

STATE

Polavaram backwaters, a threat lurking over TS, warns expert **page 5**

NATION

ED summons Kejriwal for fourth time **page 7**

BUSINESS

Citigroup to lay off 20,000 workforce in next two years **page 8**



Fine act



RICH CULTURE: An artiste performs with a Gangireddu ahead of Sankranti, during an event at Shilparamam in Madhapur, Hyderabad, on Saturday. — Photo: Surya Sridhar

Yasangi: TS stares at grim situation

Govt cites water shortage to irrigate ayacuts

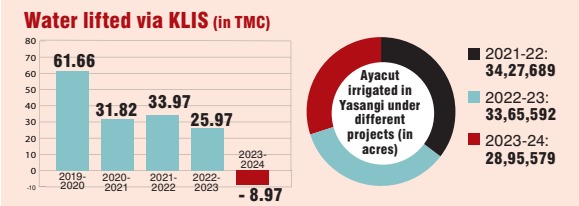
STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Telangana is staring at the possibility of the crucial Yasangi crop season taking a major hit with the government citing a shortage of water to irrigate ayacut areas of several projects. Much of the Krishna basin ayacut was in the grips of acute scarcity conditions and a crop holiday was already declared in part of the ayacut, especially in 6.3 lakh acres under the Nagarjuna Sagar Project left canal, in the absence of adequate inflows into the Krishna basin projects.

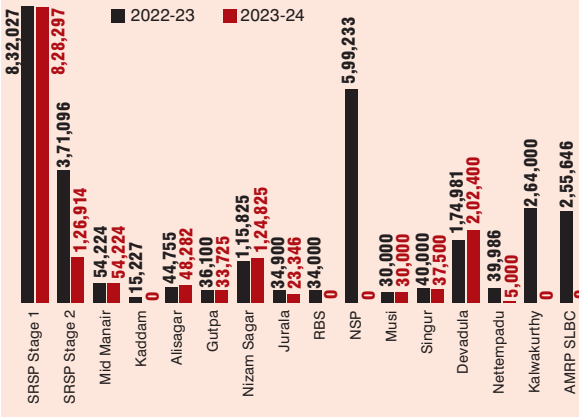
Now, ringing more alarm bells, uncertainty looms large over irrigation support to a major extent in the Godavari basin as well. A major reason for the shortage of water was the three key barrages of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS), a project repeatedly derided by the Congress, being drained for rehabilitation works with the Medigadda pillars sinking. However, even when all projects integrated with the multi-stage project holding just six tmc less water compared to last year, the government appears to be throwing up its hands citing severe shortage. The Sriram Sagar has

Feeling the pinch

A MAJOR REASON FOR THE SHORTAGE OF WATER WAS THE THREE KEY BARRAGES OF KLIS BEING DRAINED FOR REHABILITATION WORKS WITH THE MEDIGADDA PILLARS SINKING



Ayacut irrigated for Yasangi project-wise (acres)



63.19 tmc as part of its present storage as against the gross storage capacity of 90 tmc. The project was expected to support an ayacut of 11.55 lakh acres. It includes 9.65 lakh acres in the SRSP stage I. But the Irrigation Department decided to give water to only 8.28 lakh acres and 3.87 lakh acres of it was irrigated dry. As for the SRSP stage II, irrigation was restricted to only 2 lakh acres as against the total ayacut of 3.71 lakh acres. While the focus was much on restricting the crop area under the Nizam Sagar, Gutpa and Alisagar projects to the extent possible, the government opted for a crop holiday under the Kaddam project and Sadarnat too. (SEE PAGE 2)

Kharge to head I.N.D.I.A bloc

NEW DELHI

A consensus emerged on the appointment of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge as the chairperson of the opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc, pending approval of parties absent at the alliance meeting on Saturday, according to sources. Leaders of the bloc participated in the meeting via video conferencing where they discussed various aspects of the alliance such as seat-sharing and preparations for the Lok Sabha elections due in April-May. The sources said leaders of the Trinamool Congress, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and the Samajwadi

Virtual alliance doing virtual meeting: BJP

NEW DELHI: BJP president JP Nadda on Saturday took a swipe at the I.N.D.I.A bloc, saying it is a virtual alliance which is doing virtual meetings as a mere formality and that its leaders' two-point agenda is to save their families and properties. Addressing a meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, he said while Prime Minister Modi is working for a developed India, the opposition stands for "removing Modi". PTI

Nitish rejects post of convenor

NEW DELHI: Bihar CM and JD(U) national president Nitish Kumar on Saturday rejected the post of convenor of the I.N.D.I.A bloc, sources said. He suggested that someone from the Congress should take responsibility of the post. "Yes, there was a proposal," JD(U) national general secretary Sanjay Kumar said. He dismissed suggestions that Kumar was upset over the decision to make Kharge the chairperson of the bloc. AGENCIES

Party did not attend the meeting. According to the sources, a consensus emerged on Kharge's appointment as the chairperson of the bloc. "There was

consensus on the name of Mallikarjun Kharge as chairperson of the I.N.D.I.A bloc," CPI general secretary D Raja, who attended the meeting, said.

Meanwhile, sources further said that the opposition alliance leaders will meet physically later this month to chalk out further plans for the polls. PTI

More turbulence for Boeing

LONDON: A domestic All Nippon Airways (ANA) flight in Japan returned to its departure airport after a crack was reported on the cockpit window during the flight, BBC reported. The crack appeared in the outermost of the four layers of window surrounding the cockpit. The incident was not serious but if left unfixed could have been "pretty dangerous", an aviation expert said. There were no injuries to the 59 passengers and six crew members onboard. In another incident, a Boeing jet headed to Japan caught fire after a bird struck its starboard engine earlier this week. According to reports, the T'way Air flight 216 was approaching Incheon International Airport in South Korea around 9.30 pm (local time) when flames erupted from the engine.

Yadadri temple bags 'BHOG' tag

YADADRI-BHONGIR: The Yadadri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple has secured the 'Blissful Hygienic Offering to God' (BHOG) tag from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The Sri Vidya Saraswathi Shani Temple at Wargal has also earned the tag. BHOG is an initiative by the FSSAI to encourage places of worship to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene as well as convey food safety messages to the people. FSSAI CEO Kamalavardhan Rao visited the temple on Saturday and handed over the certificate to the Assistant Executive Officer of the temple. (SEE PAGE 2)

CM pushes for Hyd-Vij industrial corridor

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday requested Union Minister for Industries and Commerce Piyush Goyal to approve the establishment of a new industrial corridor connecting Hyderabad and Vijayawada via Miryalguda. He stressed the significance for according final clearances to the proposed Hyderabad-Nagpur industrial corridor as well, pointing out that the Centre's approval would result in an estimated benefit of Rs 2,300 crore for Telangana. The Chief Minister, along with Deputy Chief Minister

Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, made these requests during a meeting with the Goyal in New Delhi on Saturday. The Chief Minister also urged the Union Minister to permit submitting new proposals against the earlier plans submitted by the past government for establishing a Pharma City between Hyderabad and Warangal. **On National Design Centre** During the UPA government's rule, a National Design Centre (NDC) was approved for Hyderabad and an foundation was also laid by the then Union Minister Anand Sharma. Reminding about the relocation of the

NDC to Vijayawada post the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister urged Goyal to sanction another NDC to Telangana. He also sought approval for a Mega Leather Park, already designated for Nellore district in undivided Andhra Pradesh, to be relocated to Telangana. There was vast land in Karimnagar and Jangaon districts and the State government was willing to allot more for establishing the leather park if the Centre approved the same, he said. Responding positively to the appeal, Goyal directed the Central government officials to look into the matter immediately. (SEE PAGE 2)

Army to counter Pak bid to revive terrorism

NEW DELHI

In a major step towards thwarting Pakistan's attempts to increase terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Army is launching Operation Sarvashakti, where the security forces will be targeting the terrorists operating on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountain ranges in the UT. In recent times, Pakistani proxy terrorist groups have tried to revive terrorism in the South of Pir Panjal ranges especially in the Rajouri Poonch sector, where around 20 troops have been killed in attacks by terrorists, with the latest being on December 21, when four soldiers were killed in the Dera ki Gali area there.

"Operation Sarvashakti would be to carry out combined counter-terrorist operations from both sides of the Pir Panjal ranges where the formations of the Srinagar-based Chinar Corps along with the Nagrota-headquartered White Knight Corps would be carrying out simultaneous operations," sources in the security forces said. "The Jammu and Kashmir Police, CRPF, Special Operations Group, and the intelligence agencies would be working in close coordination to thwart Pakistani designs to revive terrorist activities in the Union Territory (UT), especially in the Rajouri Poonch sector," they added. ANI (RELATED REPORT PAGE 7)

Satwik, Chirag sail into finals

SPORT | PAGE 11



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Paigah Palace to house CM camp office?

S SANDEEP KUMAR
 Hyderabad

After official inspections at the MCR HRD Institute, is the State government now taking a good look at the Paigah Palace to be finalised as Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's new camp office? Speculation is rife that the palace in the Chiran Fort lane, Begumpet, has been selected to house the Chief Minister's camp office. The speculation gained weight with a team



of senior officials recently inspecting the palace. It has all the required infrastructure and interiors for

making it the Chief Minister's camp office. Considering its proximity to the Begumpet air-

port and the BR Ambedkar Secretariat, officials are very positive about it. However, there is no official announcement in this regard. "We are exploring different options, nothing has been finalised yet," a senior official said. Spread over five acres, the Paigah Palace has three buildings, including one heritage structure. Since 2007, the US Consulate Office operated from the palace before relocating to Nanakramguda last March. The palace is now being

maintained by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), which operates from the Swarna Jyothi complex in Ameerpet. It may be recalled that the Chief Minister's visit to the Marri Chennai Reddy Human Resource Development Institute of Telangana (MCR HRD) in Jubilee Hills on December 10 had triggered speculations that the Vivekananda Block on the institute's premises was likely to be made the new camp office. (SEE PAGE 2)

Scientist, mother die in car crash

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

A scientist and his mother were killed, while five others sustained injuries when a car, after ramming vehicles, landed in a roadside pit at Shamshabad on Saturday afternoon. According to police, Meruva Adishesha Reddy (57), a scientific officer at ECIL, and his mother M Ramulamma (88) were in the car when the former lost control of the vehicle and rammed an auto-rickshaw and a bike before landing in the pit. "The car hit other vehicles and the crash barri-

Woman killed as bus catches fire
GADWAL: A 45-year-old woman was charred to death, while three others were injured after the private bus in which they were travelling overturned and caught fire near Beechupally early on Saturday. The victim, Malathi, an employee of the Indian Institute of Rice Research, was a native of Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh and lived at Mehdiapatnam in Hyderabad. (SEE PAGE 2)

ers before falling into the pit, which was dug up as part of highway extension works. Adishesha and his mother died on the spot. A total of three vehicles, including the car, fell in the pit," said Shamshabad Inspector Sana Srinath. The police reached the spot and after much effort pulled the bodies out of the car and shifted them to the mortuary. The injured were shifted to a nearby hospital. The police have registered a case and are referring the car to the Road Transport Authority for examination.