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**Hyd Lit Fest sparking vibrant, bold discussions**



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**Judge blocks Trump's freeze on federal grants, loans**  
 Prez's plan had set the stage for constitutional clash over control of taxpayer money



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**Ranji Trophy: Delhi looks up to Kohli as they face Railways**

**In a nutshell**

**Hyd man killed in US road accident**

**HYDERABAD:** A Hyderabad man, identified as Mohammed Wajid (28) died in a road accident in the rural Plymouth County of Massachusetts in the USA on Wednesday. According to local news reports, Wajid, a resident of Chicago, was driving a Freightliner near Chatsworth when he failed to stop at the stop sign at an intersection following which he hit a grain trailer. He was studying in Chicago.

**AI Delhi-Tel Aviv flights from March**

**NEW DELHI:** Air India will resume direct flights to Tel Aviv from March 2, after suspending the services in August last year amid tensions in the Middle East. Five weekly flights will be operated, the airline said. It will deploy its Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft having 18 flat beds in Business Class and 238 seats in Economy Class. The flights will be operated on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

**9 Indians killed in Saudi traffic crash**

**RIYADH:** Nine Indians have been killed in a traffic crash in Saudi Arabia, authorities said Wednesday. The Indian Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, described the crash as happening in Jizan in southwest Saudi Arabia. India's Foreign Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaisankar separately wrote on social media platform X that he was "grieved to learn of this accident and the loss of lives." AP

**Maha Minister for burqa ban**

**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra Minister and BJP leader Nitesh Rane on Wednesday sought a ban on wearing burqa during the next month's Classes X and XII examinations of the State board, raising concerns of security and examination malpractices. He also demanded a ban on the burqa at educational institutions, stating that religious attire should be confined to homes and religious places. PTI

## 30 killed, 60 injured in Maha Kumbh stampede

Millions jostle for space to take holy dip on Mauni Amavasya



A family member of an injured devotee reacts after the stampede during the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. — Photo: PTI

PTI  
 MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

At least 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a pre-dawn stampede at the Sangam area of the Maha Kumbh early Wednesday as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on the occasion of one of the most auspicious days of Mauni Amavasya.

Several hours after the incident took place between 1-2 am, Maha Kumbh DIG Vaibhav Krishna gave the details of the casualties at a press conference here in the evening. "The incident took place due to the pressure of the crowd. The crowd broke barricades and jumped to the other side, crushing those waiting there. Over 90

injured were rushed to the hospital, of whom 30 died," he said.

The officer said 25 of the deceased have been identified. Four of them are from Karnataka and one each from Assam and Gujarat. Among those injured, 36 are undergoing treatment at the hospital and the rest have been sent with their families. Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences to the devotees who lost their family members in the stampede, describing the tragedy as "extremely saddening".

Later at night, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced a three-member judicial commission, comprising Justice Harsh Kumar, former DG

VK Gupta and retired IAS VK Singh to look into the reasons behind the stampede. He also announced an ex gratia of Rs 25 lakh each for the kin of the deceased.

"It is important to get to the bottom of the whole episode on how such a tragedy occurred," a visibly emotional Adityanath said, adding that the chief secretary and DGP would visit the Maha Kumbh on Thursday for an in-depth probe into the tragic incident.

DIG Krishna said barricades have been placed in the mela and akhara areas for lane management but they gave way under the pressure of the jostling. As the barricades broke, people fell on those sitting and waiting for taking the holy

dip during the *brahm muhurt* (early morning time considered auspicious to perform certain activities), he said.

Many ordinary people, including women and children, fell and were crushed. The officer said the government has issued strict directives there will be no VIP protocol in the mela now onwards. According to eyewitness accounts, one of the reasons for the tragedy was the sudden surge of pilgrims at the Sangam — all driven by an obvious desire to take the holy dip at 3 am, the start of the auspicious hour.

After the stampede, Amrit snan, the traditional bathing ritual of akharas, was deferred but it resumed in the afternoon. (REPORTS PAGE 7)

## Food poisoning: 27 students fall sick in Suryapet, Narayanpet

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

At least 27 students were taken ill due to food poisoning reported in two separate hostels in Telangana on Wednesday.

In the Suryapet district headquarters, five students fell sick at the tribal welfare girls' hostel after having lunch. They complained of severe vomiting and visited

a nearby Urban Health Centre around 1 pm. Despite seeking medical attention, their condition did not improve. The hostel authorities shifted them to a private hospital by 4 pm. After receiving treatment, their health was reported stable.

Though the incident occurred at 1 pm, parents were not informed till evening. Details regarding the hospital where the students were

treated were not disclosed to them, leading to confusion and concern.

While officials reported that only one student had a fever and was given a tablet, some students disclosed that others were taken to a private hospital for treatment. The incidents drew the attention of Tribal Welfare Officer Shankar, who reviewed the health status of the students. (SEE PAGE 2)

## MLC election schedule out, voting on Feb 27

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

The schedule for elections to one Graduate and two Teachers MLC constituencies in Telangana has been released, with polling set for February 27 and results to be announced on March 3.

The election notification will be issued on February 3. The Model Code of Conduct comes into force with immediate effect in the districts concerned.

The constituencies going to polls are Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda (Teachers), Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar (Teachers) and Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar (Graduates). (SEE PAGE 2)

## Telangana ryots in protest mode

Agitated over sharp decline in crop prices

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

The plight of farmers, especially those growing groundnut, chilli and red gram crops, in the State highlights the vulnerabilities faced by the agricultural community.

Tensions are mounting as they intensify their protests over the sharp decline in prices of crops.

Emmeshed in a web of severe financial distress, in the absence of support due for them under different heads, including Rythu Bharosa and the prevailing price mechanism far from being remunerative, the farmers are on protest mode organising widespread demonstrations.

While market dynamics play their part in determining prices, the crucial support expected from the State government in ensuring fair pricing and efficient procurement is missing. As February unfolds, the fate of farmers growing key crops hangs in the balance, with thousands of them anxiously awaiting solutions to their escalating problems.

Dharnas and demonstrations continued for the sec-



Farmers argue with police personnel during a protest in Mahabubnagar on Wednesday.

ond day on Wednesday in Mahabubnagar where they ventured to stop even trains on Tuesday.

Groundnut farmers are in fact facing a severe crisis as prices have plummeted. Currently trading between Rs 5,600 and Rs 6,050 a quintal, groundnut prices are considerably below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 6,783 per quintal. The surplus production in recent seasons, coupled with declining export demand, has resulted in an oversupply, causing prices to drop drastically.

Farmers who rely on groundnut as a primary

source of income are particularly hard-hit, finding it increasingly difficult to cover their rising costs of cultivation. As the cost of seed, fertilizer and labour has soared, the financial strain on groundnut farmers has intensified.

Groundnut has been sown in around 22,107 acres in the State as on September 25, 2024. Among the districts, Gadwal stood first in the groundnut-sown area with 10,752 acres, followed by Wanaparthy (7,241 acres), Warangal (1,194 acres), Nagarkurnool (376 acres) and Suryapet (286 acres). (SEE PAGE 2)

## ISRO scores a ton

SRIRAHKOTA

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Wednesday achieved a historic milestone with its 100th mission and revealed an ambitious future plan of crossing the next 100 launches in five years.

Starting off with the SLV in 1979, the space agency crossed the 100-mission mark after 46 years, but what stands out is the PSLV's dominance through the years with 62 missions.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has turned out to be ISRO's most trusted rocket, thanks to its unmatched reliability. While PSLV has been used for 62 missions, GSVL with indigenous cryogenic upper stage comes next with 17. LVM3 (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle MkIII — the heaviest rocket) with 7 and SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle) 3, follow suit.

The others are Reusable Launch Vehicle, TV (Test Vehicle) and PAT (Pad Abort Test). PSLV is often dubbed as the "trusted workhorse of ISRO" by scientists. PTI



ISRO's GSVL-F15 carrying navigation satellite NVS-02, lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. — Photo: PTI

## Hyderabad firm plays key role in satellite launch

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Hyderabad-based Ananth Technologies has played a crucial role in ISRO's historic achievement of its 100th successful launch.

ATL played a crucial role in the mission, a press release said citing its contributions to GSVL F15 and NVS-2. For NVS-2 Subsystems the company delivered critical components, including Attitude and Orbit control electronics, Star sensor Mark-III along with DC-DC converter while for GSVL-F15 subsystems, ATL supplied 40 key subsystems, including Data Acquisition Units, Transponders, Power Modules, Relay units and control modules.

Dr Subba Rao Pavuluri, CMD of ATL, said, "As a long-standing partner of ISRO, Ananth Technologies takes pride in being part of this incredible journey. We have had the privilege of contributing to several of ISRO's missions, providing cutting-edge avionics, systems and solutions that played a pivotal role in the success of these endeavours." (SEE PAGE 2)

## Indians are on a salt overload!

M SAI GOPAL  
 Hyderabad

What is the ideal amount of salt Indians need and how much are they taking on a daily basis?

Well, the answer to this query is not encouraging! Indians consume a lot of salt than what is recommended, primarily due to excessive addition of salt during cooking and by consuming processed food.

All foods naturally contain sodium and the average daily salt requirement for the body can be met by consuming recommended levels of vegetables and fruits per day. However, according to the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the contribution to total dietary intake from food sources is less than 10 per cent and a major amount comes from added salt either through cooking or processing.

Indian food intake data indicates that the average consumption of salt ranges from 3 gm to 10 gm per day in dif-

### Bear in MIND

- On an average, 45% of Indian population consumes more than 5 gm of salt
- Latest WHO recommendations suggest that only 2 gm of salt intake per day per person
- Salt intake can be naturally met by consuming vegetables/fruits without adding table salt
- Cereals, pulses, vegetables, milk; animal and sea foods major sources of sodium
- Beans, lentils, bananas, dry fruits, coconut water are good sources of potassium
- High intake of salt is associated with high blood pressure, related vascular and heart diseases
- High intake of salt may also increase risk of stomach cancer

Per day intake of salt among Indians varies between 3 gm and 10 gm

ferent States with about 45 per cent of the population consuming more than 5 gram per day, according to NIN. However, the current Indian as well as WHO recommendation for sodium intake is 5 gm (1 teaspoon) of common salt per day.

"The WHO recommendation has been reduced from 5-2 gm of salt per day, but the average consumption among Indians is 9.8 gm per

day per person in India. People in India must strive hard to limit salt consumption to reduce the risk of blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases," says Dr Kiran Madhala, public health specialist and senior anesthesiologist at Gandhi Hospital.

Sodium intake can be restricted easily by changing food habits. Further, since taste for salt is an acquired habit, salt consumption

should be restricted from an early age for health benefits in later life.

The average salt intake for the body can be easily met by consuming the recommended level of vegetables (400 gm) and fruits (100 gm) per day. All foods contain sodium and its requirement can be met with minimal added salt intake, NIN said in its 'Dietary Guidelines for Indians'. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Manja kills 19 of 160 rescued birds

T KARNAKAR REDDY  
 Sangareddy

Discarded Chinese manja continued to take a toll on birds with even migrant birds that arrive in Telangana during winter falling prey to the deadly threads.

Volunteers of the Animal Warriors Conservation Society (AWCS), known for rescuing animals and birds across the State, found 17 different migrant birds trapped in Chinese manja at various places since January 1 when the season of Sankranti kite-flying started here. In the last 29 days, AWCS volunteers rescued 160 bird species across



A barn owl trapped in nylon manja being rescued.

Hyderabad and neighbouring districts. Of these, 17 were migrant birds from across the globe. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Bar-headed goose dead at Kistareddypet lake

A bar-headed goose was found dead under suspicious circumstances at Kistareddypet lake in Ameerpet mandal on Wednesday. During the last month, several birds were found dead under mysterious circumstances in the lake. Bar-headed geese, which are migrants to Telangana, cross the Himalayas from Tibet, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia. The AWCS got a call from a citizen about the incident on Wednesday. The citizen informed them that two birds were found unconscious. When the team reached the spot, they found one dead while another one was not traceable. AWCS member Santoshi Nair said the bird was frothing and died before they could shift it to their rehab centre. She said it could be due to poisoning or high levels of pollution in the water.

