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Cracks in I.N.D.I.A bloc widen

Congress, TMC spar over seat-sharing

ANI
MURSHIDABAD

Sending out tell-tale hints of a further deepening of cracks in the Opposition bloc — I.N.D.I.A — as the Lok Sabha elections near, the West Bengal unit of the Congress on Thursday took a swipe at the Trinamool Congress, blaming the ruling party in the State for the lack of progress in seat-sharing talks.

Further opening up fissures in the Opposition bloc at a time when divergent voices over seat-sharing have come to the fore, Congress MP and the party's West Bengal chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Thursday hit out at TMC Supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, voice doubts over her intent to go into a seat allotment with the grand old party in the State.

Addressing a press conference in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal on Thursday, Adhir also scoffed at Mamata's rumoured offer of 2 of the State's 42 Lok Sabha seats to the Congress, saying those constituencies are already with the Congress and his party was quite capable of retaining them in the polls that are likely to be scheduled in the summer.

Adhir Ranjan slams Mamata, voices doubts over her intent to go into a seat allotment with the Congress in West Bengal

"The true face of Mamata Banerjee is out. They (TMC) are saying that they are ready to give us two seats in West Bengal. The seats in question are already with us. Both these constituencies elected Congress MPs. So, what new are they giving us? We won these seats defeating Mamata Banerjee's TMC and the BJP. Are they doing us a favour? Who will trust her (Mamata) with seat allotment?" Adhir said. A key constituent of the I.N.D.I.A bloc, the TMC has reportedly proposed 2 seats for the Congress to contest in the general elections. In a further dig at the ruling party in the State, Adhir said he needed no favour from the TMC as his party was quite capable of going solo in the State. (SEE PAGE 2)

Indian-origin man jailed in UK for 'indecent exposure'

LONDON

A 43-year-old Indian-origin man was sentenced to nine months in prison in the UK after being found guilty of masturbating on board a London Underground train in front of a lone woman in the carriage.

Mukesh Shah, from Wembley in north London, was found guilty of indecent exposure at London Inner Crown Court last month and or-

dered to sign the sex offenders register for 10 years. The British Transport Police said he will be subjected to a 10-year Sexual Harm Prevention Order, which occurred on Nov 4, 2022, during a tube journey. "This was a frightening and upsetting experience for the victim and I commend her bravery in confronting the offender," said BTP Investigating Officer, Detective Constable Mark Luker. PTI

Sharmila joins Congress, merges party



YS Sharmila with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi.

STATE BUREAU
New Delhi

YS Sharmila, the daughter of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy and founder of YSR Telangana Party, joined the Congress here on Thursday.

She also announced the merger of her party, the YSR Telangana Congress, with the Congress, and said she would fulfil any responsibility given to her. Sharmila joined the Congress

in the presence of party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and former party president Rahul Gandhi. Lauding the Congress, she said it was the largest secular party in the country as it served all communities and united all sections of people. Stating it was her father's dream to see Rahul Gandhi as the Prime Minister and that she would be happy to contribute to the cause, Sharmila said she was happy that she was part of the Congress victory in Telangana. (SEE PAGE 2)

Curbs on timing hit food biz at DLF street

EPSITA GUNTI
Hyderabad

The popular DLF Street in Gachibowli, the epitome of Hyderabad's nightlife, is now deserted post 12 midnight. In fact, a similar gloom has blanketed other spots, dwindling nocturnal charm of the city. The restrictions on timings for DLF and other spots were imposed in October before the Assembly elections to ensure that no untoward incidents occur. All the establishments were closed by 11 pm.

However, even after a month after the election results were announced, the restrictions are yet to be lifted. Every night



The restrictions on timings for DLF and other spots were imposed in October before Assembly polls. — Photo: Surya Sridhar

around 11.45 pm, police patrolling vehicles enter the street with their sirens on, signalling the vendors to close the shop. Post midnight, the street is empty and silent. "Earlier, we

used to keep our shops open till late night. However, we close by 12 midnight and open again around 4 am. We are losing business," says the owner of Momo's Delight

on DLF Street. Alim, who runs the Pariwar Eatery on the same street, informs "Telangana Today" that all efforts to reach out to the administration were met with no response.

"Nobody is listening to us. All eateries in the Cyberabad area are closed early," he adds. Although it is just around four hours that these shops are being shut, that time is key to the success of their business, often marking their highest sales. While the place is now a go-to for all the street food lovers in the city who are looking for a quick bite at night, the primary customers for these vendors are employees working graveyard shifts. (SEE PAGE 2)

Jagan wishes KCR speedy recovery

AP CM calls on BRS chief in Hyderabad and enquires about his health

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Thursday called on BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao who is recuperating after undergoing hip replacement surgery last month. Jaganmohan met the former Chief Minister of Telangana at the latter's residence in Nandinagar in Hyderabad here and enquired about his health.

Jaganmohan arrived at the Begumpet airport at around 11.15 pm on a special flight. Former Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy, MLAs Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Danam Nagender and others received him at the airport. Upon his arrival at Chandrashekhar Rao's residence in Nandinagar, BRS working president KT Rama Rao and others extended a warm welcome.

Later, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister met Chandrashekhar Rao and presented



AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy greeting former Chief Minister and BRS president K Chandrashekhar Rao, in Hyderabad on Thursday.

him with a shawl and bouquet as well as a statue of Lord Venkateswara Swamy, wishing for his speedy recovery. He en-

quired about the latter's health condition and ongoing treatment, following the total hip replacement surgery.

BRS sources said the meeting was a courtesy call in the wake of Chandrashekhar Rao's recent surgery and had no other significance. After spending an hour with the former Chief Minister and other BRS leaders, Jaganmohan left for his residence at Lotus Pond and later to Vijayawada. Jaganmohan was accompanied by YSR Congress party MP Mithun Reddy, MLC Raghuram, MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy and others. BRS leaders, including former Ministers Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Mohd Mahmood Ali, Rajya Sabha MP J Santosh Kumar and others were also present.

It may be noted that Jaganmohan had called Rama Rao soon after learning about Chandrashekhar Rao's surgery and wished for his speedy recovery. TDP chief and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu also called on the BRS supremo at the hospital immediately after the latter underwent surgery. (SEE PAGE 2)

Hello World!



IN SAFE HANDS: A 10-year-old gorilla Duni holds her newborn at the Prague Zoo, Czech Republic, on Thursday. — Photo: AP

Qatar: Legal team gets 60 days to appeal

NEW DELHI

The legal team of eight jailed former Indian Navy personnel was given 60 days to appeal against the ruling by Qatar's court of appeal, the Ministry of External Affairs said. Last month, the Court of Appeal in Qatar commuted the death sentence handed down to the Indians and sentenced them to prison for varying durations.

The verdict came weeks after the family members of the Indians filed an appeal against the earlier order by another court. Sixty days' time has been given to file an appeal against the order at Qatar's highest court, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a media briefing. PTI

Blood banks can only charge processing fee

NEW DELHI

Hospitals and blood banks can now only charge processing fee for blood as the apex drug regulator has decided to do away with all other fee to check the practice of overcharging.

In a communication to all States and UT drugs controllers cum licensing authorities, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) stated that the decision was taken in view of the opinion that "blood is not for sale."

Referring to the 62nd meeting of the Drugs Consultative Committee held on September 26, 2023, the DCGI in the letter on December 26 said, "It was recommended with respect of agenda No.18 of ATR point 3, for overcharging of blood, it was opined that blood is not for sale, it is only for supply and only processing cost may be charged by the blood centre." The revised guidelines stipulate that only processing fees can be charged for blood or blood components which ranges between Rs 250 to 1,550 for blood or blood components. The DCGI has asked States/ UTs to direct all blood centres under their jurisdiction to adhere to the revised guidelines. PTI

RTC to run 4,484 Sankranti specials



These buses will run from January 6 to 15 from Hyderabad to various destinations in Telangana and neighbouring States.

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has arranged 4,484 special buses for people heading to their hometowns during Sankranti festivities. These buses will run from January 6 to 15 from Hyderabad to various destinations in Telangana and neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

The free travel facility for women will also be applicable in these special buses but only till State borders. TSRTC Managing Director VC Sajjanar said all necessary arrangements have been made to take citizens

safely to their destinations for Sankranti and measures are in place to ensure that passengers do not face any inconvenience. "We are running special buses with regular fares without any hike," he said.

Special camps
The TSRTC authorities have also set up special camps for passengers waiting to board buses in usually congested areas where passenger traffic is high such as Uppal Crossroad, LB Nagar, Aramghar and KPHB. "Drinking water, mobile bio-toilets are other facilities have been arranged for the comfort of passengers in places where required," Sajjanar said. (SEE PAGE 2)

Ayodhya to be under AI vigil

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Bilawal is PPP's PM face

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India record historic victory

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ENTERTAINMENT
PAGE 12

On cloud nine

Amala, Jagat expecting child



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Farm | Rs. 85 |
| Retail live..... | Rs. 107 |
| With skin..... | Rs. 155 |
| Skinless..... | Rs. 177 |
| Egg Rates (12 eggs)..... | Rs. 78 |

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