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BRS will diminish further after Lok Sabha polls: Uttam

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday asserted that the BRS party has lost its relevance and is gradually fading away from the political landscape....

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India's 75th Republic Day at Khanij Bhavan, NMDC

National Miner NMDC celebrated the 75th Republic Day of India at Khanij Bhavan in Hyderabad and its mining projects across India. Shri Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge)...

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Intel reports \$15.4 bn in revenue in Q4, profit reaches \$2.66 bn

Chip-maker Intel has registered \$15.4 billion in revenue in its fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, up 10 per cent year-over-year (YoY). The full-year revenue was \$54.2 billion, down 14 per cent..

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Telangana people put an end to dictatorial rule: Governor

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Telangana society has put an end to the 10-year dictatorial government run against the constitutional spirit in the recently held elections and the people's government is reconstituting ruined Constitutional bodies and systems, said Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Friday. Addressing Republic

Day celebrations, she said the people's mandate declared that arrogance and autocracy have no place in Telangana state. She noted that the Constitution gave people enough powers to remove the rulers who run governments against the spirit of the Constitution through struggles and verdicts in the elections. "We achieved a separate Telangana state with the inspiration of the Constitution and the rights enshrined in it. The Constitution also provided the

people with the opportunity to terminate the governments ruling against the constitutional spirit." She unfurled the national flag at the main official function which was attended by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Cabinet ministers and top officials. The Governor mentioned that the new government is reconstructing constitutional bodies, systems, and values which were ruined in the last 10 years.

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Revanth Reddy pays tributes at Martyrs' Memorial

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy paid tributes to martyrs on the Republic Day. He laid a wreath at Martyrs' Memorial at Army Parade Grounds in Secunderabad. The event was organised by Telangana and Andhra Sub Area (TASA) with the presence of Military Band and the

officers and soldiers of all three services attired in full ceremonial dress adorning glittering medals depicting their various achievements in the service to the nation. The morning was marked by fanfare and the sequence of events was the laying of Wreath by the NCC cadet followed by various other senior officers of the station and finally, the wreath was laid by

the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister earlier unfurled the national flag at his residence in Jubilee Hills. The Chief Minister paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr B. R. Ambedkar. A police contingent and officials and staff participated in the event.

Continued on pg 02



KCR asks BRS MPs to present strong case of Telangana's unmet promises

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : Reassuring his MPs that the Party would continue its crusade in an intensified manner for safeguarding the interests of State, BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrababu Naidu on Friday wanted them to present a strong case of the unfulfilled commitments given to the State at the time of bifurcation. Addressing a meeting of the BRS parliamentary Party, he said BRS remained wedded to the cause of State development. It had an eventful history. It had

waged many a struggle for the sake of its share in river waters and transfer of common assets. The members of the parliament must fight with their voice strongly heard for realising its due in the budget session to commence at the end of the month. KCR had elaborate discussion with the MPS on the strategies to be adopted in both the houses on the issues likely to figure in the debates during the session. The meeting held at Yerravalli, lasted for nearly three hours.

Secret alliance between Congress & BJP exposed : Harish Rao

Siddipet, Jan 26 (IANS) : Former minister Harish Rao today said the secret alliance between the Congress and the BJP parties had once again been exposed and added that the appointment of MLCs in the Governor's quota had exposed the understanding between the two parties. Alleging that the Congress government was working on the BJP's agenda, he accused Governor Tamilisai of working to benefit the Congress party.



Telangana Govt grants premature release to 231 prisoners on Republic Day

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : On the Republic Day, the State Government has decided to release 231 prisoners, including 212 lifetime convict prisoners and 19 non-life convict prisoners, who are having good conduct in prisons for premature release.



Komatireddy Venkat Reddy meets Chiranjeevi, congratulates him on Padma Vibhushan

Hyderabad, Jan 26 : Telangana Minister of Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, paid a visit to Chiranjeevi on Friday to extend his congratulations for being conferred with the Padma

Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in the country. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy met Chiranjeevi at his residence in Jubilee Hills, and accompanying the minister was producer Dil Raju.



PM Modi extends greetings to nation on 75th Republic Day

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday extended greetings to the nation on the occasion of the 75th Republic Day. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President J. P. Nadda also greeted the countrymen.

Prime Minister Modi posted on X in Hindi: "Best wishes on the special occasion of the 75th Republic Day. Jai Hind!". Union Home Minister Shah remembered and saluted the fallen soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the unity and integrity of the country. "Hearty greetings to all the countrymen on Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion of democracy, I salute all the freedom fighters, constitution makers and the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the unity and integrity of the country. Let us all together



take a pledge to protect our democratic values ??on the occasion of Republic Day and contribute in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of a developed India," posted Shah on X. Nadda also posted on X: "Heartiest greetings to all the countrymen on the 75th Republic Day. Today, on this occasion, I salute all our freedom fighters, brave soldiers and constitution makers, who gave everything for the sovereignty, integrity and unity of the nation. Let us all together contribute to the fulfillment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of a capable, self-reliant and developed India. Nadda unfurled the national flag at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on the occasion.

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.Q2, Aurum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors/ mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from M/s. Shriram Finance Limited (Shriram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shriram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shriram Transport Company Limited name Changed as Shriram Finance Limited, by it's Incorporation Certificate dt.13-11-2022), is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 and also registered with RBI to do Non-Banking Finance business having its registered office at Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai- 600032 and branch office at Godavarihikani, (hereinafter referred as Company/ Lender). We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non Performing Asset in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of SHRIRAM FINANCE LTD. under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 & in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices on respective dates mentioned herein below under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 calling upon the following borrowers /guarantors /mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices and with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices. The notices issued to them on their last known addresses have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same. 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.

Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantors: 1) Shiva Prasad Kadem, S/o. Baswa Rajam, Age:45 Years, Occ:Sales And Services(Sri Rajarajeshwara Traders), H.No:5-6-77, Siddula Wada, Sircilla, Karimnagar, Pincode:505301. 2) Kadem Baswarajam S/o.Somaiah, Age:66 Years, H.No:5-6-77, Siddula Wada, Sircilla, Karim Nagar,Pincode:505301. And Also At Shiva Prasad Kadem S/o. Baswa Rajam, Age:45 Years, RCC Building Tiled Roof & Tin Roof With Open Place Bearing Old H.No: 7-1-24 & 7-1-25 To Its Corresponding New H.No: 5-6-78, 5-6-79 & 5-6-80, Siddulawada, Rajanna Sircilla, Dist: Karimnagar. Kadem Baswarajam S/o. Somaiah, Age:66 Years, Age:45 Years, Rcc Building Tiled Roof & Tin Roof With Open Place Bearing Old H.No: 7-1-24 & 7-1-25 To Its Correspon Ding New H.No: 5-6-78, 5-6-79 & 5-6-80, Siddulawada, Rajanna Sircilla, Dist: Karimnagar. 3) Bavupally Siddeshwar S/o. Veeresham, Age:39 Years, Occ: Business, H.No: 4-4-115/1, Patel Pura, Siddipet, Medak, Pincode:502103.

NPA Date: 13.03.2019; **Loan Amount:** Rs.25,00,000/-;
Date of Demand Notice: 17-12-2023; **Amount Outstanding:** Rs.60,89,610/-

SIRCIITF1903090004-Description of the Immovable Property (Property holder Name is SHIVA PRASAD KADEM & KADEM BASWARAJAM Mortgage deed dated 13.03.2019 Registered as Document No 2718/2019 on the file of the office of Sub-Registrar at Sircilla. The Single stored RCC building tiled roof & tin roof with open place bearing old H.No. 7-1-24 & 7-1-25 to its corresponding New H.No. 5-6-78 & 5-6-79 & 5-6-80 measuring to an area 125.80 sq.yards equal to 105.67 Sq. Mtrs (R.C.C G.F Plinth area 397.5 Sq. fts., F.F Plinth area 463.75 Sq. fts. Tiled Plinth Area 252.5 Sq.fts, Tin Roof Plinth area 93.00 Sq.fts) situated at Siddulawada Sircilla proper & Mandal, Rajanna Sircilla Dist. And within the limits of M.C. Sircilla Regn. Sub-Dist. Rajanna Sircilla & Regn. Dist. Karimnagar North - P.W.D Road, South - Open place of Mrupaka Bhsakar East: Open Place of Vendeo West:19 Feet Road.

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers and/or their guarantors (where ever applicable) to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the applicable rules there under. Please note that under Section 13(13) of the said Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.

Date: 23-01-2024 **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Place: Sircilla **Shriram Finance Limited**

OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 1)
3rd Floor, Triveni Complex Abids, Hyderabad -500001.

DEMAND NOTICE

NOTICE Under Sections 25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and Rule 2 of Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961.
RC/286/2023 17-01-2024

State Bank of India
Versus
Smt.K.S.J.K Lakshmi, K S JK

To (D1) Smt.K.S.J.K Lakshmi, KSKJK W/o Sri K Lakshmana Sastry, Aged about 54 Years, Female, Occ: Private Service, 11-14-262/123/102-D, Manjeera Heights -2, Chitra Layout, Behind Ranga Reddy District Court, LB Nagar, Hyderabad -500074. Also at Flat No.308, 3rd Floor, Block-A, H.No.04-79/A/308, Splendour Complex, Gajularamaram, Quthbullapur, Medchal Malkajgiri District-500055. (DD 2) Sri K. Lakshmana Sastry, S/o. Late Sri K.S. Rao, Aged About 61 Years, Male, Occ: Advocate, 11-14262/123/102-D, Manjeera Heights-2, Chitra Layout, Behind Ranga Reddy District Court, LB Nagar, Hyderabad - 500074. Also at Flat No.308, 3rd Floor, Block-A, H.No.04-79/A/308, Splendour Complex, Gajularamaram, Quthbullapur, Medchal- Malkajgiri District-500055.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD(DRT 1) in OA/332/2022 an amount of Rs.53,25,442/- (Rupees Fifty Three Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand Four Hundred Forty two only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 0 % Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f.28/10/2022 till realization and costs of Rs.1,09,210/- (Rupees One Lakh Nine Thousand Two Hundred and Ten Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally Fully/Limited).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 14/02/2024 at 10:30 a.m. For further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:
(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.
(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date:17/01/2024.
Recovery Officer
Debts Recovery Tribunal Hyderabad(DRT1)

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.Q2, Aurum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

DEMAND NOTICE

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Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantors: 1) Mohammed Abdul Majeed S/o.Mohammed Abdul Jaleel, Age: 44 Years, Occ:Poultry Business (Classic Poultry Farm) H.No:12-3-108/3, Khadarpara, Siddipet, Pincode :502103. And Also At Mohammed Abdul Majeed S/O. Mohammed Abdul Jaleel, Age:44 Years, Open Place At Rampur, Karimnagar, Pincode: 505001. 2) Firdoug Suthana W/o. Abdul Majeed, Age:38 Years,Occ:House Wife H.No:12-2-119, Khadarpara, Siddipet, Pincode: 502103 3) Vishwanatham Srinivas S/o. Devalah, Age:32 Years,Occ:Junior Assit (Irrigation Department Peddapally) H.No: 10-1-641/18, Santhosh Nagar, Karimnagar, Pincode: 505001.

NPA Date: 09-07-2023; **Loan Amount:** Rs. 20,00,000/-;
Date of Demand Notice: 17-12-2023; **Amount Outstanding:** Rs.35,85,274/-

KMG2TF2212090002-Description of the Immovable Property (Property holder Name is MOHAMMED ABDUL MAJEED Mortgage deed dated 09.12.2022 Registered as Document No 13160/2022 on the file of the office of Sub-Registrar at Karimnagar (Ro).An Open Place measuring to an extent of 181.50 Sq.Yards or 152.46 Sq.Mtrs, out of Sy.No. 854/1 Situated at Rampur Locality of Karimnagar Town and District, Within the limits of City Municipal Corporation Karimnagar and under the jurisdiction of sub District and District Registration Karimnagar. (Near 8-1-294/1) **Towards East :** Land of Pentti Anjalath **Towards West:** 30 Feet Wide Road **Towards North :** Land of Ummenthula Lavani Kumar and Others **Towards South :** Land of Beenaveni Latha.

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers and/or their guarantors (where ever applicable) to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the applicable rules there under. Please note that under Section 13(13) of the said Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.

Date: 23-01-2024 **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Place: Karimnagar **Shriram Finance Limited**

Telangana people put an end to dictatorial rule: Governor

Continued From pg 01

“The fruits of democracy, welfare, and development will reach out to people only when the government runs the administration in tune with the spirit of the constitution. Unilateral decisions and dictatorial approaches are against the principles of democracy. The newly elected people's government started functioning with full consciousness. The government is striving with the objective of delivering equal opportunities, rendering social justice, and granting freedom to all sections of people,” she said.

The Governor stated that immediately after assuming charge, the people's government initiated an action plan to fulfil the assurances given to people. Two of the six guarantees have already been implemented.

She pointed out that more than 11 crore women have already utilized the free travel facility in TSRTC buses under the Mahalaxmi Scheme, implemented as part of six guarantees. The government's main objective is to implement four other guarantees in 100 days and see the smiles on the faces of people. The government is introducing reforms and rectifying the derailed administrative systems.

Referring to precarious financial condition of the state due to the mismanagement of the previous government, Tamilisai Soundararajan stated Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's government is moving fast with grit and determination to make Telangana state to compete with the world and write a new chapter in the welfare and development sector.

She said the government has already received 1,25,84,383 applications under the Praja Palana programme conducted recently. Of them, 1,05,91,636 have been received seeking the benefits of five guarantees. People submitted 19,92,747 applications for other requisitions. The government is preparing an action plan to address the people's grievances by compiling the department wise data.

Stating that the previous government has completely neglected employment and livelihoods for youth, she said the new government is paying special attention to providing jobs to the youth. The process of reforming the TSPSC (Telangana State Public Service Commission) is in progress. Job recruitment will be taken up by the government soon after the completion of the process.

“My appeal to the youth is not to raise doubts or suspicions about the government's sincerity in providing jobs,” she said.

The Governor also revealed that the state succeeded in entering agreements with global and domestic companies for Rs 40,232 crore investments during Chief

Revanth Reddy pays tributes at Martyrs' Memorial

Continued From pg 01

He earlier attended the main Republic Day event held at Public Gardens, where Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan unfurled the national flag. In the premises of the State Legislative Assembly, Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar unfurled the Tricolour in the presence of Deputy chief minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and ministers D. Sridhar Babu and Ponnamp Prabhakar.

The leaders offered floral tributes paid at the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

Legislative Council Chairman G. Sukhender Reddy led the Republic Day celebrations at Council premises. Legislative affairs minister D. Sridhar Babu and MLCs Mahesh Goud and Surabhi Vani were also present. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari unfurled the national flag at the Republic Day event held at Dr B.R. Ambedkar State Secretariat.

SCR GM hoists tricolour on R-Day

Hyderabad, Jan.26 (NSS): South Central Railway (SCR) today celebrated the 75th Republic Day at Railway Sports Complex Grounds, Secunderabad. SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain, who was the chief guest unfurled the National Flag and received the Guard of Honour presented by various contingents of Railway Protection Force.

Delivering his address, Arun Kumar Jain extended his greetings to the entire Railway fraternity on the momentous occasion of 75th Republic Day. He stated “the Indian Constitution stands as an enduring testament to the great ideals, sowed by our visionary leaders, which have been instrumental in shaping our nation and continue to be a source of inspiration for us”. He informed

that South Central Railway has recorded exceptional performance in the current financial year with the Zone registering its best-ever earnings for the first nine months in any financial year during 2023-24. SCR achieved Rs. 14, 738 Crs in Gross Originating Revenue during April – December 2023, which is higher by Rs. 950 crs over previous year. The Zone also created history by surpassing 100 MTs in Originating Freight Loading and Rs. 10,000 crs in Originating Freight Revenue within the shortest ever time period in its history.

Simultaneously, the Zone carried nearly 200 million originating passengers during April-December 2023, thereby earning Rs. 4,286 Crores in Originating Passenger Revenue, he said. Arun Kumar Jain stated that safety continues to be foremost priority for SCR. He stated that the current financial year also witnessed SCR introducing additional services for the benefit of rail passengers. It was a



moment of pride for the Zone, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged-off four Vande Bharat Express Trains, 13 MMTS Train Services and two Passenger Train Services on different occasions, he said.

BRS will diminish further after Lok Sabha polls: Uttam

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday asserted that the BRS party has lost its relevance and is gradually fading away from the political landscape of Telangana after the Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a press conference following his participation in the annual Urs celebrations of Jan Pahad Saidulu Dargah in Palkavedu Mandal, Suryapet district, Uttam Kumar Reddy predicted that the Congress party would secure 13-14 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, while the BRS would be limited to only one or two seats. He emphasized that the main contest for the Lok Sabha in Telangana was between the Congress and BJP, with little to no relevance to BRS. He claimed, "The future of BRS will be in doubt after the

Lok Sabha, and its existence will be questionable after the Parliamentary elections. It is bound to diminish significantly from the political scene in the next few months."

Uttam Kumar Reddy disclosed that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had addressed booth-level workers of the Congress party at LB Stadium in Hyderabad on Thursday, providing guidelines for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He expressed confidence that by winning 13-14 seats, Telangana would play a significant role in forming the next Congress-led government at the Centre, with Rahul Gandhi assuming the post of Prime Minister. Accusing the previous BRS regime of cheating the people, looting public wealth, and pushing Telangana into a massive debt crisis.



Three killed in autorickshaw-bus collision in Andhra Pradesh

Vijayawada, Jan 26 (IANS) : Three agriculture workers were killed and 13 other injured in a collision between a RTC bus and an autorickshaw in Andhra Pradesh's Palnadu district on Friday, police said.

The accident occurred in Lingamgunta in Chikaluripet mandal of the district.

According to police, about 15 agriculture workers were travelling in an autorickshaw, which was heading to Appapuram village from Veluru village. The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) bus belonging to Macherla depot was on its way to Chikaluripet.

When the autorickshaw came onto Chikaluripet road from an internal road, the bus driver tried to avoid hitting it but could not succeed. The autorickshaw was crushed under the bus. While one person died on the spot, two others succumbed at government hospital Chikaluripet.

Thirteen others were undergoing treatment and two of them are stated to be in a critical condition. The deceased were identified as Y. Hanumayamma, 60, G. Shivaparwathy, 58, and Sheikh Hazrat Wali, 65.



Hyderabad Metro Rail Celebrates 75th Republic Day

Hyderabad, Jan.26 (NSS): The 75th anniversary of Republic Day was celebrated at Metro Rail Bhavan with patriotic fervour today. HMRL & HAML MD NVS Reddy unfurled the National Flag and greeted the staff and their family members on the occasion and recalled the struggles and sacrifices of the great freedom fighters of our country. Speaking on the occasion, NVS Reddy said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has approved the phase-II expansion of Hyderabad Metro Rail proposals of 70 km length, including Airport connectivity from different parts of the city. These proposals ensure metro rail services to all sections of the society in the State capital, and would also play an important role in the emergence of Hyderabad as an attractive global destination for investments. Traffic surveys and preparation of DPRs for the Phase-II corridors are going on at a brisk pace, he added. He urged the HMRL engineers and employees to rededicate themselves and work with renewed vigour in an innovative way. Chief Engineers DVS Raju, B. Anand Mohan, General Managers, M. Vishnu Vardhan Reddy, BN Rajeswar, A. Balakrishna and other officers and staff participated in the celebrations.



Diya Kumari meets UNGA President, says India is now the voice of Global South

Jaipur, Jan 26 (IANS) : Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Diya Kumari, on Friday met Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), at the City Palace here. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj (IFS), and United Nations Resident Coordinator, Shombi Sharp, were also present on the occasion. Diya Kumari later said that during the discussions on various international and contemporary issues, the UNGA President praised India's foreign policy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted the G-20 Summit chaired by India, India's help to

many countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, and raising voice against the ongoing wars around the world. The Deputy CM said the entire world is impressed by the efforts being made by the Prime Minister for the overall development of the Global South. The Prime Minister also gave the slogan of 'One World, One Family, One Future' in the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' at the G-20 conference and is trying to unite the world through the International Solar Alliance. Diya Kumari also talked about the heritage conservation in detail on the occasion. Dennis Francis is on a five-day visit to India.

Bihar Labour Department frees 4 child labourers from Munger bakery

Patna, Jan 26 (IANS) : A team of the Bihar's Labour Department freed 4 child labourers from a bakery facility in Munger on Friday. A fine of Rs 80,000 was also slapped on the owner of the bakery. Munger's Labour Enforcement Officer Kumar Raman, along with a team of his department and local police, conducted the raid on the bakery facility located at Kamargama village in Tarapur sub-division in the district. "We have freed 4 child labourers

from the bakery facility in Tarapur sub-division on Tuesday and sent them to the child welfare home in the district. They are from Jharkhand's Deoghar district. We have information of child labourers working in the facility and we had warned the owner of the bakery. Still, he has ignored our warning. "Hence, we have conducted the raid on the bakery and released the child labourers and also imposed a fine of Rs 80,000 on him," Raman said.



Bhubaneswar AIIMS conducts successful trial for using drone in healthcare services

Bhubaneswar, Jan 26 (IANS) : Bhubaneswar AIIMS on Friday successfully conducted a trial for the utilisation of drone services in the health care sector. "The drone completed the successful journey of 120 kms from AIIMS Bhubaneswar to CHC Tangi in just 1.10 hours, carrying the essential blood supplies weighing around 2kg, without encountering any operational issues," said AIIMS sources. The Executive Director of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, Dr. Ashutosh Biswas who was present during the trial said that efforts are on throughout the country to induct drone technology in the health sector under the

initiative of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. He said AIIMS, Bhubaneswar is the first in Odisha to carry out such trials for the utilization of drone services in the health care sector. "Induction of drone delivery can boost the healthcare services in rural, tribal, and semi-urban locations. These drones can carry multiple health products including vaccines, essential drugs and diagnostic samples. AIIMS Bhubaneswar, as a leading tertiary healthcare provider has created this opportunity for the people of Odisha," said Biswas. He further added that drone service can play a pivotal role during any natural disasters.

Stalin to release new women's policy following Cabinet nod

Chennai, Jan 26 (IANS) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will soon release a state policy for women after it got Cabinet nod. A meeting of the Cabinet on Friday approved the state's new policy for women. It may be noted that the state government had approved a draft of the policy in December 2021. A state-level committee headed by the Chief Secretary and comprising district-level committees headed by district collectors will monitor the implementation of the New State Policy for Women. State Minister for Social Welfare and Women Empowerment, P. Geetha Jeevan, said

the new policy is aimed at holistic development of women by empowering them through education, economic independence and sharing of power. The minister said the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment department will also monitor the implementation of the policy. Geetha Jeevan said that changes were incorporated into the draft policy based on feedback from the civil society. The minister said that the state has formulated the new policy 23 years after the national-level policy was released in 2001. She said that Tamil Nadu had conceived and implemented many women empowerment schemes like the Kalaingar Magalir Urimai



Thittam scheme under which an estimated 1.06 crore women recognised as the heads of families will be provided a monthly grant of Rs 1,000. The minister also said that the state government

is providing free bus travel for women under the Vidiyal Payana Thittam scheme, adding that the state government is in the process of constructing working women's hostels in many districts. She also

said that her ministry is collecting information on the number of women beneficiaries in the various schemes implemented by the state government.



Rajasthan CM inspects arrangements for PM Modi, French President's visit

Jaipur, Jan 26 (IANS) : Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday inspected the arrangements in wake of the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron. PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron will visit Jaipur on January 26. The Chief Minister also visited the route from the airport to the walled city from where PM Modi is likely to hold a roadshow with France President from Sanganeri Gate to Jantar Mantar. He also visited Jantar Mantar, Amer Mahal and gave necessary directions to the officials.



Clashes erupt between Pune FTII students, Right-wingers over Babri banner

Pune (Maharashtra), Jan 26 (IANS) : A few people were injured after a clash erupted between some students of the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and members of certain Right-wing groups here on Friday, after a banner was put up proclaiming, 'Remember Babri, Death of Constitution.' The banner, referring to the disputed mosque's demolition at Ayodhya in 1992, was allegedly put up by FTII-Students Association (FTII-SA), leading to bouts of anxiety on the campus at around 2 pm on Friday. Taking strong objection to the

banner, some Right-wingers barged into the campus raising slogans, yanked it off and set it on fire, leading to skirmishes between them and some students. A police team from the Deccan Gymkhana Police Station rushed to the campus and promptly brought the matter under control, though tensions continued to simmer in the vicinity. The incident, in which an undisclosed number of students and activists are reportedly injured, came a day after the consecration of the Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Rural doctors' protest near Bihar CM's residence dispersed

Patna, Jan 26 (IANS) : A planned protest by a group of rural doctors near Bihar Chief Minister's residence on Friday was dispersed by police. The registered medical practitioners in rural areas were demanding that the Bihar government regularise their services and also wanted a fixed salary as well. Around 100 rural doctors

reached the JD-U office with the demands but found no one paid them any attention and then moved towards the Chief Minister's residence. They were carrying bottles of petrol to self-immolate themselves in front of the Chief Minister's residence if their demands were not met. In view of this, a large number of police personnel present at

the spot stopped them, snatched the bottles of petrol, and carried out a baton charge to disperse them. "We have detained 14 rural doctors and kept them in the Sachivalaya police station. We are learning their demands and will inform the competent authority about the same," a Patna police spokesperson said.



Pran Pratistha ceremony was an event of BJP, RSS: Manoj Jha

Patna, Jan 26 (IANS) : RJD MP Manoj Jha on Friday said that Pran Pratistha ceremony in Ayodhya was an event of BJP and RSS. "BJP leaders are fooling people by saying that Lord Ram has arrived. I want to ask them where he was. Lord Ram is present in every particle and is in every heart," Jha said.

OPINIONmail



RSS'S RAM ON AYODHYA MISSION TO ENSURE ELECTORAL WIN FOR MODI'S BJP

It is a historical attainment for RSS. On January 22, it succeeded in striding one stable step towards altering the character and identity of India, from being a secular, socialist country to a theological Hindu Rashtra. This is for the first time in the history of independent India when the prime minister not only mixed politics with religion instead he blatantly gave credence to religion above the politics. This was also for the first time that a prime minister spent not less a month visiting various temples and maths and offering pujas to the gods and deities. Modi did not find time to take care of the needs of the poor people of the country, but he went around praying to the gods to ensure his electoral victory.

Though RSS has made clear its intentions of turning India into a Hindu Rashtra long back and its all political actions were conceived and executed keeping that strategy in view, the month-long tour of Narendra Modi of south India simply underscores that he commenced the mission to arouse the Hindu sentiment and polarise the Hindus to help RSS in its mission. Hindus and Hinduism have historically been an extremely tolerant and all-inclusive entity in south India. Even if someone believes in many gods, Hinduism will accept him. The religious parameter of Hinduism was so wide and inclusive that all kind of people used to find a place in it. It never propounded sectarian approach and attitude as is being seen in the case of RSS and BJP.

The Hindutva historians belonging to the 'WhatsApp University', while have been methodically battering Muslim rulers for exploiting and converting Hindus to Islam, have so far not tried to find out the reasons for reluctance of south Indian Hindus in subscribing to the Hindutva philosophy of RSS. Due to this inclusiveness of Hinduism, Muslims have made less of an impact in South India, so there has been comparatively less political controversy in the region.

After Modi becoming the prime minister, RSS deployed its frontal organisations in all the southern states to foment communal tension and spread acute hatred between the two communities, but its machinations miserably failed. It failed to put one community against other. It is a fact that South Indians do not even believe in a lot of the religious aspects of Hinduism. These are simply a set of cultural norms. RSS or for that matter Narendra Modi are not going to slacken their activities. As RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat put it, after consecration of Ram temple and "entry" of Ram Lalla in his house in Ayodhya the RSS will launch its most ambitious and variegated programme; beginning of the campaign for "reconstruction of Bharatvarsh" which is for harmony, unity, progress, peace and well-being of everyone. RSS is out to use this occasion to completely communalise the Hindu community. Though this is a private celebration, a carnival organised by the Ram Janmabhumi Trust, the Modi government, obviously at the instructions of the RSS, has been projecting it as a national event. The state governments have been pressured to declare holiday so that Modi's bhakts could watch him performing the inauguration. Certainly, the consecration event could not be an auspicious Hindu religious occasion. This move of RSS clearly implies that it is rewriting the Hindu religion, which suits its agenda of political Hindutva.

In an article posted on the RSS website, Bhagwat referred to the "continuous struggle of the Hindu society" for the construction of the temple in Ayodhya and said the "conflict and bitterness" over the dispute should now come to an end. He also said: "Now, the conflict that has arisen, as for and against the dispute, should be ended. The bitterness that has arisen in the meantime should also end. The enlightened people of society must see that the dispute ends completely. Ayodhya means a city where there is no war, a place free from conflict." In the transformed backdrop, the primary task for the RSS is to replace the word India with Bharat.

(By Arun Srivastava)

EDITORIAL
the indian mail



SAMAJWADI PARTY WORRIED AT RAM MANDIR IMPACT IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN UTTAR PRADESH

Terming the Ram Mandir inauguration as BJP-RSS-VHP event, the opposition parties of Uttar Pradesh have maintained distance from the program. Realising that BJP will take political benefits of the grand event to mobilise Hindu votes during forthcoming Lok Sabha polls, the opposition parties also want to be seen as Ram bhaktas.

Former chief Minister and national President of Samajwadi Party Akhilesh Yadav politely declined the invite to attend the ceremony and said he would visit the temple later on. Few hours before the inauguration of Ram temple, Akhilesh tweeted a couplet which talked about Siyaram. At the same time the SP president is involved in construction of huge temple of Lord Shiva in his hometown Itawah. Akhilesh Yadav too has become very demonstrative regarding his visits to various temples and public display of observing puja and festivals. Samajwadi Party leader is also aware about people's memory of firing on karsewaks at Ayodhya in 1990 to protect Babri Mosque.

CHINA CONTINUES TO POSE A CHALLENGE TO INDIA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMY

India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar may disagree, but the country has failed to use its import trade muscle to improve its diplomatic relations with China. His recent statement on Sino-India relations at a gathering in Nagpur earlier this month that "a strife-torn border and good business can't go together" lacks clarity and goes against the factual position with regard to the country's growing imports from China despite the latter's growing military postures along India's land and maritime borders. The trade with China has been practically one-sided with

India importing more and more from China and exporting less and less due to rigorous Chinese restrictions. India has failed to react. India continues to feed China and its economy with billions of dollars of imports every year helping the Chinese industry and trade keep millions of their people employed at India's cost. This is irrespective of increasing Chinese military threats along India's borders. Even the highly aggressive Chinese armed attacks along the Sino-Indian border, including Pangong Lake site in Ladakh and the Tibet autonomous region, the Galwan river valley and near the border of Sikkim in 2020 did not lead to India's import cut from China. India imported goods worth



US\$65 billion from China during 2020-21. In fact, for reasons best known to the Indian government, imports from China have reached record levels under the Narendra Modi government. During the last 10 years China has substantially raised its military and trade muscles in the broader South Asia region covering all countries surrounding India. They include Iran, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka,

Bangladesh and Myanmar. The new Maldives government has already established close military and diplomatic relationships with China. The latter is also in the process of getting Bhutan, a close ally of India, under its fold. India's latest loss of influence over its tiny neighbour, Maldives, to China should add to its diplomatic concern.



EVEN AFTER NEARLY NINE MONTHS, MANIPUR GOVT FAILS TO RESTORE NORMALCY

Nearly nine months have passed but the ethnic conflict in Manipur continues. The fallout of ethnic clashes has led to Manipur's present maladies which are undeniably man-made. The state which gave birth to a form of dance all its own together with a unique culture, has been in flames since May 3 last year following clashes between Kukis and Meiteis. The fire burning in Manipur for these days is no forest fire. It is a blaze that is burning off and apparently confined to pockets in the state. Continuing violence points to a lack of political will. An obduracy on the part of the powers that be in failing to acknowledge that more needs to be done is for all who care to see.

IMF REPORT ON IMPACT OF AI ON LOW PAYING JOBS UNDERLINES NEED FOR BIG UPGRADE OF SKILLS

A recent report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) claims that technology in the form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is set to affect nearly 40% of all jobs. What is more worrisome is that AI is going to impact the low-skilled jobs, that is, the income of people in the low-income bracket, further accentuating the already skewed income distribution. This may be a cause of concern for a young age-populated country like India. Every year around 10 million people enter the labour market, looking for jobs. Most of these jobs are low-skilled gig-type, and urban construction labour types jobs. This also explains why India, despite being the fifth largest economy (in terms of nominal GDP), continues to rank lowly in terms of per-capita income. Per capita income in India is \$2,200 per year, around 16% of the

world average. India's labour productivity – economic output per hour of work – is just 15% of the US levels. As wage rate and labour productivity are directly related, it is not surprising that a low-productive work force will result in a lower per-capita income. The advancement of technology is going to create problems for further job creation. A closer look at data suggests that in India, gross fixed capital formation is falling. Growth in capital formation has fallen from a high of 17.5% during 2004-2008 to a lowly 8.3%

during 2020-2021. A part of the fall in value of investment has to do with lower input costs. Technology has made sure that inputs come at a cheaper price. This has reduced the cost of private investment. During the last century, technology was complementing India's workforce by making it more productive. Electricity, combustible engines and refrigeration aided economic growth through a more productive labour force. (IPA Service)





South Korea : Nearly 350 flights at Jeju airport canceled due to snow, winds

Seoul, Jan 26 (IANS) : Nearly 350 flights set to land or take off at Jeju International Airport in South Korea have been canceled on Friday due to heavy snow and gusty winds. Around 347 flights -- 176 outbound flights and 171 inbound flights -- were cancelled at the Jeju airport, affecting about 20,000 outbound passengers, a Korea Airports Corp. (KAC) official said over the phone, Yonhap news agency reported. Two flights on international routes -- one bound for Macao and the other bound for Taipei -- sched-

uled to leave the airport at 10:40 p.m. have yet to be cancelled, the official said, adding there remain no planned domestic flights this evening. On Monday, some flights were also cancelled or delayed at the resort island's airport due to heavy snow and strong winds. "Passengers need to check their flight schedules in advance as some of the planned flights at Jeju airport are expected to suffer cancellations or delays until Wednesday morning due to heavy snow and winds," the official said.

Gaza death toll from Israeli attacks rises to 25,490

Gaza, Jan 26 (IANS) : Amid the unabated fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the death toll in the besieged enclave rose to 25,490, the Palestinian Health Ministry said on Friday. At least 195 Palestinians were killed and 354 others wounded in the last 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement, Xinhua news agency reported. "A number of victims are still under the rubble, and ambulances and the civil defense crew cannot reach them," the ministry added. On Monday, the Israeli army intensified its assault on the southern Khan Younis city, storming medical centers and killing dozens of Palestinians.



New Zealand's employment confidence rises but job prospects dimming

Wellington, Jan 26 (IANS) : Even as New Zealand's employment confidence rose in the December quarter, job prospects are dimming, a survey said on Friday. As per Westpac McDermott Miller Employment Confidence Index (ECI), finding and holding a job remain the

biggest concerns for New Zealanders, Xinhua news agency reported. Perceptions about job availability continued to fall in the December quarter, which likely reflects both the decline in vacancies and increased competition for those roles as net inward migration has surged, said Westpac Senior

Economist Michael Gordon. The ECI rose by 1.4 points to 99.7 in the December quarter, which remained down substantially from its peak of 115.2 in the September quarter of 2022. An index number of over 100 indicates that optimists outnumber pessimists. The rise in the ECI this quarter was largely due to a pickup in households' earnings growth over the past year after some very weak readings in the previous two quarters, Gordon said. "We suspect that households remain mindful of the rising cost of living," he said, adding even those who have managed to secure large pay rises may still feel that they are struggling to get ahead. Confidence amongst employees working in the public sector remains stable, and private sector employees have seen a small rise in confidence from last quarter, the survey showed. The survey was conducted in December 2023, with a sample size of 1,550.

Opposition blames 'incompetent' Canadian PM for causing immigration 'mess'

Toronto, Jan 26 (IANS) : Canadian opposition leader Pierre Poilievre has blamed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for making a 'mess' of the country's immigration system, just as Ottawa moved to cap new study permits for international students starting this year. The nation, under Trudeau's leadership, opened its doors to immigrants to replace aging workers and plug labour shortages post Covid, bumping up the country's population. However, the number boom ended up putting a strain on the country's resources, leading to a severe housing shortage, which pushed up rents and the

cost of living across the country. "We had the most successful immigration system in the history of the world here in Canada... And along came Justin Trudeau and through his total incompetence and irresponsibility... destroyed that common sense consensus on immigration," Poilievre said in an interview with Canadian media outlet True North on Friday. The number of international students in Canada crossed the one million mark recently and more than 60,000 of them became permanent residents of the country in 2023, as per the latest immigration data. The nation accepted about 455,000 new permanent residents



in the 12-month period to October 1 while bringing in more than 800,000 non-permanent residents, including temporary workers, students, and refugees. The Conservative Party boss said that immigrants, international students, and temporary foreign workers are not to be blamed for Trudeau's "incompetence". "He (Trudeau) is the one that

caused this mess. He is the one that brought hundreds of thousands of people here without homes, to cram 16 or 17 into a one-bedroom apartment or basement. He is the one that granted the work for the study permits. That is a federal responsibility... So let's not blame the students," the opposition leader said.



New York-bound flight cancelled after passenger spots missing screws on plane's wing

London, Jan 26 (IANS) : Moments before take-off, a New York bound Virgin Atlantic flight from Manchester was cancelled after an alert passenger spotted missing bolts on plane's wing, the media reported. The incident occurred on January 15, when Phil Hardy, 41, who was onboard the flight at Manchester Airport in the UK, noticed four missing fasteners and informed the cabin crew. Engineers were promptly called out to carry out maintenance checks on the Airbus A330 air-

craft before its scheduled takeoff to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, New York Post reported quoting a Virgin Atlantic representative. In a video shared on social media, an engineer can be seen climbing on to the plane's wing and fixing the issue. Though Hardy was repeatedly assured by the airline staff that there was no safety issue, he was panicked as the incident comes days after one of the doors of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 9 MAX blew open mid-air.



Can Nikki Haley give Trump a run for his money in one-of-a-kind NH primary?

New Hampshire, Jan 26 (IANS) : Tensions run high in the camp of ex South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who is putting all her efforts and hopes on moderate conservatives and independents to vote for her in the first in the nation primary ballot for GOP nomination against the former president Donald Trump, whom all polls predict could be outright winner to seal the republican race for 2024. New Hampshire's long-celebrated, first-in-the-nation primary could have the last word on the 2024 Republican nomination battle, media reports said. Voters are preparing to plough through heavy snow fills to trudge

to polling booths as former President Donald Trump is poised for what could be a decisive win over former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley. Notwithstanding the mounting criminal charges and fierce opposition from old-guard Republicans, Trump has built a formidable lead in a Granite State race that has boiled down to a one-on-one contest with the former United Nations ambassador. It's a winner take it all in this state now. Trump's decisive vote in the Iowa caucus edging out rival Florida / Governor Ron DeSantis by a whopping 30-point and Haley by 32 points, has paved the way for what his voters believe his victory

in New Hampshire by a resounding margin over Haley. DeSantis dropped out of the presidential race after his humiliating drubbing in Iowa where he spent a fortune on Ad campaigns hoping to score a win over Trump. The last week has been tumultuous with three ex-challengers - Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, and businessman Vivek Ramaswamy -- all falling by the wayside and endorsing Trump for the GOP's ticket for the 2024 Presidential race to the White House. "They're all coming with us," Trump told supporters Sunday night at the historic opera house in Rochester, N.H.

Death toll in China landslide rises to 20

Beijing, Jan 26 (IANS) : The death toll in the landslide that struck a mountainous village in China's Yunnan province rose to 20, local authorities said on Friday. Around 24 people are still missing, as per local disaster relief headquarters. More than 1,000 rescue workers are carrying out search and rescue work at the site, Xinhua news agency reported. Preliminary investigation by an expert group determined that the disaster resulted from a collapse in the steep cliff area atop the slope, said Wu Junyao, director of the natural resources and planning bureau of Zhaotong. The collapsed mass measured nearly 100 metre in width, 60 metre in height, with an average thickness of around 6 metre, he added.



Sri Lankan central bank keeps policy rates unchanged to control inflation

Colombo, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) has decided to maintain the Standing Deposit Facility Rate and the Standing Lending Facility Rate at their current levels of 9 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, to control inflation at the targeted level of 5 per cent over the medium term, while enabling the economy to reach its potential, its statement said on Friday. The decision was taken on Friday following a comprehensive assessment of domestic and international macroeconomic developments in order, the central bank said in a statement. The board took note of the ef-

fects of the recent developments in taxation and supply-side factors that are likely to pose upside pressures on inflation in the near term. However, the board viewed that the impact of these developments would not materially change the medium term inflation outlook, according to the central bank, it said. The Sri Lankan economy recorded an expansion in the third quarter of 2023, following six consecutive quarters of economic contraction, said the central bank. Sri Lanka increased its interest rates significantly in 2022 to deal with rising inflation. The rates have been reduced several times in 2023.





Additional CAPF personnel to beef up security of central agency officials in Bengal

Kolkata, Jan 26 (IANS) : Following the January 5 attack on ED and CAPF officials at Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, the officials of the different central investigating agencies probing the various scams in the state will get additional Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel for their security during future raid and search operations. Sources said a proposal has been cleared by the Union Home Ministry to allot one additional company of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for the security of central probe agency officials. Currently, a total of two companies of CAPF are allotted for this

purpose. For the time being, sources added, the third company will mainly be kept in reserve. However, sources said that when on a single day, the number of simultaneous raids by the central agencies will be more, the personnel from the reserve company will be included in the escorting team. This is to ensure that not a single team of central agency officials goes for raid and search operations without adequate security cover of CAPF personnel. Already since the attack on January 5, the escorting CAPF personnel have started taking extra precautions while accompanying the central officials. They are going to raid spots with the protection of metal helmets

and cane-shields. Besides carrying automatic firearms, as they used to before, they are now also carrying charge-batons and tear-gas shells that might come handy to disperse a mob or gathering near the raid spots. Meanwhile, even after 18 days since the attack took place, Trinamool Congress leader and the accused mastermind behind the January 5 incident, Sheikh Shahjahan, is still absconding. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has already issued a lookout notice against him in anticipation that he might escape to Bangladesh, whose international borders with India are quite close to the place where the attack took place.

Badal slams Kejriwal, Mann for rejection of Bhullar's plea for premature release

Bathinda, Jan 26 (IANS) : Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President, Sukhbir Badal on Friday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann had committed a heinous crime against humanity by rejecting the premature release plea of Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar, a convict in the 1993 Delhi bomb blast case. Asserting that both Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann had sprinkled salt on the wounds of the Sikhs, the SAD President said, "Prof Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar's premature release plea has been rejected arbitrarily after being put up

before the Delhi Sentence Review Committee seven times in the last five years. This is a violation of Prof Bhullar's human rights." Stating that Mann had also shown his anti-Sikh face in the episode, Badal said the Punjab Government refused to recommend Prof Bhullar's release despite knowing all the facts of the case, including the fact that the detainee's health was precarious. "This is condemnable." Calling upon the Khalsa Panth to recognise those who were working against it, Badal said, "The Panth helped AAP in securing 92 seats but has been betrayed." He said the episode also proved that parties of Delhi did not have

any respect for Sikh sentiments. Meanwhile, the SAD President also visited Rai Ke Kalan Village which has reported more than 250 cattle deaths and interacted with farmers who briefed him that the major reason for the massive number of cattle deaths was the delay in reaction to the crisis by the state Animal Husbandry Department. He announced allocation of Rs 10 lakh from his MPLAD funds for upgradation of the veterinary hospital in the area. He also handed over a letter in this regard to the village panchayat.



Veerappa Moily says it's doubtful Modi fasted for 11 days; K'taka BJP demands apology

Chikkaballapur, (Karnataka) Jan 26 (IANS) : Former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily has stirred a controversy by raising doubts on whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi had fasted for 11 days in the run-up to the inauguration of the Ram mandir in Ayodhya. Speaking to reporters in Chikkaballapur, Moily stated that if one fasts and drinks just tender coconut water, one will collapse in two days. "I have been told that if an 11-day fast is observed it is impossible to be alive. As per the opinion of doctors it is impossible to do, if a person drinks just tender coconut wa-

ter. PM Modi claimed that he was fasting and visited many places during this time. Narendra Modi didn't look like he was fasting," Moily opined. "I have discussed fasting with a doctor. If one fasts for 11 days, it is not possible to be alive. If it happens it would be a miracle. It is doubtful that fasting was observed. If PM Modi had gone to the sanctum sanctorum without observing fasting, the place will lose sanctity," Moily maintained. Modi undertook fasting from January 12 to take part in the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple on January 22 and he ended the fast after the priests inside the sanctum sanctorum offered him 'prasad'. Reacting strongly to the statement,



Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader, R Ashoka, stated on Tuesday in Bengaluru that the Congress leaders were abusing Modi as he hailed from a backward community. "Is this your secularism, socialism, social justice? Is this the respect you give to the Constitution of Babasaheb

Ambekar?" Ashoka questioned. "Former Union Minister Veerappa Moily should issue a public apology immediately. Otherwise, KPCC President, DK Shivakumar must expel him from the party," he demanded.

UP man arrested for raping minor in Gurugram

Gurugram, Jan 26 (IANS) : A 24-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh has been arrested from Kolkata, five months after raping a 12-year-old in Gurugram and fleeing, police said on Friday. Police said that the accused was a security guard at a society in Gurugram where he befriended the minor girl. In August 2023 he raped the victim, abandoned her in the Aravali hill area, and

fled the spot. The matter was reported to the police, and based on a complaint filed by the victim's family, a case was filed against the suspect at Badshahpur Police Station. Acting on the complaint a team of the Police Station led by Inspector Satish Kumar nabbed the accused from Kolkata and took his custody on transit remand after producing him in Kolkata court.



Cleric booked for defrauding 4 dozen people of Rs 50 crore in northeast Delhi

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : A cleric of a mosque in northeast Delhi has been booked by the Delhi Police on charges of cheating over 40 people out of approximately Rs 40-50 crore. A case has been filed against the cleric identified as Zamil Akhtar, his wife Ashma and two others and registered at the Economic Offences Wing Police Station, under Sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code. As per the FIR accessed by IANS, the complainant, Riyazull Hasan Khan, revealed that Zamil Akhtar had been involved in the scrap business for an extended period. Akhtar would purportedly acquire scrap material from companies and subsequently sell it to wholesalers in various

states. Taking advantage of this front, Akhtar and his family allegedly persuaded Khan to invest money in the venture. Riyazull Hasan Khan, believing he was investing his hard-earned money in Akhtar's legitimate business, handed over Rs 9.5 lakh to the accused. In his complaint, Khan stated that Akhtar had previously been active in assisting the Muslim community during the northeast Delhi communal clashes.

Additionally, Akhtar presented himself as the General Secretary of the North East District of the esteemed Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, which contributed to Khan's lack of suspicion regarding Akhtar's intentions.



Delhi HC rejects plea against changes in IIM Director eligibility criteria

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Delhi High Court has dismissed a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging the changes made by the Central government in the eligibility criteria for the appointment of Directors to the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). The PIL was filed by Firoz Ahmad, arguing that the amendments restricted people from applying for the post and that terms like "PhD degree from a distinguished institution" were vague. Previously, the criteria required candidates to be a "distinguished academic with a PhD or equivalent." The changes, brought to the Indian Institutes of Management Rules, 2018, specify that a prospective candidate for the position of IIM Director must have a first-class degree at both the Bachelor's and Master's levels, along with a PhD or an equivalent qualification from a reputed institute.

Anubrata Mondal to be given due respect in Trinamool after being freed : Mamata

Kolkata, Jan 26 (IANS) : Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday gave a clear signal to the party leadership that Anubrata Mondal, who is currently in judicial custody at Delhi's Tihar Jail in connection with the multi-crore cattle smuggling case, should be given his due respect in the party once he is re-

leased. The Chief Minister reportedly gave this message at the party's organisation meeting pertaining to Birbhum district, where Mondal was Trinamool Congress's district chief for over a decade. This was confirmed by actress-turned-politician and three-time Lok Sabha member from Birbhum constituency in the same district Satabdi Roy after emerging from the meeting.





Tesla shares plunge to wipe out \$73 billion in market value

London, Jan 26 (IANS) : Shares in Tesla plunged as much as 11 per cent after the market opened, wiping \$73 billion off the company's market value hours after it warned of slowing growth in electric car sales and an existential threat from Chinese rivals, CNN reported.

In an earnings presentation Wednesday, the world's most valuable automaker said its sales growth this year "may be notably lower" than last as it continued developing the "next-generation" vehicle, likely a lower-priced model. While it reported a sizeable 38 per cent increase in deliveries last year compared with 2022, Tesla had previously targeted a 50 per cent annual growth rate averaged over several years, CNN reported.

Intel reports \$15.4 bn in revenue in Q4, profit reaches \$2.66 bn

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Chip-maker Intel has registered \$15.4 billion in revenue in its fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, up 10 per cent year-over-year (YoY). The full-year revenue was \$54.2 billion, down 14 per cent YoY from \$63.1 billion a year ago. Intel's consumer chips witnessed 33 per cent gains (\$8.8 billion revenue) and the company saw "record performance notebook shipments in the quarter." The company made \$2.66 billion in profit in Q4, up from \$796 million loss in the same period last year.

"We delivered strong Q4 results, surpassing expectations for the fourth consecutive quarter with revenue at the higher end of our guidance," said Pat Gelsinger, Intel CEO. "In 2024, we remain

relentlessly focused on achieving process and product leadership, continuing to build our external foundry business and at-scale global manufacturing, and executing our mission to bring AI everywhere as we drive long-term value for stakeholders," he added. According to David Zinsner, Intel CFO, the company continued to drive operational efficiencies in the fourth quarter, and comfortably achieved its commitment to deliver \$3 billion in cost savings in 2023.

"We expect to unlock further efficiencies in 2024 and beyond as we implement our new internal foundry model, which is designed to drive greater transparency and accountability and higher returns on our owners' capital," Zinsner added.



Akasa Air orders 300 CFM LEAP-1B engines to power 150 Boeing 737 MAX airplanes

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : In conjunction with the state visit of the French President Emmanuel Macron to India, Akasa Air and France origin company, CFM International on Friday announced an agreement to purchase CFM LEAP-1B engines to power 150 Boeing 737 MAX airplanes, the sale of which was announced last week. The agreement also includes spare engines and a services contract. Akasa Air, the Mumbai-based operator launched its operations in August 2022 and had previously ordered a total of 76 LEAP-1B- powered 737-8 aircraft, of which 22 are currently in service. "This significant,

long-term agreement is testament to the confidence that CFM International has in Akasa Air. Continuing to partner with CFM as our engine maintenance provider not only reaffirms our focus on operational reliability but equally underscores Akasa Air's relentless pursuit of world class safety," said Vinay Dube, Founder and CEO of Akasa Air. "With CFM as our long-term engine maintenance provider, we remain confident in our path to becoming one of the top 30 leading airlines in the world, by the turn of this decade," he said. This new order grows CFM's footprint in India, with more than 400 CFM-powered aircraft in service

and 2,500 LEAP engines in the backlog. Both CFM's parent companies GE Aerospace and Safran Aircraft Engines have also significantly invested in India to build state-of-the-art facilities dedicated to LEAP production and maintenance, while signing strategic partnerships with Indian aerospace companies as part of the "Make in India" policy. "Our customers, including Akasa, are seeing 15 to 20 percent better fuel efficiency with their LEAP-powered fleets and it has the highest reliability and daily utilisation rates in this thrust class," said Gael Meheust, president and CEO of CFM International.

Paytm Republic Day Festival offer: Get cashback of up to Rs 500, win an iPhone 15

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : One97 Communications Limited (OCL), that owns the leading payments and financial services company Paytm, on Friday announced an offer with the theme, titled 'Paytm Republic Day Festival'.

With this, users can make eligible payments via Paytm app and collect "Pioneer" themed

stamps to win up to Rs 500 cashback and get a chance to win an iPhone 15. "This Republic Day, we are proud to present a game that celebrates the pioneering moments in the history of India. With the Paytm app, we have enabled superfast and convenient payments for users across the country," said a Paytm spokesperson. To participate in the offer, users

can play an interactive game on the Paytm app celebrating various pioneering moments in the history of India. Users can unlock stamps by using Paytm app for all their payments, such as scanning and paying at nearby shops, paying bills, doing recharges, and more. Additionally, users can also collect stamps by inviting their friends and families to the game.

Upon collecting all 16 stamps, users will earn assured cashback of up to Rs 500 and stand a chance to win an iPhone 15. "With this offer, every eligible transaction made via Paytm app allows users to earn a pioneer-themed stamp, taking them on a historical adventure along with exciting rewards," the Paytm spokesperson added.



Tata partners Airbus to make helicopters as India, France cement ties

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) The Tata Group and France's Airbus have signed an agreement to manufacture H125 helicopters "with a significant indigenous component" as part of the growing defence industrial partnership between the two countries, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said on Friday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron have firmed up a roadmap for defence industrial partnership roadmap that provides for co-development and co-production of key military hardware and facilitate technology collaboration in a range of areas including space, cyberspace and artificial intelligence, Kwatra said.

Apple announces changes to iOS, Safari, App Store ahead of EU DMA Act

San Francisco, Jan 26 (IANS) : Apple has announced changes to iOS, Safari, and the App Store in the European Union in response to the Digital Markets Act (DMA) coming into force in March. For users, the changes include new controls and disclosures, and expanded protections to reduce privacy and security risks the DMA creates, the company said in a statement. The key news is that third-party app stores will be allowed on iOS for the first time. The changes will arrive with iOS 17.4 in March. The changes include more than 600 new APIs, expanded app analytics, functionality for alternative browser engines, and options for processing app payments and distributing iOS apps. Across every change, Apple is introducing new safeguards that reduce - but don't eliminate - new

risks the DMA poses to EU users. With these steps, Apple will continue to deliver the best, most secure experience possible for EU users. "The changes we're announcing comply with the Digital Markets Act's requirements in the European Union, while helping to protect EU users from the unavoidable increased privacy and security threats this regulation brings," said Phil Schiller, Apple Fellow. "Developers can now learn about the new tools and terms available for alternative app distribution and alternative payment processing, new capabilities for alternative browser engines and contactless payments, and more. Importantly, developers can choose to remain on the same business terms in place today if they prefer," he added.



LIC gets RBI approval to acquire 9.99% stake in HDFC Bank

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accorded its approval to LIC for acquiring aggregate holding up to 9.99 per cent of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of HDFC Bank Limited. The approval has been granted with reference to the application submitted by LIC to RBI. The aforesaid approval granted by RBI is subject to the conditions mentioned therein, includ-

ing compliance with the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, RBI's Master Direction and Guidelines on Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights in Banking Companies dated January 16, 2023 (as amended from time to time), provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, provisions of the regulations issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India,

and any other guidelines, regulations and statutes as applicable. LIC has been advised by RBI to acquire the aforesaid major shareholding in the Bank within a period of one year, i.e., by January 24, 2025. Further, LIC must ensure that the aggregate holding in the Bank does not exceed 9.99 per cent of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the Bank at all times.

Lina Khan-led FTC probing Microsoft, Google investments into GenAI companies

San Francisco, Jan 26 (IANS): The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued orders to five Big Tech companies, including Microsoft and Google, requiring them to provide information regarding recent investments and partnerships involving generative AI companies like OpenAI and Anthropic. The agency will scrutinise corporate partnerships and investments with AI providers to build a better internal understanding of these relationships.



CAR embodies NEP's vision across 2764 schools

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Classmate, India's leading notebook brand, on Friday organised the annual Classmate All Rounder (CAR) National Grand Finale in Delhi. Bringing alive the government's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Classmate All Rounder was conceived and designed as a multi-skill inter-school challenge and a credible accreditation platform for holistic skill development of students. Joseph Emmanuel, Director of Academics, CBSE, graced the event as the chief guest. Saina Nehwal, Swanand Kirkire and Sangeeta Phogat also participated in the event. Classmate Allrounder aims to nurture students toward versatile skill development beyond academics. The CAR Platform serves as a nurturing ground for school students to showcase multiple skills including general knowledge.

Ajit Pawar orders BMC to secure areas facing landslide risks in Mumbai

Mumbai, Jan 26 (IANS) : Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to secure areas in Mumbai suburbs which are at risk of potential landslides/hillslides. There are several disaster-prone areas in Chembur, Ghatkopar, Bhandup, Powai and other suburbs for which the BMC should immediately construct protective walls for

the safety of citizens living in the vicinity, he said, while chairing a meeting of the Relief & Rehabilitation Ministry along with top officers where he took a review of the situation in such risk-prone zones in the country's commercial capital. Earlier, the IIT-Bombay has conducted a survey of all such dangerous spots in Mumbai suburbs for the state Disaster Management Department and a list has been prepared by the authorities. "Many citizens live in such dan-

gerous places. It is necessary to take priority measures to avoid accidents, loss of life and money in such dangerous places. For this, the BMC should prioritise the construction of protective walls and other necessary measures in these areas," said Ajit Pawar. The Deputy CM also directed the officials concerned that as soon as the disaster relief funds are received from the Centre.



CMFRI to offer lessons on marine biodiversity and environment

Kochi, Jan 26 (IANS) : The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is set to offer lessons on marine biodiversity and environment to postgraduate students, researchers, and academicians, recognising its crucial role for ensuring the health of oceans for the well-being of future generations.

A five-day training course on Know Your Marine Biodiversity and Environment (MARBIE) will be held from February 5 to 9 at the institute. It will offer a deeper understanding on marine biodiversity, taxonomy, ecosystem functions, and environmental challenges, and develop skills and tools for assessing, manag-

ing and conserving marine resources. A range of topics, including coral reef diversity, marine mammal conservation, marine fish identification, mapping spatial distribution of marine resources, marine environmental quality assessment, sea turtle conservation, and tackling marine debris, will be included. Hands-on practical sessions and field visits will also be offered at the programme. CMFRI director Dr A. Gopalakrishnan said in the face of mounting threats, including climate change and pollution, understanding and protecting marine biodiversity is crucial in ensuring global food security and mitigating climate change.

Govt to invest Rs 1.25 lakh crore to build 200 ropeway projects : Gadkari

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, said on Friday that the government has identified more than 200 projects at a cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore to be taken up in the next five years under the National Ropeways Development Programme, 'Parvatmala Pariyojana'. Addressing the 'Ropeway: Symposium-Cum-Exhibition' here, the minister said, "Our foremost priority should be to make ropeways economically viable by bringing down the overall project cost and en-

courage public private partnership to develop the ropeway network in the country." He said apart from facilitating tourism in the hilly areas, ropeways offer huge potential in urban public transport as well. The focus should be on developing indigenous and cost-efficient solutions without compromising safety. The highlights of the day were the award of two ropeway projects -- Bijli Mahadev Ropeway Project in Himachal Pradesh, and Dhosi Hill Ropeway Project in Haryana. An MoU was also signed at the event by NHLML and IIT Roorkee for creating a centre of

excellence for ropeways and other innovative alternative mobility systems. Gadkari said the priority is to bring standardisation of existing policies and codes and transform the ropeway industry by encouraging the manufacturing of ropeway components under the 'Make in India' initiative. The minister said 60 per cent construction support is provided under Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) for ropeways as compared to 40 per cent support provided under National Highways to attract more private players for development of ropeways under 'Parvatmala Pariyojana'. The objective of the symposium-



cum-exhibition is to enable industry collaborations between various Indian and global manufacturers, technology providers, concessionaires and infrastructure develop-

ers. The event also provided a common platform for industry deliberation to promote 'Make in India' and develop a roadmap for localisation of ropeway compo-

nents. Various panel discussions with industry experts were also held on building safer and affordable ropeway systems.



Lawyer hurls shoe at judge inside courtroom in MP

Bhopal, Jan 26 (IANS) : A lawyer allegedly hurled a shoe targeting the judge inside a courtroom in Madhya Pradesh's Agar district. The judge, however, escaped by bending down in time. The incident took place at a court in Agar district on Friday when the judge was hearing a case, the police said. Meanwhile, the two advocates representing the two different parties got involved in a heated argument, which the judge objected to. This enraged advocate Nitin Atal, who was already engaged in a verbal argument with his opponent, who all of a sudden took out his shoe and threw it towards the judge. The judge, how-

ever, bent down in time to save himself. The judge later informed the local police about the incident and a case has been registered against Nitin Atal. "The accused has been booked under Sections 332, 353, 294 and 504 of the IPC," a police officer said. The accused lawyer, however, is yet to get arrested. The police said a search operation has been initiated to nab the accused. Agar District Collector and SP had reached to court upon knowing the incident. Nitin Atal, who practises at the Agar and Shajapur district court, had reportedly indulged in fights with layers and judges earlier too.

SC stays Gujarat HC order sentencing policemen to 14-day jail for public flogging

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Friday stayed till further orders the decision of the Gujarat High Court sentencing four police officials to a 14-day jail term and imposing a fine of Rs 2,000 each for their involvement in flogging of several men belonging to a particular community. Hearing an appeal filed by the convicted officials, a Bench presided over by Justice BR Gavai of the apex court extended the stay already put by the High Court on the execution of the sentence. In its October 2023 order, the High Court had convicted the

four officials in contempt for breaching the Supreme Court guidelines on arrest as outlined in the DK Basu case. However, it had suspended the execution of the sentence for three months to allow the convicted police officials to file an appeal. A Division Bench of Justices AS Supehia and Gita Gopi of the HC denounced the act as "inhuman" and a stark violation of human rights. The case stems from an incident on October 3, 2022, where a sizable crowd allegedly disrupted a religious event at Undhela Village of Kheda District.



Come up with earliest possible date for Chandigarh mayoral poll : High Court

Chandigarh, Jan 26 (IANS) : Acting tough, the Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday directed the Chandigarh administration to come up with the earliest possible date for holding the mayoral poll in place of already decided date of February 6. A division bench of Justices Sudhir Singh and Harsh Bunker gave the direction while hearing a petition challenging an order of the Deputy Commissioner for postponing the election from January 18 to February 6. The bench also took on record replies filed by the administration and the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation and adjourned the mat-

ter to Friday. The court was hearing a petition filed by AAP councillor Kuldeep Kumar, who challenged the order to postpone the poll. The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation mayoral election was postponed on January 18 as presiding officer Anil Masih was unwell. The administration announced the election to the posts of Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor, and Deputy Mayor would be held on February 6. "This decision follows a thorough assessment of the security and law and order situation by the Senior Superintendent of Police," the administration had said in a statement while deferring the polls.



Turkish Parliament approves Sweden's NATO bid

Ankara, Jan 26 (IANS) : Turkish lawmakers have approved a long-delayed bill on Sweden's bid to become the 32nd member of NATO. The Turkish Parliament on Friday voted on the bill after a debate in the Grand National Assembly. A total of 346 lawmakers participated in the voting, with 287 votes in favour, 55 against, and four abstentions, Xinhua news agency reported.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected to sign the bill into law within a few days. Turkish Parliament's ratification was welcomed by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. "Today we are one step closer to becoming a full member of NATO," he wrote on social media platform X. With Turkey's ratification, Hungary remains the only NATO member country that hasn't approved Sweden's application to join the military alliance. Sweden and Finland applied to join NATO after Russia launched its military campaign in Ukraine in 2022. Their accession requires the unanimous approval of all members of NATO.

Yemen's Houthis ask UN staff from US, UK to leave in 1 month



Sanaa, Jan 26 (IANS) : Yemen's Houthi group has reportedly asked UN workers from the US and the UK to leave the areas under its control in a month. An official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said on Friday that the Houthis told UN agencies that their American and British staff were unwelcome and should

not return to the Houthi-held territory, Xinhua news agency reported. According to local media, there are more than 20 American and British nationals working for the UN in the Houthi-controlled areas. The request came amid rising tensions between the US and British forces stationed in the Red Sea

and Houthis, who have been attacking "Israeli-linked ships" in the region since the onset of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, 2023, to show solidarity with the Palestinians. The US-UK maritime coalition in the Red Sea has carried out several airstrikes on Houthi camps in various northern provinces of Yemen. It said these actions are aimed at preventing further Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea shipping lane. The Houthi group vowed to continue targeting ships linked to Israel in the Red Sea until Israel ends its attacks and blockade on the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian territory. Last week, the US redesignated the Houthi group as a "terrorist organisation" and said the move would not affect food and medicine supplies to northern Yemen.

Qatar launches new peace initiatives, claims to have ears of Israel and Hamas

Abu Dhabi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Qatar, the chief negotiator in the Israel-Hamas war, has said it is getting replies from both Israel and the Hamas as it engages in serious discussions with them to find a new solution to end the war that includes a two-state formula. The war has so far killed over 20,000 Palestinians and 2,000 Israeli soldiers in a span of over 100 days. Qatar said it's engaged in "serious discussions" with Israel and Hamas and is receiving "constant replies" from both sides. But statements made by Israeli officials "lead to a harder mediation process", Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Majed Al-Ansari, said in a news conference on Friday. "Obviously, when one side says they don't accept the two state-solution and that

they won't stop this war eventually... it leads to a harder mediation process," Al-Ansari pointed out. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected global calls, including from the US, for Palestinian sovereignty following talks with US President Joe Biden about Gaza's future, suggesting Israel's security needs would be incompatible with Palestinian statehood. Communication breakdown and the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza has impacted the talks from yielding results, media reports said. But mediation is in full swing with Qatar exchanging ideas between both sides, Al-Ansari said. "Our negotiators are working around the clock to exchange these ideas, a lot of these media reports are either missing elements or completely false," he said in response to news reports that Israel offered a two-month ceasefire to Hamas as part of a



prospective hostage deal. Meanwhile, the situation around the Khan Younis hospitals is deteriorating amid intense shelling, the United Nations said. The UN says that the situation at hospitals in the Khan Younis area of southern Gaza has deteriorated as Israeli military operations in the area have expanded, CNN reported from Gaza. "Reportedly, Israeli forces struck the vicinity of Al-Amal hospital and the ambulance headquarters, as intense fighting continued in the area, including dozens of casualties," the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Tuesday, adding

that it estimated that "13,000 displaced people who have taken shelter in Al Amal hospital and the PRCS [Palestinian Red Crescent Society] headquarters were unable to leave". OCHA cited humanitarian partners as saying that people in the vicinity and in the Al Kheir area east of Al Mawasi had lost access to the health facility, reports said. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) claimed that it had surrounded Khan Younis and instructed civilians to leave several districts and move towards the coast, which it described as "safer".

282 drug abusers undergoing de-addiction treatment in Punjab : IGP

Chandigarh, Jan 26 (IANS) : Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sukhchain Singh Gill on Friday said that at least 282 drug abusers are currently undergoing de-addiction treatment across the state. "In just 20 days, the court has confirmed 237 cases where the order has been passed under Section 64-A of the NDPS act, and 282 drug users have been undergoing the treatment of de-addiction and rehabilitation," he said. He said that the government has enforced a three-pronged strategy - enforcement, prevention and rehabilitation -- to eradicate drugs from the state.

He said that Punjab Police has been promoting and creating awareness about section 64-A of the NDPS act, which provides an opportunity to a drug consumer, caught with a few grams of heroin or narcotic powder, for rehabilitation. "Crackdown against big drug smugglers is also ongoing, with the police arresting 141 drug smugglers and suppliers, including 31 big fish, after registering 109 first information reports (FIRs) in the last week, and recovering 19.4 kg heroin, 8.3 kg opium, 25.23 quintals poppy husk, and 4,201 tablets, capsules, injections and vials of pharma opioids.



US strikes 'Iranian-backed' militia targets in Iraq

Washington, Jan 26 (IANS) : US forces have conducted strikes against facilities used by an "Iranian-backed" militia group in Iraq, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) has said. CENTCOM said in a post on X that the strikes were carried out at 12:15 a.m. Friday Iraq time, targeting three facilities used by the Kataib Hezbollah (KH) militia group and other Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq. The strikes were in response to KH's recent attacks, including the attack on al-Asad Airbase in western Iraq on Jan. 20, CENTCOM was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying. "These strikes targeted KH headquarters, storage, and training locations for rocket, missile, and one-way attack (unmanned aerial vehicle) capabilities," the command said.

CUET-UG exam : NTA assures Delhi HC on uploading final answer key before result declaration

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : The National Testing Agency (NTA) has assured the Delhi High Court that in the future the final answer key for the Central University Entrance Test (CUET-UG) exam will be uploaded on its website at least a day before the final declaration of results. Justice C. Hari Shankar was hearing a case involving two pleas filed by a candidate who appeared in the CUET (UG) 2022 examination, seeking direction for NTA to publish the final answer key, reconsider objections raised, and publish a corrected scorecard. The assurance was provided to the judge, who was also assured that the final an-

swer key would only be accessible through the individual login ID and password of the respective candidate. NTA assured the court that any consideration of objections to the provisional answer key would only be undertaken before the final result of the CUET examination. The court expressed satisfaction with the explanation and directed NTA to scrupulously adhere to these assurances in the future. The Additional Solicitor General, Chetan Sharma, representing NTA submitted that the re-examination of answer keys after the final results was undertaken in good faith.



16 school van drivers booked on drunk & driving charges in Bengaluru

Bengaluru, Jan 26 (IANS) : In a special drive, the Bengaluru Traffic police filed cases against 16 school vehicles ferrying children in Bengaluru city on Friday after their drivers did not pass the breathalyser test. The special drive was taken up in various parts of Bengaluru city between 7 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. As many 3,414 vehicles were stopped and drivers were subjected to the drink and drive test. During the test, 16 drivers of school buses, vans and other vehicles ferrying children to schools were found to be in an inebriated state. The cases have been filed in this regard and the traffic police have recommended the RTO to seize the driving licenses of these drivers.

Yogi gov integrates 100,000 CCTV cameras for enhanced citizen safety

Lucknow, Jan 26 (IANS) : In a significant move aimed at enhancing the safety and security of citizens, with a particular focus on women, children, and the elderly in Uttar Pradesh, the Urban Development Department, in collaboration with the Home Department, has successfully implemented a network of 100,000 CCTV cameras. As part of the Smart City Mission, a total of 100,000 CCTV cameras have been installed in 17 municipal corporations and Gautam Buddha Nagar as well as integrated under the Safe City Project, maintaining continuous surveillance of these cities around the clock. Amrit Abhijat, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, said that



the Safe City project in Uttar Pradesh is an important example of the Smart City Mission, which is not only improving the infrastructure of the state, but also ensuring the safety of the city residents. Abhijat expressed confidence that the Safe City project would play a pivotal role in establishing the state as the safest in the country. Under this initiative, all cameras are centrally monitored from the Smart City's Integrated Command and Control Centre and Integrated Traffic Management System. This centralised monitor-

ing facilitates real-time responses to incidents, bolstering the overall security systems of cities. Notably, the implementation of this initiative gained heightened importance with the influx of thousands of devotees to Ayodhya following the historic Pran Pratistha ceremony. The Safe City project is designed to guarantee a secure and pleasant experience for devotees, underscoring a broader commitment to safeguarding citizens throughout the state.



Cong high command not taking our suggestions on various appointments : K'taka Home Min

Bengaluru, Jan 26 (IANS) : Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Friday expressed his dismay against the party high command for not taking his suggestions into consideration over appointments of presidents and vice-presidents for boards and corporations. "No one has sought our opinion with regards to the appointments of presidents and vice-presidents for the boards and corporations. I was asked to provide a few names and I gave it to the party high command but no meeting has been called or opinions sought when the list was finalised," Parameshwara told media persons. The Home Minister also targeted Congress General Secretaries Randeep Singh Surjewala and K.C. Venugopal. "We better ideas of district level leaders and their contributions. The selection has to be made by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister.



Madras HC asks TN Assembly Secretariat to respond by March 11 on plea for live streaming

Chennai, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Madras High Court on Friday asked the Tamil Nadu Assembly Secretariat to respond, by March 11, on a plea seeking the live streaming of Assembly proceedings. The court asked whether the Assembly Secretariat could live stream the proceedings with a time lag of five to ten minutes. A bench of Chief Justice Sanjay V.Gangapurwala and Justice Bharatha Chakravarthy said that when the Parliament proceedings were being live streamed, why was the Tamil Nadu Assembly Secretariat not doing that. The court was responding to a writ petition filed by DMDK leader and filmstar Vijayakant (now deceased) of 2015 and another writ petition filed by AIADMK leader S.P. Velumani filed in 2023.

Senior counsel Vijay Narayan, representing Velumani, said that the Assembly secretariat was blacking out issues raised by the opposition in the Assembly when the live streaming was taking place, while the DMDK responded that a new litigant would take the place of the deceased Vijayakant. Advocate General P.S. Raman, in his deposition before the court, said that the proceedings were being live streamed but on occasions, the Speaker expunges certain unsavoury remarks from the records. At this, Chief Justice Gangapurwala asked the AG that if such unsavoury remarks were streamlined live, it would go against the member concerned. He also asked if the Assembly Secretariat could delay the proceedings by five to ten minutes.

Man arrested at Delhi airport, impersonation scam exposed

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : A man was caught by immigration officials at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport, who has been allegedly accused of orchestrating an elaborate impersonation scheme to cheat authorities for monetary gains. The incident came to light during arrival immigration clearance on January 26. The FIR accessed by IANS said that Vijai Mohandoss, a resident of Mangaluru, Tamil Nadu, arrived on flight from Birmingham with a passport issued on November 8 2023. However, discrepancies were noticed when officials cross-checked his travel history. According to immigration

records, Vijai had previously departed from India on January 17, 2020 using a different passport and later on March 10, 2021 from Bangalore using the same passport. Oddly, the camera image associated with the March 10, 2021 departure did not match the person who appeared on January 19, 2024. Further investigation revealed that the passport used for the departure on March 10, 2021 was reported lost as per the Directorate of Registration and Immigration, Legal, and Statistics (DRILS) status on November 8, 2023. This raised suspicions that someone had posed as an imposter during the departure from Bangalore. "Besides, there is no corresponding arrival record available in our UCF (Unique Case File)



against the departure record dated 17/01/2020. It is pertinent to mention here in order to have monetary gain or otherwise, the pax, as mentioned above, sent his passport through courier or the other modes deemed fit to other Indian national residing in India to seek the departure immigration clearance from Bangalore on 10.03.2021 posing an imposter," read the FIR. It is alleged that Vijai Mohandoss, for monetary gain or other motives, sent his passport through courier or other means to an individual residing in India.

Jitan Manjhi claims Nitish meeting Guv could be part of ploy to overthrow Bihar govt

Patna, Jan 26 (IANS) : After Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arleker on Friday, former Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi claimed that the meeting could be part of a ploy to overthrow the Bihar government. "I am repeatedly saying that Nitish Kumar may play the 'game' between January 20 and 26 and the meeting with the Governor could be a part of it. He went with Vijay Chaudhary, which is an indication that political talks were on the cards with the Bihar Governor.



Cong revokes suspension of Mohammed Moquim, Chiranjib Biswal

Bhubaneswar, Jan 26 (IANS) : The Congress party on Friday revoked the suspension of three senior leaders including Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim and former MLA Chiranjib Biswal. Similarly, the suspension of former Legislator Krushna Chandra Sagaria has also been revoked by the party. Speaking to media persons, Congress Odisha incharge Ajoy Kumar said that the suspen-

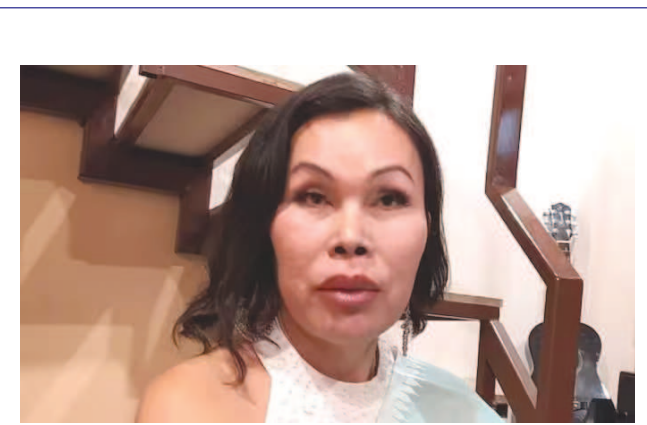
sion order against Moquim, Biswal and Sagaria had been withdrawn following their letters to the party President in this regard. He also urged others who had left the Congress to rejoin the party. Kumar stated that the party is ready to welcome them if they show interest in joining it. Earlier, Biswal and Moquim had met Kumar at the state guest house on Friday and held discussions.

Hindu religion is not BJP's private property: Shivakumar

Bengaluru, Jan 26 (IANS) : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar alleged on Friday that the BJP is politicising religion, adding that Lord Ram is not the property of the saffron party. Speaking in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said, "The BJP is playing politics with religion. There should be dharma in politics, but not the other way round. There is Ram in Siddaramaiah, Shiva in Shivakumar, Hari in Hariprasad and Krishna in Krishna Byregowda's names. Hindu religion is not BJP's private property," he said. "Our government has been giving equal importance to the Muzrai department, Haj Committee and Minority Welfare department. The BJP was in power, why did it not take up people-centric programmes? "The five guarantee schemes are benefitting people from all castes and creeds. We had a government with the JD-S. Now, they have joined hands with the same people who brought down that govern-



ment," he said. Asked about BJP leaders' criticism about the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister raising 'Jai Sri Ram' chants, he said, "Is Sri Ram their personal property? Ram belongs to everyone. They are spreading lies to project Congress as anti-Hindu. The Muzrai department under the leadership of Ramalinga Reddy has taken up special poojas in all the temples and the BJP can't digest this."



Manipur trans community expresses outrage over underrepresentation in electoral rolls

Imphal, Jan 26 (IANS) : The transgender community in Manipur has raised strong objections to the inclusion of only 239 of its members in the state's final electoral rolls, asserting that this figure significantly underrepresents their actual population. Santa Khurai, a trans activist and secretary of the All Manipur Nupi Manbi (trans-women) Association (AMANA), emphasised that the adult trans population in the state already exceeds 4,000. The final electoral rolls, released by Manipur Chief Electoral Officer Pradeep Kumar Jha, reported that out of the total of 20,26,623 electors, including 10,46,706 females, only 239 individuals identified as third gender or transgender. Expressing disbelief at the "remarkably" low figure, Khurai, also a researcher and writer, said: "We are stunned to see the terribly small number of just 239 third-gender voters in the final electoral rolls." An official of the state Election Commission acknowledged the challenge of identifying the third gender for inclusion in the rolls but affirmed that corrective measures could be taken to rectify the gender status.

Police registers case against 26 accused related to Vadodara unrest

Ahmedabad, Jan 26 (IANS) : Vadodara Police in Gujarat have registered a case against 26 persons, 16 of whom have been identified, in connection with Vadodara unrest. On Friday, the incident took place at Bhoj village under Padra taluka of the district during a Shobha Yatra, which was being taken out to celebrate the Pran Pratishtha of Lord Ram's idol in Ayodhya's Ram temple. Tensions escalated when a group allegedly hurled stones at the participants, resulting in injuries to eight persons. "Despite a rigorous combing operation by the Vadodara City Rural Special Operations Group (SOG), Local Crime Branch (LCB) teams, and Vadu Police, the accused remain at large," police said. Police has identified the injured as: Pritiben Veersang, Amritben Budhabhai, Anitaben Bharatbhai Patel, Soham Bharatbhai Patel.



JLF 2024: 550 writers, speakers, performers to represent 16 Indian, 8 foreign languages

Jaipur, Jan 26 (IANS) : Jaipur Literature Festival 2024, the literary extravaganza, will see over 550 writers, speakers, and performers representing 16 Indian and 8 international languages. The Indian languages include Assamese, Awadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Kurukh, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Tamil, Toda, Urdu, and the Banjara language – Lamani (Lambada). The Festival will feature some of the greatest literary minds this season, including Aarathi Prasad, National Geographic's Regional Manager for Europe and Western Asia, an Honorary Research Fellow in Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College London, and author of Silk: A History in Three Metamorphoses; Ajay Jadeja, former India cricketer and commentator; Anand Neelakantan, author of the blockbuster 'Bahubali' trilogy, 'Asura: Tale of the Vanquished', and the Ajaya series among others; Anjan Sundaram, award-winning author of 'Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship' and 'Stringer: A Reporter's Journey in the Congo', journalist and television presenter; Ben Macintyre, author of 14 non-fiction history books, including 'Operation Mincemeat', 'A Spy Amongst Friends', 'SAS: Rogue Heroes', and most recently, 'Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle', all of which have been Sunday Times bestsellers; Bonnie Garmus, novelist, copy-



writer, and creative director; Jan Michalski Prize for Literature-winning author Georgi Gospodinov; Gopal Krishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, author of the latest 'I Am an Ordinary Man: India's Struggle for Freedom' (1914-1948) and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi; Hernan Diaz, Pulitzer Prize-winning and New York Times bestselling author of 'Trust and In the Distance'; Jonathan Freedland, columnist, Orwell Prize-winning journalist, and author of 12 books, including 'The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World'; Katherine Rundell, author of 'Super-Infinite' (which won the Baillie Gifford Prize), and 'The Golden Mole' and 'Other Vanishing Treasure', both Sunday Times bestsellers; Katie Kitamura, award-winning author of the recent novel, 'Intimacies'; Nicholas Shakespeare, prize-winning British novelist of the recent and critically acclaimed biography of Ian Fleming; Sital Kalantry, law professor and writer of 'Court on Trial'; Sonora Jha, professor of journalism and author of 'The Laughter and Foreign' (finalist for the Shakti Bhatt Prize, the Hindu Prize and long listed for the DSC Prize).



21 Israeli soldiers killed in single attack in Gaza

Tel Aviv, Jan 26 (IANS) : At least 21 Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza while fighting Hamas, the Israel Defense Forces said on Friday. Addressing a press briefing, IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said soldiers were preparing explosives to demolish two buildings when militants launched a rocket-propelled grenade at a nearby tank on Friday, triggering a premature explosion that resulted in the collapse of the buildings while the soldiers were either

inside or nearby, Xinhua news agency reported. Offering condolences to the families of the soldiers who died, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted on X: "I wish to strengthen the dear families of our heroic warriors who fell on the battlefield. I know that for these families, their lives will be changed forever. Prime Minister Netanyahu said the military has launched an investigation into the incident.

Indian-origin couple convicted in US for forced labour, physical abuse of kin

New York, Jan 26 (IANS) : An Indian-origin Sikh couple has been convicted in the US for forcing a relative to work at their store for long hours, subjecting him to physical abuse and threats for years and confiscating his immigration documents. Harmanpreet Singh, 30, and Kulbir Kaur, 43, from Richmond, Virginia, enticed the victim -- then a minor -- to travel to the United States with false promises of helping him enrol in a school. After he arrived in the US, they took the victim's immigration documents and immediately put him to work, a Department of Justice release stated on Friday. On three different occasions, they threatened the victim -- Singh's cousin -- with a revolver for trying to take a day off and for trying to leave.

Following a two-week-long trial, a federal jury in the Eastern District of Virginia on Friday convicted the couple of committing forced labour, harbouring for financial gain, and document servitude in connection with their operation of a gas station and convenience store in North Chesterfield. The evidence presented at trial demonstrated that, between March 2018 and May 2021, the couple forced the victim to provide labour and services at their store, including working as the cashier, preparing food, cleaning, and managing store records. Singh and Kaur used various coercive means, including confiscating the victim's immigration documents and subjecting him to physical abuse, threats of force, and other serious harm and, at times, degrading living conditions to compel him to work extensive hours for minimal pay.



"These defendants engaged in an egregious bait-and-switch, luring the victim with false promises of an education in the United States and instead subjecting him to grueling hours, degrading living conditions, and a litany of mental and physical abuse," said US Attorney Jessica D Aber for the Eastern District of Virginia. The jury heard that the victim was left at the store to sleep in a back office for days at a time on multiple occasions. The couple limited his access to food, refused to provide medical care or education, and used surveillance equipment to monitor the victim -- both at the store and in their home.

In addition, they refused his requests to return to India and made him overstay his visa. The evidence further showed that Singh pulled the victim's hair, slapped and kicked him when he requested his immigration documents back, and tried to leave. "The defendants exploited the victim's trust and his desire to attend school in the United States, and then inflicted physical and mental abuse against him, all so they could keep him working for their profit," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.



'Scapegoated': Advocacy groups slam Canadian cap on international students

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Migrant and student advocacy groups in Canada have slammed a two-year cap on new study permits for international students, saying that immigrants are being "scapegoated" for the country's aggravating housing crisis. The cap, announced by Immigration Minister Marc Miller on Friday, is expected to result in approximately 3,60,000 approved study per-

mits this year -- a 35 per cent reduction from 2023. The government crackdown comes as the number of international students in Canada crossed over a million, nearly three times what it was 10 years back, reportedly leading to accommodation shortages, high rentals, and a rise in the cost of living across the country. According to Migrant Workers Alliance, a Canada-based advocacy group, International students and migrants "need rights,

not caps". "All of us in Canada are facing overwhelming bills and exorbitant rent because of price-hikes, failures of government policy, and runaway profiteering. And yet it is immigrants who are being scapegoated," said Sarom Rho from the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change. "Housing prices went up even when the border was closed during COVID-19. Capping immigration is not a solution, prices will remain high, and all today's announcement does is cede to racist ideas and hurt working-class people and their families." According to Statscan, nationwide rents rose to 7.7 per cent in the country in December, 2023. Expressing concern over the cap, Universities Canada said in a statement that the new process could mean prospective students choose other countries to pursue higher education. "We are concerned that the cap per province is going to add stress on an already stressed system and until more information is provided as to how each province will be rolling out this new program, it is difficult to comment on its effect on Canada's universities," the

group said in a statement published on Global News. Miller further said that from September, Canada will no longer issue post-graduate work permits (PGWPs) to students studying under curriculum licensing arrangements, stating that these programmes are notorious for lacking oversight and do not provide quality academic experience. "This does not fix the failures of the massive expansion of such get-rich institutions to which recruiters will continue to funnel vulnerable students. There must be a single system in which schools that are eligible for study permits should also be eligible for post-graduate work permits., If the school is not good enough for a post-graduate work permit, it simply should be closed down," the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change said in a statement. A PGWP allows one to remain in Canada and work full-time upon completion of a certificate, diploma, or degree programme that is at least eight months in length. Valid for between eight months to three years, they allow the holder to work for any employer, for as many hours as they wish, anywhere in Canada. In addition to the two-year cap, Miller also announced that in the week ahead families of international students who are not in graduate-level studies will be banned from being in the country. "This is cruel mass family separation. It must be reversed," Rho said. Steven Meurrens, a Canadian immigration consultant, said the country is aligning with the UK by narrowing open work permit eligibility for spouses of international students "only" to those in master's and doctoral programs.



Japan's bullet train service partly suspended

Tokyo, Jan 26 (IANS) : Shinkansen bullet train services between Tokyo and stations in central and eastern Japan have been suspended on Friday, local media reported. The East Japan Railway Company said: "The lines are suspended between Tokyo to Sendai, Tokyo to Niigata, and Tokyo to Nagano since 10.00 a.m.," NHK reported. The suspension was caused due to power outage, the company said.

UN chief warns of spillover of war in Gaza



United Nations, Jan 26 (IANS) : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned of the spillover risks of the war in Gaza. War and misery in Gaza are fueling turmoil far beyond, he told a high-level open debate of the Security Council on the Middle East on Friday, including the Palestinian question. "We are seeing dangerous developments across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where tensions are off the charts, with a dramatic increase in casualties," he was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency.

Dozens of Palestinians are being arrested daily. Over 6,000 Palestinians were detained since Oct. 7, with many subsequently released. Settler violence is also another major concern. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned houses and other structures continue, he noted. The Palestinian economy is in crisis. Israel's withholding of a significant portion of Palestinian tax revenues, the continued prohibition on nearly all Palestinian workers entering Israel since October 7, and severe movement and access restrictions across the West

Bank are all contributing to soaring unemployment and poverty, he said. The risks of broader regional escalation are now becoming a reality, warned Guterres. Daily exchanges of fire across the Israeli-Lebanese border, including strikes on civilian areas, have killed six Israelis and 25 Lebanese civilians and driven tens of thousands from their homes on both sides, he said. "The risk of miscalculation is dangerously high. I urge all parties to refrain from aggressive rhetoric, and to immediately end activities that could further inflame tensions." The situation in the Red Sea is also deeply worrying, said the UN chief. Houthi attacks are disrupting global trade. These have been followed by airstrikes by the United States and Britain on Houthi positions in Yemen, he noted. "De-escalation is essential, and all attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea must cease immediately."



Oxford University ends ties with TCS citing 'technical glitches' in online admission tests : Report

London, Jan 26 (IANS) : The University of Oxford has terminated its partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) following a detailed analysis of technical problems experienced by students taking online admission tests in 2023, according to media reports. Last year, TCS had entered into a partnership with the renowned university to administer online tests at its affiliated test centres. Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor Martin Williams addressed the issue in a letter to teachers and exam officers, saying that the university has conducted a thorough investigation into the issues to better understand how and why they occurred, media reports said. The decision has subsequently been taken to end our relationship with TCS, Williams added.

New Zealand to send defence team to Red Sea to protect shipping

Wellington, Jan 26 (IANS) : New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon on Friday said that his government will be sending a small defence team to the Middle East to safeguard Red Sea shipping, the media reported. The country will be deploying a six-member New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) team to uphold maritime security in the Red Sea to ensure global trade, Prime Minister Luxon said, Xinhua news agency reported. "This deployment, as part of an international coalition, is a continuation of New Zealand's long history of defending freedom of navigation both in the Middle East and closer to home," Luxon said. Almost 15 per cent of global trade goes through the Red Sea, and the Houthi attacks are driving costs higher for exporters and causing delays to shipments, he said. Houthi attacks against commercial and naval shipping are illegal, unacceptable and profoundly destabilising, he said, adding the deployed team will contribute to the collective self-defence of ships in the Middle East. No NZDF personnel or ship will enter Yemen, said the prime minister, adding it is part of a continuous New Zealand defence contribution to maritime security in the Middle East since 2013.





Glimpses of 75th Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi on January 26, 2024.



40-yr efforts to reduce human-elephant conflict recognised, Assam's 'Elephant Girl' gets Padma Shri

Guwahati, Jan 26 (IANS) : Popularly known as 'Elephant Girl' (Hasti Kanya) in Assam, 67-year-old Parwati Baruah, whose name was announced for Padma Shri, is India's first woman mahout (elephant keeper). Baruah got the award in recognition of her work in animal conservation and dispelling pre-conceptions to make a name for women in a field that has historically been dominated by men. Born into the Gauripur royal family in the Goalpara district of Assam, Barua and her father Prakritish Barua caught their first elephant together when Barua was 14 years old in the Kachugaon woods of Kokrajhar district. She spent 40 years addressing and reducing human-elephant conflicts and fought against gender stereotypes in this profession.

British ruled India for 400 years as our own people hatched conspiracies : Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru, Jan 26 (IANS) : Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said that the British were successful in ruling over India for 400 years as our own people hatched conspiracies against their people and land. The Chief Minister warned against the people who are against social change, equal opportunities and with the mindset of denying equal opportunities for all. "They are people amongst us who want to deny equal opportunities for all. They are very dangerous. People should beware of them," the Chief Minister said while addressing the gathering during the memorial day of freedom fighter martyr from Karnataka, Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna at Khodey Circle in Bengaluru. He said that the freedom lover, patriotic Sangolli Rayanna was caught by the British due to the conspiracy of our own people.



India's 75th Republic Day at Khanij Bhavan, NMDC

Hyderabad, Jan 26 (TIM Bureau) : National Miner NMDC celebrated the 75th Republic Day of India at Khanij Bhavan in Hyderabad and its mining projects across India. Shri Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge) hoisted the National Flag along with Shri Zailabuddin, senior most employee at Head Office. NMDC's Director (Production) Shri Dilip Kumar Mohanty, Director (Technical) Shri Vinay Kumar and CVO Shri B Vishwanath were also present for the celebrations. "As citizens we are beyond our individual identities, we are a community bound by shared values and a common destiny. Then, nation building becomes a responsibility of the highest order" said Shri Amitava Mukherjee in his Republic Day address. Further on collective responsibility, he said, "In our standing as the country's largest iron ore producers, we carry on our shoulders great responsibilities towards India and its people."



Stalin not to attend R-Day party organised by Raj Bhavan

Chennai, Jan 26 (IANS) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will not attend the Republic Day High-Tea party organised by the Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi at the Raj Bhavan on Friday. The Chief Minister has excused himself from attending the function citing that he has to inaugurate the INDIA alliance public programme at Tiruvannamalai and has informed the Raj Bhavan of his unavailability. While the ruling DMK has not boycotted the function in the Raj Bhavan, its alliance partners Congress, CPI - M and VCK have said that they will boycott the function.

Women display motorcycle daredevil stunts at R-Day parade

New Delhi, Jan 26 (IANS) : Women personnel of CRPF, BSF and SSB exhibited the country's Nari Shakti carried out daredevil motorcycle stunts during the Republic Day parade at Kartavya path on Friday. Over 260 women showcased their bravery, valour and deter-

mination through varied formations, including Chandrayaan, Sarvatra Suraksha, Abhivadan and Yog Se Siddhi. Ministry of Defence said that tableaux of 16 States and Union Territories (UTs) rolled down the Kartavya Path, showcasing India's rich cultural diversity and creativity.



LIC Celebrated 75th Republic Day



Hyderabad, Jan 26 (TIM Bureau) : Sri LK Shamsunder, Zonal Manager unfurled the National Flag today marking the 75th Republic Day Celebrations and addressed all the em-

ployees, Development Officers and Agents. In his address, Sri Shyamsunder said that LIC is providing best services to the policy holders with its innovative technological advancements.

