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Everyone should live together, regardless of caste and religion

Rajarshi Shah, Adilabad District Collector, said that everyone should live together in harmony and unity, regardless of caste or religion. The District Collector was the chief guest...

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India ready to share its experience, expertise with world to ensure AI future for all : PM Modi

Paris, Feb 11 : India is developing AI applications for the public good and has one of the world's largest AI talent pools, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday, adding that the country is ready to share its experience and expertise to ensure that the "AI future is for Good, and

for All". Addressing the 'AI Action Summit' here, PM Modi said India is also building its own large language model (LLM), considering its diversity. "We also have a unique public-private partnership model for pooling resources like computing power. Continued on pg 02



MRPS leader demands Telangana CM to rectify shortcomings in SC sub-categorisation report

Hyderabad, Feb 11 (IANS) : Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) leader Manda Krishna Madiga on Tuesday met Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and urged him to rectify certain shortcomings in the report of the Judicial Com-

mission on sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) for implementation of reservation.

While thanking the Chief Minister and the Congress government for passing a resolution in the Assembly to implement the Supreme Court order on sub-categorisation,

Manda Krishna Madiga told him that there are certain shortcomings in the report of the Judicial Commission headed by retired High Court judge Justice Shameem Akhtar.

The government tabled the report of the Judicial Commission in the

Assembly on February 4. Talking to the media after the meeting, the MRPS founder said the SCs should be sub-categorised into A.B.C and D and not 1,2 and 3 as recommended by the Judicial Commission.

Continued on pg 02



Andhra Pradesh sets ambitious targets under Swarnandhra Vision

Amaravati, Feb 11 (IANS) : The government of Andhra Pradesh has unveiled 'Swarnandhra@2047', an ambitious roadmap for economic transformation, aligning with the 'Viksit Bharat @2047' initiative of the Union govern-

ment. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has set the vision for 'Swarnandhra', aiming to build a \$2.4 trillion economy with a per capita income of \$42,000 by maintaining an annual GSDP growth rate of over 15 per cent. This initiative seeks to posi-

tion Andhra Pradesh as a key economic driver in the country, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth. In the years following the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana recorded similar per capita income growth from 2014-15 to 2018-19, with Andhra Pradesh at 13.21 per cent and Telangana at 13.37 per cent. Continued on pg 02



Govt ready to supply required power: Bhatti

Hyderabad, Feb.11 (NSS): The State government is prepared to provide electricity to satisfy the demand anticipated during the upcoming summer, stated Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka.

On Tuesday, the Deputy Chief Minister conducted a review meeting with officials from the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited (SPDCL) to discuss the action plan for electricity supply during the summer season at the B R Ambedkar Secretariat.

Telangana to extend support to Bahrain in skill development: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Feb 11 (NSS): Telangana stands ready to extend its full cooperation in establishing world-class institutions like Skills University, T-Hub, and T-Works in Bahrain, said Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu.



Caste census survey is historic initiative: Gutha

Nalgonda, Feb.11 (NSS): Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy has expressed that the caste census survey conducted by the State government in Telangana is a historic initiative, with approximately 97 percent participation from the populace.



Seven city residents die in road accident on their return from Kumbh Mela

Hyderabad, Feb.11 (NSS): Some Telugu pilgrims, who had gone to kumbh mela in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh State, met with a road accident on their way back to home. The mini bus in which they were travelling was hit by a lorry. Seven people were killed on the spot in the road accident in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur.

People will soon beat Congress leaders : KTR

Hyderabad, Feb 11 (NSS): BRS working president KT Rama Rao has remarked that the time is approaching when citizens may take to confronting Congress leaders who ascended to power by falsely promising utopian visions to the people of the state.

On Tuesday, KT Rama Rao attended a close-knit meeting with workers from the Khammam Assembly constituency at Telangana Bhavan. While addressing the party members during this gathering, he noted that many residents of Telangana felt they had endured considerable hardship since K. Chandrashekar Rao is no longer serving as Chief Minister. He mentioned that during the recent floods in Khammam, the community recalled the leader-



ship of former minister Puvvada Ajay. KTR underscored that while some ministers utilized helicopters to attend birthday celebrations, they failed to deploy any during the Khammam floods. The leader of the BRS claimed that a family was swept away by floods due to the negligence and lack of action on the part of the Congress government. He asserted that since 2014, the BRS administration in Khammam had achieved remarkable progress.

OPINIONmail

Rate cut complements consumption-boosting Budget, sets stage for another cut in April



The 25bps rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is anticipated to complement the consumption-boosting measures announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, providing a boost to domestic demand drivers, industry leaders said on Friday. According to RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, the MPC has also unanimously decided to continue with a neutral stance and will focus on inflation while supporting growth. "This calibrated approach by the Central Bank reflects a careful balance between fostering economic growth and maintaining financial stability," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII. Importantly, the recent series of liquidity easing measures introduced over the past two weeks will aid in the effective transmission of the rate cut to the productive sectors of the economy.

Additionally, the RBI's indication that it will inject liquidity as needed to address any tightening of frictional and durable liquidity in the system will ensure that monetary policy transmission remains effective, said Banerjee. According to Lakshmanan V, Group President and Head-Treasury (treasurer), Federal Bank, the MPC was on reasonably expected lines on all counts -- rate cut, stance and statement on liquidity measures. "This decision was a logical extension to the liquidity measures taken in January, along with clear assurances given by the RBI to support liquidity whenever necessitated going forward. Today's outcome sets the stage for rate cut expectations in April, unless inflation and global macro-conditions play havoc," Lakshmanan commented. The decision to lower the policy rate comes amid moderating growth momentum, increasing challenges from external factors, and a slowdown in inflationary pressures. "The GDP growth for the upcoming year is projected at 6.7 per cent, which is in line with our projection. On the liquidity front, the governor has assured proactive measures ensuring comfortable liquidity conditions," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings. With the Donald Trump Administration in the US shaking up global markets, we expect the RBI to be proactive in using liquidity and forex management tools. S&P Global expects the US Federal Reserve to move more gradually, cutting just 25 basis points (bps) in the first half of 2025 after slicing 100 bps between September and December 2024. "The MPC moves will depend more on domestic inflation. We expect healthy kharif and rabi crop to ease food inflation and likely drive CPI inflation down to 4.4 per cent next fiscal," said Dharmakirti Joshi, Chief Economist, Crisil Limited. "We expect the MPC to cut another 75-100 bps off the policy rate next fiscal," he added.

EDITORIAL
the indian mail

Mahakumbh 2025: Devotees thank Adani Group for distributing Aarti collection booklets free of cost

Devotees gathering at the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj have expressed happiness and thanked the Adani Group and its Chairman Gautam Adani for giving free Aarti collection as a gift to them. The Maha Kumbh 2025 is breaking and setting new records every day in terms of the enthusiasm of devotees visiting it. The Geeta Press and the Adani Group together are distributing the free Aarti collection in every corner.

This special arrangement has been made by the Adani Group for the convenience of the Kalpavasis -- who reside for the entire period of Kumbh Mela at the Sangam. A Kalpavasi takes a dip at the Sangam on all days. A Kalp is the total years in the four yugas - Satyug, Treta,

Dwapar, and Kalyug. This adds up to several millions of years. When a devotee performs Kalpavas, he/she overcomes the sins in earlier birth and escapes from the numerous rebirths.

Aarti collection booklets are being distributed on behalf of the Adani Group to the devotees who came to Mahakumbh.

A devotee from Bihar, who came to Maha Kumbh, told IANS that he received the Aarti-collection booklet and thanked the Adani Group for this noble initiative.

Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) resident Sitaram Das told IANS: "Great work is being done by Adani Group at the Maha Kumbh. I thank the Adani Group for this noble gesture."

While talking to IANS, Prayagraj resident Ragini Singh said: "I have taken this booklet for the first time.



Surajkund International Crafts Mela begins with MP and Odisha named as theme states

The much-awaited Surajkund International Crafts Mela commenced in Haryana on Friday, with Madhya Pradesh and Odisha sharing the prestigious title of theme states for the first time in the event's history. This 17-day cultural extravaganza, running until February 23, will offer a spectacular display of regional and international crafts, handlooms, traditional arts, and a variety of multi-cuisine offerings for visitors. A specially designed pavilion highlighting the rich heritage, crafts, and traditions of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha will be strategically placed near the VIP entrance. As the theme states, both MP and Odisha will receive an increased number of stalls to exhibit their diverse art forms, craftsmanship, and cultural vibrancy.

"This is the first time that two states have been selected as theme states, allowing them an extended opportunity to show-

case their artistic heritage. Out of the more than 1,200 huts at the Surajkund Craft Mela, at least 40 huts will be exclusively allocated to each state," Anurag Uikey, an official from the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department, told IANS. Madhya Pradesh's participation will emphasize its rich artistic traditions, including indigenous crafts from various regions across the state. The event will feature live demonstrations by artisans, showcasing traditional art forms, intricate handloom weaving, and indigenous crafts. Cultural performances by folk and tribal artists will also add colour to the state's representation. Apart from the theme states, the fair will also welcome the eight northeastern states -- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim -- as cultural partners. These states will present their unique handloom and handicraft traditions, offering visitors a glimpse into their rich heritage.

Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in Gujarat's Narmada district shine with impressive NQAS certificates

In an impressive achievement, the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in Gujarat's Narmada district have earned a total of 2 national-level and 37 state-level National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) certificates in just 10 months, underscoring the district's growing commitment to providing top-notch healthcare services. Between April and November 2024, health facilities in Navpara and Sundarpura villages of Nandod taluka underwent thorough assessments by Delhi-based teams. These two Ayushman Arogya

Mandir sub-centres, under the Sisodra and Jasalpur Primary Health Centres, met the stringent criteria set by the National Quality Assurance Programme (NQAP), which evaluates healthcare institutions based on a variety of quality indicators. The process involved an exhaustive review by national-level officials, focusing on infrastructure, cleanliness, medical services, and the overall quality of healthcare provided. Only institutions that meet these high standards are awarded the prestigious NQAS certification. This rigorous evaluation ensures that the healthcare centres deliver not only basic

medical treatment but also a high standard of patient care, making these facilities standout examples of quality in healthcare provision.

Narmada District Health Officer Janak Madhak, speaking to IANS about the significance of this recognition, said: "The Ayushman Bharat Arogya Mandirs in



Sundarpura and Navpara have received national-level certification due to the high quality of their services. Under this programme, we provide twelve types of essential healthcare services, ranging from child care to elderly support, ensuring that our citizens receive comprehensive and quality care." The Ayushman Arogya Mandir initiative offers a broad range of healthcare services, including free medical check-ups, medicines, and health education. It has become a vital resource for the community, with each facility catering to multiple villages.

WHO hails India's leadership in pharmacopoeial standard-setting

India's leadership in pharmacopoeial standard setting is commendable, said Dr. Roderico H. Ofrin, WHO Representative to India, on Wednesday. Ofrin also stressed the importance of regulatory harmonisation in ensuring patient safety and public health. He said this while delivering the keynote address at the 15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias (IMWP), hosted by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The three-day event, to be

held in the national capital till February 7, is in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). "India is a commitment to global pharmaceutical standardisation and regulatory convergence," said Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel. Patel also highlighted India's role as the "Pharmacy of the World" and emphasised the importance of ensuring access to high-quality medicines globally. "The IMWP serves as a vital platform to foster international collaboration in pharmacopoeial science and regulatory harmonisation," the MoS said. The Union Minister also released the IPC Newsletter 2024 and a special IPC

video film that showcases India's advancements in pharmacopoeial science. It also shows the Commission's efforts in ensuring high-quality pharmaceutical standards. Meanwhile, Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, underscored the significance of global partnerships in strengthening pharmaceutical quality standards. Srivastava reiterated India's efforts in aligning regulatory frameworks with international best practices and ensuring the availability of safe and effective medicines worldwide. The 15th IMWP will facilitate discussions on key focus areas including emerging issues in impurity assessment (Q3) and



the implications of ICH Q6 guidelines on pharmacopoeial monograph specifications. The experts are also expected to discuss enhancing collaboration among global pharmacopoeias and regulatory bodies, with updates from the Pharmacopoeial Discussion Group (PDG); promotion of environmental sustainability in pharmacopoeial practices and pharmaceutical manufacturing standards. The deliberations during the IMWP will reinforce the role of pharmacopoeias in ensuring the

quality, safety, and efficacy of medicines. The outcomes of the meeting will guide future collaborations in standard-setting and regulatory harmonisation. The discussions to be held over these three days will set the stage for further strengthening global pharmacopoeial cooperation and enhancing pharmaceutical quality assurance.

France denounces Trump's plans to take over Gaza Strip

France on Wednesday affirmed its opposition to any forced displacement of Gaza's Palestinian population, in the wake of remarks made by US President Donald Trump that he plans to take over the Gaza Strip and redevelop it after Palestinians are relocated elsewhere. Trump made the remarks at a joint press conference.



UN announces 15 innovation hubs to fuel digital transformation in Kenya

Nairobi, Feb 11 (IANS) : A consortium of United Nations agencies on Tuesday, US time, announced the shortlisting of 15 innovation hubs to spur the growth of the digital economy in Kenya while promoting equity and inclusivity. The selection of digital innovation hubs under the Digital Platforms Kenya, a three-year UN initiative, is expected to position the country as a knowledge economy hub, according to a joint statement issued in Nairobi, the Kenyan

capital, by the UN agencies and the Kenyan government. John Tanui, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Digital Economy, said the digital innovation hubs would provide a platform to foster innovation, enterprise, and sustainable development. "Kenya's digital innovation hubs are crucial for its economic future. Investing in them empowers youth and women with digital skills, fueling innovation and inclusive growth," Tanui said. The 15 innovation hubs were

shortlisted following a call for applications in December 2024, which attracted over 50 submissions. The evaluation was based on their potential to drive digital innovation, spur entrepreneurship, and empower women and youth from Kenya's marginalised regions. According to the UN agencies, the selected digital innovation hubs would serve as engines of innovation, training, and community empowerment, bridging the country's digital divide.



Zambia assures stable HIV drug supply despite US funding halt

Lusaka, Feb 11 (IANS) : The Zambian government has assured the public of a stable supply of life-saving HIV drugs despite the decision by the US government, the major supplier, to halt the supply. The Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency, a government agency responsible for the procurement, storage and distribution of medicines and medical supplies, said there are sufficient antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to meet the needs of all patients nationwide. "There is no cause for concern, as supply continuity is assured. As of today, our current ARV

stock levels are sufficient to last until June 2025," Bradley Chingobe, the agency's senior manager for corporate communications, said in a statement. He said that the central warehouse and seven regional hubs are well-stocked to ensure the availability of first-line, second-line and third-line ARV regimens for all patients requiring treatment. According to him, the agency remains committed to its structured nationwide distribution network covering 3,500 health facilities. The US government announced a 90-day suspension of funding for international development programmes,

including those in Zambia, on January 20, 2025, Xinhua news agency reported. According to the Ministry of Health, as of September 30, 2023, Zambia had an estimated 1.5 million individuals living with HIV, with almost 1.3 million of them on antiretroviral therapy. On February 6, Botswana rolled out stopgap measures to support patients affected by the closure of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that had been providing both prevention and treatment services related to HIV/AIDS due to the suspension of US foreign aid.

South Korea: Police raid Gimhae International Airport over Air Busan plane destroyed by fire

Busan, Feb 11 (IANS) : South Korean Police on Tuesday raided Gimhae International Airport to secure evidence related to last week's fire in an Air Busan plane. The Busan Metropolitan Police Agency said investigators aimed to secure surveillance camera footage from around the time the plane caught fire on January 28, shortly before taking off from the airport in Busan, about 320 kilometres southeast of Seoul. "It will take several days just to receive documents (from the airport) due to their large quantity."



Kazakhstan, Georgia to work on Middle Corridor infrastructure upgrades

Almaty, Feb 11 (IANS) : Kazakhstan and Georgia are focusing on boosting cargo volumes along the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, or the Middle Corridor, while upgrading its transit infrastructure, according to a statement issued by the Kazakh Presidential press service. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze discussed prospects

for bilateral cooperation, international agenda issues, and regional security in Astana on Tuesday. "Kazakhstan and Georgia cooperate effectively at various levels, including collaboration between parliaments, governments, and state agencies," Tokayev noted, as quoted in the statement. Tokayev highlighted Georgia's remarkable progress in recent years, underscoring the substantial results of ongoing reforms and an impressive 9.4 per cent economic

growth rate. Tokayev also praised the comprehensive development of bilateral relations, calling Georgia a reliable partner of Kazakhstan in the Caucasus region. "Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Irakli Kobakhidze paid special attention to increasing the volume of cargo transportation along the Trans-Caspian international transport route and modernising the infrastructure of the transit corridor.

Trump signs executive order imposing sanctions on International Criminal Court

Washington, Feb 11 (IANS) : President Donald Trump has signed an executive order sanctioning the International Criminal Court (ICC), accusing it of "illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America and our close ally Israel". The measure places financial and visa restrictions on individuals and their families who assist in ICC investigations of American citizens or allies, BBC reported. Trump signed the measure as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was visiting

Washington. Last November, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu over alleged war crimes in Gaza, which Israel denies. The ICC also issued a warrant for a Hamas commander, BBC reported. A White House fact sheet circulated earlier on Thursday accused the Hague-based ICC of creating a "shameful moral equivalency" between Hamas and Israel by issuing the warrants at the same time.



Malawian President orders withdrawal of troops from Congo

Lilongwe, Feb 11 (IANS) : Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera has ordered Defence Force Commander Paul Valentino Phiri to begin preparations for the withdrawal of Malawian troops from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Malawian troops are part of a Southern African Development Community mission to help the DRC government fight rebels in the east. A brief online statement made public said the President made the decision "to honour the declaration of a ceasefire by the warring parties in the DRC and to pave the way for the

planned negotiations towards a lasting peace that will bring stability to the Southern African Development Community region", Xinhua news agency reported. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has also urged for more efforts to end the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). During a press conference at the UN headquarters in New York, Guterres described the situation in DRC as "deeply concerning." Fighting between the March 23 Movement (M23) rebel group and Congolese government forces escalated in January. The rebels claimed they had taken control of

Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and a key regional hub, before heading south toward Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province. The conflict in the eastern region "is having an enormous human toll," with thousands of people killed, and hundreds of thousands forced from their homes in the eastern country, he said. The humanitarian situation in and around Goma is perilous, Guterres said. "Meanwhile, the conflict continues to rage in South Kivu and risks are engulfing the entire region." "My message is clear: Silence the guns. Stop the escalation. Respect the sovereignty and territorial in-



tegrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law," Guterres said. Highlighting there is no military solution to the crisis, the UN chief said, "It is time for mediation. It is time to end this crisis. It is time for peace." He urged all players, including neighbouring countries, subre-

gional organisations, the African Union and the United Nations, to play an active and constructive role toward an end of the conflict.

Increasing violence propels two Sudan states onto catastrophe's brink: UN

United Nations, Feb 11 (IANS) : Recent fighting has thrust two states of Sudan, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, onto the brink of catastrophe, a UN spokesman has said. "The civilian death toll following recent shelling in South Kordofan's capital Kadugli had increased to 80, with some three dozen others injured."



500 govt schools to be redeveloped with state-of-the-art facilities: Assam CM

Guwahati, Feb 11 (IANS) : Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state government has launched an ambitious initiative to redevelop 500 government schools with state-of-the-art facilities, and the work has begun in several schools

across the state. He asserted that this initiative will bring a paradigm shift to school education in Assam. CM Sarma was present today at the Palashbari High School in Guwahati where he inaugurated the project to redevelop the school with all modern learning facilities.



Ladki Bahin Yojana will not be closed, Maha Minister Uday Samant

Mumbai, Feb 11 (IANS) : The Maharashtra government will not close the implementation of a flagship Ladki Bahin Yojana but reiterated that verification of beneficiaries will continue. Industry and Marathi Language Minister Uday Samant said that the names of nearly five lakh beneficiaries have been struck off in a month owing to ineligibility due to age, possession of the vehicle and excess income. However, he claimed that the scheme would not be closed. Samant said: "Women above 65 years or having a four-wheeler are not eligible for this scheme. Also, the women covered under this scheme inadvertently, have been excluded and therefore there is a decrease in the number of beneficiaries. There is no intention to stop the Ladki Bahin Yojana." The women, having an annual family income of Rs 2.50 lakh, are also ineligible. Samant's statement comes a day after Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, at the Shiv Sena rally in Nanded.



India should also deport 'illegal immigrants' just like the US: Haryana Minister Anil Vij

Chandigarh, Feb 11 (IANS) : Haryana Minister Anil Vij has said like the US, India should also think about deporting "lakhs and crores" of illegal immigrants in the country. He added that every country has a right to deport illegal immigrants and US President Donald Trump has not made any mistake in doing so. His remark came after 104 illegal Indian immigrants from various states were deported in a US military aircraft that landed at the Amritsar airport on Tuesday. "Such people are born somewhere else, but we feed them. Why? They should go where they were born. We should also form a policy in this regard, and they should be sent back to their respective countries," Minister Vij added. Meanwhile, a senior official in the state police department said, "An investigation has been initiated against the travel agents as the deportees have alleged that they were promised a 'green card', citizenship and regularisation, once they land in the United States."



Tejashwi slams Nitish Kumar over custodial death in Bihar's Muzaffarpur

Patna, Feb 11 (IANS): Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday criticised Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over the custodial death of a youth in Kanti police station in Muzaffarpur. district. Taking to social media platform X, Tejashwi said: "A youth has

been murdered in the lock-up of Kanti police station in Muzaffarpur. In Bihar, the murder of common citizens by government-sponsored and government-protected criminals and administration is becoming a new norm. In Bihar, the police have become a predator, not a protector." The former deputy Chief Minister said that Chief Minister Nitish was unaware of the state's "deteriorating" law and order situation.



SC refuses to interfere with FIRs registered in wake of Justice Hema Committee report

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to interfere with the criminal proceedings initiated in the wake of the Justice Hema Committee report on the pitiable condition of women in the Malayalam film industry. The Apex Court ruled that once information regarding the commission of cognisable offence is revealed, the criminal law must be set in action.

K'taka HC refuses to entertain Yediyurappa's plea to quash POCSO case; gives temporary relief

Bengaluru, Feb 11 (IANS): In a setback to former Karnataka Chief Minister and BJP Central Parliamentary Committee member B.S. Yediyurappa, the Karnataka High Court has refused to quash charges against him under a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) case on Tuesday. However, the Bench granted anticipatory bail to Yediyurappa in the court, giving him immunity from arrest. The Bench, headed by Justice

M. Nagaprasanna, pronounced the judgment and sent back the case to the POCSO court. However, the court has also refused to quash the charge sheet submitted against Yediyurappa in the court. The court also did not make any comments over the eligibility of the case as presented by the petitioner Yediyurappa. The court had reserved the matter for the decision after concluding arguments and counterarguments in the case on January 17. With the judgement going against

him now, Yediyurappa will have to face legal proceedings in the case. The prosecution had argued that Yediyurappa's petition to quash the case was calculated, as it was filed after the death of the victim's mother, who was the complainant. Senior counsel C.V. Nagesh, representing Yediyurappa, countered that his client could not have known about the complainant's death, and he was not a magician. He urged the court to consider the 45-day gap between the alleged in-

cident and the registration of the FIR. The counsel also questioned the complainant's credibility, pointing out her alleged history of filing multiple FIRs against senior IAS, IPS, and government officials. The case stems from an FIR filed at the Sadashivanagar police station in Bengaluru by the mother of a minor girl, alleging sexual harassment by Yediyurappa. The former Chief Minister has denied the charges, maintaining that the allegations were politi-



cally motivated and that he was prepared to face legal proceedings. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), investigating the case, submitted a charge sheet on June 27, 2024, to a special fast-

track court. According to the charge sheet, Yediyurappa, along with three other accused, was charged under the POCSO Act and sections of the IPC, including 354(A) (sexual harassment).

5 Pakistani terrorists killed in landmine blast during infiltration bid at LoC in Poonch

Jammu, Feb 11 (IANS) : Five Pakistani terrorists were killed on Tuesday in a landmine blast near the Line of Control (LoC) while trying to infiltrate into Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Poonch district. Official sources said that the five Pakistani militants were killed in the landmine explo-

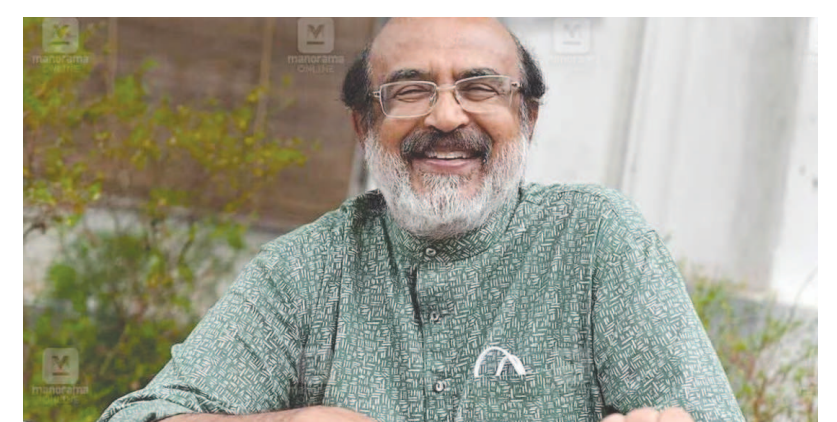
sion while attempting to infiltrate across the LoC in Battal sector of Poonch. They said that the Pakistani terrorists were attempting to infiltrate into Indian territory when one of them stepped onto a landmine. "One of them stepped on a landmine, triggering a huge explosion that killed all five terrorists.



'Times change, have to collect toll now': Former Kerala minister

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 11 (IANS) : Former Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac said on Tuesday that the state government has to collect the toll to raise the revenue for the state. "Times have changed. We will have to collect the toll on roads and bridges built using KIIFB funds," said Isaac. The former minister added that the toll collection has been forced upon the state government due to the wrong policies of the Union government, where funds to the state are not being allocated. "The state will have to look for newer avenues to raise revenues," said the former minister. The KIIFB project was touted in 2016 by the former CPI-M Finance Minister

Thomas Isaac, terming it as his 'pet project'. However, in 2016, the former Finance Minister told the Assembly that tolls would not be collected on roads and bridges constructed by KIIFB. But the former minister withdrew his early statement, saying, "What I said then, that doesn't mean, I have to stick to it." Notably, it was Isaac who started mobilising and channelling funds for facilitating planned, hassle-free and sustainable development of both the physical and social infrastructure of KIIFB. KIIFB was established as the principal funding arm of the Kerala government in 1999 aimed to channelise funds for critical and large public infrastructure projects in the state.



Karnataka HC quashes plea seeking CBI probe against CM Siddaramaiah in MUDA case

Bengaluru, Feb 11 (IANS) : In a major relief for Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Dharwad Bench of the Karnataka High Court, led by Justice M. Nagaprasanna, on Tuesday quashed a petition seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the court had reserved its verdict on January 27. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was named as the first accused in the case, while his wife, B.M. Parvathi, was listed as the second accused. Reacting to the ruling, petitioner Snehmayi Krishna termed it a temporary setback.





Concerns raised over potential data leak to China via BYD cars

Seoul, Feb 11 (IANS) : With the recent entry by China's BYD into South Korea's passenger electric vehicle (EV) market, concerns have been raised over potential personal data leaks to China through the vehicles manufactured by the company, industry observers said on Tuesday. The security risks of private data leaks to China emerged following BYD's official entry into the South Korean passenger vehicle market last month, reports Yonhap news agency.

BYD's first model launched here, the Atto 3, is equipped with connected car features, such as over-the-air (OTA) software update capability and navigation features, through which sensitive driver data could be transferred to China, according to the market watchers. "BYD must disclose exactly what types of data are collected and how they are processed," said Yom Heung-yeol, professor emeritus of cybersecurity at Soonchunhyang University. He stressed that an "opt-out

mechanism," allowing consumers to reject the collection of personal data if they choose, was necessary. BYD Korea has addressed data protection concerns, stating, "We fully understand Korean customers' concerns regarding personal data security and strictly comply with the Personal Information Protection Act." It said that data collected in South Korea is managed locally and not shared with BYD headquarters in China.

CISF goes green; solar panels to be installed on rooftops at 16 campuses

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Joining the government's ambitious mission of scaling up solar power production and achieving a carbon-neutral economy, the Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF) are set to install rooftop panels at 16 of its campuses across 11 states. The CISF on Tuesday signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd (NVVN) for the installation of 3,281 KW rooftop solar power plants across 16 CISF campuses by October 31, 2025. This marks a significant step towards promotion of renewable energy and achieving sustainability via renewable energy. The initiative also aligns with government's vision for energy security and a greener future. Notably, this is in addition to existing projects of capacity 1990 KW installed at 4 CISF campuses namely RTC Arakkonam (TN), Mahipalpur Campus (Delhi), RTC Behror (Rajasthan), 8th RB Jaipur (Rajasthan).



Adani Group joins Mayo Clinic, donates Rs 6,000 cr to build two integrated health campuses in India

Ahmedabad, Feb 11 (IANS) : Gautam Adani, the Chairman of the Adani Group, on Tuesday announced to launch Adani Health City (AHC) in partnership with US-based Mayo Clinic that aims to pioneer world-class medical research, affordable healthcare and education. The Adani family will donate upwards of Rs 6,000 crore to build the first two of these integrated health campuses in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. These will constitute two 1,000-bed multi-super-specialty Hospitals and Medical Colleges in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. The Rs 6,000 crore donation is part of the recent announcement of Rs 10,000 crore social donation by the billionaire industrialist at his son Jeet Adani's wedding, which would be channelled into various social causes. Gautam Adani has plans for more such integrated Adani Health Cities in cities and towns across the country, according to the company.

Coal demand in India projected to reach 1,755 MT by 2047

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : The coal demand in India is projected to reach 1,462 million tonnes (MT) in 2030 and 1,755 MT by 2047, the government said on Tuesday. With the fifth-largest geological coal reserves globally and as the second-largest consumer, coal continues to be an indispensable energy source, contributing to 55 per cent of the national energy mix.

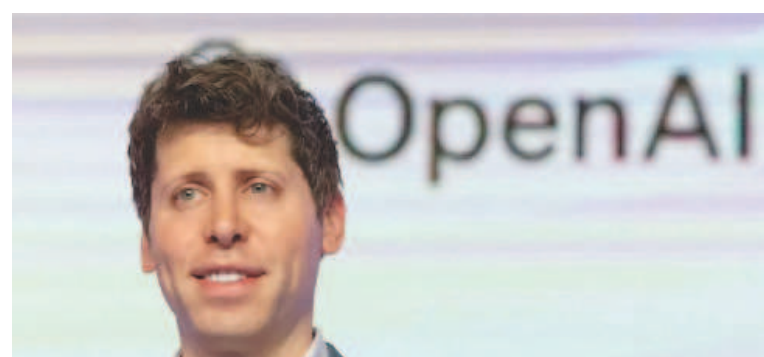


Apollo Hospitals reports 4 pc drop in Q3 net profit, revenue slips

Mumbai, Feb 11 (IANS) : Apollo Hospitals has reported a net profit of Rs 379.4 crore in the third quarter this fiscal (Q3 FY25), a decline of 4.12 per cent from Rs 395.7 crore profit in the second quarter (Q2 FY25). The company's total income in Q3 stood at Rs 5,590.7 crore, slightly lower than Rs 5,627.5 crore reported in the second quarter (Q2). Its revenue from operations also saw a decline of 1.79 per cent at Rs 5,527 crore in Q3, compared to Rs 5,627.5 crore in the previous quarter. EBITDA was down 6.6 per cent (on-quarter) to Rs. 762 crore, while EBITDA margin stood at 13.8 per cent (down 81bps QoQ) in Q3, led by contraction in gross margins by 135bps QoQ to 47.5 per cent. The healthcare major announced an interim dividend of Rs 9 per share for the financial year ending March 31, 2025. This represents 180 per cent of the face value of Rs 5 per share. Apollo Hospitals is also focusing on expansion and plans to add 3,512 beds across 11 locations over the next three to four years, starting from FY26. The hospital chain is seeing strong demand for healthcare services, particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

'Make in India' booster: Nothing to locally manufacture new smartphone series

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Aligning with the government's 'Make in India' initiative, London-based technology company Nothing on Tuesday announced that its latest Phone (3a) series will be manufactured in the country. While making the announcement, the smartphone maker added that the move is in line with the company's commitment to harnessing India's rich manufacturing ecosystem, investing in the local economy and fostering technological innovation. The Nothing Phone (3a) Series is being produced at the company's factory in Chennai, which employs over 500 workers. Notably, 95 percent of the workforce in this facility consists of women, the company said. According to Counterpoint Research, Nothing recorded an impressive 577 per cent year-over-year growth in India's smartphone market in 2024.



Benefits of Artificial General Intelligence should be broadly distributed: Sam Altman

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : As AI begins to transform industries globally, ensuring that the benefits of AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) are broadly distributed is critical, according to OpenAI Co-founder and CEO Sam Altman. The historical impact of technological progress suggests that most of the metrics we care about (health outcomes and economic prosperity, etc.) get better on average and over the long-term, but increasing equality does not seem technologically determined and getting this right may require new ideas, he emphasised in a new blog post. "Our mission is to ensure that AGI benefits all of humanity. AGI is a weakly defined term, but generally speaking, we mean it to be a system that can tackle increasingly complex problems, at human level, in many fields," he mentioned.

Gold prices at record high as investors seek safety amid trade war concerns

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Gold prices on Tuesday surged to new record highs in the domestic futures market as uncertainty over the US President Donald Trump's tariff policies increased demand for the yellow metal as a safe-haven investment. According to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association, the price of 24-carat gold was Rs 8,537 per gram, while 22-carat gold was Rs 8,332 per gram. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for April 4 expiry touched an all-time high of Rs 85,384 per

10 grams in early trade. The same contract was trading 0.51 per cent higher at Rs 85,325 per 10 grams. In the international market, gold prices also remained near record levels due to growing fears of a global trade war. Last week, spot gold reached a new peak of \$2,886.62 per ounce. The uncertainty surrounding Trump's latest trade decisions has pushed investors towards gold, which is traditionally considered a safe investment during times of economic and geopolitical instability. Trump plans to impose a 25 per cent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports into the US. He

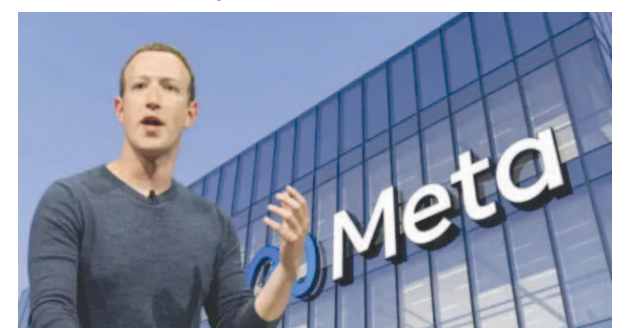


was expected to make a formal announcement later on Monday (US time). Trump may introduce additional tariffs on several countries. The trade policies have raised concerns about inflation in the US, which could prevent the Federal Reserve from cutting in-

terest rates in the near future. Meanwhile, the gold reserves in India went up by \$1.242 billion to \$70.893 billion in the previous week, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. The apex bank said that the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were also up by \$29 million to \$17.889 billion.

Meta likely to lay off thousands of employees, says leaked memo

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Tech giant Meta is expected to lay off around 3,000 employees, which is about 5 per cent of its total workforce, as per a leaked internal memo, reports said on Tuesday. According to the report, the memo, posted by Janelle Gale, Meta's Vice President of Human Resources, was shared on the company's internal Workplace forum. The memo states that affected employees will receive an email on Tuesday morning informing them about their job status.



Odisha: Representatives submit memorandums to 16th Finance Commission

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11 (IANS) : The representatives of different political parties in the state on Tuesday met the 16th Finance Commission and presented separate memorandums demanding more funds for the state. The 16th Finance Commission led by its chairperson Arvind Panagariya is on a visit to Odisha. "We have submitted a memorandum to the commission on behalf of party president Naveen Patnaik. We

have made several demands in the interest of Odisha including the increase in the state's share from the divisive pool of central tax receipts. We also drew the attention of the commission towards the non-revision of coal royalty which has been pending for years. We also raised our concerns over the green cess," said senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya. Acharya also said the BJD party has demanded a special package for the revival of sick industries in Odisha

and changes in the ratio of funding for central government schemes to lessen the financial burdens on states. The senior BJD leader expressed hope that the commission would listen to their demands. "Our main demand is related to the ratio of state and centre shares in vertical devolution of tax receipts, 60 per cent should go to the state and 40 per cent should remain with the centre.



'Kuno cheetahs to soon roam in Rajasthan via proposed wildlife corridor'

Jaipur, Feb 11 (IANS) : Cheetahs from Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park will soon be able to move freely into Rajasthan, as a new wildlife corridor is in the works, state Forest Minister Sanjay Sharma confirmed this to IANS. "A corridor will be developed to connect Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, allowing free movement of tigers and cheetahs between the two states. With this, cheetahs from Kuno will be able to enter Rajasthan naturally," Sharma said. The project will be jointly

monitored by both state governments, with a memorandum of understanding (MoU) set to be signed soon in the presence of Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. The corridor, spanning approximately 6,500 square km, will stretch from Dholpur to Sita Mata Wildlife Sanctuary, facilitating a more natural habitat for the big cats. India's ambitious cheetah reintroduction program saw eight cheetahs brought from Namibia, which Prime Minister Narendra

Modi released into Kuno National Park on September 17, 2022, marking the species' return to the country. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav released five more cheetahs into the wild at Kuno on Wednesday. Among them was Veera, a female cheetah who gave birth to two cubs on February 4. The other released cheetahs included Asha and her three cubs. Additionally, two cheetahs, Agni and Vayu, have been roaming freely since their release on International Cheetah Day, December 4, 2024.

Maha launches portal to make investment process hassle-free

Mumbai, Feb 11 (IANS) : To make the investment process hassle-free and without administrative and procedural delays, the Maharashtra government has launched the MAITRI (Maharashtra Industry, Trade and Investment Facilitation Cell) 2.0 Portal.

This also expresses the state government's commitment to fostering an environment where the industrial sector can thrive with minimal government and maximal efficiency.

The portal, formally launched by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday, is now operational.

The timing of its launch comes days after the state government inked MoUs worth Rs 15.70 lakh crore during the World Economic Forum's annual summit at Davos where the chief minister had reiterated that the government will step up efforts to improve ease of doing business.



Providing quality education is Tripura govt's main objective : CM Saha

Agartala, Feb 11 (IANS) : Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday said that the main objective of the state government is to formulate various policies and programs to ensure quality education in the state.

After inaugurating the state-level 'Teaching Learning Material (TLM)' competition-cum-exhibition at Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan here, the Chief Minister said that teachers would

have to work to strengthen the foundation of the students from an early age.

The main objective of the state government is to formulate various policies and programmes to ensure quality education in educational institutions, he said adding that providing loans and scholarships to deserving students is also one of the objectives of the education sector.

"If the foundation is not strong during the construction of a building, it cannot rise to the top. Simi-

larly, the foundation of children should be strengthened from childhood." Saha, who also holds the Education portfolio, stressed making the availability of learning materials at a low cost for the students, especially for the poor students. He added Prime Minister Narendra Modi has formulated the National Education Policy to improve the education system and the National Education Policy includes a system for making availability of teaching-learning materials. The Chief Minister said that Modi has repeatedly said that in the future, the country or the world would be in the hands of those who have knowledge.

IRDAI directs health insurers not to hike premium for senior citizens by over 10 pc

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : As health insurance companies have implemented steep premium hikes across age groups — some insurers even increasing health premiums up to 200 per cent — the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has directed them not to revise premium rates for senior citizens by more than 10 per cent per annum. In a notification, the insurance industry regulator made note of the steep increase in premium rates under some of the health insurance products offered to citizens aged 60 years and above.

According to the regulator, senior citizens constitute a vulnerable age group having limited sources of income and are most impacted in case of a steep increase in health insurance premiums.

"Insurers will have to consult the IRDAI if the premium is to be increased by more than 10 per cent," it further directed.



NSS invokes spirit of service and patriotism: Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav

Bhopal, Feb 11 (IANS) : Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said on Tuesday that the National Service Scheme (NSS) is a dynamic platform for imparting lessons on personality development and patriotism. He said the very name of the organisation evokes a spirit of service. By nurturing the qualities of students and immersing them in the core values of community development, NSS contributes significantly to the nation's growth.

"It is highly commendable that our students are now studying NSS as a subject. The youth are the future of the country, and fostering a spirit of service among them will accelerate the nation's progress," he said. Chief Minister stated this addressing an event at Samatva Bhavan honoring the NSS students who brought pride to Madhya Pradesh at the Republic Day Parade 2025 in Delhi.

Appreciating the dedication and service spirit of NSS, he awarded medals to the participating students and their coordinators and

extended his best wishes. He pointed out that NSS is a crucial platform for instilling values of social service, patriotism, discipline, and camaraderie among the youth. "The students from Madhya Pradesh have made the entire state proud with their excellent performance in this parade. He encouraged students to continue their active participation in social service and national awareness programmes," the Chief Minister said. During his address, the Chief Minister highlighted that the government is continuously working for the holistic development of the youth.

"By channeling the energy of young people in the right direction, the government is nurturing their talents to contribute to the state's development," he added. Further, he asserted that youth are the



driving force behind the development of the country and the state. "Everyone should focus on building their careers, but young people should also engage in politics to contribute to the country's development, as political progress strengthens social development," Chief Minister said.

Row over Waqf Board properties survey in MP; Cong MLA claims wrong data presented

Bhopal, Feb 11 (IANS) : A controversy has erupted over the survey of Waqf Board properties here in Madhya Pradesh after Congress MLA Arif Masood demanded that the ongoing physical survey be stopped. Masood, who is an MLA from Bhopal Madhya Assembly seat.





Tripura likely to get Rs 600 cr investment proposals at business conclave : Minister

Agartala, Feb 11 (IANS) : Tripura Industries and Commerce Minister Santana Chakma on Tuesday said that a two-day 'Business Conclave' would be held here on February 7-8 and the state is expected to receive investment proposals worth Rs 600 crore in the summit. The Minister said that the state would hold the 'Business Conclave' beginning on Friday to showcase Tripura's potentiality in various sectors, especially the service sectors. "We expected to receive proposals amounting to Rs 600 crore in Information Technology, education, healthcare, skill development and tourism sectors," she told the media adding that over 100 investors and entrepreneurs from across the country are likely to attend

the conclave. Previously, the state government organised business summits to explore the possibilities of setting up industries based on agar and rubber, Chakma said. She said that Chief Minister Manik Saha would address the conclave on the second day on February 8 to highlight the state's potentiality in various sectors. Due to the unrest in Bangladesh, no investor or entrepreneur was invited from the neighbouring country to join the business conclave this time, the minister said. Chakma highlighted that the state offers a business-friendly atmosphere, power surplus, strategic connectivity, and a time-bound single-window system for approvals. Investors would also benefit from various incentives, including tax holidays and financial support. The minister noted that in the past five fiscal years, some 160 business units have been established in Tripura, attracting investments of over Rs 1,600 crore.

Rajasthan govt has sole authority over district formation & abolition: Minister

Jaipur, Feb 11 (IANS) : Rajasthan Parliamentary Affairs Minister Jogaram Patel stated in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday that the state government holds exclusive authority to create, abolish, or modify districts, divisions, and other administrative units within the state.



K'taka Police 'supported' microfinance institutions, claims BJP

Mandya, Feb 11 (IANS) : Karnataka Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka on Tuesday alleged that the Karnataka Police "supported" microfinance institutions to harass people in the state.

January 2025 the warmest on record: Copernicus

Brussels, Feb 11 (IANS) : January 2025 was the warmest on record globally, with the average surface temperature 0.79 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2000 January average, the EU-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) reported on Tuesday. Its temperature was 1.75 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, while the average temperature over European land rose 2.51 degrees above the 1991-2000 January average. "Outside Europe, temperatures were most above average over north-east and northwest Canada, Alaska and Siberia. They were also above average over southern South America, Africa and much of Australia and Antarctica," it said in a report. The average sea surface temperature between 60 degrees north and 60 degrees south reached 20.78 degrees Celsius, the second-highest January level on record, behind January 2024. "January 2025 is another surprising month, continuing the record temperatures observed throughout the last two years, despite the temporary cooling effect of La Nina conditions in the tropical Pacific," said Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of the C3S.



According to the report, Arctic Sea ice reached its lowest extent for January, measuring six per cent below average, Xinhua news agency reported. Last month, C3S confirmed that 2024 was the first calendar year in which the average global temperature exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels -- a critical threshold set by the Paris Agreement. The agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with an aspiration to cap it at 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.



MP minister criticises Akhilesh Yadav for his 'ECI is dead' remarks

Bhopal, Feb 11 (IANS): Madhya Pradesh Sports and Youth Welfare Minister, Vishwas Sarang, on Tuesday, criticised former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party (SP) head Akhilesh Yadav for his "dead" remark against the Election Commission of India (ECI). Sarang said blaming the ECI or any other institutions

has become a new fashion for the opposition to express frustration with their defeat in the elections. The minister said that Akhilesh Yadav should have not made such a comment. "How could Akhilesh Yadav, his wife (Dimple Yadav) and other leaders of his party get elected for Lok Sabha if ECI wasn't fair? They don't question when they win, but when lose, they question ECI," Sarang told IANS. Criticising the SP chief for his comment on ECI, the BJP minister said that Akhilesh Yadav's father Mulayam Singh Yadav had ordered to open fire at 'Karsevaks' in Ayodhya. "Akhilesh Yadav is among those leaders, who will question Sanatan

Dharma and Mahakumbh. During SP's government, Uttar Pradesh used to be known for corruption and 'gundaraj', but the BJP government has eliminated those criminals," he added. Earlier, SP supremo Akhilesh Yadav criticised the ECI, saying, "Election Commission is dead. We will have to gift them white cloth."

Prashant Kishor should disclose Jan Suraj's funding sources : JD-U

Patna, Feb 11 (IANS) : JD-U chief spokesperson and MLC Neeraj Kumar criticised Jan Suraj convenor, Prashant Kishor, demanding transparency regarding the funding sources of his party. Kumar alleged that the Jan Suraj is being financed through the Joy of Giving Global Foundation, a charitable trust, and questioned the appropriateness of utilising such a foundation for political activities. He urged Kishor to disclose the companies contributing to this foundation by February 9, warning that failure to do so would lead him to reveal the names himself. At a press conference held at the JD-U office, Kumar displayed a poster alleging that Kishor's movement is primarily backed by corporate funding, rather than grassroots support.



DG CRPF visits J&K's Rajouri district, reviews security

Jammu, Feb 11 (IANS) : Director General (DG) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), G.P.Singh on Tuesday visited J&K's Rajouri district to review the security scenario in the border district. A CRPF official said that in a significant move to enhance security preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir's volatile border district of Rajouri, the Director General of the Cen-

tral Reserve Police Force (CRPF), GP Singh, visited multiple CRPF camps, reviewing operational strategies and boosting troop morale. He said that as part of his two-day visit to J&K, DG CRPF inspected the Kalakote establishment and the newly established Counter-Insurgency (CI) camp at Kopratop in Thanamandi, a region that has witnessed a surge in terror activities over the past four years. He added that the CI

camp, under CRPF's 237 Battalion, is strategically positioned to counter militant threats and strengthen security dominance in the area. He said that during the visit, GP Singh held extensive interactions with officers and jawans, commending their relentless efforts in maintaining peace. He emphasised steadfast dedication to duty, enhanced operational readiness, and a balanced approach to mental and physical

well-being. "The visit was a major morale booster for the security forces actively engaged in counter-insurgency operations in Rajouri. The DG urged troops to continue their mission with renewed vigour, strategic focus, and unwavering commitment to national security. His visit is seen as a critical step in tightening counter-terror measures and reinforcing the security grid in the border belt", the statement said.



Security forces have heightened vigil across J&K and have been carrying out aggressive operations against terrorists, their over-ground workers (OGWs) and sympathisers.



Karnataka Governor rejects ordinance aimed to tackle microfinance menace

Bengaluru, Feb 11 (IANS) : Karnataka Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot has rejected the ordinance promulgated by the Congress-led government to tackle the Microfinancing Institutions' (MFIs) menace.



Take up illegal immigrant issue with Trump: AAP MP urges PM Modi

Chandigarh, Feb 11 (IANS) : Demanding action against unauthorised immigration agents who exploit innocent individuals by sending them abroad without valid visas or work permits, Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney on Tuesday requested the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take up their issue with US President Donald Trump. Sahney said as per media reports there are around 7.25 lakh illegal Indian immigrants in the US, with 17,940 facing final removal orders.

"With the arrival of the first batch of 104 deported Indian youth on Wednesday, it is deeply concerning that lakhs of Indian national's future is in darkness," he said. Sahney condemned the inhumane treatment of deported Indian youth.

1.02 lakh km National Highways built in last 10 years, pace up by 130 pc over 2004-2014: Gadkari

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : The average annual construction of National Highways has jumped by a massive 130 per cent during 2014-2024, as compared to the previous 10 years from 2004-2014, and has taken the length of those coming up in the last 10 years to 1,01,900 km, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari told the Parliament on Tuesday. Presently 1,366 projects having a total length

of about 32,366 km are under construction in the entire country, including in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and all northeastern states, without attaining any of the various stages of project completion and excluding projects under consideration for termination/foreclosure. Most of these projects are targeted to be completed in phases by the financial year 2028, the minister said in reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. In an answer to another question, the min-

ister said that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has taken up one pilot project of the Automated & Intelligent Machine-aided Construction (AIMC) system in Lucknow-Kanpur Greenfield Expressway Project, wherein machines such as GPS-aided motor grader, Intelligent Compactor and stringless paver have been used. Envisaged advantages of AIMC are savings in time of construction without compromising the quality



of construction, increased productivity, real-time digital documentation & monitoring and better control on quality parameters

such as smooth levelled surface, adequately & uniformly compacted surface, Gadkari said. The government has taken up the

initiative for finalising policy for use of AIMC for National Highway projects, he further stated.

Odisha CM asks senior officials to ensure expeditious redressal of people's grievances

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11 (IANS) : Odisha Chief Minister's Office (CMO) has directed all the senior officials and police officers to ensure the quick redressal of grievances of people. The CMO has recently written a letter in this regard to the secretaries of all the government departments, district collectors and officials of Odisha police asking to expedite the process of resolving people's complaints. The officials have also been asked to take stringent action against anyone found neglecting the redressal of grievances of people. The CMO emphasised the importance of grievance hearing programmes, that provide a platform to the common people to lodge their grievances before senior government officials of the state at any time and

anywhere. "While reviewing the progress of complaints received, it has been observed that many complaints have been pending for a long time for delay in taking expeditious action to address the concerns and the complainants are visiting Chief Minister's Grievance Cell repeatedly with similar complaints," reads the letter by CMO. The CMO urged the authorities to expedite the grievance redressal process and also asked the senior government officials to take strict disciplinary action against those officers who are found guilty of deliberate negligence in resolving the grievances applications of people under the Orissa Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal), Rules, 1962.



Darjeeling politics: BJP legislator writes to HM Shah for tripartite meeting on key issues

Kolkata, Feb 11 (IANS) : A BJP legislator from the hills of Darjeeling in the northern sector of West Bengal has written a letter to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention in convening a tripartite meeting to find a permanent political solution for the hills of West Bengal. In the letter, the BJP legislator from the Darjeeling Assembly constituency Neeraj Tamang Zimba pointed out that despite claims from the BJP Lok Sabha member from the Darjeeling Parliamentary constituency Raju Bista that a tripartite meeting will be convened in January 2025, to date there had been no indication on this count. "However, now that January has passed and February has commenced, the silence from the MHA on this crucial matter has begun to create an uneasy and conducive atmosphere among the people who have been waiting with bated breath for justice, resolution and closure," read the letter from Zimba. Point-

ing out that the very promise of political dialogue, which is the most sacrosanct mechanism in a democracy, had led to hope for the people from the Gorkha community. "The delay and the apparent reluctance to uphold this commitment not only undermine the fate of the Indian Gorkhas in the democratic process but also cast an unfortunate shadow on the BJP-led Union government's sincerity in resolving this issue within the constitutional framework of our great Republic," Zimba's letter read. Political observers feel that a permanent political solution in the hills of north Bengal.



Manipur Speaker's tribunal serves notices to 4 NPP MLAs in anti-defection case

Imphal, Feb 11 (IANS): The Manipur Assembly Speaker's tribunal issued separate notices to four National People's Party (NPP) MLAs in the anti-defection case, asking them to furnish written comments by February 11 and attend the hearing on February 12, officials said on Tuesday. An Assembly official said that the

notice was issued to the four NPP legislators following Manipur state Congress Vice-President Hareshwar Goswami's petition before the tribunal seeking disqualification of the four NPP legislators from the Assembly. Congress leader Goswami, a retired bureaucrat.

AI, Blockchain and other tech advancements planned under eCourts Phase III Project: Law Minister

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Futuristic technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and others are planned under the eCourts Phase III Project, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. With a significant outlay of Rs 7,210 crore, the eCourts Phase III Project underlines the importance that the government attaches to the infrastructural needs of the judiciary in the country, said Minister of State for Law (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply. Meghwal, who is also the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, added that several initiatives have been planned and are under progress to strengthen and expand the capacity of the existing infrastructure at the district and sub-district levels.

"Some of the major initiatives under the eCourts Phase III project include, making fully functional advanced e-Sewa Kendras in all court complexes, interlinking of all courts across the country, including High Courts and District and subordinate courts, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement of the Indian judicial system and making the justice delivery system accessible, cost-effective, transparent, and accountable," he added.



Besides, infrastructure is being developed for paperless courts in a phase-wise manner, expansion of the virtual courts for hearing court cases by creating a robust digital infrastructure, live streaming of court proceedings, digitisation of the entire court records, E-filing of cases and provision for video conferencing facilities, the minister apprised the Parliament.

He highlighted that some of the futuristic technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and others are also planned under the eCourts Phase III Project. For ensuring seamless availability of ICT infrastructure, solar power facilities are being installed and obsolete hardware is being replaced, Meghwal said. Migrating the District Court websites to the Secure, Scalable, & Sugamya Website as a Service (S3WAAS) platform is an ongoing process and efforts are on to provide adequate cloud storage facilities in the courts, he added.

Arunachal Christian body to launch stir against 46-year-old anti-conversion law

Itanagar, Feb 11 (IANS) : The Arunachal Christian Forum (ACF), an apex Christian body in the border state, on Tuesday announced to launch series of protests against the state BJP government's move to implement a 46-year-old anti-conversion law. ACF President Tarh Miri said that they would go on a week-long fast from February 10 followed by a mass prayer demanding repeal of the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act of 1978. While talking to the media, Miri said that they are planning to gherao the state Assembly on March 6, when the Act is likely to be discussed in the house before its implementation.



UGC draft regulations an attack on TN's heritage & federalism : MK Stalin

Chennai, Feb 11 (IANS) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has strongly opposed the University Grants Commission's (UGC) draft regulations, calling it an assault on the rich heritage of Tamil Nadu and a violation of the Union's federal principles. Expressing his gratitude to Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav for their support in the protest against the UGC draft in New Delhi, Stalin took to social media to voice his concerns. "The RSS-BJP's agenda is clear: to erase diverse histo-

ries, traditions, and languages in order to impose a singular identity. As my brother Rahul Gandhi rightly pointed out, the UGC draft is not merely an educational move; it is an attack on Tamil Nadu's heritage and the very foundation of India's federalism," he said. The Chief Minister urged people to reject the UGC draft and appreciated the efforts of the DMK Student Wing, Members of Parliament, and members of the INDIA Bloc, including Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav, for amplifying students' voices in the national capital and defending the future of education. "From NEET to CAA to the three farm laws, the DMK has led ev-



ery fight to uphold our Constitution and pluralism. Today, our voice in New Delhi will echo across the country," said the Chief Minister. The UGC's new draft guidelines propose allowing candidates to qualify for faculty positions in higher education insti-

tutions by clearing the UGC-NET, regardless of whether their undergraduate and post-graduate degrees are in different disciplines. Additionally, the draft guidelines expand the eligibility criteria for vice-chancellors.



US cannot withdraw from a body it no longer belongs : UNHRC

Geneva, Feb 11 (IANS) : The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has said that as of January 1, 2025, the US' term as a member had ended, making it ineligible to withdraw from an inter-governmental body it was no longer part of. "For the record, the United States was a member of the Human Rights Council from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. Since January 1, 2025, the United States is no longer a member of the Human Rights Council and automatically became an observer state, like any of the 193 UN member states that are not Council members. An observer state of the Council cannot withdraw from an intergovernmental body it is no longer a part of," Pascal Sim, spokesperson for the UNHRC, said on Tuesday in a statement sent to Xinhua news agency.

"As a matter of principle, and in the spirit of multilateral dialogue that characterises the Council, we welcome and encourage the engagement of every UN Member State -- whether as a Council member or an observer -- in the work of the Council and its mechanisms," the statement added.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order, withdrawing the US from the UNHRC, Xinhua news agency reported. The UNHRC is composed of 47 member states, with nearly one-third of its seats up for election each year.

First French Mirage 2000 jets arrive in Ukraine: Defence minister

Paris, Feb 11 (IANS) : The first batch of Mirage 2000 fighter jets from France have arrived in Ukraine, said French Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu

on Tuesday. The fighter jets were flown by Ukrainian pilots who had been trained for several months in France, he said in a post on social media X. However, Lecornu did not specify the number of the delivered or the total number of jets that France plans to deliver to Ukraine. According to the French daily Le Monde, the French Air Force owns only a limited number of fighters -- 26 Mirage 2000-5 jets out of around 200 Mirage and Rafale aircraft.



New Zealand marks 185th year of signing Treaty of Waitangi

Wellington, Feb 11 (IANS): New Zealand marked Waitangi Day, which laid the country's bicultural foundation, on Tuesday to commemorate the 185th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the country's founding document.

While a public holiday was taken, various events were held nationwide to celebrate the country's founding day on February 6, 1840, when the treaty was signed between the British Crown and more than 500 Maori chiefs, which allowed then British government to gain the sole right to purchase land in New Zealand.

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon joined the celebration in Akaroa in New Zealand's South Island instead of the major dawn ceremony.



Planned 'return hubs' must respect migrants' rights : EU agency

Vienna, Feb 11 (IANS) : The European Union (EU) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has said that the proposed "return hubs" for rejected asylum seekers must comply with fundamental rights laws and must not become "rights-free zones". The EU is considering establishing "return hubs" in non-EU countries as temporary facilities for asylum seekers whose applications in the EU were denied and who are awaiting deportation to their home countries, Xinhua news agency reported.

In a position paper released on Tuesday, the FRA issued a pointed warning to the Commission, insisting any project to establish "return hubs" must come with

strong safeguards to guarantee lawful and dignified treatment.

Even if located outside the EU, these return facilities must adhere to fundamental rights safeguards under EU law, and member states would remain "accountable for rights violations at the hubs and during any transfers," according to a position paper by the Vienna-based FRA. "The planned return hubs cannot become rights-free zones," FRA Director Sirpa Rautio said.

Syrian military continues offensive against former gov forces, drug traffickers

Damascus, Feb 11 (IANS) : Syria's interim Defence Ministry has said that its forces are continuing operations against remnants of the ousted Bashar al-Assad government and drug traffickers along the Syrian-Lebanese border. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, the military on Tuesday also deployed heavy weaponry and drones to eliminate entrenched fighters linked to the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah and a drug cartel. The military targeted militant positions in the village of Hawik in the central province of Homs with artillery.



Iran never seeks to develop nuclear weapons: Pezeshkian

Tehran, Feb 11 (IANS) : Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed on Tuesday that his country has never sought to develop nuclear weapons.

He made the remarks at a ceremony in Tehran to mark the 46th anniversary of the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, according to a statement by his office. The ceremony

was attended by foreign ambassadors and representatives of international organisations in Iran's capital. Pezeshkian said, "We do not seek (to develop) nuclear weapons. Iran's (Supreme) Leader (Ali Khamenei) has explicitly declared this by issuing a fatwa (religious decree)."

Verifying that Iran does not intend to develop nuclear weapons is not

difficult at all, he added, noting, "They (inspectors) have so far come and investigated it whenever they have wanted, and from now on, can come and check that again a hundred times. We will never go after developing nuclear weapons." The remarks came as US President Donald Trump on Tuesday took an executive action to restore the "maximum pressure"

campaign against Iran, aiming to prevent the country from obtaining nuclear weapons. On Tuesday night, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on social media platform X that "the so-called maximum pressure is a failed experience," warning repeating this would only cause "maximum resistance" by Iran, Xinhua news agency reported.



Tensions rise between South Africa, US as Rubio plans to skip G20 FM meeting

Johannesburg, Feb 11 (IANS) : Tensions between South Africa and the United States continue to escalate following US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's recent announcement to skip the upcoming Group of 20 (G20)

Foreign Ministers' Meeting later this month. Rubio wrote on the social media platform X that he would not attend the meeting in Johannesburg. He claimed that South Africa is "doing very bad things" including expropriating land and private property.

In response, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola reiterated Thursday morning that South Africa is a sovereign country and there has been no "arbitrary" dispossession of land or property. "We are a sovereign and democratic country committed to human dignity, equality, and rights, championing non-racialism and non-sexism while placing our constitution and the rule of law at the forefront," Lamola said.

Lamola noted that since assuming the G20 presidency from Brazil, South Africa has proposed tackling a number of issues, including rising indebtedness affecting emerging economies. "Solidarity promotes collective problem-solving.



'Should be strongly condemned': India slams attack on Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence in Dhaka

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : India on Tuesday expressed anguish over the vandalism of the residence of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and said the "act of vandalism" should be strongly condemned. In response to media queries regarding the vandalism of Rahman's residence, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Thursday said, "It is regret-

table that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression, was destroyed on February 5, 2025." "All those who value the freedom struggle that nurtured Bangla identity and pride are aware of the importance of this residence for the national consciousness of Bangladesh.

Russia appoints new Roscosmos chief

Moscow, Feb 11 (IANS) : Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Dmitry Bakanov as the new director general of Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos, replacing Yury Borisov, the Kremlin announced Tuesday on its official Telegram channel.

Before his appointment, the 39-year-old Bakanov served as deputy minister of transport, focusing on innovation, including unmanned transport systems, Xinhua news agency reported.



NBA: Luka Doncic shines in Lakers debut, helps extend win streak to six

Los Angeles, Feb 11 (IANS) : Luka Doncic made an electrifying debut for the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday (IST), scoring 14 points in limited playing time and seamlessly integrating into a star-studded lineup alongside LeBron James. The Lakers extended their winning streak to six games,

cruising to a 132-113 victory over the Utah Jazz at Crypto.com Arena. Doncic, acquired in a blockbuster trade from the Dallas Mavericks, was welcomed with thunderous applause from the Lakers faithful, many of whom sported gold T-shirts bearing his name and the No. 77. Although he played just 23 min-

utes, Doncic showcased flashes of brilliance, tallying five rebounds and four assists, including a stunning three-quarter-court pass to James for a layup late in the first half. The Slovenian superstar's first basket as a Laker came early in the game—a 3-pointer on his second shot attempt.



Former champ Norrie sails into Round 2 on return to Delray Beach

Delray Beach (USA), Feb 11 (IANS): Top British singles player Cameron Norrie made a winning return to the Delray Beach Open with a hard-fought straight-sets win against qualifier Zachary Svajda to reach the second round of the ATP 250 event. The 29-year-old Norrie notched a 7-5, 6-4 win over Svajda in his first appearance in Delray Beach since winning the title in 2022.

Norrie battled through a contest that swung from one side to another like a pendulum, featuring eight breaks of serve, to eventually seal an 88-minute victory in windy conditions in Florida. In other first round matches in the event, American sixth seed Brandon Nakashima defeated qualifier James Trotter 7-6(2), 6-1 in 98 minutes, while seventh-seed Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia

beat Borna Gojo of Croatia 6-4, 6-4 in another Round of 32 match. The 25-year-old Serb, who reached the Delray Beach final in 2023, won 86 percent (32/27) of first-serve points, according to Infosys ATP Stats. American Ethan Quinn suffered the disappointment of falling in the final round of qualifying on Tuesday. But after getting into the main draw as a lucky loser.

Chess: Mumbai's rising star Vedant Panesar qualifies for 2026 Challengers section in Wijk aan Zee

Mumbai, Feb 11 (IANS) : Vedant Panesar, hailing from Mumbai, secured a place in the Challengers section of Chess 2026 after winning the qualifiers, held in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands. Scoring 6/9, Panesar finished half a point ahead of a competitive international field and booked his place in one of the most prestigious tournaments. Speaking about his win, Vedant said, "Playing at Wijk aan Zee is a

dream of every chess player. I read a quote there that said, 'Before dying, people want to visit Prague, but for a chess player, it's about winning at Wijk aan Zee.' Winning at Wijk aan Zee, where the best chess players in the world compete, is truly special. Qualifying for the Tata Steel Challengers 2026 is a dream come true, and I hope to return next year as a Grandmaster."



Beth Mooney claims Women's Player of the Month honour for January

Dubai, Feb 11 (IANS) : Australia opener Beth Mooney has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for January 2025 for her dominant performance during the multi-format Ashes series against England. The left-hander Aussie beat out strong opposition from West Indies

spinner Karishma Ramharack and India Under-19 star Trisha Gongadi to win the coveted monthly accolade. It is the first time Mooney has ever won the monthly ICC award and the second in succession for Australian players after in-form all-rounder Annabel Sutherland took home the honour in December 2024. "January was an

incredible month for the Australian Women's Cricket Team. Winning the Ashes in front of a home crowd was very special and to complete the series playing in the first ever day-night Test at the MCG in front of a record crowd for a Women's Test is a moment that we will all never forget.



'KKR feels like a family', expresses Vaibhav Arora after returning to the franchise for IPL 2025

Kolkata, Feb 11 (IANS) : After playing a critical role in Kolkata Knight Riders' title-winning campaign in the IPL 2024, Vaibhav Arora is excited to be back in the Purple and Gold for the upcoming 2025 season and said he has an emotional attachment with the franchise. The right-arm pacer bagged 11 wickets in 10 matches in the 17th edition of the IPL, causing all sorts of problems for the batters with his ability to swing the new ball. Now back with the Knight Riders, he is delighted to return to the franchise that feels like family.



BCB appoint Sarwar Imran as Bangladesh women's head coach

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has named veteran coach Sarwar Imran as the new head coach of the national women's team, replacing Hashan Tillakaratne, who vacated the position recently. BCB president Faruque confirmed the appointment on Tuesday, reinforcing his commitment to providing homegrown coaches with opportunities at the highest level. "We have decided to appoint Imran as our national women's team head coach after the post went vacant following the departure of Hashan. When I took over, I promised to give local coaches a platform in the national setup. This appointment is part of that pledge. If we don't entrust them with responsibility, how can we assess their capabilities?," Faruque was quoted by Cricbuzz.



Gilchrist disagrees with Ponting, declares Warne the greatest cricketer ever

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Australian cricket legend Adam Gilchrist has weighed in on the greatest all-rounder debate, challenging Ricky Ponting's assertion that Jacques Kallis is the best cricketer of all time. While Ponting recently hailed Kallis for his staggering numbers with both bat and ball, Gilchrist believes statistics alone don't define greatness and instead placed the late Shane Warne at the top of cricket's all-time elite.

Bumrah is India's Ronaldo, you don't replace him until you have to, says Harmison

New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Former England fast bowler Steve Harmison has drawn a striking parallel between India's ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah and football superstar

Cristiano Ronaldo, emphasising the irreplaceable nature of the fast bowler. Harmison believes that if Bumrah is forced to miss the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy due to injury, it would be akin to a FIFA World Cup without Ronaldo at his peak. Bumrah, who played a pivotal role in India's Test series against Australia, is struggling with a swelling on his back and is likely to miss the group stage of the Champions Trophy.



Zaheer Khan warns against Gambhir's 'excessive flexibility' in India's white-ball setup



New Delhi, Feb 11 (IANS) : Former India pacer Zaheer Khan has voiced his concerns over Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir's "excessive flexible approach" in the white-ball setup, cautioning that too much experimentation and frequent changes could lead to player insecurity. While acknowledging that flexibility is important, Zaheer stressed the need for clear communication and structured guidelines to maintain squad stability. "You've said that you've got to have flexibility.