

Osmania varsity bans protests, and then a climb-down

KTR, BJP leaders slam Telangana's Congress government over the university's directive

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 16 MARCH

Osmania University, once the hotbed of students' politics and agitations in Telangana, prohibited the staging of protests and sit-in demonstrations on the campus and those of its constituent colleges and administrative buildings, leading to a massive uproar. Union minister for mines and BJP state president G. Kishan Reddy and BRS working president KT Rama Rao slammed the Congress government for the move. The university authorities climbed down following the outrage and issued a statement clarifying it was not a blanket ban and the university fully supports students' right to peaceful protest.

The circular issued on 13 March stated: "Osmania University is a highly reputed educational institution meant for facilitating learning in a conducive and peaceful environment. In recent times, it was observed that there were several incidents of students' groups entering the departments/colleges/centres/administrative building of Osmania University and staging demonstrations and dharnas, resulting in the disruption of the administrative work and giving a wrong perception of the university to society. It further stated that these incidents came in the way of the "smooth functioning" of the university, leading to delay in administrative and academic progress as well as security concerns. The circular prohibited trespassing, staging dharnas and agitations, raising slogans, preventing administrative staff from discharging their duty, and using unparliamentary and filthy language against university staff and authorities. The various students'



AGENCIES VIJAYAWADA, 16 MARCH

unions at the university predictably opposed the circular and demanded its immediate withdrawal while tagging it as "undemocratic". The students gathered in front of the iconic Arts College and raised slogans against the vice-chancellor, BRS working president KT Rama Rao who was also quick to call out the Congress government in the state saying, "Suppressing student voices is a clear symbol of dictatorship. The Congress government in

Telangana is now revealing its true colours by curbing students' fundamental right to protest. Osmania University which played a crucial in the Telangana movement, is now being turned into a prison under this oppressive rule." He was however, reminded that the BRS had attempted something similar in OU during its rule. Revisiting OU's rich history as the epicentre of agitations and movements during the time of Nizam and the struggle

for statehood G. Kishan Reddy, Union minister and state BJP president said: "This had happened in KCR's regime as well when they had prohibited agitations and processions. This had happened earlier with Congress then it was TRS (BRS) doing the same and now Revanath Reddy has come with another circular banning processions, slogans, demonstrations and protests... if Telangana decides to go for protests to no government can stop it."

After the massive outrage, the university clarified that the circular had been "misinterpreted" and "misunderstood" by its stakeholders and administrative staff. A blanket ban on student protests or agitations in open spaces within the university and the restrictions were applicable only to the academic and administrative spaces within the college departments and administrative premises.

'Congress party's DNA has Emergency in it': BJP slams Congress over Revanath Reddy's 'threats' to YouTubers



AGENCIES VIJAYAWADA, 16 MARCH

Bharatiya Janata Party strongly criticised Telangana Chief Minister Revanath Reddy, over his alleged threats to YouTubers, and accused the Congress party of attacking free speech and media rights. In a self-made video, BJP Spokesperson Sheshu Poonawalla said, "The Congress party's DNA has the Emergency in it. Just like how the Congress party has always attacked the rights of the media. India

Gandhiji imposed censorship during the Emergency. Nehru ji introduced the First Amendment, which imposed restrictions on freedom of speech. Majrooh Sultanpuri was sent to jail. Rajiv Gandhi introduced two media-opposing bills," Poonawalla said. He also pointed to a recent incident in Telangana, where a female journalist was arrested, allegedly after highlighting the plight of farmers. "When she became the voice of the farmers, the Congress party attacked her," he stated. Poonawalla alleged: "The Congress Chief Minister (Revanath Reddy) is threat-

ening, saying: 'Who are these YouTubers? These are not journalists. They abuse, and I will strip them, I will humiliate them, I will beat them, I will make them roam on the streets.' Poonawalla condemned the remarks from the Telangana CM, questioning the consistency of Congress party's stance on press freedom. "Is this the language of a Chief Minister from the Congress party? Rahul Gandhi talks about press freedom, love and democracy. Is this the definition of democracy? Is this the shop of love? Is this what promotes press freedom. Rahul ji?" Poonawalla asked. He also pointed in the day, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader Krishank attacked the Telangana government for banning agitations, dharnas, and demonstrations at Osmania University and said that the Congress government is so "intolerant" that they can't even take criticism.

Karnataka: Double murder shocks Shahapur; police hunt for killers

The motive behind the murder is still unknown, and the police are working to unravel the mystery. Shahapur Police have formed special teams to track down the culprits and bring them to justice.

AGENCIES YADGIRI, 16 MARCH

A gruesome double murder was reported near Sadyapura village in Shahapur, Yadgiri district, Karnataka on Sunday morning, leaving the local community in a state of shock. The victims, identified as Mapanna (52) and Alisaba (55), were brutally killed while riding a bike from Shahapur to their village around 8 am. "Two people named Mapanna (52) and Alisaba (55) were murdered near Sadyapura village in Shahapur at around 8 am while they

were on their way to their village from Shahapur on a bike," said Shahapur Police. The motive behind the murder is still unknown, and the police are working to unravel the mystery. Shahapur Police have formed special teams to track down the culprits and bring them to justice. "The cause of the murder is not known. The police have formed special teams to track down the culprits," added Shahapur Police. Further details regarding the incident are yet to be revealed as the police continue to probe into the case.

Karnataka Assembly session to be stormy over Muslim quota issue

AGENCIES BENGALURU, 16 MARCH

The Congress government's decision to provide a four per cent quota to the Muslim community in tenders is likely to create a furore during the ongoing budget session in both Houses of the state legislature. The BJP's national leadership has stated that the decision will have national implications. Former Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday in a press meet reminded that such divisive measures in the past led to the partition of the country. The Congress government is all set to bring an amendment to the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement (KTTP) Act, 1999, to provide the quota for Muslims in the ongoing session, which will resume on Monday (March 17). The BJP is expected to



strongly oppose the bill and is likely to disrupt proceedings in both the legislative assembly and the Legislative Council. Reacting to the move by the ruling Congress party, state BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra said it is pushing the state towards violence. Amid the controversy, Minister for Waqf and Housing Zameer Ahmad Khan is considering increasing Muslim reservation to 10 per cent - a blatant violation of Supreme Court rulings, which have repeatedly stated that reservations cannot be based on religion." The BJP further questioned: "Where is social justice now? Bahubali will Congress snatch reservations

meant for SCs and STs to fulfill its appeasement politics? Mr. Scam CM Siddaramaiah, is Congress' idea of social justice taking away opportunities from the most deprived to favor your vote bank?" Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced reservations for Muslims in government contracts in the state budget for the financial year 2025-26. Although CM Siddaramaiah did not explicitly mention any community in his speech, the budget included Category-1B, which comprises Muslims exclusively. He further announced: "Under the provisions of the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, the reservation provided to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Category-I, Category-IIA, and Category-IIB contractors in public works will be increased to Rs 2 crore."

DMK govt failed to act against mineral smuggling: TN BJP chief Annamalai

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 16 MARCH

Tamil Nadu BJP President K. Annamalai has accused the ruling Dravidian Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government of failing to act against mineral smuggling in the state. He marks come in the wake of the recent seizure of two trucks allegedly used for smuggling minerals into Kerala. In a post on social media platform X, Annamalai claimed: "Since the DMK came to power, Tamil Nadu has lost its natural mineral resources. This illegal operation is being carried out solely by DMK members, depriving the state of its valuable resources and causing a shortage of construction materials. As a result, people are forced

to pay higher prices for these materials." The BJP leader further alleged that DMK members were exploiting the state's resources for financial gain while the government remained silent. Annamalai questioned the government's "inaction" regarding mineral smuggling from border districts such as the ones in Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, and Tenkasi. He demanded to know when the authorities would take action against those responsible, particularly the owners of the trucks used for smuggling. Previously, Annamalai had accused the DMK of depending on "illegal mineral theft gangs" to fund its campaign for the 2026 assembly elections.

Kishan Reddy condemns DMK's divisive politics

UNI HYDERABAD, 16 MARCH

Union Minister and Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy has criticised Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin and the DMK party for engaging in divisive politics over the past two months. He accused them of falsely alleging that the central government is conspiring against South India. Addressing the media at the state party office in Nampally on Sunday, Reddy condemned the DMK's announcement of a Policy and National Education constituency delimitation, calling



itally motivated and driven by malice. Reddy criticised the DMK and Congress for their stance on the National Education Policy and constituency delimitation, calling

it a reflection of "political bankruptcy." "Elections are approaching in Tamil Nadu within six months, and the DMK is set to lose due to public dissatisfaction with corruption,

exploitation, and the authoritarian tendencies of the Stalin family. They are staging political dramas to divert attention from these issues," Reddy claimed. He pointed to rising corruption in Tamil Nadu, high state taxes, increased electricity tariffs, and the non-implementation of promised welfare schemes as reasons for growing public discontent. Reddy accused the DMK of attempting to provoke the public by falsely portraying Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government, the Hindi language, and parliamentary constituencies as oppressive.

TN to experience temperature surge, IMD issues heat advisory

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 16 MARCH

After a brief spell of rainfall, Tamil Nadu is set to experience a surge in temperatures with the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) forecasting an increase of 2 to 3 degrees Celsius above normal until March 19. According to the RMC, the maximum temperature is expected to range between 34 degrees Celsius and 36 degrees over the next few days. "Light northeasterly, easterly or southeasterly winds will prevail in the lower tropospheric levels. Dry weather conditions are expected, with certain areas likely to experience extreme heat. Extended-range predictions from dynamic models indicate that maximum tem-



peratures will remain near normal in most parts of the state. However, northeastern and adjoining interior districts could see temperatures between 34 and 36 degrees, while the rest of the state may record 32 to 34 degrees until March 20. In Chennai, after a brief respite from the heat, the city will witness partly cloudy skies. The temperature at

ture levels caused by a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal. Coastal and adjoining districts are expected to receive satellite to above-normal rainfall until March 20. Several parts of Tamil Nadu have already started experiencing extreme heat. Vellore recorded the highest temperature of 38 degrees, while Tirupattur, Karur, Palani, Chennai, Erode, and Madurai also reported significant temperature spikes, reaching above 38 degrees in some areas. In response to the rising temperatures, the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (DPH) has issued a health advisory urging the public to take precautions against heat-related illnesses.

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Cryo Upper Stage for LVM3 flagged off to Sriharikota for US Blue Bird mission

UNI CHENNAI, 16 MAR

In an update on Sunday, ISRO Chief Chairman Dr V. Narayanan flagged off the Cryogenic Upper Stage (C25) of ISRO's LVM3 launch vehicle on 15 March 2025, from the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu, to the launch complex at Sriharikota. Directors of ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Liquid Propulsion System Centre

(LPSC), and Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC SHAR) also participated in the flag off ceremony. This stage has been integrated at IPRC and is earmarked for the fifth operational mission of LVM3 (LVM3-M5) under a commercial agreement between NSI and AST Space, LLC to launch their BlueBird Block-2 satellite. The stage was designed and developed by Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) during the development of the LVM3 launch vehicle and the stage is powered by the indigenous high thrust Cryogenic engine (CE20) with a propellant loading of 28.5 tonnes. In a first, ISRO will launch the advanced American communications satellite 'BlueBird' scheduled later this month from SHAR Range.

According to ISRO, this satellite will be launched using the LVM3, popularly known as the "Babubali" rocket. This will mark the first instance of an Indian rocket launching a large-scale US satellite. The satellite is a one-mile stone in ISRO's expanding global commercial outreach. The Bluebird satellite boasts revolutionary technology that will enable individuals to make calls using smartphones from space. With an innovative antenna spanning 64 sqms and a weight of approximately 6,000 kg, the satellite will operate in Low Earth orbit, facilitating direct satellite-to-smartphone connections. This capability will allow users to make calls and access broadband internet from space without relying on traditional ground-based towers.

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