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Rs 709 crore for Jagananna Vidya Deevena page 7



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Fire at shopping mall in Bangladesh kills 46 page 9

'Farmers first, politics can wait'

BRS reaches ground zero at Medigadda Barrage, counters every allegation with facts and figures

Ruling Congress indulging in misinformation campaign that the entire Kaleshwaram project was futile, says KTR

Demands government to prove its commitment to farmers' welfare by initiating rectification measures

S SANDEEP KUMAR
 MEDIGADDA

In a point-by-point rebuttal to the charges being levelled by the Congress on the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi on Friday reached ground zero at Medigadda Barrage and countered every allegation with facts and figures, demanding the State government to take up rectification measures instead of continuing the political blame game.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao, who led a massive delegation of BRS leaders including MPs, MLAs and former Ministers, said the visit was as per directions of BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao after the Nalgonda public meeting, to bring forth the ground reality and place it before the people to expose the false campaign of the Congress government.

"This is just the beginning and the first step. We will visit all components of the Kaleshwaram project. It is still the world's largest lift irrigation project and just because three pillars sunk at Medigadda Barrage, the Congress government is indulging in a misinformation



BRS working president KT Rama Rao, Harish Rao, Kadiam Srihari, Errabelli Dayakar Rao and others at Medigadda on Friday. — Photo: Anand Dharmana

campaign that the entire Kaleshwaram project was futile and that Rs 1 lakh crore of investment has been wasted," he said.

"If the standing crops have to be saved, water has to be supplied by taking up repair works immediately. But the State government is

deliberately delaying the repair works due to political grudges," Rama Rao told the media at Medigadda. Former Irrigation Minister T Harish Rao slammed the Congress government for failing to protect the interests of farmers. An all-party meeting should be con-

ducted to discuss the rectification measures for Medigadda. The Congress government should prove its commitment to farmers' welfare by initiating the rectification steps, he said.

Welcoming Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy's statements to take

up repair works soon after the NDSA report and recommendations, the former Irrigation Minister said in a way, this was a victory of the BRS. Coming down heavily on the Congress' false campaign on the BRS government's efforts to construct the Medigadda barrage as

against a Tummadihati, he said the decision was taken following the Central Water Commission's instructions in 2015. They specifically directed the BRS government to explore other locations citing the non-availability of water at Tummadihati, he said. (SEE PAGES 2, 5)

NO LAPSES IN DESIGN, SAY EXPERTS

HYDERABAD: Exposing the false campaign of the Congress on the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS), retired engineers and experts on Friday stressed that the sinking of the pillars at the Medigadda Barrage could be rectified and asserted that the sinking was not due to any lapse in the design.

The retired engineers and experts accompanied Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leaders led by working president KT Rama Rao to the Medigadda and Anarum barrages and made a few suggestions.

Former chairman of the Telangana Water Resources Development Corporation V Prakash Rao pointed out that Medigadda was just one component among many under the Kaleshwaram project. (SEE PAGE 2)

Modi slams TMC

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Alexei Navalny laid to rest

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Pragg goes down to Rapport

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Phir Aayi... teaser out

ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

Vikrant, Taapsee embark on a thrilling ride



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 126
Retail live	Rs. 148
With skin	Rs. 215
Skinless	Rs. 244
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 62

Ten injured in 'IED' blast at B'luru eatery



Staff and customers at Rameswaram Cafe after a blast, in Bengaluru on Friday.

BENGALURU

A low intensity bomb blast at a popular eatery here on Friday left 10 people injured even as the police invoked the stringent UAPA provisions in the case. Police suspect that an improvised explosive device (IED) fitted with a timer inside a bag could have exploded.

Officials from the local unit of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrived at the spot and conducted inquiry. The Bengaluru police registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosive Substances Act. A statement issued by the city Police Commissioner's office said 10 people — hotel staff and customers — were injured in the blast that occurred between 12.50 pm and 1 pm. The injured are undergoing treatment.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said investigation is on to ascertain the cause and nature of the explosion at the popular Rameswaram Cafe in Whitefield locality and added it might

have been caused by an "improvised explosive" device. The incident should not be politicised and everyone should cooperate, he said, adding strict action would be taken against those involved.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who along with Home Minister G Parameshwara visited the blast site in the evening and also those injured at the hospital, said it was a low intensity explosion and a timer was fixed. "The blast occurred at 1 pm. A young man of about 28-30 years came to the cafe, purchased Rava idli at the counter, placed the bag near a tree (adjacent to the cafe) and left. After one hour the blast took place," he said.

Noting that the Central Crime Branch has taken up the investigation, the DCM said, "Seven to eight teams have been formed... We are confident that within a few hours they will find the culprit." State police chief Alok Mohan described the explosion as a "bomb blast" and said nobody was seriously injured. (SEE PAGE 2)

India signs Rs 39,125 cr worth defence deals

Include procurement of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles

NEW DELHI

India on Friday sealed five major defence acquisition contracts worth Rs 39,125 crore including procurement of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, radars, weapon systems and aero-engines for MiG-29 jets as part of efforts to boost the combat capabilities of the armed forces.

The mega procurement projects were firmed up amid India's lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh, and they will be implemented under the broad framework of the government's policy to boost domestic defence manufacturing. The contracts for the procurement of the platforms and weapons systems were

Major acquisitions

Rs 19,518.65 cr FOR BRAHMOS MISSILES FROM BRAHMOS AEROSPACE PVT LTD (BAPL)

- Rs 988 cr for ship-borne BrahMos system from BAPL
- Rs 5,249.72 cr for RD-33 Aero Engines from HAL for MiG-29 aircraft
- Rs 7,668.82 cr for a batch of close-in weapon system from L&T
- Rs 5,700 cr for high-power radar systems from L&T
- Projects firmed up amid India's lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh

— DEFENCE MINISTRY
 These deals will further strengthen indigenous capabilities, save foreign exchange and reduce dependency on foreign-origin equipment manufactures in future

signed in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, under whose guidance

these deals fructified, an official readout said. Two separate deals were firmed up for procurement of BrahMos missiles. (SEE PAGE 2)

'Refrain from seeking votes based on caste'

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the EC asked parties and their leaders to refrain from seeking votes on the basis of caste, religion and language, and not insult the devotee-deity relation or make any suggestion of a divine curse.

In an advisory warning the parties, candidates and star campaigners of stern action for any violation of MCC instead of the previous practice of only 'moral censure', the poll panel also said that temples, mosques, churches, gurdwaras should not be used for electioneering. (REPORT PAGE 8)

Nod for elevated corridors in defence land

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

Putting an end to an eight-year-long wait, the Defence Ministry on Friday gave the green light for the construction of elevated corridors on defence lands in Hyderabad.

The proposed elevated corridors are aimed at ensuring smooth flow of traffic along the Hyderabad-Nagpur National Highway and the Hyderabad-Karimnagar Rajiv Highway, promising a boost to regional transportation infrastructure.

With the construction of elevated corridors now approved, traffic issues

plaguing routes from Hyderabad to Shamirpet and Hyderabad to Medchal are expected to be alleviated. It will also mark the development of transportation routes towards North Telangana. During his recent visit to Delhi, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy met union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and sought permission for the construction of elevated corridors on the de-

fence lands. The Centre responded on Friday to the repeated requests from the State government and gave necessary approvals. Responding to the same, the Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and officials from the Defence Ministry. Earlier in 2016, the State government, led by K Chan-

drashekhara Rao had initially proposed for transfer of defence lands in Hyderabad for the construction of elevated skyways, corridors and link roads to ease traffic congestion in and around Hyderabad.

The issue was pursued with the Centre repeatedly with the State government, former Minister KT Rama Rao in particular, submitting representations to the Prime Minister and five Defence Ministers including Arun Jaitley, Manohar Parikkar, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and Rajnath Singh, in the last eight years. (SEE PAGE 2)

Inter Board relaxes 1-minute-late rule

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

In a huge relief for students appearing for the ongoing Intermediate Public Examinations (IPE), the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TS BIE) on Friday relaxed the one-minute-late rule for exams. Students will now get five minutes of grace time to enter the centre after 9 am.

The move from the TS BIE came in the wake of a second-year student, Shiva Kumar, ending his life by jumping into an irrigation project after he was allegedly refused entry into the examination hall citing the one-minute-late rule.

Asking students to reach their respective centres by 8.45 am, the BIE said students who reach late after 9 am would be given a five-minute grace period. It asked district officials and chief superintendents of the

Students will now get five minutes of grace time to enter the examination centre after 9 am

centres to permit a grace period for students if they reach the centre late due to specific reasons. The IPE that began on February 28 is being conducted from 9 am to 12 noon. A total of 22,394 intermediate first-year students missed the English Paper-I exam on Friday.

Of the 5,00,936 students who registered, 4,80,542 appeared for the examination during which four malpractice cases — three in Karimnagar and one in Nizamabad were registered. Meanwhile, the TS BIE will hold spot evaluation camps for the IPE in four phases commencing March 4.