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Fierce Santa Ana winds blamed for turning wildfires, sparked last week, into infernos



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Spotlight on Satwik-Chirag for upcoming India Open

Telangana Today
Wishes its readers
A HAPPY SANKRANTI
Our offices will remain closed on Tuesday and there will be no edition on Wednesday

In a nutshell

Rupee hits record low of 86.70

MUMBAI: The rupee logged its steepest single-day fall in nearly two years and ended the session 66 paise down at its historic low of 86.70 against the US dollar on Monday, weighed down by a stronger American currency and surging crude oil prices. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.12, and moved 1 paise during intraday to 86.11 before closing the session with a loss of a staggering 66 paise at its lowest-ever of 86.70 against dollar.

BUSINESS PAGE 8

Kerala MLA Anvar resigns, backs UDF

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala legislator PV Anvar, who joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC) recently after parting ways with the ruling LDF a few months ago, resigned on Monday as the MLA of the Nilambur constituency. Anvar met Speaker AN Shamseer in his chamber at the Legislative Assembly complex here and handed over his resignation letter in the morning. Anvar had won the Nilambur seat as a CPI(M)-led LDF supported MLA.

NATION PAGE 7

6.9 quake rattles southwest Japan

TOKYO: A strong earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.9 hit southwestern Japan on Monday, triggering public warnings to stay away from coastal areas because of a tsunami advisory, which was later called off. There were no immediate reports of damage. Residents in some coastal areas were told to evacuate as a precautionary measure. One man was slightly injured in Kyushu after falling down some stairs. Trains stopped running in Miyazaki Station, stranding passengers. A tsunami, estimated to be as high as 1 metre, reached land within 30 minutes of the earthquake. The waters detected at Miyazaki Port measured 20 centimetres high.

Scarlet fever cases on the rise

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

Hyderabad is witnessing a rise in cases of scarlet fever among children between five and 15 years, along with other viral fevers during the ongoing winter, senior paediatricians on Monday said.

Scarlet fever is a seasonal bacterial infection among children caused by group A Streptococcus, which can be treated through certain antibiotics. It usually takes at least two-five days for the symptoms to show up, once the child is exposed to the bacteria.

"We are seeing children in the five-15 age group with



scarlet fever for the past few days. If your child develops fever, red and painful tonsils with or without creamish deposits, a diffuse red sandpaper like rash on day 2

and/or a strawberry-like tongue, please consult a paediatrician," said Dr Sivaranjani Santosh, a developmental paediatrician from Hyderabad. (SEE PAGE 2)

1.5 crore take dip as Maha Kumbh begins

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The fog was thick, the cold intense and the waters freezing as the Maha Kumbh, the world's largest gathering, began on Monday with 1.5 crore people taking a dip in the Sangam in their quest for 'moksha' and the belief it will cleanse their sins.

Spirituality and astrology, culture and religion, tradition and modern-day technology... it all fused into one in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati in Prayagraj. More than 40 crore people, including many from abroad, are expected over 45 days in the mela being held

after 12 years. Besides, seers claim the celestial permutations and combinations for the event are taking place after 144 years, making the occasion even more auspicious for the faithful.

And so it was that a sea of people converged in Prayagraj for the fabled Maha Kumbh. Ash smeared sadhus from their abode in the Himalayas, the religious from across the country and abroad and those just curious to take in the sights and sounds of the biggest religious spectacle of all, the Maha Kumbh beckoned them all. Thirteen Akharas of seers are participating in the Maha Kumbh. (SEE PAGE 2)



Devotees gather to take a holy dip at the Sangam on the first day of the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday. — Photo: UP CM office/PTI (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 7)

Right things will happen at right time, says Modi

Hinting at restoration of statehood, PM says he'll keep his promise made to J&K people

PTI
SONAMARG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday asserted that he would keep promises he had made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, a statement seen as an oblique reference to the demand for restoration of statehood voiced strongly by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

"Yeh Modi hai, wada karta hai toh nibhata hai. Har kaam ka ek samay hai, aur sahi samay pe sahi kaam bhi hone wale hai (This is Modi who keeps his promises. And right things are going to happen at the right time)," the Prime Minister said at a large public meeting where he shared the stage with Abdullah after inaugurating a strategic 6.4-km-tunnel between Srinagar with Sonamarg.

Terming Kashmir as India's crown, Modi also said the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' will be achieved only when this crown is bedecked with jewels. Speaking earlier at the function, Abdullah pressed for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir as promised by the Prime Minister before the Assembly elections in September last year and said, "My heart be-



Vehicles enter the Z-Morh tunnel after its inauguration by PM Narendra Modi, in Ganderbal, J&K, on Monday. — Photo: PTI

lieves that you will fulfil this promise soon." "You also promised (Assembly) elections within four months and you stayed true to your words," he said.

Without making a direct reference to the issue of statehood, Modi assured the gathering that all promises would be kept and the right things would happen at the right time. The Prime Minister said he wishes Jammu and Kashmir to be beautiful and prosperous. "There is an atmosphere of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and we have seen its effect on tourism. Kashmir is writing a new saga of development today," he said.

"Jammu and Kashmir of the 21st century is scripting a new chapter of development," he said and remarked that the region is regaining its identity as 'Paradise on Earth', leaving behind the difficult days of the past.

Modi said the Kashmir Valley will soon be connected by train and there is enthusiasm among people about it. He also paid tributes to the seven people who were killed in a terror attack near the tunnel here on October 20 last year.

After inaugurating the project, the prime minister went inside the tunnel and interacted with project officials.

Cong govt eyes Rs 3,500 cr through land, flat auctions

Residential plots, unsold flats under Telangana Housing Board and Rajiv Swagruha Corporation to go under the hammer

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

The cash-strapped Congress government is set to raise over Rs 3,500 crore by auctioning residential plots and unsold flats under the Telangana Housing Board and Rajiv Swagruha Corporation across the State. A notification for these auctions is expected next month.

Nearly 1,400 open plots, ranging from 100-500 square yards, are located in well-planned layouts at 41 locations, including Chandanagar, Gajularamaram, Kundanapally, Kurmalguda and Bahadurpally, in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) area and various



The move comes amidst fiscal challenges, including poor revenue collections for the State during the current fiscal.

other districts, including Karimnagar, Khammam, Gadwal and others. Additionally, 361 unfinished houses will be put up for sale. These follow earlier auctions where 3,444 plots and 195 houses were sold. Efforts are also under way to

sell around 700 unsold flats at the Rajiv Swagruha gated townships in Pocharam, Bandlaguda near Nagole, Jawaharnagar and Gajularamaram, among others. Many of these properties have remained unsold since the scheme's launch in 2007 in

erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, despite six previous auction phases.

The move comes amidst fiscal challenges, including poor revenue collections for the State during the current fiscal, compared to the last financial year. Telangana's revenue receipts stood at Rs 1.03 lakh crore by November this fiscal, compared to Rs 1.11 lakh crore during the same period last year.

While total receipts are around Rs 1.41 lakh crore against expenditure of Rs 1.38 lakh crore, Rs 2,621 crore was spent on loans and disbursements at November-end. As a result, the State faces a revenue deficit of Rs 14,288 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 37,850 crore. This auction aims to bridge the widening fiscal gap.

Kaushik Reddy arrested

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy was arrested from near Jubilee Hills checkpoint in Hyderabad on Monday, in connection with his argument on Sunday with Jagtial MLA M Sanjay Kumar during a review meeting in Karimnagar.

He is being reportedly shifted to Karimnagar One Town police station and is likely to be presented before the magistrate for remand. Kaushik Reddy participated



in a panel discussion at a vernacular news channel at Jubilee Hills checkpoint on Monday evening. Soon after he came out of the news channel office, the police from Karimnagar accompanied by their Jubilee Hills counterparts took him into custody. Sources said learning about the MLA's arrest, the BRS legal team

along with senior BRS leaders also rushed to Karimnagar. While the local BRS leaders are said to be rushing to the One Town police station, the police are learnt to be making arrangements to prevent any unnecessary confrontation.

During a review meeting at the Karimnagar collectorate on Sunday, Kaushik Reddy had a clash with Sanjay Kumar and interrupted the latter's speech, and demanded him to declare his party affiliation before speaking. (SEE PAGE 2)

India summons B'desh envoy on border fencing

NEW DELHI

India on Monday summoned Bangladesh's acting High Commissioner Nural Islam and conveyed to him that New Delhi has followed all laid down protocols in the construction of fencing along the border between the two countries.

India's action came a day after Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma was called in by the neighbouring country's Foreign Ministry to express its "deep concern" over the "activities" of the BSF.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it was conveyed to Islam that India observed all protocols and agreements between the two governments on the security measures at the border and it expects that all earlier understandings will be implemented by Bangladesh with a cooperative approach to combating cross-border crimes.

It said India reiterated its commitment to ensuring a crime-free border by addressing the challenges of cross-border criminal activities, smuggling, movement of criminals and trafficking. "Barbed wire fencing, border lighting, installation of technical devices and cattle fences are measures for securing the border. India conveyed its expectation that there will be a cooperative approach to combating cross-border crimes," it added. PTI

Madhya Pradesh may ban liquor in religious cities

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday said the State government is contemplating a ban on liquor in religious cities to ensure that the sanctity of these places remains intact. The Chief Minister said there are complaints about the environment in religious cities getting affected because of liquor (sale and consumption). "The State government is considering implementing a ban on liquor in religious cities by improving the policy and is serious about the suggestions given by saints in this regard," he said. Yadav said the Madhya Pradesh government will soon decide and take concrete steps in this direction. PTI

Game Changer team alleges movie piracy

HYDERABAD: The team of actor Ram Charan's movie *Game Changer* filed a complaint with the cybercrime police that some persons were demanding ransom and threatening to release the 'pirated version' of the movie. They alleged that a group of 45 people formed a syndicate and were issuing threats by releasing short clips of the movie on social media platforms. The team demanded that the police thoroughly investigate this and take action against the persons indirectly making demands of crores of rupees.