

IN BRIEF



Don't know when I'll quit Cong.: Ramesh Jarkiholi

BELAGAVI
Former Karnataka Minister and Congress MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi — who has distanced himself from the Congress for months now — has hinted that it was a matter of time before he officially quit the party. "I am officially in the Congress now. But I don't know when I will quit," he told mediapersons near a polling booth in Gokak on Tuesday. He has been upset over the alleged interference of Minister D.K. Shivakumar in Belagavi Congress affairs.

Three more held in Kerala bus assault case

KOCHI
The Maradu police on Tuesday arrested three more persons in connection with the alleged assault of passengers of contract carriage operator Suresh Kallada, taking the total number of arrested in the case to seven. The arrested were identified as Giralal, 37, of Kollam, Vishnu, 27, of Alappuzha, and Kumar, 55, of Coimbatore. Besides, notice has been issued under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to Suresh Kallada, owner of the contract carriage operating company, to appear before the investigating officer.

One arrested in TTD temple crowns theft case

TIRUPATI
The Tirupati Urban police have solved the case pertaining to the theft of three small crowns from a sub-shrine in Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple managed by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), nearly three months after the incident. Accused Akash Prathap Sarodi, 25, hailing from Nanded in Maharashtra, was arrested on Renigunta Road here on Tuesday.

'Myths being spread about Inter results'

Telangana Education Minister says panel will submit report on the issue in a couple of days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SURYAPET/HYDERABAD

Telangana Education Minister G. Jagadish Reddy said here on Tuesday that myths are being circulated about the Intermediate results announced by the Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) last week.

Responding to queries on the goof-ups by the BIE, Mr. Reddy assured both parents and students that a committee headed by Managing Director of Telangana State Technology Services Limited G.T. Venkateswar Rao was looking into the issue and would submit its report in a couple of days.

"There are more myths than mistakes in the results. We are looking into who created them as well as whether the errors are technical or human," he said.

The Minister blamed Opposition leaders for "heightening the tension among



Burning issue: ABVP activists burning the effigy of Telangana government in Nalgonda on Tuesday. •SINGAM VENKATARAMANA

students and parents".

"Political parties are behaving irresponsibly to gain political mileage. The aggrieved students and parents should understand this," he said.

Students who were sure about their performance could apply for re-evaluation and recounting, he suggested.

Meanwhile, the BJP's Te-

langana unit has demanded a probe by a sitting High Court judge into the imbroglio and called for punishment of the guilty.

One-time waiver
Party president K. Laxman on Tuesday also called upon the government to give a one-time fee waiver for requests for recounting, reevaluation and copies of answer

16 have ended their life, show some concern: HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday directed the government to state by Monday as to how many days the Board of Intermediate Education would need to re-evaluate the answer sheets of three

lakh students. Hearing a PIL petition, it said, "We are dealing with the students of Telangana State and not of Uganda or Kenya... 16 young students have ended their lives due to the errors by the board... Please show some concern towards the students."

He said a special cell should be constituted to address the grievances of students and effect redressal on a war-footing.

Accusing the BIE officials of trying to "play-down" the magnitude of failures, and pin the blame on a "few evaluators", Mr. Laxman objected to what he termed as attempts to "intimidate agitating parents and stu-

dents". The government should issue an unconditional apology for "traumatising scores of families", he said.

The BJP president termed the Intermediate exam scam as one of the biggest in the newly formed Telangana State and wondered why Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao was maintaining silence over the issue.

Telangana youth drowns in U.S.

The MBA student had gone on a picnic with his friends

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD

A youngster from the coal mine town of Bellampally in Telangana's Mancherial district, Reddy Shravan Kumar, 27, accidentally drowned in the sea at Destin beach in Florida, U.S., on Sunday.

He was studying MBA and based at Richmond. Mr. Kumar had flown down to Houston to catch up with his friends the previous day before proceeding to Destin beach for a picnic on Sunday.

According to his elder brother Kranthi, who is in Hyderabad coordinating efforts with the Telugu Association of North America



Reddy Shravan Kumar

(TANA) to bring back the dead body, Mr. Kumar had gone missing while swimming in the beach around 5.30 p.m. His friends apparently notified the local security personnel and subsequently the body was fished out.

"TANA has mailed some

forms related to process of bringing back the body. The medical examination and police clearance for shifting the body will start shortly," Mr. Kranthi told *The Hindu* over phone on Tuesday evening.

"The TANA is looking after the process of shifting the dead body. The timing will be known once the procedures as per U.S. laws are completed," he added.

Mr. Kumar was the fourth son of a retired coal miner Reddy Rajam and Malathi of Ashoknagar Colony in Bellampally.

He had gone to the U.S. in December 2014 for pursuing higher studies.

Flight stranded after man raises false alarm

Passenger mistook guitar case for gun

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

More than 170 people on a carrier bound for Singapore were stranded at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) here for over 14 hours on Tuesday after a security alert — that later proved to be false — was raised by a passenger.

Just as the Bengaluru-Singapore Flight TR573 of Scoot Airlines was approaching the runway and ready to take off at 1.20 a.m., a passenger raised an alarm mistaking a bag for a 'gun-like article', said a source. As per protocol, the

crew aborted the flight and alerted airport security.

The Bangalore International Airport Ltd., the operator of the KIA, in a statement said standard security protocol and procedures were followed and no suspicious items were found. "A passenger was de-boarded from the flight by the CISF. The remaining passengers and baggage were also de-boarded and re-screened for security and immigration clearance," said BIAL.

A police officer said, "We received information that the passenger mistook a guitar case for a gun."



Age no bar: A senior citizen being taken to the polling station at a school near Pathanamthitta on Tuesday. •LEJU KAMAL

Kerala witnesses robust polling

Voting goes on beyond 6 p.m. deadline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Voters turned out in overwhelming numbers in Kerala on Tuesday to exercise their franchise in the Lok Sabha election.

Chief Electoral Officer, Kerala, Teeka Ram Meena tentatively pegged the polling percentage at 76.82 (at 8 p.m.) even as voters remained lined up in front of booths across the State well after the 6 p.m. deadline.

The robust polling underscored the high level of enthusiasm for a pivotal national election.

Voting was peaceful in the State but not incident-free. The Congress accused CPI(M) workers of attempting to assault its high-profile candidates K. Sudhakaran and K. Muraleedharan in Kannur and Vadakara respectively. The UDF questioned the police's decision to book a voter on the charge of spreading false information on the integrity of the EVM at his polling booth in Thiruvananthapuram.

Congress workers in Sooranadu in Kollam accused a paramilitary officer of assaulting them. Minor glitches in EVMs impeded polling temporarily in a few places. Mr. Meena quashed the

Record turnout in Karnataka

STAFF REPORTER BENGALURU

The final phase of polling for the 17th Lok Sabha election in Karnataka came to an end with 14 constituencies, mostly in North Karnataka, logging a turnout of 67.72 % on Tuesday. This takes the overall polling in the State to a little over 68.25%, which is one percentage point more than in 2014, and is the highest polling in the State since reorganisation in 1956.

In all, 237 candidates are in the fray. The BJP fielded 14 candidates, the Congress 12, while its coalition partner JD(S) two.

rumour that an EVM in Thiruvananthapuram was rigged in favour of the BJP.

At least four senior citizens, including two women, died after collapsing near polling stations. Two officers were hospitalised due to heat exhaustion. Election officials found a snake in the packing of a VVPAT machine in a booth in Kannur.

Cong. leader seeks action against MLAs who defected to TRS

Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka submits a memorandum to Speaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KAMAREDDY

Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has urged Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy to initiate action against party MLAs who defected to Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS).

After submitting a memorandum to Mr. Srinivas Reddy seeking disqualification of the defected MLAs on Tuesday, he told reporters at the residence of the former that a complaint was already lodged against six out of 10 MLAs. Notice has now been served to disqualify Haripriya Nayak, Kandala Uppender Reddy, Jajala Surender and Chirumarthi Lingaiah, he said.

He said that the K. Chandrababhan Rao government was "murdering democracy" by encouraging MLAs to defect to the party. The TRS



Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka

was purchasing MLAs offering money and inducements, he said, adding that the defected MLAs deserved to be disqualified. To corroborate his argument, he said he submitted a copy of 10th Schedule dealing with defections and affidavits to the Speaker.

Mr. Vikramarka wanted to know as to how a national party could be merged with a regional party and found fault with those who joined the TRS claiming that the CLP would be merged with

TRS. "Merger is a big affair. Earlier when Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) merged with Congress all resolutions passed from village committees to party president were sent to Election Commission of India. Then only the merger came into effect," he recalled.

Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir said that when the notice for disqualification of defected Congress MLAs was being given the Speaker did not allow to take pictures. However, he permitted a press conference on the issue at his residence, he said.

Mr. Shabbir said that defections were being encouraged with inducements and gifts. Merger of a national party with a regional party will not be possible, he added. Former Whip E. Anil was also in the Congress delegation.

Untimely fall



Mangoes which fell during the heavy wind and rain witnessed on Sunday night in Telangana's Sangareddy •MOHD. ARIF

Olive Ridley hatchlings make their way into sea

Nature lovers join hands with forest personnel in releasing the tiny turtles

K.N. MURALI SANKAR KAKINADA

As a cool breeze swept the beach near Uppada Kothapalli, Olive Ridley hatchlings began their new journey into the Bay of Bengal on Tuesday.

One of the six in situ conservation centres for the endangered species arranged by the district forest officials abutting the shore turned into a hub of activity, with a battery of officials and nature lovers turning up for the evening. Black and measuring just a few inches, the hatchlings made their way into the gushing waters after their release into the beach.

Personnel from the Forest Department brought hundreds of little ones in special trays and handed them over to the officials for the re-



New beginning: Olive Ridley hatchlings on their new journey from the Moolapeta beach near Kakinada.

lease. Having their origin in the Pacific and Indian oceans, the Olive Ridley turtles come to the shores of the Bay of Bengal only to lay their eggs between December and April every year. Though Gahirmatha in Odisha is the preferred location for their nesting, many tur-

tles stop by in the intermediate beaches, lay their eggs and return to their source location.

Each female digs a sand-pit, lays 90 to 120 eggs and promptly closes the pit before leaving the shore. The turtles do not protect the eggs from predators such as

dogs and jackals. This makes the role of the Forest Department important, and it has been taking care of the conservation part.

Conservation locations

"We have arranged six in situ conservation locations in the district, from where about 1.75 lakh hatchlings are expected to be released into the Bay of Bengal," said Kartikeya Misra, District Collector.

"The Olive Ridley turtles come here by Christmas every year. Owing to the cyclone Phethai, there has been a three-week delay this year and the nesting began only after Pongal," said Anant Shankar, while observing that the releases would be continued in May too.

A 'resort' for endangered fishes

Raja Varma collects rare species from across the globe

K.SRINIVASA RAO VIZIANAGARAM

At a time when the population of many fish species is dwindling, sending them to endangered lists, a businessman here has launched an effort to protect them.

I.A. Raja Varma, Managing Director of Sun Ray Resorts, travels to different corners of the world to procure many endangered fish species and provides them a safe haven in his resort located near Bhogapuram of Vizianagaram district. He has set up a massive pond where the endangered species thrive under the supervision of experts.

"As many as 455 fish species are on the critically endangered list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. En-



The fish pond at Sun Ray Resorts at Bhogapuram.

vironmentalists fear that 87 more varieties may go extinct in no time. Given the overexploitation of fish resources in freshwater and the sea, many varieties may not be seen by future generations. I am contributing to the preservation of various species in my own little way," Mr. Raja Varma says.

The fish pond at Sun Ray

Resorts looks like a safe aquarium where fish species from various countries thrive. Topping the list is alligator gar, a native of the Mississippi river of North America with a life span of around 26 years. It grows up to 148 kg.

Exotics find a home

Stingray, an endangered species, known for its electrical sensors has eyes on its dorsal side. Doctors of ancient Greece reportedly used its barb venom for anaesthesia.

The Amazon basin's biggest fish, Arapaima, also finds a place here. It can grow up to 9 feet and 200 kg, with a life span of 20 years. 'Archer Fish', usually found in Papua New Guinea off Northern Australia, is another resident.

NGT order hits availability of sand in A.P.

G.V.R. SUBBA RAO VIJAYAWADA

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) slapped an interim penalty of ₹100 crore on the Andhra Pradesh government for illegal sand mining in the first week of this month. Subsequently, the mining reaches that are in the vicinity of Vijayawada and Guntur have been closed, severely impacting the construction industry.

A truckload of sand that used to cost ₹4,000 just before the NGT pronounced its order now costs over ₹15,000, and sometimes it is not available even if the buyer is willing to pay more. The officials are clueless when the sand reaches would be reopened.

Capital Region Builders Association Chairman Gadde Rajling says that work has come to a grinding halt for various reasons, primarily due to non-availability of sand. The city requires 750 to 1,000 lorries of sand every day if the number of ongoing projects were to be considered. The government hasn't acted in the "desired manner" after the NGT imposed the fine. The sand reaches were closed in the State with no alternative mechanism in place.

Lone exception

When contacted, Mines and Geology Joint Director V. Koteswara Raju said the sand reaches that had environmental clearances were open.

There are about 70 sand reaches across the State which have environmental clearances. The NGT order was "primarily about destitution" caused by sand reaches. Following the NGT order, three reaches in Vijayawada and five in Guntur were closed. Some of the reaches in inland areas such as Nandigama were functioning, he said.