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**NEARBY**



**IMD forecasts normal rain next month**

HYDERABAD  
 Summer like sultry conditions in twin cities and elsewhere across Telangana are likely to relent this weekend with some rain forecast in 50-60% of area. However, the dry spell will again continue after that. August is giving a glimmer of hope with "normal" monsoon rain, said India Meteorological Department, Hyderabad, Director Y.K. Reddy.  
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**Kaleshwaram brings back water in Godavari**

HYDERABAD  
 The river course of Godavari between Yellampally and Kaleshwaram in Peddapalli and Jayashankar-Bhupalapalli districts, which is most often seen dry even during the monsoon season when there is no flood, has become rejuvenated now with the storage of water in Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages of the Kaleshwaram project.  
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## Three rebel Congress MLAs disqualified

Barred from participating during term of current Assembly

**Acting tough**

Two days after the JD(S)-Congress coalition government in Karnataka lost the vote of confidence, Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar disqualified three MLAs

**DISQUALIFIED CONGRESS MLAS**



R. Shankar (Ranebennur), Ramesh Jarkiholi (Gokak), Mahesh Kumathalli (Athani)

The three disqualified MLAs will not be able to contest bypolls to re-enter the House in its present term

If MLAs change their mind according to their whims and fancies, shouldn't the voter who has elected them have a say? I am setting a precedent here

K.R. RAMESH KUMAR, SPEAKER

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 BENGALURU

Two days after the Janata Dal (Secular)-Congress government lost the trust vote, Karnataka Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar disqualified three rebel legislators with immediate effect till the end of the 15th Vidhana Sabha.

Speaking at a press conference late on Thursday, Mr. Ramesh Kumar promised to take a decision on the resignation of the 13 other rebel legislators "in the next couple of days". He added, "I know this matter will go to court."

The Speaker disqualified Congress legislators Ramesh L. Jarkiholi and Mahesh Kumathalli, representing the Gokak and Athani constituencies in Belagavi district, and KPJP legislator R. Shankar, representing Ranebennur in Haveri district, under the Tenth Schedule of the

Constitution. Mr. Shankar had merged his party with the Congress just last month.

The disqualification of the three MLAs, which is open to judicial review, brings down the strength of the Assembly to 222, including the nominated member.

The Speaker's decision adds a new dimension to the already fluid situation. While the Congress-JD(S) coalition has already been voted out, the BJP is yet to stake claim to form the next government.

"They have been disqualified with immediate effect and till the expiry of the legislative Assembly (2023 or otherwise, if dissolved early). They cannot enter the 15th legislative Assembly again," the Speaker said.

The disqualification was initiated against them under paragraphs of 2 (1) (a) of the Tenth Schedule, read with

Article 191(2), he added.

**On party's complaint**

While the disqualification proceedings against Mr. Jarkiholi and Mr. Kumathalli have been initiated based on the Congress's petition against them on February 11, the proceedings against Mr. Shankar are based on the party's complaint on July 7. Over the last two days, after the collapse of the 14-month-old H.D. Kumaraswamy-led government, all eyes were on the Speaker's decision on the resignation of the rebel legislators and the disqualification proceedings initiated against them.

Mr. Ramesh Kumar said: "I will be taking a decision on the resignations of [the 13 other] rebel MLAs in a couple of days."

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**'REBELS ON THEIR TOES TO BECOME MINISTERS'** ▶ PAGE 6

## RTI Amendment Bill passed in Rajya Sabha amid protests

BJD, TRS back it; Opposition loses bid for select panel scrutiny

**SOBHANA K. NAIR**  
 NEW DELHI

The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday amid high drama. The Opposition staged a walk-out during the vote on its motion to send the legislation for scrutiny by a Select Committee, accusing the government of trying to sabotage the vote.

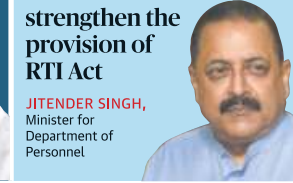
The Bill, cleared by the Lok Sabha on Monday, seeks to bring in changes involving the salaries and tenures of Information Commissioners in the States and at the Centre.

The Opposition motion was defeated 75 to 117 in favour of the government. This is a rare occasion in the Rajya Sabha that an Opposition motion was defeated. The

What happened is the ultimate insult to the dignity of the Rajya Sabha. The government has acted with blatant disregard of the traditions... They may have managed the number, but it is a moral defeat  
**ANAND SHARMA**, Deputy Leader of Opposition



The amendment was brought without any motivation, and in good faith. It will lead to institutionalisation of the Information Commission and will strengthen the provision of RTI Act  
**JITENDER SINGH**, Minister for Department of Personnel



BJP-led NDA is slowly inching towards a majority in the Upper House.

**Procedure violated**  
 The ruckus began when CPI (M) member Elamaram Kareem accused BJP MP C.M. Ramesh of collecting the ballot papers from other mem-

bers, instead of allowing the marshals to do so. Mr. Ramesh had recently switched to the BJP from the TDP.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Kareem said he first heard Mr. Ramesh instructing TDP MP Thota Seetarama Lakshmi, who sits next to him, on how to vote.

"Once the ballot papers were distributed, Mr. Ramesh came down to collect her ballot. He also had other ballot papers with him. It is not a member's job to collect the ballot papers - it is for the marshals to do so. That is when I protested and drew the attention of the House to what was blatantly wrong," Mr. Kareem said.

The other Opposition members informed Deputy Chairman Harivansh, who was in the chair, of the wrongdoing and demanded a re-poll. The Chair, however, did not respond to the allegations. At this, Opposition members stormed into the well, raising slogans.

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## Nalini released on parole for daughter's wedding

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 VELLORE

S. Nalini, 52, one of the seven life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, was released on a month's parole on Thursday to make arrangements for her London-based daughter's wedding. Amid tight security, Nalini stepped out of the women's prison at Thorapadi in Vellore at 10 a.m., and was escorted to a police vehicle. She reached Pulavar Na-

gar at Rangapuram, Vellore, where she will stay for the period of her leave in a house belonging to a functionary of the Dravida Iyakkam Tamizhar Peravai. The arrangements for her stay were finalised a fortnight ago.

Escorted by women police personnel, Nalini reached the house in Pulavar Nagar and was welcomed by her mother Padma with a traditional *arati*.

The Madras High Court on July 5 granted her 30 days parole after she argued her case in person. Since her arrest in May 1991, Nalini has come out on parole only twice - both confined to under a day's visit - once to attend her brother's wedding and subsequently after her father died.

Prison authorities have imposed 12 conditions during her parole period. Her advocate P. Pugalen-

thi said the conditions included, "No meetings with political leaders, no interviews to the media, no participation in public functions, signing of the register at the Sathuvachari police station and maintaining good conduct throughout the period."

He added that the arrangements for her daughter's wedding were being expedited. The daughter is expected to fly from London after the arrangements are finalised.

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