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Maha Kumbh: Underwater drones to be used for 1st time



WORLD | PAGE 09

Netanyahu faces health issues amid wartime crises
Israeli Prime Minister is having his prostate removed, to be hospitalised for several days



SPORT | PAGE 10

Australian tail wags after Bumrah magic

In a nutshell

Assembly special session today

HYDERABAD: A special session of the Telangana Assembly will be held on Monday to pay tribute to former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh who passed away on December 26. Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar has convened the second meeting of the fourth session of the third Telangana Assembly at 10 am on December 30, as per a notice issued by State Legislature Secretary V Narasimha Charyulu. **IANS**

Toxic gas kills 4 in Gujarat

BHARUCH: Four workers died after inhaling toxic fumes following a gas leak at a chemical plant at Dahej in Gujarat's Bharuch district, police said on Sunday. The company said all four were given immediate medical care but could not be saved. It has announced Rs 30 lakh ex gratia to the kin of each victim. A company employee and three contractual workers fell unconscious after poisonous fumes leaked. **PTI**

Manmohan Singh's ashes immersed

NEW DELHI: The ashes of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were immersed in the Yamuna near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara by his family following Sikh rituals. The ashes were collected from the Nigambodh Ghat on Sunday morning by the family and taken to the Asht Ghat on the Yamuna riverbank near the gurdwara. Singh's wife Gursaran Kaur, their three daughters and other relatives were present. **PTI**

Sabarimala reopens today

SABARIMALA: The Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple will reopen on Monday for this year's makaravilakku festival, the temple authorities said. The temple will be opened at 4 pm by Melshanthi S Arun Kumar Namboothiri, in the presence of the head priest, Tantri Kandararu Rajeevaru. Pilgrims can ascend the sacred 18 steps for darshan after the Melshanthi performs the lighting of the fire. **PTI**

CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm.....	Rs. 95
Retail live.....	Rs. 117
With skin.....	Rs. 170
Skinless.....	Rs. 193
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 78

179 die in S Korea plane crash

Jeju Air flight skids off runway, bursts into flames while landing in Muan

AP
SEOUL

A passenger plane skidded off a runway at a South Korean airport on Sunday, slammed into a concrete fence and burst into flames after its front landing gear apparently failed to deploy. All but two of the 181 people on board died in one of the country's worst aviation disasters.

The Jeju Air plane crashed while landing in the town of Muan, about 290 km south of Seoul. The Transport Ministry said the plane was a 15-year-old Boeing 737-800 jet that had arrived from Bangkok and that the crash happened at 9.03 am.

A total of 179 people — 85 women, 84 men and 10 others whose genders weren't immediately identifiable — died in the fire, the South Korean fire agency said. Emergency workers pulled two people, both crew members, to safety. Health officials said they are conscious and not in life-threatening condition.

Among the 177 bodies so far found, officials have identified 88 of them, the fire agency said. The passengers were predominantly South Korean, as well as two Thai nationals. Thailand's Foreign Ministry said its embassy in Seoul received confirmation from South Korean authorities that the two Thai passengers were among the fatalities.

The fire agency deployed 32 fire trucks and several helicopters to contain the



The passenger plane in flames at the Muan International Airport in Muan, South Korea, on Sunday. — Photo: AP

The plane (Boeing 737-800 jet) was completely destroyed, with only the tail assembly recognisable among the wreckage

— LEE JEONG-HYEON, CHIEF OF MUAN FIRE STATION

blaze. About 1,570 firefighters, police officers, soldiers and other officials were also sent to the site, according to the fire agency and Transport Ministry. Footage of the crash aired by South Korean television channels showed

the plane skidding across the airstrip at high speed, apparently with its landing gear still closed, overrunning the runway and colliding head-on with a concrete wall on the outskirts of the facility, triggering an explo-

sion. Other local TV stations aired footage showing thick plumes of black smoke billowing from the plane, which was engulfed in flames.

Lee Jeong-hyeon, chief of the Muan fire station, said the plane was completely destroyed, with only the tail assembly remaining recognisable among the wreckage. Lee said that workers were looking into various possibilities about what caused the crash, including whether the aircraft was

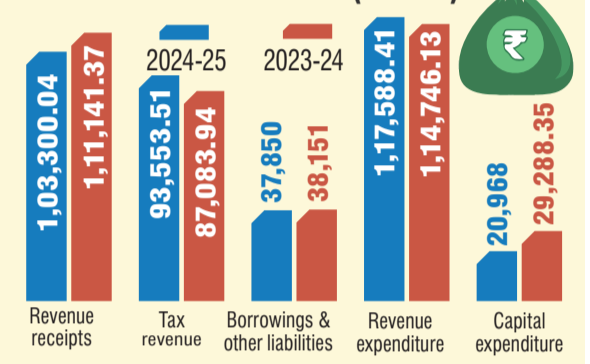
struck by birds, Lee said. Transport Ministry officials later said their early assessment of communication records show the airport control tower issued a bird strike warning to the plane shortly before it intended to land and gave its pilot permission to land in a different area. The pilot sent out a distress signal shortly before the plane overshot the end of the runway and skidded across a buffer zone before hitting the wall, the officials said. **(SEE PAGES 2, 9)**

Telangana's fiscal health in bad shape

Revenue falls short by 7% over last financial year

Where's the money going?

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NOV 2023-24 AND 2024-25 (in Rs cr)



PS DILEEP
Hyderabad

Concerns are being raised over Telangana's financial health as revenue receipts for the current financial year reached Rs 1.03 lakh crore by November, but fell short by around 7.05 per cent over the corresponding period last fiscal.

The State recorded a staggering decline of Rs 7,841.33 crore in revenue collections against around Rs 1.11 lakh crore secured by November last financial year, which is a first since the State formation.

Analysts point out that even during the Covid-19 pandemic, the State managed to maintain revenue growth, making the current dip particularly alarming.

This downturn in revenue has sparked concerns about the government's ability to sustain developmental activities without resorting to excessive borrowing.

As per the data furnished by the Comptroller and Auditor General, key fiscal indicators for November pointed out that the State is also lagging behind in achieving the budgeted target of Rs 2.21 lakh crore. Tax revenue, a critical component of the State's income, saw marginal growth in absolute terms — from Rs 87,083.94 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 93,558.51 crore in 2024-25. However, the increase falls short of expectations given the higher budget estimates for the current year, signalling inefficiencies in tax collection. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

Two constables die by suicide

STATE BUREAU
Medak/Siddipet

In separate heart-wrenching incidents, two constables hanged themselves to death — one of them after poisoning his wife and children — in Telangana.

In the first case, head constable Sai Kumar (52) was found hanging from a tree on the premises of the Kulcharam police station in Medak on Sunday morning. The head constable, who was allegedly in a relationship with a married woman, is suspected to have died by suicide after the woman's husband lodged a complaint with Medak SP D Uday Kumar Reddy against the constable recently.

Fearing action after departmental inquiry, he hanged himself on the premises of the Kulcharam police station. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

Rising suicides troubling: Harish

HYDERABAD: Former Minister T Harish Rao raised alarm over suicides among police personnel in Telangana, citing recent incidents involving officers and constables from Mulugu, Siddipet, Kamareddy, Sircilla and Medak. He said the situation was deeply troubling. **(REPORT PAGE 5)**

Not all suicides due to work pressure: DGP

HYDERABAD: Telangana DGP Dr Jitender said not all suicides among the police personnel in Telangana could be attributed to work pressure in the department. "Definitely there will be several issues due to which people commit suicides, he said on Sunday. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

BRS won't be cowed down by false cases: Kavitha

STATE BUREAU
Nizamabad

BRS MLC K Kavitha said unable to face her father and BRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao politically, the Congress and BJP were filing false cases against her as well as her brother and party president KT Rama Rao. She declared that they would not be cowed down by these intimidation tactics, and these would only make them more resilient to fight for the people of the State.

"No matter how many cases or arrests come our way, we will stand firm," she declared, addressing a massive gathering at Nizamabad on Sunday. On her first visit to the erstwhile Nizamabad district after being released in the Delhi excise policy case, she received a grand welcome from BRS leaders



BRS MLC K Kavitha with party leaders and Telangana Jagruthi representatives in Nizamabad on Sunday.

and Telangana Jagruthi representatives. Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha lashed out at the Congress and BJP for prioritising vendetta politics to weaken Chandrashekar Rao. She criticised the Congress government for failing to fulfil its election promises and ar-

resting those questioning its policies. She demanded that the Congress spell out the fate of electoral promises, including hiked social security pensions, unfulfilled assurances of two-wheelers for women graduates and stalled initiatives like Kalyana Lakshmi. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

2024 saw rise in rapes, murders

ASIF YAR KHAN
Hyderabad

The cognizable crime rate in Telangana witnessed a steep hike of 22.53 per cent in 2024 with police registering 1,69,477 cases during the year. The previous year, police had registered 1,38,312 cases across the State.

There has been a noticeable increase in crimes such as robbery, murder for gain, murders, rioting, rape and cybercrimes during the year. Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) Dr Jitender said there was nothing alarming in the increase and people should not get apprehensive. "No reason to get worried. We are taking all measures to



Telangana DGP Dr Jitender addressing the annual press conference in Hyderabad on Sunday.

ensure public safety," he said. There was a sharp increase in cybercrime as well in the State, with a total of 25,184 cases booked across the State, registering an in-

crease of 43.33 per cent. The police froze Rs 247 crore in various bank accounts of fraudsters during the year and Rs 180 crore was refunded to victims. **(SEE PAGES 2, 3)**

The DGP said there were no major law and orders issues in the State during the year, except for a few instances of communal trouble at Jainoor and Vikarabad. "Prompt action was taken and senior police officials were sent to the areas where trouble was reported and things are now normal," said the official.

On the Maoist front, the DGP said in an incident, two people were branded as police informers and killed by Maoists. "In the action that followed, there were exchanges of fire and several Maoist cadres were killed," he said, adding that there was not much Maoist activity or movement in the State. **(SEE PAGES 2, 3)**

Numaish from January 3

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The All India Industrial Exhibition, popular as Numaish, will open on January 3 instead of January 1. The decision to defer the inauguration of Numaish was taken in view of the seven-day national mourning declared by the Centre after the demise of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

Exhibition Society Secretary B Surender Reddy said all arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of the 45-day event. Traders from across the country are participating in the event.

What free power? Discoms still charge govt schools

YUVRAJ AKULA
Hyderabad

Despite a high-profile announcement by the Congress government for extending free power supply to government schools in the State over three months ago, several schools continue to receive power bills, raising questions about the government's commitment to its decision.

Back on September 5, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, who is also Energy Minister, announced free power supply to 27,862 government-run schools in the State. He

On September 5, Energy Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced free supply to 27,862 govt-run schools

had also claimed that the decision reflected the government's commitment towards government schools. However, even after more than three months into the announcement, the initiative has not been grounded, depriving school managements of the benefit of zero

bills. For example, ZP School in Karimnagar district received a bill of nearly Rs 2,000 this month. Similarly, another ZP School in Jagtial district was issued a bill of Rs 1,089 on December 9. As the government announced free power supply, the bills generated by the discoms continue to pile up in the schools, which are not keen on paying them given the government order. "This month, the school received a bill of Rs 2,000. Since the announcement of free power supply, schools have not been paying the bills," said a high school headmaster. **(SEE PAGE 2)**