

Participants deliberate on facts vs fiction at summit

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, APRIL 25

There is an urgent need for a strong consensus on legal reforms, education, technological checks, and ethical governance to counter fast-evolving digital misinformation landscape, and that one of the fallouts of such misinformation is spread and rising hatred.

Speaking at a session on 'Facts vs Fiction: Countering Disinformation' at the Bharat Summit on Friday, Thanisara Ruangdej, CEO & co-founder, Punch Up and WeVis, a civic technology platform empowering the people, Thailand, pointing to the information overload in the digital age, said there was a "deliberate weaponisation of fake content by political and geopolitical actors," and stressed on the importance of data analysis and fact-checking to combat such content. The session brought together global policy-makers, digital experts, and political leaders to confront the growing crisis of misinformation and disinformation in the digital age.

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh, who shared the dais with information & public relations minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, spoke on erosion of democratic values due to unchecked disinformation.

"The timing of Bharat Summit is crucial. Today, tech companies control global narratives and encroach upon citizens' rights. I have been a personal victim of deepfakes and fake news. Words I never said were attributed to me. Hatred is being amplified at the click of a button," he said.

Former member of the European Union Parliament, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, who outlined the EU's policies on digital literacy, media regulation, and public education, said "what is illegal

offline must be illegal online," and urged young citizens to critically assess where and how their information is sourced.

Matthew William Faulding, senior adviser

in the Prime Minister's Office in United Kingdom, sharing UK's experience with AI-generated videos and viral misinformation, stressed on the real-world impact and emotional harm it can cause.