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 Says he will usher in 'Renaissance', goal is to elevate economic crisis-stricken country



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**Fire inside me helped: Pant on scoring Test century**

**In a nutshell**

**Class V girl dies of dengue fever**  
**MANCHERIAL:** A Class V student, who was diagnosed with dengue fever, died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad on Monday. Dyavanapalli Deeksha (12) from Itikyala village in Luxetipet mandal breathed her last while under treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad. She was admitted to the hospital when her condition deteriorated five days ago.

**3 naxals killed in encounter**  
**NARAYANPUR:** Three naxalites, including a woman, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Monday, police said. The gunfight broke out at around 4 pm in the forest of Abhujnaad on the Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra inter-border when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-naxal operation, he said. PTI

**Iron rods found on Punjab rail tracks**  
**CHANDIGARH:** Nine iron rods were found on the tracks in Punjab's Bathinda district, disrupting railway traffic for a brief period, officials said on Monday. The rods were found on Sunday near Bangi Nagar on the Delhi-Bathinda route. A GRP official said a goods train loco pilot spotted the rods. "We recovered nine iron rods from the spot," said the official. PTI

**Another bridge collapses in Bihar**  
**PATNA:** A portion of an under-construction bridge collapsed in Bihar's Patna district. No one was injured in the incident. The incident comes in the backdrop of over a dozen bridges and causeways collapsed in several Bihar districts recently. The construction of Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur Ganga Mahasetu has been supervised by the BSRDCL. PTI

**CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD**

Farm.....	Rs. 125
Retail live.....	Rs. 147
With skin.....	Rs. 213
Skinless.....	Rs. 243
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 74

## Report acknowledges BRS role in TG growth

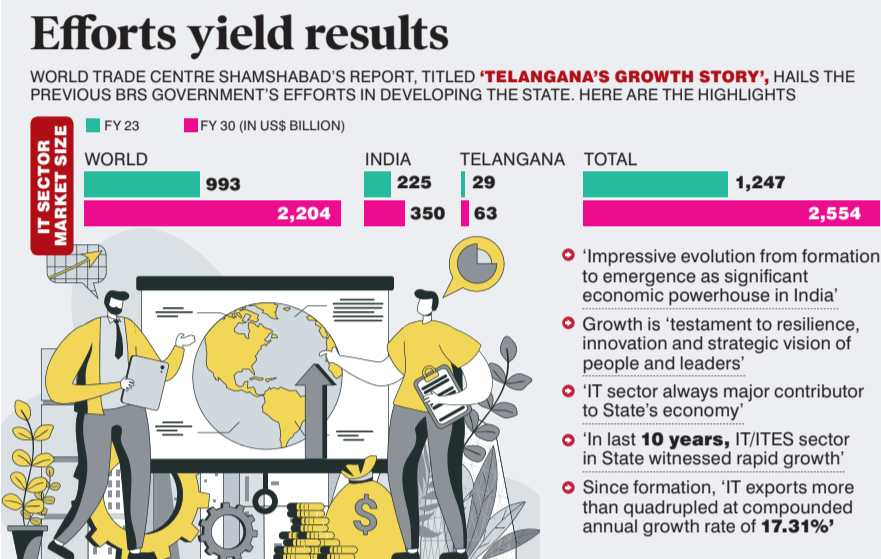
**Outlines State's journey towards becoming \$1 tn economy**

STATE BUREAU  
 HYDERABAD

The Congress might hate its political rival, the BRS, but the party's government has no way out but to acknowledge the growth that Telangana, the country's youngest State, achieved under the K Chandrashekar Rao-led government in the last 10 years.

The latest instance where the Congress government in the State had to indirectly acknowledge the BRS government's efforts in developing the State since its formation was during the AI Summit held in the city recently. This happened when Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy released a report published by the World Trade Centre Shamshabad, a member of the international World Trade Centres Association (WTCA).

The report, titled 'Telangana's Growth Story', has people such as WTCA chairman John E Drew and executive director Robin Van Puyenbroeck remarking that Telangana's "impressive evolution from its formation to its emergence as a significant economic powerhouse in India" was "a testament to the resilience, innovation and strategic vision of its people and leaders".



Even while outlining Telangana's journey towards becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2036, the report states that the strategic focus on sectors such as Pharmaceuticals & Life Sciences, Global Capability Centres (GCCs), Informa-

tion Technology (IT), and Agriculture & Food Processing was clear. All these were sectors that the previous BRS government placed high focus on.

"The State's GCC market is thriving, with a strong talent pool and cost-effective real estate, making it an attractive destination for MNCs. The IT sector has always been a major contributor to the State's economy,

with robust infrastructure and a vibrant technology ethos. The Agriculture & Food Processing industry benefits from abundant raw materials, storage and processing infrastructure. With nine agriculture universities and numerous R&D institutes, Telangana is nurturing local talent and innovation, particularly in dryland agriculture and food technology," it states. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Pharma City project still on, State govt tells HC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
 Hyderabad

Contrary to its earlier statement that the Pharma City project initiated by the previous BRS government was scrapped, the Congress government on Monday told the High Court that the project was still on.

The Revanth Reddy government, in fact, reaffirmed before the court its commitment to the Pharma City project, despite ongoing legal challenges from local farmers. Advocate General A Sudarshan Reddy announced that the project, initiated under the previous BRS administration through GO 31, remains intact.

Justice K Lakshman presided over a series of writ petitions and contempt cases brought forth by about 150 petitioners from the villages of Medipally,

**Reaffirms before the court its commitment to the project, despite ongoing legal challenges from local farmers**

Nanaknagar and Kurmid. The farmers had contested the government's land acquisition efforts, successfully obtaining court orders to set aside the acquisition awards in Medipally and Kurmid, while acquisition proceedings in Nanaknagar were stayed.

The core issue raised by the petitioners centred on the government's continued inclusion of their lands in a prohibition list, which has barred them from accessing various benefits, including Rythu Bandhu, crop loans

and the ability to conduct transactions on their properties. The Advocate General asserted that the government stands in favour of farmers and plans to negotiate a fair compensation for those affected. He assured the court that Rythu Bandhu benefits would be disbursed alongside the compensation. But the petitioners' counsel criticised this approach, arguing that Rythu Bandhu was essential for seasonal agricultural investments and should not be delayed. He said the farmers had endured the fallout from unsuccessful land acquisition attempts for the last seven years.

While some petitioners started receiving Rythu Bandhu benefits following the filing of contempt cases, the counsel said not all affected farmers were accounted for. (SEE PAGE 2)

## 356 killed as Israel bombs Lebanon

**24 children among dead, over 1,240 injured in strikes**

BEIRUT

Lebanon's Health Ministry said the death toll from Israeli strikes in Lebanon on Monday increased to 356, including 24 children.

The barrage is the deadliest since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war as the Israeli military warned residents in southern and eastern Lebanon to evacuate ahead of a widening air campaign against Hezbollah. Thousands of Lebanese fled the south, and the main high-

way out of the southern port city of Sidon was jammed with cars heading toward Beirut in the biggest exodus since 2006.

More than 1,240 people were wounded in the strikes, the Health Ministry said — a staggering one-day toll for a country still reeling from a deadly attack on communication devices last week. The toll surpassed that of Beirut's devastating port explosion in 2020, when hundreds of tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored in a warehouse detonated, killing at least 218 people and wounding over 6,000.

Meanwhile, in a recorded message, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Lebanese civilians to heed Israeli calls to evacuate, saying "take this warning seriously." "Please get out of harm's way now," Ne-

tanyahu said. "Once our operation is finished, you can come back safely to your homes," he added.

The Israeli military said on Monday evening it had carried out a targeted strike in Beirut. It did not give details. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported the Beirut al-Abed neighbourhood in southern Beirut was hit with three missiles. Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV said six people were wounded. The area was cordoned off and journalists were not allowed access. Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad said the earlier strikes hit hospitals, medical centres and ambulances. The government ordered schools and universities to close and began preparing shelters for people displaced from the south. AP (REPORTS PAGE 7)

## Worm-infested rice in mid-day meals

STATE BUREAU  
 Kodangal

Students of the Primary and Zilla Parishad School at Kommuru village in Gundamal mandal in Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's constituency of Kodangal

have complained of worm-infested rice being served to them. Former Kodangal MLA Patnam Narendar Reddy, along with a few local leaders, visited the school on Monday. When they inspected the store-room, they came across rice

bags infested with worms. Videos of the rice were shared on social media. In one of the videos, the leaders were seen asking the staff about the poor quality rice being used in mid-day meals. The staff said the rice was stored for three months.



A farmer runs with his bulls during a bull ploughing competition in Kozhikode district of Kerala on Monday. — Photo: PTI

## Possession of child porn material an offence: SC

NEW DELHI

In a path-breaking judgement, the Supreme Court on Monday held that mere possession of any child pornographic material will constitute offences under the POCSO and the IT laws even if they are not disseminated further.

Observing that "sexual exploitation of children is a pervasive and deeply rooted issue that has plagued societies worldwide and been a matter of serious concern in India", it termed as "egregious" the verdict of the Madras High Court on the issue and set it aside.

On January 11, the HC had quashed the criminal proceedings against a 28-year-old man charged with downloading pornographic content involving children on his mobile phone, saying

### Path-breaking judgement

SC SETS ASIDE MADRAS HC ORDER THAT SAID MERE DOWNLOADING, WATCHING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY NOT AN OFFENCE UNDER POCSO ACT, IT ACT

- Suggests Parliament should seriously consider bringing amendment to POCSO Act for substituting term 'child pornography' with 'child sexual exploitative and abuse material'
- Says Centre may consider to bring about suggested amendment to the POCSO Act by way of ordinance
- SC puts all courts to notice that term 'child pornography' shall not be used in any judicial order or judgment, instead 'child sexual exploitative and abuse material' (CSEAM) should be endorsed
- Implementing comprehensive sex education programmes that include information about the legal and ethical ramifications of child pornography can help deter potential offenders
- Schools can play crucial role in early identification, intervention

mere possession and downloading of such pornographic materials did not constitute offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Information Technology (IT) Act. "The HC committed an

egregious error in passing the impugned judgment. We are left with no other option but to set aside the judgment... and restore the proceedings to the court of Sessions Judge, Mahila Neethi Mandram," the apex court said. PTI

## BRS fact-finding panel arrested

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Police on Monday arrested members of the BRS fact-finding committee, formed to investigate maternal and infant mortalities at Gandhi Hospital and assess the condition of government healthcare across the State.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Dr T Rajaiah, MLA Dr K Sanjay and former MLA Dr Metuku Anand were among those detained before being taken to the Narayanguda police station. The arrests took place as the committee was on its way to Gandhi Hospital, with heavy police presence deployed at the site.

Despite attempts by police to block their movement, Sanjay and Anand, along with BRS MLA Maganti Gopinath, managed to

reach Gandhi Hospital, where they were arrested. Similar actions were reported in Warangal, where BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy was also detained ahead of his planned visit to the local government hospital.

The BRS committee members, all medical professionals, maintained that their visit was a non-political effort to assess public healthcare and offer recommendations.

"Why is the government afraid of our visit? Are they trying to hide the maternal and infant deaths in Gandhi Hospital, or are they scared that their failures will be exposed?" they asked.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao condemned the arrests, calling it an attack on transparency and accountability. (SEE PAGE 2)

## India reports first Mpxv case of Clade 1b strain

NEW DELHI

India has reported the first case of the Mpxv strain, which led to the WHO declaring it a public health emergency last month, in a patient from Kerala who had tested positive last week, official sources said on Monday.

They said Clade 1b strain has been detected in a 38-year-old man from Malappuram district, who recently returned from the UAE. The patient is stable, the sources said, adding that "this was the first case of the current strain that led to the World Health Organization declaring Mpxv a public health emergency last month for a second time". The earlier case that emerged in the national capital was a 26-year-old, who tested positive for Clade 2 strain. PTI

## TTD performs purification rituals

TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer J Shyamala Rao on Monday said devotees can set aside their apprehensions regarding laddus at the temple as the sanctity of the prasadam has been restored with a four-hour purification ritual.

The ritual was aimed at propitiating Lord Venkateswara Swamy from the alleged sacrilegious practices such as mixing animal fats in making Tirupati laddus and others. "The holy ritual was a sin-free ritual. As part of it Vastu Sudhi (and) Kumbhajala Samprohshana were carried out by the ritwiks (priests)," Rao was quoted as saying in a press release.

According to the temple body, Shanti Homam was conducted as per the tenets

of Vaikhanasa Agama in the Yagashala (ritual place) of Tirumala temple from 6 am to 10 am to ward off the ill effects, and restore the sanctity of laddu prasadam and other naivedyams (food offerings to deity) along with the well-being of Srivari (deity) devotees.

Priests were seen sprinkling holy water in potu (kitchen where laddus are made) and on the ingredients. Rao said devotees can set aside their fears about the quality of laddu prasadam and naivedyams. Venugopala Deekshitulu, one of the chief priests, and Agama advisor Mohanarangaacharyulu said rituals such as Sankalpam, Vishwaksena Aradhana, Punyahavachanam, Vastu Homam, Kumbha Pratista, Panchagavya Aradhana were performed. PTI (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 5)