



HYDERABAD

KTR seeks support for Secunderabad candidate Pajanna **page 4**



STATE

Harish steps up attack on CM **page 5**

NATION

CBSE to conduct board exams twice a year from 2025-26 **page 8**

NATION | PAGE 07

Modi lashes out at TMC



WORLD | PAGE 09

Blinken, Xi meet

Spar over Russia war, Taiwan and South China Sea



KCR tears into Cong govt for false narratives

Asks Revanth to take concrete steps to fulfil poll promises & continue schemes

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekhar Rao advised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to stop swearing in the name of Gods to implement electoral promises and instead, take concrete steps to deliver them if he had any guts. Doubling the Congress government's commitment to deliver its promises, he said the continuation of schemes such as Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima is also uncertain.

Participating in the bus tour supporting BRS MP candidate Manne Srinivas Reddy in Mahabubnagar on Friday, Chandrashekhar Rao criticised the Congress for coming to power by making false promises and spreading false narratives. He said despite spending five months in power, the Chief Minister did not deliver any promises and instead, was passing time by hurling choicest abuses against him and the BRS which were responsible for the formation of Telangana State.

He listed out the numerous promises of the Congress, including Rs 15,000 to farmers, Rs 4,500 to unemployed youth, Rs 2,500 to



BRS president K Chandrashekhar Rao during his bus tour supporting MP candidate Manne Srinivas Reddy in Mahabubnagar on Friday.

women, Rs 4,000 to elderly citizens, one tola of gold under Kalyana Lakshmi and several others, which are yet to be implemented. "There are no Scooty for young women, but only looty in the Congress regime. The Congress ruined Telangana within days after coming to power. But I will be a silent spectator. I will fight for the State's development until my last breath, but seek your support in the form of your vote," he said.

The BRS chief slammed the Congress government for conspiring to restrict Rythu Bandhu benefits and bring back the dark times of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh to the Palamuru region. He said farmers were forced to

abandon their farmlands and drive auto-rickshaws in Hyderabad for a living before TS was formed. "Farmers must unite and join BRS in the fight against the Congress to safeguard their interests," he said. (SEE PAGE 2)

Shot in the arm for EVMs

SC rejects pleas on 100% cross-verification of votes

NEW DELHI

As the country voted in round two of Election 2024, the Supreme Court on Friday rejected pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) and said "blindly distrusting" any aspect of the system can breed unwarranted scepticism.

Weighing in on the intensely debated issue that has long divided parties, a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta delivered two concurring verdicts and dismissed all pleas in the matter, including those seeking to go back to ballot papers in elections. It also maintained that "democracy is all about striving to build harmony and trust between all institutions".

The Supreme Court's long-anticipated verdict quickly found echo in the political landscape with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying at a rally in Araria, Bihar, that it was a "tight slap" on the Congress-led Opposition, which now must "apologise" for com-

mitting the "sin of creating distrust" against Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). The Congress said in a post on X that it will continue with its political campaign on the greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process.

The apex court issued two directives on the matter. Pronouncing his verdict, Justice Khanna directed the Election Commission (EC) to seal and store units used to load symbols for 45 days after the symbols have been loaded into EVMs in strong rooms. It also allowed engineers of the EVM manufacturers to verify the micro-controller of the machines after the declaration of the results at the request of candidates who stood second and third. (SEE PAGE 2)

'Pleas rejected nearly 40 times'

NEW DELHI: On a day the SC rejected pleas seeking a return to the ballot paper system, EC officials pointed out that constitutional courts on at least 40 occasions have rejected petitions challenging the reliability of the EVMs. The functionaries also referred to the recent remarks of CEC Rajiv Kumar that EVMs are "100% safe". PTI

SPORT | PAGE 10

Capitals face Mumbai today



ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

Focus on success

Samantha didn't have luxurious childhood



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 125
Retail live	Rs. 147
With skin	Rs. 213
Skinless	Rs. 243
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 540

Andhra illegally draws water from NSP tail-pond

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The alleged theft of water from the Nagarjuna Sagar tail-pond has become a new addition to the list of controversies revolving around the management of the State's precious water resources ever since the Congress was voted to power. The water reserve in the NSP tail-pond is the exclusive property of the TS Genco. The pond, which had a storage capacity of 7 tmc was meant to meet energy needs and even drinking water needs in emergencies.

Taking the Genco off guard, nearly four tmc of

the precious reserve of the State were drawn by Andhra Pradesh.

As the issue was brought to light by former Power Minister and BRS leader G Jagadish Reddy, NSP Chief Engineer V Ajay Kumar obtained a report from the TS Genco and the issue was taken up with the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB). The board in turn called for the version of the AP Irrigation Department.

The tail-pond, located 21 km downstream of the Nagarjuna Sagar dam in Nalgonda district, had for the past 10 years been holding water even during the summer for emergencies. (SEE PAGE 2)

Ex-MP's nomination rejected

STATE BUREAU
 Nagarkurnool

Former MP Mandha Jagannath's nomination from the Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha constituency has been reportedly rejected by poll officials.

Thursday was the last day for filing nominations and the Election Commission (EC) officials were conducting the scrutiny of the nominations filed by different candidates.

The former MP had quit the Congress and joined the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) recently. He filed his nomination for the Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha constituency representing the Bahujan Samaj Party.

However, the Election Commission officials have rejected his nomination, according to reports.

No respite from heatwave till May

SOWMYA SANGAM
 Hyderabad

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an extended-range forecast indicating that Telangana will experience above-normal temperatures, with a high likelihood of heatwave conditions persisting in May.

The IMD's forecast highlights that isolated pockets in Telangana are expected to witness heatwave conditions on most days leading up to Monday. Specifically, the period from May 2-8 has been earmarked for a moderate probability of heatwave occurrences in isolated or some pockets across the State.

Dry weather is anticipated to prevail over Telangana until the first week of May, as per the IMD's projections. This forecast comes after Telangana ex-



A white tiger cools off at the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad on Friday. — Photo: Anand Dharmana

perienced a second spell of heatwave on April 18 and 19, with isolated reports of hailstorms in certain areas on April 20 and 23.

Additionally, Friday marked the hottest day of the season so far. (SEE PAGE 2)

Hyderabad inches towards 44°C

Hyderabad on Friday grappled with scorching heat as the average maximum temperature soared to 42.3 degrees C, marking the city's third-highest maximum temperature for the month of April in the last 10 years. Banjara Hills took the lead at 43.6 degrees C by 4 pm. Hafeezpet trailed closely at 43.5 degrees C and Outhullapur followed at 43.4 degrees C. The city experienced a rapid temperature surge early in the day, with readings hitting scorching levels by 11 am. (SEE PAGE 2)

JEE: Student trolled for scoring 100 percentile

YUVRAJ AKULA
 Hyderabad

An IIT aspirant from Telangana, who initially scored a 7.4 percentile in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main January session, became a target of provocation and scorn from trolls on social media after scoring 100 percentile in the same exam held in the April session.

The student's all-India 14th rank in the second exam triggered an avalanche of deliberate comments from trolls, which were aimed at antagonising and demeaning the hapless student's creditable achievement, with some



even taking it too far by alleging that he might have cheated in the examination. The issue came to light with one user, who himself scored 100 percentile, taking to Reddit and alleging that the candidate in question sat beside him during

the exam, copied the answers from him and eventually fared better than him. The Reddit post, which was later deleted by the user, triggered huge trolling on both Reddit and X. Taking to X, a user posted: "Someone with 7

percentile in JEE Main session 1 got 100 percentile in JEE Main session 2 paper with full marks in all three subjects. Imagine the level of cheating going on."

Reacting to a post, a Reddit user wrote: "This guy pulled off what I dreamt." Some users sought to know how the student could copy in the computer-based examination. Another user on the same platform posted, "I will wait for his JEE Advance result and see what can be done." As per reports, the aspirant acknowledged low percentile in Session 1 and reasoned that because of high temperature during the exam he could not write well. (SEE PAGE 2)

PIO student held during anti-war stir

NEW YORK

An Indian-origin student studying at Princeton University is among two who have been arrested and barred from the campus for staging pro-Palestine protests on the campus.

Achintya Sivalingan, born in Coimbatore and raised in Columbus, has been barred from the campus and faces disciplinary action. About 100 undergraduate and graduate students began a sit-in on the McCosh Courtyard early Thursday morning, joining a wave of pro-Palestinian sit-ins. Achintya and Hassan Sayed were arrested within six minutes. PTI

Over 63% turnout in phase 2 of polls

NEW DELHI

Over 63 per cent polling was reported in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections covering 88 seats across 13 States amid few complaints of EVM glitches and bogus voting in some States on Friday.

Voters in some villages of Uttar Pradesh's Mathura, Rajasthan's Banswara and Maharashtra's Parbhani were boycotting the polls over various issues but were later persuaded by authorities to cast their franchise. Polling for the second stage of the seven-phase elections started at 7 am and ended at 6 pm. Several

States experienced intense heat conditions.

The Election Commission (EC) said polling remained largely peaceful. The tentative figure at 8 pm of voter turnout was 63.50 per cent. It is likely to go upwards when reports from all polling stations are obtained, the EC said, adding that voters reaching polling stations till the end of polling hour are allowed to cast their vote.

EC data showed the highest voting percentage was recorded in Tripura which registered 79.46 per cent polling, followed by Manipur at 77.32 and Uttar Pradesh at 54.85 per cent. PTI