

State EC sets ball rolling for election process; parties eye unanimous polls

Hyderabad: The State Election Commission on Thursday issued the notification for the first phase of Sarpanch elections for 4,236 Sarpanches and 37,440 ward members. While the nomination process picked up in several villages, celebrations were already underway in some places as candidates took out victory rallies following the decision to make the elections unanimous.]

Tejpur village in Indravelli mandal, Adilabad district, became the first village in the state to elect its Sarpanch unanimously. On Thursday, the Commission issued notifications for the elections of 4,236 Sarpanches and 37,440 ward members.

[The last date to file nominations is November 29. Scrutiny of nominations will be conducted on November 30. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is December 3. Polling will be held on December 11, and counting will begin at 2 pm, with results declared the same day. In the case of an unanimous candidature, the result will be announced on the last date of withdrawal, i.e., December 3.

There were reports of efforts being made in several Panchayats to elect Sarpanches unanimously. In many villages, both the Sarpanch and all ward members were chosen unanimously by the locals.

Meetings were reportedly held in Saleguda, Dobbiguda, and Tejapur, where village heads selected Kova Rajeshwar as Sarpanch without the need for an election, along with the unanimous election of eight ward members. However, official confirmation regarding the unanimous election of the Tejapur Sarpanch is yet to be released. The announcement will be made on the last day of withdrawal.

Lone family to get Sarpanch and Ward member posts by virtue of reservations

In another interesting case, the Sarpanch of Manthan Goud village in Vikarabad district is set to be elected unanimously. The village, reserved for Scheduled Tribes (STs), has only one ST family, and one of its members is poised to become Sarpanch.

Similarly, the ward member seats are also reserved for STs, and members of the same family are expected to

be elected as ward members.-

Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, and Corporation Chairmen were visiting their villages, trying to finalise candidates based on reservation quotas and ensuring that the majority of villages could have unanimous elections.

All major political parties are reportedly trying to influence villagers to ensure unanimous elections by offering up to Rs 10 lakh from their MPs' or MLAs' constituency development funds.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that

Bitter pill: Harish tars KNRUHS in graft paint;demands VC's scalp

Hyderabad: BRS senior leader T Harish Rao on Thursday demanded immediate action against alleged large-scale corruption in the Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) and also the removal of the Vice-Chancellor.

The BRS leader wrote a letter to the Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and National Medical Commission (NMC) chairman on the alleged irregularities. Harish Rao expressed deep concern that the prestigious Kaloji University turned into a centre of corruption and irregulari-

ties under the Congress rule. He said that the recent developments at the university have caused distress among medical students, parents, and the public.

The BRS leader criticized the Congress government led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, stating that despite coming to power in the name of 'change', the administration has now become a symbol of scams within just two years. Rao noted with concern that even educational institutions were now being turned into hubs of corruption, which

reflects poorly on the government's integrity and the Chief Minister's leadership.

Rao accused the government of being silent even after serious allegations surfaced about irregularities in the PG medical examination revaluation process. He questioned how five students who initially failed the exam were later declared passed. "Allegations suggest that the university's Vice-Chancellor, Dr Nandakumar Reddy, is behind these irregularities. Yet, the government has taken no action so far," said Harish Rao.



Maoist MMCSZC advances timeline for giving up arms, sets January 1, 2026 as zero hour

Kothagudem: CPI (Maoist) Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh Special Zonal Committee (MMCSZC) Spokesperson Ananth has announced the Maoist under the zone would lay down arms and join mainstream life on January 1, 2026.

It might be recalled that in a letter dated November 22, addressed to Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh-Devendra Fadnavis, Vishnu Deo Sai and Mohan Yadav- as well as Chhattisgarh Home Minister Vijay Sharma he asked the respective governments to give them a breathing space time till February 15, 2026 to reach a consensus.

In his latest letter to the above and audio clips released to the media Ananth noted that he heard Vijay Sharma on the radio saying 10 to 15 days would be enough to make a decision. He said he respects the Home Minister's statement, but such a short time was insufficient. However, the Home Minister should have no objection to the date- January 1, 2026 set for giving up arms and returning to the mainstream. Referring Vijay Sharma's suggestion that the government was ready to listen and would try to fulfill if Maoists put forward any proposals and demands, Ananth said they would do so just before joining the mainstream or after rehabilitation. The Naxal leader told his comrades that they should not lay down the arms one by one, but en masse, adding that the Maoists were temporarily suspending their armed struggle to accept the government's rehabilitation but it was not surrendering. Ananth maintained that giving up arms does not mean cheating or betraying the public, rather it was not the right time for struggle because weapons were an end and not a means. He requested the cadres to be patient and not to carry out any violent activity on their own while urging the governments cease all search operations and arrests. He gave a radio set frequency-435.715 to all MMC cadres to contact the leadership between 11am and 11:15as every day for the next month until January 1, 2026. He asked the cadres not to delay and try to get in touch as soon as possible.

Telangana woman ends life after husband leaves her for not 'cooking well'

Hyderabad: A 21-year-old newlywed woman allegedly died by suicide in Telangana's Vikarabad district on Thursday, November 27, after her husband left her for not cooking properly.

Shivlingam from Mallemonigudem Village in Parigi Mandal married Shireesha from Gangaram village in Gaddameed Mandal. After the wedding, the couple quarrelled over cooking.



As the fights increased, Shivalingam took Shireesha to her parents' house and asked her not to return. When Shireesha contacted Shivalingam, he reportedly told her, "I don't need you, die there."

Unable to bear the harassment, Shireesha hung herself. Her parents filed a complaint with the police demanding action against Shivalingam. Shivalingam has been booked for cruelty and abetment to suicide.



Villagers perform Ksheerabhishekam to KCR's flex poster ahead of Diksha Diwas

Adilabad: Villagers perform Ksheerabhishekam to KCR's flex poster ahead of Diksha Diwas

Residents take a rally carrying flex poster of K Chandrashekhara Rao at Mukhra (K) village in Echoda mandal on Friday

The residents recalled that Telangana was making rapid strides in many sectors under the leadership

of Rao. They hailed Rao for spearheading the Telangana movement and achieving a separate state by displaying unwavering commitment and facing odds. No leader can develop a newly created state on par with Rao, they remarked.

The celebrators wanted Rao as the Chief Minister of Telangana again. Leadership of Rao is the protection for Telangana, they opined. They took out a procession in the streets of the village playing drums.

Telangana High Court refuses to stay panchayat elections

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Friday refused to issue stay orders over the conduct of panchayat elections in the State.

Challenging the State government's GOMs 46, which provides reservations to BCs, SCs and STs within the 50 percent ceiling, a few BC organisations, including Madiwala Machadeva Rajakula Sangham and Telangana Pradesh Gangaputra Sangham filed separate petitions in the court appealing that the elections should be kept on hold.

Hearing the petitions, the High Court Bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin refused to issue stay orders

at this stage stating that the election notification was already issued. The Bench also informed the petitioners that court cannot interfere after the election notification has been issued, according to reports.

The Court also asked the petitioners whether they were seeking the cancellation of elections as the sub-categories reservations were not declared by the government.

However, the Court has directed the State government to file a counter on the sub category reservations within six weeks. The next hearing has been scheduled after eight weeks, reports said.

7-year-old found dead in Telangana's Mancherial

Hyderabad: A 7-year-old girl who went missing in Telangana's Mancherial on November 24 was found dead on Wednesday,

The minor girl was identified as Shanigarapu Mahanvita. According to police, Mahanvita was most likely abducted. The girl's parents filed a missing complaint on November 25. Police teams were formed to locate the child. However, Mahanvita's parents found her body.

They alleged that unidentified persons murdered the child. They claimed that someone who bore a grudge against their family might have been responsible and urged police to investigate thoroughly and take stringent action against those involved.

In a video shared on social media, Mahanvita's father Shekhar, who is a shepherd said, "She was with us that day, we drank tea together and she went out to play. I was working nearby and keeping an eye on her. When I turned around 10 minutes later, my daughter went missing."

A 7-year-old girl who went missing in Telangana's Mancherial on November 24 was found dead on Thursday, November 27. The police said, "The incident occurred at Nambala village in Dandepalli mandal, Mahanvita was playing outside her house, She went inside the house at 6:00PM. However, Mahanvita stepped out to play again and went missing." The case has been altered to a case of suspicious death under section 194 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Telangana ACB nabs commissioner, driver; total Rs 4.5 lakh found during trap

Hyderabad: The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested two people on Thursday, including a government officer, for demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000.

According to an ACB press release, Nizamabad Armoor municipal commissioner A Raju demanded the bribe money through his driver, Bhumes (private employee), to allot a house number to the complainant's newly constructed building.

Both Raju and Bhumes were caught red-handed. However, while checking for the bribe money, ACB officials discovered an additional Rs 4,30,000.

Both men were produced before a Nampally court in Hyderabad on Thursday. Further investigations are on.

Three days ago, an assistant labour officer in Khammam district was caught red-handed for demanding and accepting a bribe of 15,000 to do official work.

Karne Chander allegedly demanded the bribe money to forward the complainant's beneficiary application to the higher authorities about the death of the latter's father. The application would facilitate the sanction of Rs 1,30,000 towards funeral expenses for natural death under the Telangana Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board.

ACB has urged the public to file a complaint in case any public servant demands a bribe for official work.

Aggrieved individuals can contact the ACB on the toll-free number 1064, or through its website and



social media platforms, i.e., WhatsApp (9440446106), Facebook (Telangana ACB), and X/formerly Twitter (@TelanganaACB).

Cold wave grips Telangana on Nov 29-30; rains likely next week



Hyderabad: Telangana will continue to experience cold temperatures over the coming days, with a stronger spell of cold weather expected between November 29 and 30.

However a strong 2day STRONG COLD WEATHER ahead during Nov 29-30

According to T Balaji, also known as Telangana Weatherman, a weather enthusiast popular for accurate forecasting, Cyclone Ditwah is likely to bring moderate rainfall to the southern and eastern districts of the state during the first week of December.

Despite the expected rains, the cold conditions are forecast to persist.

Earlier in the day, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Hyderabad predicted heavy rains in various districts of the state on Sunday, November 30 and Monday, December 1.

Overall, Telangana has recorded a notably strong winter performance this November, with consistently chilly weather across the state throughout the month.

Bhadrachalam man duped of Rs 1.48 crore by his Facebook friend

Kothagudem: In a case of an online friendship turning into a fraud, a woman duped a Bhadrachalam man of Rs. 1.48 crore on the pretext of online trading and investment. According to police, the man, Lakavath Venkateshwarlu, struck up an acquaintance with a woman, Sharanya Reddy on Facebook. After a few days of online chatting, the woman told the man that her investment in online trading earned her a huge amount of money and advised him to do the same. She made Venkateshwarlu make an initial investment of Rs 32 lakh and showed Rs 2.40 crore credited into his trading account. He tried to withdraw the money but failed. When he conveyed the same to Sharanya Reddy she told him that since the money in his account was foreign currency he had to pay some money towards taxes to withdraw it.

Centre approves FCRA registration for Chiranjeevi Charitable Trust

Hyderabad: The Ministry of Home Affairs has granted approval for the registration of the Chiranjeevi Charitable Trust (CCT) under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

This approval enables the trust to receive do-



nations from foreign sources, officials said.

Established under the leadership of Telugu star-actor Chiranjeevi, the trust operates a blood bank and an eye bank.

With recent amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010, charitable organisations are now required to register under FCRA to legally accept foreign contributions.

Following the updated regulations, the Chiranjeevi Charitable Trust had sought approval from the central government.

According to reports, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has cleared the application, allowing the trust to begin accepting foreign donations to support its humanitarian initiatives.

Mega PTM across Nandyal dist on Dec 5

Nandyal: District Collector G Raja Kumari announced that a Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting (Mega PTM) will be conducted on December 5 in all government schools and colleges across Nandyal district.

She urged every parent to participate and personally review their children's academic progress with teachers.

The Collector chaired a Zoom video conference with MEOs and headmas-

ters on Thursday to review the preparations and ensure smooth conduct of the programme.

The Collector informed that the Mega PTM will be held between 9:00 AM and 12:45 PM, during which teachers will interact directly with parents regarding students' academic performance, participation in co-curricular activities, behavioural development and overall growth. Following the discussions, the Holistic Progress Card

(HPC) will be distributed to students, enabling parents to clearly understand the academic standing of their wards.

Lunch will be arranged for all attending parents under the Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

Raja Kumari advised parents to compulsorily download and utilize the LEAP (Learning Excellence in Andhra Pradesh) app for real-time updates on attendance, exam results, daily progress, and related academic informa-



tion.

She added that discussions will also be held on students' reading and writing proficiency under the Functional Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) initiative.

The syllabus for Class 10 is expected to be completed by December 5, and a 100-day special coaching plan will begin to enhance board exam performance.

The Collector stated that special officers will supervise the programme in every mandal, while public representatives and government officials will participate in their respective jurisdiction.

She appealed to parents, elected representatives, and officials to join hands to make the Mega PTM a grand success and strengthen the educational development process across the district.



Govt focus is on increasing farmers' income, says PMDDKY officer

Anantapur: Enhancing farmers' income remains the key objective of the government, said Sujatha Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, and Central Nodal Officer for the Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaan Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY).

She chaired a review meeting at the Anantapur Collectorate's mini conference hall on Thursday, along with District Collector O Anand and Joint Collector Shiv Narayan Sharma, to assess the implementation of PMDDKY and related agricultural schemes.

Addressing officials from agriculture and allied departments, Sujatha Sharma stressed the need to identify gaps and challenges in the farming sector and prepare a comprehensive six-year plan to enhance farmers' income.

Under PMDDKY, 36 schemes across 11 departments are being implemented, she noted, urging all departments to work in coordination for effective execution. She emphasized strengthening Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), conducting regular reviews, and ensuring scheduled training programs. Highlighting horticulture trends, she pointed out that 30% of mango and banana produce is sold locally while 70% is exported to other regions.

She called for introducing new crop varieties, improving cultivation practices, and guiding farmers toward natural farming. She also directed officials from sericulture, animal husbandry, and fisheries to achieve their assigned targets.

Collector O Anand presented detailed district-level information on agricultural and allied sectors and explained the progress of schemes including PM-Kisan, PM Fasal Bima Yojana, Kisan Credit Card, National Mission on Natural Farming, and PM Krishi Vikas Yojana.

Officials from agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, fisheries, KVK, DRDA, DWMA, natural farming, irrigation, industries and other departments participated in the meeting.

A major push for edu devpt in Dharmavaram

In an official communication addressed to Sri Sathya Sai District Collector A Syam Prasad the Minister requested immediate submission of student details, the designated government bank account for fee remittance, and the final verified fee amount.

Dharmavaram: In a significant step towards strengthening public education in Dharmavaram constituency, Andhra Pradesh Minister for Medical, Health & Medical Education Satyakumar Yadav has announced a major welfare initiative aimed at easing the financial burden on school-going families.

Demonstrating his commitment to educational support, the Minister declared that he will personally bear the entire SSC examination fee of all 1,800 Class X students studying in government schools across Dharmavaram.

The amount—₹2.34 lakh—will be paid directly from his monthly ministerial salary.

In an official communication addressed to Sri Sathya Sai District Collector A Syam Prasad the Minister requested immediate submission of student details, the designated government bank account for fee remittance, and the final verified fee amount.

He instructed the district authorities to ensure that the assistance reaches students without delay.

This decision is expected to bring substantial relief to economically weaker and middle-class households, many of whom struggle with recurring educa-



tional expenses.

By taking responsibility for the SSC examination fees, the Minister aims to motivate students to pursue higher academic goals without financial constraints.

Minister Satyakumar Yadav's gesture stands as a notable milestone in the constituency's educational development efforts, reinforcing his commitment to social welfare and the future of every student studying in government institutions.



Anantapur district legal services authority holds review meeting

Anantapur: As per the directives of the Andhra Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, Amaravati, the Anantapur District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) conducted a review meeting on Thursday on preparations for the National Lok Adalat scheduled on December 13.

The meeting was held at the District Court Hall under the chairmanship of E. Bhima Rao, Principal District Judge and Chairman of the DLSA. Senior police officials from the erstwhile Anantapur district participated in the session.

Addressing the gathering, Judge Bhima Rao urged police officials to ensure that the maximum number of compoundable criminal cases, excise cases, and long-pending settlement cases are brought before the Lok Adalat for amicable resolution.

He stressed the importance of utilizing the December 13 National Lok Adalat as an opportunity to clear a large volume of pending cases through mutual settlements.

He appealed to all departments to work in coordination to make the upcoming Lok Adalat a grand success.

The meeting was attended by First Additional District Judge Satyavani, DLSA Secretary N Rajashekar, Junior Civil Judges Balakoteshwar Rao, Harika, Permanent Lok Adalat Chairman K Srinivasa Rao, Legal Adviser Sainath Reddy, Excise Superin-

tendent S Revathi, police officials from all sub-divisions of the erstwhile district, Circle Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Court Constables.

Finally, Congress top brass to resolve Karnataka leadership issue

BENGALURU: The Congress high command seems to have finally woken up to resolve the tricky leadership 'crisis' lingering on in Karnataka, with AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge on Thursday saying that both Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar would be summoned to Delhi for talks to settle the issue. Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar – who are both eager to meet the high command and stake claim to the CM's post

SEC urged to revive special panchayats in tribal villages

Vijayawada: Vadithya Sankar Naik, former member of AP State Commission for Scheduled Tribe and founder national president of Girijana Praja Samakhya (GPS) submitted a representation to the State Election Commissioner Neelam Sahney requesting the reinstatement of special gram panchayats for tribal-dominated villages ahead of the upcoming local body elections.

Sankar Naik in the appeal recalled that the state government had previously constituted special gram panchayats for tribal villages with a population of 500 or more. Additionally, several villages with populations above 400, where tribals constituted over 80 percent of residents, were also notified and recognised under this category.

With the local body elections approaching, he urged the SEC to implement similar provisions once again. He sought the notification of all tribal villages having more than 80 percent tribal population as Special Gram Panchayats, in line with earlier practices and policies intended to strengthen self-governance in tribal areas.

Cops on toes to prevent eve-teasing

Kurnool: The Kurnool district police have strengthened preventive measures to curb eve-teasing and harassment incidents in and around educational institutions.

Under the directions of Superintendent of Police Vikrant Patil, special Anti-Eve-Teasing Beats have been deployed across key locations.

Officials warned that strict action, including legal proceedings, will be initiated against individuals found involved in harassment, teasing, or unruly behaviour.

The police have reiterated that creating a respectful and secure environment for young students, particularly girls, is their primary responsibility and that such misconduct will not be tolerated.



Police teams are conducting intensified patrolling and inspections near schools, colleges, and coaching centres to ensure the safety of students and to deter miscreants from engaging in unlawful activities.

As part of the initiative, surprise checks are being carried out at crowded areas and student gathering points.

In addition to enforcement measures, awareness campaigns are being organized by the police to educate students on available support systems.

They have advised students to immediately report any harassment or related issues without hesitation.

The police have urged them to contact the nearest police station or utilize emergency helpline numbers Dial 112 or Dial 100 whenever needed, assuring prompt response and assistance. The Anti-Eve-Teasing special teams are maintaining constant surveillance at sensitive points and counselling individuals found engaging in inappropriate conduct. The Kurnool district police appealed to the public and educational institutions to cooperate with law enforcement in establishing a safer academic environment and fostering a society free from harassment.

Nicolas Maduro | Back in power with fewer friends

More than 11 years after assuming power as Venezuela's interim President following the death of popular leader Hugo Chavez, Nicolas Maduro has yet again been sworn in as the President of the Latin American country. The circumstances of the retention of his post and the reactions to the ceremony from international actors provide a sense of déjà vu. In 2019, when Mr. Maduro was sworn in for the second time as President, nearly 40 countries including the U.S., neighbouring Colombia and Brazil and those belonging to the EU, refused to recognise his presidency. Sixteen UN-recognised countries sent representatives, including Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In 2025, however, only two Presidents — Cuba's Miguel Díaz-Canel and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega — attended. International condemnation of the manner in which Mr. Maduro was declared President after the elections held on July 28, 2024 has been more severe this time around. Since 2019, there has been a new Pink Tide in Latin America with countries such as Colombia, Brazil and Chile electing leftist Presidents. All three leaders have rejected Mr. Maduro's "victory". Chile's Gabriel Boric said on Thursday (January 9, 2025) - "From the political left, I tell you that the government of Nicolas Maduro is a dictatorship". Brazil's leader Lula da Silva vetoed the entry of Venezuela into BRICS following the latter's inability to release detailed electoral information on the disputed results. Gustavo Petro's government in Colombia also reiterated that it did not recognise the election results of July 28. Meanwhile, the Opposition candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, who exiled himself to Spain and had recently visited two countries ruled by the Right in Latin America — Argentina and Panama — withdrew plans to return to Caracas for his own "inauguration". The results in question and the process in which Mr. Maduro was declared the winner raise severe doubts about the Venezuelan elections in 2024. The U.N., which sent a panel of experts to Caracas, criticised the National Election Council of Venezuela for declaring Mr. Maduro as the winner before providing detailed table-level results.

The electoral system consisted of an electronic voting machine which produced a paper receipt after voters registered their choice at the polling booth. At the end of polling, each machine would print a tally sheet showing the candidates' names and the votes that they received. The National Election Council traditionally put up only the vote counts at the end of the election on its website, but the site was down during the counting and after disputing the results, the Opposition demanded the release of the tally sheets which was not done. The Opposition could, on its own, access 83% of the tally sheets from 30,026 polling stations, which "revealed" that Mr. Gonzalez polled 67% votes. The CNE's figures were different, favouring Mr. Maduro with 51.95% of the vote to Mr. Gonzalez's 43.2%. Considering the wide differences on this issue and the fact that the Maduro re-

gime had used intimidatory tactics throughout the election process, several international actors sought the release of the tally sheets to confirm the winner but that was not done.

Economic decline The 11 years of rule by Mr. Maduro has coincided with a significant decline in Venezuela's economic standing, with severe increases in the poverty rate, persistently high inflation and food shortages in the country. While inflation had eased to 23.58% in October 2024, hyperinflation has characterised the economy since 2018. As of October 2023, the UNHCR estimated that more than 7.7 million Venezuelan citizens fled the country to become refugees and 6.5 million among them (84%) are in Latin America and the Caribbean. Critics of Mr. Maduro blame the catastrophic economic situation on the stark authoritarian turn since he came to power. Some suggest that the economic decline was inevitable as Venezuela was overly dependent upon the petroleum sector — crude constituted 95% of the country's exports in 2014 and the oil price crash in the same year sent it into a spiral. Critics argue that the seeds of the economic decline were laid during Chavez's regime, as he tried to undo the remnants of the country's liberal democratic order to create a personalised state with concentrated powers for the executive presidency.

Following a coup attempt in 2002 against Chavez, his supporters — the Chavistas — sought to rewrite the rules of power in the country by moving it away from what observers termed an inflexible and ideologically one-sided, two-party system (a byproduct of the Puntofijo Pact between political parties in 1958). The Chavistas instituted a series of measures, including constitutional referendums and structural changes, most of which received popular support as Chavez won several elections. The Chavistas argue that the regime enhanced grassroots participation in the polity and built cooperatives while using the proceeds of the extractive economy to fund pro-poor programmes. And while the regime was cognisant of diversification, the lack of it during the oil price crash resulted in the economic crisis, which was exacerbated by a series of economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the EU after Mr. Maduro came to power. Following the economic crisis, these structures of power were utilised by Mr. Maduro to entrench himself. Since his ascent to power, Mr. Maduro's regime has moved away from a popular regime that was dependent upon grassroots mobilisation and participatory democracy to an authoritarian system. The first Donald Trump administration in August 2017 imposed sanctions prohibiting the Venezuelan government from accessing U.S. financial markets, a move that affected Venezuela's state-run oil company, PDVSA. The U.S. went on, in 2019, to impose further and direct sanctions on PDVSA, preventing it from being paid for petroleum exports to the U.S., froze its U.S. assets and disallowed the supply of diluents that aided the refining of Venezu-



elan heavy crude, among other measures. The U.S.-imposed economic sanctions were compounded by the EU's own embargo on arms and material to be traded with Venezuela, imposed in 2017. Restrictions still remain. The country got a respite when the U.S. eased some sanctions following an agreement signed between Mr. Maduro and representatives of Opposition parties in October 2023 in Barbados with political prisoners being released. The country's oil output saw an increase, resulting in more exports and a

partial easing of the severity of the economic situation. However, in April 2024, the U.S. announced that sanctions would be reinstated on the oil sector. International opprobrium just prior to the inauguration of his third term, the U.S. announced a \$65-million bounty for the arrest of Mr. Maduro even as he received support from Russia and China apart from staunch allies in Cuba and Nicaragua. The international opprobrium and increased polarisation in Venezuela is not deterring Mr. Maduro from doubling down on authoritarianism.

AM Green join hands with DP World for supply of green fuels

Hyderabad: AM Green, a leader in green hydrogen and ammonia production, has partnered with DP World, a global logistics leader, to create a sustainable supply chain for green fuels and chemicals.

This collaboration will significantly enhance global decarbonisation efforts by enabling seamless exports to key consumption markets. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed in December, DP World and AM Green will jointly develop logistics and storage infrastructure to facilitate the global export of 1 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of green ammonia and 1 MTPA of green methanol. AM Green is developing multiple projects across India, using renewable energy sources, including solar, wind and

hydroelectric power, to produce Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), green ammonia, green hydrogen, chemicals and biofuels. It has an ambitious target of 5 MTPA of production capacity by 2030, that will make a significant contribution to India's net-zero targets and global decarbonization goals. The company has already taken a final investment decision for a 1 MTPA Green Ammonia plant in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh on India's eastern coast. Mahesh Kolli, Founder, Greenko Group & AM Green, said, "This strategic partnership will enable us to efficiently export green Ammonia, green methanol, and other sustainable fuels, enhancing the global green supply chain and supporting the global shift to a low-carbon economy."

Israel-Hamas draft ceasefire deal: A look at the terms and tensions

If the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal goes according to the current draft, then fighting will stop in Gaza for 42 days, and dozens of Israeli hostages and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners will be freed. In this first phase Israeli troops will pull back to the edges of Gaza, and many Palestinians will be able to return to what remains of their homes as stepped-up aid flows in. The question is if the ceasefire will survive beyond that first phase.

That will depend on even more negotiations meant to begin within weeks. In those talks, Israel, Hamas, and the U.S., Egyptian and Qatari mediators will have to tackle the tough issue of how Gaza will be governed, with Israel demanding the elimination of Hamas. Without a deal within those 42 days to begin the second phase, Israel could resume its campaign in Gaza to destroy Hamas — even as dozens of hostages remain in the militants' hands. Hamas has agreed to a draft of the ceasefire deal, two officials confirmed, but Israeli officials say details are still being worked out, meaning some terms could change, or the whole deal could even fall through. Here is a look at the plan and potential pitfalls in the draft seen by the Associated Press. During the first phase, Hamas is to release 33 hostages in exchange for the freeing of hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. By the end of the phase, all living women, children and older people held by the militants should be freed.

Some 100 hostages remain captive inside Gaza, a mix of civilians and soldiers, and the military believes at least a third of them are dead. On the first official day of the ceasefire, Hamas is to free three hostages, then another four on the seventh day. After that, it will make weekly releases. Which hostages and how many Palestinians will be released is complicated. The 33 will include women, children and those over 50 — almost all civilians, but the deal also commits Hamas to free all living female soldiers. Hamas will release living hostages first, but if the living don't complete the 33 number, bodies will be handed over. Not all hostages are held by Hamas, so getting other militant groups to hand them over could be an issue. In exchange, Israel will free 30 Palestinian women, children or elderly for each living civilian hostage freed. For each female soldier freed, Israel will release 50 Palestinian prisoners, including 30 serving life sentences. In exchange for bodies handed over by Hamas, Israel will free all women and children it has detained from Gaza since the war began on Oct. 7, 2023. Dozens of men, including soldiers, will remain captive in Gaza, pending the second phase. During the proposed deal's first phase, Israeli troops are to pull back into a buffer zone about a kilometer (0.6 miles) wide inside Gaza along its borders with Israel. Smoke rise over the northern Gaza Strip as seen from a position on the Israeli side of the border on January 13, 2025 in Southern Israel, Israel. Smoke rise over the northern Gaza Strip as seen from a position on the Israeli side of the border on January 13, 2025 in Southern Israel, Israel. | Photo Credit: Getty Images That will allow displaced Palestinians to return to their homes, including in Gaza City and north-

ern Gaza. With most of Gaza's population driven into massive, squalid tent camps, Palestinians are desperate to get back to their homes, even though many were destroyed or heavily damaged by Israel's campaign. But there are complications. During the past year of negotiations, Israel has insisted it must control the movement of Palestinians to the north to ensure Hamas does not take weapons back into those areas. Throughout the war, the Israeli military has severed the north from the rest of Gaza by holding the so-called Netzarim Corridor, a belt across the strip where troops cleared out the Palestinian population and set up bases. That allowed them to search people fleeing from the north into central Gaza and bar anyone trying to return.

The draft seen by the AP specifies that Israel is to leave the corridor. In the first week, troops would withdraw from the main north-south coastal road — Rasheed Street — which would open one route for Palestinians returning. By the 22nd day of the ceasefire, Israeli troops are to leave the entire corridor. Still, as talks continued Tuesday, an Israeli official insisted the military will keep control of Netzarim and that Palestinians returning north would have to pass inspections there, though he declined to provide details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed negotiations.

Working out those contradictions could bring frictions. Throughout the first phase, Israel will retain control of the Philadelphi Corridor, the strip of territory along Gaza's border with Egypt, including the Rafah Crossing. Hamas dropped demands that Israel pull out of this area. In the first phase, aid entry to Gaza is to be ramped up to hundreds of trucks a day of food, medicine, supplies and fuel to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. That is far more than Israel has allowed in throughout the war. For months, aid groups have struggled to distribute to Palestinians even the trickle of aid entering Gaza because of Israeli military restrictions and rampant robberies of aid trucks by gangs. An end to fighting should alleviate that. The need is great. Malnutrition and diseases are rampant among Palestinians, crammed into tents and short on food and clean water. Hospitals have been damaged and short of supplies. The draft deal specifies that equipment will be allowed in to build shelters for tens of thousands whose homes were destroyed and to rebuild infrastructure like electricity, sewage, communications and road systems. But here, too, implementation could bring problems.

Even before the war, Israel has restricted entry of some equipment, arguing it could be used for military purposes by Hamas. Another Israeli official said arrangements are still being worked out over aid distribution and cleanup, but the plan is to prevent Hamas from having any role. Further complicating matters, Israel's government is still committed to its plan to ban UNRWA from operating and to cut all ties between the agency and the Israeli government. The UN agency is the major distributor of aid in Gaza and provides education, health and other basic services to



millions of Palestinian refugees across the region, including in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. If all of that works out, the sides must still tackle the second phase. Negotiations over it are to begin on Day 16 of the ceasefire. Phase two's broad outlines are laid out in the draft: All remaining hostages are to be released in return for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a "sustainable calm."

But that seemingly basic exchange opens up much bigger issues. Israel has said it will not agree to a complete withdrawal until Hamas' military and political capabilities are eliminated and it cannot rearm — ensuring Hamas no longer runs Gaza. Hamas says it will not hand over the last hostages until Israel removes all troops from everywhere in Gaza. So the negotiations will have to get both sides to agree to an alternative for governing Gaza. Effectively, Hamas has to agree to its own re-

moval from power — something it has said it is willing to do, but it may seek to keep a hand in any future government, which Israel has vehemently rejected. The draft agreement says a deal on the second phase must be worked out by the end of the first. Pressure will be on both sides to reach a deal, but what happens if they don't? It could go in many directions. Hamas had wanted written guarantees that a ceasefire would continue as long as needed to agree on phase two. It has settled for verbal guarantees from the United States, Egypt and Qatar. Israel, however, has given no assurances. So Israel could threaten new military action to pressure Hamas in the negotiations or could outright resume its military campaign, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened. Hamas and the mediators are betting the momentum from the first phase will make it difficult for him to do that.

Motorola unveils tough and affordable Moto G Power 2025 with premium features



Hyderabad: Motorola has launched its 2025 Moto G series featuring Moto G and Moto G Power with exemplary toughness, packing everything without a premium price. The Moto G Power is priced at a mere \$299.99. It is built with IP68 and IP69 water-resistance ratings to withstand harsh handling. This makes it tougher than most flagship devices protecting it against water submersion, high-pressure jets, and dust. What makes the Moto G Power a fairly strong contender for a tough phone is its

MIL-STD-810H certification, giving it quality ratings for drops, temperature extremes, and high humidity.

It conducts short drop tests which prove it can survive falls from tufted distances of close to four feet with temperatures between -4°F and 140°F. A big 6.8-inch display featuring Gorilla Glass 5 and 120Hz refresh rate makes the Moto G Power ideal for broadcasting, gaming, and scrolling. Along with a powerful 5,000mAh battery supporting 30W wired and

What led to the Azerbaijan Airlines jet crash? | Explained

On December 25, 2024, an Azerbaijan Airlines flight, 4K-AZ65, en route from Baku in Azerbaijan to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya in Russia, with 67 passengers and crew, faced a series of serious technical difficulties. The weather appeared to have been a factor as the crew attempted to divert to Makhachkala in Russia. There was another diversion to Aktau in Kazakhstan by the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, but the plane impacted the ground about three kilometres from Aktau's airport, and 38 passengers were killed. There are conflicting reports on the cause, linked to a series of holes in a part of the fuselage and a survivor passenger's video footage. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said "we can say with complete clarity that the plane was shot down... We are not saying that it was done intentionally, but it was done". Azerbaijan has said that the aircraft "was ordered" to fly across the Caspian Sea after it was denied landing at two Russian airports. Data from the black boxes have been decoded in Brazil, where the twin-engine aircraft, an Embraer ERJ-190AR, was manufactured. The passengers were Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Russian citizens.

What are the other details?

The flight data site, Flightradar24, has told The Hindu that "We can confirm that the flight was operating in an area affected by GPS jamming and spoofing, hence we did not see a large portion of the flight. The last portion of the flight was operated in an area of good coverage." The website of Azerbaijan Airlines says the airline, which is a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), is in full compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards. The airline has announced the suspension of flights to several cities in Russia on the directive of the Azerbaijan State Civil Aviation Authority following preliminary results from an investigation into the crash. A report on the President of Russia's official website, titled "Telephone conversation with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, December 28, 2024", says: "The presidents had a detailed discussion of issues regarding the December 25 crash Vladimir Putin apologised for the fact that the incident happened in Russian airspace... It was noted during the conversation that the Azerbaijani passenger airliner was flying according to schedule and repeatedly tried to land at Grozny Airport. At that time, Ukrainian unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) attacked Grozny, Mozdok and Vladikavkaz, and Russian air defence systems were repelling these attacks. The Russian Investigative Committee initiated a criminal case under Article 263 of the Criminal Code (violation of the rules for traffic safety and operation of the air transportation systems). Initial investigation is underway...."

On January 3, 2025, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, said 17 international experts including those from ICAO and the Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC), the body representing some of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Fed-

eration, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), were invited to ensure an "impartial and objective incident investigation". A media report says that the flight data have been analysed by the aeronautical accident investigation and prevention centre, CENIPA, Air Force Command, which is the central investigative body that is overseen by the Brazilian Air Force. Investigators from Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Russia are also involved.

The Center for Investigation and Prevention of Aeronautical Accidents in Brazil (CENIPA) has told The Hindu that "on January 4, 2024, the extraction, acquisition, and validation of the data contained in the two flight recorders (the Cockpit Voice and Flight Data Recorder – CVFDR) of the Embraer 190 aircraft were successfully completed at the Flight Data Recorder Readout and Analysis Laboratory (LABDATA) of CENIPA, located in Brasília, DF, Brazil". "Upon conclusion of these activities, all data were handed over on the same day to the Investigation Authority of Kazakhstan, the agency responsible for analyzing and investigating the accident, in accordance with international aviation accident investigation protocols. "This work was conducted in collaboration with the Aviation Accident and Incident Investigation Department of the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Such cooperation reflects the commitment of the Brazilian Government, through the Ministry of Defense and the Brazilian Air Force, to promoting aviation safety worldwide." CENIPA also said, "The analysis of the extracted data and the conclusions to be published in the Final Report remain the sole responsibility of the Investigation Authority of Kazakhstan, as stipulated in Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation."

What does the accident highlight about conflict zones?

Dr. Hassan Shahidi, President and CEO, Flight Safety Foundation, Virginia, U.S., has told The Hindu that the operation of civilian flights in conflict zones is a complex issue that involves assessing the risks posed by ongoing hostilities. ICAO guidelines stress the importance of states providing up-to-date risk assessments and advisories to airlines about potential threats, including military activity, missile launches, or other hazards. Airlines, in turn, must conduct their own risk assessments. Under international law, specifically the Chicago Convention and its Annexes, the responsibility for ensuring the safety of civil aviation lies with states. If the crash is found to be caused by actions directly linked to Russia, whether intentional or negligent, questions of state responsibility and accountability under international law may arise, which may include legal actions and findings of criminal liability.

As the flight is said to have been subject to severe electronic and communication interference, Dr. Shahidi said, "spoofing (sending false signals) and jamming (blocking or disrupting signals) can have severe impacts on aviation safety, particularly on navigation and communication



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Have nation-states been involved in air accidents?

As the paper, "Navigating the Legal Horizon: Lawyering the MH17 Disaster" (2017), by Marieke de Hoon in the Utrecht Journal of International and European Law, points out, there have been about nine major cases. Some of them include the shooting down of a Cathay Pacific airliner by China in 1954; Libyan Arab Airlines flight 114 by Israel in 1973; Korean Airlines flight 007 by the then-Soviet Union in 1983; Iran Air flight 655 by the United States in 1988; the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 by 'Libyan agents' in 1988; Sibir Airlines flight 1812 by Ukraine in 2001; and MH17.

What about the legal issues?

Dr. Mohammad Owais Farooqui, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Law, College of Law, University of Sharjah, UAE, has told The Hindu that the accident poses important legal questions with regard to jurisdiction under the principles of international law. It has drawn attention to the absence, ownership, and management of responsibility and authority in international aviation regulation, compensation, and state responsibility. In the investigations, there should be focus on how the existing international legal works and the bases, for example, the Chicago Convention and the Montreal Convention, regulate such occurrences, he says. The law applicable to the liability for damage in this context is the Montreal Convention. Azerbaijan Airlines may be financially responsible for making compensation payments, but things get complicated if state responsibility is engaged, more so in a missile strike scenario. If there is evidence that a state is involved, principles of state responsibility under the international law may prevail over the Montreal Convention and the responsible state may be under obligation to make reparation under customary international law. Another area of law is international humanitarian law, he says. The Chicago Convention specifically bans the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight, and if a state is involved

Where are GPS interference hotspots?

Flightradar24 says that the jamming of signals has been prevalent in the area around the Black Sea, while spoofing is common around Iraq, Ukraine, Russia, and also the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It says that flight crew are aware of GPS jamming and spoofing and are trained in advanced