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## State govt explores ways to raise funds

All departments told to tighten purses and clear dues

PS DILEEP  
HYDERABAD

To fund its electoral promises, the Congress-led Telangana government has launched efforts to improve revenue mobilisation and ensure effective collection of taxes as well as arrears from various revenue sources. Officials from all departments have been instructed to submit proposals to enhance revenue mobilisation and explore additional resources.

**Bhatti holding department-wise meetings**

Ahead of presenting the State Budget for 2024-25, the Finance Department has commenced the necessary exercise. While all departments have already submitted their proposals for the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has commenced holding department-wise meetings to discuss these proposals over the next week. Officials hinted at discontinuing cer-

To fulfil its poll promises, Cong govt directs departments to submit proposals to enhance revenue mobilisation and explore additional resources

tain existing schemes and replacing them with new ones as per the new Congress government's priorities.

**Budget of certain schemes to be slashed**

"Besides cutting down the budget for certain existing programmes and schemes, all departments have been instructed to explore fresh options for additional revenue resources, including tightening the tax net, focusing on collecting arrears from various resources and making optimal usage of the funds under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes," a senior official of the Finance Department said.

Sources said the State Budget was likely to be presented with an outlay of around Rs 3 lakh crore for

the 2024-25 fiscal. This is marginally higher than the previous fiscal's budget of Rs 2.9 lakh crore. At the same time, with the Lok Sabha elections scheduled for March-April, sources said the State government was not keen on imposing any tax hikes immediately.

**Improve tax collection**

Senior officials from the Industries, Revenue, Commercial Taxes, Mines, Housing Corporation, Housing Board, HMDA, TSIC and other departments have been directed to clear pending dues owed to the government. Those from the Commercial Taxes, Stamps and Registrations, Municipal Administration, Panchayat Raj and other departments were instructed to improve their

tax collection and ensure the collection of every paise due to the State government, apart from ensuring that those who were using loopholes and other methods to avoid paying tax were identified and brought into the tax net.

**Special orders for departments with land pools**

Departments with rich land pools, including the TSIC, HMDA and Industries, were instructed to realise and deposit the income generated from land auctions and leases. Specific directives were issued to ensure the utilisation of industrial parks, with officials instructed to take necessary steps and prepare proposals on income generation.

On the other hand, all government departments in the State have been asked to tighten their purses and avoid unnecessary expenditure. They were also directed against clearing major bills without prior approvals from the higher authorities.

## 9 killed as Pak strikes Iran

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday conducted "precision military strikes" against what it called "terrorist hideouts" in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province, which killed nine people.

This comes a day after Islamabad recalled its envoy from Tehran and suspended all planned high-level bilateral visits following Iranian missile attacks in Balochistan. "This (Thursday) morning, Pakistan undertook a series of highly coordinated and specifically targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts in Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran," Pakistan's Foreign Office said. It said a number of terrorists were killed during the intelligence-based operation — code-named 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'. In Persian language, 'marg bar' means 'death to' and 'Sarmachar' means guerrilla in Baloch.

The Inter-Services Public Relations, the Pakistan military's media wing, in a statement said that the precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons. It said "hideouts used by terrorist organisations Balochistan Liberation Army and Balochistan Liberation Front were struck". (SEE PAGES 2, 9)

## 14 die as boat overturns

12 students, two teachers drown in lake near Vadodara



A rescue and search operation under way after a boat overturned in a lake near Vadodara on Thursday. — Photo: PTI

VADODARA

Twelve students and two teachers died after a boat capsized in Harni lake on the outskirts of Vadodara city in Gujarat on Thursday, while 18 students and two teachers were rescued, State Minister Harsh Sanghavi said.

Earlier, the PSO of Harni police station had put the toll at 16, comprising 14 students and two teachers. Those on board the ill-fated boat were on a picnic when the tragedy occurred in the afternoon. "A total of 18 stu-

dents and two teachers were rescued. We have learnt only 10 students on board were wearing life jackets. It proves organisers were at fault," Gujarat Minister of State for Home Sanghavi said.

An FIR under Sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the IPC has been registered and two persons have been arrested, Sanghavi informed.

Teams have been formed to nab other culprits, he added. (SEE PAGE 2)

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Nawaz wants to 're-build Pakistan'  
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Swiatek survives Collins' onslaught  
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ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

Hollywood debut

Pranutan is cast opposite actor Rahsaan Noor



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## Come clean on Adani: BRS to CM

STATE BUREAU  
Hyderabad

The signing of multi-crore deals by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy with Gautam Adani for Telangana — even as Reddy's party leader Rahul Gandhi slams Adani — has been called out by the BRS, which has demanded that the Congress explain its contradictory approach towards Adani before the elections and after assuming power.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao, addressing party cadre at Telangana Bhavan here on Thursday, hit out at the Congress government, pointing out how Revanth Reddy, who earlier criticised Adani as a benefactor of the BJP, was now rubbing shoulders with the businessman at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

Asking the Congress to come clean on its stand on Adani, especially when Revanth Reddy and Rahul Gandhi appeared to be contradicting each other, Rama Rao called upon the party cadre to expose the false promises and misinformation campaign of the Con-

“**Revanth, who earlier criticised Adani as a BJP benefactor, is now rubbing shoulders with him at WEF**”  
— KT RAMA RAO, BRS

gress before the people of Telangana. "Rahul Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Adani are one. Revanth Reddy, who called Adani a thief during the recent Assembly elections, is now shaking hands with him in Davos. The Congress is known for such opportunistic and decadent politics," he said, asking why it has changed its stance on Adani.

Former Minister T Harish Rao, speaking at a party meeting in Gajwel, said Revanth Reddy was hugging Adani, while Rahul Gandhi was alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was behind Adani's corrupt activities. (SEE PAGES 2, 5)

## 'Domestic air traffic to hit 300 mn by 2030'

CITY BUREAU  
Hyderabad

Underlining the growth of the country's civil aviation industry, Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia estimated the number of domestic air passengers to surge to 300 million annually by 2030.

The exponential growth of the sector from 153 million in 2023 will still leave the country's market to be one of the most under-penetrated, he said. The Minister was in the city for the inauguration of Wings India 2024 which kick-started at the Begumpet Airport. Along with Gen Dr VK Singh and other global Ministers and industry experts, he launched multiple projects and collaborations.

Along with passenger traffic, the existing 149 airports and waterdromes will increase to over 200 by 2030. Scindia further noted that India, being the fifth largest civil aviation market in the world, has witnessed a 15 per cent growth in domestic air passenger traffic, while international numbers saw a 6.1 per cent hike. On the fleet size in the country, he said, "Today, India has become the largest purchaser of air-



An aircraft on display on the inaugural day of Wings India 2024 on Thursday at the Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad. — Photo: Surya Sridhar

craft in the world, after the US and China. Our fleet size is going to grow from 713 to upwards of 2,000 in the next decade." Scindia, who also launched the Udan 5.3 scheme, said the regional connectivity initiative has

transformed the sector with close to 517 new routes operationalised, which was almost impossible in the past.

**On flight delays, cancellations**  
In case an aircraft is di-

verted, Scindia during an interaction with the media on the sidelines of Wings India 2024, insisted on the SOPs being followed to the teeth, wherein airlines and airport authorities disembark the passengers and settle them in a

comfortable waiting area. Further, the DGCA has also given a green signal to airlines for the cancellation of flights that are expected to be delayed beyond three hours. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Ram Lalla idol placed in Garbha Griha amid chants

AYODHYA

As part of the elaborate rituals leading up to the Pran Pratishtha ceremony on January 22, the idol of Ram Lalla was placed in the Garbha Griha of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Thursday amid joyous chants of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

In a significant prelude to the upcoming ceremony, a special puja was held in the sanctum sanctorum before the idol was brought inside with the help of a crane on



The idol of Lord Ram being brought inside the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. — Photo: ANI

Wednesday night. The video shared by Sharad Sharma, media in-charge

of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, showed the joyous atmosphere at the

temple. The statue of Ram Lalla sculpted by Karnataka sculptor Arun Yogiraj has been selected for installation at Ram Temple. "The Murti sculpted on Krishna Shila, by renowned sculptor Arun Yogiraj, has been selected as Shri Vighraha of Bhagwan Shri Ramlalla Sarkar," Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra announced on X. Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra is the trust entrusted with the construction and management of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya. ANI

**Half-day holiday for Central govt offices**

**NEW DELHI:** All Central government offices across the country will be closed for half a day on January 22 due to the Ram temple consecration ceremony, a Personnel Ministry order said. "For employees to participate in the celebrations, it has been decided that all Central government offices, institutions and industrial establishments will be closed for half day," it said. PTI

## Navy rescues cargo vessel under attack

NEW DELHI

In a swift operation, a guided missile destroyer of the Indian Navy intercepted a cargo vessel with 22 crew members, including nine Indians, little over an hour after the Marshall Island-flagged ship came under a drone strike in the Gulf of Aden on Wednesday night.

The strike on cargo vessel MV Genco Picardy around 60 nautical miles South of Port Aden came amid increasing global con-

cerns over attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea. There was no report of any casualties and the fire on the vessel was contained, officials said.

The Indian Navy's frontline warship INS Visakhapatnam responded within an hour to the distress call by MV Genco Picardy following the drone attack at 2311 hours on Wednesday, they said. The Indian Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialists boarded the vessel on Thursday. (SEE PAGE 2)