

In a nutshell

China, Iran, Russia hold naval drills

TEHRAN: China, Iran and Russia conducted joint naval drills Tuesday in the Middle East, offering a show of force in a region still uneasy over Tehran's rapidly expanding nuclear programme and as Yemen's Houthis rebels threaten new attacks on ships. The joint drills, took place in the Gulf of Oman near Strait of Hormuz.

Airtel, SpaceX join hands for satcom

NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with Elon Musk-led SpaceX to offer the US-based company's high-speed internet services under Starlink to its customers in India. It assumes significance as Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel was at loggerheads with Starlink over issues related to licence fee. (REPORT PAGE 8)

China deploys robot dogs

BEIJING: China has deployed its robot dogs and autonomous patrol vehicles in the tech area of Beijing for public security, showcasing its advances made in Artificial Intelligence tools. The Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area has deployed unmanned vehicles and robotic patrol dogs to boost urban security.

Ramzan Timings

Iftar Wednesday 6:31 PM
 Saher Thursday 5:04 AM

BRS to take Cong Govt to cleaners

Budget session from today; KCR asks party MLAs to corner Govt on unfulfilled promises



BRS president and leader of opposition K Chandrashekhara Rao addressing the BRS legislature party meeting at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

With the Telangana Assembly budget session set to begin on Wednesday, BRS president and Leader of Opposition K Chandrashekhara Rao on Tuesday directed party legislators to go for a no holds barred attack on the Congress government, holding it accountable for its unfulfilled poll promises, including the much-touted six guarantees.

Stating that the Congress was given 15 months to get its act right, he pointed out the growing discontent among all sections of the

public and asked the MLAs to question the ruling party on the worsening conditions across the State.

During a three-hour marathon meeting of the BRS Legislature Party held at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday, Chandrashekhara Rao outlined a hard-hitting strategy to take on the Congress, focusing on farmer distress, power shortages, irrigation failures and unfulfilled welfare schemes that had left every section of the public upset. He wanted the party legislators to corner the government on the drying up of crops, burning of motors, lack of irrigation

water, drinking water shortage and the poor conditions in Gurukul schools and public services as well.

Significantly, Chandrashekhara Rao is set to return to the Assembly after nearly a year, a move seen as a direct challenge to the Congress government. He asked the party legislators to push for discussions in both the Assembly and the Council on BC reservations, SC classification, and issues like pending DA arrears and PRC implementation for the State government employees, and the stalled Dalit Bandhu disbursals and overseas scholarships. (SEE PAGE 2)

BRS poll prospects soar

It may get 87 seats in the event of fresh polls, says survey

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has shown a remarkable improvement in its prospects, with a potential to win up to 87 seats in the event of fresh Assembly elections in the State. This represents a significant 123 percent increase from its previous tally of 39 seats in 2023, according to the findings of a recent survey held by a reputed agency.

The survey, carried out in the third and fourth weeks of February, covered all 119 assembly constituencies, with 3,213 contacts made at the rate of 27 per constituency. Four observers, each en-

trusted with one of the four zones - GHMC, Hyderabad suburbs, North Telangana and South Telangana - monitored the exercise.

According to the findings, the Congress party may retain only 14 to 21 seats in fresh polls, compared to the 64 it won in 2023.

The Congress, which had won a lone assembly seat out of 25 seats in the GHMC limits in 2023, is certain to draw a blank if elections were held now. In North Telangana, the Congress had won 33 of the 51 seats in 2023, but may have to contend with only 7 to 9 seats in fresh elections. In South Telangana, the Congress party had won 30 of the 43 seats in 2023, but

the tally may come down to 7 to 17 seats now. In contrast, the BRS's tally would go up to 73 to 87 seats, with the breakdown being 17 in GHMC limits, 28 to 38 in North Telangana, and 28 to 32 in South Telangana.

This significant improvement in electoral prospects highlights the growing support for the BRS among the people of Telangana, who are increasingly coming out onto the streets in protest against the failures of the Congress government.

The BJP, who had won eight seats in 2023, may register a marginal gain by standing a chance to win seven to 11 seats. Other parties which had won eight

seats in 2023, including the AIMIM, would be able to retain 6 to 7 of them.

During the one-and-a-half-year rule of Revanth Reddy, almost every section of society felt let down. It gave the impression that the previous BRS government was far better compared to the present Congress administration.

As a result of this, the BRS is gaining ground at the grassroots level. On the other hand, the BJP, after the Lok Sabha polls, has started losing its base, with State leaders still campaigning for votes in the name of Narendra Modi, giving rise to the feeling that the party faces a leadership deficit. (SEE PAGE 2)

Cop dies in elevator mishap

STATE BUREAU
 Rajanna-Sircilla

Telangana Special Police 17th battalion in-charge commandant Thota Gangaram (55) died after he accidentally fell into an elevator shaft in Sircilla town on Monday.

According to the police, Gangaram had visited his batch mate and Sircilla DSP Chandrashekhara Reddy on Monday night at the latter's residence near the new bus stand. While returning, he pressed the button of the elevator on the third floor to come down to the ground floor. (SEE PAGE 2)

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

As Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka prepares to present his second full-fledged budget, political tensions within the Telangana Congress are reaching a boiling point.

The State finances, particularly the controversial handling of bills, have put the government, especially the Finance Department, under intense scrutiny.

It was just at this juncture when over 200 contractors, who implemented civil works costing between Rs.1 crore to Rs.10 crore, staged a protest in front of the chamber of Bhatti Vikramarka

four days ago. They made a hue and cry in the Secretariat corridors demanding clearance of their bills pending for over a year. The allegations that 20 percent commission was being insisted for clearing the pending bills, has caused considerable embarrassment for the Delhi leadership of the Congress party.

The party high command is taking the situation very seriously as it is worried about the Revanth Reddy regime being branded as a "20% commission government". It has already called for feedback from its dedicated channels. This incident is likely to be treated with utmost seriousness as it

had drawn the ire of Rahul Gandhi, who is said to be deeply upset over the episode.

The bills of big contractors were being handled with priority, while those with outstanding of up to Rs.10 crore were given no importance. Though some Ministers viewed the incident as a mere security lapse, the contractors had accused not only Bhatti but also the finance secretary of selective payments. The slogan of "20% commission government" gained traction not only in Telangana but also in Delhi, with opposition parties mounting attacks.

(SEE PAGE 2)

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