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Nifty closes flat ahead of RBI policy meeting

Nifty opened positive on Wednesday but soon lost some sheen to close flat at 21,931 levels. Barring IT, all other sectors ended in green, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research... **07**



Marizanne Kapp's all-round show propels Proteas women to maiden ODI victory over Australia

Marizanne Kapp emerged as the shining star for South Africa Women as they clinched a historic victory over Australia by 84 runs (DLS method).. **12**



Telangana Aviation Academy to train NRSC drone pilots

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Telangana State Aviation Academy has entered into an MoU with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to provide advanced training for drone pilots. The NRSC is one

of the primary centres of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Telangana Aviation Academy CEO S. N. Reddy and NRSC Director Prakash Chauhan signed the agreement in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth

Reddy, Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and ISRO Chairman S Somnath. State Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, R&B Secretary Srinivasa Raju and NRSC officials are also present.

Fire in Hyderabad's Niloufer Hospital, No casualties



Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : A fire broke out in government-run Niloufer Hospital in Hyderabad on Wednesday evening but there were no casualties, officials said. The fire started from the biochemistry laboratory wing on the first floor of the old building, apparently due to a short circuit. Thick smoke billowing out of the wing spread to other parts of the building, sending panic among patients and their attendants. Some of the women and children undergoing treatment were shifted as a precautionary measure. A fire engine rushed to the spot and doused the fire.



Telangana Assembly session to begin today, likely to witness stormy scenes

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Telangana Assembly session will begin on Thursday with Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan addressing both the Houses on the first day. This is the second consecutive session of the Assembly after the Congress government took over the reins of power in the Telangana State. The session is anticipated to resonate with vigorous exchanges between legislators of the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS over the issue of Krishna river waters, particularly related to handing over the outlets of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects. To this extent, the State Cabinet has already approved the

Governor's speech. After the Governor's speech, Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka will introduce the budget in the House. The State government is also planning to release a white paper related to the irrigation department in the Assembly and to expose the failure of the previous BRS government which has allegedly handed over the management of irrigation projects to the Centre. Meanwhile, Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has announced that the State government will introduce a vigilance inquiry report on the Kaleswaram project, which is said to be the brainchild of former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

Sharmila urges Jagan, Naidu to mount pressure on Centre on special status

Vijayawada, Feb 7 (IANS) : Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief Y.S. Sharmila on Tuesday urged Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and leader of opposition Chandrababu Naidu to come along in mounting pressure on the Union government to grant Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh.

Sharmila wrote open letters to both the leaders, seeking their support to pass a resolution to protect the interests of the people of Andhra Pradesh for sending the same to the Union Cabinet and the President of India.

In the letters, Sharmila demanded that the state Assembly should discuss and debate the 'injustice' the Union government has done to Andhra Pradesh.



Former Minister & Telugu Actor Babu Mohan quits BJP

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : In a jolt to the BJP in Telangana ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, former minister and actor P. Babu Mohan on Wednesday resigned from the party. He told media persons that he was being sidelined in the party. He alleged that state BJP chief G. Kishan Reddy was not responding to his calls.

He revealed that he wants to contest for Lok Sabha from Warangal constituency but did not disclose which party he would be joining.



Andhra Pradesh presents Rs 2.86 lakh crore Interim Budget

Amaravati, Feb 7 (IANS) : Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath on Wednesday

presented an interim Budget of Rs 2,86,389.27 crore. The outlay is about 2.5 per cent higher than the previous year. The budget size for 2023-24 was Rs 2,79,279 crore. The revenue expenditure is estimated at Rs 2,30,110.41 crore, and capital expenditure Rs 30,530 crore. The estimated revenue deficit is around Rs 24,758.18 crore and the fiscal deficit is estimated at around Rs 55,817 crore. Presenting the last Budget of the YSRCP government before the election, Rajendranath said the fiscal deficit will be around 3.51 per cent of the GSDP, whereas the revenue deficit will be around 1.56 per cent of the GSDP. In his Budget speech in the Assembly, he said the revenue deficit was Rs 44,487.49 crore and fiscal deficit Rs 52,508.34 crore during FY 2022-23.



PM Modi cites Nehru's letter to then CMs, takes 'non-starter' dig at Cong's 'Yuvraj'

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : If Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to Motion of Thanks to President's address in Lok Sabha was directed at frontal attack on Congress, his address in Upper House centered around laying out

NDA's roadmap for growth while also littered with jibes at grand old party and the Gandhi family. Doubling down on his attacks on the Congress leadership, PM Modi again cited party's stalwart leader and India's first Prime Min-

ister Jawaharlal Nehru and claimed that the latter was against reservation for the poor and marginalised class as this would have led to 'inefficiency and incompetence in the system'.



Congress Govt will complete all pending projects : Shabbir Ali

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : Advisor to the Government of Telangana (SC, ST, BC & Minorities) Mohammed Ali Shabbir announced that the Congress Government would

complete all the projects and initiatives that were kept pending by the previous BRS regime to ensure fast-paced growth of SC, ST, BC and Minorities in Telangana.

Telangana CM 'very disconcerted' over attack on Hyderabad student in US

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday that he was very "disconcerted" to learn of the attack on Syed Mazahir Ali, a student from Hyderabad, by four robbers in Chicago.

A day after videos surfaced about a brutal attack on the student, Revanth Reddy voiced his concern on X as it followed a fatal attack on B. Shreyas Reddy, who was killed in Ohio. He requested External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to convey

"our concerns over safety of our students and citizens living there". Revanth Reddy said his government will set up a dedicated help desk for all youth living in the US and other countries, especially students, to ensure all their needs are met.





Gutha directs steps for smooth conduct of Assembly sessions

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy has directed the officials concerned to take all necessary measures for the smooth conduct of Telangana State Legislative Assembly and the Council budget sessions which will commence on Thursday with Governor

Tamilisai Soundararajan addressing both the Houses on the first day. Gutha Sukhender Reddy along with Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar and Minister for Legislative Affairs D Sridhar Babu held a review meeting with the officials and top police officers here on Wednesday.

Kishan reviews SCR station developmental works

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Culture, Tourism & Development of North Eastern Region, visited Secunderabad Railway Station and reviewed station major upgradation plans today. He was accompanied by Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, SCR and other senior Railway officials.



Bankers should sanction timely loans to all eligible

Adilabad, Feb 7 (TIM Bureau) : District Collector Rahul Raj P S directed the bankers to sanction timely loans to all the eligible. He held a coordination meeting of district level bankers for the month of December 2023 at the Collectorate meeting hall on Wednesday. On this occasion, the District Collector said that according to the targets set in the district, banks should sanction crop related loans, establishment of employment units, small, medium, educational, housing loans and other preferential loans to the deserving poor people. He said that units should be allotted

to the eligible beneficiaries under the PM Vishwakarma Yojana scheme. He said that the officials and bankers should make plans to achieve the set goals in coordination and sanction loans within the stipulated time. He suggested that the credit limit of self-help groups should be increased and the bankers should coordinate with the concerned authorities so that the loans given will be repaid on time. He said that banks should exceed their targets by the end of the annual year. He said that by sanctioning dairy, poultry, etc. units to the farmers along with crop and ancillary

loans, two types of economic progress will increase for the farmers. Later, the collector unveiled the potential linked credit plan for the financial year 2024-25. Telangana Grameen Bank RM Venkatram Reddy was felicitated with a Shawl by the District Collector for achieving 100% financial progress. LDM Prasad, NABARD DM MD Raof, District Industries Center General Manager Padmabhushan Raju, ITDA DD Dilip Kumar, Agriculture Department Officer Pullaiah, officials of various departments, managers of banks and others participated in this meeting.

BOI BALA NAGAR BRANCH: 7-4-194/5, Ground floor, Shiv Ganesh Complex, Balanagar, Hyderabad-500011. Ph: 040 23771899, Email: balanagar.telangana@bankofindia.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 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 01.11.2023 calling upon the Borrowers: Mr. Sanjeev Kaura (Borrower), Flat No.407, 4th Floor, Survey No.169, Ashoka Ornata Apartments, Ashok Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana-500020, (Ph:9848160824), Guarantor: Mr. Gaurav Kaura (Guarantor), Flat No.407, 4th Floor, Survey No.169, Ashoka Ornata Apartments, Ashok Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana-500020, (Ph:9603882257) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.10,32,115.69/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand One Hundred and Fifteen and Sixty Nine Paise) 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 under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 3rd day of February of the year 2024.

Union Bank of India HMT Industrial Estate Branch 02121, HMT Industrial Estate, 8/127 to 129, Jeedimetla, Hyderabad-500054. Ph. No. 040-23080049, Mail Id: ubin0802123@unionbankofindia.bank

POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property) (RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India, H.M.T. Industrial Estate Branch (erstwhile Andhra Bank), Hyderabad, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 30-11-2023 calling upon the Borrower/Guarantors details mentioned as under Borrowers: 1. Ms. Jagasia Apparels, Contact Address: Plot No.78, Madhav's Mansion, Adjacent Lane to Cipla Health Care, Rajeev Gandhi Nagar Extension, Besides Prasanth Nagar IDA, Kukatapally, Hyderabad, Telangana-500072, Security Address: House No.16-3-21/624, Plot No.624, S.No.145, Bhagat Singh Nagar Phase-I, Hydernagar Village, Balanagar Mandal, Hyderabad 500085. 2. Mrs. Yamini Koganti (Alias) Mrs. Yamini Bhaskar Medepudi, Proprietor - M/s Jagasia Apparels, Contact Address: Plot No.78, Madhav's Mansion, Adjacent Lane to Cipla Health Care, Rajeev Gandhi Nagar Extension, Besides Prasanth Nagar IDA, Kukatapally, Hyderabad, Telangana-500072, Security Address: House No.16-3-21/624, Plot No.624 S.No.145, Bhagat Singh Nagar Phase-I, Hydernagar Village, Balanagar Mandal, Hyderabad-500085. Guarantor: 3. Mr. M.Vijaya Bhaskar, Contact Address: House No.16-3-21/624, Plot No.624, S.No.145, Bhagat Singh Nagar Phase-I, Hydernagar Village, Balanagar Mandal, Hyderabad-500085 to repay the amounts mentioned in the notices being Rs.1,30,66,497/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Seven Only) together with contractual rate of interest from 29-10-2023 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower as well as guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 9 of the said rules on this 3rd day of February 2024.

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, Aurum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE Where as, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Shriram Finance Limited, (Formerly know 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.13-11-2022) 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 06th day of February, 2024.



Thana Divas aims to bring police services closer to the people : SP Akhil Mahajan

He assured that he would take 68 requests from the people himself and work towards solving the problems quickly.

Rajanna Sirisilla, Feb 7 (TIM Bureau) : Thana Divas is organized in a police station on the first Tuesday of every month with the

aim of solving peace and security problems at the village level in Rajanna Sirisilla district, solving people's problems and providing police services closer to the rural people. After receiving 68 complaints from people, District SP Akhil Mahajan issued orders to the officials to solve the problems. On

this occasion, SP Akhil Mahajan said that the Thana Divas program has been organized to reach out to the people, and we are working to maintain peace and security in the villages by organizing community programs from time to time in the villages. He said that after receiving the complaints from the people and asking about their problems, the authorities have been instructed to solve such problems, problems that are not under their jurisdiction will be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities, and they will be monitored from time to time until the problems are solved. Family related problems will be conducted under the supervision of She Team and Sakhi Center. If there is a criminal problem, the officials were directed to register an FIR by giving instructions to the concerned officials. He suggested to register PD Act along with criminal cases against those who terrorize the

people and occupy the lands. He said that we will create awareness with the Legal Services Authority regarding civil problems. We will solve the problems by mediating between the two groups. Out of the complaints received during the Thana Divas program held at the station, FIRs were registered against 57 complaints. In some of the complaints, people from both the communities were called and their problems were resolved, women's family related problems were counseled by the District She Team, civil problems were advised to go to the court, and the court was directed to In this way, the Legal Services Authority was consulted and created awareness. The SP was accompanied by DSP Uday Reddy, CI Sadan Kumar, SI Shekhar Reddy and others.

Three held in chit fund fraud case

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : On February 6, 2024, Madhapur Police arrested three accused in a Chit Fund racket case under Madhapur police limits and seized three mobile phones from their possession. Police said the accused opened a chit fund company under the name and style of "Samathamurthy Chit Fund Private limited" six months back and appointed some employees to run the business and gave vide publicity and opened three branches at Madhapur, LB Nagar and Kukatapally.



Check Malnutrition with Siri Nutrition Program

At the launch of the Siri Nutrition Pilot Project: State Women and Child Welfare Department Secretary Vakati Karuna

Rajannasirisilla, Feb 7 (TIM Bureau) : Mrs. Vakati Karuna, Secretary of the State Women and Child Welfare Department, said that the experimental Siri nutrition program in the district is very helpful to overcome malnutrition. Secretary of Women and Child Welfare Department Mrs. Vakati Karuna along with Collector Anurag Jayanthi launched the Siri Nutrition Pilot Project program

aimed at distribution of sprouted seeds and multi millet laddu. On this occasion she said that although Telangana ranks first in the country in the field of health, women and children are suffering from malnutrition. It is said that 40 percent of women in the state are suffering from anemia. 30 percent of children are underweight and height for their age. It is said that women think more about their family members than about themselves and their health. Through

the Siri Nutrition Pilot Project, by providing copper laddus, ragi java, sprouted seeds and multi millet laddus to pregnant women, infants and children under six years of age once a week, the negative factor of malnutrition can be changed into a positive one and diseases caused by malnutrition can be kept away from them. He said that through this program the importance of millets will increase in the awareness of the people. District Praja Parishad Chairperson Nyalakonda Aruna Raghava Reddy said that if the unborn children are to be healthy, pregnant women must go to the Angadi Anganwadi centers near them and take the balanced food offered there. Not as expected. He said that although the government is providing nutrition, there are still women suffering from anemia problems and children suffering from stunted growth in the district. To overcome this, a program called Siriposhan is being conducted by 41,000 people in 587 Anganwadi centers in the district in the month of February. "Copper brownies will be given to pregnant women, infants and children under six years of age once a week. With everyone's participation, this program will be successful and the district will be made a malnutrition-free district.



Jupally lashes out at KCR for enacting dramas on irrigation projects

Hyderabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : Minister for Excise and Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao has lashed out at former chief minister and BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao for enacting dramas on the issue of handing over Telangana irrigation projects to the Centre.

Delhi govt announces free bus travel for transgender community

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : Delhi government on Wednesday announced free bus travel for the transgender community in the national capital. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that a proposal will soon be passed in the Cabinet to implement the new scheme. Just as women can travel free in buses in the national capital, the transgender community will also be granted free tickets from now onwards. The Delhi government had announced free bus travel for women in October 2019, and since then, approximately 147 crore free tickets have been issued to women, Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister also expressed concern about the neglect faced by the transgender community in the social environment, emphasising that they are also human beings with equal rights. He hoped that this decision by the government will greatly benefit the transgender community. Transgender individuals will receive the benefit of free bus service based on government certificate. Currently, certificates for transgender individuals are issued by the district magistrate's office in all districts.



Manipur education officials tender apology over CBSE affiliation row

Imphal, Feb 7 (IANS) : Three senior officers from Manipur Education Department, who were suspended on January 12, have reportedly furnished written apologies for "irregularity in issuing no-objection certificates (NOCs)" to schools in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts seeking CBSE affiliation, officials said on Wednesday. An Education Department official said that the officers cited "pressure" from elected representatives, civil society organisations and student bodies as the reason behind

their unilateral actions without permission of the state government. Sources said four MLAs from Churachandpur and two from Kangpokpi districts told these officers - two zonal education officers and a deputy inspector of schools, to issue the NOCs. These MLAs are part of the 10 Kuki-Zo legislators demanding for a separate administration (equivalent to separate state) for the tribals since Manipur faced ethnic riots on May 3 last year. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) canceled the affiliation of 25 schools in these districts on December 20 last year as the state government had not

provided the necessary NOCs. The CBSE mandates that state board schools obtain NOCs from the state government before applying for central board affiliation. The change in the education board from state to central in the two districts was perceived as an attempt to formalise a new arrangement amid ethnic strife. The apology letters reveal that the officers were aware of the procedural violations but "felt compelled to succumb to external pressures due to the ongoing ethnic conflict", disrupting government services and communication protocols, the sources added. In one letter, Churachandpur ZEO Jangkhohao Haokip explained his predicament, stating that he initially resisted but eventually yielded under duress from various stakeholders. Similar sentiments were echoed by Kangpokpi ZEO Lhingtingng Singait and deputy inspector of school L. Taithul. The Kuki-Zo civil society groups protested the suspension, alleging harassment by the government.



President Murmu to pay tribute to Maharshi Dayanand during Gujarat visit on Feb 12

Gandhinagar, Feb 7 (IANS) : President Droupadi Murmu's upcoming visit to Gujarat on February 12 is going to be a blend of cultural and academic engagements. The bicentennial celebrations of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati in Tankara will take place during her visit. Dayanand Saraswati's contributions have been pivotal in shaping India's religious and social narrative. The President will also be the chief guest at the 20th convocation of Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology (SVNIT), which is one of the premier technology institutes in the country.

Congress's core election team for Bengal to be headed by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

Kolkata, Feb 7 (IANS) : In a significant move, the Congress on Wednesday gave full authority to the party's West Bengal President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury about the finalization of the candidates and chalk out the campaign strategy for the state for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. The Congress central leadership announced formation of the 28-member West Bengal

Pradesh Congress Election Committee, with Chowdhury as its Chairman. Political observers feel that this development is significant on two counts. The first is that the Congress high command too has exhausted its last hope for an amicable seat sharing agreement with Trinamool Congress and hence given full authority to Chowdhury in the matter. Secondly, the responsibility to Chowdhury will expedite the process of finalising seat-sharing

talks with the CPI-M-led Left Front which he is already keen on. Observers also said that besides Chowdhury, the majority in the 28-member election committee are from those who are strongly against any kind of alliance with Trinamool in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. "The committee constitution is a clear endorsement from the Congress high command to the views of Chowdhury and his followers that for the party, the BJP and the Trinamool Congress are equal enemies in the West Bengal perspective," a city-based political observer said.



Two suspected dacoits lynched by mob in Meghalaya

Shillong, Feb 7 (IANS) : Three suspected dacoits were severely beaten up by a mob in Meghalaya's South West Garo Hills district, leading to the death of two of them while the other is undergoing treatment at the Tura Civil Hospital, the police said on Wednesday. The police said that two of the suspected dacoits identified as Balen G. Sangma (30) and Sken D. Shira (30) succumbed to their injuries, while the third one, identified as Betuwel D. Shira (22), has been admitted to the hospital in a critical condition.

4-year-old Mumbai girl raped by school watchman; accused held

Mumbai, Feb 7 (IANS) : In a shocking incident, a four-year-old girl was allegedly brutally raped and assaulted by the watchman of a private school in Kandivali East where studied, officials said here on Wednesday. The incident occurred on February 2, but her terrified parents were reluctant to lodge a police complaint. Finally, her mother approached the Samata Nagar police station on Wednesday and lodged a complaint, which was registered under the POCSO Act and other sections of various laws. Earlier, in a preemptive action, the police had arrested the accused watchman late on Saturday after they got an alert about the incident, even as the girl was hospitalised. As per preliminary investigation, the accused watchman lured the child to the washroom on the pretext of giving her a chocolate and then committed the heinous crime there before fleeing the spot. After the family lodged a complaint on Monday evening, even the school teacher and principal were added as accused in the case.



Chirag Paswan backs Manjhi over his demand of two cabinet ministers

Patna, Feb 7 (IANS) : Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (LJPR) President Chirag Paswan on Wednesday came to the support of HAM supremo and former Bihar Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, saying injustice cannot be done with him and his party.

"It is right that the party of Jitan Ram Manjhi is small and has only four MLAs but in the current circumstances, those four MLAs have big value in the formation of Nitish Kumar government. I don't know what kind of negotiation was done by Manjhi with (Chief Minister).

NCW carries out drive in MP to make Bedia tribes aware of legal rights



Bhopal, Feb 7 (IANS) : How do you explain rights and entitlements to someone who does not know what rights are? This was the main question during a conference at the National Law Institute University (NLIU) here on Wednesday. The conference was organised by the National Commission for Women (NCW).

Jan 5 attack on ED team: Bengal Gov seeks fresh report from govt on progress in probe

Kolkata, Feb 7 (IANS) : West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Wednesday sought a fresh report from the Mamata Banerjee-led state government about the January 5 attack on an ED team in North 24 Parganas when it went to conduct a raid and carry out searches at the residence of a Trinamool Congress leader, Sheikh Shahjahan. Raj Bhavan sources said that a letter has been forwarded from the office of the Governor to Chief Secretary B.P.



Gopalika, seeking updates on progress in the investigation. The Governor sought details about the updates on tracking down the mastermind of the attack, Sheikh Shahjahan who is currently absconding.



SHIRAM 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, Aurum Q park, Gan 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Shiram Finance Limited, (Formerly known as Shiram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shiram Transport Company Limited name changed as Shiram Finance Limited, by its Incorporation dt. 13-11-2022) 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 06th day of February, 2024.

Borrower Name and Address	Amount due as per Demand Notice	Description of Property
1) Shekar Mokka, S/o. Veeraswamy, Age: 43yrs, Occu: Kaveri Aqua Industries, R/o. H.No. Door No.302, 4th Floor, Saphavarna Hights, Prashanthi Nagar, Khanapuram Haveli, Khammam Pincode-507002. Cell:9848723282. 2) Mokka Neeraja, W/o. Mokka Shekar, Age: 40yrs, R/o. H.No.8-1-171/1, Prashanthi Nagar, Khanapuram Haveli, Khammam. Pincode-507002. Cell: 9866578761. 3) Mokka Sujatha, W/o. Mokka Ramana, Age: 43yrs, R/o. H.No.8-1-171/1, Prashanthi Nagar, Khanapuram Haveli, Khammam. Pincode-507002. Cell: 9866578761. 4) Mokka Ramana, S/o. Veeraswamy, Age: 45yrs, Occu: Civil Engineer, R/o. H.No.15-8-171/1, Prashanthi Nagar, Khanapuram Haveli, Khammam, Pincode-507002. Cell: 9948653222. 5) Danda Jyothi Reddy, S/o. Pulla Reddy, Age: 52yrs, Occu: Gayathri Caterers at Khammam, R/o. H.No. 8-2-58/C, Balaji Nagar, Khanapuram Haveli, Khammam. Pincode-507002. Cell: 9959542435, 9866725591.	Nine Lakhs Sixty Thousand Four Hundred And Ninety Eight Rupees Only)	YLNDFTE1407310005 Description of the Immovable Property: Item No.1: Property Holder Name: Mokka Neeraja with Document No: 207/2014 The Vacant Site Measuring to an extent of 241.34 sq.yards, in and out of Sy.No.226/A3 situated at Kusumanchi Revenue Village and Mandal of Khammam District. Bounded by: Towards East: Site of M. Rangaiah, S/o. Satyanarayana. Towards West: Vacant Site Bellamkonda Venkanna, S/o. Upender, Towards North: Vacant Site of Mokka Sujatha, Towards South: 16.00 width Road. Item No.2: Property Holder Name: Mokka Sujatha with Document No: 207/2014 The Vacant Site Measuring to an extent of 241.34 sq.yards, in and out of Sy.No.226/A situated at Kusumanchi Revenue Village and Mandal of Khammam District. Bounded by: Towards East: Site of M. Rangaiah, S/o. Satyanarayana. Towards West: Vacant Site Bellamkonda Venkanna, S/o. Upender, Towards North: Vacant Site of Bellamkonda Sandhya Rani, Towards South: Vacant Site of Bellamkonda Neeraja.

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: KUSUMANCHI, Date: 06.02.2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Shiram Finance Limited

SBFC Finance Limited
Registered Office:- Unit No. 103, First Floor, C&B Square, Sangam Complex, Village Chakala, Andheri- Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400059

POSSESSION NOTICE
(As per Rule 8(2) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of SBFC Finance Limited under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers 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 the below-mentioned dates. The Borrower/Co-borrowers 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 SBFC Finance Limited.

Name and Address of Borrowers & Date of Demand Notice	Description of Property(ies) & Date of Possession	Amount Demanded in Possession Notice
1. K MKHAN 2. SHAKERA BEGUM all are having their address at H. No. 4-8-632/A/ 893, Sadar Bazar, Bolarum, Secunderabad Contenment, Hyderabad-500010.	All that piece and parcel of the Property Eastern portion of House bearing No. 893, (S.C.B.No. 8-10-003) admeasuring 76.5 sq. yards or 63.95 sq. mtrs. out of 153 sq. yards, consisting of Ground floor built up area 650 sq. ft. of R.C.C. and First Floor Built up area 150 sq. ft. R.C.C. Situated at Sadar Bazar, Bolarum, Secunderabad Cantonment, Hyderabad District, Telangana State and property boundaries: East: House No. 895, West: Portion of House No. 893, North: House No. 899 & 897, South: Lane.	Rs. 18,12,738/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh(s) Twelve Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Eight Only) as on 13th October 2023

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Date:08.02.2023, Place:Hyderabad Sd/-Authorized Officer, SBFC Finance Limited

OPINIONmail



Water quality monitoring

Government of India, in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since August, 2019 to provide potable tap water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household in the country. Drinking Water being a state subject, the responsibility of planning, approval, implementation, operation, and maintenance of drinking water supply schemes, including those under the Jal Jeevan Mission, lies with State/UT Governments. The Government of India supports the States including Assam by providing technical and financial assistance. As per operational guidelines for the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission up to 2% of the allocation to States/ UTs under JJM can be utilized for carrying out water quality monitoring and surveillance activities. The water quality monitoring and surveillance is done through testing of water samples in Labs as well as testing through field testing Kits (FTKs) by community.

As reported by States/UTs, so far 2,118 drinking water quality testing laboratories (including 83 laboratories in Assam) at different levels viz. State, regional, district, sub-division and/or block level, have been set up in the country. To encourage water quality testing to ensure potable drinking water supply, these laboratories have also opened for general public for testing of their water samples at a nominal rate.

In order to empower the communities to monitor the water quality, States/ UTs have also been advised to identify and train 5 persons, preferably women, in every village to conduct water quality testing using Field Testing Kits (FTKs)/ bacteriological vials at village level and report the same on the WQMIS portal. So far, as reported by States/UTs, more than 22.98 lakh women (including 1.08 lakh in Assam) have been trained for testing water using FTKs.

To enable States/ UTs to test water samples for water quality, and for sample collection, reporting, monitoring and surveillance of drinking water sources, an online JJM – Water Quality Management Information System (WQMIS) portal has been developed. As reported by States/UTs on WQMIS portal, as on 30/01/2024, more than 60.93 lakh water samples have been tested in the water testing laboratories and more than 99.99 lakh water samples using Field Testing Kits, during 2023-24. As reported by Assam, as on 30/01/2024, more than 2.23 lakhs water samples have been tested in water testing laboratories and more than 10.04 lakh water samples using Field Testing Kits, during 2023-24.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, priority is accorded to make provision of tap water supply in drought-prone & desert areas, water quality-affected habitations, villages in Aspirational & JE–AES affected districts, Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) and SC/ ST majority villages. Under JJM, 0.5% of annual allocation is earmarked to States having Japanese Encephalitis-Acute Encephalitis Syndrome affected districts. Due to priority given to JE-AES affected districts (61), the tap water supply to households has increased from 8.01 lakh (2.71%) HHs in August 2019 to 216.04 lakh (72.99%) as on 30.01.2024.

EDITORIAL
the indian mail



12 years on, trial yet to begin in any of 11 cases filed by CBI against Jagan

When Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was arrested by the CBI in 2012 in an alleged disproportionate assets case that had hit the national headlines and even after nearly 12 years, trial is yet to begin in any of the 11 cases registered by the central agency. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who became the Chief Minister in 2019, has been charged with criminal conspiracy, cheating, dishonesty, inducing delivery of property,

taking gratification (accepting bribe), criminal breach of trust, forgery, criminal misconduct by public servant and corruption. According to the affidavit filed by him before the Election Commission in 2019, there are seven Enforcement Directorate (ED) cases in which he has been charged with money laundering. Petitions by the rebel MP of Jagan Mohan Reddy's party YSRCP has brought the focus back on the cases. Currently the Supreme

Court is hearing two petitions seeking transfer of the case outside the Telugu states and cancellation of Jagan's bail. In November 2023, the Supreme Court issued notices to the CBI, Jagan Mohan Reddy, YSRCP MP V. Vijay Sai Reddy and others who were named as accused in the cases registered by the CBI and ED over the allegations of enriching through quid pro quo transactions and money laundering.

Floating solar plants on water bodies to power Assam's plan for 1,000 MW in 3 years

The Assam government, at least for the last seven years, has been giving thrust on installing solar power plants across the state. The government had prepared a solar policy in 2017 to increase the solar power capacity of the state, and it has set a target to generate at least 1,000 MW of electricity in the next three years. "The state government is trying to make Assam a green energy hub. Assam currently requires 2,200 MW power to provide electricity to all households across the state," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. A senior government official told IANS, "The Central government made an ambitious plan of installing solar power plants in the country. The state government has also prepared multiple plans to increase solar energy. It is envisaged under this solar policy to leverage the solar energy potential of Assam for augmenting the installed solar power capacity by deploying resources provisioned under state and Central schemes, policies and programmes."



Maha BJP's 'power laundry' whitewashes all leaders, tainted or taunted, with ease

Several legislators and leaders, tainted or taunted with corruption allegations and investigations, belonging to the undivided Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party, who decided to either join the BJP or the ruling Mahayuti alliance, now rest in peace. Pursued vigorously by different central or state probe agencies for years, these 'defector' leaders have finally found peace, and as one such turncoat leader unabashedly mentioned, "Sleep peacefully at night." Ironically, those who did not succumb to the temptation of defecting or deserting their own parties, are doing the rounds of investigation agen-

cies' offices and face cases. Some were arrested and jailed for prolonged periods and generally remain on the probe agencies' radars. Some of the leaders who chose the easier path out of their predicaments include the breakaway NCP-AP leader Ajit Pawar, his colleagues Sunil Tatkare, Chhagan Bhujbal and Hasan Mushrif. From the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde there are Bhawana Gawli, Vijaykumar Gavit, Tanaji Sawant, Sanjay Rathod, Abdul Sattar, Arjun Khotkar, Pratap Saranik, Yashwant Jadhav, plus the kin or aides of some other leaders. Among those who did not take the easy way out are NCP-SP's MLA Rohit R. Pawar, Anil Deshmukh, Nawab Malik, Eknath Khade, an

ex-BJP strongman, besides the Shiv Sena-UBT's Sanjay Raut, Anil Parab, Ravindra Waikar, Kishori Pednekar, Rajan Salvi, Suraj Chavan and more. While Raut spent 100 days in jail, Deshmukh was behind bars for 13 months and Malik stepped out after 18 months – all granted bail in various cases they face. Those targeted by political taunts include the NCP-SP's President Sharad Pawar, Ashok Chavan, and even the non-political family members or in-laws of ex-CM and SS-UBT President Uddhav Thackeray, plus a few other leaders from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).



Question mark over LS tickets for Kamal, Digvijaya after crushing MP defeat

After the crushing defeat of Congress in Madhya Pradesh Assembly election in November last year gave a rise to speculations about political future of its two former Chief Ministers, Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh, the possibility of their candidature for the forthcoming Lok Sabha election has become part of discussion in the state's political gallery.

Both these veteran Congress leaders, who have a strong base in state's politics of over 40 years, have failed to fulfill the task assigned, which has already made the party's top brass handover the state's leadership into a young face - Jitu Patwari.

Two decades on Mayawati still haunted by Taj Corridor, rural health scams

The brickbats have outnumbered the bouquets for Bahujan Samaj Party president and former UP chief minister Mayawati, when it comes to corruption charges. Mayawati's equations with various political parties have changed with the charges levelled against her from time to time.

The first major charge that Mayawati faced as chief minister was the Taj Heritage Corridor case in 2002-2003, in which Mayawati and a minis-

ter in her government, Nasimuddin Siddiqui, were charged with corruption. The Taj Corridor project was intended to upgrade tourist facilities near the Taj Mahal and was to be implemented during her tenure as Chief Minister. The then BJP government at the Centre gave the Environmental Clearance required for the project.

However, later on the BJP backed out and then started saying that the project was not cleared by the Environment Ministry and blamed Mayawati for starting construc-

tion work near the Taj Mahal. The total estimated cost of the project was Rs 1.75 billion. The project was started with the support of the BJP and was interrupted when Mayawati snapped ties with the BJP on 25 August 2003.

According to sources, the support for the corridor project came when Mayawati protected BJP leaders L K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti from prosecution in the case of the demolition of the Babri Masjid by moving the trial on all charges, except the con-

spiracy charge, to a court in Rae Bareilly.

It was alleged that Mayawati embezzled the money dedicated for this project.

Initially, the case saw some rapid progress, when the CBI conducted extensive searches at her various addresses, and said that though she had claimed an income of only Rs 11 million during her tenure as chief minister, her bank balance in a single bank went up to Rs 25 million and the total assets held by her were estimated at Rs 150 million.





Had to hold back my 'Irish temper' when Trump called fallen soldiers 'suckers & losers': Biden

Washington, Feb 7 (IANS) : US President Joe Biden, known to be soft-spoken, went raging and stated he had to hold back his "Irish temper" when his predecessor Donald Trump reportedly described fallen soldiers in unseemly words. Hitting out at Trump for purportedly calling fallen soldiers "suckers and losers", Biden told a wealthy donors fundraising dinner at Las Vegas in Nevada that he did not know what he would have done if he had been around Trump in Washington that day. Biden had lost his son in the war against Iraq.

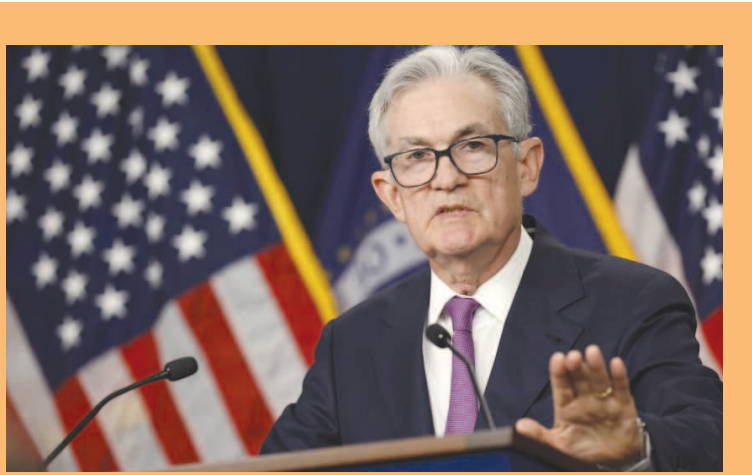
"I have to hold my Irish temper. I'm glad I wasn't with him. I'm not sure what I would've done. He had said they're all suckers and losers," Biden said addressing wealthy donors at the fundraiser in Las Vegas on Wednesday ahead of the Nevada primaries. Mentioning his son Beau, who served in the Delaware National Guard in Iraq before he died in 2015, the President got animated: "My son was not a sucker nor were any of yours. Who does this guy think he is talking about Americans?"

During a rally in Las Vegas' Historic Westside, Biden repeated a similar version of the speech, telling the crowd: "This is the guy, when he was in France; they asked him to go to an American cemetery in France for World War II, where Americans were buried. You know what he said? He said those folks were suckers and losers." "Called my son and your sons and daughters who gave their lives in this country suckers and losers. That's how this guy thinks. Who the hell does he think he is?" Biden said.

King Charles diagnosed with cancer: Buckingham Palace

London, Feb 7 (IANS) : King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer and has begun a course of treatment, Buckingham Palace announced on Wednesday "During The King's recent hospital procedure for benign prostate enlargement, a separate issue of concern was noted. Subsequent diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer," Buckingham Palace said in a statement.

The type of cancer has not been revealed, but according to a palace statement the King began "regular treatments" on Monday. "His Majesty has today commenced a schedule of regular treatments, during which time he has been advised by doctors to postpone public-facing duties. Throughout this period, His Majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual," it said.



US stocks fall after Fed Chair Powell says central bank not yet ready to cut rates

New York, Feb 7 (IANS) : US stocks fell on Wednesday after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Wednesday that the central bank is not ready to cut interest rates yet, a media report said. "We want to see more evidence that inflation is moving sustainably down to 2 per cent. Our confidence is rising. We just want some more confidence before we take that very important step of beginning to cut interest rates," Powell said, CNN reported. The Dow slid 401 points, or 1 per cent, in early Monday trading, the S&P 500 declined 0.7 per cent, while the Nasdaq Composite lost 0.9 per cent, CNN reported.

Treasury yields rose as investors continued to mull over Powell's comments. Powell dashed investors' hopes for a rate cut in March at the Fed's post-meeting press conference, with that optimism further waning after a shockingly strong January jobs report. Powell doubled down on the unlikelihood of a cut next month, CNN reported. "Those comments along with his statement suggest that as long as inflation data comes in as it has been or better, the Fed will be cutting rates by the summer," wrote Bespoke Investment Group analysts in a note on Wednesday, CNN reported.

Turkey 'neutralises' 11 Kurdish militants in Syria

Ankara, Feb 7 (IANS) : Turkish security forces "neutralised" 11 members of the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria, the country's Defence Ministry said on Wednesday. The YPG members were targeted while plotting an attack on Turkish soldiers in the "Operation Olive Branch" and "Operation Euphrates Shield" zones in northern Syria, the Ministry said in a statement as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. "We continue to respond in kind to terrorist attacks," the Ministry added. Turkish authorities often use the term "neutralise" in their statements to imply the alleged "terrorists" have either surrendered, been killed, or been captured. The Turkish army launched Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016, Operation Olive Branch in 2018, Operation Peace



Classified docs probe: Biden team 'fears' DOJ's report could hurt re-election bid

Washington, Feb 7 (IANS) : US President Joe Biden's team fears that the results of a classified documents investigation could lead to embarrassing information, and possibly photos, that could hurt his re-election campaign, media reports said. Biden's aides believe that though special counsel Robert Hur's investigation won't lead to any criminal charges, as per Axios, unflattering details and photos could still lead to political fallout.

Former President Donald Trump is facing felony charges related to his handling of classified documents that he took to his Florida home on the last day of his office in the White House. Soon after Trump's Mar-a-Lago

home was raided by the FBI in August 2022, Biden weighed in by asking aloud how "anyone could be that irresponsible". But Biden soon found himself at the receiving end of the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s case on the classified documents scandal, when documents from his eight-year term as Vice President were found in his Wilmington home and at the Penn Biden Center think tank in Washington. Biden's campaign fears Trump could use the report and any accompanying photos to create equivalency with his charges, Axios reported. Hur's investigation is believed to be finished and could be released as soon as this week, the Washington Examiner reported.



British universities to review international student admissions

London, Feb 7 (IANS) : The international student admission process in the UK is set to be reviewed after accusations of universities lowering entry standards for foreign applicants who pay far higher tuition fees. Universities UK, which represents 140 universities, announced a series of measures to review international foundation programmes and the use of recruitment agents employed to attract foreign students, The Guardian reported. In addition to taking a review, the universities will also up-

date their admissions code of practice "to clearly state its applicability to international students". The move comes after Higher Education Minister, Robert Halfon said in the House of Commons that he was "very disturbed" by a Sunday Times report that "clearly showed bad practice in the use of agents and that's not acceptable". "While I am a strong supporter of international students, I want a level playing field for all domestic students as well," Halfon said while taking up questions from the MPs last week. After Halfon's remarks, Vice

Chancellors said they would work with the government to review the use of agents and make changes to "improve resilience and identify bad practice". According to the Times report, the University of York has told staff to be "more flexible" in admitting international students with lower-than-expected grades. The Times investigation also recorded agents acting for universities such as Durham and Exeter claiming that international students with poor grades could easily gain entry via international foundation courses.

Singapore Parliament waiting for outcome of Indian-origin minister's court case

Singapore, Feb 7 (IANS) : Before deciding upon a Committee of Inquiry (COI) in Indian-origin minister S. Iswaran's case, the Singapore Parliament will wait for the court case against him to conclude, Leader of the House Indraneel Rajah said on Wednesday. Iswaran stepped down as Transport Minister last month after facing 27 charges of offences in a corruption probe, which saw him getting arrested in July 2023 and later released on bail. Responding to an MP's question in the parliament, Rajah said: "The purpose of a COI is to investigate something with a view of finding out how it happened," The Straits Times reported. "In this case, the CPIB (Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau)

has investigated the matter. Based on the investigations, the Attorney General's Chambers took the view that there is a basis for criminal charges to be brought against Iswaran. "Determination of criminal offences is a matter for the court, which is currently dealing with the case. We should wait for the court proceedings to conclude before deciding if anything else needs to be done," Rajah said. She added that everyone who is alleged to have committed wrongdoing, including MPs, should be given due process. Arriving at the State Courts on January 18, Iswaran pleaded not guilty to 27 charges -- two counts of corruption, 24 counts of obtaining items from someone he had



business dealings with as a public servant, and one of obstructing the course of justice. According to court documents, most of the offences Iswaran faces involve billionaire hotelier Ong Beng Seng, who brought Formula One to Singapore in 2008. The chargesheet states that Iswaran

received "valuable things" worth more than S\$384,000 (US\$285,000) from Ong between 2015 and 2022. These ranged from tickets to shows, private plane rides, hotel stays, football matches, and various editions of the Singapore F1 Grand Prix.

New Zealand ministers to visit Pacific island countries

Wellington, Feb 7 (IANS) : New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, and Health Minister and Minister for Pacific Peoples Shane Reti will visit Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa this week to reaffirm connections with the region. "New Zealand enjoys strong and long-standing relationships with our Pacific partners -- especially in Polynesia, where we have close political, economic, and people-to-people ties," Foreign Minister Peters said on Wednesday as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. New Zealand



has deep and longstanding cultural links with the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga, Reti said, adding that he will discuss the shared issues the communities face in New Zealand and the Pacific, particularly in health.

Bihar Education Dept warns contractual teachers against protest over competency exam

Patna, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Bihar Education Department has warned the contractual teachers in the state against holding any protest against the competency examinations being conducted by it. Education Department's Additional Chief Secretary K.K. Pathak cautioned the contractual teachers to avoid protesting against competency tests else they could face legal action and also lose their jobs. Director, Education Department, Kanhaiya

Prasad Srivastava in this regard wrote letters to all District Magistrates (DMs) in the state to take legal action against contractual teachers under relevant sections of the IPC if they participate in any kind of protest. The contractual teachers earlier announced that they would gherao the Bihar Assembly on February 13 and register a protest against the Education Department's notification on the competency examination.



'10 yrs in jail, Rs 10cr fine for unfair means in exam': Assam govt introduces Bill

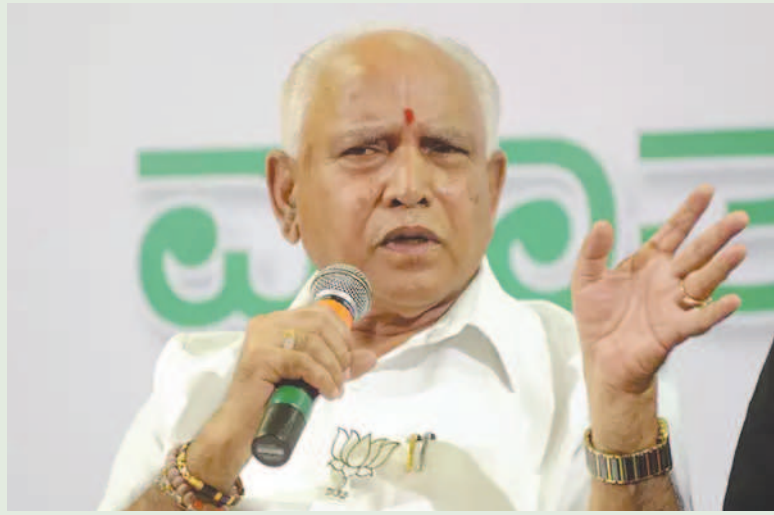
Guwahati, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Assam government introduced a Bill in the state assembly on Wednesday to penalise anyone found to have used unfair methods in recruitment examinations with a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of Rs 10 crore. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma introduced the Assam Public Examination (Measures for Prevention of Unfair Means in Recruitment) Bill, 2024, stating that any government servant enforcing the provisions in "good faith" will receive complete immunity under the proposed law. In the Bill's Memorandum, Sarma stated that it gives the

government the authority to prosecute anyone, including test takers, who engages in any endeavour to leak, create, sell, publish, or solve exam questions in order to help a candidate or administer exams at undesignated locations. According to the Bill, such an individual would face a minimum five-year prison sentence, which could be extended to ten years, as well as a minimum fine of Rs 10 lakh, and a maximum fine of Rs 10 crore. Furthermore, the introduced legislation stated that an examinee who merely engages in unfair means faces a maximum sentence of three years in prison, a fine of at least Rs 1 lakh, and a further nine months in jail should they fail to make payment. The Bill also gives the govern-



ment the authority to prevent any examinee who has been found guilty under the terms of this law from appearing in any public examination for two years. The Bill said "the court shall make an order of recovery of any wrongful gains made by such person, by way of attachment and sale any of the assets/property movable or im-

movable, or both, of such person". According to the Bill, such an individual would face a minimum five-year prison sentence, which could be extended to ten years, as well as a minimum fine of Rs 10 lakh, and a maximum fine of Rs 10 crore.



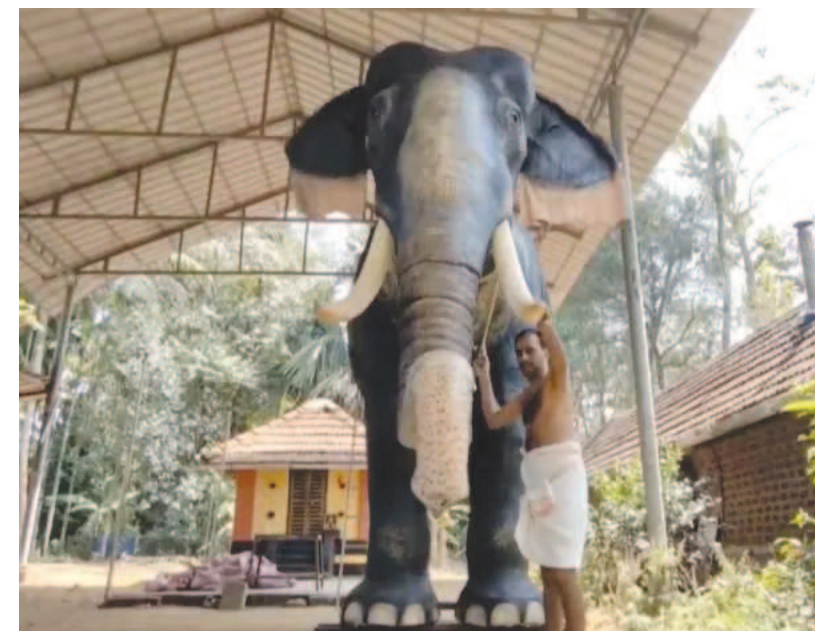
'Siddaramaiah govt responsible for decrease in K'taka share to 3.64% in 15th Finance Commission'

Bengaluru, Feb 7 (IANS) : Former Karnataka CM and BJP Central Parliamentary Board Member B.S. Yediyurappa has said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah-led Congress government is directly responsible for the decrease in the state share to 3.64 per cent in the 15th Finance Commission.

CM Siddaramaiah while announcing that he will lead the protest in Delhi at Jantar Mantar on February 7 stated that in the 14th Finance Commission, the state share which was 4.71 per cent has decreased to 3.64 per cent in the 15th Finance Commission. "That is 1.07 per cent reduction, which means that there is Rs. 45,000 crores decrease in 4 years.

According to the estimate, Rs 62,098 crore will be reduced for Karnataka," the Chief Minister said. On this, Yediyurappa said that as per the 15th Finance Commission recommendations, the NDA government has released Rs 1,16,828 crore. "... about the share of tax for the period of 2026 during the 15th Finance Commission, the state is going to get more than Rs 2.5 lakh crore. This is more than what 14th Finance Commission under the UPA government recommended. CM Siddaramaiah led government is directly responsible for decrease of state's share to 3.6 per cent in 15th Finance Commission. Because, when the commission was preparing the report, Siddaramaiah-led Congress government was ruling in the state. It has failed to convince the commission on the real economic scenario of the state," Yediyurappa said. Under 15th Finance Commission the state has already got Rs 13,985 crore. The state is going to get Rs 3,500 crore this year.

"CM Siddaramaiah has concealed all these facts and spoke half-truth," the BJP leader said. "Siddaramaiah thinks that by repeatedly telling lies, he can hide the truth. Finance Minister Niramala Sitharaman has also given suitable answers regarding the matter. Wherever it is possible, the taxes are increased," he added. The former CM further said the unproductive guarantees have destroyed the economy of the state and the situation is getting out of the hands of CM Siddaramaiah. "The government has failed on all fronts. They have come to know that the guarantee schemes won't rescue the party in the Lok Sabha elections. Following this, they have a clear idea of dropping the guarantees after the Lok Sabha elections. As part of the plan they are creating a base by pointing fingers at the Central government," he said.



NGO hands over robotic elephant to TN temple

Chennai, Feb 7 (IANS) : Voices for Asian Elephants, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), has handed over a robotic elephant to a Shiva temple in Devarshola, Gudalur, in Tamil Nadu. The NGO handed over the robotic elephant -- said to be the first such 'elephant' to be

donated to a temple in Tamil Nadu -- to the temple on Wednesday. The 11-feet-tall robotic elephant weighs around 800 kg. The NGO had earlier handed over several such robotic elephants to temples across Kerala. Sangita Iyer, founding executive director of Voices for Asian Elephants.

Inter-state bus terminus in Bhubaneswar named after B.R. Ambedkar

Bhubaneswar, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Odisha government on Wednesday said that the much-awaited Inter State Bus Terminus (ISBT) at Baramunda in Bhubaneswar will be named after BR Ambedkar. Paying tributes to Ambedkar, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday announced that the Baramunda bus stand will now be known as Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal. CM Patnaik also announced that a special gallery in 900

square feet area will be built at the bus stand to make the public aware of his immense contributions towards nation building. The life history of Ambedkar and his ideals will be showcased through the use of digital technology at the gallery. A copy of the Indian Constitution along with various articles used by Ambedkar will also be displayed at the special gallery. "Ambedkar was a visionary leader and a dedicated social reformer. He was a ray of hope for the down-trodden of the society. He strived



hard all through his life to build a just society," said CM Patnaik. The grand bus terminal constructed over 15.5 acres is expected to be the prime mode of transportation for over 30,000 passengers every day.



Hindu side wins case in Lakshgriha-Mazar dispute in UP's Baghpat

Baghpat, Feb 7 (IANS) : The five-decade-old Lakshgriha-Mazar dispute in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat has finally been decided in favour of the Hindu side. Pronouncing its verdict, the ADJ court in Baghpat on Wednesday gave ownership rights of over 100 bighas of the disputed land and tomb to the Hindu side. More than 10 witnesses from the Hindu side had testified in this case. Civil judge Shivam Dwivedi rejected the suit of the Muslim side. The lawsuit was going on between the Hindu side and the Muslim side for more than 50 years over the matter. The Mahabharata-era Lakshgriha, constructed in Baghpat's Barnawa.

Pranab Mukherjee's daughter says her father was sad with current state of affairs in Cong

Jaipur, Feb 7 (IANS) : Sharmistha Mukherjee, daughter of former President Pranab Mukherjee, on Wednesday recalled that her father -- a late Congress veteran -- was quite sad with the current state of affairs of the grand old party during his last days. She said this while speaking on a plethora of subjects at the 'Jaipur Literature Festival' here. Speaking of her book, 'Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers', Sharmistha said the former President was a die-hard fan of former PM Indira Gandhi even as, during his last days, he was quite sad with the state of affairs in Congress. "My father had told Sonia Gandhi that it would have been better to be in the opposition than

to have a weak government. Had my father been there, he would have been very upset with the current condition of Congress. This is the state of mind not only of him but of every Congress leader. "I am also troubled by the current situation. There is a rumour about me joining the BJP, but I am not going anywhere. I am a hardcore Congress worker," she said. Meanwhile, Sharmistha said that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should also get Bharat Ratna. "He has made an important contribution in improving the economy of India. He should get 'Bharat Ratna'. My father respected him a lot. Even after Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister, he used to address my father as 'Sir'.



I will fight the polls from Chhindwara, not Kamal Nath, says son Nakul Nath

Bhopal, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Congress is yet to finalise its candidates for the coming Lok Sabha election but the party's lone MP from Madhya Pradesh, Nakul Nath, on Wednesday said that he would be the candidate from Chhindwara constituency and not his father and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath. Addressing a gathering of party workers in Susar Assembly seat of

Chhindwara, Nakul Nath said: "There have been rumours doing the round for the last few days that Kamal Nath will be contesting the Lok Sabha election. Let me make you all clear that I will be the candidate from Chhindwara constituency and not Kamal Nath." He further added that his father and veteran Congress leader will be supervising the election preparation. "People of Chhindwara have been



showing their love for my father for last 40 years, and I believe that strong bonding between you (people) and the Nath family will remain forever." He also noted that Chhindwara has been the only district where the Congress won all seven assembly seats the election held in November last year.



India's smartwatch shipments grow 50% in 2023, Fire-Boltt leads: Report

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : India's smartwatch shipments have witnessed 50 per cent (year-on-year) growth in 2023, with Fire-Boltt leading the market, a new report said on Wednesday. According to Counterpoint Research, this growth was fueled by the rising penetration of smartwatches, proliferation of low-cost devices to target first-time users, and enhanced efforts

by Indian brands through extensive marketing and distribution, promotions and local manufacturing. "The market saw over 125 active smartwatch brands in 2023 even as it started moving towards consolidation. The combined share of the top five brands reached the highest ever at 81 per cent," said Research Analyst Harshit Rastogi.

Fire-Boltt led the market with a 30 per cent share. According to the report, the brand maintained its focus on offering a wide SKU portfolio and a strong offline presence. Noise (along with sub-brand Alt) secured the second spot with a 26 per cent market share, while boAt (with sub-brands TAGG and Defy) maintained its third spot with a 17 per cent share and 40 per cent (year-on-year) growth. Samsung declined by 3 per cent (year-on-year) last year but registered 17 per cent (year-on-year)

growth in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, whereas Apple's shipments declined by 57 per cent (year-on-year) in 2023 owing to longer replacement cycles and higher ASP coupled with iPhone-only compatibility, the report said.

While the market continues to register high growth rates, the analysts said they are seeing some stabilization, signaling wider adoption. "The quarterly growth rates have come down from triple to double digits. We expect the market to grow 23 per cent (year-on-year) in 2024. With the introduction of new features like cellular connectivity, high-level OS (HLOS) and better displays, the market is likely to sustain growth," Senior Research Analyst Anshika Jain said.



DBS slashes CEO's bonus by 30% after disruptions to its digital services

Singapore, Feb 7 (IANS) : Singapore's biggest bank DBS has slashed its CEO's bonus by 30 per cent after disruptions to its digital services, despite it posting a record profit, a media report said. The company said the cut to CEO Piyush Gupta's variable pay amounts to S\$4.14 million (\$3.1 million), and that his full salary for 2023 will be disclosed in March, BBC reported. In 2022, Gupta was paid S\$15.4 million.

After several glitches last year, the country's central bank banned DBS from buying new businesses or making non-essential IT changes for six months, BBC reported. The outages saw digital payment services and cash machines go offline across the city-state. At the time, DBS apologised and announced plans

to improve the resiliency of its systems. In its latest statement, the bank said that other members of its management team will have their variable pay cut by 21 per cent, while more junior employees will get a one-off bonus to help them with higher living costs. DBS' variable pay is made of both a cash bonus and deferred shares. It comes on top of base pay and is usually based on an employee's performance. The cuts to the pay of senior DBS executives come despite the bank posting annual record earnings, with its 2023 net profit rising by 26 per cent to S\$10.3 billion, BBC reported. Like many other banks around the world, DBS has benefited from higher interest rates as central banks have kept the cost of borrowing up as they try to curb rising prices.



Amazon slashes hundreds of jobs in Pharmacy, One Medical units

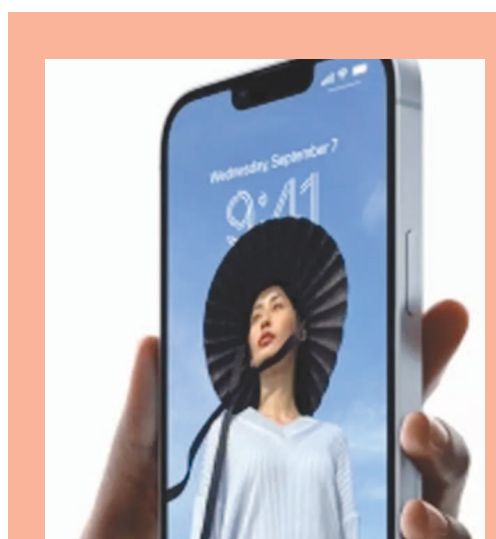
San Francisco, Feb 7 (IANS) : Amazon has eliminated hundreds of jobs from its healthcare units, including Amazon Pharmacy and One Medical, as part of a broader cost-cutting campaign. The company confirmed the development to CNBC.

"As we continue to make it easier for people to get and stay healthy, we have identified areas where we can reposition resources so we can invest in invention and experiences that have a direct impact on our customers and members of all ages," Neil Lindsay, who leads

Amazon Health Services, wrote in a memo to employees. "Unfortunately, these changes will result in the elimination of a few hundred roles across One Medical and Amazon Pharmacy," he added. In the memo, the company also mentioned that it will support those employees who are affected by the latest job cuts with financial support, benefit continuation, and career assistance to aid in their transition, as well as the opportunity to apply for new roles in the organisation.

Last month, Amazon announced

its decision to lay off nearly 5 per cent of its workforce at its Buy with Prime unit. In the same month, Amazon-owned audiobook and podcast division Audible announced it was laying-off 5 per cent of its staff, which is more than 100 employees, as part of overall job cuts at the e-commerce giant.



iPhone users targeted by govt hackers with 0-days vulnerabilities : Google

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : Google has said that government hackers last year used three undiscovered flaws in Apple's iPhone operating system to target users with spyware created by a European startup. Google's Threat Analysis Group (TAG), which investigates nation-backed hacking, published a report on Tuesday analysing several government campaigns using hacking tools developed by several spyware and exploit sellers, including a Spain-based startup called Variston. Google reported that in a particular campaign, hackers working for the government exploited three iPhone vulnerabilities known as "zero-days," which were not previously known to Apple.

Wadhvani Foundation launches 3 AI Co-Pilots to boost employability of Indian youth

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : Non-profit organisation Wadhvani Foundation on Wednesday launched three new AI Co-Pilots to enhance the employability of Indian youth and young adults. The three AI Co-Pilots include -- My Tutor for students, My Mentor for faculty, and My Interview Coach. The newly launched function-

ality is an addition to the Foundation's AI-powered platform -- Genie.AI. The platform provides more than 1,000 hours of skilling and entrepreneurship content. "By harnessing AI, we can ensure that critical employability skills are not only ingrained in educational institutions but also transcend socio-economic barriers to learning.



Nifty closes flat ahead of RBI policy meeting

Mumbai, Feb 7 (IANS) : Nifty opened positive on Wednesday but soon lost some sheen to close flat at 21,931 levels. Barring IT, all other sectors ended in green, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Buying was seen in the PSU Bank and Realty sectors. The Realty sector was in momentum amid healthy Q3 numbers from the real-estate companies, while IT saw some profit booking after an up-move in the last few sessions, he said.

Overall, the market remained on the side-lines ahead of the RBI policy meeting outcome on Thursday, he added. On the economic front, US retail sales data and China's CPI data will be released later on Wednesday. Investors would continue to take cues from the earnings season. Insurance giant LIC will announce results on Thursday, where new business premium growth is expected to remain healthy, Khemka said.



India poised to lead global oil demand growth : IEA

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : India will become the largest source of growth for global oil demand between now and 2030, while growth in developed economies and China initially slows and then subsequently goes into reverse, according to the latest report of the International Energy Agency (IEA). IEA's 'Indian Oil Market Outlook to 2030' report re-

leased at the second edition of India Energy Week 2024 in Goa on Wednesday further states that India's role in global oil markets is expected to expand substantially over the remainder of the decade, fuelled by strong growth in its economy, population and demographics.

According to the report, urbanisation, industrialisation, the emergence of a wealthier middle-class keen for mobility and tour-

ism, plus efforts to achieve greater access to clean cooking, will underpin the expansion in oil demand.

Consequently, India is on track to post an increase of almost 1.2 million barrels per day (mb/d), accounting for more than one-third of the projected 3.2 mb/d global gains, to reach 6.6 mb/d by 2030. Further the report found that massive industrial expansion means that diesel/gasoil is the single larg-



est source of oil demand growth, accounting for almost half of the rise in the nation's demand and more than one-sixth of total global oil demand growth through to 2030.

Tata Communications, Microsoft to provide calling solutions on Teams for Indian firms

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : Tata Communications on Wednesday announced that it partnered with Microsoft to provide flexibility in collaboration and connectivity on Microsoft Teams for enterprises in India. The Tata Communications GlobalRapid platform will enable both Indian enterprise users as well as multinationals with a presence in the country.



Power Grid Q3 net profit up 10.5%, declares 2nd dividend

New Delhi, Jan 7 (IANS) : Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd on Wednesday reported a 10.5 per cent growth in its consolidated net profit at Rs 4,028 crore in the October-December quarter of the current financial year compared with the corresponding figure of Rs 3,645 crore in the same period of the previous year. The Power Grid Board has approved a second interim dividend of Rs 4.50 per equity share for 2023-24. The second interim dividend will be paid to the eligible shareholders on March 5.

Bihar caste census: SC to commence final hearing in April

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Wednesday said that it will commence from April 16 the final hearing on a batch of petitions filed against the caste survey in Bihar. Observing that the matter requires a detailed hearing, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta ordered listing of the batch of pleas on April 16. The bench said that it will decide on the next date of listing if intervention applications filed in the matter should be allowed or not. The top court had repeatedly refused to pass any interim order staying the survey process or publication of the outcomes of the survey, though it was contended that the matter will become infructuous post publication of the data. The clutch of special leave petitions filed before the Supreme Court challenges the Patna High Court's order dismissing pleas challenging the survey.



Lalu's family misused the power: Deputy CM

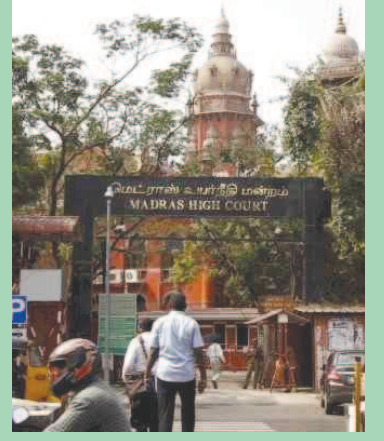
Patna, Feb 7 (IANS) : Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha on Wednesday alleged that Lalu Prasad Yadav's family has misused power when he was Chief Minister and a minister at the Centre. He said that the Lalu family will be held accountable in the court of law. "Tejashwi Yadav wanted to become a political player in the state but he has completely failed in his efforts. The family members of Lalu Prasad Yadav misused the power in the state and in Centre. Action will be taken against them through courts," Sinha said. He said that the people of Bihar had given the mandate to NDA

in the 2020 assembly election but the RJD stole the mandate and came to power from the back door. "They have defamed and frightened the people of Bihar and because of them a large number of migrations has taken place across the state. Our top priority is to save the state," the Deputy Chief Minister said. He said that during the 2020 Bihar assembly election, the NDA had promised about 19 lakh jobs in the state. "The recruitment process was also started during the NDA government. Even the decision of caste based survey was also taken during our tenure," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

'Why not taking constructive steps in fishermen issue', Madras HC asks TN govt

Chennai, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Madras High Court has asked the Tamil Nadu government as to why it is not taking constructive steps on the issue of fishermen being arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy. Responding to a PIL filed by Fishermen Care, an NGO, pleading for the safe return of Tamil fishermen who are in the custody of the Sri Lankan Navy, the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, S.V. Gangapurwala, wondered

why the state government is not taking up the fishermen's issue. The NGO requested the court to protect the traditional fishing rights of Tamil fishermen in the waters between Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. The counsel for the NGO requested the court to consider formation of a joint committee of state and Central government officials to discuss the issues faced by the traditional fishermen in the sea where they are attacked by Sri Lankan Navy as also by pirates.



The counsel for Tamil Nadu government informed the court that Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this issue. The bench posted the matter for next hearing on March 11.



AKALI Dal seeks roll back of UT policy to cap deputation of staff

Chandigarh, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Wednesday demanded a roll back of the new policy of the Union Territory administration of Chandigarh to cap the deputation of employees from Punjab and Haryana to the UT at seven years only. Condemning the decision, SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema said the new policy was against the ad hoc arrangement agreed to by the UT administration at the time of division of the state into Punjab and Haryana. He said it was then agreed that staff for the UT would be taken from Punjab and Haryana on 60:40 ratio respectively. Asserting that the deputation of Punjab and Haryana government employees could not be equated with other such deputations in the country, Cheema said, "In the case of Punjab and Haryana employees, they are posted as a right by the two governments." He said the employees so posted did not draw any deputation allowance like other deputations. "It is clear that the new policy is aimed at discouraging the posting of employees from Punjab and Haryana in the UT. With such uncertain conditions they would not like to shift to Chandigarh permanently." Cheema said the UT administration should keep in mind that the entity was a temporary arrangement pending transfer to Punjab. "In such a case the UT administration does not have any right to frame such policies," he said.

J&K L-G lauds Interim Budget for UT, expresses gratitude to PM

Jammu, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, on Monday lauded the Interim Budget 2024 for the Union Territory, and expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday presented the Interim Budget 2024 for J&K, besides revising the estimates for the UT for the current fiscal. The L-G tweeted: "Grateful to Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji & Hon'ble FM Smt Nirmala Sitharaman Ji for J&K's Interim Budget 2024-25, which is dedicated to farmers, women, youth, marginalised sections of society and seeks to strengthen the grass-roots democracy in the Union Territory. "The Interim Budget highlights the government's commitment of rapid economic growth and ensures that the growth is socially inclusive and sustainable. It focuses on fast expansion of agricultural economy and addresses the issue of regional imbalances besides seeking to bridge the rural-urban divide. A statement issued by the Finance Department of the UT said: "The Central government has agreed to provide Rs 41,751.44 crore to the UT government in this financial year and Rs 37,277.74 crore in the next financial year.

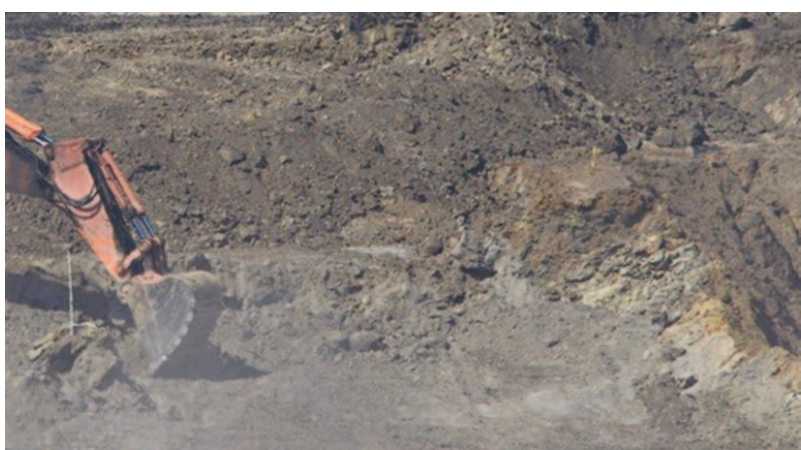


Shiv Sena ministers meet Fadnavis over BJP legislators' allegations against CM Shinde

Mumbai, Feb 7 (IANS) : Two days after a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator Ganpat Kalu Gaikwad was nabbed for shooting a ruling Shiv Sena leader in Ulhasnagar, several Ministers of the latter's party called on Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis here on Wednesday. The Shiv Sena ministers met Fadnavis before the state cabi-

net meeting presided over by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Excise Minister Shambhuraj Desai told mediapersons later. The ostensible reason for the meeting was Gaikwad's comments levelling serious allegations against the CM, accusing Shinde of reportedly owing him a lot of money and for setting up a criminal fiefdom in the state. "Shinde is trying to establish a

kingdom of goons in the state. He deceived Uddhav Thackeray, he will betray the BJP also. He owes me crores of rupees. Shinde should quit if Maharashtra has to be administered well. This is my humble plea to Fadnavis and Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Gaikwad earlier had said before he was whisked off by the Thane Police.



Staff shortage makes curbing illegal mining difficult in Gurugram, Nuh

Gurugram, Feb 7 (IANS) : Department of Mines and Geology of Gurugram and Nuh are struggling with acute shortage of staff and infrastructure which makes it difficult for the concerned officials to curb illegal mining across the two districts. Sources in the department said

that they did not have sufficient infrastructure, including government vehicles, due to which they had to rely either on private vehicles or others for patrolling. "Due to the lack of vehicles, sometimes we have failed to verify the complaints received about illegal mining."

Economy moving in reserve gear in Haryana, says Hooda

Chandigarh, Feb 7 (IANS) : Congress leader and former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda on Wednesday said the state's economy was moving in top gear during his party's government, but the BJP-JJP government pushed the economy in "reverse gear". "This is the reason why Haryana, which was number one in every parameter of development till 2014.



'Misappropriation of funds': Goa BJP chief says issue between party MLAs resolved

Panaji, Feb 7 (IANS) : Goa BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Tanavade said on Wednesday that the issue of 'misappropriation of funds' raised by Assembly Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar against Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude has been resolved. "Earlier, I had said that

it is family matter. Later, some people criticised me over the issue. Neither is it a happy or unhappy moment for me," Tanavade said, after holding a meeting of Tawadkar and Gaude at the CM's official residence. He said that Chief Minister Pramod Sawant was also present during the meeting. "Though they (Tawadkar and Gaude) hold key po-

sitions, they have both been elected on party symbols. Hence, being an MLA is the first criteria, then comes the different positions. Some become ministers, some become Speaker. Hence, to defuse this issue, me and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant held a meeting with them and resolved the matter," he said.

US Senate approves \$118 billion package for southern borders control; dead on arrival, says House Speaker

Washington, Feb 7 (IANS) : The US Senate on Wednesday approved a \$118 billion funding package which includes a bipartisan deal to redress the migrant crisis at the southern border and fresh aid for Ukraine, Israel, and other US allies. But its fate is uncertain in the House of Representatives as Speaker Mike Johnson, Republican from Louisiana, said the Bill was "dead on arrival."

Democrats have embarked on a challenging path forward in the upper Congressional chamber where they hold the majority at 51 to 49, where the Republican leadership quickly panned it. But in the House of Representatives Republicans hold the majority and it will take a tough call on like-minded liberals and conservatives to come together to approve the package.

Reports about the bipartisan agreement were in the offing as President Biden's aid package for Israel and Ukraine was stuck with Republicans wanting to take the latter out and there was no hope in the lower chamber of the House of Representatives. The final text of the Bill being released will allow leaders – including those Republicans who have already sworn off the proposal – to evaluate the legislation, media reports said.

The 370-page Bill includes the supplemental aid package requested by President Joe Biden for foreign conflicts, which would appropriate \$60 billion for Ukraine, \$14 billion for Israel, and \$10 billion for humanitarian aid, including in Gaza, the reports pointed out.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, said he would launch consideration of the legislation this week as "the overwhelming

majority of Senators want to get this done." But the bipartisan agreement is facing fierce opposition and sharp criticism from the virtual GOP boss and former President Donald Trump and other Republican leaders. The odds of the Bill passing muster in the House of Representatives either appear bleak now, reports said House Speaker Mike Johnson, said on Sunday evening that the Bill is "even worse than expected" and said it will be "dead on arrival" if it reached the House.

Even some Republican senators slammed it: Senator Mike Lee, said, "I cannot understand how any Republican would think this was a good idea." Senator James Lankford, told reporters that he urged his colleagues to consider it before passing judgment. "Why don't we actually work through the process to see what (lawmakers) actually step out and say they do support



this?" he said. President Joe Biden said in a statement released on Sunday night that it is the "toughest and fairest set of border reforms in decades" and that he strongly supports it.

Schumer called it a "monumental step" and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said it includes "direct and immediate solutions" and called upon the Senate to "carefully consider the opportu-

nity in front of us and prepare to act." The details of the new deal on borders and aid to American allies as revealed by the media, is as follows.

The border control proposal seeks to expand detention capacity and make it harder for people to qualify for asylum but would allow migrants who can claim credible fear to stay in the country and work. It includes around \$20 bil-

lion in additional funding to expand the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) ability to catch, process, house, and transport migrants and to catch people smuggling fentanyl and other narcotics across the border. The plan also makes it easier for multiple DHS agencies to hire additional employees, USA TODAY reported.



Donald Trump makes doubtful claims about Middle East, Nikki Haley and Mitch McConnell

Washington, Feb 7 (IANS) : Former US President Donald Trump apparently slipped again making doubtful claims, described as false by the media, about the Middle East, rival Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley, Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and other subjects. Trump's alleged false claims came in an interview that aired on Wednesday morning on Fox News, notably including his claim that he warned the US not to invade

Iraq in March 2003, media reports said. Invasion of Iraq: Trump claimed that he had publicly spoken against the idea of invading Iraq, a claim he has been making since his 2016 presidential campaign. Trump told FOX: "Going into Iraq was a stupid thing. Remember I used to say, 'Don't do it, but if you do it, keep the oil.'" Fact check: Trump's claim is false and was debunked eight years ago. In reality, Trump did not publicly express opposition to the invasion of Iraq before it occurred. In his 2000 book, "The America We De-

serve," Trump argued a military strike on Iraq might be necessary; when radio host Howard Stern asked Trump in September 2002 whether he is "for invading Iraq," Trump responded, "Yeah, I guess so. I wish the first time it was done correctly", CNN said in a report apparently dug out from the past statements of the ex-President. Trump did not express a firm opinion about the looming war in a Fox interview in January 2003, saying that "either you attack or don't attack" and that then-President George W. Bush "has either got to do something or not do something, perhaps." Trump criticised the war in 2003, but after the invasion, he claimed that American troops should not be withdrawn from Iraq. He emerged as an explicit opponent of the war in 2004. A CNN search in 2019 turned up no examples of Trump saying anything before the war about keeping Iraq's oil. Trump's White House did not respond at the time to the news agency request to provide proof.



10 cops killed in terror attack on Pak police station ahead of polls

Islamabad, Feb 7 (IANS) : At least 10 police officials were martyred and six critically injured in yet another targeted terror attacks on a police station in Dera Ismail Khan during the early hours of Wednesday. The attack signifies the tense, sensitive and critical situation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province with increased terror attacks, only four days before the polling day on February 8.

According to the police, terrorists entered the Chodhwan police station at around 3 a.m. on

Monday morning, sniping out the guards standing around it. "They hurled grenades as well as shot at police officers they encountered. Four of the martyred belong to the Elite Force," said a police official.

"After entering the building, the terrorists used hand grenades which caused more casualties to the police," said Malik Anees ul Hassan, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Draban. Police sources also revealed that the attack was carried out by at least 30 terrorists, who attacked from at least three different directions.

Maldives to attract 2 mn tourists in 2024

Male, Feb 7 (IANS) : Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu on Wednesday forecasted that the country can attract two million tourist arrivals this year, for the first time in the history of the Maldives since the inception of its tourism industry, according to local media. Muizzu made the statement while delivering his first presidential address at the opening sitting of the last session of the ongoing 19th Parliament on Wednesday morning.

The President said the expansion of Velana International Airport (VIA) would increase tourist arrivals by 10.3 per cent on average in the medium term, Xinhua news agency reported.



Indian-American admits to passport and citizenship fraud in US

New York, Feb 7 (IANS) : An Indian-American man in Florida has pleaded guilty to procuring citizenship unlawfully, misusing evidence of naturalisation, and making false statements in a passport application. Jaiprakash Gulvady, 51, faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a release by the US Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida, announced last week. According to court records, Gulvady, an Indian national, came to the US in 2001 on a temporary business visa. In August 2008, less than two weeks after divorcing his wife, a US citizen whom he had married the year before, Gulvady married another US citizen.

Snowfall in eastern Canada causes state of emergency

Ottawa, Feb 7 (IANS) : A historic multi-day snowstorm in eastern Canada has caused a local state of emergency, leaving many schools, universities and government offices closed. Cape Breton Regional Municipality of Nova Scotia has declared a local state of emergency with some places in the region receiving up to 80 centimetres of snow, Xinhua news agency reported, citing local media. "Residents are directed to shelter in place and advised to clear snow from their home's entryways, walkways and driveway to facilitate home access," a news release from the municipality read. "Residents should also remove snow from ventilation points at your home." "Do not travel. Roadways are being cleared for emergency response and travel of essential workers. The process is slow and ploughs require several passes to deal with the significant accumulation," the news release said.



Blinken meets Saudi Crown Prince in Riyadh

Riyadh, Feb 7 (IANS) : Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud and visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in the Saudi capital of Riyadh on Wednesday.

The two sides reviewed regional developments and bilateral relations on Wednesday, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the Saudi Press Agency. Saudi Arabia is the first stop of Blinken's fifth tour in the region since the onset of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, 2023, which has led to escalating tensions across the region.

Israel resumes attacks in northern Gaza

Jerusalem, Feb 7 (IANS) : Israel has resumed battles in the northern Gaza Strip amid growing international calls for a ceasefire.

In its latest operational update on Wednesday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported that its troops have returned to areas where they previously operated.

Over the past few weeks, attacks in the north of the strip have decreased following Israel's assertion of gaining control over the area, foster-

ing hopes that displaced civilians could return to their homes -- a prospect the Israeli army has indicated that it will not permit at this stage, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The forces operating under the division are preventing Hamas from rebuilding its capabilities," Itzik Cohen, the commander of IDF's 162nd Division, said in the update, stressing the forces were "intensifying operations against and pressure on Hamas remaining in the area."





Burglars loot Rs 20 lakh in Bihar

Patna, Feb 7 (IANS) : Burglars looted jewellery and around Rs 20 lakh from a house in Ramdayalu Nagar locality of Muzaffarpur city in Bihar on Wednesday, officials said. The victim's family is of Rajiv Krishna, a doctor of Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) Muzaffarpur. Dr Manisha Bhawe -- wife of Dr Rajiv -- said that she was at home along with her father-in-law, mother-in-law and children. "Four masked men carrying firearms barged inside and took the family members at gunpoint demanding cash and jewelry. They robbed the house for around one and half hours and then fled after taking the jewellery and money worth at Rs 20 lakh," she said. She said that the robbers were speaking local language and had locked the entire family in one room, snatched the mobile.

Rajasthan BJP chief slams Cong leader for 'Bharat Ratna is given to the dead' remark

Jaipur, Feb 7 (IANS) : Hours after Rajasthan Congress in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa triggered a controversy by commenting "Bharat Ratna is given to the dead", state unit BJP chief CP Joshi on Wednesday hit back at the grand old party, saying it had bestowed the prestigious award on two prime ministers when they were alive.

The erstwhile Congress government had conferred Bharat Ratna to country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1955 and fourth Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1971. The BJP government conferred the highest civilian award to late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee after coming to power in 2014.



RSS to hold 6-day brainstorming session in MP

Bhopal, Feb 7 (IANS) : A six-day brainstorming session of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will be held in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain and Gwalior-Chambal regions from Wednesday. The dignitaries who will be attending the conference and address different sessions include RSS Chief Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, General Secretary (RSS) Duttatreya Hosabole, Dr. Krishna Gopal, Dr. Mohan Vaidya, Ramdutt Chakradhar

and Sri Mukunda. The BJP organisation leaders will also be joining the meeting. Sources said the main focus will be to discuss the future agenda. Sources also told IANS that a two-day (February 6 and 7) session will start in Ujjain and thereafter they will move to the Gwalior-Chambal region and continue with its meetings in Morena for the next three days. The session will culminate on February 11. A Bhopal-based RSS functionary said it is a regular meeting, which

the organisation holds after an interval in different parts of the country. However, it speculated that along with the success of building Ram temple in Ayodhya, the issue of Gyanvapi and Krishna janam bhoomi may also be a part of discussion in the meetings. Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also arrive in Madhya Pradesh on February 11 to kick-start the party's campaign for the coming Lok Sabha election for 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh.

CPLs issued to women in 2023 increased by 22%: VK Singh

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Wednesday claimed that in the year 2023, total number of commercial pilot licences (CPL) issued are 1622 of which 294 were issued to women constituting 18 per cent of total CPLs issued. In a written reply in Rajya

Sabha, the Minister of State for Civil Aviation V. K. Singh said that there is an increase of 22 per cent in the number of CPLs issued to women in the year 2023 (294 CPLs) as compared to the year 2022 (240 CPLs). The minister added that at present, the total number of women pilots employed with various Indian

scheduled and non-scheduled operators is approximately 14 per cent of the total flight crew strength. "The Ministry of Civil Aviation and its associated organisations have taken steps to increase the number of pilots in the country, both women and men," he said. These include issuing award let-

ters by Airports Authority of India for nine new Flying Training Organisations (FTO) at five airports namely Belagavi, Jalgaon, Kalaburagi, Khajuraho and Lilabari in the first phase and six more FTOs at five Airports in the second phase namely Bhavnagar, Hubballi, Kadapa, Kishangarh and Salem.

"In addition, the Women in Aviation International (WAI) - India Chapter conducts many awareness programmes across the country in collaboration with the MoCA, industry and leading women aviation professionals, with special focus on schoolgirls, especially from low income families," Singh added.



Centre failed to double farmers' income, says Harsimrat Kaur in LS

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : Former union minister and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal on Wednesday said the Central government has failed to double farmers' income, increase employment and control inflation. Speaking after the President's Address in the Lok Sabha, Badal said: "Even though the President had stressed that improving the lot of farmers, poor and youth was the focus of the Union government, the same has not been supported with data." Asserting that the data was to the contrary, the Bathinda MP said even though the Union government had promised to double farmers' income by 2022, this promise remained elusive. "As per the data of the National Statistical Office (NSO), the

average income of agriculture households increased from Rs 8,000 per month in 2015 to only Rs 10,000 per month in 2019." The Shiromani Akali Dal leader said in stark contrast the NSO data revealed that the average debt of farmers had increased by 58 per cent in the same period. "As many as 10,880 farmers also committed suicide in 2021 as per the Centre for Science and Environment," she added. Stating that farmers were most indebted in Punjab with small farmers in the state incurring a debt of Rs 3 lakh per farmer, she said the issues of farmers were also not being addressed. "Despite a clear cut undertaking by the Central government that a sub-committee would be formed to make minimum support price (MSP) a legal right of farmers, the

same was not done," the former Union Minister said. She said even as there was an 80 per cent increase in agriculture inputs, the increase in the MSP was increased by 30 per cent only. She said how there was a 26 per cent decrease in the Kisan Samman Nidhi beneficiaries in Punjab which was contributing the most to the national food kitty. She said similarly even though crop insurance companies had earned Rs 57,000 crore, farmers in Punjab did not get any compensation for successive crop losses even though its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had promised to release com-



ensation for crop losses even before the conduct of the 'girdawari'. Talking about the menace of drugs in the country, Badal said the situation was precarious in Punjab with drones from Pakistan flying in drugs into the state. "A demographic disaster is taking place but the Central government is yet to come out with a concrete policy to stop the influx of drugs into Punjab from across the border," she added.



Congress ditched Muslims by sending them to detention centres : Badruddin Ajmal

Guwahati, Feb 7 (IANS) : All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal attacked the Congress on various occasions. Ajmal attended a few public programmes in his constituency in Assam's Dhubri in the last few days. In one such programme on Wednesday night, he claimed that the Congress has been showing false sympathy for the Mus-

lim people of the state. He said, "It was the Congress party which built detention centres and sent the Muslim people there. They have cheated Muslims for 60 years. We have been labeled as foreigners, one detention camp after another was built to detain Muslims." According to Ajmal, after losing power both at the Centre and at the state, now the Congress leaders are changing their tone.

Centre pushing state to financial crisis, says Kerala Minister

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 7 (IANS) : Even as the Supreme Court is hearing a plea of the Kerala government on the treatment meted out to the state by the Centre with regards to finances, on Wednesday state Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal slammed the Centre during the budget presentation in the Assembly. He pointed out that Kerala cannot remain a mute spectator against the hostile approach of the Central government "which is pushing the state towards the worst financial crisis in its history".



"Instead, we should strive forward with the strong sentiment of 'Thakarilla Keralam, Thalarilla Keralam, Thakarkkanavilla Keralathe (Kerala will not be shattered, Kerala will not tire, Kerala cannot be destroyed)'. The government will provide leadership in taking forward our achievements and progress.

PM. Suryodaya Yojana: Know about Centre's scheme to harness solar energy, empower the poor with 'free electricity'

New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) : The 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22 this year, is a path-breaking initiative aimed at making electricity bills of poor and middle class citizens 'zero' while helping them make substantial gains from the rooftops panels, installed on their terrace. Under the newly launched groundbreaking initiative, solar pan-

els will be installed on about 1 crore households and this will help them save upto Rs 18,000 crore annually. The beneficiaries will get 300 units of free solar electricity while they will have the flexibility to sell surplus power to commercial units. PM Modi also spoke about highlights of this scheme during his public address in Guwahati on Wednesday and said that the Centre was working on a plan on slashing the electricity bills of households to zero.



Discontinuing UNRWA funding will have disastrous repercussions : Qatar's PM

Tel Aviv, Feb 7 (IANS) : Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani has said that there would be "disastrous repercussions" in the stability of the region if funding for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is halted. The Qatar Prime Minister was speaking to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York, according to Hebrew media reports. Media reports stated that the Qatar Prime Minister has stressed the "severe consequences" of discontinuing fund-

ing to the UNRWA and emphasized that halting financial support to the agency could lead to "disastrous repercussions". He also showcased its pivotal role in ensuring regional stability and providing humanitarian relief. The discussion, as per reports, brought to the forefront the critical situation in the Middle East, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.



Palestinian President urges UN to stop Israeli attacks

Ramallah, Feb 7 (IANS) : Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has urged UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to step up international efforts to stop the ongoing Israeli "aggression" against the Palestinian people. Abbas made the remarks on Wednesday during his meeting at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah with the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the Palestinian news agency Wafa. Abbas called on Guterres to continue his personal efforts and intensify international efforts "to withdraw Israeli occupation forces from the entire Gaza Strip and not to confiscate any inch of its land," Wafa reported.



Hamas condemns US-British airstrikes on Yemen

Gaza, Feb 7 (IANS) : Hamas has condemned the US-British airstrikes on Yemen, considering it "an escalation that will drag the region into more turmoil". "We strongly condemn the US-British airstrikes of the Republic of Yemen and consider it a blatant attack on the sovereignty of an Arab country," Hamas was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying on Wednesday. Hamas in a press statement said

that the airstrikes represented "an escalation that will drag the region into more turmoil and instability, for the repercussions of which Washington and Israel bear full responsibility". US and British forces launched joint strikes Saturday against targets in the Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen, said the Pentagon. Yemen's Houthi group said on Sunday morning it would launch retaliatory attacks for the US-Brit-

ish airstrikes overnight on six provinces under Houthis' control in northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa. Since the Israel-Hamas conflict broke out on October 7, 2023, the Houthis have carried out more than 40 missile attacks against commercial vessels and US naval ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Houthis said they aimed to press Israel to end the offensive and siege of Gaza.

Fresh trouble for Sunak as Minister accused of giving Infosys 'VIP access': Report

London, Feb 7 (IANS) : Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing a fresh conflict of interest row after a Conservative minister on a trade mission to India last April said he would be happy to help IT firm Infosys, owned by his wife's family, grow in the UK. According to a Daily Mirror investigation, Trade Minister Dominic Johnson said he was "keen to see a bigger Infosys presence in the UK and would be happy to do what he could to facilitate that". The development comes as the Bengaluru-based firm founded by Akshata Murty's father vies for contracts in the UK worth 750 million pounds and plans to increase its workforce in its second-biggest market by 20 per cent to 6,000. Valued at more than 500 mil-

lion pounds, much of the enormous wealth accumulated by Sunak and his wife -- who has a 0.91 per cent stake and reaped dividends of 13 million pounds in the last financial year -- comes from this IT firm. At a meeting at the company's office, details of which were obtained by The Mirror by using Freedom of Information requests, Johnson steered Infosys on how to obtain UK visas for its staff. Johnson "outlined the mobility schemes available which Infosys could take advantage of, particularly the High Potential Individual visa scheme," which allows holders to stay in the UK for two years. The April 2023 meeting also discussed how the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would benefit Infosys. "Reassure that the FTA will further create new opportunities and



investor-friendly policies to support business growth," one of the points mentioned in the briefing notes for Johnson read. Ahead of Sunak's visit to India for the G20 summit in September last year, trade experts and parliamentarians raised concerns alleging that Infosys would financially benefit from the post-Brexit trade deal. Infosys, which is one of the biggest investors in Johnson's Somerset Capital, was "reassured" by the minister who said: "We value the relationship with Infosys and will continue to engage at a

Ministerial level when requested of us." Calling the uncovered documents "damning", the opposition Labour said the government had serious questions to answer about giving "VIP access" to a business so personally close to Sunak and Liberal Democrats demanded full transparency. "This government seems intent on wrecking the public's trust in politics. The public has a right to know what the Government is up to.

Cambodian PM to pay official visit to Thailand

Phnom Penh, Feb 7 (IANS): Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet will pay an official visit to Thailand on February 7 at the invitation of his Thai counterpart Srettha Thavisin, the country's Foreign Ministry said in a press statement on Wednesday. The two Prime Ministers will hold talks on bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas of common interest, the statement added. "They will also preside over the signing of numerous documents on bilateral cooperation," the state-

ment said as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. Hun Manet will also deliver opening remarks at a Cambodia-Thailand Business Forum, it added. "The visit is expected to consolidate the enduring ties and traditional bonds of friendship between the two countries, guided by the spirit of their Enhanced Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, bringing mutual benefits for the two people as well as peace, stability and prosperity for the ASEAN community and beyond," the statement said.



Commitment to our citizens more than anything else : Israel Def Min to US envoy

Tel Aviv, Feb 7 (IANS) : Israel Defence Minister Yoav Gallant has said that the commitment to the citizens of the country is more important for the government than anything else. He conveyed this to Amos Hochstein, the visiting special envoy of US President Joe Biden, in Tel Aviv on Wednesday, said the minister's office. It may be noted that Hochstein played a major role in brokering arrangements between Israel and Lebanon, such as the late 2022 agreement delineating the

maritime border between the two countries. In November 2023 also, Hochstein landed in Israel in an attempt to curb the re-emerging violence between Hezbollah and Israel. The Defence Minister's office said in a statement that Gallant emphasised on the need to solve the crisis in North of Israel with the Hezbollah. Gallant told Hochstein that his country was ready to resolve the crisis (in the North) through diplomatic means, but were prepared for any other option.



Indian-origin singer fined for molesting woman in Singapore

Singapore, Feb 7 (IANS) : A 42-year-old Indian-origin singer in Singapore has been fined S\$3,000 for molesting a female production crew member in a drunken stupor in 2022. Sivabalan Siva Prasad Menon, who had consumed between 10 and 15 cups of whisky on the day of the incident, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to one count of molestation. Two other charges, including one more molestation charge, were considered during sentencing, The Straits Times

newspaper reported. On the day of the incident, the victim reported at the Mediacorp Campus in Stars Avenue at around 11 a.m. to work on the production of a show that had hired Menon as a singer and dancer. Deputy Public Prosecutor Grace Teo told the court that Menon, who was also present at the venue, had downed up to 15 cups of whisky between 3 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. The victim and a friend were waiting for the lift after the show ended.

Egypt's Prez calls for two-state solution to settle Palestinian issue

Cairo, Feb 7 (IANS) : Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has stressed the need to reinvigorate the two-state solution as a basis for the comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue and the restoration of security and stability in the Middle East. Sisi made the remarks on Wednesday during a meeting here with French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Stephane Sejourne, Xinhua news agency reported, citing a statement by

the Egyptian Presidency. The meeting focused on Egypt's efforts with various actors to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and provide access to humanitarian aid and relief to end the severe humanitarian catastrophe the people of Gaza have been enduring, the statement said. The talks also emphasized the necessity for the international community to assume responsibility with regard to the implementation of the relevant international resolutions.



Rachin Ravindra refuses to share POTM award with Kane Williamson, says: 'He's got 31 Test hundreds for my one'

Mount Maunganui, Feb 7 (IANS) : New Zealand batter Rachin Ravindra on Wednesday refused to share the Player of the Match award with Kane Williamson after New Zealand emerged victorious by 281 runs in the first Test against South Africa. In a remarkable display of

batting prowess, Ravindra notched up an incredible 240 runs in New Zealand's first innings total of 511, marking his maiden Test century. His monumental innings, which included a game-changing 232-run partnership with Williamson.



'What an incredible player': De Villiers praises Shubman Gill for his match-winning ton



Former South Africa cricketer AB de Villiers has praised Shubman Gill for his sublime century in the second innings of the second Test between India and England and emphasized it as the game-changing inning.

On the pivotal third day of the match, despite the early setbacks of losing two wickets with India precariously placed at 30/2, Gill remained undeterred, and with each elegant stroke, he went on to score 104 runs off 147 balls, including 11 fours and two sixes. It was his third century in Test cricket and his first while batting at the number three position for India.

His partnership with Shreyas Iyer served as the backbone of India's innings, providing the stability that helped India set England a target of 399 in their second inning.

Marizanne Kapp's all-round show propels Proteas women to maiden ODI victory over Australia

Sydney, Feb 7 (IANS) : Marizanne Kapp emerged as the shining star for South Africa Women as they clinched a historic victory over Australia by 84 runs (DLS method) in the second match of a three-match One-Day International (ODI) series, marking their first-ever win against the for-

midable opponents in 17 matches. Kapp's remarkable all-round performance not only inspired her team to victory but also breathed new life into their campaign, keeping them alive in both the one-day and multi-format series.

The tale of Kapp's heroics began in Adelaide, where she was forced to retire hurt during a comprehen-

sive defeat at the hands of Australia. Despite facing doubts about her fitness, Kapp's determination and resilience shone through as she took the field at North Sydney Oval. Her innings of 75 runs off 87 balls, embellished with 12 boundaries, anchored South Africa's batting to 229/6 in a rain-halted 45 overs match, supported

by crucial contributions from Anneke Bosch and Chloe Tryon. However, it was Kapp's bowling prowess that truly turned the tide in South Africa's favour. She tore through Australia's top order, claiming three crucial wickets for a mere 12 runs. With menacing inswingers and unwavering accuracy.



It will be huge for me to win SA20 once again: Aiden Markram

After seamers, Ott Niel Baartman and Marco Jansen powered the Sunrisers Eastern Cape to their second consecutive SA20 final with a convincing 51-run victory over Durban Super Giants in the Qualifier 1, skipper Aiden Markram shared his thoughts on the team's performance and future, reflecting on the contributions of key players like Baartman. The Sunrisers' 44-run victory over Paarl Royals in their final league stage match cemented their status as one of the most formidable challengers for the crown. Speaking on getting into the finals for a second year in a row, Sunrisers Eastern Cape captain Aiden Markram said, "I wouldn't say anything new that we've done or tried."

Like I did in FC Goa, I want to help Odisha FC players to play in the national team: Sergio Lobera

Bhubaneswar, Feb 7 (IANS) : The Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 table-toppers Odisha FC and FC Goa are set to square off at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Friday to determine the League Winners Shield champions of the tenth season of ISL.

The two teams are solid contenders to stake a claim for the biggest honours at the end of this

campaign and this game can help the Juggernauts, currently at 30 points, to build a reasonable distance with FC Goa (27), despite having played two games more (13) than the Gaurs (11).

It will be an encounter that will bring back a host of memories and emotions for Odisha FC head coach Sergio Lobera, who entered the shores of Indian football with FC Goa in 2017.



SAFF U19 Women's: India ready for Bangladesh redemption in final

Dhaka (Bangladesh), Feb 7 (IANS) : The India U19 Women's National Team will be out to break a voodoo on the artificial turf of BSSSMK Stadium on Thursday when they meet hosts Bangladesh in the SAFF U19 Women's Championship 2024 final.

Despite marked improvement in women's football, India somehow hold a dismal record in this age group in SAFF. The title has eluded India on more than one occasion, the latest example being the SAFF U20 Women's Championship in Dhaka last year,

when Bangladesh pipped India to win the trophy.

Thursday's final will definitely be a huge opportunity for India to put past records on the burner and retain the title.

The Young Tigresses will certainly enter the final match with a strong determination to seize the championship title and set the records straight from the Indian perspective.

In the group stage, India won comfortably against Bhutan (10-0) and Nepal (4-0) but lost against Bangladesh by a solitary goal to

enter the final as the second-place finishers in the group.

Apart from having a tight defence and a balanced midfield, India enjoy good attacking qualities with forwards Pooja and Sulanjana Raul and wingers Neha and Sibani Devi putting up a commendable show. Well, despite all the positive signs, it will definitely not be easy to topple the hosts, who beat India in the group league earlier this week. No one knows it better than India's head coach, Sukla Dutta.