

Sex scandal CD: Karnataka CM accepts resignation of H Y Meti; orders probe

BENGALURU(KCN): Stung by an alleged sex CD scandal, Karnataka Excise Minister H Y Meti resigned today with government ordering a CID probe into the entire purported episode over the charge that he sought sexual favour from a woman in return for help.

Meti's exit came days after the alleged scandal erupted with the 71-year-old minister, considered close to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, submitting his resignation to him, saying he was doing so of his own accord to avoid embarrassment to the government.

Siddaramaiah said he has accepted the resignation and ordered a CID inquiry into the entire purported episode.

Sex scandals that have rocked Indian politics in the last two decades

He said, "Mr H Y Meti, Minister for Excise, voluntarily submitted his resignation to me. I have recommended his resignation to His Excellency Governor

of Karnataka for acceptance. I have also entrusted the entire episode to CID and (asked it) give a report as early as possible, to know the truth about the incident."



"Meti is claiming it is a conspiracy, he is not involved in such an incident and has totally denied it. That is why I am entrusting the matter to CID to inquire into it," said Siddaramaiah, who was under Opposition pressure to drop Meti. On allegations that he was in the know of the alleged incident but was trying to shield the Minister, he said "It is totally false. If I was

Chief Minister. "I have done nothing wrong. I have requested the Chief Minister to hold an inquiry," Meti, who has been rubbishing the allegations against him, told reporters after submitting his resignation.

Meti, considered close to Siddaramaiah from his Janata Dal days, was given a cabinet berth in June this year, when 14 minis-

ters were dropped and 13 others inducted in a bid to give a face-lift to his more than three-year-old government. The alleged scandal has come as a huge embarrassment to the

of seeking sexual favour from a woman in return for help. There are contradictory reports about the woman allegedly involved as multiple videos have emerged with her claiming to be the Minister's relative in one and retracting from it in another.

Mulali had also claimed that some supporters of Meti had threatened him not to release the CD. An audio tape had surfaced in connection with the alleged sex CD where a man claiming to be a supporter of Meti is heard threatening the RTI activist. Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Mulali said he has information about more such incidents involving a couple of Ministers and at least three MLAs. Reacting to this, Siddaramaiah said "I don't know, let him release."

Earlier Meti had rejected reports on the alleged CD, calling it false. He had also said none of his supporters had threatened the RTI activist.

The controversy involving Meti has been brewing since Sunday after RTI activist Rajashekar Mulali accused him

of seeking sexual favour from a woman in return for help. There are contradictory reports about the woman allegedly involved as multiple videos have emerged with her claiming to be the Minister's relative in one and retracting from it in another.

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Honour hard work of farmers, PCC chief tells Odisha government

KORAPUT(KCN): THE State Government should enhance the quantity of paddy to be procured from mandis in the larger interest of farmers, said Prasad Harichandan, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president.

Speaking at a meeting here on Tuesday, Harichandan said since the farmers produced bumper crop across undivided Koraput, the Government should honour their hard work by procuring 25 quintals per acre.

The minimum support price for paddy should also be increased to save farmers from distress sale, he added. The OPCC chief, who made a stopover here on way to Rayagada

from Malkangiri district, criticised the Chief Minister on the method of launching



different projects from one place and said people are aware of the fate of thousands of projects. People would give the right response in the forthcoming Panchayat elections, he added.

Harichandan also criticised the CM for avoiding Malkangiri district where more than 100 children died of Japanese En-

cephalitis. The CM preferred to visit Koraput and Nabarangpur but

On the other hand, the State Government had set a target to start the aca-

Sagarika and Chandra Sekhar Majhi skipping the meet. The MLAs took the plea of Assembly session for not making it to the meeting, which is considered crucial in the run-up to the Panchayat elections.

Harichandan said, "Congress is a democratic party and every leader has a right to give his opinion and all are functioning under one umbrella. It is not like the BJD where the leaders have no voice and all fear their autocratic ruler."

Harichandan said, "Congress is a democratic party and every leader has a right to give his opinion and all are functioning under one umbrella. It is not like the BJD where the leaders have no voice and all fear their autocratic ruler."

Harichandan was accompanied by former Union minister Srikant Jena, DCC president Meenakshi Bahinipati, Congress block chairperson and Koraput Municipality Chairman Bhagban Bahinipati.

Meanwhile, dissidence in the party came to the fore with MLAs Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Kailash Chandra Kulesika, Krushna Chandra

while dealing with the law and order situation as the situation has improved in Valley. "We need to heal the wounds of the people, who suffered during last five months".

The CM asked police to differentiate between militants and their families and a regular stone-pelter and his family members. "All youth can't be seen with suspicious eyes. We can't look at everybody with the same prism," she said and urged police to help the State government in normalising the situation.

Police, she said, needs to reach out to elderly, youth and the injured and differentiate between the general masses and the disruptive elements besides undertaking community policing.

Mehbooba's statement comes after her government cleared ex-gratia relief for the family of slain Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani over killing of his elder brother Khalid Muzaffar in security forces firing in April last year.

Asserting that there is no other option than reconciliation, Mehbooba said, "Time has come to take some bold reconciliatory decisions to get J&K people much needed healing

Differentiate between militants and their families: JK CM tells police

SRINAGAR(KCN): Admitting that excessive force was used to deal with the situation during five months of unrest in the Valley, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday



told police to differentiate between militants and their families and asked the cops not to use pellet guns.

"People of Kashmir suffered during the five months of unrest. There were lot of casualties and hundreds of civilians and security men were injured," Mehbooba said while addressing the passing-out parade of police at Commando Training Centre, Awantipora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

She admitted that during the unrest, the government had to use excessive force to deal with the situation and maintain law and order.

"I have no hesitation in telling the truth that we had to use excessive force to secure life and property of people of J&K. Had we not used the force, there would have been more casualties and injuries," the CM said.

At least 94 people were killed, more than 13000 including over 5000 security men injured and over 8000 people arrested in Valley during five months of unrest triggered by killing of 21-year-old Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in an encounter with security forces on July 8.

Mehbooba said

and relief which they have been craving for too long."

"I am of strong belief that there is no way forward except reconciliation, dialogue, discourse and minimizing the differences between re-

gions and people," she said.

Maintaining that Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and PSA are temporary, Mehbooba said, "We had army and security forces in the State before as well, but when militancy erupted, AFSPA had to be imposed. I want police and public to help the State government in creating an atmosphere, where a time will come when AFSPA is gradually revoked and PSA used only against criminals, drug addicts and timber smugglers and not against 80-year-old persons or youth".

"Police should help the State government in normalising the situation so that they don't have to book elderly persons and youth under PSA," she said.

On use of pellet guns, Mehbooba said she wants there should be no use of gun or pellet gun.

She said security personnel should avoid using the pellet gun against protestors. "They should exercise restraint from using the pellet guns till some alternative is found".

Mehbooba again praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his initiatives to normalize ties with Pakistan and demonetisation.

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Sruthi gets her wish, to work with Rajiv Menon

Sruthi Hariharan has a varied repertoire. The actress has worked with different directors and on diverse subjects.

While she stays rooted in Sandalwood, Sruthi does not miss any opportunity to work in other languages, especially if it gives her a chance to work with a good director.

The actress, who recently completed shoot for Uppi Matte Hutti Ba-Inti Prema, had a wonderful 2016 with plenty of projects. Her 2017 looks equally exciting.

While she is to play opposite Darshan in Prakash Jayaram's directorial, set to go on floors from February, Sruthi



is upbeat about her Tamil film with Rajiv Menon. In it, she will be playing the lead opposite GV Prakash. This yet-to-be titled

film, she says, will go on floors from January.

"My last film in Tamil was with Arjun Sarja," she says, "It was a bilingual in Kannada and Tamil and was shot in the beginning of last year."

The actor admits that the Tamil film industry was hard to get a break into, despite her fluency in the language.

"I have been busy with projects in Kannada, but it's not been as easy in Kollywood," she says.

"I have been part of a Balaji Sakthivel film, which is taking its own time, and we have to go with the flow.

Meanwhile Rajiv

Menon's project is something I am looking forward to. He was one director in my wish list. I am a huge fan of his films, Kandukondain and Minsara Kanavu, which I have grown up watching. Forget working with him, I would be excited even if I am with him on the sets."

Sruthi is also excited about working with GV Prakash.

"We know the kind of stories GV Prakash gravitates to, the combination of the director and actor will be riveting. It is a commercial film and will be made in sync sound, another interesting challenge for me," she says.

Rachita Ram set for varsity course

Rachita Ram seems destined to work with the top actors of Sandalwood, if the list of her films are anything to go by. The actress who made a transition from TV serials to the silver screen has worked with stars including Darshan, Sudeep, Puneeth Rajkumar, Ramesh Aravind, Ganesh and Dhruva Sarja. Now, she has just bagged an Upendra movie.

Rachita tells City Express that working with each star has been a learning experience, but when it comes to Upendra, it is like entering a "Film University". "When I worked with Darshan, Sudeep, Puneeth and Ganesh, they gave me acting tips and technical gyan time and again. With Uppi, I am sure to learn more about filmmaking. For me, he is a university."

The film produced by Vijayalakshmi Urs will go on the floors from December end.

Christmas cheer in sandalwood

While Sandalwood is riding through the demonetisation storm, a few filmmakers are sure of

Varalakshmi and Apoorva Kasaravarli's Niruttara will be competing with Aamir Khan's

alakshmi According to Ramesh Aravind, the film was initially slated for a December

best to wait till they are free. Holidays would be leisurely.

That why we shifted the release to

and Allu Aravind, features Ganesh and Shanvi Srivatsava and will be released in a good number of theatres across Karnataka. It is a remake of the 2015 Telugu film Bhale Bhale Mogadivoy.

"The original film's makers, who watched the final copy, are extremely happy," says Ramesh Aravind. "As mentioned by City Express, I remake a story and not a film, which has become a code now. I have kept to my style."

Preetham is happy with Naanu...s release date and says, "It will be out with my best friend Ganesh's film and

Nirrutara has Kiran, who was launched through my directorial. It is not at all about competition because each film is different. Naanu Mattu Varalakshmi is about race for love and our Christmas gift to the viewers."

The film sees the launch of GK Venkatesh's grandson, Prithvi, and is produced by the actor's father K Manjunath. Naanu Mathu Varalakshmi also marks the debut of Malavika Mohanan. The film distributed under Jayanna Combines will be released in 150 theatres.



cashing in on the Christmas holidays.

Three Kannada films - Ramesh Aravind's Sundaranga Jaana, Preetham Gubbi's Naanu Mattu

Dangal from B-town, All to be out in theatres on December 23.

Prithvi and Malavika Mohanan in Naanu Mattu Var-

9 release but that was when the industry hit the demonetisation nadir. "People were struggling to get money, waiting in long queues at banks, so we thought it's

Christmas," he says. "We are hoping the cloud has finally passed and the queues will shift to the theatres."

The film, from Rockline Venkatesh



Supermodel Gigi Hadid attended the ceremony in an off-shoulder white dress. Hadid was also one of the hosts for the event.

Old notes worth Rs 12.44 lakh crore deposited till Dec 10: RBI

MUMBAI(KCN): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tues-

"more and more notes" on a daily basis, said Deputy Gov-

ing and take action against officials found involved in un-

pending a junior RBI official after dubious transaction issue. All



day said that Rs. 12.44 lakh crore of demonetised Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes have been deposited by the public since demonetisation was announced on November 8. Notes worth Rs 12.44 lakh crore have been deposited till December 10, while the central bank has been issuing

ernor S.S. Munda.

"We have been issuing more and more notes on a daily basis. RBI has printed 1.8 billion notes of Rs 2,000 and Rs 500. It has printed 20 billion of smaller denomination notes," he said.

The RBI also said that it has instructed the banks to do central data check-

lawful activities.

"Banks have taken action against errant officials. Banks must investigate when the data is suspicious," he said.

Munda said that a junior RBI official has also been suspended and due action will be taken in the matter.

"We have sus-

the banks as well as RBI are having an institution of whistle blowers. It is a due process that will be undertaken. Due action has been initiated," he added.

However, he also praised the banking industry for carrying out the "good work" since demonetisation.

India to witness increase in mobile fraud by 65% in 2017: Study

NEW DELHI(KCN): With the surge in digital transactions via e-wallets and

search firm EY, titled 'Strategic National Measures to Combat Cybercrime', said a



other online payment gateways, mobile frauds are expected to grow to 60-65 per cent in the country by 2017, a leading industry body said on Monday.

The joint study by Assocham and re-

secure cyberspace and the government's initiatives in keeping tabs on cyber crime have become important criteria for businesses to establish, operate and flourish in any region.

"Mobile frauds are areas of great concern for companies as 40-45 per cent of financial transactions are done via mobile devices and this threat is expected to grow to 60-65 per cent," the study noted. Credit and debit card fraud cases top the chart of cyber crimes and there has been a six-fold increase in such cases over the past three years.

"According to the data, about 46 per cent complaints of online banking related to/credit/debit card fraud followed by Facebook-related complaints (39 per cent -- mostly

morphed pictures/cyber stalking/cyber bullying)," the study said.

Other major cyber complaints were cheating through mobile (21 per cent), hacking of e-mail ID (18 per cent), abusive/offensive/obscene calls and SMS (12 per cent) and others. Enforcing data security measures and creating proactive security monitoring capabilities are vital for an organisation to maintain a lead over emerging threats and protect their financial, intellectual and customer-related information, the study said.

Aurobindo Pharma dips over 2 per cent after fire incident

NEW DELHI(KCN): Shares of Aurobindo Pharma dropped over 2 per cent today after the company reported a fire incident at its Srikakulam facility in Andhra Pradesh.

On BSE, the stock opened at Rs 722 and tumbled 3.09 per cent to touch an intra-day low of Rs 696.

The scrip finally settled 2.04 per cent down at Rs 703.55.

Following a similar trend on NSE, the stock opened at Rs 718.60, before tum-

701, down 2.45 per cent.

A total of 1.03 lakh shares of



bling 3.14 per cent to touch an intra-day low of Rs 696. It ended the day at Rs

Aurobindo Pharma got traded on BSE, while over 30.22 lakh stocks of the com-

pany changed hands on NSE.

The flash fire incident occurred on December 12, 2016 in the company's active pharmaceutical ingredients unit, located at Pydibhimavaram, Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh in which two people died and one was critically injured, Aurobindo Pharma said in a filing to BSE today.

India's current account deficit at \$3.4 billion in July-Sept: RBI

Rupee hit a record low of 68.86 amid RBI intervention. Image used for representational purpose. (File photo | Reuters) **MUMBAI:** India posted a current account deficit of \$3.4 billion, or 0.6 percent of gross domestic product, in the July-September quarter, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement on Tuesday.

That compared with a deficit of \$8.5 billion, or 1.7 percent of GDP, in the same quarter a year ago, according to data re-

leased by the RBI. In the GDP.

pared with a deficit of



the April-June period, the current account deficit was \$300 million or 0.1 percent of

Meanwhile, the balance of payments was at a surplus of \$8.5 billion com-

\$900 million a year ago, the RBI data showed.

Tata Motors director alleges governance lapses by Tata Sons

NEW DELHI(KCN): An independent director of Tata Motors has alleged governance lapses by the automaker's parent, Tata Sons, and said it wrongly influenced directors,

meetings have been called by these companies next week to remove him.

Mistry has found support from some independent directors like Nusli Wadia,

that Tata Sons hurriedly sought legal advice to influence Nov. 14 meetings of Tata Motors' independent directors and its board of directors.

At a meeting on that day, Tata

dependent directors and was told that it was not only inappropriate, but also illegal, he said. He also alleged that Ratan Tata and his close aide, Noshir Soonawala, also a trustee of Tata



stirring up a public power struggle at India's biggest conglomerate.

In a boardroom coup in October, Cyrus Mistry was removed as chairman of Tata Sons, holding company of the \$100 billion steel-to-autos Tata empire, with family patriarch Ratan Tata temporarily returning to the helm.

Mistry, who had sought to strengthen the firm's governance, remains a director of several group companies such as Tata Motors, Tata Steel and Indian Hotels Co Ltd. Special shareholder

who sits on the boards of some group companies including Tata Motors, owner of luxury automaker Jaguar Land Rover, and Tata Steel.

In a scathing 13-page letter to shareholders, seen by Reuters on Wednesday, Wadia, who has been with Tata for about four decades, said Tata Sons "sought to illegally and inappropriately influence events and coerce the directors."

Wadia, head of the Wadia group that has business interests ranging from textiles to aviation, alleged

Motors' independent directors gave a tacit nod to Chairman Mistry, but stopped short of an outright endorsement.

Wadia said that, according to the legal opinion obtained by Tata Sons, if the independent directors were to express their support for Mistry, it could not be considered "material" and should not be disclosed to the stock exchanges, thus preventing Mistry's supporters from issuing any public statement.

Wadia sought legal advice on the company's effective silencing of the in-

Trusts, Tata Sons' biggest shareholder, sought, and were given, information and briefings from Tata Motors and Tata Steel about the company's affairs that were material and price sensitive.

As a result, Tata Steel Europe's strategy, financial data, and details on its proposed merger with ThyssenKrupp and other price sensitive information were shared. Tata Sons has called on shareholders to remove Wadia, as well as Mistry, as a director on company boards.

Tata Sons had no immediate comment.

Inzamam criticises Anderson over comments on Kohli

KARACHI(KCN): Pakistan chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq has criticised James Anderson for his uncharitable comments about Virat Kohli's technique, saying that the England pacer should first take wickets in India before questioning the Indian skipper's capabilities.

Anderson had recently said Kohli's technical deficiencies were not at display during the ongoing Test series between India and England because the pitches in India are devoid of bounce and there is lack of movement.

"It is surprising to me that Anderson should question Kohli's runs and ability because I haven't seen him take too many wickets in India," Inzamam said on the Geo Super

sports channel here last night.

batsman. Don't the English and Australia

not matter where you get runs because in

dian batsmen, rated Kohli highly.



"Does Anderson mean to say that if you get runs in England you get some sort of certificate that makes you a quality

lian players struggle when they play in the sub-continent? Does that mean they are bad players or weak teams. To me it does

Test matches runs are runs," the former Pakistan skipper added. Inzamam, who played against the golden breed of In-

ion if a batsman scores 80 and it helps his team win, it matters more to me than someone scoring 150 and his team still losing.

"He is a quality player and when he is getting runs his team does well. That is important to judge or classify a batsman's value. There is hunger in him for runs," he said.

The veteran of 120 Tests lamented that the Asians have a habit of questioning their own teams and players while England and Australia always back their cricketers.

"If they don't do well there we start questioning the ability of our teams and players ourselves. We must not forget Australia lost 3-0 in Sri Lanka, we beat England 3-0 in the past

in the UAE."

Meanwhile, Inzamam revealed that during his captaincy he feared Virender Sehwag the most among the Indian batsmen.

"Sehwag was a dangerous player because if he scored 80 odd runs it meant his team would end up scoring 300 or more in a Test or ODI. The more time he spent time at the crease the more he dented the morale of the bowlers, which was worrying for me as captain," said Inzamam.

On the suspension of bilateral cricket between Pakistan and India, Inzamam said it has hurt Pakistan cricket a lot.

"Overall it is not good for cricket and for both countries not

to play bilateral series. But from a Pakistani perspective it has done us more damage as already foreign teams are also not touring Pakistan and our young players are not getting chances to play matches against international sides before playing for the senior team.

"People want to see Indo-Pak matches but there is nothing one can do about it until things are normal at the government level. Personally, I always enjoyed the challenge of playing against India and it made a better player. To me an Indo-Pak series has always been even bigger than the Ashes," concluded Inzamam.

First day-night Ashes Test set for Adelaide

JOHANNESBURG (KCN): South African pace spearhead Dale Steyn will not be playing next year's Indian Premier League (IPL).

Steyn has ruled himself out of the lucrative T20 league in order to return to the Proteas side for their England tour - and possibly the ICC Champions Trophy.

who is currently recovering from an elbow injury, was quoted as saying by Sport24. "I haven't had a long break like this in a good few years and every season I go into it with something wrong, whether it be a little hammie or whatever."

He would also miss the tour to New Zealand which begins on February 17 with

third Test.

Steyn, who plays for Gujarat Lions franchise in the IPL, will not participate in the event which runs from April 5 to May 21.

"It will be nice to go into a season, starting in June, and confidently know that I am really strong and in a good place," he added.

South Africa would be playing three ODIs in

Champions Trophy, which runs from June 1-18.

The 33-year-old had got his right shoulder fractured during Australia's first innings of the opening Test against South Africa, which the Proteas went on to win by massive 177 runs at the WACA Ground in Perth. The 33-year-old has also not been included in the 13-men squad for the



"June is realistic for South Africa," Steyn,

a T20 clash and ends with the March 25-29

England and then they would participate in the

three-match Test series in Sri Lanka.

'Great players should play together,' Ronaldo talks of partnering Messi

MADRID(KCN): After lifting his

Griezmann to win the coveted prize.

quoted Ronaldo as saying.

pressive catalogue "My objective



fourth Ballon d'Or award, Real Madrid star striker Cristiano Ronaldo has insisted that the competition for the trophy would have been fiercer if he and Lionel Messi were in the same team.

Ronaldo, who inspired Zinedine Zidane's side to the Champions League glory and Portugal to the European Championship 2016 trophy, defeated Messi and Atletico Madrid forward Antoine

The Portuguese star, who previously lifted the prestigious prize in 2008, 2013 and 2014, is now one behind Messi, who took the honour for a fifth time last year.

Asserting that 'great players should play together', Ronaldo believes he would have performed out of the top had Messi been his team-mate.

"It would be interesting to see both of us in the same team," goal.com

"I think great players should play together. So if we were in the same team, I think I would have more than him, but he wouldn't be far off. Everyone knows Messi is a great player. He's won five Ballons d'Or," he added.

The 31-year-old asserted he now hopes to help Real Madrid to the Club World Cup in Japan as he aims to add more achievements to his already im-

now is to win the Club World Cup, an important trophy. After that, to win La Liga. It's a title that Real wants to win. And if possible, the Champions League again and the Copa del Rey. I always want to win everything," Ronaldo said.

Ronaldo has scored 19 goals in 20 games for club and country this term, to add to the 54 goals he got last season.