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# MAATE MANIKESHWARI PASSES AWAY AT 87

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@ Kalaburagi

SPiritual leader Maate Manikeshwari (87), who has a huge following in Kalyana Karnataka districts and also in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, passed away at her ashram in Yanagundi village on Saturday night. The last rites will be conducted with state honours.

Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Sharath B told TNSE that a team of officers, including the Assistant Commissioner of Sedam, is camping in Yanagundi to make arrangements for devotees to pay their last respects to the mortal remains of the saint. A committee of the devotees of Maate Manikeshwari will decide on Sunday about the date of the last rites, he said.

A team of doctors, which was constantly monitoring Maate Manikeshwari's health condition at the ashram, informed the district administration about her passing away at 9.30 pm on Saturday and an official an-



Maate Manikeshwari

nouncement was made at 9.45 pm. She had been suffering from age-related health issues for about a year. Hundreds of devotees were seen praying for her good health since Saturday morning and thousands are expected to throng to Yanagundi from Sunday.

Sedam MLA Rajkumar Patil said Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, many senior leaders of BJP and Congress, including

Mallikarjun Kharge, will take part in the last rites.

In-charge Chief Executive Officer of Vijayapura Zilla Panchayat, Govind Reddy, who is an ardent follower of the saint, told Express that she left her house at Mallabad in Sedam taluk at the age of 10 and mediated at Srisailem. She had given up food and water since many decades. There are over 100 ashrams of Maate Manikeshwari in Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Maate Manikeshwari advocated non-violence and vegetarianism to her devotees. She used to live in a cave on the hillock at Yanagundi and would give darshan to her devotees on the day of Shivaratri, and on one or two occasions in a year.

Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol and Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi have condoled the death of the spiritual leader. "When the entire world is celebrating International Women's Day on March 8, it is very sad that we have lost a great soul," Jarkiholi said.