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Nagoba Jatara from Feb 9



SACRED RITUAL: Mesrams return to the Indrevelli mandal centre carrying holy water drawn from the Godavari, at Hasthanamadugu near Kalamadugu village in Jannaram mandal on Sunday. — Photo: Mandapelli Kanthiah (REPORT PAGE 4)



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Nitish somersaults to Bihar CM gaddi again

Ditches Mahagathbandhan, I.N.D.I.A for NDA, takes oath for record ninth time

PTI PATNA
 JD(U) president Nitish Kumar on Sunday took oath as Chief Minister of Bihar for a record ninth time after a dramatic volte-face, ditching the Mahagathbandhan and opposition bloc I.N.D.I.A and forming a new government with the BJP, which he had dumped less than 18 months ago.
 Kumar was sworn in by Bihar Governor Rajendra Arlekar at Raj Bhavan in the presence of senior leaders, including BJP national president JP Nadda, hours after he resigned from the post, saying "things were not working well" for him in the Grand Alliance and the opposition bloc.
 BJP leaders — Samrat Choudhary and former Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha — were among those who took oath of office. The two are named as Deputy Chief Ministers. Earlier, Choudhary and Sinha were named as leader and deputy leader, respectively, of the BJP legislature party. They thanked the party's top leadership for the opportunity and vowed to "protect Bihar from the jungle raj unleashed by Lalu Prasad's RJD".
 JD(U) members Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Vijendra Yadav and Shrawan Kumar also took oath apart from former CM Jitan Ram Manjhi-led Hindustan Awam Morcha's Santosh Kumar Suman and inde-



Newly sworn-in Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary exchange greetings during a ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Patna on Sunday. — Photo: ANI

pendent legislator Sumit Singh. Congratulating Kumar and his two deputies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that the newly sworn-in NDA government in Bihar will leave no stone unturned for the State's development and to fulfil people's aspirations. In a post on social media site X, Modi said he is confident that the new government will serve the people with full dedication.
 Notably, no leader of the RJD, the single largest party in the Assembly, was present at the ceremony.

(RELATED REPORTS PAGE 7)

No question of going anywhere else: Nitish

PATNA: JD(U) president Nitish Kumar asserted that there is now no question of leaving the NDA-fold. "I was with them (NDA) earlier too. We went on different paths, but now we are together and will remain so... I came back to where I was (NDA), and now there is no question of going anywhere else," he said after

taking oath as CM. "You people know that I believe in work and the same will continue. I will keep doing work for the overall development of the State," he said. Commenting on the collapse of I.N.D.I.A bloc, he said, "They were not doing anything. Nothing happened after the first meeting that took place in Patna last year." **PTI**

Congress terms him 'chameleon'

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Sunday compared Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to a "chameleon", and said the people of the State will never forgive him for his "betrayal". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said they already knew about Kumar's decision to leave the alliance but had not said anything to help keep the I.N.D.I.A bloc together. "There are many people like 'Aaya Ram-Gaya Ram'. Lalu ji and Tejashwi ji had said Nitish is going," Kharge said. **(REPORT PAGE 7)**

Alliance won't last, says Kishor

PATNA: JD(U) president Nitish Kumar's newly-formed alliance with the BJP would unravel before the 2025 Assembly polls in Bihar, political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor claimed on Sunday. Kishor also said the BJP could end up paying a "huge price" for realigning with Kumar, after declaring that its doors were shut for the leader by whom it was ditched less than 18 months ago. "Nitish Kumar's volte-face is no surprise. I had been saying that he would not remain with the Mahagathbandhan ever since he had joined the combine," he said. **PTI**

Maratha quota: Rane against govt's decision

Jarange to continue agitation

MUMBAI

Union Minister Narayan Rane on Sunday said he does not agree with the Maharashtra government's decision to give all benefits enjoyed by the OBCs to Marathas till they get a reservation.

It would be an encroachment on the (rights of) other backward communities and could lead to unrest in Maharashtra, Rane, the former Chief Minister of the State, said in a post on X. "It will lead to suppression of the Maratha community that has a historical legacy and it will also be an encroachment on the other backward communities," he said. "It could lead to unrest in the State," Rane said, adding he will speak on the issue on Monday also.

Meanwhile, Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Sunday said the agitation will continue until members of the community start receiving the benefits. "Our agitation will continue until at least one person from my community benefits under

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Giving benefits enjoyed by OBCs to Marathas till they get reservation will lead to unrest
— NARAYAN RANE, Union Minister

the new rules the State is going to introduce. The State government has shown me the draft and the final notification is yet to be out," he said.

Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Chhagan Bhujbal has also expressed dissatisfaction over the State government's decision and questioned the "backdoor entry" of Marathas into the OBC category. He claimed that Justice (ret'd) Sandeep Shinde, who heads a committee set up to find Kunbi records of Marathas, was getting almost double the salary of the CJJ. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

BRS lost power, not prowess: KTR



BRS working president KT Rama Rao addressing a meeting of party workers and functionaries in Siricilla on Sunday.

STATE BUREAU Hyderabad

Asserting that the BRS may be down, but not out, party working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday said the party had lost only power but not its prowess as the right combatant.

Addressing a meeting of party workers and functionaries at the Siricilla Assembly constituency, he said A Revanth Reddy was not a people's Chief Minister. He had become the Chief Minister under the 'Delhi Management Quota'.

There was no other leader in the country like K Chandrashekhara Rao to question louder and stronger on behalf of the people. It was he who was instrumental in realising Statehood for Telangana. But for the realisation of a separate Telangana by him, Revanth Reddy would never have been able to become CM, he said. Referring to the unfulfilled promises of the Congress, he said farmers were waiting for the Rs 2 lakh loan waiver promised by the new government. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

Group-I notification: Will the wait get longer?

YUVRAJ AKULA Hyderabad

With just three days left, will the Congress government live up to its poll promise of notifying the Group-I notification? This happens to be the question in the minds of unemployed youth and government job aspirants in the State.
 As part of its election manifesto for the Legislative Assembly, the Congress had promised to fill two lakh jobs within one year of forming the government.
 Accordingly, it has come out with a job calendar men-

According to Cong govt's job calendar, notifications for Group-I is scheduled for Feb 1 & Group-II for April 1

tioning the dates of notifications for various vacancies, including the Groups in two phases with the Group-I notification scheduled for February 1 this year.
 The Congress had also announced that it would notify Group-II on April 1 under the first phase, with

the second phase notification scheduled for December 15. Further, teacher job aspirants have been assured of a mega District Selection Committee (DSC).
 Similarly, the notification dates for the Group-III and IV vacancies, besides for assistant executive engineers and AEE posts in different departments, agriculture, horticulture and veterinary officers, assistant motor car vehicle inspector, transport, excise and police constables, polytechnic, junior and degree lecturers have also been announced by the party. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

Inspector held in Praja Bhavan hit-and-run

CITY BUREAU Hyderabad

Two more persons, including a police inspector, have been taken into custody by the Punjagutta police in connection with the 'hit and run' case reported in front of Praja Bhavan last month. The prime suspect in the case, Rahil Shakeel, the son of former Bodhan MLA Aamir Shakeel, is still at large and suspected to be hiding in Dubai.
 Among those taken into custody are Bodhan Police Station Inspector Prem Kumar and a relative of Shakeel. **(SEE PAGE 2)**

Govt, high-profile persons' social media accounts at risk

NEW DELHI

Recent trends show an increase in incidents where scammers attack and fraudulently take over social media accounts of high-profile persons and government organisations to perpetrate misinformation campaigns and scams, India's federal cyber security agency said in its latest advisory.
 The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said the security of such accounts

CERT-In says security paramount to protect reputations, suggests measures to check 'compromise'

was paramount to protect reputations as it also suggested measures to check the "compromise" of social media accounts, including usage of multifactor authentication tools. "In today's interconnected world, social

media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information. These platforms have become essential for individuals, governments and enterprises alike, offering a powerful medium for communication and engagement," it stated.
 But its widespread influence also carries significant risks. The security of social media accounts is paramount to prevent misuse, protect reputations and ensure dissemination of authentic information, it said. **PTI**

Woman techie shot dead in Pune

PUNE

A 26-year-old woman, employed with an IT major, has been shot dead allegedly by her boyfriend in Pune district, the police said on Sunday.
 The boyfriend, Rishabh Nigam, was apparently upset that victim Vandana Dwivedi had started avoiding him recently, they said. The incident took place at a lodge in Hinjawadi, Pimpri Chinchwad, on Saturday and police got the information on Sunday morning. Nigam was apprehended in Mumbai and has been arrested. **PTI**