

## Karnataka elephant Rupavati suffering from ailments, transport permission to Hyderabad on hold

Hyderabad: The Forest Department of Karnataka that has agreed to transport the elephant Rupavati to Telangana for Bonalu and Muharram festivals has informed that the elephant is suffering from various ailments and not fit for such transport.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change directed that it requires a thorough medical examination for Rupavati following the concerns raised about the elephant's health, which reportedly includes several ailments rendering it unfit for travel. According to a statement from the Ministry, the Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka had issued a transit pass for Rupavati's transfer. However, the Ministry

has been informed that the elephant's condition might not be suitable for such a move. In response to these concerns, the Ministry has mandated that a team of veterinarians conduct a comprehensive medical check-up of Rupavati and submit a detailed medical report. The Ministry has also put the transport permission on hold until further directions or concurrence from the High Power Committee appointed by the Supreme Court are received. The Ministry emphasized the urgency of the matter and requested that the compliance report be submitted as soon as possible for further action. The directive aims to ensure the well-being of the captive elephant and adherence to legal and ethical standards in animal transport.



## Akshaya Patra Foundation, HSBC collaborate to launch sustainability projects

Hyderabad: The Akshaya Patra Foundation has collaborated with HSBC Global Service Centres, India, to launch new sustainability projects including solar and biogas plants at its kitchens in Kandi, Narsingi and Warangal. As a part of HSBC India's wider energy transition programme, the project includes installation of a 165-kW solar plant and a 2,000 kg capacity biogas plant in the kitchens.

The newly launched energy conservation units will generate clean, renewable energy while reducing CO2 emissions by approximately 152 tons annually, a press release said. The integration of biogas systems replaces conventional LPG usage for cooking and harnessing organic waste from the kitchens, facilitating not only efficient waste management but also improves soil health using organic slurry as fertilizer. Mamatha Madireddy, Managing Director, Head of HSBC India Global Service Centres, said, "This initiative is a true reflection of our commitment to harness renewable energy for a better future." Satya Gaura Chandra Dasa, Trustee and regional president of Akshaya Patra Foundation Hyderabad, Dhananjay Ganjoo, Chief Marketing Officer, The Akshaya Patra Foundation, and others were present.



## Telangana to submit report on Kaleshwaram works and investigations to NDSA

Hyderabad: The Telangana Irrigation Department is preparing a report to submit to the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) on the interim works completed so far and that are yet to be completed on the three barrages of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme. A team of officials from the Irrigation Department will leave for New

Delhi next week to submit the report and seek the way forward for resuming the pumping operations at the barrages. The inflows at Medigadda are close to 35,000 cusecs and it would support lifting of water at the Kannepalli pump house without any need for building the storage at the barrage. There is no scope for impounding at

the barrage with all its gates kept open as suggested by the NDSA, according to officials.

The report to be submitted by the department to the NDSA will be outlining the feasibility aspects for resuming the operations at all the 35 pumping units of the three barrages, water requirement in the project

ayacut and measures to be taken after flood season, especially from the end of October.

The geophysical and geotechnical investigations at Medigadda have already been suspended with the rise in the inflows. They are to be resumed only after the flood season, according to officials.

# Will microbes bring an end to the plastic disaster? The answer could be an artificial microbe that feasts on plastic

What if there was a way to deal with millions of tonnes of legacy plastic waste lying in the oceans, rivers and forests? Science fiction? A team of scientists are, in fact, attempting to solve this massive crisis. Lab results are promising but a fully designed solution is a long way to go. The world produces some 430 million tonnes of plastic per year. Around 11 million metric tons of plastic currently enter the ocean, and that volume is expected to triple in the next 20 years.

Worryingly, a plastic grocery bag was found in the Mariana Trench — the deepest point in the ocean, according to the United Nations. There is now a marine ecosystem called the “plastisphere”, which comprises the microbial community on plastic debris. Microplastics are ingested and inhaled by humans and animals every day. The annual social and environmental costs linked to plastic pollution are high with some UN estimates suggesting it's more than \$1.5 trillion per year. The experiment Against this backdrop, and searching for a sustainable way to mitigate plastic pollution, a team of geneticists at the Harvard Medical School has been working to understand whether microorganisms have evolved the basic ability to break down different hydrocarbons or plastic.

Sukanya Punthambaker, co-founder of Breaking, a recently launched plastic degradation and synthetic biology company, has been working on this challenge at the Wyss Institute at Harvard University. Punthambaker was working with renowned geneticist, George Church (also co-founder of Breaking) when she was able to create X-32, which has the potential to degrade up to 90% of polyesters and polyolefins in less than 22 months — untreated, some of these plastics would take over 80 years to decompose naturally. Lab studies are still underway and the team is yet to publish their results but initial findings were promising enough for a US-based “de-extinction company” Colossal Biosciences to support the Harvard team to create “Breaking”. The aim: To work towards developing X-32 to address the global plastics crisis. In lab tests, X-32 has started to break down paint brush bristles, fishing wire and dental floss, according to the team at Breaking. “Here we are leveraging biotechnology and synthetic biology to tackle the huge global plastic pollution problem. What we discovered at the Wyss Institute is that having been helped by Colossal as well, we have found a novel microorganism that can degrade different kinds of plastic. So, that is how we differentiate from other existing technologies,” Punthambaker said. “We are working towards supercharging these microorganisms so that we can increase their plastic degradation efficiencies. We call them X-32. We will be super-charging them, meaning we will use genetic technologies to enhance and up-regulate their genes that are responsible for the plastic degradation,” Punthambaker said.

This is not the first time that scientists



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have found that certain microorganisms have the potential to degrade certain types of plastics. “There was a very famous science paperback in 2016 that showed that microorganisms can degrade PET (Polyethylene terephthalate),” said Punthambaker. In 2016, a paper by Kyoto Institute of Technology found that by screening natural microbial communities exposed to PET in the environment, they managed to isolate a novel bacterium, ‘Ideonella sakaiensis 201-F6’, which is able to use PET as its major energy and carbon source. When grown on PET, this strain produces two enzymes capable of “hydrolysing” PET. Both enzymes are required to enzymatically convert PET efficiently into its two environmentally benign monomers, which are molecules that make polymers. Now when Punthambaker looks back she remembers... “I was always interested in nature and science. A lot of my paintings won the first prize at ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) in Bengaluru. I was always passionate about it. I am very excited to use all my skillsets in solving such a transformational challenge facing the world now,” she said. Punthambaker did both her undergraduate education and masters in microbiology and biotechnology from Bengaluru and then moved to the University of Michigan for her PhD in molecular biology. Thereafter she joined Church and has been working with the team at Wyss for the past 10 years. “There have been discoveries that microorganisms can degrade certain basic types of plastic like PET. But no microorganism has been found or created to degrade the really difficult, carbon-to-carbon bonds of certain types of plastic that

do not degrade for thousands and thousands of years,” said Kent Wakeford, co-founder and executive chairman at Breaking. “These include nylon which is in fishing nets, the plastic used in plastic bags at grocery stores, and a lot of plastic that is filling up landfills, oceans, and rivers. That is one of the toughest plastics to break down. That’s the discovery that Sukanya made; so, this is a breakthrough in terms of scope and magnitude,” Wakeford said. The Breaking team believes that the technology is ecologically safe because they are looking at a two-pronged approach. “Safety is our top priority. We are using a two-pronged approach. One is to extract the enzymes responsible for this degradation and that could be separately scaled up as well. So, the answer is that the use of this microorganism to degrade plastics is completely safe,” Punthambaker added.

The salient features “One of the things which is quite amazing about this discovery is that these microorganism needs water and a little bit of salt to survive on carbon. It doesn’t need any type of pre-treatment. It is designed in a way so it can be deployed anywhere. The by-products once it has broken down the plastic, is water, a little bit of CO<sub>2</sub>, and a little bit of biomass,” Wakeford said. “When we think of going to the market, the way it scales up is just like any type of enzyme in fermentation plants. So, it is relatively cheap which is great because as we are facing such a major global problem, we want to be able to use it at scale,” Wakeford added. Possible impact of the technology On whether such a discovery will take focus away from phasing out plas-

tics or reducing the use of plastics completely in daily life, the Breaking team said their breakthrough will help address the massive problem of legacy plastic waste. “There are 5,000 million tonnes of plastic in oceans, landfills and rivers. That is not the only issue. There are 400 million tonnes (of plastic) created every year and even with any kind of code to limit plastics, it’s going to take only a small percentage off that,” Wakeford said.

“On top of that, there are contributing factors to a lot of environmental issues with plastic such as with washing clothes, polyesters or anything, the fibres are going into the water system; micro and nano plastics are finding their way not only into the environment but also water, agriculture and now into the human body. Humans are consuming a credit card worth the size of plastic every single month and that will impact human health,” warned Wakeford. “We have entered an era in which our environments and bodies are at risk to micro and nanoparticles of polymers (plastics) that we once trusted. We have also entered an age of exponential technologies in which we can see and seek the nuances and continua of polymers. Harmful-to-helpful is not nearly natural vs synthetic; it depends on size, shape and location of the polymer particles,” Church, mentioned earlier, said. “For example, polyethylene has the same set of bonds as beeswax, just longer. We are “Breaking” these and reusing the parts in beneficial reconfigurations,” Church, who is also a professor of Genetics at Harvard Medical School and of Health Sciences and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said.

# JSW MG Motor India Launches its Monsoon Accessories Range

JSW MG Motor India today introduced its latest range of accessories for the on-going monsoon season. These high-quality accessories are introduced for its entire portfolio to ensure that the customers and their vehicles are protected throughout the monsoon season. With the introduction of the monsoon accessories range, the brand is offering its customers to embrace the monsoon season with added comfort and convenience. These essential monsoon accessories are now available JSW MG Motor India's dealerships and ensure a protected, and hassle-free driving experience during the rainy season.

The Monsoon Range includes: Umbrella – This is a sleek umbrella with MG branding which will be perfect for sudden showers. Equipped with an automatic open mechanism, it can be activated with a single press of button. Combining functionality with style, it provides UV protection and big enough to accommodate 2-3 people. The MG-branded umbrella ensures the customers are well-protected when they step out of the vehicle, regardless of the weather. Car Cover – This waterproof, breathable car cover offers

superior protection against heavy rains and high humidity. It not only prevents water from seeping in, but also allows moisture to escape, thereby avoiding mold and mildew. This cover ensures that the vehicle remains clean and dry and, preserving its shine and appearance even in the harshest weather conditions.

Chrome Cleaning Kit – The anti-corrosion chrome cleaning kit is a must for monsoon season, which includes cleaning solution that resists corrosion and tarnish. This kit ensures that chrome accents maintain their shine and durability throughout the monsoon season. This high-quality product will enable the vehicle to withstand the rigors of the wettest months, adding both protection and flair. Invisible Super Car Cleaner Spray – This powerful, practical cleaner is gentle on surfaces, tackling the toughest stains in seconds. For maintaining a spotless interior, this specially formulated spray keeps monsoon dirt and grime at bay. It keeps the car interior clean and fresh even in muddy conditions and is safe on all surfaces and leaves no odours or chemical residue.

Car Mounting Wireless Charger and



Holder – This waterproof, shock-resistant wireless charger and phone holder ensures that mobile stays charged and firmly secure while driving in rainy conditions. Designed to handle bumps and moisture during monsoon driving, it offers seamless

convenience and safety. The durable adhesive ensures secure mounting, while the touch sensor allows for easy operation. It is compatible with iOS, Android, and other phones, offering 360° rotation for flexible positioning.

## BRS finds government's crop loan waiver guidelines deceptive



In a statement, former agriculture minister S Niranjana Reddy said the guidelines were an attempt to create confusion and meant for the Congress to find excuses from implementing the scheme

Former minister Niranjana Reddy argued that seeking complaints from farmers regarding loan waivers would create disputes among them and said the Congress party, which gained power by making election promises, was now looking for

excuses to escape those promises. Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi found the guidelines issued by the Congress government for the crop loan waiver objectionable and deceptive. The party accused Chief Minister A Revanth

Reddy of backtracking on his promise to disregard ration cards, made just four days earlier.

In a statement, former agriculture minister S Niranjana Reddy said the guidelines were an attempt to create confusion and meant for the Congress to find excuses from implementing the scheme. He reminded that while the previous governments used ration cards merely to identify families, the new guidelines exclude farmers with over 10 acres and having pink cards from the scheme.

Niranjana Reddy argued that seeking complaints from farmers regarding loan waivers would create disputes among them and said the Congress party, which gained power by making election promises, was now looking for excuses to escape those promises. He questioned the need for agricultural officials to implement loan waivers and verify the validity of white ration cards when PM KISAN data was available.

"The government's lack of sincerity about loan waivers is evident in these confusing and divisive guidelines. This policy will increase political pressure on officials and create conflicts between them and farmers," he said. The BRS leader recalled that the previous K Chandrashekhara Rao government had introduced several pro-farmer schemes including free power supply, irrigation water, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima and crop loan waiver. The BRS government had waived off crop loans worth Rs.29,144.61 crore in two tranches, ben-

efiting 58.3 lakh farmers. "In contrast, the Congress party's campaign falsely claimed that the KCR government did not waive farmers' loans. They promised to waive all crop loans obtained till December 9 if they came to power. But now, they are limiting it to a few through these new guidelines," he added.

Niranjana Reddy criticised the reliance on ration cards and PM-KISAN data for loan waivers, arguing that it undermined the purpose of the crop loan waiver scheme. He also questioned the government's delay in imposing these restrictions and the absence of clear sanctions. "The government is misleading farmers by promising crop loan waivers, while imposing unnecessary restrictions. Even farmers with five acres and having a job with Rs.30,000 monthly salary, are paying income tax. This deception is unacceptable," he asserted. He demanded the State government to clarify how many farmers were eligible to receive the promised Rs 2 lakh loan waiver.

He criticised the reliance on PM-KISAN data, calling it a betrayal of farmers. "The government is not genuinely interested in improving the conditions of farmers," he said. Meanwhile, BRS leader Manne Krishank termed the government's decision to make ration card a criteria for farm loan waiver as an attempt to fool farmers. He reminded that the Chief Minister himself made it clear that ration card would not be a criteria for the loan waiver and now had taken a U-turn.

# Vizag Warriors New Andhra Premier League 2024 Champions

The Vizag Warriors have claimed the title of champions in the Andhra Premier League (APL) 2024. In an exciting final held at the ACA-VDCA International Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam, the Vizag Warriors faced the Uttarandhra Lions. The final match, played on 13th July 2024, saw the Vizag Warriors setting a challenging target of 190 runs. Despite a valiant effort, the Uttarandhra Lions were bowled out for 102 runs in 16.3 overs, securing an 87-run victory for the Vizag Warriors. In a thrilling final match, the Vizag Warriors scored a commanding total of 189/5, a brilliant knock of 91 runs off 56 balls from Ashwin Hebbar and a supporting innings of 37 runs off 27 balls from Munish Varma. On the bowling front, P Manikanta Gangadhar impressed with figures of 3/17, while K. Sudarshan and Jagarlapudi Ram claimed 2 wickets each. Ashwin Hebbar was adjudged the Player of the Match for his outstanding performance. Throughout the tournament, Ashwin Hebbar emerged as the top scorer with

456 runs, while K Sudarshan topped the bowling charts with 14 wickets. Ashwin Hebbar was also awarded the coveted Orange Cap and was named the Player of the Tournament. Uttarandhra Lions innings got off to a shaky start, with Mopada Ravikiran and Sanaboyina Tarun dismissing quickly. Pinninti Tapaswi and Bendalam Satvik tried to stabilize the innings, but the wickets kept falling at regular intervals. Bendalam Satvik top-scored with 26 runs off 26 balls, including a solitary six. Dheeraj Kumar and Bandaru Ayyappa also made valuable contributions, but the Lions' innings eventually folded for 102 runs in 16.3 overs. Dr. Narendra Ram, co-owner of the Vizag Warriors and owner of Lifespan, announced a cash reward of Rs 10 Lakhs for the team as a token of appreciation for their remarkable performance. During the celebration, Dr. Narendra Ram expressed his happiness and extended his congratulations to the team members, sports staff, media, and sponsors of the Vizag Warriors. Dr.



Narendra Ram has been a significant motivating force behind the team. The victory ceremony concluded with the Vizag War-

riors proudly lifting the Season 3 Trophy, marking their triumph in the Andhra Premier League 2024

## Swatantrata Center Urges Telangana Govt. to Implement 24x7 Business Operations in Hyd



**SWATANTRATA**  
CENTER FOR HUMAN FLOURISHING FOUNDATION

In a crucial step to stimulate economic activities in Hyderabad, Raghavendra Askani, Social activist, co-founder and director of the Swatantrata Center, has written an open letter to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana, Anumula Revanth Reddy and to the Chief Secretary, Mayor, and Commissioner of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Telangana Police, and Labor Department. The letter requests the immediate implementation of 24x7 operational permissions for shops and commercial establishments in Hyderabad without further delay and emphasizes the establishment of robust and peaceful systems.

Commenting on the request, Social activist Raghavendra Askani said, "24x7 business operations would significantly boost economic activities, create numerous job opportunities, and help the state of Telangana compete on a global scale. We

believe that implementing 24/7 operations in Hyderabad could achieve an additional 2% growth, amounting to \$1.50 billion (122.22 billion INR), with the city's GDP potentially increasing by \$1.50 billion in the following year." The key suggestions mentioned in the letter include a simplified licensing system, labor department amendments, an annual fee structure, enhanced police-public dynamics, protection for female staff, the establishment of a nightlife implementation committee, 24x7 public transport, and infrastructure improvements to support the city's readiness for 24x7 operations.

Highlighting the need to adopt the 24x7 operations model and maintain competitive stakes, these measures would not only foster economic growth but also improve the quality of life for city residents. The Telangana government and Chief Min-

ister Revanth Reddy are expected to take immediate action to promote the progress and welfare of Telangana.\* About Swatantrata Center: Swatantrata Center is a non-profit organization based in Hyderabad, Telangana, India. The organization was founded with the mission of promoting economic freedom, free enterprise, and individual liberty in the state of Telangana and across India.

The Swatantrata Center advocates for policy reforms and initiatives that enable businesses, entrepreneurs, and citizens to

thrive without excessive government interference or bureaucratic hurdles. The organization focuses on areas such as regulatory reform, ease of doing business, labor laws, and the development of a conducive environment for private sector growth and investment. The Swatantrata Center's work is guided by the principles of free market economics, limited government, and individual liberty. The organization is committed to promoting these values and working towards the creation of a more prosperous and free society in Telangana and beyond.

## Telangana Govt issues order with guidelines for crop loan waiver

Hyderabad: The State government on Monday issued a government order GO Rt. No 567, listing out the guidelines for implementation of the crop loan waiver. According to the GO, the waiver would be limited to Rs.2 lakh per one farmer's family. The food security card database of the Civil Supplies department would be considered as a parameter to define a farmer's family. This would be applicable to short term crop loans obtained between December 12, 2018 and December 9, 2023. The waiver would be implemented for loans obtained from scheduled commercial banks, rural banks and district cooperative banks.

Under the programme, farmers will have to pay the excess loan amount (more than Rs.2 lakh) to the banks. Once the ex-

cess amount was paid, the remaining Rs.2 lakh would be deposited into the farmer's loan account. The Agriculture Commissioner would be the implementing authority for the farm loan waiver 2024 and the National Informatics Centre would be IT partner for the implementation. An exclusive portal would be operated for implementation of the farm loan waiver programme. All the details, including each farmer's loan account, data validation, eligibility and others would be made available in the portal. The agriculture department would be setting up grievance cells to address complaints raised by farmers. They can lodge the complaints on the portal or at the centres at mandal level. Officials should process the application and address it within 30 days and the same should be informed to the farmers.

# PURPLE GROUP ANNOUNCES 1000CR FUNDING LED BY SUBSIDIARY OF ADIA (ABU DHABI INVESTMENT AUTHORITY).

Purple Group, one of India's leading omnichannel beauty platforms, announces the closing of a ₹1000cr funding round led by a wholly owned subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), along with participation from other investors, which includes a combination of primary and secondary shares. Strategically expanding its offline presence, Purple Group retails its six direct-to-consumer private brands including, Faces Canada, Alps Goodness, Good Vibes, Carmesi, DermDoc, and Ny Bae across multiple touchpoints. The brand has over 1500 assisted and 40000+ touchpoints pan India. The company serves the beauty needs of customers in tier 2/3+ micro-markets, expanding beyond metro cities.

Speaking on the investment Manish Taneja, Co-Founder & CEO at Purple said, "It is our mission to democratize beauty and make it accessible to all, and while we have reached many beauty enthusiasts across India, we still have a long way to go. We will constantly innovate and leverage our technology and data capabilities to provide our customers with the best omnichannel experience. In increasing its shareholding in Purple, ADIA has continued to support us as we pursue our vision of building a sustainable and profitable business."

Purple is one of the fastest-growing retailers in the Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) segment, having grown its GMV by ~4x over the last 3 years. Purple is operationally profitable and expects to grow its



online platform faster than the industry while scaling offline stores and improving profitability. Alongside this funding round, Purple has also announced its largest-

ever Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) liquidity program and will offer liquidity of ₹50cr to its employees. Purple has granted ESOPs to 320 employees up

to date, and 85 of them have liquidated ESOPs worth ₹75cr over three buyback programs. In the largest-ever ESOP liquidity program announced, 26% of its beneficiaries are women.

## Skin Cancer, Solar Keratoses, eye damage, Photokeratitis, Immune System Suppression.

Sunburn, also called erythema, is one of the most obvious signs of UV exposure and skin damage. Often marked by redness and peeling (usually after a few days), sunburn is a form of short-term skin damage. When UV rays reach your skin, they damage cells in the epidermis. In response, your immune system increases blood flow to the affected areas. The increased blood flow is what gives sunburn its characteristic redness and makes the skin feel warm to the touch. At the same time, the damaged skin cells release chemicals that send messages through the body until they are translated as a painful burning sensation by the brain. White blood cells, which help protect you from infection and disease, attack and remove the damaged skin cells. It is this process of removing damaged cells that can cause sunburned skin to itch and peel. Sun Tan What it is:

There is no such thing as a safe tan. The increase in skin pigment, called melanin, which causes the tan color change in your skin is a sign of damage. Defects of suntan Once skin is exposed to UV radiation, it increases the production of melanin in an attempt to protect the skin from further damage. Melanin is the same pigment that colors your hair, eyes, and skin. The increase in melanin may cause your skin tone to darken over the next 48 hours. Premature Aging ; Sometimes re-

ferred to as "photoaging," premature aging is the result of unprotected UV exposure. It takes the form of leathery, wrinkled skin, and dark spots. Why it happens: Although the causes of premature aging are not always clear, unprotected exposure to harmful UV rays break down the collagen and elastin fibers in healthy young skin, and cause wrinkles and loosened folds. Frequent sunburns or hours spent tanning can result in a permanent darkening of the skin, dark spots, and a leathery texture. Symptoms: Wrinkles, Dark spots, Leathery skin, Skin Cancer; There are two main types of skin cancer: Melanoma, External Link Disclaimer, Non-melanoma

Melanoma is the less common, but more dangerous form of skin cancer, and accounts for most of the deaths due to skin cancer each year. Melanoma is cancer that begins in the epidermal cells that produce melanin (melanocytes). According to the American Cancer Society (ACS) melanoma is almost always curable when detected in its early stages.

Non-melanomas (basal cell External Link Disclaimer and squamous cell External Link Disclaimer carcinomas) occur in the basal or squamous cells located at the base of the epidermis, both inside and outside the body. Non-melanomas often develop in sun-exposed areas of the body,

including the face, ears, neck, lips, and the backs of the hands. Eye Damage - Photokeratitis What it is: Photokeratitis can be thought of as a sunburn of the cornea. It is caused by intense UVC/UVB exposure of the eye.

Photokeratitis is also called "snow blindness" because many people develop this condition at high altitudes in a snowy environment where the reflections of UVB are high. This condition can also be produced by exposure to intense artificial sources of UVC/UVB, like broken mercury vapor lamps, or certain types of tanning lamps.

Symptoms:

Tearing

Pain

Swollen eyelids

A feeling of sand in the eye

Hazy or decreased vision

Immune System Suppression

According to the World Health Orga-

nization (WHO), all people, regardless of skin color, are vulnerable to the effects of immune suppression. Overexposure to UV radiation may suppress proper functioning



of the body's immune system and the skin's natural defenses, increasing sensitivity to sunlight, diminishing the effects of immunizations or causing reactions to certain medications.

# Why we must reassess emergency response in the wake of the Delhi school bomb hoax

On the morning of May 1, 2024, more than 100 schools in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) received bomb threats over email. The emails were received by the schools around 4 AM, leading to the evacuation and closure of schools later in the day. It first led to panic and then chaos among students, teachers and parents. In a few schools, students were moved out of buildings and had to wait for hours in a common area on the premises before leaving for their homes. The children were asked to leave their school bags and other belongings in school to be collected the next day. While Delhi's education minister Atishi and the Delhi police confirmed the news on social media, bomb squads and police teams investigated the schools and increased security throughout the Capital. According to police, "nothing suspicious was found," and the event was labelled a hoax. Police filed an FIR against an unknown person under section 120B, 506 of IPC. Less than a week later, on Monday, May 6, several schools in Ahmedabad also received similar threats over email. These threats also appeared to be a hoax.

These kinds of "hoax" threats were not the first and certainly will not be the last to be issued. Of course, what stood out about the incident, in the case of NCR, was its scale, with several schools all across Delhi and its neighbourhood getting affected. By using the term "hoax", it could seem that the authorities are taking the incident lightly. The jury, of course, is still out to pinpoint the accountability.

However, it does not portend well for us if a terror outfit is involved. If terrorists had a hand — which cannot be denied — they have achieved their aim of spreading panic that manifested in the large-scale evacuation of schools. One prime motive of a terror outfit is strategic messaging, and the same was achieved on May 1. It is a given that such incidents do not have more than 24 hours of shelf life in the news narrative, which is a travesty to our sense of societal priorities. The May 1 incident should not be taken lightly owing to the serious repercussions it could have on young minds. Point to be noted: The children who underwent evacuation could be thinking about and discussing the incident with their peers for long. Brushing off the event as a "hoax" points to the fact that the matter is likely to be forgotten soon. Hopefully, this will not be the case and the matters will be brought to a conclusion, notwithstanding the fast-paced events around us. However, a critical issue that seems to have escaped the post-hoax narrative is that children were issued threats in schools. Schools are the foundation of the citizenry in a society where future citizens are being groomed. A threat of a potential terror attack will impact young minds though the impact could be different for different children. This may mould some into conscious and alert citizens while in some others, it may trigger a trauma. Parents and teachers need to shape the former and guard against the latter. Much depends on how



such harrowing incidents are explained to school children, especially those who have experienced the panic and chaos. It doesn't augur well if children are made conscious of looming terror threats with stereotypes. An impression formed and inferences drawn at this stage are likely to stick with them for the rest of their lives. It is necessary that parents and teachers are adequately conscious of their critical responsibility, and are discrete while sharing information on such incidents with school children. Children will be inquisitive: Share information, not inferences.

Both central and state governments

should look into the history of such cases and form a unified approach and response protocols to such incidents. The electronics and information technology ministries and the National Disaster Management Authority, for one, should be part of the mix when the government sits down to formulate policies to handle such cases in the future. The May 1 bomb hoax threats are unlikely to be the last. And, that's the reason why we need to evolve policies on how to tackle such threats and their aftermaths. A broad-brush measure like large-scale evacuations could be a part of the process but they are certainly not the correct re-

sponse. It was fortunate that the emailed threats did not, in reality, become a tragedy. However, a competent and effective dispensation is expected to be more focused and surer of the measures that it undertakes, irrespective of the unpredictability factor tagged to such an exigency.

Colonel Shashank Ranjan is a retired Infantry officer with 33 years of experience, having served extensively in counter-insurgency environment. He currently teaches at OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana. The views expressed are personal.

## SC verdict in DMRC case raises a slew of questions

India's attempt to project itself both as a country where it is easy to do business and as a hub of arbitration has received a jolt with the recent judgment of the Supreme Court (SC) in Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) v Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt. Ltd. (DAMEPL). The legal struggle that began in 2012 was thought to have been settled when the SC dismissed a review petition in 2021. It has now been exhumed through a curative judgment: An award delivered in 2017 has been set aside in the name of correcting the "miscarriage of justice" in the exercise of "curative jurisdiction" of the SC. To say the least, the judgment has sent disturbing signals down to national and international commercial and legal circles.

In the case of Rupa Hurra v Ashok Kumar (2002), the SC propounded the scope and ambit of curative power. Article 142 of the Constitution of India bestows curative jurisdiction upon the apex court. It

is a wide power. But the greater the power, the more sparingly it should be used. In fact, it should be exercised only in the rarest of the rare cases: One, to prevent an abuse of the process of the court; and two, to cure "gross miscarriage of justice". In order to establish these grounds, a party would have to prove either a violation of principles of natural justice, or bias of the judge, i.e. the judge's close connection with the subject-matter, or with one of the parties to the lawsuit. These legal contours are well settled. The DMRC v DAMEPL judgment has upset the apple cart.

The commercial dispute between the DMRC and DAMEPL underwent different legal spheres — from the arbitral tribunal, which pronounced its award in 2017, of ₹8,000 crore in favour of DAMEPL, to the Single Bench of Delhi High Court (HC), which upheld the award in 2018, to the Division Bench of the HC, which set aside the award in 2019. Thereafter, from the

Division Bench of the SC, which restored the award in 2021, to the dismissal of the review petition and confirmation of the award also in 2021, to a Full Bench of the SC, which has allowed the curative petition filed by DMRC and set aside the award recently. To say the least, the judgment has opened a Pandora's Box. First, the concept of "finality of judgment" has been jolted. If decisions can be flipped like this, when does a legal dispute come to rest? How long do litigants run to seek justice? Second, the apex court has sieved through the evidence in detail. Such an exercise of judicial power has raised interesting legal questions.

Whether in the exercise of curative jurisdiction, the court can critically examine the merits and demerits of the case or not. Whether by re-appreciating the evidence, the court has overstepped its curative jurisdiction or not.

# What Binance's \$4 billion fine and CEO resignation mean for crypto | Explainer

The story so far: The U.S. government this week slammed Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, with a \$4 billion fine after confirming serious protocol failures as it frequently violated U.S. sanctions. On November 22, Binance's CEO and one of the crypto industry's most powerful players, billionaire Changpeng Zhao, announced his resignation. The crypto market is extremely susceptible to even minor shakeups; the latest update has shocked thousands of traders worldwide who rely on Binance (legally or illegally) to conduct their crypto trades.

Why is Binance's CEO stepping down?

Zhao announced he was stepping down, admitting he had made "mistakes" and that he was doing what he felt was best for the company. In Seattle, Zhao pleaded guilty to violating the Bank Secrecy Act by not maintaining an effective anti-money laundering programme. He will have to pay a \$50 million fine and his resignation is part of a legal deal. "Today, I stepped down as CEO of Binance. Admittedly, it was not easy to let go emotionally. But I know it is the right thing to do. I made mistakes, and I must take responsibility. This is best for our community, for Binance, and for myself," posted Zhao on X on November 22. He named Richard Teng, previously Binance's Global Head of Regional Markets, as the new CEO. Teng has over 30 years of financial services and regulatory experience spanning across Abu Dhabi and Singapore, Zhao said. The former Binance CEO stressed that U.S. agencies did not accuse the exchange of misappropriating user funds or engaging in market manipulation. Zhao also said he would probably be a passive crypto investor focusing on decentralised finance (DeFi), and perhaps train other upcoming entrepreneurs, apart from taking a break. However, he will continue to be a Binance shareholder who is available for company members to consult, Zhao confirmed. Legal experts have pointed out this still leaves the Canadian national with considerable influence over the company he founded in 2017.

What did Binance do to warrant the fine?

Binance was charged with not maintaining a working anti-money laundering programme, as well as running an unlicensed money transmitting business, and violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, per court documents dated November 14. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said that the exchange did not report suspicious transactions and it told employees to keep information from law enforcement bodies. That meant millions of dollars in crypto transactions involving criminal actors like the Russia-based dark net marketplace Hydra and users based in sanctioned nations such as Iran were not reported, "allowing illicit actors to transact freely, supporting activities from child sexual abuse, to illegal nar-

cotics, to terrorism, across more than 100,000 transactions." Transactions "associated with terrorist groups like Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Al Qaeda, and ISIS" were also unreported. "Binance processed these transactions, but it never filed a single suspicious activity report. And it also allowed over 1.5 million virtual currency trades that violated U.S. sanctions," said Yellen in an official statement on November 21. The Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network settlement agreement assessed a \$3.4 billion penalty while the Office of Foreign Assets Control assessed a penalty of around \$1 billion, bringing the total to above \$4 billion. This marked the "largest enforcement action" in the Treasury's history, according to Yellen.

Has Binance faced legal issues before?

Binance has faced legal and compliance issues in a number of countries, but swiftly moved past most barriers under Zhao's audacious leadership style, with the company loudly expressing support for regulation while also pulling out of the jurisdictions which tried to regulate or probe its activities. However, the U.S. Treasury alleged that Binance had lied about exiting the U.S. years ago, and that it retained U.S. users as well as "significant" ties with the country. In June this year, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) hit Binance with a lawsuit, claiming that it was comingling and diverting customer assets to a third party linked with Zhao, and that the exchange broke federal securities laws by "illegally conducting unregistered offers and sales of securities to U.S. investors." How will this affect crypto investors and the sector? While U.S.-based individuals are barred from using the Binance platform, it remains to be seen whether this policy will be strictly enforced under the company's next CEO. Binance has been ordered to completely exit the country and will be strictly monitored from here on.

BNB, the cryptocurrency that helps facilitate trades on the Binance exchange and is native to the BNB blockchain ecosystem, fell by more than 10% to a price of around \$234 as the news of Zhao's resignation broke. However, it slowly began recovering. As more crypto exchanges with U.S. customers come under regulatory pressure, they may decide to comply with the country's registration requirements (even if just on paper alone), or exit the country completely. Some exchanges try to evade legal action by basing their headquarters in foreign tax havens. However, crypto investors who do not want their transactions monitored by centralised authorities or the U.S. government may explore the riskier DeFi route or transact through non-regulated decentralised exchanges (DEXs).

What did Binance's CEO say about FTX?

On December 9 last year, Zhao fired off tweets criticising the collapsed FTX



crypto exchange headed by former billionaire and CEO Sam Bankman-Fried, who was found guilty of financial fraud on multiple counts this October. "You don't have to be a genius to know something don't smell right at FTX," Zhao said and called attention to the company's "reprehensible

misuse of customer funds." But almost a year later, Zhao apologised for his own actions and is leaving behind his crypto exchange which was condemned by U.S. regulators in the harshest terms for criminal practices. This is yet another case which illustrates just how quickly the illusion of stability can shatter in the crypto sector.

## With looming TikTok ban in the US, the death of the global internet

The history of the global internet is the history of local apps that strove to become big, fulfilling promises of global connectivity. Our current spate of digital applications stands on the graves of a large number of platforms, applications, environments, products, and tools that were once in vogue. I remember the world before Google, where the only way to find credible information online was through a p2p network of carefully maintained links to discussion forums which were not just digital dumpster fires. There was a time before Facebook where we had just discovered blogging and were finding communities that were experimenting with user generated content. Before Twitter, there were enough spaces on the internet which were fuelled by rage and hate. We didn't have to wait for Instagram to go and get ourselves bullied, negged, and sexualised — there were enough spaces for whoever wanted it, where the most vulnerable people were constantly being violated and attacked. Our social media practices are so overwhelming and encompassing that we forget how new and temporary they are. Many of the legacy apps have already wrapped up. The more persistent ones have evolved so much that they bear almost no resemblance to their original versions. The breathless air of innovation and disruption and the desperate search for something new constantly bombard us with the next big thing which is going to make everything else obsolete. Once the hype dies, the initial curiosity falters and most of these disruptors find their space in the digital ecosystem, with things more or less scrolling along. If there is one unwritten rule of the internet that is rooted in information and

attention economies, it is that this too shall pass. Apps will come and go, with digital life cycles that are more akin to that of fruit flies than tortoises. Given the ephemeral nature of these apps, it does come as a surprise that so many governments around the world keep on trying to control one which has recently been on an upswing — TikTok. In India, we have already mourned the death of TikTok, and a slew of old and new apps have evolved to replace it, grabbing the mindless, repetitive, memetics-driven interactive video-platforming space that TikTok ushered in. The Indian users, devastated when the app first got banned, along with the hyperbolic analysts and speculators who warned us that it was the beginning of the end, have all survived the great loss. As the United States government now considers the banning of TikTok, the questions have come to the fore again — what is it about TikTok that seems to trouble so many people so profoundly? The usual arguments about the brokenness of the internet — misinformation, manipulative algorithms, immersive frivolous content that shapes political decisions, rampant hate and violence, radicalisation of young people on ideological grounds, exploitation of users by selling their data, targeted messaging that makes people vulnerable through AI analytics, and polarisation of societies intensified by filter bubbles — do not work. This is because TikTok doesn't have a monopoly or uniqueness on any of these. If these are the reasons why TikTok has to be banned, we might as well shut down the internet, wear tinfoil hats and wait for the rapture. There is nothing exceptional about TikTok and its policies around content curation, data brokerage and ownership.

# Are gallstones linked to an increased risk of Gallbladder Cancer (GBC)? Health expert answers

Gallstones have long been recognised as a significant factor associated with gallbladder cancer (GBC), particularly in regions like northern India where the incidence of both conditions is high but it involves a complex interplay of genetic predisposition, environmental factors and chronic inflammation. While gallstones serve as a risk factor for GBC, health experts reveal that it is essential to recognise that not all individuals with gallstones will develop cancer.

What are the factors associated with Gall Bladder Cancer?

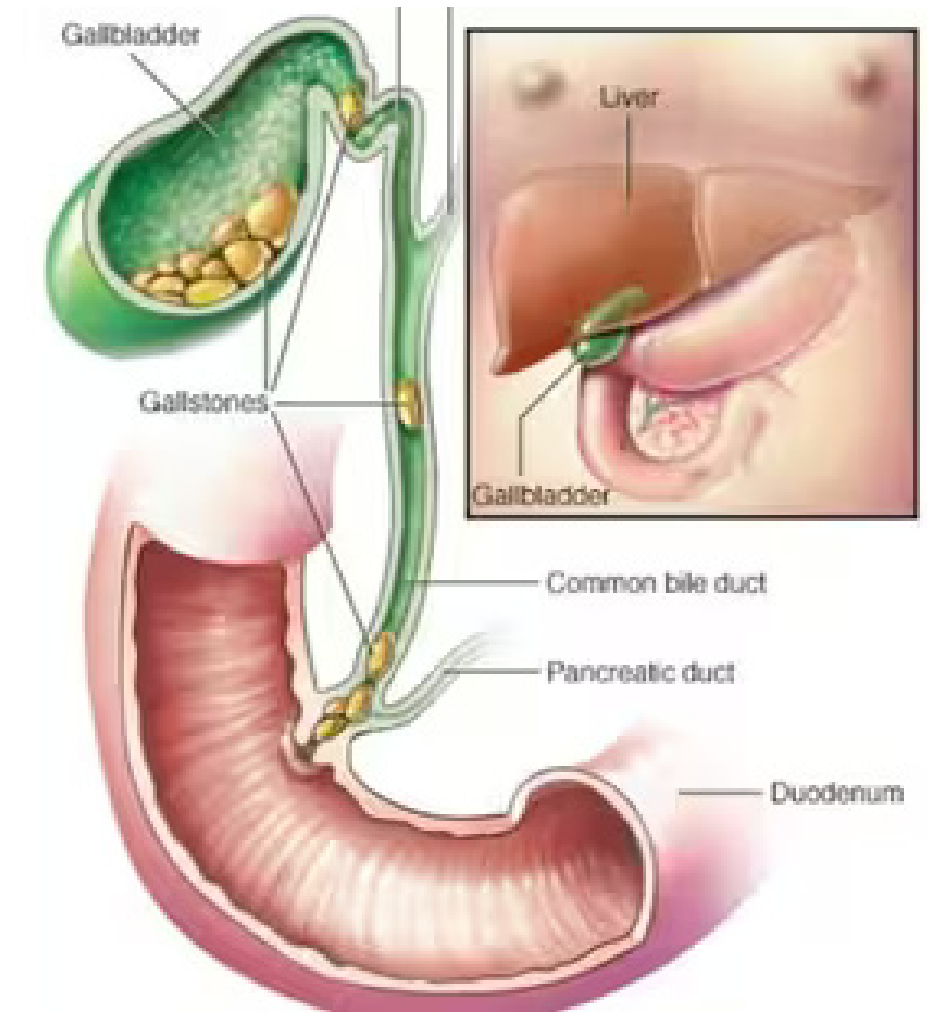
In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Shivendra Singh, Senior Consultant and Chief of GI Oncosurgery and Liver Transplant Services at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGCIRC), explained, "Gallstones are often detected during examinations for gallbladder cancer, and often, it remains a reason for misdiagnosis. Various studies in India have documented presence of gall stone in 70–90% of patients with GBC. The pathogenesis of GBC is influenced by various co-factors, including age, gender, socio-economic status, and comorbidities such as chronic infections with *Salmonella typhi* or *Helicobacter pylori*. Furthermore, environmental factors like exposure to pollutants, heavy metals, and dietary habits also play a role in carcinogenesis." He shared, "It has been observed that middle aged women around 40 and above with a demographic profile, often referred to as "fat, fertile, female over forty" are generally the subset which is mostly affected with gall stone disease. Additionally, the type of gallstones prevalent in different regions also contributes to the varying incidence of GBC. For instance, in northern India, where cholesterol/mixed stones are predominant, the association with GBC may be more pronounced compared to regions like South

India, where pigment stones are more common."

Should you opt for gallbladder removal due to fear of cancer?

Dr Shivendra Singh revealed, "It's important to note that gallbladder issues, including the presence of gallstones, do not always lead to gallbladder cancer. While gallstones are a known risk factor for cancer development, the majority of people with gallstones will not develop cancer. It's crucial not to generalize the need for gallbladder removal solely based on the presence of gallstones or fear of cancer. Each case should be evaluated individually, considering the patient's symptoms, medical history, and overall health." He asserted, "It's essential to weigh the risks and benefits on an individual basis, considering factors such as age, overall health, and the presence of red flag symptoms. Regular screening and surveillance may be warranted for individuals with known risk factors, especially those with a family history of GBC or other biliary tract malignancies. A comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms, coupled with personalised risk assessment, is crucial for effective prevention and management strategies. Chronic irritation caused by gallstones has been linked to gallbladder cancer, presenting symptoms such as loss of appetite and stomach fullness. However, pain is uncommon in gallbladder cancer, typically occurring only during inflammation due to cholecystitis."

Pointing out that gallbladder cancer may not show much symptoms as such because it spreads very fast, Dr Shivendra Singh said that patients may face certain discomfort and while symptoms can vary, there are some common signs to be aware of: Warning signs include nausea, vomiting, weight loss, and discomfort in the right hypochondrium or lower right side of the



chest wall. In some cases, gallbladder problems can lead to jaundice, a condition characterized by yellowing of the skin and eyes. Jaundice occurs when bile flow from the liver is obstructed, often due to gall-

stones or inflammation of the gallbladder. Some individuals may notice a lump or heaviness in the right upper abdomen. This sensation can be accompanied by discomfort or a feeling of fullness.

# Are you parenting your partner? Therapist drops truth bombs that we should be aware of

In a relationship, two people create their own dynamics – the kind of relationship pattern that they are comfortable with. This is also based on the attachment style that they have. From avoidant attachment to anxious attachment, a partner can have any of the four types of attachment styles, or a combination of multiple ones. This further decides the behavioural patterns in the relationship. However, when we start to parent the partner and take care of them without them doing it for us, it can lead to a dip in emotional intimacy and connection. This can slowly turn frustrating. "Together we'll go through a 4-step process to figure it out. How you and your partner are incompatible and if there are any deal breakers you might be ignoring? Whether your emotional connection is compromised and what you can do about it? Whether you're

trapped in a doomed dynamic that's never going to go anywhere? If you have inner love blocks that sabotage your relationship without you knowing," wrote Relationship Coach Marlina Tillhon. Signs of parenting the partner Reminding them: We are constantly reminding them of things that they need to take care of – from their responsibilities to their meetings. Paying for them: Paying bills for them and allowing them to be financially immature is a toxic pattern in a relationship. Walking on eggshells: We constantly walk on eggshells around them because we cannot predict their mood and do not want to overwhelm them. Not sharing needs or feelings: We think that they will not be able to understand how we are feeling, hence we try to stop ourselves from sharing our needs and feelings. Harsh reality we need to know Enabling immaturity:

