



**NATION | PAGE 07**  
**Kejriwal vows to prioritise job creation if re-elected**



**WORLD | PAGE 09**  
**US House approves immigrant detention Bill**  
 Called 'Laken Riley Act', the Bill will be President Trump's first law to sign



**SPORT | PAGE 10**  
**India's batting stars disappoint on Ranji return**

**In a nutshell**

**Foreign Secretary to visit Beijing**

**NEW DELHI:** Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will travel to Beijing on a two-day trip beginning Sunday to hold talks with his Chinese counterpart, in the second such high-profile visit from India to China in less than one-and-a-half months. Last month, NSA Ajit Doval visited Beijing and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi under the framework of Special Representatives (SR) dialogue on the boundary dispute. **PTI**

**Tenant ryot ends life in Adilabad**

**ADILABAD:** A tenant farmer died by suicide as he was allegedly depressed over his inability to repay mounting debts at Mirzapur village in Bela mandal. This is the sixth case of suicide by a farmer in the district in the last couple of months. Locals said that Gode Govind Rao, 45, took the drastic step by consuming pesticide at his farm. Rao grew cotton in four acres of land took on a lease from another farmer of the village by borrowing a loan of Rs 5 lakh. **PTI**

**Ram Gopal Varma gets 3 months jail**

**MUMBAI:** A court sentenced filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma to three months imprisonment in a cheque bounce case and issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against him. Judicial Magistrate (First Class) in Andheri, YP Pujari, convicted Varma for the offence punishable under the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act. The court also directed the filmmaker to pay compensation of Rs 3.72 lakh to the complainant. **PTI**

## Telangana's fiscal health under strain

**Weak revenue receipts, spiralling borrowings raise concerns**

**PS DILEEP**  
**HYDERABAD**

Telangana's financial health appears to be under severe strain with significant shortfalls in revenue receipts, subdued tax collections and mounting borrowings, as revealed in a comparative analysis of fiscal performance up to December 2024 against the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

As per the latest report released by the Comptroller and Auditor General, the revenue receipts for the current financial year reached Rs 1.12 lakh crore, which is only 50.76 per cent of the Budget estimate of Rs 2.22 lakh crore, a marked decline from 57.72 per cent in the corresponding period of 2023-24.

Tax revenue, the primary contributor, has also seen a dip in performance, achieving just Rs 1.02 lakh crore, which is around 62.07 per cent of the targeted Rs 1.64 lakh crore, compared to

**Grim Scene**

**Latest Comptroller and Auditor General report reveals distressing picture**

- Revenue receipts for current financial year: **Rs 1.12 lakh cr**
- This is only **50.76%** of Budget estimate of **Rs 2.22 lakh cr**
- Tax revenue dips, stands at just **Rs 1.02 lakh cr**
- This is only **62.07%** of target **Rs 1.64 lakh cr**
- GST at **Rs 37,664.91 cr**, only **64.28%** of target
- Stamps and Registration collection: **Rs 7,524.42 cr**
- This is **41.28%** of Budget estimates, much lower than **57.59%** last year
- Non-tax revenue stands at **15.59%** as against **89.14%** last year



Economists warn that State's over-reliance on borrowings amidst poor revenue collection indicates a looming fiscal crisis. With fiscal deficit nearing the brink and critical social and economic sector allocations under-utilised, immediate corrective measures are imperative. Analysts stress the need for robust tax reforms, improved non-tax revenue mechanisms, and prudent fiscal management to avert a deeper financial turmoil.

65.37 per cent last year.

Key components such as Goods and Services Tax (Rs 37,664.91 crore) at 64.28 per cent of the target against 67.03 per cent last year, and Stamps and Registration (Rs 7,524.42 crore) at 41.28 per cent of Budget estimates against 57.59 per cent last year, have underperformed, reflecting slower economic

activity and weak tax enforcement.

While the Sales Tax revenue of Rs 24,035.11 crore surged to 71.86 per cent against 56.33 per cent, the State Excise Duties continue to struggle at Rs 14,078.39 crore, which is 54.96 per cent of the target against 82.98 per cent achieved last fiscal.

Notably, non-tax revenue is in free fall, achieving only 15.59 per cent of the Budget estimate, a stark contrast to 89.14 per cent in the previous year. Similarly, grants-in-aid and contributions have reached only 22.05 per cent, despite a higher allocation i.e. Rs 4,771.44 crore, indicating insufficient Central transfers. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

## 'India against illegal migration'

**WASHINGTON**

India has always been open to legitimate return of undocumented Indians to their country, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, noting that New Delhi is still in the process of verifying those from the US who can be deported to India and the number of such individuals cannot be determined yet.

"As a government, we are obviously very much supportive of legal mobility be-

cause we do believe in a global workplace. We want Indian talent and Indian skills to have the maximum opportunity at the global level. At the same time, we are also very firmly opposed to illegal mobility and illegal migration," Jaishankar said.

"Because you also know that when something illegal happens, many other illegal activities get joined onto it, which is not desirable. It is certainly not good reputationally. So, with every coun-

try, and the US is no exception, we have always maintained that if any of our citizens are there illegally, and if we are sure that they are our citizens, we have always been open to their legitimate return to India," he said. The Minister was responding to a query on news reports that India is working with the Trump administration for the deportation of some 1,80,000 Indians who are either undocumented, or have overstayed their visas. **PTI**

## Air India to resume Tel Aviv, Delhi flights

**JERUSALEM**

With the ceasefire holding up in the north and south of Israel, several major international airlines, including Air India, have announced plans to resume flights to Israel expanding connectivity to the war-torn region.

"It's official now. We are resuming flights from March 2, 2025," a representative for Air India in Israel said. Several Indians staying in Israel felt a sigh of relief as the Indian carrier's website opened bookings on the route.

Air France announced that it will resume flights on the Paris-Tel Aviv route starting Saturday. The carrier also plans to increase its frequency in the coming months. Transavia France, a low-cost subsidiary of the Air France-KLM Group, will also return on the Israel route on January 28. **PTI**

## Pensions used to pay property tax arrears

**STATE BUREAU**  
**Mancherial**

In a strange mode of collecting property tax dues, panchayat officials in Namnur village of Hajipur mandal here allegedly diverted the social security pensions of about 15 persons to clear their property tax arrears.

A total of 275 residents in

the village were beneficiaries of various social security pensions. Of them, 15 beneficiaries were shocked when the local Panchayat secretary told them that their pension amount for December was used to clear their property tax dues.

They urged the official to give them back the amount, considering their plight. The

beneficiaries regretted that the officials did not give the amount when they pleaded to them and said they would not be able to meet their needs if the pension was deducted. When asked, Panchayat secretary Sandhya Rani, however, denied the allegation and claimed that she did not deduct the pension amount of any benefi-

ciary. She stated that she was ready to face action if found guilty.

Hajipur Panchayat Officer Umar said staffers of the department were not allowed to use the pension to pay property tax. He stated that steps would be taken to return the pension to the beneficiaries if it was indeed deducted. **(REPORT PAGE 5)**

## Thieves on a 'roll', steal road rollers!



Police officials with the road roller which was seized.

**CITY BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

They might be small-time crooks, but their targets were indeed big.

Four thieves joined hands and set out to steal a road roller, which usually weighs a whopping 8,000 kg. The gang pulled off the theft from Balanagar in the city and headed to Maharashtra,

where they intended to sell it in scrap. However, their luck ran out, and they were caught by the Jeedimetla police.

The arrested were identified as Afroz Ahmed (24) of Karnataka, Mohammed Ibrahim (31) of Zaheerabad, a DCM driver Shaik Anwar (35) of Medchal, and Balla Ram Satyanarayana (47). **(SEE PAGE 2)**

## State's population growth may near zero-mark by 2035

**M SAI GOPAL**  
**Hyderabad**

In the coming years, Telangana State will experience a significant decline or slowing down of the population growth, as key demographic indicators that influence population, including births, deaths and total fertility rates are projected to decline sharply to record levels.

By 2031-35, the population growth rate, which is defined as the rate at which population increases over a period of time, will almost come to Zero (0.3) in Telangana State.

At the same time, the State will be at the bottom three (along with Andhra Pradesh) in India to have the lowest Crude Birth Rate (CBR), which is the number of live births per thousand people over a period of time. The CBR in Telangana declined steadily from 15.7 births in 2011-15 to a pro-

**Telangana will be at the bottom three (along with Andhra Pradesh) in India to have the lowest Crude Birth Rate**

jected 10.2 by 2031-35, which means that only 10 live births will take place for 1,000 people in Telangana. Demographers point out that drop in birth of the number of children in a year is a crucial factor that indicates the slowing down of the population.

The 'Population Projections for India and States 2011-35', report by Census of India, indicates the all important fertility rates among women will also drop significantly in Telangana State, mirroring a similar trend all over the Country. The Total Fertility

Rates (TFR), the average number of children that a woman is likely to have in her lifetime, in Telangana will drop to 1.5 by 2031. The TFR of 1.5 is an indication that fertility rates have reached below replacement levels.

As States develop economically, women get better access to health and education, fertility rates begin to fall, a phenomenon seen across the world, public health officials here noted.

Commenting on the drop of TFR, noted statistical platform 'Data for India' said "When a country's TFR drops to 2.1, meaning that women will have an average of 2.1 children over their lifetime, demographers say that the country has reached 'replacement fertility'. This is a key milestone. If fertility falls below that level, the population will begin to decline in absolute numbers". **(SEE PAGE 2)**

## Gram Sabhas turn fighting rings



People argue with officials at a Gram Sabha in Mahabubnagar on Thursday.

**STATE BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

**FARMER TRIES TO END LIFE OVER INDIRAMMA HOUSING SCHEME**

People continued to vent their ire against officials and Congress leaders at Gram Sabhas on Thursday for including ineligible people as beneficiaries in the list for the four schemes and delivering injustice to genuinely eligible persons.

For the last three days, the State government has been conducting Gram Sabhas for the identification of eligible persons for benefits under four schemes, including Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Atmeeya Bharosa, Indiramma Indlu and ration cards.

Like the last two days, many Gram Sabhas across the State on Thursday were marred with heated arguments, abuses and allegations. Unable to control the situation, officials left the meetings midway at a few places. At Pasara village, Govindrapeta mandal in Mulugu, women entered into arguments with officials for including ineligible persons in the list for Indi-

ramma Indlu, while leaving out genuine applicants. Tension prevailed at the Gram Sabha in Maddirala mandal headquarters in Suryapet after police constables pushed people for arguing with officials. Irked over the officials' failure to include his name in the Indiramma Indlu beneficiaries list, a person fumed at the officials and tried to argue with the Tahsildar. However, police constables prevented the person from heading towards the officials and pushed him aside. At the Shaliguararam

Gram Sabha, residents questioned the revenue officials as to how many times they should apply for benefits under different schemes.

Many were seen informing the officials that they had already applied for houses and ration cards during Praja Palana and sought to know as to how many they have to apply. Similarly, at Bhel mandal Gram Sabha, villagers questioned the officials why their applications for ration cards and houses that were applied in the past were not processed. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

**LAST 4 DAYS**

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