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Telangana Today



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Double trouble for I.N.D.I.A bloc

TMC, AAP to go solo in West Bengal & Punjab for LS polls

PTI
KOLKATA/CHANDIGARH

In a double whammy for the opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc, the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Punjab on Wednesday said there will be no alliance with the Congress for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and that their parties, TMC and AAP, will go it alone in the respective States.

The surprise announcement by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that caught the Congress off guard came on the back of the growing tussle between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the grand old party over sharing of seats to be contested in the key eastern State. It came just a day ahead of the scheduled entry of the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra into West Bengal.

"I had given them (Congress) a proposal (on seat sharing) but they refused it at the outset. Our party has now decided to go it alone in Bengal," Banerjee told reporters at the Dumurjala helipad in Howrah district. "We have decided that there

NO I.N.D.I.A WITHOUT MAMATA: CONG

BONGAIGAOON: The Congress on Wednesday said no one can imagine the existence of the opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc without West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee. Addressing a press conference in Assam as part of the party's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said TMC is an "important pillar" of the opposition alliance. "No one can imagine I.N.D.I.A alliance without Mamata ji. The bloc will fight polls in West Bengal and all (partners) will participate," he said. PTI

DEATH KNELL FOR ALLIANCE: BJP

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Wednesday said West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's decision to "go solo" in the Lok Sabha polls is a sign of her desperation and "death knell" for the I.N.D.I.A bloc of the opposition parties. The BJP also took potshots at the Congress and other I.N.D.I.A bloc constituents on the AAP's decision to go alone in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Punjab, saying "I.N.D.I.A Alliance" is getting demolished day by day and the time has come for its "funeral". PTI

will be no relations with the Congress in Bengal," the Chief Minister said in her remarks that has dented opposition unity efforts.

A total of 28 parties have come together to form the I.N.D.I.A grouping to take on the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. According to

sources, the TMC had offered only two seats to the Congress based on its 2019 Lok Sabha polls performance. This was not acceptable to the Congress causing strains between the two parties in West Bengal, which accounts for 42 parliamentary seats.

MAMATA SUFFERS MINOR INJURY

BARDHAMAN: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee injured her forehead on Wednesday after her car had to make a sudden halt to avoid a collision with another vehicle here, a senior official said. Banerjee, who was seated in front beside the driver, was injured after her head hit the dashboard, he said. The accident took place when she was returning to Kolkata from a review meeting in Purba Bardhaman. "By God's grace, I was saved as my driver was alert." PTI



Meanwhile, in Chandigarh, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said his party will not enter into an alliance with the Congress in the State, reiterating that the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will win all 13 seats at stake. (SEE PAGE 2)

Assam Rifles soldier fires at six jawans, kills self

IMPHAL

At least six Assam Rifles personnel were injured after a soldier opened fire at them before killing himself in Manipur's Chandel district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Sajik Tampak late on Tuesday when the Assam Rifles jawan fired at his colleagues, they said. He later shot himself dead, a police officer said.

"... This unfortunate incident should not be correlated with the ongoing ethnic conflict, given that none of the injured is from Manipur. An investigation into the incident has been ordered to ascertain the facts," the Manipur Police said on X. The injured personnel, who are undergoing treatment, are reported to be in "stable condition", the officer said.

Meanwhile, security was beefed up in and around Manipur capital Imphal as the Arambai Tenggol has asked all Ministers and MLAs of the valley districts for a meeting at Kangla Fort here on Wednesday, an official said. Arambai Tenggol, an organisation of around 50,000 people engaged in guarding villages, has asked all ministers and MLAs of the valley districts to come for discussions. PTI

74 killed as Russian military plane crashes



Smoke rises from the scene of the warplane crash at a residential area near Yablono in Belgorod on Wednesday. — Photo: AP

Moscow blames Kyiv; deceased include 65 PoWs

MOSCOW

Russia's Defence Ministry on Wednesday accused Ukrainian forces of shooting down a military transport plane, killing all 74 people aboard, including 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war (PoWs) being swapped.

Ukrainian officials did not immediately confirm or deny Russia's claims about the crash in Russia's Belgo-

rod border region, although they said they were looking into them. The Associated Press could not confirm who was aboard or other details on what brought the plane down.

A video of the crash posted on social media showed a plane falling from the sky in a snowy rural area and a massive ball of fire erupting where it apparently hit the ground. In addition to the 65 PoWs, the Il-76 transport carried a crew of six and three other passengers, the Russian military said.

According to the statement, Russian radar registered the launch of two missiles from Ukraine's Kharkiv region that borders the Belgorod region. AP

Tight security at Uppal

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Trump wins NH primary polls

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Kiran George, Lakshya advance

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ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

In Chennai Story

Shruti Haasan star in the Indo-UK co-production



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Chappal remark: KTR slams Cong

STATE BUREAU
Karimnagar

In a strong-worded response to Minister Komatreddy Venkat Reddy's reported statement that farmers who complained of not getting Rythu Bandhu assistance should be slapped with chappals, BRS working president KT Rama Rao said it should be the other way around, with farmers giving the chappal treatment to Congress leaders for failing to deposit Rythu Bandhu amounts in their accounts.

Speaking at a BRS Social Media Warriors awareness programme in the Karimnagar parliament constituency on Wednesday, Rama Rao said farmers should also think whether they would hit back at the Congress leaders with their chappals or with their votes.

He also pointed out that though farmers across the State were in a crisis, with many of them not receiving

Says farmers should give chappal treatment to Congress for failing to deposit Rythu Bandhu amounts

Rythu Bandhu assistance so far, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had falsely claimed in Davos that he had already started the implementation of the Rythu Bharosa scheme in Telangana. This was in comparison with the governance of Chandrashekhar Rao, when Rythu Bandhu amount was deposited in accounts of 70 lakh farmers without fail.

Stating that though the Congress talked about only six guarantees, fact was that the party had made 420 promises to various sections of the public before the elections, Rama Rao warned the Congress leaders of severe public backlash. (SEE PAGE 2)

ACB raids former HMDA Director

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) teams have been conducting a major search operation at different places in the State on the houses, offices and other establishments linked to former HMDA Director Shiva Balakrishna since Wednesday morning.

Sources said about 14 ACB teams swooped down on the houses of the relatives, friends and others connected to Balakrishna in the morning following information that he reportedly amassed wealth during his tenure as HMDA Director. The officials suspect Balakrishna acquired wealth running into nearly Rs 100 crore in the form of flats, bank deposits, gold, equity investment, business investments and farmland registered in the names of his relatives and benamis. (SEE PAGE 2)

Over 200 migrant gulls found dead

STATE BUREAU
Sangareddy

In a rather disturbing incident, over 200 migrant gulls, including brown-head gulls and black-head gulls, were found dead in the backwaters of Nagarjuna Sagar in Nalgonda district.

Since water levels in Nagarjuna Sagar have receded due to poor inflows from upstream areas, farmers were cultivating various crops in the surfaced area at Vizag Colony in Chandam-pet mandal. A team of birders, who were on a birding trip to Vizag Colony on Tuesday, found the birds'



Carcass of a gull found in the backwaters of Nagarjuna Sagar in Nalgonda district.

carcasses. They noticed the birds were spread along the backwater bund of Nagarjuna Sagar near Vizag Colony. (SEE PAGE 2)

Sangareddy mango ryot gets R-Day invite

T KARNAKAR REDDY
Sangareddy

His passion for agriculture made him try and test several horticulture crops in the last two decades in his field at Burdipad village of Zaheerabad mandal. Today, Bawgi Sriram (47) is the proud farmer of 28 mango varieties. This has earned him an invite to the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi.

After knowing the quality of the mangoes he was growing in his orchard, Raj Bhavan had ordered 100 boxes of the fruit last season and Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan distributed the fruit to the



Bawgi Sriram at his farm in Burdipad, Zaheerabad mandal of Sangareddy district.

staff. Sriram had sent a few boxes to the Chief Minister's office and other important persons in the State as well. Born to a small trader in Satwar vil-

lage, Sriram (47) moved to Zaheerabad town, 8 km away, after his graduation and ventured into a small business in 2001. Due to the passion he had for

agriculture, he started to buy agricultural land to take up cultivation at Burdipad. In the last 20 years, he bought 50 acres with his earnings from business and agriculture.

Sriram grows Benishan, Dasher, Himayath, Kesari, Rasalu and several other varieties of mango. He also has a Super Gold variety of Seetaphal, which he grows in four acres, lemon in four acres, papaya in three acres and ginger in two acres. He uses the remaining land to grow other horticulture and vegetable crops. Sriram said he restricts the spraying of pesticides apart from using cow dung and green manure. (SEE PAGE 2)

Farmers' Bharat Bandh on Feb 16

NOIDA

Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Wednesday said farmers will observe a 'Bharat Bandh' on February 16 over several issues in the country, including non-implementation of a law that guarantees MSP for crops.

Traders and transporters have also been asked to support the cause and observe a work strike that day, said Tikait, the national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union. "We have called for a 'Bharat Bandh' on February 16. Several farmers' groups are part of it, including Sanyukta Kisan Morcha," he said. PTI