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No 'Pachi Pulusu' in govt schools, colleges



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Insurgents close in on Syria's 3rd largest city

Thousands flee as rebels advance towards Homs, enter Rastan and Talbiseh



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Starc's six-wicket haul puts Australia in command

In a nutshell

BRSLP meeting tomorrow

HYDERABAD: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi Legislative Party (BRSLP) meeting will be held at the residence of party president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in Erravelli at 1 pm on Sunday. The meeting gains significance as the Assembly session is scheduled to commence from December 9. The party leadership will discuss and devise strategies on the issues to be raised in the Assembly.

Tiger attack suspected

ASIFABAD: A buffalo calf was killed, suspected by a tiger, when it was grazing in the forests near the Cheela-palli village in Sirpur (T) mandal on Friday. The attack by the tiger, which was elusive for the last few days, triggered panic among villagers. Sources said the calf died after being attacked by the tiger, which allegedly mauled Morle Lakshmi to death in Kagaznagar before attacking Rauthu Suresh.

B.Tech student ends life

HYDERABAD: A B.Tech first-year student of a private engineering college hanged herself to death in her college hostel at Dundigal on the city outskirts on Friday. K Sravani (20), a Mechanical Engineering student, stayed in the hostel on the campus. She was reportedly upset for the past few days and mostly stayed in her room without interacting much with her roommates. A case was booked.

Student shoots principal dead

CHHATARPUR: A Class XII student allegedly shot dead the principal of his school in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur after being admonished for coming late. He and his classmate from the Arts stream escaped from the spot on the deceased's scooter, they added. Police said Principal SK Saxena (55) was shot in the head at the entrance of the Government Higher School. PTI

CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm.....	Rs. 85
Retail live.....	Rs. 107
With skin.....	Rs. 155
Skinless.....	Rs. 177
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 85

Top BRS leaders under house arrest

Cops stop them from holding protest at Ambedkar statue

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

For the second consecutive day, tensions continued to escalate between the BRS and police on Friday. Even as the BRS cadre geared up for a massive demonstration at the 125-ft statue of Dr BR Ambedkar near Necklace Road, a huge number of police personnel was deployed at the residences of senior BRS leaders who were placed under house arrest, foiling the proposed protest.

While senior legislators, including T Harish Rao, K Kavitha, Vemula Prashanth Reddy, KP Vivekananda, Shambhipur Raju, Padi Kaushik Reddy, Dr K Sanjay, and several others such as RS Praveen Kumar, were placed under house arrest, many BRS leaders were taken into preventive custody. Similar reports trickled in from various parts of the State. Police also kept a strict vigil on the routes leading to the State capital to prevent the BRS cadres from joining the protest. Condemning the arrest of its leaders and the Congress



Police personnel outside BRS leader T Harish Rao's residence in Hyderabad on Friday.

government's constitutional violations, the BRS had decided on Thursday to stage a massive demonstration at the iconic statue of Dr BR Ambedkar near Necklace Road on Friday. They were scheduled to pay tributes to the Constitution's architect and stage a demonstration against the "murder of democracy" by the Congress government in Telangana.

A large number of police personnel were also deployed at the BRS State headquarters in Telangana

Bhavan as well, where BRS MLAs, MLCs, MPs, elected representatives and activists were scheduled to assemble before proceeding to the protest site.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council S Madhusudhana Chari and other leaders arrived at Telangana Bhavan around 10.30 am and paid tributes to the portrait of Ambedkar. However, they were stopped from proceeding to the Ambed-

kar statue. With several leaders under house arrest, the BRS postponed its protest.

Taking to X, Rama Rao shared the photographs of the Ambedkar statue during the previous BRS rule and the current Congress regime. He went on to ask Congress Lok Sabha leader Rahul Gandhi whether he had explicitly instructed the Congress government in Telangana to insult Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

(SEE PAGE 2)

KTR slams Congress for disrespecting Ambedkar

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday came down heavily on the Congress government in Telangana for disrespecting Dr BR Ambedkar and undermining his legacy on the occasion of his death anniversary on Friday.

Slamming Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for neglecting the world's tallest 125-ft Ambedkar statue near Tank Bund, Rama Rao said it was abandoned and public access to it restricted.

Speaking at Telangana Bhavan after paying tributes to Ambedkar's portrait, Rama Rao reminded the previous BRS government's efforts in honouring Ambedkar by installing his world's tallest statue and naming the State Secretariat after him. "The Congress government didn't even bother to clean or garland the statue. When we planned to visit the memorial to clean it ourselves, our leaders were placed under house arrest," he said.

THANKS TO BABASAHEB, TG BECAME REALITY: KCR

HYDERABAD: BRS supremo and former CM K Chandrashekar Rao paid homage to Dr BR Ambedkar on his death anniversary, commemorating his lifelong fight against discrimination and his contributions as the architect of the Constitution of India. He recalled the BRS government's efforts to realise Ambedkar's vision of an egalitarian society. Chandrashekar Rao lauded Ambedkar's foresight in drafting a Constitution that ensured equal rights for marginalised communities. (SEE PAGE 2)

He criticised Revanth Reddy for insulting Ambedkar's ideology by locking the statue's premises and obstructing public access. He also slammed the Congress for historically disrespecting Ambedkar, both during his lifetime and after his death. On Dalit welfare

under Congress rule, the BRS working president said the Congress had cancelled cheques issued under Dalit Bandhu by the previous BRS government, stopped the Ambedkar Overseas Scholarships and neglected tribal welfare. He said promises such as Ambedkar Abhaya-hastham had not materialised, while Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries were facing cases for seeking funds. "This government's actions against Dalits expose its neglect and disregard for social justice," he said.

Targeting Rahul Gandhi, Rama Rao called out his silence on the dictatorial actions of his own party in Telangana. "Rahul talks about safeguarding the Constitution, but ignores the unconstitutional actions of his party in Telangana. BRS legislators, elected by the people, are being restricted from reaching out to those in need," he said. On the upcoming inauguration of a redesigned Telangana Thalli statue, he questioned the secrecy and intent behind the move. (SEE PAGE 2)

Repo rate unchanged despite slowdown

RBI lowers GDP forecast to 6.6% for this fiscal

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday kept its key interest rate unchanged but cut the cash reserve ratio that banks are required to park with the central bank, as it did a balancing act between inflation management and supporting economic growth.

With India's GDP seeing a sharper-than-anticipated dip in the July-September period to 5.4 per cent — its slowest pace in seven quarters, inflation on the uptick and rupee under pressure — the RBI had few choices to make.

Its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for a record 11th meeting in a row.

Four of the six members of the panel voted for a status quo in rate, while retaining its policy stance at "neutral". External members — Nagesh Kumar and Ram Singh — voted for a quarter-point reduction.

Announcing the MPC meeting decisions, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Cash Reserve Ratio —

Focused on keeping inflation on tight leash: Das

MUMBAI: The RBI's efforts are focused on keeping the inflation horse on a "tight leash", Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday. The balance between inflation and growth has gotten "unsettled", Das said, referring to the lower-than-expected 5.4 per cent GDP expansion and price rise shooting beyond 6 per cent for October, and added that all the instruments will be deployed to get it back. Das, whose current term as the central bank Governor ends in a few days, also called for efforts to ensure that the "credibility" of the flexible inflation targeting regime is "preserved" going forward as well. "The (inflation) horse has made a valiant effort to bolt, our effort is to keep it on a tight leash," Das said at the post-policy press conference. PTI

the proportion of deposits that banks must set aside with the central bank — has been cut by 50 basis points to 4 per cent, effective in two tranches on December 14 and December 28. The cut will infuse Rs 1.16 lakh crore into the banking system and soften short-term interest rates and enhance capacity of banks to extend credit and invigorate economic activity across sectors. "At this juncture prudence and practicality demands we remain careful," Das said. A status quo is "appropriate and essential", he said, adding if growth

slowdown lingers beyond a point, "it may need policy support".

RBI lowered its growth forecast for the year ending March 2025 to 6.6 per cent, from its earlier projection of 7.2 per cent. This was even though Das said GDP slowdown bottomed out in the July-September quarter and has seen a pick-up in subsequent months due to festive spending and strong agriculture output. It also raised its inflation forecast for the current 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) financial year to 4.8 per cent, from 4.5 per cent previously. PTI

Ryots tear-gassed at Shambhu



Tear gas being used by security personnel to disperse the farmers moving towards barricades during their foot march to Delhi, at the Shambhu border in Patiala district, Punjab, on Friday. — Photo: PTI

SHAMBHU

Protesting farmers on Friday suspended for the day their foot march to Delhi to press for various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP, after some of them suffered injuries due to tear gas shells at the Punjab-Haryana border.

Earlier in the day, a 'jatha' of 101 farmers began to march towards the national

capital from their protest site at the Shambhu border but was stopped a few metres away by multilayered barricades erected by Haryana security personnel.

As the group reached the barricades, security personnel lobbed multiple tear gas shells to disperse the protesting farmers and force them to retreat to their protest site. Covering their eyes and mouths, several

protesting farmers rushed to cover the tear gas shells with wet jute bags to counter the smoke.

Many of them were seen uprooting iron nails and barbed wire installed on the road to deter their march. Chanting 'Satnam Waheguru' and holding their union flags, several farmers of the 'jatha' crossed the initial layer of barricades easily but could not proceed fur-

ther. A few of them were seen pushing an iron mesh put up by security personnel down the bridge constructed over the Ghaggar river. One of the protesters climbed the roof of a tin shade where security forces had been stationed. He was forced to climb down. Water cannon vehicles have also been deployed at the Shambhu border point to quell the protest. (SEE PAGE 2)

Study throws fresh light on Nicobarese

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The population genetic researchers from Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, in a recent study have thrown new light on the genetic origins of Nicobarese people.

It was earlier believed that the linguistic ancestors of Nicobarese had settled in the Nicobar archipelago during the early Holocene, about 11,700 years ago. However, a new genetic study of the Nicobarese population taken up by the CCMB and BHU researchers indicates a significant



A new genetic study of the Nicobarese population by CCMB and BHU indicates ancestral connection with Austroasiatic peoples.

ancestral connection of Nicobarese shared with Austroasiatic populations across South and Southeast Asia. The study also suggests that the Nicobar is-

landers settled there about 5,000 years ago.

Austroasiatic is spoken in southern parts of Asia, including Vietnam and Cambodia, as the main official

languages and in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, Laos, Thailand and Malaysia as the first language of many minority groups that are isolated from each other by other language speakers. Two major extant branches of the Austroasiatic language tree are Munda in eastern, northeastern and central India and Khasi-Aslian, which stretches from Meghalaya in the northeast of the subcontinent to the Nicobars, Malay Peninsula and Mekong delta in Southeast Asia.

Researchers from nine institutions were co-led by Dr Kumarasamy Thangaraj from CCMB and Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, BHU, Varanasi. (SEE PAGE 2)

Kaushik Reddy gets bail

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS Huzurabad MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy, who was arrested on Thursday morning, was granted bail after midnight following a day-long dramatic sequence of events. He was arrested at his Kondapur residence around 10 am after a confrontation with police at Banjara Hills police station. (REPORT PAGE 5)

Wad of cash at Singhvi's seat triggers uproar in Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI

A wad of currency notes found from the seat allotted to Abhishek Singhvi in Rajya Sabha rocked the Upper House on Friday with the Opposition and ruling alliance MPs trading charges and the Congress MP demanding a probe into the 'security lapse'. Singhvi also suggested that glass en-

losures should be erected to prevent anyone from planting 'ganja' on seats in an MP's absence. Rajya Sabha was adjourned for the day within minutes of meeting after lunch as treasury benches were on their feet seeking answers from the opposition. Deputy Chairman Hariwansh, who was in Chair, sought to pacify the members of the ruling party

and urged them to sit and allow the House to function. As unrelenting BJP members continued to raise slogans, he adjourned the House for the day.

Soon after the official papers were laid on the table in the morning, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said security staff recovered a wad of Rs 500 notes from the seat allotted to Singhvi. PTI