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Commercial LPG cylinder prices slashed by Rs 7 ahead of Union Budget

In a move set to impact the hospitality and commercial sectors, oil marketing companies have reduced the price of 19 kg commercial LPG cylinders by Rs 7, effective immediately....

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Budget 2025-26 to build healthier, more resilient India: JP Nadda

The Union Budget 2025-26 is balanced, and inclusive and will build a healthier and more resilient India, said Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda on Saturday. The Union Budget was...

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Sree Leela becoming hard negotiator: What's Happening?

There was once a time in Tollywood, when young actress, Sri Leela was the most sought after heroine in the industry. Thanks to her impeccable, dancing skills and good...

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One crore people will benefit from revised slabs, pay no tax: FM Sitharaman



New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her first post-Budget press conference, said that the revision in tax slabs as announced in the Union Budget 2025-26

will leave 'enough money in the hands' of taxpayers, adding that about 1 crore taxpayers will be directly benefitted from the extended rebates and exemptions, under the New Tax regime. Speaking to the media, FM

Sitharaman said: "One crore more people will benefit due to the increased tax exemption limit from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 12 lakh. They will have to pay no income tax."

As per the new slabs, proposed in Budget 2025-26, those with an income of up to Rs 12 lakh will have to pay no income tax, marking a decisive change in the tax structure.

She also reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's commitment to the Viksit Bharat goal and outlined the initiatives and steps being undertaken to propel the nation on that path.

Further, drawing a comparison



between the Budget of the UPA era in 2014 and this year's Budget, she said that the amendments in tax slab rates have busted the narrative of 'need for more money in people's pockets'.

Sharing details of the tax slabs and benefits during the UPA era and today, she said: "For somebody earning nearly Rs 8 lakh in 2014, nearly 1 lakh more money will be

in their pockets now because of the changes. Rs 1 lakh income tax in 2014 has become zero tax in 2025. For those earning Rs 12 lakh, Rs 2 more money would be into the pockets of taxpayers."

She further told mediapersons: "Across the board, everybody is benefiting because the income tax rates have been brought down. In 2014, the income tax rate for those

earning Rs 24 lakh/year, the income tax was about 5.6 lakh, now it is only 3 lakh which in turn means that Rs 2.6 lakh more money into their hands." Drawing a comparison between the prevailing tax rates and the proposed new ones in FY25-26, she said that those who are earning Rs 8 lakh will have Rs 30,000 more money into their pockets because their tax liability has been brought to zero. She also sought to dismiss apprehensions about reduced capex investments.



Budget has put railways on expansion track: Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Welcoming an allocation of Rs 2.52 lakh crore for expansion of the railways, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday described Budget 2025-26 as 'balanced' and pro-middle class due to the new income tax exemption limit of Rs 12 lakh. Talking to IANS, he also complimented Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for continuing India's growth story by maintaining the Capital Expenditure momentum by allocating Rs 11.2 lakh crore.

Continued on pg 02

BJP, Congress failed Telangana: KTR criticises Union Budget 2025

Hyderabad, Feb 1 (IANS) : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao criticised the Union Budget 2025-26, alleging that the BJP and the Congress have failed Telangana. Demanding an apology from the BJP and the Congress for neglecting the state, he said that it has once again been proved that national parties cannot safeguard Telangana's interests. He said Telangana's BJP ministers, Congress MPs, and Chief Minister

A. Revanth Reddy should apologise for their inability to secure funds for the state. K. T. Rama Rao, popularly known as KTR,



CM Revanth discusses plans for formulation of Telangana Budget

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday discussed plans for the formulation of the Telangana State budget. He held a meeting with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers and other senior officials from the Finance department at the Command Control Center



and discussed on the budget requirements for various departments and sectors.

Power utilities gear up to meet summer demand in Telangana

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS): With a view to ensure uninterrupted quality power supply in line with the rising demand during the Yasangi (Rabi season) and the upcoming summer, the power utilities have taken all necessary measures. A review meeting was held at the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana (TGSPDCL).

Continued on pg 02



DK Aruna hails Union budget

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS): BJP MP DK Aruna today said the Union Budget 2025-26 introduced by the Central government would be a feast for the middle class. Responding to the budget allocations, she said this was a budget that paves the way for development. Speaking to media persons in Delhi, she said people asked them to provide tax relief. She thanked Prime Minister Modi for providing the tax relief in the annual budget. She said the Centre was giving incentives to those who set up startups. DK Aruna responded to the criticism that Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman showered blessings on Bihar in her budget speech and did not even mention Telangana, she said the budget speech would not mention the names of the individual States.



Authorities should play active role in creating infrastructure: Komatireddy

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS): Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has emphasized that the advancement of the State is contingent upon the quality of its infrastructure.

Budget good for poor, middle class, farmers, small traders & youth: Bandi

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS): Union Minister Bandi Sanjay today termed the Union Budget presented by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman as wonderful and added that this was a budget that is favourable for the poor, middle class, farmers, small traders and young

entrepreneurs. "This budget is a boon for middle class employees and businessmen. Giving tax exemption of up to Rs 12 lakh to employees is a revolutionary step. Never in the last 75 years has such a favourable budget been made for the middle class. This is a reform budget. It

is a great thing that this budget is designed to make India the third largest economy after the US and China by 2027.

This is proof that the BJP government is biased towards the poor and middle class," he said in a statement. He also said it was a great thing that all employees.



Budget has put railways on expansion track : Ashwini Vaishnaw

Continued From pg 01
He said the allocation for railways will further help take the network to every corner of the country, improve facilities for passengers and construction of new stations. "The newly sanctioned projects may include 100 new Amrit Bharat trains, 200 new Vande Bharat trains, 50 Nammo Bharat trains and 1,000 flyovers and underpasses," he said, promising new facilities for passengers including better safety, expansion of network and new stations. Another interesting provision introduced by the Union Finance Minister is to allow maintenance, repair and operations (MROs) for the railway sector on the lines of existing facilities for airlines and ships. "This will help generate jobs through India-based operations related to repair of railway systems, motors and engines from anywhere in the world," he said. He also hailed the provisions in the Budget for India's semiconductor and AI Missions.

The Union Budget 2025 fuels India's growth engines with a bold push for manufacturing, green mobility, and rural empowerment—driving innovation, job creation, and global leadership

Hyderabad, Feb 1 (TIM Bureau) : The Union Budget 2025 outlines a bold vision for Viksit Bharat, focused on eradication of poverty, quality education, affordable healthcare, and women's empowerment. By prioritizing rural prosperity and establishing India as a global agricultural powerhouse, the budget fosters inclusive growth that reaches all corners of the na-

tion. A bold push towards manufacturing excellence, supported by strategic investments in infrastructure, EV technology, and MSME growth, strengthens India's industrial backbone. This people-centric vision strikes a perfect balance between fiscal discipline and sustainable economic growth. The elimination of income tax for individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh will spur economic activity and unlock con-

sumer potential, while simplified tax regulations foster ease of doing business. Meanwhile, green energy investments and EV policy support accelerate India's shift to a clean, sustainable economy, positioning it as a leader in innovative mobility. The automobile sector stands poised for a significant leap forward, with substantial investments in green energy and a clear policy

framework to support energy storage solutions. These measures will accelerate India's transition to a clean mobility future, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability and technological innovation. In essence, this budget is a bold fusion of foresight, strategy, and ambition, perfectly aligned with Prime Minister Modi's vision for a developed India by 2047—a nation leading in innovation, inclusive growth, and global influence.



It's not just a financial plan, but a transformative blueprint for national progress and the empowerment of every citizen."

Ruling party MLAs express dissatisfaction at State administration

Hyderabad, Feb.1 (NSS) : There are reports circulating that the Telangana Congress party is experiencing significant disorganisation. Allegations suggest that 11 Congress MLAs have clandestinely convened at a hotel on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Further claims indicate that a

Minister is neglecting their concerns and is not providing support for development initiatives. It has been reported that the MLAs are expressing dissatisfaction with the Minister, who is purportedly making decisions regarding their constituency without their prior knowledge. The MLAs from the ruling party have remarked that

works were completed during the previous BRS administration, yet similar works are now facing delays under their own Congress governance. In response to these concerns, the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has taken proactive measures. TPCC chief Mahesh Goud has reached out to the MLAs, assur-

ing them that he will facilitate a meeting with the Minister. He encouraged the ruling party MLAs to address the issues collaboratively and amicably. Reports indicate that out of the eleven individuals who met privately, four are MLAs from Mahabubnagar, while six additional MLAs engaged via phone.

Members of the ruling party have voiced their concerns regarding the insufficient progress on various works and have found themselves waiting for extended periods to have their bills addressed. Although the Congress leadership has denied claims of discord among party officials.

Stressed Asset Management Branch, 3rd Floor, Andhra Bank Building, Sultan Bazar, Kofli, Hyderabad-500001, Mobile: 9324912041, Email: ubin0812048@unionbankofindia.bank

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) [RULE 8(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Stressed Asset Management Branch, Hyderabad under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(1) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 07.02.2020 calling upon the borrower M/s. Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 67,93,274.72 (Rupees Sixty Six Crores Sixty Seven Lakhs Ninety Three Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy Four and Paise Seventy Two only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this the 30th day of January of the year 2025.

The borrower/guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India, Stressed Asset Management Branch, Hyderabad for an amount Rs. 12,46,29,136 as on 31.12.2024 and interest thereon.

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

Description of Immovable Property:
1) All that part and parcel of property consisting of school & hostel buildings along with fixed block there on consisting of Ground and 4 floors constructed on following land held in the name of Mr. M Subrahmanyam S/o Mr. Ankaiah and which was leased out to M/s. Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society

A) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.3.82 cents situated at Survey No.558/1 consisting of Ac.0.78 cents of land, Survey No.558/2 consisting of Ac.0.76 cents of land, Survey No.557 consisting of Ac.1.31 ½ cents of land, Survey No.556 consisting of Ac.0.18 cents, Survey No.557 consisting of Ac.0.80 ½ cents of land, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit - 2, Chawatapalem Panchayath area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District. Bounded by: East: Panta Kaluva, South: Railway Track to some extent and Land of Mannuru Subrahmanyam to some extent, Mannuru Kanthamma (W/o Ankaiah) West: Kanupuru Cheruvu Kaluju vaagu, North: Land sold by Ch. Vasantha Kumar Reddy and Ch.Chaitanya Deepthi.

B) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land Admeasuring Ac. 0.03 cents situated at Survey No.559, Kanupuru Bit 2, Chawatapalem Panchayathi area, Venkatachalam Mandal, Sri Potti Sreeramulu District. Bounded by: East: Panta Kaluva, South: Railway Track, West: Kanupuru Cheruvu Kaluju Vaagu, North: Land purchased by Mannuru Subrahmanyam from Ch. Vasantha Kumar Reddy and Ch.Chaitanya Deepthi

C) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land Admeasuring Ac. 1.18 cents situated at Survey No.565/B1 Consisting of Ac.0.01 cents of land, Survey No.565/B2F consisting of Ac.0.10 cents of land, Survey No.565/B1 consisting of Ac.0.20 cents of land, Survey No.565/B2F consisting of Ac.0.88 cents of land, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit-2, Chawatapalem Panchayath area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District. Bounded by: East: Panta Kaluva, South: Land sold to you by Ch. Vasantha Kumar Reddy, Ch. Chaitanya Deepthi along with K.Surekha, West: Kanupuru Cheruvu Kaluju Vaagu, North: Land of Mannuru Subrahmanyam

2) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural Land admeasuring Ac 0.70 cents at S No 572/B1, patta no 277 at Venkatachalam Village, Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh held in the name of Mannuru Kanthamma W/o Ankaiah, bounded by: East: Land of Yamala Masthanaiah, South: Irrigation Channel, West: Land of Yaragalla Veniaiah, North: Land of Mandala Ramanaiah

3) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.0.61 cents(2952.4 Sq Yds), situated at Survey No.574/P2, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit-2, Chawatapalem Panchayath area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society., South: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, West: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, North: Channel

4) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.0.24 cents situated at Survey No.574/P3, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit-2, Chawatapalem Panchayath area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Mannuru Kanthamma and Others, South: Land of Mannuru Lalitha, West: Land of Yamala Ravindra, North: Land of Mannuru Kanthamma and Others

5) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.0.45 cents, situated at Survey No.575/1P2, Venkatachalam, Village, Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Valpi Chenchu Krishnaiah, South: Irrigation Canal, West: Land of Yamala Masthanaiah, North: Land of Mannuru Kanthamma

6) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.0.49 cents out of Ac.0.92 cents land in patta No.186 situated at Survey No.570/B, present its sub division as 578-B1, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit-2, Chawatapalem Panchayath area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society., South: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, West: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, North: Channel

7) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.0.95 cents at S no 577-1-B Khatha No 36 in Kanupuru bit II Village at Venkatachalam Mandal, Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Channel, South: Channel, West: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah, North: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah

8) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land admeasuring Ac.1.28 cents at S no 576-A, 576-B & 577 VEERANNA KANUPURU Bit II Chawatapalem village in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam as detailed below held in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam

A) All that part and parcel of Non-Agril land admeasuring 0.48 cents or 0.194 hectares of land situated at Sy.No.577, Veeranna Kanupuru Bit-II, Chawatapalem Panchayat area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore Dist Bounded by: East: Channel, South: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah, West: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah, North: Land of Lankapalli Chetaiah to some extent and channel to some extent and

B) All that part and parcel of Non-Agril land in patta no 265, survey no 576-A consisting of an extent of Ac.0.31 cents and patta no 205, survey no 576-B consisting of an extent of Ac.0.49 cents land in total Ac.0.80 cents or 0.324 hectares of land situated at Veeranna Kanupuru Bit-II, Venkatachalam Mandal, Kanupuru Bit-2, Chawatapalem Panchayat area, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society., South: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, West: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, North: Channel

9) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural Land in Sy no: 576/A, 574/P1 VEERANNA KANUPURU Bit II Chawatapalem village to the extent of Ac.0.85 cents held in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Yaragalla Vanamma, South: Land of Yamala Ramanaiah, West: Land of Yamala Masthanaiah, North: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah

10) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural Land in Sy no: 571/A, 571/B VEERANNA KANUPURU Bit II Chawatapalem village to the extent of Ac.1.66 cents held in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah, South: Land of Mannuru Ankaiah, West: Land of Yamala Ravindra, North: Land of Yamala Masthanaiah

11) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land in survey no 573/B2, Kanupuru Bit-II, Venkatachalam Mandal, Nellore, in an extent of Ac.1.10 cents held in the name of Mannuru Revanth S/o. M Subrahmanyam Bounded by: East: kaluva, South: Land of Uppu Puttaiah, West: Vaagu, North: Donka

12) All that part and parcel of Non-Agricultural land in Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore District - Guduru Registration District - Bujabuja Nellore Sub - Registration - Venkatachalam Mandal - Kanupuru Bit - I Gram Panchayath area - Veeranna Kanupuru Bit - I Village - (as per Document and Pass Books the Survey Nos. 953 -A1, 953 -A3, 953 -B2 & 953 -B3) as per Present Revenue Records it is Survey Nos. 953 -A1 - A3 consisting of an Extent of Ac. 1.11 cents of land in Survey No.953 - B consisting of an Extent of Ac. 1.08 cents of land in total Ac. 2.19 cents or 0.886 hectares of land Bounded by: East: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society., South: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, West: Land of Ravindra Bharathi Educational Society, North: Canal

Place: Venkatachalam, Nellore. Sd/- Authorised Officer Union Bank of India

Power utilities gear up to meet summer demand in Telangana

Continued From pg 01
Corporate office, presided over by Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Principal Secretary of the Energy department along with Chairman and Man-

aging Director, TGSPDCL Musharraf Faruqi. The current power supply situation and preparations for the ex-

pected surge in electricity demand during summer were discussed. Based on the current electricity consumption trends, a significant

rise in demand is anticipated in the coming months. In January of last year, Telangana's peak power demand was 13,810 MW, whereas this year.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that my clients entered into agreements of sale with 1) Kanjarla Balaiah S/o. Kanjarla Pentaiah, 2) Kanjarla Ravi, S/o. Kanjarla Balaiah, 3) K. Lakshmi, D/o. Kanjarla Balaiah, All Resident of H.No.7-35, Lakdaram Village, Patancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District, 4) Smt. Nandi Kandi Malleshwari, W/o. Nandi Kandi Prabhhu, R/o. Madhikunta Village, Sadashivpet Mandal, Sangareddy District, and 5) Smt. Purra Yellamma, W/o. Late Purra Sailu, R/o. H.No.1-13, Korpole Village, Jogipet Mandal, Medak District, to purchase the below mentioned schedule property and paid substantial amount to them. Any person having any right, interest or claim over the schedule property may put forth their claims/objections if any along with documentary proof with the undersigned within 7 days of publication of this notice, as otherwise, my clients shall proceed further with transaction and any claims raised thereafter will not be entertained.

Schedule Of Property: All that of agricultural land admeasuring Ac-15 Cts. in Survey No.519/7, situated at Lakdaram Village, Patancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District, Telangana and bounded by: North: Agriculture Land belongs to R.Raji Reddy of Sy.No.518, South: Agriculture Land belongs to B.Narsimha Reddy of Sy. Nos.515 and 520, East: Layout belongs to Suraksha Developers in Sy.No.515 and Land of B.Narsimha Reddy of Sy.No.515, West: Agriculture Land belongs to Pentaiah of Sy.No.519/Part.

Sd/- G. Krishna B.Com, LLB, Advocate
H.No.11-99, Prasanthi Nagar Colony, Road No.4, Near Vijaya Durga Bhavani Temple, Serilingampally, Hyderabad-500019. Mob: 97044-40216

Budget 2025-26 to build healthier, more resilient India: JP Nadda

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Union Budget 2025-26 is balanced, and inclusive and will build a healthier and more resilient India, said Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda on Saturday. The Union Budget was tabled in the Parliament today by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "With a strong focus on expanding healthcare access, infrastructure, and research, this budget reinforces the government's commitment to building a healthier and more resilient India," the Union Minister said in a post on social media platform X. "The Budget presented today is balanced, inclusive, and promotes development. This budget will accelerate the resolution of 'Developed India'," he added, noting that the Budget prioritises poor, farmers, and the middle class. "Priority



has been given to the welfare of the poor, farmers, and the middle class. This inclusive and welfare-oriented Budget will ensure respect for the

deprived and includes the empowerment of women and the upliftment of the middle class," he said.

Indian Overseas Bank
RP ROAD BRANCH: 4-2-25 to 28 & 32, 1st Floor, Rashtrapathi Road, Secunderabad-500003 (Telangana), Phone: 040-23468828 / 23468827, email: iob0432@iob.in

PRE-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

To:- 1. Mr. Santosh Kumar Gumpnapally, S/o Mr. G.Krishna Murthy Rao, 2. Mrs. Divya Sree Gumpnapally, W/o Mr. Santosh Kumar Gumpnapally, Address:- Plot No.14, Sri Indraprastha Colony, Road No.8, Ward No.12, Block No.1, Fathullaguda Village, Uppala Mandal, L.B.Nagar, Medchal-Malkajigiri, Hyderabad-500068 (Borrower Cum Mortgage).

Sir/Madam, NPA Account: Mr. Santosh Kumar Gumpnapally & Mrs. Divya Sree Gumpnapally

Pre-auction sale notice- Issued under Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

1. This has reference to recovery actions initiated against you under the provisions of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

2. Please refer to the possession notice dated 14.06.2023 issued to you regarding taking possession of the secured assets more fully described in the schedule below and the publication of the said possession notice in the newspapers as mentioned below by the authorized officer for the purpose of realization of the secured assets in exercise of the powers conferred on the bank as Secured Creditor under the provisions of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and the Rules there under.

Newspaper Date of publication
Business Standard (Daily) 17.06.2023
Mana Telangana (Daily) 17.06.2023

3. You the above-named borrowers / mortgagors / guarantors have failed to pay the dues in full after issuance of Demand Notice dated 21.02.2023 and Possession Notice dated 14.06.2023.

Hence it is proposed to sell the secured assets mentioned in the Schedule below on "as is where is" and "as is what is" condition under Sec 13(4) of the Act read with Rules 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

4. The dues in the loan account as on 20.01.2025 is **Rs.1,83,36,632/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Three Lakhs Thirty Six thousand and six hundred thirty two only)** and further interest at contractual rates and rests, besides costs / charges incurred till the date of repayment in full is liable to be paid.

5. We hereby give you notice of 30 days under rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 under SARFAESI Act to pay the dues of the bank being **Rs.1,83,36,632/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Three Lakhs Thirty Six Thousand and Six Hundred Thirty Two only)** as on 20.01.2025 along with further interest and costs till the date of payment. We further draw your kind attention to section 13 (8) of SARFAESI Act regarding time available to you for redemption of the scheduled properties.

6. If you fail to redeem the properties by payment of the dues to the bank as aforesaid, the same will be put to sale to recover the dues under appropriate provisions of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 of SARFAESI Act.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTIES: All that Parts and Parcel of Residential Plot and building constructed thereon situated at Plot No 14, admeasuring 526 Sq.Yards or 439.78 Sq.Mtrs in Survey No.64/A, 64/AA, 64/E Situated at H.No.12-1-417/14, Road No 8, ward No 12, Block No.1, adjacent to Raghavendra Nagar Colony, Fathullaguda Village, Uppal Revenue Mandal, Previously under Ranga Reddy District presently under Medchal-Malkajigiri District Under GHMC, L B Nagar Circle, standing in the name of **Mr. Santosh Kumar Gumpnapally, S/o Mr. G.Krishna Murthy Rao and Mrs. Divya Sree, W/o Santosh Kumar Gumpnapally and bounded by: North: Neighbourhood Plots, South: Plot No's: 15 & 16, East: Neighbourhood Plots, West: 25' Wide Road.**

Place: Hyderabad Sd/- (PRAVEEN KUMAR) Authorised Officer Indian Overseas Bank

Shabbir Ali slams Union Budget

Hyderabad, Feb 1 (NSS) : Senior Congress leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir expressed strong disapproval of the Union Budget 2025-26, stating that the BJP-led government had once again neglected the welfare of minorities.

He pointed out that the total allocation for minority welfare for 2025-26 is Rs 3,350 crore, a marginal increase from the Rs 3,183.24 crore allocated the previous year. He criticised the BJP government for failing to provide substantial funding despite the massive overall budget of Rs 50.47 lakh crore, where the minority welfare share remains just 0.066%. This meagre allocation is nothing but a cruel joke, he said, adding that the allocation for educational empowerment remains inadequate.



Ms. Kavita Shirvaikar, Managing Director of Patel Engineering Limited stated

Hyderabad, Feb 1 (TIM Bureau) : The Union Budget 2025 placed a strong focus on the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, and we recognize the government's initiatives to enhance the private sector's role in the country's development. It is anticipated that the coordinated three-year project pipeline of the government, which is supported by ministries and the India Infrastructure Project Development Fund (IIPDF), will not only speed up the completion of projects but also sustain private sector participation. The coop-

erative framework in which states are encouraged to bid for PPPs is considered an important step towards efficiency and faster infrastructure development in the country. Further strengthening this momentum, the launch of the second Asset Monetization Plan, with ₹10 lakh crore earmarked for reinvestment, underscores the commitment to leveraging existing assets to fund new projects. Besides, sharing PM Gati Shakti data with private players will help improve project planning and execution and minimize inefficiencies in resource utilization.



Suwendu Adhikari's popularity as national campaigner for BJP increasing

Kolkata, Feb 1 (IANS) : The popularity of the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, as a national campaigner for the BJP seems to be increasing. Adhikari is scheduled for a two-day visit to New Delhi from Saturday to campaign on behalf of the party for the forthcoming Delhi Assembly polls. BJP sources said Adhikari's sustained campaign in West Bengal over the atrocities on minority Hindus in neighbouring Bangladesh in the recent past and the huge mobilisation of the crowd in programmes led by him on this issue, have impressed the party's national leadership and he has become a favourite for national campaigning. "Although not on a scale like in West Bengal, the problem of settlement of illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators is also there in Delhi to an extent," he said.



Strict action against SP, DC if Devadasi practice found : Karnataka CM

Bengaluru, Feb 1 (IANS) : Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah issued a stern warning on Saturday, stating that if the illegal Devadasi practice is discovered anywhere in the state, strict action will be taken against the concerned Superintendent of Police (SP) and Deputy Commissioner (DC). Chairing a state-level Awareness and Monitoring Committee meeting at the Vidhana Soudha conference hall, CM Siddaramaiah emphasized that the Devadasi system has been abolished and must not persist. He declared, "If any such practices are found, we will act decisively against the SP and DC without hesitation." The Devadasi system, historically involving the dedication of women -- often from marginalized communities -- to temples, has been associated with systemic exploitation.

K'taka Police shoot murder accused in leg after escape bid in Hubballi

Hubballi (Karnataka), Feb 1 (IANS) : The Karnataka Police fired at three men, who are accused in a murder case, on Saturday when they attempted to attack the cops and escape in Hubballi city. The accused were shot in the leg. They have been identified as Abhishek, Vinod, and Yallappa. Police Inspectors Srimantha Hunasikatti and Sunil, attached to the Vidyanagar and Kamaripet police stations respectively, opened fire on the accused. According to the police, the accused had hacked 24-year-old Akash Valmiki to death near Unakal Lake late on Monday night. After gathering information about the accused, the police went to arrest them. However, the accused attempted to attack the police personnel and

tried to flee the scene. The police fired four warning shots in the air, urging the accused to surrender, but when they failed to comply, the officers fired five rounds at them. After being shot in the leg, the accused were arrested and taken to the hospital. Police Inspectors Srimantha Hunasikatti, Sunil, and constables Muttu Lamani and Sharana Gouda Lamani sustained injuries during the encounter. The incident occurred within the jurisdiction of



the Vidyanagar police station. Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused killed Akash Valmiki to instil fear in the region. According to Police Commissioner N. Shashikumar, the three accused have been arrested, and a manhunt has been launched to apprehend five other individuals involved in the crime.



New sexual harassment case against Sasidharan, Kerala Police to seek extradition from US

Kochi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Even while on bail in a case of sexual harassment, award-winning Malayalam film director Sanal Kumar Sasidharan has been booked in a similar case registered by the Kochi police on a complaint by the same actress. Sasidharan, who is in the US currently, has been accused of harassing the woman actor over social media. The police have now started steps to extradite Sasidharan who is presently in the US. As the first step, they have got in touch with the Indian Embassy there. Incidentally, Sasidharan is presently out on bail after he was arrested from a temple in the state capital city in 2022 on the complaint of an actress that she was being threatened and stalked by him for a while.



Kharge's statement on Maha Kumbh reflects deeply troubling mindset against Sanatan Dharma : Assam CM

Guwahati, Feb 1 (IANS) : Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday launched a scathing attack on Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge for his statement on Maha Kumbh, saying it reflected a deeply troubling mindset against Sanatan Dharma. CM Sarma wrote on his X handle, "The statement by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on the Mahakumbh is unprecedented and reflects a deeply troubling mindset against Sanatan Dharma. I believe this is the official stance of the Congress party led by Rahul Gandhi." The Assam CM also raised questions about Sonia Gandhi's holy dip in Kumbh in 2001 and challenged Kharge to issue a statement on Hajj yatra. He mentioned, "But let me ask him: back in 2001, Sonia Gandhi herself took a holy dip during the Kumbh. Will he also dare to say that going for Hajj will not resolve issues like hunger and poverty?" CM Sarma also asked Hindu leaders to take a stand on this matter. In the X post, the CM wrote, "It's time for all Hindu leaders associated with Congress to reflect and take a stand. Do not compromise your faith, your dharma, or the rich cultural heritage of this nation for mere power and po-

sition. No leader, no ideology, and no party should be placed above your religion and beliefs. Sanatan Dharma has stood the test of time for millennia; do not allow its essence to be undermined for political expediency. Let your conscience guide you." To recall, criticising the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its leaders over taking dips in Sangam at the Maha Kumbh Mela, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday wondered if the Ganga baths would end poverty in the country or put food on the tables of those hungry while claiming that the BJP leaders have been visiting Prayagraj "just for the camera".



Cong's true intent is to eradicate Sanatan Dharma: Sudhanshu Trivedi on Kharge's holy dip jibe

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi on Saturday accused the Congress party of aiming for "eradication of Sanatan Dharma" and "dismantling Hinduism," claiming that Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks reflect party's deep-rooted disregard for Indian culture and traditions. Reacting to Congress chief's comments during the 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' rally in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, Trivedi claimed that the statements reflect Congress' consistent stance against Sanatan Dharma. At the rally, Kharge questioned the relevance of BJP leaders' holy dips in the river Ganga during the Maha Kumbh and said that such acts do little to address poverty, hunger, and other pressing issues.



Restless BJP ally in Kerala BDJS explores new political options

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 1 (IANS) : Days after the Bharath Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS), the second-largest ally of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Kerala, passed a resolution.

Give details, costs of security if Tahir Hussain given parole for campaigning: SC to Delhi Police

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Saturday asked the Delhi Police to apprise it of the security measures that would be needed if the 2020 national capital riots accused Tahir Hussain is allowed to campaign under custody parole. The Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has fielded Hussain as a candidate from the Mustafabad constituency. A bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath was hearing a

plea filed by the former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor seeking interim bail for campaigning ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. The Bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta, told Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S.V. Raju, appear-

ing for the Delhi Police, to give an estimate of how much security personnel would be required if Tahir Hussain is given custody parole and the expenses it would entail. It hinted that Tahir Hussain may be asked to make a deposit towards the security expenses.



Raghav Chadha urges Centre to cap skyrocketing airfares for Maha Kumbh pilgrims

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP, Raghav Chadha on Saturday criticised airlines for hiking fares during the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, urging the Centre to take immediate action to make air travel affordable for pilgrims. In a video message, Chadha expressed his concern, saying, "For followers of Sanatan

Dharma, Maha Kumbh is the most significant festival of faith and spirituality. Millions from across the globe wish to visit Prayagraj to take a holy dip, meditate, and engage in penance. However, airlines have turned this sacred event into an opportunity for profit." Chadha highlighted the steep rise in airfares, stating, "Flights to Prayagraj that typically cost Rs 5,000 to Rs 8,000 are now priced at Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000. Such

arbitrary pricing has left lakhs of devotees disappointed and unable to attend the festival." Urging the Union government's intervention, Chadha said, "Airlines must not exploit this spiritual occasion for profit. On behalf of all devotees, I appeal to the government to curb this exploitation by introducing price caps or ensuring affordable flight options for pilgrims heading to the Maha Kumbh."

Chadha drew parallels to a past success, stating, "Earlier, when we raised the issue of overpriced food at airports, the government acted, introducing affordable canteens. I am confident our voice will once again be heard, and the airlines will reduce fares for devotees." The rising airfares have led many pilgrims to seek alternative routes to Prayagraj, with Varanasi emerging as a more economical travel hub. As of January 28, flights from

cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru to Prayagraj were priced between Rs 24,000 and Rs 40,000, with some fares exceeding Rs 53,000. Meanwhile, flights to Varanasi cost nearly 50 per cent less. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) recently held a meeting with airline representatives to address the issue, urging them to add more flights and rationalise ticket prices.



Following the meeting, the Centre directed airlines to introduce additional flights to Prayagraj on key holy dip dates, including January 29 (Mauni Amavasya).

OPINIONmail



Spiritual infrastructure : How the Kumbh inspires India's leadership story

In the vast landscape of human gatherings, nothing quite compares to the Kumbh Mela. As a company, we have been deeply engaged this year in the Mela -- and, every single time I have a discussion on this subject, I am humbled by the vision our forefathers had. As someone who has built ports, airports and energy networks across India, I find myself astonished by this magnificent demonstration of what I call "spiritual infrastructure" -- a force that has sustained our civilization for millennia.

Probably the World's largest management case study When Harvard Business School studied the Kumbh Mela's logistics, they marvelled at its scale. But, as an Indian, I see something deeper: the world's most successful pop-up megacity isn't just about numbers -- it's about eternal principles that we at the Adani Group strive to embrace.

Consider this: Every 12 years, a temporary city larger than New York materializes on the banks of sacred rivers. No board meetings. No PowerPoint presentations. No venture capital. Just pure, time-tested Indian jugaad (innovation) backed by centuries of iterative learnings.

The three indestructible pillars of Kumbh leadership

1. Scale with Soul
At the Kumbh, scale isn't just about size -- it's about impact. When 200 million people gather with dedication and service, it is not just an event but a unique confluence of souls. This is what I call "spiritual economies of scale." The larger it grows, the more efficient it becomes, not just materially but in human and humanity terms. True scale is not measured in metrics but in the moments of unity it creates.

2. Sustainable before sustainability was cool
Long before ESG became a boardroom buzzword, the Kumbh Mela practiced circular economy principles. A river is not just a source of water but the flow of life. Preserving it is a testament to our ancient wisdom. The same river that hosts millions returns to its natural state following the Kumbh, having cleansed hundreds of millions of devotees and confident that it can cleanse itself of all the "impurities" it washed away. Perhaps there's a lesson here for our modern development paradigms. Progress, after all, is not in what we take from the earth, but in how we give back to it.

3. Leadership through service
The most powerful aspect? The absence of a single controlling authority. True leadership lies not in giving orders but in the ability to take everyone along. Various akharas (religious orders), local authorities and volunteers work in harmony. It's leadership through service, not dominance -- a principle that modern corporations would do well to study. It teaches us that great leaders do not command or control -- they create conditions for others to work together and collectively rise.

Service is devotion, Service is prayer and Service itself is God

What The Kumbh Teaches Global Business
As India aims for a \$10 trillion economy, the Kumbh Mela offers unique insights:

1. Inclusive growth
The Mela welcomes everyone -- from sadhus to CEOs, villagers to foreign tourists. It's the ultimate example of what we at Adani call "Growth with Goodness."

2. Spiritual technology
While we pride ourselves on digital innovation, the Kumbh showcases spiritual technology -- time-tested systems for managing human consciousness at scale. This soft infrastructure is as crucial as physical infrastructure in an era where the biggest threat is mental illness!

3. Cultural confidence
In an era of global homogenization, the Kumbh stands as a testament to cultural authenticity. It's not a museum piece -- it's a living, breathing example of tradition adapting to modernity
Is the future ancient?

As I walk through our ports or solar farms, I often reflect on the Kumbh's lessons. Our ancient civilization didn't just build monuments -- it created living systems that sustain millions. This is what we must aspire to in modern India -- not just building infrastructure, but nurturing ecosystems.

And, while nations compete with military might and economic muscle, the Kumbh represents India's unique soft power. Vasudeva Kutumbakam! It's not just about hosting the world's largest gathering. It's about showcasing a sustainable model of human organization that has survived millennia.

EDITORIAL
the indian mail

TN minister and MP
Kanimozhi meet FM
Sitharaman, request release of
MGNREGS dues

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu, accompanied by DMK Deputy General Secretary and MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi to request the immediate release of pending dues under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

In a post on the social media platform X, Thennarasu stated, "The Chief Minister urged the Prime Minister on January 13 to ensure the immediate release of Rs 1,056 crore to the state government."

The delegation emphasised the urgent need for the Union Ministry of Rural Development to release the pending funds without further delay. Tamil Nadu Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department Additional Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi also accompanied Thennarasu and Kanimozhi during the meeting.

Earlier, on January 13, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the release of outstanding wage dues amounting to Rs 1,056 crore under MGNREGS.



Union Budget: PMAY holds key to affordable housing for millions

The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY-Urban) has made steady progress since it was announced in mid-2015 in providing affordable housing and going forward, adaptable, sustainable and low-cost construction technologies can be used to rapidly develop large mass housing projects, according to a report on Tuesday. Data by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs indicates 118.64 lakh homes have been sanctioned as of January 20, 2025. Nearly 90.22 lakh units have been completed, and nearly 112.50 lakh have been 'grounded'. In terms of the financials, nearly Rs 200,000 crore of central assistance has already been committed.

"PMAY must be made accessible to more people, and awareness about it also needs a big shot in the arm," said Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group. An important aspect of PMAY is interest subsidy on home loans, and direct subsidy for individual house construction or enhancement. "Any announcements that Union Budget 2025-26 will make in context with affordable housing will doubtlessly involve PMAY. Creative solutions and strong political will can bring this vitally important programme back to centre stage, which is where it belongs," Puri added. Nationally, rising prices have led to a gradual tapering down of luxury housing, and this may trigger an inflection point where the

cycle can once again turn positive for the affordable segment (units priced under Rs 40 lakh). Any substantial announcement for the affordable housing segment in the upcoming Union Budget can strengthen the trend and give affordable housing a seriously needed leg-up, according to the report. "Even if such measures don't initiate a full-blown revival, they can at least improve this segment's overall prospects. Finally, a healthy housing market caters to a broad range of buyers and doesn't favour just one segment," said Puri. After the pandemic, housing demand changed considerably. Now, Indians wanted larger and multi-functional homes with a comprehensive spread of lifestyle amenities.



No threat of Guillain Barre Syndrome in Bengal: State Health Department

After Maharashtra recorded one death and 110 suspected cases of Guillain Barre Syndrome, the West Bengal Health Department on Tuesday said that there is nothing to panic about the neurological disorder in the state. A statement by state Health Secretary Narayan Swarup Nigam claimed that Guillain Barre Syndrome is

nothing new. According to him, there had been sporadic reports of people getting affected by Guillain Barre Syndrome. However, he added, that in West Bengal, there is nothing to panic about since neither this is a new disease nor there had been fresh reports of new individuals getting affected by it in the state since December 2024. He also said that his claims have also been confirmed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Ac-

ording to Nigam, generally, kids below 15 years of age are being affected by this disease. However, Nigam added the state Health Department's medical teams are keeping a tab on the situation. Guillain-Barre Syndrome is a rapid-onset muscle weakness caused by the immune system damaging the peripheral nervous system.

Would welcome Nitish Kumar's son into politics: Former Bihar MP



Former Member of Parliament (MP) Anand Mohan said on Monday that he would welcome the Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar enter into politics. "If Nishant Kumar wants to come into politics, I would welcome him. The leader of the new generation should come forward. It is a healthy sign," he said.

Speculation about Nishant Kumar's political debut intensified after his recent visit to Bakhtiyarpur, his ancestral home, with his father on January 8.

During a program to honour the memory of Nitish Kumar's late father and other freedom fighters, Nishant appealed to the people to support his father and the Janata Dal (United) (JD-U) party. He urged voters to ensure Nitish Kumar becomes Chief Minister again.

Boat has already sunk: BJP on reports of Akhilesh Yadav and TMC MP 'powering' AAP campaign

As the political landscape heats up ahead of Assembly elections in the city, the BJP on Tuesday lampooned the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over reports of high-profile campaigners like Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav and Trinamool Con-

gress MP Shatrughan Sinha joining its bid to return to power in the capital. Two senior BJP leaders Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Anil Vij reproved the alliance, labeling it a "Jugaad" (makeshift solution) that is bound to fail. They added, "The AAP boat has already sunk". Speaking to IANS, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said,

"Look, this 'Jugaad' bloc is falling apart even before it goes for polls. If the makeshift alliance is crumbling before it even reaches the people, it's clear their attempt to cover up their failures under a political alliance." Haryana Transport Minister Anil Vij was more direct and critical of the deepening cracks within the INDIA bloc.



"The AAP boat has already sunk. It doesn't matter who joins their campaign now; their boat is doomed. Nothing will work for them, no matter what they do," Haryana minister told IANS. He also weighed in on the INDIA Bloc, suggesting that the so-called bloc was never truly united.

Tensions remain high in DR Congo amid rebellion attacks in major city

Kinshasa, Feb 1 (IANS) : Tensions remained high in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Saturday as the March 23 Movement (M23) rebellion advanced in the country's North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. President of the DRC Felix Tshisekedi is expected to address the nation amid the humanitarian crisis and major advances by the rebellion in the eastern part of the country, a DRC official said late Monday. However, he did not specify the exact time of the president's national address, reports Xinhua news agency. Vital Kamerhe, president of the National Assembly, the country's lower house of parliament, made the announcement after a high-level meeting chaired by

Tshisekedi on the humanitarian and security situation in Goma, the capital of the North Kivu province, which is currently facing attacks by the rebels. Since Sunday evening, gunfire has been heard across Goma, a city with over 700,000 internally displaced people living on its outskirts. On Monday morning, fighting intensified in various parts of the city, including areas near the border with Rwanda, local sources told Xinhua. "Active combat zones have spread to all neighbourhoods of the city," Bruno Lemarquis, the deputy UN envoy and top UN humanitarian official in the DRC, told a news conference on Monday. The situation in Goma remains "fast-evolving," he added.



Denmark to strengthen Arctic defence amid US interests in Greenland

Helsinki, Feb 1 (IANS) : Denmark has unveiled plans to bolster its military presence in the Arctic amid rising concerns over the US interest in acquiring Greenland, a Danish-owned territory. Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen announced late Saturday that the government will allocate 14.6 billion Danish krona (approximately \$2 billion) to boost the defence of Greenland, Arctic Sea and Northern Atlantic. The decision follows an agreement among Danish political parties, Xinhua news agency reported. The plans will include three new arctic naval vessels and two long-range drones, increased surveillance and crisis training for the local residents.



UN officials express alarm over escalating violence, humanitarian crisis in DRC

United Nations, Feb 1 (IANS) : Senior UN officials expressed alarm over the escalation of violence and the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), amid intensified hostilities in Goma, the eastern regional capital city. Bruno Lemarquis, deputy special representative of the secretary-general and the resident and humanitarian coordinator for the DRC, said heavy artillery fire hit the city centre, striking hospitals and a UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) site,

Xinhua news agency reported. "For example, several shells struck the charity maternity hospital in central Goma, killing and injuring civilians, including newborn and pregnant women," he said. A Save the Children facility and the UNHCR site also were struck. The coordinator was unable to describe the number and extent of casualties at the maternity hospital, but said there were no casualties at the other two sites, adding that hospitals in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, are overwhelmed. Speaking to reporters at UN headquarters on a video link from

Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC, Lemarquis said the humanitarian crisis in and around Goma is extremely worrying with "a new threshold of violence and suffering" reached as active combat threatens all quarters of the city. "Civilians are taking the brunt of the escalating hostilities," he said. Lemarquis said the few colleagues of his remaining in the city of 1 million -- only critical UN humanitarian personnel remain -- reported hundreds of thousands of people attempting to flee the violence.

Islamists attacking minority Hindu and Ahmadiyya communities in Bangladesh, reveals human rights report

Dhaka, Feb 1 (IANS) : Groups promoting extremist Islam are attacking minorities, particularly those from Hindu and Ahmadiyya communities in Bangladesh, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has revealed in its latest report that also highlights "a disturbing pattern" of security force abuses in the country after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster last August, targeting the Awami League supporters and journalists.

The 50-page report titled 'After the Monsoon Revolution: A Roadmap to Lasting Security Sector Reform in Bangladesh' offers various recommendations to the Muhammad Yunus led interim government, including seeking technical assistance, monitoring, and reporting by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN rights experts to ensure lasting reforms. The report mentions growing attacks on Hindu minorities since the fall of the Hasina government

that has led to international concern. Several commentators told HRW that Hindus and other religious minorities were attacked because they traditionally supported her Awami League party. "There are repeated allegations of violent attacks against Hindus and other minorities and that the police have failed to ensure protection," the report mentions. It also termed the arrest of Hindu priest Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former official of the International Society for Krishna Conscious-

ness (ISKCON), as "another worrying indication" for freedom of expression in Bangladesh. "Das's arrest came at a time when there is growing concern over attacks on Hindu minorities. The interim government has confirmed that at least 88 cases of communal violence had been registered between August 5 and October 22, and that 70 persons had been arrested. Hindu groups say that there have been hundreds of incidents of vandalism targeting Hindu businesses, homes, and places of



worship," the report states. With the Chittagong Lawyers' Association forcing its members not to represent Das, the spiritual

leader's struggle to have a legal representation in the court is acknowledged in the report which quotes a Hindu lawyer.

US aid suspension poses challenge to Mozambique's health sector: PM Levy

Maputo, Feb 1 (IANS) : The potential suspension of financial aid from the US to Mozambique has raised concerns about its impact on critical sectors, particularly health, according to Mozambican Prime Minister Maria Benvinda Levy. Speaking on Saturday in Maputo, the country's capital, Levy emphasised the importance of the aid while expressing optimism about the government's ability to manage internally. "If the suspension of external aid from the US is confirmed, the health sector will be one of the most affected," Levy told the press during an event in Maputo ahead of the official ceremony to appoint and swear in the new police chief, Joaquim Sive. She

noted that the government is prepared to tackle the challenge despite the significance of the support previously provided. "We have faced other worrying situations before and managed them successfully. I believe this time will be no different, as we will use our internal resources to navigate through." Acknowledging that the US support has been crucial, particularly in the health sector, Levy said other areas, with less significant dependence on external aid, might also be impacted. "We will have to redirect some of our resources to ensure these critical areas can continue their activities without disruption," she added.



Syria's interim FM welcomes EU decision to suspend sanctions

Damascus, Feb 1 (IANS) : Syria's interim Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani welcomed the decision by the European Union (EU) to suspend sanctions against Damascus for one year, calling it a move that could enhance living conditions for Syrians and support economic recovery. In a statement on the social media platform X, al-Shibani said on Saturday that Syria "appreciates the EU's move to halt sanctions" and expressed hope that the suspension would "positively impact all aspects of Syrians' lives and foster sustainable development." The EU Foreign Affairs

Council earlier on Monday agreed to temporarily lift restrictions targeting Syria's energy, transport, and selected financial sectors, according to French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot, Xinhua news agency reported. The decision, Barrot said, aims to alleviate humanitarian pressures while urging Damascus to commit to a United Nations-backed political transition, intensify efforts against Islamic State remnants, and dismantle all chemical weapons stockpiles. The EU has maintained stringent sanctions on Syria since 2011.

Hezbollah affirms right to respond to Israeli occupation

Beirut, Feb 1 (IANS) : Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem reaffirmed the group's stance on Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, stating that the deadline had passed, and no extensions would be tolerated. "Any delay in withdrawal is the responsibility of the UN and sponsoring nations," he declared in a televised speech, emphasising Hezbollah's right to act against continued occupation. Qassem emphasised Lebanon's unified resistance against Israeli presence, noting that President Joseph Aoun had instructed the army to stand with the people marching south. "The occupation is an aggression against Lebanese sovereignty, and it is the responsibility of the

people, army, state, and resistance to confront it," he said. Regarding the ceasefire agreement, Qassem revealed that Israel had initiated the negotiations through US mediators, Xinhua news agency reported. "We accepted the ceasefire because we did not seek war, but Israel's continued violations, over 1,350 breaches, prove its aggressive nature," he said. "The resistance remains prepared for any scenario. Our patience is strategic, but our response will be decisive if provoked," he warned. Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that Lebanon has fulfilled its obligations under the ceasefire agreement while Israel continues to delay its implementation.



CM Stalin to inaugurate memorial for social justice activists in TN's Villupuram

Chennai, Feb 1 (IANS) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, will inaugurate a memorial honouring 21 social justice activists who lost their lives in the police firing during the Vanniyar reservation struggle in September 1987. The memorial, constructed at Vazhuhareddi in Villupuram at a cost of 5.70 crore, will be a tribute to these activists.

CM Stalin is on a two-day visit to Villupuram district as part of his statewide tour to evaluate government schemes. During the tour, CM Stalin will also inaugurate a memorial hall in honour of former minister A. Govindasamy, who served in governments led by iconic Dravidian leaders C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi. This memorial hall, also built in Vazhuhareddi, has been com-

pleted at a cost of 4 crore. As part of his visit, CM Stalin will also open the Ellis Chatram dam, built across the Thenpennai River at Enathimangalam. As part of his two-day visit, CM Stalin conducted a roadshow in Tindivanam on Saturday, greeting people and receiving petitions along the way. He walked for about one km, interacting with residents before continuing the roadshow.



The event featured traditional art performances such as karakattam. CM Stalin also paid a surprise visit to a primary health centre in Olakur near Tindivanam. Accompanied by District Collector C. Palani, he inspected the fever and post-operative wards, checked the availability of medi-

cines, and interacted with patients to assess the quality of treatment. He directed health authorities to ensure timely disbursement of assistance under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Security. Tamil Nadu Minister for Forests K. Ponnudiy, along with District Collector C. Palani, reviewed security arrangements in the district. CM Stalin began district visits to monitor the implementation of state government schemes on November 5, starting with Coimbatore.



Pragati Yatra : Nitish Kumar to visit Purnea today, review developmental work

Patna, Feb 1 (IANS) : Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is set to visit Purnea on Saturday as part of the second phase of his Pragati Yatra to review ongoing developmental projects, inauguration, and foundation-laying ceremonies for various schemes worth crores of rupees.

This follows his earlier visit to Saharsa. During the visit, the Chief Minister is expected to engage directly with the local population, address their concerns, and inspect key public infrastructure, including schools and Anganwadi centres.

He will also conduct a detailed review of government-run schemes in the district. Senior officials, ministers, and local MLAs will accompany him, with all necessary administrative arrangements already in place to facilitate the visit. Notably, this trip was initially scheduled for January 27 but had to be postponed after the Chief Minister fell ill.



Jailed Dera Sacha Sauda sect chief Ram Rahim gets parole for 12th time

Chandigarh, Feb 1 (IANS) : Controversial Dera Sacha Sauda sect chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, serving a 20-year sentence in Rohtak's Sunaria jail in Haryana for raping two of his disciples, was once again granted parole on Saturday, this time for 30 days. This is Ram Rahim Singh's 12th parole or furlough in the last four years.

For the first time since he was sentenced to 20 years in jail in August 2017 for raping two disciples, he would stay in his sect's dera in Sirsa for 10 days. Later he will stay in Uttar Pradesh's Bagpath.

Ram Rahim, who was last granted 20-days' parole that came four days before Haryana voted on October 5 last year, was patronised by political leaders and parties in Punjab and Haryana for nearly two decades due to his ability to influence the votes of his followers. Last time he sought parole by citing the death anniversary of his father Maghar Singh that falls on October 5, which is observed as Parmarthi Diwas.

NIA arrests one suspect in ISIS recruitment case during raids in TN

Chennai, Feb 1 (IANS) : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a key suspect, identified as Alphazith (25), in connection with ISIS recruitment activities. The arrest took place in Purasaiwalkam, Chennai during a raid by NIA which commenced at 3.30 a.m. Tuesday. Alphazith, a resident of the Mayiladuthurai district, was employed as a driver with Kasturi Ambulance Service in Purasaiwalkam. Preliminary investigations indicate that Alphazith was involved in recruiting individuals for ISIS, a banned terrorist organisation. Further investigations are ongoing.

The NIA launched simultaneous raids in Chennai and Mayiladuthurai districts early Tuesday, starting at 3:30 a.m., following intelligence inputs that individuals in various districts of Tamil Nadu were being recruited for banned organisations.

The raids are being conducted at 15 locations in Mayiladuthurai and 5 locations in Chennai. NIA teams from Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, with support from the Tamil Nadu Police, are participating in the operation. Sources within the Tamil Nadu Police revealed



that the raids targeted areas associated with banned Islamic fundamentalist organisations.

The NIA has conducted multiple raids across Tamil Nadu in recent years, targeting locations such as Mayiladuthurai, Thanjavur, Tiruchy, Coimbatore, Madurai, and others. These operations often focused on former members of the outlawed Popular Front of India (PFI), an Islamist organisation banned by the Government of In-

dia in 2022. One notable case involved the February 5, 2019, murder of Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) leader Ramalingam in Thanjavur. Ramalingam was allegedly killed by PFI members for opposing the forced conversion of underprivileged individuals. The NIA had earlier filed charges against 18 PFI members in connection with the case.

Yamuna toxic water: Haryana CM Saini dares Kejriwal to apologize or face defamation

Chandigarh, Feb 1 (IANS) : A day after former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accused BJP-ruled Haryana of 'poisoning' the Yamuna river, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini asked the former to apologize to the people, otherwise, he will file a defamation suit against him. A day earlier, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and her Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann moved the Election Commission of India (ECI), alleging high ammonia levels in the water supplied from Haryana to Delhi. It's learnt that the ECI has directed the Haryana government to submit a factual report by noon on Saturday.

In his campaigning in poll-bound Delhi, AAP national convener Kejriwal has been saying the BJP "has done such an act that has never been done in history before. The people of Delhi get water to drink from Haryana and Uttar

Pradesh. "In Yamuna, water flows into Delhi from Haryana. The BJP's Haryana government has poisoned the water in Yamuna. However, the Delhi Jal Board was vigilant enough to stop that water from coming to Delhi, otherwise, it would have caused mass genocide in Delhi." Responding to Kejriwal's "war of words", Haryana CM Saini said Kejriwal has a habit of making baseless allegations and blaming others for his "inefficiency" and "incapability" to fulfil his own promises.



"Kejriwal should apologise to the people of Delhi and Haryana or face legal action for his baseless allegations," said CM Saini. He blamed Kejriwal for failing to make proper arrangements for water distribution, which has forced Delhi residents to consume

contaminated water. CM Saini blamed Kejriwal for systematically diverting 28 drains into the Yamuna river. "The people of Delhi would teach him a lesson in the upcoming Assembly polls...I said that you (Kejriwal).



Kashi Vishwanath temple sees surge in devotees during Maha Kumbh, millions seek blessings

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The ongoing Maha Kumbh has witnessed an overwhelming turnout of devotees not just in Prayagraj, the city hosting world's largest religious gathering but also in Varanasi, especially at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. While crores of pilgrims take holy dip

in Maha Kumbh, millions of devotees are also flocking to Varanasi to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva at the Kashi Vishwanath temple. The temple which underwent extensive renovation recently, is setting a new record in terms of daily footfalls as the devotees are breaking previous records, including those of Sawan and Shivaratri.

A brief glimpse of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple corridor shows devotees standing in lines, stretching up to 5 kms for offering prayers to Baba Vishwanath.



India summons Lankan envoy, lodges 'strong protest' over firing on Indian fishermen

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : India on Saturday summoned the Sri Lankan envoy in New Delhi to lodge a strong protest over an incident of firing by the Sri Lankan Navy during the apprehension of 13 Indian fishermen in the proximity of Delft Island, earlier in the day. Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India, Priyanga Wickramasinghe, was summoned by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), while the Indian High Commission in Colombo also raised the matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sri Lankan government.

Indian Railways reach 23,000 km tracks for 130 kmph speed, clock 4 p.c. rise in earnings

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Indian Railways has achieved a significant milestone by upgrading more than 23,000 track kilometres (TKM) of the railways' network to support train speeds of up to 130 kilometres per hour (kmph), an official said on Saturday.

According to the Ministry of Railways, there has been a four per cent rise in earnings between April and December

of the current fiscal year (FY25), with Rs 1.26 lakh crore revenue from freight operations. The passenger segment earnings increased by six per cent, reaching Rs 55,988 crore, in the reported period. "With nearly one-fifth of India's railway network now equipped for higher speeds, these advancements have been made possible through robust safety measures such as modern signalling systems.





FM raises capex in FY 2025-26 to Rs 11.21 lakh crore for funding big infra projects

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has decided to continue with the high capital expenditure on big-ticket infrastructure projects in the highways, ports, railways, and power sectors with an allocation of Rs 11.21 lakh crore in the Budget for 2025-26, which represents an increase of 10.2 per cent over the Rs 10.18 crore that was spent on capex in 2024-25. The figure is a modest 0.9 per cent higher than the Budget Estimate for 2024-25 at Rs 11.11 lakh crore which was a sharp increase over the capex for 2023-24. The entire amount of the Rs 11.11 lakh crore could not be spent during the current financial year because of the Lok Sabha elections which followed by Assembly polls in some states, including Maharashtra.

Sitharaman proposed to reduce the capital expenditure target to Rs 10.18 lakh crore from Rs 11.11 lakh crore for this fiscal year.

The capex continues to remain at a robust level to spur growth and it must be seen in comparison to a high base, a senior official said.



FIU slaps Rs 9.27 crore penalty on crypto platform Bybit over PMLA violations

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The government has slapped a penalty of Rs 9.27 crore on Bybit Fintech Limited (Bybit), a virtual digital asset service provider (VDA SP) over Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) violations. The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) imposed a monetary penalty of total Rs 9,27,00,000 on Bybit, "with reference to the violations of its obligations under the PMLA". Bybit kept expanding its services in the Indian market without securing mandatory registration with the FIU-IND, according to the agency. "The persistent and continuous non-compliance caused FIU-IND to block their websites to stop operations under the Information Technology Act, 2000 through the Ministry of Electronics and Communication Technology (MEITY)," said the Ministry of Finance.



Commercial LPG cylinder prices slashed by Rs 7 ahead of Union Budget

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : In a move set to impact the hospitality and commercial sectors, oil marketing companies have reduced the price of 19 kg commercial LPG cylinders by Rs 7, effective immediately.

The revision comes just ahead of the Union Budget presentation, scheduled for 11 AM in Parliament. Following this reduction, the cost of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder in Delhi has dropped from Rs 1,809 to Rs 1,797.

Indian stock market ends flat after Union Budget, small-cap stocks shine

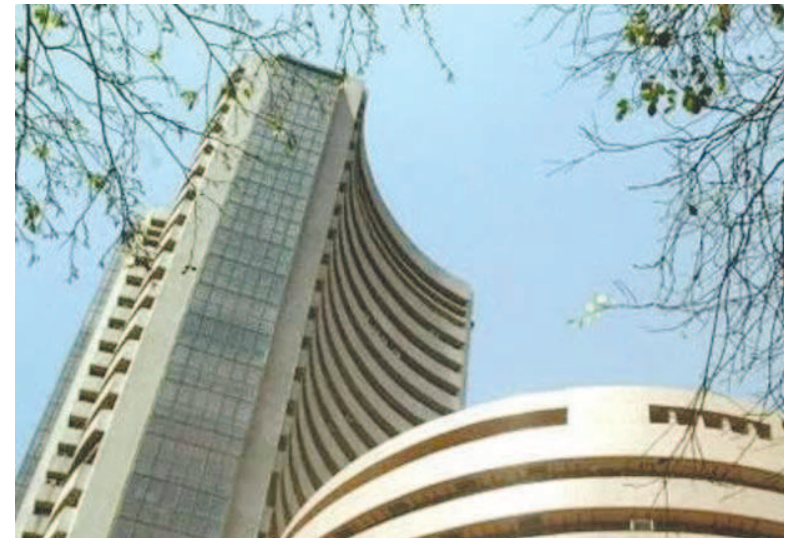
Mumbai, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Indian stock market on Saturday closed flat over weak global cues as Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2025-26 in Parliament.

Despite touching the day's high of 77,899.05, the BSE Sensex settled at 77,505.96 with 5.39 points or 0.01 per cent up from its previous close.

The NSE Nifty ended lower by 26.25 points,

or 0.11 per cent, at 23,482.15. Throughout the session, the index moved between a high of 23,632.45 and a low of 23,318.30.

"The Nifty has witnessed a roller-coaster ride during the Budget session. On the daily chart, a small-bodied candle has formed, indicating indecision," market experts said.



PNB reports strong Q3 FY25 results, net profit doubles

Mumbai, Feb 1 (IANS) : State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Saturday posted impressive results for the quarter ending December 2024 (Q3 FY25) reporting a net profit of Rs 4,508.21 crore, a 103 per cent increase from Rs 2,222.8 crore in the same quarter last year.

On a sequential basis, profit grew by around 5 per cent from Rs 4,303 crore in the September quarter (Q2 FY25).

The net interest income (NII) rose by 7.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) at Rs 11,033 crore, compared to Rs 10,293 crore in Q3 FY24, according to its stock exchange filing. PNB's total income jumped 16 per cent to Rs 34,751.7 crore from Rs 29,961.65 crore in the previous year. Quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), it saw a marginal increase of 1

per cent from Rs 34,447.10 crore in Q2FY25.

The gross non-performing assets (Gross NPA) reduced to Rs 45,413.98 crore from Rs 60,371.38 crore a year ago and Rs 47,582.25 crore in the previous quarter. The Gross NPA ratio declined to 4.09 per cent from 6.24 per cent in Q3FY24 and 4.48 per cent in the previous quarter.

However, the net NPA of the public bank fell to Rs 4,437.43 crore from Rs 4,674.24 crore in Q2 FY25 - significantly lower than a year ago. The net NPA ratio of the bank dropped to 0.41 per cent from 0.66 per cent QoQ and 0.96

per cent YoY. Punjab National Bank's operating profit stood at Rs 6,620 crore in Q3 which was a 4.6 per cent growth YoY.

The credit-deposit ratio of the bank improved to 69.95 per cent from 69.24 per cent YoY and 69.91 per cent in Q2FY25. The bank reported a provision write-back of Rs 285 crore, compared to a provision of Rs 288 crore in Q2 FY25. Provisions against NPAs rose to Rs 317 crore in the third quarter from Rs 199 crore in the previous quarter.

Banks in robust health as NPAs down to 12-year low, profit up 22.2 per cent : Economic Survey

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : India's monetary and financial sectors have performed well in the first nine months of the Financial Year 2024-25 with the gross NPAs of banks now down to a 12-year low of 2.6 per cent at the end of September 2024 while their profitability improved during H1 of FY25, with profit after tax surging by 22.2 per cent year-on-year, the Economic Survey stated.

Bank credit has grown at a steady rate in the current financial year while deposits continue to exhibit double-digit growth. As of the end of November 2024, the YoY growth in aggregate deposits of scheduled commercial banks stood at 11.1 per cent, it states. The survey highlights that sector-wise, the growth in agriculture credit as of November 29, 2024, in the current financial year was 5.1 per cent. The growth in industrial credit picked up and stood at 4.4 per cent as of the end of November 2024, higher than the 3.2 per cent recorded a year ago.



India bets big on AI, allocates Rs 500 crore for 3 Centres of Excellence

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Aligning with India's broader vision to become a global artificial intelligence (AI) hub, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced the creation of three Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in AI for education.

The initiative, with a budget allocation of Rs 500 crore, aims to strengthen AI research and its use in the education system in the country.

These new AI Centres of Excellence will work on advanced research, the development of AI learning tools, and foster collaboration between educational institutions and industries. The goal is to equip students with the skills they need to thrive in the future. "AI is transforming industries worldwide, and India needs to lead in both AI research and its practical applications," FM Sitharaman said while presenting the Union Budget in Parliament. She added that these Centres of Excellence will act as innovation hubs and will help in developing AI solutions that can be used in education.



IndusInd Bank reports 39 pc drop in Q3 profit at Rs 1,402 crore

Mumbai, Feb 1 (IANS) : IndusInd Bank on Saturday reported a net profit of Rs 1,402 crore for the third quarter of the financial year 2024-25 (Q3 FY25), marking a 39 per cent decline compared to Rs 2,301 crore in the same quarter last year (Q3 FY24).

The bank's financial performance was impacted by higher provisions and a slight decline in its core income. The net interest income (NII), which represents the difference between interest earned and interest paid, stood at Rs 5,228 crore in Q3 FY25, a marginal dip of 1.2 per cent from Rs 5,295 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previ-

ous year. The bank's net interest margin (NIM), a key measure of profitability, dropped to 3.93 per cent from 4.29 per cent a year ago and also declined from 4.08 per cent in the previous quarter.

IndusInd Bank's asset quality weakened, with its gross non-performing assets (GNPA) rising to Rs 8,375 crore, or 2.25 per cent of total loans, as of December 31, 2024.

This was higher than the 1.92 per cent GNPA recorded in the same period last year.

History points its finger at you and cries: Khera slams Scindia's remarks on Rahul's criticism of royals



New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera on Saturday sharply reacted to Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's comments criticising Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi over his remark on the role of royal families in India's freedom struggle and reminded the erstwhile royal of the now-abolished privy purse system for former Indian princes and pointed out that "the positive contributions of a few cannot overshadow the misdeeds of numerous royal families." Scindia, in a post on Monday, had remarked, "The statement by Rahul Gandhi, a leader who

considers the Constitution as his 'pocket diary', about the role of India's royal families before Independence exposes his narrow thinking and understanding. In his hunger for power and position, he has forgotten that these royal families laid the foundation for equality and inclusive development in India years ago." Giving a sharp retort, Khera said in a post on X on Tuesday, "History points its finger at you and cries, Your Highness. If the 26th Amendment of the Constitution had not been enacted, even today the Government of India would have been paying crores of rupees

as tax-free allowances to the Gwalior royal family – Rs 25 lakh annually in 1950, adjusted for inflation, would have been a staggering sum today. This practice continued until 1971."

The 26th amendment of the Constitution passed in 1971, abolished the privy purse system for former Indian princes.

Defending the royal families, Scindia had highlighted their contributions to social justice and education.

He said that Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda provided financial assistance to Dr B.R. Ambedkar for his education; Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj pioneered social justice in 1902 by introducing 50 per cent reservation for Bahujans in governance; and Madhav Maharaj I of Gwalior established education and employment centres for empowering Backward Classes in the Gwalior-Chambal region.

Khera countered Scindia's narrative, accusing him of whitewashing history, saying, "You may have forgotten the treachery of many royal families and their allegiance to the British, but we cannot.

Three newly appointed judges take oath at Rajasthan HC

Jaipur, Feb 1 (IANS) : Three newly appointed judges -- Chandrashekhar Sharma, Pramil Kumar Mathur, and Chandra Prakash Shrivastava -- were sworn in at the Rajasthan High Court on Monday. The oath-taking ceremony was held at the court's main bench in Jodhpur and was presided over by Chief Justice MM Shrivastava.

With their induction, the total number of judges in the Rajasthan High Court has risen to 33. All three judges belong to the 1992 batch of judicial officers. The swearing-in ceremony was held at 10 am in the courtroom of the High Court's main bench. On the occasion, Chief Justice M.M. Srivastava administered the oath to the three newly appointed judges. Senior High Court judges Pushpendra

Singh Bhati, Dinesh Mehta, Vineet Kumar Mathur, Birendra Kumar, Manoj Kumar Garg, Munnuri Laxman, Farzand Ali, Rekha Borana, Kuldeep Mathur, Nupur Bhati and Yogendra Kumar Purohit were also present at the ceremony.

Last October, the Rajasthan High Court also welcomed three judges transferred from other high courts. These included Justice Avneesh Jhingana and Justice Arun Monga from Punjab and Haryana High Court and Justice Munnuri Laxman from Telangana High Court.

The Rajasthan High Court has an approved strength of 50 judges, but currently, only 33 judges are serving, leaving 17 positions vacant.



Tortured by microfinance staff, Karnataka teacher jumps into river

Davanagere (Karnataka), Feb 1 (IANS) : A female teacher committed suicide by jumping into a river, allegedly due to harassment by microfinance staffers in Karnataka's Davanagere district, said officials here, adding that her body was found on Saturday. The victim was identified as Pushpalatha, who had gone missing on January 26.

According to the police, Pushpalatha, a resident of Honnalli, and her husband Halesh, also a teacher, had taken a loan from a microfinance company in Shivamogga. It is alleged that Pushpalatha faced harassment from the staffers as they were unable to pay the final instalment of the loan EMI.

Mohit Kamboj denies involvement in Baba Siddique murder case, calls for fair probe

Mumbai, Feb 1 (IANS) : The investigation into the murder of NCP leader Baba Siddique has taken another turn, with his son Zeeshan Siddique alleging links between his father and BJP leader Mohit Kamboj in connection with slum redevelopment projects in Bandra. Baba Siddique, who was expected to be nominated to the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC), was shot dead on October 12 last year, leaving the political and real estate circles of Mumbai in shock. Zeeshan Siddique claimed that his father had documented interactions with multiple builders and politicians, including Mohit Kamboj, in relation to redevelopment projects. He also mentioned WhatsApp communications on the day of the murder, specifically between 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., concerning a project managed by Mundra Builders. Zeeshan also shared a



video purportedly showing members of Mundra Builders using abusive language against his father while addressing slum dwellers. Following the allegations, Mohit Kamboj issued a public statement refuting any involvement in the murder and condemning the allegations. "It was presented in a twisted manner. Baba Siddique was a good friend of mine. We spoke two to three times a day," said Kamboj. "On the evening of the murder, I had a conversation with him. We were part of the NDA and discussed politics and general topics.

K'taka Minister denies role in MUDA scam, says CM's wife not involved

Bengaluru, Feb 1 (IANS) : Karnataka Minister for Urban Development Byrathi Suresh on Saturday denied his involvement in the MUDA scam and said he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, B.M. Parvathi, had "zero role" in the case. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Minister Suresh said, "I am very clear. The court granted the stay after considering that we had no role in the case. The matter has been adjourned to February 10, and we will see what happens after that," he said. The High Court on Monday stayed the notice issued by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to him and the CM's wife for appearance before the agency in the case. "I and the Congress party have full trust in the judiciary and the Constitution. We will follow the court's orders. The ED officials must explain why they issued notices to us," the Minister asserted. He further said, "I was surprised when I received the notice. When the scam occurred, I was not in charge of the Urban Development Ministry.



Kerala police faces heat for twin murders in Palakkad, accused still at large

Palakkad, Feb 1 (IANS) : Public outrage has erupted against the Kerala Police following the brutal murders of 54-year-old Sudhakaran and his 76-year-old mother, Lekshmi, allegedly by their 58-year-old neighbour, Chenthamara. Despite prior complaints about the suspect's behaviour, police inaction is being blamed for the tragedy.

A massive manhunt involving a 150-strong Kerala Police force is underway in the Nenmara area to apprehend Chenthamara, who previously served time for the 2019 murder of Sajitha, Sudhakaran's wife. Released on bail just two months ago, Chenthamara is now accused of this latest gruesome crime, which took place as the trial for Sajitha's murder was set to begin. The victims' daughters -- Akhila and Athulya, expressed their anguish, condemning the local police for ignoring their written complaints about the accused.

Woman, daughter trampled to death by wild elephants in Assam

Guwahati, Feb 1 (IANS) : A woman-daughter duo was killed by wild elephants in Assam's Udalguri district, officials said on Saturday. The duo died while they were sleeping in their house, the officials stated. Superintendent of Police (SP), Udalguri district, Pushkin Jain men-

tioned that the incident happened on Monday night in the Dimakuchi area - a locality adjacent to an elephant corridor. He said: "A 60-year-old mother and her daughter aged about 40 years were sleeping in one of the houses that the elephants destroyed in the locality. After the elephants left the area, the bodies were found."



The deceased were identified as Lalmek Karmakar and her daughter Apu Karmakar. The bodies were sent for post-mortem at Udalguri Civil Hospital.

Punjab Police arrest six members of Kaushal gang including two key shooters

Chandigarh, Feb 1 (IANS) : Punjab Police's Counter Intelligence Amritsar has foiled a possible target killing with the arrest of six members of the Kaushal Chaudhary gang, including two key shooters -- Puneet Lakhnpal and Narinder Kumar, alias Lalli, who were involved in the murders of kabaddi player Sandeep Singh Nangal Ambian and Sukhmeet Singh, said Director

General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav here on Saturday. The other four arrested members have been identified as Harpreet Singh, Gurbhinder Singh, Sandeep Singh and Maninderjit Singh.

The police have also recovered six .30 bore foreign-made pistols along with 40 rounds from their possession. DGP Yadav said the same gang was also involved in firing indiscriminately at the Highway King

Hotel in Rajasthan and demanding extortion of Rs 5 crore in September 2024. All the arrested accused have a criminal history and they have been evading arrests for the last three years, he added. He said the preliminary investigation has revealed that the arrested people are professional shooters of the organised criminal network of the Kaushal Chaudhary gang. He added that the gang is active in Haryana,

Rajasthan, Punjab, etc., and they execute criminal activities on the directions of their foreign-based handlers. Sharing operation details, the DGP said on Sunday a team from Counter Intelligence Amritsar received input about members of the Kaushal Chaudhary gang, including Amarjit Singh, Jagjit Singh, Balwinder Singh, Prabhdeep Singh and others were orchestrating a targeted killing in



the state by sitting abroad with the assistance of local operatives. The information further elaborated that local members of the gang

were reportedly roaming near Haveli restaurant in Jandiola in Amritsar and were equipped with weapons.



Fire persists at Sudan's largest oil refinery following army's recapture

Khartoum, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Khartoum Oil Refinery is still engulfed in flames and smoke, three days after the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) regained control of the strategic complex. Husham Mohamed Babikir, acting director of the refinery, said crude oil storage tanks were set ablaze before the SAF retook control of the refinery. Xinhua news agency reported. Babikir told a Xinhua correspondent who visited the refinery as part of a media team that the fire, still ripping through the

complex, caused some tanks to explode and the leaking of crude oil. "We are determined to repair the damage as quickly as possible, and we are confident in our ability to accomplish that," said the acting director. The refinery, located north of Khartoum, began production in May 2000. Previous statistics by Sudan's Ministry of Oil showed it has a production capacity of about 100,000 barrels per day, covering approximately 45 per cent of the country's needs.

Gujarat man held in 'digital custody' for 13 hours, duped of Rs 13 lakh

Jamnagar, Feb 1 (IANS) : A man in Gujarat's Jamnagar was digitally arrested for 13 hours by cybercriminals and duped of Rs 13 lakh.

The man was identified as Mehul Ramakantbhai Panji who was tricked into the plot by a gang impersonating officials from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Mumbai Crime Branch. The details reveal that Mehul was held under "digital arrest" for 13 consecutive hours. The cybercriminals coerced him by linking him to a fabricated drug-related NDPS case.



UCC roll-out: BJP welcomes move, JD(U) leader raises concerns; Opposition fumes

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Uttarakhand has taken a historic step by becoming the first state in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), igniting a fierce political divide. While the BJP and Shiv Sena have lauded the state's decision, calling it a progressive move for national unity, opposition parties, including Congress, RJD and a JD(U) leader have raised strong objections, asserting that the move undermines the country's rich cultural diversity and threatens societal harmony. Uttarakhand's Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami not only announced the implementation of the UCC but also launched an online portal for citizens to register marriages, divorce, inheritance claims, live-in relationships, and their dissolution, all

under the newly introduced law. The state also released a set of rules to guide the implementation of the law, marking a significant step in the country's legal landscape. BJP leaders were quick to praise Uttarakhand's move. Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao described the

state's action as courageous and noted that Uttarakhand's experience could serve as a model for the rest of the nation. "Uttarakhand has long considered UCC, and now it's been implemented. This step should encourage further nationwide discussions," he said.



India honours Trinidad and Tobago President with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

Port of Spain, Feb 1 (IANS) : India has conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award on Christine Carla Kangaloo, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, recognising her outstanding achievements in public affairs and her contributions to enhancing India's global prestige, the High Commission of India in Trinidad and Tobago announced on Saturday. In a post on X, the High Commission stated, "At the Republic Day reception hosted by the High Commis-

sion last evening, Christine Carla Kangaloo, ORTT, President of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, was honoured with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award on behalf of the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, by the High Commissioner of India Dr. Pradeep Rajpurohit, for her outstanding achievements in Public Affairs and for fostering the name and prestige of India." Kangaloo, an Indo-Trinidadian President, served as the chief guest for the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from Janu-

ary 8-10, 2025. She delivered a virtual address that received widespread applause across India and beyond. The High Commission extended its congratulations to the President and the First Gentleman for this distinguished honour, thanking them for gracing the Republic Day reception. During her address at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Kangaloo emphasised the deep-rooted ties between India and Trinidad and Tobago, dating back to 1845 when Indian indentured workers first arrived on the Trinidadian shores. She highlighted that India was



among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Trinidad and Tobago after its independence in 1962. The President praised India for its contributions to the global community, citing achievements in education, medicine, mathematics, and navigation. She noted India's historical accomplishments, including the establishment of the world's first university in Takshashila.

Israeli drone strike kills two in West Bank

Ramallah, Feb 1 (IANS) : An Israeli drone strike killed two Palestinian men and wounded three others after targeting a vehicle in the Nour Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian authorities and witnesses said. The Ramallah-based Health Ministry said in a statement that two fatalities and three injuries were brought to Tulkarm Governmental Hospital following the strike. Witnesses and local sources told Xinhua the attack ignited a fire at the scene, prompting ambulances and civil defence crews to respond. The Palestinian Authority's Tulkarm governor, Abdullah Kamil, identified the dead as Ihab Abu Atwi and Ramez Al-Damiri, Xinhua news agency reported. Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the Israel Security Agency (ISA) confirmed in a statement that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) killed two in Tulkarm. "During a joint IDF and ISA counterterrorism activity, an IAF aircraft struck and eliminated Ihab Abu Atwi, a terrorist who served as the head of Hamas in Tulkarm, and an additional terrorist," the statement read. It added that Abu Atwi was involved in numerous shooting attacks, including an attack on an Israeli vehicle at the Ramin junction in the West Bank in July last year, in which three Israelis were injured.



Parts of Rajasthan experience intense cold, Fatehpur records 0.5 degrees

Jaipur, Feb 1 (IANS) : Parts of Rajasthan again experienced intense cold as the temperature in many cities dipped. Fatehpur in eastern Rajasthan recorded a minimum temperature of 0.5 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning while Sangariya in the western part of the state registered a minimum temperature of 1.4 degrees. The minimum temperatures in many cities of the state were recorded as under 10 degrees leaving nights colder while days were warmer. Sikar recorded a minimum temperature of 1.4 degrees Celsius, Ajmer had a minimum temperature of 7.1, while Bhilwara had 4.9, Vanasthali 6.0 and Alwar registered 3.2 degrees. Further, cities such as Jaipur and Kota also experienced a drop in minimum tempera-

tures by 4 degrees. Severe cold persisted in the Shekhawati region in the last 24 hours, with minimum temperatures in Churu and Sikar falling below 4 degrees. Sikar recorded 3.5 degrees, and Churu reported 3.6 degrees -- both the lowest temperatures of the season for January. Similarly, Kota experienced its coldest night of the season, with a minimum temperature of 6.6 degrees. The Meteorological (MeT) Department has further warned of a new Western Disturbance, which is expected to arrive in early February, potentially bringing rain to some regions. The weather department expects further predict no significant relief from the cold for the next three days.



Tension prevails along India-Bangladesh border after clash between farmers

Agartala, Feb 1 (IANS) : Tension prevailed along the India-Bangladesh border in Tripura's Unakoti district on Saturday after a clash between the farmers of two villages on the border of the countries, officials said. The BSF and police officials separately said the villagers of India and Bangladesh clashed among themselves over the issue of farming in cropland in the border village of Hirachhara in Kailashahar Sub-division on Sunday evening. According to the officials, two Indian farmers and a Bangladeshi cultivator were injured in the clash before the BSF troops intervened in the conflict. Local people said that Indian farmers -- Karim Ali (28) and

Zamir Ali (34), both brothers, were severely assaulted with sharp weapons and iron rods by a group of 10-12 Bangladesh nationals. The attack left them critically injured, with Karim sustaining deep wounds on his left hand and back while Zamir suffered head injuries. Both are currently undergoing medical treatment at the Unakoti District Hospital, where doctors have indicated that Karim's left-hand finger may need an amputation. The incident occurred when the two brothers, who cultivate betel leaves and paddy on their land near the zero line of the border, had gone for farming activities on Sunday and found significant damage to their crops. They informed the matter to the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel posted in the area. However, while returning home in the evening, they were threatened not to go to that area again for cultivation and then attacked by Bangladeshi nationals from the Murui Chhara area of Moulvibazar district (Bangladesh). The attack occurred within Indian territory raising concerns about the safety of the Indian border villagers. Additional troops of the BSF have been deployed in the areas.

Delhi polls : Maken accuses Kejriwal of reviving terrorism in Punjab, condemns desecration

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : As part of Congress party's 'AAP ke Pap' (Sins of AAP) series, former Delhi Assembly speaker Ajay Maken on Saturday hit out at AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal for the lawlessness in Punjab that has resulted in a desecration incident in Amritsar and revival of terror in the state. Calling Kejriwal a 'khalnayak' (villain) and 'anarchist', Maken condemned the vandalism of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar's statue in Amritsar on Sunday due to growing lawlessness in Punjab and accused the AAP of shielding terrorists who have undertaken 11 blasts in Punjab under Bhagwant Singh Mann government.



V-P Dhankhar slams politics over UCC, targets illegal migrants

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday hit out at critics of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), asking how we can criticise something which is the mandate of the Indian Constitution and highlighted the security threat posed by illegal migrants. He said that Article 44 of the Constitution ordains that the state will endeavour to secure for the citizens a #UniformCivilCode throughout the territory of India. "One state has done it. I'm sure it will be a matter of time that the entire country will have

similar legislation," he added. Addressing the inaugural event for the fifth batch of participants of the Rajya Sabha Internship Programme, he said, "We are in a joyous mood today. The beginning of the last quarter of the century of adoption of the Indian Constitution has taken place with 'Dev Bhoomi' Uttarakhand making Uniform Civil Code (UCC) a reality." Condemning politics over UCC, Vice-President Dhankhar said, "Some people, out of ignorance, are criticising the Uniform Civil Code." "Politics has taken such a deep root in our minds that it has turned into poison. For political gain,



people don't hesitate to forsake nationalism, not even for a moment, without feeling concerned," he added. "How can anyone oppose promulgation of Uniform Civil Code! you study it. Study the debates of the Constitutional Assembly, study how many times the Supreme Court of the country has so indicated," he said. The Vice-President also underlined the security threat posed by illegal migrants and said, "Millions of illegal migrants are living in our land. Is it not a challenge to our sovereignty? Such people will never be wedded to our nationalism." He said such people use our resources of health, education, and other facilities and engage in jobs meant for our people.

Total area under rabi crops increases to 655.88 lakh hectares

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The total farm area sown in the country under various rabi crops in the ongoing season so far has crossed 655.88 lakh hectares, up from 643.72 lakh hectares in the same period of the previous year, according to official figures released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare on Saturday. The area sown under wheat has shot up to 324.38 lakh hectares (ha) compared to 315.63 lakh ha during the corresponding period of last year, which is expected to result in higher production of the cereal for the season. The winter rain is also expected to benefit the crop, according to farm experts. The total area under pulses has increased to 142.49 lakh ha area coverage compared to 139.29 lakh ha during the same period last year which would lead to an increase in the output of the crop. This would help check prices of pulses which have been fuelling inflation. Another 55.67 lakh ha area coverage has been reported under Shri Anna and

coarse Cereals while oilseeds have been sown in 98.18 ha. The increase in the total sown area this year comes as a welcome development as it is expected to increase production of essential food goods and would help bring down inflation in the economy. Looking ahead, food inflation is expected to ease while the growth outlook for the economy is "cautiously optimistic" for the coming months as the agricultural sector is likely to benefit from favourable monsoon conditions, increased minimum support prices and adequate supply of inputs, according to the Finance Ministry's monthly economic review. India's retail inflation rate, based on the Consumer Price Index, fell to a 4-month low of 5.22 per cent in December as prices of vegetables.



Gujarat govt sanctions 12,382 more solar pumps, 7700 installed

Gandhinagar, Feb 1 (IANS) : More than 7,700 farmers in Gujarat have installed off-grid solar pumps under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhayan (PM-KUSUM) scheme as of December 2024, as per the official data shared by the state government. As part of the initiative, the state government has disbursed over ₹218 crore in subsidies to farmers. This subsidy covers approximately 70 per cent of the total cost of solar pump installation, significantly reducing the financial burden on farmers. By adopting solar-powered ir-

rigation systems, farmers are not only conserving electricity but also contributing to environmental sustainability. The PM-KUSUM scheme, launched by the central government in 2019, aims to ensure the availability of water and electricity for irrigation while promoting the use of renewable solar energy. Farmers across the state are benefiting from pollution-free electricity to power their agricultural needs. The Central government has sanctioned Gujarat to install 12,382 standalone off-grid solar pumps by March 2026 under the scheme. As of October 31, 2024, the state's total installed renewable energy capacity (excluding hydro-power) reached 29,814.36 MW, making it the second-largest in India after Rajasthan. In terms of solar power, Gujarat's capacity stood at 14,182 MW as of June 2024. A notable aspect of Gujarat's solar initiative is its leadership in residential rooftop solar installations.



'Sanatan Dharm' row : SC turns down pleas seeking action against Udhayanidhi Stalin

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Saturday refused to entertain pleas seeking legal action, including registration of an FIR, against Tamil Nadu Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin over his controversial statements on 'Sanatan Dharm'. Speaking at a conference in Chennai in September 2023, the then minister for sports and youth affairs had said, "Sanatana Dharma was against social justice and equality and that it should be 'eradicated' like malaria and dengue." A bench of Justices Bela M. Trivedi and P.B. Varale questioned the maintainability of writ petitions filed under Article 32 of the Constitution. Sending the disclination of the apex court to entertain the plea, senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, appearing for B. Jagannath and two other petitioners, sought permission to withdraw the pleas.

'Language transcends religion': Celebrated Urdu poet Shiv Kishan Bissa



Jaipur, Feb 1 (IANS) : Shiv Kishan Bissa, popularly known as Sheen Kaaf Nizam, a celebrated Urdu poet and literary scholar from Jodhpur, has been awarded the Padma Shri for his exceptional contributions to Urdu literature. His renowned poetry collections include 'Lamhon Ki Saleeb', 'Dasht Mein Dariya', 'Naad', 'Saya Koi Lamba Na Tha', and 'Bayazein Kho Gayi Hai', among others. In 2010, his book 'Gumshuda Dair Ki Gunjti Ghantiyan' earned him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award, solidifying his legacy in the literary world.

Kerala BJP sets example in women empowerment, claims state party president

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 1 (IANS) : President of the Kerala unit of the BJP, K. Surendran, asserted on Saturday that while other political parties merely talk about women empowerment, the Kerala BJP has taken concrete steps to lead by example, appointing women to key leadership positions in the state. Over the past three months, the Kerala BJP has conducted extensive organisational elections, introducing major changes to its structure. Traditionally, the state's 14 geographical districts had one president each, similar to other political parties of the state.



First apologise for ancestors insulting Ambedkar : Sarang slams LoP Rahul Gandhi

Bhopal, Feb 1 (IANS) : Madhya Pradesh Cabinet Minister Vishvas Sarang on Saturday launched a scathing attack on Congress MP and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, over the party's nationwide 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' programme and demanded an apology for what he termed as "insulting" Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar. The Congress party launched the programme from Mhow.

AAP has anti-Dalit mindset, says Thakur; assures improved essential services if BJP comes to power

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) : BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Saturday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of harbouring an "anti-Dalit" mindset, criticising the party's actions and statements related to Dalit leaders and said essential services will improve in Delhi if the BJP comes to power. Speaking to IANS, Thakur claimed, "The anti-Dalit mindset is clearly visible in the Aam Aadmi Party. The Punjab Chief Minister, from the AAP, removes his own garland and puts it around the neck of Dr. Ambedkar's statue. Meanwhile, they make derogatory comments about Dalit MLAs. Under their rule, Dr. Ambedkar's statue was disrespected, and when a Dalit woman asked for a ticket, she was asked for money, and when she demanded it back, there were talks of getting her beaten up."

Thakur further pointed out that Dalit leaders within the AAP have voiced similar concerns. He mentioned, "Two Dalit leaders from AAP have openly called the party anti-Dalit. There isn't a single Dalit Rajya Sabha MP from the AAP, nor have they appointed a Dalit as Deputy Chief Minister. Furthermore, AAP promised to send 500 Dalit students abroad for studies, but none were sent. These are just a few incidents that show how AAP disrespects Dalit leaders and the Dalit community." Thakur also raised concerns about the party's failure to live up to its promises. "Women from the Dalit community, their daughters, and even Dr. Ambedkar himself have been disrespected by the AAP," he said, emphasising the gap between the party's promises and its actions.

Bihar: Lalan Singh hits back at Tejashwi Yadav over Mokama firing incident

Patna, Feb 1 (IANS) : The political tension in Bihar has escalated following the Mokama firing incident involving supporters of former MLA Anant Singh and the Sonu-Monu gang. While the opposition, led by RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, has criticised the government for allegedly protecting criminals, NDA leaders, including Union Minister and JD-U leader Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, have come to the defence of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Tejashwi Yadav ques-



tioned the government's role in the incident, accusing it of shielding criminals, and even hinted at Lalan Singh's alleged involvement.

African leaders call for AU reforms to improve efficiency

Nairobi, Feb 1 (IANS) : Five African leaders called for reforms of the African Union (AU), focusing on peace and stability, funding, the Pan-African Parliament, and the African Court of Justice, to make it efficient and responsive to effectively serve its members and the people of Africa. The leaders, who attended a retreat in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, said a reformed African Union, which is key to unlocking the continent's full potential, will serve as a bridge to

prosperity for all African people. Kenyan President William Ruto, who spoke at the conclusion of the high-level Extended Bureau Retreat on AU Institutional Reforms he chaired in his capacity as the champion of the institutional reforms, said reforms involve revitalising the structure, functioning, and focus of the AU Commission, AU organs, and specialised agencies, which aim to boost the effectiveness and efficient management of the AU programs. "A fit-for-purpose African Union

is a necessary imperative at this point if the AU has to play the role of speaking for 1.4 billion Africans," Ruto said. The retreat was attended by presidents John Mahama of Ghana, Azali Assoumani of the Comoros, Taye Atske Selassie of Ethiopia, and Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea-Bissau. Also present was AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat. Ruto also announced that they had agreed on the need to establish a committee of five presidents to complement efforts by the AU's

champion of institutional reforms. The committee, he said, will help to advance the implementation of agreed reforms of various agencies, institutions, and organisations. Ruto, who was given the mandate to champion reforms of the AU by fellow heads of state last year, said reform of the African peace and security architecture is necessary to ensure lasting peace and stability. The retreat recommended the establishment of a panel of experts to propose ways for strengthening Africa's conflict response and fi-



nancing mechanism. The leaders also proposed the financing of the AU to make it more financially autonomous. Ruto said they have recommended the operationalisation of the African

Court of Justice and the appointment of judges, which will ensure that the continent has a mechanism for conflict resolution in Africa, especially on disputes.



Australia's road death toll reaches 12-year high

Canberra, Feb 1 (IANS) : Australia's road death toll has hit a 12-year-high, government data has revealed on Saturday. According to a new report from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) on Tuesday, there were 1,300 deaths on Australian roads in 2024. It marks an increase from 1,258 deaths in 2023 and the highest figure since 2012 when there were also 1,300 deaths, reports Xinhua news agency, citing the government data. The 12-year high comes after Australia's federal, state and territory governments in 2021 launched a 10-year national strategy to reduce the number of road deaths by half and the number of serious injuries by 30 per cent. The National Road Safety Strategy set a target of gradually reducing road deaths from the 2018-20 annual average of 1,142 to fewer

than 571 by 2030. The BITRE report said the 2024 death toll was 127.7 per cent higher than the 2030 target. Responding to the report, peak motoring body the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) said the national strategy is "wildly off-track." "It is clear current road safety approaches are inadequate and that more action is required to save lives," AAA Managing Director Michael Bradley said in a statement. Out of Australia's eight states and territories, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania reported fewer road deaths in 2024 than in 2023. In New South Wales - the country's most populous state - the death toll was unchanged at 340 in both years, while Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory reported 79 more deaths combined in 2024 than in 2023.

Tahawwur Rana not yet on plane to India, US 'evaluating' options

Washington, Feb 1 (IANS) : The United States' State Department is "evaluating next steps" in regard to Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India that was upheld last week by the country's Supreme Court, clearing the way for him to finally face justice for his alleged role in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. Rana is of Pakistani descent like David Coleman Headley, who is serving a long prison sentence in an US jail after pleading guilty for his complicity in the 2008 terrorist attacks in a deal with American authorities that protects him from extradition. "In view of the recent Su-

preme Court decision, and consistent with applicable US law, the Department of State is currently evaluating next steps in this case," a spokesperson for the agency said in response to an IANS request for information on the next steps following the court order and when is he likely to be despatched to India. "We have long supported India's efforts to ensure the perpetrators of the Mumbai terrorist attacks face justice," the spokesperson added. The US has indeed been supportive of Indian efforts to bring the perpetrators of the attacks that left 167 people dead, including six Americans, and hundred wounded. It has pushed Pakistan, where the terrorists of the



Lashkar-e-Toiba were based and where they had been trained by the country's Intelligence service, to punish the perpetrators. The US also helped India's case before the UN Security Council for designating Masood Azhar, the founder of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, an international terrorist, leading a group of permanent members to stymie Chinese attempts to block the effort. For now, however, it seems unclear how soon Rana will

be on a plane to India. Rana was arrested by the US police in October 2009, just two weeks after Headley's arrest, on three counts: Conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism in India, conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism in Denmark, and providing material support to a foreign terrorist organisation, according to a US court document.



Italy resumes controversial migrant transfers to Albania

Rome, Feb 1 (IANS) : Italy has restarted its contentious program of sending asylum seekers picked up in the Mediterranean to Albania, months after judges in Rome ruled against the transfers. On Saturday, an Italian Navy vessel transported 49 male asylum seekers to Albania. The program involving Albania is part of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's strategy to curb the number of migrants coming to Italy, reports Xinhua news agency.

The plan is controversial as Albania is outside the European Union, meaning the refugees are not protected under EU asylum rules. Domestic critics in Italy said the program is costly and ineffective, considering its projected expense of 800 million euros (around 840 million US dollars) will address only a tiny fraction of the migrant influx to Italy each year. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 66,000 asylum seekers landed on Italian shores in 2024, down dramatically from nearly 158,000 in the previous year. In October last year, Italy began transferring migrants to two controversial new facilities in Albania, which are located in the Albanian towns of Shengjin and Gjiade.

Syrian refugee return sparks workforce concerns in Turkish industries



Gaziantep, Feb 1 (IANS) : As Syria shows signs of recovery from its 13-year civil war, the gradual return of Syrian refugees from Turkey is raising fears of labour shortages in key Turkish sectors reliant on low-wage workers, industry representatives and analysts say. "Syrian workers constitute about 20-25 per cent of our workers at this stage; their massive return could definitely have consequences," Beyhan Duran, a managing agent from a livestock farm in the southern Gaziantep province, told Xinhua. Duran said

this could be a game-changer for Turkish businesses reliant on the Syrian workforce. Although only a small number of Syrians have returned so far, he expects the majority will eventually leave as conditions stabilise in Syria, Xinhua news agency reported. Gaziantep, a major Turkish city near the Syrian border, has long been dependent on the presence of approximately 450,000 Syrians. Metin Corabatir, director of the Ankara-based Research Center on Asylum and Migration.

Sikh community leaders deny reports of immigration raids at New York's Gurdwaras

New York, Feb 1 (IANS) : Sikh community leaders have said that there have been no raids on Gurdwaras contradicting reports in some Indian media. Sukhjinder Singh Nijjar, who was at New York's Richmond Hill Gurdwara, a major Sikh centre, on Saturday said the prayer services were conducted reverently and there was no interference by anyone. There were no raids or any law enforcement actions at other Gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey either, said Nijjar who is with the Sikh Cultural Society representing the Coastal Northeast and was the chairman of its public and media committee. He attributed the misreporting to "some sort of misunderstanding and miscommunication" and "just basically word of mouth type of thing that" gets spread with no basis in fact.



Libya seeks to enhance economic cooperation with Serbia: Minister

Tripoli, Feb 1 (IANS) : Libya aims to reactivate and update 25 bilateral agreements with Serbia to strengthen economic cooperation, Libyan Economy Minister Mohamed Al-Hweij said. Speaking at a joint news conference on Saturday with Serbian Foreign Ministry State Secretary

Nikola Stojanovic following a Libyan-Serbian economic forum in Tripoli, Al-Hweij described the agreements signed over the past decade but largely dormant as needing alignment with "global political and economic developments." "Our cooperation with Serbia

spans 70 years. Today, we seek practical steps to diversify Libya's economy and create true partnerships across all sectors," Al-Hweij said, adding that senior officials from both nations would exchange visits to advance joint ventures.



Rajamouli's Mastermind Behind Priyanka Chopra's SSMB Casting

Rajamouli's choice to cast Priyanka Chopra in his up-and-coming film SSMB29 is making a parcel of buzz, indeed in spite of the fact that the official affirmation hasn't come through however. Priyanka was as of late spotted going by Hyderabad.

Prabhas's Tasty Treat To Fauji Heroine

Working with Rebel Star Prabhas comes with many advantages. One of them is the delicious home-cooked food that he offers to his co-actors and crew members. Many heroines in the past praised Prabhas for the tasty food he offered on the set. The latest heroine to join the list is Imanvi, who is acting alongside Prabhas in Hanu Raghavapudi's next. Tentatively called Fauji, the

shoot of this movie is currently happening at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad. Imanvi, who is taking part in the shoot, got a special lunch from Prabhas's home. She couldn't resist sharing a video of it on social media and captioned.



Dil Raju Badly Needs A Top Director?

Star producer, Dil Raju burnt his hands, this Sankranti festival season with Game Changer which turned out to be a colossal dud. He hoped that this landmark film with Ram Charan and Shankar will be a flagship project in his banner.



SreeLeela becoming hard negotiator : What's Happening?

There was once a time in Tollywood, when young actress, Sri Leela was the most sought after heroine in the industry. Thanks to her impeccable, dancing skills and good commercial appeal. She was the first choice for several female lead characters alongside star heroes in Tollywood. However, things are slowly starting to change under the sheets as Leela is no longer being considered as the primary choice for several biggies. On top of that, she is facing complaints about her negotiation skills. Recently, Leela was signed for Akhil's upcoming

film but opted out later due to date issue. She signed some other project in this period and subsequently could not make time for the film Akhil. In the end, the makers had to go through trouble with regard to Leela. Then again, this is being followed by another peculiar situation as the makers of another film of Leela are having to go through a strange situation.

Laila Oho Rathamma Song : Catchy and Addictive beats

Mass ka Das Vishwaksen has garnered huge amount of praises for accepting a challenging role in lady get-up in his upcoming film, Laila. The movie songs, promotional material has been trending on social media and the recently released teaser has increased the buzz further to next level. The makers have now released Oho Rathamma song from the

album composed by Leon James. Folk singer Penchal Das has written and sung the song along with Madhu Priya. The song radiates infectious energy with great mass beats and the singers' vocals aptly support it. Vishwaksen's energy and his dance moves are so catchy that we cannot turn away our heads from him for even a second. His massy looks and trendy attire

enhance the feel of the song by multifold. Also, glamour of leading lady Akanksha Sharma and high production values make the song a visual feast. Ram Narayan is directing this trendy entertainer and Sahu Garapati is producing it with a high budget without compromising on quality. Movie is set to release on 14th February and it is already creating huge fan frenzy all over.



Naga Chaitanya is a terrific actor - Aamir Khan

Yuvasamrat Naga Chaitanya Akkineni and Sai Pallavi starrer Thandel is gearing up for a grand release on 7th February. The movie is directed by Chandoo Mondeti and produced by Bunny Vasu on a massive scale with a huge budget. Allu Aravind is presenting it. Now, the makers have unveiled Hindi trailer in Mumbai in presence of Aamir Khan. Talking at the event, Aamir Khan stated that he became a great admirer of Naga Chaitanya on the sets of Lal Singh Chaddha. He stated that Chaitanya used to be always prepared on sets and used to chill out with him post it. He also called Allu Aravind as

his elder brother and wished a huge blockbuster success for Thandel. He complimented Chaitanya as a great performer and stated that he is looking tremendous and terrific in Thandel trailer with Sai Pallavi. He also stated that he loved Thandel trailer and complimented director Chandoo Mondeti remarking that "it is a very well shot movie." Naga Chaitanya stated that he always looked up to Aamir Khan and wanted to be part of movies like how the Bollywood Superstar has been over the years. He remembered his shooting time with him on the sets of Lal Singh Chaddha and thanked the actor.

Pooja Hegde's Unfiltered Thoughts on Nepotism!

Pooja Hegde's much-awaited Bollywood movie Deva, starring Shahid Kapoor and directed by Rosshan Andrews, released today amidst much anticipation. Produced by Zee Studios and Siddharth Roy Kapur, the film has sparked conversations, especially with its mixed reviews. However, it's Pooja's candid thoughts on nepotism that have grabbed the spotlight recently, revealing a side of her that fans haven't heard before.



Sai Pallavi's Correction In Thandel : What Happened?

There is no debating the fact that Sai Pallavi is one of the most talented actresses in the contemporary setting of Tollywood. She has a huge fan following in the Telugu states and she is capable of pulling audience to theatres on her own. Coming to the topic now, Sai Pallavi is awaiting the theatrical release of her upcoming Telugu film, Thandel which is releasing on February. While interacting with the media about this film, she had a very interesting revelation about one particular sequence in the film. "There is this one particular prison sequence in the film that had a lot of emotion. The line of order that we followed, was we shot this prison sequence first, and then shot a scene featuring

me. But after watching the prison sequence, I knew I had to better myself. After watching the intensity of Naga Chaitanya in the prison sequence, I knew I had to absolutely explode in the next scene. So I immediately notified my director, Chandu Garu and we shot the scene with the needed amount of intensity." She said. Usually, actors are very reserved about delivering their opinions to the directors in order to avoid hurting and clashing with them. But Sai Pallavi is too honest and straightforward for this, and the same can be understood if we look at the fact that she prompted her director to reshoot a sequence and the film just to match Chaitanya's intensity. This is the kind of hard-working nature that separates her from the rest.

After Balayya, He Is Back With Chiranjeevi!

Considering the fact that all the elite superstars of Tollywood occupied with Pan Indian films, it has now become common for non-mainstream star directors to go after senior heroes. The same is happening with Director Bobby now. After having worked with Nandamuri Balakrishna for Daku Maharaj recently, Director Bobby is now again back with megastar Chiranjeevi. The duo had earlier worked together for Waltair Veerayya, and it was a smashing success during the 2023 Sankranti season. Now again, we are hearing that Bobby is preparing another script for Chiranjeevi, and he will be approaching the senior Hero very soon. Chiranjeevi reportedly values, Bobby very much after Veerayya, and it should be fairly straightforward for the director to impress Chiru again with his new script. This will be the immediate next project of Bobby after Daku Maharaj and related arrangements are in full swing now.

