

## DCP Rakshita Krishnamurthy Counsels Rowdy Sheeters; Warns of PD Act for Illegal Activities



“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 28:” “To maintain law and order and prevent criminal activities in the Secunderabad Zone, DCP Ms. Rakshita Krishnamurthy, IPS, conducted a special counselling session today for active and inactive rowdy sheeters at the DCP Office premises in Amberpet. “Rowdy sheeters from all police stations under the zone attended the counselling. The DCP warned that any act causing disturbance to public peace, involvement in settlements, or participation in criminal activities would not be tolerated under

any circumstances.” She advised the participants to give up criminal behavior and lead responsible lives as law-abiding citizens. She also made it clear that strict legal action would be taken against habitual offenders and that cases would be booked under the Preventive Detention (PD) Act if required. “ACPs and SHOs of the Secunderabad Zone were present during the programme. Police officials stated that such preventive measures are being taken to strengthen public safety and instill a sense of security among citizens.

## Massive consumer awareness rally to be held in Hanamkonda on January 30

Hanamkonda: Southern States Consumer Coordination Committee (CCC) chairman and Consumer Confederation of India (CCI) national senior secretary Dr Pallepada Damodar said that a massive consumer awareness rally would be held here on January 30.

Speaking at a consumer awareness meeting organised by District Consumer Advisory Committee in Hanamkonda on Wednesday, he said that a national-level consumer awareness campaign was being conducted for consumer empowerment.

The Department of Consumer Affairs and the CCI, in collaboration with other relevant departments, were conducting the campaign to raise awareness about the Consumer Protection Act 2019.

The campaign focuses on educating consumers about fraudulent practices in weights and measures, adulteration of food products, defects in paid services and how to obtain compensation through the law.

The campaign was started in New Delhi on December 24, National Consumer Rights Day and would continue in all States until March 14, 2026. The campaign will conclude in New Delhi on March 15, World Consumer Rights Day, Damodar said.

Consumer associations, Civil Supplies Department, Weights and Measures Department, Drug Control Department, municipal officials and public organisations have been participating in the campaign.

CCI chairman Dr Ananth Sharma, its president Preeti Pandya, working president Selvaraj, CCI general secretary S Chakrapani, Telangana State committee members Bheem Reddy, Shilpa Reddy, Supraj and representatives from consumer associations of various States would participate in the rally in Hanamkonda on January 30, he added.



## Governor, Union Minister showcase transformative schemes for women

Hyderabad: Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy underscored the central government's commitment to women's empowerment and inclusive growth during a programme organised under the aegis of the ABV Foundation on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma noted that Self-Help Groups, once limited to a symbolic existence, have been revitalised under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He highlighted the success of the PM Awas Yojana, which has provided four crore poor families with permanent housing, alongside the Jan Dhan Yojana that enabled millions to access formal banking. Stressing the vision of Viksit Bharat, he stated that development is being pursued without barriers of caste or religion. He remarked that when women are economically strong, families prosper, and the acquisition of new skills by women brings a fresh direction to the entire nation.

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy elaborated on various government initiatives ranging from space research to grassroots welfare.

He pointed out that street vendors and small entrepreneurs now receive loans without collateral thanks to schemes like the Jan Dhan Yojana, which has facilitated 55 crore accounts. Digital transactions, once confined to the wealthy, have now reached every household.

He specifically cited programmes such as Drone Didi, which trains women in drone technology, and Lakhpati Didi, which aims to make women financially independent. G Kishan Reddy also emphasised the expansion of skill centres in community halls to ensure training opportunities across diverse fields. He assured continued support for women entrepreneurs and highlighted the government's decision to raise Self-Help Group loan limits from Rs 50,000 to Rs 20 lakh, with future plans to extend this limit to Rs 50 lakh to further bolster female-led enterprises.

ABV Foundation founder Kavya Kishan Reddy shared that more than 15 skill centres have been established in the Secunderabad parliamentary constituency, training over 25,000 women to become self-reliant. These centres are helping women expand their businesses and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

She credited the vision of the Prime Minister for introducing transformative schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi, and Mudra loans, which integrate women into the national development journey. The event concluded with a call for more women to utilise these central schemes to achieve financial autonomy and lead the charge toward a developed India by 2047.

## Hyderabad 10K celebrates fitness, inclusion and a pioneering legacy around Hussain Sagar

Hyderabad: People's Plaza came alive with energy and purpose this morning as the 19th edition of the Hyderabad 10K, India's first-ever 10K run, was successfully held, bringing together over 5,000 runners from across the city and beyond. The iconic event, re-initiated this year by NEB Sports, followed a scenic loop around the historic Hussain Sagar Lake, offering participants a truly Hyderabad experience.

The event was ceremoniously flagged off by the Founders of the Hyderabad 10K Foundation - Dr Ramesh Byrapaneni, Uma Chigurupati, Jagdish Nalluri, Anil Kumar and Dinaz along with Padma Bhushan awardee and legendary badminton player Pullela Gopichand. Addressing the gathering, Gopichand recounted the journey of how the Hyderabad 10K was conceived many years ago, at a time when organised running events were virtually unheard of in India, and shared the vision of encouraging everyday citizens to embrace fitness.

Adding a deeply personal touch to the morning, Pullela Gopichand and Uma Chigurupati also participated in the 10K run, completing the course and earning their finisher medals alongside thousands of runners, embodying the spirit of participation that the event stands for.

A defining highlight of this edition was its strong emphasis on inclusivity, with visually impaired and differently-abled runners participating alongside elite athletes, amateurs, corporates and first-time runners—reinforcing the belief that running is truly for everyone.

Winners – Fastest Finishers

10 KM – Fastest Women

1st Place: KM Sujata – 47:15

2nd Place: Kanika Jain – 55:56

3rd Place: Johannah – 1:00:15

10 KM – Fastest Men

1st Place: Boddupalli Ramesh – 35:38

2nd Place: Banoth Chandrashekar – 38:00

3rd Place: Vikram Prajapat – 38:25

Set against the stunning backdrop of Hussain Sagar and People's Plaza, the Hyderabad 10K once again reaffirmed its mission to promote active lifestyles and preserve the pioneering legacy of distance running in India. The Hyderabad 10K Foundation and NEB Sports reiterated their commitment to building a healthier, more inclusive city through sport and community-led initiatives.

## Yadadri police hold awareness drive amid tiger movement

Hyderabad: The Yadadri police on Wednesday conducted an awareness programme for villagers where tiger movement was reported in last fortnight and asked them not to harm the animal.

P Srinivas Naidu, DSP, Yadadagirigutta, along with the sarpanch of Dattaipally, Ibrahimpur and Dayamabanda Thanda villages in Turkapally mandal, conducted the awareness programme in view of tiger movement and cattle killing.

The tiger has been moving around Turkapally and Yadadri mandal for the last fortnight and attacked cattle on three instances in Ibrahimpur, Dattaipally, and Ralla Janagaon villages.

"Forest department officials are making continuous efforts to send the tiger back to the reserve forest using traps, bait, drones and other technical methods," Srinivas Naidu said.



## BRS leaders lodge complaint with Council Chairman

A delegation of BRS leaders, led by the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council S Madhusudhana Chary, met Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy on Tuesday to lodge a formal complaint against a regional news channel. The delegation alleged that a news anchor insulted MLC Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao during a recent live debate.

S Madhusudhana Chary urged the Chairman to consider the verbal assault on a single member as an attack on the dignity of the entire Legislative Council and demanded strict action against the scribe to prevent future recurrences. The BRS leaders condemned the conduct of the private channel, ABN, claiming the anchor acted with a visible conspiracy against the party.

They alleged that when Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao objected to certain portrayals during the discussion, the anchor responded with inappropriate and

derogatory remarks. Speaking on the matter, Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao stated that despite being invited as a guest, he was subjected to treatment that sought to tarnish his image and the reputation of his party leaders.

He maintained that he did not use any unparliamentary language during the exchange and expressed deep hurt over the attempt to lower his dignity on a public platform. The delegation, which included Deshapathi Srinivas, Pochampally Srinivas Reddy, and Naveen Kumar Reddy, asserted that such incidents undermine democratic institutions and the respect accorded to elected representatives. They called for a formal inquiry into the broadcast to ensure that the professional decorum of members is protected during media engagements. The Chairman assured the members that the matter would be examined in accordance with the rules of the House.

## Canal breach exposes neglect of Mallanna Sagar main canal

Siddipet: The Congress government ignored the removal of weeds in the Mallanna Sagar main canal, which has now resulted in a breach near Yellareddypet hours after water was released for Yasangi. Water was also overflowing at a few places as weed growth, particularly nutgrass, had spread across the canal, standing as testimony to the government's neglect. Farmers under the ayacut complained that water was flowing over canals at several locations as weeds blocked the smooth flow. Following demands by farmers and an appeal by Dubbak MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, the irrigation department released water to the ayacut on Tuesday night. However, the canal suffered a breach within hours, leading to sand piling and flooding of paddy fields between Yellareddypet and Pedda Masanpally villages.

## Telangana municipal polls may see campaigning by Amit Shah, Nitin Nabin

Hyderabad: Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president Nitin Nabin are likely to campaign in support of party candidates in the Telangana municipal elections to be held on February 11.

Shah and Nabin are expected to participate in the campaign though details of their visits have not yet been finalised, BJP sources said on Wednesday. Marathon runner Pilli Raju hoists Telangana police flag high across the nation

BJP is hoping for an impressive performance in the urban local body polls as it aims to emerge as an alternative to ruling Congress and opposition BRS in the 2028 assembly elections.

BJP won a decent eight seats in the 2023 assembly polls. It pulled off a spectacular win in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by bagging eight of the total 17 seats. However, the party suffered a major setback as it lost security in the recent bypoll to Jubilee Hills assembly constituency.

# Permanent Solution to Drainage Problems in the City Minister Tummala

Khammam, Jan 28:

State Agriculture minister Tummala Nageswara Rao stated that steps are being taken to construct an underground drainage system to provide a permanent solution to the drainage problems in Khammam city.

On Wednesday, the Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of CC roads and side drains in the 21st Division, to be taken up at an estimated cost of Rs545.60 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that proposals amounting to Rs 1,250 crore have



been submitted to the State Government for the construction of an underground drainage system to permanently resolve the city's drainage issues. With the

support of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the underground drainage works will be taken up using Central Government funds, he

said.

The Minister further stated that works under a drinking water scheme worth 250 crore are also being implemented to ensure there is no shortage of drinking water in Khammam city. He said the government is undertaking planned and systematic measures to provide all basic amenities in the city.

He added that steps are being taken with public cooperation to make Khammam a clean and green city, and appealed to every citizen to take responsibility in keeping the city green and clean.

# 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 Diaz-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."

# 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



systems. These technologies could interfere with Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), for example, GPS, ADS-B and transponder signals and communication systems. Enhanced cybersecurity measures, alternative navigation systems, and robust incident reporting mechanisms are needed to mitigate these risks".

An ICAO spokesperson has told The Hindu that ICAO has readied itself to support this investigation in the interest of aviation safety and security, deputing an ICAO expert to be deployed onsite as an observer to the international investigation team. He said, "The investigation, as prescribed by Annex 13, shall be conducted with the sole objective of preventing future accidents and incidents, through the collection and analysis of safety data and information. Annex 13 calls for a preliminary report to be produced within 30 days of the accident, with a final report to follow within 12 months." Conflict zones, with state and non-state players, pose immense risks to civil aviation and countries are responding to this growing threat with several initiatives. Canada's Safer Skies initiative is one such example that was in response to the shooting down of a Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 in 2020 after take-off from Tehran. The IATA Tactical Operations Portal gives aviation subscribers real-time alerts related to airspace and airport operations. It operates based on a five-level alerting system. Another group is the Expert Group on Risk Information overflying Conflict Zones (EGRICZ), which is an informal international group that puts out information on airspace conflict zone risk assessments. There is also the Safer Skies Consultative Committee which is a formal international platform that examines conflict zone threats.

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 risk management.

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, its conduct may amount to a breach of this law, especially if not in accordance with the principles of necessity and proportionality. The Azerbaijan case, he says, highlights the necessity for more authoritative and codified regulation of international civil aviation activity, the enhancement of liability regulation at the global level, and cooperation within the international legal framework.

# 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.

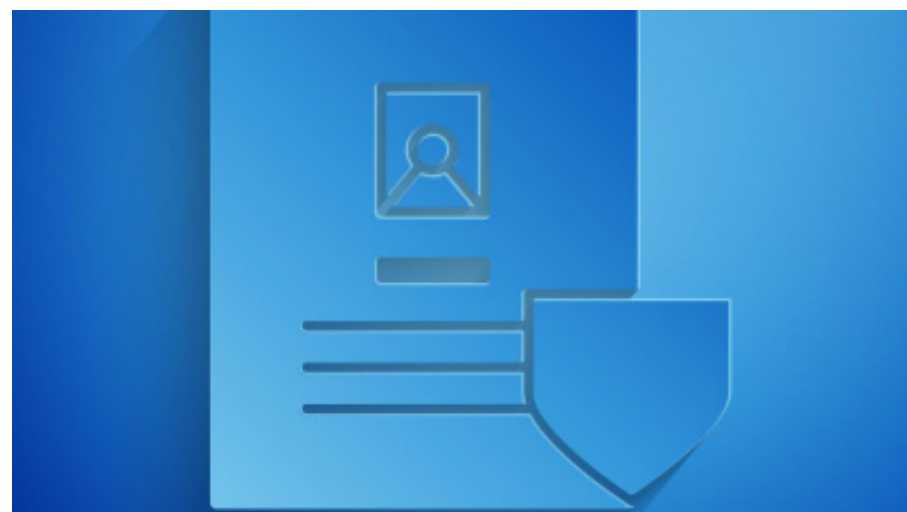


## India's data protection rules need some fine-tuning

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 is-



sue 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.

# 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 here 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



tion 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.

# 'If I can be a useful model for people to emulate, why not?' asks Shashi Tharoor

In his new book *A Wonderland of Words*, Shashi Tharoor writes about being in love with words since he was a child. Over the years, he says he has become a role model for aspirational Indians. In an interview, Tharoor talks about his literary pursuits and why he would love to return to fiction. Edited excerpts.

For someone who has been so involved with words, what do you feel about the way language is evolving now?

Wasn't that always the case? In my generation, when people started saying things like cool and hip and groovy, the earlier generation looked askance. Now it's old fashioned to say cool or hip or groovy. Each generation does come up with its own words.

Does a life in politics make writing more complex?

When you come into Indian politics, it's complicated, because you have to work in multiple languages; or rather, things you say in one language can be translated, distorted and made stories of in other languages. As a result, I learned to be rather conscious of my public English. What's interesting is that while I have indeed been converted into a meme and an object of joking, the truth is there are also a lot of people who come up to me, asking for

selfies and expressing admiration for my English. They often do so in rather modest and/or accented English, which means that for aspirational Indians, command of English is what they look up to as an admirable trait. If I can be a useful model for people to emulate, why not?

Could you talk about the kind of research that went into the book?

I began this as a series of columns. Then I started merging columns, expanding some for the book. Secondly, some of the pieces are clearly off the top of my head, but some required more research, and I did have help, which I've acknowledged in the book. Professor Sheeba Thattil did the research for me. She had access to lots of philological and etymological texts that I don't routinely come across or know where to look for. I was emphatic that I was not writing this for other professors of English. I was writing for general readers like myself, or people less involved in language than me. There were also some things I just stumbled across on the Internet. For example, in the Introduction, I include that wonderful letter by Robert Pirosh, who got a Hollywood screenwriter's job on the strength of it. I came across that entirely by fluke.

It's been a long time since you wrote



fiction. Has returning to words in this sort of playful, interesting way given you room between much more intensive research and work on your non-fiction writing? Partly true, but there is a more serious challenge, which is that fiction requires not only time, which is scarce enough for me, but it requires a space inside your head to create an alternative moral universe, to populate it with characters, incidents, episodes, conversations that are as real to you as those you encounter in your daily life. You con-

struct this kind of glass palace of illusion, and you enter into it, ideally, every day while you're writing a novel. The problem with my life, both in my other stages of my UN career and in my entire political life, is that I am constantly interrupted. The great merit of non-fiction is it's interruptible. Even if you suddenly have to go off on some work, on your return you can reread what you are writing, and your own line of thought and argument will recur to you and you will continue the work. That's why I found, as a practical proposition, that writing non-fiction was manageable. I have not abandoned fiction. God grants me enough years, I certainly intend to return to it.

## An interview with Dhvani Mehta, National Secretary, Rhodes Scholarship India

Rayan Chakrabarty, a final-year Master's student from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, plans to create a museum and document the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Asia. Vibha Swaminathan, a final-year Law student at National Law School, Bengaluru, aims to study citizenship regimes and human rights litigation. Avani Vats, a visually-impaired graduate from St. Stephen's College, New Delhi, is interested in epistemology and making philosophy accessible to people with disabilities. Shubham Narwal, a veterinarian at ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly, plans to explore conservation strategies for the Great Indian Bustard. Pal Aggarwal, a B.Tech student from IIT-Bombay, intends to become an astronaut, and advocate for women in Science. What do these youngsters have in common? They are all recipients of the Rhodes Scholarships 2025, which will enable them to pursue their higher education at Oxford University, the U.K. In September 2024, The Rhodes Trust announced the creation of a sixth Rhodes Scholarship for India. Dhvani Mehta, National Secretary, Rhodes Scholarship for India, talks about how the scholarship came to be, how it impacts Indian students, and more.

Established in 1902 by Cecil Rhodes, a British financier who was Prime Minister of Cape Colony in the 1890s, the Trust now acknowledges the role of colonial wealth and discriminatory practices in laying the foundation for the scholarship. Today, steps are being taken to correct the mistakes of

the past and make it more inclusive and equitable. "Earlier scholarships were restricted to the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand; in short, where the white man had made his mark. But the idea now is to ensure that more of the wealth on which the scholarship was founded goes back primarily to Africa, to which Cecil Rhodes owes a great debt, and to acknowledge other parts of the world where there has been a history of colonial rule and trauma," she adds. The parameters on which the scholarships are awarded are the same across countries. "There is no variation in the criteria barring technical variations of age, eligibility, citizenship, educational requirements. But, the criteria mentioned in Rhodes' will — academic excellence; energy to use one's talent to the fullest, including excellence in co-curricular or extracurricular activities, and values or how one demonstrates truth, courage, devotion to duty, timeliness, and leadership — are still the basis on which the Trust awards the scholarships," explains Mehta. Busting myths Mehta busts the myth of a "typical Rhodes scholar". There is no 'type', she explains. In fact, the scholarship's strength lies in its diversity and the opportunity to meet different people while at Rhodes House. Another myth was physical prowess: that one had to excel in a sporting activity. Back in 1903, the scholarship required applicants to be athletic and able men. But that isn't true anymore. The selection criteria mention 'energy to use one's talents to the full', but this can be shown



through a range of extracurricular pursuits and leadership opportunities. Mehta also shares tips for students who are planning their Rhodes journey: Early start: Don't wait till you are in the final year of your UG to think about what your application will look like. The scholarship requires you to have demonstrated your engagement in extracurricular and leadership activities early on.

Authenticity: Don't engage in extracurricular or co-curricular activities only for the sake of the scholarship. The selection committee can make out which candidate is authentic and which ones are out for personal gain. Introspection matters: Maintain an excellent academic record. Apply to the scholarship as an opportunity to introspect about the kind of person you want to be and the career you want to have.