

HYDERABAD
Won't tolerate officials' negligence in performing duties: Mayor **page 3**

NATION
Grave constitutional crisis in Delhi, says Kejri **page 7**



WORLD
26 combatants killed in Papua New Guinea tribal violence **page 9**

Farmers reject govt's proposal

Say will peacefully march to Delhi at 11 am tomorrow



Farmers gather at the Shambhu border during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest, near Patiala on Monday. — Photo: PTI

CHANDIGARH

Farmers leaders taking part in the 'Delhi Chalo' agitation on Monday rejected the Centre's proposal of procuring pulses, maize and cotton at MSP by government agencies for five years, saying it was not in their interest and announced that they will march towards the national capital on Wednesday.

"We appeal to the government to either resolve our issues or remove barricades and allow us to proceed to Delhi to protest peacefully," farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said.

In the fourth round of talks with farmer leaders, a panel of three Union Ministers on Sunday proposed buying of pulses, maize and cotton crops by government agencies at MSP for five years after entering into an agreement with farmers. Earlier on Monday, Samyukta Kisan Morcha, which spearheaded the 2020-21 stir, rejected the

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We appeal to the Centre to either resolve our issues or remove the barricades and allow us to proceed to Delhi
— SARWAN SINGH PANDHER, Farmer leader

Centre's proposal, saying it seeks to "divert and dilute" the farmers' demand for MSP and they will accept nothing less than the 'C-2 plus 50 per cent' formula for MSP as recommended in the Swaminathan Commission report. Jagjit Singh Dallewal, a leader of SKM (Non-Political), which is spearheading 'Delhi Chalo', said, "After holding discussion, it has been decided that the proposal is not in the interest of farmers and we reject it." (SEE PAGE 2)

TS farmers in a fix as groundwater depletes

Average levels down to 7.72 mbgl in January, lowest in half a decade



Farmers across Telangana are a worried lot as the State's groundwater table dries out.

PS DILEEP
 HYDERABAD

Telangana's water crisis has deepened as the average groundwater levels plummeted to 7.72 m below ground level (mbgl) in January, the lowest in half a decade.

Alarming declines exceeding 3 mbgl have been witnessed in Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda and Vikarabad districts. The previous lowest average groundwater level in the State was witnessed in January 2020, at 8.88 mbgl.

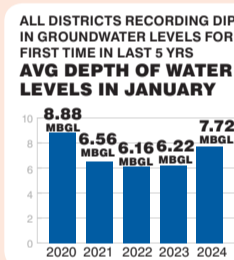
Over the last five years, the groundwater levels hovered around 6 mbgl but plummeted by a massive 1.5 m this year, posing a major challenge to the State. The average depth of water lev-

Alarming decline

- In last 5 yrs, groundwater levels hovered around 6 mbgl but plummeted by massive 1.5 m this year
- Over 27.5 lakh agricultural connections pumping water from agri borewells
- More than half of total cropped area in TS dependent on groundwater for crop cultivation

WORST-HIT DISTRICTS
 Declines exceeding 3 mbgl witnessed in

VIKARABAD	11.98 mbgl
NALGONDA	8.68 mbgl
NAGARKURNOOL	3.57 mbgl



GOVT FEELS THE HEAT

- Situation affecting drinking water supply in many areas
- State govt forced to take up comprehensive survey to identify villages, habitations facing drinking water crisis
- Recently allocated Rs 1 cr for each Assembly constituency from Chief Minister's Special Funds to address drinking water needs

“
We are preparing a contingency plan to address the drinking water shortage in the ensuing summer. Plans are afoot to make optimum usage of water from all available reservoirs to meet the drinking water needs
— OFFICIAL, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development

FARMERS FORCED TO DRILL BOREWELLS
 In Nalgonda district, over 70 new borewells drilled in tiny village of Koppole alone

At least 50 new borewells dug up in each village in ayacut areas

Borewell drillers have hiked prices from Rs 60 per ft to Rs 70 due to increased demand (REPORT PAGE 5)

els from the surface in Telangana during January was recorded as 8.88 mbgl in 2020, 6.56 mbgl in 2021, 6.16 mbgl in 2022, 6.22 mbgl in 2023 and 7.72 mbgl in 2024.

The depleting groundwater levels have been posing a

threat to agricultural operations, which were already affected due to decreased water availability in projects on the Krishna and Godavari rivers. With more than 27.5 lakh agricultural connections for pumping water

from agricultural borewells, more than half of the total cropped area in Telangana is dependent on groundwater for crop cultivation. According to the latest groundwater level reports from January this year, all

districts have witnessed a dip in groundwater levels for the first time in the last five years. Vikarabad district registered an average groundwater level of 11.98 mbgl, which is the deepest in the State. (SEE PAGE 2)

C'garh mayoral poll: SC to scrutinise ballot papers

NEW DELHI

Voicing its deep concern over "horse-trading", the Supreme Court said on Monday it will examine on Tuesday the ballot papers of the Chandigarh mayoral poll and video recording of the counting, saying instead of ordering fresh polls, it may consider declaration of results based on votes already cast.

The BJP won the polls on January 30 defeating the comfortably placed AAP-Congress alliance candidate after the Returning Officer declared as invalid eight

Also calls for video of counting to be examined, voices deep concern over horse-trading

votes of the coalition partners, drawing accusations of tampering with ballots.

Manoj Sonkar of the BJP defeated Kuldeep Kumar after polling 16 votes against his rival's 12 to bag the Mayor's post. Sonkar, however, resigned subsequently, while three AAP councillors

defected to the BJP. "We are deeply concerned about the horse-trading which is taking place," a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, and directed the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to depute a judicial officer to bring the records safely to New Delhi and present them before it on Tuesday.

"We will list this tomorrow (Tuesday) and see the ballot papers and decide what to do. This whole business of horse trading is disturbing," it said. PTI

Pawar faction can use 'NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar' name

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed that the Election Commission's order of February 7 allotting 'Nationalist Congress Party - Sharadchandra Pawar' as the party name for the Sharad Pawar faction will continue till further orders. It sought a response from the Ajit Pawar-led faction on a plea of Sharad Pawar against the February 6 order of the EC recognising the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister-led group as the real NCP. PTI

Fresh Group-I notification out, 563 posts to be filled

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Telangana State Public Services Commission (TSPSC) on Monday issued a fresh Group-I notification to fill 563 posts across various government departments.

The earlier notification, which was released by the BRS government in April 2022 for the first time after separate statehood was achieved, stands cancelled.

According to the new notification, applications have been invited online from qualified candidates through proforma application, which will be made available on www.tspsc.gov.in from February 23 to March 14 for various categories of posts for Group-I services, the new general recruitment notification issued by the State government stated.

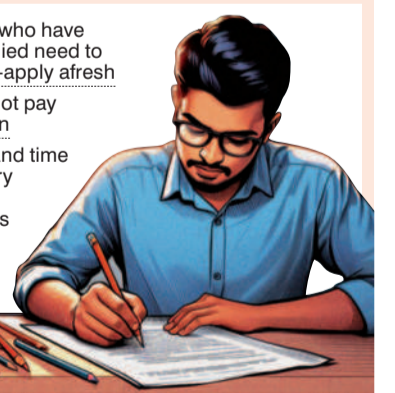
Candidates can start submitting their Group-I applications from February 23 to March 14. The edit option for those who have submitted their applications will remain open from 10 am on March 23 to 5 pm on March 27. The preliminary test (objective type) will be held between September and October this year.

Those candidates, who had applied earlier for Group-I services in 2022 (which is now cancelled),

Key dates

- FEB 23-MARCH 14:** Submission of online applications
- 5 PM, MARCH 14:** Deadline for receipt of online applications
- 10 AM, MARCH 23 TO 5 PM, MARCH 27:** Application edit option
- MAY-JUNE:** Preliminary Test (objective type)
- SEPT-OCT:** Main Examination (conventional type)

- Candidates who have already applied need to login and re-apply afresh
- They need not pay any fee again
- Exact date and time of preliminary and main examinations will be released at the earliest



FOR DETAILS visit www.tspsc.gov.in

Two Hyd-based blood banks lose licence

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Telangana State Drug Control Administration (TSDCA) on Monday cancelled the licences of two blood banks in Hyderabad — Sri Kara Hospital Blood Centre at Madinaguda and New Life Educational Society Blood Centre at Darulshifa — for the illegal sale of human plasma.

It also conducted raids at another blood bank, Haemo Service Laboratories, which is located in a residential building at Bhavani Nagar, Moosapet,



The New Life Educational Society Blood Centre at Darulshifa and Sri Kara Hospital Blood Centre at Madinaguda.

and detected a huge stock of human plasma bags that were stored in freezers. An individual, identified as R Raghavendra Naik,

had been operating Haemo Service Laboratories within the apartment, illegally collecting plasma from various blood banks

(blood centres) and stockpiling them for sale in an unauthorised manner, the DCA said.

The TSDCA drug inspectors detected that Sri Kara Hospital Blood Bank and New Life Educational Society Blood Centre were illegally selling plasma to Naik and not adhering to the norms.

After inspections, the TSDCA issued show-cause notices to Sri Kara Hospital Blood Centre and New Life Educational Society Blood Centre for the illegal sale of plasma from the blood bank. (SEE PAGE 2)

The many 'varnams' of Varnam

HYDERABAD | PAGE 02

Navalny's widow vows to fight

WORLD | PAGE 09



Bumrah likely to be rested

SPORT | PAGE 10



ENTERTAINMENT
 PAGE 12

Ajay looks intense

Shaitaan all set to hit the screens on March 8



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 130
Retail live	Rs. 152
With skin	Rs. 220
Skinless	Rs. 251
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 73

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