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Stones fly, five injured in chaos



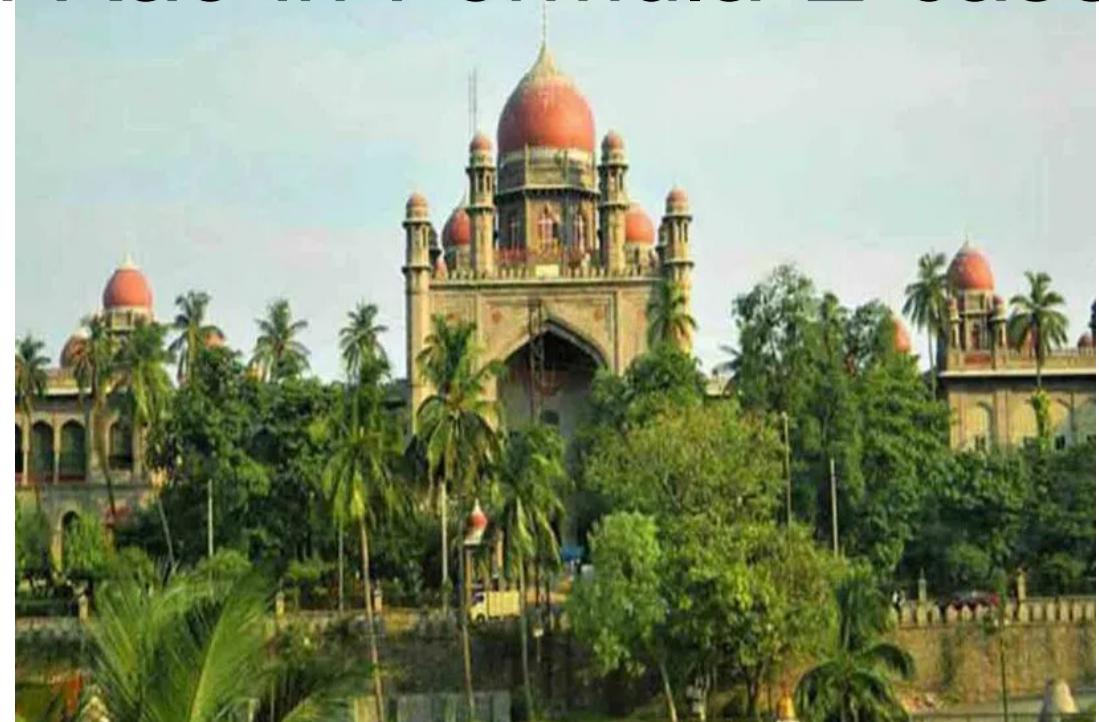
Hyderabad: Atleast five persons were injured in construction site at Kokapet, Narsingi when huge stones fell on them during blasting of rocks on Friday. A real estate firm had set off detonators at a construction site near Neopolis. The blasts sent stones and construction debris flying, striking people and nearby vehicles. It is learnt that a series of not less than ten blasts were carried out suddenly without any prior intimation to the locals or taking any preventive measures by the construction company.

Panic gripped locals who heard the blast sounds and stones falling from above immediately rushed to safety. Initially, they suspected that the blasting was part of a movie shoot, but later confirmed it was a blast being taken up by a construction company. Some of the Ayyappa Swamy devotees and construction workers at nearby labour camps were injured when huge stones from the rocks fell on them. Based on a complaint, the Narsingi police have booked a case under sections 125 and 91B of the Explosives Act and took up investigation.

## Traffic advisory issued in view of Christmas Celebrations at LB Stadium on Saturday

Hyderabad: In view of the Christmas Celebrations being organised at LB Stadium and to be attended by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on December 21, there will be certain traffic restrictions in the surroundings between 5pm and 9pm on the day. Traffic congestion points include Nampally railway station road, Ravindra Bharathi, AR petrol pump junction, BJR statue, SBI Gunfoundry, Sujatha School lane towards Khan Lateef Khan building, Lakdi-ka-pul, Basheerbagh, Iqbal Minar, The RTC buses plying from Ravindra Bharathi towards BJR statue will be diverted towards Nampally railway station depending on the traffic situation as per the need. In case of any inconvenience in commuting, please contact the Hyderabad Traffic Police Helpline – 9010203626.

## Telangana High Court halts arrest of KT Rama Rao in Formula-E case



Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Friday granted interim relief to BRS leader KT Rama Rao barring his arrest in the Formula E race corruption case until December 30. Justice N.V. Shravan Kumar, while granting the relief, also allowed the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to continue its investigation into the matter. KTR, the working president of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), had moved the High Court in a lunch motion seeking to quash the First Information Report (FIR) registered against him. The FIR alleges that KTR, during his tenure as Minister, misused government funds in connection with the Formula E race held in Hyderabad in 2023. The ACB registered the case accusing KTR of directing the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) to pay Rs 55 crore to a foreign company in violation of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines. The FIR filed under Sections 13(1)(a), 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Sections 409 and 120(B) of the Indian Penal Code, claims that the money was transferred improperly, causing financial misconduct. Represented by Senior Counsel Aryaman Sundaram, KTR's legal team argued that the FIR was politically motivated and lacked sufficient evidence to support the serious charges. In his submission, Sundaram emphasized that the case stemmed from a procedural lapse, not corruption. He also pointed out that no preliminary inquiry had been conducted before the FIR was filed, despite a 14-month delay. "We had to safeguard the event (Formula E). The worst case against the petitioner is that he did not follow procedure. That's the only charge," Sundaram told the court, adding that there was no evidence to suggest criminal misconduct by KTR. Sundaram further argued that the FIR did not meet the legal requirements for charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act. He stated that no allegations of financial gain or enrichment had been made

against KTR. The legal team also highlighted that the Formula E event had generated significant profit for the state government, amounting to Rs 110 crore. Sundaram also pointed out that a tri-partite agreement had been signed on October 25, 2022, between the Formula E organizers, the state government, and a sponsor for a four-year period. Following the sponsor's withdrawal in October 2023, the Telangana government stepped in to cover the required funds, including the disputed Rs 55 crore payment. Sundaram argued that the funds were transferred based on the existing agreement and that the government's actions were aimed at ensuring the success of the event, rather than involving any wrongdoing. One of the key points raised by KTR's defense was the delay in registering the FIR. The complaint was lodged on December 18, 2024, and the FIR was filed just the following day, suggesting a lack of proper investigation before taking legal action. Sundaram further argued that the entire case appeared to be part of a political vendetta against KTR, given the timing of the complaint and the absence of a prior inquiry. He cited the Supreme Court's rulings in Lalita Kumari and Charan Singh cases, which require a preliminary inquiry in corruption cases before filing an FIR, especially when there is a significant delay.

Sundaram also referenced the Bajrang Lal judgment, arguing that the court must look at the surrounding circumstances, which pointed to political motives rather than genuine legal concerns. The Advocate General, A. Sudarshan Reddy, opposed KTR's petition, stating that a preliminary inquiry had been conducted by the government before the FIR was registered. Reddy argued that the FIR does not need to be a comprehensive document at this stage and that all irregularities would be revealed during the course of the investigation. He asserted that the charges against KTR were not politically motivated and that the state had sufficient grounds to pursue the case. Reddy also argued that KTR should seek anticipatory bail under Section 438 or 439 of the CrPC rather than attempting to quash the FIR under Section 482. He requested that the court not to grant any relief at this stage. Justice N.V. Shravan Kumar questioned the Advocate General about the specifics of the charges and the ingredients of the alleged offences. The judge noted that the investigation could proceed, but directed that no arrest be made until December 30, 2024, offering temporary relief to KTR. The court further instructed the state government to file its counter-affidavit by December 27 and scheduled the matter for a hearing by the regular bench on December 30.

## Furore in Telangana Assembly over Formula-E case against KTR



Hyderabad: The Telangana Assembly witnessed chaos on Friday as BRS MLAs demanded a discussion on allegations surrounding the Formula-E car race. Both treasury and opposition benches engaged in sloganeering and disrupting proceedings, forcing Speaker Gaddam Prasad to adjourn the House for 15 minutes. The session began with BRS MLAs urging the Speaker to hold a discussion on the Formula-E issue before moving to the Bhumi Bharati Bill placed for discussion. Senior BRS leader T Harish Rao criticised the Congress government for making baseless corruption allegations against former Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao and the previous BRS government. "If the government has sincerity and courage, let us have an open discussion. Let the facts come out," he said. Harish Rao defended Rama Rao's decision to host the Formula-E event, emphasising its aim to boost Telangana's economy and global reputation. He charged the Congress government with using false cases to distract attention from its unfulfilled promises and issues like the arrest of Lagacherla farmers. The Speaker maintained that the Formula-E issue involved an individual, whereas the Bhumi Bharati Bill had Statewide relevance. Heated arguments followed, with BRS

MLAs demanding an assurance on when the topic would be debated. With the Revenue Minister initiating discussion on the Bill, BRS legislators continued raising slogans. Opposition Congress MLAs countered with protests against Rama Rao and the previous BRS government, leading to further disruptions and to adjournment. Speaking to mediapersons, the BRS MLAs stated that Congress MLA

Veernapally Shankar had thrown papers and hurled water bottle at the opposition MLAs protesting before the Speaker's podium. "He had also shown his shoe to one of our Dalit MLAs in the Assembly. He must be booked under an SC/ST atrocities case," MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy said. Another BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy said the papers were thrown, shoe was shown, and abuses were hurled at

the BRS MLAs. He said immediately after shoe was shown, the Speaker adjourned the House. "The Congress MLAs are trying to incite violence and evict the opposition MLAs. While Rahul Gandhi is attacking fellow Parliamentarians in Lok Sabha, the Congress MLAs are throwing water bottles and showing shoe at their opposition MLAs. The government should release the video footage," he demanded. Though the session resumed after about an hour, the BRS MLAs continued their protests at the Speaker's podium, demanding withdrawal of the case against KT Rama Rao and also hold a discussion on the issue in the House. Legislative Affairs Minister Sridhar Babu clarified that issues not included in the BAC agenda could not be taken up for discussion, further fuelling tensions. A scuffle broke out as marshals tried to intervene, and some members threw papers at the Speaker, escalating the disruption. The House was adjourned once again till afternoon. Earlier, BRS MLAs submitted an adjournment motion, urging the Speaker to allow a discussion on the Formula-E controversy. Wearing black badges and holding placards, they staged a demonstration outside the BRS Legislative Party office to mark their protest against the false case filed against Rama Rao.



