

Western Times

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News Brief

Shastri's grandson quits Congress

New Delhi, Feb 14 (IANS) Vibhakar Shastri, grandson of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, has resigned from the Congress in what is being viewed as yet another setback to the grand old party. He has tendered his resignation to the party's national president Mallikarjuna Kharge. "Hon'ble Congress President Shri Khargeji Respected Sir, I hereby tender my resignation from the primary membership of Indian National Congress," Shastri has posted this message on X.

Traffic restored on Srinagar-Leh highway after 12 days

Srinagar, Feb 14 (IANS) The Srinagar-Leh highway was restored for traffic on Wednesday after remaining closed for 12 days. One of the toughest mountain roads of the World, the over 400 km long road passes through the Zojila Pass that connects the cold desert Ladakh UT with J&K and the rest of the country. Since the nearly 15 km road stretch from Sonamarg to Gumri passing through snow-bound Zojila Pass remains frozen, motorists have been advised to use tyre chains during travel on this stretch for safety.

Electric department employee dies due to electrocution in J&K's Srinagar

Srinagar, Feb 14 (IANS) An employee of the power development department (PDD) died due to electrocution on Wednesday in J&K's Srinagar district. Sources said that a PDD inspector identified as Imtiaz Ahmad died due to electrocution when he was carrying out some repairs in the Pampora area of Srinagar district. "He was immediately shifted to hospital where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival," sources said, adding that police have taken cognizance of the incident. Locals have demanded an inquiry into the incident, saying that the transmission line had not been disconnected when the employee was carrying out some repairs.

ED seeks speedy trial in ex-TN minister Senthil Balaji's case

Chennai, Feb 14 (IANS) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has requested the Madras High Court to consider a speedy trial in the job-for-cash scam case against Tamil Nadu DMK leader and former minister V. Senthil Balaji. The ED in its affidavit before Justice Anand Venkatesh said that the former minister was intentionally stalling the commencement of the trial in the money laundering case. The premier investigating agency urged the court to order a speedy trial instead of accepting the plea to grant bail before the completion of the trial. The ED said in the court that it had time and again expressed its readiness for the commencement of trial but the accused was willfully delaying the process before the Principal Sessions Court in Chennai. The investigating officer, Karthik Dusari also informed the court that Senthil Balaji will not be able to complain of long pretrial incarceration when the delay was caused by his own actions.

RS polls: BJP nominates Nadda from Gujarat

Ashok Chavan from Maharashtra

New Delhi, Feb 14 (UNI) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday nominated National President Jagat Prakash Nadda from Gujarat and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, who quit Congress and joined BJP on Tuesday, from his home state for the Rajya Sabha elections.

BJP General Secretary Arun Singh announced the names of a total of seven candidates from Maharashtra and Gujarat in a statement here.

Besides Nadda from Gujarat, Govind Bhai Dholakia, Mayank Bhai Nayak, and Jaswant Singh Salam Singh Parmar have been nominated as Rajya Sabha candidates from Gujarat,

while alongside Chavan, Medha Kulkarni and Dr Ajit Gopchhade from Maharashtra.

Earlier in the day, the BJP had given Rajya Sabha tickets to Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnav and L. Murugan, thereby making it unlikely for them to contest Lok Sabha elections.

The party released a list of five candidates today for the biennial Rajya Sabha elections from Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, including the names of these two Union Ministers.

The BJP's Central Election Committee has approved these names, Arun Singh said.

The BJP has re-nominated L. Murugan from Madhya Pradesh, while the other three candi-

dates including Umesh Nath Maharaj, Maya Naroliya, and Bansilal Gurjar, who have been given tickets, are new. The party has fielded Ashwini Vaishnav from Odisha.

After losing power in Himachal Pradesh to the Congress, the BJP on Wednesday nominated party national President J.P. Nadda, who belongs to the hill state from Gujarat for the Rajya Sabha seat.

The Congress has nominated Abhishek Manu Singhvi for the Rajya Sabha from its ruling Himachal Pradesh. He is likely to be elected unopposed.

Singhvi reached the state capital and met Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu.

The biennial elections to fill 56 seats of Rajya Sabha will be held on February 27. The last date for filing of nominations is February 15.

In the 68-member house, the Congress has an absolute majority of 40 seats -- six over than the half-way mark.

The opposition BJP has strength of 25 legislators. There are three Independent legislators, comprising two BJP rebels and one Congress.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Wednesday announced its support for Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav's candidature for the Rajya Sabha seat from Odisha. The BJD's announcement came hours after the BJP nominated Vaishnav from the state for the Rajya Sabha.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 'Bharat Mart', a warehousing facility, in Dubai on Wednesday. UNI

Maheshwar Reddy named BJP floor leader in Telangana Assembly

Hyderabad, Feb 14 (IANS) After much dilly-dallying, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has named A. Maheshwar Reddy as its floor leader in Telangana Assembly.

More than two months after the Assembly elections, state BJP chief G. Kishan Reddy on Wednesday appointed the MLA from Nirmal constituency as the leader of BJP Legislature Party.

In a letter to the Speaker, Kishan Reddy informed him about the appointment

of Maheshwar Reddy as BJP-IP leader.

Maheshwar Reddy had quit Congress to join BJP in April last year. He was then holding the post of AICC programmes implementation committee chairman.

The state BJP chief also named Adilabad MLA Payal Shankar and Kamareddy MLA Venkata Ramana Reddy as deputy floor leaders. Rama Rao Patel, the MLA from Mudhol is secretary.

Kishan Reddy named

Sirpur MLA Palvai Harish Babu as the chief whip and Nizamabad Urban MP D. Suryanarayana Gupta as the whip. P. Rakesh Reddy, the MLA from Armoor, has been appointed as treasurer.

BJP had won eight seats in 119-member Assembly in November 30 elections. While all the parties appointed their floor leaders in December, the BJP could not name its legislative party leader reportedly due to lack of unanimity.

Arrest accused or suspend cop: K'taka Speaker on threat to BJP MLA

Bengaluru, Feb 14 (IANS) Karnataka Speaker U.T. Khader on Wednesday asked the state government to get the accused, who gave life threat to the BJP MLA in Bengaluru, arrested by evening or suspend the concerned police inspector.

Addressing the Congress government in the Assembly, Khader said, "The House must take the issue seriously. Two to three members of the Assembly have been threatened and this shows he is given courage. Why has he not been arrested yet? He should be arrested im-

mediately by the evening. "Otherwise, the police inspector should be suspended. The government should send out a strong message in this regard."

Mahalakshmi Layout BJP MLA K. Gopalaiah raised the issue of former corporator and Congress leader Padmaraj giving him life threat. "At 11.05 p.m., I got a call and the accused demanded money from me. When I refused, he abused me in vulgar language. He threatened that he would get my house looted and get my family executed. He runs clubs and has no fear..." he said.

MLA Gopalaiah further said that senior BJP leader S. Sureshkumar was also threatened by the accused. "He should be deported from the city. I need protection from the government. Anytime he can send his men to harm me and this might result in tragedy," he said.

"The police are waiting like dogs in front of his house for 10 to 12 hours. He is not coming out though he is very much at home," he stated.

BJP MLA and General Secretary V. Sunil Kumar said that there should not be politics in this case and the MLAs should get pro-

tection. Suresh Kumar, BJP MLA and senior leader said, "Myself and LoP R. Ashoka have suffered at the hands of the same person. Though no clubs are allowed to run in the entire Bengaluru, he runs clubs in his buildings. Though he is in the house, why has he not been arrested yet? ...The Speaker should give direction for his immediate arrest."

Former Home Minister Araga Jnanendra said that during the BJP rule all clubs and casinos were shut down and local officers were held responsible if the clubs were run.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath worshipping on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchami at Shri Guru Ravidas Janmasthan Temple at Seer Govardhanpur, in Varanasi on Wednesday. UNI

Mumbai airport congestion: Flights forced to hover for 40-60 minutes, 2000 kg extra fuel burned per hour

New Delhi, Feb 14 (IANS) While clarifying the reason behind imposing flight curbs at the Mumbai airport, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on Wednesday said that due to congestion and excess capacity on its runways, flights are forced to hover over the city for a long duration of around 40-60 minutes, leading to traffic in air and burning of extra jet fuel.

"The staggering fuel consumption during these prolonged circling times has raised alarms, with an average aircraft burning approximately 2000 kilograms of fuel per hour," said a senior MoCA official.

The ministry said that such delays lead to significant fuel wastage, ranging from 1.7 to 2.5 kilolitres of jet fuel, translating to a financial burden of around Rs 1.8 to 2.6 lakh per flight.

"This additional cost is anticipated to eventually trickle down to consumers, affecting both passengers and airlines adversely. Moreover, the inefficiency in airport operations results in longer wait times and inordinate delays, exacerbating the situation for all stakeholders involved," said the official.

An analysis conducted by the Airport Authority of India identified a bottleneck during the High Intensity Runway Operations (HIRO) hours, particularly from 0800 to 1100 hrs. and 1700 to 2000 hrs., where the permitted air traffic nearly equaled that of the remaining 18 hours combined. General Aviation and Military Aircraft

operations further exacerbated the congestion, particularly during peak hours. "The root causes of persistent congestion were attributed to excessive slot distribution with limited time margins by the airport operator, non-adherence to slots by airlines, and non-scheduled operations during peak hours.

Every VIP guest in GBC-4 in Uttar Pradesh to get one 'CM fellow'

Lucknow, Feb 14 (IANS) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed concerned officials to attach one 'CM Fellow' to each VIP, to assist them during the upcoming Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC) and accordingly, train all Fellows in protocols etc.

Arrangement for accommodation, food, transportation for the VIPs and other guests should be made well in advance, he said.

The Chief Minister said that the focus should be on security and hospitality protocols during the event. "Lucknow should be adorned for GBC-4, it

should be clean and spiral lights should be installed on all main roads. Taxi stands, hoardings and other infrastructure should be arranged in an organised manner. CCTV surveillance along the entire VVIP route must be operational to ensure strict monitoring of any disruptive elements," he said, according to the government spokesman.

After the inaugural session on February 19, the following two days will be dedicated to sectoral sessions.

Students from technical, technological and management institutes will be invited to these events so that they can learn

about the state's policies.

GBC-4 will see implementation of projects for which govt signed MoUs during the Global Investors Summit in February 2023. The event saw the participation of 10 partner countries, more than 1,000 foreign representatives from 40 countries, four ministers of partner countries, 17 Union Ministers, ambassadors and high commissioners, and more than 25,000 delegates, including national and international investors.

Investment proposals of Rs 39.52 lakh crore have been received through the programme and since then.

TN man dupes 20 people on pretext of Canadian jobs, held

Chennai, Feb 14 (IANS) Tamil Nadu Police arrested a 33-year-old man for duping as many as 20 people of Rs 1 crore on the pretext of getting them high paying jobs in Canada. Police said that Sivaraajan (33) was running a travel agency in Chennai and he had put advertisements in local dailies about high paying jobs in Canada. Based on his advertisements, many people approached him and paid money for getting a job in Canada. Sivaraajan also asked people to pay a minimum advance money at an average of Rs 5 lakhs. A person Shanmugham (47) approached Sivaraajan for a job in Canada and he was asked to advance an amount of Rs 15 lakhs. Even after paying the money, Shanmugham had to wait for several months but he could not get a job in Canada. According to Crime Branch police, Shanmugham requested many times to Sivaraajan to return the money he had paid. However neither money was returned nor he was given a job and finally he approached police who promptly registered a case, traced Sivaraajan and arrested him.

Rahul pledges guarantee on MSP but Cong govt rejected Swaminathan Committee report in 2010

New Delhi, Feb 14 (IANS) In a redux of the farmers protest in 2020-21, a sizeable number of farmers marched from their villages in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, as part of 'Chalo Delhi' agitation to seek government's nod and preferably a legislation to implement their demands. Minimum Support Price (MSP) is their chief demand, this time.

Farmers Protest 2.0 has earned the support of Congress and other Opposition parties. Leading from the front, Rahul Gandhi has promised guarantee on MSP for crops, apparently taking a leaf from PM Modi's popular guarantee slogans.

However, it has come to light that Congress government in 2010, itself turned down the recommendations of Swaminathan Committee report which batted for a much higher compensation for farmers, in lieu of their farm produce.

Notably, Swaminathan Committee's National Commission report, headed by renowned scientist MS Swaminathan, had submitted its recommendation on Minimum Support Price (MSP) before

the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in 2010.

A questionnaire from Parliament, dated 16April, 2010, shows that KV Thomas, the then minister in UPA government cited 'distortion of market' and 'counter-productive' aspect as the reason for turning down the recommendations.

KV Thomas, the MoS for Agriculture in 2010 during UPA rule, said in response to BJP MP Prakash Javadekar in Rajya Sabha that the recommendation was not accepted by the government

because "MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) based on objective criteria and considering a variety of relevant factors. Hence, prescribing an increase of at least 50% on cost may distort the market. A mechanical linkage between MSP and the cost of production may be counter-productive in some cases."

Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that Congress, if voted to power, will give a legal guarantee on MSP to every farmer, based on the recommendations of Swaminathan report.

Our land & language always first: K'taka Dy CM Shivakumar

Bengaluru, Feb 14 (IANS) Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday said that Karnataka's land and Kannada language were always the first priority of the state government. Speaking to reporters at the KPCC office, he said, "A lot of Marathi people living in Belagavi are from Karnataka. Karnataka's land and language will always be the first priority. Everyone has to stay united." Replying to a reporter's query whether the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) had requested the Maharashtra Government to set up an office in Belagavi, he said, "The Government has created a lot of infrastructure for the people in rural areas of Belagavi District. They are living on our land, breathing our air, drinking our water and cultivating our land. We will announce a project worth Rs 900 crore in the upcoming budget to provide drinking water to Belagavi rural."



CPP Chairperson Sonia Gandhi filing her nomination for Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan, in Jaipur on Wednesday. UNI

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आगणना पाना वांचवा भाटे
नीचेनी **लींक** पर **क्लिक** करो

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