

Kerala govt tried to shield people named in Hema panel report: Ex-Union minister Muraleedharan

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Former Union minister and BJP leader V Muraleedharan on Thursday slammed the Kerala government for "not acting in a timely manner" over the Justice K Hema Committee report, which studied issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry.

He accused the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government of trying to protect the persons mentioned in the report, including a Communist Party of India (Marxist) MLA, despite countrywide protests over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in a Kolkata hospital.

"Kerala is a state where women are considered equal to men, in every field of activity. In the film industry of such a

state, if women are treated as second grade citizens, it is the duty of the government to take action," Muraleedharan told PTI.

The report by the Justice Hema Committee, constituted by the Kerala government post the 2017 actress assault case, has revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry, prompting calls for action against the guilty.

The Justice Hema panel report is based on the atrocities against women in the Malayalam film industry. It has stirred the Malayalam film industry, with the Kerala government facing flak for not acting earlier.

In the wake of the committee report that shed light on work-

place harassment in the Malayalam film world, many women actors, including a Bengali actress, have gone public with allegations of sexual harassment against some of the well-known faces of Malayalam cinema, including eminent director Ranjith and actors Siddique and Mukesh.

Muraleedharan said, "Law stipulates that when such an incident (of sexual harassment) happens...when something comes out, nobody is required to submit a written complaint. The Supreme Court has said that whenever such a cognisable offence happens, the government can take action if it comes to its knowledge."

"The ministers to whom the report was submitted, including the chief minister who handles the home portfolio, decided not to act on it, even after submission of the report, which contains the names of people who are responsible for such atrocities," he added.

"The state government did not act in a timely manner over the report. It tried to protect the persons mentioned in it, including a CPI(M) MLA," the former minister claimed.

The people of Kerala are agitated over the stand taken by the government. The government instead of acting on the report as per the law was trying to sidestep the whole issue, he alleged. "The government is saying that we will organise a conclave, but a conclave is useful for finding future solutions. When a crime happens, an FIR should be filed, the victim should be allowed to

make a statement before a magistrate within 24 hours. After an FIR is filed and then the inquiry, investigation should happen. If the culprit is required to be taken into custody, that also should be done," Muraleedharan said.

He also demanded the resignation of the state's culture minister, alleging that he kept the report under wraps for four-and-a-half years. The senior BJP leader is in Mumbai ahead of the assembly elections scheduled to be held in October-November this year. He met Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar.

Muraleedharan claimed that the ruling Mahayuti alliance will sweep the elections and come to power in the state again.

Those born with silver spoon in mouth won't understand plight of the poor: Ajit Pawar

STATE TIMES NEWS

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR: The Maharashtra government is committed to the welfare of the poor but those born with a silver spoon in their mouth won't understand the plight of the deprived section of society, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said on Thursday.

Addressing a rally here during his 'Jan Samman Yatra', Pawar urged people not to fall prey to the opposition's "fake campaigns", highlighting government schemes for the youth, women, Warkaris (followers of Lord Vitthoba) and others. "We have deposited Rs 3,000 in the accounts of eligible women," said the NCP chief, referring to the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme, which provides monthly aid of Rs 1,500 to married, divorced, and destitute women in the 21-60 age group with annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh. The opposition calls the Ladki Bahin scheme an "election jumbal" but it's a fake campaign, he said, assuring that no one will take back the money from anyone. "The opposition is trying to derail the schemes. Those born with a silver spoon in their mouth won't understand the plight of the poor," said Pawar. While the government is giving three free cooking gas cylinders per year to 52 lakh families across

the state, it is also bearing the education fees of girls and women in the state, he said. Rejecting the claims that the schemes will throw the state's finances into disarray, Pawar said Maharashtra's revenue collection has been good. "The state needs Rs 75,000 crore for these schemes. We have the money so we are giving these schemes," he said. The schemes can run only if the Mahayuti coalition, comprising BJP, NCP and Ekanth Shinde-led Shiv Sena, is re-elected, he said. "We have handled the treasury of the state government. We know where to cut expenses and where to spend. We have also spoken to Union Minister of Agriculture Shivraj Singh Chouhan over sugarcane, onion, soybean, and milk," Pawar said.

The NCP chief also promised strict action in the collapse of the statue of Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot fort in Malvan tehsil of Sindhudurg district, which has triggered a political storm, with the opposition accusing the state government of corruption and insulting the Maratha warrior king. "No matter what, wrong is wrong and cannot be forgiven. Stringent action will be taken in this case to set an example that such mistakes won't be pardoned," he added.

2 YSRCP Rajya Sabha members resign from House

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Two YSRCP members of the Rajya Sabha - Beedha Mastan Rao Jadhav and Venkataramana Rao Mopidevi - have tendered their resignation from House membership, parliamentary sources said on Friday.



Vice President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Jagdeep Dhankhar has accepted their

resignation, they said.

Mastan Rao, whose term was to end in June 2028, had switched from the TDP to the YSRCP. He is likely to go back to the TDP.

Mopidevi, whose term was till June 2026, may also join the TDP, the sources said.

Air Marshal Denzil Keelor: Fighter pilot who shot down Pak Sabre in 1965 war

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Air Marshal Denzil Keelor (ret'd), a decorated IAF officer and 1965 Indo-Pak war hero, will perhaps be best remembered for shooting down a Sabre aircraft of the adversary in the war. The 90-year-old veteran who earned a Vir Chakra for his heroics in the 1965 war died on Wednesday in Gurugram, people close to his family said.

Born in Lucknow in December 1933, he and Trevor Keelor came to be known as fighter pilot brothers, and gained legendary status.

Trevor Keelor was the first IAF pilot to score an air kill in Independent India. He also shot down a Sabre aircraft in the 1965 war.

Denzil Keelor took part also in the 1971 Indo-Pak war that led to creation of Bangladesh.

"He shot down a Sabre aircraft of the Pakistani forces



during the 1965 war. He and his brother are heroes of the IAF," a senior officer said.

Commissioned in the Indian Air Force in May 1954, Denzil Keelor also earned a Kirti Chakra for his daredevilry in 1978 (as a Group Captain) during two aircraft emergency situations, according to his profile published on the official website of the gallantry awards.

Kirti Chakra is India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award.

His Kirti Chakra citation reads, "Group Captain Denzil Keelor VrC (4805) F(P) was posted in August

1975 to a prestigious unit which evolves tactics and imparts combat training. The nature of flying in the unit is intense and difficult, imposing a high degree of physical and mental stress on the flyers."

In March 1978, while Group Captain Keelor was flying a Type 77 aircraft at high altitude, the canopy flew off and exposed him to explosive decompression and severe wind blast, it says.

The incident left him with injury to his eyes, an ear drum, and left arm, which made it difficult for him to control the aircraft.

"Though he was fully justified in abandoning the aircraft at that stage, he used his skill and experience to the limit to recover the aircraft. Under very adverse conditions, without being able to look out sufficiently due to wind blast, and with unimpaired vision from only one eye, Group Captain Keelor brought the aircraft back to base and executed a safe emergency landing," it says.

By his flying skill, determination, presence of mind and courage, at considerable personal risk, he was able to save a valuable aircraft.

Again, in May 1978, during a live air-to-air sortie, a 23 mm high explosive shell burst as it left the gun muzzle. Shrapnel damaged the aircraft and caused total electrical failure and a serious throttle restriction, the citation read.

"The cone extended fully and the associated engine rumbling and surge gave

every indication of engine bearing failure. Without electric instruments and radio telephony, Group Captain Keelor had no way of either knowing what had happened or of asking for assistance. He assumed that the engine bearing had failed and decided to attempt an emergency recovery," it says.

Keelor returned to the airfield, set up a flame out pattern and executed a safe landing.

"The throttle was stuck at 60 per cent revolutions per minute and in spite of this he was able to stop the aircraft without damage. His outstanding and skilful handling of these two serious emergencies saved two valuable aircraft.

"Group Captain Denzil Keelor thus displayed conspicuous courage, exemplary professional skill and devotion to duty in electing to recover the aircraft even at peril of his life," it adds.

Coast Guard gets Rs 2,500-crore vessel to fight pollution

STATE TIMES NEWS

PANAJI: A Rs 2,500-crore pollution control vessel built by Goa Shipyard Limited for the Indian Coast Guard was launched on Thursday, with Union minister Sanjay Seth asserting that it would be an asset for the maritime security agency.

The Union Minister of State for Defence launched the newly built Pollution Control Vessel, GSL Yard 1267, for the Indian Coast Guard in a ceremony held at Vasco in Goa.

"This ship is 72 per cent 'atmanirbhar' and has the capability to fight coastal pollution," Seth told reporters.

The Union minister said the

ship will be an asset for the Indian Coast Guard, which patrols "our shores to keep them safe from unwanted elements".

Seth said that during his last 85 days as minister of state for defence, he spent much time learning about "our" forces. "After learning about our forces, I can say that the Indian defence sector is robust," he said.

He called the launch of the pollution control vessel a significant step forward in the efforts to protect the country's marine environment and mitigate oil pollution. "Equipped with cutting-edge technology, this vessel will play a vital role

in preserving marine life," he said.

Seth said the achievement is a testament to the country's progress towards becoming 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India). "I am proud to say that our Indian Coast Guard is among the best in the world, and this vessel will further enhance its capabilities," he added.

The ship, built at Rs 2,500 crore, was launched in the presence of Inspector General of the Indian Coast Guard Bhisam Sharma, Commander Coast Guard Region (West). Sanjeev Kumar, Secretary of Defence Production and other dignitaries were also present.

Arunachal to chart comprehensive road map for sports development: Khandu

STATE TIMES NEWS

ITANAGAR: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday announced that his government will soon chart a comprehensive road map for development of sports and games in the state.

This initiative aims to empower the youth by providing them with training and resources needed to confidently compete in national and international sporting events, Khandu said at the National Sports Day celebrations here to provide cash incentives to 87 meritorious sportspersons of the state in 14 disciplines.

"As our sportspersons continue to bring pride through their achievements on national and international platforms, we are launching the Arunachal Olympic Sports Mission. This initiative aims to support our promising athletes in their pursuit of competing in the 2028 and 2032 Olympic Games," the chief minister said.

Khandu while informing that his government in its budget for the current fiscal year, has declared 2024-25 as the 'Year of Youth', further emphasised that the government's focus will be on skill development,



empowering young people to become successful entrepreneurs and contribute meaningfully to the state's growth.

The chief minister shared that a start-up model has already been developed to support the youth, offering them nine months of skill development training through renowned institutions.

"Additionally, the government will provide a 75 per cent scholarship for commercial pilot training at various prestigious private institutes of international repute, ensuring that the youth receive world-class opportunities and support," he added.

"Today, as we commemorate the National Sports Day, we honour the great legacy of Hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, whose unparalleled contributions

to sports continue to inspire us," Khandu said.

"Our ambitious plans include establishing a world-class football stadium with a capacity of over 25,000, adhering to FIFA standards. This will not only cultivate local talent but also elevate the state onto the global sports stage," he said.

The development of new national-level stadiums at Pasighat, Ziro, Daporijo, Tezu, Aalo and Chimpu, along with the Golden Jubilee Outdoor Stadium in Yupia and the D K Badminton Academy, highlights our dedication to strengthening sports infrastructure, he added.

Khandu noted that while the state previously struggled to secure medals in national and international sporting events, it has since risen to the third position in the Northeast, following

Manipur and Assam, since 2016.

"This achievement is the result of persistent efforts by all stakeholders and unwavering support from the Centre in prioritizing the development of sports in the state," he said.

Khandu emphasized the significant initiatives taken by the Centre to foster the development of sports, highlighting the Khelo India programme as a key effort to nurture and refine sporting talents across the nation.

He further mentioned that the state currently boasts 58 Khelo India centres, underscoring the government's commitment to sports development.

Additionally, he said, a new sports academy has been established at Miao in Changlang district, following the success of the Sangey Lhaden Sports Academy in Chimpu, near the state capital.

The chief minister said that the state government in the past eight years provided cash incentives to the tune of Rs 4.14 crore to a total of 771 sportsmen, while an amount of Rs 1.57 crore was provided to honour 87 sports persons this year.

"The government has fixed 5 per cent job reservation

for youths in various departments as sports quota and in the home department the reservation is 10 per cent," Khandu said.

Arunachal Pradesh is making significant strides in the field of sports and hosted the 77th edition of the Santosh Trophy National Football Championship, a historic first for a Northeastern state, the chief minister said.

He also said that the state is planning to host an international rafting championship in 2027, along with a national rafting championship next year.

With its numerous rivers ideal for the sport, Arunachal Pradesh is set to become a prime destination for rafting enthusiasts, he said adding, a preliminary discussion was held in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, Sports and Youth Affairs minister Kento Jini said that the government in order to tap budding sporting talents is planning to construct football and volleyball grounds in every village of the state.

He added that a proposal had been submitted for setting up a digitized centre of excellence in every district to identify sporting talents.

Navy on Shivaji statue: Conceptualised, steered project with state govt which also gave funds

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: The Indian Navy on Thursday said it conceptualised and steered the project of installing the Shivaji statue, which collapsed in Maharashtra's Malvan this week, in coordination with the state government which also provided funding for it.

The Navy said in a statement that it remains committed to assisting in all measures to repair, restore and reinstate the statue at the earliest.

A joint technical committee headed by Indian Navy officials, representatives of the state government and technical experts is being formed to probe the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Malvan, the Navy said.

Late on Wednesday night, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde held a meeting of top officials of



the state government and the Indian Navy.

The Navy said the statue was unveiled as part of the Navy Day celebrations, held for the first time in Sindhudurg district, aimed at honouring the legacy of the "Maratha Navy" and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj towards maritime defence and security, and its historical linkage with the modern Indian Navy.

Centre to unveil new simplified pension application form for retiring employees

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Centre will unveil a new simplified pension application form for its retiring employees on Friday, according to an official statement.

The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) had vide its notification dated July 16, 2024 released the simplified pension application "Form 6-A", it said.

"This form will be available in Bhavishya/e-HRMS (online modules) to all the central government employees who are going to retire in December 2024 and onwards. The retiring officials, who are on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A through e-HRMS (only superannuation cases) and the retiring officials, who are not on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A in Bhavishya," the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry on Thursday said.

According to the statement, this new form and its integration with Bhavishya/e-HRMS will be launched on August 30, 2024 by Union Minister of

"The project was conceptualised and steered by the Indian Navy, in coordination with the state government which also provided funding for it," the Navy said.

The 35-foot statue of the 17th-century Maratha empire founder installed at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg district's Malvan tehsil collapsed on August 26, nearly nine months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The state government has maintained that the structure was designed and built by the Navy and ordered a probe into the crash episode.

However, the incident has triggered a political storm in Maharashtra, with the opposition accusing the state government of corruption and insulting the Maratha warrior king.

State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh.

Form simplification has been an important initiative of the Centre's "maximum governance-minimum government" policy, it said. In this new form, a total of 9 forms/formats have been merged, the statement said.

This new form and related changes in the business process of Bhavishya will be a game changer as on the one hand it simplifies the pension form submission for the employee through "a single sign only" and on the other hand achieves the end-to-end digitisation of the entire process of pension processing till the start of pension payment after retirement, it added.

"This paves the path towards paperless working in the whole process of pension," the statement said. It added that with a pensioner-friendly user interface, pensioners no longer need to worry about the forms they have filled out or might have missed.

SC seeks bank statement of accused to ascertain transactions in Jharkhand land "scam"

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday sought the bank statements of an accused to ascertain the financial transactions related to the sale of 4.55 acre land of the Indian Army in Ranchi allegedly by creating false property documents. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who is out on bail, is also an accused in a money laundering case arising from the alleged land scam. The top court was hearing an appeal of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging the grant of bail to co-accused Dilip Ghosh by the Jharkhand High Court on November 28, 2023. "You produce the bank statement (of the accused) of the rele-

vant period by today evening itself. It will come up for hearing tomorrow (Friday)," a bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma told senior advocate S.Nagamuthu, representing Dilip Ghosh. The top court refused to list the case for hearing on a later date as sought by Nagamuthu, saying it will be heard on Friday itself. As per the federal anti-money laundering probe agency, a parcel of 4.55 acres belonging to Indian Army was sold off by non-owners by creating falsified documents. It said Afshar Ali, a resident of Bariatu in the Jharkhand capital, and his accomplices prepared a fake deed at the office of RoA (Registrar of Assurances

(Records), Kolkata in the name of a Prafulla Bagchi claiming that the land belonged to the latter. Some of the accused obtained a holding number in respect of the property and offered to sell it to M/s. Jagatbandhu Tea Estate Pvt Ltd (JTEPL) of which Dilip Ghosh is a director. The JTEPL purchased the property for an agreed amount of Rs 7 crore as against the prevailing value of over Rs 20 crore since there was an ongoing litigation with regard to the said property with the Indian Army, the high court noted in its order. It was claimed that cheques were issued by JTEPL in favour of accused Pradeep Bagchi. A cheque

for Rs 25 lakh was encashed, and as per mutual understanding, the remaining amount was payable upon handing over the physical possession of the property in question, the high court had said. The ED has been claiming collusion between the accused and wants to prosecute them for alleged money laundering.

On Wednesday, the bench asked Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED, whether the probe agency has call details of Ghosh and Bagchi. The probe agency said it does not have them but it will clarify this aspect later. The law officer said the sale deed was for a total amount of Rs 7 crore but it does not have

any reference to the part payment of Rs 25 Lakhs to Bagchi. "Just to get out of this, they are now saying Rs 25 Lakhs is paid but it is not paid," Raju said, adding "Though the sale deed mentions cheques for payment of 7 crore, but none of the cheques were encashed. If there was any agreement of payment, the sale deed would have been maintained."

"How did you make the payment of Rs 7 crore...The question is that if it is shown that these payments were made by issuing cheques then the sale deed talks about that the cheques were not encashed," the bench said. When Nagamuthu attempted to explain, the

bench shot back saying, "Don't make such mock submissions here. We are not going to accept this."

The money laundering case emanated from an FIR lodged by Jharkhand police on June 4, 2022 at Bariatu Police Station in Ranchi under sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security) and 471 (using forged document as genuine) of the IPC against Pradeep Bagchi, a local resident. The FIR was based on a complaint by Dilip Sharma, tax collector of the Ranchi Municipal Corporation alleging that Bagchi obtained two holding numbers of the land by submitting forged papers. Later they allegedly fraudulently sold the properties.