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**MUDA case: High Court issues notice to Sidda, wife**



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**Netanyahu vows harsher strikes on Hamas**

Prime Minister praises Israeli troops for what he called 'a remarkable job'



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**Adivi Sesh's 'Major' set to be screened in Japan**

## In a nutshell

**Gold price edges close to Rs 1 lakh**

**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices soared by Rs 1,650 to hit an all-time high of Rs 98,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a global rush for safe-haven buying triggered by an escalated trade war between the US and China. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 96,450 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

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**China now faces 245% tariff: US**

**WASHINGTON:** China now faces tariffs up to 245% on imports to the United States due to its retaliatory actions, the White House has said, as the trade war escalated between the world's two largest economies. Separately in a post on Truth Social, President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that China "just reneged on the big Boeing deal, saying that they will "not take possession" of fully committed to aircraft".

(REPORT PAGE 8)

**Will soon join politics: Vadra**

**NEW DELHI:** Robert Vadra, businessman and brother-in-law of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday claimed he is being targeted by probe agencies as he is part of the Gandhi family and that things would have been different had he been part of the BJP. Vadra said he is almost an activist now and will soon join politics as he has been working with people since 1999. PTI

## STATE BUREAU

HYDERABAD

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the State government over the large-scale tree felling in the Kancha Gachibowli area, questioning the "tearing urgency" and warning of stringent action against officials for illegal tree felling.

Asserting that it would go "out of the way" for the protection of the environment, the court asked the State Wildlife Warden to submit a concrete restoration plan and measures being taken for protection of wildlife in the forest area.

Making it clear that restoration of status quo at the site would be the court's first priority, a bench of justices BR Gavai and AG Masih heard the suo motu case registered over the alleged environmental violations. Listing the matter for May 15, the court granted four weeks to the State to respond to the Central Empowered Committee's (CEC) report, following a submission by the State that the report was voluminous and that the State would need some time to file its reply. The court also made it clear that in the meantime, not even a single tree should be felled in the area. It also warned the State about sending its officers to a "temporary prison" if the State chooses to oppose restoration.

According to posts by news agency Live Law on X,

## KEY RULINGS

- SC Bench expresses concern at videos showing wildlife running to seek shelter, erasing of 100 acres of forest
- Invokes its 1996 order restricting tree felling even in private lands
- Warns Chief Secretary of severe action if concrete restoration plan not submitted
- Directs Telangana's Wildlife Warden to explain steps being taken to protect displaced animals
- Grants four weeks' time to Telangana to respond to the Central Empowered Committee's report



- Takes note of CEC report alleging that the land was mortgaged to private parties without proper disclosure in affidavits
- Apex court schedules next hearing for May 15

**44 If you want to construct, you should have taken permissions. Even for important projects like the Chardham project in Uttarakhand, the Centre had to fight for years in court**

**44 What was the tearing urgency to do it (felling of trees) in three days of holidays?**

**44 Let there be green lungs in the city like we have in Bombay, Chennai and Jaipur**

**44 We are concerned with the damage done to environment. Any enactment which falls foul of this Court's 1996 order will not be tolerated**

## A wake-up call for Revanth: KTR

**HYDERABAD:** The Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) on Wednesday hailed the Supreme Court's directive to restore the forest in Kancha Gachibowli and to ensure the protection of wildlife in the area as a huge win for environmental conservation efforts in Telangana. Reacting to the apex court's strong obser-

ations against the Telangana government, BRS working president KT Rama Rao said the order vindicates the concerns raised by environmentalists and the BRS over the large-scale tree felling in Kancha Gachibowli forest. He hoped that the Revanth Reddy government will not continue to make a fool of

itself. "The BRS wholeheartedly welcomes the Supreme Court's directions. We hope this serves as a wake-up call for Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Congress government that they cannot get away with environmental murder," he said in a statement.

(SEE PAGE 2)

## SC order slap in the face of govt, says Harish

**HYDERABAD:** Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao termed the Supreme Court's directives in the Kancha Gachibowli case, as a tight slap in the face of the Congress government for its senseless actions in Telangana. He said the apex court's observations, especially its censure over the use of bulldozers during holidays, exposed the deliberate and dangerous environmental destruction by the Revanth Reddy government.

"These directives are a slap in the face to the government that tried to deprive Hyderabad of its green cover under the guise of development," he said.

Harish lauded the CEC report for exposing the lies of the Congress.

## STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) appointed by the Supreme Court has submitted a scathing report on the controversial clearing of 400 acres in Kancha Gachibowli. The report, submitted in the suo motu case heard by the apex court on Wednesday, exposes a series of irregularities and apparent violations by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIIC), and recommends immediate suspension of all activities on the land pending further judicial orders.

In its 60-page report, the CEC has recommended that no new interests be created in the disputed land - whether through sale, lease, or mortgage - until the Supreme Court takes a final decision. It has also sought the reconstitution of the Expert Committee to include forest officers, wildlife experts, ecologists, remote sensing professionals and survey agencies to ensure accurate identification of forest-like areas in accordance with the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 2023.

Highlighting the ecological sensitivity of the area, the committee urged the Court to declare the entire vacant land of the University of Hyderabad, including the disputed portion, as

**In its 60-page report, it recommends that no new interests be created in the disputed land until SC takes a final decision**

an ecologically sensitive zone, and recommended a moratorium on all development or clearing activities until a comprehensive ecological assessment is conducted, preferably by the Wildlife Institute of India.

Crucially, the report flags a deliberate avoidance of environmental clearance (EC) norms by TGIIIC. It stated that the agency applied only for Consents for Establishment (CFE) under the Air and Water Acts, deliberately sidestepping the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) under the EIA Notification, 2006. The TGIIIC sought CFE permission for the extent of 122.63 acres on January 30 this year.

The CEC has urged the Court to investigate the act of fragmenting or underreporting the total project area, often referred to as "piecemealing", in order to avoid triggering EC requirements. It has further called for disciplinary action against responsible TGIIIC officials.

(SEE PAGE 2)

# Will Muslims be part of Hindu trusts, asks SC

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday proposed to order that the properties declared as Waqf including "waqf by user" won't be de-notified but the Centre opposed the suggestion and sought a hearing before such a directive.

The top court also asked the Centre if Muslims would be allowed to be part of Hindu religious trusts.

"The properties declared by courts as waqfs should not be de-notified as waqfs, whether they are by waqf-by-user or waqf by deed, while the court is hearing the challenge to the Waqf

**Proposes to order that properties declared as Waqf including 'waqf by user' won't be de-notified**

Amendment Act 2025," the bench said.

The top court went on, "All Members of the waqf boards and central waqf Council must be Muslims, except the ex-officio members." A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan in the hearing

earlier considered referring the pleas to one high court but later heard at length a battery of senior advocates, including Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Rajeev Dhavan and solicitor general Tushar Mehta, who represented the Centre.

The bench said it would resume hearing on the petitions at around 2 pm on April 17. The court expressed concern over the violence that followed the law's enactment and said it was disturbing. The CJI proposed to pass an order to say that ex-officio members could be appointed regardless of their faith but others had to be Muslims. PTI

## Police notice to Smita Sabharwal

CITY BUREAU

Hyderabad

The Gachibowli police have issued a notice to Smita Sabharwal, urging the senior IAS officer to share any information regarding the Kancha Gachibowli land case to the investigation officials.

However, as there was no response from the officer, the police are planning to send her a notice for the second time. The police said, "As the case pertaining to spreading fake news was under probe, the officer had reposted certain content on her verified X account". (SEE PAGE 2)

## MOOD UPBEAT



BRS MLC K Kavitha paints a wall as part of crowd mobilisation for the party's upcoming silver jubilee meeting, in Karimnagar.

# Murshidabad riots fuelled by BJP, BSF: Mamata

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday termed the recent communal violence in Murshidabad as "pre-planned", accusing a section of the BSF, central agencies under the MHA, and the BJP of orchestrating tension by allegedly facilitating outsiders and enabling cross-border influx from Bangladesh.

Addressing a meeting with Muslim religious leaders, Banerjee urged PM Narendra Modi not to implement the "atrocious"

Waqf (Amendment) Act, warning that it would divide the country, and requested him to rein in union Home Minister Amit Shah, whom she accused of "harming the nation most for his own political agenda".

The TMC supremo claimed that despite the volatile situation in Bangladesh, the Centre rushed through the Waqf (Amendment) Act and allowed cross-border infiltration, both of which, she alleged, contributed to the unrest in Bengal.

Banerjee alleged that a section of the BSF and cer-

tain central agencies under the Home Ministry played a "role in facilitating the violence" and ordered a probe into the role of the border force.

"I came across news quoting the Home Ministry sources claiming the role of elements from across the border in Murshidabad unrest. Is it not the role of the BSF to guard the border? The BSF is under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The state government does not guard the international border. The central government can't evade responsibility," she said. PTI



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaks during a meeting in Kolkata on Wednesday. — Photo: PTI

## Justice Gavai recommended as next CJI

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Wednesday recommended to the Centre the name of Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai as the next CJI.

Justice Gavai, the second senior-most Supreme Court judge after the incumbent CJI Khanna, is set to become the 52nd CJI on May 14 after the retirement of CJI Khanna on May 13.

Justice Gavai, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, would have a tenure of over six months as the CJI. He is due to retire on November 23, 2025. Khanna, who was sworn in as the 51st CJI last year, recommended to the Law Ministry to appoint Justice Gavai as the next CJI. PTI