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Tigers in Hyderabad zoo to get a glass enclosure



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Australian PM Albanese wins a second 3-year term
Becomes first Australian Prime Minister to clinch a second consecutive term in 21 years



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This is my place for life, says Surya Srinivas

In a nutshell

BSF apprehends Pakistani Ranger

NEW DELHI: A Pakistani Ranger has been apprehended by the BSF from along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan, official sources said on Saturday. The Ranger has been taken into custody by the Rajasthan frontier of the force, they said. The development comes nearly a fortnight after a Border Security Force jawan was apprehended by the Rangers amid rising tension between the two countries in the wake of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed. PTI

Two drown in reservoir

SIDDIPET: Two persons of a family were feared drowned in the Ranganayaka Sagar on Saturday. A family of 13 people from Warangal had reached the Ranganayaka Sagar in an SUV. Four of them including Miraz and Arbaz ventured deep into the water body in a playful mood. Since they did not know how to swim, they started drowning. While the locals rescued two of them, Miraz and Arbaz went missing in the water while the others watched helplessly, police said.

Maha man's unique gesture

Chandrapur: A young man from Maharashtra's Chandrapur district set aside lavish ceremonies at his wedding and instead used the funds collected to build a road to help people from his village access their farmland. Shrikant Ekude of Susa village in Warora married Anjali on April 28 in a simple affair. A postgraduate in Agriculture, Shrikant said they marked the occasion by planting around 90 saplings instead of accepting traditional gifts.

Engineer thrashed to death

Jajpur (Odisha): A 22-year-old engineer was allegedly thrashed to death by the owner of a crusher unit in Odisha's Jajpur district. Deceased Arijit Jena was a resident of Jaraka in the district. The incident came to light Arijit's father Ajaya Kumar filed a complaint with Dharmasala police. According to the police complaint, Arijit was employed in stone crusher unit at Rahadpur. When he failed to call her on April 27, breaking his routine, she rushed to the crusher unit where she found him injured.

India bans imports, ships from Pakistan

PM again vows 'firm and decisive' action against terrorists

PTI
NEW DELHI

India on Saturday imposed a ban on import of goods coming from or transiting through Pakistan and also entry of Pakistani ships into its ports even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country is committed to take "firm and decisive" action against terrorists and their backers.

In fresh punitive measures against Pakistan that came into effect immediately amid heightened Indo-Pak tensions in the wake of the deadly Pahalgam terror attack, India also suspended exchange of mails, parcels from the neighbouring country via air and surface routes. Terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22, sparking outrage in India and abroad. After holding wide-ranging talks with visiting Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco, Modi said terrorism is the "biggest threat" to humanity.

(SEE PAGE 2)



A security official keeps vigil on the banks of the Dal Lake, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, in Srinagar on Saturday. — Photo: PTI

Pak's missile test 'act of provocation'

NEW DELHI: India considers Pakistan's test launch of a ballistic missile on Saturday amid escalating tensions between the two countries over the Pahalgam terror attack as a "blatant" act of "provocation", people familiar with the matter said on Saturday. The Pakistani military carried out the launch of the Abdali surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range of 450 km. It is learnt that Islamabad provided prior information to New Delhi about its plan to carry out the missile test as mandated under laid down obligations and norms. "The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability," the Pakistan Army said. PTI

Rajnath to skip Russia visit

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to skip Russia's Victory Day parade and his deputy Sanjay Seth is likely to represent India at the event in Moscow this week.

The move to send the Minister of State for Defence comes amid increasing tensions between India and Pakistan.

Manipur shutdown marks 2 years of clashes

IMPHAL/CHURACHANDPUR

A Statewide shutdown and mass gatherings marked the second anniversary of the ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities on Saturday, amidst demands for free and safe movement of all residents, and a separate administrative arrangement.

Shutdowns, observed in both the Meitei-majority Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo-dominated hill districts, brought life to a grinding halt across the State. While the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity enforced the shutdown in the valley, the Zomi Students' Federation (ZSF) and the Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) led similar actions in the hill areas.

In State capital Imphal, COCOMI organised a public convention at Khuman Lampak Stadium, where speakers urged the central government to ensure the "free and safe movement" of all residents in the State.

(RELATED REPORTS PAGE 7)

Six dead, over 70 injured in Goa temple stampede

PANAJI

Six persons including two women were killed and more than 70 sustained injuries after a stampede broke out during a temple festival at a village in North Goa district in the early hours of Saturday, officials said.

The State government ordered a magisterial inquiry into the tragedy at Shirgao village, and also transferred five officials including the district collector and superintendent of police.

The stampede occurred at around 3 am when thousands of devotees thronged the narrow lanes leading to the temple of Goddess Sree Lairai Devi for an annual festival, police said. The village is located 40 km away from Panaji.

"At least 30,000 to 40,000 people had gathered, and some were standing on a slope. A few persons fell, causing others to tumble and fall on each other," Director General of Police Alok Kumar said.

About 50 people fell on the slope, and the stampede



Rescue operation under way after a stampede during a temple festival in North Goa on Saturday.

was confined to that spot, he added. Thousands of devotees from Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka attend the annual festival.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish

over the tragedy.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant visited the injured persons at the North Goa district hospital, and also visited the stampede site.

(SEE PAGE 2)

Indiramma houses: Villagers stage novel protest

STATE BUREAU
Kothagudem

In yet another protest related to alleged irregularities in sanctioning Indiramma houses to the homeless poor, a few residents of Regalla thanda in Julurpad mandal in the district climbed an overhead water tank demanding justice.

There were around 60 families in the thanda under Bethalapad gram panchayat and many of them were homeless. Four women and three men who applied for Indiramma houses were not sanctioned houses in the



Residents of Regalla thanda in Julurpad mandal in Kothagudem climb a water tank alleging irregularities in Indiramma housing scheme.

first list. They alleged that those who have agricultural lands were given houses

while ignoring the poor families. The matter was taken to the officials concerned but in vain.

In a bid to highlight the issue, the men and women climbed the water tank and shouted slogans demanding the officials to sanction Indiramma houses to eligible families. A head constable, Mallaiah from the local police station, reached the spot and convinced the protestors to withdraw their protest. After much persuasion, they relented. Such protests have become a common sight in many villages in erstwhile Khammam district.

Teenager sexually assaulted by woman

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

A teenage boy was allegedly sexually assaulted by a woman at her house in Jubilee Hills. A case under POC SO was registered against the woman.

According to police, the boy aged 16 years lives with his parents in the servant quarters of a bungalow. He completed his schooling recently.

Depressed

The woman suspect aged around 27 years also stays in quarters in the same bungalow and frequently interacted with the boy and

called him to her house regularly.

For a few days, the boy was not keeping well and appeared depressed.

The parents who spoke to the boy in detail came to know he was being sexually assaulted on numerous instances by the woman. The victim also told that the woman had threatened him of dire consequences if he revealed anything to anyone. After coming to know about the shocking details, the parents of the boy confronted the woman and scolded her. They then approached the Jubilee Hills police and made a complaint against the woman.

Rs 3,000-cr cotton scam alleged

Congress leaders manipulating purchases: BRS

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Alleging a Rs 3,000-crore scandal in cotton procurement in the State, BRS leaders Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, Errolla Srinivas, Manne Govardhan Reddy and a host of others on Saturday said Congress leaders were acting as a syndicate to manipulate cotton sales leaving the farmers in the lurch.

Addressing a news conference in Telangana Bhavan, they demanded a thorough probe into the irregularities in cotton purchases.

Peddi Sudarshan Reddy said cotton farmers had suffered massive financial losses due to a fraudulent nexus between traders and officials. In the 2024-25 sea-

BRS leaders demand a thorough probe into the irregularities in cotton purchases which has hit farmers hard

son, around 25 lakh farmers cultivated cotton, producing 49 lakh bales. While the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) procured 41 lakh bales, private traders handled only 8 lakh bales.

Shockingly, only 6.3 lakh farmers managed to sell their cotton to CCI, and truck permits were issued for merely 9 lakh bales. He alleged that despite the government issuing 60,000 transaction records (TRs),

farmers failed to receive fair compensation, as private market prices ranged between Rs 5,500- Rs 6,000 per quintal, well below the official minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 7,521.

They alleged secret meetings between CCI officials and top traders at a five-star hotel in Hyderabad during Diwali, marking the beginning of a major scam. While official records suggest that 80% of the crop was procured by CCI, Reddy claimed that only 20% of farmers were actually able to sell directly to the corporation. He linked marketing officials to the scam, paralleling it with irregularities in the Civil Supplies Department, in which the Chief Minister and Ministers were allegedly involved.

Centre to procure next-gen air defence system

NEW DELHI

The government has started the process to procure a next-generation Very Short Range Air Defence System or VSHORADS (NG), which should be able to engage aerial targets "both by day and night" and under all weather conditions, including in snow-bound locations.

The Defence Ministry has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the procurement, which was uploaded on the Indian Army's web-

site on Saturday. In the RFP, the Ministry said it intends to procure "48 launchers, 48 night-vision sights, 85 missiles and one missile test station of Very Short Range Air Defence System (New Generation) or VSHORADS (NG) under Buy (Indian) category" and seeks participation from prospective bidders in the procurement process, subject to requirements.

Under the "operational characteristics and feature" head, the RFP document says, "To meet the evolving

dynamic air threat, Army Air Defence requires Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORADS) manportable missile system for effective terminal and point defence." "These VSHORADS, based on infra-red homing (IR) technology, are effective fire-and-forget type of missile systems and are being referred to as VSHORADS (NG)," it says.

The RFP defines the General Staff Qualitative Requirements (GSQRs) for the planned VSHORADS (NG).

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