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Suspension of 14 MPs revoked

NEW DELHI

Fourteen opposition MPs, who were suspended during the last session and their case referred to privilege committees, will return to attend Parliament's Budget session, with union Minister Pralhad Joshi saying that the Chairs in the two Houses have agreed to the government's request to this effect.

Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha committees had recommended that their suspension be withdrawn after they expressed regret for their conduct during the

Budget session from today

The Budget Session of Parliament, the last of the present Lok Sabha, begins on Wednesday with an address by President Droupadi Murmu to a joint sitting, as the government sought cooperation of parties to ensure the proceedings run smoothly. All eyes will be on the President's address and the interim budget Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presents on February 1, as they are likely to offer a glimpse into BJP's agenda for Lok Sabha polls, expected in April-May.

Winter session when their relentless protests prompted the Chairs to take action.

While a total of 146 opposition MPs, 100 in Lok Sabha

and the rest in Rajya Sabha, were suspended for bringing placards into the chambers and frequently disrupting Parliamentary proceedings,

the transgressions by these 14 were considered more serious. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Joshi told reporters on Tuesday, "Everybody's suspension will be withdrawn. We have requested the Speaker and the Chairperson on behalf of the government, and they have agreed." He, however, asserted that leaders of different parties who attended an all-party meeting ahead of the session were told that they should follow the decision that MPs should not bring any materials inside chambers. PTI

Special ritual



COLOURFUL: A 'Theyyam' artiste hoists 'Thirumudi' (Royal crown) of Muchilot Bhagavathi during the Perumkaliyattam festival at Muchilottu Bhagavathi Temple at Vengara in Kannur on Tuesday. — Photo: PTI

15 PFI workers get death for killing Kerala BJP leader

ALAPPUZHA

A Kerala court on Tuesday sentenced to death 15 persons associated with the now-banned Islamist outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) in connection with the murder of BJP OBC wing leader Ranjith Sreenivasan in this district in 2021, the special prosecutor of the case said here.

The sentence was pronounced by Mavelikkara Additional District Judge V G Sreedevi. The family of the slain leader and the BJP welcomed the judgement, with the saffron party hailing Sreenivasan as a "great martyr" who got justice today.

According to special prosecutor Prathap G Padickal, although 14 out of the total of 15 persons convicted in the case were produced before the court on Tuesday, the judge orally

BJP OBC wing leader Ranjith Sreenivasan was killed by the now banned outfit in front of his mother, infant, and wife in a most 'cruel and diabolical manner'

stated that the sentence would also apply to the convict who was not produced today. When the remaining convict, who is currently hospitalised due to an illness, is produced in court, the sentence against him will be pronounced, he said.

The court had convicted the 15 men on January 20. Reacting to the verdict, the family of Sreenivasan said they were satisfied with it. "This was an exceptionally rare case, and our loss is immense. We express our gratitude to the prosecution and investigating officers for conducting a thorough and honest investigation into the incident, ultimately re-

sulting in the imposition of the maximum punishment," Sreenivasan's wife told reporters.

The prosecution had sought the maximum sentence for the convicts, saying they were a "trained killer squad" and the cruel and diabolical manner in which the victim was killed in front of his mother, infant, and wife brings it within the ambit of the "rarest of the rarest" of crimes. Sreenivasan, the BJP OBC Morcha State secretary, was brutally attacked and killed in his home on December 19, 2021, in front of his family, by activists affiliated to PFI. PTI

BRS petitions DGP on foisting of false cases

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi on Tuesday urged Director General of Police (DGP) Ravi Gupta to stop the practice of foisting false cases against party workers and functionaries in the State. BRS leaders led by Badugula Lingaiah Yadav, MP and L Ramana, MLC met the DGP and requested him to direct police officials to take action against Congress leaders instigating attacks against BRS followers. They apprised him of the violence unleashed by the Congress targeting BRS workers and supporters at Huzurnagar, Manakondur, Bhupalpally and Kolhapur constituencies. They also informed him that BRS leader and Bhongir ZP chairman A Sandeep Reddy was attacked in the presence of Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy.

High drama as Soren returns

Meets MLAs; ED to question him today

PTI

RANCHI/NEW DELHI

Amid 'suspense' over his whereabouts and intense political drama, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Tuesday reached his official residence in Ranchi and chaired a meeting of his alliance MLAs even as a slugfest broke out between his party JMM and the BJP over the action by the ED, which is set to question him on Wednesday in a money laundering case.

A day after an ED team visited the JMM executive president's Delhi home with the intent to question him and agency officials claimed that he was "untraceable", sources close to Soren said that the 48-year-old Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader came by road from Delhi, undertaking a more than 1250 km journey.

"I reside in your hearts," he told reporters in Ranchi after paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary. He was replying to a query regarding his absence. "We all are committed to following the footsteps and ideologies of the Father of the Nation. We are proud that such people were born among us and guided us," he added.

Soren held the meeting of alliance legislators at the



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren with JMM MLAs after paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary, in Ranchi, on Tuesday. — Photo: PTI

ED grills Tejayshwi for 8 hours

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday questioned RJD leader Tejayshwi Yadav for over eight hours in connection with the agency's money laundering probe into the alleged land-for-jobs scam, officials said. Tejayshwi, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, arrived at the ED office here for questioning around 11.30 am and left the premises after 8 pm, sources said. The investigating officer of the case recorded Yadav's statement under PMLA, they said. His father and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad was questioned by the probe agency's sleuths for over nine hours on Monday in connection with the same case.

CM House to discuss the present political situation in the State. In photographs and videos shared by Soren's office on X, MLAs and Ministers were seen

greeting the Chief Minister before taking part in the meeting. Soren's wife Kalpana Soren was also present at the meeting. (SEE PAGE 2)

Conmen held in kidnapping case

CITY BUREAU

Hyderabad

It was a motley group - an advocate, a software expert, a realtor, couple of businessmen and a student, and allegedly supported by a sub-inspector of police.

Pretending to be a team of crime investigating officials, the group of conmen 'raided' a software firm in Madhapur to hold the staff there as hostage and demand a ransom of Rs.10 crore. However, their run was short-lived and trying to manage with Rs.70 lakh, some of them were caught by the police. The Raidurgam police solved the kidnap for ransom case of three directors on January 27 and arrested eight persons on Tuesday. According to the police, the arrested persons were identified as P Mahendra Kumar (advocate), Shaikh Mohammed Abdul Quadir (IT

A group comprising a techie, advocate, realtor and student backed by an SI raid a software firm to extort money

expert), P. Sandeep Kumar (student) and B.Raghu Raju, (private employee), all from Andhra Pradesh.

The others arrested were Vijay Shekhar (a realtor), A.Ranjith Kumar (private employee) and businessmen - B.Rahul and Subba Krishna, all from the city. The absconding persons include Sujana, a 2012 batch sub-inspector from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. The target of the conmen was Darshan Sugunakara Shetty, Director of AJA ADS India Private Limited which operates in US IT recruiting and IT support, with over 20 employees. (SEE PAGE 2)

Imran gets 10-year jail for leaking secrets

ISLAMABAD

Jailed former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a special court on Tuesday for leaking State secrets, in a major blow to his bid to return to power in the February 8 general elections.

The decision to sentence Khan and ex-Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was announced by special court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain during the hearing of the case held at the special court in Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi established under the stringent Official Secrets Act.

The 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician is already serving a three-year jail term after being convicted of corruption. Khan's party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has faced numerous troubles starting with denial of its poll symbol. PTI

Ensure water supply

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Israeli troops kill 3 in raid

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Rajat may get a look in for Test

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High Court stays swearing in of MLCs

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
 Hyderabad

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday stayed the notification by the Governor appointing Telangana Jana Samiti president M Kodandaram and Siasat joint editor Amer Ali Khan as MLCs under Governor quota.

A two-Judge Bench comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Anil Kumar Jukanti were dealing with writ pleas filed by Kurra Satyanarayana and

Dasoju Sravan Kumar challenging the validity of Governor's orders rejecting the previous State government's nominations. It may be recalled that the Court had directed the parties to come up with a gentleman's agreement and not pass any adverse orders. The counsel for the petitioners argued that despite the pending litigation, the Governor cleared the appointment and also that the swearing in ceremony was scheduled on February 1. (SEE PAGE 2)

Two killed in fresh violence in Manipur

IMPHAL

Two village volunteers were killed and two others injured after their camp was attacked in Manipur on Tuesday, police said. The incident happened at the camp situated near Kadangband village in Lamshang area at the border of the Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts, they said. The deceased were identified as N Michael, 33, and M Khaba, 23, they added.

Indian Navy rescues two hijacked vessels

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy rescued an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel with 19 Pakistani crew members and a Sri Lankan trawler in two swift operations after armed pirates hijacked the boats in the Arabian Sea amid deteriorating security situation arising out of Iran-backed Houthi rebels targeting various cargo ships in the region. Indian warship INS Somalia rescued fishing vessel (FV) Al Naemi

from 11 Somali pirates off the east coast of Somalia on Monday, in the second such rescue of an Iranian-flagged vessel in the troubled region, officials said. In total, the Indian Navy rescued three hijacked vessels in the Arabian Sea since January 28.

"Indian naval ship Sumitra, having thwarted the piracy attempt on FV Iman, has carried out yet another successful anti-piracy operation off the east coast of Somalia, rescuing fishing vessel Al

Naeemi and her 19 Pakistani crew from 11 Somali pirates," Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said. The warship had responded to a distress call from FV Iman on January 28 and rescued the vessel and its 17 Iranian crew members from armed pirates. In another mission on Monday, the Indian Navy along with naval forces of Sri Lanka and Seychelles, rescued a fishing vessel after it was hijacked in the sea lanes of Mogadishu. PTI



An anti-piracy operation by the Indian Navy's INS Sumitra, rescuing Fishing Vessel Al Naemi. — Photo: PTI