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Israel is ready to pause its war in Gaza, says Biden page 9

Cross-voting mars RS polls in 3 States

Big upset for Cong in HP, wins 3 seats in K'taka

PTI
 BANGALORE/LUCKNOW

The Congress on Tuesday suffered a major upset in Himachal Pradesh at the hands of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections which were marred by cross-voting in all three States though it won three seats in Karnataka while the saffron party pocketed an extra seat in Uttar Pradesh.

Polling was held for 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh, four in Karnataka and one seat in Himachal Pradesh. On February 20, 41 candidates including BJP chief JP Nadda, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw and L Murugan were elected unopposed to the Upper House.

Himachal Pradesh saw cross-voting that led to the victory of BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan over Congress' Abhishek Manu Singhvi. Mahajan was declared winner by draw of lots after both the candidates were tied, securing 34 votes each. The result made it clear that six Congress MLAs and the three Independents voted in favour of the BJP. At present, the Congress has 40 MLAs, BJP 25

HP saw cross-voting that led to the victory of BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan over Abhishek Manu Singhvi

while three are independents in the 68-member Himachal Pradesh Assembly.

High drama in UP
 Singhvi said the BJP's move to field a candidate against a party which has 40 members compared to its 25 was a clear message that the saffron party wants to win by hook or crook and more by crook. There was high drama in Uttar Pradesh where amid concerns over cross-voting, SP chief whip Manoj Pandey quit while polling was underway. As many as eight SP MLAs also did not attend a meeting called by the Yadav on Monday. SP candidate and retired IAS officer Alok Ranjan lost to BJP's Sanjay Seth, an industrialist.

The other seven BJP candidates who won are: former union Minister RPN Singh, former MP Chaudhary Tejveer Singh, general secretary of the party's

Uttar Pradesh unit Amarpal Maurya, former state minister Sangeeta Balwant (Bind), party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi, former MLA Sadhna Singh, and former Agra mayor Naveen Jain. SP's actor-MP Jaya Bachchan won another term while Dalit leader Ramji Lal Suman bagged the second seat for the party.

In Karnataka, five candidates were in the fray for the four seats, including D Kupendra Reddy JD(S). Those elected are Ajay Maken, G C Chandrasekhar and Syed Naseer Hussain (all Congress) and Narayansa K Bhandage of the BJP. The election was marred by cross-voting as BJP MLA S T Somashekar voted for Maken, while another party legislator A Shivaram Hebbar abstained from voting. Somashekar said he listened to the "voice of his conscience" and voted in favour of the Congress "which built schools and carried out developmental works in his constituency."

Hebbar too abstained from voting adhering to his conscience, he said. SP president Akhilesh Yadav warned that strict action will be taken against the MLAs who cross voted.

Will implement all promises, says Revanth

Launches Gruha Jyothi, LPG cylinder schemes

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday reiterated that despite financial constraints, the Congress government would implement the Six Guarantees.

Speaking after the formal launch of LPG cylinders for Rs 500 and 200 units of free power supply under Maha Lakshmi and Gruha Jyothi schemes, respectively, at the Secretariat here, the Chief Minister said that due to the Mahabubnagar Local Authorities MLC elections model code of conduct, the venue for the launch of these two schemes was relocated from Chevella to the Secretariat.

Speaking after the formal launch of the Rs 500 LPG

LPG scheme comes with riders

HYDERABAD: The State government on Tuesday issued guidelines for the implementation of the Maha Lakshmi Scheme with riders that restricted the scheme to the average LPG consumption of the beneficiary during the last three years, to white ration card holders with active LPG connections, and those who had applied for the subsidised cylinder through the Praja Palana programme held till January 6.

As for the mode of payment, the State government will transfer the required subsidy amount in advance to the oil marketing companies (OMC) on a monthly basis. (SEE PAGE 2)

cylinder and 200 units of free power supply under Gurha Jyothi scheme at the Secretariat here, the Chief Minister said that due to the Mahabubnagar Local Authorities MLC elections model code of conduct, the venue for the launch of

these two schemes was relocated from Chevella to the Secretariat. "We are maintaining financial discipline and we are committed to implement all the Six Guarantees," the Chief Minister further said. (SEE PAGE 2)

Software firm CEO found hanging

STATE BUREAU
 Sangareddy

A Chief Executive Officer of a software company was found hanging in his home in Ameenpur here. According to the police, Kasi Viswanath, 38, a resident of Durga Homes Phase-2 in Ameenpur, had gone to the US six months ago to set up a software firm but the project did not take off.

He had returned disappointed, the police said, adding that this was suspected to have driven him to the extreme step.

According to his wife Vineela, Viswanath had set up a software company, Eclat Prime, in Madhapur along with his friends a few years ago. However, it was his dream to set up a company in the US, for which he had gone there. However, multiple issues forced him to drop the idea and return. (SEE PAGE 2)

Red Bull Soapbox race in city

HYDERABAD | PAGE 02

Sulyok elected Hungary Prez

WORLD | PAGE 09



McCullum backs Jonny Bairstow

SPORT | PAGE 10



CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 140
Retail live.....	Rs. 162
With skin.....	Rs. 235
Skinless.....	Rs. 267
Egg Rates (12 eggs).....	Rs. 65

BRS calls for 'Chalo Medigadda'

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

BRS working president and former Minister KT Rama Rao on Tuesday said there was a larger conspiracy behind the deliberate delay in rehabilitation of the Medigadda barrage and other components of the multi-stage Kaleshwaram project.

Addressing a news conference at Telangana Bhavan, he said the BRS would organise a 'Chalo Medigadda' programme on March 1 to expose the sinister designs of the Revanth Reddy government behind the vicious campaign launched by it against the project which served the State as its lifeline. The Congress had conspired

to leave the project to its fate by ignoring the urgent need for immediate repairs to the three piers in Medigadda found to be sinking and addressing the seepage issues noticed in Annaram barrage so that it would get washed away during the monsoon that comes with flooding in the river.

The government was dilidallying on the project rehabilitation as part of a hidden agenda it was pursuing to trivialise the benefits being delivered by the project that was designed to make the water-starved regions of the State richer by 240 TMC of water drawn from Godavari that would otherwise have been left untapped. (SEE PAGE 2)

Modi unveils crew for Gaganyaan mission

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made on Tuesday revealed the names of the four astronauts who are currently undergoing rigorous training for India's first-ever human space flight mission, Gaganyaan.

Addressing the audience at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, the PM introduced to the nation the esteemed astronauts: Group Captains Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan, and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla. Bestowing them with the prestigious 'astronaut wings', Modi hailed these astronauts as "four forces" representing the aspirations of India's 1.4 billion people. (REPORT PAGE 7)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi hands over wings to astronauts-designate Shubhanshu Shukla, Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap and Ajit Krishnan at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. — Photo: PTI

Nizam's petrol pump found in KBR park

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Nestled within the verdant expanse of Kasu Brahmananda Reddy (KBR) National Park in Jubilee Hills, lies a discreet yet historically significant artifact - a private petrol pump, formerly owned by the Nizam of Hyderabad to cater to his fleet of automobiles, trucks and machinery.

Recently brought to light by city-based Raju Alluri, the existence of this relic from the past has sparked curiosity among park-goers. Alluri, who stumbled upon the petrol machine during a routine walk, took to Facebook to share his discovery. He noted that despite its proximity to the walking path, the pump remains

largely unnoticed by regular visitors to the park. The revelation sheds light on the park's rich history, as documented in the management plan prepared by the Divisional Forest Officer for the period until 2025-26.

According to the document, the total area of the Jubilee Hills Forest Block, now known as KBR Park, spans 142.5 hectares. Previously under the possession of Nizam, the area was later acquired by the government under the Urban Land Ceiling Act. However, a portion of 2.40 hectares was permitted to be retained by the Nizam. The park, surrounded by a wall erected by Nizam during 1960s, played a crucial role in conservation of flora, fauna and rock formations representative of the Deccan Plateau. (SEE PAGE 2)



The petrol pump found in the KBR national park. — Photo Facebook/Raju Alluri

Student ends life over loan app harassment

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

An engineering student die by suicide due to alleged harassment from online loan app executives.

S Manoj Kumar (20), a native of Bhadradi-Kothagudem, was a third-year student in Institute of Aeronautical Engineering, Dundigal. Manoj borrowed money through loan apps for personal expenses and failed to pay EMIs on time. Following this, the loan app agents allegedly started harassing him. Upset and humiliated, Manoj ended his life by hanging from the ceiling fan in his room.

Conflict of interest hits V-C aspirants

YUVRAJ AKULA
 Hyderabad

The Higher Education Department that issued notification for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors to 10 State universities is caught in a fix.

A few professors, nominated by the respective universities' Executive Councils (ECs) to the search committee that selects candidates for the coveted post, are also in the race for the V-C position. This has resulted in a conflict of interest since the applicants cannot be part of the selection committee. The department

is facing another peculiar situation. According to sources, except for one present V-C, nine other incumbent V-Cs applied seeking another term.

Favouritism
 These are the same V-Cs under whose chairmanship universities ECs nominated the eligible candidates to the search panel. The department officials are apprehensive that it may lead to favouritism. Apart from incumbent V-Cs, the Telangana State Council of Higher Education officials have also thrown their hat in the ring. (SEE PAGE 2)

Lorry driver runs over 3, dies in mishap later

STATE BUREAU
 Sangareddy

Minutes after three youngsters died after a lorry rammed their car, the lorry driver died in another accident at Kaidhampally village on Tuesday.

Six youngsters from Jogipet town had left their homes to have tea from a roadside dhaba at Masanpally village in Andole mandal at around 12.30 am on Tuesday. When they stopped their car to attend nature's call near Masanpally, the lorry ran over three of them who were standing on the road and also hit the car. (SEE PAGE 2)