

'PLAYING IN FOUL AIR AMOUNTS TO PUTTING KIDS IN GAS CHAMBER'

SC, HC concern over kids' health; pollution watchdog halts Nov-Dec NCR sports events

Ananthakrishnan G
and Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, November 19

SPORTS TOURNEYS POSTPONED IN NCR

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday asked the air pollution watchdog for Delhi-NCR to consider issuing directions to schools to move sports activities scheduled in November and December to "safer months".

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) complied within hours, directing NCR governments to postpone physical sports competitions scheduled for November and December. (See box)

A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran accepted the submission by amicus curiae Senior Advocate Aparajita Singh that making children participate in outdoor sports activities in peak pollution months amounted to putting them in a "gas chamber".

"The learned amicus has... raised the concern for most of the schools having their sports competition in the months of November-December, which is the peak period for poor...air quality. The amicus submits that this would amount to virtually putting the school-going children in a gas chamber."

"We, therefore, request the CAQM to take into consideration this aspect of the matter and issue necessary directions to the concerned states so that the sports competition activities could be shifted to safer months," the Bench ordered.

Also on Wednesday, the Delhi High Court remarked orally that the government of Delhi was "shirking its responsibility" by allowing sports activities in the period between November and January.

The court was hearing a petition by 11 schoolchildren who are seeking rescheduling of the outdoor sports calendar to avoid the months during which the air quality in Delhi is often in the 'severe' zone (AQI higher than 400).

Justice Sachin Datta issued notice and sought a status report from the Delhi government on the steps it has taken this year, as well as the steps it intends to take for the next year, to address the issue.

The court also sought responses from the Delhi government's Directorate of Education (DOE) - which schedules zonal, interzonal and state-level tournaments, and coaching camps and selection trials - and the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), which

THE CAQM on Wednesday convened a meeting with representatives from the central Ministry of Education, governments of NCR states, Sports Authority of India, and NCR State Pollution Control Boards to consider measures to safeguard the health of children from air pollution in November and December.

ACTING ON SC's observations, the watchdog wrote to the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh asking them to take "immediate... action to ensure that physical sport competitions scheduled in November and December may be postponed keeping in view the air quality trends prevailing in the area where such events are scheduled..."

schedules national-level tournaments, on how the school sporting calendar for the upcoming year can be adjusted.

The schoolchildren have submitted that the scheduling of sports tournaments in Delhi's air forces them to choose "between their fundamental right to life and education".

After counsel for petitioners senior advocate Shyel Trehan submitted that the tournaments could start in April "when the air is better", standing counsel for Delhi government Sameer Vashisht told the court that "summers are extremely hot" - but "if SGFI will schedule the dates (avoiding the months of high air pollution in Delhi), certainly Delhi will follow... They (students) cannot be deprived of it (participation in sports)".

To this, Justice Datta observed, "They cannot be deprived of damage to lungs, is it? I am sorry to say, you are shirking your responsibility. Do you recognise there's a problem (in the air quality) in these months (from November to January)? You recognise that... You plan in a way from the future year, that there is minimal number or no fixtures during this period. For Delhi, you must start your games immediately after the Boards (exams)."

In the SC, the CJI-led Bench took note of a submission that construction workers who have been out of work for a week on account of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), were yet to get subsistence allowance.

11 SCHOOLCHILDREN GO TO HIGH COURT WITH PLEA AGAINST POLLUTION

'It's now right to life vs right to education, very pattern of childhood has changed'

Drishti Jain
New Delhi, November 19

ON A November morning, a week after Diwali, Mehboob Shaw's daughter, a Class 11 student, stepped onto a football field in Delhi as the Air Quality Index hovered in the 'severe' category - a range which prompts public health advisories to warn even healthy adults to stay indoors. By the time the inter-zonal tournament ended, she had done what many children in Delhi have been doing: breathe in toxic air.

Days later, she was coughing persistently and struggling to breathe. Nearly every student who played that day, parents say, came home with similar complaints.

Her experience is not an outlier, but part of a pattern that parents and pediatricians in the Capital have been warning about for years: children getting visibly sicker following outdoor sporting events held during the months when the city's air routinely ranks among India's most polluted.

Now, a group of children has taken their fight to the Delhi High Court, asking officials to reschedule their schools' sports events during the months when the city's pollution reaches its peak.

Their petition argues that scheduling school sports tournaments when the air is hazardous effectively forces students to choose "between their fundamental right to life and education". Most major events are slated between October and January, a stretch marked by a recurrent cycle of toxic air.

The petitioners maintained that the health risks have become too acute to ignore.

Parents of these petitioners told *The Indian Express* that it is now a cycle so "consistent" that it has become "predictable".

"Children return with watery eyes, asthmatic symptoms, itchy skin," said Vasant Vihar resident Vidyut Gulati, the mother of a petitioner.

Pediatric studies have repeatedly shown that prolonged exposure to high particulate matter can impair lung growth, reduce immunity and worsen asthma



The Delhi team selection for the SGFI nationals in progress at the East Vinod Nagar sports complex in heavy smog in December 2023. A group of 11 schoolchildren have sought the Delhi High Court's intervention to change the outdoor sports calendar in the season of high air pollution. EXPRESS

"Headaches have become routine because of the pollution."

Physical symptoms are only one part of the story. Parents say the very rhythm of childhood is changing.

"They are restless, anxious, agitated, wanting to go out. But they can't," said a parent of another petitioner. Another said her child now feels forced to choose "between her health and the sports she loves".

For younger children, the stakes are even higher. "Their lungs have not developed, their immunity has not developed," one mother said. Even teenagers, she noted, do not have fully mature lungs, making prolonged exposure particularly harmful. "It is really a silent killer and it is becoming true of Delhi."

Pediatric studies have repeatedly shown that prolonged exposure to high particulate matter can impair lung growth, reduce immunity and worsen asthma. A 2021 study by AIIMS Delhi, Kalawati Saran

Children's Hospital and the Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute found that even short-term exposure to polluted air led to a marked rise in emergency room visits by children for acute respiratory symptoms, both on the day of exposure and for up to six days afterward. The researchers reported significantly higher cases on days with poor air quality compared with cleaner ones.

The parents said they see these effects playing out in real time. Some have begun questioning whether Delhi is still a viable place to raise children.

"I don't know whether it's worth living in the city at this time," Shaw, a resident of Sainik Farm, said.

For many families, the struggle is not new, and the new legal battle keeps bringing old fears back. "I still remember going to Jantar Mantar eight years ago with my son, who was six or seven then, for a march against the poor air quality. But nothing has changed," said

Gaurav Gulati, whose child has moved HC.

According to these parents, they moved the court out of desperation as these health episodes have only become more frequent.

This fall, Gaurav's 15-year-old son, Abhivier, was forced to visit a doctor after repeated coughing and wheezing fits following cricket practice. "The doctor said it was a bronchitis attack; his chest was congested and he had a headache. He had to miss school for a week and was told to stay indoors," said his mother, Vidyut.

For the parents, moments like these sharpen the urgency of their case. Every practice session, they said, is another reminder of why the fight cannot wait another season.

Rahul Bose, whose daughter is a petitioner, said the emotional toll is mounting. "It's not fair to make children choose between the right to live and the right to the opportunities in front of them," he said.

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Tuesday evening, hours after multiple teams of the ED carried out searches at 25 locations linked to the Al Falah group in Delhi-NCR.

The agency also initiated a probe against the Al Falah group on the basis of two FIRs registered by the Delhi Police Crime Branch.

"By allegedly fabricating and misrepresenting its NAAC accreditation status and falsely claiming UGC recognition under Section 12(B), Al-Falah

University has not only violated regulatory norms but has also irreparably harmed the lives and career prospects of countless students who relied on these claims in good faith," the ED, represented by Special Public Prosecutor Simon Benjamin, told Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan of Saket Court.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC) that assesses and accredits higher educational institutions.

"Students invest their most valuable and productive years, along with their families' hard-earned finances, based on the credibility and statutory recognition of an institution; when such recognition is false, the degrees they obtain suffer diminished value, affecting their eligibility for higher education, government jobs, research opportunities, and professional advancement. This results in emotional distress, financial

loss, wasted years of youth, and long-term setbacks in their academic and professional trajectories," the ED's remand papers said.

The ED also claimed that the funds were used for personal and private gain. "... incriminating evidence has been found which indicate the diversion of funds (duped from people) and fees of students for personal and private use. Various persons have admitted that matters with regard to financial decisions were taken by the arrestee/accused," it said.

"Meanwhile, the University, through these alleged deceptive practices, has continued to attract admissions and accumulate substantial monetary gains, thereby enriching itself at the cost of students' trust, future, and legitimate expectations," it added.

Nine shell companies registered at the same address that are linked to the group are under examination as part of the investigation into financial irregularities.

guided by rgesheet

strike," he said in his statement, according to the chargesheet.

Sakariya's wife refused to give him money to travel to Delhi, but his friend and co-accused Tahseen Raza transferred Rs 2,000 to him online, says the chargesheet.

Sakariya told police that he put in a request to meet the CM, and got a Jan Sunwai slip. He took the metro to Kashmiri Gate, picked a fruit-cutting knife off a vendor's cart, and got himself a bed at the Delhi Gujarati Samaj Dharamshala. On August 20, after seeing the police deployment for the CM's meeting, he threw the knife

Cartel busted with 4 arrests, drugs worth Rs 100 crore seized

Express News Service
New Delhi, November 19

DRUGS HIDDEN in cavities of travel bags, long train rides to Mumbai and Bengaluru, a "kitchen" used to mix drugs for sale and a hawala channel funneling the money to Nigeria. That's how, the Delhi Police said Wednesday, an Africa-based drug cartel was supplying methamphetamine drugs (also known as meth) from the Capital to other metropolitan cities in India.

drug manufacturing facility was unearthed at Tek Chand Colony, Nilothi Extension. This lab had several equipment, calcium chloride, methanol, coloured and transparent liquid chemicals and solvents," DCP Patel said.

Later on November 6, one Chinoye Emmanuel was arrested for allegedly helping Amorka in setting up the "kitchen," police said.

At the instance of Amorka and Chinoye, the police also conducted raids in Bengaluru

Man dupes people by posing as R&AW chief, Army officers; held

Neetika Jha
Noida, November 19

ON TUESDAY, the Noida unit of the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) were informed about a man who was allegedly posing either as an Army Major, Colonel or the director of Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and renting accommodations at multiple places.

The 37-year-old, identified as Sunit Kumar — who the informant said was residing in Greater Noida's Paramount Golf Forest Society — was subsequently arrested on Wednesday. According to the police, Kumar was trying to convince people to open multiple bank accounts and was using forged documents for the same.

An official statement released by the STF read: "Kumar was found in possession of a large cache of allegedly forged documents, including multiple

PAN and voter ID card photocopies with different names and photographs, fake government identity cards, fabricated rent agreements, cheque books, credit/debit cards, laptops, tablets, and verification letters purportedly from Delhi Police."

A senior official, requesting anonymity, told *The Indian Express* that Kumar was floating multiple companies and was involved in circular trading. "We are still investigating the case... he has duped several people over the years. Every time he got caught or people got suspicious, he would tell them that he was hiding his real identity and that he was actually a R&AW agent. We have so far frozen an amount of Rs 40 lakh that was lying in his account," he said.

"Acting on surveillance and intelligence inputs, an STF team, led by ASP Raj Kumar Mishra and DySP Navendu

Kumar, traced the suspect to Paramount Golf Forest [Society]. The suspect was brought to the STF office for detailed questioning [on Wednesday]. He was arrested around 8.30 pm," an STF officer said.

According to officials, Kumar admitted to using different identities to convince people of his authority. The STF said he used forged documents to rent multiple properties and subsequently used the addresses to open bank accounts.

He allegedly floated three companies — Happu Mental Health Service 2, Festum 24 Technologies Pvt Ltd, and Lokally Technologies Pvt Ltd — listing himself and a relative as the directors.

A case has been registered at Surajpur police station under relevant Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections for cheating and forgery, and Section 66D of the IT Act pertaining to impersonation and online fraud.

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Notice for Re-scheduled date of Online Application & Choice Filling

In continuation to Advertisement No. BCECEB(PGMAC)-2025/05 dated 05.11.2025, it is to inform all concerned NEET(PG)-2025 candidates / institutions that in the light of Revised NEET(PG) Schedule 2025 dated 15.11.2025 issued by MCC, Important dates of PGMAC-2025 is hereby rescheduled as follows:

Sl. Programme	Re-scheduled Date
i. Revised Starting date of online Registration & submission of Application-cum-Choice Filling / Editing of Application Form data (Round-1 & Round-2)	19.11.2025
ii. Last date of online Registration & submission of Application with payment through Debit Card/ Credit Card/ Net Banking/ UPI by Registered candidate/ Editing of Application Form data (Round-1 & Round-2)	21.11.2025 (10.00 pm)
iii. Last date of Choice Filling and Locking (Round-1 & Round-2)	21.11.2025 (11.59 pm)
iv. Publication of Rank Card	23.11.2025
v. Round-1 Provisional Seat Allotment Result publication date	26.11.2025
vi. Downloading of Allotment order (Round-1)	26.11.2025 to 01.12.2025
vii. Documents Verification and Admission (Round-1)	28.11.2025 to 01.12.2025
2. Eligibility criteria for Counselling / Counselling Fee payment procedure, Instructions and other Details for filling up Online Applications are available in the Prospectus of PGMAC-2025 and the related Advertisement No.-BCECEB(PGMAC)-2025/01 Dated 29.10.2025, can be seen / downloaded from the Board's website: bceceboard.bihar.gov.in .	

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