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We are giving special attention to solve city issues : Gadwal Vijayalakshmi

Hyderabad, Feb 3 (NSS): GHMC Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi today said that special attention had been paid to the problems of the city and added that In order to find out the problems in various wards of the city and resolve them on the spot, the officials of the respective departments of the zonal units along with the concerned corporators would focus on the long-term issues in sanitation, storm water drainage in colonies and prepare proposals as required. "So far, around 15 wards have been toured and efforts have been made to solve various problems as well as long-term issues.

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People still have opportunity to provide caste census details : Ponnam

Hyderabad, Feb.3 (NSS): Minister for BC Welfare Ponnam Prabhakar stated that individuals who previously did not provide information for the caste census still have the opportunity to do so now.

While addressing the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, the Minister reaffirmed that, as promised prior to the elections, the Congress government undertook a caste survey, which has been completed as part of a broader initiative. Continued on pg 02



MLC Kavitha slams govt over caste census data

Peddapalli, Feb 3 (NSS): BRS party MLC K Kavitha today criticized the Congress government over its caste census data. She demanded that a bill be introduced in the State assembly to increase the reservation of BCs in the local body elections and added that there was no point in holding a short discussion in the Assembly on the issue. "Why is the Congress government not showing negligence towards the BCs?", she asked. MLC Kavitha, who reached Peddapalli as part of her district tour, was accorded a grand welcome by the party leaders. Speaking on the occasion, she reminded that the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi gave the slogan that the BCs should get share in welfare programs as per their population.

BRS party cadres should get ready for by-elections : KTR

Hyderabad, Feb 3 (NSS): BRS party working president KT Rama Rao today took to Twitter and urged the BRS party cadres and activists to be ready for the by-elections. "If you look at the earlier judgments of the Supreme Court, the BRS MLAs, who have switched sides will also be sacked. Also, it is impossible for the Congress party to protect the defectors," he

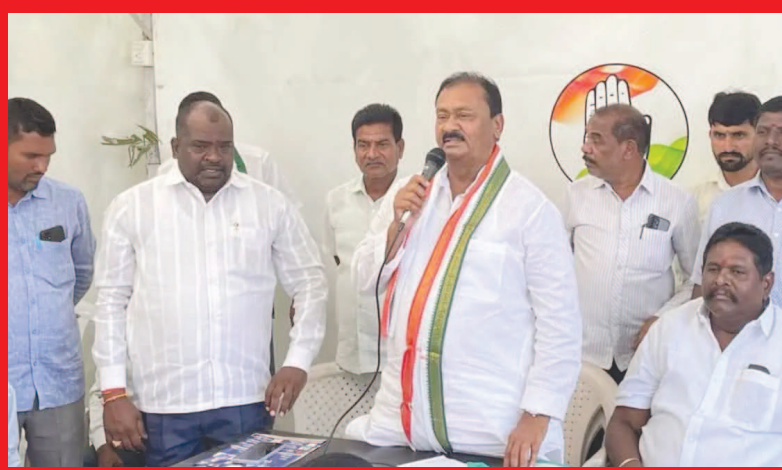
said. However, the hearing of the petition filed by the KTR in the Telangana MLAs defection case had been postponed to Monday. A bench of Justices Justice BR Gavai and Justice Vinod Chandran said it would hear the same along with the petitions filed earlier in the matter.

On January 29, KTR had filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court alleging that Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar



was wasting time from taking action against the MLAs who defected from the BRS party. He urged the court to direct the Speaker to take a decision on the disqualification petitions immediately.

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State's caste survey historic step toward social justice

Hyderabad, Feb 3 (NSS): Congress senior leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir said the State's caste survey has provided evidence to protect the 4% Muslim reservation, reinforcing its legal standing and silencing its critics. Addressing media persons at

Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, he called the survey a historic step toward social justice and equitable resource distribution. He said the data would help design welfare schemes based on real socio-economic conditions, ensuring transparency and inclusivity. The survey classified 10.08% of Telangana's Muslim population under the BC category.



Kharge says 'thousands died' in Maha Kumbh stampede, NDA members protest in RS

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday stirred a controversy after he claimed that "thousands died" in the stampede at the Maha Kumbh venue in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj. Continued on pg 02



Telangana Commission on SC sub-classification set to submit its report

Hyderabad, Feb 3 (IANS) : The single-member Judicial Commission, headed by retired High Court judge Justice Shameem Akhtar, is set to submit its report on the sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs) to the Telangana Cabinet Sub-Committee.

This report, which is considered critical for equitable resource distribution among SC communities,

will be placed before the Cabinet meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday. The Sub-Committee was constituted on September 12, 2024, with Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy as its Chairman and Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha as co-chairman to implement the Supreme Court order on the sub-classification of

SCs. Ministers D. Seethakka, Ponnam Prabhakar, and D. Sridhar Babu, and MP Mallu Ravi were appointed members of the committee. On the recommendation of the Cabinet Sub-Committee, the state government had constituted a one-member judicial commission headed by former High Court judge Justice Akhtar in October. The Commission studied various

aspects of the issue and prepared its report. The Cabinet Sub-Committee will discuss the Commission's report and make its recommendations to the Cabinet. The Commission's report and the Sub-Committee's recommendations will be placed before the Cabinet, which is scheduled to meet on Tuesday.

Continued on pg 02



Positive impact of regular contacts evident in India-Russia strategic partnership : President Murmu

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : President Droupadi Murmu on Monday asserted that the "positive impact" of regular contacts is evident in the broader 'India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' which continues to benefit significantly from the ongoing interaction at

various levels. As a visiting parliamentary delegation led by Chairman of Russia's State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Murmu also emphasised on paying special attention to closer interaction between women.

Continued on pg 02

District She Team and Police Akka are ensuring the safety of women and students

Rajanna Siricilla, Feb 3 (TIM Bureau) : The She Team and Police Akka, which were formed with the aim of ensuring the safety of women and students, are conducting extensive awareness programs by creating awareness on issues such as women's laws, good touch, bad touch, POCSO, ragging, eve teasing, who to contact if harassed. In the past month, 134 awareness

If you are harassed, immediately report it to She Team 87126 56425, or to Police Akka : District SP Akhil Mahajan

programs have been organized in educational institutions in the district through the Police Akka program, and 03 cases and 08 cases have been registered against miscreants harassing students and women in the district and counselling has been conducted in the

presence of parents, said District SP Akhil Mahajan. Speaking on the occasion, SP Akhil Mahajan said: "Students and women should not be afraid when they feel unsafe, if they come forward boldly and complain to the She Team or the police sister, strict action will



be taken against the accused, and special measures are being taken for the protection of women and students in the district. He advised women and students to be vigilant with strangers, not to share your personal information with them, and to be more vigilant with people they meet on social media. Women, students and girls who are facing sexual harassment or harassment like ragging at their workplaces or anywhere else should not remain silent and should file a complaint boldly.

LOST OF DOCUMENTS
I, Mrs. Dasari Kistamma, W/o D.Murthy, aged about 51 Years, Occ: Housewife, R/o H.No.3-2, Turkapally Village, Shamirpet Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana State, do hereby solemnly on oath and affirmation declare as under: That I have appeared for the 1st my Original Regd. Sale Deed Document No.2253/2015 registered on dt: 16-06-2015 at Shamirpet lost while I was House Shifting from Rental House to Own House and in spite of my best efforts I am unable to trace it.
If anyone found the document kindly inform at contact @ 8688749352

People still have opportunity to provide caste census details : Ponnam

Continued From pg 01

"The time has arrived for justice for the Backward Classes, and no one shall be excluded, irrespective of any attempts to hinder this process," Ponnam Prabhakar emphasized. He noted that key leaders from ma-

ajor political parties failed to furnish details for the caste survey and did not collaborate with the State government.

"With the exception of MLC Kavitha, no other member of the Kalvakuntla family contributed

information for the caste census survey. I kindly urge all leaders to provide the necessary details regarding the caste census to the mandal-level officials," Ponnam Prabhakar remarked.

We are giving special attention to solve city issues : Gadwal Vijayalakshmi

Continued From pg 01

Especially in the wake of the state government sanctioning funds to the GHMC, the funds will be sanctioned for resolving long-term issues," she said. On Monday, the mayor visited several colonies in Hafizpet division and said that steps had been taken to prevent sanitation and

dog menace in the area. The Mayor instructed the officials to take steps for sanitation and prevention of dog menace in the RTC colony and prepare proposals for road widening, storm water drainage and development of the park. She said that Steps should be taken to remove construction waste in Nalagandla tank.

Form No.14 [See Regulation 33(2)]
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)
1st Floor, Triveni Complex, Abids, Hyderabad-500001.

DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961.
RC/590/2024 07-01-2025

Canara Bank
Versus
M/s. Suswa Infoway Pvt Ltd and Others

To,
(CD 1) M/S Suswa Infoway Pvt Ltd., Rep. By Its Directors, Sri Mantha Ravi Ganesh And Smt M.N.S.Laxmi, H.No.3-19-88, Flat No 205, Gangothi VR Residency, Saraswathi Nagar Colony, Lothukunta, Secunderabad 500015. Also At: H.No. 1-24-121/1, Indira Sadan, Indira Nagar, Lothukunta, Secunderabad, Hyderabad
(CD 2) Sri Mantha Ravi Ganesh S/o Late M.S.V.Sastry, Directors For M/s Suswa Infoway Pvt.Ltd., R/o H.No.3-19-88, Flat No.205, Gangothi VR Residency, Saraswathi Nagar Colony, Lothukunta Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Telangana
(CD 3) Smt M.N.S. Laxmi W/o Mantha Ravi Ganesh, Director of M/s Suswa Infoway Pvt.Ltd., R/o H.No.3-19-88, Flat No.205, Gangothi VR Residency, Saraswathi-nagar Colony, Lothukunta, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Telangana-500015.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD(DRT-2) in OA/139/2023 an amount of Rs.36,52,080.83 (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Fifty Two Thousands Eighty And Paise Eighty Three Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 7.5% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 12-12-2022 till realization and costs of Rs.67,500/- (Rupees Sixty Seven Thousands Five Hundred Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited).

- You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.
- You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.
- You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 11/03/2025 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings.
- In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:
 - Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.
 - All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 07/01/2025
Sd/- Recovery Officer
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)

FORM NO. 14 [See Regulation 33(2)]
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)
1st Floor, Triveni Complex Abids, Hyderabad-500001.

DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961.
RC/693/2020 25-11-2024

Bank of India
Versus
M/S. OHM Sri Agencies And Another

To
(CD 1) M/s. OHM Sri Agencies Rep by its Prop Mr. Y.Ramakrishna, Flat No.203, Mahalakshmi Mansion, B.K.Guda, Sri Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana-500038.
(CD 2) Mr. Y.Ramakrishna, S/o Satyanarayana, Flat No.203, Mahalakshmi Mansion, B.K.Guda, Sri Nagar, Hyderabad-500038.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) in OA/2435/2017 an amount of Rs.22,65,708.32 (Rupees Twenty Two Lakhs Sixty Five Thousands Seven Hundred Eight And Paise Thirty Two Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 13.10% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 20/01/2018 till realization and costs of Rs.21,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Thousands Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited).

- You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.
- You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.
- You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 27-01-2025 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings.
- In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:
 - Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.
 - All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 25-11-2024.
Recovery Officer
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)

BOWENPALLY BRANCH, 155, Sikh Rd, Sector C, Manovikas Nagar, Bowenpally, Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Telangana-500018

SALE OF SECURED MOVABLE ASSETS UNDER HYPOTHECATION
Auction Sale under hypothecation of movable property mortgaged to Bank for recovery of the secured debts. Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Bank of Baroda had taken physical possession of the properties described herein below pursuant to hypothecation with a right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS AND WHATEVER IS" and "WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues in the following loan accounts with our Branch.

Name of the Borrower: Mr. Hamilpur Raju, Flat No. 5160 & 61, Janapriya Metro Police, Erragadda, Hyderabad-500018.

Sr. No.	Loan A/c No.	Total Dues	Description of the Vehicle	Reserve Price	EMD
1	24730600004559	Rs.19,15,000/- + interest + other expenses etc. till date. (Less Recovery if any)	Vehicle: Four Wheeler (Mahindra Scorpio-ND MT 2WD Z8L 7S BSVI Engine No. YDP4A82448 Chassis No. MA1TJ2YD6PB93605 Registration No: TS08JN3411	Rs.19,15,000/-	Rs.1,91,500/-

Date/Day/Time of e-Auction: 06-03-2025, Thursday 12.00 PM to 4.00 P.M.
Last date of submission of BID: 05-03-2025, Wednesday, before 4.00 P.M.
Date & time of inspection of Vehicle : 05-03-2025, Wednesday, from 01.00 P.M. to 4.00 P.M.
10% Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) shall be deposited through RTGS/NEFT/Fund Transfer on or before 05-03-2025, Wednesday, before 4.00 P.M. to the designated account, the details of which are given as under: Account Name: NEW INTERMEDIARY ACCOUNT; Account No.: 24730015181219, IFSC Code: BARB0BOINPA (Fifth letter is ZERO), Name of Bank: Bank of Baroda. Vehicle located at: Bank of Baroda, Bowenpally Branch, Mobile: 7993316539, E-mail: boinpa@bankofbaroda.com). For more details contact the Branch on Ph No.7993316539.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E AUCTION SALE: 1. Bank of Baroda reserves the right to accept/reject any or all of the offer(s) or Bid (s) so received without assigning any reason thereof. 2. Bank of Baroda reserves the right to accept/reject/Postpone/Cancel the E-auction without assigning any reason thereof. 3. To the best of knowledge and inform on of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on the vehicle. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of vehicle & to inspect & satisfy themselves. (FOR DETAILED TERM AND CONDITIONS PLEASE REFER TO <https://bob.auctiontiger.net/>)
Date: 03-02-2025, Place: Hyderabad
Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

BRS party cadres should get ready for by-elections : KTR

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Meanwhile, the hearing on the special leave petition filed by BRS party MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy on the defections will also continue. A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court said it would hear the two petitions together on February 10. In this context, KTR called upon the party cadres and workers to prepare for the by-elections as those who have switched sides are sure to be sacked.

However, the rebel MLAs Kadiyam Srihari, Danam Nagender, Vellam Venkata Rao,

Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, Kale Yadaiah, Prakash Goud, Arikepudi Gandhi, Gudem Mahipal Reddy and Dr Sanjay Kumar joined the ruling Congress party. BRS working president KT Rama Rao has been demanding that they be disqualified by the assembly Speaker.

Positive impact of regular contacts evident in India-Russia strategic partnership : President Murmu

Continued From pg 01

and youth parliamentarians of India and Russia. "Welcoming the delegation to India, the President said that exchanges of this nature among public representatives not only foster stronger cooperation but also allow the partnership to remain contemporary and updated. She stated that the positive impact of regular contacts is also evident in the broader 'India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership', which continues to benefit significantly from the ongoing interaction at various levels," read a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan after the meeting.

The President noted that at the leadership level, there is regular interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The level of cooperation between our parliaments has also been very good. She said that mechanisms like the Inter-Parliamentary Commission have played an important role in facilitating cooperation. She emphasised on special attention to closer interaction between

women and youth parliamentarians of India and Russia," the statement added.

The President shared with the delegation that she had inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair on Saturday, where Russia is the 'Focus Country'. She said that the fair gives Indian readers a wonderful opportunity to get to know the rich literary heritage of Russia and also urged for stronger engagements in cultural and artistic domains.

Earlier, the visiting delegation, which arrived in India late last night on an official visit aimed at bolstering bilateral relations, also visited both houses of the Indian Parliament.

Volodin called on Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar at the Parliament, asserting that India is one

of the key partners of Russia in Asia. "We have special relations. They are developing on the principles of friendship, non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states and mutually beneficial cooperation," he said during his meeting with the Vice President. The Chairman of the State Duma pointed out that the leaders of the States continue to make a "great contribution" to the development of the Russian-Indian dialogue. "For our part, we must legislatively ensure the decisions taken by President of Russia Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi. Our relations are growing stronger, and we must ensure that the dynamics that exist at the executive level are also present in our work. It is important to develop interaction within the parliamentary dimension so

that we contribute to the development of relations through our work," Volodin underscored. He stated that India remains one of the key partners of Russia in Asia.

"Over the past five years, bilateral trade has increased fivefold and continues to grow: from January to November 2024, it increased by 15 per cent. Due to this, our citizens and our countries benefit," the Chairman of the State Duma said.

The Vice President's office stated that discussions touched upon diverse facets of the multi-dimensional bilateral relationship between India and Russia.

"Both leaders underlined the significance of enhancing parliamentary ties which provide a solid foundation for the overall Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two nations," VP Dhankhar said in a post on X.

Kharge says 'thousands died' in Maha Kumbh stampede, NDA members protest in RS

Continued From pg 01

However, he set a condition for him to apologise for his comment. The tragedy that occurred due to overcrowding at the Maha Kumbh on January 29 during the Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya -- considered an auspicious day for holy dips -- killed 30 people and left at least 60 injured, the authorities said. They said a massive crowd heading towards the ghat to take holy dips broke down barricades,

leading to the stampede. Kharge, Congress chief and the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, however, said the "thousand deaths" at the Maha Kumbh was his own estimate, in an attempt to not accept the number of dead that was reported by the authorities. "I pay my tributes to the people who died in Maha Kumbh... the thousands who died in Kumbh," he said, evoking the protests by members of the ruling alliance.

"This is my estimate and if this is not right, you (government) should tell what is the truth," Kharge said. "I did not say 'thousands' to blame anyone. But how many people died, give that information at least. I will apologise if I am wrong. They should give figures, how many died, how many are missing," he added. Kharge's comment drew loud protests from the treasury

benches and Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar even asked him to retract his comment. "The LoP (Leader of Opposition) has indicated a scenario using figures to the extent of thousands. I appeal to him, in this House, whatever is spoken, carries great weight. You have spoken something which has numbered everyone," Dhankhar said.



Be ready for action under MCOCA if found indulging in extortion, ransom : Maha Dy CM Ajit Pawar

Beed, Feb 3 (IANS) : Deputy Chief Minister and NCP president Ajit Pawar on Monday warned his party workers that he would not tolerate anyone indulging in extortion or ransom during development works and also said that those found involved in such acts would be booked under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

His statement comes amid the raging controversy over the brutal killing of Massajog sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh and the demand for the arrest of Food and Civil Supply Minister Dhananjay Munde due to the links of his confidant Walmik Karad in the case.

He further announced that if any party office-bearer or any citizen is found firing rounds from his revolver in the air and making reels he would direct the police administration to cancel the licence.

Ajit Pawar's stern warnings came during his interaction with the party office-bearers on Thursday in his maiden visit to Beed after the appointment of the district guardian ministers.

Immediately after landing at the airport early morning, Ajit Pawar visited the party office and asked the office-bearers to focus on maintaining their clean image and not to indulge in wrongdoings. "Beed is constantly in the news (due to the killing of sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh). No one should believe in rumours. Action will be taken wherever there is any truth.

UP medical varsity introduces gold medal in Tripura CM's name for meritorious students

Agartala, Feb 3 (IANS) : King George's Medical University (KGMU) in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow has announced to introduce a gold medal in the name of Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha. KGMU's Dean Prof. Ranjit Kumar Patil in a letter to Saha informed the varsity's decision.

"The gold medal would be presented annually to the top-performing student in oral and maxillofacial surgery," the letter said.

It said: "On the occasion of your auspicious arrival at the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Faculty of Dental Sciences, on November 26, 2024, and impressed by your inspiration and contribution to the institution, the Vice Chancellor of King George's Medical University.



Upcoming Budget session of Bengal Assembly may end state govt-Raj Bhavan tussle

Kolkata, Feb 3 (IANS) : The tussle between the West Bengal government and the Raj Bhavan is expected to end during the upcoming Budget session of the Assembly, scheduled next month.

The state has already sent an invitation to the office of Governor C. V. Ananda Bose, requesting the latter to deliver the opening speech of the Budget session on February 10.

Last year, the Assembly's Budget session was held without the Governor's speech. Uncertainties had been looming over the opening speech of the Governor this time too, since the Winter Session of the House in the closing quarters of 2024 was just adjourned sine die.

If the upcoming Budget session was shown as resuming the adjourned session, technically, the Governor's opening speech could have been avoided.

However, state secretariat insiders said, the state government has ended uncertainties by already sending the invitation to the office of the Governor.

However, it is not yet clear whether the

office of the Governor will give a positive reply to the invitation or not. While the opening speech of the Governor is scheduled to be on February 10, the minister of state in charge of the Finance Department (Independent charge) Chandrima Bhattacharya is scheduled to present the Budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26 on the floor of the house on February 12. Considering that this will be the last full-Budget before the state Assembly elections in 2026, there is a possibility of enhancement in allocation under different welfare and dole schemes offered by the state government, especially for those which are women and youth-specific besides a hike in the dearness allowance for the state government employees.



BJP infighting: Karnataka MP lashes out at state President Vijayendra, seeks national leaders' intervention

Bengaluru, Feb 3 (IANS) : The infighting within the BJP's Karnataka unit has come out into the open with the party's Chikballapur MP and former minister K. Sudhakar on Monday lashing out at state President B.Y. Vijayendra and warning that if national leaders fail to take action, the party has no future.

Addressing the media in Bengaluru, Sudhakar expressed his dissatisfaction, stating that he has not been treated well since joining the BJP from the Congress. "I joined the BJP believing in its democratic values and the principles of the RSS. I contested from Chikkaballapur, where the BJP had no presence. Seventeen of us joined the BJP to make B.S. Yediyurappa the Chief Minister. After Yediyurappa's resignation, I worked closely with CM Basavaraj Bommai. Yet, those who claim to be building the party targeted me and tried to ensure my defeat," Sudhakar said, taking direct aim at Vijayendra.

'Victory of Congress policies', says Kamal Nath after MP HC upholds 27 pc reservation for OBCs

Bhopal, Feb 3 (IANS) : Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath said on Monday that the High Court's order to uphold the 27 per cent reservation for the OBC community is a 'victory of the Congress's policies'.

"This is a victory of the Congress party's policies. In March 2019, during my tenure as Chief Minister, I had given 27 per cent reservation to the

OBC community in Madhya Pradesh," said the former Chief Minister after the bench of Madhya Pradesh Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Vivek Jain rejected one of the petitions challenging 27 per cent reservation to OBCs.

The court observed that it was the circular which was challenged in the petition and not the Act. However, the bench has maintained the stay on reservation of 27 per cent

which it had ordered in 2020. As many as 76 petitions were filed in the Madhya Pradesh High Court in opposition and support of 27 per cent reservation for OBC while challenging the implementation of the 87:13 formula for recruitment and appointments.

The High Court has posted the next hearing on February 28. A formal request was also made to withdraw two petitions (out of 76) filed by the general category,

which was accepted by the division bench. Meanwhile, the Congress alleged that the BJP has always misled the people on the issue of OBC reservation, however, the High Court's order has once again paved the way for 27 per cent reservation (provision).

Several senior Congress leaders, including former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath and the party's state unit chief Jitu Patwari, have unanimously de-

manded a 27 per cent reservation quota for OBC in Madhya Pradesh. "Kamal Nath-led Congress government made the provision for 27 per cent reservation for OBC, which was opposed by the BJP. However, the High Court order has cleared all the obstacles. Now the OBC community should be given the benefit of 27 per cent reservation," said the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC).



Transgenders have gained respect, recognition under PM Modi's leadership: Community leader Saloni Bai

Ajmer, Feb 3 (IANS) : Saloni Bai, a transgender community leader, on Monday, praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for working towards the welfare of the transgender community, saying that the community has received better security, respect, and recognition due to the commitment and steps taken by the Prime Minister.

"My community prays for him (PM Modi) that he always remains healthy and happy and continues to work for the country's progress," she said. On the last day of the last session of the 17th Lok Sabha in February 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi seized the opportunity to list out its achievements as well as those of his government. Asserting that a significant amount of work has been done towards helping those who are on the

edges of society, the Prime Minister pointed out that the transgender community, which felt disrespected, has been given an identity.

"Those who were always on the edges, whose wellbeing was not a concern to anybody, have now felt the presence of government. When free (vaccination) injections were given during Covid, belief was instilled in people... No one should feel helpless," the Prime Minister said during his address, in Hindi, in the Lok Sabha last year. The All India Kinnar Mahasammelan is set to be organised in Rajasthan's Ajmer from February 16 to 26, Saloni Bai, the President of the transgender community. People from the transgender community across the country will participate in this conference. This conference will be presided over by Saloni Bai, the chairperson of the transgender community.



BPSC officials ignoring grievances of candidates : Chirag Paswan

Patna, Feb 3 (IANS) : Union Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan has strongly criticised the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) over alleged irregularities in a recently concluded 70th PT examination. While interacting with the media persons in Patna, Paswan accused BPSC officials of ignoring the grievances of candidates and highlighted inconsistencies in how the commission handled the issue of leaked question papers. "The BPSC officials themselves admitted that the question papers went viral on social media during the exam at the Babu examination centre in Patna, leading to its cancellation and re-examination. I want to ask BPSC why the entire exam was not cancelled if such irregularities occurred. All students deserve a fair and equal op-

portunity," Paswan said. He further criticised BPSC for not following standard operating procedures while conducting the exam and cited complaints from candidates, including his own family members, who faced issues like unavailability of question papers and delays in their distribution. The 70th PT BPSC exam was held on December 13, 2024, at 912 centres in Bihar. Reports of massive irregularities surfaced, particularly at the Babu centre in Patna's Kumhrar locality.

Locals seek urgent action to protect temple in Gujarat's Chhotaudepur, hit streets

Chhotaudepur (Gujarat), Feb 3 (IANS) : After the Nakuleshwar Mahadev Temple was washed away in the 2022 floods in Gujarat's Chhotaudepur, the people fearing a similar fate for another temple in the area are now taking to the streets to draw the government's attention. The people in the Sankheda area of the district on Monday have hit the streets, demanding urgent action to protect the historic Arjunanath Mahadev Temple located on the banks of the Uchh River. A delegation on January 27 submitted a memorandum to Mamlatdar and Resident Collector Shailesh Goklani, urging immediate intervention to safeguard the temple from potential collapse.



OPINIONmail

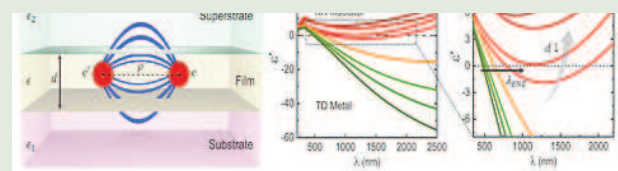
Confined Electrons paves the way for improved optoelectronic materials, sensors & nano-catalysts

This study opens new avenues for understanding and manipulating the fundamental behaviour of electrons in nanoscale systems which can help design more efficient nanoelectronic devices and optoelectronic materials with enhanced precision, sensors that operate at atomic and molecular levels as well as efficient nano catalysts. Metals have long been celebrated for their plasmonic properties—collective oscillations of free electrons that enable unique optical responses. From catalysis to advanced photonic devices, plasmonic behaviour underpins a wide range of modern technologies. However, Prof. Saha's research sheds light on an unexpected and transformative aspect of this field: how the confinement of electrons at the nanoscale disrupts and ultimately breaks down plasmonic behaviour.

A new study by Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) in Bengaluru, under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), GoI, probe how the quantum confinement of electrons, driven by size reduction to the nanoscale, changes the electronic structure of metals. This shift, as shown by the team steered by Prof Bivas Saha leads to a suppression of the collective oscillations essential to plasmonic properties, fundamentally altering the material's optical and electronic behaviour. At the nanoscale, materials behave in ways that often defy classical intuition. JNCASR's work published in the prestigious Science Advances (2024, Vol. 10, Issue 47), bridges the gap between traditional plasmonics and the quantum effects that emerge at this scale. Prof. Saha's team employed advanced spectroscopy techniques to observe plasmonic phenomena in metallic systems with varying degrees of confinement. Alongside, computational simulations provided a deep theoretical framework to explain the observed breakdown.

They used cutting-edge tools such as electron energy loss spectroscopy (EELS) and first-principles quantum mechanical calculations which helped them predict electron behaviour with unprecedented accuracy. Apart from JNCASR, Prof. Alexandra Boltasseva and Prof. Vladimir Shalaev from Purdue University and Prof. Igor Bondarev from North Carolina State University in USA, and Dr. Magnus Garbrecht and Dr. Asha Pillai from the University of Sydney participated in this study.

This research challenges long-held assumptions in plasmonics, redefining the boundaries of what is possible with metal-based materials. The electron confinement-induced plasmonic breakdown represents not just a scientific revelation but also a call to rethink the design principles of nanoscale materials. Speaking about the breakthrough, Prof. Saha remarked, "Our findings highlight the transformative role of quantum confinement in redefining material properties. This is not just about understanding plasmonic breakdown—it's about pushing the limits of how we can harness nanoscale phenomena for technological innovation." With growing interest in quantum materials and nanotechnology, Prof. Saha's work positions JNCASR as a leader in exploring the uncharted territory where classical and quantum physics converge. "The electron confinement-induced plasmonic breakdown in metals represents a landmark achievement in materials science and nanotechnology. By unravelling the intricate interplay between quantum confinement and plasmonic behaviour, this research sets the stage for revolutionary advancements across industries." - commented Prasanna Das, lead author of the paper. The implications of the study are vast, spanning -- electronics and photonics, sensing technologies and catalysts and energy conversion.



EDITORIAL
the indian mail



Hamas to release three Israeli, five Thai hostages : Israeli sources

Israel has received a list of hostages expected to be released from Hamas captivity in Gaza on Thursday, including three Israeli and five Thai nationals, Israeli sources said. The list was delivered to mediators by the Palestinian armed group ahead of the expected release of a third batch of hostages, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement. The office said Israel "accepts" the list, which includes civilian female Arbel Yehud, 29, female soldier Agam Berger, 19, and civilian male Gadi Mozes, 80, Xinhua news agency reported. Israel's state-owned Kan TV re-

ported that apart from the three Israeli hostages, five Thai nationals, who worked in agriculture in southern Israel and were kidnapped by Hamas in the attack on October 7, 2023, would also be released on Thursday. Netanyahu's office did not comment on the Thai hostages. According to Israeli figures, 10 foreign nationals are still being held by Hamas in Gaza, including eight Thais, a Nepali, and a Tanzanian, with at least three of them presumed dead. The upcoming release is separate from the ceasefire agreement that took effect on January 19, ending more than 15 months of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

It followed a dispute after Hamas released four female soldiers on Saturday, prompting Israel to accuse the group of violating the deal, under which Yehud was supposed to be freed before the soldiers. In response, Israel refused to withdraw forces from the Netzarim Corridor that separates Gaza's north and south. The dispute was resolved through Qatari mediation. Hamas agreed to release Yehud, Berger, and another hostage on Thursday, ahead of the next scheduled release of three more Israeli captives on Saturday. Israel then approved the return of displaced Palestinians to northern Gaza on Monday morning.

Congressional Caucus on India has a new Republican co-chair

Democratic US lawmaker Ro Khanna on Wednesday announced that Republican colleague Rich McCormick will join him as the co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on India, replacing Mike Walz, who is now the National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump.

Representatives Andy Barr and Marc Veasey will continue serving as vice co-chairs and Brad Sherman, who formerly served as chair, will continue to serve as chair emeritus. The India caucus is committed to strengthening the relationship between the U.S. and India.



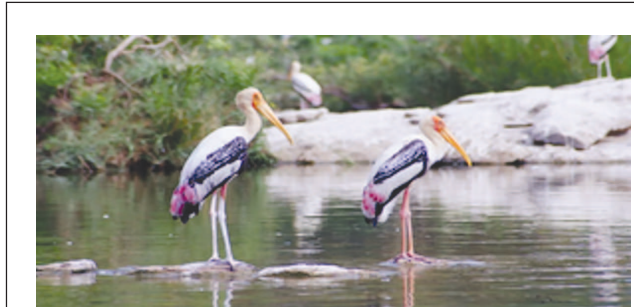
TikTok forges partnership to boost Kenya's creative economy

Video-sharing social networking platform TikTok announced partnerships with global digital advertising firm Aleph Holdings and Kenya-based e-commerce platform Wowzi, which is expected to boost Kenya's creative economy. Carl Jordan, head of sales and global business solutions for sub-Saharan Africa at TikTok, told journalists in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, that the cooperation with Aleph Holdings will ease the process for Kenyan

businesses to advertise their products and services on the mobile video platform, Xinhua news agency reported. "The collaboration with Wowzi will provide Kenyan content creators with access to potential advertisers in order to enhance their revenue streams," Jordan said. He noted that the partnerships reflect TikTok's commitment to strengthening the local creative ecosystem by ensuring talent is rewarded on the platform. Stephen Newton, regional managing director for sub-Saharan Af-

rica at Aleph Holdings, said the partnership with TikTok will simplify media buying for Kenyan businesses, enabling them to transact in local currency while benefiting from TikTok's insights. Mike Otieno, co-founder and president of Wowzi, noted that the partnership with TikTok in the development of Kenya's vibrant creator community is designed to provide valuable opportunities for local creators to connect with audiences worldwide and maximise their potential on the platform. Aleph Holdings' involvement is

expected to simplify media buying for businesses, allowing them to pay in local currency and access direct insights from TikTok. Wowzi Co-founder and President Mike Otieno said the collaboration will have a transformative impact on Kenya's digital marketplace, creating new revenue streams for content creators. TikTok maintains that these partnerships reflect its commitment to fostering local talent and businesses, positioning Kenya as a key player in the global digital economy.



Significant increase in arrival of migratory birds at TN Vettangudi bird sanctuary

The Vettangudi Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu has witnessed a remarkable surge in the number of migratory birds this season, according to forest officials. This year, approximately 3,500 to 4,000 birds have arrived at the sanctuary, a significant increase from the mere 800 recorded in 2023. The Tamil Nadu Forest Department reports that around 20 species of migratory birds visit the Vettangudi Bird Sanctuary annually.

Working expeditiously to safely bring back Sunita Williams, Butch Willmore: NASA

NASA on Thursday said it is "working expeditiously" along with SpaceX to safely bring back Indian origin astronaut Sunita Williams and astronaut Butch Willmore, currently stuck in the International Space Station (ISS) for 238 days. NASA said this after billionaire and SpaceX founder Elon Musk stated that US President Donald Trump had asked him to facilitate the return of both Williams and Willmore as soon as possible. The SpaceX CEO said that it was "terrible" that the pair were left "stranded" at the ISS for so long. "NASA and SpaceX are expeditiously working to



safely return the agency's SpaceX Crew-9 astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Willmore as soon as practical," the US space agency said in a post on social media platform X. NASA said it is "also preparing for the launch of Crew-10 to complete."



EU unveils plan to boost competitiveness

Brussels, Feb 3 (IANS) : The European Commission presented the Competitiveness Compass, a strategic blueprint aimed at restoring the European Union (EU)'s economic edge and driving technological leadership as it seeks to close the gap with the US and China. Acknowledging a two-decade lag in productivity growth compared to other major economies, the Compass focuses on boosting innovation, advancing decarbonisation, and strengthening security, according to the Commission's statement. "Europe has everything it needs to succeed in the race to the top. But, at the same time, we must fix our weaknesses to regain competitiveness," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

said in the statement. The Compass builds on a strategic report released last year by Mario Draghi, the former Italian prime minister and former president of the European Central Bank (ECB), which calls for an additional annual investment of between 750 billion euros (\$779 billion) and 800 billion euros to counteract Europe's decline in competitiveness, Xinhua news agency reported. The Commission will launch "AI Gigafactories" and "Apply AI" initiatives to accelerate AI development and adoption across key industries, the Compass says. It also promises actions for advanced materials, quantum, biotech, robotics, and space technologies.

Syria's military administration appoints al-Sharaa as interim president, dissolves armed factions

Damascus, Feb 3 (IANS) : Syria's Military Operations Administration announced the appointment of Ahmed al-Sharaa as president during the transitional period, granting him authority to establish an interim legislative council until a permanent constitution is ratified. Spokesman Hassan Abdel Ghani said al-Sharaa would serve as interim president and represent Syria in international forums. He also announced the immediate dissolution of all military factions and revolutionary political bodies, with their integration into state institutions, Xinhua news agency reported. The announcement came during a "Victory Conference" held in Damascus. "We have



freed our people from humiliation -- now we must devote ourselves to reconstructing and advancing this nation," al-Sharaa said at the conference, referencing a sweeping offensive by militant groups led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) late last year that resulted in the collapse.

Israeli PM to visit US for discussion on Gaza truce deal

Jerusalem, Feb 3 (IANS) : Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will travel to Washington next week at the invitation of US President Donald Trump, according to a statement from Netanyahu's office. Trump has invited Netanyahu to "a meeting at the White House on February 4," said the statement. The meeting is expected to focus on the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal, Israel's state-owned Kan TV News reported. Under the deal, a six-week ceasefire started on January 19 during the first phase. By the 16th day of this ceasefire, talks

will commence on subsequent phases aimed at addressing the release of remaining Israeli hostages held in the Gaza Strip and further withdrawal of Israeli forces from the enclave. Netanyahu has been under political pressure from key members of his far-right coalition government to resume Gaza fighting after the first phase of the deal, Xinhua news agency reported. According to Kan, the White House has prepared an incentive package to encourage Netanyahu to proceed with the deal. The package reportedly includes sanctions targeting the International Criminal Court in The Hague, which issued arrest war-



rants against Netanyahu in late November last year for "crimes against humanity and war crimes" during the Gaza conflict. Earlier the Israeli government announced that Hamas will release six hostages this week while Israel will allow Palestinians in Gaza to return to their homes in

the northern region. According to a statement from the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel, "Following vigorous and determined negotiations led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Hamas has backtracked and will carry out an additional phase of releasing hostages this Thursday."



Situation in DR Congo's Goma calmer, with sporadic shooting and looting reported: UN

United Nations, Feb 3 (IANS) : Situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) city of Goma is calmer but still tense, with some violence hampering humanitarian operations, a UN spokesman said. Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said that the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, known as MONUSCO, reported sporadic shooting but an overall reduction in exchanges of fire within the city. Continued clashes were reported in surrounding areas, including in Sake, northwest of Goma, Xinhua news agency reported. "The mission's priority right now remains the protection of its personnel, its assets and the many civilians sheltering within UN premises," Dujarric said at the daily briefing. "UN peacekeepers are planning on sending patrols today (Wednesday) in Goma to assess the situation, to conduct resupplies and assess routes."



Australian bushfire prompts evacuation order

Sydney, Feb 3 (IANS) : Authorities in southeast Australia have ordered communities to evacuate as bushfires in western Melbourne, the capital city of Australia's state of Victoria, continue to spread. Victorian emergency services on Monday morning urged about 100 residents of four small towns near the southwestern edge of the Grampians National Park, about 250 km west of Melbourne, to leave immediately to escape the threat posed by a nearby out-of-control fire, Xinhua news agency reported. A warning issued by VicEmergency shortly after 7:30 a.m. local time said that there was a significant increase in fire activity overnight that caused a fire burning along the national park's western edge to spread in multiple directions. "Leaving immediately is the safest option, before conditions become too dangerous. Emergency services may not be able to help you if you decide to stay," it said. Residents of three more towns to the east of the fire, which was

sparked on Monday by dry lightning, have been told that leaving now is the safest option. Incident controller Peter Western told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) that the fire had increased in size to 7,000 hectares overnight despite mild conditions. He said that it has burnt through some private property at the western edge of the park. Communities near a second fire in the national park's north have been told to monitor changing conditions and prepare to evacuate. He added that crews were working hard to contain the fires before a heatwave that is forecast to last from Saturday until Tuesday.



UNHCR launches solar project to empower refugees in Zambia

Lusaka, Feb 3 (IANS) : The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched a solar photovoltaic project to increase access to electricity in refugee settlements in Zambia, improving the livelihoods of refugees and surrounding communities. The

solarisation project is expected to benefit refugee settlements in Lusaka, the country's capital, Mantapala Refugee Settlement in the northern part of the country, and Meheba Refugee Settlement in the western part of the country, Xinhua news agency reported. The initiative is a cooperation between the UNHCR

and Zambia's Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security. The project will provide a steady power supply to the refugee settlements and alleviate the challenges posed by frequent power outages Zambia is facing due to an electricity deficit.

UN chief speaks with presidents of Rwanda, DR Congo over conflict

United Nations, Feb 3 (IANS) : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres talked over the phone with the presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda to discuss the escalating conflict in the DRC, a UN spokesman said. When asked about the content of the conversations, Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for the UN secretary-general, replied at a regular briefing. "The secretary-general obviously discussed the situation in the DRC, and he's been very clear both publicly and privately for the need for Rwanda to cease support to the M23 (March 23 Movement).



Acting South Korean president orders extra vigilance on US policy uncertainty

Seoul, Feb 3 (IANS) : Acting President Choi Sang-mok called for staying vigilant and maintaining the enhanced market monitoring on Monday amid growing uncertainties stemming from monetary and external economic policies by the Donald Trump administration. Choi made the remarks during a macroeconomic meeting meant to assess new policies by the US government and the Federal Reserve's rate-setting meeting Wednesday (local time), where it kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged following three consecutive rate cuts, reports Yonhap news agency.

Anti-poisoning drug 'Atropine' could prevent mysterious deaths in J&K's Rajouri: Expert

Jammu, Feb 3 (IANS) : In a path-breaking development, doctors at the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in J&K's Rajouri district have finally succeeded in finding the antidote for the poison that killed locals in Budhaal village of Rajouri district. Around 17 people including 14 children were killed by a mysterious disease in Budhaal village of Rajouri district between December 8 to January 17. Analyses of samples from the victims suggested that the deaths had not been caused by viral or bacterial infection although some neurotoxins were found in those samples. These

sample analyses could not lead the doctors treating the patients to find the treatment that could prevent fatalities among the patients. Talking to IANS, Dr A.S. Bhatia, Principal GMC Rajouri said, "We were helplessly watching the patients report at the hospital and dying before our eyes. This left all of us in pain and helplessness. However, the breakthrough came when we sat and analysed the treatment files of all the patients who had reported at the hospital." Dr Bhatia added that they received patients on December 14 among whom two patients, Danish and Abdul Qayoom survived while

others had passed away. "When we analysed the treatment files, all the treatments given to patients were the same except that Abdul Qayoom and Danish had been given atropine for some other reason. These two patients survived and we could zero in on atropine as the antidote for the disease. The surviving two patients had been administered atropine for some other reason," he said. "Atropine is also the antidote for organophosphorus poisoning, but the characteristic symptom of organophosphorus poisoning is that the patient would exhibit constricted eye pupils in case of poisoning by

an organophosphorus group of poisons," the doctor said. Dr Bhatia added that as bad luck would have it, no patient from Budhaal village reported constricted eye pupils. "Thus all of us missed the poisoning group for which atropine had to be used," he said. He added that by analysing treatment files and through the process of elimination, they came to know that it was the organophosphorus group of poisons that had caused all these deaths. "On January 20, we received around 22 people reporting symptoms of the so-called mysterious disease. We administered atropine to all of them



and also to those sent to Chandigarh and Jammu," he said. He added that none of the patients, who had been administered atropine died and now they know that the mystery behind the so-called mysterious disease has been solved. "Our only regret is that we missed the group of organophosphorus poisoning that caused the 17

deaths because none of the victims had any symptom that would indicate this group of poisons," he said. J&K government had deputed teams of doctors to Budhaal village while the Union Home Minister Amit Shah had constituted an inter-ministerial team to probe the Budhaal mysterious deaths.



CPI-M has mastery in misleading people : Tripura CM Saha

Agartala, Feb 3 (IANS) : Tripura Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Manik Saha on Monday slammed the opposition CPI-M, stating that the party is a "master in misleading people", and it never acknowledges development. Saha, a former state unit BJP president, gave a strong response to the allegations raised against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by CPI-M leaders during a public meeting on Wednesday. The Chief Minister also strongly criticised CPI-M politburo member Prakash Karat and advised him "to undergo cataract surgery" as he was unable to see the development of Tripura. "He (Karat) has cataracts in his eyes. He should undergo cataract surgery. How will they see progress? When he landed at the Agartala airport this time, didn't he notice the progress of Tripura? We named the airport after Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur. During the CPI-M-led Left Front government tenure, they did not respect Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur," he said. The BJP government named the airport after Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur to show respect

for the erstwhile Maharaja and his contribution to the development of Tripura. "Did he not see the development of the road on which he hoisted his party (CPI-M) flag? They do not see development, which is why they always make such statements. And they have a mastery in misleading people," he said. Saha further said that the economy of the country has developed from 11th place to 5th place, but in reality, the CPI-M has regressed by 50 years. "That is why they feel left behind. They feel this way because they are lagging. How many times during the UPA or Congress period did they attack the Constitution? Have they forgotten all this? After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, he has worked to protect the Constitution. He has taken initiatives to safeguard it. In contrast, CPI-M and Congress have worked to undermine the Constitution. "Everyone has seen what they did in West Bengal. Now they are getting fewer votes than NOTA," the Chief Minister said, adding that every one must understand why the people are rejecting them (CPI-M).

Man held in Karnataka for raping his neighbour

Bengaluru, Feb 3 (IANS) : A man hailing from Assam has been arrested in Karnataka for allegedly raping a 20-year-old woman in the state's Ramanagar district, the police said on Monday. The incident took place in Bidadi town. The arrested individual has been identified as Manzoor Alam who was working at a private firm. According to police, the accused barged inside the victim's house when she was taking a bath. He forcibly dragged her to his place and

committed the crime. As the woman raised an alarm and shouted for help, the local prop rushed to the spot. The accused attempted to escape by fleeing the scene as people started gathering. However, he was chased down, thrashed, and handed over to the police. The police stated that the victim suffered severe bleeding from the incident and was taken to the hospital. More details are yet to emerge regarding the incident. In a shocking case, a woman waiting for a bus in Bengaluru's K.R. Market was gang-raped, and

robbed of her jewellery, cash and mobile phone on January 19. The Karnataka BJP has demanded the resignation of Home Minister G. Parameashwara following the reporting of a gang-rape incident involving a woman on Tuesday morning in the state. The BJP has also expressed concerns over the increasing number of criminal incidents in the state and the absence of fear of police. On January 14, a shocking incident of rape and murder of a six-year-old girl was reported from Bengaluru. The police had arrested 25-year-



old Abhishek Kumar from Bihar in connection with the crime. The incident had taken place when the parents of the girl had gone away for work and the victim was alone. On July 10, 2024, a gang of five men abducted two minor girls and sexually assaulted one of them on Karnataka-Kerala border in Kodagu district.

JPC clears Waqf bill, 14 amendments accepted

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), scrutinising the contentious Waqf Amendment Bill cleared it on Monday and approved 14 amendments proposed by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) members. The Waqf Amendment Bill, seeking to bring reforms in the way Waqf boards are administered across the country got cleared by the JPC with a margin of 16:10 members (16 from NDA and 10 from Opposition parties). According to reports, a total of 66 amendments were proposed in the Waqf bill including 23 by the ruling BJP MPs and 44 from Opposition members. JPC chairman and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, speaking to reporters said that this was the final meeting of the Parliamentary panel and a total of 14 amendments have been cleared on the basis of a majority. "In the past six months of deliberations, we discussed many amendments. All amendments were put to vote today and members gave out their verdict with 16 voting in its favour while 14 opposing the amendments," he told newsmen.



Aparajita Sarangi, BJP MP and a JPC member added that the deliberations over amendments in the Waqf bill were held extensively and in most democratic manner and it was after the due procedure that 14 amendments have been approved. The JPC meets in the past have witnessed chaotic scenes with the Opposition accusing the committee chairman of bias and inclination towards the ruling party. The Opposition also claimed that the procedure was being hastened to start a narrative ahead of Assembly elections in the national capital.

Delhi HC rejects Naresh Balyan's plea for custody parole

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Delhi High Court on Monday turned down a plea filed by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Naresh Balyan, who is behind bars in connection with the case under the stringent MCOCA, seeking custody parole to aid his wife in campaigning ahead of the polls in the national capital. Controversial Uttam Nagar legislator Naresh Balyan, initially arrested in an alleged extortion case, has been replaced by his wife Pooja Naresh Balyan in forthcoming Delhi elections.



CM Majhi calls Utkarsh Odisha business summit a 'huge success'

Bhubaneswar, Feb 3 (IANS) : Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday said that the state inched closer to achieving the goal of becoming one of the top five economies of the country with the massive success of the two-day Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha conclave-2025. "The Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha conclave-2025 was a huge success," he said. The two-day flagship business summit hosted by the Odisha government on January 28 and 29 was attended by Industrial houses, global delegates, and policymakers. Speaking to media persons during a press conference here, the Chief Minister said, "As many as 145 Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) have been signed during the conclave. These MoUs will transform the Industrial sector of

Odisha as well as begin a new era of cooperation with world-class industrial establishments." With the signing of these MoUs during the conclave, the state is expected to receive investments to the tune of Rs 12.89 Lakh crore in 16 diverse sectors such as chemicals and petrochemicals, textiles, mining and metallurgy, renewable energy, IT/ITeS, tourism, and food processing. "These investments are expected to generate over 8.94 lakh job opportunities, creating a significant socio-economic impact and ensuring inclusive growth of the state," added the Chief Minister. He said that the state government has also received 448 Investment Intents in prescribed forms with a cumulative investment worth Rs 3.84 Lakh crores the potential to create 3.92 lakh jobs.

He further stated that the state received a total of 593 projects with an investment of Rs 16.73 lakh crores and employment potential of 12.88 lakhs in over 20 sectors across all 30 districts of Odisha. Majhi noted that the conclave attracted delegates from over 16 countries, including representatives from the Partner Countries - Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia - further strengthening Odisha's position as a global investment destination. "We are committed to achieving the vision of Samrudh Odisha 2036 and contributing to Viksit Bharat 2047," he said. The Chief Minister, on behalf of the people of Odisha, has also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his unwavering support to Odisha during the mega business summit which



he personally inaugurated. "The Prime Minister was himself present and gave his guarantee (Modi Ki Guarantee) for investments in Odisha. He has extended absolute support to us in making a Samrudh Odisha by 2036 and making it a growth engine of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Congress leader Jagtap slams

Mumbai Police for mishandling high-profile cases

Mumbai, Feb 3 (IANS) : Maharashtra MLA and senior Congress leader Bhai Jagtap has criticised Mumbai Police for its alleged mishandling of several high-profile cases. Speaking to IANS, Jagtap remarked, "Mumbai Police, often compared to Scotland Yard for their efficiency and professionalism, are now tarnishing their image with subpar investigations. Their handling of cases is increasingly being perceived as superficial." Referring to the murder case of Sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh in Beed, Jagtap said it is because of the pub-

lic and political pressure that things got moving. "The main accused was booked under MCOCA (Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act) only due to our persistent efforts," he told IANS. Jagtap raised concerns about the police allegedly presenting "duplicate" accused in the attack on Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan.





Budget 2025-26 maintains high Capex amid fiscal prudence : BoB analysis

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Union Budget for 2025-26 has maintained fiscal prudence without compromising on the quality of expenditure and the government's borrowing program has been stable, which is positive for markets, according to an analysis by Bank of Baroda economists. The analysis highlights that the momentum of capital expenditure (Capex) for large infrastructure projects in the highways, railways and ports sectors has been maintained in the Budget. Apart from infrastructure, rural development

and agriculture will be driving the growth in spending. The Centre's overall expenditure is estimated to increase from Rs 47.2 lakh crore in FY25RE to Rs 50.7 lakh crore in FY26BE. This will be led by both, revenue and capital spending, the report states. The Centre's capex spending is expected to increase sharply to Rs 11.2 lakh crore from Rs 10.2 lakh crore as per FY25RE. As a percentage of GDP, the ratio of capex is retained at 3.1 per cent, the report states.

India cuts import duty on high-capacity motorcycles, boost for US brand Harley-Davidson

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : Motorcycles with engine capacity of up to 1,600 cc, which are imported as completely built-up (CBU) units, will now attract an import duty of 40 per cent as against 50 per cent earlier, as per the Budget document. The import duty on semi-knocked down (SKD) kits has been cut to 20 per cent versus 25 per cent earlier.



Cellecor Gadgets collaborates with Flipkart's Jeeves to boost local manufacturing

Mumbai, Feb 3 (IANS) : Aligning with the 'Make in India' initiative, Cellecor Gadgets Limited on Monday collaborated with Jeeves Consumer Services, a part of the Flipkart group to enhance customer satisfaction and service quality.

Jeeves is a leading third-party service provider in India, and the partnership aims to improve the after-sales services for Cellecor Gadgets' products, according to its stock exchange filing. "This collaboration aligns with the vision of providing innovative, reliable, and technologically superior products that cater to the evolving needs of Indian households," Cellecor Gadgets said. The company further added that the collaboration reinforces the commitment to strengthen local manufacturing while delivering high-quality consumer electronics. Jeeves specialises in lifecycle management across various categories, according to the exchange filing.

Government's consumption growth estimated to improve in FY25

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The government consumption growth is estimated to improve in FY25 given the increase in the revenue expenditures of both state and union governments, while private consumption growth is expected to be driven by rural demand, easing inflation and a favourable base, according to a report on Monday. Exports are also expected to witness strong growth supported by robust growth in services exports, said PwC's 'Budget 2025-26: Fostering India's Inclusive Growth' report, which offers detailed insights into the budget highlights, economic outlook and key tax and regulatory proposals that will shape India's economic trajectory in the coming years. As per the first advance estimates, India's economic growth is expected to moderate to 6.4 per cent in financial year (FY) 2025, compared

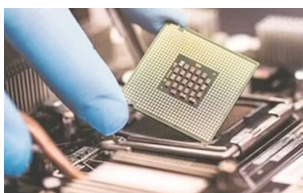
to 8.2 per cent growth in FY24, mainly due to slowdown in urban consumption, high food inflation, slow growth in capital formation and global headwinds. However, India is expected to remain the world's fastest growing in 2025, supported by a strong domestic market, rising working age population and strong macroeconomic fundamentals, said the report. The government estimates that it will better its fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent and pegs it at 4.8 per cent for financial year (FY) 2025.



Budget 2025-26: FDI limit for insurance sector raised to 100 per cent

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced an increase in the FDI limit for the insurance sector from 74 per cent to 100 per cent in the Budget for 2025-26 as part of far-reaching reforms in the financial sector. This enhanced limit will be available for those companies which invest the entire premium in India. The current guardrails and conditionalities associated with foreign investment will be reviewed and simplified, the Finance Minister said. Budget 2025-26 aims to

initiate transformative reforms across six domains which will augment our growth potential and global competitiveness during the next five years, she while presenting the Budget in Parliament. One of these domains is the financial sector which encompasses sectors like insurance, pensions, bilateral investment treaties (BIT) and so forth, she said. A forum for regulatory coordination and development of pension products will be set up, the Finance Minister stated.



Global semiconductor revenue jumps 18 pc in 2024: Report

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The global semiconductor industry witnessed a strong rebound in 2024, with total revenue reaching \$626 billion, an 18.1 per cent increase from the previous year, a report said on Monday.

This positive momentum is expected to continue, with projections indicating semiconductor revenue will climb to \$705 billion in 2025, according to the report from Gartner. While memory dominated the market, non-memory semiconductor revenue also saw an increase of 6.9 per cent in 2024, accounting for 74.8 per cent of total industry revenue. The report added that among the top 25 semiconductor companies, 11 posted double-digit revenue increases.



India tops global digital well-being index, leads in online safety and parental support

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : Amid growing concerns over online safety, India leads on a global digital well-being index, scoring 67 out of 100 which reflects strong trust and support between parents and teenagers, a report said on Monday. The country leads in online satisfaction, with 58 per cent of respondents expressing contentment with their digital experiences, compared to 53 per cent in the US and 42 per cent in the UK, said the report by Snap Inc. India reported the strongest support networks for young

people, with respondents having 9 to 12 sources of guidance, such as parents, teachers and mentors. However, 78 per cent of Indian Gen Z users sought support from others, up from 65 per cent in 2023, the report added. There is an increase in parental engagement, with 70 per cent of parents regularly checking in on their teens' online activities, up from 62 per cent in 2023. Indian Gen Z users reported the highest rates of online threats, including sextortion and grooming. About 71 per cent of Indian Gen Z respondents said they had been targeted for sextortion, with 55 per cent falling victim, the report

added. The report further added that 77 per cent reported losing control of intimate images they shared, with 80 per cent of these cases involving minors aged 13-17. Also, 60 per cent of respondents had experienced grooming, with over half being minors. Another major concern is the lack of awareness about the legal implications of sharing explicit content involving minors. The report found that 52 per cent of respondents wrongly believed that not reporting such content was legal, the highest percentage among all surveyed countries.

Hyundai's US sales jump 15 pc YoY in January

Seoul, Feb 3 (IANS) : Hyundai Motor, South Korea's top automaker, saw its sales in the United States climb 15 per cent from a year ago in January, marking its biggest sales for the month to date, the company said on Monday. Hyundai Motor's U.S. sales reached 54,503 units last month, compared with 47,543 units sold in the same month last year, according to the automaker. The on-year growth was driven by a 74 per cent surge in sales of hybrid models and a 15 per cent increase in sales of electric ve-

hicles (EVs), with the Santa Fe hybrid EV (HEV), Tucson HEV, Ioniq 5 and 6 EVs all posting record sales for January, reports Yonhap news agency. Kia, Hyundai's sister company and South Korea's second-largest carmaker, also saw US sales rise 12 percent on-year to 57,007 units in January, according to the company.



BJP govt in 11-year rule destroyed democracy in the country, alleges CPI (M) leaders

Agartala, Feb 3 (IANS) : Top CPI-M leaders in Tripura on Monday claimed that the 11-year rule of the BJP-led Narendra Modi government at the Centre destroyed democracy in the country and the saffron party was running the government to favour only the millionaires.

Addressing a public rally, CPI-M politburo member Prakash Karat said that in the last 11 years, people in the country witnessed how the Modi government destroyed democracy and arrested prominent leaders of opposition parties.

"Before Lok Sabha elections, the then Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren were arrested and put in jail to suppress their voice," he told the gathering. The CPI-M leader alleged that it is in the DNA of BJP's blood to kill democracy in the country while its ideologue Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has been trying to create a 'Hindu Rashtra'.

Criticising the 'One Nation,

One Election' Bill, Karat said that the proposed legislation would curb the democratic rights of the people in various states.

During the Left Front rule, any communal strife never occurred but now it often took place in different places of Tripura, the CPI-M leader said, adding that imbalance was created in the country and the wealth of millionaires increased while poor people became poorer.

The public gathering was organised in connection with the three-day (January 29 to 31) 24th state conference of the CPI-M.

Former Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar said that due to severe undemocratic activities, the Congress-led government was defeated and the CPI-M-led Left Front came to power for the first time in Tripura securing 56 seats in the 60-member Tripura Assembly. Sarkar, also a CPI-M politburo member, claimed that a section of good BJP leaders was already frustrated over the misgovernance of the saffron party-led government in the state. "Those old and sincere BJP leaders are now being sidelined. Those

BJP workers worked for the party, and now they are being attacked by the BJP goons and getting no support from the state government," he said.

Sarkar highlighted the unfulfilled promises made by BJP leaders before the 2018 Assembly election campaign, such as doubling the work days of employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to 200 and increasing daily wages to Rs 340. He also alleged "rampant corruption and lawlessness" under the current BJP government in Tripura.

CPI-M Tripura state Secretary Jitendra Chaudhury claimed that the state's economy has collapsed under a corrupt and autocratic BJP government.



Rajasthan HC to NHAI: Complete Bhankrota flyover on Jaipur-Ajmer highway by April 1

Jaipur, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Rajasthan High Court has directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to complete the Bhankrota flyover project in Jaipur by April 1, 2025, without any further delays. A hearing was held on Monday regarding the delay in constructing the Bhankrota flyover on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway.

The court further expressed strong discontent over the encroachment on the highway, emphasising that any form of obstruction would not be tol-

erated. Additionally, the court has demanded an action plan for traffic diversion, which must be submitted within two weeks.

Earlier, the High Court had voiced dissatisfaction over the prolonged delay in the flyover's construction. Justices Indrajit Singh and Vinod Kumar Bharwani summoned NHAI officials to clarify the project's completion timeline.

During the proceedings, the court noted that due to the incomplete flyover, traffic congestion in the area persists for hours, and no concrete steps have been taken to manage vehicle diversions. At Wednesday's hearing, NHAI

officials requested a three-month extension to complete the flyover. However, the court firmly ordered that the flyover must be operational by April 1, 2025. The court also addressed concerns regarding encroachment on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway, instructing that the highway's width should remain at 48 metres and that service roads must be kept free of obstructions.

Additionally, NHAI has been asked to submit a detailed action plan for handling traffic diversions during the ongoing construction.

Opposition should avoid politics over Maha Kumbh stampede: Rajasthan BJP Chief

Jaipur, Feb 3 (IANS) : Rajasthan BJP President Madan Rathore on Monday criticised the opposition parties for politicising the Maha Kumbh Sangam stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, emphasising that it was an unfortunate accident and not a deliberate or "sponsored" incident. He also extended his

condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the stampede and wished a speedy recovery for the injured. He urged devotees attending the religious event to remain patient and avoid unnecessary haste. State BJP President Rathore called the Opposition's stance "unethical" and "condemnable", urging them to show compassion instead of ex-

ploiting the situation for political gains.

Commenting on the Delhi elections, State BJP President Rathore accused the Congress of being an opportunistic party, highlighting



its inconsistent stance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). He said that Congress sometimes contests elections in alliance with AAP and at other times opposes it. "A self-respecting party does not behave like this," he remarked.



GRSE signs MoU to diversify underwater weapons & communication systems sector

Kolkata, Feb 3 (IANS) : With an aim to diversify into the field of underwater weapons, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Apollo Micro Systems Ltd (AMS) in Kolkata on Monday.

The Hyderabad-based AMS is involved in the design and development of customised electronic hardware and software solutions for mission-critical applications. AMS' client list includes Bharat Electronics Ltd and other companies engaged in the production of equipment for the aerospace, defence and homeland security sectors.

A senior GRSE official said that as per the MoU, GRSE and AMS

will collaborate for joint research and development, co-production and supply of advanced equipment to meet the current and future requirements of the Indian Armed Forces, Paramilitary and Central Armed Police Forces, Central and State Government agencies as well as the civilian and export markets.

According to him, GRSE has already delivered Jaldoot, an Autonomous Surface Vessel to the Defence Research and Development Organisation and launched an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle that is expected to be ready for delivery soon. GRSE has also ventured into the production of Naval Surface Guns and the Navy has placed orders for 10 such systems, he said.



Bhopal court sends ex-RTO constable's aide to 6-day police custody

Bhopal, Feb 3 (IANS) : Former Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Constable Saurabh Sharma's business partner and key associate Sharad Jaiswal, who is one of the co-accused in the disproportionate assets case, was produced in the court in Bhopal on Monday.

Jaiswal was detained by Madhya Pradesh Lokayukta police when he came to surrender at the Bhopal district court on Tuesday and questioned him. The court sent him to a six-day police (Lokayukta) custody (till February 4). The main accused Saurabh Sharma and another co-accused Chetan Gaur were arrested and produced in the court on Tuesday, and they were sent to a seven-day police custody.

Now, for the next five days, Lokayukta police would question the accused trio (Saurabh Sharma, Chetan Gaur, and Sharad Jaiswal).

Pinarayi Vijayan faces backlash for urging Kerala Guv to commute sentence of murder convict

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 3 (IANS) : A controversy has erupted in Kerala after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan advised Governor Rajendra Viswanath Arlekar to commute the sentence of a murder convict. The convict, Sherin, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of her father-in-law in 2009. Sherin, the main accused, along with two others have been serving life imprisonment in the Karanavar murder case since

2010. However, Pinarayi Vijayan's office, who also holds the Home Ministry portfolio, pointed out that the decision was taken based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and the Law Department.

Reportedly, a top political leader is seen behind the fast-tracking of the application of Sherin's commuting sentence. Meanwhile, according to the rules for remission, the prisoner should show exemplary character as a prisoner.



Shiv Sena seeks Central support in Budget for Maha to become India's innovation capital

Mumbai, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Shiv Sena has urged the BJP-led NDA government to provide substantial financial support in the annual budget for 2025-26 for infrastructure, employment generation, and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, ensuring Maharashtra becomes India's innovation capital.

Shiv Sena Parliamentary

Party leader Shrikant Shinde said: "Maharashtra is leading the way with pioneering initiatives aimed at women, farmers, and youth — three pillars of our society that deserve unwavering support. Our initiatives include 'Ladki Bahin' for women's financial independence, the revolutionary Re 1 Crop Insurance Scheme for farmers, and extensive skill development programmes for youth. As we look towards the Union Bud-

get 2025, Maharashtra expects robust support for these sectors to drive lasting transformation." He further added: "A strong Maharashtra is pivotal to a stronger India, and we are committed to working alongside the NDA government to realise this vision. With the leadership of PM Modi and the trust of our people, we will propel India's economic ascent." Shinde said that Maharashtra has played an indispensable role in

India's growth story because of a slew of initiatives implemented by the Centre during 2104 and 2024. "As the state with the highest GDP per capita in India, Maharashtra is poised to be the torchbearer of India's journey towards becoming an economic superpower. The historic mandate for the MahaYuti government in the 2024 Assembly elections has reinforced our commitment to accelerating growth and progress. Maharashtra has



continued to attract the highest investment at Davos Summit for the third consecutive year," he added. Shinde said that India stands at the cusp of a historic economic transformation. "Under the decisive leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



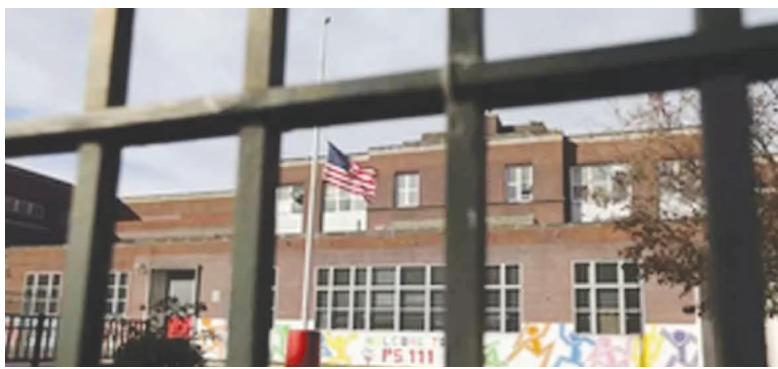
UN confirms US notification of withdrawal from Paris Agreement

United Nations, Feb 3 (IANS) : The United Nations confirmed that it had received official notification from Washington of its withdrawal from the Paris climate change agreement. "The United States notified the Secretary-General, in his capacity as depositary, of its withdrawal, on 27 January 2025, from the Paris Agreement of 12 December 2015," Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN chief Antonio Guterres, said at a daily briefing. "According to Article 28, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement, the withdrawal of the United States will take effect on January 27, 2026," he said. The spokesman reaffirmed the UN's commitment to the Paris Agreement and support all effective efforts.

US: Oklahoma moves to ask immigration status in public school enrollment

Houston, Feb 3 (IANS) : The State Board of Education of Oklahoma has voted to advance a rule requiring parents to report immigration or citizenship status when enrolling students in public schools. The rule, approved by 6-0 unanimously on Monday, must be approved by the Governor and the state legislature to take effect in the landlocked south-central US state. If approved, the rule would require each school district to record the number of students whose parent or guardian cannot provide proof of citizenship or legal immigration status "due to the lack of citizenship or legal immigration status of the student." "Our rule around illegal immigration accounting is simply that. It is to account for how

many students of illegal immigrants are in our schools," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters, a Republican member of the board. Dozens of students protested Walters' immigration policies in Oklahoma City on Tuesday, calling for keeping deportation agents off school campuses, Xinhua news agency quoted the local media as reporting. "All children have a constitutional right to equal access to education regardless of their citizenship or immigration status," the National Immigration Law Center said in a statement in response to the rule change. US President Donald Trump last week issued a directive allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to arrest people in schools.



Argentine railway workers walk out in demand of higher wages

Buenos Aires, Feb 3 (IANS) : Argentine railway workers went on strike Monday to demand higher wages, a move criticised by President Javier Milei's government for leaving a million passengers stranded. Local and regional train service in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area was suspended by the six-hour stoppage, from 9 am to 3 pm local time (1200 GMT to 2100 GMT), led by the La Fraternidad union. The union announced the strike on January 21, demanding higher

wages along with an additional 153,000 pesos (145 US dollars), 10 per cent of a worker's salary, to cover the cost of a basic food basket and offset the inflation-driven loss of purchasing power. The state-owned company Trenes Argentinos Operaciones released a statement on Monday that the strike would affect about a million passengers. "Due to this strike, it is estimated that the National State will lose more than 100 million pesos in the payment of fares for those who will not be able to make their trips," it said. Railway staff

are demanding a 46 per cent wage increase to offset the loss of purchasing power since Milei's government took office in December 2023, while authorities have offered just 3.5 per cent, Xinhua news agency reported. Due to the strike, the Argentine government lost more than 100 million pesos in the payment of fares. Trenes Argentinos Operaciones said that the strike did not affect long-distance services that departed during the said time slot from and to Mar del Plata.

Iranian FM says no message received from US for nuclear talks

Tehran, Feb 3 (IANS) : Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said that no specific message has been sent or received between Iran and the US regarding the holding of nuclear negotiations. In an address to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, Araghchi said on Monday that talks between

Iran and Britain, France, and Germany are going on and that Iran is waiting for the United States to determine its policies and position, following which Iran would consider them and make its decision, according to a report by the official news agency IRNA. "If the country comes to the conclusion that the possibility exists for holding negotiations on equal terms, we will decide about that,"

he said. "The basis and criterion for us is still the same distrust that existed in the past, which still pervades the relations between the two countries," he said, adding, "We reached an agreement in the past. Iran implemented the agreement, but they were the ones who scrapped it." Resolving that distrust is not easy nor possible solely by using "good and beautiful" words, he said, un-

derscoring that practical actions and clear policies are required to that end. Iran signed a nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with world powers in July 2015, agreeing to put some curbs on its nuclear program in return for the removal of sanctions. The United States, however, pulled out of the deal in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Iran, prompting Tehran to scale back its commitments under the deal, Xinhua news agency reported. The talks to revive the JCPOA began in April 2021 in Vienna, Austria. Despite several rounds of talks, no significant breakthrough has been achieved.



10.5 tonnes of illicit drugs destroyed in Afghanistan's Bamiyan

Bamiyan, Feb 3 (IANS) : Authorities of the counter-narcotics department have destroyed 10.5 tonnes of illegal drugs in central Afghanistan's Bamiyan province, the provincial police office said in a statement on Monday. The contraband including opium poppy, hashish, objects used in manufacturing heroin and other toxic items was burned publicly on Tuesday, the statement said. Police in Bamiyan banned the cultivation of poppy, drug processing, and drug trafficking in the province, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on January 14, police uncovered 43 kg of illicit drugs in eastern Afghanistan's Khost province and detained an individual on charges of involvement in drug trafficking, according to provincial police

spokesman Tahir Ehrar. The contraband, which included 43 kg of hashish and a piece of an AK-47, was discovered outside the provincial capital, Khost city. The official added that one drug smuggler had been arrested. The police made it clear that they would not allow anyone to produce or smuggle hashish, poppy, or the objects used in manufacturing heroin in the province, Ehrar said. The counter-narcotics police had also uncovered 64 kg of illicit drugs, including methamphetamine, and arrested 17 suspected drug smugglers in two provinces of Afghanistan, the Ministry of Interior had revealed earlier this month. The contraband, which included 43 kg of methamphetamine and 21 kg of hashish.



First deportees land in Colombia from US

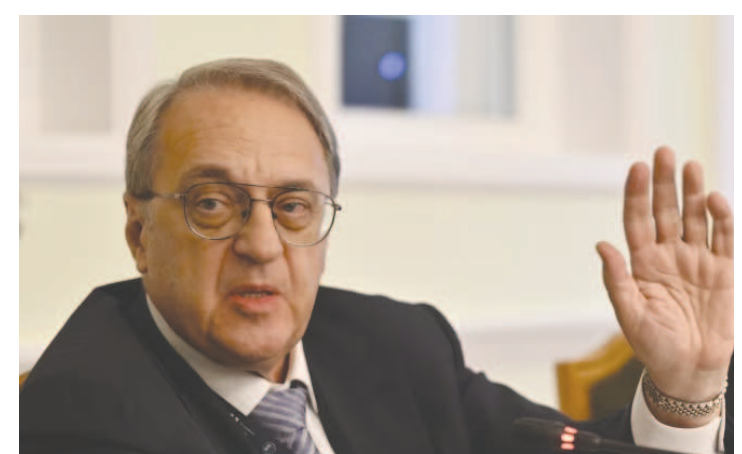
Bogota, Feb 3 (IANS) : Two Colombian Aerospace Force planes with migrants deported from the United States landed late Monday in the country's capital Bogota, Colombian President Gustavo Petro confirmed. The Colombian nationals were picked up in Houston, Texas, and San Diego, California, on the instructions of Petro. "They are Colombians, they are free and dignified and they are in their homeland where they are loved. The migrant is not a criminal, he is a human being who wants to work and progress," Petro posted on the social platform X, along with photos of the Colombian nationals walking out of planes. Earlier in the day, Trump had posted on his social media platform that the United States will impose 25 per cent tariffs, which will increase to 50 per cent in one week, on all goods coming into the United States from Colombia.

cel the visas of all Colombian government officials and slap 50 per cent tariffs on imports from Colombia. The two sides then reached an agreement that Colombian planes would transport the deportees without handcuffs, under safe and dignified conditions, as requested by Colombia's government. "The Government of Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms, including the unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens from Colombia returned from the United States, including on U.S. military aircraft, without limitation or delay," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said in the statement on Sunday. Earlier in the day, Trump had posted on his social media platform that the United States will impose 25 per cent tariffs, which will increase to 50 per cent in one week, on all goods coming into the United States from Colombia.

Russian deputy FM says to deepen ties with Syria, support reconstruction

Damascus, Feb 3 (IANS) : Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said that Russia is willing to deepen ties with Syria and support its reconstruction, according to a Russian media report. Heading a high-level Russian delegation to meet with Syria's de facto leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, and other top Syrian officials, Bogdanov told RT Arabic news network that the meeting was "constructive and positive," during which the two sides underlined the "historic," "uninterrupted" bilateral friendship. Both sides pledged to deepen ties in various fields, including infrastructure, electricity, oil and gas, agriculture, fertilizers, and railways,

Bogdanov, also Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy for the Middle East and Africa, Xinhua news agency reported quoting RT Arabic. "We agreed to maintain comprehensive dialogue on all aspects of cooperation," he said, adding that Moscow stands ready to support Syria's reconstruction process and host Syrian delegations "whenever they request." Bogdanov dispelled concerns about Russian facilities in Tartous and Hmeimim in northwestern Syria, saying they remain unaffected amid Syria's recent political changes. Rumors about altering contracts for the Russian-operated Tartous Port are "purely commercial" and can likely be resolved "amicably."



Israel to sever ties with UN Palestinian refugee agency

Jerusalem, Feb 3 (IANS) : Israel said it would sever all ties with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) starting on Monday, accusing the agency of employing Hamas operatives and enabling "terror activity" in Gaza. "UNRWA is riddled with Hamas," Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein said on social media platform X. "Beginning January 30, Israel will cease all engagement with UNRWA in accordance with Israeli law," he wrote. Marmorstein reiterated Israel's commitment to humanitarian aid reaching Gaza but said assistance

would be channeled through "alternative organizations," including other UN agencies, international NGOs, and foreign governments, Xinhua news agency reported. An Israeli law passed in October 2024 mandates an end to UNRWA's operation on Israeli land -- including East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed in a move not recognised internationally -- and contact with Israeli authorities from Thursday. It also bars Israeli officials from any contact with UNRWA. The move has drawn condemnation from international leaders and aid groups. UNRWA, which provides vital healthcare, education, and emer-

gency services to millions of Palestinians, denied the allegations and said it has received no formal evidence from Israel to substantiate the claims. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said on Tuesday that the agency has been the target of a "fierce disinformation campaign" to "portray the agency as a terrorist organization." The headquarters of UNRWA is facing an immediate shutdown due to bans passed by the Israeli legislature in October. These restrictions threaten the organization's operations across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.



Tejashwi Yadav slams Bihar Dy CM Sinha over financial irregularities allegations

Patna, Feb 3 (IANS) : Bihar Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav on Monday slammed Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha over his remarks that he (Tejashwi Yadav) was involved in financial irregularities in the Grand Alliance government. "The BJP government should take action against me if I have committed any wrongdoing. But they should also be prepared to face consequences in future," said the Bihar LoP. He

added that NDA leaders are competing with each other to see who can criticise him or his father, Lalu Prasad Yadav, more vehemently. He further remarked that Sinha, despite holding the position of Deputy Chief Minister, lacks substantial influence within his own party and the state government. "He has become the Deputy Chief Minister but even he himself might not be able to believe it. Neither Samrat Choudhary values him nor Nitish Kumar does," Yadav said. Regarding the incident involving

Bhagalpur MP Ajay Mandal, who allegedly beat a local journalist, Yadav expressed disappointment over Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's silence. He said Nitish Kumar was a silent spectator when 200 rounds of firing took place in Mokama or his party MP allegedly assaulted a local journalist. He also raised concerns about the rising crime rates in the state and criticised the union ministers and state ministers for defending Nitish Kumar.

North Korea's Kim inspects nuclear material production base



Seoul, Feb 3 (IANS) : North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has inspected a nuclear-material production base and a nuclear weapons institute, emphasising that strengthening the nuclear shield is "indispensable" amid a long-term confrontation with "the most vicious hostile countries". Kim made the remarks during his inspection of the production base and the Nuclear Weapons Institute, where he reviewed the core processes for producing weapons-grade nuclear materials and learned about the present production status. North Korea's security situation, in which "a long-term confrontation with the most vicious hostile countries is inevitable," makes it "indispensable" for the country to steadily strengthen the nuclear

shield to cope with existing and new security dangers and to guarantee its sovereignty, interests and development right, the Korean Central News Agency quoted Kim as saying. The external situation facing North Korea "remains grave and the challenges of the hostile forces are becoming ever more pronounced," he said, adding that nuclear weapons stockpiling and its increase by geometrical progression provide an absolute force capable of thoroughly containing North Korea's enemies. The leader stated the country's nuclear technical forces are growing stronger day by day, affirming that "guaranteeing peace and security by dint of strength is our mode of struggle and option".

African officials call for strengthening public health security amid new outbreaks

Mombasa, Feb 3 (IANS) : The recurrence of infectious diseases such as Ebola, monkeypox and Marburg in Africa calls for enhancing the resilience of the continent's public health systems through sustainable funding, technology adoption, improved surveillance and community engagement. Africa remains vulnerable to disease outbreaks that are being fueled by climate change, pollution, unregulated human mobility across

borders and limited access to diagnostics and essential medicine, said the officials and experts attending the East Africa Regional Global Health Security Summit 2025, officials said at a forum in Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa. The summit that runs from January 28-30 was convened by Kenya's Ministry of Health and aims to chart a new pathway for enhancing preparedness and response to pandemics in the region. In addition, delegates from governments, academia, civil society,



donors, industry and regional blocs attending the three-day forum will discuss novel ways to boost biosecurity, advance health equity, and ramp up the adoption of technologies and innovations in the health sector.

Kenyan President William Ruto in his opening remarks said that African nations have a collective duty to revamp their health systems and ensure they are capable of responding to outbreaks that are transboundary.

Amid growing concerns, IMF cautions

Pakistan to be patient on demands from private sector

Islamabad, Feb 3 (IANS) : The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cautioned Pakistan to remain on course with its bailout plan and commitments amid growing demands from the country's private business sector to open up opportunities and create jobs through public-private partnership programmes. Mahir Binici, the new IMF Resident Representative for Pakistan, has urged Islamabad to deliver on reforms, which he said would benefit people in the longer run. "Pakistan needs to stay on course and remain com-

mitted to programme objectives. It also needs to be cautiously optimistic and have patience to stay on course in order to deliver on reforms so that people could benefit from it," said Binici while addressing a conference titled 'Dialogue on Economy' at the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC).



SADC to hold extraordinary summit on eastern DR Congo situation

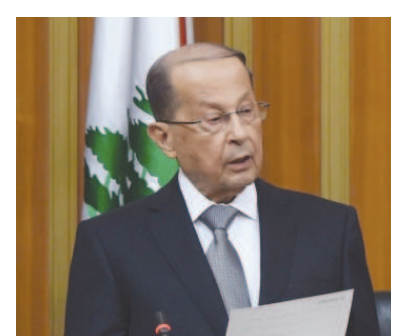
Harare, Feb 3 (IANS) : The Southern African Development Community (SADC) will hold an extraordinary summit in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, on Monday to discuss the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the SADC Secretariat said in a statement. The extraordinary meeting of heads of state and government, which will be chaired by SADC Chairperson and Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, will be preceded by the meetings of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials and the SADC Council of Ministers, the statement said. The SADC is a regional economic community of 16 member

states, including the DRC. The other members are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia, Xinhua news agency reported. The extraordinary summit comes after recent attacks on United Nations and SADC peacekeeping missions by armed groups in the eastern DRC. Mnangagwa on Monday condemned the armed groups for the attacks, which resulted in several deaths and injuries, and vowed that the SADC will take action to deal with the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC. In November 2024, the

SADC extended the mandate of its peacekeeping mission in the DRC by one year amid continued fighting between the Congolese army and armed groups, which has resulted in over 400,000 people being displaced since the start of 2025. Earlier UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres talked over the phone with the presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda to discuss the escalating conflict in the DRC, a UN spokesman said. The M23 rebels occupy portions of Goma, the largest city of eastern DRC, while Rwanda has been denying allegations its troops were in the DRC, supporting M23.

World Bank says Lebanon's reconstruction plan nearing completion

Beirut, Feb 3 (IANS) : Ousmane Dione, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa region, announced that the bank is finalising a rapid damage assessment to support Lebanon's reconstruction efforts. Speaking after a meeting with President Michel Aoun, Dione said that the World Bank is expected to complete the assessment by the end of February and that emergency assistance will soon be submitted for approval by the bank's board. "We are committed to standing by Lebanon during this critical transition to support its recovery and ensure the prosperity of all its people," Dione said. During his meeting with President Aoun, Dione reiterated the World Bank's support for Lebanon.



Monitoring the Washinton plane crash, says Trump

Washington, Feb 3 (IANS) : US President Donald Trump said that he is monitoring the plane crash that occurred over the Potomac River near Reagan National Airport in Washington. "I have been fully briefed on the terrible accident which just took place at Reagan National Airport. May God Bless their souls. Thank you for the incredible work being done by our first responders. I am monitoring the situation and will provide more details as they arise," the President's office said in a statement. A tragic mid-air collision occurred over the Potomac River near Washington, US, involving American Airlines Flight 5342, and a Black Hawk helicopter. The passenger plane was carrying 60 passengers and crew, according to some media reports. Meanwhile, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said that

there were fatalities. "I am closely monitoring the situation at DCA, and I will receive a briefing from the FAA tomorrow. While we don't yet know how many on board were lost, we know there are fatalities. Please join Heidi and me in praying for all involved as the search and rescue is underway," he said in a post on X. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reported that the aircraft collided around 9 p.m. on Wednesday as the passenger jet was approaching Runway 33 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. "APSA Airlines Bombardier CRJ700 regional jet collided in midair with a Sikorsky H-60 heli-



copter while on approach to Runway 33 at Reagan Washington National Airport around 9 p.m. local time. PSA was operating as Flight 5342 for American Airlines. It departed from Wichita, Kansas. The FAA and NTSB will investigate. The NTSB will lead the investigation," the FAA said in a statement. The flight had originated from Wichita, Kansas. Emergency response teams, including the Metropolitan Police Department and the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department.



Jordan sends another 16 aid helicopters to Gaza

Amman, Feb 3 (IANS) : Jordan sent another 16 aid helicopters to Gaza as part of its ongoing efforts to deliver assistance to the coastal enclave. The helicopters carried 20 tonnes of humanitarian and relief aid, sent in collaboration with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and several other countries, Xinhua news agency reported quoting state-run Petra news agency. Jordan is diversifying its methods of delivering aid to Gaza, with military helicopters being used to speed up the transportation of urgent and perishable supplies, particularly medical treatments and essential healthcare

items. The humanitarian delivery is set to continue for eight days, with 16 aircraft operating daily, Petra reported. Earlier Egypt sent another 310 humanitarian aid trucks to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing, amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas ceasefire brokered by Egypt, Qatar, and the US, Egypt's State Information Service (SIS) reported. "The convoy includes 20 trucks loaded with fuel," the SIS report added. The trucks would go through the Al-Auja (Nitzana) and Kerem Shalom crossings for inspection by the Israeli side before being delivered to Gaza, Earlier in January, Jordan's For-

eign Minister Ayman Safadi emphasised the alignment of positions between Jordan and Denmark in supporting efforts to reach an agreement that would lead to a halt in the "aggression on Gaza." He made the remarks in a joint press conference in Amman following a meeting with the Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen, according to a statement by the ministry. Current efforts should lead to an agreement that provides all needed to address the humanitarian disaster caused by the conflict, sending sufficient, practical, rapid, and immediate aid to Gaza, Safadi said.

Iraq rejects attempts to displace Palestinians : FM

Baghdad, Feb 3 (IANS) : Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said that Iraq rejects any attempts that aim to displace the Palestinian people. Hussein's remarks came during a phone call with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, during which they discussed developments in Palestine after the ceasefire and ways to enhance joint coordi-

nation to support the Palestinian people, according to a statement issued by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry. Hussein reaffirmed Iraq's stance in supporting the Palestinian cause, emphasising the importance of unifying efforts to enhance their resilience on their land, the statement said. Hussein stressed - according to the statement - "Iraq's firm position in supporting the Palestinian cause,

stressing the rejection of any attempts aimed at displacing the Palestinian people and the importance of unifying efforts to enhance their steadfastness on their land." He pointed out that "Iraq will continue to exert maximum efforts to ensure that the Palestinian file and support for the rights of the Palestinian people are at the forefront of the priorities of the agenda of the Arab Summit that



Baghdad will host this year." For his part, the Palestinian Foreign Minister expressed - according to the statement - his deep appreciation for Iraq's supportive stances towards Palestine, praising the fraternal relations between the two countries.



Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger formally exit ECOWAS

Abuja, Feb 3 (IANS) : The memberships of the three West African countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have been formally withdrawn from the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), one year after the three junta-led nations jointly declared an intention to exit the regional bloc. The ECOWAS Commission said in a statement that the withdrawal took effect Monday. It is a historic exit from the bloc, founded in 1975 to promote economic integration in all economic activities, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial matters, and social and cultural affairs, Xinhua news agency reported.



Turkish president meets Hamas delegation following Gaza ceasefire

Ankara, Feb 3 (IANS) : Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with a Hamas delegation, which included Muhammad Darwish, head of the Shura Council, Erdogan's office said in a statement. The meeting was attended by key Turkish officials, including Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, National Intelligence Organization Chief Ibrahim Kalin, Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun, Senior Advisor for Foreign Policy and Security Akif Cagatay Kilic, and Presidential Chief of Staff Hasan Dogan, said the statement. Erdogan told the delegation in the meeting Hamas's "471-day struggle in Gaza reaffirmed the spirit of resistance will endure," Xinhua news agency reported quoting the semi-official Anadolu

Agency. Turkiye will continue to "expose realities in Gaza," Erdogan reportedly said, expressing hope for the successful completion of the Gaza ceasefire. Erdogan has often expressed Turkiye's strong stance on the Palestinian issue and has maintained communication with both Hamas and international actors regarding the conflict. A three-phase ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas took effect on January 19, initiating six weeks of calm and raising hopes for an end to 15 months of Israeli assaults on Gaza that devastated the enclave and for the release of dozens of hostages held there. On Saturday, the International Committee of the Red Cross announced the completion of the second phase of a prisoner-hos-

tage exchange between Hamas and Israel, implemented under the initial terms of the ceasefire agreement. Earlier in the day, Israel has received a list of hostages expected to be released from Hamas captivity in Gaza on Thursday, including three Israeli and five Thai nationals, Israeli sources said. The list was delivered to mediators by the Palestinian armed group ahead of the expected release of a third batch of hostages, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement. Earlier Gaza saw the second hostage swap as Hamas freed four female Israeli soldiers in exchange for 200 Palestinian prisoners, a part of a six-week ceasefire starting.

Serbian PM Vucevic announces resignation after months of mass protests

Belgrade, Feb 3 (IANS) : Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic announced his resignation on Monday at a press conference at the government building in Belgrade, citing "elevated tensions" sparked by a collapse at Novi Sad railway station in November last year. Vucevic, along with other current ministers, will continue leading the government in technical mandate until the election of a new government, Xinhua news agency reported. Serbia's PM resigned after weeks of massive anti-corruption protests sparked by the deadly collapse of a concrete canopy in Novi Sad last November. The canopy collapse, which killed 15 people in the northern city of Novi Sad, has become a flashpoint reflecting wider discontent with the increasingly autocratic rule of Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic. The incident intensified long-held anger over corruption and the lack of oversight in construction projects, amplifying criticism of Vucic's government, which has faced accusations of undermining democratic freedoms while pursuing European Union membership for Serbia.



Former Senate Foreign Relations Committee head sentenced to 11 years in international bribery case

New York, Feb 3 (IANS) : Former Senator Bob Menendez, who wielded considerable power as the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has been sentenced to 11 years in a bribery case that put a spotlight on international attempts to influence US policy. "You stood at the apex of our political system" but "lost your way and working for the public good became working for your good", Federal Judge Sidney Stein said here on Wednesday imposing the sentence on a tearful 71-year-old Menendez.

SA20 : MI Cape Town crush Pretoria Capitals to close out a perfect record at Newlands

Cape Town, Feb 3 (IANS): MI Cape Town underlined their status as the SA20 table-toppers for season 3 with a comprehensive bonus-point victory over the Pretoria Capitals to close out a perfect record at Newlands. Robin Peterson's team followed in the Paarl Royals footsteps by becoming the second team to preserve an unbeaten home record with five victories at the foot of Table Mountain. MI Cape Town finished on 35 points - a record points tally after the league phase - due to their 95-run victory over the Capitals. Despite making six changes to their line-up.



WPL: Chinelle Henry replaces injured Healy in UPW; RCB pick Graham, Garth for Devine & Cross

Mumbai, Feb 3 (IANS) : UP Warriorz (UPW) have announced West Indies' Chinelle Henry as a replacement for injured Aussie Alyssa Healy for the upcoming edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2025, starting from February 14. Healy, who has captained UP Warriorz in each of the first two editions of the WPL, was ruled out of the third season of the tournament due to a foot injury. "Henry, who represents West Indies, has so far played 62 T20Is and has 473 runs and 22 wickets against her name in T20Is. She joins UPW for Rs 30 lakh," the WPL statement read. Meanwhile, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), picked Heather Graham and Kim Garth as replacements for Sophie Devine and Kate Cross, respectively. Devine and Cross both will not feature in the WPL 2025 due to personal reasons. Graham, the Australian all-rounder, has played 5 T20Is and has 8 wickets to her name from the same.

Australia is on a journey of becoming a great team, that's our end goal: Lyon

Galle, Feb 3 (IANS) : Veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon believes the current Test team is still on their way to achieving greatness in the longer format, something which he said is their end goal. Australia began their tour of Sri Lanka with a thumping win - coming by an innings and 242 runs in the series opener at Galle, which arrived just after they reclaimed the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a 3-1 triumph over India.



West Ham Utd recall James Ward-Prowse Nottingham Forest loan spell

London, Feb 3 (IANS) : West Ham United have recalled James Ward-Prowse, who has spent the first half of the 2024/25 season on loan at Nottingham Forest. The Hammers confirmed that a mutual agreement was reached between the two clubs and the player, who made ten appearances during his spell at the City Ground.



Golf: McIlroy clinches Pebble Beach Pro-Am title for 27th PGA Tour win

Pebble Beach (California, US), Feb 3 (IANS) : Rory McIlroy powered his way past a pack of contenders and closed with a 6-under 66 for a two-shot victory in the Pebble Beach Pro-Am. This was the 27th victory of McIlroy's PGA Tour career and the second in his past three worldwide starts. This victory gave McIlroy an encouraging start to 2025 after a year that was defined by heartbreak. McIlroy won four times worldwide in 2024, and capped the year by winning his sixth Race to Dubai, but he also finished second four times, often in heartbreaking fashion. McIlroy took the top spot for good with an 18-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole into a stiff breeze along the Pacific. He effectively ended the drama with a towering drive and a 7-iron into the 571-yard 14th hole, setting up an eagle putt from just outside 25 feet, PGA Tour reports. It's a really cool way to start the season," said McIlroy, who won for the second time in California. "To get this win this early means a great deal, and hopefully I'll keep the momentum going into Torrey Pines in a couple weeks' time."

BAI to hold preparatory camp for Badminton Asia Mixed Team C'ships in Guwahati from Feb 4-8

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : The five-day preparatory camp for the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships will be held at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati from February 4 to 8, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) said on Monday. Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships to be played in Qingdao, China from February 11-16. The Indian team will be leaving for China on the night of February 8. Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and Paris Olympics semi-finalist Lakshya Sen would be leading a 14-member Indian team, which had won the bronze medal in the last edition in 2023. Apart from Sindhu and Sen, the team also boasts of the likes of Asian Games gold medallists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty along with Olympian HS Prannoy, and others.



Mumbai Open: Maaya Rajeshwaran, 15, secures spot in main draw

Mumbai, Feb 3 (IANS) : The 15-year-old Maaya Rajeshwaran scripted another sensational win at the Mumbai Open WTA 125 Series at the Cricket Club of India here on Monday. She prevailed over Jessica Failla, winning 7-6, 1-6, 6-4 in a nail-biting encounter to seal her place in the main draw. Maaya Rajeshwaran registered her second win of the tournament, having defeated World No. 265 Nicole Fossa Huergo in the previous round. She will now be part of the main draw and will be up against Yuriko Lily Miyazaki of Great Britain. The young tennis star has been part of the Rafael Nadal Academy in Spain, while competing in ITF Juniors tournaments around the world. After confirming her participation in the main draw, Maaya reflected on her performance and reiterated her goals.



ILT20 Season 3: Wasim Akram throws his weight behind Desert Vipers to dominate playoffs

Dubai, Feb 3 (IANS) : With the battlelines drawn for the ILT20 Season 3 finale, Pakistan bowling legend and former captain Wasim Akram put his weight behind the Desert Vipers to outshine their opponents to go all the way to the title. While the Vipers were the first team to book a berth in the play-offs in this season with their dominating show with the bat and the ball, defending champions MI Emirates finished second in the points table to qualify. Sharjah Warriorz and Dubai Capitals became the third and fourth teams respectively to sneak into the play-offs after their commanding victories on Super Sunday clashes held in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

F1: Adrian Newey questions Red Bull's approach as RB20 struggled in 2024 season

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) : Formula 1's legendary designer Adrian Newey has raised concerns about Red Bull Racing's struggles with the RB20 as the 2024 season progressed, suggesting that a lack of experience within the team may have contributed to their inability to resolve key driveability issues.



Champions Trophy 2025: Tickets for India vs Pakistan clash sold off in an hour

Dubai, Feb 3 (IANS) : Tickets for the highly-anticipated clash between archrivals India and Pakistan in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Dubai were snapped up within minutes of going on sale on Monday. The rush was so intense that over 1,50,000 eager fans queued online, causing waiting times to

exceed an hour. The much-awaited India vs Pakistan match will take place at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on February 23. It is a group-stage match of the 2025 Champions Trophy, which will be held on a hybrid model in Pakistan and UAE. Residents and cricket enthusiasts alike were taken aback by the overwhelming demand for tickets for the marquee clash. Sudhashree, a Dubai resident, expressed her astonishment, saying, "I anticipated a long queue, but the speed at which tickets vanished was shocking. By the time I secured my place, only two categories remained."