



**HYDERABAD**

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**6 killed in strikes**

Russia bombards Kharkiv; 11 injured in missile attack



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**Mumbai Indians eye first victory**



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**Alaya hails Gen-Z**

Opens up on how 'Zoomers' influence trends



**Ramzan Timings**

Iftar Sunday 6:35 PM  
 Saher Monday 4:42 AM

**CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD**

Farm	Rs. 156
Retail live	Rs. 178
With skin	Rs. 258
Skinless	Rs. 294
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 51

## 'China may use AI to meddle with elections'

Microsoft warns poll-bound India, S Korea, US

PTI  
 NEW YORK

China is likely to deploy Artificial Intelligence-generated content via social media to sway public opinion to boost its geopolitical interests during elections in countries like India, South Korea and the US, tech giant Microsoft has warned.

Voting for 543 Lok Sabha seats in India will take place between April 19 and June 4, spread across seven phases. South Koreans will go to polls in a general election on April 10 while the US will hold the Presidential election on November 5.

"With major elections taking place around the world this year, particularly in India, South Korea and the United States, we assess that China will, at a minimum, create and amplify AI-generated content to benefit its interests," Clint Watts, general manager, Microsoft Threat Analysis Center, said in a blog post.

Despite the chances of such content in affecting election results remaining low, China's increasing experimentation in augmenting memes, videos, and audio will likely continue — and may prove more effective down the line, he said. China will do it along with North Korea, he wrote.



**India talks tough on AI-generated content, deepfakes ahead of LS polls**

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has come down heavily on global digital companies, asking them to fix their platforms as part of a new advisory around AI and its potential misuse during polls. According to exposure management company Tenable, misinformation spread through AI-generated deepfakes and fake content is the biggest threat to the upcoming polls. The Centre last month said social media intermediaries "must not permit any bias or discrimination or threaten the integrity of the electoral process." IANS

These are among the Microsoft Threat Intelligence insights in the latest East Asia report published on Wednesday by the Microsoft Threat Analysis Center (MTAC).

China is using fake social media accounts to poll voters on what divides them most to sow division and possibly influence the out-

come of the US presidential election in its favour. China has also increased its use of AI-generated content to further its goals around the world.

North Korea has increased its cryptocurrency heists and supply chain attacks to fund and further its military goals and intelligence collection.

## Borewell drillers, pumpset mechanics make a comeback

Amid water crisis, farmers are forced to use their services

S SANDEEP KUMAR  
 Hyderabad

Borewell drilling machines and agriculture pumpset repair stalls that had almost gone into oblivion in the last few years in Telangana are now back in demand in many districts.

Due to the lack of sufficient irrigation water and quality power supply, farmers desperate to save standing crops are hitting borewell drilling agencies and winding machine repair stalls. For the last few days, these scenes are being witnessed in many villages across the State.

Bicchiaiah, a paddy farmer at Chintabai thanda in Jangaon, says borewell drilling agencies were charging Rs 110 to dig a foot. Farmers were forced to spend about Rs 40,000 to drill one borewell. The sad part is despite spending huge amounts, all efforts put in by farmers are going in vain. "My brother drilled six borewells in his fields and not one was successful,"



Scenes of people digging borewells and getting winding machines repaired have become common across villages in the State. (Above) A borewell being dug in Warangal.

says Bicchiaiah, pointing to a failed borewell point.

Similarly, Shivashankar drilled six borewells, Nar-simha drilled four, Lakshmi drilled six and so did a few other farmers in the last three months. All their efforts and money went down the drain as not a drop of water was pumped out. While farmers are piling up losses, drilling agencies in Jangaon, Suryapet and

neighbouring towns are making quick money.

Due to financial constraints, marginal farmers were paying an amount to their counterparts, who are blessed with borewells, to supply water. A farmer from Devarupalla, U Jannaiah, owns 1.5 acres and the borewell in his field dried up. To save his crops, Jannaiah paid Rs 2,000 to his neighbour to ensure water

for wetting his paddy field. He had to also buy a water pipe to cover a distance of 60 feet from the borewell to his field. Such was the plight of many farmers in Kadavendi, Golapally, Manpahad and other villages. If this was the situation in parts of Jangaon, Suryapet and Nalgonda, farmers in Ranga Reddy are lining up at pumpset winding machines repair outlets. (SEE PAGE 2)

## NIA team attacked in West Bengal

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

A team of the NIA was allegedly attacked by a mob on Saturday when it went to arrest two main suspects in a 2022 blast case in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district, sparking a political slugfest with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accusing

the investigators of assaulting the villagers.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said one of its officers was injured and a vehicle was damaged in the attack that happened in Bhupatinagar. It said in a breakthrough in the Bhupatinagar blast case, in which three persons were

killed on December 3, 2022, two key conspirators — Balai Charan Maity and Manobrata Jana — were arrested after extensive searches at five locations.

The explosion ripped apart the kutch house of Rajkumar Manna, who along with Biswajit Gayen and Buddhadeb Manna

were grievously injured and later died. The attack happened at Jana's house with locals allegedly trying to obstruct the team from moving towards the Bhupatinagar police station to complete the arrest formalities, officials said. Locals gheraoed the NIA vehicle and hurled stones. PTI (REPORTS PAGE 8)

## Districts turn ovens, mercury at 44.5°C

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

As the summer heat tightens its grip, districts across Telangana are experiencing blistering temperatures, turning the region into ovens.

According to reports from the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDDS), several areas witnessed scorching highs on Saturday, with Penpahad in Suryapet, Nampalle in Nalgonda and Garimellapadu in Bhadrachalam recording a sweltering 44.5 degrees Celsius.

Within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits, Moosapet sizzled at 41.9 degrees Celsius. Numerous localities within the city have been hit particularly hard. (SEE PAGES 2, 3)



A tiger cools off as water sprinklers get activated in the enclosure amid a heatwave, at the Nehru zoo. — Photo: Anand Dharmana

## 3 Maoists killed on TS border

STATE BUREAU  
 Kothagudem

Three Maoists were killed in an exchange of fire with police forces on the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border on Saturday.

Telangana's anti-naxal forces Greyhounds and Bijapur police jointly conducted an anti-naxal operation.

The encounter took place in the Karriguta forests of the Pujari Kanker area under the Usur police station limits. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Selfie on cable bridge costs man his life

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Fascination for a selfie on the Durgam Cheruvu cable bridge has cost a youngster his life and left his friend battling for life.

According to the information available, 27-year-old S Anil Kumar and his friend 28-year-old K Ajay were taking selfies on the bridge when a speeding car hit them on Friday night. On information from

passersby, the Madhapur police rushed to the spot.

The police said both Anil and Ajay sustained grievous injuries and were immediately shifted to a private hospital. "Anil died early on Saturday while undergoing treatment," they said.

The police registered a case under Sections 304 (A) and 337 of the IPC. Police have been warning people against taking selfies on the bridge as they could be penalised.

## SI held for taking bribe

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

The ACB on Saturday caught a Sub-Inspector and constable of the Madhapur police station for demanding Rs 50,000 and accepting a bribe of Rs 30,000.

SI M Ranjith Kumar demanded Rs 50,000 from one Mudavath Laxman through constable-cum-writer Vikram allegedly for not arresting Laxman in a case and settling it in Lok Adalat. The ACB sleuths laid a trap and caught them.

## KTR poser to Rahul on defections

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Saturday wanted to know from the Congress whether its anti-defection assurance stated in the party manifesto would apply to Telangana or not.

Coming down heavily on the party and its leader Rahul Gandhi for their hypocrisy on this count, he demanded transparency from the Congress as far as its poaching mission in Telangana was concerned

and challenged them to adhere to the manifesto promises.

Rama Rao accused the Congress of preaching one thing while doing the exact opposite by welcoming BRS MLAs into their party while allowing them to retain their posts. He reminded Rahul Gandhi that the AICC has announced the Secunderabad MP seat for Danam Nagender, an elected BRS MLA in Telangana. Recalling their historical associa-

tion with the 'Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram' culture of political defections in India, he emphasised the need for political integrity and consistency in the approach of the party on such issues and urged all parties to uphold the principles of democracy and transparency. Rama Rao welcomed the Congress' proposal to amend the 10th schedule to ensure automatic disqualification of MLAs and MPs if they defect parties. (SEE PAGE 2)

