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 Businessmen in a fix over cash seizures ahead of Lok Sabha polls **page 3**

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 'I.N.D.I.A bloc will repeal CAA if voted to power' **page 7**



BUSINESS
 Hyderabad tops the chart in women's employment **page 8**

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Jaggi Vasudev undergoes surgery



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Shehbaz to forego pay

Move aimed at curbing unnecessary expenditures



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Cricket's big guns ready for IPL grind



ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

Shahid set for his next

Ashwatthama to explore concept of immortality



Ramzan Timings

Iftar Thursday 6:32 PM
Saheer Friday 4:57 AM

CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD

Farm	Rs. 106
Retail live	Rs. 128
With skin	Rs. 186
Skinless	Rs. 211
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 57

Telangana braces for pollen tsunami

12 lakh trees being cut in Vikarabad for Navy's radar system

M SAI GOPAL
 HYDERABAD

Telangana is set to face a significant public health crisis triggered by a pollen tsunami due to massive tree felling being taken up at the Damagundam forest in Vikarabad to make way for the Indian Navy's Very Low Frequency (VLF) Radar Communication System.

As authorities go ahead with the decision to cut nearly 12 lakh trees, the operations could trigger a massive pollen tsunami due to the absence of tree barriers, exacerbating health risks. As a result, the urban areas in Telangana are expected to experience a 200 per cent increase in pollen accumulation, leading to an exponential rise in allergies.

By estimates, the number of people who will knowingly or unknowingly suffer from allergies will be an additional one crore in Telangana State.

Noted pulmonologist from Hyderabad Dr Vyakarnam Nageshwar, who recently submitted a detailed

Potential health crisis

TS LIKELY TO WITNESS A MASSIVE POLLEN TSUNAMI DUE TO DEFORESTATION

- Surge in asthma, respiratory issues, emergency hospital admissions likely
- 1 cr additional individuals to suffer from allergies in TS
- Major public health hazard in the coming months due to felling of 12 lakh trees
- Respiratory ailments likely to shoot up in Hyderabad



report on the impact of felling 12 lakh trees on public health to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), warned that the massive deforestation will not only be a disaster for climate in Telangana but also trigger a pollen tsunami, which will be very difficult to deal with.

"If such massive deforestation is not avoided, it could lead to disastrous consequences as this phenomenon, coupled with rising temperatures, sets the stage for a potential pollen

tsunami that can be compounded by escalating temperatures such as the one we have seen in Brazil," he warned.

The unprecedented temperature surge, compounded by deforestation in the Damagundam forest, poses a severe threat to public health, potentially precipitating a surge in hospitalisations and emergency admissions, he said.

Pollen particles may traverse vast distances through the wind and given the ab-

sence of natural tree barriers, heightening the risk of allergic reactions and respiratory ailments among the nearby populace in Hyderabad city, situated a mere 70 km away.

The prolonged pollination periods resulting from warmer climates and increased carbon dioxide levels will further exacerbate pollen allergies, affecting not only allergic individuals but also those previously unaffected.

(SEE PAGE 2)

Custody without trial: ED faces top court's ire

Accused cannot be denied benefit of default bail by filing supplementary chargesheets: SC

NEW DELHI

Keeping an accused in custody without trial is akin to detention which hampers liberty, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday while deprecating the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) practice of filing supplementary chargesheets in money laundering cases to defeat the accused's right of getting default bail.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta took exception to the ED filing four supplementary chargesheets, the latest on March 1, 2024, in a money laundering case arising from alleged illegal mining in Jharkhand.

The top court was hearing the default bail plea of Prem Prakash, an alleged associate of former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren. Prakash was arrested in August 2022 after raids during which two AK-47 rifles, 60 live rounds and two magazines were claimed to have been found at his home in Ranchi.

He was booked for the offences of money laundering

SC to hear Kavitha's plea tomorrow

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court will hear BRS leader K Kavitha's plea on March 22 challenging her arrest in the money laundering case relating to the Delhi excise policy irregularities matter. The matter will be heard by a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna with MM Sundresh and Bela M Trivedi. Kavitha, through her advocate P Mohith Rao, moved the Supreme Court on Monday challenging her arrest by ED in the money laundering case relating to the Delhi excise policy matter. ANI

and under the Arms Act. The Bench told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, about the investigation in the case still continuing despite four supplementary

chargesheets having been filed. "We are putting you (ED) on notice. (Under the law) you cannot arrest a person without the investigation in the case being complete. A person cannot be put in custody without the commencement of trial. It is akin to detention and affects the liberty of an individual. In some cases, we have to settle this issue," the Bench told Raju.

Justice Khanna said an accused cannot be denied the benefit of default bail by filing supplementary chargesheets. "The whole object of default bail is that you do not arrest until investigation is complete. You cannot say that a trial will not commence unless the investigation in the case is complete. You cannot keep on filing supplementary chargesheets and keep the person in jail without trial," he said.

Justice Khanna said the petitioner has been behind bars for 18 months and supplementary chargesheets are being filed one after the other, which is eventually delaying the trial. (SEE PAGE 2)

Hyd student missing in US

HYDERABAD

A 25-year-old student from Hyderabad, studying in the US, has gone missing there since March 7 and his family here said they received a "ransom" call.

Mohammed Abdul, a resident of Nacharam in the US in May 2023 to pursue a Masters in IT from Cleveland University, and was staying in Cleveland, his family said.

Mohammed Saleem, Abdul's father, said his son last spoke to him on March 7, and since then he was not in touch with the family and his mobile phone was switched off. Abdul's roommates in the US informed him that they have lodged a missing complaint with Cleveland Police.

However, on March 19, the family received a call from an unidentified person, who claimed that

Abdul had been kidnapped allegedly by a gang selling drugs and demanded \$1,200 to "release" him. The caller also threatened to sell Abdul's kidneys if the ransom wasn't paid, his father said.

"Yesterday (Tuesday), I got a call from an unknown number, and the caller informed me that my son has been kidnapped and demanded money. The caller did not mention the mode of payment but just asked to pay the amount. When I asked the caller to allow us to talk to my son, he refused," a worried Saleem said.

Abdul's parents requested the Central government to take necessary measures to locate and bring back their son safely. Saleem also wrote a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in this regard. PTI



MOHD ABDUL'S FAMILY IN NACHARAM GETS RANSOM CALL SEEKING \$1,200, SAYS HIS FATHER

True to character



IMPORTANT DAY: An artiste dressed as Lord Shiva takes part in a religious procession on the occasion of 'Rangbhari Ekadashi' in Varanasi on Wednesday. — Photo: PTI

Radhakrishnan takes oath as Governor

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

CP Radhakrishnan assumed office as the third Governor of Telangana at Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday. Telangana High Court Chief Justice Alok Aradhe administered the oath in the presence of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, State Cabinet Ministers, officials and others.

After the swearing-in, the Governor conveyed his gratitude to the people of Telangana. In his address, Radhakrishnan asserted that Raj Bhavan was committed to collaborating with all stakeholders, including the Central and State governments, and also upholding the principles of fairness, integrity and impartiality. (SEE PAGE 2)

TIFR researchers devise safer and durable lithium battery

YUVRAJ AKULA
 Hyderabad

Researchers of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Hyderabad, have said they have developed a simple, scalable and cost-effective method to assemble a safer and durable Lithium Metal Battery (LMB), which is identified as one of the potential future storage systems.

The LMBs can provide nearly 10 times higher energy density compared to the current Lithium-ion Batteries (LIBs). However, they pose certain safety concerns and cannot be used for fast-charging applications. This is due to the uncontrolled dendrite formation, leading to excessive heating and battery short circuit, which has become one of



Lead author Preeti Yadav shows a glowing red LED (3V) powered by the modified separator-based lithium metal battery.

the critical challenges of the LMB advancement, the researchers said.

To address these challenges, the TN Narayanan's Lab at TIFR-Hyderabad modified the LMB using commonly

available graphite derivative powder, increasing the battery's longevity.

According to the researchers, a porous separator membrane lies between the electrodes in a battery, keeping them apart, and is crucial to preventing a short circuit. When a battery is used for some time, tree-like structures or whiskers called dendrites begin to form on one of the electrodes. If these dendrites grow uncontrollably, they may become a physical bridge between two electrodes, causing a short circuit.

Preeti Yadav and Pallavi Thakur, graduate students and lead authors of the study, used commonly available graphite derivative powder to modify the separator membrane used in a typical battery. (SEE PAGE 2)

Don't ignore ryots, KTR warns CM

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday questioned Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's apparent neglect of farmers' plight amidst the unseasonal rains that destroyed crops in a major way in Telangana.

In the wake of the recent unseasonal rains and hailstorms across the State, Rama Rao questioned the Chief Minister's lack of empathy towards farmers who were facing adversities, whether it is drought or hailstorm. He urged the State government to prioritise addressing farmers' grievances over visits to Delhi to meet the AICC leadership and strategies to gain political upmanship in the State. He said the new Congress government was ignoring crop losses that

“Don't you have any compassion for farmers...? A State where farmers are ignored can never prosper”
 — KT RAMA RAO, BRS

could lead to a rise in farmer suicides in the State.

The BRS working president highlighted the disconnect between political manoeuvring and genuine governance, lamenting the lack of focus on crop damage and agricultural support amidst efforts to achieve political goals. He called for sustained attention and action to alleviate farmers' suffering. (SEE PAGE 2)