

Veena received bribes for Pinarayi: ED

SHAN A S @ T'Puram

LINKING ex-chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and family with suspected hawala deals, the Enforcement Directorate's communique to the state police chief said Hassan Varish, who is reportedly an associate of Riyas and Veena, received the bribe money and sent it to Dubai via a hawala agent on five occasions. The ED letter, seeking to register a case against them, carried damning remarks against the former chief minister, daughter Veena T and son-in-law P A Mohammed Ri-

yas as it said " the amounts received by Veena is nothing but bribe received on behalf of her father".

The 25-page letter said letter said Veena began receiving cash from the Cochin Minerals and Rutile Limited (CMRL) from March 4, 2017, and it continued up to May 9, 2019. She had received ₹9 lakh as first payment from CMRL and went on to racket ₹3.28 crore in total. A part of the payment, which came to the tune of ₹50 lakh was



Pinarayi Vijayan

paid by CMRL without an invoice. The letter also red-flagged Veena's 16-day long trip to UAE in 2024 as suspicious and said the some of the payments made by the CMRL ended up as deposits in foreign banks.

The letter said the UAE-based associates had transferred the cash to their bank accounts there. In order to substantiate the allegations, the ED listed diary entries reportedly made by the

CMRL senior officials, handwritten notes including that of Veena, sensitive information from a red diary that allegedly belonged to the ex-CM's daughter and leads from the money trail. The letter also unambiguously mentioned that the CMRL had explicitly masked several of its payments made to Veena and she did not produce evidence to prove that she had rendered any service to the company during questioning.

The agency mentioned that it recommended registration of FIR under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA).



Leopard caught in cage set up for tiger in O-Valley

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Nilgiris

A leopard was caught in one of the cages set up to capture a man-eater tiger in the O' Valley forest range of the Gudalur forest division on Wednesday morning.

Locals, who noticed the leopard's movement after it was trapped in a cage in the Baram area, informed the forest department. A team of forest staff from the range visited the spot and confirmed that a leopard had been trapped.

The animal appeared aggressive and panicked after being caught in the cage, which had been baited with a live goat. The goat, which had been tied at the rear end of the cage, remained safe as the cage automatically closed after the leopard entered. Meanwhile, a few locals captured videos of the roaring animal, which were widely shared on social media.

As the leopard was not considered problematic and had been unexpectedly caught in the cage, forest officials transported the cage to a nearby forest area, about one km away, and released the animal.

"The animal was released nearby as the area is part of its territory. We did not check the sex of the animal due to the limited time and released it as per the advice of District Forest Officer P Devaraj," said a forest department official of the O' Valley range.

'Act against contractors damaging UG power lines'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

ELECTRICITY Minister CTR Nirmal Kumar on Wednesday directed officials to initiate legal action against contractors who damage underground power cables during road and other civic works, saying such incidents were causing avoidable power outages.

The direction was issued at a pre-monsoon preparedness meeting at the Secretariat, where the minister reviewed measures to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply during the Northeast monsoon. Nirmal Kumar examined the state's power position, including generation, purchases and projected demand, and reviewed the availability of essential materials such as electricity poles for restoration work during emergencies.

He also discussed the disaster management plan and preparedness to respond to disruptions caused by heavy rain and strong winds. The minister said under-

Inspects power position

Nimal Kumar examined the state's power position, including generation, purchases and projected demand, and reviewed the availability of essential materials at a meeting

ground cables were frequently damaged during road works and asked officials to fix responsibility on contractors and take legal action where necessary.

He also reviewed the status of government orders required to implement various announcements made by the department. Energy Department Principal

Secretary Anil Meshram, TNEB Chairman V Arun Roy, Tamil Nadu Power Generation Corporation Limited Managing Director M Govinda Rao, Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited Managing Director P N Sridhar and other senior officials attended the meeting.



EOW cops plan to seek custody of FQL crypto scam kingpin couple

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

THE Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Madurai, is planning to take custody of the alleged kingpin couple in the multi-crore FQL cryptocurrency investment scam, sources in the investigating unit said on Wednesday.

K Ranjith and his wife Priyadarshini were arrested by the EOW on Monday and remanded in judicial custody until September 22 at the Madurai Central Prison on Tuesday.

Police sources said the couple

was questioned following their arrest, during which investigators obtained a few vital pieces of information.

At least 40,000 people from Madurai, Virudhunagar, Dindigul and Sivaganga districts are believed to have fallen victim to the alleged scam over the past seven months.

Apart from the six cases already registered by the EOW, another case is likely to be registered by the Ramanathapuram EOW. Sources added that the investigating unit is also planning to take custody of a few more

persons in connection with the case. Preliminary investigations revealed that agents allegedly lured people into investing money through cash and UPI transactions. A portion of the funds was allegedly converted into Tether (USDT) and credited to FQL/VG wallets. However, investors were subsequently unable to withdraw their money, with their wallet balances becoming inaccessible.

Director General of Police (HoPF) Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal had transferred the six cases to the EOW on August 31.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar/Balasure

A black Thar seen moving along the Bichitrapur casuarina forest road late Monday night, hours before five abandoned baby orangutans were found in the protected area, has emerged a big lead in the investigation into how the critically endangered, non-native species reached the coastal forest in Balasure district.

The vehicle was captured by a CCTV camera of a shop in the forest fringe village of Badapai, while local residents also reported seeing it near the forest around 11.25 pm on Monday night.

Forest officials have collected the footage and are examining the evidence.

Meanwhile, the Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police has begun probing how the babies reached the state. An STF team comprising three SP rank officers visited Badapai, where the abandoned orangutans were found. The team conduct-



The orangutans have been kept in quarantine at Nandankanan Zoological Park in Bhubaneswar | EXPRESS

ed a field-level investigation and interacted with local residents to gather clues. STF IG Himanshu Lal told *TNIE* that multiple probe teams had been formed "Strict action will be taken against those found involved in the illegal wildlife trade," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Sethu Selvam is DMK candidate for Pondy bypoll

PUDUCHERRY: The DMK on Wednesday named former AITUC leader Sethu alias Sethu Selvam as its candidate for the Thattanchavady Assembly constituency bye-election, scheduled to be held on October 6. DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin announced Selvam's candidature at the party headquarters in Chennai. The DMK said he would contest with the support of the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) parties. The nomination pits Sethu Selvam against former MLA Ashok Anand, whom Chief Minister and AINRC leader N Rangasamy has already announced as the NR Congress-BJP alliance candidate. The contest is significant for both sides, with the DMK seeking to regain the constituency it won in 2019 by election and the ruling alliance attempting to retain its hold. Sethu Selvam, who was expelled from CPI in 2025, contested as an independent in 2026. ENS

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