

Unprecedented chaos erupted at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium) in Kolkata on Saturday after Argentine football legend Lionel Messi was forced to leave the venue early, triggering violent scenes that shocked the nation and drew global attention. What was meant to be a historic and celebratory event during the Kolkata leg of Messi's GOAT Tour quickly spiralled into disorder, raising serious concerns over event management, crowd control, and administrative accountability. Disturbing visuals from the stadium showed angry spectators hurling bottles, damaging property, and attempting vandalism soon after Messi's departure. Opposition parties described the incident as a moment that left Bengal with its "head bowed in shame," while political and civic circles witnessed intense debate over how such a high-profile international event could descend into chaos.

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# Morning India

**Prime organiser of Messi event arrested for 'mismanagement and chaos'**

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Satadru Datta, the prime organiser of the Lionel Messi football event at Salt Lake Stadium here was arrested on Saturday following widespread chaos at the venue, which prompted the Argentine World Cup-winning captain to leave the field early.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the stadium unrest, Datta was held by the Bidhannagar Police for "mismanagement" of the event from the Kolkata airport, where he had gone to see off Messi and his entourage on their way to Hyderabad. "We are looking into whether there was any mismanagement from the organiser's side, which led to the chaos at the stadium. He has been detained, and the police have now brought the situation under control," West Bengal DGP Rajeev Kumar said at a press conference. "We are looking into whether there was any mismanagement from the organiser's side, which led to the chaos at the stadium. He has been detained, and the police have now brought the situation under control," West Bengal DGP Rajeev Kumar said. The organiser has given in writing that he will refund the prices of tickets he sold to the disappointed spectators, Kumar added. What was supposed to be a marquee football spectacle turned into widespread violence and disorder at the stadium after Messi's brief and tightly ring-fenced appearance, his first at the venue since 2011, left large sections of the crowd frustrated as they failed to catch a glimpse of their superstar despite having paid hefty sums for tickets.

**4 accused charged with murder by SIT in Zubeen Garg death case**

**MI News Service, Guwahati:** A Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing into the death of popular singer Zubeen Garg, charged four accused with murder in its chargesheet filed in a Guwahati court on Friday. The accused are Shyamkanu Mahanta, Siddhartha Sharma, Shekhar Jyoti Goswami and Amritprava Mahanta, lawyers said. Shyamkanu Mahanta was the chief organiser of the North East India Festival, which was attended by Garg in Singapore, where he died under mysterious circumstances while swimming in the sea on September 19. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Assam Police investigating the death of noted singer Zubeen Garg submitted a detailed chargesheet before the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in Guwahati on Friday. The filing marks a major step forward in the high-profile case that has drawn intense public attention across the state and the country as well.

The charge sheet, running into nearly 3,500 pages, was prepared after months of inquiry into Garg's death in Singapore on September 19. The SIT examined around 300 witnesses, travelled to Singapore to collect evidence, and scrutinised electronic devices, personal items and other materials linked to the singer. The investigation



Argentine superstar footballer Lionel Messi during the Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on Saturday.

Pic: Prabin Bhattacharya

## Mamata Banerjee sincerely apologises to Lionel Messi and his fans after the mess

**MI News Service, Kolkata :** Expressing her strong dismay and apologising to the Argentine superstar Lionel Messi and thousands of football fans in the city after a massive chaos erupted inside the Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium) on Saturday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she was "deeply disturbed and shocked" by the mismanagement at the stadium during an event featuring the global football icon in the midst of his brief appearance.

In a post on X, Mamata Banerjee said this afternoon that she was on her way to the Yuva Bharati Krirangan along with thousands of football lovers when reports of disorder and crowd unrest emerged. "I am deeply disturbed and shocked by the mismanagement witnessed today at Salt Lake Stadium," the Chief minister said adding "I sincerely apologise to Li-



onel Messi, as well as to all sports lovers and his fans, for the unfortunate incident." The Chief minister also announced the formation of a high-level enquiry committee headed by retired Calcutta High Court judge Justice Ashim Kumar Ray, with the state's Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretary (Home and Hill Affairs) becoming

members. The panel has been tasked with conducting a detailed probe, fixing responsibility and recommending corrective measures to prevent similar incidents in

her "heartfelt apologies to all sports lovers", as criticism mounted over the authority's alleged failure to properly handling the situation in front of the VVIP guests. Her imme-

**I am deeply disturbed and shocked by the mismanagement witnessed today at Salt Lake Stadium**

--Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

future. Her statement came within an hour after Messi was escorted out of the venue within minutes of his arrival following the unruly behaviour of a section of a massive 70,000 odd crowd who had gathered at the stadium to have a glimpse of the Argentine superstar since early this morning. Taking immediate action, the chief minister announced the constitution of the enquiry committee under the chairmanship of retired Justice Ashim Kumar Ray. She concluded her statement by once again extending

diate decision of instituting a judicial enquiry signals potential accountability measures following the chaotic scenes that overshadowed what was expected to be a super success of the government. As a result, what was meant to be a celebratory event, descended into a chaos. During his brief stay inside the stadium Messi could manage only a brief wave to the spectators before being escorted out within minutes under heavy security, with none of the scheduled programmes taking place.

## Thousands welcome Argentine icon as Messi mania grips Kolkata



Messi Mania grips Kolkata as thousands welcome Argentine icon

**MI News Service, Kolkata :** Thousands braved the December chill and waited past midnight to give a rousing welcome to Argentine superstar footballer Lionel Messi as he arrived in Kolkata for his whirlwind three-day, four-city GOAT India Tour 2025. The Barcelona legend's 2.26 am touchdown in the early hours of Saturday sent the city into a frenzy. Gate 4 of the international arrivals turned into a roaring sea of chants, flags and flashing phones, with fans sprinting between gates for even a fleeting glimpse of their

favourite star. Children perched on shoulders and drums rolled as Messi was whisked out through the VIP gate under massive security. A heavy convoy then escorted him to his hotel, where another huge crowd was waiting deep into the night. Barriques, police deployment, and non-stop cheering completed a citywide eruption of "Messi mania." Messi arrived with long-time strike partner Luis Suarez and Argentina teammate Rodrigo De Paul. Over the next 72 hours, he will zip across Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi,

I'm a die-hard Ronaldo fan, so what? His biggest rival is coming to my city and I cannot miss the moment. So we planned to stay in the hotel a day in advance

**Krish,**  
a Class 9 student  
of Birla High School

meeting chief ministers, corporate leaders, Bollywood celebrities and eventually Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday. Despite keeping vigil through the night, the wait ended in disappointment for many fans as they could not catch a glimpse of their icon.

Heavy traffic meant Messi was whisked out of the airport and taken to his hotel around 3.30 am through a back entrance, giving hundreds of waiting supporters a complete miss. Only a handful of lucky airport staff managed a fleeting glimpse of the Argentine superstar as he stepped off the private Gulfstream V, looking dapper in a black suit over a white T-shirt, before being driven straight off the tarmac. The Hyatt Regency lobby turned chaotic as fans sprinted across corridors

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## Indian Defence forces committed to adapting to changing environment: CDS



**You (new officers) also join the Air Force at a moment when a new normal has firmly taken shape. An era defined by a high degree of operational preparedness, 24-7, 365 days. The intensity of operations may have ebbed, but Operation Sindhur continues**

**CDS General Chauhan**

tures, joint operations, and national pursuit of Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence are shaping the future of India's military strength, he said.

"Your journey ahead will be accordingly guided by Jai, the first word of Jai Hind, that's victory. 'J' stands for jointness, fighting as one nation, one force. 'A' stands for Atmanirbhar Bharat, trusted platforms and systems made not just for India but for the world.

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## Fans on rampage as Messi's Kolkata tour turns "Messy"



Police personnel used mild force to disperse the angry crowd after they tried to vandalise the Salt Lake Stadium, alleging poor management of the Argentine Legend Lionel Messi's GOAT Tour event in Kolkata, on Saturday.

**MI News Service, Kolkata :** Argentine football superstar Lionel Messi's brief visit to Kolkata descended into chaos as angry fans broke security protocols after failing to catch even a glimpse of the world's most popular footballer during his blink-and-miss 22-minute appearance at the Salt Lake Stadium on Saturday morning. What was meant to be a red-letter day for thousands of football fans in the City of Joy turned into a virtual nightmare, with "less of Messi" and more of what many described as a "royal mess", as massive disorder

player during the programme in the city, as ticket prices were "hefty", he said.

Bose asked about the role of the state government in Messi's visit to Kolkata and questioned why a person was allowed to earn money at the expense of the common people's emotions. "The Lok Bhavan has been receiving calls and mails from football fans complaining that they were unable to get tickets for the Messi match as the prices are beyond their reach. Now, the Governor is keen to know why this is happening. Why are the common people un-

The Governor has written to the state, asking for a detailed report on the private person who is earning from Messi's visit. Why are the common people barred from seeing Messi?--Lok Bhavan official

able to see their favourite star when he is here?" the Lok Bhavan official said.

Messi who arrived here last night on the first leg of a brief visit to the city as part of his four city tour programme in India, attended a tribute programme in Salt Lake Stadium, featuring music, dance and an exhibition match between Mohun Bagan 'Messi' All Stars and Diamond Harbour 'Messi' All Stars. The Governor is "shocked to learn that only a few people who have paid a hefty price for the tickets would be able to see the star Argentine footballer", he said.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has written to the state government, seeking an elaborate report on the arrangements for Argentine superstar footballer Lionel Messi's programme in Kolkata on Saturday, a Lok Bhavan official said. The Governor sought the report after several football enthusiasts complained to him that they could not get an opportunity to have a glimpse of their favourite

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## Cabinet nod for Census 2027; Rs 11,718 crore sanctioned

**MI News Service, New Delhi :** The Centre has approved Rs 11,718 crore for conducting the Census of India - 2027. Information and Broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced here on Friday. The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal to conduct the Census which will be the first digital exercise of its kind. I&B Minister Vaishnaw told reporters here. The Census will be conducted in two phases -- house-listing and housing census from April to September, 2026; and population enumeration (PE) in February 2027. For Ladakh and snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the PE exercise shall be conducted in September, 2026, he said. The Census 2027 will also capture caste data electronically in the PE phase. Vaishnaw said adding about 30 lakh field functionaries will complete this gigantic exercise of national impor-

tance. Use of a mobile app for data collection and the central portal for monitoring purposes will ensure better quality data, Vaishnaw said. Data dissemination will be much better and in a user-friendly way so that all queries on required parameters for policy-making will be available with a click of a button, he said. Census-as-a-Service (CaaS) will deliver data to ministries in a clean, machine-readable and actionable format, he said.

Earlier, the Registrar General of India (RGI) has sought a Rs 14,618.95-crore budget to conduct the Census 2027, which will be the first "Digital Census" and collect data on caste. The RGI, which comes under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), circulated a note seeking the approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), a central body under the Ministry of Finance that appraises government schemes and projects. Once cleared by the EFC, the MHA moved the proposal for the approval of the Union Cabinet.

## Bus horror in Salboni: 13 in critical condition after flip

MI News Service, West Medinipur: A passenger bus went out of control and plunged into a roadside ditch at Nayanjuli under Salboni police station on Friday morning, injuring at least 13 people and triggering scenes of chaos and terror. The bus, which was traveling from Midnapore to Lalgarh, was reportedly packed with passengers when the accident occurred in the Bhatmora area.

Witnesses described a horrifying moment as the vehicle, allegedly moving at high speed, suddenly veered off the road before overturning violently. Inside the bus, passengers were thrown against one another amid twisted metal, shattered glass, and desperate screams. Panic gripped the area as locals rushed to the scene to help the injured. According to local sources, the driver is suspected to have lost control due to reckless overspeeding, a factor residents say is a recurring menace on this stretch of road. Several passengers sustained serious injuries, including severe trauma to the head, arms, and legs. At least a few victims remain in critical condition and are undergoing round-the-clock medical supervision at Midnapore Medical College and Hospital. Others with less severe injuries were initially taken to a nearby health center before being referred for advanced treatment. Rescue operations were swiftly carried out with the help of villagers and personnel from the Pairakata police outpost, who worked together to extricate trapped passengers from the wreckage and transport the wounded to medical facilities.

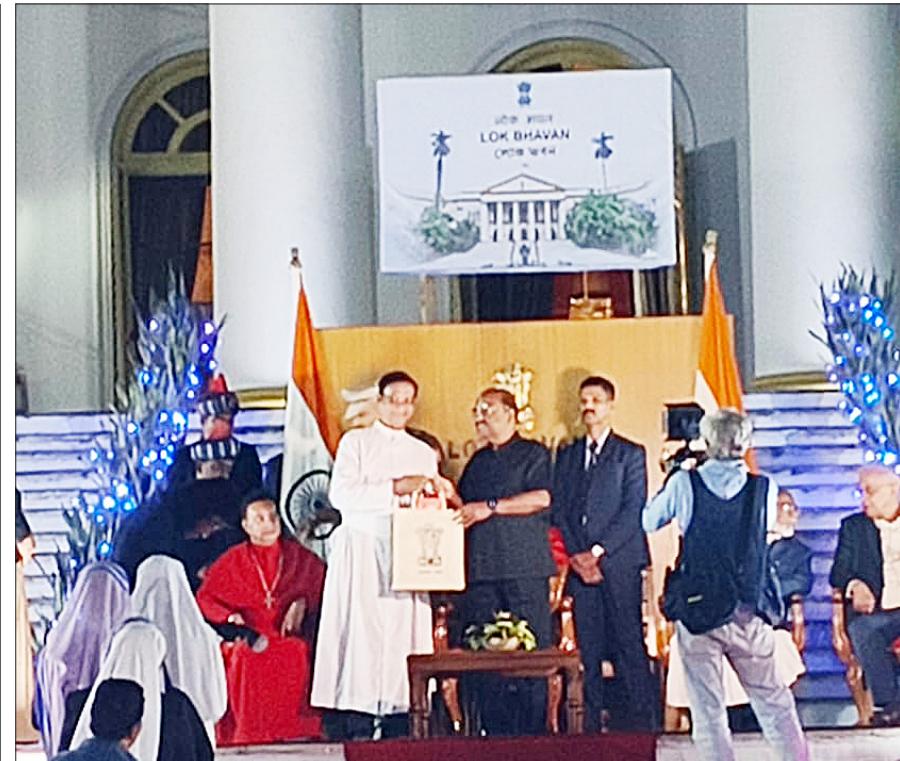
Fortunately, no fatalities have been reported so far, though the incident once again highlights the persistent danger on regional highways. Police have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the crash and to assess possible negligence. Meanwhile, anger is mounting among local residents. "This road has become a death trap. How many more accidents will it take for the administration to act?" questioned outraged locals, demanding stricter enforcement against speeding and negligent driving. The overturned bus is being recovered, but the accident has reignited urgent calls for accountability and stronger road safety measures to prevent further avoidable tragedies in West Bengal.

## 12-Yr-Old Girl Killed in Fair Swing Accident

MI News Service, Murshidabad: What began as an evening of innocent joy at the bustling Lalpur fair ended in unimaginable tragedy for 12-year-old Asmir Khatun, a fifth-grade student from Shamsheganj under Dhulian Municipality. The young girl had gone to the fair with friends on Friday evening, eager to enjoy the festivities, unaware that the outing would become her last.

Asmir was riding one of the fair's most popular swing rides when disaster struck. Her long hair became entangled in the ride's rapidly spinning wheels, violently yanking her down in a horrifying split second. Witnesses recalled scenes of chaos as her desperate screams cut through the festive crowd, instantly turning celebration into panic. Locals rushed forward, frantically attempting to free her severely injured body from the machinery. She was immediately taken to Anupnagar Hospital in a desperate bid to save her life. Tragically, doctors declared her dead on arrival. Shamsheganj police soon reached the scene, secured the area, and later sent the body to Jangipur Hospital for post-mortem examination. Preliminary findings point to shocking safety lapses at the fair. Faulty equipment, lack of protective measures, and the complete absence of supervision on a ride crowded with unsupervised children are being cited as major factors behind the tragedy. Residents allege that such negligence is routine at local fairs, where profit often takes precedence over safety. Grief and anger have engulfed the village. Classmates and teachers mourn the loss of a bright and cheerful student, while Asmir's family remains inconsolable. "These fairs are death traps waiting to happen. Where was the oversight?" questioned distraught neighbors, blaming the administration for its failure.

Police have assured a thorough investigation, but public outrage continues to grow. Many now demand accountability, asking when fairground operators will finally be held responsible for endangering innocent lives.



West Bengal Governor Dr C. V. Ananda Bose attends the pre-Christmas celebrations at Lok Bhavan, where various cultural programmes were organised on Saturday.

## "Investigation going on": Bengal Sports Minister Aroop Biswas on chaos at Lionel Messi's Event

MI News Service, Kolkata: West Bengal Sports Minister Aroop Biswas has revealed that the government has ordered an investigation into the matter, and he will not comment on anything regarding the chaotic incident at Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium during Argentine legend Lionel Messi's GOAT Tour event on Saturday.

The government has ordered to investigate this matter. An investigation is going on, and I will not comment on anything," Aroop Biswas told reporters.

Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour descended into chaos on Saturday after fans expressed disappointment when the Argentine legend left the event at Salt Lake Stadium much earlier than planned, leaving the crowd

angry.

Many fans who paid a hefty amount to watch a glimpse of the football icon Messi became angry and began throwing water bottles and chairs from the stands. The angry mob also entered the ground and tried to vandalise the tent and the goal post. The situation escalated, and police personnel used mild force to disperse the angry crowd.

"This was a private event organised by a PR agency. The AIFF was not involved in the organisation, planning, or execution of this event in any capacity. Furthermore, the details of the event were neither communicated to the AIFF, nor was any clearance sought from the Federation," the post read.

"We urge all attendees to extend their full cooperation with the relevant authorities and to maintain order. The safety and security of all individuals involved must remain the paramount priority," the post read.

"The All India Football Federation is deeply concerned by the events that transpired at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati

Kirangan, where thousands of fans gathered to witness world football stars Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo de Paul." AIFF shared an Instagram post.

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(L) Angry spectators erupted in protest at Salt Lake Stadium during Lionel Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour, hurling bottles, forcing gates between stands, and damaging property alleging lack of mismanagement, after the Argentine superstar exited the venue prematurely on Saturday. (R) Police personnel use plastic chairs thrown by spectators as makeshift shields to protect themselves amid unrest by enraged fans at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on Saturday. Pic Prabir Bhattacharya

## Police Promise Strict Action, Order Refund After Chaos at Lionel Messi's Kolkata Event

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Unprecedented chaos erupted at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium) in Kolkata on Saturday after Argentine football legend Lionel Messi was forced to leave the venue early, triggering violent scenes that shocked the nation and drew global attention. What was meant to be a historic and celebratory event during the Kolkata leg of Messi's GOAT Tour quickly spiralled into disorder, raising serious concerns over event management, crowd control, and administrative accountability. Disturbing visuals from the stadium

showed angry spectators hurling bottles, damaging property, and attempting vandalism soon after Messi's departure. Opposition parties described the incident as a moment that left Bengal with its "head bowed in shame," while political and civic circles witnessed intense debate over how such a high-profile international event could descend into chaos.

Amid mounting outrage, senior officials of the West Bengal Police addressed the media directly from the stadium premises. Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar and Additional Director General (Law

and Order) Javed Shamim were present and openly questioned the role of the organisers. DGP Rajeev Kumar stated that organisers had been instructed to refund ticket money to spectators who were deprived of the programme. ADG Javed Shamim confirmed that formal complaints were being received and that FIRs would be registered. "There are allegations and FIRs will be filed. We will investigate where the lapses occurred and who is responsible. The police are treating this matter with utmost seriousness," Shamim said. He further emphasised that no one responsible for

the incident would be spared, adding, "Those found guilty will face strict punishment." From the beginning, it had been reported that the event was organised under the leadership of Shatadru Dutta. Responding to questions from journalists, Shamim confirmed that the FIR process was underway and that Dutta had been detained. Shortly afterwards, it emerged that Shatadru Dutta had been arrested from Kolkata airport. Police sources said he would be interrogated thoroughly and that the investigation would determine whether responsibility lay solely with him or if others

were also involved. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee issued a public apology to Lionel Messi for the unfortunate incident. Posting on social media platform X, she expressed regret over the events that unfolded and assured that an investigation had been ordered. Anger among fans continued to mount, with many stating that they had paid between ₹4,000 and ₹10,000 for tickets but were unable to see Messi due to the disorder. Some spectators said they had been waiting for months and arrived at the stadium in the early hours, only to return disappointed.

**4 accused charged with murder by SIT in Zubeen Garg death case**

**From PG 1**  
was led by senior officials of the Criminal Investigation Department. Seven people arrested during the probe are currently in judicial custody. Those named in the charge sheet also include the singer's cousin Sandipan Garg, and two personal security officers, Nandeshwar Bora and Parvesh Baishya. According to the findings, four of the accused have been charged with murder under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Sandipan Garg has been charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, while the two security personnel face charges related to criminal breach of trust. The charges were framed after corroboration of witness testimonies, electronic data and forensic material, rites performed with full Zubeen Garg. Lawyers representing the accused were not present during the filing of the charge sheet, and reports indicate that several local advocates have declined to take up defence in the case. The development follows strong reactions across Assam after the singer's sudden death, which was initially reported as a drowning incident during a recreational activity in Singapore. The state government had earlier stated that certain circumstances surrounding the death appeared suspicious, prompting the formation of the SIT.

**Indian Defence forces committed to adapting to changing environment: CDS**

**From PG 1**  
And finally, "I for innovation, daring to think ahead and to be ahead of the curve," he explained. General Chauhan further said battles in the older domains will always remain contested, often brutal. But in the new domains, they will be smart, swift, and shaped by intellect, innovation, and initiative. The force that masters new frontiers is more likely to prevail in future conflicts.



Angry fans forcibly broke through the barricades and stormed onto the turf at Salt Lake Stadium, alleging mismanagement by the organisers during Lionel Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour after the Argentine superstar left the venue early on Saturday. Pic Prabir Bhattacharya

## AIFF Clarifies No Role in Kolkata Messi Event Chaos

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Vandalism at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata during Lionel Messi's India tour, leaving thousands of fans frustrated and raising questions about event management and crowd control. The Argentine superstar spent only about 10 minutes at the venue, but the brief appearance was enough to trigger a series of incidents, including fans throwing water bottles, breaking chairs, and vandalising parts of the stadium.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has now responded to the Kolkata event, clarifying its role and distancing itself from the chaos. According to the federation, the programme was a "private event" organised by a PR agency, and AIFF had no involvement in its planning, execution, or organisation. In an official statement, the AIFF expressed concern over the unruly scenes that unfolded, stressing the importance of safety and security for all attendees. In its statement, AIFF clarified that no official clearance or communication had been sought from the federation regarding the event. "The details of the event were neither communicated to the AIFF nor was any clearance sought from the federation. We urge all attendees to cooperate fully with the relevant authorities and maintain order," the statement read. The federation also emphasised that the safety and security of all individuals involved must remain the top priority. Fans had paid between INR 4,000 and INR 12,000 to watch Messi, 2022 FIFA World Cup winner Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo De Paul, but many were left disappointed as a large number of VIPs surrounded Messi, forming a human blockade. Once Messi exited the stadium, rioting erupted among the spectators. Water bottles and food packets were hurled at the field, and several chairs were broken. Fibreglass seats were left smashed across the pitch and synthetic track. Two canopies set up for Messi and even the Chief Minister's enclosure suffered damage during the unrest.

## Kunal Ghosh Slams Organisers After Chaos at Lionel Messi's Kolkata Event

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Chaos at Salt Lake Stadium during Lionel Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour on Saturday triggered sharp political reactions, with Trinamool Congress state general secretary Kunal Ghosh strongly criticising the organisers and calling the incident shameful for the city. Thousands of fans who had paid hefty amounts for tickets were left disappointed after the Argentine football legend left the venue early following a brief appearance.

As frustration spilled over, spectators hurled bottles from the galleries, attempted to break gates between stands, and entered the field, where vandalism was reported. Police personnel were forced to use plastic chairs thrown by the crowd as makeshift shields to protect themselves. The situation quickly descended into chaos, forcing security agencies to step in and restore order. Reacting to the incident, Kunal Ghosh publicly questioned the event's planning and execution. In a strongly worded social



media post, he asked why Messi was surrounded by what he described as a chaotic crowd of "hangarons" instead of being allowed to walk freely during the stadium parade. He also questioned why gallery spectators, who had waited for hours, were deprived of the opportunity to see the football icon. "Was it only about money and business?" Ghosh asked, alleging that incompetent organisers failed to ensure even basic planning. "Everyone was deprived because of these organisers and a few sycophants," he wrote, accusing them of prioritising personal visibility over the fans' experience.

According to the organisers, Messi was scheduled to

arrive at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan around 11 am and take a round of the field as part of a felicitation programme. Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan was also expected to attend the event. Although Messi arrived on time, the programme quickly ran into trouble due to poor crowd management, leading to extreme disorder and his early departure. Fans voiced their anger, with many claiming they had purchased tickets four months ago or had been waiting outside the stadium since as early as 4 am. Despite the long wait, several spectators said they were unable to see Messi at all.

Recalling Messi's earlier visit to Kolkata in 2011, Ghosh pointed out that the footballer had watched a match calmly from near the corner flag at the same stadium without any chaos. "What we witnessed today was not about seeing Messi but about a few people trying to project themselves," he said, adding that the lack of planning had tarnished Kolkata's image.

## West Bengal to Host Major Business and Industry Conclave on Dec 18

**MI News Service, Kolkata:**

West Bengal is set to host a major Business and Industry Conclave on December 18 at DhanaDhanya Stadium, with a special focus on eight key sectors: steel, gems and jewellery, food processing, information technology, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, tourism, and textiles. While these sectors will receive special emphasis, other industries will also be represented. The conclave is expected to play a significant role in attracting investment to the state and boosting employment opportunities. A final preparatory meeting for the event was held recently at Nabanna, attended by the state Chief Secretary Manoj Pant, Chief Economic Advisor to the Chief Minister Amit Mitra, and other senior administrative officials. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is scheduled to inaugurate the conclave, which will see the participation of leading industrialists from across the state. According to sources at Nabanna, the first session of the conclave will showcase West Bengal's progress in the industrial sector and present the current investment landscape. The Chief Minister is expected to highlight the state government's support for industrial development. Eminent industrialists, including Harsh Notia, Sanji Goenka, RudraChattopadhyay,

## Thousands welcome Argentine icon as Messi mania grips Kolkata

**From PG 1**

shouting "Messi! Messi!" that echoed well past dawn. The lobby resembled an Argentine fan club, dotted with sky-blue jerseys, scarves and flags as the frenzy built up. Messi checked into Room 730, with the entire seventh floor sealed off to ensure no movement around his suite. With security at its peak, some fans who could afford it booked rooms in the hotel to stay as close to Messi as possible. With security at its peak, some fans who could afford it booked rooms in the hotel to stay as close to Messi as possible. "I'm a die-hard Ronaldo fan, so what? His

biggest rival is coming to my city and I cannot miss the moment. So we planned to stay in the hotel a day in advance," said Krish, a Class 9 student of Birla High School. He roamed the coffee shop with his mother and elder sister, anxious for a peek at the icon. "I just want to tell him to play football with me. And if I'm not successful, I will go to the gym tomorrow morning to catch a glimpse of him. I have my autograph book ready and hopefully I will get a selfie." Satadru Dutta, the sole promoter of the tour who received Messi at the airport, said the moment was historic for Kolkata.

## Fans on rampage as Messi's Kolkata tour turns "Messy"

**From PG 1**

Stadium for a tribute programme featuring music, dance and an exhibition match between Mohun Bagan 'Messi' All Stars and Diamond Harbour 'Messi' All Stars.

On his arrival at 10.50 am, the superstar Argentine footballer interacted with both teams, before participating in the felicitation of Bengal's Santosh Trophy-winning side and a "Master Class with Messi" for kids. Thousands braved the December chill and waited past midnight to give a rousing welcome to Lionel Messi as he arrived in Kolkata for his whirlwind three-day, four-city GOAT India Tour 2025. The legend's 2.26 am touchdown on Saturday sent the city into a frenzy. Messi arrived with long-time strike partner Luis Suárez, Rodrigo De Paul and Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan joined the programmes in Kolkata.



# Lionel Messi reaches Hyderabad, football icon's second pit stop for 'GOAT India Tour'

MI News Service, Hyderabad: Legendary FIFA World Cup-winning Argentine football icon Lionel Messi reached Hyderabad on Saturday, his second pit stop for his 'GOAT India Tour' 2025.

Messi was brought to Hyderabad with a high level of security after the chaos that unfolded earlier today in Kolkata during his first stop of the tour.

Messi's itinerary in Hyderabad includes a highly anticipated 7v7 exhibition football match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, where Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is expected to join him on the field. The evening will conclude with a grand musical extravaganza celebrating Messi's illustrious career and his achievements in world football. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi have also reached Hyderabad.

Earlier, event organiser Anutman Reddy shared details of Messi's schedule, saying, "Lionel Messi is expected to come at the stadium by 7:00-7:30 pm. Musical programs will start at 5:30 pm onwards. There is plenty of entertainment for everyone... Messi will be here with us on the ground for about 1 hour... There will be a lot of events... As UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors, he will engage with children."

Fans are incredibly excited about the football legend's Hyderabad visit, with one of the fans, named Abhishek, saying to ANI, "I am from Maharashtra. I came here to catch a glimpse of Lionel Messi. It is very great of him to come to India... I have been a supporter of Lionel Messi since childhood. It is a dream-come-true moment for me... Even if I get to see



him for two minutes, that would be enough for me."

Notably, Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour descended into chaos on Saturday after fans expressed disappointment when the Argentine legend left the event at Salt Lake Stadium much earlier than planned, leaving the crowd angry. The crowd also voiced anger at VIPs and politicians, including West Bengal sports minister Arup Biswas, for hogging Messi's time and preventing them from catching a glimpse of the football legend.

Many fans who paid a hefty amount to watch a glimpse of the football icon Messi became angry and began throwing water bottles and chairs from the stands. The angry mob also entered the ground and tried to vandalise the tent and the goal post.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) issued a statement clarifying that Lionel Messi's event in Kolkata was a private event organised by a PR agency and the federation was not involved in the

"planning or execution" of the event at Salt Lake Stadium on Saturday.

"The All India Football Federation is deeply concerned by the events that transpired at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, where thousands of fans gathered to witness world football stars Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo de Paul." AIFF shared an Instagram post.

"This was a private event organised by a PR agency. The AIFF was not involved in the organisation, planning, or execution of this event in any capacity. Furthermore, the details of the event were neither communicated to the AIFF, nor was any clearance sought from the AIFF. No, this is a private event," he clarified.

"AIFF is a big organisation. Let AIFF run like AIFF. I am tying up in my private capacity. They have their own programs, and AIFF is a federation. If they ask me for anything then I will try to help them. AIFF have not asked anything from me. I also did not say anything to AIFF. Every federation has a policy. They will not be able to go beyond that policy," he noted.

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose said that the organiser of Lionel Messi's GOAT Tour event has been arrested after the chaos.

Speaking to ANI, Governor Ananda Bose said the event organiser was arrested. "The organiser has been arrested, and an investigation has been done..."

Following the chaotic incident at Salt Lake Stadium, Additional Director General

behind Messi's visit, stated that the visit was organised independently and that there was no involvement of the All India Football Federation (AIFF). "No, this is a private event," he clarified.

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(ADG) Law and Order Jawed Shamim said the situation is under control. He added that an FIR has been lodged and the chief organiser has been arrested, and promised that organisers will refund money to fans.

"There is normalcy now. The second part is the investigation; the FIR has been lodged, and the chief organiser has been arrested... I'm telling you, they (organisers) are promising that they will return (ticket fee to fans). We will see how it can be done," Jawed Shamim told reporters.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also apologised to fans after Messi's Kolkata event turned into chaos.

"I am deeply disturbed and shocked by the mismanagement witnessed today at Salt Lake Stadium. I was on my way to the stadium to attend the event along with thousands of sports lovers and fans who had gathered to catch a glimpse of their favourite footballer, Lionel Messi. I sincerely apologise to Lionel Messi, as well as to all sports lovers and his fans, for the unfortunate incident," Mamata Banerjee wrote on X.

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# Lionel Messi graffiti unveiled in Mumbai ahead of football icon's visit on Sunday

MI News Service, Mumbai: Graffiti of Argentine football icon Lionel Messi was unveiled on a building ahead of the legend's visit to Mumbai as a part of his 'GOAT India Tour' 2025.

The football legend, after the visits to Kolkata and Hyderabad, is set to come to Mumbai on Sunday. Delhi will be the last stop of Messi's tour on Monday.

In September, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis confirmed Messi's visit to India for the first time since 2011.

During his last visit, he played a friendly match with his Argentina team against Venezuela in Kolkata.

During his time in India, under-14 young football players from across the state will be selected by the Maharashtra Sports Department, and they will get the opportunity to practise with Messi on December 14.

Notably, Messi's Kolkata leg of the GOAT Tour descended into chaos on Saturday after fans expressed disappointment when the Argentine legend left the event at Salt Lake Stadium much earlier than planned, leaving the crowd angry. The crowd also voiced anger at VIPs and politicians, including West Bengal sports minister Arup Biswas, for hogging Messi's time and preventing them from catching a glimpse of the football legend.

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Shamim said the situation is under control. He added that an FIR has been lodged and the chief organiser has been arrested, and promised that organisers will refund money to fans.

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I am constituting an enquiry committee under the chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) Ashim Kumar Ray, with the Chief Secretary and the Additional Chief Secretary, Home and Hill Affairs Department, as members. The committee will conduct a detailed enquiry into the incident, fix responsibility, and recommend measures to prevent such occurrences in the future. Once again, I extend my heartfelt apologies to all sports lovers," West Bengal CM added.

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## Researchers unveil new tool that reveals gene behaviour in bacteria



LOS ANGELES [US]: Bacterial infections are responsible for millions of deaths each year, with the global threat made severe by the increasing resistance of microbes to antibiotic treatments.

This is due, in part, to bacteria's capacity to switch genes on and off when they detect environmental changes, including the presence of drugs.

Such switching is accomplished through transcription, which converts the DNA in genes into its chemical cousin in mRNA, which guides the building of proteins that make up the microbe's structure.

Understanding how mRNA production is regulated for each bacterial gene is central to efforts to counter resistance, but approaches used to study this regulation to date have been laborious. According to a new study, scientists revealed a trick that may speed such efforts.

According to the study authors, organisms from bacteria to humans grow as their cells multiply by dividing, with each cell becoming two. Before cells divide, they must copy their DNA such that each of the two daughter cells has a copy. To do so, a molecular machine called DNA polymerase ticks down the DNA chain, reading and making a copy of each gene one by one.

Publishing online Jan. 24 in the journal *Nature*, the study adds to explanations of how gene expression throughout the genome is shaped by DNA replication during bacterial growth.

Specifically, the research team found that when DNA polymerase arrives at any specific gene, it disrupts the transcription in a way that reveals the state of that gene's regulatory status.

"Our study results show that the constant replication of genes during the cell cycle as the bacterial cells reproduce and grow can be exploited to learn about many aspects of how genes are regulated," said study lead investigator Andrew Pountain, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow at NYU Langone Health and its Institute for Systems Genetics.

"We like the analogy of the electrocardiogram in medicine," said Itai Yanai, the senior investigator of the study and professor at NYU Langone's Institute for Systems Genetics.

By monitoring patterns of electrical activity in the heart, the ECG reveals a series of waves that provide a detailed, graphical view of a patient's cardiac health. Similarly, waves of changes in the abundance of mRNA in response to a gene's replication produce a signature on a graph, which the authors termed the transcription-replication interaction profile, or TRIP.

The researchers showed how specific waves can be linked to certain features. For example, whether a gene is under a specific form of control, known as repression, where a protein blocks that gene's mRNA from being made. These repressed genes were found to have characteristic, spiked TRIP patterns.

"Our aim is to understand how gene regulation shapes these TRIPs, with a goal of using them to diagnose gene regulation across the entire set of thousands of genes in the bacterium," added Yanai.

"We hope that our further investigations of gene expression profiles will offer insight into how groups of genes respond to disruptions or changes in their environment."

## High blood pressure may increase risk of strokes, finds study

MICHIGAN [US]: A Michigan Medicine study found that high systolic blood pressure (the top number on the blood pressure reading and how hard the heart pumps blood to the arteries) increases the risk of the two most common types of strokes over time.

The study looked at the average systolic blood pressure years before the first stroke in over 40,000 adults aged 18 and older who had no history of stroke.

Researchers covered three types of stroke: ischemic, a clot that cuts blood supply to the brain and the cause of over 85 per cent of all strokes; intracerebral hemorrhage, a bleed within the brain; and subarachnoid hemorrhage, bleeding between the brain and the tissues that cover it. They found that having a mean systolic blood pressure that is 10-mm Hg higher than average was associated with a 20 per cent higher risk of overall stroke and ischemic stroke, as well as a 31% greater risk of intracerebral hemorrhage.

"Our results suggest that early diagnosis and sustained control of high blood pressure over the lifespan are critical to preventing



stroke, ischemic stroke and intracerebral hemorrhage, especially in Black and Hispanic patients who are more likely to have uncontrolled hypertension than white patients," said senior author Deborah A. Levine, M.D., M.P.H., professor of internal medicine and neurology at University of Michigan Medical School.

Black patients had a 20 per cent higher risk of ischemic stroke and a 67 per cent higher risk of intracerebral hemorrhage than white patients. Hispanic patients had a 281% higher risk of sub-

arachnoid hemorrhage, but not any other stroke type, compared to white patients. While Black and Hispanic patients had a higher risk of stroke, researchers found little evidence to suggest that race and ethnicity affected the association between cumulative systolic blood pressure and the type of stroke that affected any patient.

"Examining racial inequities advances our understanding of the social, economic and political structures that affect health behaviors and risk for stroke

among racial and ethnic minority groups," said Kimson E. Johnson, Ph.D., M.A., M.S.W., first author and postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Michigan. While systolic blood pressure is a modifiable target for preventing stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, a national study conducted in 2020 found that blood pressure control in the United States worsened from 2013 to 2018, especially for Black and Hispanic adults. Self-monitoring of blood pressure improves blood pressure diagnosis and control and is accurate and cost-effective, but it remains an underused tool, Levine says.

"Two major barriers to self-monitoring of blood pressure are lack of patient education and insurance not covering the home blood pressure monitors, which cost \$50 or more," she said.

"Health care systems and providers must educate and urge their patients to do home blood pressure monitoring, and insurers must pay for home blood pressure monitors to optimize people's blood pressure and reduce their chances of having a stroke."

## Study assesses therapeutic strategies for severe obesity in adolescents



ILLINOIS [US]: According to a study, adolescents with severe obesity who got both meal-replacement therapy and financial incentives had a higher reduction in body mass index compared to those who just received meal-replacement therapy. The finding was published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Justin Ryer, PhD, Vice Chair of Research for the Department of Surgery at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Associate Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, was a co-author of the study.

Severe obesity currently affects about one in five children and adolescents in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is defined as having a body mass index, or BMI, either at or above the 95th percentile for age and sex. The condition is associated with an increased risk of adult obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other conditions.

Previous research has found that meal replacement therapy (MRT), rather than traditional lifestyle modifications, is more effective in helping reduce BMI in adolescents with severe obesity. In the current study, the investigators sought to determine if MRT paired with financial incentives to adolescents with severe obesity would increase the efficacy of MRT and lead to a greater reduction in BMI, when compared to MRT alone. "There's literature for adults that supports that tying in financial incentives to weight loss or physical activity programs increases adherence,"

"While financial incentives plus MRT appears to be a longer-term strategy than MRT alone, treatment withdrawal will likely result in BMI increase. As such, research is needed to identify strategies that are scalable and feasible in the long term given the chronic nature of obesity," the authors wrote.

## Research explores secrets of lipid synthesis inside cells

LOS ANGELES [US]: South Korean researchers at the IBS Center for Molecular Spectroscopy and Dynamics (IBS CMSD) have made a useful discovery concerning cellular microscopy.

The team has successfully developed Two-Color Infrared Photothermal Microscopy (2C-IPM), a unique method for studying neutral lipids within lipid droplets of living cells.

This new microscopy can be combined with isotope labelling, which allows thorough monitoring of neutral lipid synthesis within individual lipid droplets.

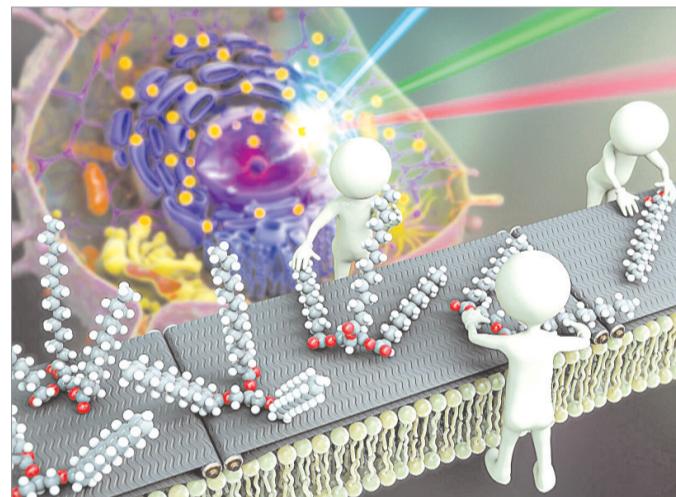
Lipid droplets (LDs) are structures made up of pockets of neutral lipids (triglycerides) enclosed in a monolayer of phospholipids.

They have long been regarded as uninteresting organelles whose sole function is to store excess energy in the form of neutral lipids.

However, recent studies indicate these droplets actually are dynamic players in various cellular metabolic activities.

It was found they are actively involved in regulating lipid toxicity and cell communication, as well as their correlation with prevalent diseases like obesity and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Understanding the functions of LDs is thus imperative for the



diagnosis and treatment of these conditions.

Researchers have traditionally stained the cells with lipophilic dyes and employed fluorescence microscopy to study LDs within cells. However, this method has several significant limitations.

First is photobleaching of the dyes, which restricts the observation duration of the LDs to very short time windows. Another limitation is the fluorescent dyes themselves. The currently used fluorescent dyes simply target the hydrophobic environment within LDs, utilizing unspecified binding mechanisms. As such, they are

incapable of accurately analyzing the composition and quantity of neutral lipids.

Unlike previous methods that relied on fluorescent microscopy, the new 2C-IPM technology uses an infrared (IR) spectroscopic method and does not require the use of fluorescent dyes.

The new method monitors neutral lipids within LDs directly by detecting changes in IR absorbance. Importantly, this advantage allows researchers to observe the synthesis of neutral lipids within individual LDs in living cells over a long period. Employing the newly developed method, the research

team studied the synthesis of neutral lipids in cells when they were exposed to excess fatty acids.

The researchers were able to distinguish freshly synthesized neutral lipids from pre-existing neutral lipids within cells by subjecting deuterium-labeled fatty acids, which have distinct spectroscopic properties from non-deuterated forms. The analysis results verified excess fatty acids caused lipid toxicity, and cells respond by increasing the synthesis of neutral lipids.

The lead author researcher PARK Chanjung, remarked, "This study serves as a fundamental example demonstrating the possibility of long-term research on lipid droplets and internal neutral lipids in living cells. The analytical method established in this research can be applied to the diagnosis and treatment of diseases closely associated with lipid metabolism, such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease."

Director CHO Minhaeng commented, "By successfully observing the process of neutral lipid synthesis in living cells, we have laid a new foundation for studying the functions of lipid droplets within cells at the molecular level. This method is expected to be widely used in the investigation of various cellular metabolic phenomena."

## Hypertension guidelines do not include potassium-enriched salt: Study

NEW SOUTH WALES [AUSTRALIA]: An international panel of experts published a suggestion in the scientific journal *Hypertension* published by the American Heart Association, calling for the inclusion of low-sodium potassium-enriched salt in hypertension therapy guidelines.

High levels of sodium intake and low levels of potassium intake are widespread, and both are linked to high blood pressure (hypertension) and a greater risk of stroke, heart disease and premature death. Using a salt substitute where part of the sodium chloride is replaced with potassium chloride addresses both problems at once.

Professor Alta Schutte at The George Institute for Global Health and UNSW Sydney said that despite data from randomised controlled trials demonstrating the health benefits of potassium-enriched sodium-reduced salt substitutes, they are rarely used.

"We found current clinical guidelines offer incomplete and inconsistent recommendations about the use of these salt substitutes," she said.

"Given the wealth of evidence available, we feel it's time to include salt substitutes in treatment guidelines to help address spiralling rates of uncontrolled high blood pressure around the world and reduce preventable deaths."

"Our aim is to understand how gene regulation shapes these TRIPs, with a goal of using them to diagnose gene regulation across the entire set of thousands of genes in the bacterium," added Yanai.

"We hope that our further investigations of gene expression profiles will offer insight into how groups of genes respond to disruptions or changes in their environment."

undetectable by most people. "Unwanted taste effects are the main reason why efforts to reduce salt intake have failed for more than two decades. The willingness of patients to keep using potassium-enriched salt removes that barrier, which is why it can be a game-changer," Prof Schutte added. A global collaboration of researchers from the US, Australia, Japan, South Africa and India reviewed 32 separate hypertension treatment guidelines - two from global organisations, five from regional organisations and 25 from country organisations - published between 1 January 2013 and 21 June 2023. They found all guidelines referred to sodium reduction, with most recommending reducing salt intake.



Many also recommended increasing dietary potassium intake, but only two - the Chinese and European guidelines - made a specific recommendation for using potassium-enriched salt.

Dr Tom Frieden, President and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, a global public health organisation focused on preventing 100 million deaths from cardiovascular disease, said that the number of people living with hypertension had doubled in the past 30 years to about 1.3 billion. "High blood pressure kills more than ten million people every year - almost 20 people every minute. Twenty percent of these deaths can be linked to a single culprit: eating too much salt," he said.

"Based on the evidence, there is little doubt that most patients with hypertension and their families should reduce their overall salt intake and, when choosing to consume salt, should switch from regular salt to potassium-enriched salt. This will help reduce blood pressure and protect against serious complications such as stroke and premature death."

Dr Frieden emphasized the shift required to our food environment. "As a society, we must prioritize availability and accessibility of low-sodium, potassium-enriched salts - at home, in restaurants, and in grocery stores. These products should not be marketed or priced as a luxury. Low-sodium, potassium-enriched salt can become the new default." Another barrier to uptake has

been concerns about causing elevated levels of potassium in the blood (hyperkalaemia) in people with advanced kidney disease.

Professor Bruce Neal, Executive Director at The George Institute Australia and Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at Imperial College London, said it is clear that patients with advanced kidney disease should not use potassium-enriched salts, but this applies to a very small proportion of the population, and these patients are already recommended to avoid salt intake.

"No issues with serious harm from hyperkalaemia were recorded in any of the trials to date, though all were done in clinical settings. Our recommendation for use in hypertension is based on patients being managed by a healthcare worker. Healthcare workers know not to recommend potassium-enriched salt in the presence of kidney disease and risks for these patients can be avoided."

The authors argued that given potassium-enriched salt is one of the few dietary interventions patients comply with long-term, it is logical to at least consider the use of potassium-enriched salt for all those with hypertension.

"We strongly encourage clinical guideline bodies to review their recommendations about the use of potassium-enriched salt substitutes at the earliest opportunity - if the world switched from using regular salt to potassium-enriched salt it would prevent millions of strokes and heart attacks every year at very low cost," added Prof Schutte.



