

**STATE**

**String of setbacks for BJP in Zaheerabad Lok Sabha constituency** **page 5**

**BUSINESS**

**RBI rules out review of action against PPBL** **page 8**

**WORLD**

**Israel rescues 2 hostages in Gaza raid that killed 67 Palestinians** **page 9**



## Assembly passes resolution not to hand over projects to KRMB

**BRS, Congress engage in war of words over Krishna projects**

STATE BUREAU  
Hyderabad

Telangana State Legislative Assembly on Monday passed a resolution informing the Union Government of its resolve not to hand over the control of common projects to Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) unless its conditions were fulfilled. The conditions include, the finalisation of water sharing taking into consideration the basis of the catchment area, drought-prone area, population and cultivable area in the riparian States.

The other conditions include keeping the minimum draw down level (MDDL) of Srisailem at 830 ft, limiting the outside basin diversions from Srisailem to 34 TMC, and steps for stalling unauthorised construction of projects and expansions diverting Krishna water beyond the Krishna basin.

The House witnessed an intense discussion on the issue with Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy making a PowerPoint presentation on the issue. The Minister, led the treasury benches, in the trenchant attack on the former government, accusing it of turning a blind eye to the overuse and diversion of Krishna water by Andhra Pradesh.

The main opposition party, the BRS, fielded former Irrigation Minister and Siddipet legislator T Harish Rao to put the government in a spot over its negligence in agreeing to hand over the



Former Irrigation Minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao speaks in the Assembly on Monday.

projects to KRMB. It was literally a war of words with both sides refusing to concede any advantage to the other.

The five-hour-long debate saw several Ministers, including Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Sridhar Babu and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy springing to their feet to counter the onslaught of Harish Rao, who laid out threadbare the efforts of the earlier BRS government to safeguard the interests of Telangana. Harish Rao maintained that the government moving such a resolution itself was a victory for the BRS arguing that it was only after his party took up the issue and planned a public meeting on the issue in Nalgonda, that

the government was forced to change its stand on the issue.

**Detailed discussion**

Earlier, the Chair turned down the BRS' plea for allowing it to make a presentation leading to vociferous protests. Harish Rao reminded the treasury benches that the ruling party leaders had challenged a detailed discussion in the House, but now the BRS was not being allowed to speak. When Uttam Kumar Reddy, during his presentation claimed that during the BRS rule, the diversion of Krishna water by Andhra Pradesh increased while the inflows dwindled. The Minister also claimed that the former government

had agreed to a proposal to hand over 15 components of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects, eliciting loud protests from BRS members. Uttam Kumar Reddy argued that the BRS government had skipped the Apex Committee meeting when the Andhra Pradesh government was contemplating the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project. He charged that the "inefficient and incompetent" government had agreed to a share of 512 TMC for AP and 299 TMC for Telangana. However, Harish Rao was quick to intervene and point out that it was only for one year that Telangana had agreed to such a share. (SEE PAGE 2)

(KRISHNA PROJECTS: BRS BEATS BACK CONG BLAME GAME PAGE 5)

## Nitish wins Bihar floor test

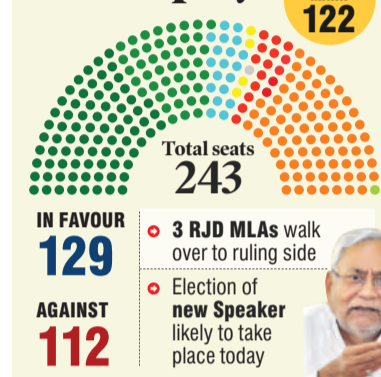
**Non-NDA members walkout; Speaker ousted**

PTI  
PATNA

The National Democratic Alliance government in Bihar, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, on Monday won the trust vote in the State Assembly, with 129 MLAs voting in favour of the motion, amid a walkout by all non-NDA members. Altogether, 129 legislators voted in favour of the motion, but Kumar rose to suggest that the vote of Deputy Speaker Maheshwar Hazari, who belongs to the JD(U), also be counted. Usually, the person in the Chair does not take part in voting, unless there is a tie.

Hazari ordered a headcount after having declared the motion as passed through a voice vote, following a request from Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, which was seconded by Kumar, the JD(U) president. The NDA, comprising the JD(U), BJP, former CM Jitan Ram Manjhi's HAM and an Independent, had a combined strength of 128 in the

**Power play**



243-strong Assembly. However, it received a shot in the arm with three RJD MLAs - Prahlad Yadav, Chetan Anand and Neelam Devi - walking over to the ruling side.

**Slams RJD, Congress**

BJP MLAs, who were elated at the party's return to power after a gap of nearly 17 months, erupted in chants of 'Jai Shree Ram' as the trust vote was won by the Chief Minister, who spoke for nearly 30 minutes, vent-

ing spleen against erstwhile allies RJD and Congress as also the opposition INDIA bloc, which he had helped form. Pointing towards RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, who had served as his deputy till he remained with the 'Mahagathbandhan', Kumar fumed: "What was the shape of Bihar while it was ruled by his father (Lalu). There were no roads, people were afraid of venturing out in the dark after sunset. We set it right upon coming to power in 2005."

**TN govt, Governor face off**

NATION | PAGE 08

**Rotation govt likely in Pak**

WORLD | PAGE 09



**India chase glory at BATC**

SPORT | PAGE 11



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## Qatar frees 8 ex-Navymen; seven return home

NEW DELHI

Qatar has released eight jailed former Indian Navy personnel and seven of them returned home on Monday morning, in what is being seen as a major diplomatic victory for India that came nearly three-and-half months after a Qatari court handed them death sentence that was subsequently commuted to jail terms.

Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself constantly supervised all the developments in the case and has never shied away from any initiatives to ensure the return of the Indians. In an early morning statement, the Ministry

**Modi to visit Doha tomorrow**

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to the Qatari capital Doha on February 14 after concluding his two-day visit to the UAE, an announcement that came hours after Qatar released eight jailed former Indian Navy personnel. Modi is embarking on a two-day visit to the UAE on Mon-

day with an aim to expand overall bilateral ties in a range of areas including trade and investment, energy and digital domain. "After completing his visit to the UAE, the Prime Minister will travel to Doha, Qatar on February 14 afternoon," Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said. PTI

of External Affairs (MEA) said India appreciates the decision by the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani enabling the release and home-coming of the Indians. The former Indian Navy personnel apparently faced charges of espionage, but neither the Qatari authorities nor New Delhi made the charges against them public. PTI

## Govt doctors stage protests across State

CITY BUREAU  
Hyderabad

Government doctors across Telangana launched massive protests on Monday against the State government's decision to suspend two senior doctors from Kamareddy Government Medical College and General Hospital over the incident of a rat biting a patient in the hospital's intensive care unit. Boycotting daily duties during outpatient hours, the members of the Telangana Teaching Government Doctors Association (TTGDA) in all medical colleges and hospitals in districts wore black badges and raised slogans against the State government.

## Hookah parlours banned in State

STATE BUREAU  
Hyderabad

Telangana Legislative Assembly and Council on Monday unanimously passed a Bill banning hookah parlours in the State.

Moving the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution) (Telangana Amendment) Bill, 2024, on behalf of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, State Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu said the hookah parlour organisers were taking advantage of the smoking craze among young people and making them addicted, hence the government had decided to ban it in State.

The government would initiate stringent measures to curb hookah bars and the sale of other narcotic substances in the State, he said, adding that the government had already constituted an Anti-Narcotic Team, headed by Addition Direc-

tor General rank officer to curb usage of narcotic substances in the Greater Hyderabad jurisdiction. The Minister said people involved in hookah business would be punished with imprisonment from a minimum of one year to seven years and a fine of Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh would be imposed. An offence under the new Act would be cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable, he said.

He further stated that smoking hookah could be more harmful than smoking cigarettes and that young people could move on to more toxic substances. "Hookah could also harm passive smokers and could be a public health hazard," he said. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Age limit for job aspirants raised to 46

CITY BUREAU  
Hyderabad

Here is some good news for government job aspirants and unemployed youth in Telangana State. The State government has raised the upper age limit by two years from existing 44 years to 46 years for the ensuing recruitments. An order to this effect has recently been issued by Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari.

However, the upper age limit enhancement will not be applicable for direct recruitment to posts of uniform services viz., Police, Excise, Fire, Prisons, Forest Departments etc., for which physical standards have been prescribed.

**Several representations**

The move comes following several representations from unemployed youth seeking relaxation of the upper age limit for direct recruitment. Such a move will enable more unemployed youth to become eligible for recruitment to the various categories of posts. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Section 144 in Delhi for a month ahead of ryots' march

NEW DELHI

There will be a complete ban on gatherings, processions or rallies and entry of tractor trolleys carrying people in the national capital as the Delhi Police imposed Section 144 for a month in view of intended widespread tension and "social unrest" due to the farmers' 'Delhi Chalo March' on Tuesday.

The order issued by Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora prohibited any type of rally or procession and blocking of roads and

passages. The order shall come into force on February 12 and shall remain enforce up to March 12. Delhi Police order has imposed a ban on tractor rallies trying to cross borders of national capital.

The farmers from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are expected to enter Delhi during their march.

Meanwhile, a team of Union Ministers held talks with farmer leaders in a bid to dissuade them from their 'Delhi Chalo' march to press the Centre for enactment of a law on minimum support price for crops. The Minis-

ters — Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal and Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda — held the second round of talks with the farmer leaders at the Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration in Sector 26.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher, among others were present. The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, was still on till reports last came in. (RELATED REPORT PAGE 7)

## Bubbling error: Aspirants knock doors of TSPSC

CITY BUREAU  
Hyderabad

A large number of Group-IV job aspirants, who committed bubbling errors during the examination, approached the TSPSC requesting consideration of their candidature for the test. Citing an earlier High Court order that directed the Commission to consider the candidature of Group-II aspirants who had made similar mistakes, Group-IV aspirants urged the TSPSC to consider their request along the same lines. (REPORT PAGE 3)

## Outrage over insensitive bike taxi passenger

CITY BUREAU  
Hyderabad

A rider, working for a ride-hailing service (bike taxi) in Hyderabad was allegedly coerced by a customer to push the vehicle to the nearest petrol bunk, while he continued to remain seated. The incident, which sparked outrage on various social media platforms, occurred when the bike ran out of fuel, leaving the passenger stranded.

Some of the commuters, who spotted the incident, recorded the entire event as it unfolded and uploaded it on multiple social media platforms. In the video footage that went viral, the rider can be seen pushing the

bike while the passenger remained seated. The video, needless to say, sparked widespread anger from netizens, who criticised the passenger's behaviour and expressed sympathy with the rider's plight.

**Sparks outrage**

The passenger reportedly had hoped on the bike taxi after booking a ride and when the bike ran out of petrol en route, the rider requested the passenger to walk to the nearest petrol station. However, the passenger allegedly refused to comply with the rider's request, prompting the latter to push the two-wheeler manually, while the customer continued to sit on the bike.



A screen grab of the video where the bike taxi rider is pushing the vehicle to a petrol pump.