

## Rohit Reddy and two others remanded to 14-day judicial custody

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FORMER BRS MLA Pilot Rohit Reddy, his brother Ritesh Reddy, and a Delhi-based businessman Namit Sharma were remanded to 14 days of judicial custody by a magistrate in Upparpally in Telangana after they were arrested in a high-profile drug party at a farmhouse on Saturday night.

The three were subsequently shifted to Chanchalguda Central Jail. The operation was conducted by Telangana's Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE), led to the arrest of three and eight others were granted station bail.

The party took place at the farmhouse of Rohit Reddy in Moimabad including alleged drug consumption and gunfire during the late-night raid. During the operation,



nearly 40 officers participated in the operation, entering the premises by scaling the compound wall to prevent guests from escaping.

In a raid, as many as 11 persons were present at the party and were detained after undergoing drug screening tests. Six persons were tested positive for narcotics consumption. Among those who tested positive were Rohit Reddy, TDP MP from Eluru, Putta Mahesh Kumar, Ritesh Reddy, Kaushik Ravi, Arjun

Reddy, and Namit Sharma.

Police seized 0.26 grams of cocaine, a German-made pistol, four empty cartridges, one live cartridge, 48 beer cans, and six bottles of liquor.

The seized narcotic has been sent to the forensic laboratory for detailed analysis. Police registered a case under several provisions, including Sections 8(c), 22(a), 27, and 29 of the NDPS Act, Sections 30 and 25(1B)(a) of the Arms Act, along with relevant sections of the Telangana Excise Act.

# Senior Cong leader Jeevan Reddy likely to quit party, may join BRS

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SENIOR Congress leader Tjeevan Reddy is likely to quit the Congress party and join the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) soon, according to sources close to him.

Jeevan Reddy, who has been associated with the Congress for nearly four decades, reportedly informed his followers about his decision to leave the party. It is learnt that he may formally join the BRS during a public meeting scheduled to be held in Jagtial town on March 25.

Sources indicate that the veteran leader has been unhappy with recent developments in the Congress party,



particularly the induction of Jagtial BRS MLA Sanjay Kumar into the Congress. Jeevan Reddy had openly criticised the party leadership from top to bottom over the issue.

His dissatisfaction reportedly intensified during the

recent municipal elections and the selection of the municipal chairman. Political observers also point out that his unsuccessful attempt to secure a Rajya Sabha seat further deepened his disappointment.

According to sources, Jee-

van Reddy has been telling his followers that he feels he is no longer being given adequate priority within the Congress party.

In a significant development, Congress party flex banners installed outside and inside his residence in Jagtial town were removed on Monday. Supporters were also seen taking down photographs of party leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, TPCC president B Mahesh Kumar Goud, and Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar.

Sources said Jeevan Reddy is expected to formally submit his resignation from the Congress either on March 24 or March 25 before joining the BRS.

Meanwhile, reports suggest that he has already been in touch with BRS working president KT Rama Rao regarding his possible entry into the party. He is also believed to be assuring his supporters that the BRS will return to power in the next elections and that he would secure victory as well.

Earlier on Monday, coinciding with the commencement of the Budget session of the Assembly, Jeevan Reddy criticised the state government, alleging that the Revanth Reddy administration was showing negligence in addressing farmers' issues. He also accused the government of delaying the procurement of maize crops, causing distress to farmers.

## State Transport Dept pushes green transit with electric auto retrofit plan

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TO promote an environment-friendly transport system and achieve the goal of net-zero emissions, the Telangana Transport Department is taking steps and has initiated consultations with electric retrofitment companies.

On Monday, a meeting was conducted in two phases with companies engaged in electric retrofitment of three-wheeler vehicles. The first meeting was chaired by Transport Commissioner Dr K Ilambarathi and the second meeting was chaired by Special Chief Secretary, Transport, Roads and Buildings



Department Vikas Raj.

During the meetings, detailed discussions were held with retrofitment companies regarding the proposed policy to convert the existing petrol and diesel auto-rickshaws operating in the Telangana

Core Urban Region (TCUR) into electric vehicles using electric kits.

The discussions covered technical standards, safety regulations, certification procedures, cost structure, battery technologies (both swappable

and fixed battery systems), and implementation modalities.

The retrofitment companies shared their views on the feasibility of converting the existing auto-rickshaws into electric vehicles. They stated that this initiative would help reduce air

pollution, lower operating costs for auto drivers, and improve air quality in urban areas.

According to the transport department, as per the directions of the Chief Minister, the government is formulating a policy to encourage the conversion of petrol and diesel auto-rickshaws into electric vehicles. Under the proposed programme, the government is examining the possibility of providing financial assistance for converting petrol and diesel auto-rickshaws into electric kits. The objective is to accelerate the expansion of a sustainable urban transport system in urban areas.

"The suggestions received from retrofitment companies will be examined and feasible proposals will be considered while formulating the policy," said a senior officer at the transport department.

## Sajjanar warns public against AI Deepfake videos circulating online

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VC Sajjanar, Police Commissioner, issued an advisory warning citizens about the growing threat of AI Deepfake videos and fake photos being circulated online by cyber-criminals. The advisory urges the public to remain cautious and verify suspicious content before sharing it on social media. On Monday, Sajjanar said on social media that many AI-generated videos and photos circulating online appear highly realistic, making it difficult for people to immediately identify them as fake. However, careful observation can reveal clues such as unnatural



lighting, unusual facial expressions and awkward movements, he posted on X.

Sajjanar also advised the public to verify suspicious images or videos before forwarding them. If there are doubts about any viral content, people should perform a reverse im-

age search to identify the original source.

"Forwarding unverified content based on emotions can unintentionally contribute to the spread of fake news, which may create confusion or unrest in society. In such cases, you may also become a partner in the crime of spreading fake news," he cautioned.

He urged citizens to follow a simple rule while using social media: think before clicking, verify the authenticity of the content, and only then share it.

In the era of AI deepfake technology, the Commissioner called upon citizens to remain alert and use critical thinking to prevent the spread of fake news and cybercrime.

## CM pulls up party legislators

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Stating that the public had given the Congress the mandate because the previous BRS government had failed to meet expectations, he said the ruling party must now concentrate on delivering effective governance. He cautioned legislators to remain vigilant, as opposition leaders, having faced defeats in several elections, including municipal and local body polls, were keen on targeting the government. Revanth Reddy ordered

the constitution of Assembly committees and directed the legislators concerned to undertake study tours as part of their responsibilities. The Chief Minister called for better coordination between government whips and legislators during discussions in the House. He instructed the whips to guide members in selecting appropriate topics and issues so that proceedings are conducted efficiently without wasting valuable House time.

## 'Telangana on cusp of mega transformation'

Continued from P1

Telangana would compete with the developed global cities and countries. Taking inspiration from the successful models across the globe Telangana would like to achieve a 3 trillion-dollar economy by 2047," he said. The Governor talked about 'Telangana Rising 2047' stating that Telangana was standing as a global beacon of inclusive growth and innovation. Giving the government's roadmap, the Governor said the document 'Telangana Rising' was prepared in line with the Vikasit Bharat

Vision 2047 and in consultation with NITI Aayog with an aim to evolve Telangana into a \$3-trillion economy by 2047, with an interim target of \$1-trillion by 2034. He said that the state's GSDP for 2025-26 is Rs 17.82 lakh crore reflecting an impressive growth rate of 10.7 per cent, with Telangana contributing 4.99 per cent to India's GDP.

The state's per capita income reached Rs.4,18,931. At the same time, the government has maintained price stability, with inflation contained at 0.2 per cent, he added.

## MEA slams US report recommending sanctions on RSS

Continued from P1

This comes after USCIRF designated India as a "country of particular concern" and asked United States to link arms sales and trade policies to religious freedom. USCIRF said its report, Systematic Religious Persecution in India, provides an overview of India's social, political, and criminal justice systems as they relate to issues regarding freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). "It also examines the relationship between Hindu nationalist groups like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the implications of this dynamic

for FoRB.

Despite offering some constitutional protections for FoRB, India's political system facilitates a climate of discrimination toward religious minority communities," the report alleged. USCIRF also argued that conditions for religious freedom in India have "continued to deteriorate" and accused the Indian government of "targeting" religious minorities and houses of worship. "Several states undertook efforts to introduce or strengthen anti-conversion laws to include harsher prison sentences. Indian authorities also facilitated widespread detention and illegal expulsion of

citizens and religious refugees and tolerated vigilante attacks against religious minority communities," the report said.

Created in 1998 by an act of the United States Congress, the USCIRF "monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) abroad" and makes recommendations to the President of the United States, the United States Department of State, and Congress. The agency says it acts independently, but the US President and senior political leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate appoint its nine commissioners.

## Trump may send troops to capture 'Crown Jewel of Iran'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is reportedly weighing the possibility of seizing Kharg Island-- a scrubby stretch of land in the Gulf that handles almost all of Iran's crude exports-- amid a growing energy crisis due to war in the Middle East.

Trump may order the seizure of Iran's critical oil depot on Kharg Island if tankers remain bottled up in the Persian Gulf amid Tehran's blockade, US officials said.

If the US goes ahead with the move, it will put US troops on the ground, which risks triggering Iranian retaliatory strikes against oil facilities and pipelines across Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia.

But America's main ally in the Middle East, Israel, may not be inclined to put its boot on the ground in Iran just yet, as Israel's ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, has claimed that neither Washington nor Jerusalem intends to invade Iran.

He said the focus of US-Israeli actions remains on encouraging change within Iran through pressure from its own people rather than through military occupation.

## US Prez Trump accuses Iran of spreading lies

Continued from P1

"Now, AI has become another Disinformation weapon that Iran uses, quite well, considering they are being annihilated by the day," he said on his social media platform on Monday.

Trump said Iran showed "phony Kamikaze Boats" shooting at various ships at sea, which looks "wonderful, powerful, and vicious." "But these boats don't exist -- It's all false information to show how tough their already defeated Military is!"

The five US refuelling planes that were supposedly struck down and badly damaged, according to the "Wall Street Journal's false reporting," and others, are all in service, except for one, which will soon be flying the skies, Trump claimed. "Buildings

and Ships that are shown to be on fire are not -- It's FAKE NEWS, generated by AI."

He accused Iran of working in close coordination with the fake news media, showing USS Abraham Lincoln Aircraft Carrier, one of the largest and most prestigious Ships in the World, burning uncontrollably in the Ocean. Not only was it not burning, but it was also not even shot at -- Iran knows better than to do that! The story was knowingly FAKE and those media outlets that generated it should be brought up on charges for treason for dissemination of false information. The fact is, Iran is being decimated, and the only battles they "win" are those that they create through AI and are distributed by corrupt media outlets.

## Karnataka Speaker raps govt

Continued from P1

Stating that there had been no improvement from the government side, the Speaker questioned how the House could function smoothly if such lapses continued. "If this is the attitude of the government, how are we supposed to run the House in a manner agreeable to all?" he asked.

Khader further declared that the proceedings would not continue until the ministers and officials concerned explained the reason for the delay in answering questions. "Until the ministers and officials concerned come to me and explain what the issue is, I will not conduct the House. I am adjourning the House," he said. Earlier, after Question Hour, Home Minister G. Parameashwara informed the House on behalf of the government that out of the 230 questions that were to be answered in written format, the government had responded to 84.

## Global energy crisis deepens as Iran keeps hold on Hormuz

Continued from P1

As morning broke Monday, a drone hit a fuel tank near Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international passenger traffic, causing a large fire. Firefighters contained the blaze and there were no inju-

ries reported, but the airport suspended all flights before resuming them a few hours later. Later, a person was killed in the capital of the United Arab Emirates when an Iranian missile hit a vehicle, the Abu Dhabi media office said.

## Guv's address a 'roadmap' for the govt: CM

Continued from P1

For context, the Governor's address to the Legislature, usually ahead of the Budget session (as mandated by Article 176 of the Indian Constitution), is prepared by the State Cabinet led by the Chief Minister. The speech is not a personal statement by the Governor; rather, it is drafted by the state government to highlight its accomplishments, policy priorities, and legislative agenda for the coming year. However, under the principle of "Aid and Advice" (Article 163), the Governor is constitutionally required to read the text prepared by the elected government.

It may be mentioned here that, though the Governor is expected to read the address verbatim, going by recent events in states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, Governors have chosen to skip portions of the cabinet-approved address, triggering debates over the extent of the Governor's power under Article 176.

Revanth Reddy said that every member must speak and respond strictly in accordance with the party line and the government's priorities in the Legislative Houses. Further,

the Chief Minister said, that debate on the failures of the previous government is not required. "It is the right time to focus on our plans and how to fulfil people's aspirations," he observed. The Chief Minister said that the "people's government" is presenting its third budget in the session.

The Chief Minister recounted that the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi government did not allow the opposition to speak on important issues. Even the then CLP leaders Bhatti Vikramarka and Jana Reddy were denied the opportunity to speak. "I was also suspended for the entire session as well as for the duration of my tenure as an MLA, and barred from entering the House," the CM recalled.

The Chief Minister stated that all the Assembly committees would be constituted soon. He suggested to the MLAs and MLCs to tour other states and study best practices with regard to policies. The MLAs were asked to focus on ways to prevent drinking water crisis in summer. The '99-Day 'Praja Palana - Pragati Pranali' should be taken directly to the people at the grassroots level, the Chief Minister told party legislators said.

## India rules out talks with US on Hormuz

NEW DELHI: India on Monday said it has not held bilateral talks with the United States on deploying naval vessels to secure merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The clarification came after US President Donald Trump urged countries to send warships to keep the strategic waterway open amid tensions with Iran.

## PNG and CNG supply uninterrupted: Govt

Continued from P1

During an inter-ministerial briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary (Marketing and Oil Refinery) at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said fuel stations supplying CNG and households using PNG continue to receive normal supply. Authorities have also initiated enforcement action against hoarding, with raids conducted across several states to monitor storage and distribution. The government said crude oil availability remains adequate, with refineries operating at full capacity and petrol pumps functioning normally without reported shortages.

City gas distributors are also promoting PNG adoption. Indraprastha Gas Lim-

ited has announced an incentive of free gas worth Rs 500 for consumers registering for PNG connections before March 31.

LPG bookings have declined as concerns over domestic gas availability eased. Meanwhile, 22 states and Union Territories have set up control rooms to monitor supply and curb hoarding or black marketing.

The ministry urged consumers to avoid panic bookings and use digital platforms for LPG orders. The government said it continues to prioritise uninterrupted supply to households and key sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions, while closely monitoring the situation amid prevailing geopolitical developments.