

## Old machinery may have caused Telangana blast

State govt orders expert probe; Sigachi Industries announces Rs 1 crore ex gratia

PTI, HYDERABAD: The Telangana government has constituted an expert committee to probe the causes and circumstances surrounding the June 30 explosion at the Sigachi Industries Ltd plant in Pashamylaram, Sangareddy district, which claimed 38 lives and left over 30 injured.

The committee, led by Dr B Venkateswar Rao, Emeritus Scientist at CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), has been tasked with establishing the sequence of events that led to the tragedy and assessing whether Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and safety norms were followed. It has been asked to submit a detailed report within a month, along with specific recommendations to prevent such incidents in the future. The Director of Factories will assist the panel during its inquiry.

This expert panel comes in addition to the five-member committee appointed earlier by the state, headed by Chief Secretary A Santhi Kumari, and comprising senior officials from disaster management, labour, health, and fire services departments.

M Dana Kishore, Princi-



Debris at the site of an explosion at the Sigachi Industries' pharma plant, at Pashamylaram in Telangana

pal Secretary for Labour, Employment, Training and Factories, held a preliminary meeting with committee members and subject experts via video conference. Officials from IICT and the Director of Factories also participated. The team is expected to visit the accident site shortly.

Meanwhile, Sigachi Industries confirmed that it had lost 40 team members in the blast and fire. The company has announced an ex gratia of Rs 1 crore each for the families of the

deceased and assured full medical and rehabilitation support for the injured. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has also announced Rs 1 crore compensation per victim's family, Rs 10 lakh for the seriously injured, and Rs 5 lakh for those with minor injuries.

However, troubling questions have emerged about the plant's safety practices. An FIR filed by Sangareddy police alleges that the plant operated with outdated machinery despite repeat-

ed warnings from workers. The complaint, filed by Yashwanth Rajanala — whose father was among the deceased — claims that workers had raised alarms about the risk posed by ageing equipment, but management failed to act.

The FIR also invoked serious charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including culpable homicide not amounting to murder and voluntarily causing grievous hurt.

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## WAVE OF DESTRUCTION



Wreckage of a vehicle amid silt and debris following flash floods, at Thunag in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, on Wednesday

## Corruption lens on Mapusa Joint Mamlatdar-I

Team Herald

### TRAIL OF CORRUPTION?

PANJIM: Devanand Prabhakar Prabhu, currently serving as Joint Mamlatdar-I at Mapusa, is under investigation for allegedly securing his government post by submitting a false certificate claiming eligibility under the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category.

The Directorate of Vigilance, after conducting a preliminary inquiry, reportedly found sufficient grounds to proceed with prosecution and has obtained sanction from the State government to initiate legal action.

What was surprising was that the Ponda Mamlatdar issued an EWS certificate

to Devanand Prabhakar Prabhu, appointed Joint Mamlatdar in Feb 2024, is facing a vigilance enquiry for falsifying documents under the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category. Ponda Mamlatdar issued an EWS certificate to Prabhu despite the fact that the Talathi of Usgao had submitted a negative report, stating that Prabhu

was not eligible for income and assets certificate. The complaint in the matter was filed by Vishant Kamat, who has demanded a thorough inquiry into what he described as a fraudulent appointment. According to Kamat, Prabhu obtained the EWS certificate to qualify for recruitment through the Goa Public Service Commission (GPSC), which in 2023 had advertised three posts for Mamlatdars. A total of 358 candidates applied, including five under the EWS category.

Prabhu was subsequently appointed as Joint Mamlatdar in February 2024. In his complaint, Kamat has submitted a list of 12 properties, most of which are in the name of Prabhu's father.

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## 13k bogus beneficiaries get dole meant for poor

Minister says over Rs 50 cr under DSSS recovered; but why are MLAs signing applicants' forms sans checks?

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a shocking revelation, Social Welfare Minister Subhash Phal Desai disclosed on Wednesday that since 2011, over 13,000 ineligible individuals had fraudulently received benefits under the Dayanand Social Security Scheme (DSSS) — a welfare initiative meant to support senior citizens, single women, widows and persons with disabilities.

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“The beneficiaries submit forms signed by MLAs. Are not those MLAs who sign the forms responsible? How do they sign forms without verifying? How do the authorities approve money to beneficiaries without them being entitled to? It means that the MLAs and the authorities are hand in gloves. What action is the government proposing against them?”

— Amit Palekar, AAP Goa president

“What action is being taken? Has the matter been investigated? Who approved it? After having officially declared, has the government or the minister or the department identified the officers responsible for allowing such a big discrepancy, which is nothing less than a fraud? Just recovering money does not solve the crime.”

— Trajano D'Mello, Political analyst

## Marquez quits as India football head coach



PTI, NEW DELHI: EMBATTLED India football head coach Manolo

Marquez stepped down on Wednesday after reaching a 'mutual agreement' with the All India Football Federation (AIFF), which was under pressure to fix accountability for the recent downward spiral of the national team.

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## Karnataka govt challenges CAT relief to suspended IPS officer in HC

PTI, BENGALURU: The Karnataka government on Wednesday approached the High Court challenging the Central Administrative Tribunal's (CAT) order reinstating Additional Commissioner of Police Vikash Kumar Vikash, who was suspended following the tragic stampede at Chinnaswamy Stadium here last month, which claimed

11 lives and injured 56 others.

The Tribunal, on July 1, quashed Vikash's suspension, terming the state's action as “mechanical” and lacking substantial grounds.

The Bengaluru bench of the tribunal comprising B K Shrivastava and Santosh

Mehra held that the state failed to present convincing material to justify the suspension.

“The order has not been based on convincing material... the officers have been suspended without sufficient material or grounds,” the Tribunal said, directing the state to reinstate Vikash

immediately.

In response, the state government filed a writ petition before the Karnataka High Court, contending that the CAT overstepped its jurisdiction by making determinations on the incident without the benefit of a full-fledged departmental inquiry.

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## Two lakh fish samples tested for formalin since 2019 and found ok, says Health Minister

Team Herald

PANJIM: Health Minister Vishwanath Phale on Tuesday said that since 2019, over two lakh fish samples have been tested at three key locations in Goa, and none have shown traces of formalin.

In post on social media, he said that the health ministry, in collaboration with the state fisheries department, has been conducting regular quality checks on fish samples collected from both inland and marine sources. He said that the results of the tests have been found to be satisfactory.

He said that the Goan fish industry is growing, and the government is committed to ensuring the safety and quality of the fish supply.

Rane stated that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) routinely conducts fish quality testing through its State-of-the-Art Laboratory, as well as through third-party laboratories. He said that the results of the tests have been found to be satisfactory.

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## Students at risk as drug influx rises in State

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: A rising influx of drugs into the state has raised concerns among law enforcement agencies and the public. The state government has taken steps to curb the drug trade, but the problem persists.

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