

STATE
Release water for Yasangi crops: Pocharam page 5

NATION
India successfully tests new-generation AKASH missile page 7

WORLD
US, UK launch massive retaliatory strike on Houthis page 9

BRS identifies factors for poll loss

Will focus on strengthening party from grassroots level

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), which is in a self-inspection mode, has identified multiple factors that led to its defeat in the recent Assembly polls, with the party leadership deciding to fill whatever gaps there were and work with more vigour to regain its upper hand in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls.

For this, the focus will be on strengthening the BRS from the grassroots level, with the party cadre to be the medium to reconnect with the people.

At the end of the first spell of preparatory meetings for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections being held at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, BRS working president KT Rama Rao outlined the key factors behind the decline in the party's performance. He said while the recent election results were not an outright rejection of the BRS, there were disappointing outcomes in cer-



BRS working president KT Rama Rao addressing a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, at Telangana Bhavan on Friday.

tain districts. Out of 119 seats, the BRS won 39 while in 14 seats, it lost by slim margins. "Had those seats been secured, the story would have been different," he said.

Taking responsibility for the decline in the party's performance, Rama Rao identified organisational shortcomings, stating that

the party's focus on administration overshadowed its attention to internal restructuring to strengthen itself. He admitted not giving proper recognition to newly joined members from other parties and ignoring the well-being of party workers to some extent.

Finding fault with the recent remarks by some BRS

leaders that the people of Telangana made a mistake by electing the Congress, he asked them to stop blaming the electorate and start introspecting over their shortcomings. He reminded them that the same electorate voted for the BRS for two consecutive terms earlier.

(SEE PAGE 2)
 (NO BJP-BRS ALLIANCE PAGE 5)

Army convoy attacked in Poonch, no casualties

POONCH/JAMMU

Suspected terrorists fired upon a convoy of vehicles carrying security personnel in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday evening, prompting security forces to launch a search operation, officials said. There were no casualties among the security personnel, they said.

"At around 1800 hours today (Friday), a security forces convoy of vehicles was fired upon by suspected terrorists from a jungle near Krishna Ghati in Poonch sector," the White Night Corps of the Army said on X. "A joint search operation by the Indian Army and police is in progress," it said.

The vehicles that came under attack were carrying security personnel back to the camp, the officials said. A senior police officer said no one was injured in the incident and the commanding officer as well as other Army personnel were safe. A search operation has been launched in the area, he added.

The incident came after a high-level security meeting was held by Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi. PTI

Missing aircraft's wreckage found after 7.5 years

NEW DELHI

The wreckage of a transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been located at the depth of around 3.4 km in the Bay of Bengal, nearly seven-and-a-half years after the plane with 29 personnel on board went missing.

The Defence Ministry said a scrutiny of the images captured by an autonomous underwater vehicle deployed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology recently found to be conforming and found to be conforming with an An-32 aircraft. This discovery at the probable crash site, with no other recorded history of any other missing aircraft report in the same area, points to the debris as possibly belonging to the crashed IAF An-32," the Ministry said in a statement.

The An-32 aircraft with registration number K-2743 of the Indian Air Force had gone missing over the Bay of Bengal on July 22, 2016, during a mission. Twenty-nine personnel were on

An-32 aircraft of the IAF had gone missing over the Bay of Bengal on July 22, 2016, during a mission

board the aircraft. Large-scale search-and-rescue operations involving aircraft and ships could not locate any missing personnel or the wreckage of the plane since it went missing.

The National Institute of Ocean Technology, which functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had recently deployed an AUV with deep-sea exploration capability at the last known location of the missing An-32 aircraft.

"This search was conducted at a depth of 3,400 metres using multiple payloads, including a multi-beam SONAR, synthetic aperture SONAR and high-resolution photography," the Ministry said. "Analysis of search images indicated the presence of debris of a crashed aircraft on the sea bed approximately 140 nautical miles from the Chennai coast," it said. PTI

Panel cautions public

STATE | PAGE 06

Blinken wraps up Middle East tour

WORLD | PAGE 09



Nagal in Aus Open main draw

SPORT | PAGE 10



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India's longest sea bridge unveiled

MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated Atal Setu, the longest sea bridge in the country connecting Mumbai and its satellite township Navi Mumbai, and sounded the bugle for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, saying the fulfilment of this project was his guarantee.

The PM, who was on a day-long visit to Maharashtra, inaugurated the Rs 17,840-crore Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu, the longest sea bridge as well as the longest sea bridge in the country connecting South Mumbai with Nhava-Sheva in Navi Mumbai. The six-lane trans-harbour bridge is 21.8 km with a 16.5 km sea-link. Its foundation stone had been laid by Modi in December 2016.

"When I came here on December 24, 2016, to lay the foundation stone of this sea bridge, which faced a lot of roadblocks, I had resolved that the country would undergo a change. Completion of the sea bridge despite the Covid-19 pandemic is very crucial and important," Modi said at a public meeting at Panel in neighbouring Raigad district.

"People were fed up with how mega projects were stalled and they had given up hope wondering if big projects will ever be completed. But it was Modi's guarantee that the country will change," he said. Before 2014, mega scams used to be the topic of discussion. But 10 years down the line, mega projects getting completed is the talk, he said.

(SEE PAGE 2)

Parliament Budget session from Jan 31

NEW DELHI

A brief Budget session of Parliament, the last of the 17th Lok Sabha, will be held between January 31 and February 9, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Friday.

"Interim Budget Session 2024, last session of Seventeenth Lok Sabha to be held from 31st January to 9th February, with address of Hon'ble President to the Parliament. On 1st February, Hon'ble FM @nsitharaman ji will present the Interim union Budget (sic)," he said on X.

The new government, which will be sworn in after the Lok Sabha polls, will present the full-fledged Budget later. As the term of the 17th Lok Sabha ends on June 16, it will be the last session of Parliament before polls. PTI

Perfect flight



PRECISION STUNTS: The Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran aerobatic team performs during rehearsals of an air display at Marine Drive in Mumbai on Friday. — Photo: PTI

19-year-old shuns riches, to turn Jain nun

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

In a world captivated by comfort and luxury, 19-year-old Yogitha Surana chose a different path. This young graduate has decided to give up the opulent lifestyle she was born into and embark on a transformative spiritual journey.

Yogitha, who is the second child of a Chittor jeweller, will give up personal comforts and embrace the simple life of a Jain nun at a ceremonial event, 'Diksha Mahotsav', to be conducted by the Jain Samaj in Hyderabad on January 16.

The youngster had initially aspired to have a career in science and wanted to study engineering. "However, Diksha intrigued me, raising a lot of thoughts and considera-



Yogitha Surana will embrace the simple life at a ceremonial event, 'Diksha Mahotsav', on January 16. — Photo: Anand Dharamana

tions in me. I started differentiating between the materialistic and spiritual worlds, and I understand where I am. The spiritual world is the best as it will give me permanent inner peace," she says.

Yogitha's decision to move away from the allure of material wealth is not merely a personal choice, but a declaration of her commitment to a life of meditation, self-discipline and detachment.

Her mother Sapna Surana says, "I am happy with her choice and supporting her on this transformative path. While there's a tinge of sadness due to attachment, it's a positive step."

Her father Padmaraj Surana adds, "She asked for our support as her birthday gift and we decided to stand by her."

After the ceremony, Yogitha will wear simple white robes and give up modern conveniences such as fans, lights, toothbrushes and soaps. Jain monks and nuns follow unique practices to live a simple and mindful life, and avoid traditional baths because they believe they could harm tiny organisms and waste water.

Instead, they opt for sponge baths and use a damp cloth to clean their hands, feet and face.

Couple attack: Woman alleges gang rape

HAVERI/BENGALURU

The case of attack on an interfaith couple in Haveri has taken a new twist with the woman alleging gang rape as the incident took a political colour with the opposition BJP targeting the Siddaramaiah government on the issue.

The seven men, who allegedly barged into a hotel room and attacked the couple at Hangal in Haveri district, were charged with gang rape after the 26-year-old victim complained that she was sexually assaulted by them, police said.

Three of them, who also belong to a minority community, have been arrested in connection with the January 8 incident, they said. On Thursday afternoon, the victim's statement was recorded in front of a Magistrate, police said. PTI

Security lapse at Tirumala

TIRUPATI

In a security lapse near Tirumala temple, two devotees were found using a drone to film the hill shrine in violation of the rules.

The devotees, said to be from Assam, were spotted flying a drone to capture visuals of the temple. Some other devotees passing by took pictures of the devotees while they were flying the drone on Ghat Road at the 53rd bend.

Taking serious note of this, the vigilance wing of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) detained the two devotees and questioned them. The TTD officials were probing how the devotees managed to bring the drone with them without being detected at the security checkpoint at Alipiri. The TTD manages the af-

fairs of the Sri Venkateswara temple atop Tirumala. Last year, alleged drone visuals of the temple had made rounds on social media platforms. The TTD officials, however, ruled out the possibility of the drone camera being used. They believe that the video may have been shot using still photography. They had said that the entire Tirumala is under the eagle eye of hi-fi vigilance and security, and it is not possible to capture the video through a drone camera.

The TTD had ordered a probe. The temple body had also warned that a criminal case would be booked if anyone was found involved in using drones to shoot the video. As per the Agama Shastra rules, flying of aircraft or drones over the hill shrine is prohibited. IANS

Revanth leaves for New Delhi

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy flew to New Delhi on Friday afternoon and is likely to meet a few Union Ministers, besides the AICC leadership.

There were no official meetings on Friday and he stayed at his residence in Yamuna Apartments. He is likely to meet a few Union Ministers on Saturday and appointments were being sought by the officials. He is also expected to meet the AICC leadership and discuss some aspects, including candidates for the ensuing Lok Sabha elections in the State, party sources said. He is likely to participate in the inaugural session of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. (SEE PAGE 2)