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**REDS GOING GREEN,  
GREEN BACK TO RED**

**Zomato back  
from green to  
red uniform**

Zomato has rolled back its decision to introduce green uniforms that ensures vegetarian food delivery by "pure veg fleet", after the move sparked a backlash. The company said it was done to ensure red uniform delivery partners were not harassed by RWAs. **P8**

**Bastar Reds go  
green, run on  
solar power**

Guns, explosives, cordtex wire ... and solar cells. Solar panels, largely ordered online, are turning up among seizures from Maoists in Bastar. Pressure from forces is forcing Reds to be constantly on the move and therefore rely on solar panels to get power on the go. **P8**

**NEET PG date  
now advanced  
to June 23**

The National Medical Commission (NMC) on Wednesday rescheduled medical entrance NEET PG to June 23. The NEET PG 2024 was to be held on July 7. The result will be out by July 15, while counselling for admission will be held from August 5 to October 15. **TNN**

## Govt in SC: ECs picked as per law enacted by Parl

Admits Shortlist  
Shared Hours  
Before Meeting

Dhananjay.Mahapatra  
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'NONE OF THE PETITIONERS DOUBTED ECs' UNIMPEACHABLE CREDENTIALS'

Centre on CJ's Exclusion From Selection Panel

Independence of EC, or any other organisation, does not arise from and is not attributable to presence of a judicial member in the selection committee. Presence of senior govt functionaries (PM and HM) in selection committee cannot be a ground to automatically assume bias... High constitutional functionaries ought to be presumed to act fairly

► Centre pointed out that none of the petitioners had raised any doubt about the unimpeachable credentials of appointed ECs

in the Lok Sabha.

The Centre challenged the contention of the petitioners for keeping the CJ as part of the panel in line with the SC's 2013 verdict. It said that no one

On Delay In Sharing Shortlist

It is wrong, misleading and malicious to suggest that (Adhir) Chowdhury was given the shortlisted names as an act of premeditation on (part of) two members of the Executive (PM and HM), as all the three members received the list simultaneously

► Centre insisted on sticking to the SC-mandated panel mandated interim selection panel after Parliament enacted an Act.

► Continued on P9

## 50% of BRS electoral bonds bonanza of ₹1.3k cr came in just 4 days in 2 yrs

Nirupa.Vatyam@timesgroup.com

**BOND BROUHAHA**

► BRS is the fourth-largest recipient of electoral bonds

► Of the approx ₹1,322 cr, it got ₹663 cr in 4 days between Oct 2021 & July 2023

► Several firms bought EBs running into crores merely days before the deposits into BRS accounts

2021), as per the latest data released by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Merely days ahead of all these deposits into BRS accounts, several firms including Future Gaming and Hotel Services, Chennai Green Woods Private Limited, Hetero Labs Limited, and DLF Commercial Developers Limited etc., had bought EBs in bulk.

► Continued on P5

Hyderabad: Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan took additional charge as governor of Telangana on Wednesday. Telangana HC Chief Justice Alok Adadhe administered him the oath of office in the presence of CM A Revanth Reddy at Raj Bhavan. Later in the day, he visited the Bhagyalakshmi temple at Charminar and the Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadagirigutta near the city. **P2**

## Can grant bail in PMLA cases if trial delayed: SC

AmitAnand.Choudhary  
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New Delhi: Observing that stringent bail provisions under Prevention of Money Laundering Act cannot take away power of courts to protect right to life and liberty of the accused, Supreme Court on Wednesday said bail can be given for trial delay in money laundering cases as a person cannot be kept in jail indefinitely.

While hearing the public prosecutor and if there are reasonable grounds for believing he is guilty, "could not take away power of courts to grant bail for trial delay".

► Continued on P14

## BJP, TDP alliance plan for T too gains ground

Sribala.Vadlapatla  
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Hyderabad: After BJP formalised an alliance with TDP and Jana Sena in Andhra Pradesh, ► Continued on P2

from Kamma community as the presence of TDP loyalists and Kamma community will help BJP put up a good show in Khammam which is one of its weakest turfs.

**Pak's Gwadar port attacked, 7 ultras & 4 soldiers killed**

Baloch separatists stormed Pakistan's Gwadar Port Authority Complex, part of multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Wednesday, reporters Omer Farooq Khan.

Seven terrorists were shot dead by army and police in the strategic hub that houses offices of three UN organisations, Pakistan govt departments, intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces. "Attackers carried out several explosions," Saeed Ahmed Umran, southwestern Baluchistan province commissioner, said, adding it was followed by continuous firing. Four soldiers were also killed in the terror attack, he said. **P12**

**PM wishes Putin for poll win; also talks to Zelensky**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin again in a phone conversation for his "landslide" victory in the presidential polls, while also speaking to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and reiterating before both the leaders India's consistent position for resolution of the long-drawn Russia-Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. **P7**

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# DANCE of DEMOCRACY



2 BATTLEGROUND TELANGANA

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## WEDNESDAY SEIZURES

In view of the ensuing Lok Sabha elections, police officials have increased vigil at inter-state check posts and state borders



1,450 gelatine sticks & 3,000m fuse wire seized at Nagarjunasagar check post

₹50,000 unaccounted cash seized from a person at Wanaparthy checkpost

₹90,300 unaccounted cash seized from a person travelling from Kurnool bypass at Telangana border

THE TIMES OF INDIA | HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

## Parties Worry About Engaging Cadre Amid IPL & Summer ■ Some Start Campaign, Others Wait For Mid April 58 Summer Days Before Polling To Test Campaign Stamina

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**Hyderabad:** While Telangana heads for Lok Sabha polls on May 13, what is making the contesting candidates and political parties nervous is the 58-day long gap between the actual polling date and the day (March 16) when the election schedule was announced.

Sustaining the campaign tempo, engaging young cadres in the midst of a busy IPL season, torrid summer and catering to the demands of the electorate, especially in rural areas, are some of the big challenges which will test the candidates the most.

### Longest gap in last 3 polls

In fact, this will be the longest gap in the last three general elections held. In 2019, the gap between the general election announcement and the polling date was only 32 days. A 55-day gap ensued in the 2014 polls as Telangana voted on April 30, after the poll schedule was released on March 5.

Aspirants in various parties, especially BJP, are apprehensive that by the time the election day approaches, keeping the cadres in good spirits and engagement with voters will be a huge task.

The gap surpasses even the recent assembly elections, which had a 52-day window between the election date announcement and polling date.

Speaking to **TOI**, a poll strategist, on the condition of anonymity, said: "In the villages, there will be demands from voters seeking sports kits, construction of commu-

### TACKLING THE LONG ROAD TO POLLS

#### CAMPAIGN CHALLENGES

- Meeting demands of electorate, especially in rural areas
- Maintaining morale among

#### VOTER DEMANDS

- Requests for amenities like sports kits and community halls
- Pressure on candidates to fulfil promises in campaign period



#### GAP BETWEEN POLLS AND ANNOUNCEMENT EARLIER

2024 Lok Sabha polls	58-day gap
2023 Assembly polls	52-day gap
2019 Lok Sabha polls	32-day gap
2014 Lok Sabha polls	55-day gap
2009 Lok Sabha polls	44-day gap

#### ORGANISATIONAL EFFORTS

- Parties to plan campaign strategy for high turnout for meetings
- Some parties request to postpone IPL for higher voter participation

#### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Challenges of engaging young voters during busy IPL season
- Previous instances of sports events affecting voter turnout.

## BRS campaign struggles amid legal issues

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**Hyderabad:** The BRS, having announced candidates for 11 out of 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, is yet to launch a full-fledged election campaign, apart from a 'Khadana Bheri' public meeting in Karimnagar on March 12.

The campaign momen-

tum is anticipated to build up in early April. Even the candidates declared by the party have refrained from starting their campaign, citing the challenge of lengthy campaign period and financial constraints.

The arrest of BRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter, Kavitha, in the Delhi excise policy scam has al-

this hot summer will take a toll on everybody."

Telangana BJP is holding a meeting on Saturday to manage the campaign calendar with all the contestants, state office-bearers, senior leaders, and parliament constituency-wise in-charges to discuss the workload. Party sources said several public meetings of top leaders are in the offing and

so slowed down the campaign, with BRS working president KT Rama Rao and Siddipet MLA Harish Rao focused on securing her bail in Delhi.

However, some like B Vipin Kumar, BRS candidate from Karimnagar, have been actively campaigning for the past month, conducting meetings with party workers across the constituency.

The state party unit wants good turnout for all the campaign meetings.

Though the IPL season will be completed much before the last phase of polling is conducted, political leaders and candidates are at their wits' end on how to lure the young voters to exercise their franchise and engage young cadres in the campaign.

Others are focusing on meeting key leaders and organising party worker meetings. KCR, who addressed nearly 100 meetings during the 2023 assembly polls, is expected to hold only one or two meetings in each Lok Sabha constituency. KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao are set to cover every segment in their allotted constituencies.

A similar situation arose in 2014 during the assembly elections (May 7) in AP when the World Cup T20 tournament was held. Little wonder, the TDP-Jana Sena alliance in AP was worried over cricket-loving fans stepping out of their homes and casting their vote in this IPL season and urged the Election Commission to postpone the IPL fixture.

## Managing finances and logistics a big challenge

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**Hyderabad:** Contesting candidates are faced with the big challenge of sustaining their election campaign for nearly two months.

Political parties and aspirants were expecting that the general elections in the state would be held in the first phase, which will be held on April 19, followed by the second phase on April 26.

Inclusion of Telangana in one of these two phases would have spared the candidates from a long campaign and expenditure and other factors involved in it.

But the Election Commission poll schedule saw Telangana going to polls in the fourth phase on May 13.

Those involved in the campaigning for the candidates and aspirants said it will be a challenging task to maintain logistics, finances, among other things, especially moving in the field with the voter everyday until the currents come down on campaigning on May 11.

However, there are some candidates who say it will be an advantage as they get time to visit every village and mandal in the parliamentary constituency. Congress candidate from Mahabubabad (ST reserved) constituency.



- Candidates facing challenge of sustaining election campaign for 58 days
- Parties expected polls in phase 1, but state scheduled for phase 4 on May 13
- Candidates concerned about logistics, finances & voter interaction

"Once you are in politics and nominated to contest the election, you should see this long gap as an opportunity to visit and interact with as many voters as possible. Yes, there will be challenges on financial and other fronts but one has to manage it," he said.

The Congress party is expected to release its second list of candidates soon. The talk in political circles is that the candidates to be nominated from various seats in second and third lists would be spared from the long campaign schedule.

## Radhakrishnan assumes office as T'gana governor

**Guv Associated With RSS Before Joining Politics**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



Telangana governor CP Radhakrishnan along with his wife Sumathi offers prayer at Bhagyalaxmi Mandir at Charminar on Wednesday

Hyderabad: Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan took charge as governor of Telangana on Wednesday.

Chief Justice of Telangana high court, Alok Aradhe, administered the oath of office to the new governor in the presence of chief minister A Revanth Reddy at a ceremony held in Raj Bhavan.

Presiding over the ceremony, chief secretary A Santi Kumari read out the warrant of appointment issued by the President of India. Cabinet ministers and officials were present. Radhakrishnan, who was also appointed as lieutenant governor of Puducherry until arrangements are made, will take charge on Thursday.

After the resignation of Tamilisai Soundararajan, who previously held these positions, Radhakrishnan was given the additional charge of Telangana and Puducherry.

Soon after joining the saffron party, the former governor posted on her social media platform that she was back in service of Tamil Nadu people.

A two-time MP from Cumbatore as a BJP candidate, he was appointed as governor of Jharkhand in 2023. Radhakrishnan was closely

associated with RSS before joining active politics.

Meanwhile, Tamilisai joined the BJP in the presence of Tamil Nadu unit president K Annamalai.

After the resignation of Tamilisai Soundararajan, who previously held these positions, Radhakrishnan was given the additional charge of Telangana and Puducherry.

Soon after joining the saffron party, the former governor posted on her social media platform that she was back in service of Tamil Nadu people.

CPI plans to field candidates on its own if Congress doesn't allocate seat

Won the Kothagudem assembly constituency in 2023 as Congress ally

Parties seek Peddapalli, Nalgonda, Khammam, Bhongir or Warangal seat

Lost deposit in 19 seats contested independently in assembly polls

To contest only Bhongir seat in Telangana, not seeking alliances

Party aims to maintain presence in the Lok Sabha electoral contest

CPI leader told TOI on the sidelines of the two-day state council meeting.

However, CPI might not sever its ties with the ruling Congress. It could be issue-based support. CPI state council meeting would also take a call on this issue on the concluding day of the meeting. On its part, Congress leaders maintained that they had made no promise during

alliance talks with CPI about giving a Lok Sabha seat. "We are committed to the promise of giving two MLC seats. However, the party leadership will take a call on sharing a Lok Sabha seat soon," a senior Congress leader said.

Meanwhile, CPI has announced Mohammed Jahanmir as its candidate for Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency. He is the CPI Bhuvanagiri district secretary.

"We are likely to confine our contest to only Bhongir seat in Telangana. We (CPI) are not going to any party seeking an alliance, but the party leadership will decide if any party invites us for it," CPI state secretary Tammini Veerabrahman said.

Though CPI does not have the strength to win the seat on its own, the state leadership decided to field a candidate to ensure that the left party's presence was there in Lok Sabha electoral contest in the state.

Hyderabad: Alleging that BRS and Congress have an understanding, BJR Medak candidate and former MLA N Raghuendar Rao on Wednesday said that former chief minister K Chandrashekhar Rao is silent even though several pink party leaders are quitting and joining the grand old party.

Addressing a rally in Medak, he said: "Congress and BRS are not finding candidates to contest the elections. BRS lost complete credibility the day it changed its name. There is no difference between Congress and BRS." Expressing confidence that BJP would cross 400 seats in the general elections, he said: "BJP Telangana will win double-digit seats."

BJR candidate for Karimangar and national general secretary Bandi Sanjay accused chief minister A Revanth Reddy of ignoring the plight of farmers, who suffered crop damage due to heavy rains in the past two days in the state. "It is not just BRS, but Congress govt is also cheating farmers in the state," he alleged. TNN

## 'Family politics' rift comes to the fore in T Cong ahead of list

From P1

Sources said one of the senior BRS leaders was also keen on contesting either as a BJP or TDP candidate from Khammam and a section of party leaders was not averse to it. But another section within the BJP was of the view that an alliance with TDP in Telangana may not work in party's favour in Khammam and some key seats.

Discussions are going on, especially after the alliance in AP. For this very reason, candidate for Khammam has been kept pending. The party had earlier asked senior leaders to contest from the constituency but they did not evince interest," said a BJP source.

A few days ago, BRS leader Jalagan Venkat Rao had joined the BJP. Though a potential candidate from Khammam, Venkat Rao is from Velama community and the BJP is keen to give the seat to a Kamma leader. "Party leaders will present their point of view to the leadership during the election committee meeting in the coming days. Naming a TDP candidate as part of the deal is still a long shot," said a source.

## No difference between BRS and Cong: BJP

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Hyderabad: Internal squabbles have come to the fore in the Congress before the release of second list from Telangana for the Lok Sabha polls. On Wednesday, AICC secretary SA Sampath Kumar shot off a letter to the party's parliamentary chairperson Sonia Gandhi alleging 'family politics' in the state and 'suppression of facts' to deny him the Nagarkurnool seat.

An effort has been made to ensure that Mallu Ravi (brother of Bhatti Vikramarka) gets the ticket for Nagarkurnool and Prasad Reddy, brother of minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy is given the Khammam seat," Sampath told TOI, adding if Mallu Ravi seat, Bhati is given Nagarkurnool seat, Bhati may not exert pressure to give Khammam seat to his wife Nandini Vikramarka.

The central election committee of the AIIC is meeting in Delhi on Thursday to finalise candidates. "Though the CEC finalised the names of eight candidates from Telangana as part of the second list on Tuesday itself, it held back due to pressure from other aspirants. The second list may be released after CEC's meeting on Thursday," said a Congress leader.

However, after reports appeared over candidates, some leaders shot off letters to the party high command. Among them, AIIC secretary and an aspirant for Nagarkurnool seat, Sampath Kumar, in his letter to Sonia Gandhi said: "I would like to bring to your notice that facts have been suppressed in the process of selecting candidate for Nagarkurnool seat. I belong to 'Madiga' and the suitable candidate in all aspects, but leaders finalised the name of Mallu Ravi, who has lost four times and who belongs to negligible populated Mala."

"An effort has been made to ensure that Mallu Ravi (brother of Bhatti Vikramarka) gets the ticket for Nagarkurnool and Prasad Reddy, brother of minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy is given the Khammam seat," Sampath told TOI, adding if Mallu Ravi seat, Bhati is given Nagarkurnool seat, Bhati may not exert pressure to give Khammam seat to his wife Nandini Vikramarka.

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## BRS may field Padma Rao in Sec'bad, Danam likely to get Congress ticket

BJP Has Already Picked Kishan As Its Candidate

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Hyderabad: Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency is set to witness a triangular contest in the ensuing elections. Union minister G Kishan Reddy and two sitting MLAs — Danam Nagender (Congress) and T Padma Rao (BRS) — will vie for the honours.

After scouting for a suitable candidate and after several rounds of discussions, the BRS leadership has reportedly decided to field party's Secunderabad MLA Padma Rao from the Lok Sabha seat. The party is likely to go ahead with Danam, a source said.

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## TRIANGULAR CONTEST ON CARDS

### LIKELY CONTENDERS

#### BR'S WAIT AND WATCH

- Party likely to announce Padma Rao's candidature after Cong declares candidate
- BRS initially thought of fielding former minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav

## A Step Towards Better Heart Health

A fitness event led by actor-influencer Mandira Bedi puts the word out about coronary heart diseases and how to combat them



More than 300 people showed up early on a recent morning to participate in a workout session that was led by actor and fitness advocate Mandira Bedi

**E**nough Mandira Bedi is an influencer, when it comes to health matters, the actor and fitness advocate doesn't tell people what to do. "I show them that I'm doing something, and often they follow," she says.

This is particularly true of heart health matters. Mandira is a stickler for testing. "Every six months, I get my complete blood work done, which includes a lipid profile test," she says. "I never miss out on this. I spend a good two hours at the lab, and when my reports come in, I share them with both my general physician and my homoeopath. If there is anything amiss, they suggest steps to rectify it."

Mandira finds it puzzling

that in this day and age, when cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are becoming common among people in their 30s, 40s and 50s, that women don't always take this seriously. "A lot of women think nothing can happen to their hearts, but the fact is that they are as prone to heart diseases as men," she says. "So it's important, for both men and women, to get their lipid profile tests done regularly, to check on their cholesterol levels, especially LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, which is also known as 'bad cholesterol'. High LDL cholesterol can lead to heart attacks and what's worse, it comes with no symptoms. That's why you need to get the right checkups done, to see what's going on inside your body."

**TEST REGULARLY**  
Taking care of your health is not rocket science, Mandira feels. "All you need is exercise and good nutrition, so be mindful of what goes into your body and watch the exercise that you're doing." But that's not enough. "It doesn't matter what age you are, or how fit you must do regular health check-ups, especially the lipid profile test," she says. "Just like women are asked to get mammograms and pap smears done on a regular basis, do your lipid profile frequently. Get your investigations done and live in peace. That's all there is to it."

This was Mandira's message during a recent event held to spread the word about heart health and the dangers of LDL cholesterol. Organised as part of a joint campaign by global pharma major Novartis and the *Times of India* – called Unlocked and Beat Bad Cholesterol – some 300 people showed up at the crack of dawn on a recent Wednesday, to attend a fitness session led by Mandira. As they unrolled their yoga mats and fell enthusiastically in step, Mandira

kept their spirits up with smart encouragements. "Remember," she told the crowd at one point, "abs are not made from crunches. They are made from healthy lunches!" While Mandira Bedi was the crowdpuller, the weightier matters relating to heart health were shared by Iris Zemzoum, President, Novartis Asia Pacific, Zemzoum, providing a global

perspective, says as per data, 18 million patients die every year from cardiovascular events – a fifth of them in India. "What's worse, such cardiovascular events occur among Indians a decade earlier than it happens in the West, and that is something we need to change," she adds.

"As a country with a 1.4 billion population, you cannot afford to have your young workforce suffer from cardiovascular events 10 years earlier than any other nation in the world."

To achieve this requires concerted effort. "The only way you can do something about such cardiovascular events is by partnering [with others]," says Zemzoum. "We at Novartis are trying to reinforce our engagement in cardiovascular treatments and prevention. We have a legacy of many decades – where we have invested, researched and supported many different partners in the healthcare system to drive awareness about the importance of tackling cardiovascular diseases, whether from a prevention or treatment point of view. Prevention is always better than treatment, especially given that in many other diseases we don't have that option."

As Zemzoum elaborates, "We need patients' voices as well as those of other stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem, like medical experts and healthcare professionals, the media to amplify patients' voices, and government officials who are shaping policies to allow earlier and better access to medicines, [and facilitating] better prevention and awareness for patients."

A good start would be if doctors and healthcare professionals, when they see patients, could also make them aware of the need for frequent health check-ups. Perhaps even recommend a lipid profile test, feels Dr BC Kalmath, of Bombay Hospital. As a cardiologist, when patients come to him, they already have (or suspect) a CVD.

"But whenever anyone consults me, the first thing I tell them is to get tested regularly," he says. "People don't quite know this, but a lipid profile test is nothing more than a blood test, where the technician draws hardly 1 or 2 ml of blood. It's that simple." He adds: "People don't realise that ASCVD (atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease) can affect anybody at any age, and at any time. But LDL cholesterol is a modifiable risk factor, in the sense that it is treatable with nutrition, exercise and if

those don't work, medication. In fact, people's awareness about cholesterol is also limited. They don't understand that LDL cholesterol and high triglycerides are dangerous. But high HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is a good thing, and we must aspire to increase that in our body."

health and nutrition at the time. "I even work out with them, to keep them motivated and help them prioritise exercise and good eating habits," he adds.

Prioritising lifestyle management is something Ram Khandelwal learnt the hard way. The founder of one of India's first patient support groups for heart health had a heart attack four years ago, when he was 33.

"In 2017, two years before my heart attack, a lipid profile test showed that I had very high LDL cholesterol," says Khandelwal. "Unfortunately there was not much awareness, at that time, about the fact that this high LDL cholesterol could trigger heart attacks." Khandelwal had consulted a cardiologist who failed to emphasise the serious impact elevated LDL cholesterol levels can have on the heart.

**HELPING HAND**

After his heart attack, Khandelwal and his wife Aditi started looking for resources – one on the awareness side, and another for lifestyle management – but couldn't find any. "That's when we started India's first patient community group on Facebook, and today it has more than 3,500 members," Khandelwal adds. "We bring together patients, their families and caregivers,

Dr Kalmath says he has to undertake angioplasty or bypass surgeries practically every day. "But that's the last thing I should be doing," he says. "Those are options for when everything else has failed, so we should not allow ourselves to get to that point. Reduce your LDL cholesterol with daily exercise, good eating habits and quit smoking."

Testing is not just for the privileged, says top cop Krishna

It doesn't matter what age you are, or how fit, you must do regular check-ups, especially the lipid profile test

– Mandira Bedi



Prakash, who has also participated in the Ironman and Ultraman triathlon competitions. "As senior officers, we have to get full body checks done ever year, and this includes all the investigations for heart health. But it is our people on the ground – the police men and women, who work at high-stress jobs – who need it more, though they don't always realise it," he says. So Prakash says he constantly speaks to his junior staff about cardiac matters and general

healthcare professionals, cardiologists and others to create a community where we can freely and openly talk about heart health; share our concerns; and have candid discussions about what works and what doesn't, in terms of patients and what they really need."

In the long run – and in today's society, where cardiac issues are still taboo to discuss – this is the only effective way forward.

**UNLOCKED** | A MOVEMENT FOR HEART HEALTH



Seen at the event were (from left) Amitabh Dube, Country President for Novartis in India; actor Mandira Bedi; Iris Zemzoum, President, Novartis (APMA); Dr BC Kalmath; cardiologist and Ram Khandelwal, who heads one of the country's first patient advocacy groups for heart health

## Prevention first: How 'lipid clinics' are saving lives

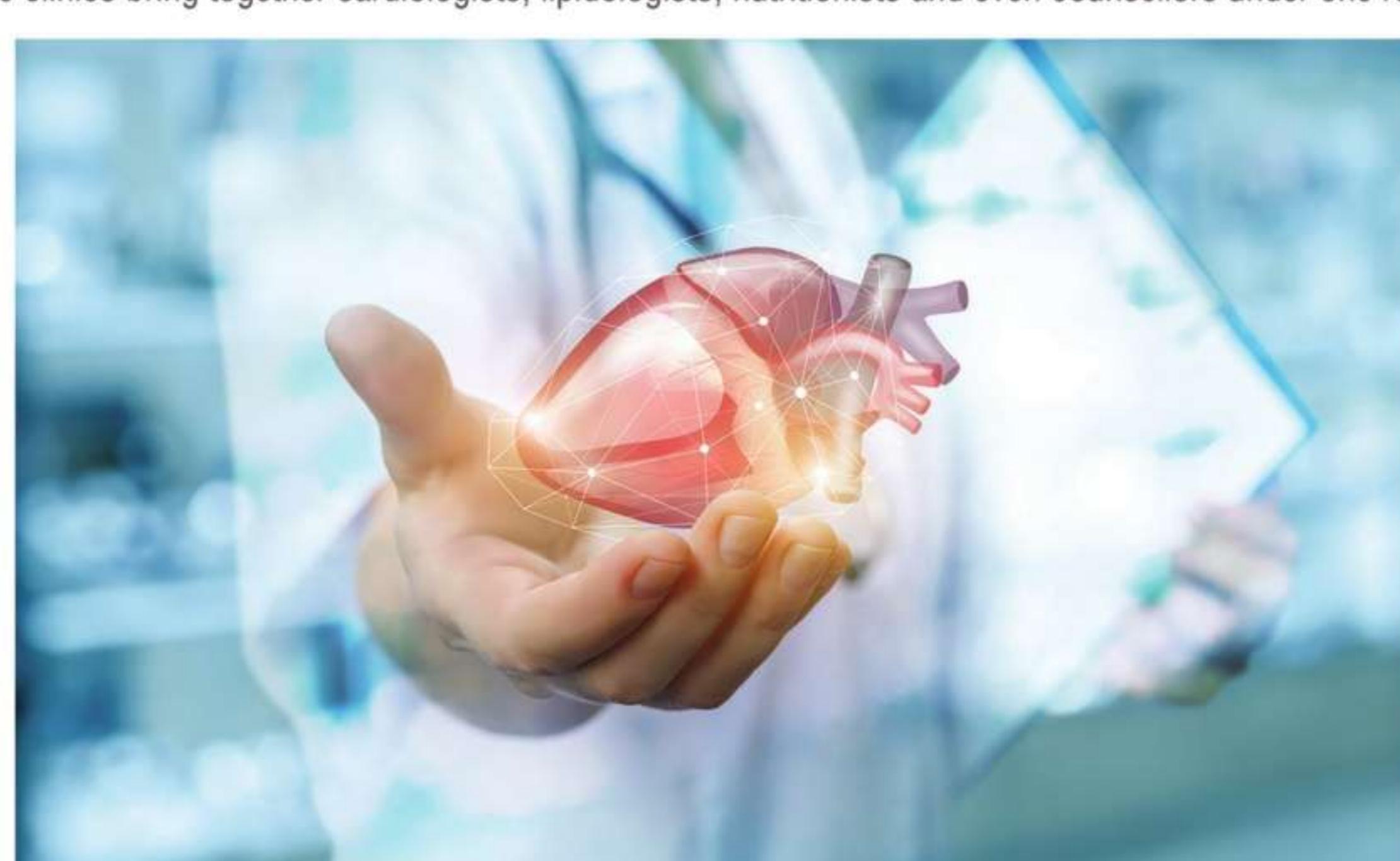
These clinics bring together cardiologists, lipidologists, nutritionists and even counsellors under one roof to create a comprehensive treatment plan for patients

**A** few years ago in Hubli, Karnataka, medical professionals organised a mass blood sugar drive. They tested people on the street, on local transport and even at fairs and gatherings. The random blood sugar (RBS) test required only a finger-prick of blood; and since it was offered for free, most people consented to it.

"Over one lakh people were tested in one day," says Dr Ameet Sattur, Interventional Cardiologist with Suchirayu Hospital in Hubli. "If only we could carry out a mass lipid profile test like this in India, and for free. Many more people would get tested, and that's what we need because there is such little awareness about lipids and their relation to heart health in the country."

### DEADLY ANOMALIES

Lipid abnormalities occur when a person's blood contains excessive LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, also known as 'bad' cholesterol, and low HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, or 'good' cholesterol, and this has emerged as a leading cause for heart attacks and other coronary heart disease



(CHD) in India. But very few people know this, and far fewer are getting themselves regularly tested to check on their LDL cholesterol (LDL-C) levels. High LDL-C levels come with no symptoms and can only be gauged by regular monitoring through lipid profile tests.

You can get specialist help in first understanding the spectrum of lipid disorders, and then in formulating an organised treatment plan

– Dr Ameet Sattur



help in first, understanding the spectrum of lipid disorders, and then in helping you to formulate and follow an organised treatment plan," says Dr Sattur, who runs a lipid clinic in Hubli. "At our centre, we bring together a lipidologist, cardiologist, dietician, pathologist [and even a counsellor, if necessary] to carry out advanced lipid tests and create an all-round treatment plan." Once you have a dedicated clinic, says Dr Sattur, you can create a more comprehensive approach for the patient.

### ROLE OF LIPIDS

The main aim of lipid clinics is, however, primary prevention of cardiovascular diseases. This means creating awareness about what causes heart attacks and strokes, and how lipids play a part in that. And it's not just LDL-C and HDL-C; doctors are also beginning to see more cases of Lipoprotein(a), or LP (a) – another type of LDL that is an established risk factor for atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, stroke and other cardiac issues.

"We know that dyslipidaemia causes cardiovascular diseases, but heart attacks are just one part of that," says Dr Sanjeevkumar R Kalkekar, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai. "A disbalance in lipids can also cause brain strokes, brain attacks, aortic aneurysm, vascular problems in the legs and other complications."

Dyslipidaemia causes heart attacks but also brain strokes, brain attacks, aortic aneurysm, vascular problems in the legs and other complications

– Dr Sanjeevkumar R Kalkekar

Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai

event, is no longer at risk for another one. "If you don't take precautions, there are 50 per cent chances of you having another heart attack in three months, and another after that and so on," says Dr Kalkekar. "Lipid clinics will

come more aware that lipids need to be managed, and in a holistic manner."

Lipid clinics first started showing up in India in 2016-17, but they have been an established entity in the West for more than a decade. The

necessity for such clinics in India has been created by inadequate compliance on the part of patients. "The problem with primary prevention is that if a patient has no symptoms of cardiac problems – and with high LDL-C there are typically no symptoms – it is difficult to convince him to get on the path to better lipid management," adds Dr Sattur. "Most patients want to take care of high LDL-C with better diet, exercise and lifestyle changes rather than medication. That might work for people with five per cent high LDL-C; it won't work with those whose LDL-C levels are at 75 per cent."

Most cardiologists agree primary prevention – not allowing LDL-C to go to danger levels – is far more preferable than secondary prevention, which aims to make sure that a patient, who has already experienced a cardiac

ensure that you have a comprehensive treatment plan in place that you can follow, and you have experts to help you with that."

Dr Kalkekar devotes one day to see patients who have registered for his lipid clinic, and this starts with recording the patient's medical history and a thorough investigation with all the requisite tests. "We also employ a risk calculator that calculates how prone a person is to cardiovascular events in the next 10 years," says Dr Kalkekar.

Rakesh Singh (name changed for anonymity) believes Dr Sattur's lipid clinic saved his life. The 46-year-old real estate promoter has undergone two bypass surgeries for major blocks in his heart. Today, after careful guidance provided by experts in the lipid clinic, he is back on his feet. "He is a changed man," says Dr Sattur.

vention strategies to prevent and manage this important cardiovascular risk factor". Another study on lipid anomalies among adolescents in India tested 35,830 girls and boys aged between 10 and 19 years, and found that about 77 per cent of them were suffering from lipid anomalies. The study, published in 2022 in the National Library of Medicine journal, concluded that "preventing the increasing burden of lipid abnormalities among Indian adolescents is essential... unhealthy dietary habits are significantly associated with high LDL and non-HDL levels. In the longer run, this might cause the early onset of hypertension, diabetes, and CHDs".

Lipid clinics are a structured form of treating dyslipidaemia. "Here, you can get specialist

hypertension, diabetes, and CHDs".

"LDL-C in elevated levels

is the primary cause of heart attacks," says Dr Sattur. "About 25 per cent of my patients

who have already had a heart attack, are less than 40 years of age." According to him, there is a 10-15 per cent presence of dyslipidaemia in the general population, and in the urban areas, this increases to about 25-30 per cent. This alarming fact is making many cardiologists, like Dr Sattur, start 'lipid clinics' as part of their overall practice.

"We know that dyslipidaemia causes cardiovascular diseases, but heart attacks are just one part of that," says Dr Sanjeevkumar R Kalkekar, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai. "A disbalance in lipids can also cause brain strokes, brain attacks, aortic aneurysm, vascular problems in the legs and other complications."

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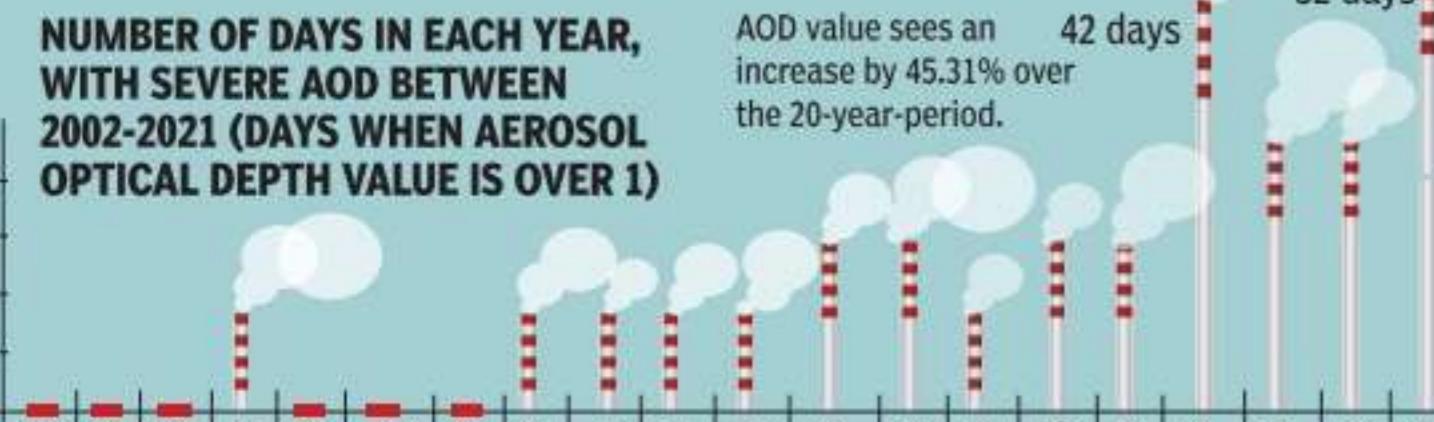
necessity for such clinics in India has been created by inadequate compliance on the part of patients. "The problem with primary prevention is that if a patient has no symptoms of cardiac problems – and with high LDL-C there are typically no symptoms – it is difficult to convince him to get on the path to better lipid management," adds Dr Sattur. "Most patients want to take care of high LDL-C with better diet, exercise and lifestyle changes rather than medication. That might work for people with five per cent high LDL-C; it won't work with those whose LDL-C levels are at 75 per cent."

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already experienced a cardiac

**Research Underscores Pressing Need For More Efforts To Address Air pollution**

# City sees record 45% spike in aerosols in 20 years: Study



## WHAT IS AN AEROSOL?

Aerosols are tiny particles or liquid droplets suspended in the air. They can be natural like volcanic ash or human-made like vehicle emission, industrial pollutant. They play a significant role in Earth's climatic system by scattering and absorbing sunlight and influence cloud formation.

## WHAT IS AEROSOL OPTICAL DEPTH OR AOD?

AOD measures the amount of solar radiation that the atmosphere's aerosols scatter or absorb before reaching the ground. Greater the AOD, the higher concentration of aerosols.

## HOW IS AOD LINKED TO PM2.5 AND PM10?

PM 2.5 AND PM 10 refer to solid particles of sizes less than 2.5 microns and 10 microns. These particles get suspended in the atmosphere along with water vapour and other coarser particles to form aerosols whose concentration is measured with AOD.



## Forest fires major reason behind state's poor air quality

Amisha.Rajani@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** Forest fires are one of the major factors that contribute to poor air quality in Telangana, according to a recent study.

The study, titled 'Trend Analysis of Aerosol Concentrations over Last Two Decades' also shows that there is a significant correlation between forest fires and aerosol optical depth (AOD) that measures how much light is absorbed or scattered by tiny particles (aerosols) in the atmosphere.

According to the study, the AOD and forest fires are connected because when a forest fire occurs, it releases large amounts of smoke, ash, and other particles into the air. These particles can contribute to an increase in AOD levels in the affected area. As the smoke from



the fire rises into the atmosphere, it can spread over large distances. Higher AOD values mean more particles are blocking sunlight from reaching the ground, affecting visibility and air quality, even in areas far from the fire itself.

In fact, environmentalists also attribute forest fire as one of the factors for decreasing air quality of the city. According to the data from Telangana database for fire alerts, over 4256 hectares have been burnt till March, 2024, with 5027 fires alerts being reported.

als over Hyderabad district of India.

As per the data, in 2002, the AOD levels on an average were less than 0.40, which increased to 0.70 in 2021. A further analysis shows that the years when AOD severity was highest were 2018 and 2021 when for 42 days and 52 days respectively the daily AOD was exceeding 1, indicating severe concentration levels.

## 48% rise in AOD during winter

A season wise analysis over 20 years further showed that in during winter, the AOD increased by 48.7% and during autumn, it increased by 46.9%. During summer, the AOD levels went up by 44.6%. The monsoon experience the lower increase over the 20-year period with a rise of only 33.3%.

"In our study, we found AOD to achieve its highest mean value in the summer during some of the years. After thorough investigation it was concluded that forest fires, a prominent sight in the forests of Telangana during summer, could have an upper hand in higher aerosol loading during summer," said the researchers. They further added that this does not rule out the impact of vehicle pollutants as AOD values during other seasons are not much lower than those in summer.

## How AOD is used to estimate solar radiation

"The AOD precisely measures the amount of solar radiation that atmosphere's aerosols scatter or absorb before reaching the ground. These are formed when particulate matter (PM) 2.5 and 10 gets suspended in the atmosphere along with the water vapour and other coarser particles to form aerosols. The concentration of these is estimated using AOD," said the researchers of the study titled 'Trend analysis of aerosols concentrations over the last two decades from MODIS retriev-

## Court reserves its order on Praneeth plea

**Hyderabad:** Justice G Radha Rani of Telangana high court on Wednesday concluded the hearing in the petition filed by suspended intelligence DSP D Praneeth Rao, who was questioning the way the trial court granted his custody to police to question him in an alleged phone tapping case.

Senior counsel G Mohan Rao, who appeared for Praneeth, said: "The complainant in the case is himself coming to question Rao, which is unlawful," he said. He should be questioned only during office hours, he said, urging the court to give such a direction to police. The judge reserved the order. **TNN**

RAMZAN TIMINGS	
Iftar (Thursday)	6.31 pm
Sehri (Friday)	5.03 am

## Chilkur temple head priest gifts bull to Muslim farmer

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



Head priest of Chilkur Balaji temple CS Rangarajan presents the bull to farmer Mohd Ghous (behind him)

temple's goshala and gifted them the bull," the temple's hereditary priest Rangarajan told TOI. "When the country is getting polarised on religious lines, I came forward to help a distressed farmer of the village on hu-

manitarian grounds," he added.

Ghous was overwhelmed with the gesture and said with folded hands that it was the blessing of the almighty that "our family has been rescued".

## City icons to go dark for 'Earth Hour'

**Hyderabad:** Several iconic monuments, including Golconda Fort and Charminar, and other prominent structures in the city will switch off their lights on March 23 between 8:30pm and 9:30pm to observe 'Earth Hour'.

Earth Hour, a global movement aimed at raising awareness about environmental issues and the impact of energy consumption, encourages individuals, organisations, and communities to switch off non-essential lights for an hour as a symbolic gesture of their commitment to the planet and the potential for individual action to effect change. This movement unites people worldwide in demonstrating a collective dedication to combating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and reducing pollution. **TNN**

Initially, police had nabbed Hidayath Ali at Poolbagh and later, based on the information given by him, Mujahed was caught at Balapur. They used

TOI



The fruits and the ripener chemical seized by police on Wednesday

## Chemically ripened fruits worth ₹12L seized, 5 held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** Five fruit vendors were nabbed by sleuths of Task Force on Wednesday while selling artificially ripened fruits to public. Police seized Rs 12 lakhs worth mangoes.

Police said that E Rameshwar from Mangalhat, Irfan Khan from Asif Nagar, Syed Zahoor from Bahadarpura, Syed Mastan from Talab Katta and Syed Aslam from Bhavani Nagar were arrested.

From Rameshwar, police seized 1,300 kgs of mangoes ripened by carbide powder. Police seized 90 sachets of Ethylene used to ripen fruits and 30 sachets of carbide powder from the accused. The mangoes seized from him is worth Rs 4.55 lakh.

A fruit is supposed to be ripened in 3 to 4 days, but the vendors were artificially ripening fruits in a day by using large quantity of chemicals. "The accused used to supply products to fruits and juice shops in Hyderabad. Due to heavy demand for fruits for festival and marriage season, the accused were using artificial ripeners like ethylene and calcium carbide, which is violation of FSSAI guidelines," deputy commissioner of police (Task Force) S Rashmi Perumal said.

forms. The e-commerce platforms that supply groceries hand over expired goods to third party agencies for destroying them. According to sleuths, Saibuddin approached these agencies and procured expired products from them.

Expired food products like pani puri papad, different types of masalas, spices, atta and chocolate mix were seized from his shop. He was handed over to RGI airport police for further investigation.

## Delhi bizman among 2 nabbed with MDMA, wanted in 6 cases

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** Madhapur police on Wednesday arrested two persons, including a businessman from Delhi, who were part of the drug peddling network related to the Radisson Radhik bowli drugs case.

Cops said Syed Abdul Rahaman from Musheerabad and Milansi Narendras Vanitha from Delhi were caught and from the latter police seized 11 grams of MDMA. Police also seized a high-end car that cost more than Rs 1 crore from one of the accused.

The duo was wanted in six



different cases filed in various parts of Hyderabad and Cyberabad.

"We suspect that they used high end cars to gain access to their targeted customers in costly hotels. They used to go to the hotels and pose as customers to identify their prospective clients," police said. The officials said that they are yet to probe the ownership of the high-end car.

## Cops bust international call routing racket, arrest two

### It's Nat'l Security Threat & Loss To DOT, Say Police

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** Two persons who were allegedly carrying out illegal call routing were nabbed by Task Force sleuths on Wednesday.

Police said that based on the information given by department of telecommunication (DoT), searches were done at Santosh Nagar and Balapur.

Hidayath Ali, who is into computer mechanics, were arrested and from them police seized 12 SIM boxes, three routers, six laptops, two hard disks, eight cell phones, 204 BSNL SIM cards, four monitors, 10 power cables and other equipment.

If initially, police had nabbed Hidayath Ali at Poolbagh and later, based on the information given by him, Mujahed was caught at Balapur. They used



The seized routers, laptops, cell phones, SIM cards & other hardware

exchanges. "This will have a national security threat apart from financial loss to the DOT," police said.

"The calls from foreign countries, especially those from Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia were being routed to India using illegal exchanges. The calling line identification (CLI) displayed to Indian citizens will be the mobile numbers of India," a Task Force officer said, explaining the fraud. The SIM cards were bought from West Bengal and it displays Indian numbers.

Such calls from abroad cannot be traced by the security agencies since they do not land on government regulated

## Parsi, Ismaili communities gear up to ring in Navroz

Amisha.Rajani@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** The Parsi and the Shia Ismaili Muslim communities in the city are gearing up for the festivities of 'Navroz.' For the Parsis, it is their New Year celebration, with decorations and prayers at the 'Agriya' (fire temple), followed by community gatherings.

The community, which has been residing in the city for the last 200 years shares the significance of the festival. "The Parsi New Year marks the start of spring season."

**COMMUNITY CONNECT**

bolising renewal. On Navroz, families joyfully visit each other, which signifies letting go of past misunderstandings and embracing fresh starts with stronger bonds," said Roxana Chehna, an architect from the city.

On Navroz, after immersing in prayers in the three Agriya in the city, all the mem-

### CELEBRATING PARSI NEW YEAR



bers gather at the Zoroastrian club for, as they call it, 'Jashn,' to indulge in greetings and food. This event is inclusive and welcomes non-parsis also.

"After our prayers, we dis-

tribute 'Falooda,' which symbolises cooling energy and a sweet start to the year," said Jehangir Bisney, president of the Zoroastrian Club.

Presently, the community in Hyderabad comprises fe-

ther than 1000 members, engaged in occupations such as garments, bakeries, and confectioneries, while the younger generation has shifted towards careers in technology & finance.

With optimism of Navroz, we pray for a future abundant in health, wealth & thriving populace to uphold our traditions

— Shireen Sethna Baria | COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

Shireen Sethna Baria, a community advocate, expressed concern over the declining population, noting a higher proportion of older individuals. "With the optimism of Navroz, we pray for a future abundant in health, wealth, and a thriving populace to uphold our traditions," she added. Likewise, the Shia Ismaili Muslim community is marking Navroz in the city with Garba, prayers, food, and the Haft Seen tradition.

"Haft Seen is a spread of seven natural ingredients symbolising different things. This includes wheatgrass for prosperity, coins for wealth, vinegar for patience, garlic for medicine or recovery, apples for health, dates for sweetness, and eggs for fertility. This is adapted from the Persian tradition," said Shehnaz Khetani, a homemaker from the community.

Sharing the tradition of colouring eggs and decorating the Haft Seen table,

which takes her back to childhood, Khadija Hirani, a marketing strategist, shared that every year they lay the table to carry forward their culture. "We also distribute dry fruits, sweets, and wheat grains among the 'Jamaat' (community) which signifies abundance and shared prosperity," Hirani added.

The community members shared that in the evening of Navroz they get together in 'Jamatkhana,' (place of worship for Ismailis), for prayers and meet, and greet everyone.

"Navroz Mubarak." "This year Navroz has fallen in the month of Ramzan so it makes it even more special and the celebrations will hold twice the joy. I'm looking forward to the family dinner post the special Navroz prayers at Jamatkhana, as the feast will hold the joy of celebrating the new year as well as breaking our fast after a day filled with devotion," added Alizah Noorani, a community volunteer.

## ₹25 cr assets of cop, kin attached in drugs case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** The revenue department under the Union finance ministry has issued orders attaching properties and freezing bank accounts belonging to a constable deputed to the prohibition & excise department Golla Ramesh and his relatives in connection with seizure of 2 kg alprazolam in 2023.

Telangana State Narcotics Bureau along with Shadnagar police of Cyberabad had arrested Ramesh, while his five relatives are on the run.

The attached properties include 22 acres of land, 4 plots located in different parts of Shamshabad, Shadnagar, Chevella and Miyapur. The net market worth of the properties is estimated to be over Rs 25 crore.

TS NAB officials said that the properties registered in the name of the accused persons have been attached and frozen under the provisions of the Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) (SAFEM) Act.

Officials said that the attachment orders were pasted on the properties acquired by the accused by peddling Alprazolam. Golla Ramesh is also accused in another case against him at Gachibowli police station of Cyberabad.

Except Golla Ramesh, all others are on the run.

# In April '22, BRS got highest bond deposits of ₹411 crore

Many Cos Bought Bonds Worth Crores Of Rupees

Nirupa.Vatyam@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** The latest data released by the ECI reveals that the BRS received 50% of electoral bonds on four days between Oct 2021 and July 2023.

BRS which received ₹1,322 crore in electoral bonds (EB), got the highest single-day deposit of ₹268 crore into its account on April 12, 2022.

Many firms like Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Future Gaming, Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited among others had purchased bonds worth crores of rupees.

BRS, which is the fourth largest recipient of EBs, in its reply to ECI on donors said: "Electoral bonds received, deposited, and credited to our party's account from Oct 11, 2018, to Sept 30, 2023, totals ₹1,322 crore. However, detailed particulars of the donors against each bond are not available with us as the electoral bonds scheme procedure has not provided/facilitated for capturing of the details of the donors of the bonds."

BRS received maximum EB deposits of almost ₹411 crore in April 2022. On April 12 that year BRS had encashed 268 bonds each worth ₹1 crore.

A day before that on April 11 and then on April 6 it had received ₹92 crore and ₹50 crore respectively, reveal records.

During the same month, several firms had purchased bonds worth crores of rupees.

## Man gets 20-yr jail for minor's rape

**Hyderabad:** The XII additional metropolitan sessions judge for POCSO cases at Nampally, T Anitha, has sentenced a 24-year-old man to rigorous imprisonment for 20 years and imposed a fine of ₹5,000 in connection with the rape of a seven-year-old girl in Saifabad in 2022. The judge awarded ₹4 lakh compensation to the survivor.

Additional deputy commissioner of police C Venugopal Reddy, investigating officer in the case, said apart from DNA matching, the court also appreciated other evidence gathered during the probe and found the accused, Gali Tarun, guilty of the offence and awarded him the stringent punishment.

DNA extracted from the samples collected from the girl's clothes nailed him in the offence, police said. Her statement before the court and also the statements of eyewitnesses, who saw him running away after raping the girl, resulted in the conviction, they said.

Police said when the girl was playing, Tarun took her with him to a construction site promising to buy chocolates and raped her. Locals tried to catch him, but he escaped from the spot. TNN

## Suicide note nails ex-rail staff for fraud

**Hyderabad:** In a rare instance, suicide note of an unemployed youth, who took his life after he was cheated on the pretext of providing a railway job, has led to the conviction of the accused. E Sathaiah, a retired railway employee, was sentenced to five-year rigorous imprisonment and fined ₹6,000 by the principal sessions court at LB Nagar on Wednesday.

The verdict was based on the suicide note by the 26-year-old victim that revealed Sathaiah's deception over a railway job promise.

The victim from Talo-kondapalli in Rangareddy district, had been duped by Sathaiah into paying ₹3.5 lakh with the hope of securing a railway job. Sathaiah, who worked as a gangman at Nampally, failed to fulfil his promise and also refrained from returning the money, which led to the youth's despair and subsequent suicide at Sarooragna in September 2017.

Public prosecutor A Phani Kumar presented the case in the court with evidence such as the suicide note and testimonies of the panch witnesses. TNN



## Edu institutes bought bonds worth crores

Nirupa.Vatyam@timesgroup.com

<b>BRS' ELECTORAL BOND JACKPOT</b>		
• ₹1,322 crore: Electoral bonds credited to BRS' account (Oct 11, 2018, to Sept 30, 2023)	• BRS got maximum EB deposits of ₹411 crore in April 2022	• BRS encashed 268 bonds each worth ₹1 crore on April 12, 2022
• On April 6 & 11, BRS had received ₹50 crore and ₹92 crore respectively	• July 13, 2023: ₹218 crore flowed into BRS coffers (second-highest single-day collection)	

In fact, two days before ₹50 crore was deposited into BRS' account, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital had purchased 50 bonds worth ₹1 crore each. On April 7, 2022, Future Gaming had purchased bonds worth ₹100 crore, while DLF and Hetero had bought bonds for ₹40 crore each and Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited had bought bonds for ₹25 crore. Chennai Green Woods Private Limited had picked up bonds for ₹50 crore on April 8.

In July 2023 too huge sums flowed into BRS coffers. While it received ₹218 crore on July 13 alone – its second-highest single-day collection – the rest of the month witnessed ₹100 crore being deposit. The same month, Future Games had showed.

BRs got another chunk of ₹85 crore against 85 bonds worth ₹1 crore each on Oct 8, 2021. On Oct 11 it received another ₹67 crore. During the same time, Future Games had purchased bonds for ₹195 crore while MEIL bought ₹100 crore worth bonds on three different dates that month, the ECI data showed.

Interestingly, at the time when all these institutes purchased bonds, BRS got crores of rupees into its account.

As per procedure, a search-cum-selection committee will be formed, which will consider all the applications received. Some nominations are usually made by prominent persons that may also be

considered. Those shortlisted will be called for an interview and selected based on the President of India's recommendation. If no appropriate person is found, they might extend the tenure of the current director," said a retired professor from IIT.

The notification was released this week, and sources note that mostly directors/deans from other IITs and NITs are likely to apply for the post owing to the specific administrative clause.

Within IIT-H there are close to 80 professors of varying seniority. Of these only 10 to 15 hold various administrative roles, sources added.

## Silver Merc led police to man behind massacre of 20 strays

### 40-MINUTE KILLING SPREE



- Narsimha Reddy with 2 other accused drove around village around 1.15 am on Feb 16
- On 40-minute killing spree, Reddy shot strays with gun of other accused
- Cops checked CCTVs and subsequently zeroed in on three accused

it till others in village fell asleep. On Feb 16, around 1.15 am, he along with his associates Tariq Ahmed and Mohd Taher stepped out in his silver Mercedes, looking for strays.

As they drove through the main road in the village, Narsimha Reddy started shooting at the strays using his friend Tariq's licensed weapon. The main accused did not have a license, cops confirmed.

"After avenging the death of his pet, Narsimha Reddy immediately fled the village and returned home in Hyderabad, leaving no clues," said an official of Mahabubnagar police investigating the case.

He added: "But one of the villagers who was witness to this mass killing told us that he had seen people in a silver Mercedes chasing the strays. We worked on this single clue to solve the mystery."

According to cops, Reddy who came to his in-laws home on Feb 15, partied till late night with the other accused and wa-

ted till others in village fell asleep. On Feb 16, around 1.15 am, he along with his associates Tariq Ahmed and Mohd Taher stepped out in his silver Mercedes, looking for strays.

When police started a probe after finding the bodies of strays, one of the villagers who works as a driver in Hyderabad told them about people in a silver Mercedes killing the dogs.

Police then enquired about outsiders who visited the village during that night and found out about Narsimha Reddy.

"We checked CCTVs for vehicles entering the village on Feb 15 and leaving before Feb 16 morning and got a breakthrough, which led to their arrest on Tuesday," official said. The trio is in judicial custody.

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## High court suspends appointment of DME leader over X post

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** Justice Pulla Karthik of Telangana high court on Wednesday suspended the appointment of Dr N Vani as in charge director of medical education (DME) (Admn).

HC directed the state to fill the post in tune with the provisions of law and the existing norms.

The judge said that the appointment was prima facie unlawful and suspended the appointment.

The judge passed the inter-

## Cops summon BRS leader over X post

**Hyderabad:** Police on Wednesday summoned BRS leader Manne Krishan for uploading a post on X, making accusations against CM Revanth Reddy's brother.

Krishan later tweeted on X, "Indiramma police has seized my mobile phone & filed a case for posting on social media regarding Revanth's brother A Mahananda Reddy who is treasurer of Chitrapuri Society involved in ₹3,000 crore scam."

Cops have filed a case against him on March 16. TNN

## Vendor caught masturbating, mixing semen with ice cream

Shiva Kumar Pinna

**Warangal:** An ice-cream vendor was caught on camera allegedly masturbating in daylight and then mixing his semen with the products he was selling at Ambedkar Centre in Nekkonda mandal headquarters in Warangal district on Tuesday evening.

The ice cream seller was identified as Kaluram Kuribia, a native of Rajasthan.

He migrated to Nekkonda a year ago and was selling ice-cream and Falooda products at the Nekkonda mandal headquarters.

According to information, Kaluram Kuribia was allegedly caught red-handed by locals while masturbating and selling ice cream mixed with se-

men. The locals took a video which went viral on social media platforms and local WhatsApp groups. A complaint was filed on the basis of the short video. Police rushed to the spot and took the ice cream vendor into custody.

Nekkonda police also seized the ice cream cart and informed the food inspector in

Warangal.

Warangal food inspector Kishan Murthy and his team rushed to the spot, collected samples, and sent them to the State Food Laboratory in Hyderabad for testing.

Speaking to the media, Krishna Murthy said, "The sample was sent to the laboratory and we are waiting for the report. Based on the report, action will be taken against the ice-cream seller."

According to Nekkonda sub-inspector (SI) M Mahender, a case was registered under Section 294 (obscene acts) of the IPC. "The ice cream seller Kaluram Kuribia has been arrested and we are waiting for the report from the State Food Laboratory," SI Mahender said.



VIDEO GOES VIRAL

## IIT-H begins hunt for new head as term of director ending soon

### Selection Will Be Based On Prez's Recommendation

Donita.Jose@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** City's premiere institute, the Indian Institute of Technology - Hyderabad, is scouting for a new head as the term of the current director, BS Murty is coming to an end soon.

The director who took charge in 2019 is slated to complete his term on August 26, 2024.

The list includes Sri Chaitanya Students Facility Management, Varsity Education Management, and T Sharks Overseas Education Consultancy among others. These seem to be the only educational institutes in India to have purchased electoral bonds worth crores of rupees.

While Sri Chaitanya purchased bonds worth ₹10 crore on April 8, 2022, and ₹6 crore on Jan 11, 2024, Varsity Education, which is an entity of Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions, bought bonds for ₹2 crore on April 8, 2022.

T Sharks, meanwhile, bought ₹4 crore worth bonds on July 12, 2023. T Sharks Infra Developers, which is run by Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions, bought bonds for ₹10 crore on August 26, 2024.

As per procedure, a search-cum-selection committee will be formed, which will consider all the applications received.

Some nominations are usually made by prominent persons that may also be

### MINISTRY TO FORM SELECTION PANEL

- Term of current director BS Murty ending on August 26, 2024
- Union education ministry last week sought applications for post
- Candidates must have administrative experience for 5 years or above
- Those having 10 years teaching experience in STEM courses can also apply
- Mostly, directors/deans from other IITs & NITs likely to apply
- IIT Hyderabad itself has about 80 professors of varying seniority
- Of these, only 10 to 15 hold various administrative roles
- Shortlisted candidates will be called for interview
- Selection based on President's recommendation
- If no person is found, director's tenure can be extended



## EFLU still without vice-chancellor

**Hyderabad:** The other central institution running with an in-charge head is the English and Foreign Language University (EFLU).

While multiple notifications were released between 2022 and 2023 to fill the post of vice-chancellor (V-C), the institute continues to run without a full-time V-C appointee.

Sources said that 18 applications have been received for the position, but nobody has

been shortlisted yet.

"Now, with the pool model code of conduct in place, it is unlikely that a decision will be taken till June 4. Hence, no major administrative decisions can be taken on campus until then, including recruitments," a source said. The latest notification for its V-C was issued on Nov 9, 2023. TNN

the post owing to the specific administrative clause.

Within IIT-H there are close to 80 professors of varying seniority. Of these only 10 to 15 hold various administrative roles, sources added.

Presently, professor Sudarshini Bharati is acting as in-charge V-C. It is learnt that despite having been associated with the university for nearly 30 years — both as student and a professor — she has not applied for the post.

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Within IIT

## CERT-In warns Apple users of vulnerabilities

**Hyderabad:** The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has flagged multiple vulnerabilities in Apple products in India. Rating the severity of the vulnerabilities as 'high', the agency issued an advisory to Apple users.

"Multiple vulnerabilities have been reported in Apple products which could allow an attacker to execute arbitrary code, bypass restrictions, disclose sensitive information, gain elevated privileges or cause denial of service conditions on the target systems," said the advisory issued on Tuesday.

CERT-In advised users to apply appropriate security updates as mentioned in the Apple Security updates to prevent cyber attacks.

According to the agency, the affected software are Apple visionOS prior to 1.1, Apple tvOS versions prior to 17.4, Apple watchOS versions prior to 10.4 which are available for Apple Watch released in the series 4 and later. TNN

# Medigadda: NDSA questions Muralidhar, other top officials

## NDSA Likely To Question Reps Of Contractors

Koride.Mahesh  
@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** The National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), which began the probe into the sinking of piers at Medigadda barrage and leakages in Sundilla and Annaram barrages, questioned former engineer-in-chief C Muralidhar on Wednesday.

NDSA members also questioned officers and engineers, who worked and have been working in the central design wing, operation and maintenance and other wings individually.

Led by former chairman of Central Water Commission J Chandrashekhar Iyer, the NDSA team is likely to question contractor company

### NO DOCUMENTARY PROOF GIVEN

- Officers & engineers who worked & have been working in central design wing, operation & maintenance and other wings questioned individually
- NDSA team focusing on technical point of barrages, design preparation & approvals, who cleared them, hydrology & model studies for barrages
- Quality control & laboratory tests before taking up construction also being looked into



L&T, which constructed Medigadda barrage and also contractors of Annaram and Sundilla on Thursday.

The team had earlier interacted with officers a couple of weeks ago and this is the second round of visit to the state as part of the investigation. Though the NDSA thought of summoning the officers to Delhi, it changed its mind as

they will have to carry a huge bulk of documents and also computer hard discs and other material to Delhi.

Sources in the irrigation department said the NDSA team is focusing on technical point of barrages, design preparation and approvals, who cleared them, hydrology, model studies for the barrages, quality control and also labora-

## Govt issues notification to fill 5,000 posts in health wing

**Hyderabad:** The finance department of Telangana on Wednesday issued a GO permitting the filling of 5,348 vacancies under the medical and health department through direct recruitment.

This includes 3,235 positions across various categories supervised by the director of the medical education. Among these are 381 assistant professor roles in medical col-

leges, 1,545 staff nurse positions, and 420 grade II lab technician positions.

The Telangana Vadiya Vidhana Parishat will receive 1,255 posts, including 617 civil assistant surgeons, while the MNJ Institute of Oncology and Regional Centre will have 212 posts filled.

Additionally, the director of the health wing will oversee the filling of 575 positions. TNN

**STATE BANK OF INDIA**  
Premises & Estate Department, Local Head Office,  
Moti Mahal Marg, Hazratganj, Lucknow, 226001.  
Ph: 0522-2295361 / 365 / 366

**TENDER FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY AND PMC FIRM FOR PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BAREILLY WITH OTHER OUTFITS**

State Bank of India invites applications in two envelopes system (technical and price bid) for the pre-qualification of Architectural and Project Management Consultancy Service Firms for the proposed construction of **Administrative Office with other outfits at Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.**

The pre qualification criteria, scope of the services to be offered, terms and conditions of appointment and the detailed Performa etc. for submission of the application form and price bid for the purpose can be downloaded from our website <https://bank.sbi> under 'SBI in the news' => 'Procurement News'. Any corrigendum/addendum will be available only on Bank's website.

The last date & time for submission of application is 15.04.2024, upto 03:00 pm  
Asstt. General Manager (Premises & Estate)

**WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA**  
**GATI SHAKTI VISHWAVIDYALAYA**  
(A Central University under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India)  
Lalbagh, Vadodara, Gujarat 390004

GSV/Acad/Admissions-2024

**ADMISSION NOTICE : AY 2024-25**

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV), Vadodara is a Central University established by an Act of Parliament vide Central Universities (Amendment) Act 2022. The University is sponsored by the Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India. Being a University of first-of-its-kind, GSV focuses on transport and logistics related education, multidisciplinary research and executive training.

Applications are invited for admission to the following academic programmes across Engineering and Management disciplines for the AY 2024-25:

Discipline	Level	Program	Duration	No. of Seat	Entrance Test
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Under-graduate (Regular Programs)</b>	B.Tech. in Civil Engineering (Specialization : Rail Engineering)	4 Year	60	JEE (Main) 2024 Admission through JOSAA Visit JOSAA website <a href="https://josaa.nic.in/">https://josaa.nic.in/</a> for details.
		B.Tech. in Electronics and Communication Engineering (Specialization : Rail Engineering)	4 Year	60	
		B.Tech. in Mechanical Engineering (Specialization : Rail Engineering)	4 Year	60	
		B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering (Specialization : Rail Engineering)	4 Year	60	
		B.Tech. in Artificial Intelligence & Data Science (Specialization : Transportation and Logistics)	4 Year	60	
<b>Management</b>	<b>Post-Graduate (Regular Programs)</b>	B.Tech in Aviation Engineering	4 Year	30	CUET-PGI/ CAT/ MAT/ XAT
		MBA (Logistics and Supply Chain Management)	2 Year	30	
		MBA (Ports and Shipping Logistics)	2 Year	30	

**Executive Programs Exclusively for Working Professionals**

<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Post-Graduate (Executive Programs)</b>	M.Tech (Intelligent Transport System)	3 Year	20	GSV Entrance Test
		M.Tech (Railway Engineering)	3 Year	20	
<b>Management</b>	<b>Post-Graduate (Executive Programs)</b>	MBA (Logistics and Supply Chain Management)	2 Year	30	GSV Entrance Test
		MBA (Multi-modal Transportation)	2 Year	30	
<b>Engineering/ Management</b>	<b>Doctoral</b>	Ph. D (Sponsored)	-	-	GSV Entrance Test/ JRF/SRF/GATE

For Application procedure and detailed information, visit the University website - <https://gsv.ac.in>  
Contact us at- [admission2024@gsv.ac.in](mailto:admission2024@gsv.ac.in) for any admission related query/information

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The only University in India exclusively focused on transport and logistics education.
- Multi-disciplinary programmes based on demand-driven curriculum addressing industry needs.
- Innovation Led & Industry Driven University with strong emphasis on industry connect.
- Collaborations with top Higher Education Institutes and Industry.
- Highly experiential and unique interdisciplinary pedagogical approach incorporating latest technologies.
- High-quality and experienced faculty with global exposure.
- Focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: communication, critical thinking and innovation.
- Project-based teaching-learning and well-structured internships at Indian Railway establishments and other Organizations.
- State of the art railways facilities and lab infrastructure.
- Excellent Hostel facilities for the UG students and female PG students. (For regular students only)
- GSV Financial Aid upto 100% of tuition and 50% of hostel fee - only for the eligible regular students.

# Political dynasties stay afloat across party lines

## Sons Of 6 Ex-CMs Take Poll Plunge

Madhu.Rasala  
@timesgroup.com

**Vijayawada:** The forthcoming assembly elections will see sons of six former chief ministers in the fray.

For many questions, the engineering officials could not provide any documentary proof for their arguments. Some engineers even claimed that they were not part of any team and that the decisions were taken at the highest level.

The irrigation department had earlier issued a memo, asking the top officials of the department and chief engineers, superintending engineers, and executive engineers, those presently working with the department, including retired, and transferred since 2016 to be available for questioning by the NDSA team.

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**SPORTS MINISTER ANURAG THAKUR SAYS INDIA IS READY TO HOST 2030 YOUTH OLYMPICS AND 2036 SUMMER OLYMPICS**



**SADHGURU JAGGI VASUDEV UNDERGOES EMERGENCY BRAIN SURGERY, DELHI HOSPITAL SAYS HE IS RECOVERING WELL**

# As war drags on, PM Modi speaks to Putin & Zelensky

Reiterates India's Position For A Resolution Through Dialogue

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** PM Narendra Modi congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin again in a phone conversation for his "landslide" victory, while also speaking to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and reiterating before both leaders India's consistent position for resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

In his conversation with Zelensky, the first between them this year, Modi underlined India's people-centric approach, saying his govt will continue to do everything within its means to support a peaceful solution of the ongoing conflict. Unlike China, India has not drawn up any peace plan, or made any specific offer to mediate, but has long maintained it will be happy to facilitate any international peace effort.

Zelensky expressed gratitude for India's support for



Firefighters work to put out a fire at a printing house which was hit by a Russian missile strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Wednesday

Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, humanitarian aid, and "active" participation in Peace Formula meetings, as he invited Modi to Ukraine and hoped India will attend the inaugural Global Peace Summit in Switzerland.

Ukraine also wishes to welcome Indian students back to Ukrainian educational institutions, he said.

According to an Indian readout, Modi highlighted that India supports all efforts for

an early and peaceful resolution of all issues between the two countries. Zelensky appreciated India's continued humanitarian assistance for the people of Ukraine and the leaders agreed to remain in touch. Ahead of a visit by the Ukraine foreign minister to India later this month, they also discussed ways to further strengthen India-Ukraine partnership in various spheres.

The Modi-Zelensky talks took place at a time the Russi-

an Black Sea has taken repeated hits from Ukrainian attacks. The chief of Zelensky's office, Andriy Yermak, had briefed NSA Ajit Doval last week about the conflict, including Ukraine's success in confronting Russia in the Black Sea. Ukraine also sought support from India for the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland that can help achieve "just and lasting" peace.

In his talks with Putin, the PM congratulated him on his re-election and conveyed his best wishes for "peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Russia". Modi, who is expected to visit Russia later this year for the BRICS summit and a bilateral meeting, had earlier congratulated Putin in a post on X. According to Russia, the leaders also discussed progress in "mutually beneficial" trade and energy ties and the commitment to coordinate their actions with multilateral groups like BRICS and SCO.

# India bears not terrorism wounds, says PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

## PM's Bhutan visit put off due to bad weather

**New Delhi:** PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday, in an apparent reference to Pakistan, said those who used to bleed India by inflicting terror were suffering and their pitiable condition was there for all to see whereas India's role in global growth was being acknowledged worldwide. Speaking at the News18 Rising Bharat Conclave, he once again sounded supremely confident of winning LS polls and said the next five years would be crucial to continue the country's growth journey even as he



recalled how the past 10 years had witnessed overall growth on all parameters.

"Be it the leaders of terrorism or the countries seeking development and peace, everyone has experienced Ris-

ing Bharat. This new India does not bear the wounds of terrorism, but teaches a lesson with full force to those who inflicted the wounds of terrorism," Modi said.

PM cited the remarks of

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut likening him with Aurangzeb as he said, "The govt has approached the electorate based on its performance in the past 10 years. And it has also started working on a roadmap for 100 days in its third term. On the other hand, the opposition parties are setting a new record. Today, Modi was abused for the 10th time. Modi has been compared with Aurangzeb and there was also a threat to blow his skull."

Modi said the entire world considered the 21st century to be that of India. "Big rating agencies and economists are assured of rising India. Why is it that they aren't raising any questions? It's because the en-

tire world is witnessing how India has brought big changes in the last 10 years," he added.

He said in the last 10 years, 25 crore people had come out of poverty, the country had moved from being the 10th largest economy to the fifth. India's forex reserves crossed \$700 billion and exports increased exponentially. "However, we need to do a lot more. Our govt is employing technology to catch the corrupt. Today, it's becoming hard to hide money trails, and therefore, stashes of money are being found from beds and walls. Bundles of notes were unearthed from a Congress MP and a TMC leader's home, and hence they are rattled," PM said.

The FCU is mandated to counter misinformation on govt policies, initiatives and schemes either suo motu or under a reference via complaints," the I&B ministry said in a statement.

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

## Centre notifies fact check unit as per IT rules

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The ministry of electronics and information technology on Wednesday notified the Centre's 'fact check unit' as per IT rules under the Press Information Bureau.

The move comes weeks after the Bombay High Court refused to restrain the Centre from notifying the FCU, a decision that has been challenged in the Supreme Court, which will hear the plea on Thursday.

The FCU is empowered to decide if an information uploaded on online platforms and social media is accurate or not. In case, the data is found to be "fake", "false" or "misleading", the platform will have to take down the information that is brought to its notice by the FCU or run the risk of losing "safe harbour" status. The "safe harbour" clause in the Information and Technology Act provides legal immunity to platforms against content shared by their users.

"The FCU is mandated to counter misinformation on govt policies, initiatives and schemes either suo motu or under a reference via complaints," the I&B ministry said in a statement.

# IS India chief arrested in Assam after infiltration from Bangladesh

Prabin.Kalita  
@timesgroup.com



his wife is a Bangladeshi national.

"Both are highly indoctrinated and motivated leaders and members of IS in India. They had furthered the cause of IS in India through conspiracies to carry out recruitment, terror funding and terror acts by means of IEDs at several places across the country. Several cases are pending against them at NIA, Delhi, ATS, Lucknow. Assam STF will hand over the accused to NIA for legal action against these fugitives," the CPRO said.

Faroogi is one of the key accused in the Delhi IS terror module. A former Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) student, Farooqi is suspected to be the founder of the Aligarh module.

Farooqi holds the title of "Ameer" within IS, who is responsible for persuading others to join the outfit.

A former AMU student, Farooqi is suspected to be the founder of the Aligarh module

detected in Dharmasala area of Dhubri after they crossed the border. Both were apprehended and brought to the STF office in Guwahati," the CPRO added.

He said that their identity was ascertained and it was found that one of the two was "Haris Farooqi, the head of IS in India."

The CPRO added that Farooqi's associate Anurag Singh converted to Islam and

# Age bar flouted? Centre seeks Moose Wala parents IVF details

Neel.Kamat @timesgroup.com

between 21-50 years. It is requested to look into the matter and submit a report to the department of action taken in the case as per the ART (Regulation) Act, 2021," the letter by SK Ranjan, director, ART and surrogacy division, department of health research, Union ministry of health and family welfare, of March 14, stated.



It mentioned that the department has come across media reports that Moose Wala's mother Charan Kaur had delivered the baby at a hospital in Bathinda on Sunday.

The letter mentions that

conceiving a child through IVF is allowed only for women from 21 to 50 years of age. "Under Section 21(g)(i) of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021, the age limit prescribed for a woman undergoing ART services is

However, HS Phoolka, senior advocate in the Supreme Court and former Punjab leader of opposition, rejected the Centre's stance on the issue. "Govt has no power to question any couple. Under ART Act, 2021, conditions apply only to clinics. Restrictions under Sec 21 apply to clinics only. Hence, govt cannot question," he tweeted and tagged Bal-Kaur Singh on Wednesday.

Uploading a video clip on social media on Tuesday night, Bal-Kaur Singh had said that he was being harassed and asked to produce documents to prove that the baby was legally born.

"I am a law-abiding ex-service man. My son did not break the law for 23 years. I have committed no wrong. Everything was done legally. I will produce the documents, but if the govt has any issues, it can lodge an FIR and put me behind bars," he had said.

## Central Electricity Regulatory Commission

4th Floor, Chandrik Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001

Phone : 23353503, FAX: 23753923

Dated: 14.3.2024

### NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by POWERGRID Ramgarh Transmission Limited (PRTL), B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi 110 016 for the grant of a separate transmission licence under the Regulated Tariff Mechanism (RTM) mode. The scope of the project for which a separate transmission licence has been sought is as under:

S. No.	Scope of the Transmission Scheme	Capacity/km	Implementation timeframe
1.	1 no. of 400 kV bay at Fatehgarh-III PS (erstwhile Ramgarh-II)	400 kV line bays -1	20.9.2025
	<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Rs. 16.30 crore</b>	
2.	Establishment of 3x1500 MVA 765/440 kV & 3x500 MVA, 400/220 kV pooling station at Fatehgarh-3 (new section) (In addition to 4x500 MVA ICT proposed under Rajasthan SEZ Ph-II of section-1) along with 2x330 MVAR, 765 kV & 2x125 MVAR, 420 kV Bus Reactors	765/440 kV 1500 MVA ICT: 3 Nos. (10x500) MVA, including one spare unit 330MVAR 765 kV bus reactor-2 (7x110 MVA including one spare unit) 765 kV ICT bays-3 nos. 400/220KV, 500MVA ICT-3 nos. 400 kV ICT bays 6 nos. 220 ICT bays 3 nos. 765kV line bays -2 Nos. 765kV reactor bays -2 nos. 125 MVA, 420kVbus reactor-2 nos. 420 kV reactor bays -2 nos.	1.2.2025
	<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Rs. 435 crore</b>	
3.	6 nos. of 220 kV bays and 3 nos of 400 kV bays along with bus extension of 220 kV & 400 kV bus as well as bus sectionaliser arrangement between both the levels i.e. 400 kV new section and 220 kV new section with under implementation section at Fatehgarh-III PS.	400 kV line bays -3 nos. 220 kV line bays-6 nos. 400 kV bus sectionaliser - 1 no. 220 kV bus sectionaliser - 1 no.	As per table A
	<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Rs. 82.45 crore including IDC of Rs. 2.30 crore.</b>	
4.	Augmentation of 3x1500 MVA 765/440 kV & 2x500 MVA, 400/220 kV pooling station at Fatehgarh-3 (new section).	765/440 kV 1500 MVA ICT: 3 Nos. 400/220 KV, 500MVA ICT-2 nos. 765 kV ICT bay-3 nos. 400 kV ICT bay-5 nos. 220 kV ICT bays 2 nos.	As per table B
	<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Rs. 245 crore</b>	
5.	1 Set of Bus sectionalizer at 400kV level of 765/400/220kV Fatehgarh-III PS (Section-2)	400 kV Bus sectionalizer - 1 set	1.1.2025
	<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Rs. 17.11 crore</b>	

- The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited vide its letters 27.9.2023 and 12.2.2024 has recommended for the grant of a separate transmission licence to the POWERGRID Ramgarh Transmission Limited for executing the transmission line through RTM route as mentioned in para-1 above.
- Based on the material available on record, the Commission has, vide order dated 13.3.2024 in Petition No. 293/TL/2023, proposed to issue transmission licence to the applicant for establishing the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
- A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to POWERGRID Ramgarh Transmission Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website [www.powergrid.in/subsidiaries](http://www.powergrid.in/subsidiaries) or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
- Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by 1.4.2024 at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
- The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on 3.4.2024. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

**(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)  
Secretary**

Advt. No.:HRI/01/2024

Government of India

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### NOTICE REGARDING LOST CERTIFICATE(S) OF Company Name \_ L&T

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I/we Zubeda Sajjauddin Mehdi residing at H.No: 10-50-15A, Opp: Walthaird, Sirpuram, Visakhapatnam - 530003 the registered holder(s) of the under mentioned shares held in the above said company, hereby give notice that the share certificate(s) in respect of the said shares have been lost and I have applied to the Company for issue of duplicate certificate(s).

Any person having claim in respect of the said shares should lodge such claims with the Company as its above referred address within 15 days from this date, else the Company will proceed to issue duplicate certificate(s) and no further claim will be entertained by the Company thereafter

Folio No. Certificate No Distinctive Nos. No. of Shares

04374746 329765 57513694 575137093

Date : 21-03-2024 NAME OF SHAREHOLDER

Place : Hyderabad Zubeda Sajjauddin Mehdi

### NOTICE REGARDING LOST CERTIFICATE(S) OF Company Name \_ L&T

Regd office: L&T House, Ballard Estate; Mumbai

# B'luru blast: Karandlaje under EC scanner for remarks on TN

Karnataka CEO  
Given 48 Hrs To Submit Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Election Commission Wednesday directed the Karnataka chief electoral officer (CEO) to ensure "immediate, appropriate action" on a complaint received from DMK against Union minister Shobha Karandlaje's controversial statement linking people from Tamil Nadu to the bomb blast in Bengaluru.

Directing action in accordance with provisions of the model code of conduct, EC sought a compliance report from the CEO within 48 hours.

The EC action follows a complaint received from DMK in which the party alleged that Karandlaje's suggestion that people of Tamil Nadu had planted the bomb at Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru — made at a press conference in Bengaluru on



EC action follows a DMK complaint where the party alleged that Karandlaje's remark was baseless as NIA is yet to identify the culprit

Tuesday — was a baseless accusation as NIA was yet to identify the culprit. It said the statement "attempts to promote feelings of enmity and hatred between the people of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu", "generalises the people of Tamil Nadu as extremists" and has the potential to "engender violence against the Tamil community".

Terming Karandlaje's remarks as a violation of Section 123(3) (corrupt practice)

## Union minister apologises but TN cops slap 4 cases

Minister **Shobha Karandlaje** Wednesday apologised for hurting Tamils by her remark about the Bengaluru blast. "One guy comes from Tamil Nadu, trained there, plants a bomb at Rameshwaram Cafe," the Union minister said.

Apart from the EC action, Madurai police filed four cases against the minister following a complaint by a Madurai resident. In an attempt to clarify her remarks, Karandlaje put out a post on X, stating that her intention was to "shine light and not cast shadows". She acknowledged her comments may have upset Tamils and said her remarks were directed at individuals trained in the Krishnagiri forest linked to Bengaluru blast. TNN

and Section 125 (promoting or attempting to promote feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language) of Representation of the People Act, 1951 and as well as the model code of conduct (no party or candidate shall aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred between different communities), Tamil Nadu's ruling party DMK sought action against the minister and BJP.

**Missing MP girl staged her own kidnapping, say Kota police**

**Kota/Indore:** A Kota police team in Indore on the trail of 'abducted' NEET aspirant Kavya Dhakad on Wednesday said there was no kidnapping, and it was an elaborate ruse to extract money so that she and her boyfriend could move to another country.

"She has not been traced yet and was last reported to be in Indore on Tuesday evening. Based on the investigation so far, there is no evidence of any crime against the girl," Kota SP Amruta Duhun said. "Kavya may have had herself photographed being held captive in a room and sent the pictures to her father with a demand for Rs 30 lakh ransom. If this was done under pressure, it will become clear once she is rescued."

Kavya is believed to be on the move with her boyfriend and another friend. Cops have caught a third friend in whose Indore apartment the 'kidnap pictures' were clicked. Duhun said Kavya was in Indore all this while and had never taken admission at the Kota institute or her parents thought she had. TNN



REDS GO GREEN

sorted to outright looting from villagers. But now they simply order solar panels

Under govt scheme, solar panels of 150W-300W capacity each are installed in houses. Each is enough to power four lights and a fan.

Upgraded versions come with sockets that are compatible with most gadgets and mobile phones and can be used to directly charge equipment.

None considered it a big

loot if Maoists made off with solar panels but it's turning out that the robbery is powering the insurgency.

Solar panels of various sizes have been seized after encounters or raids on Maoist camps, indicating that they are still foraging.

# Robbed solar panels now powering Maoists in Ch'garh

Rashmi.Drolia@timesgroup.com

**Raipur:** Guns, explosives, detonators, cordtex wire, painkillers, soap... and solar cells. Solar panels are turning up among the staple seizures from Maoists in Bastar as insurgents seek to up-tech their gear in a losing battle. The tide has long turned in the insurgency and Maoists are being increasingly cornered in ever-shrinking pockets of influence.

Pressure from the security forces is forcing Maoists to be constantly on the move and change camps frequently, often several times a night. TheyThe insurgents are using solar panels to get power on the go to operate/charge mobile phones, radiosets and other gadgets.

These panels are good enough to charge wireless batteries, radio sets, mobile phones, laptops, and other electronic devices for Maoists. Most of them are looted from villagers, who have got it under a distribution scheme. But there was never a complaint lodged against Maoists for looting solar panels from a village in

Maoists initially exploited govt's shift towards renewable energy. Some years ago, Chhattisgarh State Renewable Energy Development Agency (CREDA) had installed solar panels in remote villages, security outposts, and relief camps, which were stolen against Maoists for looting solar panels from a village in

bulk," IG Sundarraj added. CREDA officials told TOI that these small solar panels are only 70% efficient in dense forests and cloudy weather but enough to charge phones/batteries. They said it wouldn't be difficult for Maoists to order such panels online (the cheapest ones are a couple of thousand bucks). No village has yet requested replacement of their looted solar panels, said an officer.

Bastar range IG P Sundarraj told TOI that solar panels are lightweight, easy to carry and often foldable, easily fitting into the 'pitthoo' (backpack) the cadres carry in forests.

It appears the Maoists initially exploited govt's shift towards renewable energy. Some years ago, Chhattisgarh State Renewable Energy Development Agency (CREDA) had installed solar panels in remote villages, security outposts, and relief camps, which were stolen against Maoists for looting solar panels from a village in

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Solar panels of various sizes have been seized after encounters or raids on Maoist camps, indicating that they are still foraging.

## Budaun man kills neighbour's 2 sons before cops shoot him dead

Canwardeep.Singh  
@timesgroup.com

### 3RD SON SURVIVES

► Md Sajid goes to Vinod Thakur's house, asks for money to treat his wife  
► Thakur's wife gives him ₹5k, but Sajid slits throats of her 6- & 13-year-old sons.  
Third son, 9, survives attack  
► Mob catches Sajid, but he escapes. Found hiding in a forest, fires at cops who gun him down, SSP Budaun says

Piyush, 9, was also attacked but survived with minor injuries.

"I was downstairs when he took my brothers to the roof. While coming down, he also attacked me, but I managed to escape," Piyush recounted.

SSP Alok Priyadarshi said that efforts are underway to locate and apprehend Javed.

Talking to TOI, he said, "Sajid and his brother Javed, residents of Alapur in Budaun, murdered the two minor siblings. The mob initially caught Sajid but he managed to escape before police could arrest him. Our search team found him hiding in a forest area. When asked to surrender, he opened fire. He was injured in retaliatory firing and thereafter taken to hospital, where he died during treatment."

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## Paper 'leaked', Bihar teacher job test junked

**Patna:** Amid an alleged question paper leak, Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on Wednesday cancelled the Teacher Recruitment Examination (TRE-3.0), affecting more than five lakh candidates appearing for 87,744 teacher posts, reports Kshitz.

"The new examination date will be announced later. Candidates can check the new exam date updates in due course of time on the official website of the commission," BPSC said in a press release.

The commission had sought 'standard evidence' and inquired on certain points from the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) over the allegations, the release stated. In response, however, the EOU informed that "during the investigation, any information and sealed electronic devices cannot be shared with any office or organisation as per the rules".

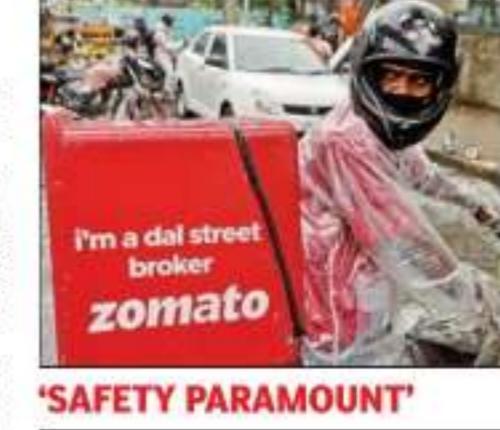
All Zomato riders, both regular fleet and fleet for vegetarians, will wear red uniforms as they have in the past. This will ensure that our red uniform delivery partners are not incorrectly associated with non-veg food and blocked by any RWA (resident welfare association) or societies during any special days... Our rid-

ers' physical safety is of paramount importance to us," he posted on X. "We now realise some of our customers could get into trouble with their landlords, and that would not be nice if that happened because of us," he wrote on X.

"But why did we need to separate the fleets? Because despite everyone's best efforts, sometimes the food spills into the delivery boxes. In those cases, the smell of the previous order travels to next order and may lead to smelling of the previous order," he added.

## Online backlash forces Zomato to drop 'green' plan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



'SAFETY PARAMOUNT'

**Bengaluru:** Zomato has rolled back its decision to introduce green uniforms that ensures vegetarian food delivery by "pure veg fleet", after the move sparked a huge backlash.

from social media users Deepinder Goyal, founder and CEO of Zomato, took to X on Tuesday and said the company will have a fleet of riders who will cater specifically to vegetarian orders, but they won't be wearing the green uniform.

All Zomato riders, both regular fleet and fleet for vegetarians, will wear red uniforms as they have in the past. This will ensure that our red uniform delivery partners are not incorrectly associated with non-veg food and blocked by any RWA (resident welfare association) or societies during any special days... Our rid-

## Gujarat to punish victims if they fail to report ragging incidents

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** In a bid to curb ragging, Gujarat govt will take stringent action on educational institutions which penalises perpetrators but not victims and witnesses of ragging, if they fail to flag the incident to authorities.

Gujarat govt on Tuesday issued a govt resolution (GR) and informed the Gujarat high court about it on Wednesday. This was undertaken after the HC took suo motu cognizance of a ragging incident at BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad last year.

**However the new govt resolution places the burden of proof on the perpetrator of ragging and not the victim. The institution is required to file an FIR for cases of ragging, if required**

The provision in the GR reads, "Fresher who do not report incidents of ragging either as victims or witnesses shall also be punished suitably." However, it places the burden of proof on the perpetrator of ragging and not the victim. The institution is required to file an FIR for cases of ragging, if required.

The punishment prescribed for perpetrators of ragging is suspension from the institute, withdrawal of scholarship, debarment from exam and educational events, withholding results, expulsion from hostel, cancellation of admission, suspension from academic activities for up to four semesters, expulsion from the institute and debarment from admission to other institutes for five years. The punishment includes provision for imprisonment of up to two years. If perpetrators are not identified, there is a provision for collective punishment as well.

Among other measures to curb ragging, institutes and hostels are required to strengthen security. Private and commercially managed hostels will have to be registered with local police and must report such incidents or they will be held responsible for non-reporting. Students indulging in ragging will have a remark about their behaviour on their migration certificates.

## WESTERN RAILWAY-AHMEDABAD CONSTRUCTION OF 3 NOS. 2 LANE ROAD OVER BRIDGES

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction)-II, Western Railway, Ahmedabad for and on behalf of President of Union of India invites E-Tender for the following work: **E-Tender Notice No. Dy.CE/CII/ADI-ROB-238-267-271 (TWO PACKET)** (1) Name of work with its location: Construction of 3 Nos. 2 lane Road Over Bridges (with approaches) End to End in the area of L.C No. 238 at Km. 401/24-25/26 at Km. 441/16-18 & L.C No. 271 Km. 441/10-12 between Vadodara-Geratpur of Vadodara Division (TWO PACKET) (2) Approximate Cost of Work: ₹ 11,23,99,439-22/- (3) Estimated money to be deposited: ₹ 57,12,000/- (4) Tender form fees: Nil (5) Completion period of work: 12 Months including monsoon. (6) Date and submission of bid: Submission of e-tender: 05-04-2024, upto 15:00 Hrs. (7) Website particulars: Notice Board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office: Office of Dy-Chief Engineer (Construction)-II, Western Railway, 2nd Floor, 'C' Wing, Nirman Bhavan, Nr. DRM office, Asarva, Ahmedabad-382 345. Website: [www.wrops.gov.in](http://www.wrops.gov.in)

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## BUSINESS CONNECT

# INDIA govt will junk CAA, UCC, rein in guvs: DMK in manifesto

Also Promises To Bin Modi Govt's 'One Nation, One Election' Plan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** M K Stalin's DMK headlined its Lok Sabha manifesto on Wednesday with a host of big commitments supposedly aligned with the INDIA bloc's poll goals—reversal of the BJP-led central govt's decisions or proposals to implement CAA and UCC, restoration of J&K's statehood, and repeal of Article 356, among others.

In the context of Tamil Nadu, DMK's promise to curtail Raj Bhavan's powers assumes significance against the backdrop of the Stalin govt's repeated run-ins with governor RN Ravi.

The manifesto states that DMK would, as part of INDIA, also junk BJP's proposal to implement the "one nation, one election" concept. It promises to cut LPG, petrol and diesel prices to Rs 500, Rs 75 and Rs 65 respectively.

DMK intends to have TN exempted from NEET, the gateway to MBBS admissions, and push for scrapping the national education policy.

"The new (INDIA) govt



Tamil Nadu CM and DMK chief MK Stalin with party leader Kanimozhhi during the release of the party's manifesto in Chennai on Wednesday

will undertake actions to appoint governors in consultation with CMs," the manifesto says.

Stalin said the monthly benefit of Rs 1,000 given to women heading families and TN's breakfast scheme for schoolchildren would be extended to the rest of the country. "We promise what we will do, and we will deliver what we promise," the CM said.

"This is not just a DMK poll manifesto, but the manifesto of the people...PM Modi failed to fulfil the promises he made. BJP wasted the power handed to them. It doesn't au-

tomatically give well for the country if BJP continues in govt."

Stalin said an INDIA bloc govt would be "egalitarian", protecting the Constitution and democratic values. "All anti-people policies of BJP will be reconsidered," he said of the manifesto, drafted by a panel led by DMK MP Karunamani.

The manifesto highlights DMK's social justice plank, saying all Sachar panel recommendations will be implemented. A caste census will be conducted across the country.

## AIADMK clinches LS poll deal with DMDK

**A**IADMK on Wednesday finalised a seat sharing arrangement for the Lok Sabha polls with DMDK, founded by 'Captain' Vijayakanth who passed away recently. Announcing the pact, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said DMDK would contest from Tiruvallur, Central Chennai, Cuddalore, Thanjavur and Virudhunagar Lok Sabha constituencies. PTI

saying "elections can't be contested by merely distributing MPLADS funds".

Congress workers are instrumental in our win, but they are feeling disappointed as the party has failed to give them due importance or any responsibilities. I don't see any Congress workers out in the field campaigning," Pratibha, who is also the state Congress president, told media persons.

Pratibha, who had attended the meeting of Congress screening committee in New Delhi on Tuesday to discuss the names of potential candidates for the four seats of Himachal, said given the present situation, chances of the party's success did not look bright.

"I have remained in the field in recent times and going by the present condition in various constituencies, I don't think we will get much success in the polls. That's why I have decided to withdraw my name and informed the high command that I would not contest elections. I will support whoever the party fields from Mandi," she said.

On the bypolls to the six assembly seats, Pratibha said: "We will have to work day and night to ensure victory of our candidates in the by-elections so that we can save our govt." Pratibha, the wife of late chief minister Virbhadra Singh, had won the Mandi seat by defeating BJP's Brigadier Khushal Thakur (retd) by a thin margin in a bypoll in 2021. She was elected from Mandi for the first time in 2004 and then again in 2013. BJP, however, wrested the constituency from Congress in 2014 and retained the seat in 2019. TNN

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## EYEING BUSINESS AMID CAMPAIGNS



A man arranges scarves of political parties for sale ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Mumbai on Wednesday

## 'Obnoxious': BJP moves EC against Rahul's 'shakti' remark

**New Delhi:** Continuing its attack on Rahul Gandhi, a BJP delegation on Wednesday called on Election Commission seeking action against the Congress leader and an unconditional apology for his "fight against shakti" remark at a rally in Mumbai.

The party has also urged that an FIR should be lodged against Rahul and micro-blogging platform X be directed to delete the video of his speech.

"The obnoxious statement made by Rahul Gandhi has deeply hurt the sentiments of Hindus as it was rendered with malicious intention of insulting religious values and creates enmity among religious community. Further, the deed is jeopardising the peaceful environment, which may pose a serious challenge to free and fair elections," BJP said through a delegation headed by Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

BJP also highlighted that Rahul made false allegations with respect to the authenticity of EVMs despite the pronouncement of SC as well as clarification issued by EC.

"Rahul Gandhi may be instructed to offer an unconditional apology and retraction for his utterances at the Shivaji Park event in Mumbai," the party has said in its petition. TNN

## 'Don't downplay voter wisdom': HC junks plea to punish oppn trio

**New Delhi:** Pointing out that voters should not be underestimated, Delhi HC on Wednesday refused to entertain a plea seeking

to prosecute Rahul Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal and Akhilesh Yadav for allegedly "making false and misleading statements intending to damage the image and credibility of the country."

HC declined to intervene, saying the wisdom of the Indian voters should not be underestimated as they know who is leading and misleading them.

The plea referred to news reports and claimed Gandhi, Kejriwal and Akhilesh made misleading and false statements regarding alleged waivering of loans worth Rs 16 crore of few industrialists by govt.

Petitioner Surjit Singh Yadav — who claimed to be a farmer and a social activist — pleaded with the court to direct the Centre to register a complaint and prosecute these three leaders and to direct several social media platforms and political parties to which these leaders belonged to remove these statements from their electronic and social media platforms.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmohan PS Arora said people who are aggrieved would take action, if required. TNN

## Raft of inductions for Cong: An MP, an MLA, and a party

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Suspended BSP MP from Amroha Danish Ali joined Congress on Wednesday, saying he had taken the decision to fight the divisionary forces in the country. Former Bihar MP Pappu Yadav

Wednesday merged his outfit Janadikar Party with Congress, while BJP whip in Jharkhand assembly Jai Prakash Patel joined Congress, in a raft of inductions that the opposition party said was a sign of growing mood for it ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Congress incharge of UP Avinash Pandey said Ali's entry will strengthen the party. Ali is a frontrunner for Con-

gress ticket from his constituency in western region.

Also, in a relief for Congress, Assam MP Abdul Khaleque withdrew his resignation after meeting party chief Mallikarjun Kharge. Khaleque resigned from Congress last week after being dropped as a candidate from Assam and had accused Assam Congress chief and AICC state incharge of being prejudiced against him. Upon taking back his resignation, he said his grievances had been addressed by the brass and he would work to strengthen the Congress.

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A three-term MLA, Patel said he was joining the Congress for the betterment of

Jharkhand. AICC state incharge Ghulam Ahmed Mir said a sitting legislator from the ruling party coming into Congress is an indicator of things to come in the state. Legislature party leader Alamgir Alam and state Congress chief Rajesh Thakur joined the induction ceremony at the Congress office.

Pappu Yadav, a former RJD leader and MP met Lalit Prasad and Tejaswini Yadav in Patna on Monday before merging his outfit with Congress at the AICC headquarters. With his wife a Congress MP in Rajya Sabha, Pappu said he would work as a dedicated soldier to strengthen the party in Bihar. He came to the joining ceremony with his son Sarthak.

Fadnavis told reporters in Mumbai, "Union home minister Amit Shah had a meeting with Raj Thackeray in Delhi. Instead of speaking prematurely now, it is better that you all wait for a day or two and we shall speak in detail on it."

Fadnavis, who later left for Nagpur, said that he and party president Chandrashekhar Bawankule are visiting each of the Lok Sabha constituencies where candidates have been declared.

Pawar said his party will hold discussions before finalising the Beed candidate.

"Voting for the seat is in the fourth phase and there is still some time to make a decision. The party's committee will decide the candidate and Sonawane has said he will accept the decision. He lost the last election by a narrow margin, but has agreed to work towards strengthening the party in Beed," he said Wednesday.

Sonawane had contested as an NCP candidate against BJP's Pritam Munde in 2019. "I lost, but I had polled over five lakh votes. Recently, my workers had begun to feel they were not getting the same respect (after the split), and therefore, I decided to join Pawar Saheb," he said.

Founder of Rashtriya Samajik Paksha, Mahadev Jankar, also visited Pawar's residence in Pune on Wednesday

## TMC MP Abhishek gets SC relief from ED summons during polls

**New Delhi/Kolkata:** Supreme Court on Wednesday gave Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and his wife Rujira relief from being summoned by ED during the Lok Sabha poll

process.

Noting that Abhishek was contesting Lok Sabha poll, SC adjourned it to July 10 the hearing on his plea challenging the central agency's summons in connection with money laundering cases.

A bench of justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mittal adjourned the hearing after senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Abhishek, apprised the top court that Trinamool leader, who was last called in 2022, was in the midst of an election campaign.

He urged the court to take up the matter in July. Banerjee's counsel, Sanjay Basu, said in a statement: "SC today took note of the fact that

the Petitioner No. 1 (Abhishek) is an MP and a candidate from the Diamond Harbour seat in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls 2024, and both him and his wife Rujira Banerjee have continued their cooperation with the investigating agencies, which was acknowledged by Mr SV Raju, Lt. ASG appearing for ED." TNN & AGENCIES

## Shah remark: NBW against Rahul stayed

**J**harkhand HC on Wednesday stayed the execution of a non-bailable arrest warrant against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accused in a defamation case pending in the MP/MLA court in Chaibasa, reports Chandrakant Mukherjee. Rahul had moved the HC challenging the warrant issued on Feb 27 by the special Chaibasa court for his appearance in the case, pertaining to alleged defamatory remarks he had made against Union home minister Amit Shah was part of the panel.

Exclusion of CJI from the panel has been prominently flagged by those seeking a stay on the appointment of two ECs, attributing executive bias to the selection committee. Govt said, "Independence of the Election Commission, or any other organisation or authority, does not arise from and is not attributable to presence of a judicial member in the selection committee. Presence of senior govt functionaries (PM and HM) in the Selection Committee cannot be a ground to

nature of the one sought by the petitioners, would amount to stay of the legislation validly enacted by Parliament, and such a stay at the interim stage would be an exercise impermissible within the confines of judicial review envisaged under the Constitution," it said, adding that none of the petitioners raised any doubt about the unimpeachable credentials of the two ECs appointed.

It said for 73 years, ECs were exclusively appointed by govt, absent a legislation in this regard. SC had only provided an interim mechanism for selection of ECs to fill a legislative vacuum, which has since been filled by a Parliament-enacted law, it said, adding the Constitution itself vests Parliament with the power to prescribe mechanism for EC appointments through a law.

An interim order in the

case said that no one can insist on sticking to the SC-mandated panel mandated interim selection panel comprising PM, CJI and leader of opposition in LS, to select ECs after Parliament enacted 'CEC & Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Terms of Office) Act', which came into force Jan 2. The law replaced the CJI with a Cabinet minister in the selection panel. In the recent EC selection, Union home minister Amit Shah was part of the panel.

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An interim



**SWFs' Bets On Green Assets Over 2X Of Black Ones In 2023**  
With \$11.2tn in assets, sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) are increasingly looking at sustainable investments as energy transition gains traction. In 2023, SWFs invested \$26bn in green assets, more than double their bets on black assets. Nearly half of green assets were held by Gulf funds that are channelling energy revenues into sustainable investments

# TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, HYDERABAD | THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024



SWF Investments In  
Black Assets (\$bn)  
(Fossil fuels & mining)



SWF Investments In  
Green Assets (\$bn)  
(Renewable energy & electric vehicles)

Source: Visual Capitalist



## JSW MG Motor India plans to recreate 'Maruti movement'

To Invest ₹5,000Cr, Launch Cars Every 3-6 Mths From Sept

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The first major India-China joint venture took off in the car industry with \$110-billion Chinese automotive behemoth SAIC, which owns and operates MG Motor brand, partnering homegrown steel major JSW to manufacture cars for Indian and global markets.

Saijan Jindal, chairman of JSW group, said cumulatively holding of Indian entities will be 51% in the new company, which will be called JSW MG Motor India and will see initial investment of Rs 5,000 crore. While JSW will get 35% stake in MG Motor India, domestic financial investors will hold 8%, MG employees 5% and dealers 3%. SAIC will hold the balance 49%, though the agreement envisages diluting Chinese partner's equity further over next few years through a series of steps, which may include an IPO.

TOI was the first to report on the JV between JSW and MG Motor in its edition dated April 25 last year.

JSW, which is separately investing Rs 40,000 crore into automotive business through



FIRST MAJOR INDIA-CHINA AUTO JV: (From left) Rajeev Chaba, CEO Emeritus of MG Motor India, Saijan Jindal, chairman, JSW Group, and Parth Jindal, member of steering committee of JSW MG Motor India

plans to set up factories for electric cars and commercial vehicles, batteries and components in Odisha, said the new entity with MG intends to recreate the "Maruti movement" and launch efficient cars every three-to-six months starting Sept.

Jindal said while his group had closed the deal with MG, it is being pursued by several other groups for a partnership. Speculation is JSW is holding talks with Volkswagen group for a partnership in India, apart from talking to Chinese Leapmotor to license their technology for

EVs. "There are so many opportunities, and we keep on discussing... India is buzz word today, and there are lots of people who talk to us, and approach us," he told TOI, while being joined by son Parth (member of steering committee of JSW MG Motor) and MG Motor India CEO emeritus Rajeev Chaba.

On the new partnership, he said, "With MG, my dream is that we will recreate a Maruti movement. Like 40 years ago when Maruti came to India, it changed the auto industry by bringing in very efficient and lightweight cars.

The new entity of JSW and MG will now go aggressive in the car market by driving in a series of new cars, mostly focused on clean energy that would include plug-in hybrid electrics (that run on both petrol engine and battery), pure electrics, fuel cells, and other greener options.

The companies also plan to ramp up production at MG's Halol plant in Gujarat from 1.2 lakh units annually to 3 lakh units, as they look to go aggressive in new car launches, pricing, and technologies.

Ambassadors and Fiat went into oblivion as Maruti brought in state-of-the-art new cars. And today, they are the market leaders. So, I believe with MG, we can create a New Energy Vehicles (NEVs) Maruti movement," Jindal said.

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# TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, HYDERABAD | THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

EWAN MCGREGOR HAD INTIMACY COORDINATOR EVEN FOR SEX SCENES WITH WIFE ON NEW SHOW: 'NECESSARY AS IT'S ALSO ABOUT THE CREW'

SAYING NOTHING...  
SOMETIMES SAYS THE MOST  
— EMILY DICKINSON



BEYONCE REVEALS UPCOMING ALBUM 'ACT II' A CLAPBACK TO BEING TOLD SHE 'DOESN'T BELONG IN COUNTRY MUSIC'

## Pak thwarts attack on CPEC's Gwadar port, 7 militants killed

Baloch Separatists Storm Complex, 4 Soldiers Die In Blasts & Gunfire

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

**Islamabad:** Baloch separatists armed with guns and bombs attacked Pakistan's strategic Gwadar Port Authority Complex, a key to the multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, on Wednesday with seven assailants being shot dead by security forces, govt officials said.

The militants stormed the complex in southwestern Baluchistan province which houses offices of different govt departments, intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces, said Saeed Ahmed Umriani, the region's commissioner.

"Attackers carried out major blasts," he told media, adding that it was followed by an attack with guns. He said the army and police were responding. "I have received reports that seven attackers have been killed," Umriani added.

An army source told AFP four soldiers were also killed.

The United Nations Department for Safety and Security said "several explosions followed by continuous firing" were reported during the attack. The



Gwadar, a seaport town on Pakistan's southwestern coast, is part of China's multi-billion-dollar CPEC, the flagship project of Xi's Belt and Road Initiative

**China to order hunt for corrupt BRI officials**

**C**hina plans to launch an "international manhunt" to target fugitive officials allegedly involved in corruption in the country's ambitious decade-old multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a media report said Wednesday. The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), the ruling Communist Party of China's anti-corruption watchdog, made the call in a meeting on Tuesday with multiple agencies involved in the cross-border corruption hunt, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. PTI

statement added there were no immediate reports of casualties, elaborating that seven personnel from three UN agencies based in Gwadar and two UN agencies on missions were "sa-

fe and accounted for".

Majeed Brigade, a suicide squad of the proscribed Balochistan Liberation Army, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it targeted offices

of military intelligence located in the complex. BLA mostly targets security forces and Chinese interests in Pakistan. Intelligence reports suggest it maintains sanctuaries in areas along the Pakistan-Iran border.

Gwadar, a seaport town on Pakistan's southwestern coast, is part of China's multi-billion-dollar CPEC, the flagship project of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. Much of the violence is seen as a reaction by Baloch separatist groups to China's investment plans in the region to link its Xinjiang province with the Arabian Sea in Balochistan through network of roads and rail. Baloch nationalists initially wanted a share of provincial resources, but later initiated a movement for separation from Pakistan.

The attack on the Gwadar complex follows a fierce terrorist attack on a security check post in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, last week, as the country witnesses a spike in such attacks, resulting in the deaths of several civilians and law enforcement officials.

## To cut CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, US announces rules aimed at phasing out gas cars



**NOT A BAN:** The regulation does not mandate the sales of electric vehicles, and gas-powered cars and trucks could still be sold. Rather, it requires carmakers to meet tough emissions limits. It's up to them to decide how to comply with the rule

**T**he Biden administration Wednesday issued one of the most significant climate regulations in the nation's history, a rule designed to ensure that the majority of new passenger cars and light trucks sold in the US are all-electric or hybrids by 2032.

Nearly three years in the making, the new tailpipe pollution limits from the Environmental Protection Agency would transform the US automobile market. A record 1.2 million electric vehicles rolled off dealers' lots last year, but they made up just 7.6% of total US car sales, far from the 56% target under the new regulation. An additional 16% of new cars sold would be hybrids.

Cars and other forms of transportation are, together, the largest single source of carbon emissions generated by the US, pollution that is driving climate change and that helped to make 2023 the hottest year in recorded history.

Electric vehicles are central to President Biden's strategy to confront global warming,

laxed from tailpipes over time so that, by 2032, more than half the new cars sold in the US would most likely be zero-emissions vehicles in order for carmakers to meet the standards. That would avoid more than 7 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the next 30 years, according to the EPA. That's the equivalent of removing a year's worth of all the greenhouse gases generated by the US, the country that has historically pumped the most carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The regulation would provide nearly \$100 billion in annual net benefits to society, according to the agency, including \$13 billion of annual public health benefits thanks to improved air quality.

The standards would also save the average driver about \$6,000 in reduced fuel and maintenance over the life of a vehicle, EPA estimated. The transition to e-vehicles would require enormous changes in manufacturing, infrastructure, technology, labour, global trade and consumer habits. nvt

which calls for cutting the nation's emissions in half by the end of this decade. But EVs have also become politicised and are becoming an issue in the 2024 presidential campaign. "Three years ago, I set an ambitious target: that half of all new cars and trucks sold in 2030 would be zero-emission," said Biden in a statement. "We'll meet my goal and race forward in the years ahead."

The rule increasingly limits the amount of pollution al-

lowed from tailpipes over time so that, by 2032, more than half the new cars sold in the US would most likely be zero-emissions vehicles in order for carmakers to meet the standards. That would avoid more than 7 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the next 30 years, according to the EPA. That's the equivalent of removing a year's worth of all the greenhouse gases generated by the US, the country that has historically pumped the most carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The regulation would provide nearly \$100 billion in annual net benefits to society, according to the agency, including \$13 billion of annual public health benefits thanks to improved air quality.

The three women from Jamia Islamiyah Al-Balaat seminary in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were arrested two years ago for murdering their teacher, Safoora Bibi, alleging she had committed blasphemy.

The assault took place at the seminary's gate where the students beat their teacher with sticks before slitting her throat.

After learning of the incident, the teacher's uncle had informed the police that his niece had been tortured and killed in the street. Subsequently, police said, the accused had confessed to the crime, claiming that a teenage relative had dreamt of the victim committing blasphemy.

Al Russell, the hospital's chief executive, said "all

## Lanka to let foreign ships dock for replenishments

**The move comes after China protested against Sri Lanka allowing a German survey ship but turning down its request**

**C**olombo: Sri Lanka has said it will allow foreign offshore research ships for replenishments at its ports despite a one-year ban on such vessels, a senior official said after China protested over Colombo allowing a German survey ship but turning down a similar request it had made.

This is the first time Sri Lanka has officially admitted foreign research vessels will be allowed for replenishments since President Ranil Wickremesinghe's govt imposed a one-year ban on offshore research vessels last Dec after strong security concerns raised by India and the US following the visit of two Chinese high-tech research

vessels in 14 months.

"The ban on foreign ships

is for research purposes, not on replenishment," Economy Next quoted Nilukta Kadurugamuwa, Sri Lanka's foreign ministry spokesman, as saying. "There was a German research vessel recently for replenishment and Sri Lanka allowed it," he added.

Sri Lanka is in the process of introducing SOPs for handling foreign vessels. nvt

## Can Texas arrest migrants at border? Back-&-forth rulings spark confusion



Texas law would make it a state crime to cross into the US state from a foreign country anywhere other than at a legal port of entry

**L**awyers for Governor Greg Abbott of Texas and the Biden administration were back in court on Wednesday for the latest round in a bitter fight over immigration enforcement, as a panel of three federal judges in New Orleans heard arguments over the state's migrant arrest law.

The panel, which did not immediately issue a ruling, was considering whether the law can take effect while its constitutionality is being challenged in court. During the hour-long hearing, only two of the judges spoke, and their comments suggested a split on the panel. Chief Judge Priscilla Richman appeared sceptical of the law, particularly its pro-

vision allowing state courts to order migrants back to Mexico. Judge Andrew Oldham, a former general counsel to Abbott, focused his questions on justice department's lawyers and appeared likely to side with Texas. The third judge, Irma Carrillo Ramirez, who did

not speak, was appointed by President Biden and confirmed only a few months ago.

The hearing came after a day of back-and-forth rulings that briefly allowed the law to take effect. It would give state and local police agencies the power to arrest migrants who cross into Texas without authorisation — powers the Biden administration says are reserved for the federal govt.

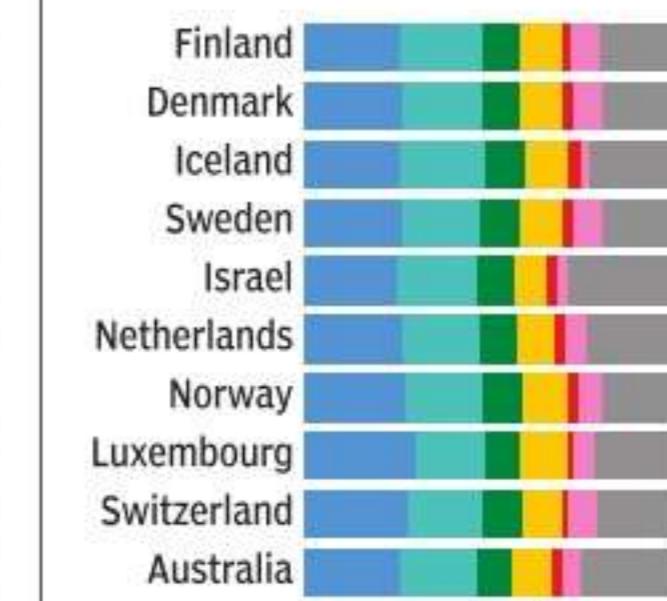
The rulings had created confusion along the border, outraged immigration advocates and led to a show of defiance by the Mexican govt.

The law would make it a crime to cross into Texas from a foreign country anywhere other than a legal port of entry. nvt

## Finland 'happiest' for 7th year; India ranks #126 while US out of top 20

### HAPPY LEAGUE OF THE WORLD

**HAPPINESS FACTORS** ● Dystopia-Residual ● Perception of corruption  
● Generosity ● Freedom to make life choices ● Healthy life expectancy  
● Social support ● Log GDP per capita



**143 NATIONS RANKED**  
► US (#23) & Germany (#24) not among top 20. Dropped from #15 and #16 respectively  
► Afghanistan, at bottom, saw sharpest decline in happiness since 2006-10  
► Younger generations happier than their older peers



fe expectancy, freedom, generosity and corruption.

Jennifer De Paola, a happiness researcher at the University of Helsinki in Finland, said Finns' close connection to nature and healthy work-life balance were key contributors to their life satisfaction.

The report also found that younger generations were happier than their older peers in most of the world's regions — but not all. In Australia and New Zealand, happiness among groups under 30 has dropped dramatically since 2006-10, with older generations now happier than the young. Also, happiness inequality increased in every region except Europe, which authors described as a "worrying trend". nvt

### AROUND THE WORLD

**Aus burglar caught doing yoga on cam before break-in at bakery for croissant**

inspired manoeuvres, she entered Phillipa's Bakery headquarters. The woman has been charged with theft, burglary and going equipped to steal. She was released on bail.

**No bidders for house where Suu Kyi was held for years** No bidders appeared at a court-ordered auction Wednesday of the family home of Myanmar's imprisoned former leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, where she had been held under house arrest for nearly 15 years. Many view the house as a historical landmark of Suu Kyi's non-violent struggle against military rule for which she won the Nobel Peace Prize. Suu Kyi had challenged the auction order. A lawyer said the court will continue to handle the case.

## Israel kills 90 'gunmen' in al-Shifa hospital raid

Deceased Were Patients: Hamas



**CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE:** Palestinians flee the area near al-Shifa hospital in central Gaza. Since Monday, Israeli troops have engaged in gunbattles with militants at the complex, leaving displaced people, medical teams and nearby residents caught in the crossfire

**Blinken to visit Israel this week, his 6th**

**U**S secretary of state Antony Blinken will travel to Israel to Israel this week as part of his sixth urgent mission to West Asia since Israel's war with Hamas began in Oct, as relations between the two countries have soured dramatically in the recent weeks. The US state department said the Israel stop would cap Blinken's latest tour that started in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday and will continue in Egypt on Thursday. The top US diplomat will be in Tel Aviv on Friday. Blinken will hold talks with the Israel govt leadership on the ongoing negotiations and "the need to ensure the defeat of Hamas, including in Rafah, in a way that protects the civilian population", the department spokesman said. AP

tal was again being used by gunmen. Ismail Al-Thawabta, director of Gaza's Hamas-run govt media office, said all of those killed had been wounded patients and displaced persons inside the hospital. "The Israeli occupation army practices lying and deception in spreading its narrative as part of justifying its continuous and law-breaking crimes, which violate international law, international humanitarian law," he said. REUTERS

### CURIOSITY OVER 'MISSING' ROYAL RESULTS IN PRIVACY BREACH

## Did UK hospital staff try to snoop on Kate's medical records? Govt watchdog to probe



Kate had surgery at the clinic on Jan 16 and was discharged almost two weeks later. The palace has given little detail about Kate's condition beyond saying it wasn't cancer-related and the surgery was successful

appropriate investigatory regulatory and disciplinary steps will be taken." He added, "There is no place at our hospital for those who intentionally breach the trust of our patients or colleagues."

Health minister Maria Caulfield said police had been asked to look into the matter. "Whether they take action is a matter for them." AP

### Kate-spiracies explode on internet

**K**ate Middleton has long been a magnet for unproven rumours: She pressured an art gallery to remove a portrait! She split from her husband! She changed her hairstyle to distract from pregnancy rumours! She did not give birth to her daughter!

This year, speculation kicked into overdrive. Middleton has lain low since Christmas. Kensington Palace said she was recovering from "a planned abdominal surgery". Conspiracy theorists had other more sinister ideas. The only explanation for the future queen's long absence, they said, was that she was missing, dying or deceased, and that someone was trying to cover it up.

In her invented death, the princess joins a host of other celebrities and public figures — from President Joe Biden to Elon Musk — who scores of online detectives have declared in recent months to be

dead or even in an induced coma. Internet sleuths declared that photos of Kate in cars with her mother and husband were actually another woman who lacked the princess's facial moles. Another video of Kate and her husband at a store was combed over by conspiracy theorists who said she looked too blurry, too healthy, too thin, too flat-haired, too unprotected by bodyguards to really be the princess.

For many of the people, conspiracies are harmless fun. Others, however, spend "countless hours" on the pursuit, demanding celebrities provide proof of life. Whatever the motivation, what lingers is an urge to question reality, misinformation experts say nvt

## Ireland PM Varadkar quits in shock announcement

**London:** Ireland's Indian-origin Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, Wednesday sent shockwaves across the country by announcing his resignation, citing "personal and political reasons", triggering a leadership contest.

The 45-year-old made the announcement in an emotional statement from the steps of the govt buildings in Dublin. Varadkar said he believed a new leader "will be better placed than me" to gain seats for his party Fine Gael in the next general election, scheduled for next year.

"My reasons for stepping down now are personal

and political, but mainly political..." After seven years in office, I don't feel I'm the best person for that job anymore. There are loyal colleagues and good friends contesting local European elections and I want to give them the best chance possible," he said. "I have nothing lined up or in mind. No definite personal or political plans, but I am looking forward to having time to think about them."



SABALENKA MATCH AT MIAMI OPEN WILL BE UNCOMFORTABLE, SAYS FRIEND PAULA BADOSA

SPANISH COURT GRANTS BAIL TO DANI ALVES ON APPEAL AGAINST RAPE CONVICTION



## IPL RING BEFORE THE FINAL FLING

For Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, this season of franchise cricket must set the tone for the upcoming T20 World Cup. The return to the old guard comes from a yearning to fill India's ICC trophy cupboard before the era of these two greats ends.

Partha.Bhaduri@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will enter IPL-2024 knowing India's ICC trophy stocks have been depleted by years of drought.

For both, the IPL will be a prelude to that elusive quest, another World Cup title, in the US and Caribbean in June. Form, fitness, technique and approach will be fine-tuned while strutting their stuff in franchise colours.

The T20 WC follows but first, they must look the part.

Looming issues of relevance seem to have been addressed for the moment, at least for one of them — Rohit has already been named India's T20I captain for the WC by the BCCI secretary.

For Kohli, issues of relevance would seem a no-brainer: he is a T20 giant and certainly the most consistent in India's wins. Among other things, he has scored 518 runs in nine innings while successfully chasing a target in the T20 World Cup, remaining unbeaten eight times.

Latestly, concerns about his strike rates in certain situations have crumbled under closer scrutiny. Last season, Kohli scored 639 runs from 14 outings for RCB at a strike rate of 139.82, with two hundreds. This would suggest a late-career resurgence. How do you keep a trump card like him out of the T20I team?

Logically too, it would seem that if the selectors have picked Rohit, they must pick Kohli. This return to the old guard in cricket's freshest format is not because the coun-



STALWARTS: India will hope Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli shine with the bat in the IPL

try lacks new talent — far from it — but because of the yearning to fill that empty ICC cupboard in the Rohit-Kohli era of Indian cricket.

Remember, it was assumed after the 2022 T20 WC in Australia that there would be no more T20 comebacks for both. That sentiment changed after India's formidable performance in the 50-over WC late last year; It was subsequently felt that the current dispensation under head coach Rahul Dravid — with these two batting stalwarts in tow — deserves another go at another title.

As Rohit said in the wake of India's comprehensive and heart-wrenching defeat to Australia in the 50-over WC final, "it was just pure love from people... it was wonderful to see... it gives you motivation to get back and start working again and look for another ultimate prize".

It's time, then, for another fling at the

"ultimate prize" that has eluded for so long, and the road starts here with the IPL. No doubt it is the last such attempt for Rohit and Kohli.

For both, the IPL must set the tone for the upcoming WC. This is, however, a task made onerous by the oddball dynamics of franchise cricket.

Rohit may have been named India's skipper but he has just lost the Mumbai Indians captaincy to Hardik Pandya. The same Pandya who, it was assumed before Jay Shah's proclamation in Rajkot, would have been the natural successor to Rohit as India's T20 captain.

It is with the bat, then, that Rohit must make a statement. Except he has been in woeful form in the IPL for a while. He averaged 19.14 in 2022 and 20.75 in 2023 for MI. From 2017 to 2023, across 100 IPL innings, Rohit averages 24.60 with no hundreds and

13 fifties. He went 24 innings without a fifty from April 29, 2021 to April 8, 2023.

Rohit did score a century, his fifth in T20Is, against Afghanistan in Bengaluru this Jan, but seems to be in a deep, IPL-specific slump brought on by his desire to dominate bowlers from the get-go.

Kohli, meanwhile, likes to open for his franchise but bat at No. 3 for India. His presence in the India side complicates selection matters with the likes of Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma all jostling for top and middle-order berths. Though he is not an IPL captain anymore, Kohli needs that title win with RCB to define the narrative.

India will hope Rohit and Kohli can exude an aura of winnability for their IPL franchises before some anticipated World Cup heroics. And then maybe, at the end of the long summer, that big prize will follow.

## HOW THE TEAMS LOOK—PART II

### ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU

RCB have adopted a new team name, jersey and logo for the 17th edition. But the old question still remains — when will they end the title drought? The pressure has increased after the women's team won the WPL.

**STRENGTH:** With a batting line-up comprising Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis and Glenn Maxwell — RCB will bank on their willow strength. Throw in Cameron Green and Rajat Patidar, their balanced top five can outbat any opposition.



**WEAKNESS:** Lack of quality spinners is a concern. With leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga surprisingly released, RCB could not find a replacement at the auction. Leg-spinner Karn Sharma, Himanshu Sharma and part-timer Maxwell, do not inspire confidence.

**OPPORTUNITY:** The Indian line-up, comprising domestic performers like Patidar, pacers Akash Deep and Vysakh Vijaykumar can turn match-winners.

**THREAT:** At home in Chinnaswamy with shorter boundaries, RCB can be found wanting at the death. Without Harshal Patel, they are short of options and may turn to Alzarri Joseph or Reece Topley for the job.

### SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad, 2016 champions, have assembled a squad packed with match-winners. They broke the bank to acquire the services of Pat Cummins. They also strengthened the batting by adding Travis Head and Hasaranga, which gives it a very strong look on paper.

**STRENGTH:** Sunrisers have the best of foreign talent at their disposal, but all of them cannot play on a regular basis and to get the combination right will be tricky. Mayank Agarwal at the top can be dangerous. However, their trump card will be South African Klaasen.

**WEAKNESS:** Lack of consistency has been their biggest problem. Add to that poor performances of domestic players. Barring Klaasen, the rest struggled to perform last year. In bowling, Malik and Natarajan need to find their range.

**OPPORTUNITY:** It will be a great opportunity for Cummins to rally a beleaguered side. The proven big match winner that the Australian is, it will remain to be seen if he can emulate David Warner and win the title. For the domestic trio of Abhishek Sharma, Rahul Tripathi and Abdul Samad it's another opportunity to come good.

**THREAT:** The Sunrisers rely heavily on their overseas players. The form of Travis Head, Heinrich Klaasen and Pat Cummins holds the key and they will hope Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Washington Sundar and T Natarajan stay free of injury.

### KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shreyas Iyer is back as the skipper and that augurs well for KKR. Gautam Gambhir is back too, as the mentor. Hopefully, the former skipper, who led them to two titles, will be able to motivate the team.

**STRENGTH:** Batting is KKR's strong point with the likes of Phil Salt, Shreyas Iyer, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Rahamanullah Gurbaz and Rinku Singh ready to explode at any time.

They also have formidable spinners in Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarthy and Suyash Sharma.

**WEAKNESS:** Apart from Mitchell Starc, the pace department looks a little soft. Having been picked for a record price, there will be pressure on the Aussie to deliver. Starc will have to depend on pacers like Chetan Sakaria, Vaibhav Arora and Harshit Rana for support.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Phil Salt, who replaced Jason Roy, has a chance to prove that the management was right to back him. He can bat in any position and that gives the team flexibility.

**THREAT:** Andre Russell is a huge asset when he is in form, but has not always been consistent. An injury to him or Starc can throw KKR's campaign out of gear. Even Iyer's fitness will be keenly watched.

MS Dhoni

Shreyas Iyer

Phil Salt

Andre Russell

Nitish Rana

Chetan Sakaria

Varun Chakravarthy

Suyash Sharma

### CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

CSK have everything going in their favour — a great team, the opener at home, the final at Chepauk. It can be the ideal Dhoni swansong and the team is up for it.

**STRENGTH:** The depth. Almost every player in their team has international experience and they know what it takes to deliver on the big stage.

**WEAKNESS:** Injury to Matheesha Pathirana, their No. 1 death bowler.

The team will be desperate to have him back.

MS Dhoni

Shreyas Iyer

Phil Salt

Andre Russell

Nitish Rana

Chetan Sakaria

Varun Chakravarthy

Suyash Sharma

### 'RAHUL CAN BAG T20 WC SLOT IF HE SHINES IN IPL'

New Delhi: If KL Rahul leads Lucknow Super Giants to their maiden IPL title, he will automatically be rewarded with a spot in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup, reckons the franchise's head coach Justin Langer.

Rahul, who is coming back from a quadriiceps injury, is not still a certainty in the Indian T20 squad. Asked how he would balance his skipper's personal ambition with the team's interests, Langer said it isn't all that complicated. "If the team does well, everyone gets rewarded."

**AB EXPECTS 'GOOD FRIEND' KOHLI TO BE AT HIS USUAL BEST**

Chennai: South Africa great AB de Villiers has backed his former Royal Challengers Bengaluru teammate Virat Kohli to be at his usual best in the Indian Premier League.

The 35-year-old Kohli has not played competitive cricket in almost two months after opting out of the recently-concluded Test series against England at home, which India won 4-1 because of the birth of son.

"Stalwart, King Kohli, over 7000 runs, over 200 IPL matches — but

that's simply incredible. That's like a career in itself. Virat will be back. We've missed him dearly and absolutely cannot wait to watch the best of him this coming season," de Villiers said on his YouTube channel.

Apart from Rahul, the other serious T20 World Cup contender from LSG is leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi.

"For players like KL or Bishnoi, the more they concentrate on playing well for LSG, their chances (of WT20 call-up) will increase."

Rahul is expected to link up with the team on Wednesday evening due to a flight delay but the former Australian opener didn't say a word about when the star player will start keeping. "He has followed all the 'Return To Play' protocols and he has been hitting a lot of balls," AGENCE

that's simply incredible. That's like a career in itself. Virat will be back. We've missed him dearly and absolutely cannot wait to watch the best of him this coming season," de Villiers said on his YouTube channel.

De Villiers also backed current RCB skipper Faf du Plessis to deliver this season. "He has had a little bit of a dip in form of late, but towards the back end of the SA20, he started finding his feet again, which boasts well for RCB this season," he said.

De Villiers also praised RCB's bowling attack, which includes the likes of Lockie Ferguson, Reece Topley, Mohammed Siraj, Alzarri Joseph and Karn Sharma. PTI

## GALLERY

### GT name Warrier as Shami's replacement

Gujarat Titans have roped in Kerala medium-pacer Sandeep Warrier as a replacement for injured senior Indian seamer Mohammed Shami, the Indian Premier League said on Wednesday. Shami recently underwent a successful Achilles heel surgery in London for his right heel problem. He is expected to be undergoing rehabilitation for almost the whole of IPL 2024, thus ruling him out of the entire event.

**Retired Imad Wasim makes himself available for Pak selection:** Four months after retiring from international cricket, Pakistan spin all-rounder Imad Wasim has made himself available for selection after playing a key role in Islamabad United's title win in PSL. AGENCIES

### ACTION TODAY

**BASKETBALL:** NBA, 4.30 am to 8.30 am (Jiocinema); **CRICKET:** BD vs Aus, women's ODI, 9 am (Fancode); **FOOTBALL:** Euro qualifying, 10.30 pm and 1.15 am Friday (Sony Sports); World Cup qualifying: Afghanistan vs India, 12.30 am Friday (Fancode); **TEENNIS:** Miami Open, 8.30 pm & 4.30 am Friday (Sony)

### Afghanistan condemns CA's postponement of bilateral T20I series

Kabul: A miffed Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Wednesday asked its Australian counterparts to "not succumb" to pressures from their government, which the south Asian country believes led to the postponement of a bilateral T20 series. Cricket Australia (CA) on Tuesday postponed a three-match T20 International home series against Afghanistan's men's team in August this year, citing the "worsening" conditions for women and girls in that country. Responding to CA's move in a strongly-worded letter, the ACB said, "The Afghanistan Cricket Board expresses disappointment over Cricket Australia's decision to postpone yet another bilateral series against Afghanistan and reiterates its stance on neutral and politics-free cricket across the globe. ACB advocates for keeping cricket distinct from political influence, considering the game's significance in Afghanistan."

Zara in joint lead at Queen Sirikit Cup

Indian teen star Zara Anand braved icy and frosty conditions on the opening morning of the 44th Queen Sirikit Cup golf tournament to card 1-over 73 and take a share of the lead in Christchurch on Wednesday. The 15-year-old Zara, who was added to the team by the Indian Golf Union following the withdrawal of 2023 winner Avani Prashanth, shot at the Par-72 Clearwater Golf Club. AGENCIES

### Two-window ban for Hyd FC

Marcus.Mergulhao  
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Panaji: Hyderabad FC have been barred from registering new players for the next two windows after they were handed a transfer ban by the All India Football Federation's player status committee.

The Indian Super League (ISL) club has been punished for repeat offences after defaulting on salaries to several players and officials.

"The club is banned from registering any new players for two entire and consecutive registration periods. The club can register new players only for the next registration period following the complete serving of the relevant sporting sanction," the AIFF's player status committee said on Wednesday.

The ban will be effective from the next registration window, starting mid-June to August end. The second transfer window is scheduled for January 2025 which effectively means Hyderabad cannot register players for the en-

tiere 2024-25 season. The club is currently serving a FIFA transfer ban after the club defaulted on payment to former Nigerian striker Bartholomew Ogbeche.

The player status committee has noted that Hyderabad is a repeated and egregious offender with several cases filed against it by players, officials and intermediaries for non-payment of dues. "Hyderabad are not functioning like a professional club and have shown utter disregard for its players."

The list of those who have complained against them have kept on growing. It is no surprise that the AIFF decided to act," an official told TOI.

According to sources, more than ten players and officials have complained in the last two years. It includes foreign players like Joel Chianese, Borja Herrera, Odei Onaindia and Ogbeche, while former coach Manolo Marquez and goalkeeper's coach Asier Rey are also among those who have taken their case to the world body.

Protest wins Mumbai FC two more points

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Panaji: Mumbai City FC opened up a two-point lead at the top of the ISL table after they were awarded two additional points for their 1-1 draw against Jamshedpur FC, adjudged to have fielded an ineligible player.

Jamshedpur had fought hard for a draw against the table toppers but ended up replacing an Indian player with a foreigner, after Nigerian striker Chima Chukwu was sent off late in the game. The substitution left six Indian players on the field.

The All India Football Federation's disciplinary committee concluded that Jamshedpur violated League Rule 4.2.10, which states that "each club shall ensure that at least seven domestic players are fielded on that day. He joined the MI camp on Monday and has be-

### Rohit, Hardik exchange pleasantries at MI camp</

**SPAIN COURT BAILS CONVICTED ALVES FOR 1 MILLION EUROS**

**Barcelona:** Former Brazil international Dani Alves is to be released from jail pending an appeal against his rape conviction in a one-million-euro bail agreement denounced by the victim's lawyer as "justice for the rich." The ruling came a day after his lawyer requested the 40-year-old's release on grounds he had already served a quarter of his four-and-a-half-year sentence in pre-trial detention following his arrest in January 2023. In its ruling, the Barcelona court granted him "provisional release" in exchange for "the bail payment of 1,000,000 euros" (\$1.08 million) also requiring he hand over his Spanish and Brazilian passports, remain in Spain and present himself to court "on a weekly basis."

But the decision drew a furious response from the lawyer of the young woman who was raped by Alves at a Barcelona nightclub in December 2022. "I'm very surprised and totally outraged... because it's like this is justice for the rich," Ester Garcia told RAC1 radio in the northeastern Catalonia region and pledging to appeal on grounds it was "not in line with the law".

"It is scandalous that they can free a person who they know can get hold of a million euros in a heartbeat," she said.

**POLICE RAID RUBIALES' RESIDENCE IN PROBE OF SAUDI ARABIA SUPER CUP DEALS**

**Madrid:** Spanish police have arrested at least six people and raided the offices of the Spanish soccer federation as part of a corruption and money laundering probe that includes suspicions regarding the federation's deal with Saudi Arabia to take the Super Cup to the West Asian country.

Spain's Guardia Civil said that they raided the federation's offices near Madrid and a residence belonging to former federation president Luis Rubiales in the southern city of Granada on Wednesday. Police said that Rubiales was not among the six arrested. The office for Spain's state prosecutors said that a total of 11 premises were raided for documents and that it expected the operation to conclude with seven arrests and the identification of five more people as being under investigation. AGENCIES

# INDIA COUNT ON YOUNG VIKRAM

HAMSTRING ISSUES FOR MIDFIELDER SAHAL ON MATCH-EVE

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**S**unil Chhetri knows there are more than just three points at stake when India face Afghanistan in a crucial FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifier at the Damac Stadium in Abha on Thursday.

After an unimpressive campaign at the AFC Asian Cup where India lost all three games and were among the only two teams not to score a goal, Igor Stimac's side now has a lot of ground to cover.

"We are here right in the corner of Saudi Arabia and we really have to bounce back after what happened in the Asian Cup," said Chhetri. "It's not going to be easy. We have to turn up."

On paper, this looks relatively easier than group opponents like Asian champions Qatar and Kuwait. Afghanistan have a weakened side with only three of their 18 protesting players returning to the side, while four more are available from those who played a role in the play-offs win against Mongolia.

India, though, aren't taking anything for granted and know they will have to be at their best, particularly while adjusting to the conditions in the high-altitude city, located 2,470 metres above sea level.

"From what we know, Afghanistan had a three-week camp here in Abha from Jan 21 to Feb 11 and



WC QUALIFIER

played two games against local clubs. We can expect a much different side from what we have seen them play against Qatar and Kuwait," said a senior team official.

Stimac is unlikely to throw away any major surprises with his choice of players. With Sandesh Jhingan injured, Anwar Ali and Rahul Bheke are certainties in the centre of defence with Nikhil Poojary and one from Subhashish Bose or Akash Mishra on either side.

Midfielders Jeakson Singh and Apuria are automatic choices, while captain Chhetri, Manvir Singh and Lallianzuala Chhangte will have

important roles to play. If practice sessions are any indication, Stimac could show faith in 22-year-old Vikram Partap Singh, who has seven goals and two assists in this season's Indian Super League (ISL), as India's lone striker.

Sources said midfielder Sahal Abdul Samad felt discomfort with his hamstring while controlling a pass and won't be risked on Thursday. Brandon Fernandes was also unwell but has now recovered.

"Each game is important from the aspect of self-confidence and rankings. But our priority and the final goal is to qualify (for the next

**INDIA VS AFGHANISTAN: HEAD-TO-HEAD**

FIFA RANKINGS	
India — 117	Afghanistan — 158
Matches (Sr internationals): 20	
India won — 13	Afghanistan won — 1
DRAWS: 6	
India — 43 goals	Afghanistan — 12 goals

Last Meeting (Jun 11, 2022; Asia Cup qualifiers, Kolkata): India 2 (Chhetri, Samad) Afghanistan 1 (Zubayr Amiri)

—Stats: Gautam Roy

Our priority and the final goal is to qualify for Round 3. There are various options to get there and obviously, nothing will be decided in the next two games."

—Igor Stimac, INDIA COACH

round). There are various options to get there and obviously, nothing will be decided in the next two games. The matches in June against Kuwait and Qatar will tell us everything," said Stimac.

Afghanistan have lost both their games against Qatar (1-8) and Kuwait (0-4). It's been a difficult start as national team coach for Ashley Westwood, grappling with the boycott of first-choice players who are protesting against the Afghanistan FA.

"In football, anything can happen," said Westwood, who has had coaching spells at Bengaluru, ATK and Punjab FC. "It's 90 minutes with lots of uncontrollables, so you always have a chance. All I know is we will give all we can from an application and effort perspective and leave no stone unturned regarding respecting our opposition."

**CITY SPORT**

Winners of the pickleball championship on Wednesday

**Double delight for Sahil**

Sahil clinched two titles in the Gamepoint 1st Pickleball

Championship on Wednesday.

He won the men's doubles and

mixed doubles titles. Sahil and

Dhaval defeated Gaurabdh

Ghosh and CS Cisakh 15-7 in

the men's doubles final. Later,

he partnered Prachi to defeat

Charitha and Venkat 16-14 in

the mixed doubles final.

**Quality Inn Residency to face Park Hyatt in final**

Quality Inn Residency crushed

Taj Krishna by 10 wickets to

cruise into the final of the

HRAT'S T20 cricket tournament.

They will take on Park Hyatt,

who downed Radisson Blu

Plaza by five wickets, in the

final.

**Brief scores (SFs):** Taj Krishna 153/6 in

20 overs (Anil 58, Lakshman 28,

Soumya Ranjan 25; TK Sunil Kumar 1/31,

Ravish Daway 1/19) lost to Quality Inn

Residency 154/0 in 15.3 overs (Tufani Khan

73\*, Lokesh Dave 49\*). Radisson Blu Plaza

103 in 18.5 overs (SK Quadri 30; N Gopi

2/20, Amit Negi 2/21, Shubham Tandle

3/16) lost to Park Hyatt 105/5 in 13.2 overs

(G Naresh Kumar 25, Amit Negi 27; Bhagat

Rawat 1/19, Madhu 1/31).

**Tejendra powers Sanathnagar to close victory**

Tejendra showed his shooting prowess by scoring a staggering 52 points as his side Sanathnagar Playground defeated Loyola Academy in the 5th Samuel Vasanth Kumar memorial tournament at YMCA Secunderabad. Majid, with his 27-point show, staged a lone battle for the Loyola Academy. For the winners, Jasim was the next best with 15 points.

**Results:** Sanathnagar PG 86 (Tejendra 52, Jasim 15) bt Loyola Academy 82 (Majid 27, Daniel 12, Steve 10, Vignesh 10).

**IPL Fan park in Nizamabad**

Nizamabad will be one of the 50 Indian cities to have an IPL Fan park during the IPL season. The match between LSG and PBKS will be screened at the Fan park on March 30 and Sunrisers Hyderabad's match against Gujarat Giants will be shown on March 31. The first two weeks of IPL from March 22 to April 7 will see 15 Fan parks. Fans can witness live action with music, merchandise, food, games and some fun activities by the official sponsors of IPL.

## Sindhu, Srikanth, Lakshya progress

**Basel: Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu, in-form**

Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth produced impressive performances to progress to the second round of the Swiss Open super 300 badminton tournament here on Wednesday. Sindhu, who had claimed the title in 2022, beat Thailand's Pornpicha Choewong 21-21, 21-13.

Sen, who had reached back-to-back semifinals at French Open and All England Championships in the last two weeks, outlasted Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao 21-19, 15-21, 21-11 in 62 minutes.

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**Army inducts homemade anti-drone systems**

Rajat Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Army has now

inducted an initial lot of seven new indigenous integrated drone detection and interdiction systems (IDD&IS) for deployment along the northern borders with China, even as DRDO is working on more powerful directed energy weapon systems in shape of high-energy lasers and high-powered microwaves.

The vehicle-based IDD&IS, which provide for both "soft kills" of hostile drones through jamming and "hard kills" through lasers, has a detection range of 5 to 8 km. While the "soft kill" can jam the drones at ranges from 2 to 5 km, the effective "hard kill" range is over 800 meters.

Produced by DRDO and Bharat Electronics, these IDD&ISs are Mark-I variants introduced by the Army Air Defence (AAD). They will add to the existing counter-drone systems. There will, of course, be advanced IDD&IS versions with longer interception ranges," an officer said. The armed forces have already inked several contracts for them, and more are in the pipeline.

**Baby slips off dad's hands, falls 3 fls**

Raipur: A year-old infant died after slipping from her father's arms and falling 40 feet below at a mall in Raipur on Tuesday night. The father was cradling the infant while helping his elder child, a five-year-old boy, step onto an escalator on the third floor, when he lost his grip on his daughter. CCTV footage showed the infant's head hit the floor first. Witnesses said that when the elder child struggled to step onto the escalator, the father pulled him up and that is when he lost balance, loosening his grip on the infant girl. TNN

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**SC raps ED for filing multiple chargesheets**

► From P 1

“It is related to Article 12

of the Constitution. I

have already held this

in the Manish Sisodia case that if there is undue incarceration,

then court can grant bail

and Section 45 (of PMLA) does

not come in the way,” Justice

Khanna observed.

On Feb 8, hearing a case re-

lated to UAPA, a different SC

bench had said that the con-

ventional idea of ‘bail is the rule,

jail is the exception’ was not

applicable when an accused

was facing charges under the

case.

anti-terror law but delay in tri-

als proceedings could be a ground

to seek bail. On Wednes-

day, a bench of Justices Sanjiv

Khanna and Dipankar

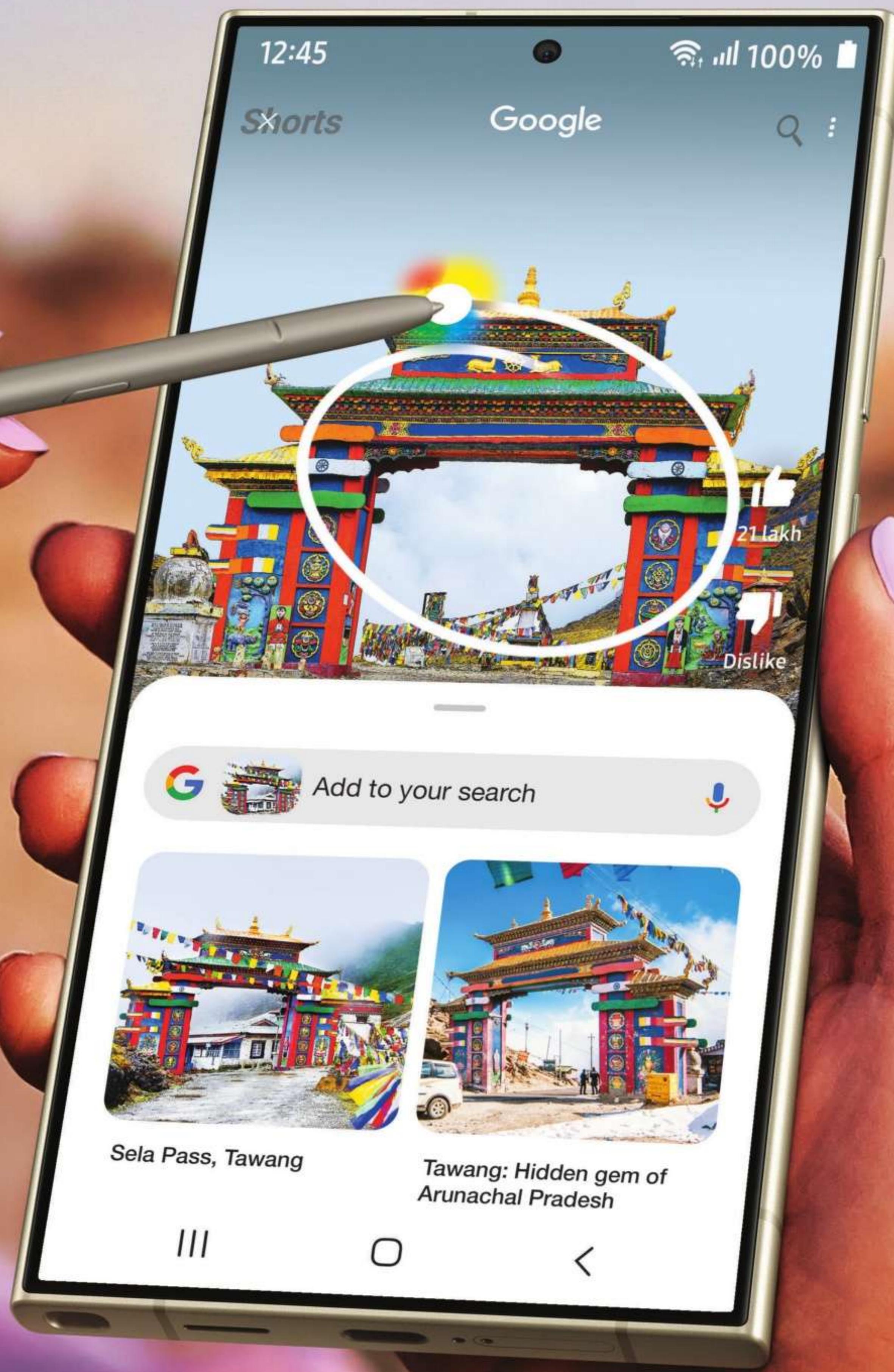
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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

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