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**Borders fully secure for J-K elections, says BSF**



WORLD | PAGE 09

**19 killed in Israeli strike on Gaza tent camp**  
Tel Aviv says it targeted senior Hamas militants with precise munitions



SPORT | PAGE 10

**Grand welcome for Paralympic stars**

**In a nutshell**

**Godavari crosses 2nd warning level**

**KOTHAGUDEM:** A second warning was issued as river Godavari crossed second warning level of 48-ft at Bhadrachalam. The water level at 11 am was 45.50-ft with discharge of 10.32 lakh cusecs. The river crossed second warning level at 5.15 pm and the water level at 8 pm was 48.80-ft with discharge of 11.82 lakh cusecs. Residents in flood-affected villages were shifted to relief centres.

PHOTO HYDERABAD PAGE 4

**Yechury's health condition critical**

**NEW DELHI:** CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's condition is 'critical' and he is on respiratory support at AIIMS, his party said on Tuesday. The 72-year-old Yechury is being treated for acute respiratory tract infection at the ICU in AIIMS, it said in a statement. A multi-disciplinary team of doctors is closely monitoring the condition of Yechury, which is critical at this time, the party said. PTI

**Wing Commander booked for rape**

**SRINAGAR:** An FIR has been registered against a Wing Commander following complaints of rape by a woman flying officer, officials said on Tuesday. Both the IAF officers are currently stationed in Srinagar. After the complaint, the FIR under "relevant sections of the law" was filed at Budgam police station in central Kashmir on Saturday, a senior police officer said. The IAF said it is cooperating with the police. PTI

**AP: Army, NDRF join rescue mission**

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** Indian Army and the NDRF joined the rescue and relief operations in Kakina district of Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday while heavy rains in the north coastal region inundated villages and damaged crops over thousands of acres. The Indian Army relief column, which was deployed in flood-hit Vijayawada for the last few days, has moved to Kakina.

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**CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD**

Farm.....	Rs. 97
Retail live.....	Rs. 119
With skin.....	Rs. 173
Skinless.....	Rs. 196
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 68



**Taapsee, Kanika reunite**

Action thriller 'Gandhari' is duo's third collaboration together

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## 'Turncoat' Arekapudi denies joining Cong

**Fearing disqualification, the MLA says he is still with BRS**

STATE BUREAU  
HYDERABAD

A day after the Telangana High Court issued directions for the Speaker to decide on the disqualification of three BRS MLAs who defected to the Congress, Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi, who had joined the Congress in July, is apparently trying to use technical aspects to escape disqualification.

Gandhi, who won the 2023 Assembly elections from Serilingampally constituency on a BRS ticket, had along with a few corporators joined the Congress on July 13. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had formally welcomed him into the Congress by offering a party scarf in the presence of MLC Patnam Mahender Reddy and Government Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy.

However, following the BRS opposing Gandhi's appointment as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, a post that is usually given to an Opposition member, the MLA has now taken a 'U' turn and is claiming that he is still in the Op-



A file photo of Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi being welcomed into the Congress by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. The photo was released by the CMO on July 13.

position. He also claimed that the scarf offered by the CM was not of the Congress but a general scarf, usually offered to people in temples! "How can you say that I am with the Congress? During the meeting with the CM, he offered me a scarf, which is generally offered in a temple. Was it a Congress scarf? Did he offer a Congress scarf to me or the corporators? I am still in the Opposition and am I not eligible?" Gandhi asked in an interview to a television news channel. (SEE PAGE 2)

### DEFECTED MLAs IN A SPOT OF BOTHER

**HYDERABAD:** After the High Court orders and Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi's 'U' turn, the other MLAs who defected to the Congress from the BRS, are now in a spot of bother. In all, 10 MLAs, who won the Assembly elections on BRS tickets from different constituencies, joined Congress after the polls. However, after the defection of the first three MLAs, the BRS approached the HC, seeking disqualification of the turncoats. The court issued instructions to the Speaker on Monday to initiate action on the defected MLAs within four weeks. Already, the defected MLAs are facing tough times in their constituencies as local Congress leaders were treating them like 'untouchables'. Jugalamba Gadwal MLA B Krishnamohan Reddy, Jagtial MLA Dr Sanjay Kumar, Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy, Chevella MLA K Yadaiah and others have been opposed by local Congress leaders. These MLAs are now worried about their future. With lack of support from Congress cadre, they are apprehensive about their political career if they too are disqualified. The fear of disqualification is haunting them since Monday's directions from the HC could be cited as a precedent and similar action be demanded against them as well.

## Hyd air quality 'hazardous'



The annual average values for PM2.5 were found to be five to six times higher than the WHO standards at seven locations.

SOWMYA SANGAM  
Hyderabad

The air quality in Hyderabad reached hazardous levels, according to a new report from Greenpeace titled 'SPARE THE AIR' 2nd Edition, which analysed 2023 air pollution trends. The findings reveal an alarming escalation in particulate matter concentrations across the city.

Hyderabad's air quality monitoring stations, positioned across 14 locations by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB), paint a grim picture of air pollution.

The annual average values for PM2.5, the tiny but deadly particulate matter, were found to be five to six times higher than the World Health Organization revised guidelines at seven locations, including Central University, New Malakpet, and Somajiguda.

**Alarming**

In areas including Bollaram industrial area, IDA Pashamylaram, Kokapet, Sanathnagar and Zoo Park, these levels were an alarming seven to eight times higher than the WHO standards. The scenario is equally bleak for PM10, a larger particulate that poses severe health risks. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Students, cops clash in Manipur

**Protests continue in Imphal; govt bans internet, reimposes curfew in 3 districts**

IMPHAL

Defying the curfew, over a thousand students staged protests in Imphal for the second day on Tuesday even as security forces lobbed tear gas shells and fired in the air to disperse the protesters, while the Manipur government banned mobile internet for five days to prevent spreading of fake and concocted posts, photos, and videos.

The students, who staged a demonstration in front of the Chief Minister's Secretariat and Raj Bhavan on Monday to protest the rising violence in the State, remained gathered overnight in the all-women Ima Market and locked themselves on its first floor as the market remained closed on Tuesday due to the reimposition of the curfew.

Rejecting the persuasion of the senior police officers to return to their homes, the agitated students on Tuesday organised protests in front of the Manipur University even as the security personnel, deployed in large numbers, tried to disperse them. Tension prevailed in Imphal, due to the protests and the security forces' response. Authori-



Police fire tear gas shells to disperse students protesting against a fresh wave of ethnic violence, in Imphal on Tuesday. — Photo:AP

ties earlier on Tuesday reimposed curfew in three districts — Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal — after apprehending fresh trouble in the capital and the adjoining areas. Search operations are going on in different places to locate any kind of inimical object or attempt or to find out any troublemakers. IANS

**WOMAN CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE GETS KILLED**

**IMPHAL:** A 46-year-old woman was killed after getting caught in a clash between two armed groups in Manipur's Kangpokpi district. The incident happened in the remote Thangbuh village on Sunday, they said. A few houses were also torched, forcing the locals to flee to nearby forests, they added. The deceased woman was identified as Nemjakhol Lungdim. PTI

**TAILS OF SOPHISTICATED ROCKETS RECOVERED**

**IMPHAL:** Tails of sophisticated rockets have been recovered after recent drone attacks in Manipur, a top official said. Manipur Police dismissed claims of Lt Gen P C Nair, a retired DG of Assam Rifles, in a recent interview that no drones or rockets have been used in the attacks. He also labelled Manipur Police as a 'Meitei Police', indicating their alleged partisan role in the ethnic strife. (REPORT PAGE 8)

## Govt to rope in 5,000 cyber commandos

NEW DELHI

In a major effort to tackle cybercrime, union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled several key initiatives on Tuesday, including launching a Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre, a web-based module as a comprehensive data repository and portal for sharing cybercrime information, and deploying 5,000 "cyber commandos".

He urged cybersecurity agencies to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify the modus operandi of criminals duping people of their

**Amit Shah urges cybersecurity agencies to use AI to identify the modus operandi of criminals duping people of their hard-earned money**

hard-earned money, spreading fake news and abusing women and children online. India hosts around 46 per cent or almost half of global digital transactions, making the job of these agencies "challenging", he said while delivering a keynote speech during the first foundation day celebrations of the I4C or Indian Cyber Crime Co-

ordination Centre here. He also announced that the government aims to train 5,000 cyber commandos over the next five years to strengthen cyber defences across India.

Four major cyber platforms have been introduced — the Suspect Registry, Cyber Commandos, Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre, and

the Coordination Platform. He emphasised the importance of creating a Cyber Suspect Registry at the state level, which will serve as a crucial database in the fight against cybercrime. The Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre will integrate police, financial institutions, and other agencies onto a single platform, while the Coordination Platform will enhance collaborative efforts to address cyber threats. With the rise in digital transactions, Shah underscored the necessity of robust digital security measures. IANS

## BC census: HC sets deadline

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
Hyderabad

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday set a three-month deadline for the State government to complete a crucial empirical inquiry aimed at identifying politically Backward Classes and enumerating Backward Class voters in all local bodies across Telangana.

This directive follows the Supreme Court's judgement in the 'Vikas Kishanrao Gawali vs. State of Maharashtra' case. A division Bench of the Telangana

High Court, comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J Sreenivas Rao, instructed Advocate General A Sudershan Reddy to adhere to the Supreme Court's guidelines outlined in Paragraph 13 of the Vikas Kishanrao Gawali judgement. The State government was asked to submit a compliance report to the court within three months.

The High Court's order came in response to three petitions filed in 2018, 2019 and 2020 by the Telangana State Backward Classes Welfare Association and in-

dividuals including Jajula Srinivas Goud and Dasoju Sravan Kumar. These petitions challenged the continuation of the local body election process without undertaking the mandated fresh identification of politically backward classes as required by the Supreme Court's earlier judgment in 'K. Krishnamurthy vs. union of India'. During the hearing in August, the petitioners' counsels highlighted that the SC issued updated orders in 2021, reaffirming the triple test conditions for OBC reservations.