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Successful marriage
 Siddharth and I discuss everything, says Vidya Balan



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 136
Retail live	Rs. 158
With skin	Rs. 229
Skinless	Rs. 261
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 53

Will fight for Dalits: KCR

To stage protest at Secretariat along with 1.30 lakh Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Continuing his fiery attack on the State government, listing out its follies and failures one by one, Leader of Opposition and Bharat Rashtra Samithi president K Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday said the State had ended up in utter disarray in just four months of Congress rule.

Almost every section in the society was let down, he said, adding that it was more so with the Dalits, who were deprived of the Dalit Bandhu financial assistance. The Congress, which promised to scale up the Dalit Bandhu assistance from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh, had however frozen the funds, proving that it had intended nothing but mere lip service.

Addressing a well-attended public meeting at Chevella as part of launching his poll campaign ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Chandrashekar Rao pointed out that the previous BRS government introduced the Dalit Bandhu scheme covering over 1.30 lakh beneficiaries in the first phase. They were all in for a rude shock now as they



Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao at the party's public meeting in Chevella on Saturday.

were left without the rightful assistance as the State government had opted for freezing the funds meant for the programme.

The proceedings issued by the previous government extending financial help to the beneficiaries were officially withdrawn, he said, calling it a brazen move to

deprive the Dalits of their due. The BRS would not sit silent, he said, stating that he would stage a massive protest in front of the Dr BR Ambedkar Secretariat on the issue soon.

"I will sit in protest along with all the 1.30 lakh Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries and fight the government for the

benefits they were deprived of," he said, appealing to intellectuals and youth from the Dalit communities to think over the great deprivation they were subjected to.

"Unless you come together to fight, it will be hard to expect the benefits of the scheme to come by," he said, recalling that the BRS gov-

ernment had given precedence to the development of Dalit communities who subjected to neglect for decades together. The BRS government had installed a 125-ft statue of Ambedkar in the city and named the new Secretariat after the architect of the Constitution of India. (SEE PAGES 2, 4)

Iran seizes Israeli ship with 17 Indian sailors

Tensions escalate in Mideast

DUBAI

Commandos from Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard rappelled down from a helicopter onto an Israeli-affiliated container ship mostly manned by Indians near the Strait of Hormuz and seized the vessel on Saturday, the latest in a series of attacks between the two countries. Seventeen Indian sailors are on board the ship which has a crew of 25.

The Middle East had braced for potential Iranian retaliation over a suspected Israeli strike earlier this month on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed 12 people, including a senior Guard general who once commanded its expeditionary Quds Force there.

The Israeli war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip meanwhile is now six months old and is inflaming decades-old tensions across the whole region. With Iranian-backed forces like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen's Houthi rebels also involved in the fighting, any new attack in the Mideast threatens to escalate that conflict into a wider regional war.

Iran's state-run IRNA said a special forces unit of the Guard's navy carried out the attack on the vessel, the Portuguese-flagged MSC Aries, a container ship associated with London-based Zodiac Maritime.

Zodiac Maritime is part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. Zodiac declined to comment

India in touch with Iran

NEW DELHI: Seventeen Indians are on board an Israeli-linked container ship that has been seized by the Iranian military amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. Official sources said India is in touch with Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels, both in Tehran and in Delhi, to ensure security, welfare and early release of Indian nationals," it said. PTI

and referred questions to MSC. Geneva-based MSC later acknowledged the seizure and said 25 crew had been aboard the vessel. "We are working closely with the relevant authorities to ensure their wellbeing, and safe return of the vessel," MSC said. An Indian government official, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to brief to journalists, said 17 of the crew were Indians. IRNA said the Guard would take the vessel into Iranian territorial waters. (IRAN WILL ATTACK ISRAEL SOONER THAN LATER PAGE 9)

Jagan injured after stone hurled at him

VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was on Saturday injured after unidentified persons pelted stone during the YSRCP chief's election campaign in Vijayawada, his office said. The Chief Minister suffered a small cut on the left side of his temple above the eye during his 'Memanta Siddham' election canvassing bus tour.



The AP CM suffered a small cut on his left temple

"The stone struck the CM while he was acknowledging the crowds as part of his bus tour at Vivekananda School Centre in Singh Nagar, Vijayawada," said a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). The stone hit Jaganmohan at a very high velocity and officials suspect that it could have been launched from a catapult, prompting the people standing around him atop the bus to wipe his forehead with a handkerchief initially.

Resumes yatra
 Immediately, the Chief Minister was administered first aid inside the bus by a doctor. However, unfazed by the stone pelting, he resumed his tour in the city, where he canvassed for nearly four hours. Mean-

while, YSRCP leaders alleged that the TDP was behind the "attack". Meanwhile, during the yatra, Jaganmohan said TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu ignored the handloom weavers' community during his tenure.

Jaganmohan Reddy has embarked on a 21-day election campaign bus tour from Idupulupaya in Kadapa district to Iechapuram in Srikakulam district. Elections for the 175-member Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh are scheduled on May 13 and the counting of votes is slated for June 4. PTI

Six stabbed to death in Sydney

SYDNEY

A man stabbed six people to death at a busy Sydney shopping centre on Saturday before he was fatally shot, police said. Eight people, including a 9-month-old, were injured in the at-

tack. The 40-year-old suspect began stabbing people at the Westfield Shopping Centre in Bondi Junction, which is in the city's eastern suburbs, before a police inspector shot him after he turned and raised a knife, New South Wales Assistant

Police Commissioner Anthony Cooke said.

Six of the victims — five women and a man — and the suspect died. Commissioner Karen Webb said the eight injured people were being treated at hospitals. (SEE PAGE 2)

Two killed in Manipur gunfight

IMPHAL

Two persons were killed in a gunfight that broke out between two armed groups in Manipur's Imphal East district on Saturday, police said. The deceased are yet to be identified. The shootout happened at a place close to the border of Kangpokpi district, a police officer said. Additional State and Central forces have been rushed in to contain the situation, he said.

The incident came a day after three persons were injured in a gunfight between armed village volunteers and unidentified gunmen in Tengnoupal. At least 219 people were killed after ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3 last year, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts. (RELATED REPORT PAGE 7)

CBI books MEIL for bribery

NEW DELHI

The CBI registered an FIR against Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd (MEIL), which was the second-biggest buyer of electoral bonds worth Rs 966 crore, in an alleged bribery case.

Eight officials of the NISP and NMDC and two officials of MECON were also named in the FIR for receiving alleged bribe of around Rs 78 lakh in clearing bills of Rs 174 crore of Megha Engi-

Initiated preliminary inquiry on Aug 10, 2023, about alleged bribery in Rs 315-cr project at Jagdalpur

neering in connection with works related to Jagdalpur integrated steel plant, officials said Saturday.

Megha Engineering had emerged as the second-biggest buyer of electoral

bonds and donated the highest amount of about Rs 586 crore to the BJP, according to the data released by the Election Commission on March 21. The company also donated Rs 195 crore to BRS, Rs 85 crore to DMK, and Rs 37 crore to YSRCP. The TDP got about Rs 25 crore from the company, while the Congress got Rs 17 crore. The JD-S, Jana Sena Party and the JD-U got smaller sums ranging from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore. (SEE PAGE 2)

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