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Leadership change is high command's call, says Sidda



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Key EU leaders unite to counter US on Ukraine
Meeting comes after Trump administration's diplomatic blitz on war



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Shami looks to hit his strides in Champions Trophy

In a nutshell

Panel finalises name of next CEC
NEW DELHI: The committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met here and is learnt to have recommended the name of the next Chief Election Commissioner to the President, even as the Congress asked the government to defer the decision pending a Supreme Court hearing. The committee met at the Prime Minister's Office in South Block. PTI

Nepali student found dead in KIIT
BHUBANESWAR: A third-year B.Tech Nepali student at a private engineering institute allegedly died by suicide in her hostel, leading to campus tension following which a group of students from the Himalayan kingdom were evicted on Monday. The deceased, identified as Prakriti Lamsal, was studying at KIIT, the varsity's registrar said. PTI

Seven Muslim youths detained
JAIPUR: Police detained seven Muslim youths in Rajasthan's Beawar district for allegedly sexually exploiting minor girls and attempting to forcefully convert them. Three FIRs have been registered against 10 Muslim men after complaints by the family members of five girls at the Bijai Nagar police station under the relevant sections. PTI

Goa man jailed for killing foreigner
PANAJI: A court in Goa sentenced a 31-year-old local resident to rigorous life imprisonment for the rape and murder of Irish-British national Danielle McLaughlin in 2017. The court had pronounced the accused, Vikat Bhagat, guilty of raping and murdering the tourist, whose body was found in a forested area in Canacona village of South Goa in 2017. PTI

Wishes pour in for KCR on 71st birthday

Hundreds gather at Erravelli to greet BRS chief, series of events held across TG



BRS working president KT Rama Rao and others cut a 71-kg cake marking party president K Chandrashekhara Rao's birthday, at Telangana Bhavan on Monday.

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

PEOPLE WANT KCR AS CHIEF MINISTER AGAIN, SAYS KTR

HYDERABAD: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Monday asserted that people across Telangana wanted K Chandrashekhara Rao to return as Chief Minister. He called for the mobilisation of 60 lakh BRS soldiers dedicated to the task. He termed this effort as the ultimate birthday gift to the BRS chief who fought for Telangana's formation. Addressing party workers at Chandrashekhara Rao's 71st birthday celebrations at Telangana Bhavan here, Rama Rao lauded his father, stating that Chandrashekhara Rao was not a hero for just him, but for four crore Telangana people. (REPORT PAGE 2)

The birthday celebrations of former Chief Minister and BRS supremo K Chandrashekhara Rao were held on a grand scale at his Erravelli residence on Monday. Several hundreds of party workers, leaders and supporters from across the State thronged the venue to wish their leader. The surroundings of Erravelli were packed with hundreds of vehicles as slogans of 'KCR Zindabad' and 'CM KCR' echoed in the air. Chandrashekhara Rao personally greeted his supporters and well-wishers for four hours, accepting flower bouquets, shawls, books, and artwork specially made for him. BRS working presi-

dent KT Rama Rao, along with former Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, and MPs, also extended their wishes. Praying for his healthy and long life, villagers in Erravelli performed special pujas and conducted a yagam which was attended by the former Chief Minister and his wife, Shobhamma. In a heartwarming moment at the wedding ceremony of 'Namasthe Telangana' editor Thigulla Krishna Murthy's son in Gajwel,

Chandrashekhara Rao and Shobhamma exchanged garlands and rings, celebrating his birthday in the presence of guests. On the occasion, the BRS chief released a book titled 'Vandella Munduchoopu' edited by Juluru Gourishankar. Speaking on the occasion, Chandrashekhara Rao reflected on Telangana's progress under his leadership. He asserted that the BRS laid strong foundations in sectors such as water,

funds, and employment, citing RBI reports validating Telangana's rapid growth. "The first Telangana government revived devastated villages, ensured irrigation for uplands, desilted ponds, and provided fresh water to every village," he said. He credited his government for supplying 24-hour uninterrupted electricity and positioning Telangana as a model State. He stated that schemes such as Rythu Bandhu had transformed

Telangana into a granary for the nation and reiterated his commitment to protecting the State's Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb. "Lies can never erase Telangana's glorious history," he declared, vowing to continue the State's developmental journey. While the BRS cadre celebrated the former CM's birthday in a grand manner by organising cake-cutting and indulged in social services, several leaders from various political parties extended their greetings to the BRS chief. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Ministers Ponnampet Prabhakar, D Sridhar Babu, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and others extended their wishes. (SEE PAGES 2, 5)

Gogoi 'ready' for probe on wife's ISI links

GUWAHATI

Amid controversy over the alleged ISI links of Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's British wife, the Assam government on Monday constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate a case against Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh for his social media comments on India's internal affairs. Gogoi, on the other hand, said the BJP-led government in Assam is free to conduct any inquiry on the issue of his spouse Elizabeth Colburn's alleged links with the Pakistani spy agency, but he and his party know where they stand. Sheikh, an advisor of the Pakistan Planning Commission and a former colleague of Colburn, was charged under various sections of the BNS and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The four-member SIT team will be headed by CID Special DGP M P Gupta, AIGP (Admin) Pranabjyoti Goswami, SP CM's Special Vigilance Cell Rosie Kalita and Additional Deputy Commissioner of

Assam forms SIT to probe a case against Pak national comments on India's internal affairs

Police, Guwahati (West) Moitrayee Deka. "Pursuant to the registration of the case, the DGP, Assam Police, has constituted a SIT to investigate the matter. Assam Police will conduct a professional and completely objective investigation," the Chief Minister posted on X. Sarma said earlier in the day that an FIR was lodged against Sheikh as his comments on India's internal affairs and parliamentary matters were aimed at disrupting communal harmony and the nation's interests. The Assam Chief Minister and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi, the deputy leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, over his wife's alleged connection with the ISI. (SEE PAGE 2)

Youth loses money to online games, ends life

CITY BUREAU
HYDERABAD

Upset over losing huge money to online games, a youth died by suicide at Khanamet in Madhapur on Sunday night. SM Aravind (23), a degree student at a private degree college, was staying with his parents and sibling in a rented house in Khanamet.

According to the police, though the time when he started is unclear, Aravind started spending money on online games and also on-line betting. However, he could not earn anything in return and lost all the money. Upset over the losses, he recently informed the matter to his family who supported and comforted him. (SEE PAGE 2)

Strong tremors jolt Delhi-NCR

NEW DELHI

Strong tremors were felt in the national capital and adjoining regions as an earthquake of 4.0 magnitude struck the region early on Monday. There were no reports of any damage or injuries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people in the region to stay calm and follow safety precautions while keeping alert for possible aftershocks. Modi said in a post on X, "Tremors were felt in Delhi and nearby areas. Urging everyone to stay calm and follow safety precautions, staying alert for possible aftershocks. Authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation." The epicentre of the quake was in the Jheel Park area of Dhau-

Kuan and there were some reports of people hearing a loud sound as the ground shook. The National Centre for Seismology said the earthquake struck at a focal depth of five kilometres at 5:36 am. Shallow earthquakes, originating five or 10 kilometres below the surface, tend to cause more damage than those originating deep below the surface. The Jheel Park region has been experiencing smaller, low-magnitude quakes once every two to three years. It recorded an earthquake of 3.3 magnitude in 2015, an official said. In a post on X, the Delhi Police said, "We hope you all are safe, Delhi!" It also urged citizens to call on the emergency 112 helpline for emergencies. PTI

Gachibowli area noisiest in Hyd

T LALITH SINGH
HYDERABAD

Once an island of tranquillity, tucked away on the city outskirts, the University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus at Gachibowli is increasingly getting swamped by the din. In fact, it is not a commercial Abids or an industrial Sanathnagar, but a demarcated sensitive area of Gachibowli that has emerged as the noisiest place in Hyderabad. The widespread real estate development and high volumes of traffic on the old Mumbai highway here have escalated the place to the top of noise recordings in the city. The data on noise levels generated by the Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TGPCB) reveals how the UoH monitor-



During daytime, noise levels in Gachibowli stand above 70 dB while during the nights, they hover between 69 dB and 70 dB.

SOUND CHECK		
DATE	DAY	NIGHT
Feb 1	72.90	70.10
Feb 2	72.49	70.63
Feb 3	73.53	69.30
Feb 4	72.52	69.35
Feb 5	72.23	69.51
Feb 6	72.5	69.53
Feb 7	72.05	71.17
Feb 8	71.52	69.64
Feb 9	71.91	69.66

(DATA FROM TG PCB: NOISE LEVELS IN DECIBELS)

IN AREAS IDENTIFIED AS 'SENSITIVE', THE ACCEPTABLE NOISE LEVELS ARE 50 DB DURING DAYTIME AND 40 DB AT NIGHT

ing station recordings have left behind the other parts of the city, including the ever-busy commercial hubs such as Abids, JNTU and even the routinely blamed for pollution industrial areas of Jeedimetla and Gad-

apotharam. In areas identified as 'sensitive', the acceptable noise levels are put around 50 decibels (dB) during daytime and 40 dB at night time. However, Gachibowli noise recordings have zoomed well ahead of the

limits and the PCB recordings for the first ten days of February show them touching the 73.53 dB. During the daytime, the noise levels were above 70 dB while during the nights, it hovered be-

tween 69 dB and 70 dB. On February 3 for instance, the daytime noise level at Gachibowli was 73.53 dB while at the commercial area of Abids, it was recorded as 56.05 dB and at the residential zone of Jubilee Hills, the noise levels were 58.66 dB. Another designated sensitive area of Hyderabad, the Nehru Zoological Park too has been witnessing increased noise levels with February's first ten-day data ranging from 65 dB to 67 dB. Those who have witnessed the metamorphosis of Gachibowli along with its circle of growth that includes Kondapur, Madhapur, Financial District, Nalgandla and Tellapur, recall how the serenity and tranquillity of the place has been shattered in the last couple of decades.

US deportee dealt with snakes, crocodiles

CHANDIGARH

Promised a legal entry into the US, Mandeep Singh's life was at risk after he was made to deal with crocodiles and snakes, trim his beard despite being a Sikh, and had to go without food for days. But his dream to secure a better life for his family in Amritsar came crashing down on January 27 when he was arrested by the US Border Patrol while trying

Instead of legal entry as promised, Mandeep's travel agent put him on the 'donkey route' - an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter the US

to sneak into America via Tijuana in Mexico. Mandeep was part of 112 Indians to be deported by a US military aircraft that landed at the Amritsar airport late on Sunday, the third such batch of Indians to be sent back amid a crackdown by the

Donald Trump administration against illegal immigrants. The deportees' arrived within 24 hours of a US military aircraft bringing back a batch of 116 Indians living illegally in that country. Instead of a legal entry as

promised, Mandeep's travel agent put him on the 'donkey route' - an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter the US. Speaking to reporters in Amritsar, Mandeep (38) showed several videos of the perilous journey his travel agent and sub-agents put him through. "When I spoke to my agent, he said within one month I will be taken to the US in a legal way," Mandeep said. (SEE PAGE 2)

PIO leader fined in Singapore

SINGAPORE

Singapore's Indian-origin Leader of the Opposition Pritam Singh was on Monday fined SGD 14,000 after a district court found him guilty on two counts of lying under oath to a parliamentary committee. Singh was fined a maximum of SGD 7,000 for each of his two charges. Later, he said that he will run for the general election scheduled in November. PTI

BJP earned Rs 4,340 cr in FY24

NEW DELHI

The BJP reported the highest income among national parties in the financial year 2023-24, declaring total earnings of Rs 4,340.47 crore, according to poll rights body ADR. The amount accounted for 74.57 per cent of the total income of six national parties during the period under review, the report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) said.

"The BJP declared a total income of Rs 4,340.47 crore during FY 2023-24 but spent only 50.96 per cent of it, amounting to Rs 2,211.69 crore. The total income of Congress was Rs 1,225.12 crore, while its expenditure for the year was Rs 1,025.25 crore or 83.69 per cent of its total income," the report said. A large portion of the income for national parties came from donations through electoral bonds. While the BJP received the

highest amount, securing Rs 1,685.63 crore, the Congress received Rs 828.36 crore, and the AAP Rs 10.15 crore. Collectively, these three parties raised Rs 2,524.1361 crore - 43.36 per cent of their total income - through the electoral bond scheme, which the SC struck down as 'unconstitutional and manifestly arbitrary' in May last. The maximum expenditure by Congress was made towards election-related expenses. PTI