers.



Centre's deprivation of Bengal to be Trinamool's key campaign plank: Abhishek Banerjee

Kolkata, Feb 17 (IANS) : Setting the tone for his party's aggressive drive to win the hearts of the voters in West Bengal ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Trinamool Congress national General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee made it clear on Saturday that pending Central dues to the state government will be the key campaign plank of the party in the run-up to the elections. During a virtual meeting with all the Trinamool MPs and MLAs as well as the top leadership of the party, Banerjee said that from February 18 to 25, the party will organise mass outreach camps in different parts of the state to make the people aware of how the Union government is allegedly depriving the common people of their legitimate dues because of political vendetta.

K'taka : BJP, JD-S stage walk out after Siddaramaiah targets Centre

Bengaluru, Feb 17 (IANS) : Karnataka BJP and JD (S) MLAs staged walkout from the budget session on Saturday while condemning the targeting of the Central government by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The BJP and JD (S) MLAs stood up as soon as the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah started pointing out the Central government for not allocating sufficient funds for the state. The opposition mem-

bers displayed placards stating that there is absolutely nothing in the budget, turning the house into chaos. They slammed the Chief Minister for targeting the Central government for political reasons and staged a walkout led by LoP R. Ashoka and JD (S) State President H.D Kumaraswamy. The opposition members of both the houses gathered in front of the Vidhana Soudha and staged a protest against the government.



BJP MP Pragya Thakur accuses Akasa Air duty manager of 'conspiring' against her

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS): BJP's Lok Sabha MP Pragya Singh Thakur on Saturday accused a duty manager of Akasa Air of conspiring and trying to cause huge loss to her during a Mumbai-Delhi flight she was travelling in. "Honorable Aviation Minister @JM_Scindia ji, when I came

to Delhi from Mumbai to Delhi @AkasaAir by flight number QP1120, Duty Manager Imran and his associates conspired and tried to cause huge loss to me. I hope you will definitely take action. Jai Shri Ram," tweeted Thakur, who represents the Bhopal constituency in the Lok Sabha. Responding to the MP's allega-

tions, the airline apologised and said that an internal investigation has been initiated to look into the matter. "We regret the de-boarding experience that Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Pragya Thakur, had on our flight QP1120 on February 15 (Thursday), 2024," said the airline in a statement. "We apologise for any inconve-



nience caused to her. While we will investigate the incident in detail, we take this as an opportunity to learn and to continue improving our services," it added.



Siddaramaiah's

budget - a 'bundle of lies': Bommai

Bengaluru, Feb 17 (IANS) : Senior BJP leader Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday said Chief Minister K. Siddaramaiah's budget is a "bundle of lies" to cover up his government's "failures". Slamming Siddaramaiah, Bommai said the chief minister has "destroyed the sanctity of the financial statement by attacking the Centre and making false claims". The BJP leader claimed that as compared to last year, only Rs 1,000 crore had been spent out of Rs 25,000 crore borrowed.

The Karnataka government was taking loans at a high rate of interest and spending them on unproductive expenses, Bommai said.

"The state has received all the grants from the Central government. But the state's tax collection has nosedived. To cover up this, the state government has presented the budget with a bundle of lies. There were no grants for Special Component Plan (SCP)/ Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and also for education and irrigation. The Congress has made Karnataka bankrupt," Bommai said.



Marriages between NRIs/OCIs, Indian citizens must be registered : Law panel

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The 22nd Law Commission, chaired by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi (Retd), has recommended that all marriages between Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)/Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) and Indian citizens should be compulsorily registered in India. The commission said that there has been a rapid rise in legal issues arising out of inter-country marriages taking place between NRIs and foreign citizens of Indian origin on one hand and Indian citizens on the other. In its report, the panel observed: "The rising occurrence

of fraudulent marriages involving NRIs marrying Indian partners is a worrisome trend. Several reports highlight an increasing pattern where these marriages turn out to be deceptive, putting Indian spouses, especially women, in precarious situations. Deceptive practices like false assurances, misrepresentation, and abandonment are commonly associated with these fraudulent unions, causing distress to the Indian partners." It said that the inter-country nature of these marriages further intensifies the vulnerability, making it challenging for affected individuals to pursue legal remedies and support. Pitching for a comprehensive cen-

tral legislation, the commission said that the proposed law should include provisions on divorce, maintenance of spouse, custody and maintenance of children, serving of summons, warrants, or judicial documents on the NRIs and OCIs. Also, the panel recommended that requisite amendments be introduced in the Passports Act, 1967 in order to mandate the declaration of marital status, the linking of a spouse's passport with the other and mentioning of the Marriage Registration Number on the passports of both the spouses.



Himachal's GSDP estimated

at Rs 1,91,728cr - a hike of 11%: Economic Survey

Shimla, Feb 17 (IANS) : Himachal Pradesh's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices is estimated at Rs 191,728 crore in 2022-23 against Rs 172,162 crore in the second revised estimate in 2021-22, showing an increase of 11.4 per cent during the year, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Saturday.

The GSDP at constant (2011-12) prices in 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 133,372 crore against Rs 124,770 crore in 2021-22, registering a growth of 6.9 per cent during the year. The growth of 6.9 per cent in 2022-23 is mainly attributed to a 5.7 per cent growth in the primary sector, 5.1 per cent growth in the secondary sector, and 10.4 per cent growth in the tertiary sector of the economy, Sukhu told the assembly, citing the state's economic survey 2023-24. Food grain production, which was 15.79 lakh metric tonne (MT) during 2021-22 decreased to 15.23 lakh MT in 2022-23 and is anticipated to be 16.52 lakh MT in 2023-24. The vegetable production increased to 18.67 lakh MT in 2022-23 against 18.04 lakh MT in 2021-22. As per current estimates based on economic conditions up to December 2023, the economy of the state for 2023-24 is expected to grow by 7.1 per cent against 6.9 per cent during 2022-23. The economy of the state has shown a shift from agriculture sector to industries and services as the percentage contribution of agriculture in total Gross State Domestic Product has declined from 57.9 per cent in 1950-51 to 55.5 per cent in 1967-68, 26.5 per cent in 1990-91 and 9.45 per cent in 2022-23.



NCSC recommends Prez rule in Bengal, says women

were harassed in Sandeshkhali

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Saturday recommended the imposition of President's rule in West Bengal in its report on Sandeshkhali violence submitted to President Droupadi Murmu.

NCSC Chief Arun Halder said, "The commission has submitted its report to the President. The report recommends the imposition of President's rule in West Bengal." The Commission has said that women were harassed in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali.

Bengal ration case: ED probes Bangladesh links of arrested bizman

Kolkata, Feb 17 (IANS) : Enforcement Directorate (ED) sleuths have started probing the Bangladesh links of Biswajit Das, the Kolkata-based businessman who was arrested by the central agency sleuths in connection with the ration distribution case in West Bengal. Sources said that Das, a close confidante of West Bengal Minister Jyotipriya Mallick and Trinamool Congress leader Shankar Adhya, used to visit

Bangladesh frequently. Even a day before his arrest on February 14 he was in Bangladesh. He hurriedly returned to Kolkata on February 13 evening after being informed that the ED sleuths were conducting raid and search operations at his premises. Both Mallick and Adhya are in judicial custody now for their alleged involvement in the ration distribution case and Das's name surfaced in the course of interrogation of Adhya by the ED sleuths. Sources said that as the ED sleuths

are getting deeper into their investigation in the ration distribution, the investigating officials are securing additional clues relating to hawala and Bangladesh links in diversion of the ill-gotten proceeds in the alleged scam, Adhya and Das, as per the latest findings of the central agency sleuths, played the key role in first converting the alleged scam proceeds through multiple foreign exchange dealing entities and then diverting the same abroad through the hawala route.



NewsClick row: HC issues notice to Delhi Police on Prabir Purkayastha's plea against UAPA FIR

New Delhi, Feb 17 (IANS) : The Delhi High Court on Saturday issued a notice to the Delhi Police on a plea by NewsClick founder, Prabir Purkayastha, challenging the FIR in a case lodged under the provisions of the UAPA over allegations that the media outlet received money to spread pro-China propaganda.

During the proceedings, Advocate Zoheb Hossain, representing the police, opposed the issuance of notice, citing subsequent developments in the case, notably the in-



volvement of former NewsClick Human Resources (HR) head, Amit Chakravarty, as an approver. Hossain argued that the alleged offences were prima facie established against the accused. Senior Advocate Dayan Krishnan, representing

Purkayastha, contested these claims, prompting Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma to issue notice to consider the Delhi Police's response.



Women, above 60, to get free travel in UPSRTC buses

Lucknow, Feb 17 (IANS) : Women above 60 years will get to travel for free in UP State Roadways Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) buses soon.

To ensure transparency, UPSRTC will issue cards to the eligible women. The card will have the personal details of women passengers.

Raj leader Malviya slams Cong in Delhi as rumours of MLA joining BJP today fly

Jaipur, Feb 17 (IANS) : Even as rumours of Congress MLA Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya joining the BJP flew thick and fast in Rajasthan, the veteran leader reached New Delhi on Saturday, where for the first time, he slammed the grand old party in front of the media. Even though the BJP and the Congress leader's office remained tight-lipped about the possibility of him joining the BJP, sources close to Malviya said that he has decided to leave the party. In Delhi, Malviya tried to corner the Congress high command without taking names. He said, "You all are seeing the situation in the Congress. The vision that propelled the party earlier is no longer there. I was not made a minister for three years. My name was and still is in the CWC. The Congress is limited now to being surrounded by a few people."

Police identify Indian-origin techie as suspect in US family murder-suicide case

New York, Feb 17 (IANS) : Indian-American former Meta engineer Anand Henry has been identified as a suspect in a murder-suicide involving himself, his wife and their four-year-old twins in the US state of California, the police said. Henry and his wife Alice Priyanka Benziger, both in their late thirties, were found dead inside a bathroom of their \$2.1 million Alameda de las Pulgas home with gunshot wounds on Saturday. A 9mm handgun legally registered to Henry was located on the bathroom floor where both adults' bodies were located. "Based on the shared investigation to date between the San Mateo Police Department, the San Mateo County Crime Lab, and the San Mateo County Coroner's Office, Anand Henry has been identified as the suspect," the San Mateo Police Department said in a statement on Saturday. The police, who entered the house through an unlocked window, also found the bodies of two children inside a bedroom with no signs of trauma. According to investigations, Benziger succumbed to multiple gunshot wounds, while Henry suffered from a single shot. "The cause of death for the minor boys is still pending pathology, but we can confirm they did not die from gunfire or show signs of bodily trauma," the police said.



Rishi Sunak has suffered a double-blow after losing two by-elections to Labour

London, Feb 17 (IANS) : UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has suffered a double-blow after losing two by-elections to Labour Party, overturning significant majorities in both, the media reported. Both Kingswood and Wellingborough turned from blue to red, meaning this government has seen the most by-election losses of any Conservative administration since the Second World War, Sky News reported. The losses do not bode well as Downing Street continues its preparation for the general election due this year. The results also provide some relief for Keir Starmer after a challenging week for the Labour leader, having scaled back his party's green investment plan and been embroiled in an anti-semitism crisis. Labour's wins in Kingswood and Wellingborough mean the Conservatives have now lost 10 by-elections in the course of this Parliament – two more than the eight defeats suffered by the 1992-97 Conservative administration led by John Major, The Guardian reported. It means the Conservative government has lost more by-elections than any previous government since the 1966-70 Labour administration of Harold Wilson, which endured 15 losses, The Guardian reported.



Tulsi Gabbard 'open' to talks on running as Trump's mate, discusses foreign policy

Washington, Feb 17 (IANS) : Hindu-American Democratic presidential candidate, has spoken to Republican frontrunner Donald Trump and his advisors about the country's foreign policy, keeping her options as the former President's 2024 running mate 'open', media reports suggested. The first Hindu in the US Congress left the Democratic Party in 2022, calling it an "elitist cabal of warmongers" and accusing its leadership of "cowardly wokeness". Now, with the country likely

set for a Trump-Joe Biden rematch in 2024, the talks with Gabbard focused on how the Defence Department should be run in case of a second Trump term, The Washington Post reported. Also, with Trump telling his advisors and donors time and again that his personnel choices at the Pentagon cost him, there were broader conversations on how Trump 2.0 would manage things differently. A military veteran, who served in the Iraq war between 2004 and 2005 for the Hawaii Army National Guard before entering Congress, Gabbard has long been critical of US intervention overseas

and has also blamed Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Biden's failed foreign policy. "She appeals to Republicans who are skeptical of intervention overseas, which is now a majority of Republican voters," GOP strategist Andrew Surabian told Newsweek. While appearing on Fox News' Fox & Friends recently, the former Hawaii representative said she would be "open" to a conversation with Trump on running as his 2024 running mate. "I'd be open to that conversation. My mission in life is to serve our country and serve the American people and find the best way to be able to do that," Gabbard said. Gabbard recently inked a deal with Elon Musk to host a show on X to "defend free speech", saying she will be sharing stories of those whose "voices have been silenced". Trump, bulldozing his way to grab the crucial GOP nomination for the 2024 presidential race, is yet to announce his vice-presidential pick. While media speculation throws up several candidates, Trump has said very little about whom he or she he has shortlisted or even what qualities he's looking for in a potential candidate, media reports said.



Army thwarts Pak drone attempt along LoC in J&K's Poonch

Jammu, Feb 17 (IANS) : Alert troops of the Army on Saturday intercepted a Pakistani drone along the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K's Poonch district. Officials said that alert troops intercepted the drone in the Baloni area of Krishna Ghati sector in Mendhar (Poonch) and forced it to return by firing at it. "The incident took place around 7.10 a.m. today when a Pakistani drone was seen coming near one of the Army posts in Mendhar area.

Law enforcement should stay ahead in modern tech to counter terrorists : Interpol chief

New York, Feb 17 (IANS) : Law enforcement agencies must stay ahead of the curve on modern technologies to be able to counter terrorist groups who are exploiting the lawless frontiers of technology, according to Interpol's Secretary-General Jurgen Stock. "Modern technology has been used by criminal groups, terrorist groups (and), of course, they are not bound by any regulation," he told reporters here on Saturday. "They use what is available including social networks."

"Law enforcement, of course, needs to be equipped, needs to be trained, because without modern technology, we cannot do our

job in law enforcement," he said. Speaking outside the Security Council chamber, before briefing Council members met on the threat posed by Da'esh, he added that the group has been "diminished", but the "threat is not over". "It is particularly important to keep the pressure high" on the group better known by the acronym ISIS for Islamic State in Iraq and al-Shams even though it operates in a much broader area, directly and through affiliates. "Any gap we leave" and any weak-



ness would be exploited by it, Stock said. "The group has been strengthened by the use of modern emerging technologies," he added. Stock said that it was important for members of the Interpol to share information as that "remains

key in the fight against international terrorism". Interpol is providing "a unique early warning system" against terrorism by "sharing investigative leads and important data like biometric data on terrorists," he added.



Japan 'paying attention' to remarks from N.Korean leader's sister: Top govt spokesman

Tokyo/Seoul, Feb 17 (IANS) : Japan is "paying attention to" the remarks by the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un about her openness to mending ties and discussing a possible visit to Pyongyang by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, its top government spokesman said on Saturday. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi made the comment, referring to Kim Yo-jong's comments

on Saturday that Kishida might be able to visit North Korea under certain conditions, such as that Tokyo will not raise the longstanding issue of Japanese abductees, Yonhap news agency reported. "We are paying attention to the fact that Vice Director Kim has issued the statement," Hayashi said in a regular briefing. Without giving further comments, Hayashi restated that Kishida and the Japanese government have been making efforts at various lev-

els to realise a summit with the North Korea's leader to resolve pending issues with Pyongyang. But Hayashi made it clear that Japan will not accept North Korea's claim that the abductees issue has been resolved. "We cannot accept that," he said. "We remain unchanged that Japan intends to comprehensively resolve pending issues such as nuclear and missiles and the abductions, based on the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration." In 2002, Japan and North Korea signed a landmark declaration committing them to an early normalisation of bilateral ties. The signing came with the first historic visit to North Korea by the then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in the same year. This led to North Korea returning five Japanese abductees home. Kim Yo-jong's comments came after Kishida said at a recent parliamentary session that various activities are under way, in response to a question about Tokyo's push for a potential summit with North Korea. Kim also said North Korea and Japan can open up a "new future" together if Tokyo makes a political decision to pave a new path for mending relations through

"courteous behaviour and trustworthy action". Japan claims that North Korea abducted 17 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s and 12 of them are still in North Korea after it returned the five abductees. North Korea has admitted having abducted 13 Japanese nationals in the past to train its spies in Japanese language and culture. While returning the five, North Korea claimed that the other eight were deceased. South Korea believes that any contact between Tokyo and Pyongyang should be made in a way that would "help promote the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula," a Foreign Ministry official in Seoul said on condition of anonymity. "We are closely communicating with the Japanese side on North Korean issues, including contact between Tokyo and Pyongyang," the official added. "South Korea, the US and Japan are closely coordinating to bring North Korea back on the path to denuclearisation."

Indian national dies in flooding as severe weather batters Australia's Queensland

Melbourne, Feb 17 (IANS) : An Indian national has died in a flooding incident in Queensland as wild weather battered the region with severe rain and thunderstorms, the Indian High Commission in Canberra said on Saturday. Expressing condolences, the Indian mission said that it is in touch with the family and providing all possible assistance. "Heartbreaking tragedy in Australia: an Indian national lost her life in a flooding incident near Mount Isa, Queensland. Deepest condolence to the family of the deceased. Mission team is in

touch for all necessary assistance," the Indian High Commission posted on X. While further details are awaited, the victim's name was not revealed by the mission. The local media reported that a 28-year-old woman was found dead inside a partially submerged car in floodwaters in Queensland on Friday. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology in the country has issued a severe thunderstorm alert for parts of southeast Queensland, which includes heavy rainfall warnings across Logan, Redland City and parts of Brisbane.



Allu Arjun: 'Pushpa 2' has a 'huge canvas'; fans can 'definitely expect' a third part

South Indian star Allu Arjun spoke about the plans of expansion for his 'Pushpa' franchise, which was first released in 2021. Talking about the August release 'Pushpa 2: The Rule', Arjun said: "You can definitely expect part three, we do want to make it a franchise and we have exciting ideas for the lineup."

"A sizzle reel from the Pushpa franchise is being screened on the sidelines of the Berlin European Film Market in order to seed it as a brand for international audiences. There will also be a fan screening of 'Pushpa: The Rise — Part 1', added the actor, while talking to Variety. Berlin will be Arjun's first time in Germany and his first time at a film festival. "I just want to see how people abroad are going to see

this film, and try to understand how they view Indian cinema, just understand how film festivals are and what kind of films are watched and what is the mindset of the people that come there," Arjun said. Directed by Sukumar, the film talks about the rise of Pushpa Raj (Arjun), a laborer who rises through the ranks of a red sandalwood smuggling syndicate and faces off against an egotistical police officer.



Suriya-starrer 'Kanguva' moves into post-production

The upcoming film 'Kanguva', which stars Suriya, has entered the post-production after wrapping up its filming schedule. The film, directed by Siva, also stars Disha

Patani and Bobby Deol, and saw its pre-production and shoot stretched over a period of two years. The film's cinematographer, Vetri Palanisamy took to his X and shared an update on the film's post production. He shared the update from the film's Digital intermediate (DI).

'Bade Miyan Chote Miya' title track infused with Akshay, Tiger's 'swag, style' to be out on Mon

The title track of Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff-starrer 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' will be dropping February 19 and the actors have shared a glimpse of it filled with "swag and style" in a poster. Akshay and Tiger took to Instagram, where they shared a poster, where the two are seen walking in style. The poster seems to be a still from the song, which will drop in three days. The track is touted as the "party song for the season." Tiger and Akshay will be seen sharing screen space in action-thriller 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', directed by Ali Abbas Zafar. The film is produced by Zafar, Jacky Bhagnani, Vashu Bhagnani, Deepshikha Deshmukh, and Himanshu Kishan Mehra under the banners of Pooja Entertainment and AAZ Films. The film stars Prithviraj Sukumaran, Sonakshi Sinha, Manushi Chhillar, Alaya F., and Ronit Bose Roy. The film is shot in locales of Mumbai, Scotland, London, Luton, Abu Dhabi.



Abhimanyu Singh goes grey for Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Lahore 1947'

Actor Abhimanyu Singh will be seen as an antagonist in Rajkumar Santoshi's upcoming film 'Lahore 1947' starring Sunny Deol. The filmmaker said that Abhimanyu's intensity, voice, and conviction are truly unbeatable. Santoshi said: "Usually, whenever we think of a villain's character, the first few names that come to our mind are Amrish ji and Danny ji but we have to look forward and see who's taking the baton ahead."

"Interestingly, we have roped in Abhimanyu Singh who will be seen playing a strong and lead role as antagonist in Lahore 1947. His intensity, his voice, and his conviction are truly unbeatable. He is undoubtedly one of the most talented actors we have in our industry." Abhimanyu Singh predominantly works in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil language films. He has vast experience working in films such as Lakshya, Dhol, Once Upon Ay

Time in Mumbai Dobaara!, Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela, Bachchan Paandey, Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan among many others. Talking about 'Lahore 1947', Aamir Khan will take over the charge as producer under Aamir Khan Productions, while director Rajkumar Santoshi will helm the project. Sunny Deol and Preity Zinta will be leading the film as the main actors.

Kriti Sanon completes 10 years in Bollywood

From a college graduate who wasn't sure about starring in films to winning a National Film Award, it has been an interesting journey for actor Kriti Sanon, who credits her engi-

neering background for staying curious. Sanon made a promising film debut opposite fellow newcomer Tiger Shroff with 2014's "Heropanti".



Arjun Kapoor thrilled playing villain in 'Singham Again'

Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor has joined the star-studded cast of Rohit Shetty's 'Singham Again', where he will be seen playing a baddie. He promises there will be mayhem. Arjun took to Instagram, where he shared his bloodied look from the movie. Another image has Ranveer Singh's 'Simmba' looking intensely at each other. Describing himself as "villain," Arjun wrote: "Singham ka villain! Feeling on top of the world being a part of hit-machine Rohit Shetty sir's cop universe! I promise you there will be mayhem." Rohit Shetty called his character a "shaitaan" and introduced Arjun: "Insaan galati karta hai, aur usse uski



saza bhi milti hai... Lekin ab jo aayega, wo shaitaan hai! CAN I SAY — INTRODUCING ARJUN KAPOOR!." Arjun's best friend Ranveer Singh, who too is in the film, shared the same pictures and wrote: "MY BABA BADDEST." "Singham Again" also stars Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Jackie Shroff. While Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone and Tiger Shroff reportedly appear as cameos.



Suniel Shetty gets nostalgic as he reminisces about his father

Actor Suniel Shetty, who is currently judging 'Dance Deewane' has reflected on the significance of physical touch, particularly between fathers and sons. He noted that while children often share physical closeness with their mothers, the same isn't true for fathers. In the new episode of 'Dance Deewane', audiences were swept away by the mesmerising performance of two extraordinary brothers.