

Crisis deepens for Rabi farmers in Telangana

Protests intensify as water scarcity worsens in SRSP ayacut

D CHANDRA BHASKAR RAO
 HYDERABAD

The plight of Rabi (Yasangi) farmers in Telangana is becoming increasingly dire as they reach the midpoint of their crop season. While a major segment of the crop requires irrigation support for at least two more months, some areas need an additional fortnight. But uncertainty looms large over the fate of the crops.

Many farmers, left high and dry with a severe shortage of water for irrigation, have been driven to the brink of suicide. Protests have erupted across the canal system. The farmers are agitated due to lack of positive response from irrigation officials.

In Suryapet district's Chinnasitaranahanda, farmers staged a protest on their knees, expressing their frustration at repeatedly pleading with Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy for water, to no avail. The desperation among farmers is palpable. A young farmer in

KTR SLAMS GOVT FOR PUSHING FARMERS INTO DISTRESS

HYDERABAD: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Saturday questioned the treatment meted out to farmers under the Congress rule. He said the bankers took away the gates of farmers' houses for defaulting on agriculture loan repayment. "Today they are taking away the starters... Will they take away our locks and keys tomorrow? Telangana women! Is it time to revolt against this incompetent Congress government? Why is such enmity against farmers burdened by debt? Why such anger towards farmers who are already struggling?" he wondered. He said the government failed to provide adequate irrigation facilities. (REPORT PAGE 5)

CONG FAILURES AGGRAVATED WATER CRISIS, SAYS HARISH

HYDERABAD: Stating that Telangana, once a model for groundwater conservation under the BRS government, was now facing a severe water crisis, BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday criticised the Congress government for its failures in managing the precious water resources. He attributed the water crisis that was adding to the challenges faced by the people, especially farmers, solely to the mishandling by the government. Reacting to a report in *Telangana Today* on the deteriorating groundwater situation, he recalled that under KCR's leadership, Telangana saw a remarkable increase in groundwater levels. (REPORT PAGE 5)

Kudakuda village, Suryapet district, attempted suicide. Vemulakonda Lakshmaiah, a close relative of a Congress leader, consumed pesticide in his withering crop field, expressing anguish over the lack of timely water supply from the SRSP canal, which he blamed on the Congress government's failure.

As water scarcity worsens, protests are intensifying. More and more farmers, losing hope in their Rabi crops, are leaving their standing crops for cattle grazing. This has become a common sight in the entire ayacut of the SRSP Stage II,

from Dornakal in Mahabubabad district to Kodad in Suryapet district. The fate of the Rabi crop now hinges on the irrigation department's ability to ensure water supply in the next two weeks.

Failure to do so could leave nearly half the Rabi farmers unable to recover even half of their crop investments. Unlike the previous BRS regime, there is no full fledged crop investment support either to mitigate these losses.

Groundwater depletion
 Adding to the crisis, the

groundwater table is depleting rapidly. New borewells are yielding no water. This was the situation even in the SRSP Stage I ayacut also. In Darpalli mandal, a farmer who spent nearly Rs 3 lakh on his standing crops in four acres is now ready to abandon his crops for cattle grazing. After spending another Rs 3 lakh on a new bore well that failed to yield water, he now faces additional costs to close it permanently.

Many farmers are experiencing similar hardships. The situation is equally appalling in the SRSP Stage II command area. (SEE PAGE 2)

In a nutshell

Israel, Hamas end hostage exchange

KHAN YOUNIS: Israel and Hamas completed the sixth exchange of hostages and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners on Saturday with just over two weeks remaining in the initial phase of their fragile Gaza ceasefire. Israelis expressed some relief as the three hostages — Argentinian-Israeli lair Horn, 46; American-Israeli Sagui Dekel Chen, 36; and Russian-Israeli Alexander Troufanov, 29 — appeared to be in better condition than the emaciated hostages freed a week ago. (WORLD PAGE 9)

Not running away: Podcaster Ranveer

MUMBAI: Podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia on Saturday said he was getting death threats, but he was not running away. He also alleged that people "invaded my mother's clinic posing a patients". His post on Instagram comes as the Mumbai Police was unable to trace him as his phone remained switched off. The police had given comedian Samay Raina time till March 10 to appear before them in a probe into the controversial remarks on his YouTube show, an official said on Saturday. (PTI)

'Sheesh Mahal' under scanner

NEW DELHI

The Central Vigilance Commission has directed CPWD for a detailed probe into the alleged merger of properties to expand the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow and the expenditures incurred on its interiors.

The bungalow labelled as 'Sheesh Mahal' by the BJP for alleged corruption was occupied by Arvind Kejriwal as the Chief Minister of Delhi from 2015 till the first week of October last year.

No immediate reaction was available from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) or its convenor Kejriwal on the matter. The Central Vigilance Commission took cognisance of BJP leader Vijender Gupta's two earlier complaints and factual reports of the Central Public



Works Department based on which it has now directed to conduct detailed probes. Gupta, a newly elected BJP MLA from Rohini, said in a press conference that his first complaint to the CVC on October 14, 2024, alleged that Kejriwal flouted building regulations to construct a lavish mansion covering 40,000 square yards (8 acres). (SEE PAGE 2)

Three J&K staffers sacked for terror links

JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday dismissed three government employees, including a jailed policeman, for their alleged terror links.

The sacked employees have been identified as police constable Firdous Ahmad Bhat, teacher in the School Education Department; Mohammad Ashraf Bhat and orderly in Forest Department Nisar Ahmad Khan, who was earlier arrested in connection with the killing of a National Conference Minister in 2000, officials said.

The officials said the LG invoked Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution to terminate the services of the three employees after investigation clearly established their terror links. (PTI)

Deportees took loans to go to US

CHANDIGARH

The family members of a second batch of illegal Indian immigrants being deported from the US are in a state of shock, with many of them saying that they raised money by pledging farm land and cattle to send them abroad for a bright future.

A plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants from the US was to land at the Amritsar air-

port on Saturday, the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its promised crackdown on illegal migration.

The plane was expected to land at the airport late in the evening, official sources said. Of the 119 deportees, 100 are from Punjab and Haryana, 33 are from Punjab, 33 are from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three

from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and one each is from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The family of Daljit Singh, a resident of Kurala Kalan village in Tanda of Hoshiarpur district, said a travel agent had duped them. Kamalpreet Kaur, the wife of Daljit, alleged that her husband was deceived by the agent. (SEE PAGES 2, 8)

Does the sight of a doc raise your BP? It's probably White Coat Hypertension

T LALITH SINGH
 Hyderabad

The sight of a doctor's white coat might reassure and comfort a patient. But inadvertently, it is this white coat only that could end up elevating the blood pressure and has the mercury rising in the sphygmomanometer.

A common condition, White Coat Hypertension (WCH) has many patients ending up recording an elevated blood pressure in medical settings than during home monitoring.

WCH is believed to be the result of a patient experiencing anxiety during medical appointments and a reflex to having the blood pressure checked. From reaching the health centre to entering the examination room and hav-



ing the inflatable arm cuff wrapped, all could contribute to subconscious anxiety and take the blood pressure reading a few notches up. Medical professionals attribute the syndrome to stress of a health check and fear of negative outcomes that patients nurture as they arrive at the hospital. "A pa-

A patient, while meeting a doctor, is stressed about his health. This results in high BP

— DR A SREENIVAS KUMAR
 APOLLO HOSPITALS

This results in the BP readings being more in the presence of white coats than what the patient could have monitored at home. The senior cardiologist says doctors take this possibility into consideration while assessing the health of a patient and coming up with a treatment plan. (SEE PAGE 2)

Bhopal school gets threat mail in Telugu

BHOPAL: A school in Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal on Saturday received an email claiming that the institute would be blown up by "RDX",

police said. The threat mail to the school in Piplani was written in Telugu, an official said. Authorities mobilised teams from the Anti-Terrorism

Squad, bomb disposal unit and dog squad, said police. There were no students in the school when the threat mail arrived. (PTI)

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