

## Women's groups to turn entrepreneurs by setting up cement brick making units

**KARIMNAGAR:** To strengthen the financial status of women, the State government has proposed 13 business models under the Indira Mahila Shakti Scheme. As part of this, the government women groups are being encouraged to enter the brick manufacturing business. It has been decided to set up 174 units in 58 mandals of the erstwhile Karimnagar district.

Officials, who said they were collecting the details of women groups that are interested in setting up cement brick units, said apart from encouraging the women to enter the brick-making business, marketing facilities would also be provided. The government is planning to utilise the cement bricks manufactured by the women groups for the construction of houses under the Indiramma Scheme.

If this materialises, there would not be

any problem for the women's groups in marketing their product since the government has announced the construction of 3,500 houses each in 119 Assembly constituencies totalling 4.5 lakh houses in the first phase. The cost of setting up a brick-making unit is estimated to be Rs 18 lakh. The women's groups will get a 35 per cent subsidy under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme. It requires 2,250 bricks for the construction of each unit under the Indiramma House Scheme. Per day, it is possible to manufacture 2,400 bricks in each of these units to be established soon. After the bricks are manufactured, the housing department engineer, MPDO/Municipal commissioner will decide on the price of bricks and extend marketing support, DRDA officials said. Officials have decided to establish 45 units in Karimnagar, 54 in Jagtial, 39 in Peddapalli, and 36 in Rajanna-Sircilla.



## As Strong As Your Will Power: The all-new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure launched in India.



Hyderabad :The all-new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure has been launched in India. This adventure motorcycle will be available as a completely built-up unit and deliveries will commence from April 2025.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President and CEO, BMW Group India said, "The all-new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure is the new benchmark in the world of large adventure motorcycles. The new Adventure GS is the insurmountable rock in the portfolio of the biggest travel enduros. For more than two decades, the big BMW GS Adventure with flat twin boxer engine has been synonymous with long-distance motorcycle journeys. It has been equipped with a wide range of standard equipment, is highly individualized and invites you to enjoy a limitless motorcycle experience. The all-new BMW R 1300 GS

Adventure, the legend, is already the statement for absolute adventure – it is rock solid."The introductory ex-showroom price of the all-new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure starts from:BMW R 1300 GS Adventure (Base)INR 22,95,000Additionally, three option Styles are also available for individualization – Triple Black, Style GS Trophy and 719 Karakorum.

\*Prices prevailing at the time of invoicing will be applicable. Delivery will be made ex-showroom. Ex-showroom price (inclusive of GST and compensation cess) as applicable but excludes Road Tax, RTO statutory taxes/fees, other local tax/cess levies and insurance. Prices and options are subject to change without prior notice. For further information, please contact your local authorized BMW Motorrad Dealer.The all-

new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure is available in the following color schemes – Basic variant is available in Racing Red paintwork, Optional Styles – Triple Black is available in Blackstorm metallic paintwork, GS Trophy is available in the Racing Blue metallic paintwork and the 719 Karakorum is available in the Aurelius Green matt metallic paintwork.

To enable customers to own BMW Motorrad motorcycles of their choice, BMW India Financial Services offers flexible and hassle-free finance solutions. What's more, it goes beyond just motorcycles – with accessories financing, ensuring that you're fully equipped for all your riding experiences. For complete peace of mind, all BMW Motorrad bikes come with a standard warranty for 'three years, unlimited kilometers', with an option to extend the warranty to fourth and fifth year. Road-Side Assistance, a 24x7 365 days package further ensures prompt services in case of breakdown and towing

situations.The all-new BMW R 1300 GS AdventureThe all-new BMW R 1300 GS Adventure comes with a completely new design that sets it apart from its sister model, the R 1300 GS. The design with the new flyline follows the idea of demonstrating extreme robustness and versatility right from the start, without adding unnecessary complexity, but instead, intelligently combining materiality and functionality. A key component of the outer skin in the central bodywork area is the 30-liter aluminium fuel tank, which is largely uncovered. High-quality highlights include recessed BMW emblems and embossed GS lettering on both sides, while two visible welding seams in the seat area demonstrate the technology and manufacturing precision. The sheer width of the tank inspires confidence and provides effective frontal weather protection. Functional, narrow side surfaces integrate the rider perfectly and offer the best possible ergonomic conditions even off-road.

## Government to develop, construct new bus stations across Telangana

Hyderabad: Efforts are on to develop all the bus depots and stations across the State apart from building new ones, said Transport Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar. Speaking at the RTC Board meeting on Saturday, he said the government will develop the existing 97 depots and bus stations along with the establishment of new depots. Prabhakar instructed the officials to complete the establishment of new depots and bus stations that have been approved by the board as soon as possible.



# The price of protection: tackling inequity in cervical cancer prevention

No woman should die from cervical cancer. Yet, it is the second leading cancer and significant contributor to cancer-related deaths in Indian women. Despite being one of the most preventable and curable cancers, if detected early, the cervical screening rate in India is dismal at 2%. A vaccine for cancer is now available but its price puts it out of reach for many. The inequities in cervical cancer screening, prevention and treatment along with its high mortality and morbidity make it an important public health problem not only for India but also globally.

Every January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. In addition to the discussion about its causes and risk factors, this piece aims to spark dialogue among public health advocates, policymakers, and readers about the urgent need for equitable cervical cancer prevention. It underscores the importance of bridging the gap to ensure every woman, regardless of income, has the opportunity to protect herself from this preventable disease. The cervix is the entrance to the uterus from the vagina, it is anatomically part of the female reproductive tract. The most common viral infection of this body part is caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which causes almost 99% of cervical cancers. While most HPV infections are asymptomatic and cleared by the immune system within a few months to years, persistent infection with high-risk HPV types can lead to cervical cancer.

Symptoms of early-stage cervical cancer include vaginal bleeding post intercourse and menopause, between periods or heavier or longer periods and, strong-odored and watery vaginal discharge. Advanced cervical cancer symptoms include difficulty or pain in bowel movement and urination, abdominal pain and swelling in legs. Since these symptoms overlap with other health conditions, seeking professional health consultation is essential. Apart from cervical cancer, HPV infection is also associated with cancers of the head, neck, oropharynx and anogenital area and anogenital warts. Rarely, warts form on the larynx and other parts of the respiratory tract. While HPV infection is more common in women, this virus is also prevalent in men. Several factors increase the risk of HPV infection including unsafe sexual contact, multiple sexual partners, age at first sexual intercourse along with education and literacy levels, and a weakened immune system resulting from various reasons such as HIV infection or smoking. With over 200 HPV types, these can be high or low risk based on their potential to cause cancer. Currently twelve HPV types are identified as high-risk (oncogenic), and causing cancer in humans. HPV16 and 18 are most oncogenic and also the most common type found in regions of high prevalence globally, including India.

As per the World Health Organization (WHO), screening, prophylactic vaccination against HPV, and treatment of precancerous lesions are effective strategies to prevent cervical cancer. Precancers are often asymptomatic, requiring regular screening even post-vaccination. While cervical cancer screening is recommended every 5-10 years starting age 30, women with HIV should get screened every 3 years starting age 25. The three main methods of screening are HPV

test, Pap smears and HPV/Pap co-test.

The HPV test checks for HPV infection. Last year, the US FDA approved HPV self-collection. In India, several companies have started offering HPV at-home screening tests priced around ₹2,500 - ₹3,000. On the other hand, Pap smear test collects cervical cells to detect presence of precancerous and cervical cancer cells. A Pap smear costs around ₹500. The HPV/Pap co-test checks for both and costs around ₹3,000 - ₹4,000. Vaccination is central to the WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Problem. Implementing this strategy could prevent 60 million cervical cancer cases and 45 million deaths over the next 100 years. Being vaccinated between ages 9 - 14 years, before any exposure to HPV, is highly effective in preventing the infection. Hence, vaccination is not recommended in sexually active adults, who may already have been exposed to HPV.

There are six licensed HPV vaccines: three bivalent, two quadrivalent, and one nonavalent, all globally marketed. Valency refers to the number of virus types against which the vaccine is effective. All of these vaccines effectively prevent HPV types 16 and 18, responsible for 70% of cervical cancer cases, and associated precancerous lesions. The quadrivalent vaccine also protects against anogenital warts caused by HPV types 6 and 11, while the nonavalent vaccine adds coverage for types 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58. Clinical trials and global surveillance



confirm their safety and efficacy. As per the December 2022 WHO Position on HPV vaccines, a one- or two-dose schedule is recommended for girls aged 9 - 14 and women aged 15 - 20. For women over 21, two doses with a six-month interval are advised. Immunocompromised individuals, including those with HIV, require a minimum of two doses, with three doses recommended when feasible. While HPV vaccines are a powerful preventive tool, their high cost: ₹4,000 to ₹11,000 per dose - makes them inaccessible to millions of women, especially those in rural, low-income backgrounds and underserved areas. Neither is it part of the National Immunisation Programme. Essen-

tially, lack of equitable access to a life-saving intervention is exacerbating health inequities in cervical cancer. In India, there is a high correlation between literacy levels and cervical cancer. Hence, in the absence of affordable vaccines, alternative strategies and investment in public health education aimed at health behavior change becomes crucial. Specifically, education on the importance of screening, managing anxiety about screening and safe sexual practices are important measures. To improve the efficacy of education, involving men in the campaign is an important aspect of public health education. These measures can serve as vital stopgaps until vaccines are made accessible to all.

## Triumph to launch the Thruxton 400: Retro cafe racer for the modern rider



The Thruxton 400 retains its iconic cafe racer design, showcasing a sleek fairing around the headlight that flows seamlessly into the fuel tank. The round LED headlight, inspired by the bigger Thruxton RS, is complemented by clip-on handlebars and bar-end mirrors, enhancing the bike's sporty yet retro character.

Hyderabad: Triumph India is set to expand its 400cc lineup with the upcoming Thruxton 400, a modern take on the brand's iconic cafe racer. Recently spotted during testing, the Thruxton 400 brings back the classic cafe racer design with a few updates to meet the needs of contemporary riders. The Thruxton 400 maintains the signature cafe racer styling, featuring a neat fairing around the headlight that extends to the fuel tank. The round LED headlight is inspired by the larger Thruxton RS, and the bike is equipped with clip-on handlebars and bar-end mirrors, contributing to its sporty and retro appeal. A single-piece seat, scooped at the front, and a single-piece grab rail enhance its authentic cafe racer look. While the design harks back to classic models, the Thruxton 400 is built on the same platform as the Speed 400, sharing features like the exhaust system. Under the hood, the Thruxton 400 will be powered by the same 399cc, single-cylinder, liquid-cooled engine that powers Triumph's other 400cc models, delivering 39.5bhp and 37.5Nm of torque. This engine is paired with a six-speed gearbox. Expect features such as LED lighting, a semi-digital instrument console, traction control, and dual-channel ABS, along with USB charging ports. The Thruxton 400 is likely to be priced around Rs 2.50 lakh (ex-showroom), slotting between the Speed 400 and Scrambler 400.

One-Day Workshop on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Agriculture

Hyderabad, 18th January 2025: The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) organized a one-day workshop on "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Agriculture". The workshop aimed to explore the applications of AI in addressing key challenges across agriculture, animal husbandry, rural development, Panchayati Raj, and self-help groups (SHGs).

The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr. G Narendra Kumar, IAS, director General of NIRDPR who outlined the workshop's objectives and the vision of the Center of Excellence (CoE) in AI. Shri J. R. K. Rao, IAS (Retd), OSD-cum-Interim Coordinator, CoE in AI, provided insights into the expectations from the workshop and the roadmap for AI integration in rural governance.

The inaugural address was delivered by Shri N. N. Sinha, IAS (Retd), Former Secretary, Rural Development, Government of India. He highlighted the transformative role of AI in enhancing rural livelihoods and governance, underscoring its potential to address complex challenges. The technical sessions included a presentation on the establishment of the CoE in AI by Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR, followed by a virtual session on AI tools for development by Prof. (Dr.) Shivendu, University of South Florida, USA. Experts discussed key challenges and opportunities in five thematic areas—agriculture, animal husbandry, rural development, Panchayati Raj, and SHGs. About 12 states representatives from various states in the cadres of Secretary / Principal Secretary / Directors of RD&PR including Shri. M. Raghunadan Rao, Secretary of Agriculture Govt of Telangana presented specific problem statements that could be addressed through AI solutions. Three key issues were identified for each thematic area, and subcommittees were proposed to define actionable AI-based strategies.

The workshop concluded with a discussion on forming subcommittees, enhancing state participation, and creating a strategic roadmap for the CoE. In their closing remarks, Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, emphasized the importance of collaboration and innovation to drive AI-based rural transformation. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. M. V. Ravibabu, marking the beginning of a new era of technological integration for sustainable rural development.



**One-Day Workshop on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Agriculture**  
18th January, 2025



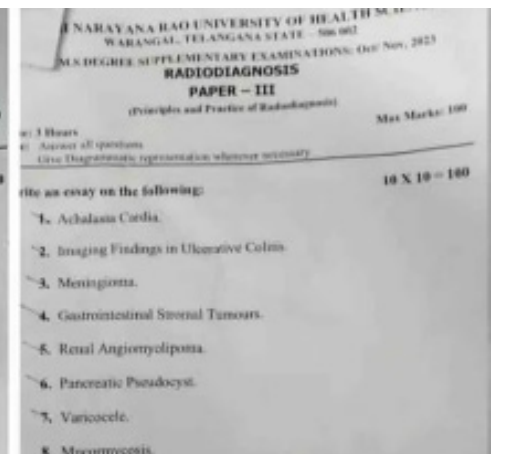
**Center of Excellence in AI, NIRDPR**  
**National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj**  
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 30

# KNRUHS goofs up with PG question paper, students shocked

Hyderabad: In what appears to be an embarrassing goof up, the Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS), Warangal, repeated the PG supplementary exam question paper, from two years ago, for the recently conducted regular theory examination.

The question paper distributed to students during the MD/MS Degree Examinations (January 2025) for Radiodiagnosis Paper-III (principles and practice of Radiodiagnosis) on January 16 was already used in the supplementary examinations held in October/November 2023. The students were perplexed to see the question paper being repeated. The issue came to light on

Saturday after some of the students pointed out the faux pas. Interestingly, except for the year and name of the examination, everything, including the paper code, questions and their numbering, remained the same, which raised serious concerns over the university's question paper preparation process. This was not the first time that such a goof up was committed by the university. Earlier, it reportedly gave out-of-syllabus questions in the Biochemistry Paper-I and Paper-II in the first-year annual MBBS examination. As per the rulebook, question papers prepared by the experts are scrutinised by the examination controller and subject moderator before commencement of the examination.



# HDFC ERGO launches a road safety awareness campaign to encourage responsible driving

Hyderabad: HDFC ERGO General Insurance, India's leading non-life insurance company, has launched #GalatRaastePeMatJao, an initiative aimed at raising awareness about the risks associated with unsafe driving practices and promoting responsible road usage. Indian roads have been witnessing a large number of deaths and serious injuries due to accidents caused by various factors such as over speeding, mobile phone usage, reckless driving, etc. Alarming, over 4.60 lakh road accidents happened in the country in 2022 in which over 4.40 lakh individuals got injured. To address these concerns, HDFC ERGO has unveiled a campaign titled #GalatRaastePeMatJao, to create awareness metaphorically and urge individuals to avoid unsafe practices like using mobile phones while driving, over-speeding, and other risky behaviours, thus motivating people to be responsible on roads. Aligned with this campaign, the Company is also distributing car danglers across select network of cashless garages across the country. These car danglers, with important road safety messages, aims to serve as reminders to the vehicle owners to follow safety measures, while they are driving.

Speaking about the need of road safety week, Parthanil Ghosh, Director and

Chief Business Officer, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, said, "Road crash casualties lead to tremendous emotional and financial turmoil for families. Additionally, it also significantly denting the Indian GDP, to the tune of 3% to 5% annually. As per the latest Global Status Report on Road Safety by WHO, road traffic crash numbers continue to rise in India. Sadly, young people from 18-45 age-group accounted for around 65% of total accident deaths in 2022. Road accidents are caused by various factors, with the use of mobile phones accounted for over 2% of the deaths with drunken driving accounted for over 2.5% of the persons killed in 2018. As a responsible corporate citizen, at HDFC ERGO we have always taken initiatives that can contribute towards building a Healthy and Safe India. Through #GalatRaastePeMatJao, we aim to raise awareness about the profound impact of unsafe driving habits and foster a culture of responsible road behaviour."

HDFC ERGO has launched various campaigns to propel the idea of road safety such as #TakeltEasyonRoads in 2015, a social media campaign to spread awareness on the impact of distracted driving, which is one of the key reasons for road accidents; Do Not Disturb an awareness campaign in 2018 around various reasons that lead to



road accidents and #EyesOnTheRoad to raise awareness on the importance of being focused on the road. In 2020, the company also launched High beam – not OK please radio campaign, addressing the misuse of the high beam while driving and

#KyaYehChaltaHai, highlighting the casual attitude of people towards Road Safety and encouraged the audience to obey even all traffic rules, no matter how small they are. Reinforcing its commitment to drive road safety, the company launched

## Rotary Club of Lake District Moinabad Welcomes Illinois Rotarians for a Week of Friendship and Cultural Immersion"



Hyderabad: The Rotary Club of Lake District Moinabad hosted a delegation of 11 Rotarians from District 6440, Illinois, USA, as part of the Rotary Friendship Exchange Program for the Rotary Year 2024-25. This meaningful initiative celebrated global goodwill, friendship, and cultural exchange, reinforcing the international spirit of Rotary. Throughout their enriching weeklong visit, the delegation participated in various cultural, vocational, and service-oriented

activities that showcased Hyderabad's vibrant heritage and the commendable community work executed by Rotary District 3150. Program Highlights Included: Visit to NIMS Epilepsy ICU: The delegation toured the advanced facility, gaining valuable insights into medical advancements and community healthcare initiatives supported by local Rotarians Blood Donation Camp & Vocational Visit at Premier Energies: Delegates eagerly took part in a blood donation camp,

with all collected blood going to the Rotary Challa Blood Centre. They also visited the cutting-edge factory of Premier Energies, exploring innovative sustainable energy technologies and learned how Premier Energies drives renewable energy innovation and empowers the community. The Rotary Friendship Exchange provided an immersive experience for the delegates, allowing them to connect deeply with the local community, culture, and service-oriented spirit of

Hyderabad. The visiting Rotarians expressed their sincere gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by the Rotary Club of Lake District Moinabad, which organized numerous tours of iconic city landmarks and cultural experiences to further deepen the bonds between the two districts.

## Malabar Gold & Diamonds opens 15th showroom in Tolichowki

Hyderabad: Malabar Gold & Diamonds launched its 15th showroom in the city at Tolichowki. Spanning 10,800 sft, the new showroom offers an unparalleled jewellery shopping experience, a press release said.

The launch was attended by Jubilee Hills MLA Maganti Gopinath, Shaikpet corporator, Mohammed Rashed Farazuddin and others.

MP Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, said, "with this new showroom, we are proud to bring an expansive range of jewellery that includes everything from traditional to contemporary styles, offering our customers the finest designs and craftsmanship." To mark the occasion, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is offering a special silver offer from January 18 to 31 and customers can take home a free silver coin (in the equal weight of gold) with every purchase.

# Banks should periodically review and strengthen their security measures:

Hyderabad :In view of the recent incidents of bank robberies in Raiparti, Bidar and Mangalore, CP Sri Sudheer Babu., IPS held a coordination meeting at Rachakonda Commissionerate Office in Neredmet with the Chief Officers and other staff of all banks under Rachakonda today as part of the anti-crime measures regarding the precautions and security arrangements to be taken by banks in the Rachakonda Commissionerate to provide adequate security and instill public confidence in banks. Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Sri Sudheer Babu IPS said that banking sector is a pillar for the survival of the society and the progress of various business and commercial activities. He said that people keep their hard earned money in bank with great confidence and depend on banks for their growth through business and other commercial activities. CP stated that special attention is being given by the Rachakonda police to the banks as part of the daily patrolling duties to provide adequate protection to such banks .

CP said that, the recent bank robbery incidents in Raiparti, Bidar and Mangalore have exposed the weaknesses of bank security, the outdated and flawed security arrangements followed by banks. The commissioner said that some crimes like bank robberies are getting repeated due to age old security measures of banks despite the proper security measures taken by the police department besides their own patrolling duties. CP mentioned that in view of the recent incidents, their officials have inspected 489 banks under the jurisdiction of Rachakonda Commissionerate and reviewed the security measures. The commissioner brought it to the attention of the representatives of the banks that poor quality bank buildings, fragile security arrangements and locking system, lack of vigilance or non-recruitment of security guards, antiquated alarm system, absence of CCTVs, only



single backup of data footage are identified and action taken. On this occasion, the Commissioner gave numerous valuable instructions to the representatives of the banks regarding security infrastructure. CP instructed that CCTV cameras should be installed at all necessary places in the bank premises and iterated that CCTV footage is a crucial evidence in the investigation of grave crimes like bank robberies. "Install 24/7 CCTV cameras covering all important areas including bank entry and exit points, cash counters and strong rooms, ensure cloud storage of footage (alternative storage) and install hidden cameras with battery operated storage",

CP added. CP instructed to adhere to the provisions laid down in the Telangana Public Security Act and the technical security norms of the treasury should not be less than the minimum standards prescribed by the RBI. CP also mentioned that Windows should have grills to prevent illegal intrusions and fences, gates, bollards and vehicle barricades should be installed to prevent vehicular attacks. The commissioner suggested that new security devices should be installed to prevent unauthorized access. CP further suggested that they should update their software regularly to protect their banks from cyber criminals and specially advised to

send trained personnel as per the prescribed rules to guard the ATMs.

The representatives of the banks were advised during the meeting to follow the instructions of the police for the safety of the banks and immediately inform the police when any untoward incident comes to their notice. DCP Yadadri Rajesh Chandra IPS, DCP LB Nagar Praveen Kumar IPS, DCP Malkajgiri Padmaja IPS, DCP Crime Aravind Babu, DCP Maheshwaram Sunitha Reddy, DCP SOT 1 Ramana Reddy, DCP SOT 2 Muralidhar, ACP IT Cell Narendra Goud, ACP CCRB Ramesh and other officials participated.

## JSW MG Motor accelerates into wider NEV portfolio: Unveils MG Cyberster and MG M9 under its luxury brand channel, MG Select

Hyderabad:JSW MG Motor India has ushered in a new age of 'accessible luxury' with two new models - MG Cyberster, India's First all-electric Roadster and the MG M9, India's first electric three-row presidential limousine, slated to be launched this year. Unveiled at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 today and debuting under its new luxury brand channel, MG Select, these new models underscore the company's vision to usher in a new era of mobility in India – one that is intelligent, sustainable, and customer-focused. Pre-reservations for the MG Cyberster and M9 commence today, and customers can log on to [www.mgselect.co.in](http://www.mgselect.co.in) and pre-book these two cars. With these two new models, the brand will soon have the widest EV portfolio with five different models across different segments, including the MG Windsor - the number one selling EV since its launch, the MG Comet, and the MG ZS.

The MG Cyberster, India's First all-electric Roadster, reimagines the classic MG B Roadster with best-in-class technology and futuristic design, blending classic elegance

with exhilarating performance. A completely new roadster designed for a new generation of sportscar drivers, the MG Cyberster opens a bold and compelling new chapter for the brand. The MG M9, India's first electric three-row presidential limousine, is conceptualized to provide ultimate comfort and luxury on wheels. Redefining a luxury EV with spacious interiors, superior craftsmanship, and long range, the MG M9's charisma will appeal to luxury buyers in India. Talking about the brand's continued success in EVs, Parth Jindal, Director, JSW MG Motor India, "Unveiling the two new models at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo, Parth Jindal, Director, JSW MG Motor India, said "JSW MG Motor India is redefining the very concept of accessible luxury in the country by unveiling two luxurious pure EVs that combines legacy and modernity. Having brought the much-needed disruption in the EV market with Windsor EV, we are now set to give a new meaning to the modern roadster standard with MG Cyberster, with its iconic design and value-added features. Along with MG Cyberster,



the introduction of the MG M9 presidential limousine is our attempt to provide ultimate comfort and luxury on wheels. With these unveils, we are offering a unique blend of style and features for the discerning buyers, reflecting on our firm commitment to bring world-class luxury and technologically-ad-

vanced, sustainable mobility solutions in India." Speaking at the expo, Rajeev Chaba, CEO Emeritus, JSW MG Motor India, "At JSW MG Motor India, innovation is a core pillar of our brand. We are committed to consistently disrupt the market for our customers, particularly with a sharp focus on NEVs.

# Anand Mahindra on 90-hour work week debate: My wife is wonderful, I love staring at her

Focus on the quality of work and not on the quantity, as one can change the world in 10 hours, Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra said on Saturday (January 11, 2025), joining the debate on a 90-hour work week. Speaking at the National Youth Festival in the national capital, Mr. Mahindra asserted that he is on social media not because he is lonely and quipped, "My wife is wonderful. I love staring at her".

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Chairman S.N. Subrahmanyam has sparked an online outrage with his comments, asking, "How long can you stare at your wife" while advocating a 90-hour work week and suggesting that employees should even give up Sundays. Responding to a query on the 90-hour work week, Mr. Mahindra, while reiterating his respect for Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy and others, said, "Let me not get this wrong, of course, but I have to say something. I think this debate is in the wrong direction because this debate is about the quantity of work".

"My point is we have to focus on the quality of work, not on the quantity of work. So, it's not about 40 hours, it's not about 70 hours, it's not about 90 hours. What output are you doing? Even if it's 10 hours, you can change the world in 10 hours," he added. Mr. Mahindra further said he "always believed that you have to have leaders and people in your company who make wise decisions, wise choices. So, the question is, which kind of mind makes the right choices and right decisions?" He also stressed the need to have a mind that is "exposed to holistic thinking, that is open to inputs from around the world" and also the need for people from different backgrounds like engineers and MBAs to study arts and culture to be able to make better decisions.

"...because I think you make better decisions when you have a whole brain when you are informed about arts, culture, that's when you make a good decision," Mr. Mahindra said. Highlighting the need to spend time with family and friends, he said, "If you're not spending time at home, if you're not spending time with friends, if you're not reading, if you don't have time to reflect, how will you bring the right inputs into making a decision?" Taking the example of M&M, which makes automobiles, he said, "We have to decide what a customer wants in a car. If we are only in the office all the time, we are not with our families, we are not with other families. How are we going to understand what people want to buy? What kind of car do they want to sit in?"

He further said, "I'm not going to say you need to work so many hours of that. I don't want it to be. Ask me what's the quality of my work. Don't ask me how many hours I work". Referring to his followers on X, who often ask how much time he has and why he spends so much time on social media instead of working, Mr. Mahindra said, "I want to tell people I'm on X on social media not because I'm lonely... My wife is wonderful. I love staring at her. I spend more time. I'm not here to make friends. I'm here because people don't understand it is an amazing business tool, how in one platform I get feedback from 11 million people..." Last month, billionaire Gautam Adani also waded into the work-life balance debate when he said the

spouse would leave if one was to spend eight hours with the family. He had reportedly stated that work-life balance is a matter of personal choice. "Your idea of work-life balance should not be imposed on me, and my idea shouldn't be imposed on you. Say, someone spends 4 hours with family and finds joy in it, or if someone else spends 8 hours and enjoys it, that is their work-life balance". "Aath ghanta family ke saath bitayega tho biwi bhaag jaayegi (Wife will leave if one spends eight hours with family)," he had said. Last year, Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy stirred up a storm on the internet when he suggested the need for a change in India's work, stating youngsters should be prepared to work for 70 hours a week. Mr. Murthy had found support from Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal.



## India's data protection rules need some fine-tuning

On January 3, 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the much-anticipated Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules — a key moment in India's journey to regulate digital personal data. This step follows the passage of the DPDP Act, 2023, bringing India closer to operationalising its framework for safeguarding personal data. The draft rules represent a departure from the earlier and controversial Personal Data Protection Bill, which many deemed was overly restrictive and even hostile to industry interests. The Bill underwent extensive framing, reframing and consultations over nearly a decade, only to be rescinded when committees and government stakeholders wisely decided it was untenable.

In contrast, the positive response to the DPDP Act and its accompanying rules, reflected in conversations with businesses and in media coverage, stems from the less prescriptive, principles-based approach of the draft rules. Unlike the earlier rush to regulate under the so-called "Brussels Effect", where global digital rulemaking mirrored the European Union (EU)'s interventionist regulatory ethos, India has taken a more pragmatic stance. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), once hailed as a gold standard by privacy experts, now faces criticism for unintended consequences — favouring well-resourced corporations, stifling smaller enterprises, and failing to significantly enhance public trust in the Internet. India's measured approach thus far offers a refreshing alternative to Europe's interventionist policies. The hits as pragmatism and flexibility

One of the draft rules' standout features is their principles-based framework for notice and consent. While the GDPR has cumbersome requirements, such as notifying users of indirect data acquisition, cross-border data transfers, and automated decision-making processes, India's rules emphasise simplicity and clarity. This helps reduce "consent fatigue", a significant issue in Europe,



where users are inundated with unnecessary details, such as the location of data processing — information of little practical use. In 2023, the European Commission introduced the Cookie Pledge Initiative to address growing frustration over incessant consent pop-ups. However, such course correction would have been unnecessary had the EU taken a less invasive approach to regulating user interfaces and consent mechanisms. The very existence of this pledge highlights the burdens created by prescriptive regulation. India's DPDP Rules sidestep these pitfalls by focusing on outcomes rather than processes, empowering users without drowning businesses and consumers in unnecessary complexities. The rules avoid dictating how entities should enable users to exercise their rights to correction, erasure, nomination, withdrawal of consent and to seek information from entities. They require only the publication of relevant information on apps and websites. In contrast, the GDPR is prescriptive about how similar information should be presented, including instances where entities may need to provide this information orally to users. Why should the state dictate every aspect of an app or website's design or user interface? India's

approach, thankfully, respects business autonomy and innovation. The processing of children's personal data requires stricter protection compared to other types of data processing — which the rules provide for. However, as more children engage with digital technologies online, they increasingly benefit from certain activities, such as monitoring and tracking, which are of value in specific contexts. Take the case of educational institutions, including supplementary education and vocational training services. They rely on activities such as behavioural monitoring and tracking to deliver targeted interventions tailored to students' academic performance. These practices leverage the benefits of learning management systems, which personalise instruction and improve educational outcomes. Recognising this, the rules thoughtfully allow exemptions for specific industries. Educational institutions, clinical and mental health establishments, allied health-care providers, and child-care centres are not required to verify parental consent for tracking and behavioural monitoring, as long as they adhere to guardrails. The exemption for such industries demonstrates a nuanced understanding of industry-specific needs, reflecting the principles of thoughtful policymaking.

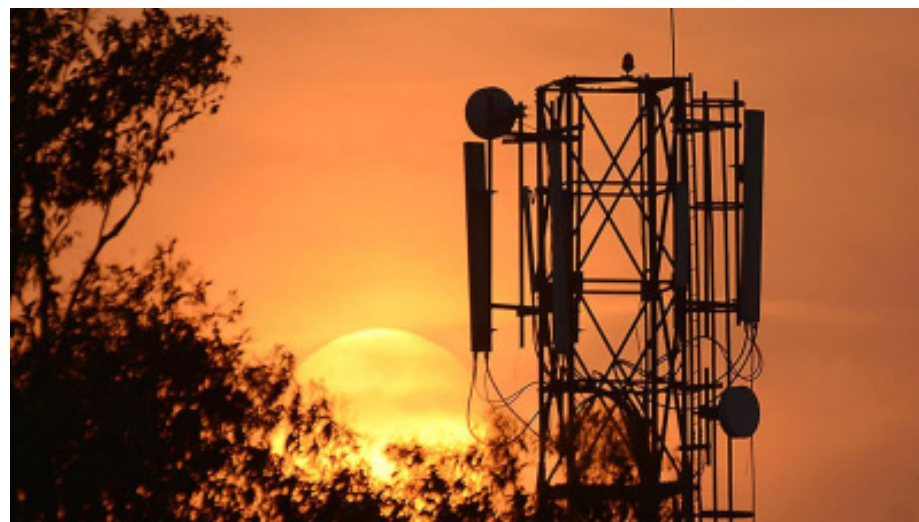
# Companies look to localise data storage, telecom tech

From data centres to telecom equipment, Indian firms are capitalising on key policy developments to indigenise the Indian tech stack, from both a hardware and software point of view. The main movers are emerging from markets that sell to large businesses. One firm, CloudPhotonix, recently established by veterans of the transceiver industry, has quickly started selling the product to telecom firms, as networks look to move away from foreign, specifically Chinese-made components. Meanwhile, at least one firm, DigiBoxx, is offering cloud storage and enterprise backup locally in India, anticipating demand from firms seeking to pre-emptively comply with localisation requirements in the wake of laws like the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

While the Act doesn't currently require data localisation within Indian borders, it leaves that possibility open in some sectors; the Reserve Bank of India already requires Indians' payment data to be stored locally. Late last year, CloudPhotonix co-founder Tarun Sibal hosted a small event in Delhi gathering academics and industry players, outlining the importance of transceivers, a key component in networking and telecom equipment to transmit and receive data, hence the portmanteau.

Mr. Sibal and his other co-founders are well into their 50s, hardly a common age for

start-up founders. He pointed out that making transceivers and dealing with the science of photonics, which most telcos and data centre firms import into India, is a "dark art," a term that his colleagues repeated in subsequent presentations. They seek to leverage not just the shift away from Chinese technology in telecom networks, which started after the border clashes in 2020, but the growing impulse to make and market the tech locally. Essentially, very few people have accrued the yearslong expertise needed to make transceivers, making it a difficult market for freshly minted graduates. As per an estimate by the Mohali-based Roots Analysis, the optical transceiver market worldwide could grow to \$47.64 billion by 2035, over four times its current value. The firm's CTO Sunil Khatana said in a presentation that a significant share of data centre and network infrastructure expenditure was on imported transceivers. Local storage options DigiBoxx, meanwhile, bills itself as the "first swadeshi SaaS [Software as a Service]-based digital storage and sharing platform," and its "servers and data centers are based in India, so customers can be assured their digital assets and IP are stored safely in the country," its CEO Arnab Mitra said. Security isn't always a function of the location of data, but over the years, localisation mandates like the RBI's have pushed firms in



other industries to seek local storage options, even if they are more expensive due to a lack of scale. The rise of local storage as an option is "becoming an even hotter topic is obviously the rise of privacy," Mr. Mitra said in an interview. He admitted that local storage was more expensive but added that firms looked out for their reputation when making storage decisions for regulatory purposes. "So, it's in many ways priceless," he said, adding that the firm was also trying to avoid imposing hidden costs like some of its

global competitors. Union Secretary for Electronics and Information Technology S. Krishnan welcomed the growing introduction of local options in telecom equipment and data storage in an interview with The Hindu, saying, "These are commercially driven decisions, and that's the way it ought to be." IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in an interview with The Hindu on January 8, 2025, touted the success of the OpenRAN technology deployed on thousands of towers in India, and would soon be exported.

## Ramesh Bidhuri refutes AAP's claims on BJP's CM face for Delhi Assembly elections



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from the Kalkaji Assembly constituency, Ramesh Bidhuri, on Sunday (January 12, 2025) refuted Aam Aadmi Party's claim that he is BJP's chief ministerial face for the upcoming elections. Terming the AAP's claims as "baseless" and "misleading propaganda," Mr. Bidhuri, a former two-time MP, said that the people of Delhi want to bring BJP to power in the Assembly elections.

"Over the past 25 years, I have held key positions and served as a Member of Parliament twice and as an MLA three times. I have now been given the opportunity to go near you for the fourth time," he said in a press

statement in Hindi. "The party has given me so much, and I have no claim to any position. However, Arvind Kejriwal has persistently launched misleading propaganda against me. I want to make it clear that I am not a contender for any post," he added. Mr. Bidhuri further stated that by making such allegations the AAP chief has accepted that the BJP would form a government in the National Capital. "By making statements about me, Arvind Kejriwal has essentially acknowledged that the Bharatiya Janata Party is forming the government in Delhi, and he has conceded defeat," he said. Watch: Delhi Assembly Polls 2025 | What are the challenges

for BJP? "It is widely known that the people of Delhi are deeply dissatisfied with him. They want relief from scandals such as the liquor scam, education scam, health scam, and the 'Sheesh Mahal' scam, along with broken roads, contaminated drinking water, and other issues," he added. "I am as devoted to the BJP as I am to the people. The rumours about me being a contender for the Chief Minister's post are baseless. I will continue to serve you tirelessly as your servant," he further added.

On Saturday, the AAP convenor claimed that Mr. Bidhuri will be made BJP's CM face and proposed a debate between the Chief Ministerial candidates of the BJP and AAP, to be held before the people of Delhi after the "official confirmation" of Mr. Bidhuri's candidacy. Taking a dig at Mr. Bidhuri, who had also been in the soup for his previous

remarks on Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, Mr. Kejriwal questioned his contributions towards Delhi's development as a Lok Sabha MP. "We are getting information that Ramesh Bidhuri's name will be officially announced (as BJP CM face) in the coming one or two days. I congratulate Ramesh Bidhuri on becoming the CM face of BJP. On behalf of the Delhi public, I want to ask Ramesh Bidhuri what he did for the development of Delhi while being an MP. What is his vision for Delhi? What work will he get done as the CM face?" said Mr. Kejriwal. Mr. Bidhuri is up against Delhi CM Atishi and Congress candidate Alka Lamba in the Kalkaji Assembly seat for the upcoming polls. The Delhi assembly polls will be held in a single phase on February 5, and the counting of votes will take place on February 8.

## Scarlet fever cases on rise in Hyderabad: Here's what every parent needs to know

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is witnessing a rise in cases of scarlet fever among children between 5 years and 15 years, along with other viral fevers during the ongoing winter season, senior pediatricians on Monday said. Scarlet fever is a seasonal bacterial infection among children and is caused by

group A Streptococcus, which can be treated through certain antibiotics. It usually takes at least 2 to 5 days for the symptoms to show-up, once the child is exposed to the bacteria. "We are seeing children 5 to 15 years of age with scarlet fever for the past few days. If your child develops fever,

# Bhopal's 40-year-old past is Pithampur's paranoid future

It's close to sundown and a family is gathering in the courtyard of their home near the ancient Bokneshwar Mahadev temple in Tarpura village, Pithampur town of Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district. The Puri family members have been priests at the temple for generations. There's a discussion about the town's tense atmosphere, and the matriarch asks if she and her family of at least 15 will die. Their home is opposite an industrial waste-treatment plant. On January 3, the usually peaceful town of Pithampur, about 35 km from Madhya Pradesh's financial capital Indore, erupted in protest. People across genders and ages were out on the streets of what is one of the largest industrial areas in the State. As the day progressed, two people attempted self-immolation. The next day, an angry group of protesters pelted stones and tried to march to the waste-treatment plant.

It is now a few days past the protests and life in the densely-populated town has resumed its regular pace, with markets open, roads full of traffic and trucks honking. However, in Tarpura village, located on a pahadi (hill) on Pithampur's outskirts, the number of security personnel grows larger closer to the plant. The people's anger is directed towards the Madhya Pradesh government's plan to dispose 358 tonnes of toxic chemical waste at the Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Private Limited, owned by the Ramky Group. The waste was generated from a disaster 40 years ago.

Vijay Puri, 24, (left), and other members of the Puri family at their house, which is opposite to the Ramky Group's Pithampur Industrial Waste Management plant where the toxic waste has been kept. Vijay Puri, 24, (left), and other members of the Puri family at their house, which is opposite to the Ramky Group's Pithampur Industrial Waste Management plant where the toxic waste has been kept. In the early winter of 1984, on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, M.P.'s capital Bhopal woke up to a nightmare. The toxic gas, methyl isocyanate (MIC), leaked from the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) factory, killing thousands. The health impact is still felt among those who live here. The waste had been lying at the now-abandoned factory in Bhopal for four decades.

While small protests in the industrial town, as well as in Indore, had been going on since the shifting of waste gained steam around the end of December 2024, the anxiety grew, bursting into protests against the disposal there. On the morning of January 2, 12 trucks carried spill-and-leak-free containers loaded with the waste to the facility in Pithampur. While the Central Government estimates, based on a report by the Officer of the Welfare Commissioner, Bhopal Gas Victims, say that 5,479 people have died due to the disaster as of 2022, several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists have claimed that the numbers surpass 15,000. Government estimates also show that while thousands suffered physical disabilities in the aftermath of the accident, it has also had health implications on more than 5 lakh people over the decades. The worry and the trauma that Bhopal has been

living with has travelled to Pithampur. Fear, fuelled by fake news has made people anxious about another disaster. The refrain is: we will not let Bhopal's waste be burnt in Pithampur.

Waste on the way From their terrace, Vijay Puri, 24, the matriarch's grandson, and other family members point at the plant and to the police barricades outside. He reiterates his grandmother's concern: "Why has the government brought Bhopal's waste here?" He and his family draw attention to a statement by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav after the waste reached the town on January 2. "He claimed that the toxicity of the waste lasts 25 years, so now it is not harmful. If it is not harmful, why can't they just burn it in Bhopal? What was the need to bring it here with so much security and theatrics?" Vijay asks. The waste was packed and loaded into the containers by over 100 specially-trained workers who did 30-45 minute shifts to avoid long exposures. On the night of January 1, the trucks left the Union Carbide premises with a heavy security cavalcade via a 250-km green traffic corridor.

The government's actions have come after the Madhya Pradesh High Court, hearing a 20-year-old case seeking the disposal of the waste, pulled up the State authorities in a December 3, 2024, order. It directed them to take action within four weeks, to remove and dispose of the waste that had been in the factory. Due to the public outcry following the movement of the waste, the State Government filed an affidavit before the HC, seeking six weeks' time to instil confidence in people. On January 6, the court gave the government the time, also directing the media not to publish "any fake news". Questions and answers

People in Tarpura and nearby villages have many questions, including whether the waste disposal will be done safely. Swatantra Kumar Singh, director of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department, says it will be incinerated at 1,200 degrees Celsius. "A batch of 90 kg will be incinerated, after which the toxicity feedback rate will be examined. If it is within limits, the waste will be incinerated in batches of 270 kg and will take about three months. Otherwise the process will be slowed, and may take up to nine months," he says. It will be supervised by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board (MPPCB). The smoke, Swatantra says, will be released into the air through a four-layer filtration system and the residue, expected to be around 900 tonnes, will be fully covered with a two-layer membrane and buried under a landfill site. The government has also highlighted a Supreme Court-directed trial in 2015 in which 10 tonnes of the same waste from the UCIL factory was incinerated at the treatment plant. It was after this trial and submission of a success report that the SC had first issued directions for the incineration of the remaining waste at Pithampur.

The people in Pithampur are not convinced. "What will happen if even 10% of what happened in Bhopal happens here? Our children will die in 10-15 years," says Lakshmi



Sahu, 28, who runs a tea shop opposite the Pithampur bus stand, the epicentre of the January 3 protests. Residents of Sagar district, Lakshmi and her husband, who is a vegetable vendor, moved to Pithampur about eight years ago for work and are now raising their two children here. "It's not easy for us to keep our shops shut for two days but we did that during the protests to save our children's future," she says, as her five-year-old daughter plays. Vijay shows an old well near the Bokneshwar Mahadev temple, now covered with a grill. Several people in the village say that the well was a major source of water for them before the authorities covered it after the 2015 trial disposal of the 10-tonne UCIL waste. "During the monsoon, when the water pours onto the landfill sites, a foul smell also spreads in the locality," Vijay says. Rumours are rife

The government and the police blame misinformation, and say that people are being paranoid. Dhar Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar Singh says that the situation in the area is now peaceful and that various departments, including the police, are working to dispel misinformation. Seven cases have been filed in connection with the protests, and the SP says they are checking surveillance footage to identify miscreants. The stone-pelting at the treatment facility on January 4 morning was also a result of a rumour that spread in the area, an officer says. A social media message claimed that one of the trucks parked within its premises had disappeared, disposal of waste had begun, and some workers inside the plant had fainted. The police have arrested three men in connection with the rumour and the district authorities have issued several messages regarding the waste disposal process. Dhar Additional SP Indrajeet Bakalwar says that the public were pacified only after community representatives and activists were taken inside the factory to see that all 12 trucks were sealed. In Tarpura village, Ram Prasad, 38, a vegetable vendor says that ever since the waste arrived there, several people from the village would climb onto their rooftops and count the trucks. Social media is rife with 'content creation'. An Instagram video shows a girl telling her mother to pack an oxygen cylinder before going to Pithampur because "there will be no oxygen there due to the burning of toxic waste".

The fear around the disposal of the waste has caused panic among migrant workers too. Inder Sharma, a labour contractor from Bihar's Khagaria district, says that nearly 70-80 workers he had brought have left for their hometowns. Decades-long mistrust In 2008, 40 kg of Union Carbide's toxic waste was transported to Pithampur in the dead of night, during a curfew in Indore. This had caused protests at the time. Since the early 2010s, the people of Pithampur have been opposing the plans to burn the waste in their town, three years after the Gujarat government refused to allow incineration at a facility in Ankleshwar. The current task of disposal has been handed to the Ramky Group's plant for ₹126 crore. Behind the anger and fear of Bhopal's waste is also the scepticism of the "Ramky factory" as it is known locally. Apart from Tarpura, various villages or localities — such as Dhannad, Chirakhan, Akoliya, Bardari, and Silotiya — located around the plant, claim they have been adversely impacted by it. Residents allege that the residue of the industrial waste at landfill sites and two drains from the factory have contaminated local water bodies and the groundwater. Rajesh Bhariya, 36, a farmer in Tarpura, says that even borewells are not used to water the crops in the village and that farmers rely only on dew for moisture in the winter crops. "The groundwater is red, almost like petrol. If you use it in crops, your current crop will go bad and it will also affect the yield of the next crop," he says. Lakshmi Sahu at her tea shop in Pithampur. Eight years ago, her family moved from the district of Sagar to Pithampur for better opportunities. He points to the chickpea field where his mother, Sarju Bai, 70, is working: "You can see the size of the plants. They are much smaller than usual, because of the lack of water," he says. His mother intervenes to talk about a well in the valley behind her fields. "We used to drink water from it until six to eight years ago. Now look at its condition," she says. The well has a layer of foam on its surface. A drain from the plant flows less than 5 m away. Some 100 m further into the valley, a larger drain flows. In Chirakhan village, which falls under Indore district, a group of men have gathered under a tree at the panchayat office. Here, they don't have regular drinking water, the supply of which