



Phone : 23710519  
Fax : (91-11) 23730937, 23730682  
E-mail : cvo@csir.res.in  
सीड पोस्ट

**वैज्ञानिक तथा औद्योगिक अनुसंधान परिषद्**  
अनुसंधान भवन, 2, रफी मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110001  
**COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH**  
Anusandhan Bhawan, 2, Rafi Marg, New Delhi - 110001

संख्या

No.

प्रेषक

From

To

15-1(152)/2017-Vig.

दिनांक: 15 सितम्बर 2018

**मुख्य सतर्कता अधिकारी**  
**Chief Vigilance Officer**

सीएसआईआर के सभी राष्ट्रीय प्रयोगशालाओं/संस्थानों के निदेशक  
The Directors/Heads of all National Labs. /Instts. of CSIR

Subject: Publication of Research Papers -reg

महोदया, महोदय/Madam/Sir,

मैं विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों द्वारा रिसर्च जनरल/रिसर्च पेपर्स छापने में हो रही धांधलियों की तरफ आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ तथा समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित खबरों की प्रतियाँ आपके सूचनार्थ अग्रेषित कर रहा हूँ। इस तरह का कार्य वैज्ञानिको/शोधकर्ताओं के लिए एक गंभीर वैज्ञानिक दुराचार है।

I want to draw your attention to the rigging of research general/research papers by various newspapers and forwarding the copies of the news reports published in the newspapers for information. Such act on the part of Scientists/Researchers is a serious scientific misconduct.

सीएसआईआर की प्रयोगशालाओं/संस्थानों में कार्यरत सभी वैज्ञानिक एवं तकनीकी क्षेत्र में कार्यरत कर्मचारियों/अधिकारियों को इस तरह की कुप्रथा में शामिल होने से बचना चाहिए तथा अपने निजी स्वार्थ के लिए ऐसी धांधलियों का उपयोग नहीं करना चाहिए।

Therefore, Scientific and technical employees working in CSIR lab./Instt. should refrain themselves from indulging in this kind of misdemeanor and do not use such tactics for thier personal interest.

इसलिए, आप अपने संस्थान/प्रयोगशाला में कार्यरत सभी कर्मचारियों के संज्ञान में लाएं।

You, are, therefore bring this to the notice of all staff working in your lab./Instt.

भवदीय/Yours faithfully,

(मेजर राणा विक्रम सिंह)  
मुख्य सतर्कता अधिकारी

संलग्न: यथोपरि  
प्रतिलिपि:

1. महानिदेशक, सीएसआईआर के निजी सचिव
2. संयुक्तसचिव(प्रशा.), सीएसआईआर के निजी सचिव
3. वित्त सलाहकार, सीएसआईआर के निजी सचिव
4. विधि सलाहकार, सीएसआईआर के निजी सचिव
5. सभी राष्ट्रीय प्रयोगशालाओं/संस्थानों के प्रशासन नियन्त्रक/प्रशा. अधिकारी
6. सीएसआईआर मुख्यालय/कॉम्प्लेक्स के उप-सचिव/वरिष्ठ- उप-सचिव/अवर सचिव
7. प्रमुख आईटी विभाग: इस पत्र को सीएसआईआर वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध करने हेतु।
8. सतर्कता अनुभाग, सीएसआईआर के सभी अनुभाग अधिकारी
9. कार्यालय प्रति

Separately, 6,000 kg of contaminated fish was seized at Walayar in Palakkad district. In

And the Kochi-based Central Institute of the biggest chances or to remain competitive

# How the pay-and-publish business works

**SHYAMLAL YADAV**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

AN INVESTIGATION by *The Indian Express* (published on Page 1 of this edition) has revealed India to be one of the biggest global hubs for the "pay-and-publish" business, a practice in which "predatory journals" that often exist only online, publish research without any rigorous checks or expert review, for a "fee" ranging from as little as a couple of thousand rupees to well over a lakh.

## Predatory journals

The American librarian Jeffrey Beall first used the expression "predatory open access publishing" in 2010, and published a list of "predatory publishers" on his blog that year. He subsequently started updating the list frequently, but was forced shut down his blog in 2017 under threats of lawsuits. But a major global debate had been opened. The UGC website defines predatory journals or predatory publishers as "unscrupulous open access journals or publishers who publish articles on payment but with little or no real peer review. (They) exploit the business model of

open-access publishing that involves charging publication fees... without following the editorial and publishing policies and services associated with legitimate journals". It is important to note that not all open access journals — which anyone can read and download for free, with authors paying for the publication of their papers — are "predatory" in nature; several reputed journals with strict peer review policies, too, follow the model of accepting "processing charges" from authors.

## A market for 'research'

The UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2010 award 15 marks for each article published in "Refereed Journals", and 10 marks for those published in "Non-refereed but recognised and reputable journals and periodicals, having ISBN/ISSN

numbers". Each publication in "Conference proceedings as full papers, etc." fetches 10 marks. Under the Regulations, the Academic Performance Index (API) score for a paper is augmented based on the "impact factor" — a measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year — of the refereed journal. The API provision was scrapped for college teachers last month so they could focus on teaching without feeling pressured to undertake research, but continues for universities.

*The Indian Express* found around 300 publishers from India publishing more than 6,000 journals and organising hundreds of conferences in the country and abroad. The pressure to publish, and to present papers at conferences in order to collect the marks needed for recruitments/promotions often incentivises pay-to-publish practices. It is important to note, however, that only a small share of the clientele of predatory publishers based in India are from India. Says Beall, who man-

aged the Auraria Library in Denver, US, until March this year, predatory publishers are "giving a bad name to India".

## UGC's response

UGC has a Standing Committee on Notification of Journals, currently headed by Prof V S Chauhan. Last year, the UGC published a list of over 32,000 "approved journals" on its website, which meant that articles published in these journals would be considered in promotions and recruitments. UGC had earlier asked universities to recommend journals for the list — an exercise that allowed several poor-quality publications to slip through. As questions were raised, the UGC slashed 4,305 journals from the list, bringing the number of approved journals down to 25,784. The concern over predatory publishing is, however, global: the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME) expressed concern in December 2017 over "the growing number of entities that are advertising themselves as 'scholarly medical journals' (but are)... 'fake', 'predatory', or 'pseudo' journals (that) misrepresent their peer-review and publication processes... for the sole purpose of making money".



ict out their prejudices; and the impunity they com-  
ured by state admini-

tion. The state has around 4,000 hectares under aquaculture, which produces harvests in the monsoon, when trawlers from most states do not go to sea, and supplies dry up.

Kerala officials recalled a case of Vannarai shrimp, an export variety from Andhra, which was sold at an inflated price of Rs 350 per kg, and was used for consumption for over



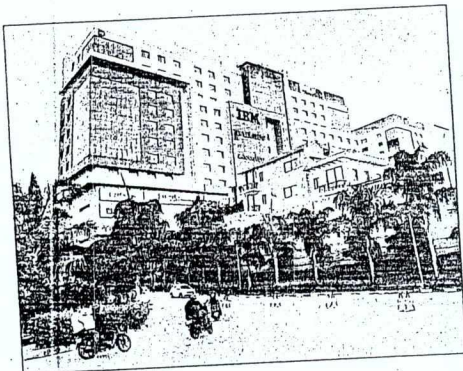
# nEXPRESS

AI, NAGPUR, PUNE, VADODARA

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

## Inside India's fake research paper shops: pay, publish, profit



**FROM BIGGEST IN HYDERABAD TO ONE MAN IN BAREILLY**

Omics, from this building (left) in Hyderabad, hosts over 700 journals and faces action in US; Irshad Ahmad in Richha near Bareilly hosts 13 journals from his one-room home office

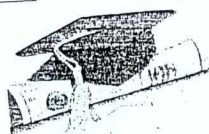
Despite UGC blacklist, hundreds of 'predatory journals' thrive, cast shadow on quality of faculty and research nationwide

SHYAMLALYADAV  
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

IN THE world of academia, getting published in an international research journal is almost the holy grail, it helps bump up the CV for hiring and helps in the competition for tenure or promotion. It takes rigorous research, an original contribution, exhaustive peer or expert reviews, and dogged persistence.

But then, there's also an easy way — pay and publish.

An investigation by *The Indian Express* shows that India has emerged as one of the biggest markets for a business in which over 300 publishers manage what are called "predatory journals" that claim to be interna-



**#FAKE SCIENCE**

PART I

listed "charge" or "fee" that ranges from \$30-\$1,800 per piece.

From a plush office in the heart of Hyderabad, home to one of the world's largest such publishers, to a one-room, one-man, one-laptop office at Richha in Bareilly, *The Indian Express* found that most of these publications exist online, claim to have a list of experts as editors, and employ minimal or no editorial checks

before publication.

Hyderabad-based OMICS is, in fact, facing legal action by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the US for fraudulent claims — a charge the company denies.

"These so-called predatory journals have brought a bad name for the country and also for many of its sincere researchers," S C Lakhotia, professor emeritus at Banaras Hindu University, told *The Indian Express*.

Ten months ago, Lakhotia resigned from a committee set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to assess publications recommended by universities for inclusion in an approved list of 32,659 journals maintained by the national regulatory body.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

V-Cs, AIIMS, IIT profs on list: 'Students sent it, we don't know'

SHYAMLALYADAV  
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

FROM VICE-CHANCELLORS to AIIMS directors and IIT professors, from Pulwama to Behrampur and Roorkee, the range and reach of names linked to articles and conferences organised by publishers of "predatory journals" is staggering.

Most of them figure in publications brought out by Hyderabad-based OMICS and Turkey-based WASET, which claim to organise research conferences across the world.

The home page of WASET's website lists a conference schedule that runs up to the year 2031, with links leading to titles of papers to be presented and their authors. However, a closer look reveals a different picture.

For instance, the last listed event is the International Conference on Psychology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, on July 14-15, 2026. One of the papers to be presented is *Qualitative Analysis of Current Child Custody*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

RELATED REPORT  
PAGE 13



# 13 journals, editorial team of 150, and one room in Bareilly

"THE LIST had many bogus or dubious journals," Lakshya said.

On May 2, the UGC removed 4,308 journals from the list, saying they were of "dubious nature". Over the last month, *The Indian Express* visited hundreds of these websites, criss-crossed the country from Ghaziabad to Mandasaur and Hyderabad, and interviewed owners, experts and "editors", to find an ecosystem thriving in a grey zone.

One company was behind over 700 journals, another brought out 10. One website offered a 96% discount, another did not list its fee but said it is "fairly reasonable". And while all the owners claimed they were running legitimate "open access" operations, the editors who responded to a questionnaire said they were yet to edit a single article.

Most of these journals covered the fields of medicine, engineering and management, the range diverse: From *Journal of Aging Research* and *European Journal of Medicinal Plants* to *Journal of Religious Studies*, *Buddhism and Living*.

*The Indian Express* investigation is part a global project involving 60 reporters led by German broadcasters NDR and WDR, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, with 18 partners, including *Le Monde* and *The New Yorker*.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) provided the online platform to share findings on 175,000 publications published by some of the most important predatory publishers, including OMICS, IOSR Journals and Science Domain. These three were among the key players that *The Indian Express* tracked down — along with the fee listed on their websites for each article.

## OMICS

NO. OF JOURNALS: 785

TOPICS: Medicine, Pharmaceuticals, Engineering, Technology, Management

CHARGE: \$149-\$1,819

Run by Srinubabu Gedela, a PhD in Biotechnology from Andhra University, Hyderabad-based OMICS is one of the largest publishers of predatory journals in India. Court records in the US, where OMICS is facing action from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for al-

that they never received any manuscripts to review." *The Indian Express* contacted two experts listed as editors on the OMICS website — Rajesh Malhotra, professor of orthopaedics, AIIMS-Delhi, and Ravi Kant, director, AIIMS-Rishikesh — and both denied this claim by the publisher. The company claims to have published over 1 million articles.

**REACTION:** Srinubabu Gedela: "(The FTC charge) is completely wrong... They don't know the definition of journal. They don't know what peer review is. They are illiterates. Scientists are not illiterates. They know which article to publish in which journal." (Note: The full interview will be published tomorrow.)

## AUSTIN

NO. OF JOURNALS: 202

TOPICS: Medicine, Pharmacology

CHARGE: \$1,800

The group, which has also published over a dozen e-books, is run by a Hyderabad-based couple, Mahendra Reddy Chirra and Siva Parvathi Chirra. Its websites show a web of addresses for various entities — from New Jersey in the US to Andheri-Kurla in Mumbai. Registrar of Company documents show that Austin Publishers Pvt Ltd was incorporated in Hyderabad on February 13, 2014. They show that its name was changed to Austin Info Consultancy Pvt Ltd in August 2015, with Mahendra Reddy and Siva Parvathi as directors. The contact details of editors, and members of the editorial team, are not available on the Austin websites. The company claims to have published over 7,000 articles.

**REACTION:** Mahendra Reddy Chirra: "My spouse is from a medical background... In this globalised world, location is of no matter. Academicians need their work to get published and we are serving the publication needs of all academicians across the world. Major publishers are outsourcing their work to India because of the resources available here."

**REACTION:** Mahendra Reddy Chirra: "My spouse is from a medical background... In this globalised world, location is of no matter. Academicians need their work to get published and we are serving the publication needs of all academicians across the world. Major publishers are outsourcing their work to India because of the resources available here."

## SCIENCE DOMAIN

NO. OF JOURNALS: 111

TOPICS: Science, Technology, Medicine

CHARGE: \$500



charges \$500 per article but offers discounts of up to 96% on this price. "Kindly contact to editor: 15@sciencedomain.org to know payment instructions for bank wire transfer," it states. The website claims that four of its journals are on the UGC list but *The Indian Express* found only one — *British Journal of Economics, Management & Trade* — although its new version, *Journal of Economics, Management and Trade*, is missing. The company claims to have published over 20,000 articles.

**REACTION:** Dr (Ms) M B Mondal: "We strongly protest any attempt to label Sciencedomain International as a predatory publisher... (Our) journals follow the transparent open peer review model, so the main criteria of predatory publishing cannot be applied."

## IAEME

NO. OF JOURNALS: 126

TOPICS: Engineering, Management

CHARGE: \$170-\$550

The website of IAEME (International Association of Engineering and Management Education) shows that it is run by Dr S Balasubramanyam, who is identified as a PhD. The website claims that IAEME is "a non-profit international association for engineering and management education", and claims that it "takes only 3-5 days for an article publication". IAEME claims that seven of its journals are on the UGC list but only five are actually listed. In separate claims on its websites, the company says it has published "5,500 papers" and "11,713 articles".

**REACTION:** Dr S Balasubramanyam: "We are not going to provide any information other than what is already available on our website."

## IJRDO JOURNALS

NO. OF JOURNALS: 43

SUBJECTS: Engineering, Medicine

Moneygram, etc — in the names of at least four other individuals identified as Jafar Inam, Rais Ahmed, Aasif Khan and Jabbar Khan. Akhtar describes himself as a "B. Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering in 2014... currently pursuing the M.Tech in CSE". Two IJRDO journals were on the UGC list before being removed on May 2. *The Indian Express* sent emails seeking details to 21 members of the editorial team of *IJRDO Journal of Business Management*. Only one, identified as Buddhi Prakash Chauhan, responded to say that "perhaps, they did not take my consent". Asked how many articles he had edited, Chauhan said: "None."

**REACTION:** Naeem Akhtar: "We do not pay our editors or reviewers. They review the manuscripts voluntarily. Currently, we are improving our standards by focusing on quality research papers. So anyone can't expect to publish their article by just paying the publication charges. However, we do ask for the publication charges after an editorial decision is taken."

## IOSR JOURNALS

NO. OF JOURNALS: 24

SUBJECTS: Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, Applied Science, Mathematics

CHARGE: \$75

With a list of 24 journals, iosrjournals.org, the website of International Organization of Scientific Research (IOSR), states: "Congratulations, Most of IOSR Journals are approved by UGC." But *The Indian Express* found none of those journals on the UGC list. Run by Chetan Sharma, who claims to have completed his PhD, the website lists *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences* as "MCI Approve". But, when contacted, a representative of the Medical Council of India (MCI) said it has "no role with regard to journals". The websites of these journals list addresses in Australia, Qatar, US and Dasna in Ghaziabad. At the Ghaziabad address listed on questjournals.org, registered in the name of Sharma, *The Indian Express* met Sandeep Sharma, who identified himself as a builder and younger brother of Chetan Sharma. "Chetan has shifted his business to Bengaluru," he said. The company claims to have

## ARSEAM

NO. OF JOURNALS: 13

TOPICS: Science, Engineering, Art, Management

CHARGE: Not listed, website says "fairly reasonable"

Run from a single room in Bareilly's Richha by Irshad Ahmad, who identifies himself as a research scholar, Academic Research in Science, Engineering, Art and Management (ARSEAM) lists 150 names on its editorial team. *The Indian Express* emailed queries seeking details to all, and received responses from two who said they had never edited an article for ARSEAM. One of them, Dr Sandeep Kumar Kesarwani, who is Assistant Professor at IBS Dehradun, said: "No one has approached me." The other, N Ramu of Annamalai University, said, "The publisher sought my willingness to become the editor of a journal. I sent my CV with my consent. I haven't reviewed any article."

**REACTION:** Irshad Ahmad: "We do not charge for publication. We charge only for hard copies of journals. We have different charges for foreign authors."

## IATESTM

NO. OF JOURNALS: 10

TOPICS: Science, Technology, Engineering, Management

CHARGE: \$120-\$200

Run by Bijoy Kumar Barik, who is listed as the chairman, IATESTM (International Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering and Management) is linked to a number of websites with addresses listed in Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Selangor in Malaysia. *The Indian Express* tracked at least 20 of these websites, all of which were described as "not for profit". They include Kolkata-based International Institute of Engineers and Researchers (IER), which claims to be the "world's fastest growing non-profit organization". Theier.org also includes a list of over 216 conferences scheduled till 2019, each with a registration fee of \$150. One organisation, Institute For Technology and Research, claimed to have 10 journals on the UGC list but *The Indian Express* found none.

**REACTION:** Bijoy Kumar Barik: "We are working on a

# V-Cs, AIIMS, IIT profs on list: 'Students sent it, we don't know'

Evaluation Practices by Carolyn J Ortega and Stephen E Berger. But an attached PDF shows the paper was published in WASET's *International Journal of Psychological and Behavioural Sciences* two years ago.

When contacted by *The Indian Express*, the Indian experts who were listed either denied any links to these publications and conferences or attributed their presence on the list to "juniors" who had sent articles for publication. Others said they were not aware that these journals charged money for publishing articles.

On July 13, a day after he was contacted by *The Indian Express*, Rajesh Malhotra, professor of orthopaedics at AIIMS-Delhi, filed a police complaint against OMICS for naming him as an editor of *Journal of Osteoarthritis*. Malhotra is also listed as the co-author of three articles on the publisher's database. "I had no idea it was a fake journal... The moment the article was published we started getting demand for money, and I have a trail of mails that were exchanged," Malhotra told *The Indian Express*.

The OMICS and WASET database includes hundreds of articles listed against the names of faculty, researchers and experts from premier institutions such as AIIMS, RML Hospital-Delhi, SGPGI-Lucknow, JIPMER-Puducherry, IITs, NITs, JNU, Delhi University, Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University and several other renowned institutions.

*The Indian Express* spoke to Vice-Chancellors, AIIMS directors and IIT professors on the list, and this is what they had to say:

## RAKESH BHATTNAGAR

VICE-CHANCELLOR, BHU

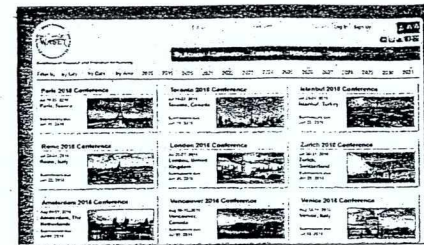
■ Listed as co-author in *Mycobacterial Diseases*, OMICS  
"At the time, I was in JNU. I did not pay for this publication. The first author of the paper did part of the work with me, and put my name as co-author."

## M JAGADESH KUMAR

VICE-CHANCELLOR, JNU

■ Listed as co-author in *International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering*, WASET

"My student made an oral presentation on this topic at the



WASET's home page lists conferences till 2031

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, PULWAMA, J&K  
■ Listed as author in *Journal of Carcinogenesis & Mutagenesis*, OMICS

"The journal at that time was not known to be of a predatory nature. The work was published with them after invitation by the journal's editor without any demand for money. It was only after publication that their accounts officer demanded article-processing charges, which we refused to pay."

## KRS RAO

VICE-CHANCELLOR, MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

■ Listed as co-author in *Journal of Marine Science: Research & Development*, OMICS

"That was published in 2011. It was a review on invitation, not a research article and not with our findings, and we did not pay for publication. We never promote the 'pay and publish' policy. The article was published in the first issue and first volume with other renowned scientists. In my view, it is too early to understand the mission and vision of any newly inaugurated journal in its first issue."

## AMARENDRA NARAYAN MISRA

VICE-CHANCELLOR, KHALLIKOTE

CLUSTER UNIVERSITY, BERMAMPUR, ODISHA

■ Listed as co-author in *Journal of Proteomics & Bioinformatics*, OMICS

"It was in 2010 that we published this article, when the journal had published two issues. They had a brilliant editorial team and it was not a predatory journal at the time, as per our knowledge. We did not pay any

all your efforts. So this is just an odd slip. You regret it always later as good research work goes in vain, without any recognition."

## SARMAN SINGH

DIRECTOR, AIIMS-BHOPAL

■ Listed as co-author in *Mycobacterial Diseases* and *Journal of Vaccines & Vaccination*, OMICS

"OMICS is a predatory organisation, but this was realised nationally and internationally only about two years ago. Before that, many of the conferences and journals were managed by Indian doctors who started requesting senior professors of reputed institutes to help them and submit articles or abstracts. As emotional Indians, some of us submitted a few articles and abstracts. However, I want to make it clear that none of the two papers were published for any fee paid by me or AIIMS or anybody else on my behalf."

## PROF A KANNAN

IIT-MADRAS

■ Listed as co-author of three articles in *International Journal of Chemical and Molecular Engineering*, WASET

"Usually, our MS students are permitted to attend an international conference and write a paper for presentation. After this presentation, their work was published in the WASET journal. I do not use these papers in my list of referred publications, neither does my institute give any recognition for such publications."

## PROF VINOD KATIYAR

IIT-ROORKEE

■ Listed as co-author in *International Journal of Physical and Mathematical Sciences*, WASET

"My student presented her research work at the 17th



# EXPRESS

UR, PUNE, VADODARA

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

ISSUES

Govt  
Bill

ition charge

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

## 1 journal to 1,500 in 10 years: Hyderabad is hub of pay & publish

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



ily 2008, exactly ten years  
then Prime Minister  
umohan Singh had sought a  
vote after the withdrawal of  
support to his government.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PARLIAMENT

E 6



SHYAMLAL YADAV  
HYDERABAD, JULY 19

FROM THE first journal brought out by OMICS ten years ago to an estimated 1,500 publications today, Hyderabad has emerged as the Indian hub of predatory journals that publish research articles on a range of subjects from medicine to management for a fee, an investigation by *The Indian Express* has revealed.

Most of these journals exist online and are operated by companies based across the city, including the posh Banjara Hills, but flaunt addresses from abroad on their websites, mostly in the US and UK.

"An academic in India can get credit for publishing in an 'international' journal in the UK or the US, when in fact it is typically a small operation run out of a house in the West," Jeffrey Beall, the Denver-based former librarian who coined the term "predatory publishing", told *The Indian Express*.

Beall was among the first to raise the red flag against such publishers in a widely read blog eight years ago. And among the scores of Hyderabad-based publishers flagged by Beall is OMICS, which is among the biggest op-



P Ashvin  
Kumar runs  
Avens  
and Open  
Science



#FAKE  
SCIENCE

PART II

erators with over 700 journals.

*The Indian Express* tracked down many others, including Avens Publishing Group and Open Science Publications run by 32-year-old P Ashvin Kumar, who said that he had completed an MTech in Biotechnology and worked with OMICS earlier.

Kumar, who operates from a small office in the Manikonda area, said that Avens has an office in US and that over 70 per cent of articles published on its journals "come from abroad". "Our journals have published more than 1,000 articles,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Face behind  
biggest of all:  
'40 countries,  
million articles'

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
HYDERABAD, JULY 19

"We have published nearly a million articles, including those from conference proceedings. This year, we are organising more than 2,000 conferences, 500 symposiums and 500 workshops in 40 countries."

INSIDE AN imposing glass-cased building in Hyderabad's Gachibowli, the 36-year-old face behind more than 780 research journals and companies operating in 40 countries, has confidence written all over it.

But behind all the plans, Srinubabu Gedela is at the centre of a storm that's threatening his business empire. Gedela is the CEO of OMICS, labelled as one of the largest "predatory publishers" of research articles on topics in medicine, pharmaceuticals, engineering, technology

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Seer's death after suspected food poisoning sparks row in Karnataka

of the eight mathas or the Ashta



Sabha which, at the end of the 12-hour discussion, was defeated 126-325 votes.

This was the closest he came to point at violence against minorities and Dalits, cow vigilantism and mob lynching — incidents over which his party has come down heavily against the ruling BJP over the last four years.

In contrast, the Prime Minister, sensing that the Opposition was not keen to project a prime ministerial candidate

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEW DELHI, JULY 20

IN A point-by-point rebuttal to allegations levelled against him by Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the Nehru-Gandhi family “the kedar” (contractor) and “saudagar” (trader), and said the no-confidence motion against his government by “some people” was only to spread instability in the country through “negative politics”.

Replying to the debate in Lok

which regally states to protect the classified information provided by the CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



‘Negative politics by som

Sabha Friday, Modi took a s at the Congress and CONTINUED ON P/

## SC Collegium reiterates Justice Joseph’s name, recommends 2 others

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G & SUSHANT SINGH

NEW DELHI, JULY 20



Uttarakhand Chief Justice K M Joseph

DESPITE THE Centre’s reservations, the Supreme Court Collegium has “reiterated” its decision to recommend Uttarakhand Chief Justice K M Joseph as an apex court judge. The Collegium also said that it had found “nothing adverse regarding” his “suitability” in two letters sent by Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad asking the Collegium to reconsider its decision.

The Collegium met on July 16 and said in its resolution: “The

Collegium, on due consideration of all the aspects mentioned in the aforesaid two letters, resolves to reiterate the afore-mentioned recommendation, especially since nothing adverse regarding suitability of Mr Justice K M Joseph has been pointed out in the aforesaid letters.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

## Behind locked doors, Mandsaur is home to research paper shops

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
MANDSAUR (MP), JULY 20

IT’S KNOWN as a hotspot of opium farming and ground zero of a violent protest by farmers that led to police firing and five deaths last year.

Today, Mandsaur on Madhya Pradesh’s border with Rajasthan is quietly gaining a new reputation in an unlikely field — the world of pay-and-publish research journals.

Unlike Hyderabad, which is home to heavyweight “predatory publishers”, such as 750-journal OMICS, an investigation by The Indian Express has revealed that the Mandsaur business revolves



#FAKE SCIENCE

PART III

around over 100 journals covering science to management, a few names and many locked houses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

RELATED REPORT  
PAGE 10

Advertisement for GENFOUR Crack IT study CLASSES. It features a woman's portrait and text including: "Starts: 21 July", "Scan the QR code & download VISION IAS app", "GET IT ON Google Play", "VISION IAS Delhi", "Karol Bagh", "Mukherjee Nagar", "LUCKNOW 8468022022", and "हिन्दू".



FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Face behind biggest of all: '40 countries, million articles'

and management for charges ranging from \$149 to \$1,819.

On May 1, the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a motion in the District Court of Nevada, seeking "preliminary injunction and other equitable relief" against OMICS. It alleged that most of the claims found on websites of OMICS journals — on peer reviews, list of editors, access to credible databases — are "phony".

On July 13, Rajesh Malhotra, professor of orthopaedics at AIIMS-Delhi, filed a police complaint against OMICS for allegedly falsely naming him as an editor of one of its journals.

Gedela, however, is unfazed. Speaking to The Indian Express, he described the FTC as "illiterates". He claimed that all the charges against OMICS are "completely wrong" (read the full interview at [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)).

But The Indian Express spoke to experts who have been tracking OMICS over the years and found that they were far from impressed by such claims.

Asked to identify the biggest predatory publisher in India, S C Lakhota, professor emeritus at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), told The Indian Express: "I understand that the OMICS group is based in India and most of its journals would qualify to be in that category." (Read the full interview at [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com))

Until last year, Lakhota was a member of a UGC committee formed to assess such journals.

Jeffrey Beall, a former librarian at the University of Colorado in Denver who coined the term "predatory publishing" five years ago, was more direct.

"The worst case is OMICS International based in Hyderabad. It publishes hundreds of low-quality, open-access journals... It uses deceptive practices and does not carry out a proper peer review, publishing scientific papers without proper quality control. It has hurt many academics throughout the world, giving a bad name to India," Beall told The Indian Express (read the full interview at [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)).

Gedela claimed that Beall has a bias. "Because of open access journals, their jobs are at stake," he said, referring to librarians. He claimed that his company had sent a notice seeking \$1 billion in damages to Beall but did not pursue it because "he is not capable of paying the damages".

However, a number of experts in India told The Indian Express that their names were wrongly used by OMICS. Besides, The Indian Express found, at least 177 OMICS journals did not list their ISSN, the standardised international ID code.

Sanjeev Mishra, Director, AIIMS-Jodhpur, is listed in the "proceedings" of at least two OMICS conferences — September 15-17, 2014, in Lucknow and October 20-21, 2014, in the US.

## 'US FTC ARE ILLITERATES, SCIENTISTS ARE NOT'

OMICS chief Srinubabu Gedela responds to key charges levelled by the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against his company:

**FTC:** Academics who agreed to serve on OMICS editorial boards stated that they never received any manuscripts to review.

**GEDELA:** Peer review is taken care of by editorial boards of the respective journals. Every journal has 40-50 editorial board members. If they accept the articles, we will publish them. But we do not have any control over editorial policies. The editor is the main stakeholder. The authors have equal responsibility.

**FTC:** Several listed editors indicated that they had never agreed to be affiliated with OMICS.

**GEDELA:** That is completely wrong. Normally, the FTC takes around six months for each case. Against us, they have taken three years but not proved a single thing. We have filed our response. We have also filed a suit against them for \$3.11 billion in compensation due to loss.

**FTC:** OMICS has submitted only 14,598 unique individuals as purported editors and reviewers, and not 50,000 as claimed on its

websites.

**GEDELA:** Every journal has 50-60 editorial board members. Some of the members are active and some not that much. The number of active members, which FTC assessed, is around 15,000... For every journal, we divide 10 members for one subject, 10 for another, like that. If the journal is publishing an article related to a particular subject, that means the remaining 40 members may not be active.



Srinubabu Gedela owns OMICS. Express

**FTC:** OMICS induced authors to write for paid journals, with charges ranging from \$149 to \$1,819.

**GEDELA:** The FTC don't know the definition of journal. They don't know what peer review is. They are illiterates. Scientists are not illiterates. They know which article to publish in which journal. If, after working for a year on their research, they publish in a journal, they know better than the illiterates at FTC.

(Full interview at [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com))

rate. It was possibly lifted from the cover of one of my earlier books."

Gedela completed his B. Pharm and M.Tech (Biotechnology) from Andhra University and post-doctoral degree from Stanford University in the US. Hailing from Allana village in Andhra's Srikakulam district, he established his first company OMICS Group Inc in Nevada in 2007, started his first journal Journal of Proteomics & Bioinformatics in 2008, and returned to India in 2009.

The Indian version was founded as OMICS Online Publishing Pvt Ltd in Hyderabad. In 2015, the company's name was changed to OMICS International Pvt Ltd.

Registrar of Companies (RoC) records show that Gedela is linked today to a web of subsidiaries and entities, such as OMICS Entertainment Pvt Ltd, Versant Online Solutions and Srinu Sci Technol BioSoft Pvt Ltd.

Records show that OMICS

"Our articles from India are very few, less than 0.01 percent... 99.99 percent of articles are from outside. So we are not concerned about India, indexing, UGC, etc. This is all nonsense. Our services are all export and there is no business from India," he said.

Gedela said that he formed entities over the last two years in the UK and Singapore, including Meetings International, Allied Academics Ltd, Euroscion Ltd, Pulsus Group Ltd. He is also linked to two Delaware-based companies, iMedPub LLC and Conference Series LLC.

Gedela has informed the Nevada court that OMICS Group, iMedPub, Conference Series, Allied Academics, Pulsus, Trade Sci, SciTechnol and EuroSciCon are subsidiaries of OMICS International.

The FTC estimates that between August 25, 2011 and July 31, 2017, OMICS earned "gross revenues, in the form of publication and conference registration



not capable of paying the damages.

However, a number of experts in India told The Indian Express that their names were wrongly used by OMICS. Besides, The Indian Express found, at least 177 OMICS journals did not list their ISSN, the standardised international ID code.

Sanjeev Mishra, Director, AIIMS-Jodhpur, is listed in the "proceedings" of at least two OMICS conferences - September 15-17, 2014, in Lucknow and October 20-21, 2014, in the US. Mishra told The Indian Express that he "never attended" them.

Sarman Singh, Director, AIIMS-Bhopal, is listed in two OMICS conferences. "Neither me nor any of my students attended these conferences," Singh said.

Rakesh Bhatnagar, Vice-Chancellor, BHU, said he "did not attend" the four OMICS conferences where his name was listed.

Malhotra, from AIIMS-Delhi, who is listed as an editor of OMICS's Journal of Osteoarthritis, said: "I am neither on the rolls of OMICS nor am I the editor of any of those journals. I didn't even know that they were using my name on their website. In fact, my affiliation on the site is not accu-

The Indian version was founded as OMICS Online Publishing Pvt Ltd in Hyderabad. In 2015, the company's name was changed to OMICS International Pvt Ltd.

Registrar of Companies (RoC) records show that Gedela is linked today to a web of subsidiaries and entities, such as OMICS Entertainment Pvt Ltd, Versant Online Solutions and Srinu Sci Technol BioSoft Pvt Ltd.

Records show that OMICS Entertainment took a loan of Rs 5 crore from Punjab National Bank in March 2016; Versant showed a net loss of Rs 4.68 crore in 2015-16 after taxes; and, Srinu Sci Technol BioSoft's turnover in 2015-16 was Rs 16.89 lakh.

But Gedela claimed that when it came to OMICS, "our revenue from India is almost zero". "Europe has 40 per cent of our business, US has 7-8 per cent, China has nine. India is not our market. Out of 3,000 conferences we are conducting this year, not a single one is in India," he said.

This is why, he said, his companies have nothing to do with education regulatory authorities in India, such as UGC.

linked to two Delaware-based companies, iMedPub LLC and Conference Series LLC.

Gedela has informed the Nevada court that OMICS Group, iMedPub, Conference Series, Allied Academies, Pulsus, Trade Sci, SciTechnol and EuroSciCon are subsidiaries of OMICS International.

The FTC estimates that between August 25, 2011 and July 31, 2017, OMICS earned "gross revenues, in the form of publication and conference registration fees from consumers, of at least approximately \$50,740,100.05..."

One of the charges levelled by FTC is that OMICS falsely claimed that "their publications are included in NIH's indexing databases" and used the logo "to advertise their journals". The trade commission was referring to PubMed Central (PMC), a free full-text archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature at the US National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine.

Gedela confirmed that some OMICS journals were removed from PubMed in 2013. "It was also because of Jeffrey Beall's blog," he said.

## Pay & publish

and we do not pay editors and reviewers. We are publishing 46 journals now and all of them are regular. We have ISSN for 44 of them," he said, referring to the standardised international ID code.

Asked about the editorial strength of Avens journals, Kumar said, "In all, we have nearly 1,500 members on our editorial boards. I have put their names only after getting their approvals and receiving their biodata and photographs."

Kumar said he launched his second company, Open Science Publications, recently with 17 journals. Asked whether he had tried to get his journals listed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), he claimed: "Initially, I contacted them but they never responded."

Another publisher, Bio Accent, runs 47 journals, and lists a US address on its website. However, the website itself is registered in the name of Ravi Shankar Kuppalla of Pravathi Nagar in Hyderabad. Similarly, CRESCO Publications, which claims to run 116 journals, has provided a

US address on its website, which is registered in the name of Ramchandra Reddy of Guntur.

There are hundreds more with dual identities - Clerisy's website is registered in the name of "Mr Ashok, Hightech City" and Hendun Research Access has its website registered in Mossapet.

And most of these websites have little or no details of their editorial staff.

"Cenetri Publishing Group is highly conscious about the word it believes, the word it says, the word it publishes. We ensure to have highly professional, real-time researchers as our expert team and a perfect list of researchers as authors," claimed one website, with addresses in Sydney and Hyderabad. However, pages linked to the 'Editorial Board' icon on at least three of their websites were blank.

Openventio, with a US office, publishes 40 journals from Hyderabad, with an "article processing charge" ranging from \$127 to \$1,027 depending on the article's length and author's country. Scientific Open Access Journals runs 24 journals, with an "article processing charge" of \$500 for 20 of them.

The addresses of such publishers criss-cross the city's map, The Indian Express found.

Among them are Annex Publishers with 83 journals from Begumpet, Excelytics with seven from Nehru Nagar, Meghana Publications with 10 from Banjara Hills and Scientific Future Group with four from Madhopur.

Then, there's Cafet Innova, a "non-profit organization", which claims to run four journals from Hyderabad. "We are into service to encourage young people," said one of its "founder members", Raju Adela.

The Indian Express investigation is part a global project involving 60 reporters led by German broadcasters NDR and WDR, and Suddeutsche Zeitung, with 18 partners, including Le Monde and The New Yorker. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) provided the online platform to share findings on 175,000 publications.

## TOMORROW: WHAT LIES BEHIND THE LOCKED HOMES IN MANDSAUR?

## Check fake news

If they remain mute spectators they are liable to be treated as abettors and thereafter face consequent legal action," the Centre said in a statement.

"Reports in the media resonate the general sentiment that there is much more that needs to be done by WhatsApp. There is a need for bringing in traceability and accountability when a provocative/inflammatory message is detected and a request is made by law enforcement agencies."

An e-mail query sent to WhatsApp did not elicit any response.

The Centre said that the problems have not been adequately addressed by WhatsApp. "It has been conveyed to them in unmistakable terms that it is a very serious issue which deserves a more sensi-

tive response," the Centre noted.

Following the lynching of five men in Dhule in Maharashtra under similar circumstances, on July 3, the IT Ministry had written to WhatsApp asking the company to take immediate steps to tackle the misuse of their platform "wherein inflammatory messages were circulated that led to unfortunate incidents". On the same day, WhatsApp responded and highlighted their initiative to mark forwarded messages and to step up efforts to detect fake news.

"Subsequently, an unfortunate incident has occurred in Bidar where a 32-year old software engineer Mohammed Azam was killed and this was preceded by viral circulation of rumours on WhatsApp about child lifters," the Ministry said.

The Ministry also said that it was regretted that the "enormity of the challenge

and the rampant abuse happening in the country leading to the repeated commissioning of crimes pursuant to rampant circulation of irresponsible messages in large volumes on their platform have not been addressed adequately by Whatsapp".

WhatsApp has announced measures to counter the spread of rumours and unverified information, including letting only group administrators decide which members can post and labelling forwarded messages to distinguish between the messages that have been forwarded from the ones that have been created by the sender.

Apart from the messaging app, Twitter, too last week announced it was expanding its effort to fight abuse and spam on its platform by removing the accounts that have been locked on account of suspicious behaviour.



# Energy cure, God university get prime space for money

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

A US-BASED NRI hailing from Betul in Madhya Pradesh claims that he can cure all diseases by transmitting energy. A nursing home owner from Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh touts his "University of God" as a counter to scientists who have won the Nobel.

Nothing illustrates better the danger posed to genuine researchers by the pay-and-publish model of predatory journals than their publication of articles that propagate dubious claims with hardly any editorial review or oversight.

"Many open-access publishers publish fake, junk, and pseudo-science. They only want to make easy money, so they don't reject fake research. Instead, they just publish it and send an invoice to the authors," Jeffrey Beall, the Denver-based former librarian who coined the term "predatory publishing" eight years ago, told *The Indian Express*.

Based in Nevada, Mahendra Kumar Trivedi, 55, has authored and co-authored over 150 arti-



cles in journals of Science Publishing Group and over 100 in those of Hyderabad-based OMICS — both have been tagged as "predatory publishers".

Trivedi's website claims: "In 1995, Mr Trivedi discovered that he had the unique ability to harness the energy from the universe and transmit it to anywhere on the globe, infusing it into living organisms and nonliving materials to optimize their potential. This unique phenomenon resulting from Mr Trivedi's biofield energy transmissions became internationally known as the Trivedi Effect."

The Indian Express accessed over 90 articles published by Trivedi and found similar claims in all. He also claims to have developed "Trivedi Water", which is listed on Amazon but is "currently unavailable".

According to his website, Trivedi offers the "Biofield treatment" for groups and individuals in the US, with charges ranging \$200 to \$2,000. The Indian Express, however, found a number of holes in the collaborations that Trivedi claimed to have with a number of institutions.

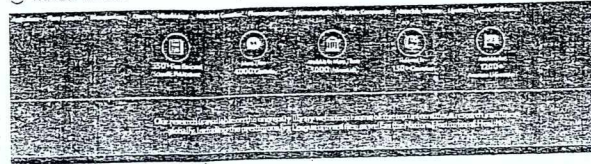
His website claims: "The National Center of Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) has recognized and accepted Biofield Energy Healing as a complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) health care approach in addition to other therapies, medicines and practices."

The NCCIH is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) under the US Department of Health and Human Services. When contacted by The Indian Express, an NCCIH spokesperson responded: "NCCIH does not endorse, recognize, or accept, any specific complementary, integrative, or alternative treatment approach."

Dismissing another claim from Trivedi, an IIT-Bombay spokesperson clarified that it does "not endorse any of his claims".

Records accessed by The

TRIVEDI EFFECT



The website of Trivedi Effect

Indian Express from courts in Pennsylvania show at least two rulings that went against Trivedi's favour since 2014. Both were defamation suits filed by Trivedi against a blogger and a researcher for claiming that he was "scamming people" and "abusing women" — Trivedi claimed he was not a public figure.

When contacted by The Indian Express, Trivedi wrote in an emailed response: "Our 'energy treatment' is highly reputed throughout the world as miraculous and impossible to deny scientifically... Between 1995 and 2008, I dedicated 100% of my time to blessing as many people as possible in India without charging any money. There have never been any allegations from anyone related to cheating, fraud or sexual harassment. No police complaints have ever been filed.

No government or police inquiries were opened due to these kind of allegations."

Thousands of kilometres to the east of Nevada, Vijay Mohan Das has challenged Nobel-winning physicists in a series of articles published in "predatory" journals run by companies such as Ghaziabad-based IOSR Journals.

In one of his articles published in IOSR Journal of Pharmacy and Biological Sciences in May-June 2014, the 62-year-old owner of Das Nursing Home writes: "Believing all clinical stages are high risk group, participatory science advocates prayer as an adjuvant therapy to conquer cancer in all stages of the cancer."

Das, a Master of Surgery from MLB Medical College in Jhansi, did not respond to a query from

The Indian Express on whether he applies his theory at his nursing home. He said he runs a "charitable" institution and charges consultancy fee in OPD of Rs 200 and Rs 500 for emergency cases.

Asked why most of his articles are published in "predatory" journals, Das said: "I submitted my article to a reputed journal of physics but they said it is not physics. There is no God in the Big Bang theory. In my theory, there is God."

Asked about his "University of God", he said: "I registered it as a society many years ago. It is unlike other universities, it is for online classes about my theory."

In one of a series of articles published by Das in the November-December 2016 issue of IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education, he writes: "Nobel Prize Physics 1930 (Raman Effect) and Nobel Prize 1902 (Zeeman's Effect) and Nobel Prize 2019 (Stark Effect) are explained by wrong mathematical theories."

He was referring to C V Raman, Pieter Zeeman from the Netherlands and Johannes Stark from Germany. Stark won the Nobel in 1919, not 2019.