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Rafah next target, says Israeli Defence Minister page 9

Enchanting Kashmir



PICTURESQUE: Tourists enjoy Shikara rides on the Dal Lake against the backdrop of snow-capped mountains, in Srinagar on Friday. — Photo: ANI

Champai takes oath, MLAs in Hyd

Jharkhand Assembly floor test on February 5

PTI
 RANCHI

After two days of political uncertainty, JMM legislature party leader Champai Soren on Friday was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand and the JMM-led coalition government will seek a vote of confidence on February 5.

Along with Champai Soren, senior Congress leader Alamgir Alam and RJD leader Satyanand Bhokta were sworn in as State Ministers by Governor CP Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan. Immediately after the swearing-in, 38 lawmakers of the ruling alliance were flown to Hyderabad to prevent any poaching attempt by the BJP in the run-up to the trust vote.

Cabinet meet
 In its first Cabinet meeting, the Champai Soren-led coalition government decided to seek a vote of trust on Monday. The Governor gave 10 days to Champai Soren to prove a majority in the Assembly, prompting the alliance to shift its



Champai Soren signs documents after taking oath as Jharkhand CM, at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi on Friday. — Photo: PTI

MLAs from Jharkhand, a legislator said. A senior leader of the coalition said: “The decision to shift the legislators to Hyderabad, the capital of Congress-ruled Telangana, was taken considering that the opposition BJP may make attempts to poach them.” Congress leader Banna Gupta whose party is a constituent of the ruling alliance said, “As many as 38 MLAs flew to Hyderabad. Several others stayed back.” The MLAs arrived at the Begumpet airport in Hyderabad in two flights, Congress sources said. (SEE PAGE 2)

ED gets 5-day custody of Hemant Soren
RANCHI: Ex-Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren was remanded to five days’ ED custody by a special PMLA court in connection with a money laundering case. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court refused to interfere with his arrest by the ED and asked him to approach the High Court. PTI

Save auto drivers, KTR to CM

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Congress government should support autorickshaw drivers by initiating special measures and put an end to suicides, demanded BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday.

In an open letter addressed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, he said as many as 15 auto drivers died by suicide in the State. But the government was yet to respond to the situation. One of the auto drivers

Writes to Revanth; urges government to pay Rs 10 lakh each to kin of auto drivers who died by suicide

burnt his vehicle in front of the Praja Bhavan out of sheer frustration and helplessness. He urged the government to pay Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of auto drivers who died by suicide. Besides this, the government

should consider extending monthly assistance of Rs 10,000 to the family of every auto driver who was left with no takers.

“The plight of the auto drivers was deteriorating day by day in the State. The crisis that gripped the lives of the auto drivers is an example of the fallout of the ill-conceived policies of the government,” he further said. Meanwhile, the BRS working president took potshots at the Congress for taking credit on the recruitment of staff nurses and po-

lice constable jobs. “Not for the first time, will not be the last time either for credit chor Congress party. 6,956 staff nurses and 15,750 police constables recruitment was completed by KCR Government but unfortunately, we could not release the results because of the Election Code,” the BRS working president posted on X.

He further said that now the Congress, which had nothing to do with recruitment, wants to fool people into believing that they have done it.

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N Korea tests cruise missiles
 WORLD | PAGE 09



Jaiswal puts India in command
 SPORT | PAGE 10



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Kejri ‘refuses’ to accept cops notice

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Friday visited the official residences of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Cabinet Minister Atishi to serve them notices to join the probe into their allegations that the BJP was trying to poach AAP MLAs, but they did not accept the notices, sources said.

Sources in Delhi Police said Crime Branch teams will visit their residences again on Saturday to give them the notices. This comes days after the Delhi BJP submitted a complaint to Delhi CP Sanjay Arora in the matter. The police sources said the notice was given to Kejriwal “but he did not accept it”, a claim rejected by the AAP which said the crime branch team left without serving the notice. PTI

‘Priyanka will launch Rs 500 LPG scheme soon’

STATE BUREAU
 Adilabad

Sounding the poll bugle for the ensuing Lok Sabha elections, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi will be invited to launch the Rs 500 gas cylinder scheme shortly in the presence of one lakh women.

Similarly, the Congress government will also launch the 200 units free power supply to households shortly. Based on last year’s consumption by households, the 200 units free power supply scheme will be implemented, he said.

Addressing a public meeting at Indravelly here on Friday, the Chief Minister said the Congress was committed to implementing all



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Minister Seethakka and others during a public meeting at Indravelly on Friday.

promises made to the people during elections. Saying that it had been just over 50 days since the Congress government came to power in the State, he said 7,000 staff nurse jobs were filled. Likewise, 15,000 constable jobs would be filled in an-

other 15 days, he said. The past government did not bother to get the court cases cleared for filling 15,000 constable jobs. Soon after coming to power, the Congress government initiated measures to get the cases cleared. (SEE PAGES 2, 5)

2 AP policemen held with ganja

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Two policemen of the Andhra Pradesh Special Police were caught transporting ganja in Bachupally on Friday. The two arrested policemen, V Sagar Patnaik (32), a head constable and P Srinivas, (35), a constable of the third battalion of APSP in Kakinada were transporting 22 kg of ganja in 11 packets and concealed in a car. The value of the seized contraband is worth Rs 8 lakh.

Preliminary probe revealed that the duo was on leave on the grounds of ill health and was planning to earn some money by peddling ganja. They purchased the contraband in Thuni and started for the city when they were caught. The duo planned to sell the contraband at a higher price in the city to some persons.

CBI books activist for FCRA violations

NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case of alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act against human rights activist Harsh Mander and his NGO, and searched his premises on Friday, officials said.

The searches were conducted at two locations in Delhi including Mander’s official and residential premises, according to CBI. The agency registered the FIR against the former IAS officer and his Delhi-based CES after conducting a preliminary enquiry on a complaint from the Home Ministry for the alleged violations of various provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

The agency had registered a preliminary enquiry on April 13 last year on a

Conducts searches at two locations in Delhi including Harsh Mander’s official and residential premises

complaint from the Home Ministry against the Centre for Equity Studies, Aman Biradari Trust, Oxfam India and Action Aid Association over alleged FCRA violations. The inquiry revealed that the Centre for Equity Studies was established and registered as a trust with Harsh Mander as its chairman, the FIR said. The inquiry has revealed that through its chairman Mander, the CES diverted funds from FCRA accounts in alleged violations of FCRA, the FIR alleged. PTI

PIO student dies in US; 4th in a month

NEW YORK

Police in the US are investigating the death of an Indian-American student in the state of Ohio, the fourth such case within a month in the country. The Consulate General of India in New York said that no foul play is suspected at this stage in the death of Shreyas Reddy Benigeri, a student of the Lindner School of Business, Cincinnati.

“Deeply saddened by the unfortunate demise of Mr. Shreyas Reddy Benigeri, a student of Indian origin in Ohio,” the Consulate said in a post on X. “Police investi-

gation is underway. At this stage, foul play is not suspected,” the Consulate said, without divulging any further details of the incident.

The Consulate continues to remain in touch with the family and is extending all possible assistance to them, it said. Benigeri’s family in India has been informed about the tragedy and it is understood that his father is expected to arrive from India soon. The incident comes just days after Neel Acharya, an Indian-origin student pursuing a double major at Purdue University, was found dead near the varsity airport. (SEE PAGE 2)

Monkeys keep winged guests away from Chintapalli

JAMES EDWIN
 Khammam

Migratory birds, which usually make Chintapalli of the district their home during summer, have stayed away from the village for the third year in a row.

The reason? Locals attribute this to monkey menace besides loss of habitat as well as urbanisation wherein real estate ventures have come up near the village. Every year, by December-end, the village comes alive with the arrival of thousands of migratory birds for nesting. Their arrival is



According to locals, loss of habitat is also the reason behind migratory birds staying away from the village for the third year in a row.

preceded by the visit of pilot birds that ensure the local habitat is suitable for roosting and breeding. In

the last couple of years, a few pilot birds arrived but returned soon and there is no sign of birds coming to

the village this year either, says local guide and watcher Rayapati Rama Krishna. He said Chinta-

palli derives its name from a large number of tamarind (Chinta chettu) trees, which offer shelter to migratory birds. To keep monkeys away, the villagers have cut the trees jeopardising the very name of the village.

The Dubalamma tank in the village makes it an ideal spot for the birds to breed as they get enough food but the water level in the tank also receded. “The main cause for concern for birds is that monkeys are damaging eggs and nests and there is no solution to this problem,” Rama Krishna told ‘Telangana Today’. (SEE PAGE 2)

‘Thalapathy’ Vijay floats party

CHENNAI

Eyeing electoral success in the 2026 Assembly elections, top Tamil star Vijay on Friday announced the launch of his political party, claiming the people of Tamil Nadu were “yearning” for a change.

In a statement, the actor announced the launch of his party, ‘Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam’, even as he expressed concern over the current political situation that was fraught with “administrative deterioration,” corruption and “divisive politics,” that impeded unity. (SEE PAGE 2)