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4 PAGES RS. 2/-



Parliament should act as agent of social change: Meira Kumar 2



CPI to adopt neutral stand in TN bypoll 3



Asin gets adventurous - goes paragliding! 4



Chris Gayle left out of Windies squad for Oz series, board to meet Jamaica PM 4

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RH: 90% RAINFALL: NIL
SUNSET TODAY 6.06 PM
SUNRISE : TOMORROW 6.36
MOONRISE : TODAY 7.06 AM
MOONSET : TOMORROW 7.06 PM

Karunanidhi's PSOs come under DVAC scanner

CHENNAI: Sleuths of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) today conducted raids at the residences of three Personal Security Officers (PSOs) of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M Karunanidhi in the city.

Police sources said the raids, which began around 0900 hrs, were in connection with the alleged allocation of government Housing Board flats/plots to them under the Government's discretionary quota during the previous DMK regime.

Initial reports said the raids were being simultaneously held at the residences of three PSOs of Mr Karunanidhi.

It may be recalled that the residences and office premises of former DMK Ministers, MPs and present and former MLAs and DMK functionaries were raided by the DVAC on charges of amassing wealth and also were arrested on land grabbing charges ever since the AIADMK came to power in June last year.

American special forces stationed in India



WASHINGTON: US Special Forces teams are currently stationed in five South Asian countries including India as part of the counter-terrorism co-operation with these nations, a top Pentagon commander has disclosed.

These teams have been deployed by US Pacific Command as part of its effort to enhance their counter-terrorism capabilities, in particular in the maritime domain, Admiral Robert Willard, the PACOM Commander said yesterday.

"We have currently special forces assist teams - Pacific assist teams is the term - laid down in Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, as well as India," Willard told lawmakers at a Congressional hearing in response to a question on co-operation with India on counter-terrorism issues. "We are working very closely with India with regard to their counter-terrorism capabilities and in particular on the maritime domain but also government

to government, not necessarily DOD (Department of Defence) but other agencies assisting them in terms of their internal counter-terror and counterinsurgency challenges," Willard said.

Willard said, Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is a very dangerous organisation. It not only has very good operational security, but also a lot of international design in terms of their aspirations.

"So it is a very important threat, and we're working very closely with the nations in the region to help contain it," he said. The PACOM Commander was responding to a question from Congressman Joe Wilson as to what effort is being made to counter threat from LeT. In his prepared statement, Willard told lawmakers that

the US and India are working together on contain LeT.

"Responsible for many attacks in India, including the horrific attacks into Mumbai, LeT is headquartered in Pakistan, affiliated with al-Qaeda and other VEOs, and contributes to terrorist operations in Afghanistan and aspires to operate against Asia, Europe and North America," Willard said.

He said Pacific Command's Indian Engagement Initiative that resourced and hosted Mumbai counter terrorist specialists for training exercises and exchanges throughout the US, together with capacity-building activities with South Asian partners are mainly focused on containing LeT and contributing to CT self-sufficiency of the sub-region's militaries.

Govt to study ONGC auction before lining up more companies

NEW DELHI: With the ONGC disinvestment barely scraping through, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Friday said the government has decided to study the auction process before going ahead with stake sale of other companies.

"This (ONGC auction) is the first case. We shall have to analyse and then make assessment," Mukherjee told reporters here.

The share sale of ONGC scraped through with largest insurer LIC coming to the rescue at the last moment. Mukherjee had yesterday said that the stake sale was subscribed 98.3 percent yielding government Rs 12,733 crore. Against an offer of 42.77



crore shares, the final demand was for 42.04 crore shares. Out of this LIC has reportedly purchased 41 crore shares.

The government has already asked Sebi to investigate the technical glitches that led to confusion about the subscription of ONGC share auction.

On account of the rush towards the close of the bidding process, the stock exchanges failed to upload the

subscription amount leading to confusion about the total quantum of bids.

The government late night clarified that the auction has been successful and they have been able to raise the targeted amount.

With the ONGC disinvestment going through the government has raised Rs 13,878 crore through stake sale in PSUs in the current fiscal. The government had set a target of mopping up Rs 40,000 crore from disinvestment in the current fiscal.

The government is still toying with the idea of raising money through buy-back under which the cash rich blue chip PSUs will be asked to buy government's stake.

Tourism to launch 10 special tour packages: Gokula Indra

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation Limited will soon launch 10 special tour packages in an attempt to give tourists visiting Tamil Nadu a chance to experience religious architecture and soak them in divine fervour in Hindu religious sites in the state.

Carrying forward the idea of launching a one-day tour to all important temples in the state as announced by Tamil Nadu Tourism Minister Gokula Indra in the state Assembly last year, TTDC



has come up with 10 special packages that includes visits to notable religious sites in the state.

The packages include a tour to nine Nagarathar

temples in Sivaganga district -Illaiyathangudi, Illupaikudi,Iranikoil, Mathur, Nemam, Pillaiyarpatti, Soorakudi, Vairavankovil, and Velangudi temples near Karaikudi.

Another tour includes visit to Divya Desam temples in Kancheepuram and Thiruvallur districts and a tour to Thirukkadaiyur temple in Nagapattinam district. TTDC also has tours to Yelagiri Hills and Kolli Hills for those interested in hiking and trekking.

Another interesting pack-

age in the bouquet of tours is exclusively organised around places that held importance during the nation's freedom struggle.

Named 'Freedom Fighters' Circuit Tour,' it takes tourists around places associated with the freedom struggle and memorials and birthplaces of freedom fighters from the state.

These packages will be launched this month, going by the government order passed on February 29 in this regard, TTDC sources said.

India has great capabilities, partnership is "worth exploring": NATO

WASHINGTON: A top Pentagon Commander has told US lawmakers that the possibilities of NATO partnership with India and Brazil are "worth exploring", as the two nations have great capabilities.

"Just to really push a little further out there, two nations that I think are worth exploring possibilities with are India and Brazil. They both have great capability. They could operate with us, for example, in the piracy mission should they choose to do so," said Admiral James Stavridis, Commander of US European Command (EUCOM), and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

This is for the first time possibly that a top Pentagon commander is making such a statement on partnership between NATO and India. The Pentagon official was quick to inform lawmakers that this idea of his could be a little bit far-fetched.

Stavridis, who was responding to a question from Congressman Loretta Sanchez at a Congressional hearing yesterday, said that exploring the possibilities of NATO building partnership with India was last on his list of four priorities of NATO's expansion and partnership with other countries.

"I would look first and foremost at building on the coalition in Afghanistan.

Twenty-eight NATO nations, but we have 22 other nations who are partnering with NATO in Afghanistan. This is many Pacific nations, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga. So I think that that coalition base gives us one set of potential partners looking forward," he said.

"Secondly, we have two organisations that reach beyond NATO. Today, the Mediterranean dialogue, we're in the process of talking, for example, with Libya. Already many of the other nations in General Ham's region are part of this. The nations around the Mediterranean are natural NATO partners," he said.

The commander said that

the partnership with Istanbul Cooperative Initiative, consisting of the Gulf states, had helped US in anti-piracy operations. Stavridis said during the upcoming NATO Summit in Chicago, the leaders would review its policies and will present the alliance's path forward in total on nuclear weapons.

"In terms of NATO continuing to finance the infrastructure and what are the costs, the costs are relatively significant in protecting these weapons; and thus, we have to, as an alliance, make decisions about whether we want to maintain them or not," he said, adding that the decision on the issue would be taken soon.

UN Security Council calls on Syria to allow humanitarian access



NEW YORK: UN Security Council has called on the Syrian authorities to allow "immediate, full and unimpeded" humanitarian access.

The Security Council called upon the Syrian authorities to "allow immediate, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations in need of assistance, in ac-

cordance with international law and guiding principles of humanitarian assistance," Xinhua reported a UNSC statement as saying on Thursday.

The press statement was read out by British Ambassador to the UN Mark Lyall Grant, whose country holds this month's Security Council presidency.

According to the statement, the 15-member council expressed its "deep disappointment" on Valerie Amos, United Nations' under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, not being granted authorisation to visit Syria. It called upon the Syrian authorities to grant her "immediate and unhindered access," the statement added. The council also called upon all parties in Syria, in particular the Syrian authorities, to cooperate fully with the UN and relevant humanitarian organisations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and allow evacuation of the wounded from affected areas.

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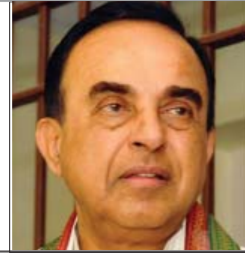
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India should be divided into 50 smaller states

India should be divided into 50 smaller states and the process should begin with the formation of Telangana, the Centre must declare Telangana immediately. 'If all the details provided, I will file a petition in High Court in the state on the fraud committed by the Centre on the issue of Telangana.'

- Janata Party President Dr Subramanyam

Pondy Varsity to have conference auditorium in 12th plan period

PUDUCHERRY: The Pondicherry University will have an international conference auditorium in the 12th five year plan period, Vice-Chancellor J A K Tareen said here on Thursday.

Speaking at the inaugural function of the 48th annual conference of the Indian Econometric Society, Tareen said the auditorium which could accommodate 3,000 people would be constructed at a cost of Rs 50 crore.

Stating that 'critical mass' was key for finding talent, he said the university would be targeting to have 12,000 post graduate students in the campus during the 12th five year plan period.

He said ultimately the university, which had been awarded 'A' grade by Union Grant Commission's National Accreditation panel, would be targeting to have 20,000 students in the campus.

Tareen said the University had the largest women faculty, nearly 27 per cent, compared to other universities in the country and Pondicherry University was 100 per cent disabled-friendly and would soon open a special floor in the new library under construction for the visually impaired students.

Rupee improves by 6 paise at 49.16 against US Dollar

MUMBAI: The Rupee moved up in the opening session today by six paise to 49.16 against the US Dollar on increased foreign capital inflows, dealers at the Interbank Foreign Exchange said.

The domestic unit registered intra day high and low at 49.17 and 49.13 per US Dollar respectively with a minor fluctuation. Yesterday, it had slipped by 21 paise to 49.22 against the US Dollar.

Parliament should act as agent of social change: Meira Kumar

VIJAYAWADA: Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar said that Parliament should act an 'agent of social change' and ensure social equality and economic emancipation.

After unveiling the bronze statue of her father and former Deputy Prime Minister Jagjeevan Ram at Gandhi Nagar here, she said, "The first and foremost function of Parliament, in my view, is that it should ensure social justice, social equality, economic emancipation and keep a vigilant eye on what government is doing." She said she is always partial towards Dalits, downtrod-

den and women in the Lok Sabha adding that she gives sufficient time to discuss the issue of social justice, equality and economic emancipation.

Referring to the struggle for independence, Ms Kumar said the freedom struggle was carried out not only for political freedom but also for social and economic equality. The Lok Sabha Speaker highlighted that Parliament represents 120 crore people and enacts laws and ensures its implementation.

Lauding the development in Andhra Pradesh, she said



that whenever foreign delegates visit India, after seeing Parliament, they wish to visit Hyderabad to witness its development in IT and other sectors.

Need for wise use of bio-diversity for development: Chidambaram

TIRUPATI: Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India, R Chidambaram, has given a clarion call to the scientists to look into new areas of technology which are eco-friendly by wisely using the conservation techniques of bio-diversity for sustainable growth and development of the country.

Addressing the three-day International Consultation on 'Eco-friendly Technology and Sustainable Science, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development, Sources of Water' organised by Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)'s Sri Venkateswara Vedic University here yesterday, Dr R Chidambaram, who is also the Chairman of



National Knowledge Network, said 'India's infrastructure was growing very rapidly ahead of other countries.'

'We should come out with more and more proven technologies to march ahead in the world of scientific experimentation,' he said.

'To attain sustainable growth with bio-diversity conservation, there was an urgent need to bring aware-

ness among the public', Dr Chidambaram opined. In his presidential address, TTD Executive Officer LV Subramanyam said the scientists should think of new avenues of inventions in the conservation of bio-diversity by taking out the essence hidden in Vedas.

India was a treasure house of both vedic and scientific knowledge and there is a need to balance science and vedas to invent new technology which is useful for the sustenance of human race, he maintained.

Vice-Chancellor of University of Colombo (Sri Lanka) Dr Kshanka Hirumbiregam said, 'India was far ahead of Sri Lanka in the conservation techniques of

She recalled that noble laureate Md.Yusaf of Bangladesh, in his address, praised Andhra Pradesh for successful implementation of 'micro finance' under Indra Kranthi Patham scheme. Housing Minister Kanna Lakshmi Narayana, MP Lagadapati Rajgopal, Legislative Council Chairman Chakrapani and a host of MLAs also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, Ms Kumar, along with her husband Manju Kumar, garlanded the statue of Jagjeevan Ram at Gundala and interacted with a group of women.

Launch of Chandrayaan-II likely to be delayed: ex-ISRO chief

PUNE: The launch dates of 'Chandrayaan-II' may be postponed further, according to Suresh Naik, former group director of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Mr Naik was speaking at a lecture on 'Chandrayaan and its Journey', organised by Pinnacle Concept Learning Centre, here last evening. 'Chandrayaan-II' which was scheduled for a launch in 2013 has been postponed to an early 2014

launch. Depending on the pace of work, there are possibilities of rescheduling the launch date, he said.

'Chandrayaan-II' with two rovers will have a smooth landing, Mr Naik said. A remote sensor attached to 'Chandrayaan-I' had aided the discovery of the presence of water on the surface of the moon. 'Chandrayaan-II' will bring back samples of rocks for examination.

'The project needs to be approved by the government once we are able to prove presence of water on the moon,' he added. Asked about the controversy surrounding ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair, he stated, 'We support promotion only on merit and talent. There was a minor procedural lapse in the reports and it is up to the government to analyse it. Once Chandrayaan-II is launched, people will forget about the accusations.'

Trichy Division earnings to cross Rs 581.48 cr by March

TIRUCHIRAPALLI: Earnings of Tiruchirappalli Division of Southern Railway, which achieved loading target of 8.51 million tonnes by January, is likely to cross Rs 581.48 crore during the current financial year ending March 31.

"The earnings of the division has reached Rs 490.94 crore in January 2012 itself and is all set to surpass its target of 581.48 crore by the end of the current financial year," said Mr Gopinath, public relations officer of the division.

He said the division has achieved its loading target of 8.51 million tonnes (set for the period April 2011-March 2012) on February 27 itself, well in advance by a month. Commodity wise, the division has carried 4.85 million tonnes (mt) of coal, 1.75 mt of cement, 1.1 mt of food

grains, 0.65 mt of fertilisers and 0.16 mt of other commodities. "An all-round improvement achieved in loading of coal and cement has helped the division surpass its target loading a month in advance," Gopinath said in a press release issued here today.

The division has also maintained normalcy in food grain loading in the current year, he added. During 2010-2011, the division re-

corded 7.83 mt of loading, surpassing the division's target of 7 mt.

Based on its performance in the current year ending January 2012, the division is moving ahead by 9 per cent over its current freight loading target, registering an increase of 27 per cent in comparison with the corresponding period of the previous year, he added. He said the division is moving head in scrap disposal too.



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| 0600 | PON VILAIYUM BHOOMI |
| 0630 | AALAYA DARISANAM |
| 0700 | BHAKTHI MAALAI |
| 0715 | KAALAI THENDRAL Breakfast Show-Yoga / Meditation |
| 0730 | NAM VIRUNDHINAR |
| 0800 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 0815 | BHAKTHI MAALAI |
| 0830 | Nirmala-Prog. rom DD archives |
| 0900 | NAADHA SANGAMAM - South Zone Hook Up Programme |
| 1000 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 1005 | TELE-SHOPPING- Sponsored Programme |
| 1030 | ENDRUM INIMAI |
| 1100 | Programme from DDK, Coimbatore |
| 1130 | PROGRAMME FROM DOORDARSHAN MADURAI |
| 1200 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 1205 | Pudhu Punal |
| 1300 | NALANDHAANAA - Health Pro.(Pro.from DDK, Puducherry) |
| 1330 | A to Z - Sponsored Programme |
| 1400 | GTM TELE-SHOPPING- Sponsored Programme |
| 1430 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 1440 | SIRIPPU VEDIGAL |
| DD - 1 & PODHIGAI | |
| 1500 | KURALIN KURAL |
| 1510 | FEATURE FILM IN TAMIL |
| 1700 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 1705 | FEATURE FILM CONTINUED |
| 1730 | SUTHTHAMUM SOOZHALUM- Pro. on Pollution Control |
| 1800 | Padippin Ulagam Palgalai kzhagam-University Prog. |
| 1830 | Oru pudhiya Udhayam: Rural Development prog. |
| 1900 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 1905 | NAM VIRUNDHINAR |
| 1930 | Podhigaiyil Pudhiya Raagangal |
| 2015 | SEIDHIGAL |
| 2045 | SIRIPPU VEDIGAL |
| 2100 | NEEDITHTHA VAAZHVIKKU THEV AIKKETRA NUGARVU-Spon:Pro |
| 2105 | AVAL EN RASIGAI - Episode: 8 |
| 2130 | SUTTRULA VAANGA - Sponsored Programme |
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| US DOLLAR | 45.85 | 51.95 |
| STERLING POUND | 73.10 | 82.75 |
| EURO | 61.05 | 69.10 |
| AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR | 50.15 | 55.90 |
| BAHRAIN DINAR | 121.50 | 138.65 |
| CANADIAN DOLLAR | 45.85 | 52.65 |
| DANISH KRONER | 8.00 | 9.40 |
| EGYPTIAN POUND | 5.90 | 8.50 |
| HONGKONG DOLLAR | 5.70 | 6.85 |
| JAPANESE YEN / 100 | 56.10 | 63.80 |
| JORDAN DINAR | 61.35 | 71.90 |
| KUWAIT DINAR | 146.45 | 182.00 |
| MALAYSIAN RINGGIT | 14.60 | 18.00 |
| NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR | 37.45 | 44.00 |
| NORWEGIAN KRONER | 7.95 | 9.40 |
| OMANI RIAL | 119.00 | 135.80 |
| QATAR RIAL | 12.50 | 14.40 |
| SAUDI RIAL | 12.15 | 14.15 |
| SINGAPORE DOLLAR | 35.95 | 42.50 |
| SOUTH AFRICAN RAND | 5.70 | 7.10 |
| SWEDISH KRONER | 6.65 | 7.90 |
| SWISS FRANC | 50.30 | 57.80 |
| SYRIAN POUND | 0.35 | 0.90 |
| THAI BAHT / 100 | 148.05 | 175.40 |
| UAE DIRHAM | 12.40 | 14.25 |
| CHINESE YUAN | 5.50 | 9.00 |

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Freedom of the press has been completely curtailed
"Nitish Kumar, who himself claims to be the product of the emergency movement of 1974 has enforced emergency in Bihar where freedom of the press has been completely curtailed," instead of taking corrective measures for restoring freedom of the press, the state government, including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, launched a frontal attack on Justice Katju. "This kind of attack on a constitutional authority is actually an attack on democracy."
- Lok Janshakti Party president Ram Vilas Paswan

Sankarankovil bypoll: Nominations of 20 candidates rejected

CHENNAI: The nominations of 20 candidates for the March 18 by-election to Sankarankovil Assembly constituency were rejected on scrutiny here on Thursday.

In a press release here, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Praveen Kumar said of the 33 nominations filed for the seat, 20 were rejected during scrutiny.

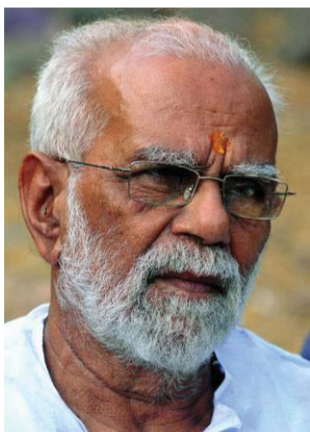
The nominations of 13 candidates were found in order for the bypoll which was set to witness a multi-cornered contest with the ruling AIADMK, DMK, DMDK, MDMK and BJP in the fray.

IJK activists hold fast

TIRUCHIRAPALLI: The activists of Tiruchirapalli district unit of the India Jananayaka Katchi led by their district President D K S Bharathi observed a day's fast at suburb Coleroon toll-gate here today protesting against the continuous power cut.

Among others including Parkavakula Munnetra Sangam's State General secretary R Sathyathan, Zonal secretary of the Pari Narpani mandram Dr Parkavan Pachamuthu and others spoke on the occasion and they urged the Central and Tamil Nadu Governments to commission the Koodangulam nuclear power plant immediately.

Tearful adieu to Narayana Panicker



CHANGANACHERRY: Changanacherry bid tearful adieu to Nair Service Society (NSS) leader P K Narayana Panicker who led the Nair Community for three decades.

Peoples from different walks of life irrespective of political and religious affiliations paid their tribute to Narayana Panicker when his body was kept for public homage at the NSS headquarters on Thursday.

From the NSS headquarters his mortal remains were taken to his house at 1500 hrs and the funeral was held there with official respect at 1715 hrs.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Union Minister K C Venugopal, Leader of the Opposition V S Achuthanandan, State Revenue Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Finance Minister K M Mani, Minister K C Joseph, KPCC President Ramesh Chennithala, LDF convener Vaikom Viswan, ministers, actor Suresh Gopy, MPs, MLAs, Bishops, Political, Social and Religious leaders paid their tributes to the departed leader.

His eldest son Sathesh Kumar lit the pyre.

CPI to adopt neutral stand in TN bypoll

TIRUCHIRAPALLI: The Tamil Nadu unit of the Communist party of India (CPI) has decided to adopt neutral stand in the March 18 bypoll to the Sankarankovil assembly constituency, party's State Secretary T Pandiyan said.

Addressing a press conference here, soon after the party's state council meeting, Pandiyan said that a resolution to this effect was adopted at the meeting. He said the meeting took account of the present political situation of the state and other political parameters and decided to be neutral in the by-election.



He welcomed Chief Minister J Jayalitha and DMK President M Karunanidhi's stand on the Sri Lankan war crimes issue and also urged

the Prime Minister to back resolution seeking at the U N Rights council seeking probe into war crimes against Sri Lanka.

There should be an international inquiry over the war crimes of Sri Lanka against the Sri Lankan Tamils and to step up pressure on this, the party is going to observe a state-wide fasting agitation in all the district headquarters on March 6 and called up on the political parties of Tamil Nadu to support the CPI's efforts on this.

Expressing his deep concern over the present power position of the state he appealed to Ms Jayalitha to

approach the Centre to get adhoc additional allotment of power from central pool and to tide over the power shortage to some extent.

Referring to the Koodankulam nuclear power plant, he said the party is for early commissioning of the plant, provided the authorities concerned fulfill the local people's demand that job opportunities should be given them in the proposed nuclear power plant.

He urged the union government to withdraw its move to evolve a national water policy as it would affect the interest of the common people.

Collected 25 lakh, spent Rs 17 lakh for anti KKNPP protest

CHENNAI: Activists protesting against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant on Thursday said their People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) has collected over Rs 25 Lakh locally to fuel their agitation and denied receiving any foreign funds.

"Between August 14 last year and February 28, we have collected Rs 25,17,991 and spent Rs 17,64,238," Stanly, one of their 30-member finance committee of PMANE, said to sources. Denying any foreign funds in the protests, he said, "We have used only this money collected from locals, fishermen and beedi rolling women."

Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram had stated in Delhi yesterday that cases have been filed against four NGOs after it was found prima facie that they were involved in diversion of foreign funds from the purpose for which they were received. He said the CBI has been asked to register cases against four of the two NGOs while the other two have been left to Tamil Nadu Police.

Stanly said every households in the area donated Rs 200 each, while fishermen in that vicinity donated 10 per cent of the total earnings from their catch. Meanwhile, the protests against the controversial Indo-Rus-



sian nuclear project will enter the 200th day tomorrow.

"Our people are relying only on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister... We are returning with high hopes," S P Udayakumar, spearheading the protests had said after

meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalitha yesterday. Jayalitha is yet to take a decision on the issue after the four-member state committee submitted its report on February 28.

Lawyer's assault media, Cameraman injured

BANGALORE: A cameraman of private television news channel was injured in front of the city civil court here when lawyers attacked media persons who had gathered to cover the production of mining baron Gali Janardhana Reddy here today. Cameraman Nagesh sustained head injury when lawyers allegedly threw stones at the media men. He was rushed to the hospital.

Lawyers were protesting against the private channels covering the event. Reddy was to be produced before the CBI Special Court Judge B V Angadi. Lawyers initially indulged in a wordy duel with media men and started pelting stones.

In protest against the attack by the lawyers, the media persons present there staged a dharna in front of the court premises. It was alleged that

despite more than 500 police personnel present to provide security cover no action was taken to pacify the lawyers who were attacking the media persons.

Press Club of Bangalore President M A Ponnappa, strongly condemning the incident, urged the police to take suitable action against those involved in violence.

An inquiry should be conducted and whoever had in-

dulged in the attack against media men should be brought to the book, he said, adding the incident would be reported to the Press Council of India (PCI).

Bangalore Reporters Guild President Prabhakar, strongly condemning the attack by the lawyers, urged the government to take immediate action against those who indulged in curbing the rights of the Press.

Criminal case against marines in Italy

KOCHI: In a bid to persuade India to hand over its two arrested marines charged with murder for killing two fishermen, Italy told the Kerala High Court on Thursday it has initiated criminal proceedings against them under its law that could lead to a prison term of not less than 21 years.

The police custody of the two Italian marines Latore Massimiliano and Salvatore Gironi was meanwhile extended till March 5 by a Kollam court. During the proceedings in the High Court, Justice PS Gopinathan ticked off the Italian government, pointing out "serious defects" in its plea seeking quashing of FIR

as per Article 575 of Italian Penal code whoever causes death of a person was punishable with a prison term of not less than 21 years was filed in the High Court by counsel for Italian government and the two marines. The case has led to a diplomatic stand-off between India and Italy.

The judge directed the Consul General to produce necessary documentary evidence to show that the Consulate has the authorisation to represent Italian government in legal proceedings relating to the killing of the fishermen by the marines on board the cargo ship Enrica Lexie off the Kerala coast last month.

against the two marines and sternly told them it will look into the petition only after these are "cured".

Italian government should not have an impression that the Indian Judiciary was so loose that anyone could file a plea before courts, he said in the open court.

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The judge even expressed

doubt whether the signature of one of the accused affixed in the affidavit produced before the court was genuine. Even though senior counsel for the petitioners repeatedly requested the court to look into the documents, the court refused and directed the petitioners to "cure" the defects. Only after "curing" the defects, the documents would be looked into, the judge held. India maintains that since the incident took place within its waters, the marines must face a trial as per Indian law. Italy has said that as members of the Navy, the marines are entitled to immunity abroad and should be tried in their home country.

Baba Ramdev a businessman in saffron clothes: Congress

NEW DELHI: Congress on Thursday hit out at yoga guru Ramdev, who has announced his entry into the fast moving consumer goods and herbal retail markets with his 'swadeshi' line of products, saying the move called for introspection if one should do business or politics in saffron clothes.

"While we should not comment on anybody's personal business, it does call for introspection whether one should be doing business or politics in saffron clothes," party spokesperson Manish Tewari told reporters while reacting to questions on Ramdev's announcement.

Flanked by close aide Balkrishna in New Delhi, the yoga guru disclosed his plans to sell his brand Patanjali's products in the open market from over one lakh 'swadeshi kendras' which he planned to set up across the country by April this year.

"There are people who will see only business in this venture, but I consider this my rashtira dharm (national duty) "Yoga, Ayurveda and swadeshi are not a profession but a mission for us," Ramdev said.

In response to a question that Congress General Secretary Digvijay Singh had

called him a 'maha thug' (super cheat), Ramdev said he was someone who could set cheats right.

Ramdev said there were people who could say all kinds of things even against great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others whom he considered his ideals.

Kanan meets Lt Governor, demands action against N R Govt

PUDUCHERRY: Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha Member P Kannaan on Thursday called on Lt Governor Iqbal Singh and submitted a memorandum seeking action against the N R Congress government here on law and order issue.

Later, Mr Kannaan told reporters outside the Rajinivas that he urged the Lt Governor to implement the Goondas Act, take steps to generate employment op-



portunities for the youth and provide immediate relief to Thane cyclone victims. He said there was no let up in the crimes here and law and order situation continued to

remain deteriorated.

The Congress leader had met Chief Minister N Rangasamy and urged him to implement the Goondas Act some time back and told media persons then that if Mr Rangasamy failed, he would meet the Lt Governor with the issue and later would raise the issue in Parliament, besides taking it up with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi.

Man who helped locate Italian oil tanker M V Enrica dead

ALAPPUZZHA: Xavier Justin, whose timely action helped Indian Coast Guard locate the Italian oil tanker M V Enrica Lexie, on which the Italian marines shot dead two Indian fishermen on February 15, died when an unknown merchant ship hit on his fishing boat off Alappuzha coast on Thursday.

Had he not informed the officials on time, the Coast Guard could not have located the ship and brought it to the Kochi port leading to the subsequent arrest of two marines.

Justin was the fishing boat driver, when the unknown cargo vessel hit his boat killing two people on the spot

and leaving two seriously injured and three missing.

Despite massive search jointly by the Coast guard and the Navy, the alleged vessel could not be located so far. In protest against the incident, the fishermen called for a hartal in the coastal areas.

Trinamool to oppose every anti-people policy of Centre

KOLKATTA: Keeping pressure on the Congress-led UPA, its partner the Trinamool Congress today said the party would continue to oppose 'tooth and nail' every 'anti-people' policy and bill of the Centre.

"If the Government tries to bring in any anti-people policy or bill, then the Trinamool Congress parliamentary party will oppose it tooth and nail. We have earlier also opposed the anti-people policies of the Centre," senior Trinamool Congress leader and Union

Minister of State for Health Sudip Bandopadhyay said.

"We have opposed the Lokayukta clause in the Lokpal Bill and FDI in retail. It was Trinamool which opposed price rise. We are a party which is pro-people," he said.

Ridiculing the Opposition Left Front for trying to paralyse West Bengal by participating in the Bharat bandh, called by eleven Central trade unions, Bandopadhyay said the issues on which the strike was called were earlier taken up by the Trinamool

Congress.

"I would request these trade unions to meet Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and place their demands. The demands will be placed to the central government and it will bear results."

The Trinamool Congress, the second largest ally of UPA, had earlier opposed the Centre on Teesta water sharing treaty with Bangladesh, hike in the prices of petroleum, FDI in retail trade, National Security Centre and the Lokpal Bill.

Russians voting in India for Russian Presidential elections.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: For the first time, Russian citizens settled in Kerala and tourists visiting the state will be able to cast their ballots in the Russian Presidential elections.

Polling will begin at 1000 hrs tomorrow at the Russian

Consulate here, Russia's Honorary Consul in Thiruvananthapuram Ratheesh C Nair told UNI today. "We are expecting around 50 persons to cast their ballots for the March four elections," he said, adding that 32 of them had already registered till this evening.

He said all the preparations were completed and officials from the Russian Consulates in Chennai would oversee the voting. He pointed out that polling was already held at neighbouring Koodankulam where many Russians are working on the nuclear power project there.

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I feel clean shaven men are able to sweep a woman off their feet: Chitrangada Singh

For years, women have been known to doll up for their man and now it's time for men to reciprocate by shaving and being well groomed," said the 35-year-old stunner. "I feel it is mostly clean shaven men who are able to sweep a woman off their feet with their presence and charm," she added.

Chris Gayle left out of Windies squad for Oz series, board to meet Jamaica PM



West Indies player Chris Gayle taking rest after the team practice session

Former West Indies captain Chris Gayle has been left out of their preliminary squad for the limited overs series against Australia in the Caribbean as the Jamaican's row with the regional cricket board rumbles on.

The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) plans to meet Jamaica's Prime Minister to discuss the damaging dispute which has resulted in strong criticism from fans, media and politicians in the Caribbean island over the treatment of Gayle.

The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) on Thursday

named a 30-man squad to attend fitness testing ahead of the series which begins on March 16 in St. Vincent with the first of five one-day internationals.

The squad, made up of 17 contracted players and 13 others "under consideration for selection", will train in Barbados ahead of the series.

Gayle has not played for West Indies since the 2011 World Cup following a public spat with the board.

Initially the dispute centered on Gayle's commitments to Twenty20 cricket, including

the lucrative Indian Premier League, but he was later asked to apologise for an interview in which he was critical of the board and coach Ottis Gibson.

The 17 contracted players are: Adrian Barath, Carlton Baugh, Devendra Bishoo, Kraigg Brathwaite, Darren Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Fidel Edwards, Kirk Edwards, Shannon Gabriel, Nelon Pascal, Kieran Powell, Kemar Roach, Andre Russell, Darren Sammy, Marlon Samuels, Shane Shillingford and Devon Thomas. The 13 additional players under consideration for selection for the series are: Samuel Badree, Tino Best, Nkrumah Bonner, Dwayne Bravo, Johnson Charles, Shane Dowrich, Danza Hyatt, Garey Mathurin, Sunil Narine, Kieron Pollard, Denesh Ramdin, Krishmar Santokie and Dwayne Smith.

The WICB board of directors agreed this week that its president Julian Hunte should meet Jamaica's Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller "to discuss matters pertaining to cricket in

Jamaica and the West Indies and Chris Gayle".

Left-hander Gayle, one of the most explosive batsmen in the sport and who is particularly effective in the shorter forms of the game, was not immediately available for comment.

Seamer Ravi Rampaul, who is under contract, is missing due to illness.

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Nissan to launch cheap cars in India



Tokyo: Nissan Motor Co is all gearing up to launch cheap automobiles tailored for emerging markets under its old Datsun brand in 2014, a Japanese newspaper reported on Thursday.

The vehicles, priced around 500,000 yen, will initially be built and sold in India, Indonesia and Russia, the newspaper said. Japan's No. 2 automaker hopes to sell 300,000 Datsuns a year soon, the paper added.

Nissan has been pushing rapidly into emerging markets, including through a partnership with Ashok Leyland Ltd in India and a recently announced fac-

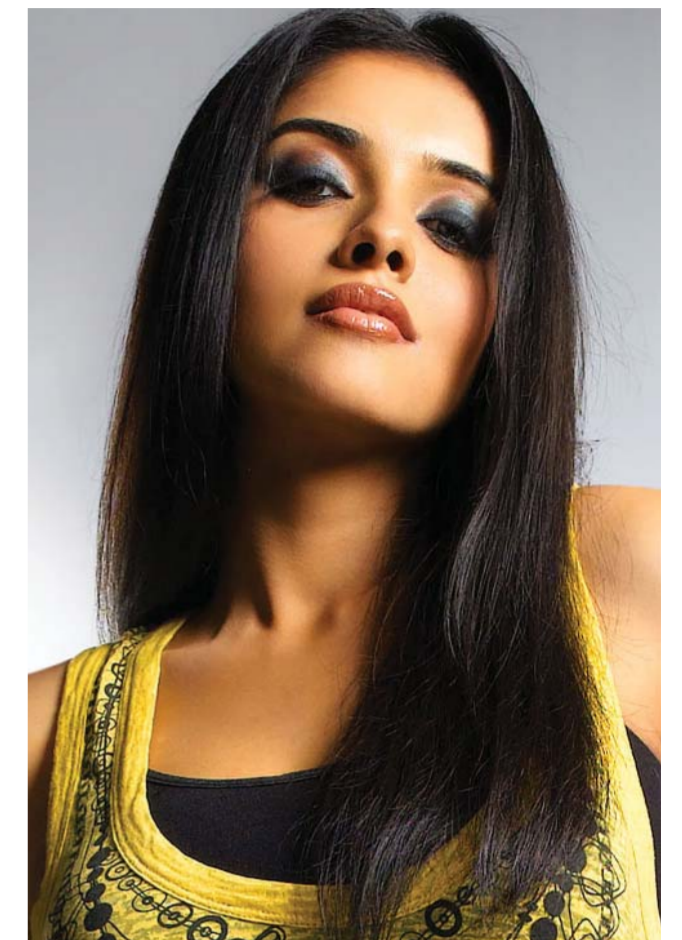
tory in Brazil, where it aims to triple its market share by 2016.

The move would also follow the reboot of other auto industry brands that were discontinued in the 1970s and 80s, such as the Dodge Dart and the Toyota 86, which will be re-released in April.

While other Japanese automakers have developed models for emerging countries, this will mark the first brand created just for those markets, the paper said.

Datsun will now make models tailored to the specific needs of each market, the paper said.

Asin gets adventurous - goes paragliding!



NEW DELHI: After getting an unexpected time off from work, Bollywood actress Asin Thottumkal planned to explore her adventurous side and went paragliding in Panchgani, where she is shooting for Rohit Shetty's 'Bol Bachchan'.

A fan of adventure sports, when Asin found out about paragliding opportunities in Panchgani, she jumped at it

as she wanted to do something exciting, said a source.

In fact, the 26-year-old hired a cycle and after her shoot went cycling on a trail to make most of her stay in the beautiful town, adds the source.

'Bol Bachchan', which also features Ajay Devgan, Abhishek Bachchan and Prachi Desai, is expected to release July 6.

Yahoo! to deliver premium digital content in Malayalam

NEWDELHI: Yahoo! India and Malayala Manorama, the leading Malayalam language daily, Thursday announced a partnership to deliver premium digital content in Malayalam.

"The co-branded property malayalam.yahoo.com offers the combined editorial strengths of Yahoo! and Malayala Manorama and provides a superior digital content experience for the large base of 37 million Malayalam speaking audience across the globe," a Yahoo statement said.

Malayalam on Yahoo! India offers local, national and

global news across genres of politics, sports, business, governance, utility and entertainment.

Easy to browse and to discover, the stories connect users to their interests. Life-style and utility information is available in the education, motoring, health, religion & spirituality and astrology sections. Select content such as Movie, Music, and Weekend features from Manorama Online will also feature on this destination.

According to a IAMA (Internet and Mobile Association of India) report, the Indian language audience is

growing at a rate of nearly 40 percent per year and the next wave of digital audience in India is expected to emerge from the non-English speaking population.

"These statistics indicate that there is a large base of internet users in India who are keen to access content in their own regional language," the statement said.

Arun Tadanki, managing director, Yahoo! India and Southeast Asia, said: "Launch of Malayalam content on Yahoo! India is yet another milestone in the execution of our language strategy, aimed at grow-

ing the overall internet user base in India."

"Our choice of partner has always been driven by our commitment to bring in premium content from a trusted brand, in this case Malayala Manorama. Together, we bring the latest from the world of news, entertainment and other local interests to a discerning audience," Tadanki added.

This latest launch the fifth in a series of language offerings from Yahoo! India that started with Hindi followed by Tamil, Marathi and Bengali.

UAE, NRI wins 'Media Guild' Academy award

CHENNAI: Ramesh Viswanathan president of UAE Tamil sangam, has been selected for the prestigious 'Media Guild' Award 2010 -11.

'Media Guild' Academy for Recognition news release announcing the award here today said Ramesh Viswanathan president of UAE Tamil sangam was selected by the academy for the prestigious award 'Media Guild' which taking into account of his contribution in helping the youths for employments in GCC countries without any expectations, creating social aware-



ness and self confidence activities among Indians live in UAE.

Nomination of Ramesh

Viswanathan submitted to academy by Ms.Gokila, Arun Kumar, Murugan Krishnamoorthy, Kamatchi Sriram and Kavitha Swaminathan.

"Media Guild" started its way back operation in 2007. It has achieved the best of satisfaction in recognition of achievers. The academy's 'Media Guild' Award which is in Chennai's first dedicated to awards and prizes disbursed to the respective awesome contribution to the area of work or activity. Such as social service, movies & theatre, science & technology, education &

everything that comes under the purview of the awards given.

"Media Guild" major aim is to create multi awareness on self confidence, self empowerment and in social services.

'Media Guild' awardees are selected in unbiased way through three committees called, referral, advisory and selection. It is purely non political & non commercial. The award carries citation and memento of pen nib.

It would be presented at a function to be held at Chennai in shortly, date and venue to be announced.

Arctic Sea: thick ice melting faster than thinner

Washington: The oldest and thickest Arctic Sea ice is melting much faster than the younger and thinner ice at the edges of the Arctic Ocean's floating ice cap, an alarming new NASA study has revealed.

The thicker ice, known as multi-year ice, survives through the cyclical summer melt season, when young ice that has formed over winter just as quickly melts again.

The rapid disappearance of older ice makes Arctic sea ice even more vulnerable to further decline in the summer, said Joey Comiso, senior scientist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, Greenbelt, who authored the study, the Journal



of Climate reported.

The new research takes a closer look at how multi-year ice, that has made it through at least two summers, has diminished with each passing winter over the last three decades, according to a university statement.

Multi-year ice "extent" --

which includes all areas of the Arctic Ocean which covers at least 15 percent of the ocean surface -- is diminishing at a rate of 15.1 percent per decade, the study found. Sea ice area is always smaller than sea ice extent, and it gives scientists the information needed to estimate the total volume of ice in the

Arctic Ocean.

Comiso found that multi-year ice area is shrinking even faster than multi-year ice extent, by 15.1 percent per decade.

"The average thickness of the Arctic sea ice cover is declining because it is rapidly losing its thick component, the multi-year ice. At the same time, the surface temperature in the Arctic is going up, which results in a shorter ice-forming season," Comiso said.

"It would take a persistent cold spell for most multi-year sea ice and other ice types to grow thick enough in the winter to survive the summer melt season and reverse the trend," Comiso concluded.

Arjun with Bengali girl



A complete family based story with social awareness outputs Tamil movie 'Prasad' started its shoot operations. Action hero Arjun and Bengali nativity girl Laskmi Battacharya is in female lead. - Mounam Ravi / Kumarsrinivas

School boy enjoys basket journey



A school boy has been transported to his school in a vegetable basket at Tambaram Chennai, the boy enjoys the journey.

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