

CM Revanth to take disciplinary action against Surekha

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HYDERABAD

WITH over a dozen legislators out for Environments and Forest Minister Konda Surekha's scalp, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is likely to mend matters by taking some crucial decisions soon after his return from London on Sunday.

To reiterate his political might in the party, the Chief Minister would pursue an action in consultation with the party's high command. "Removal of Surekha from the Cabinet, her expulsion from the party and reshuffle of the state Cabinet are not ruled out", party leaders said. Revanth Reddy wants to send a strong message to all dissidents in the party by taking some stringent action against those who are damaging the government's reputation openly, sources indicated. Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy and State Planning Board Vice Chairman G Ch-inna Reddy have already raised a banner of revolt in the party on political issues and created friction in the ruling party. The party high command has taken a serious view of the increasing open defiance against the government of late by some leaders.

Leaders said that the Chief Minister will hold a meeting with TPCC president, State Congress in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan and some senior AICC leaders and take disciplinary action against the Minister and the two senior leaders. "The party has taken a serious note of Minister Konda Surekha family's political motives in the comments made against the CM. Action is imminent, but in what form will be decided by only the party high command", leaders said.



No water for farmers even as Nagarjua Sagar brimming

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NAGARJUNASAGAR

WATER levels in the Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir are gradually rising with the inflows reaching the reservoir from the Srisaillam Project through power generation. As of 9 am on Friday, the water level in Nagarjuna Sagar reached 531.70 feet, while the storage stood at 171.4844 TMC.

The reservoir is receiving heavy inflows of 55,278 cusecs. At present, the Nagarjuna Sagar crest gates remain closed, and no water is being released through the main power house or the right and left canals. Only 500 cusecs of water is being released through the SLBC (AMRP), with the total outflow recorded at 500 cusecs.

Meanwhile, confusion continues among farmers in the Nagarjuna Sagar ayacut area over the release of irrigation water.

Despite the heavy inflows into the reservoir, officials have so far not given clarity on when irrigation water will be released to crops in the ayacut area, causing concern among farmers.

Farmers said the Kharif crop season is currently at a crucial stage and warned

Nagurjana water for Hyderabad

IRRIGATION Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday said the Meteorological Department had warned that there might not be adequate rainfall during September and October due to the impact of El Nino. He said the water available in Nagarjuna Sagar may

have to be conserved and used for Hyderabad's drinking water requirements through the coming summer. Therefore, the available water must be used cautiously, giving equal importance to both agricultural and drinking water needs, he clarified.



that any delay in supplying irrigation water could result in crop losses.

They expressed concern that timely water supply is essential to protect their standing crops. With the reservoir storage steadily increasing, farmers have urged the government and irrigation authorities to immediately make a clear an-

nouncement regarding the release of irrigation water to the Nagarjuna Sagar ayacut.

While the rising water level in Nagarjuna Sagar has brought some relief, farmers remain uncertain about when water will reach their fields. They are anxiously awaiting clarity from the authorities on the irrigation water release.

Sowcar Janaki: A cinematic legacy with Rajahmundry roots

DEEKSHITULA
SUBRAHMANYAM
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

THE passing of veteran actress Sowcar Janaki in Chennai on Friday has brought back memories of her close association with Rajamahendravaram, the city where she was born and grew up before embarking on a remarkable journey that made her one of the most respected actresses in South Indian cinema. Janaki died in Chennai at the age of 94 following age-related ailments, bringing the curtain down on a career spanning more than seven decades. She acted in nearly 400 films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam and remained active in cinema and on stage for several generations.

For Rajamahendravaram, her story has a special significance. Born Sankaramanchi Janaki on December 12, 1931, she belonged to a Kannada-speaking Madhwa Brahmin family. Her parents were T Venkoji Rao and Sachi Devi. Janaki was brought up in Rajahmundry, where her early years were shaped by the cultural atmosphere along the banks of the Godavari. They reside in the Papermill officers' colony at that time.

Her father, Venkoji Rao, was



a paper industry specialist. He studied paper manufacturing and chemical engineering in England and later worked in the paper industry.

His professional career brought the family to Rajahmundry, where Janaki spent her formative years.

Her mother, Sachi Devi, hailed from Guwahati in Assam. Though the family had links with different parts of the country, Rajahmundry became an important part of Janaki's early life. According to sources, the family lived in the papermill officers' colony and an old building opposite the Gokavaram bus stand area in the city at that time.

The artistic atmosphere around the family gradually found expression in Janaki. She was drawn to performance from a young age and became associated with radio programmes before entering films. Her younger sister Krishna Kumari too went on to become a celebrated actress, making the family's connection with cinema even more remarkable.

Janaki entered the film industry in 1949, and her breakthrough came with the 1950 Telugu film Shavukaru, directed by LV Prasad.

She played the female lead opposite NT Rama Rao. The success of the film gave her the name by which generations of

film lovers came to know her, Sowcar Janaki.

According to veteran film actor and noted stage musician of Rajamahendravaram, Sripada Jith Mohan Mitra, Janaki's family left Rajamahendravaram for Calcutta in 1948, when she was around 17 years old.

He said that she did not return to Rajamahendravaram later for film shootings or stage performances. He expressed his condolences for her. He praised that her contribution was not confined to cinema. She performed extensively on stage and was associated with radio in her early years. Her career spanned more than seven decades.

Her long career brought several honours, including the Kalaimamani award from the Tamil Nadu Government and the Padma Shri from the Government of India in 2022.

Janaki's death has been mourned across the film industry, but in Rajamahendravaram the memories are especially personal. The city remembers not only a celebrated actress who went on to make her mark across South Indian cinema, but also the young girl who grew up along the banks of the Godavari before her name became part of Indian film history.

New H1B fee move clears White House review

NEW DELHI: A proposal from the Donald Trump administration that could raise or otherwise change fees for petitions for the H1B work programme has cleared a key White House regulatory review, bringing it closer to publication and implementation, reported the US-based outlet, Bloomberg Law. While details of the proposal are not available for public viewing yet, any increase or change in H1B fees could hit Indian professionals hard, who accounted for a majority of all H1B approvals and renewals in 2025. According to the report, the proposal from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), identified

as RIM 1615-AD20 was cleared by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) on Wednesday. This proposal will be published by the DHS publicly in the coming weeks.

The move comes as the Donald Trump Administration continues to overhaul the H1B programme from the ground up, a visa route that is heavily used by highly skilled Indian professionals looking to live and work in the US. The DHS proposal concerns fees associated with H1B visa workers' petitions. But the proposal's precise provisions remain under wraps as the DHS has yet to publish the regulation.

Proposed prog not appropriate to CM's office: MEA

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Responding to a question on Telangana Chief Minister being denied political clearance for his proposed US visit, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said visits by Chief Ministers and other dignitaries are assessed by the ministry before political clearance is accorded. "Let me say that the visits of Chief Ministers, as with other dignitaries, are assessed by the Ministry of External Affairs to accord political clearance.

The programme proposed in such cases should be appropriate to the office held and the purpose of the visit. In this particular case regarding the United States, that was not so, and therefore the clearance was not given," Jaiswal said. He, however, clarified that political clearance had been

granted for Revanth Reddy's visit to the United Kingdom. The MEA's response comes after Revanth Reddy, earlier in the day, claimed that the Centre had denied permission for his proposed visit to the US, forcing the Telangana Rising delegation to cancel the US leg of its tour. According to the Telangana Chief Minister's Office, the state government had sought Central clearance for the Chief Minister's proposed visits to the UK and the US, but permission was granted only for the UK leg. The CMO said the state government was informed about the denial of permission for the US visit after the official delegation had reached the UK. The Chief Minister's Office said Revanth Reddy will now return to Hyderabad from London on August 23 instead of travelling to Boston.

Cops file FIR on pellet gun victim's complaint after Rahul's dharna

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police on Friday registered a first information report (FIR) in the case of 19-year-old Sahil Lochab, who allegedly suffered pellet injuries during the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) protest, hours after Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi staged a sit-in outside the Parliament Street Police Station. However, no individual has been named as an accused in the FIR.

As per the latest information, the police registered the FIR under Sections 118 and 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Section 118 deals with voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt using dangerous weapons or means, while Section 125 concerns acts endangering the life or personal safety of others.



Rahul Gandhi at the Parliament Street Police Station

The drama unfolded in the early hours of Friday when Gandhi and a few Congress leaders accompanied Lochab to the police station after the latter alleged that the Delhi Police had refused to register the FIR. They first went to the Connaught Place Police Station; however,

after being informed that the New Delhi Deputy Commissioner of Police, Sachin Sharma, was at the Parliament Street Police Station, they soon reached the spot.

Visuals show that Gandhi, decked up in his white T-shirt and light-brown pants, walked

into the police station, taking the officials by surprise.

He first pressed the officials to register the complaint; however, as the officials refused, he began his sit-in outside the police station. He also said that he would not end his sit-in until the officials agreed to register Lochab's complaint.

Three pellets were lodged in his (Lochab) eye, and 200 in his body. There are shells near his heart that cannot be touched. Delhi Police say they did not fire pellet guns. Who fired pellet guns if not cops? Police said they had orders from the top not to file an FIR on the complaint of the victim," Rahul told the media. He also showed the metallic pellets recovered from the student's body.

SACK SUREKHA, CHORUS CONG LEGISLATORS

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Some of the legislators also demanded immediate action against Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy and Telangana State Planning Board Vice-Chairman Dr G Chinnna Reddy.

The demand follows recent remarks reportedly made by Susmitha against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy over ticket distribution in the next elections. Following furore within the party, Konda Surekha had appeared before the party disciplinary committee and clarified that she should not be held responsible for her daughter's remarks, considering that the remarks in question represented Susmitha's "personal" views. Reacting to the

issue, Government Whips Beerla Ilaiah, Vemula Veeresham, and Venkat Balmoor, along with MLAs Revuri Prakash Reddy, Balu Naik, Chikkudu Vamsi Krishna, B. Manohar Reddy, G. Madhusudhan Reddy, Nayini Rajender Reddy, Gandra Satyanarayana, K. R. Nagaraju, K. Rajesh Reddy, Veerapalli Shankar, Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, Kunduru Jayaveer Reddy, B. Lakshma Reddy, Vedma Bhoji, Mandula Samel, and MLC Baswaraj Saraiah, strongly criticised Surekha. They said that if she had no connection with her daughter's remarks, she should have publicly condemned them.

Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah said criticism from opposition par-

ties was expected, but criticism of the party leadership from within the Congress was unacceptable. He questioned the criticism directed at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that the Chief Minister had worked hard to bring the Congress to power and had been consistently strengthening the party. Ilaiah demanded that Konda Surekha respond to the remarks made by her daughter and criticised those making allegations against the Chief Minister. Ilaiah said it was unfortunate that "some leaders within the party" were publicly criticising the Chief Minister and stressed the need to maintain discipline and unity within the Congress.

Government Whip Vemula

Veeresham said Konda Surekha should have condemned her daughter's remarks if she was not associated with them. He alleged that Surekha's statements were causing embarrassment to the Congress party and recalled that she had faced criticism earlier over controversial remarks concerning an actress. Veeresham said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had worked hard to bring the Congress to power and alleged that attempts were being made to weaken his leadership. "Action must be taken against anyone who speaks against the Chief Minister," he said, adding that party leaders should raise their grievances on appropriate party platforms rather than making public statements.

PM pitches for India as global space hub

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called for wider use of space technologies to address everyday challenges and urged India's burgeoning private space industry to forge stronger partnerships with other sectors to create new opportunities.

Modi made the remarks during an interaction with the CEOs and founders of 20 space startups at Seva Teerth, where he reviewed the growth and emerging potential of India's private space ecosystem. According to a PMO release, the startups represented diverse areas of the space economy, including rocket and reusable semi-cryogenic launch vehicle development, avionics, satellites, advanced propulsion systems, space and defence intelligence, space-debris management and artificial intelligence-based hyperlocal weather and climate intelligence. The startup leaders briefed the Prime Minister on the rapid progress of the private space industry and their efforts to develop advanced capabilities and technologies within India. They also highlighted the increasing interest from organisations around the world in adopting and leveraging technologies developed by Indian space companies. The CEOs said the government's decision to open the space sector to private participation had generated



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with CEOs and founders of 20 space startups at Seva Teerth in New Delhi on Friday

considerable enthusiasm and created multiple new opportunities for entrepreneurs. They also appreciated the support extended by the government and spoke about growing collaboration within the industry.

Congratulating the entrepreneurs for entering and expanding in a relatively new area, Modi said the confidence demonstrated by private space companies had reinforced the vision behind opening the sector to private participation. The Prime Minister pointed out that several countries either lacked the resources to invest in space or were not inclined to make such investments, arguing that this provided India with a significant opportunity to strengthen its position in the global space industry.

He urged the companies to explore applications beyond their existing areas of work and focus on how space technologies could make people's lives easier. Modi also stressed the importance of closer cooperation between space companies and organisations working in other sectors.

Citing examples, he suggested that companies developing technologies to tackle space debris could collaborate with environmental organisations to expand their applications. Similarly, space technology firms working in agriculture could partner with agricultural universities and government departments to help farmers take better-informed decisions and improve productivity.

NTA clarifies on Rs 200 answer key challenge fee

NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has said that its 'answer key challenge' system is designed to be fair to all students, and rejected concerns about it being expensive. An NTA answer key challenge is an online process where candidates who take an exam (like JEE Main, NEET, or UGC NET) can object to errors in the provisional answer key.

The NTA has been under fire lately over issues ranging from NEET-UG paper leak to errors in the UGC-NET examinations. "On the concern being raised that answer key challenges are 'too expensive': a quick clarification for candidates. The answer key challenge system is designed to be fair to every student, not just the one who challenges," NTA said in a post on X. "One challenge, everyone benefits. If even a single candidate challenges a question, and the subject experts accept the challenge, the revised answer key applies to every candidate who wrote the exam," it said.

The NTA said that fee is charged for challenging an answer to discourage frivolous challenges and it is refunded if the challenge turns out to be right.

Centre denies permission for CM Revanth's US visit

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The Centre informed the state government of the refusal of permission to visit America, after the official delegation had reached the UK. Responding to the Centre's decision, the Chief Minister said: "The only purpose of the visit was to, as part of the New Education Policy of the Centre, bring the world's best institutions to India, to Telangana, to Hyderabad. They would have been an answer to our youth's aspirations to get education, skills, and training from the best Ivy League and top global institutions."

I have always believed we should all think beyond politics and elections when

it comes to nation building and future of the youth, he remarked.

Although visibly shocked by the "political denial" of permission for him to further Telangana Rising and education, and to contribute to Viksit Bharat, Revanth Reddy decided to comply with the Centre's decision and return to India from London, taking a flight back to Hyderabad, instead of proceeding to Boston, USA. The Chief Minister, however, instructed the officials to go ahead with the US trip and conclude all the partnership agreements.

Revanth Reddy will continue, as per the scheduled programme, his visits to and

interactions with Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics, the London Business School, University of London, among others.

He will also be meeting with top sports institutions and skilling leadership in the United Kingdom, and try to formalise partnerships with Telangana.

"My resolve and endeavour to make Hyderabad one of the top global cities, where any common Indian can get education and a certificates from Harvard and Oxford, or an MIT and LBS or LSE, is because while most leaders have wanted to send their children abroad, I want to bring the world's best to India," he observed.