



STATE | PAGE 05

HC stays land acquisition for industrial park in Lagacherla



WORLD | PAGE 09

US President issues 'last warning' to Hamas

Trump asks outfit to release all remaining hostages held in Gaza



SPORT | PAGE 10

Kane Williamson thinks India 'at home' in Dubai

In a nutshell

2 executed Indians buried in UAE

NEW DELHI: Days after they were executed, two Indian nationals — Shahjadi Khan and Muhammed Rinash Arangilottu — were buried in the UAE in presence of their family members. According to the MEA, Shahjadi and Arangilottu were buried following regulations of the UAE. Thirty-year-old Shahjadi, a caregiver from UP, was executed last month for murdering a child. AP

Babbar Khalsa terrorist held

LUCKNOW: An "active terrorist" of Babbar Khalsa International with "links" to Pakistan's ISI, who had planned a major terror attack during the Maha Kumbh, was arrested from UP's Kaushambi district early Thursday. The terrorist, Lajar Masih, was nabbed in a joint operation by Uttar Pradesh STF and Punjab Police around 3.20 am. Masih had planned a major attack during Maha Kumbh. PTI

Ice may exist on Moon: Data

NEW DELHI: Ice could be present at more locations right beneath the Moon's surface at the poles than previously thought, a study of data collected by the Chandrayaan-3 mission has suggested. Large, yet highly local, changes in surface temperatures can directly affect the forming of ice, and looking into these ice particles can reveal "different stories about their origin and history". PTI

Drought stares parts of Telangana

Depleting groundwater levels, empty ponds and lakes pose major threat to standing Rabi crop

D CHANDRA BHASKAR RAO
HYDERABAD

The rapid depletion of groundwater in parts of Telangana is emerging as a major threat to the standing Rabi (Yasangi) crops that are in a crucial stage. With wells and borewells running dry and tanks and ponds empty, the groundwater situation is becoming increasingly dire. This crisis is casting a shadow of uncertainty over crops that are just one to one-and-a-half months away from harvest.

The critical watering period at the end of March is essential for crops such as paddy, groundnut and vegetable crops. In the absence of adequate irrigation support, farmers are bracing for potential losses. Vegetables, in particular, require watering multiple times to achieve the desired yields. As the State grapples with this severe water shortage, the fate of Yasangi farmers, who rely solely on groundwater sources, hangs in the balance.

Godavari basin crisis

The once-thriving Godavari basin, which saw a considerable rise in groundwater levels due to consistent water lifting operations, is now facing a severe groundwater crisis. The Kaleshwaram barrages — Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla — had maintained maximum water



A farmer shows his dried up field in Narayanpet of Dhanwad mandal on Thursday. — Photo: B Taher

levels, forming a 120-km freshwater lake in Godavari that enriched the groundwater table. Water used to seep into the ground, even at depths of five to 10 feet in some riverbank pockets.

However, this scenario has drastically changed, leaving the region dry and farmers desperate. The drying up of the vast stretch in the Godavari basin, once perpetually under a sheet of water due to regular pumping operations under the

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP), has led to an alarming decline in groundwater levels.

The KLIP barrages are now emptied, with crest gates fully open, causing a big drop in groundwater levels in Peddapalli district's Manthani, Mutharam, Palakurthi, Anthargaon and Dharmaram mandals. This situation serves as a stark example of the broader water crisis affecting the State, severely impacting

agricultural activities. In February 2024, groundwater levels in these mandals were recorded at 5.09 metres below ground level. By February 2025, the levels had plummeted to 5.44 metres. This fluctuation has left farmers in a state of despair, struggling to sustain their crops with diminishing water resources.

Farmers have voiced their frustration against the Telangana Congress government. (SEE PAGE 2)

Facts on the ground

IN FEBRUARY 2025, AVERAGE GROUNDWATER LEVEL WAS **8.68 M** BELOW GROUND LEVEL

- Jagtial had shallowest groundwater level at **4.86 m bgl**
- Vikarabad had deepest groundwater level at **13.67 m bgl**
- **18 districts** saw decline in groundwater levels, ranging from **0.05 m** in Kamareddy to **2.36 m** in Yadadri
- Shallow water levels (<5 m bgl) covered about **19%** of the State
- Water levels in **5-10 m bgl** range covered **49%** of State, with **10-15 m bgl** levels at **25%**, and moderately deep (**15-20 m bgl**) and very deep (>20 m bgl) covering **8%**

STATE RECEIVED 1,050 MM OF RAINFALL IN 2024-25, 21% HIGHER THAN NORMAL OF 864 MM

RAINFALL RANGED FROM 776 MM IN YADADRI TO 1,656 MM IN MULUGU DISTRICT

GROUNDWATER SHORTAGE LED TO DRYING UP OF PADDY: OFFICIAL

HYDERABAD: In response to a news item titled 'Erratic power supply worsens TG farmers' woes' that appeared in these columns on Thursday, TGPSPCL A Venkateswarlu, Superintending Engineer (Operation), Nalgonda, clarified that the paddy fields in Pittampally village dried up due to the lack of groundwater and not due to power supply issues. The power supply to Pittampally village is extended from the 11 KV feeder of the 33/11 KV Pamana Gundla substation. "According to our records, the supply load is 120 amps, and the voltage levels are healthy," he said. (SEE PAGE 2)

3 INJURED AS TWO VILLAGES FIGHT FOR SRSP WATER IN MAHABUBABAD

MAHABUBABAD: The escalating water crisis in Mahabubabad district resulted in a violent confrontation between two villages. Farmers from Ammapuram GK thanda and Balaji thanda, two villages that rely on water from the DPM-57 canal at Mylaram under SRSP project Stage II, attacked each other following heated arguments over water release. Three farmers — Banoth Mangya, Ajmeera Ramesh and Guguloth Bikksham — were brutally attacked by residents of Balaji thanda.

Hyd call centre dupes US citizens

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The call centre was set up a few months ago in Madhapur and telecallers tricked US citizens, NRIs into transferring huge sums into bank accounts

A full-fledged call centre with 63 employees from where citizens of the United States were being cheated was busted by the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) following a raid at a building in Madhapur on Wednesday evening.

According to Shikha Goel, Director TGCSB, accused Kaivan Patel Rupesh Kumar alias Jaddhu of Gujarat was operating the racket with the help of his brother Vicky, who stays in Dubai, and another person, Azad.

The call centre was set up a few months ago and the telecallers tricked US citizens and NRIs into transferring huge sums into some bank accounts. Prime suspect Chanda Manasvini (36) started a company, Exito Solutions, and took a floor on rent at a building in Madhapur. They recruited around 60 people, including nearly 40, from Northeastern

States and offered them a monthly salary of Rs 30,000. Transportation and accommodation was also provided to the employees by the company.

"The telecallers introduced themselves as employees of Paypal call centre and informed the customers, mainly US citizens, that they were some unauthorised transactions made

through their accounts. The people were then tricked into sharing sensitive information and it was used to transfer money from their accounts," Goel said.

The telecallers were given a target of duping at least 10 people a day. "On an average, around 600 people were targeted by the telecallers and amounts running into thousands of dollars was siphoned from their accounts and transferred into mule accounts," said the official.

The money was then converted into crypto currency and transferred to crypto wallets. (SEE PAGE 2)

'Kashmir issue ends once PoK returned'

Pakistan rejects Jaishankar's remarks as "baseless"

LONDON/ISLAMABAD

The Kashmir dispute would be solved after the "return of the stolen part of Kashmir which is under illegal Pakistani occupation," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said.

Jaishankar was speaking at a session at the Chatham House think tank in London on Wednesday, prompting Pakistan on Thursday to reject as "baseless" his remarks regarding Kashmir, while making counter demands to address the issue.

Responding to an audience question on "solving" issues in Kashmir, Jaishankar stated, "On Kashmir, we have done, I think, a good job solving most of it." "Removing Article 370 was step number one, restoring growth and economic activity and social justice in Kashmir was step number two, and holding elections with a very high turnout was

UK CONDEMNS JAISHANKAR SECURITY BREACH

LONDON: The UK on Thursday strongly condemned the security breach involving a pro-Khalistan extremist rushing towards EAM S Jaishankar's convoy, saying such attempts to "intimidate, threaten, or disrupt" public events are "completely unacceptable". It came after the Ministry of External Affairs had called on the UK to "live up to their diplomatic obligations" after a man from a small group of protesters chanting pro-Khalistan slogans and waving separatist flags attempted to breach the security perimeter as Jaishankar left the Chatham House think tank in London on Wednesday evening. The protester was swiftly taken aside by officers of the Metropolitan Police, with no arrests being confirmed so far. "We strongly condemn the incident that took place outside Chatham House during the EAM's visit to the UK," a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson said. PTI

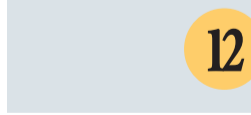
step number three." "I think the part we are waiting for is the return of the stolen part of Kashmir which is under illegal Pakistani occupation; when that is done, I assure you Kashmir will be solved," Jaishankar said. In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Shafiq Ali Khan rejected Jaishankar's remarks. "Instead of making baseless claims about Azad Jammu and Kashmir, India should vacate the large territories

of Jammu and Kashmir under its occupation for the last 77 years," he said while addressing a weekly press briefing.

"The relevant UN Security Council resolutions stipulate that the final status of Jammu and Kashmir is to be determined through a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN auspices. India's prevarication cannot change this reality," Khan said. (TRUMP'S MULTIPOLARITY SUITS INDIA: EAM PAGE 7)

Janhvi turns 28, wishes pour in

A BTS photo of the birthday girl from sets of #RC16 released



Another farmer dies by suicide

STATE BUREAU
Adilabad

A tenant farmer died by suicide, while his wife was battling for life after they attempted to end their lives by consuming pesticide as they were depressed over not being able to repay mounting debts, at Vadur village in Neradigonda mandal late on Wednesday night.

Locals and police said Poshetti (60) and his wife Indira (55) tried to kill themselves as they were disheartened by their inability to repay loans availed for growing cotton and other crops. While Poshetti breathed his last while undergoing treatment at RIMS-Adilabad, Indira's medical condition was learnt to be critical. (SEE PAGE 2)

The couple suffered huge losses due to decline in yield of cotton crop raised in 10 acres leased out from another farmer.

The losses were attributed to unfavourable climate, surge in cost of pesticides and low minimum support price (MSP) for cotton. The quantum of the loan taken was not known yet.

Burdened by debt, auto driver ends life

STATE BUREAU
Adilabad

A 36-year-old auto-rickshaw driver died, allegedly by suicide, as he was distressed over his inability to repay loans, on the outskirts of Bazarhathnoor mandal centre in Adilabad on Thursday.

Police said Bhagath Santosh from Ramnagar in Bazarhathnoor mandal headquarters was found hanging from a tree at a farm on the outskirts of the village. He was depressed over his inability to clear debts of around Rs 4 lakh availed from private banks. Some farmers noticed the body and alerted the police, who rushed to the spot and shifted the body for a post-mortem examination. Roja, wife of Santosh, lodged a complaint with the police. A case was registered.

Row over Shami's fasting: Clerics split over not observing roza during Ramzan

NEW DELHI

A fresh controversy has erupted over Indian cricketer Mohammed Shami's decision not to observe a fast during the ongoing month of Ramzan.

The issue has sparked a division among Muslim clerics and scholars, with some condemning his actions and others offering a more lenient view based on Islamic principles.

Recently, a video went viral on social media where Mohammed Shami was seen drinking water during



India's semi-final match against Australia. The criticism came from Muslim cleric Ibrahim Chaudhary, who expressed disappointment over Shami's public actions during the sacred month of Ramzan. He questioned Shami's commitment to his religious duties, particularly

able to observe them, then they are committing a sin," said Chaudhary.

He further elaborated that Islam calls for complete submission to its tenets, and only by embracing all its commandments can one attain success.

According to Chaudhary, Shami's actions, if deliberate, could lead to a loss of the reward that comes with fulfilling religious duties. Another Muslim scholar Maulana Qari Ishaq Gora came to Shami's defence, offering a nuanced perspective. IANS

KCR gears up for grassroots meetings

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Keeping up with the momentum gained from last month's BRS extended executive body meeting, party president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao is set to reinvigorate the party's grassroots network.

Starting in the next few weeks, he will personally engage with local leaders to assess ground realities and boost the morale of party workers. While Chan-



drashekhar Rao has been meeting the party cadre and also the public at his Erravelli residence since recovering from a hip replacement surgery last year, he intends to hold constituency-wise meetings in a more structured manner.

Leaders from each constituency will interact with him, share firsthand reports on the current political situation, providing him with insights into public sentiment and issues plaguing them. (REPORT PAGE 5)

Come clean on tunnel collapse, KTR to tunnel

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Charging the Congress government with gross negligence, BRS working president KT Rama Rao demanded that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy come clean on the collapse of the SLBC tunnel.

He said only a probe with a HC sitting judge can be relied upon. He was reacting to a news report in an English newspaper revealing that a report had warned about a possible 'fault zone' in the tunnel. (REPORT PAGE 5)