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Textile exports to triple before 2030, says PM Modi



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US Secretary of State says Hamas must be eradicated
 Says 'gates of hell would be open' if Hamas doesn't release dozens of remaining hostages



SPORT | PAGE 10
India bank on batting depth for Champions Trophy title

In a nutshell

New FASTag rules from today
NEW DELHI: New FASTag rules, imposing extra penalties on users with low balance, delayed payments or black-listed tags, will come into force from Monday. The National Payments Corporation of India and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways have issued some key changes to the FASTag ecosystem, aiming to streamline toll payments, reduce disputes and curb frauds. The new rules will affect users who delay payments. **BUSINESS PAGE 8**

Cartoon row: Website 'blocked'
CHENNAI: After BJP's complaint to the Centre against a Tamil digital magazine alleging it published a cartoon showing Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an offensive manner, the magazine said its portal is inaccessible to its readers and Chief Minister M K Stalin and leaders of political parties condemned the "blocking" of the website. It said there have been numerous reports stating that Vikatan website has been blocked. **PTI**

Manipur MLAs call for peace
IMPHAL: Kuki-Zo MLAs of Manipur have expressed hope that the Central government would lay out a "comprehensive political roadmap" for peace and justice, following the imposition of President's rule in the strife-torn State. In a joint statement, 10 MLAs — seven BJP legislators, two Kuki Peoples' Alliance MLAs and one Independent — said they also look forward to measures to end the sufferings of those affected by the ethnic conflict. **NATION PAGE 7**

170 Pakistanis deported
ISLAMABAD: Nearly 170 Pakistanis have been deported from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries over the last two days, according to a media report on Sunday. Saudi authorities deported 94 Pakistanis involved in begging, drug dealing, illegal residence, working without a sponsor, absconding from employment, and violating contractual agreements. Some of them were also black-listed. **PTI**

Glitches in Rythu Bharosa irk farmers

Ryots end up receiving only fraction of amount they are due

T KARNAKAR REDDY
SIDDIPET

The wait for Rythu Bharosa was long enough. And when the very few farmers, who were lucky enough to be among the first to receive the long-awaited financial assistance for the Yasangi season, started to get the funds, inexplicable glitches are robbing them of their happiness.

Many farmers have got only a fraction of the amount they were eligible for. While some got just Rs 450 instead of the Rs 7,650 they were eligible for, some haven't got the money credited despite being listed as eligible beneficiaries.

For instance, in Siddipet, many farmers got less benefit than the land extent they had on their respective names. The farmers are now roaming around revenue offices seeking the release of the remaining amount. However, they did not get answer from the officials, who said they too had no clue how the farmers got less amounts than what they were eligible for.

Mukkeru Raju, a native of Ghanpur in Siddipet, had 1 acre 17 guntas of land on his name. Raju is eligible for Rs



We are receiving numerous complaints from farmers every day. But there is no mechanism to address these issues with the Agriculture Dept — **AGRICULTURE OFFICER, DUBBAK**

8,550 under Rythu Bharosa. However, just Rs 2,550 was credited in his account. Another farmer, Devara Anil Kumar Swamy, a resident of Rampur, had 1 acre 11 guntas of land on his name. He was eligible for Rs 7,650, but his account was credited with just Rs 450. There are several more such stories not

just in Siddipet, but across Telangana with many farmers visiting the banks, revenue offices and agriculture offices every day. However, the officials have no answer. Another farmer Rondla Rajinikanth Reddy, who had 1 acre 20 guntas of land at Golangonda in Yadadri-Bhongir, did not get Rythu

Bharosa at all. Gugulothu Rajitha, a resident of Konapuram in Chennaraopet mandal of Warangal district, got just Rs 4,500 though she was eligible for Rs 10,500. The farmers alleged that the State government had failed to complete the loan waiver and were now again cheating the farmers by denying them whatever they were eligible for under the Rythu Bharosa scheme.

An agriculture officer in Dubbak Assembly segment, on condition of anonymity, said they were receiving numerous such complaints from farmers every day. However, he said there was no mechanism to address such issues with the Agriculture Department. They had never experienced such incidents before, he said.

Another farmer from Nedhanur in Timmapur mandal of Karimnagar district, Kethireddy Amaravardhan Reddy, got Rs 900 though he was eligible for Rs 12,000. In Vikarabad district, Chelka Narsamma got Rs 8,700 though she was eligible for Rs 14,700. The list is endless, just like the struggles of the farmers ever since the Congress came to power.

447 ryots ended lives since Cong's return

Resurgence of farmer suicides points to looming crisis in Telangana

D CHANDRABHASKAR RAO
Hyderabad

The tragic suicides of Nannavath Harya in Nalgonda district on February 14 and Kummarrri Nageswar Rao in Mulugu district on February 7 highlight the dire circumstances faced by farmers in Telangana. Both men, overwhelmed by mounting debts and the inability to sustain their farms, took their own lives. Their stories are not isolated incidents.

In 2024 alone, 376 farmers succumbed to despair, bringing the total number of farmer suicides to 447 in the 14-month Congress rule. In the wake of the economic downturn, the farming community in Telangana is facing unprecedented challenges. The ground reality today is a grim reminder of the pre-2015 era. The loss of a protective cover, meticulously planned and extended by the first Chief Minister of the State, K Chandrashekhara Rao, had previously revived the dwindling fortunes of the peasant community.

However, the collapse of the real estate sector has led to a sharp decline in the value of farmland, further adding to the crisis. This downturn has had a cascading



effect on the livelihoods of farmers, particularly small and marginal ones.

The real estate crash, which has seen property values plummet by almost 25-40 per cent in rural pockets, has cast a shadow on the confidence levels of farmers. With no takers for farmland, mortgage and farm loans have become a significant burden. The loan waiver initiative has yet to cover a major segment of the farming community.

For instance, Segnama Nagabhushan of Ramavaram village in Husnabad, Siddipet, re-

ceived a message about the loan waiver, but the status of his loans remained unchanged. Tragically, he passed away before the issue was addressed. His son is now moving from pillar to post to resolve the matter, but to no avail.

The pressure from Telangana Grameena Bank officials in Husnabad is mounting on them. Losing faith in the assurances given by elected representatives, the family is now ready to dispose of a few 'five guntas' of land to make the family debt-free on their own. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

KTR punches holes in Centre's TG debt narrative

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led Centre, charging it with excessive borrowing, financial recklessness and systematic discrimination against Telangana.

He debunked the false narrative of Telangana's mounting debt by union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Rajya Sabha recently and demanded accountability on the Centre's Rs 125 lakh crore borrowing over the last decade, questioning its lack of tangible development outcomes.

In an open letter to the Finance Minister, Rama Rao pointed out that 14 Prime Ministers had collectively borrowed Rs 56 lakh crore

Says 14 PMs borrowed Rs 56 lakh cr over 65 years since Independence, while Modi alone took Rs 125 lakh cr in 10 years

over 65 years since India's Independence, while the Modi government alone has borrowed Rs 125 lakh crore in just 10 years between 2014 and 2024. "A government that has incurred the highest debt in the history of India has no moral right to question Telangana's borrowing," he lashed out.

He reminded Sitharaman that Telangana was a surplus Budget State even before its formation in 2014. **(HITS OUT AT CONG: PAGE 5)**

Confusion over trains led to Delhi tragedy

NEW DELHI

A narrow stairway with 42 steps leading to a 25-foot-wide foot-over-bridge at the New Delhi railway station turned into a scene of panic and chaos when a stampede left 18 people dead and more than a dozen injured.

Scattered slippers, torn bags and abandoned belongings lay strewn across the staircase, the bridge, and platforms 14 and 15 — silent witnesses to the tragedy that unfolded on Saturday night.

The tragedy struck at 9.55 pm on Saturday, when thousands of passengers, many of them Maha Kumbh pilgrims, crowded the station. A mix-up in train announcements set off a chain reaction of confusion and panic, according to eyewitnesses.

The Delhi Police said the confusion happened because of the announcement of the trains having the same initial name starting with 'Prayagraj'. "The announcement of the Prayagraj Special arriving at platform 16 led to confusion because Prayagraj Express was already at platform 14. People who couldn't reach their train at platform 14 thought their train was arriving at



Relatives of a woman, who died in the stampede, mourn her death at Sangam Vihar in New Delhi on Sunday. — Photo: PTI (REPORTS PAGE 7)

platform 16, leading to the stampede. "Additionally, there were four trains heading to Prayagraj, of which three were delayed, causing unexpected overcrowding,"

police said. Two other trains, Swatantrata Senani Express and Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express, were already delayed, leaving platforms 13, 14 and 15 packed

with travellers. Then came an announcement that a special train to Prayagraj would depart from platform 16. "A train to Prayagraj (Prayagraj Express) was at platform 14.

When the announcement about the special train was made, many passengers assumed it was their regular train and rushed to platform 16," said an eyewitness. **PTI**

2nd batch of deportees also arrive in shackles

CHANDIGARH

A US military aircraft carrying 116 illegal Indian immigrants landed at Amritsar airport on Saturday night, with the men among the deportees claiming they were in shackles during the journey and Sikh youths were allegedly without turbans.

The C-17 aircraft, which landed at the airport around 11.35 pm, was the second batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its crackdown on illegal immigrants.

They were provided food upon reaching Amritsar, much to their reprieve after the exhausting journey. According to sources, most of

THIRD US PLANE WITH 112 INDIAN DEPORTEES LANDS AT AMRITSAR

CHANDIGARH: A US military aircraft carrying 112 Indians landed at the Amritsar airport late on Sunday night, the third such flight bringing deportees as part of a crackdown by the Donald Trump administration against illegal immigrants. The plane landed at the airport at 10:03 pm, said sources. Of the 112 deportees, 44 are from Haryana, 33 from Gujarat, 31 from Punjab, two from Uttar Pradesh and one each from Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, said sources. Families of some of the deportees have reached the airport. The deportees will be allowed to head to their homes after completion of all formalities including immigration, verification and background checks. Arrangements have been made for the transportation of deportees to their destination. **PTI**

the deportees in the second batch were aged between 18 and 30. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Sunday strongly condemned the US authorities for allegedly not allowing Sikh deportees, who were part of the second batch of illegal Indian immi-

grants, to wear turbans. The statement came after some video clips on social media showed Sikh deportees without turbans completing their immigration formalities at the Amritsar airport. SGPC officials gave 'dastar' (turban) to the Sikh deportees. **PTI**

US ends grant for 'India voter turnout'

NEW YORK

The US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) led by billionaire Elon Musk has announced a series of expenditure cuts, including \$21 million allocated for "voter turnout in India."

Tasked with improving governance and curbing wasteful expenditures, the DOGE in a post on X on Saturday announced cancelling many programmes costing hun-

dreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars.

It said, "US taxpayer dollars were going to be spent on the following items, all of which have been cancelled..." The list included \$486 million in grants to the 'Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening', including \$21 million for 'voter turnout in India' and \$22 million for 'inclusive and participatory political process' in Moldova. **PTI**

Two held for duping investors in Rs 850-crore Ponzi scam

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The Cyberabad Police arrested two people — Pavan Kumar Odela, vice-president, and Kavya Nalluri, director — working with Capital Protection Force Private Limited and business head of Falcon Invoice Discounting Platform for cheating thousands of investors to the tune of Rs 850 crore.

According to the police, the management of Falcon Invoice Discounting (FID) platform introduced itself as

Falcon Invoice Discounting posed as a peer-to-peer web platform, promised investors high returns on investments

a P2P (peer-to-peer) web platform and promised investors high returns on their investment. "Pavan and Kavya, along with Amardeep Kumar, managing director, and Aryan

Singh, chief operating officer, and others lured depositors by promising high returns on short-term deposits under the guise of invoice discounting. A total of Rs 1,700 crore was collected and the amount repaid was Rs 850 crore. The remaining was swindled. A total 6,979 depositors were duped." K Prasad, DCP (EOW) Cyberabad, said.

The company used an app and website, and falsely presented itself as a legitimate P2P invoice discounting service. **(SEE PAGE 2)**