

## News Brief

### It's a rumour: TN Cong president on party leader Vijayadharani joining BJP

Chennai, Feb 19 (IANS) Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) President K. Selvaperunthagai on Sunday dismissed speculation suggesting Congress Legislature Party chief whip S. Vijayadharani joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as rumours.

He also said the INDIA bloc will gain tremendously in Tamil Nadu and added that the aim is to win all 39 seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone seat in Puducherry.

Selvaperunthagai also said that the Congress and DMK were working together for the success of the INDIA bloc in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Chief Minister MK Stalin.

He, however, said that he would not comment on the rumours being spread that the DMK was trying to allocate one seat from the Congress quota to the Makkal Nee-dhi Maiaim leader and Tamil superstar, Kamal Haasan.

### Over 100 huts gutted in fire in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 19 (IANS) Around 130 huts were gutted after a massive fire broke out in a slum cluster in Delhi's Shahbad village area, an official said, adding that no one was injured in the incident. Sharing the details, Director of Delhi Fire Service (DFS) Atul Garg said that a call regarding the blaze was received at 10:17 p.m. on Sunday.

"Total 15 fire tenders were rushed to the site and flames were doused," said Garg. "No causality or injuries have been reported. Around 130 huts got burned," Garg added.

### Srinagar-Leh highway closed due to heavy snowfall

Srinagar, Feb 19 (IANS) Major snowfall during the last 24 hours closed most of the highways leading out of Kashmir in J&K on Monday except the Srinagar-Jammu highway on which traffic was moving smoothly.

Traffic department officials said that Srinagar-Jammu national highway is open for traffic while the Srinagar-Leh, Mughal Road, Bandipora-Gurez road, Sinthan-Kishtwar and roads leading to Keran/Karnah border towns are also closed. The MeT department had forecast rain/snow till February 21 after which the weather is expected to improve.

### UP youth killed as security guard's gun goes off during scuffle

Lucknow, Feb 19 (IANS) A youth died here after he allegedly suffered a bullet injury as the gun of the apartment's security guard accidentally went off during a scuffle between the two.

According to reports, police got information that a youth was lying by the roadside near the apartment at Kuda Crossing. The man was later identified as 22-year-old Aman, a resident of the Shahpur Bhamrauli village under Dubagga police station.

## UP has gone from red tape to red carpet: PM Modi

Lucknow, Feb 19 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday, said that Uttar Pradesh had changed its investment culture from "red tape to red carpet".

He said that this was possible because of the double-engine government. Speaking at the Ground Breaking Ceremony 4.0. here, the Prime Minister said "It has been seven years since a double-engine government was formed in UP. In these years, the red-tape culture in the state has been ended and a red-carpet culture has been brought in."

He said that Uttar Pradesh was receiving investment proposals from all sectors.

The Prime Minister also insisted that in the last seven years, crime has reduced in the state and

business culture has expanded.

"In the last seven years, an environment of business, development and trust has been formed in UP. The double-engine government has shown that if there is a true intention for change, nobody can stop it," he said.

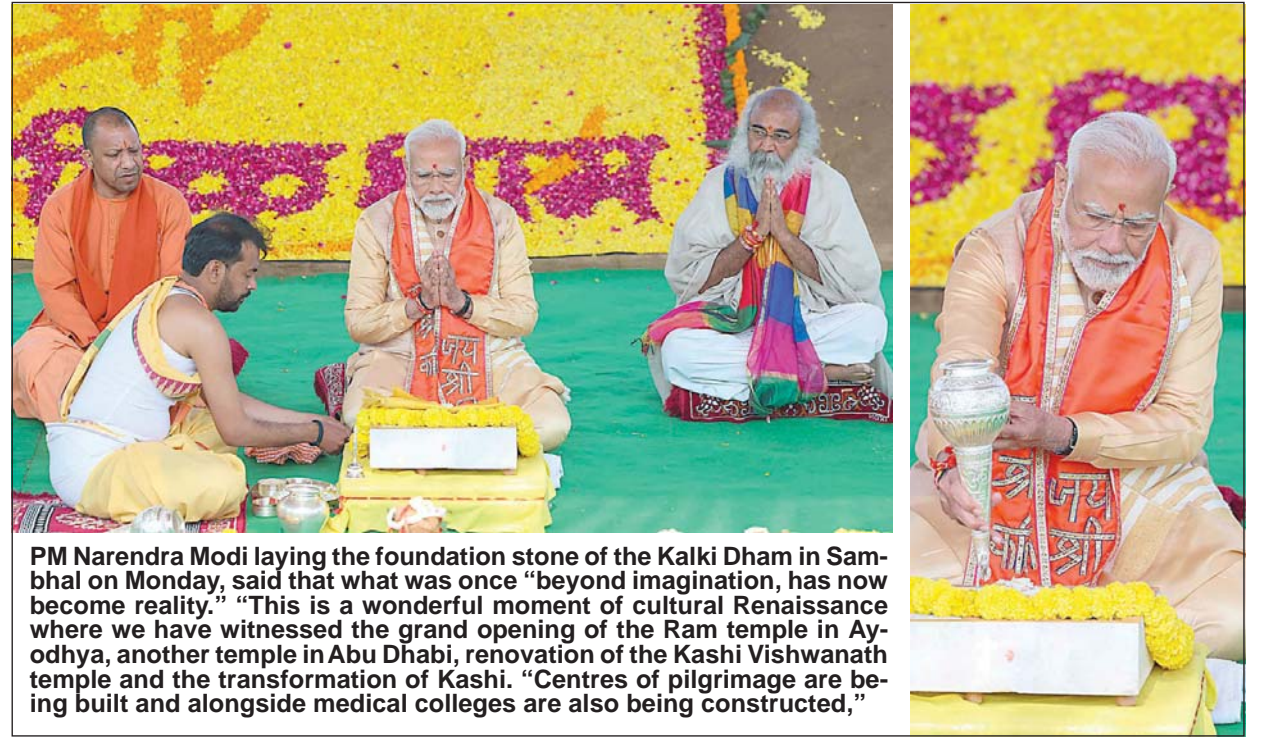
The Prime Minister mounted a scathing attack on previous governments led by the Congress and said, "When I speak about 'Viksit Bharat', new thinking and new direction is needed for it. Had we followed the kind of thinking that prevailed in the country for decades after Independence, this would not have been possible."

The Prime Minister referred to the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra and said the vehicle with "Modi's guarantee" reached various

parts of Uttar Pradesh so that there is a saturation of government welfare schemes.

"We are gathered here with the resolve to build 'Viksit Uttar Pradesh' for 'Viksit Bharat'. I have been told that through technology, lakhs of people from more than 400 Vidhan Sabha seats of UP are connected to this event. About seven-eight years back, we could not even think that there could be such an atmosphere in Uttar Pradesh regarding investment and employment," he said.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath, in his welcome address, said that economic prosperity depended on availability of land, population and capital. "I am proud to say that all three are amply available in Uttar Pradesh."



PM Narendra Modi laying the foundation stone of the Kalki Dham in Sambhal on Monday, said that what was once "beyond imagination, has now become reality." "This is a wonderful moment of cultural Renaissance where we have witnessed the grand opening of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, another temple in Abu Dhabi, renovation of the Kashi Vishwanath temple and the transformation of Kashi. "Centres of pilgrimage are being built and alongside medical colleges are also being constructed."

## Raj Congress' key tribal leader & four-time MLA Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya joins BJP

Jaipur, Feb 19 (IANS) Congress Working committee member and MLA from Bagidora in Rajasthan's Banswara district, Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya joined the BJP on Monday after quitting from the grand old party. The four-time MLA is a strong tribal face in the state. Soon after joining the party, he attacked the Congress and said, "When the Congress party refused to attend the Pran Patishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, I was hurt."

Malviya praised the BJP and said, "If I want to develop my area, then there

is no other party which can work in the tribal areas except the BJP. PM Modi's policies have impressed me," he added. BJP state President C.P. Joshi accorded a warm welcome to him on the occasion. Malviya resigned from the post of MLA after joining the BJP. He reached the BJP party office in Jaipur at around 2 p.m. and took the membership of the party in the presence of senior leaders. Malviya demanded that Mangarh Dham be declared a national monument. He was in Delhi for the last three days and on

Sunday, he met Home Minister Amit Shah. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma had reportedly taken him to Shah. Party sources said that Malviya was not happy in the Congress after he was not made the leader of opposition. He was not fielded as a Rajya Sabha candidate and instead veteran leader Sonia Gandhi filed her nomination papers for the seat. Party state in-charge Arun Singh, co-in-charge Vijaya Rahatkar and veteran leaders, including Arun Chaturvedi, Rajendra Rathore were present during his joining.

## Assam, Goa CMs to flag off BJP's Vijaya Sankalp yatras in Telangana

Hyderabad, Feb 19 (IANS) Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will launch two of the four Vijaya Sankalp yatras of the BJP in Telangana on Tuesday.

The yatras, that would begin simultaneously, are part of the BJP's preparations for the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls.

The state BJP said the yatras have the twin objectives of strengthening the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Telanga-

na by way of ensuring greater contribution in the ensuing elections and exposing the "hypocrisy of the Congress party in the state, which is dodging implementation of its critical electoral promises."

During the yatra, BJP leaders and workers will reach out to a cross-section of people to impress upon them the need to strengthen the hands of the Prime Minister to make India truly Atmanirbhar and enable it to regain its ancient glory of being a Viswaguru, the state BJP

said. Sarma will launch the Komaram Bheem cluster yatra in Adilabad District and will also address a public meeting. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, will flag off the Rajarajeswari cluster yatra at Tandur in Vikarabad District. Senior national leaders of the party, along with union ministers and chief ministers of different NDA-ruled states will participate in the 10-day yatra. Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of the North Eastern Region, G Kishan Reddy, who is

also the state BJP President, BJP National General Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar, All India President, BJP OBC Morcha, Dr K Laxman and party leaders Etela Rajender and DK Aruna will participate in all the yatras. The BJP, which won four out of 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana in 2019, has set the target of 10 seats in the forthcoming elections. The party leaders are confident of achieving the target in view of the impressive performance in the recent Assembly elections.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the 4th Groundbreaking ceremony of UP Global Investors' Summit, in Lucknow on Monday. UNI

## TN govt launches Thayumanavar Scheme to remove poverty, Rs 27,922 cr allocated

Chennai, Feb 19 (IANS) Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu announced the setting up of the Chief Minister's Thayumanavar Scheme to alleviate poverty from the state over the next two years.

The minister while presenting the budget for the financial year 2024-25 made the announcement in the Assembly. He said the scheme was allocated an amount of Rs 27,922 crore under the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department. The minister said that this was announced to launch a "final assault on poverty over the next two years."

The Finance Minister said that these funds would be used to help rescue about five lakh of the poorest families from poverty. They will be provided the necessary government assistance in an integrated manner.

He also added that the government would ensure the participation of elected representatives, charitable organisations, and banks for the initiative piloted by the state government.

The Minister also said that under the scheme, the

most vulnerable sections of society, including the destitute, elderly persons living alone, single-parent families, orphaned children, those with mental impairments, persons with disabilities and families with children requiring special assistance would be identified.

## Woman found dead under mysterious circumstances in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 19 (IANS) A 30-year-old woman was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her in-laws' house in north Delhi's Burari area, an official said on Monday. The deceased was identified as Pooja, a resident of district Darbhanga, Bihar and she had been married for more than six years. "On Monday, an information was received at Burari police station regarding the death of the woman after which a police team rushed to the spot," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) M K Meena. "During the inspection of the dead body, there was no injury. Rakesh, the husband of the deceased, had been working as a cook in Hyderabad and he along with his wife Pooja had been residing in Hyderabad," said the DCP.

## Pralhad Joshi criticises K'taka govt for supporting Hubballi riot accused

Bengaluru, Feb 19 (IANS) Minister for Mine, Coal and Law Pralhad Joshi on Monday criticised the Karnataka government over their alleged support to the celebrations by some people after court granted bail to the Hubballi riot accused.

"Congress has said that the accused are innocents. Who are they to decide about the case," he told media persons.

Earlier, people had allegedly celebrated the release of the accused at a religious place which was allegedly supported by the Karnataka government.

Joshi said that the Police Commissioner was

attacked and assaulted during the riots along with many police officers and staff.

"The police vehicles were also damaged during the riots. Despite all this, why did the government not argue the case efficiently in the court?" he asked. He said that most of the police officers targeted during the riots are still serving at the same place.

"The government, by ensuring the bail to the accused, has forgotten the protection of the police," he said.

He said that the accused faced sedition charges but they were freed by the Congress

government.

Last Friday, the Karnataka High Court granted bail to 106 persons in Hubballi riot case, while three accused are still in jail.

Violence erupted on April 16, 2022 in Hubballi city in Karnataka over a provocative WhatsApp status in which a photo-shopped picture of religious flag was seen hoisted atop a mosque.

The police had arrested 152 persons in connection with the violence. Earlier, the Supreme Court had also granted bail for 35 persons while the minor boys detained in connection have also been granted the bail.

## Man kills cousin over land dispute in J&K's Bandipora

Srinagar, Feb 19 (IANS) A family dispute on Monday led to the murder of a man by his cousin in J&K's Bandipora district. Police said that a man identified as Ghulam Mohiuddin Parry living in Hajin village of Bandipora district sustained critical injuries during a scuffle over a land dispute. He was rushed to a hospital in Srinagar city. "He was declared dead by the doctors at the hospital. "The accused was identified and arrested," police said. This is the second unfortunate incident in the last two days in Kashmir wherein a family dispute turned bloody resulting in a death.

## Now, B.Tech student commits suicide in Kota

Jaipur, Feb 19 (IANS) A B.Tech student committed suicide in Kota by hanging himself in his room, the police said on Monday, adding that the student was pursuing his education from Jalandhar in Punjab and was suffering from depression.

His family members had gone to Lucknow to attend a wedding ceremony on Sunday, leaving the deceased alone at home. Before committing suicide, the student called his father and said, "Papa, I am fed up with life."

After some time, when his family members called him back, he did not take the call. The family members later called a neighbour, who after inquiry said their son was not opening the door.

The incident took place in Ambedkar Nagar under the Kunhadi police station limits on Sunday. The body was handed over to the family on Monday after post-mortem.

Sub-inspector of Kunhadi police station, Rajaram, said: "The family lives in Ambedkar Nagar. The elder son, Rohit (23), was pursuing B.Tech from Jalandhar. He was mentally ill and was undergoing treatment for the past two-three years. On Saturday 17, his parents had gone to Lucknow to attend a relative's wedding. Rohit was alone in the house.

"He called his father at around 4 a.m. on Sunday and said that he was fed up with his life. After some time, his father called him back but he didn't answer the phone."

His father then called their neighbour who went to the house and called Rohit several times, but the latter did not open the door.

"I immediately left from Lucknow with my wife and reached Kota at 6 p.m. on Sunday. When I reached home, I saw Rohit hanging in his room.

The police rushed him to the MBS Hospital, where the doctor declared him dead," said the deceased's father, Rajesh Mathur, whose younger son studies in Ahmedabad.

Kota, a coaching hub, has been reporting a surge in suicide cases, mainly by JEE and NEET aspirants, for the past few years

## Another farmer dies in protest in Punjab

Chandigarh, Feb 19 (IANS) One of the farmers who was protesting in front of the house of former Punjab chief minister Amrinder Singh in Patiala has died of a suspected heart attack on Monday.

The farmer, identified as Narinderpal Singh (43), was from Patiala district. This is the third such death during the ongoing farmers' protests over their demands, among others, for a legal guarantee of the minimum support price (MSP) of their crops.

The first death was reported from the Shambhu border, while another from the Khanauri border, both located on the Punjab-Haryana border. Narinderpal Singh reached the 'dhama' site with his colleagues on February 17. On Sunday night, when his health deteriorated, he asked his fellow farmers to take him back to the village.



This capital city is gearing up for yet another Attukal Pongala, the largest annual gathering of women in the world, as women devotees are busy for purchasing pots for the ceremony, in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. UNI



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