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A great achievement is being trumpeted: Union fiscal deficit falls to 5.6% against an estimated 5.8% in 2024. But doesn't the law of a 3% fiscal deficit apply to the Union Govt? They who take up cudgels against state governments' non-compliance have not complied with it even once.

Kingpin of Iran-based organ trade racket nabbed from Hyderabad

The accused, who connected victims to mafia, was caught while he was planning to leave country

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

THE kingpin of the Iran-based organ trade racket, who connected victims to the mafia was nabbed from Hyderabad on Saturday. Ballamkonda Ramaprasad aka Prathapan, 41, a resident of Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, was picked up by a special investigation team (SIT) led by district police chief Vaibhav Saxena. The accused was arrested while he was planning to leave the country, said an official.



Police take the accused for medical examination on Saturday (inset) Ballamkonda Ramaprasad | EXPRESS

"The arrested was the kingpin of a major organ smuggling racket operating in the country. He was the chief coordinator of organ trade. He was responsible for finding the donor, conducting medical examination and ensuring that the person was medically fit to donate organs," said Vaibhav Saxena, Ernakulam district police chief. When he zeroed in on the accused, he was hiding in a hotel.

Thrissur in connection with the organ harvesting case led to the arrest of Ramaprasad. The accused persons in the racket are suspected to be involved in largescale kidney trade.

Pradesh, Maharashtra, Hyderabad, and Delhi. A youth from Thirunellayi in Palakkad was the only person on the list from Kerala, he said.

The accused focused on illiterate rural people and entangled them in the organ trade. They earned ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore for each organ, but only ₹5 to ₹6 lakh was given to the donors, said a police official. The gang mostly targeted gullible victims from Madhya

Ramaprasad himself approached the racket for the first time to donate a kidney. However it failed as he was found to have contracted some diseases during medical examination ahead of the harvest.

the vast opportunities of the illegal trade. Later, he made contacts with the organ trade racket and became an active link in the trade. The racket and its financial deals were centred in Iran, the officer said.

Madhu, a resident of Kochi, was leading the operations of the racket from Iran. As per reports, he had arrived in Delhi last year. The trio involving Ramaprasad, Sabith Nasar, and Madhu formed a shell company for the financial transactions, which was controlled by Sajith Shyam, who has already been detained by the police.

Explaining the modus operandi of the accused, the police officer said, the organ smuggling racket contacted the donors through social media platforms.

Later, Ramaprasad contacted the donors and sent them to Iran after completing the medical formalities. Sabith, based in Iran, received the donors and ensured that they returned home after the organs were harvested.

Committee suggests appointment of senior Cong leader as KSU in-charge

CONTINUED FROM P1

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN @ T Puram

IT'S RELIABLY learnt that the inquiry committee also made a veiled attack on Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan, as it blamed Aloysius for being part of a faction in the party. A party source told TNIE that the panel received more than 100 complaints from KSU activists against the student organisation's leadership.

discipline and decorum showed by the KSU leadership, for which corrective steps should be taken. Earlier, Aloysius and his team were engaged in a similar incident at their study camp at a resort at Ramakkalmedu in Idukki," said the party source.

While putting the entire blame on the KSU leadership, the committee also urged Sudhakaran to appoint a senior Congress leader as in-charge of the KSU. Following the resignation of KPCC vice-president V T Balam, the then in-charge, two years ago in protest against the incumbent state and district leaderships of the KSU, Sudhakaran had not appointed a replacement for him. This had resulted in the camps not having an officer-in-charge.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INQUIRY PANEL

- Lack of discipline throughout the duration of the camp. The KSU leadership did not seek the cooperation of KPCC and the service of a camp officer
■ A KPCC office-bearer should be appointed as in-charge of KSU urgently
■ KSU leaders who showed serious lack of discipline and those holding decorative posts should be removed
■ KPCC should appoint a committee to bring about complete changes in KSU
■ If there is a difference of opinion among Congress leaders, KSU should not be a party to it
■ The camp should have given guidance to activists, but instead it sent out a wrong message
■ Sole responsibility of the clash lies with KSU state leadership

EXPRESS READ

Bar bribery probe: CB searches hotel in Kochi

Kochi: The Crime Branch (CB) on Saturday searched a hotel in Kochi where a bar owners' association held their meeting last month in connection with a case related to an audio clip on bar bribery. A CB team from Thiruvananthapuram reached the hotel in Palariyattom where the meeting of office-bearers of Kerala Federation of Hotel Association was held on May 23. The team led by DYSP Binu Kumar checked the minutes of the meeting. The officials also recorded statements of a few bar owners.

5,418 organ donation surgeries performed in state, says K-SOTTO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

Organ donation from deceased persons

Table with 3 columns: Year, Donors, Receivers. Data for 2019-2023.

Kerala State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (K-SOTTO) has launched a post-transplant audit as per the government's instructions.

"The number of non-relative organ donations has been increasing steadily in some of the transplant centres in Kerala. Three important transplant centres were inspected to collect details in the beginning stage and a detailed report will

be submitted to the government," said Noble Gracious, executive director, K-SOTTO.

K-SOTTO does not have any information on human trafficking for organ donation as the donors are not admitted or tested in transplant centres in Kerala. In the last five years, only 90 surgeries related to organ donation from deceased persons were performed in the state, while 5,418 organ donation surgeries were performed.

In all, 286 transplants have been done here after obtaining organs from deceased persons.

Siddu, Shivakumar get bail in defamation case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court on Saturday granted bail to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar in a defamation case filed by the BJP.

Judge K N Shivakumar directed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to appear before him on June 7 without fail.

The BJP had filed a private complaint accusing these leaders of defaming it through advertisements in newspapers on May 5, 2023, ahead of assembly elections in the state.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who are second and third accused, respectively, submitted applications seeking bail.

Rahul, who is the fourth accused, did not appear before the court on Saturday despite an exemption from appearance given to him on April 29.

He sought one more exemption stating that he could not appear because of a meeting of the INDIA bloc leaders.

The BJP's counsel objected to Rahul's application stating that he had already been given an exemption. He cannot escape from appearance as all are equal before law. The court should not exempt him from appearance and issue a warrant against him, he argued.

Rahul's counsel argued that the Congress leader's absence was not intentional. The court has the power to give exemptions as per the latest judgment of the apex court, he said.

SEX SCANDAL

SIT to seek access to Apple's servers

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

THE SPECIAL Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged sexual assault cases involving Hassan JDS MP Prajwal Revanna will soon request Apple to give access to its servers to gather evidence against him.

A source in the SIT told TNIE that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), under which the SIT functions, has been requested to help it get information from Apple. "Besides the statements of the victims, evidence in the form of texts, pictures, videos and locations from Apple's servers will strengthen the cases," the source said.

'CHANCE FOR BJP WIN IN TVM, ATTINGAL & THRISSUR'

CONTINUED FROM P1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @TPuram

AS PER its prediction, the UDF will win between 17-19 seats while the BJP-led NDA would get 1-3 seats.

News 24- Today's Chanakya suggested a better position for the NDA with four seats. While the UDF tally will be 15, the LDF will get just one seat, said Today's Chanakya.

Axis My India survey has given 2-3 seats to NDA. While the UDF might get 17-18 seats, the LDF is likely to be confined to a minuscule space with 0-1 seats, according to Axis My India.

VMR too predicted 19 seats for the UDF, one seat for the NDA, with the LDF drawing a blank.

Noticeably, in a first, all exit polls predicted that the BJP would win its first LS seat from the state. Thiruvananthapuram,



where Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar took on sitting MP Shashi Tharoor; Thrissur, where actor-turned-politician Suresh Gopi contested against CPI's V S Sunil Kumar and senior Congress leader K Muraliedharan; and Attingal, where Union minister V Muraliedharan contested against CPM's V Joy and sitting Congress MP Adoor Prakash, are the three seats where the saffron party is expected to make it big.

The Times Now-ETG survey predicted 14-15 seats for the UDF, four seats for the LDF and one seat for NDA.

While TV 9 put UDF's tally at 16, LDF at 3 and NDA at 1, the CNN News 18 exit poll predicted 15-18 seats for the UDF, 2-5 seats for the LDF and 1-3 seats for the NDA.

Polstrat has given UDF 16 seats, LDF 3 and NDA one seat. Going by India News -JAN KI BAAT, the Opposition front will get 14-17, the ruling front 3-5 and NDA 0-1.

Punjab National Bank advertisement for immovable properties sale. Includes details of assets, terms and conditions, and contact information.

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank advertisement for E-Auction Notice. Includes details of the property being auctioned, terms and conditions, and contact information.

Central Institute of Psychiatry advertisement for Postgraduate Courses - 2024 Session. Includes details of courses, admission process, and contact information.

Indian Overseas Bank advertisement for e-Auction Sale Notice for Immovable Properties. Includes details of the property, terms and conditions, and contact information.