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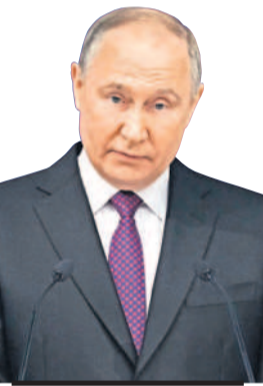
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Fashion forward

Alia Bhatt walks in floral saree at Met Gala 2024



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 140
Retail live	Rs. 162
With skin	Rs. 235
Skinless	Rs. 267
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 63

'Modi hatched plot to arrest me in graft case'

KCR says since they couldn't implicate him, they arrested Kavitha in vengeance

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had orchestrated a conspiracy to arrest him on corruption charges. However, the attempt failed as no evidence of corruption could be found, he said, adding that now, the Congress government in Telangana was trying to file cases to malign and suppress his party.

In an interview with a vernacular media channel, 'ETV', Chandrashekhara Rao said Modi had tried his best to implicate him in corruption cases, just like the BJP had targeted Arvind Kejriwal and Hemant Soren. However, with the BJP failing to find any evidence of any corruption, the attempts turned futile. On the arrest of his daughter and BRS MLC K Kavitha, he said it was a "vengeance arrest", since he had sent a police team after BJP's BL Santosh for attempting to topple the democratically elected BRS government in Telangana. He also said her arrest was proof that there was no collusion between the BJP and the BRS, as the Congress was alleging.

Stating that Modi's time had come to an end, Chandrashekhara Rao said people were not ready to tolerate Modi anymore as he was speaking as per his whims and attempting to create a communal divide. "If the BJP is so strong, the Prime Minister would not need to stoke communal sentiments," he said on the BJP's claims of '400 paar'.

Predicting the emergence of a coalition government at the national level, with significant roles for the BRS and other regional parties, he hinted at a decline in



Leader of Opposition and BRS chief K Chandrashekhara Rao during a roadshow in Kamareddy on Tuesday.

BJP's influence, especially in South India where the party was unlikely to win more than 10 seats. On the BJP's claims of spending crores of rupees for the development of Telangana, the BRS supremo dared Modi for an open debate in this regard. He stated that Telangana's contribution to the nation was greater than what the Centre gave to the State in terms of funds.

He also expressed concern over the governance of the Congress in Telangana, stating that within just five months, people were already disappointed. He remained optimistic about his party's prospects in the Lok Sabha elections, asserting that the BRS would secure at least 12 seats and play a pivotal role in forming a coalition government at the Centre. (SEE PAGE 2)

Where is State revenue going, KCR asks govt

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Lambasting the Congress over its failure to fulfil its poll promises in the last five months, Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao on Tuesday sought to know what the State's revenue was being spent for.

As broken promises were not enough, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy stopped the disbursement of Rythu Bandhu financial assistance to farmers by conspiring to lodge a complaint with the Election Commission of India and getting orders im-

posing a temporary ban, he said. Campaigning for BRS Zaheerabad MP candidate Gali Anil Kumar in Kamareddy on Tuesday, Chandrashekhara Rao asked the public whether the government gave Rythu Bandhu to farmers, Rs 2,500 and two-wheelers to women, Rs 4,000 monthly allowance to unemployed youth, Rs 4,000 pensions to senior citizens, and other benefits under various schemes promised by the Congress government.

When the crowd responded with a "No", he asked the State government where the revenue earned

by the State in the last five months had gone. "If the Congress is not spending its revenue on public welfare and development programmes, where did it go? What are they spending on?" he asked, stating that the Congress had not only failed to deliver its promises but had also discontinued welfare and development programmes initiated by the previous BRS government and deprived access to basic needs of people, including drinking water and power supply. He reminded that people never faced such challenges in nearly 10 years of BRS rule. (SEE PAGES 2, 4)

KCR, the true-blue messiah of minorities

RS PRAVEEN KUMAR

Muslims from Telangana State have had a magnificent ten years. They heaved a sigh of relief after statehood was achieved. After enduring tumultuous and discriminatory governance during the undivided Andhra Pradesh days, the new statehood ushered in a period of hope and prosperity for them. What made this time more memorable was that the newly-formed State would be under the leadership of the BRS and, more importantly, a proven secular leader like K Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR).

A key benefit of having KCR at the helm of the State's affairs was his ability to counter the communal riot agendas often associated with the Congress party. This meant that the Muslim community in Telangana could be heard and attended to, unlike the previous years when Congress leaders called the shots and disregarded the presence of minorities.

The BRS provided a secular government where KCR actively worked for the betterment of all minorities, introducing schemes specifically designed for them.

This commitment to inclusivity is why Muslims remained loyal to KCR, even during the run-up to the Assembly elections when Congress leader A Revanth Reddy attempted to court their votes. It was clear to the Muslim community that in KCR, they had a leader they could trust. This resulted in overwhelming support for BRS candidates in the Assembly elections, with Muslims enjoying numerous privileges during the BRS rule. In Hyderabad alone, BRS won 16 of the 24 seats, while Congress failed to secure even a single victory. The people from the capital city saw no reason to turn away from KCR's proven track record of secular governance.

Chandrashekhara Rao's approach towards minorities was in stark contrast to that of A Revanth Reddy's Congress. While Revanth Reddy has drawn criticism for not accommodating a single Muslim leader in his Cabinet, KCR's BRS appointed Mahmood Ali as Deputy Chief Minister in 2014 and made him the Home Minister in 2018, thereby instilling confidence among the minorities. (SEE PAGE 2)

Over 63% turnout in phase-3; violence in WB

NEW DELHI

Over 63 per cent voter turnout was recorded on Tuesday in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections in 93 constituencies spread over 11 States and Union Territories with stray incidents of violence in West Bengal.

Assam recorded the highest turnout at 77.06% followed by Goa at 75.13% and West Bengal at 73.96%, while Uttar Pradesh witnessed the lowest at 57.34%,

with Bihar at 58.16%, Gujarat at 57.62% and Maharashtra at 61.44% doing slightly better, according to the figures from Election Commission at 10.40 pm. The overall voting percentage was 63.53 per cent.

Among other States and UTs, Chhattisgarh recorded 70.05% polling, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu 68.89%, Karnataka 69.65%, and Madhya Pradesh 66.05%, according to the Election Commission. PTI

EC halts disbursement of Rythu Bandhu

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday directed the Telangana government to defer payments under the Rythu Bandhu scheme till Lok Sabha polls are held in the State on May 13. Interestingly, the orders came after State officials informed that Rythu Bandhu assistance of over Rs 2,400 crore was released by the government to farmers.

The ECI action came after N Venukumar lodged a complaint with the Commission, which issued orders to Telangana Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj, pointing out that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had violated the model code of conduct by announcing that Rythu Bandhu (earlier Rythu Bandhu) would be disbursed on or before May 9.

During the 'Jana Jata Sabha' in Kothagudem on Saturday, the Chief Minister openly declared that Rythu Bandhu disbursement would be completed by May 8. To this effect, he even challenged BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao. Venukumar had lodged a complaint with

Directs govt to defer payments till polls, says CM Revanth Reddy violated model code of conduct

ECI on Monday pointing out that this was a violation of the MCC.

'Clear violation'
 "In the above premise and a clear violation of Model Code of Conduct by Revanth Reddy, President Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee and star campaigner and Chief Minister, the Commission directed that disbursement of balance instalment under the Rythu Bandhu scheme for Rabi season of 2023 will be effected only after the completion of the poll in the State of Telangana on 13.05.2024," the Commission said.

The decision of the Commission was to be communicated to the Telangana government immediately and a compliance report was to be submitted to the Commission by 5 pm on Tuesday, the letter said.

Four dead as rains wreak havoc in State

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Bringing much-needed respite from the sweltering heat, thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and gusty winds, struck several places in the State on Tuesday. However, the respite was not without damage for others.

In three separate incidents, four people, including a fruit vendor, were killed on Tuesday. While a young farmer was killed in a lightning strike at Kukunurpally mandal in Siddipet district, two others died in a

wall collapse at Railapur village of Medak district. In another incident, a fruit vendor was electrocuted at Bahadurpura in Hyderabad.

The rains left a trail of destruction across agricultural fields, where mango crop was damaged in several acres, while paddy brought for procurement at purchase centres was drenched in several areas. Power supply disruptions were also reported across the State as the winds uprooted trees and electric poles. The climate changed suddenly after noon at several places and overcast conditions were witnessed. (SEE PAGES 2, 4)



A biker makes his way amid rain on a waterlogged road in the city on Tuesday. — Photo: Anand Dharmana

SC stays HC order on Bengal jobs scam

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Calcutta High Court order invalidating the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff made by the State's School Service Commission (SSC) in State-run and State-aided schools.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, permitted the CBI to

continue with its investigation and probe even members of the State Cabinet.

The top court, however, asked the CBI not to take any precipitate action like arresting a suspect during the investigation. Earlier in the day, it termed the alleged scam as a "systemic fraud" and said the State authorities were duty-bound to maintain digitised records pertaining to the appointment of teachers and non-teaching staff. The top

court was hearing a batch of petitions challenging the Calcutta HC's April 22.

"Public job is so scarce... Nothing remains if the faith of the public goes. This is systemic fraud. Public jobs are extremely scarce today and are looked at for social mobility. What remains in the system if their appointments are also maligned? People will lose faith, how do you countenance this?" the CJI asked the lawyers representing the State. PTI

Mamata calls MCC 'Modi code of conduct'

PURULIYA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has turned a blind eye to the allegations against BJP leaders that they indulge in hate speeches during campaigns, converting the Model Code of Conduct to "Modi code of conduct".

She also claimed that Prime Minister Modi and other top BJP leaders consider only themselves as Hindus, and they do not think about the other communities. Modi and other BJP leaders by their "hate-filled speeches" are intimidating lower caste Hindus, minorities and other marginalised sections, but the EC is silent, she alleged. PTI