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Congress cadre vandalise BRS district office



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Houthis will pay heavy price, warns Netanyahu
 Describes them as proxy of Iran and 'a threat to Israel and the entire region'



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Shami returns to Indian team after 14 months

In a nutshell

Farmer ends life over debt
ADILABAD: A 38-year-old farmer died by suicide by consuming pesticide as he was allegedly depressed over his inability to repay loans at Pipri village in Indervelli, on Saturday. According to police, on December 31, Kinaka Shankar tried to kill himself as he was distressed by mounting burden of loans. He breathed his last while undergoing treatment at RIMS-Adilabad. Based on a complaint, a case was registered.

AAP MLA dies in 'accidental firing'
LUDHIANA: AAP leader and Ludhiana West MLA Gurpreet Bassi Gogi died of a gunshot injury he sustained while cleaning his licenced pistol. Gogi was 58 and is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter. Joint Commissioner of Police Jaskaran Singh Teja said the bullet pierced Gogi's temple and he was rushed to the Dayanand Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), where doctors declared him dead.

Shiv Sena (UBT) to go solo in polls
NAGPUR: Amid a blame game over the MVA rout in Assembly elections, key constituent Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) announced to contest local bodies polls solo, a move raising question mark over the opposition bloc's unity. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut cited the lack of opportunities for workers of respective parties in an alliance and right to organisational growth as major considerations for going solo.

Mob attacks Assam Rifles camp
IMPHAL: A mob stormed and destroyed a makeshift camp of the Assam Rifles in Manipur's Kamjong over alleged harassment and restrictions on transportation of timber. The members of the group that attacked the camp in Hongbei area belonged to Kasom Khullen block of the Naga majority district. Assam Rifles personnel used tear gas shells and fired in the air to disperse the protesters.

Farmers await loan waiver

Despite assurances from Ministers, many eligible beneficiaries still in the dark

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

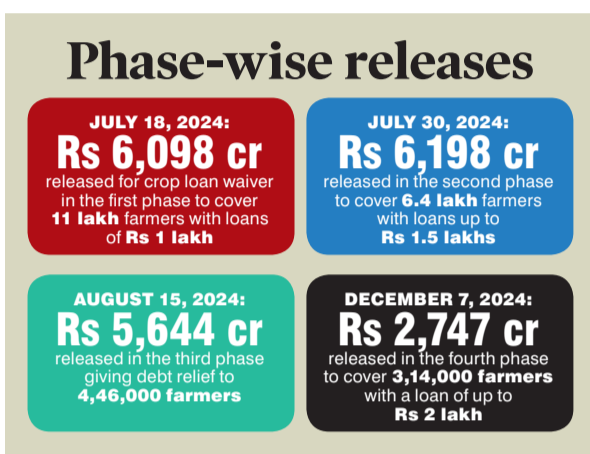
Farmers have been eagerly awaiting the implementation of a crop loan waiver for loans exceeding Rs 2 lakh.

Despite assurances from Ministers and elected representatives of the Congress party, the waiver is yet to be implemented. The government is expected to make a decision only after the local body elections.

For the last two months, farmers have been frequenting mandal-level agriculture offices, hoping for some good news on the waiver. However, officials have stated that they have received no instructions from the administration on the waiver. No release of funds for this purpose could be expected in near future either.

They believe the government will take a call on these loans only after the local body polls, or possibly even later. Over two lakh farmers with crop loans above Rs 2 lakh have been waiting for the waiver. The cash-strapped government, already grappling with issues related to the long-pending Rythu Bharosa payments, may find it difficult to say no to these farmers.

This vocal section of society wields considerable influence in the villages and cannot be easily placated or disappointed. The delay in the waiver has left farmers in a state of uncertainty, as they continue to hope for relief from their mounting debts.



lief from their mounting debts.

K V L Narasimha Rao, a farmer from Nelakondapalli village near Kodad approached the local Agriculture extension officer on the waiver issue. He has nearly 60 acres in cultivation and borrowed Rs.2.6 lakh from two banks for crop investment. The AEO concerned has clarified that no communication has been received so far on the waiver of crop loans above Rs 2 lakh. There was no indication when they were going to be waived.

In fact, the Congress government's crop loan waiver programme in the State initially expected to provide relief to many farmers, has instead left many disillusioned. Despite its rollout in four phases, complaints are mounting. The government has claimed to have released funds for the waiver of all accounts with an outstanding of up to Rs 2 lakh as part of the fourth phase. Officials contacted on Friday said the waiver process was still in progress.

Over one lakh complaints pertaining to the last three phases were taken up with Agriculture department officials and bankers, but according to sources, hardly about 25 per cent of these were addressed. Much to the dismay of farmers, waiver money deposited in over 28,000 accounts was reversed and returned to the government's coffers. Even the BRS helpline has received over 1.5 lakh complaints on the loan waiver, highlighting the gravity of the issue.

Many farmers from Potharam revenue village in Siddipet district have experienced the same. Local agriculture officials suggested they approach the Collector, but no resolution has been achieved so far.

Five youngsters drown in Kondapochamma project

Two others swim to safety, officials retrieve bodies

STATE BUREAU
 Siddipet

The craze for taking selfies and videographs claimed the lives of five youngsters as they drowned in Kondapochamma Sagar while two of their friends had a lucky escape on Saturday.

The officials retrieved the bodies by roping in expert divers after hours of effort. The seven teenagers, all from Musheerabad in Hyderabad, had gone to Kondapochamma Sagar with the Sankranti holidays commencing.

They arrived at Kondapochamma, built as part of the Kaleshwaram project at Markook, on two-wheelers. While shooting videos and selfies, the teenagers ventured a bit deep into the reservoir where massive pits were dug while building the project. When one of them slipped into the pit, the rest followed him while trying to rescue him. However,



Police officials retrieve the body of one of the youngster who drowned, on Saturday.

two of them swam ashore safely and called the police by dialling 100. The police, irrigation and other department officials have collectively roped in expert swimmers to search and retrieve

the bodies. The deceased were identified as Dhanush (20), his brother Lohith (19), Cheekatla Dineshwar (17), Sahil (19) and Jatin (17). The five, along with Komari Mrugank (17) and Md

Ibrahim (20), arrived at the reservoir on Saturday morning. Mrugank and Ibrahim were seen saying that they took their last picture with their friends.

(SEE PAGE 2)

KTR slams CM for shielding Megha

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Highlighting the blatant attempt being made by the Congress government to withhold the vigilance report on Sunkishala incident, BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Saturday said that it would undermine public trust and accountability.

In the case of the Sunkishala incident, the decision

to keep the vigilance report secret raises questions about the integrity of the administration and its commitment to transparency.

He condemned the move as an attempt to cover up a grave mistake made by a construction company by linking it to national security sections of the RTI Act. He alleged that the primary reason for keeping the committee report, which recommended blacklisting Megha

Company, secret is a clandestine agreement between Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Megha Krishna Reddy.

He pointed out that due to Megha Company's negligence, the retaining wall collapsed, causing a loss of Rs 80 crore of public money and jeopardizing Hyderabad's growing drinking water needs. The BRS leader also accused the Congress government of hesitat-

ing to disclose the committee report out of fear that the construction flaws would be exposed. He stated that hiding information would amount to admitting the mistake. He also highlighted the irony of the present situation that Revanth Reddy, who once criticised Megha Company as the East India Company while in opposition, now turning a blind eye to their faults after coming to power.

(SEE PAGE 2)

CCTVs to keep an eye on Inter practicals

YUVRAJ AKULA
 Hyderabad

CCTV cameras will be turned into observers for the forthcoming intermediate practical exams. To put an end to malpractices, the Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) decided to hold practical examinations amidst the CCTV surveillance system.

The decision from the Board comes as several corporate junior colleges have not been holding the practical examinations as per the rulebook, allowing students

To put an end to malpractices, Telangana Board of Intermediate Education decides to hold practical examinations under CCTV surveillance

to pass exams with inflated results. Now, this directive is aimed at ensuring students complete their practical exams independently.

The Board recently held a meeting with junior colleges operating under all managements and mandated the installation of CCTVs. According to officials, 900 labs where exams will be held

have already been equipped with CCTV cameras. "The centralised CCTV surveillance system will be monitored by the board officials," said a senior official. So far, marks are being recorded under the CCTV surveillance. With CCTVs in place, the Board decided to do away with the departmental officers, who on several oc-

casions faced accusations of receiving cash under the table from corporate colleges to pass their students and some with inflated scores. However, the TGBIE will be deploying additional flying squads, which will be tasked to oversee the conduct of the exams in all junior colleges.

The TGBIE will hold practical examinations for both general and vocational courses from February 3 to 22, including on second Saturdays and Sundays, from 9 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm.

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'Anaaj wale baba', a star attraction at Maha Kumbh

PRAYAGRAJ

As the grand Maha Kumbh, the largest religious gathering on the planet, is about to start in Prayagraj at the holy confluence of the revered Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers, the city is brimming with vibrant colours and a sense of excitement. Among the many unique and fascinating sights, one stands out — a sadhu with plants growing on his head.

Wheat, millet, and chickpeas seemingly sprout from his scalp, drawing the curiosity of devotees and visitors alike. This unusual sadhu's name is Amarjeet, widely known as 'Anaaj Wale Baba' (The Grain Baba)', hailing from Sonbhadra.

He has been growing various types of grains on his



Amarjeet has been growing various types of grains on his head for last five years, a practice that has earned him his unique moniker.

head for the last five years, a practice that has earned him his unique moniker. His unusual vow, he explains, is rooted in a deep commitment to environmental preservation and world peace. I am from Sonbhadra.

My pledge is that our Tricolour should continue to fly high. For the last 24 days, the crops have been growing on my head, and they will remain for another two-and-a-half months," Amarjeet said.

(SEE PAGE 2)

Game Changer ticket price hike revoked

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Telangana government has withdrawn orders facilitating a hike in ticket prices and additional shows for Ram Charan-starrer *Game Changer* movie. The government also decided not to permit early morning shows in future until public interest, health and safety are duly considered.

These orders were issued on Saturday following the High Court's directions to the State government.

Following an appeal from the film producers, the State government on January 8 accorded permission for screening an additional show on January 10 (film release day) at 4 am. This apart, the government also permitted a hike in ticket prices by Rs 100 for multiplexes and Rs 50 for stand-

alone theatres. After the stampede at Sandhya Theatre during the premier show of *Pushpa-2*, the issue of price hikes and benefit shows rocked the State, besides triggering arguments and debates.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had announced in the Assembly that the Congress government would not permit price hikes and benefit shows anymore in the State.

The same was also announced by Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy as well. However, taking a 'U' turn, the Congress government permitted a price hike in tickets and additional shows for the *Game Changer* movie, which was produced by Dil Raju, who is also Chairman of Telangana Film Development Corporation.

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