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Builders to get full cooperation in Telangana : Bhatti

Hyderabad, Feb 15: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said the State government regards builders and real estate developers as valued members of society due to their role in generating wealth and contributing to the development of Telangana. He assured that the government will provide

full support to these stakeholders. Bhatti Vikramarka spoke as the chief guest at the Telangana Builders Green Summit held at Novotel on Saturday. During his address, he emphasized that the State government will initiate programs that aim to facilitate, rather than hinder, builders' efforts. He also warned that if anyone spreads false informa-

tion intended to disrupt the activities of builders and developers, the government will take strict action against them.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that Hyderabad serves as an excellent environment for builders, noting that various policy initiatives have been implemented to enhance the city's green status. Bhatti



Vikramarka further stated that the state government has undertaken a Musi Rejuvenation project to transform Hyderabad into a global city. Unprecedented in the history of the state, the government has allocated Rs. 10,000 crore for the development of Hyderabad alone.

FM has given very clear picture of Indian economy, reforms : PM Modi



New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while responding to the debate on the Union Budget 2025-26 in the Parliament this week, has given a very clear picture of the Indian economy and ongoing reforms, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday. "During her remarks in Parliament, Finance Minister @nsitharaman has given a very clear picture of the Indian economy and the reform trajectory we are undertaking," PM Modi posted on social media platform X.



PM Modi cementing his role as global leader, says N Chandrababu Naidu

Amaravati, Feb 15 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a "highly successful" visit to the US and France and said that he is cementing his role as a global leader. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP)

national president posted on 'X' that the Prime Minister is cementing his role as a global leader. "During his visit, he strengthened trade, defence, and energy ties and co-chaired the AI Action Summit. I deeply appreciate the Hon'ble PM's leadership in positioning India at the forefront of global AI innovation," wrote CM Naidu, whose party is a crucial ally of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

'BFSI Skilling' course for B.Tech graduates: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Feb.15 (NSS): Telangana's government is spearheading efforts to unlock exciting career opportunities for its youth in Global Capability Centers (GCCs), announced Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu. With Hyderabad rapidly emerging as a thriving hub for GCCs, boasting 355 centers employing over 3 lakh professionals.



MP DK Aruna

dances with tribal women!

Mahbubnagar, Feb.15 (NSS): As part of the 286th birth anniversary celebrations of Sant Sevalal Maharaj, Mahbubnagar MP DK Aruna danced with tribal women in the district. She participated in the celebrations organized by the Mahbubnagar ST Morcha of the party and paid floral tributes at the portrait of Sevalal.



MLC Kavitha slams Revanth Govt

Khammam, Feb 15 (NSS): BRS party MLC Kavitha today criticized the Revanth Reddy government for not being able to govern the State. She alleged that the ruling party was filing illegal cases against her party leaders. Kavitha visited the party leader Lakkineni Surender, who is in remand in Khammam sub-

jail. Speaking to media persons on the occasion, she alleged that Lakkineni Surender was arrested illegally and added that CM Revanth Reddy was trying to rein in the BRS party chief KCR. **Continued on pg 02**



CM Revanth meets Rahul Gandhi, discusses Cabinet expansion

Hyderabad, Feb.15 (NSS): Chief Minister Revanth Reddy called on Congress senior leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Saturday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister discussed cabinet expansion and several key issues related to the Telangana Congress with Rahul Gandhi. Later, in a chit-chat with media persons.



Uttam prepares for national conference on water security

Hyderabad, Feb.15 (NSS): Irrigation & Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy held a high-level meeting with senior officials at Jala Soudha on Saturday to review the State's irrigation strategy ahead of the '2nd All India State Water Ministers' Conference 2025', scheduled to be held in Udaipur, Rajasthan, on February 18-19. The meeting focused on Telangana's priorities in wa-

ter governance, cost-effective irrigation expansion, and completion of pending projects, which will be presented at the national conference. The minister emphasised that the Congress government in Telangana is committed to achieve maximum ayacut expansion with minimal expenditure. He directed officials to prioritise projects that can be completed with least investment while delivering the highest irrigation benefits. During the meeting, officials presented updates on major irrigation projects, including SLBC (Srisailem Left Bank Canal), Dindi, Palamuru-Rangareddy, Devadula, and several lift irrigation schemes.

Andhra Pradesh Police conduct searches at YSRCP leader Vamsi's house in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Feb 15 : Stepping up its investigation into the kidnap and SC/ST atrocity case against YSR Congress Party leader and former MLA Vallabhneni Vamsi, Andhra Pradesh Police on Saturday.



Revanth should think before his comments on PM : Bandi Sanjay

Hyderabad, Feb 15 : Union Minister Bandi Sanjay said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy should think once before talking about Prime Minister Narendra Modi .

MEAI Hyderabad Chapter Hosts National Conference on 'Mining the Marvels: Way Forward Towards Atmanirbhar Viksit Bharat 2047'

Hyderabad, February 14, 2025: The Mining Engineers' Association of India (MEAI), Hyderabad Chapter successfully hosted the first day of a two-day National Conference on the theme "Mining the Marvels: Way Forward Towards Atmanirbhar Viksit Bharat 2047." The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers and experts to deliberate on the future of the mining sector and its role in India's journey towards self-reliance. The inaugural session was graced by Shri Amitava Mukherjee, Chairman-Cum-

Managing Director (Additional Charge), NMDC Ltd., as the Chief Guest. Other distinguished guests included Shri D.B. Sundara Ramam, Vice President - I, MEAI & Vice President, Tata Steel; Shri Dr. N.K. Nanda, Former CMD (Additional Charge) & Director (Technical), NMDC Ltd.; Shri B. Veera Reddy, Former Director (Technical), CIL & Former CMD, CCL; G Dhananjaya Reddy, Vice President II, MEAI and Shri Joydeep Dasgupta, Director (Production), NMDC Ltd. The event was presided over by Shri Vinay Kumar, Director (Technical), NMDC Ltd. and Chairman, MEAI Hyderabad Chapter.



Delivering the keynote address on the theme of the seminar, Shri Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Addl. Charge), NMDC, said, "The role of mining in national development is crucial. He spoke about how the mining industry can bring social and

economic impact in the communities. He emphasized the challenges of attracting young talent due to the remote nature of mining operations and urged MEAI to encourage students and professionals to consider careers in mining. Shri Amitava

Mukherjee also highlighted NMDC's commitment to Responsible Mining and spreading smiles through its community initiatives, setting industry standards as a leader in sustainable mining practices.

Wake up the youth Flash mob of Siricilla Medical College MBBS first-year students

Rajanna Siricilla, February 15 (TIM Bureau): The Siricilla Medical College MBBS first-year students' flash mob program called Wake up the youth was organized at Siricilla Ambedkar Chaurasta on Saturday morning. On this occasion, the youth were inspired to follow the right path and reach higher heights without resorting to bad habits.

Medical College Principal Dr. Bairi Lakshminarayana, Vice Principal Dr. Arun, Government General Hospital Superintendent Dr. Lakshminarayana, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Chikoti Santosh Kumar, Senior Professor Dr. Nagarjuna Chakravarthy, MBBS first-year and second-year students, and medical staff participated in the program. Siricilla Town CI Krishna attended the event as the chief guest and congratulated the students. The organizers thanked SP Akhil Mahajan, traffic police personnel, DPRO, and media friends for their cooperation in the event.



Bank of Baroda
Stressed Assets Management Vertical, Bank of Baroda, Baroda Corporate Center C-26, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai-400051. Email: wfd.bcc@bankofbaroda.co.in

BOB:SAWV:117:206 Date: 16-02-2025

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE (SCN)

M/s Trishul Automotives SF No.52 & 53, Uyyalawada Main Road, Nagar Kumool, Telangana-509209	M/s Trishul Automotives 30-27/5/127, Santoshima Nagar Colony, Near DAV Public School, Saifaluda, Hyderabad, Telangana-500056.	Mr. Kashi Chandra Yadav Manneboina, S/o Gopal Yadav (Partner/Guarantor)	Mr. Niketan Kumar Yadav Manneboina, S/o Gopal Yadav (Partner/Guarantor)
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The Identification Committee on Willful Defaulters of our Bank has instructed to issue SCN to you for classification as Willful Defaulter on the following grounds: (1) The Unit is closed. No stock found during inspection, (2) Remittance of substantial amounts (approx. 78.00 Lakh) to unrelated business entities/individuals amounting to siphoning off funds as per Clause 3(1) (i) (c) of RBI Willful Defaulter Master Direction. The SCN sent to above addresses on 06-02-2025 returned undelivered, thus being published in newspaper. You are called upon to submit written representation within - 21- days at the address given above as to why you should not be classified as Willful Defaulter. In case of non-receipt of the same, the Identification Committee will further proceed in your classification as Willful Defaulter.

Sd/- (General Manager)

Canara Bank
HO: BENGALURU RO: HYDERABAD NORTH

DEMAND NOTICE

Notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

BRANCH OFFICE: WANAPARTHY (07283), KURNOOL ROAD

1. Name of the Borrower(s): Sri. Mallisetty Shiva Shankar, S/o Mallisetty Venkata Swamy, H.No.2-97, Allipur, Balmoor Taluka, Mahabub Nagar District-509203, Telangana. Non-Performing Asset (NPA) as on 03-02-2025 Outstanding Amount: Rs. 35,34,856.85 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Thirty Four thousand Five hundred and Fifty Six and Paise Eighty Five Only) and incidental expenses and costs thereon. Demand Notice Dtd: 05-02-2025 Brief Details of Security/ies: All that the part and parcel of Residential plot bearing No.4, in Sy Nos 936/1/1, 937/A/2, 936/B/21, 937/A/1/2, 936/2/21, 937/A/1/1/2, 936/2/2/TLP No.00702/AL/O/DTCP/3067/0015/2022 & Nala Order Proceeding No.21000495303, an extent of 250.00 Sq.Yards situated Near PANGAL Road Wanaparthi Town and District, STATE TELANGANA in the name of Sri. Mallisetty Shiva Shankar, S/o Mallisetty Venkata Swamy and bounded as follows: North: Plot No.3, South: Plot No.5, East: 30 Feet Road, West: Plot No.8. Mortgage Deed No.9174/2023 Dated: 10-07-2023 Cersai Asset Id: 200073400778; Security Interest Id: 400072061600

BRANCH OFFICE: LALAPET (BIC 1286), HYDERABAD.

2. Name of the Borrower(s): 1. M.Aruna Jyothi (Borrower), W/o M.Chandrasekhar, Plot No.119/A, Tirumala Nagar, Moula Ali, Hyderabad-500040, Telangana (Borrower), 2. M.Chandrasekhar, S/o M.Balakrishna, Plot No.119/A, Tirumala Nagar, Moula Ali, Hyderabad-500040, Telangana (Co-Borrower). Non-Performing Asset (NPA) as on 07-04-2024 Outstanding Amount: Rs.40,74,794.15 (Forty Lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Seven hundred and Ninety Four and Paise Fifteen Only) together with further interest and incidental expenses and costs thereon. Demand Notice Dtd: 12-02-2025 Brief Details of Security/ies: All that the Construction of Stilt + Upper Floors there after on all that the Plot bearing No.114 Southern Part, in Survey No.5 218,217,218,219,220,221 and 222 admeasuring 150 Sq.Yards, or 125.4 Sq.Mtrs., situated at Block No.2, Cherlapally Old Village, Kapra Mandal, Under G.H.M.C Kapra Circle, Medchal-Malkajgiri District in the name of M.Aruna Jyothi & M.Chandrasekhar and Bounded by: North: Plot No.114 Northern Part, South: 20' Wide Road, East: 33' Wide Road, West: Plot No.113.

BRANCH OFFICE: HYDERABAD AHMEDNAGAR

3. Name of the Borrower(s): Legal heirs of Deceased Borrower - Late Sri K.Venkata Sivanaga Pavan Kumar, S/o K.VSR Anjaneyulu, 1, Kalapatapu Subhadra (Legal heir of Deceased Borrower), W/o Late Sri K.Venkata Sivanaga Pavan Kumar, H.No.16-11-749, Mosarambagh, Behind SBH Lane, Dilusukhnagar, Hyderabad-500036. 2. Kalapatapu Naga Sai Srivasini (Legal heir of Deceased Borrower), D/o Late Sri K.Venkata Sivanaga Pavan Kumar, H.No.16-11-749, Mosarambagh, Behind SBH Lane, Dilusukhnagar, Hyderabad-500036. Non-Performing Asset (NPA) as on 16-12-2019 Outstanding Amount: Rs.2,16,26,889.00 (Rupees Two Crore Sixteen Lakhs twenty Six Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty Nine Only) and incidental expenses and costs thereon. Demand Notice Dtd: 10-02-2025 Brief Details of Security/ies: Bearing H.No.10-5-385/51, 10-5-385/84, 10-5-385/A/12, 10-5-385/1/15, 10-5-385/60/4/B, Flat No.1, on First floor, on Tower No. A1 (Block-A), of "The Valencia" in Ward No. 10, Block-5, T.S. No. 26, Sy. No. 129/77, situated at Road No.12, Syed Nagar, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500034 in the name of Late Sri K.Venkata Sivanaga Pavan Kumar, S/o K.VSR Anjaneyulu. Bounded by: BOUNDARIES OF RESIDENTIAL FLAT: North: Open to Sky, South: Open to Sky, East: Corridor, West: Open to Sky

In respect of loans availed by you at our branch, which have become Non Performing Asset(s) with balance outstanding mentioned above along with interest and costs etc. we have already issued detailed demand notice under Sec 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 by Courier/ Registered post with acknowledgement due to you which has been returned, unserved and undelivered. We have indicated our intention of taking possession of securities owned by the borrowers as per Sec 13(4) of the Act in case of your failure to pay the amount mentioned above within 60 days you are advised (1) to collect the original notice/cover addressed to you and returned by Courier/Postal Authorities from the undersigned for more and complete details and (2) to pay the balance outstanding amount with interest and costs etc., within 60 days from the date of notice referred to above to avoid further action under the SARFAESI Act.

Date: 15-02-2025, Place: Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

Bank of Baroda
Medchal Branch, 3-227, NH-44 Sadananda Arcade, Opp. Mukund Theater Medchal-501401. Phone: 08418-220181/Mob No.8367788259

ABRIDGED VEHICLE E-AUCTION NOTICE

In view of the default committed by the Borrowers mentioned below, Bank has repossessed/ seized the Hypothecated Motor Vehicle mentioned below in exercise of the powers conferred under Hypothecation Agreement executed by the parties and same is being auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS BASIS".

Name & Address of the Borrower: Sri. Karthik Ponnala, S/o Ponnala Venkateshwar Rao, 3-6-217/A, Main Road, West Marredpally, Marredpally (M), Secunderabad. Loan A/c No. 6470060002392. Amount Due: Rs.25,11,514/- as on 31-10-2023 + interest + other expenses etc. till date (Less Recovery if any).

Sr. No.	Description of the Vehicle	Reserve Price	EMD	Remarks
1	Vehicle: Four Wheeler, Reg. No.: TS10BWTR4652; Chassis No.: MBJAAA1012014240323; Engine No.: M20ANA56855; MFG/Model: Toyota Innova Hycross Hybrid (7S) BSVI (Petrol), Colour: Super White; MFG Month/Year: April/2023	Rs. 16,20,000/-	Rs. 1,62,000/-	The Successful bidder shall pay the Registration Charges, Vehicle Transfer Charges and Life Tax, Insurance etc.

A/c Name: New Intermediary Account; A/c No.: 64680015181219; IFSC Code: BARBOVJMEDC (Fifth letter- ZERO); Name of Bank & Branch: Bank of Baroda, Medchal Branch.

Vehicle Auction through Online mode: https://bob.auctiontiger.net/Date/Day/Time of E-Auction: 19-03-2025, Wednesday, 11.00 A.M. to 2.00 P.M. Last date of submission of BID: 18-03-2025, Tuesday, before 4.00 P.M. The intending purchasers/ bidders may inspect the Vehicle on or before 17-03-2025 during the time 10.30 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. (At parking Yard: HKGN Parking Yard, Opp. Masqati Dairy Ice Cream Parlour, Turka Yamjal, Hayathnagar Md., Nagarjuna Sagar Road, R.R. Dist-501510, Contact No.9603561534). For online Auction process please contact the Authorised Officer on Tel No. 08418-220181/Mob No.8367788259

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE: 1. Bank of Baroda reserves the right to accept/reject any or all of the offer(s) or Bid (s) so received without assigning any reason thereof. 2. Bank of Baroda reserves the right to accept/reject Postponed/ Cancelled E-auction without assigning any reason thereof. 3. To the best of knowledge and inform on of the Authorised Officer, there is no encumbrance on the vehicle. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of vehicle & to inspect & satisfy themselves. (FOR DETAILED TERM AND CONDITIONS PLEASE REFER TO https://bob.auctiontiger.net/)

Date: 15-02-2025, Place: Medchal, Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda



Awareness programs should be conducted along with extensive inspections for drug control : Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha

Rajanna Siricilla, Feb 15 (TIM Bureau) : Rajanna Siricilla Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha ordered the concerned officials to implement strict action for drug control in the district. The Collector, along with SP Akhil Mahajan, held a district-level narcotic control meeting with the concerned officials on Saturday on the measures taken for drug control in the district. In the district narcotic control meeting, various issues such as NDPS cases registered in the district, mea-

sures to prevent marijuana cultivation, measures to control drug use, programs to be taken by departments to prevent drug use, and widespread publicity on the harm caused by drug use were discussed. Later, Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha explained that the state government has been instructed to take strict action against those

supplying drugs. SP Akhil Mahajan said that a special drive has been launched to control marijuana in the district. He said that extensive inspections are being conducted to curb marijuana, and at the same time, the harm caused by drugs and marijuana is being widely publicized.

MLC Kavitha slams Revanth Govt

Continued From pg 01
"If the BRS leaders are arrested, it will be like stopping KCR. In the Congress government, rythu bandhu, rythu bhima schemes,

pensions and jobs were not available. Revanth Reddy is making false promises to cheat people," she alleged.

She criticized Revanth Reddy saying in the 14 months of the Congress party's rule, nothing had been done except thefts. She said this government would definitely be questioned. Kavitha warned

that no matter how many cases the government filed, they would not be bogged down. She assured that every party worker would be protected by the party high command.

All sections of society should benefit from technology: President Murmu at BIT-Mesra

Ranchi, Feb 15 (IANS) : President Droupadi Murmu, addressing the platinum jubilee celebrations of Birla Institute of Technology (BIT) Mesra on Saturday, emphasised the need to leverage technology for the development of marginalised sections of society.

"All sections of society should equally benefit from the rapidly evolving technological development. Technology and humanity should complement each other. This principle has also been highlighted in our National Education Policy," she said.

Mosquito control in Musi River & its surrounding areas

Hyderabad, Feb 15: To reduce the mosquito menace in the Musi River & its surrounding areas, anti-larval operations have been conducted with over 100 workers.

Basavatarakam cancer hospital's Amaravati unit to be ready in 8 months: Balakrishna

Hyderabad, Feb 15 (IANS) : Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital's Andhra Pradesh unit will be ready later this year, said popular Tollywood actor Nandamuri Balakrishna, who is chairman and managing director of Board of Trustees of the hospital. The hospital is coming up at Thulluru in Amaravati, for which the Andhra Pradesh government allotted 15 acres in 2018.

Balakrishna inaugurated the pediatric oncology unit at the Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital, Hyderabad on Saturday to mark International Childhood Cancer Day. Speaking on the occasion, the Tollywood star said the hospital was expanding its operations. The new hospital at Thulluru will be inaugurated in eight months, he said. Balakrishna stated that with courage, cancer patients can recover from the disease. The hospital was established by former Andhra Pradesh chief minister.

Bank of India
HABSIGUDA BRANCH, 4-7-21/A, Nacharam Main Road, Hyderabad, Telangana-500076. Tel: 040-27172979, Email: habsiguda.telangana@bankofindia.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 02-12-2024 calling upon the borrowers Sri Mr. Satish Kumar Kumbhoji S/o Kumbhoji Venkanna, H.No.1-8-586/6, Patigadda, Secunderabad, Hyderabad-500003, Telangana & R/o. Plot No 79, Balaji Homes, Majeeppur, Shamirpet, Medchal Malkajgiri, Hyderabad-500079, Telangana to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.39,82,882.36 (in words Rupees Thirty Nine Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty two and Thirty Six Paise) plus interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under subsection (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 15th day of February of the year 2025. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India for an amount Rs.39,82,882.36 and interest thereon. The borrowers' 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.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:
All that the finished House on Plot bearing No.79 in Balaji Homes, admeasuring 235 Square yards or equivalent to 196.46 Square meters including with a total plinth area of 3150.0 Sft (R.C.C) (1575.0 Sft in Ground Floor and 1575.0 Sft in First Floor) in part of Survey nos 104/P to 109, 110/P, 111/P, 112,113,114 & 117 situated at Village & Grampanchayat Majeeppur, Mandal & Sub-Dist Shamirpet Dist & Regn. Dist Medchal-Malkajgiri and bounded by: North: 33' Wide Road, South: Plot No. 78, East: 33' Wide Road, West: Plot No. 80.

Date: 15-02-2025, Place: Habsiguda Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of India



Vadodara Municipal Corporation deploys 18 teams to address stray cattle menace

Vadodara, Feb 15 (IANS) : To address the stray cattle menace, the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) has launched an extensive campaign deploying 18 dedicated teams. On the inaugural day of this initiative, the teams successfully captured 29 stray cattle across various city zones. This decisive action follows

recent incidents where stray cattle caused significant harm, including injuries at a wedding and a fatality. In response, the VMC expanded its operations by adding 10 more teams to the existing eight, intensifying the crackdown on stray animals. Historically, despite multiple accidents attributed to stray cattle, the VMC's interventions have been perceived as temporary,

leading to recurring issues. On the first day of the campaign, the 18 teams managed to capture only 29 stray cattle, leading to public concerns about the effectiveness of the operation. Some residents speculate that prior warnings may have been leaked, allowing cattle owners to evade the crackdown. Stray cattle pose a significant challenge in Gujarat, impacting urban and rural areas. According to the 20th Livestock Census, the state reported approximately 343,918 stray cattle. In Ahmedabad, the problem has been particularly acute.

Madrasas in Bengal propagating anti-national ideology, alleges MP Minister Vijayvargiya

Nagpur, Feb 15 (IANS) : Madhya Pradesh Cabinet Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya has alleged that some madrasas in West Bengal are imparting anti-national ideology. He stated that Intelligence agencies are actively investigating the matter. Speaking to media persons here on Saturday, Vijayvargiya asserted, "Anti-national education is being imparted in Bengal's madrasas. Intelligence agencies are investigating the matter. Evidence has been found at some places, though some madrasas are also functioning properly." The BJP leader, who was previously the state in-charge of West Bengal, added, "I have been in Bengal, and I am aware that several madrasas have been involved in propagating anti-national ideology." The issue of alleged anti-national activities in educational institutions was further amplified by Maharashtra Minister and BJP leader Nitesh Rane, who on Wednesday alleged that a minority institute in Nandurbar district had provided shelter to a Yemeni national.



Aero Show 2025: BJP MP takes sortie in indigenous trainer plane; lauds India's Defence Atmanirbharta

Bengaluru, Feb 15 (IANS) : Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya took a sortie on the HTT-40, India's fully indigenous Basic Trainer Aircraft (BTA), at the Aero Show on Saturday. Soon after his sortie, he reflected on the journey of the making of the HTT-40, saying that India has now moved on from scams under the UPA to self-reliance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi by developing its own fully indigenous BTA. He added, "Flying the HTT-40 was an incredible experience. This aircraft is a testament to India's engineering excellence and a shining example of how, with the right policy and support, our scientists and engineers can achieve anything." The HTT-40, developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the Indian Air Force (IAF), is a fully aerobatic aircraft, powered by a four-bladed turbo-prop engine, equipped with a state-of-the-art glass cockpit and the latest safety features, including a zero-zero ejection seat. It marks another

significant step towards achieving greater self-reliance in Defence and aviation, aligning with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by eliminating the dependency on foreign BTAs for pilot training. Speaking after his sortie, Surya said, "The HTT-40 represents India's journey from scam to self-reliance, from foreign dependency to Atmanirbharta."

Lalu Prasad says won't let BJP form govt in Bihar, Deputy CM Sinha hits back

Patna, Feb 15 (IANS) : Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Chief Lalu Prasad on Saturday said that he will not let the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) form the government in Bihar till the time he is active in the state's politics. Speaking to media in Patna, Lalu Prasad said, "How could BJP form the government in Bihar until we are here? We would not allow the BJP to form the government in Bihar." Responding to Lalu Prasad's remarks, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha said the NDA, of which BJP is one of the constituents, will return to power in the state. "It is not certain whether Lalu Prasad will stay or not, but the NDA is sure to form the government in the state," Deputy CM Sinha said. Further criticising the RJD leader, he remarked, "Lalu Prasad doesn't need to stay now because he has made the word 'Bihari' an abuse, created caste frenzy, and enmity between brothers. So, there is no need for people like him." With the Bihar Assembly elections approaching, political tensions have intensified between the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).



DMDK may secure Rajya Sabha seat from AIADMK quota

Chennai, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), founded by the late Tamil superstar Vijayakanth, is likely to receive a Rajya Sabha nomination. The party is likely to field late Vijayakanth's son Vijay Prabhakaran as the DMDK nominee. DMDK general secretary and Vijayakanth's widow, Premalatha, informed the media that the AIADMK had promised the party a Rajya Sabha seat during the discussions leading up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election alliance. The party fielded Vijay Prabhakaran from the Virudhunagar constituency, however, he lost to Congress leader and sitting MP Manickam Tagore by a narrow margin of 4,379 votes. In addition to Virudhunagar, the DMDK contested from Tiruvallur (SC), Central Chennai, Cuddalore, and Thanjavur Lok Sabha constituencies.

You are forcing me: RS chairman warns of 'severe consequences' over chaos in House

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday warned the Opposition members of serious action followed by 'severe consequences' over 'disrespecting' the President's message and creating constant ruckus in the House. As the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) report on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was tabled in the House, Opposition benches erupted in protest. RS Chairman's call to maintain decorum went ignored as some Opposition members gathered in the well of the House and kept raising slogans. The clamour continued even as the Vice President and the House chairman read out the President's message. "Don't show disrespect to the President of India," Dhankhar told the protesting members from Opposition benches. He then urged the Leader of Opposition (LoP) Mallikarjun Kharge to ask them to go back to their seats. Despite Dhankhar's appeal, the chaos continued in the House, prompting him to issue strict a warning



to the agitating lawmakers. "You have been here enough. Do you want me to take ultimate action? Take back your seat. You are forcing me to take serious action. The consequences are severe," Dhankhar said. As the House was reconvened after 10 minutes of adjournment, the government and Opposition engaged in a verbal duel over the JPC report on the Waqf Amendment Bill. Several Opposition lawmakers claimed that parts of their dissent notes were erased from JPC's report, however.

All eyes on Shivakumar's next move amid Siddaramaiah's ambitions to lead party in K'taka Assembly polls

Bengaluru, Feb 15 (IANS) : Fingers are crossed in the ruling Congress in Karnataka following Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's announcement that he is willing to complete his term and lead the party in the next Assembly elections. The Congress camp is particularly concerned about Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar's cryptic tweets, stating that "attempts might be futile, but prayers will surely fetch victory." This comes right after AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's statement regarding the appointment of new state presidents for the party. Meanwhile, Minister for PWD Satish Jarkiholi, a close associate of CM Siddaramaiah, camped in New Delhi for two days and met with high command leaders.



Minister of Cooperation K.N. Rajanna, a staunch follower of CM Siddaramaiah, also visited New Delhi. Home Minister G. Parameshwara is expected to travel there next week.

ED conducts raids in multiple cities in forex trading case of Himachal Police

Chandigarh, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) of Chandigarh zone has conducted search operations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, at various locations in Delhi, Rohtak in Haryana, Noida and Shamli in Uttar Pradesh as part of an ongoing investigation in the case of QFX Trade Ltd and others, running multi-level marketing scheme under the guise of forex trading. Their Directors are Rajender

Sood, Vineet Kumar and Santosh Kumar and one of the masterminds Nawab Ali, a.k.a. Lavish Chaudhary. The ED initiated an investigation on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by Himachal Pradesh Police against QFX Company which had defrauded many investors through a fraudulent forex trading scheme. QFX Company and its Directors were running an unregulated deposit scheme, promising high returns on investments to the investors. The agents of QFX group of



companies ran the MLM Scheme under the name of the QFX investment plan, wherein they created websites, apps, social media ads, etc., to attract investors promising higher rates of return in the name of forex trading.

OPINIONmail



Kharge calls Waqf JPC report 'unconstitutional'; Centre says Opposition misleading issue

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Waqf (Amendment) bill tabled its report in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday amidst uproar by the members of the Opposition members. As the chaos prevailed, the House was adjourned for 10 minutes and convened again with both sides engaging in discussion on the bill. Leader of the House J.P. Nadda also condemned the Opposition for creating a ruckus during the reading of the President's note. Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, called the report "unconstitutional" and "fake." He claimed that multiple members had submitted dissent notes, but the majority view was forced through without due consideration. "The JPC report on Waqf had dissenting views from several members, but they were bulldozed. This is not right. It is condemnable and an anti-democratic act," Kharge stated. Expressing "shock," he said, "The dissenting views were deleted, and the report is being tabled. I condemn this, and the House will never accept this fake report."

He demanded that if dissenting views were excluded, the report should be withdrawn and reviewed again. He urged Leader of the House J.P. Nadda to take back the "unconstitutional" JPC report. Following the uproar, Nadda hit back at the Opposition, slamming their conduct. "Debates and discussions are necessary in Parliament. In a democracy, we agree to disagree. But we must uphold traditions and conduct proceedings in a constitutional manner," he asserted. Expressing disappointment, he added, "Despite repeated requests from the Chair, the Opposition disrupted the House even during the President's message. This behaviour is highly irresponsible and deserves strong condemnation."

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju also targeted the Opposition, accusing them of "misleading" the issue. He stated that no part of the report had been deleted or altered. "Some of the concerns raised by the Opposition were verified, and I found that no section of the report was removed. Everything has been tabled before the House. On what basis are these allegations being made? Do not mislead the issue," Rijju said, dismissing the claims as false. He further pointed out that the Opposition was actively involved in the preparation of the report over the past six months. Jagdambika Pal, BJP MP and Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, had earlier said that the committee was presenting its report after months of consultations. Pal highlighted that disagreements were part of the legislative process. He added that even after the report's finalisation, dissenting members were invited to submit their notes of dissent, which were included in the final report along with stakeholders feedback. Despite this, opposition leaders continued to express their objections. Trinamool Congress MPs Kalyan Banerjee and Md Nadimul Haque, both JPC members, accused the committee of expunging key portions of their dissent notes from the final report.

The Waqf Act of 1995, introduced to regulate Waqf properties, has long been criticized for mismanagement, corruption, and illegal encroachments. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aims to address these concerns by implementing reforms, including digitisation of records, enhanced auditing measures, improved transparency, and legal mechanisms to reclaim unlawfully occupied properties.

EDITORIAL
the indian mail

Leading Australian expert calls for urgent action to reduce impacts of climate change

Australia and other high-emissions countries must take drastic climate action following a record-breaking year in 2024, a world-leading expert has said. Mark Howden, director of the Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions (ICEDS) at the Australian National University (ANU), on Thursday said that global greenhouse gas emissions must be cut rapidly to prevent the impacts of climate change from becoming irreversible. In comments released ahead of his final annual State of the Climate address, Howden - who will step down as ICEDS director 10



years later in 2025 - said that Australia has the natural resources and means to become a global leader in renewable energy and climate adaptation, reports Xinhua news agency. He said that the world "is paying the price of the escalating impacts" of climate change after average global temperatures exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels for the first time in 2024. "Not only was 2024 the hottest year on record, but each of the last 10 years is the hottest 10 years on record - the change is unrelenting," Howden, who is also vice-chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

as their body temperature increases with global warming. The research, which was published on Thursday by the University of Queensland (UQ), analysed 15 years of data from sensors and trackers on 203 wild saltwater crocodiles in rivers on the Cape York Peninsula, Australia's northernmost point. Researchers found that the crocodiles are spending more time at or near their critical thermal limit of 32-33 degrees Celsius, at which point their diving and swimming performance is impacted. The study found that since 2008, the temperature peaks experienced by the crocodiles have increased by 0.5 degrees Celsius and their median body temperature has increased by 0.11 degrees Celsius. Of the crocodiles that were studied, 45 experienced body temperatures above 34 degrees Celsius at least once.



China reveals names of moon-landing spacesuit, manned lunar rover

The China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) on Wednesday unveiled the names of the moon-landing spacesuit and manned lunar rover for the country's manned lunar exploration missions. The moon-landing spacesuit is named Wangyu, meaning gazing into the cosmos, and it echoes the name of the country's extravehicular spacesuit, Feitian, which means flying into space, according to the CMSA, Xinhua news agency reported. It represents that after realising the goals of spaceflight and establishing China's space station, the country's manned space programme has embarked on a new journey of venturing to the moon and deeper space.

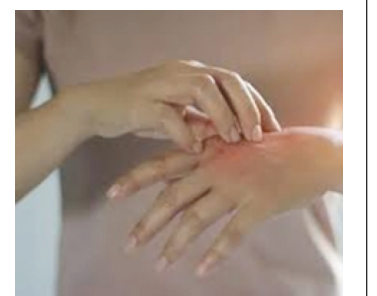


South Sudan targets 3.4 million children in new polio vaccination campaign

South Sudan, in partnership with United Nations agencies, launched the fourth round of the polio vaccination campaign, with the goal of vaccinating 3.47 million children between the ages of 0 and 59 months. Harriet Pasquale Akello, undersecretary in the Ministry of Health on Wednesday said the vaccination aims to eliminate transmission of poliomyelitis (polio) among children across the country. "In light of our country's challenging conditions, we urge everyone to seize this opportunity. Every child under five must receive oral polio vaccines. Our goal is to stop the transmission of poliomyelitis," Akello said in a joint statement issued in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. The campaign, spearheaded by South Sudan's Ministry of Health with support from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), follows the recent confirmation of 36 cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) in eight counties of the country. Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan, said the vaccination campaign is a significant step towards eradicating polio, a disease that no child should ever have to face, Xinhua news agency reported. "This campaign is a crucial step toward eliminating the outbreak and safeguarding every child from this debilitating disease. Because no child is safe, until all are protected, we continue to strengthen the cold chain system to maintain vaccine efficacy, mobilise communities and empower frontline health workers to reach even the most remote areas," said Obia Achieng, deputy representative of UNICEF.

Philippines bans German animal product imports amid threat of foot-and-mouth disease

The Philippines has issued a temporary ban on the importation of animal products from Germany amid a recent outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) in the European country, local media reported on Wednesday. Philippine Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said in a memorandum issued on Monday that the import ban is part of the government's emergency measure to prevent the dangerous communicable animal disease from infecting local animals. "The order shall take effect immediately and shall remain enforced unless revoked in writing," the memo read. However, certain products are exempt from the ban, such as ultra-high temperature milk and derivatives, heat-treated meat products in hermetically sealed.



UN panel asks Yunus govt not to ban any political party in Bangladesh

The United Nations has recommended Bangladesh against banning any political party for the sake of a multi-party democracy. "Refrain from political party bans that would undermine a return to a genuine multi-party democracy and effectively disenfranchise a large part of the Bangladeshi electorate," a fact-finding report published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) detailed, reported leading Bangladesh daily Prothom Alo on Wednesday. Last October, within weeks of coming to power after the fall of the government led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the interim government had banned the student wing of Awami League, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

25 countries now legally recognise Ayurveda: Ayush MoS Prataprao Jadhav

Ayurveda is now legally recognised as a traditional medicine system in over 25 countries and the Indian Ayush sector's market size has expanded from \$3 billion in 2014 to \$23.3 billion in 2022, at a CAGR of 17 per cent, according to Union Minister of State for Ayush, Prataprao Jadhav. He said, "The expansion of Ayush-based medical tourism, facilitated by the Ayush Visa, has increased the number of international patients seeking treatment in India." Talking about Ayush's popularity within the country, Jadhav cited the report of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).





Kenya ramps up measures to curb viral disease spread

Nairobi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Kenya's health authorities said that robust measures are underway to mitigate the risks of viral diseases such as Marburg, mpox, and Ebola across the country. Cabinet Secretary for Health Deborah Barasa said that although the Marburg virus outbreak remains confined to Tanzania's Kagera region, Kenya's geographical proximity and high cross-border interactions pose a significant risk of imported cases. Barasa said the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, has heightened surveillance and response measures to ensure continuous preparedness. "Additionally, infection prevention and control training for healthcare workers has been prioritised, with facilities being equipped with protective gear to ensure safety and continuous readiness," she said at a weekly media briefing in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. According to a

statement from the ministry, key preparedness measures include activating the Marburg Contingency Plan, enhancing screening at points of entry, activating laboratory networks, and developing case management guidelines to contain the disease. Barasa emphasised Kenya's strong regional coordination, working closely with Tanzanian health authorities and the international medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres to strengthen disease surveillance and technical support. Meanwhile, Patrick Amoth, director-general for health in the Ministry of Health, called for heightened vigilance and strict adherence to infection prevention protocols to minimise the risk of Marburg transmission. "By sustaining these measures and fostering ongoing collaboration, Kenya aims to mitigate the risk of Marburg virus spread and safeguard public health effectively," Amoth said.

Jordan to take in 2,000 sick Gaza children, opposes displacing Palestinians: PM

Amman, Feb 15 (IANS) : Jordan is ready to receive 2,000 sick Gaza children for medical treatment, as the healthcare system in the coastal enclave has been devastated, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan said. According to Jordan's state-run Petra news agency, during a parliamentary session, Hassan on Saturday reaffirmed Jordan's clear and unwavering position that there should be no resettlement nor displacement of Palestinians and that no solutions to the

Palestinian issue should be at Jordan's expense. Jordan will not act unilaterally on matters concerning the future of Palestine and the region, he said, adding that the country is working with Arab nations, alongside Egypt and Palestinians, to formulate a unified and clear Arab position on Gaza's reconstruction, Xinhua news agency reported. He said that supporting Palestinians' resilience and defending their just rights are at the core of Jordan's efforts, and a just resolution to the Palestinian cause based on the establishment of an inde-

pendent Palestinian state is the foundation of achieving regional security, stability, and peace. He added that Jordan's stability and security, and the protection of its people, are paramount. Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Wednesday reaffirmed that Jordan will not accept any proposal to relocate Palestinians from Gaza to other countries, including Jordan and Egypt. "There are firm and unchanging Jordanian positions. Palestinians cannot be transferred to Egypt, Jordan, or any other Arab state," Safadi told Al Jazeera. He stressed



that a just peace can only be achieved through a two-state solution, ensuring Palestinian sovereignty and independence. Both Jordan and Egypt have strongly opposed any forced displacement. The Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and Arab nations have rejected Trump's plan outright.



India and Cambodia continue to strengthen Buddhist linkages

Phnom Penh, Feb 15 (IANS) : India and Cambodia continue to solidify Buddhist linkages, including religious tourism. Indian Ambassador to Cambodia Vanlalvawna Bawitlung called on the Cambodian Minister of Culture and Religion Chay Borin and discussed ways to further strengthen various cultural partnerships. During their meeting, they also discussed the expansion of cooperation in religious affairs and outlined plans to bring Buddhist relics from India to Cambodia in 2026. The Cambodian minister highlighted various initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Hun Manet in promoting Buddhist institutions. He acknowledged India's continued support, especially in providing assistance to Cambodian monks, pagodas, and provid-

ing scholarships for Cambodian students studying in India, reported Cambodian daily Khmer Times. As part of PM Narendra Modi's 'Act East' policy, India's engagement with Cambodia continues to grow tremendously with special emphasis also being laid on promoting Buddhist linkages. New Delhi views Buddhism as a connecting factor to enhance ties with the South East Asian nations, including Cambodia. In 1979, India was the sole nation to recognise Cambodia after the fall of the infamous Khmer Rouge regime and an embassy in Phnom Penh was revived in 1981. India also continues to play an extremely significant role in the restoration of ancient temples and heritage sites like the famous Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Cambodian society is predominantly Buddhist and retains a strong influence of Hindu and Buddhist rituals, idolatry and mythology. It has been seen that many of its rituals have resemblance with Indian culture and traditions. Khmer, Cambodia's official language, has more than 3000 words originating from Sanskrit. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Cambodia was signed in 2000 and has been renewed from time to time. Cultural diplomacy and Buddhism have been the cornerstone of India's foreign policy, fostering stronger bilateral and regional ties.

Karachi tense after protest against commercial trucks intensifies

Karachi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Pakistan's economic hub and the provincial capital of Sindh province remained tense on Saturday after violent protests broke out against commercial trucks, involved in a number of fatal accidents across the city. Protests against the protesters termed as "killer" trucks and dumpers resulted in arson on trucks in different parts of the city and also called for torching and puncturing tyres of trucks which enter the city. The chaos has resulted in violent attacks on dumpers and trucks, spreading fear of unrest in the city. The protesters torched at least four dumpers and trucks in different areas of Karachi, prompting authorities to take action against the culprits and arrest political leader Afaq Ahmed, leader of Muhajir Qoumi Movement (MQM - Muhajir) for calling his supporters to target trucks and dumpers in the city. The violent protests are a response to a series of incidents involving road accidents involving heavy trucks and dumpers. The provincial government took notice of the incidents and restricted the entry of heavy trucks into the city during the daytime. However, trucks continued to enter the city and were seen moving around the industrial areas and other parts.



Tulsi Gabbard confirmed America's top spy as DNI

Washington, Feb 15 (IANS) : The US Senate on Saturday confirmed Tulsi Gabbard, a former Congresswoman, as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), who oversees the country's 18-member intelligence community, including the CIA and the NSA. Gabbard, 43, was confirmed in a 52-48 vote largely along party lines, with only Senator Mitch McConnell, the former Republican majority leader voting against her. Gabbard is now the 18th member of President Donald Trump's cabinet to be

confirmed. Among the pending are Kash Patel, nominee to head the FBI; and Robert F Kennedy Jr, nominee to head the health and human services. Gabbard is now the second former co-chair of the Congressional India.



Cholera outbreak kills over 100 people in Angola

Luanda, Feb 15 (IANS) : Angola has recorded 3,402 cholera cases and 114 deaths since the outbreak began in early January, according to the Health Ministry's daily press release. Since February 1, Angola has been reporting more than 100 new cholera cases daily, peaking at 295 on February 8. However, laboratory testing to confirm infections remains limited, with only about 20 samples analysed per day, Saturday's press release said.



Political uncertainty and turmoil cripples Bangladesh economy

Dhaka, Feb 15 (IANS) : Large and small entrepreneurs are grappling with mounting financial pressure as rising interest rates continue to drive borrowing costs in Bangladesh. Uncertainty looms over the uninterrupted gas supply which is crucial for manufacturing, United News of Bangladesh reported on Saturday. Several small and large entrepreneurs claimed that law enforcement agencies, especially the

Bangladesh police, must play a vital role at the field level, particularly where roads are blocked, and labour unrest erupts based on rumours or minor issues. Abdul Awal Mintoo, former President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), told UNB that "Domestic and international trade will expand when a political government assumes state power.

South Korea: Yoon attends likely final hearing of impeachment trial

Seoul, Feb 15 (IANS) : South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Saturday attended what is likely the final hearing of his impeachment trial over his short-lived imposition of martial law in December. Yoon and other witnesses, including National Intelligence Service Director Cho Tae-yong, appeared for the eighth formal hearing of the trial at the Constitutional Court in central Seoul, a month after the first session took place on January 14. Thursday's hearing took place as the court has yet to schedule additional dates for the trial's oral arguments, raising the possibility that they could end on the day. Should oral arguments conclude Thursday, a final deci-

sion on whether to uphold Yoon's impeachment or reinstate him is expected to be made in early March. The court can still schedule one or two more hearing dates if deemed necessary, but it has so far said that nothing has been decided over additional hearings. If additional hearings are scheduled, the court is expected to reach a decision by mid-March, Yonhap news agency reported. In the impeachment trials of former Presidents Roh Moo-hyun and Park Geun-hye, the court announced its decisions about two weeks after oral arguments ended. Earlier on February 11, six opposition parties proposed a special counsel bill to investigate allegations against impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's influence-peddling scandal linked to the parliamen-



tary by-elections in 2022. The scandal involved allegations that Myung Tae-kyun, a self-proclaimed power broker, took approximately 76 million won (\$54,400) from former ruling party lawmaker Rep. Kim Young-sun in exchange for his help in getting her nominated for the 2022 parliamentary by-elections. Myung allegedly won Kim Young-sun's nomination in exchange for conducting public opinion polls favourable to Yoon ahead of the 2022 presidential election.

Power cuts back in Delhi soon after BJP win in election : Atishi

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Linking the exit of AAP from the Delhi government to the return of power cuts, former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Saturday alleged that long blackouts have been taking place in many parts of the city since the Assembly election with many voters realising their mistake of electing the BJP.

Addressing the media five days after the AAP lost power in Delhi after 11 years, Atishi said the BJP does not know

how to run a government. "From 1993 to 1998, when the BJP was in power the state of Delhi's power sector was deplorable," she said. The Kalkaji legislator said that people have started realising the mistake they have committed by voting the BJP to power, adding that it is the same story in all the states where the BJP is in power. "Within three days of winning the Delhi election, the BJP has started converting Delhi into Uttar Pradesh where long power cuts of 3-4 hours take place every day," she said.

The difference between a government of educated people and a government of people with forged degrees has become clear to people within three days, said Atishi.

"Immediately after the exit of the AAP government, it has become clear that the BJP is struggling to govern the city," she said.

"I am receiving phone calls from different parts of the city, especially Mayur Vihar phase-III DDA flats that for the first time some residents of the area have bought an inverter as power cuts

have suddenly returned to torment them after the election," she said.

The situation is the same in Sangam Vihar, Vikaspuri and Uttam Nagar whose residents have started buying inverters which operate on batteries.

She said a parent called her and said that her daughter is preparing for Board exams and there was a long power cut in their area last night. "The parent said he bought an inverter today morning to ensure that his daughter does not face a similar



problem during exams."

The former CM asked if the power cuts started in February, which is relatively a cool month, and what will be the state of affairs in May-June when air-conditioners are used and the peak power demand in the city rises

to 8500 MW," she said.

Atishi's attack on the BJP comes at a time when the victorious party is still holding consultations with its legislators over the contours of the Cabinet and the name of the new Chief Minister.



School headmaster killed in bomb attack in Jharkhand's Madhupur

Deoghar (Jharkhand), Feb 15 (IANS) : In a shocking incident, Sanjay Das, the headmaster of a government middle school in Madhupur, Jharkhand, was killed in a bomb attack on Saturday, police officials said.

The attack took place in Piprasol under Madhupur police station limits, sending shockwaves across the region. Das, 52, was posted at a school in Mahuadabar village and had arrived at the school premises around 8:30 a.m. to register his biometric attendance. About half an hour later, as he was leaving on his scooter, unidentified assailants ambushed him and hurled bombs at him.

The explosion triggered panic among locals and students. Das collapsed on the spot, succumbing to his injuries instantly.

Eyewitnesses said that the assailants came on a motorcycle and fled immediately after the assault. Upon receiving information, police personnel from Madhupur station rushed to the location and cordoned off the area. The body was sent to a local hospital for post-mortem, and forensic teams were deployed to gather evidence from the crime scene.

While the exact motive behind the attack remains unclear, initial investigations suggest a possible land dispute as a reason. Preliminary inquiries indicate that the attackers had prior knowledge of Das' routine and had been waiting for the right moment to strike. Family members of the deceased, who arrived at the scene upon hearing the tragic news, were inconsolable. The police are also questioning other teachers and school staff to gather more information.

Bengal Police deny permission for Mohan Bhagwat's meeting, RSS moves HC

Kolkata, Feb 15 (IANS) : The West Bengal unit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, on Saturday, approached a single judge bench of the Calcutta High Court challenging the denial of police permission for a meeting of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in Burdwan town of East Burdwan district. The district police have denied the permission on the grounds that since the secondary examination conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) is currently underway there are restrictions on the use of loudspeakers during that period.

The district police, while denying the permission, had also pointed out that there is a school near the venue of the proposed meeting of the RSS chief. However, there is a counter-argument that since the meeting will be on Sunday there will be no question of the examination process being disturbed. On Saturday, the state unit of RSS approached Calcutta High Court challenging the denial of police permission. The matter is expected to come up for hearing on Friday.

Bhagwat is currently on a tour in West Bengal. During the tour, he met different state functionaries of RSS and discussed how to expand the organisation's network in the state. The proposed meeting at Burdwan on Sunday is a part of the exercise focussing on districts in central Bengal. Political observers feel that the tour is extremely crucial on two counts, the first of which is the crucial West



Bengal Assembly elections in 2025. Secondly, the tour is happening against the backdrop of the continuing persecution of the minority Hindu population in neighbouring Bangladesh, the obvious impact of which is felt in West Bengal which has the longest international border with Bangladesh.

On February 8, Bhagwat had a long meeting with the parents of the victim female doctor in the R.G. Kar rape and murder case. The latter have sought the intervention of the RSS chief in ensuring justice for their daughter. During the meeting, the victim's parents, especially, requested Bhagwat to ensure that the Centre takes necessary steps and gives appropriate instructions so that a fair investigation into the matter is carried out in future and all the masterminds behind the ghastly crime are punished. Bhagwat gave them his assurances on the matter.

Sachin Pilot questions Rajasthan gov't's silence over phone tapping

Jaipur, Feb 15 (IANS) : Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot on Saturday questioned the Bhajan Lal government over its silence on phone tapping allegations made by state minister Kirodi Lal Meena. Addressing the media persons, Pilot pointed out that a sitting minister had accused his own government of phone tapping. However, the government has remained silent on the matter. Furthermore, despite the minister resigning months back, his resignation has not been accepted.

Pilot emphasised that no government has the right to violate an individual's privacy, regardless of their position.

"If a minister himself is alleging that his phone is being tapped and is speaking about it publicly, the government must respond," he stated. Criticising the government's inaction, Pilot noted that while the minister has stepped down, his resignation remains unaccepted. "Instead of addressing the serious allegations, the party is merely questioning him on why he spoke out.



Cong gov't in Himachal misusing central funds to construct boundary wall for private firm: BJP

Shimla, Feb 15 (IANS) : Himachal Pradesh BJP Vice President and former minister Rajeev Saikal on Saturday accused the Congress government in the state of constructing a boundary wall by spending Rs 8.75 crore for a private company in the industrial belt of Baddi by using funds from the centrally-sponsored PM Gati Shakti scheme.

"The government should answer why the Central funds were diverted. The PM Gati Shakti scheme, designed to enhance seamless connectivity and infrastructure.



Chhattisgarh CM, Cabinet, all-party MLAs head to Prayagraj for Maha Kumbh

Raipur, Feb 15 (IANS) : Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, along with his Cabinet, ruling and opposition MLAs, and all the Lok Sabha MPs from the state, is heading to Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, to participate in the Maha Kumbh and take a holy dip at the sacred Triveni Sangam. The leaders will board a flight from Swami Vivekananda Airport in Raipur and are expected to reach Prayagraj later in the day. Expressing his enthusiasm about the visit, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said, "Today, the Chhattisgarh government, the Council of Ministers, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor, MPs, and MLAs are all heading to Prayagraj to take a holy dip at the Maha Kumbh and become part of this sacred occasion." Acknowledging the warm invitation extended by the Uttar Pradesh government, Sai further added, "We would like to thank Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for their invitation. Additionally, Chhattisgarh has set up a pavilion at the Kumbh, providing free accommodation and meals for devotees from our state." Emphasiz-

ing the spiritual significance of their visit, he said, "It is our privilege to go there and wish for a prosperous Chhattisgarh."

CM Sai's wife, Kaushalya Sai, who is also accompanying him, expressed her gratitude to the Uttar Pradesh government for the opportunity. Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly Speaker Raman Singh described the occasion as a moment of pride for the entire state.

"It is a great fortune for all of Chhattisgarh that under the leadership of our honourable Chief Minister, along with the honourable Governor and all of us legislators -- both from the ruling and opposition parties -- we are participating in this grand occasion," he said.

Kerala Forest Minister slams Bishops for demanding his resignation

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 15 (IANS) : With people in Wayanad losing their sleep after three locals were killed by wild animals, on Saturday Kerala Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran turned his ire towards Bishops who have demanded his resignation over the matter. Speaking to the media here just before leaving for the State Assembly he ruled out his resignation. "Resignation is a political demand. I have always regarded the bishops at a very high level and I have always respected them. They are always known for their soothing remarks, but now I feel that is not the case," said Saseendran. Two Catholic bishops -- Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, who heads the Thamarassery Diocese and his colleague Mar Jose Pulickal who heads the Kanjirapally Diocese.



Hyundai crosses 37 lakh unit exports from India, to make more cars for the world

Gurugram, Feb 15 (IANS) : Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), one of the country's leading automobile manufacturers, has completed 25 years of exports from India, reinforcing its position as the largest exporter in this segment. Since starting exports in 1999, the company has shipped over 3.7 million (37 lakh) vehicles

across the globe, it said in a statement. The company's export data showed the success of India's push for self-reliant and globally competitive automobile production. Over the years, Hyundai has expanded its global reach, exporting cars to more than 150 countries. At present, the company supplies vehicles to over 60 nations.



GCC leasing surges to 31 pc of total market, Bengaluru leads



Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : Global Capability Centres (GCCs) have leased 22.5 million square feet (mn sq ft) in 2024, accounting for 31 per cent of total leasing volumes, according to the latest office market assessment by real estate consultancy Knight Frank India. Of this, 50 large deals (over 100,000 sq ft each) totalled 12.1 mn sq ft, while 56 mid-sized deals (50,000 - 100,000 sq ft) contributed 4.4 mn sq ft. Additionally, 223 smaller deals (under 50,000 sq ft) accounted for 5.5 mn sq ft of leased space, the report states. Among cities, Bengaluru recorded the high-

est total GCC leasing at 9.33 mn sq ft, 66 per cent of which (6.18 mn sq ft) came from large deals -- marking a 191 per cent surge in absorption. Hyderabad followed, with GCC transactions totalling 5.06 mn sq ft, of which 67 per cent (3.41 mn sq ft) were in the large office space category. Chennai with 89 and NCR with 53 deals also saw good uptake by GCCs in 2024. Bengaluru emerged as the dominant market, capturing 42 per cent of total GCC leasing volumes with 100 lease transactions -- the highest among all cities. Across the top eight cities, GCCs executed 329 leasing deals in 2024.



Nearly 61 pc CFOs plan to hike average employee compensation this year

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS): About 61 per cent of CFOs globally are planning to increase average employee compensation this year, compared to 71 per cent in 2024 and 86 per cent in 2023. According to a Gartner report, CFOs are planning significant technology budget increases, viewing digital investments as crucial for growth and efficiency. While 77 per cent of respondents plan to boost spending in the technology category with almost half 47 per cent of CFOs intending to increase spending by 10 per cent or more in 2025 compared to last year. The results underscore the critical role of technology in driving profitable growth and effi-

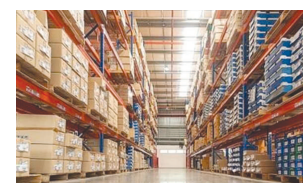
ciency across industries. The continued focus on technology aligns with developments in traditional and generative AI, which promise to drive new offerings, enhance decision-making, and boost productivity, said Randeep Rathindran, Distinguished VP, Research in the Gartner Finance practice. According to the report, although the cooling labour market gives organisations more negotiating power on compensation, CFOs should remain sensitised to the potential risks of attrition and low engagement as prices for household necessities remain stubbornly high. The report further stated that most sectors are prioritising technology spending

in 2025. In the retail sector, cost of goods sold (COGS) and compensation are likely to see increases as organisations aim to enhance product quality and customer interactions. Meanwhile, in the banking sector, compensation and external services are also prioritised to attract technical talent and outsource nonstrategic work. Rathindran said that investing in technology is no longer a choice but a necessity for companies aiming to maintain a competitive edge. The consistent increase in technology budgets across sectors highlights the ongoing strategic shift towards digital transformation as a driver of innovation and efficiency, he mentioned.

Tier 2 and 3 cities emerge growth drivers in India's warehousing sector

Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : India's total warehousing stock reached 533.1 million square feet last year, with emerging tier 2 and 3 cities now contributing approximately 100 million sq ft, or about 18.7 per cent of the total stock, according to a report released on Saturday. This shift represents a fundamental change in the country's logistics map towards hub-and-spoke model, improving last-mile delivery capabilities as envisioned during the implementation of goods and service tax (GST), said the report by leading real estate firm JLL.

The Indian warehousing market has experienced remarkable growth in major cities since implementation of GST. Growth is now expanding to emerging tier II-III cities as hub and spoke model is playing out.



OpenAI is not for sale, Board tells Elon Musk

San Francisco, Feb 15 (IANS) : Sam Altman-run OpenAI on Saturday rejected billionaire Elon Musk's offer to buy the nonprofit company for \$97.4 billion. In a statement on X social media platform, Bret Taylor, Board

Chair of OpenAI, called Musk's bid "an attempt to disrupt his competition." "OpenAI is not for sale, and the board has unanimously rejected Mr. Musk's latest attempt to disrupt his competition," Taylor posted.

SEBI rejects US businessman Gaekwad's bid for competing offer in Religare stake sale

Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Saturday rejected a request from US-based businessman Danny Gaekwad to make a competing

offer for a majority stake in Religare Enterprises Limited. Gaekwad had proposed an offer that was 17 per cent higher than the Rs 235-per-share bid made by the Burman family of Dabur

for a 26 per cent stake in the company. His offer aimed to acquire a 55 per cent stake in Religare. However, the Burman family, responding to Gaekwad's bid,

stated that his proposal was not formal as he had only sought SEBI's permission to make the offer. They also pointed out that he was already late in entering the bidding process.



DPIIT Secretary reviews massive infra projects in Gujarat, Rajasthan

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Amardeep Bhatia, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to review key issues affecting mega infrastructure projects in the state of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

ICICI Securities pays Rs 80 lakh fine to settle SEBI's margin trading violations

Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : ICICI Securities on Saturday settled allegations of violating securities laws by paying a settlement amount of over Rs 80 lakh to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The violations were mainly related to margin trading facilities (MTF). The market regulator had accused ICICI Securities of not following the agreed terms under the margin trading facility. According to SEBI rules, any unconfirmed pledge securities under MTF must be squared off by the next trading day (T+1). However, the company allegedly failed to do so and instead kept these securities in the Client Unpaid Securities Account



(CUSA) or the pool account without pledging them. This violated multiple SEBI circulars and stockbroker regulations. Another major issue was a software glitch in ICICI Securities' system. The module responsible for liquidating shares was not functional from November 11, 2022, to May 31, 2023. As a result, securities lying in the CUSA or pool account could not be squared off for MTF clients. This disruption led to operational inconsistencies and non-compliance with SEBI regulations.

Global e-commerce market expected to hit \$11 trillion by 2028

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : The global e-commerce market is on track for significant growth and is expected to reach \$11 trillion by 2028, a report said on Saturday. The expansion is being fuelled by rapid technological advancements, improved delivery services, and rising internet penetration worldwide.



TN govt launches door-to-door leprosy detection campaign

Chennai, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Tamil Nadu Health Department on Saturday commenced a statewide leprosy case detection campaign to screen suspected cases. The campaign will continue until February 28 with over 20,000 volunteers conducting intensive door-to-door screenings.

The initiative aims to cover 133 rural blocks and 27 urban areas across 37 districts.

According to Tamil Nadu Director of Health Services, Dr T.S. Selvavinayagan, 18,192 searchers will screen residents in rural blocks, while 4,332 searchers will conduct screenings in urban areas over the next two weeks.

The campaign will extend its outreach to schools, colleges, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) workers, self-help group (SHG) members, voluntary organisations, and government offices.

Leprosy, a communicable disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae* bacteria, spreads through droplets from coughing or sneezing by untreated individuals. The disease has an incubation period of 5-7 years.

Dr Selvavinayagan stated: "Leprosy manifests when the infected person's immunity declines. The initial symptom is a hypo-pig-

mented patch with a loss of sensation on the skin. With early detection, leprosy can be fully cured through multi-drug therapy (MDT)."

He warned that untreated leprosy could lead to complications such as peripheral nerve damage, resulting in deformities of the eyes, hands, and feet. The Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) 2025 aims to identify cases early, including hidden cases, and provide prompt treatment.

Dr Selvavinayagan urged the public to cooperate with searchers visiting their homes and to volunteer for screenings. He emphasised Tamil Nadu's potential to elimi-

nate leprosy by 2025. "Elimination does not mean total eradication. It means reducing the disease to a level where it is no longer a public health problem. There should be no new deformity cases or childhood cases. Rehabilitation for individuals with leprosy-related deformities will continue," he said.

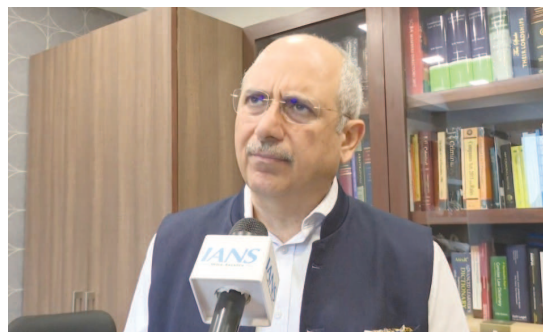
He said that as a preventive measure, post-exposure prophylaxis with a single dose of rifampicin will be provided where necessary. Additionally, all school children will be screened by public health teams.

The health department advises the public to report any of the follow-



ing symptoms to searchers for further evaluation and follow-up at Primary Health Centres (PHCs). The likely symptoms are hypopigmented skin patches with loss of sensation, inability to close eyes, thickening of earlobes and nodules, weakness or numbness in hands and feet, clawing of fingers

and toes, muscle wasting in hands and feet, difficulty holding objects, non-healing ulcers on hands and feet. The Tamil Nadu Health Department encourages public participation and cooperation to ensure the campaign's success and help eliminate leprosy as a public health concern in the state.



BJP slams Oppn for disrupting Parliament over Waqf Bill

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : BJP National Spokesperson Nalin Kohli on Saturday strongly criticised Opposition parties for disrupting proceedings in the Lok Sabha over the Waqf Bill. Kohli accused the Opposition of consistently seeking opportunities to create chaos and hinder the smooth functioning of Parliament. Speaking with IANS, Kohli said, "There's a clear process for how Parliament operates. For years, the Opposition parties have actively looked for chances to derail the proceedings. They find fault with every issue and insist on questioning the process of lawmaking. "When Parliament passes a law, it follows a set procedure. There is room for debate and amendments, but the Opposition has consistently refused to engage in that process."

"Instead, they call for boycotts and disruption. Does the Opposition not realise that such behaviour only undermines Parliament's ability to function? There's a lot they want to say about the Waqf Bill, but disruptive tactics won't help get the work done."

He further reacted to Congress leader Srinivas BV's social media post where he mocked the new RSS building, calling it a "Sheesh Mahal." Kohli responded to this, saying, "The Congress party is clearly out of touch with the pulse of Delhi's voters. It's evident they lack a genuine political issue, or the ones they raise simply don't resonate with the public."

J&K Lt Governor orders zero tolerance to terrorism and terrorists

Srinagar, Feb 15 (IANS) : Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha chaired a high-level meeting in Srinagar on Saturday to review the security scenario in the Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by DGP J&K, Nalin Prabhat; ADGP Hqrs, MK Sinha; ADGP CID, Nitish Kumar; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Mandeep K. Bhandari; IGP Kashmir, Vidhi Kumar Birdi; IGP Crime, Sunil Gupta; IGP Security, Sujit Kumar; IGP Railways, Vivek Gupta; Range DIGs, SSPs, Commandants of AP/IR Battalions and various other senior officers of J&K Police, in person and through virtual mode.

The DGP briefed the chair regarding the present security scenario of the valley and the roadmap put in place to counter.



After CM Mamata, Abhishek Banerjee too calls for going alone in Bengal Assembly polls

Kolkata, Feb 15 (IANS) : Trinamool Congress General Secretary and the party's Lok Sabha member Abhishek Banerjee, on Saturday, echoed and justified West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's recent announcement of the party contesting alone in the crucial Bengal Assembly elections in 2026 without having any understanding with any other party, including the Congress. Speaking to media persons on Thursday, Abhishek Banerjee said that the most im-

portant thing in an election is public support, whether any party is contesting alone or in alliance with others.

"If public support is there, victory is bound to come irrespective of whether a party is contesting alone or in an alliance. The best example on this count is West Bengal. Here we have won after contesting alone," he said.

Earlier this week the Chief Minister said that since Congress has nothing in West Bengal there is no question of having an alliance with it in the state. She also said at that meeting with party legislators that Trinamool Congress will form the government again for the fourth time in 2026 securing two-third majority.

HC issues notice to AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan in Delhi Waqf Board money laundering case

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Delhi High Court on Saturday issued a notice to AAP legislator Amanatullah Khan in connection with the Delhi Waqf Board money laundering case.

A bench of Justice Vikash Mahajan was hearing a plea filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging the trial court's refusal to take cognisance of a charge sheet filed against Amanatullah Khan. Asking Amanatullah Khan to respond to the ED's plea, the Justice Mahajan-led Bench directed the trial court to defer the proceedings till March 21.



367 vacancies of Judges in High Courts, says Law Minister Meghwal

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : There are 367 vacancies of judges in various High Courts and a shortage of 5,320 Judicial Officers in the district and subordinated judiciary in different states, the Parliament was informed on Saturday.

Minister of State for Law and Justice, Arjun Ram Meghwal told Lok Sabha that while every effort is made to fill the existing vacancies expeditiously, vacancies of Judges in High Courts keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of Judges and increase in their sanctioned strength.

He said, "Since May 2014, the Government has increased the sanctioned strength of High Court Judges from 906 to 1,122 (as on date). Under the collaborative effort between the Government and the Judiciary, 1,013 Judges have been appointed

in various High Courts since 2014 till February 10, 2025." As per the data provided by Meghwal in a reply in Lok Sabha, there are two vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court against a sanctioned strength of 34.

He said the maximum number of 81 vacancies exist in Allahabad High Court, followed by Punjab and Haryana High Court with 34, Calcutta High Court 29, Bombay High Court 26, Delhi High Court 22 and Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat High Courts with 20 each. The total sanctioned strength of High Court judges stands at 1,114, the MoS said.



Ragging horror: Role of Kerala nursing college authorities being probed

Kottayam, Feb 15 (IANS) : Kottayam SP Shahul Hameed on Saturday said the detailed probe has begun into the ragging incident in which five third-year students of the state-run Nursing College in Kottayam were arrested. "It was on February 11 that we received the complaint, and the next day, the arrests were recorded. We are now probing the authorities' role if they had any idea of what was happening," said Hameed. On Saturday, the visuals of the

brutal assault on innocent first-year students that came out on the Malayalam TV channels sent shockwaves. In the visuals, senior students could be seen laughing and making lewd comments when the victim was tied to a bed and left naked.

"We have confiscated the mobile phones of the arrested students. We will now find out from whose mobile phone the pictures were shared," said Hameed, adding that all the students have been booked under the Anti-Ragging Act. "As of now, we have got only one complaint and we will look into if there are other complaints too," said Hameed. On Wednesday, third-year students Rahul Raj, NS Jeeva, N. P. Vivek, Rigil Jeeth and Samuel Johnson were arrested and later sent to judicial custody.



Pakistan Navy chief visits Lankan ship during Karachi maritime exercise

Karachi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited SLNS Vijaybahu, an advanced offshore patrol vessel of the Sri Lankan Navy, during the ongoing multinational maritime exercise Aman 2025 being held in Karachi, Lankan media reported on Saturday. Ashraf was welcomed by Commander of the Northern Naval area Rear Admiral Thushara Karunathunga and several other officers, including Sri Lanka's Defence Attache to Pakistan, as he boarded the ship. A crew of over 100

naval officers has travelled from Colombo to Pakistan to participate in the maritime exercise, reported Daily Mirror. "Aman means peace, but this is more than just an exercise. With the Sri Lankan Navy and other navies, this is an opportunity to show our collective resolve and our commitment to work together and make the seas secure for our future generations," Ashraf told the leading Lankan daily. Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir had also met Bangladesh's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Nazmul Hassan in Rawalpindi recently. This marked the second high-level meeting of defence officials between two countries in less than a month. In January, a six-member military delegation from Dhaka, led by Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt. Gen. S M Kamrul Hasan, visited Pakistan.

WHO faces communication challenges on bird flu after US withdrawal

Geneva, Feb 15 (IANS) : Communication with the US regarding the ongoing bird flu outbreak has become increasingly difficult because of the country's withdrawal from the UN health agency, said the World Health Organization (WHO). Christian Lindmeier, a WHO spokesperson, addressed the issue at a press briefing in Geneva late on Saturday, explaining, "Communication is a challenge indeed. The traditional ways of contact have been cut", Xinhua news agency reported. However, he declined to elaborate. Since the outbreak of H5N1 bird flu in the US in April 2024, nearly 70 people, primarily farm workers have been infected. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that while there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission.



Imprisoned Imran Khan writes third letter to Pakistan's Army Chief

Islamabad, Feb 15 (IANS) : Former Pakistan Prime Minister and founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan, has written a third letter to the country's Army Chief General Asim Munir, calling his attention to six major issues, including what he termed as alleged electoral fraud during the February 8, 2024 general elections. Imran Khan's legal representative, Faisal Chaudhary, revealed the details of Khan's third letter while speaking to the media outside the Adiala jail, after meeting with Imran Khan. Faisal Chaudhary said that Imran Khan's third open letter to the army chief has emphasised at least six major pointers including structural reforms; damage caused to democracy by the cur-

rent government's policies; electoral fraud committed against PTI during the 2024 elections; the urgent need for the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the May 9, 2023, riots; requirement for the judicial commission to investigate 26 November PTI protest and killing of at least 12 PTI workers; and targeted attempts to suppress Pakistan's largest political and popular party PTI. Faisal Chaudhary said that PTI remained consistent and firm on its demand to establish a judicial commission to investigate the 9th May riots, highlighting that the targeted attack to dismantle PTI by the arrest of Imran Khan, PTI leadership and its workers, and raids in Punjab against PTI leaders, have continued despite government's denial.

New poll shows dropping support for New Zealand govt

Wellington, Feb 15 (IANS) : The latest poll showed on Saturday the support rate of New Zealand's current coalition government dropped 2 points to 22 per cent, a record low for Prime Minister Christopher Luxon as the government leader, amid growing economic concerns and high unemployment rates. The 1News Verian Poll of 1,000 eligible voters conducted from February 3 to February 7

also shows the opposition, or the left bloc of the Labour and the Green parties, would have enough seats to form a government. The main opposition Labour Party's leader Chris Hipkins, also the former Prime Minister, rose two points to 17 per cent in support rate, showed the poll which was the third in a row. Support for Luxon's National party in the ruling coalition was down 3 per cent to 34 per cent, compared to the previous result in



December, and the other two members of the coalition -- the ACT and the New Zealand First -- were up by 1 point to 9 per cent and down by 1 point to 5 per cent, respectively, it said, adding the opposition Labour's support rate was up 4 per cent to 33 per cent.



Opposition parties in South Korea propose special counsel bill to probe Yoon's alleged election interference

Seoul, Feb 15 (IANS) : Six opposition parties proposed a special counsel bill on Saturday to investigate allegations against impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's influence-peddling scandal linked to the parliamentary by-elections in 2022. The scandal involves allegations Myung Taekyun, a self-proclaimed power broker, took approximately 76 million won (\$54,400) from former ruling party lawmaker Rep. Kim Youngsun in exchange for his help in getting her nominated for the 2022 parliamentary by-elections. Myung allegedly won Kim Youngsun's nomination in exchange for conducting public opinion polls favourable to Yoon ahead of the 2022 presidential election. If approved, the special counsel will investigate allegations Yoon

and first lady Kim Keon Hee were involved in the nomination process of the 2022 local elections and by-elections, as well as parliamentary elections last year. Opposition parties also suspect that the Changwon District Prosecutors Office, currently investigating Myung, is deliberately delaying its probe into Yoon, and will look for possible interference by authorities at the Supreme Prosecutors Office and the presidential office of the senior secretary for civil affairs, Yonhap news agency reported.

Libya releases 24 refugees from detention centre in Tripoli: UN

Tripoli, Feb 15 (IANS) : Libyan authorities released 24 refugees, including women and children, from a detention centre in Tripoli, UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency said. The refugees were released from the Abusliem detention centre in southern Tripoli, UNHCR said in a statement on Saturday. The agency registered the released individuals and provided them with assistance, including medical support, blankets, clothes, and personal care items. Some will receive temporary shelter, the statement added. UNHCR said it is working with Libyan authorities for the release of all refugees and asylum-seekers in detention, particularly the most vulnerable.



Kenya pledges to work with telecoms to reduce cyber threats

Nairobi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Kenya pledged to partner with foreign and local telecommunications companies to reduce cyber threats in the country. William Kabogo Gitau, cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Information, Communications and The Digital Economy, on Saturday, said every business that interacts with consumers online has a responsibility to ensure their customers know how to protect themselves. "We require a concerted effort by stakeholders and service providers to arm Kenyans with the knowledge and information they

require to identify online fraud and how to report users and numbers engaged in such activities," Gitau said in a speech read on his behalf by Principal Secretary Edward Kisiang'ani. Kisiang'ani spoke at a forum held in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi to mark Safer Internet Day which falls on February 11, a global occasion dedicated to promoting a safer digital experience for everyone, especially children. David Mugonyi, director general of the Communications Authority of Kenya, said the country is ranked by the International Telecommunication Union as a tier one country in the Global Cybersecurity Index, which measures the commitment of a country to cybersecurity. Mugonyi said the National Kenya Computer Incident Response Team-Coordination Center (National KE-CIRT/CC).

Trump administration secures release of American teacher detained by Russia

Washington, Feb 15 (IANS) : The administration of US President Donald Trump has secured the release of Marc Fogel, an American teacher detained by Russia. US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz said on Saturday in a statement that Fogel was flown out of Russian airspace after "an exchange" was successfully negotiated with Russia.



Sunita Williams, Butch Wilmore to return to Earth earlier than scheduled: NASA

New York, Feb 15 (IANS) : NASA and SpaceX are accelerating the target launch and return dates for the upcoming crew rotation missions to and from the International Space Station (ISS), which will bring the agency's stranded astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore back home.



Germany extends border controls for another six months

Berlin, Feb 15 (IANS) : Germany will extend its strict border controls, initially implemented to address migration and terrorism concerns, for an additional six months beyond their planned expiration in March, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced on Saturday. Last September, Germany introduced passport and identity document checks at land border crossings to curb the number of people entering the country without a visa. The measure was initially set to be in place for six months, re-

sponding to rising illegal immigration and security concerns. According to the German Interior Ministry, in recent months, Germany has detected approximately 80,000 cases of illegal entry, ar-

rested around 1,900 smugglers, and turned away about 47,000 individuals for reasons such as falsified documents or lost visas. "With border controls.



Ashok Gehlot questions

Rajasthan CM's silence over phone tapping

Jaipur, Feb 15 (IANS) : Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot asked Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Saturday to address the controversial issue of phone tapping in the state. During a press conference in Jaipur, Gehlot recalled that when accusations of phone tapping emerged during his tenure, "The opposition demanded my resignation when allegations of phone tapping emerged during my tenure. I stood up in the Assembly and clarified that no MLA, minister, or individual's phone has been tapped," said Gehlot while addressing a press conference in Jaipur. The former Chief Minister further added that as Bhajan Lal Sharma is the Chief Minister, Leader of the House, and also the state's Home Minister, he should explain why he isn't addressing the issue as he did during his tenure.

Gehlot further stated that since BJP minister Kirodi Lal Meena has made similar allegations, Chief Minister Sharma must clarify the situation in the Assembly to put an end to the controversy. He emphasised that Rajasthan has no tradition of phone tapping. "The law only permits phone tapping in cases involving anti-social elements or individuals accused of treason. Even in such instances, prior ministerial approval is required. If phones have been tapped unlawfully, then the government has committed a crime. Who will take responsibility? The Chief Minister must answer," the former Chief Minister said. Earlier, former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot termed the phone allegation a 'serious crime' which demands an impartial investigation.

TN Education Minister mismanaged Rs 1,050 crore Samagra Shiksha funds: BJP's Annamalai



Chennai, Feb 15 (IANS) :Tamil Nadu BJP State President K. Annamalai alleged on Saturday that State School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh mismanaged Rs 1,050 crore allocated by the Central Government for the Samagra Shiksha scheme. In a statement, Annamalai claimed that the scheme, introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018-19, aims to provide equitable and quality education to all children. He said despite receiving substantial central funding, the Tamil Nadu government has "failed" to implement the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum as a separate subject in schools. Annamalai said, "The Central Government earmarked Rs 6.40 lakh for capital expenditure, Rs 15,000 for teachers' salaries, and Rs 2.50 lakh for other expenses to establish ICT labs in schools."



Horn of Africa to receive over 4 mln USD to tackle hunger

Nairobi, Feb 15 (IANS) : The European Union has provided \$4.13 million to support a joint project to protect vulnerable communities in the Greater Horn of Africa from the devastating impacts of climate extremes, conflict, and displacement, the World Food Programme (WFP) said. The project will support 450,000 vulnerable people in Ethiopia and Somalia for two years by reducing the impacts of forecasted shocks before they become crises through capacity strengthening of weather agencies to provide timely, accurate

forecasts, enabling better community and government response, the UN agency said on Saturday. "Increasingly frequent and intense climate extremes such as droughts and floods are compounding existing drivers of hunger such as conflict, displacement and economic instability," Rukia Yacoub, WFP's deputy regional director for Eastern Africa, said in a statement issued in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. "As livestock and crops perish, livelihoods are lost, and hunger deepens," the statement said. "Early action saves lives, builds people's resilience to face future

crises, and eases the strain on limited humanitarian resources." The project will be implemented by the WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Climate Prediction and Applications Centre of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Danish Refugee Council, according to the statement, Xinhua news agency reported. The Horn of Africa, located in the easternmost part of Africa, is one of the world's most conflict-prone and fragile regions.



Bihar: RLJP to contest 243 seats in upcoming Assembly polls

Patna, Feb 15 (IANS) : The Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP), led by Pashupati Kumar Paras, has announced that his party will contest all 243 seats in the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections. The party has also intensified its preparations for the 2025 elections with a focus on grassroots

organisation and Dalit empowerment. "We have planned to establish an organisation at every booth in Bihar. Accordingly, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will be appointed across constituencies. The idea is to make a strong base at the ground level to contest all 243 seats of Bihar," Paras said.

Northeast region has 2,054 startups, Assam leads : Centre

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Led by Assam, there are at least 2,054 startups in the northeast region now, the Central government informed on Saturday. While Assam has 1,487 startups, Manipur has 179 and Tripura has 141 startups so far, Minister of State in DoNER Ministry, Dr Sukanta Majumdar, said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.



Kerala court acquits MLA Kappan in 2013 cheating case

Kochi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Two-time opposition legislator Mani C. Kappan on Saturday got major relief when a court here exonerated him in a 15-year-old alleged cheating case. Kappan, a multi-faceted personality before becoming a legislator, was a film producer and has also donned the grease paint in a few Malayalam

films. The exoneration order came from a special court in Ernakulam which tries criminal cases against MPs/MLAs. The case against him was filed on the basis of a complaint filed by one Dinesh Menon alleging that Kappan had borrowed Rs 2 crore from him in 2010 but had only repaid Rs 25 lakh. In 2013, Kappan and Menon entered into an agreement by

which Kappan agreed to repay Rs 3.25 crore to Menon in instalments. Kappan allegedly issued post-dated cheques towards the payment. He also used his property as collateral in favour of Menon. However, the cheques were dishonoured and Menon learnt that the property had already been offered as security to a bank.

Menon filed a complaint and Kappan was consequently charged with offences which included criminal breach of trust and cheating. But on Saturday, Kappan finally got cleared and incidentally, every time he contested an election, this case was used by his detractors. Kappan has been a popular personality as he was pitted against

towering Kerala Congress (M) veteran K.M. Mani who represented the Pala Assembly constituency in the Kottayam district from its inception in 1967 till he passed away in 2019. In between two times, Kappan lost to Mani, but after the passing away of the latter.



Defame, abuse Muslims: Abu Azmi slams Nitesh Rane's remarks on madrasas

Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : Maharashtra Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA, Abu Azmi on Saturday launched a sharp attack on Minister Nitesh Rane over his demand for an investigation into madrasas across the state, accusing him of consistently trying to "defame Muslims." Rane had raised concerns about an illegal madrasa in Nandurbar's Akkaluwa taluka, where a Yemeni national was allegedly planning terror activities.

Manipur Police detect selling of activated SIM cards, raid multiple places

Imphal, Feb 15 (IANS) : Manipur Police launched extensive raids in various places of Imphal East and Imphal West districts in connection with the selling of activated SIM cards on fake documents, suspected to be used by the underground militants and anti-social elements, officials said here on Saturday. A police official said the selling of activated SIM cards came to light during an investigation of some cases relating to abduction, intimidation and force-

ful collection of ransom from traders, businessmen, government employees, contractors and selective common people. The official said an FIR was registered at Porompat police station in Imphal East district on Wednesday for selling activated SIM cards on fake identity papers by

impersonating someone else. "Such SIM cards are suspected to be used by underground militants, anti-socials and criminals for the purpose of extortion and intimidation to people of different walks of life. During the investigation of a recent criminal case, this facet came to light wherein the sub-



scriber, on whose name the SIM card was issued, was not aware of it," the official said. He said raids were conducted in Imphal East and Imphal West districts.



S. Korea calls on doctors' groups to resume talks with government

Seoul, Feb 15 (IANS) : South Korea's Second Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo called on the medical community on Saturday to resume talks with the government to resolve the prolonged deadlock over medical reform. "It is very disappointing and regretful that the government and the medical community are holding no discussion at all at the moment," Min-soo said during a government meeting, urging the doctors' groups to return to the negotiation table, Yonhap news agency reported. Thousands of trainee doctors have been absent from their workplaces in the form of a

mass resignation since February last year, as the medical community continued to urge the government to reconsider its planned increase of medical school students. Earlier, the government announced plans to increase medical school admissions by 1,500 students for 2025, as part of a broader initiative to raise the total by approximately 10,000 over the next five years to address a shortage of doctors. Min-soo said the government has been working to normalise the medical system and resolve difficulties for junior doctors.

Ilie Bolojan takes over as Romania's interim President

Bucharest, Feb 15 (IANS) : Klaus Iohannis concluded his tenure as President of Romania, with Senate President Ilie Bolojan assuming the role of interim head of state. The handover ceremony took place on Saturday at Cotroceni Palace, where Iohannis welcomed Bolojan in the Hall of Honour and they held a brief meeting, Xinhua news agency reported.

Iohannis resigned on Monday, citing concerns that an impending parliamentary suspension vote could plunge Romania into a crisis. Bolojan, who had previously served as interim President of the National Liberal Party, suspended himself from party leadership prior to assuming office. He will serve as interim President until May when Romania holds its presidential elections. The first round is scheduled for

May 4, with a potential runoff on May 18. Ilie Bolojan, 55, was elected President of the Senate in December 2024. It was the latest twist in weeks of political turmoil after the country's top court called off a presidential election in December amid claims of Russian meddling. In January, tens of thousands of Romanians took part in protests called by the far-right criticising the vote cancellation after the sur-



prise win of far-right candidate Calin Georgescu in the first round of the election. Incumbent Iohannis, under mounting pressure, after lawmakers launched a procedure to impeach him.



2 IS militants killed in airstrike in Iraq

Baghdad, Feb 15 (IANS) : Two Islamic State (IS) militants were killed in an airstrike in the northern Iraqi province of Kirkuk, the Iraqi military said. Acting on intelligence, Iraqi forces conducted an airstrike on Saturday, targeting an IS hideout in the rugged area in Kirkuk, according to a statement from the Security Media Cell, a media outlet affiliated with the Iraqi Joint Operations Command.

Austrian coalition talks led by Freedom Party fail

Vienna, Feb 15 (IANS) : Efforts to form a coalition government in Austria collapsed after negotiations between the far-right Freedom Party and the conservative People's Party broke down.

The Freedom Party had been in talks with the People's Party since January, aiming to establish Austria's first government led by the far-right. In the Austrian parliamentary elections last September, the Freedom Party emerged as the leading party with approximately 29 per cent



of the vote, followed by the People's Party with 26.3 per cent and the Social Democratic Party with 21.1 per cent. The liberal NEOS party secured fourth place, reports Xinhua news agency.

Bangladesh: Experts slam Yunus-led govt's 'wrong' economic policies

Dhaka, Feb 15 (IANS): The economic policies of the current Bangladesh interim government led by Muhammad Yunus have come under criticism from its own stakeholders. The Director General of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies and former economist at Bangladesh Bank, Mustafa K Mujeri, has stated that the current interim government is adopting the wrong policies at the wrong times. "It has been six months since the interim government took over.

Unfortunately, there has been almost no success in the financial sector of the country at this time. The economy has largely stagnated due to some core problems, such as a high inflation rate and a slow pace of financial growth. There has not been much success in terms of other problems we have. As a result, the economy is yet to bounce back," stated a report published in leading Bangladesh daily Prothom Alo. The report further quoted Mujeri as saying, "There is a common pattern of the economic policies

adopted so far by the interim government. And that is adopting the wrong policies at the wrong time. The consequences won't be good in the coming days." According to another report by Bangladesh's leading business daily, The Financial Express, the interim government of Bangladesh is facing formidable macroeconomic challenges, in particular, reining in inflation. The country grapples with slowing GDP growth, currency devaluation, financial crisis, and looming debt. Mustafizur Rahman, an

economist who has closely followed Bangladesh's economy for decades, said, "It appears that the economy has fallen into a vicious cycle." He cited the authorities' pursuit of a contractionary monetary policy, which has increased the cost of funds, inhibiting private investment, according to a leading Bangladesh newspaper, The Daily Star. "The government's decision to raise value-added tax (VAT) on nearly 100 goods and services has stoked inflation and further eroded



the purchasing power of ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, in the financial sector, default loans have continued to pile up," he further added. The economy of Bangladesh has been facing severe challenges amidst the huge unrest in the country since August

2024. The business sector in the country is facing a huge liquidity crunch, with numerous commercial and industrial establishments shutting down. The entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are facing difficulties in importing raw materials to sustain their businesses.



UN welcomes efforts to resolve Ukraine conflict following Trump-Putin phone call

United Nations, Feb 15 (IANS) : The United Nations welcomes all efforts to resolve the Ukraine-Russia conflict and sees the phone call between the US and Russian leaders as a "positive thing," a UN spokesman said. "What we would appreciate is any efforts to resolve the war in Ukraine that would involve the Russian and Ukrainian sides. And so obviously, if both of them are willing to be involved in a process, that would be a welcome development," said Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on Wednesday, speaking of the phone conversation.

"Given the importance of the United States and the Russian Federation, the UN welcomes any efforts to resolve issues through regular contact," the spokesman said at a daily press briefing, calling the conversation between the two leaders "a positive thing." The White House and the Kremlin announced separately on Saturday that US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone conversation, reports Xinhua news agency. After his first official phone call with Russia's President Vladimir Putin after he became President, Trump posted on Truth Social,

"We both agreed, we want to stop the millions of deaths taking place in the War with Russia/Ukraine." After his call with Zelensky, he said, "A meeting is being set up on Friday in Munich, where Vice President J.D. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio will lead the Delegation." They will be there to participate in the Munich Security Conference where foreign affairs, defence and security officials from many countries will participate. Trump said Zelensky, "like President Putin, wants to make PEACE. We discussed a variety of topics related to the War."

Widespread egg rationing sweeps US stores amid bird flu crisis

California, Feb 15 (IANS) : More US grocery chains are implementing egg purchase limits as bird flu outbreaks continue to disrupt supplies, with California shoppers particularly feeling the squeeze through restricted purchases and early morning queues. At a Costco store in San Jose, California, the warehouse has been limiting purchases to three cartons per customer since Saturday, according to a store employee named Pauline. By late morning on Tuesday, only 15 cartons remained -- all higher-priced organic brown and green eggs, with no white eggs available. The store has

posted the sales limit sign at the entrance, effective Saturday. "You need to come early to make sure you can buy eggs," Marcie Lopez, a customer at the store, told Xinhua news agency, noting that eggs are getting more expensive and harder to buy this year. "No eggs, no eggs, no eggs," a clerk at another Costco store in Azusa, California, told the people waiting in line just after the location opened on Monday morning. "It's unbelievable, we came so early in the morning, but we still couldn't buy eggs," a customer.



Paul Kapur nominated to be second Indian-descent top diplomat for India

Washington, Feb 15 (IANS): S. Paul Kapur, who worked previously on relations with India, has been nominated by the Trump administration to head the South Asia bureau at the State Department that conducts diplomatic ties with India and the region. "Paul Kapur, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs," said a statement from the office of Vice-President J.D. Vance, including a huge number of appointments that were sent for the US Senate's consideration and confirmation. Kapur currently serves as a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, specialising in South Asian politics, and security, and international relations. If confirmed, he will be the second Indian-descent top US diplomat for relations with South Asian countries, but unlike his predecessor in this category, he will head a smaller regional spread.



World No. 1 Jannik Sinner banned for three months for doping

Montreal, Feb 15 (IANS) World number one Jannik Sinner has reached a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) which will see the Italian serve a three-month ban. Sinner was found by an independent tribunal of the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) to bear no fault or negligence having twice tested positive for clostebol.



Rohit Sharma-led Indian team leaves for Dubai for Champions Trophy

Mumbai, Feb 15 (IANS) : The India senior men's cricket team, led by opener Rohit Sharma, have departed for Dubai from Mumbai to participate in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy, starting from February 19. All Group A matches of the Indian team will be held at the Dubai International Stadium, while the rest of the games will take place in Pakistan. Visuals from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai showed Rohit & Co, along with the support staff, checking into the airport to take their flight to Dubai.

IANS understands that the initial plan for the team was to leave in batches of two for Dubai, but with the BCCI policy guidelines issued last month saying that the team will travel together for its abroad tours, it was decided for the side to leave together for the eight-team competition from Mumbai. In the Champions Trophy, India will be significantly missing the services of its fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who is recovering from a lower back injury sustained during the fifth Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test in Sydney last month. Fast-bowling all-rounder Harshit

Rana has been named his replacement while wrist-spinner Varun Chakaravathy was also included at the expense of Yashasvi Jaiswal, who was originally in the provisional team. Jaiswal is now one of the non-travelling substitutes alongside Mohammed Siraj and Shivam Dube. India, the two-time Champions Trophy winners, will begin their 2025 campaign against Bangladesh on February 20, before taking on Pakistan in a highly-anticipated clash on February 23. India will play their final Group A match against New Zealand on March 2.

IPL 2025: Excited to meet Shreyas Iyer as I love his attitude, says Priyansh Arya

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) Young batter Priyansh Arya, who will turn out for Punjab Kings in the 2025 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), said he is excited to meet skipper Shreyas Iyer, saying that he loves his attitude. "I am really excited to meet head coach Ricky Ponting. I love his pull shot. Apart from that, I am also excited to meet Shreyas. I love his attitude and the way he walks."



Champions Trophy: Smith should open the batting for Australia, says Gilchrist

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Legendary Australia cricketer Adam Gilchrist said stand-in captain Steve Smith should be slotted in as an opener in the ODI team for the upcoming Champions Trophy, citing it as a way of maximising the number of deliveries he can face in the side's matches in Pakistan. In Australia's heavy 2-0 ODI series loss in Sri Lanka, Smith made 12 and 29 as a middle-order batter. But with young Jake Fraser-McGurk in an inconsistent run of form,

Gilchrist feels Smith has to open the batting, though he finds Matt Short as an interesting option to partner with Travis Head at the top. "It's a challenging one at the moment, but Steve Smith should open. I didn't see where he was slotted in the game against Sri Lanka. Obviously, Travis is going to be there - he's fresh and fit. I also like Matt Short being there - he can form a nice left hand-right hand combination - that would be the preferred way for me to go."



Antony's Man Utd story 'may have more chapters,' says agent Junior Pedroso

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Antony, who is at Real Betis on loan from Manchester United, looks to have settled in well in Spain having already scored two goals for his new club. The Brazilian winger's agent Junior Pedroso believes his resurgence is due to Antony finding happiness and that a return to Manchester United at the end of his loan period is still on the cards. "I believe that football is very dynamic. There are no long-term plans to be made."

Ben Duckett declared fit and available for England's campaign in the Champions Trophy

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Left-handed opener Ben Duckett has been declared fit and available for England's campaign in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy, starting from February 19, following a scan on his left groin. Duckett picked an injury in his left groin while fielding during the third ODI against India, which England lost by 142 runs in Ahmedabad and suffered a 3-0 series sweep. After departing India, Duckett was set to undergo scans in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

fit and available for the ICC Champions Trophy," said the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in a statement on Saturday. Duckett's availability comes as a big relief for England, who were previously forced into making one change to their 15-man Champions Trophy squad, with Tom Banton replacing Jacob Bethell, who suffered a left hamstring injury during the ODI leg of the India tour. On their recent trip to India, they also had mounting injury troubles in the form of Jofra Archer (cut on bowling hand), Brydon Carse (toe niggle).



WPL 2025: Bowlers hold the aces as UP Warriorz begin campaign against Gujarat Giants

Vadodara, Feb 15 (IANS) : The UP Warriorz have put in the hard yards in pre-season, and are all geared up to begin their campaign at the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2025 season against Gujarat Giants in Vadodara on Sunday. The team welcomes a new captain Deepti Sharma while retaining the mission to fight hard and win every match. This season also brings a thrilling new chapter as UP Warriorz will play at their home stadium in Lucknow for the very first time during phase three of the tournament. The team kicks off their cam-

campaign in Vadodara, facing the Gujarat Giants on February 16, and will play two games in the first phase. In Bengaluru and Lucknow, after that, the UP Warriorz are scheduled to play three matches each, respectively, to close out the league stage of their campaign. Captained by Deepti Sharma, who hails from UP, and coached by England's Jon Lewis, the UP Warriorz have a strong bowling set-up, especially the spin battery, which is possibly the most dangerous in the competition. Sophie Ecclestone, who is the WPL's highest wicket-taker with 27 scalps in two seasons, has India's best bowler in the format Deepti Sharma for company in the attack.

Deepti, who has bagged 138 wickets for India, has amassed 19 dismissals across two seasons for the UP Warriorz. And backing them up are the likes of Australian Alana King, Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (three wickets in 4 games), Rajeshwari Gayakwad (13 wickets from 16 games) and Gouher Sultana. If the spinners are a deadly combination in the UP Warriorz set-up, the pace attack too is quite prolific. While Anjali Sarvani's (six wickets in 13 games) shown her abilities with the ball in the first two seasons.

Pranav Prince sparks Mumbai Titans' table-topping surge in InBL Pro U25 League

New Delhi, Feb 15 (IANS) : Mumbai Titans' captain Pranav Prince put on a masterclass to lead his team to a statement victory over table-toppers Hyderabad Falcons in the InBL Pro U25 League earlier this week. After back-to-back defeats, the Titans roared back in style, dismantling the previously unbeaten Falcons 95-79 before storming past Chennai Heat (85-70) and Gujarat Stallions (69-63) to seize the top spot in the standings.

