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Ajit Pawar faction is the real NCP, says Election Commission **page 8**

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Hockey player Varun booked under POCSO **page 8**



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Security beefed up ahead of elections in Pakistan **page 9**

KCR to lead fight for Krishna water rights

Public meeting in Nalgonda on February 13; Says no compromise on riparian rights of Telangana



BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao addressing the party meeting at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Sounding a stern warning to the Central and State governments that Telangana would stand to lose a great deal in terms of its entitlement to Krishna river water once the operational control of Nagarjuna Sagar and Sri-sailam projects was conceded to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao on Tuesday declared that he would go to any extent to safeguard the interests of Telangana.

Appealing to the party workers to gear up for a new phase of agitation, he made

it clear that there would not be any compromise on riparian rights of Telangana that were hard earned.

Emotions ran high at the Telangana Bhavan, which was thronged by party workers in large numbers as the party chief returned to the BRS headquarters after a gap of three months following his recovery from a total hip replacement surgery. He was accorded a rousing welcome by them.

Chandrashekhara Rao then had a detailed interaction with elected representatives from the BRS, party leaders and functionaries from Khammam, Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Ranga Reddy - all part of the com-

mand area of the Krishna basin projects, and dispelled their fears of deprivation in case of the projects being handed over to the KRMB.

As a first step in the direction of initiating the rank and file of the party into battle mode, he announced that a public meeting would be held in Nalgonda on February 13 with massive mobilisation of the public from all parts. He said BRS workers would be playing a decisive role in spearheading the new phase of the agitation intended to fight the government for Krishna water. The State government, because of its ill-advised moves had put the districts in the command area of Krishna projects at stake. A resolution was adopted at the meeting pledging all support to the fight for the protecting the State's right over the Krishna waters.

The BRS had fought relentlessly for the State's share of the river water as part of the Statehood movement. Even after realising Telangana, the BRS government did not part with its control over the joint projects and their outlets during the last 10 years. Once the State control over Nagarjuna Sagar dam was handed over to the KRMB, Telangana would be in for a trying time as it would not be able to meet its drinking water needs, Rao cautioned.

Firm eyeing Musi river project under scanner

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

A firm that reportedly came forward and "expressed interest" to execute the Musi Riverfront Development Project, the Meinhardt Group, is involved in a scam, known as the Meinhardt scam, in Jharkhand apart from facing a probe in Pakistan for embezzling billions of rupees and cheating investors for nearly 20 years.

A delegation of the Meinhardt Group from Singapore led by CEO Omar Shahzad had met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy at the Secretariat on Tuesday and expressed interest in executing the Musi Riverfront Development Project, with Revanth Reddy, according to an official statement, asking them to design models of the projects to be adopted for the Musi project.

However, it has now come to light that the Meinhardt Group is involved in a

The Meinhardt Group which called on the Chief Minister, is involved in a scam in Jharkhand and is also accused of embezzling funds in Pakistan

scam, known as the Meinhardt scam, in Jharkhand, where the Anti-Corruption Bureau is launching a probe into alleged irregularities by former Jharkhand Chief Minister and BJP national vice-president Raghubar Das and others in the appointment of Meinhardt Singapore Private Limited as a consultant for the Ranchi sewerage-drainage project in 2005. Even the CAG had pointed out anomalies in the functioning of Meinhardt with regard to surveys it conducted, while courts had questioned the eligibility of the firm.

That is not all. The Singapore-based firm is facing a major probe in Pakistan, in what is being labelled by the media as the Creek Marina scam. In September 2023, Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) registered a case against the owners of Creek Marina — a multi-billion rupee residential project launched by Meinhardt more than 18 years ago in partnership with the Defence Housing Authority — and senior officials of local private banks for their alleged involvement in embezzling billions of rupees of local buyers and investors. According to media reports, Meinhardt Singapore PTE Ltd (MSPL), failed to complete the project and hand over the flats to buyers and investors despite the passage of almost 19 years. (SEE PAGE 2)

Dastakari Haat mela till Feb 11

HYDERABAD | PAGE 02

King Charles III has cancer

WORLD | PAGE 09



The big factor between two sides

SPORT | PAGE 10



ENTERTAINMENT
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Adah in naxal story

Bastar-The Naxal Story, has just been unveiled



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11 killed, 174 injured in explosion at MP firecracker unit

BHOPAL/HARDA

An explosion and subsequent blaze at a firecrackers factory in Madhya Pradesh's Harda town killed 11 people and left 174 others injured on Tuesday, officials said.

A person has been detained in connection with the incident, a senior official said. The incident occurred in the Bairagarh locality on Magardha Road, on the outskirts of Harda town, approximately 150km from the state capital, Bhopal, prompting the state government to seek Army's helicopters for evacuation.

"So far, 174 people have been rescued from the incident site -- 34 were referred to Bhopal and Hoshangabad, while 140 were undergoing treatment in district hospital. One death has been reported from among the people who were referred, and 10 deaths have been reported from the district hospital," Narmadapuram Commissioner Pawan Sharma said. "The fire has been doused, and debris is being removed from the site. Investigation into the matter is underway, but currently, the rescue mission is our priority." The cause of the blast was not yet known, a senior official earlier said. The Madhya Pradesh government ordered a probe. Condolences poured in from across the country led by President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (SEE PAGE 2)



Drugs worth Rs 8 crore seized

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Habit forming drugs valued at Rs. 8 crore were seized and a Nigerian was nabbed in a joint operation by the Telangana State Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TSNAB) and the Punjagutta police on Tuesday.

The police seized 557 grams of cocaine, 390 grams of ecstasy pills, 21 grams of heroin, 21 grams of weed (Marijuana), a total of 105

grams of charas, seven grams of amphetamine, eight mobile phones and Rs. 5.40 lakh in cash. Acting on a tip off, the TSNAB caught the Nigerian, Iwuala Udoka Stanley, who arrived to India on a business visa in November 2009 and since then was illegally living in different parts of the country. Stanley started readymade clothes business in Mumbai and realised that the income was not sufficient. (SEE PAGE 2)

Hyderabad student attacked in US

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

A student from the city, pursuing master's degree at a university in Chicago, United States, was injured in an attack by armed robbers a little distance away from his house at Campbell Avenue, according to reports here on Tuesday. The victim, Syed Mazahir Ali is a resident of Langer Houz. The attack took place on February 4, when Ali was walking back home along with his friend, when three men chased and attacked him before snatching away his mobile phone. The entire incident was captured on a neighbour's CCTV camera. (SEE PAGE 2)

UCC: U'khand to regulate live-in relationship

Exempts tribal community from proposed law

DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand government on Tuesday tabled in the assembly the Uniform Civil Code Bill, the first such move in any State after Independence that could be followed by similar legislation in other BJP-run States.

The State's tribal community is exempted from the purview of the proposed law, which also mandates registration of live-in relationships. Children born of such relation will be considered legitimate and deserted women partner entitled to maintenance from their partners.

Coming just ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Uttarakhand Bill ticks off an important item on the BJP agenda — a common law on marriage, divorce, land, property and inheritance for all citizens, irrespective of their religion.

It is likely to be studied and implemented by BJP governments in States such as Gujarat and Assam. Only Goa has a common civil law, in operation since the Portuguese rule. As it sets out common provisions, the Bill effectively bans practices like polygamy -- without

Common law in the offing

THE BILL PROPOSES A COMMON LAW ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, LAND, PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE FOR ALL CITIZENS IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR RELIGION IN UTTARAKHAND, EXCLUDING THE SCHEDULED TRIBES

- Effectively bans practices such as polygamy
- Registration of live-in relationships mandatory
- Live-in partners must not be under 18
- If any one of them is under 21, the registrar is bound to inform their parents or guardians.
- They will face a higher penalty if they submit false information to the registrar
- Children born from live-in relationship will be considered legitimate
- Deserted women partner entitled to maintenance from their partners
- Grants adoption rights to everyone, including Muslim women
- It seeks to ban practices such as halala and iddat (Islamic practices a woman must go through after a divorce or the death of the husband)
- Equal property rights for sons and daughters
- Eliminates distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children
- Equal treatment for adopted and biologically born children
- In the event of a person's death, UCC ensures equal property rights for the spouse, children, and parents

The Bill stipulates penalty of up to a month in prison or a fine of **Rs 10,000**, or both, if the partners do not register within a month

MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW BOARD OBJECTS
 All India Muslim Personal Law Board disapproved of the Uniform Civil Code and questioned the nature of the 'uniform code' if any community is exempted

specifically naming them. Marriages can be solemnised through separate rituals followed by different communities. On Tuesday, the second day of a special session of the Assembly, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami entered the House with a copy of the original Constitution. (SEE PAGE 2)

Confusion over 200 units free power scheme

ANIL KUMAR
 Hyderabad

Even as the State government has announced plans to soon launch the Gruha Jyothi scheme, which promises 200 units of free electricity, confusion prevails among citizens as to who all will be eligible.

With the State government yet to issue guidelines for the scheme, which is a component of the Maha Lakshmi scheme, misconceptions too are galore among the people. Though the Congress party during its poll campaigning promised to provide free power to all households that consume less than 200 units, there



Though Congress promised free power to all households that consume less than 200 units, there is a talk that only those Below Poverty Line will be eligible

is widespread talk that only those who have Below Poverty Line cards will be eligible for scheme.

There is also confusion about whether tenants are eligible or not. What is the status of people from other parts of the country who are residing in Telangana? What will happen to those who applied for

White ration cards during the Praja Palana programme? Will this scheme apply to all of them? Are only people who belong to Telangana eligible? Officials, as of now, are not able to give clarity on these issues, creating more confusion and worry among the people. Interestingly, the Maha

Lakshmi portal clearly mentions that the beneficiaries must apply through the Praja Palana application form by downloading it, creating confusion as the Praja Palana application receiving process ended on January 6. Whether the same application submitted during Praja Palana will be considered or a fresh application needs to be submitted afresh is not clear.

Officials say that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will make an announcement on the Gruha Jyothi scheme in the upcoming Assembly session and that clarity will emerge on the terms and conditions of eligibility only after that. (SEE PAGE 2)