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ISRO plans historic space docking feat tomorrow



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Trump pushes for delaying TikTok ban  
Urges Supreme Court to give him time for a negotiated solution for video-sharing app



**SPORT | PAGE 10**  
Nitish Reddy's maiden ton keeps India afloat

**In a nutshell**

**Huge protest in Beed**  
BEED: Thousands of people gathered in Maharashtra's Beed city on Saturday to protest the brutal murder of Mas-sajog sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh as even MLAs from ruling coalition demanded the sacking of NCP Minister Dhananjay Munde. Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange, former MP Sambhaji Rajee Chhatrapati, local BJP MLAs Suresh Dhas, Abhimanyu Pawar; NCP MLA Prakash took part in the protest. **NATION PAGE 8**

**Kejriwal rubbishes L-G inquiry**  
NEW DELHI: The BJP is panicked that the AAP government would give Rs 2,100 to women under Mahila Samman Yojana and thus trying to stop the scheme fearing defeat in the upcoming polls, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday. He also rubbished an order by the Lieutenant-General for an inquiry into the collection of details of women through registration under the scheme as 'fake'. **NATION PAGE 7**

**Snow hits air, rail, road traffic in J-K**  
NEW DELHI: Daily life was thrown out of gear in Kashmir as the season's heaviest snow-fall hit air, rail and road traffic and disrupted power and water supply on Saturday while Ut-tarakhand shivered due to snow and intermittent rain causing temperatures to dip. In Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told Deputy Commissioners to personally supervise snow clearance operations. **PTI**

**Ryots for Kisan Mahapanchayat**  
CHANDIGARH: Farmers, on a warpath against the Centre, have called for a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' at the Khanauri protest site on January 4. Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha had earlier given a call for a Punjab bandh on December 30. The steps come amid the SC coming down heavily on the Punjab government for not shifting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal to a hospital. **PTI**

**CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD**

Farm.....	Rs. 105
Retail live.....	Rs. 184
With skin.....	Rs. 127
Skinless.....	Rs. 210
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 80



**Kat, Vicky spend time by the sea**

Power couple takes a break from busy schedules

## FAREWELL, DR SINGH

**Former PM Manmohan Singh cremated with full state honours**



Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's wife Gursharan Kaur and daughter Daman Singh pay their last respects to him, at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday. — Photo: PTI

**PTI**  
NEW DELHI  
Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who led India to the path of economic liberalisation in the 1990s, was cremated with full state honours here on Saturday in the presence of top dignitaries from the country and abroad. Singh's funeral pyre was lit by his eldest daughter, Upinder Singh, at the Nigambodh Ghat as family members, friends and dignitaries bid farewell to the reformist former Prime Minister. President Droupadi Murmu, the supreme commander of the armed forces, led the nation in paying last respects to the leader. Priests and family members recited religious hymns from the holy Gurbani, while chants of 'Satnam Wah-guru' filled the air, as Singh was cremated according to Sikh rituals. Before Singh's mortal remains were consigned to flames, the security forces gave a salute of three volleys of small arms and the buglers sounded the 'Last Post' as a mark of honour for the former PM.

### Row breaks out over former PM's funeral

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Saturday accused the Centre of insulting Manmohan Singh, the country's first Sikh Prime Minister, by carrying out his last rites at Nigambodh Ghat instead of a designated spot that could later become his memorial. The opposition party had written to the Centre for identifying a designated place for Singh's last rites, where a memorial could be set up for him. The BJP accused the Congress of "indulging in politics" over the funeral and alleged that the party has "insulted" its own leaders, including ex-PM PV Narasimha Rao, in the past. "Since Manmohan Singh's death, the Centre has been preparing to construct a memorial for him. A Cabinet meeting was called," BJP MP Sambit Patra said. **(REPORT PAGE 7)**

At the Nigambodh Ghat, a sense of deep grief united the assembly featuring Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, union Ministers and senior Congress leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Foreign Minister of Mauritius Dhananjay Ramful were among the foreign dignitaries who paid tributes to Singh, who served as the Prime Minister from 2004 to 2014. Singh (92) died on the night of December 26. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla also paid their last tributes and laid wreaths on his mortal remains. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and the chiefs of the tri-services also laid wreaths on the former PM's mortal remains. Several Chief Ministers, including Siddaramaiah (Karnataka), Revanth Reddy (Telangana), Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh) and Atishi (Delhi), besides Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, also attended the last rites. **(SEE PAGES 2, 7)**

### TG Assembly to pay tributes tomorrow

**HYDERABAD:** The Telangana Assembly session will be conducted at 10 am on Monday. Legislative Assembly Secretary Narasimha Charyulu informed the members through letters on Saturday to this effect. It is learnt that the session will be held for a day to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

## Formula-E row: KTR dismisses allegations

**Says there was no conspiracy, corruption**

**STATE BUREAU**  
Hyderabad

BRS working president and legislator KT Rama Rao has dismissed the allegations levelled against him in the Formula-E car race issue as "mere accusations without any factual basis". In a statement here on Saturday, he said the erstwhile BRS government was forced to take the decision to host Formula-E Season 10 due to the lack of sponsors and "there was neither any conspiracy, nor any corruption" involved in it. "It was all aimed at enhancing the image of Hyderabad. It is part of a policy decision intended to organise it even in the next season also," he asserted.

Pointing out that the Election Commission had not issued any notices if there was a violation of the election code, he wanted to know from the leaders in the Congress government on what basis they ventured to question him on behalf of the EC.

Quoting a report of the Nielsen Sports Analysis, he



It was all aimed at enhancing the image of Hyd. It's part of a policy decision intended to organise it in the next season also

— KT RAMA RAO, BRS WORKING PRESIDENT

highlighted that the Formula E race in Hyderabad had considerable economic impact.

The Rs 54-crore payment to the race organisers was made by the department concerned which he represented as its Minister. He questioned the Congress leaders as to how the Rs 54-crore payment could become Rs 600 crore as claimed by them. He stated that the figures were unclear and it seemed to be "an attempt to tarnish his reputation".

He explained that the Rs 8 crore mentioned by the present ruling party were tax returns, which sponsors would cover.

He asserted that all payments made through the Indian Overseas Bank were in accordance with the rules.

The BRS leader emphasised that there was no personal gain involved and that the allegations were politically motivated.

He pointed out that if the payments made to the Formula-E organisers amounted to graft, why no case was filed against the organisers. He said if any losses were incurred due to Formula-E, that could be the fallout of the ruling party's irrational decisions and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's lack of foresight.

Reiterating his commitment to transparency and accountability in his role as a the then Minister, he said they failed to establish if "I was benefitted by even a single rupee from it" and dismissed as that owed to Congress Party leaders' vengeance.

### Fluorosis issue linked to private RO units

**STATE BUREAU**  
Hyderabad

The resurgence of fluorosis in several villages across Nalgonda district has been linked to the flourishing business of private Reverse Osmosis (RO) units.

These units are reportedly supplying groundwater with high fluoride content, undermining the efforts of initiatives such as Mission Bhagiratha, which aims to provide safe drinking water to rural households.

The fluorosis issue has become particularly severe in regions where groundwater contains high levels of fluoride. **(REPORT PAGE 5)**

## Putin apologises for plane crash

**MOSCOW**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologised to his Azerbaijani counterpart for what he called a "tragic incident" following the crash of an Azerbaijani airliner in Kazakhstan that killed 38 people.

The plane was flying on Wednesday from Azerbaijan's capital of Baku to Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, when it turned toward Kazakhstan and crashed while making an attempt to land. There were 29 survivors.

In an official statement Saturday, the Kremlin said air defence systems were



firing near Grozny on Wednesday due to a Ukrainian drone strike, but stopped short of saying one of these hit the plane. On Friday, a US official and an Azerbaijani Minister made separate statements blaming the crash on an external weapon. **AP**

## TET centre allotments shock aspirants

**YUVRAJ AKULA**  
Hyderabad

For a two-hour examination, this 24-year-old woman will have to travel 210 km, a nearly four-hour journey, to reach her exam centre. Another candidate will embark on a 130-km commute, taking about two-and-a-half hours to reach the centre.

This is the challenging situation that some teacher job aspirants face with the School Education Department having allotted their Telangana Teacher Eligibility Test (TG TET) 2024 II centres far off from their residence.

The TG TET is to be held from January 2-20.

On downloading their hall tickets, several candidates were shocked to find their test centres allocated hundreds of kms away from their homes.

A woman candidate, a resident of Rajanna Sricilla district, who registered for the TET Paper-I, has been assigned a test centre at the JB Institute of Engineering & Technology in Moinabad

**Teacher job aspirants face challenging situation as they have been given exam centres hundreds of kms away from home**

mandal, Rangareddy district, about 210 km away. Another 26-year-old man, who registered for both TET Papers I and II, has been assigned centres at Laxman IT Academy and iON Digital Zone in Medchal-Malkajigiri district, respectively, which are nearly 130 km away from his residence in Siddipet.

In another case, a candidate from Khammam district received a centre in Siddipet district, which is about 210 km. The situation is particularly challenging for women candidates, who face safety concerns and the possibility of travelling early in the morning to reach the centre in time.

The Paper-I will be held from 9 am and candidates have to be present two hours prior to the commencement of the exam. This will necessitate candidates to start their journey as early as 4 am! Candidates lamented that despite selecting nearby areas as their preferred exam centres, they were allotted centres hundreds of kilometres away from their residence. Attempts to reach the School Education Department officials for a comment proved futile.

A total of 2,75,773 candidates, including 94,335 for Paper-I and 1,81,438 for paper-II, have registered for the exam. The Paper-I is conducted for aspirants seeking teaching eligibility for Classes I-V, while Paper-II is held to determine eligibility to teach Classes VI-VIII.

### TIGER SPOTTED IN NALLAMALA



Tourists on a safari in Nallamala forests were stunned to spot a tiger strolling in Farhabad of Amrabad mandal in Nagarkurnool district on Saturday morning. While on their way to the tiger safari viewpoint, they spotted the big cat, Mannanur FRO Ravikumar said. With the sightings of tiger being reported in Nallamala, authorities cautioned villagers and tourists to be extra careful.

## NY fete: Spl teams to check drug abuse

**ASIF YAR KHAN**  
Hyderabad

The upcoming New Year's Eve festivities are to be closely scanned for drug abuse by the enforcement agencies.

The Telangana Anti Narcotics Bureau (TGANB), which has already formed 19 special teams, intends to have big gatherings on the radar and monitor them

more closely. These special teams comprise personnel from the TGANB, Prohibition and Excise Department and local police. Two teams will carry a mouth swab drug test, while the remaining 17 will be equipped with ABON (urine kit).

The teams will visit pubs, bars, hotels and resorts where New Year events are schedules. Sniffer dogs will also be used to identify

drugs concealed in cars, parking places, escalators and other places, said a senior official of TGANB.

The bureau had already issued guidelines to the local law enforcement agencies to ensure that the managements of pubs, bars and other recreational places submit the details of the music band members and DJs.

"We have asked them to collect the details and his-

tory of the music band members and DJs and verify their antecedents.

Those who have a history of drug abuse and any criminal cases should not be invited to perform," said the official.

The pub, bar and hotel managements should also act as anti-drug soldiers and support the 'drug-free Telangana' initiative, the official added. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

### Wettest Dec day in Delhi in 101 yrs

**NEW DELHI**

Delhiites experienced an overcast and chilly day after the city recorded the highest single-day December rainfall in 101 years.

According to the weather department, Delhi recorded 41.2 mm rain in the past 24 hours till 8:30 am on Saturday, due to which daytime temperatures remained below normal throughout the day.

According to the IMD, the capital recorded the highest-ever rainfall on a single day in the month on December 3, 1923, at 75.7 mm. **PTI**