

HYDERABAD

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 Israel calls for sanctions on Iran's missile programme



Congress govt's days are numbered: KCR

Says recent developments and Revanth's remarks cast doubts on its survival

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Predicting that the Congress government in Telangana had its days numbered, Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao said on Tuesday that surveys by the Congress itself had indicated that the ruling party would not manage more than two MP seats in the forthcoming elections.

The survey reports and the escalating discontent towards the Congress government and the surge in defections to the BJP had made Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy jittery, which was evident from his statements.

"While we wish the Congress government to complete its five-year term, recent developments and the Chief Minister's remarks cast doubts on its survival. While there is uncertainty over the number of people defecting from the Congress to the BJP, we need not wonder if the Chief Minister himself shifts loyalties considering his subtle gestures towards the BJP in recent times," Chandrashekar Rao said.



Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao during the Praja Ashirvada Sabha at Sulthanpur in Medak on Tuesday.

Addressing a well-attended Praja Ashirvada Sabha at Sulthanpur in Medak on Tuesday, Chandrashekar Rao drew attention to the Congress' failure to fulfil key promises made to farmers, including the Rythu Bandhu scheme and Rs 500 bonus per quintal for

paddy. Calling upon the farmers to voice their demands through the postcard movement launched in Siddipet constituency recently, he asked them to write to the Chief Minister, demanding the promised crop loan waiver, compensation of Rs 25,000 per acre for crop

losses and immediate procurement of paddy along with the Rs 500 bonus. "Considering the plight of farmers, the State government must provide the Rs 500 bonus to paddy farmers. I assure the Chief Minister that the BRS will not object or complain to the Election

Commission of India in this regard. If the election code is an issue, I urge the State government to issue bills now and release the bonus after the elections. We will not spare the Congress government unless the bonus is given to paddy farmers," he said. (SEE PAGES 2, 4)

29 naxals killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

KANKER

Ahead of the first phase of polling in Chhattisgarh, security personnel gunned down 29 naxalites, including some senior cadres, in Kanker district on Tuesday in the biggest encounter ever in the State, police said. This was the highest number of fatalities suffered by naxalites in a single encounter in the history of the State's fight against Left Wing Extremism.

Three security personnel also suffered injuries in the fierce gun battle and a large quantity of weapons was recovered from the spot, officials said. The latest gunfight took place at around 2 pm in Hapatola forest between Binagunda and Koronar villages under Chhotethiya police station limits, when a joint team of the BSF and the State Police's District Reserve Guard was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police Sundarraj P said. The operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of senior cadres of north Bastar division of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) Shankar, Lalita, Raju and others, he said.



Security personnel at the encounter site in Kanker district on Tuesday.

"Bodies of 29 Maoists along with a huge cache of weapons, including AK-47, SLR, Insas and .303 rifles, were recovered from the spot," the IG said. Polling in the naxalite-hit Bastar Lok Sabha seat will take place on April 19 in the first phase, while the Kanker constituency, part of the Bastar region, will vote in the second round of general elections on April 26. Shankar and Lalita, both divisional committee members of the north Bastar division of Maoists, are believed to be amongst the deceased, sources added. PTI

SC reposes faith in use of EVMs

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday deprecated criticism of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and calls for reverting to ballot papers, saying the electoral process in India is a "humongous task" and attempts should not be made to "bring down the system". It also recalled how polling booths were captured in the era of ballot papers to manipulate election results.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas seeking complete cross-verification of the votes cast using EVMs with VVPAT, an independent vote verification system which enables an elector to see whether his vote was cast correctly. The Bench was critical of the argument that many European countries have gone back to ballot papers after

“There will be some mismatch in vote count due to some human errors but it can be countered and checked”
 — SUPREME COURT

having tried out voting machines. "This is a humongous task. No European country can do this. You talked about Germany but what is the population there? We have to repose faith in the electoral process," the Bench told advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms'. (SEE PAGE 2)

Issue public apology, Ramdev told

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday warned yoga guru Ramdev and his aide Balkrishna against any attempt to "degrade allopathy" and permitted them to tender a "public apology and show contrition" within a week in the contempt proceedings in misleading advertisements case against Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.

The court, however, made it clear that it is not letting them "off the hook" yet. The apex court was hearing a plea filed in 2022 by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

Ramdev and Balkrishna, who were personally present in the court, tendered an unconditional and unqualified apology. PTI

CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIES

War of words raises political heat

TMC gave Bengal on lease to goons

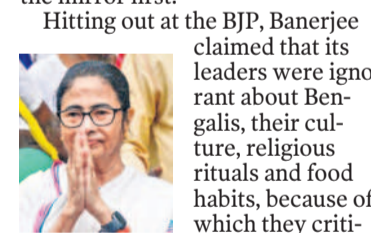
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday flayed the Trinamool Congress, accusing it of "protecting" infiltrators but opposing the CAA, which gives citizenship to refugees. Modi, while addressing an election rally at Balurghat, also alleged that the TMC gave West Bengal "on lease"



to goons and infiltrators. The PM criticised the TMC regime for opposing Ram Navami celebrations in the State, and termed Calcutta High Court's ruling that allowed a VHP procession in Howrah as "victory of truth". "This year's Ram Navami celebrations are a bit different as Ram Lalla returned home in Ayodhya. But the TMC is opposing Ram Navami celebrations in the State," he said. PTI

BJP anti-Bengali, filled with dacoits

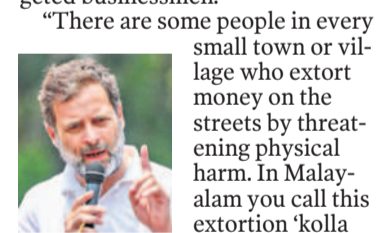
Demanding a white paper on the investigations conducted by central teams in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said that PM Narendra Modi who accuses her TMC of corruption should look in the mirror first.



Hitting out at the BJP, Banerjee claimed that its leaders were ignorant about Bengalis, their culture, religious rituals and food habits, because of which they criticised eating fish. "BJP had sent 300 central teams to Bengal to investigate the allegations of corruption but they didn't find anything," she said. "The PM says TMC is a corrupt party. He should look in the mirror first. His party is filled with dacoits," she added. PTI

Electoral bonds a form of extortion

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched an attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday over the electoral bond issue, describing it as a "form of extortion" and alleging "intimidatory tactics" against targeted businessmen.



"There are some people in every small town or village who extort money on the streets by threatening physical harm. In Malayalam you call this extortion 'kolla adikkal' (loot), but Modi calls it electoral bonds. What a common thief is doing on the streets, the PM is doing at an international level," Gandhi alleged. He accused the BJP-led central government of using sophisticated tactics to threaten targeted businessmen. PTI

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Maxwell takes break from IPL



SPORT PAGE 11

Paris Olympics

Flame lit at the site of ancient games in southern Greece



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 128
Retail live	Rs. 150
With skin	Rs. 218
Skinless	Rs. 248
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 56

Civils: TS girl bags third rank in first attempt

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

She is just 22 years old but conquered one of the toughest examinations in the country and that too, on her very first attempt. Meet Donuru Ananya Reddy from Mahabubnagar district, who has come out with flying colours clinching third rank in the Civil Services Examination 2023 results, which were announced by the UPSC on Tuesday.

Ananya Reddy perhaps is one among the youngest women in the country to have achieved this feat at the age of 22. Speaking to 'Telangana Today', the Mahabubnagar native said



Donuru Ananya Reddy; 3rd rank, Nandala Saikiran; 27th rank, KN Chandana Jahnavi; 50th rank

except for coaching for Anthropology optional in Hyderabad, she had self-prepared for the examination. "After the interview, I expected to be in the final selection list but not third rank. This is my first attempt," said an elated Ananya Reddy, who graduated from the Miranda

House, a constituent college of DU. "Since my childhood, I always wanted to serve the society. So, I took up civil services. In fact, I am the first in my family to get into civil services," said Ananya, whose father is self-employed and mother, a homemaker. (SEE PAGES 2, 4)

Aditya Srivastava tops exam

NEW DELHI: Aditya Srivastava has topped the prestigious civil services examination 2023, with Animesh Pradhan and Donuru Ananya Reddy getting the second and third ranks respectively. Srivastava qualified examination with electrical engineering as his optional subject. He did his graduation (Bachelor of Technology) in electrical engineering from IIT-Kanpur. Animesh Pradhan, a graduate (B.Tech) in computer science from the NIT Rourkela, secured the second rank with sociology as his optional subject, the UPSC said. PTI

Oil tankers attacked in Manipur

IMPHAL

A driver was shot at as armed men allegedly targeted fuel tankers in Manipur's Tamenglong district on Tuesday, police said. At least two fuel tankers were hit in the firing that happened near Keimei village on NH-37 which connects Imphal with Silchar, they said.

Armed men, who are yet to be identified, fired from hilltops targeting the fuel tankers on the highway, in which the driver was shot in his leg, they added. As the bullets hit the tankers, oil was seen spilling on the road. Police said additional forces were sent to the area. PTI

Another IIT-Basar student ends life

STATE BUREAU
 Nirmal

A student studying Pre-University Course second year at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies (RGUKT)-Basar was found hanging in the hostel campus on Tuesday. The reason for the student's extreme step is yet to be ascertained. This is the second suicide reported in the university within two months.

According to Basar police, Buchuka Aravind (17) was found hanging in a room in the hostel. Aravind hailed from Bandarupalli village in Thoguta mandal of Siddipet district. His

body was shifted to a government general hospital in Nirmal. The police, who began an investigation into the incident, are probing reports that the youngster was depressed after reportedly being given a detention by the university due to low attendance.

On February 22, Tenugu Shirisha (17), a PUC first-year student was found hanging in her hostel, while Ramati Praveen Kumar (20) from Nagarkurnool district was found dead in the hostel on November 26. On August 8, a 17-year-old, a student of first year PUC, was found hanging in the hostel room on varsity's campus. (RELATED REPORT PAGE 3)