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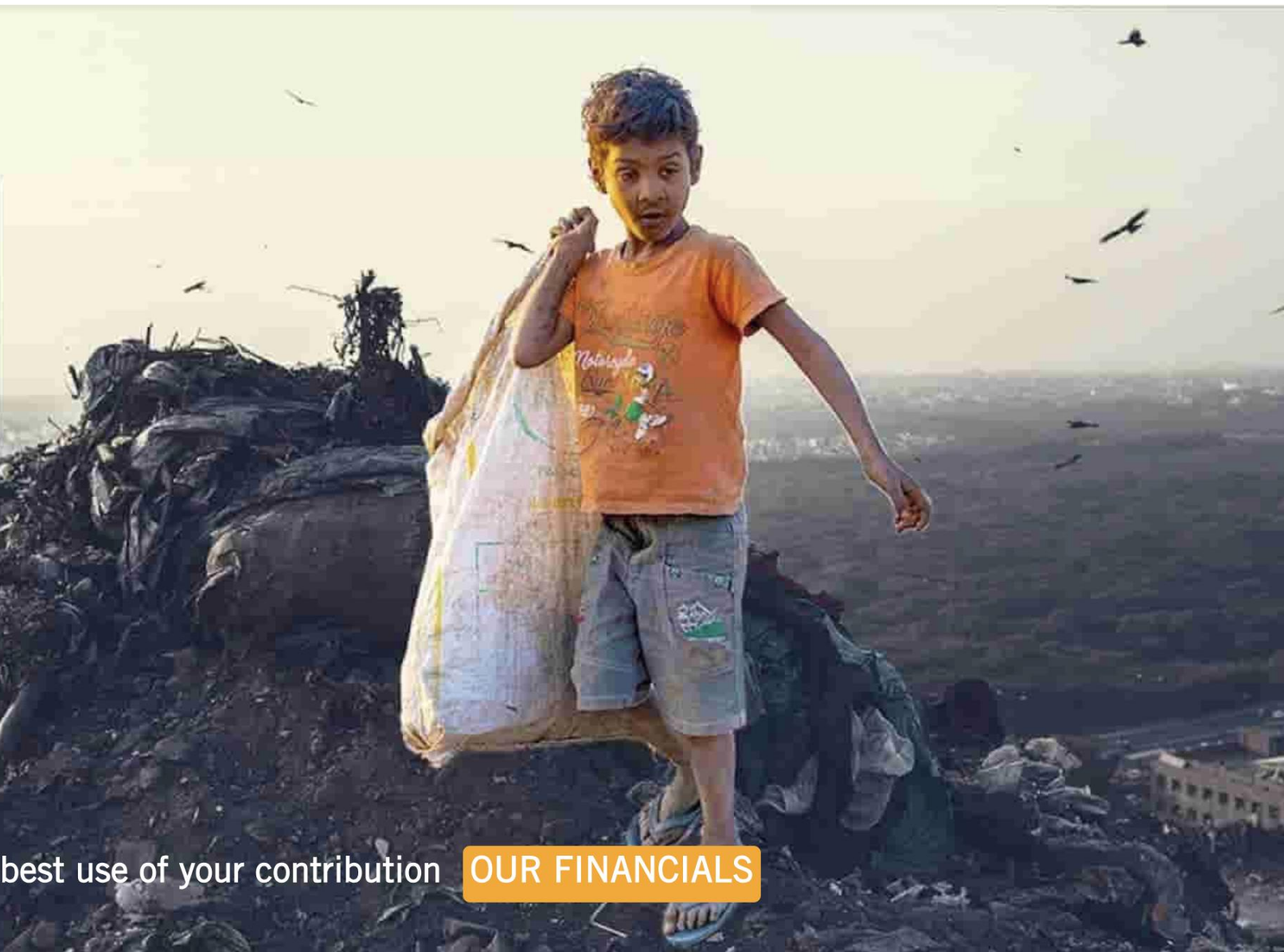
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Does India lack a sporting culture outside cricket?
Olympics performance brings back the question
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Real beats Atalanta for UEFA Super Cup
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INSIDE

Ex-Thailand PM's daughter to be voted to power
BANGKOK
Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, will be nominated as the country's new Prime Minister in a parliamentary vote, her party Pheu Thai party and its coalition partners said on Thursday. > PAGE 14

'Dam burst effect' caused Wayanad landslide: experts
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
A team of geologists, who surveyed the landslide-hit zone in Wayanad on Thursday, said a heavy rainfall-induced "damming effect" in a densely forested and uninhabited uphill region had caused the massive earthfall that wiped out three villages in Yethiri taluk on July 30. > PAGE 3

'High stress levels found among PG medical students'
BENGALURU
The report of the National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students 2024 shows that 84% of postgraduate medical students experience moderate to very high stress levels, while 64% say workload affects their mental health. > PAGE 3

Rahul Gandhi again urges Modi to visit Manipur
NEW DELHI
Rahul Gandhi, leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, on Thursday again requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit violence-hit Manipur and urge the Union and State governments to work towards a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict at the earliest. > PAGE 6

PM calls for 'secular civil code' in Independence Day speech

In his 11th successive address to the nation from the Red Fort, Modi seeks to do away with a 'communal civil code' and end discrimination on the basis of religion; he flags issue of women's safety, says forces of anarchy want to destabilise country

Nistala Hebbar
NEW DELHI

In his 11th successive Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday gave a renewed push to the BJP's ideological aim of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), re-emphasising the idea as a "secular civil code" enshrined in the Constitution and a way of ensuring equality before the law for all.

"The Supreme Court has repeatedly discussed a Uniform Civil Code in India. A large section of the country believes, and it is true that in the civil code, what we have is a communal civil code. The need of the hour is a secular civil code. Only then will we be free of discrimination on the basis of religion. It is our duty to fulfil the vision of our Constitution makers," the Prime Minister said.



National narrative: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the nation at the Red Fort on 78th Independence Day. > PAGE 11

Besides the UCC, a large part of the PM's customary address touched on several contemporary issues that packed a strong criticism of the Opposition. Without naming the West Bengal government and the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, Mr. Modi flagged the issue of women's safety.

"Our mothers, sisters and daughters are being tortured. There is anger among the people and I can feel it. The country, so-

NDA allies strike a cautious note

NEW DELHI
The Janata Dal (U) and Telugu Desam Party, key allies of the ruling NDA, struck a cautious note on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal for a "secular civil code". Both parties have not supported the idea in the past. > PAGE 5

tempt to destabilise Indian markets.

He reiterated his commitment to fighting corruption and deplored what he termed the tendency in some quarters to celebrate corruption. He added that he was prepared to pay the price for going after corruption and the corrupt.

Call for peace
On Bangladesh, the PM struck a pragmatic note. "As a neighbouring country, I understand the worry

regarding what happened in Bangladesh. I hope that the situation becomes normal there very soon. We are committed towards peace and have the best wishes for Bangladesh's development journey," he said.

The PM also touched on the controversy surrounding the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for medical education, promising that his government would be increasing the seats available for medical education across the country by 75,000.

While delivering his longest Independence Day speech in 11 years (at 98 minutes), Mr. Modi also presented a report card of his government of the past 10 years, lauding the pace and intent of reforms undertaken by it.

MORE REPORTS
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FREEDOM NOTES
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Mob attack fails to quell doctors' fight for justice in Bengal

Hours after a mob vandalised their protest site at the emergency ward of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital (RGKMCCH) here in the early hours of Thursday, junior doctors, students and nurses continued their agitation against the rape and murder of a woman doctor on duty.



In shambles: A ward of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, which was vandalised by unidentified persons on Thursday. > PAGE 11

Even as thousands of people in Kolkata and beyond participated in "Reclaim the Night" protests, about one hundred intoxicated persons stormed into the hospital's premises soon after midnight. They vandalised the protest site, stripping down posters and destroying hospital property, including stocks of medicines, ventilators, stretchers, and beds.

The Kolkata Police have arrested twelve people in connection with the mob violence. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee blamed the attack on "politically motivated outsiders who wish to create issues in the State" and urged the protesting doctors to return to work.

"Call for strong security"
Junior doctors, medical paramedics at the RGKMCCH and other hospitals across the State have been protesting for the last week, demanding justice for the doctor's death and safety measures at hospitals. After the vandalism, protesting doctors rebuilt the site of the agitation on Thursday and continued sloganeering. Their protests intensified with the arrest of the newly appointed principal of RGKMCCH,

Later in the evening, the principal addressed the press and agitating doctors and assured them that security had been heightened at the hospital's premises. Ms. Pal said, "If you know anything, please tell me. I don't know anything about them."

"When the mob arrived, some of the police personnel swarmed into the gynaecology ward and asked us if they could hide amongst us. They even requested us for civilian clothes," recalled one of the protesting nurses. "They are supposed to protect us, but we ended up protecting them. Higher authorities did not do anything to protect us."

"The scene of the crime is [a] Seminar Room which is intact and has not been touched," the Kolkata Police said in a post on X. Ms. Banerjee told local media that the mob "viciously attacked the police. A Deputy Commissioner was found unconscious due to injuries to his head. The police did not wish to resort to violence, so they took a peaceful stance".

The Chief Minister added that she does not blame the protesting doctors, but she appealed to them to resume duty.

Hours after a mob vandalised their protest site at the emergency ward of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital (RGKMCCH) here in the early hours of Thursday, junior doctors, students and nurses continued their agitation against the rape and murder of a woman doctor on duty.

Growing outcry



Up in arms: Bangladeshi protesters on their way to picket the home of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country's founding leader, on the anniversary of his assassination on Thursday. AFP (REPORT: PAGE 14)

Sri Lanka presidential poll draws 39 aspirants

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

As many as 39 presidential aspirants will contest a crucial poll in Sri Lanka on September 21, the Election Commission said on Thursday, after closing nominations.

Incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who rose to the top office through a parliamentary vote during the island nation's 2022 crisis, is seeking a mandate to take forward his government's economic reform agenda.

He is contesting as an Independent candidate on a "stability" plank.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 14

Digital platform driven by drone mapping to revive solar power scheme

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

With delays plaguing the ₹2,000-crore PM-KUSUM programme launched to boost solar energy infrastructure in agriculture, States have begun experimenting with alternative approaches to improve adoption. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Ujjwala Saraksha evam Uththan Mahabhayam (PM-KUSUM) envisages setting up 100 GW of solar power plants in farmer-owned land, installing 14 lakh solar pumps, and solarising 15 lakh grid-connected agricultural pumps.

As of June, only 256 MW of power plants, 3,97 lakh solar pumps and 13,500 solarised pumps have been installed. The low uptake has forced the government to push the scheme's deadline to 2026.

A lot of challenges
A key hurdle is the unavailability of suitable land. Solar power in India has grown on the back of utility-scale power projects in Gujarat and Rajasthan where vast tracts of deserts and uncultivable land are suitable for setting up power plants.

With agricultural land, it is often a challenge to find



A key hurdle hindering the programme is the lack of suitable land. GETTY IMAGES

enough parcels of land that can be 'pooled' together and made available to a power project developer, said Saurabh Kumar, Vice President-India, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). The latter is a collaboration of the IKEA Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund,

and works on clean energy adoption and financing the transition away from fossil fuel in developing countries.

Drone technology
"We have been working with the Rajasthan government by developing a digital platform that uses drone technology to map land parcels. While this is information that is available to the government, often there is little institutional capacity to actually execute projects," said Mr. Kumar. "We connect with land and power developers."

"As of date, 12.3 MW has

already been installed in Rajasthan. The plan is to touch 100 MW in 2024," said Mr. Kumar. Plans are afoot to apply this approach in Maharashtra as well, he added.

The digital platform allows tracking the scheme's progress in real-time allowing for "prompt corrective actions and provides a level of oversight crucial for the successful deployment of large-scale solar projects, where delays and cost overruns can have significant repercussions."

Farmers willing to set up solar modules on their

lands are paid rent by the power project developer. "GEAPP looks to ensure that landowners receive fair compensation with lease rates linked to prevailing market rates and adjusted for inflation. GEAPP's digital solutions and the ground support have helped mitigate these issues, enabling Rajasthan to lead in achieving its renewable energy targets," the document notes.

According to the Ministry for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), 256 MW installed national-capacity of 200 MW of power capacity is situated in Rajasthan alone.

Digital platform driven by drone mapping to revive solar power scheme

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

With delays plaguing the ₹34,000-crore PM-KUSUM programme launched to boost solar energy infrastructure in agriculture, States have begun experimenting with alternative approaches to improve adoption. The Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) envisages setting up 100 GW of solar power plants in farmer-owned land, installing 14 lakh solar pumps, and solarising 35 lakh grid-connected agricultural pumps.

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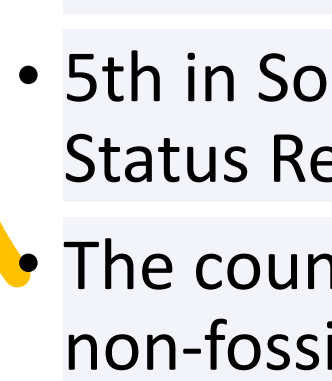
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Farmers willing to set up solar modules on their

lands are paid rent by the power project developer. “GEAPP looks to ensure that landowners receive fair compensation, with lease rates linked to prevailing market rates and adjusted for inflation. GEAPP's digital solutions and on-ground support have helped mitigate these issues, enabling Rajasthan to lead in achieving its renewable energy targets,” according to the document. According to the Ministry for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), of the 256 MW installed nationally, nearly 200 MW of solar capacity is situated in Rajasthan alone.

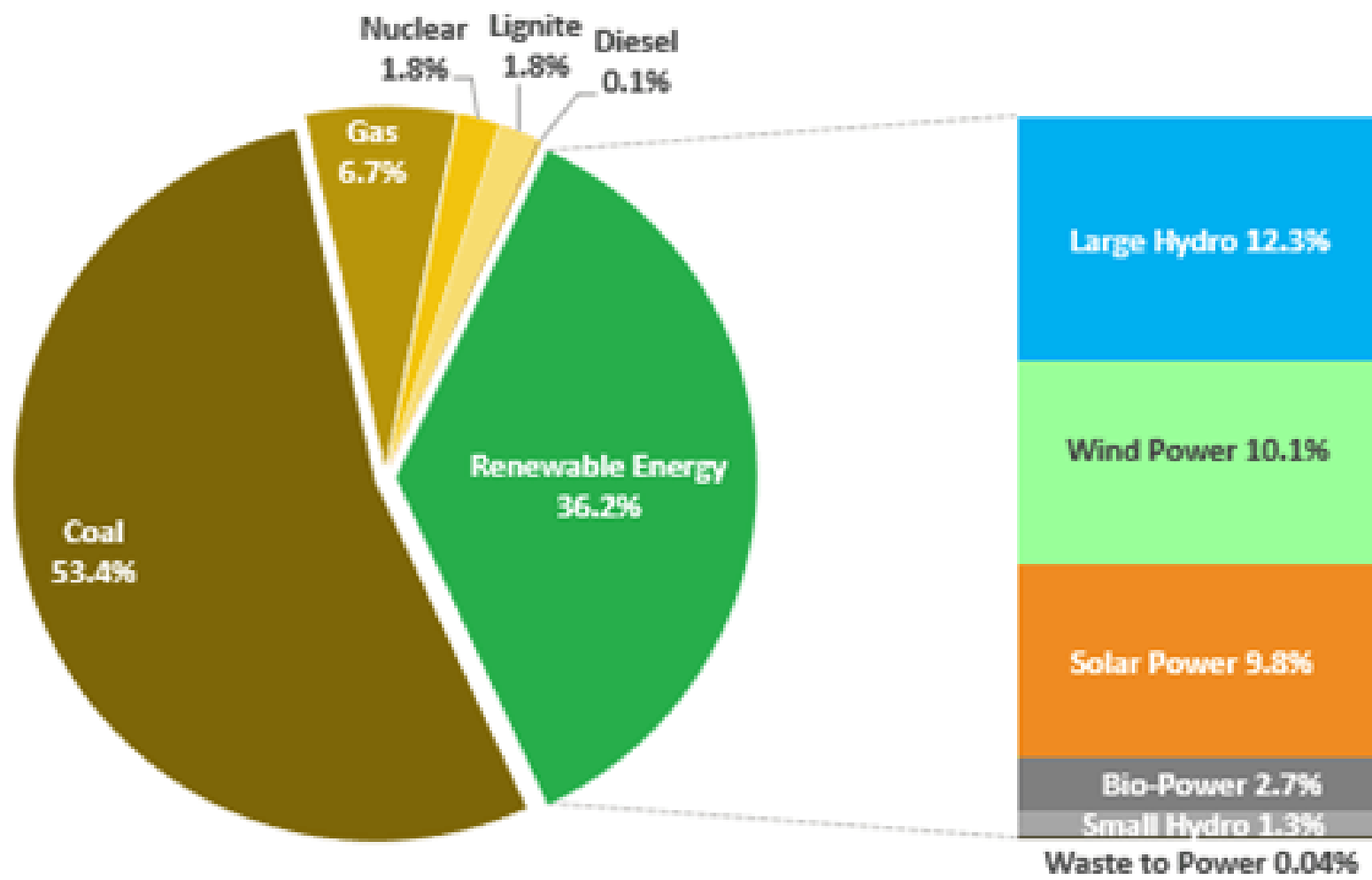


- **Creating a Sustainable World**

- India is the 3rd largest energy consuming country in the world.
 - India stands 4th globally in Renewable Energy Installed Capacity (including Large Hydro),
 - 4th in Wind Power capacity &
 - 5th in Solar Power capacity (as per REN21 Renewables 2024 Global Status Report).
 - The country has set an enhanced target at the COP26 of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy by 2030.
- 

India - Cumulative Installed Power Capacity Mix (%)

Renewables (including Large Hydro) comprise ~36.2% of India's total installed capacity, with solar accounting for ~9.8%. Among renewables, solar accounts for ~27.2% of the installed capacity



Renewable energy sources have a combined installed capacity of 150+ GW.

As of May 2024, Renewable energy sources, including large hydropower, have a combined installed capacity of 195.01 GW.

The following is the installed capacity for Renewables:

- Wind power: 46.65 GW
- Solar Power: 85.47 GW
- Biomass/Co-generation: 10.35 GW
- Small Hydro Power: 5 GW
- Waste To Energy: 0.59 GW
- Large Hydro: 46.92 GW

India has set a target to reduce the carbon intensity of the nation's economy by less than 45% by the end of the decade, achieve 50 percent cumulative electric power installed by 2030 from renewables, and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

India aims for 500 GW of renewable energy installed capacity by 2030.

PM KUSUM

Objectives

- **Component-A:** For Setting up of 10,000 MW of Decentralized Grid Connected Renewable Energy Power Plants on barren land.
- **Component-B:** For Installation of 17.50 Lakh stand-alone solar agriculture pumps.
- **Component-C:** For Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid Connected Agriculture Pumps.

Features

- Aimed at ensuring energy security for farmers in India,
- Honour India's commitment to increase the share of installed capacity of electric power from non-fossil-fuel sources to 40% by 2030.

Significance

- The scheme will open a stable and continuous source of income to the rural land owners by utilisation of their dry/uncultivable land.
- The solar pumps will save the expenditure incurred on diesel for running diesel pump.



PM-KUSUM Programme:

The ₹34,000-crore PM-KUSUM programme was launched to boost solar energy infrastructure in agriculture.

The programme aims to set up 100 GW of solar power plants in farmer-owned land, install 14 lakh solar pumps, and solarize 35 lakh grid-connected agricultural pumps.

Due to delays and low uptake, the government has extended the scheme's deadline to 2026.

- **Challenges:**


- A significant challenge is the unavailability of suitable land for solar power projects.
- Utility-scale solar power projects have largely been successful in Gujarat and Rajasthan due to the availability of large tracts of uncultivable land.
- Finding enough contiguous agricultural land to pool together for solar power development is difficult.

- **Use of Drone Technology:**

- In response to the land challenges, states have started using a digital platform driven by drone mapping to identify suitable land parcels for solar projects.
- The platform, developed in collaboration with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP), IKEA Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Bezos Earth Fund, tracks the scheme's progress in real-time.
- It provides oversight crucial for the deployment of large-scale solar projects and allows for prompt corrective actions.



- **Implementation in Rajasthan:**

- Rajasthan has been a significant focus for implementing the drone technology-driven platform.
 - As of the current date, 12.3 MW of solar power has been installed in Rajasthan, with plans to reach 100 MW by 2024.
 - The approach is also planned for Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- 

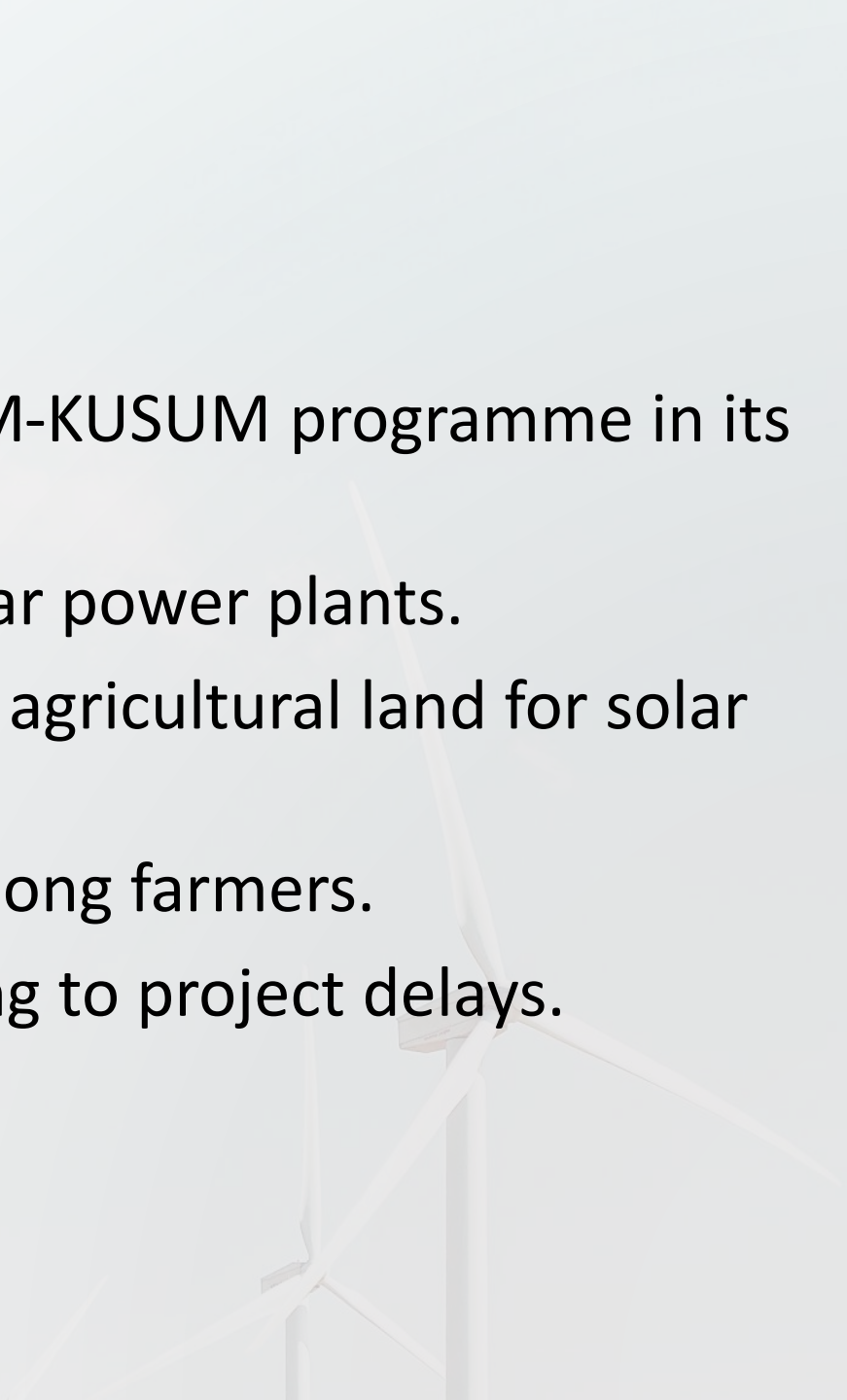
- **Benefits for Farmers:**

- Farmers who allow solar modules on their land are paid rent by power project developers.
- Lease rates are linked to prevailing market rates and adjusted for inflation.
- This setup helps farmers earn additional income while contributing to renewable energy targets.

National Impact:

Nearly 200 MW of the 256 MW of solar capacity installed nationally under the PM-KUSUM scheme is situated in Rajasthan.

The digital solutions and on-ground support provided by GEAPP have been instrumental in achieving these results.

- What is a major challenge faced by the PM-KUSUM programme in its implementation?
 - a) Lack of financial resources to install solar power plants.
 - b) Difficulty in finding suitable contiguous agricultural land for solar power projects.
 - c) Insufficient demand for solar power among farmers.
 - d) Overabundance of available land leading to project delays.
- 

At I-Day event, Karnataka CM says 5 guarantees will continue for 5 years

Each family receives financial assistance of ₹4,000 to ₹5,000 a month through these schemes. Karnataka is the only State implementing such a programme similar to developed countries and the government is proud of it, asserts Siddaramaiah

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Pointing to rest speculations about the State government planning to stop the five guarantee schemes or tweaking them with more exclusionary clauses, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said they would be continued for the full term of his government.

"We will give a befitting reply through economic growth of Karnataka to those who made the prophecy that the State will go bankrupt through these schemes," he said, during his Independence Day address here, in response to allegations that the guarantee schemes had come at the cost of development works and financial prudence by the government.



Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah during the Independence Day event in Bengaluru on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR

"These schemes have brought relief to the lives of

people who have suffered due to the rising financial inequality. On the one hand, our government is giving impetus to the redistribution of wealth through these schemes and, on the other, we have

taken up programmes for sustainable economic development of the State with equal commitment," he asserted.

Through the five guarantee schemes — Gruha Lakshmi, Shakti, Gruha Jyothi, Anna Bhagya, and Yuva Nidhi — each beneficiary family receives direct and indirect benefits amounting to an average of ₹4,000 to ₹5,000 a month. "This is the concept of universal basic income, which provides financial assistance to poor families. Karnataka is the only State implementing such a programme in a big way, which is being implemented in developed countries

to help the poor and we are proud of it," he said.

Innovations in future
Pointing out that the State is all set to make innovations and help these beneficiaries further, he said, "We are providing ₹2,000 to every woman head of the beneficiary families. We are thinking of helping them organise as Street Shakti women's self-help groups."

He said women have already availed of 270 crore free trips under the Shakti scheme and saved around ₹6,541 crore. Under Gruha Lakshmi, ₹25,259 crore had been transferred 1.2 crore women.



Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at the Raj Bhavan on Thursday. R. RAJU

T.N. CM attends annual Governor's reception

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and a few of his Cabinet colleagues attended the annual Independence Day 'Home' reception hosted by Governor R.N. Ravi at the Raj Bhavan on Thursday.

Mr. Stalin had boycotted 'At Home' last year over Mr. Ravi's "pro-NET" stand. However, there was no major confrontation between the Governor and the government in recent months of political parties who participated at the event.

Judges of the Madras High Court, law officers, chairpersons of tribunals, retired defence personnel, Chief Secretary Shiv Das Mesra, Director-General of Police/Head of Police Force Shankar Jwal, and senior officials of the State government were present.

Mr. Stalin held the post of Governor in high esteem and would continue to accord respect to it.

Duralimuragan, K.N. Nehru, I. Periasamy, K. Ponmudi, E.V. Velu, M.R.K. Panneerselvam, K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran, Thangam Thennarasu, and Udhayanidhi Stalin took part at the event.

Mr. Stalin highlighted a growing concern that general scientific awareness is being undermined, leading to a resurgence of superstitions, harmful customs, and outdated practices.

"As India transitions into a new era in which it excels in various domains such as literacy, education, health, manufacturing and industry, various quarters are attempting to drag the nation back into darkness by leveraging caste and communalism as divisive tools. The threat endangers our secularism and requires careful response. The erosion of scientific consciousness creates a breeding ground for sectarian tendencies, which can jeopardise national unity and integrity," he cautioned.

Mr. Stalin also held the post of Governor in high esteem and would continue to accord respect to it.

NDA govt. has put an end to lawlessness in A.P.: Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday said that Andhra Pradesh, which was in the grip of lawlessness, corruption and land grabbing in the past five years, got its freedom back with the formation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

Speaking after hoisting the Tricolour on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day here, Mr. Naidu



Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

said Andhra Pradesh suffered more due to theocratic Alliance (NDA) government than bifurcation of the State.

"People are now enjoying the fruits of free state opposed to the dictatorial

rule in the past five years," Mr. Naidu said.

Mr. Naidu asserted that his government would meet the expectations of the people, who were vexed with the "dark rule of the previous government." He alleged that the State had gone back by 30 years due to the "inefficient and corrupt rule, which was marked by land, cash, wine, mine and drug mafias."

"We are taking revolutionary steps to restore 'Brand A.P.," he said

CM says Telangana govt. committed to giving aid to farmers

P. Lakshmi Reddy
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday reiterated his government's commitment to farmers' welfare by announcing that it would extend financial assistance of ₹12,000 per year to landless agricultural labourers from this year.

"The government is preparing modalities and guidelines to implement the

Rythu Bharosa scheme transparently. The scheme will be launched based on the suggestions from farmers, agricultural labourers and intellectuals," he said in Hyderabad.

He mentioned that the government was trying to restructure the State's debts. Mr. Reddy said: "The total State debt during the formation was ₹75,577 crore, and it rose to ₹7 lakh crore by December last year."

Survey reveals high stress levels among PG medical students

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The report of the National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students-2024 has revealed that 84% of postgraduate (PG) medical students experience moderate to very high stress levels, while 64% say that workload adversely affects their mental health and well-being.

The report, based on an online survey, also showed that an "alarmed" 81% and 27.8% of undergraduate (UG) medical students and 15.2% of PG students voluntarily indicated having a diagnosed mental health disorder, and 31.2% PG students reported having had suicidal ideation.

They cited factors such as long working hours daily, continuous duty days, and inadequate infrastructure and support as the contributing stressors. "This underscores the need for effective stress management and mental health support structures within medical institutions," the report also having elicited response from 25,590 UG students, 5,337 PG students and 7,035 faculty members.

Around 19% of PG students expressed the need to alleviate stress through substance use, including tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs. There was an urgent need to take measures to educate students and implement measures to curtail stress, the report said.

With medical training presenting various challenges, including intense competition, emotional stress, financial burden, in-

terpersonal conflicts, limited personal time, and inadequate support, creating an environment conducive to mental health issues, the National Medical Commission (NMC) had formed a task force headed by Suresh Bada Math, Professor of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

Financial concerns
The study also finds a link between the high expense of medical education and its link to stress. Around 81% of students who responded to the survey felt that their stress and well-being are impacted by financial concerns.

A large majority of 72.2% find their stipend insufficient, "pointing to a critical need for review and adjustment of stipend policies."

While 68.4% said they receive their stipends regularly, 41.6% do not, indicating potential areas for improvement. Nearly 50.7% of the PG students said they have financially dependent family members. Financial stress is a significant issue of UG students as well. Educational loans or debt are held by 27.2%, and among them 32.7% said they feel extreme or significant pressure about repayment. Close to half the PG students surveyed, at 45%, expressed a need for more than 60 hours a week with stipend not getting reduced weekly off. About 38% of the PGs reported not having adequate time to rest, while 57% stated that they had to work off from duty as per NMC regulatory provisions.

Rush hour



Festive mood: People crowded the Krishna Rajendra Flower Market in Bengaluru on Thursday on the eve of the Varamahaishkmi festival. Many shoppers purchased flowers, fruits and vegetables ahead of the festival. K. MURALI KUMAR

Indian astronomers find new method to predict amplitude of next solar cycle

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have found a new method to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle. Besides, their research can also help in space weather forecasting.

"The intricacies of the solar cycle and forecasting space weather are important areas of current research, including in India."

What is space weather?
"The main components of

space weather are the solar wind, coronal mass ejections and solar flares. They can compress the magnetosphere of the Earth and trigger geomagnetic storms, which can affect power transmission, damage spacecraft electronics,

and threaten the lives of astronauts. Thus, space weather is a profound influence on modern civilization," said the Department of Science and Technology. Astronomers use many different ways to measure the strength of the next solar cycle. This includes the

oretical calculations based on dynamo models, extrapolations, precursor methods, etc.

The precursor method uses the value of some measure of solar activity at a specified time to predict the strength of the following solar maximum.

Number of sun spots
The rain further boosted the momentum of the solar discharge from uphill, straining the naturally formed dam and impairing the slope's stability. Mr. Marhal said that in the early hours of July 30, the debris outflow stretched the natural dam, forming a barrier to breaking point. It soon collapsed and the momentum of the unabating inflow of soggy mud and debris, in- terfering with the stress on the hillside, triggered the hillside slipping. The debris that was estimated 6.5 km downhill from the dam's breach. Mr. Marhal said Panchajanya method can be used in space weather forecasting.

'Dam burst effect' caused Wayanad landslide, say experts

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A team of geologists, who surveyed the landslide-hit zone in Wayanad on Thursday, said a heavy rainfall-induced "damming effect" in a densely forested and uninhabited uphill region had caused the massive earthfall that wiped out three villages at Vythiri taluk of the district on July 30. Geologist John Marhal, who heads the team of experts from the National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCES) investigating the landslide, told media persons that the group's finding was merely a "preliminary inference."

More detailed studies were under way, including soil testing and gauging seismic stability. Mr. Marhal said 570 mm of rainfall caused the forested hillside to get waterlogged. The saturated soil flowed downwards, forming a temporary "dam" at the top of the hillside.

The rain further boosted the momentum of the solar discharge from uphill, straining the naturally formed dam and impairing the slope's stability.

Mr. Marhal said that in the early hours of July 30, the debris outflow stretched the natural dam, forming a barrier to breaking point. It soon collapsed and the momentum of the unabating inflow of soggy mud and debris, interfering with the stress on the hillside, triggered the hillside slipping. The debris that was estimated 6.5 km downhill from the dam's breach.

Mr. Marhal said Panchajanya method can be used in space weather forecasting. However, a large

'India still struggling to predict disasters'

Sarath Babu George
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Despite significant advancement in scientific knowledge and discovery, India still struggles to predict natural disasters effectively enough to safeguard human lives and property, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said.

He noted that the country lacks a robust mechanism for providing definitive warnings about natural calamities, even in the 21st century. Global experience has shown that only precise forecasts, rather than general warnings, can effectively prevent disasters.

His comments assume relevance against the backdrop of the Wayanad landslide.

Mr. Vijayan highlighted a growing concern that general scientific awareness is being undermined, leading to a resurgence of superstitions, harmful customs, and outdated practices. "As India transitions into a new era in which it excels in various domains such as literacy, education, health, manufacturing and industry, various quarters are attempting to drag the nation back into darkness by leveraging caste and communalism as divisive tools. The threat endangers our secularism and requires careful response. The erosion of scientific consciousness creates a breeding ground for sectarian tendencies, which can jeopardise national unity and integrity," he cautioned.

swathes of land at Chooramala could be reclaimed for the construction of houses. He said the NCES team would submit its final report to the Kerala government.

Search continues
Meanwhile, the harrowing search for bodies of the landslide victims continues downstream Chuliyar river in Nilambur taluk in the neighbouring Malappuram district.

Speaking to mediapersons in Wayanad, Revenue Minister K. Rajan said 118 persons remained missing. Search teams were scouring the mud and debris the cascading landslide had deposited in the upstream Iruvanpuzha river and downstream Chuliyar bodies. Central and State government forces were conducting the massive search operation, guided by handlers of cadaver-detecting trained sniffer dogs and local scouts and divers.

Mr. Rajan said the search operation since the landslide yielded 212 body parts, about 173 from either bank of the Chuliyar river in Nilambur. Search teams scouring the river's banks found 80 bodies out of the total 231 recovered so far.

He said the government had divided the locality into five sectors. The search teams could cover as much ground as possible. The Minister also warned volunteers against undertaking search missions alone. He said mobile phone reception was scanty or non-existent in the forested regions abutting the disaster zone. "Volunteers could easily get lost or trapped."

Indian astronomers find new method to predict amplitude of next solar cycle

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have found a new method to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle. Besides, their research can also help in space weather forecasting.

The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory.

The intricacies of the solar cycle and forecasting space weather are important fields of current research, including in India.

What is space weather?

“The main components of



The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data. TAMILNADUTOURISM.TN.GOV.IN

space weather are the solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares. They can compress the magnetosphere of the Earth and trigger geomagnetic storms, which can affect communication and power transmission, damage spacecraft electronics,

and threaten the lives of astronauts. Thus, space weather has a profound influence on modern civilization,” said the Department of Science and Technology.

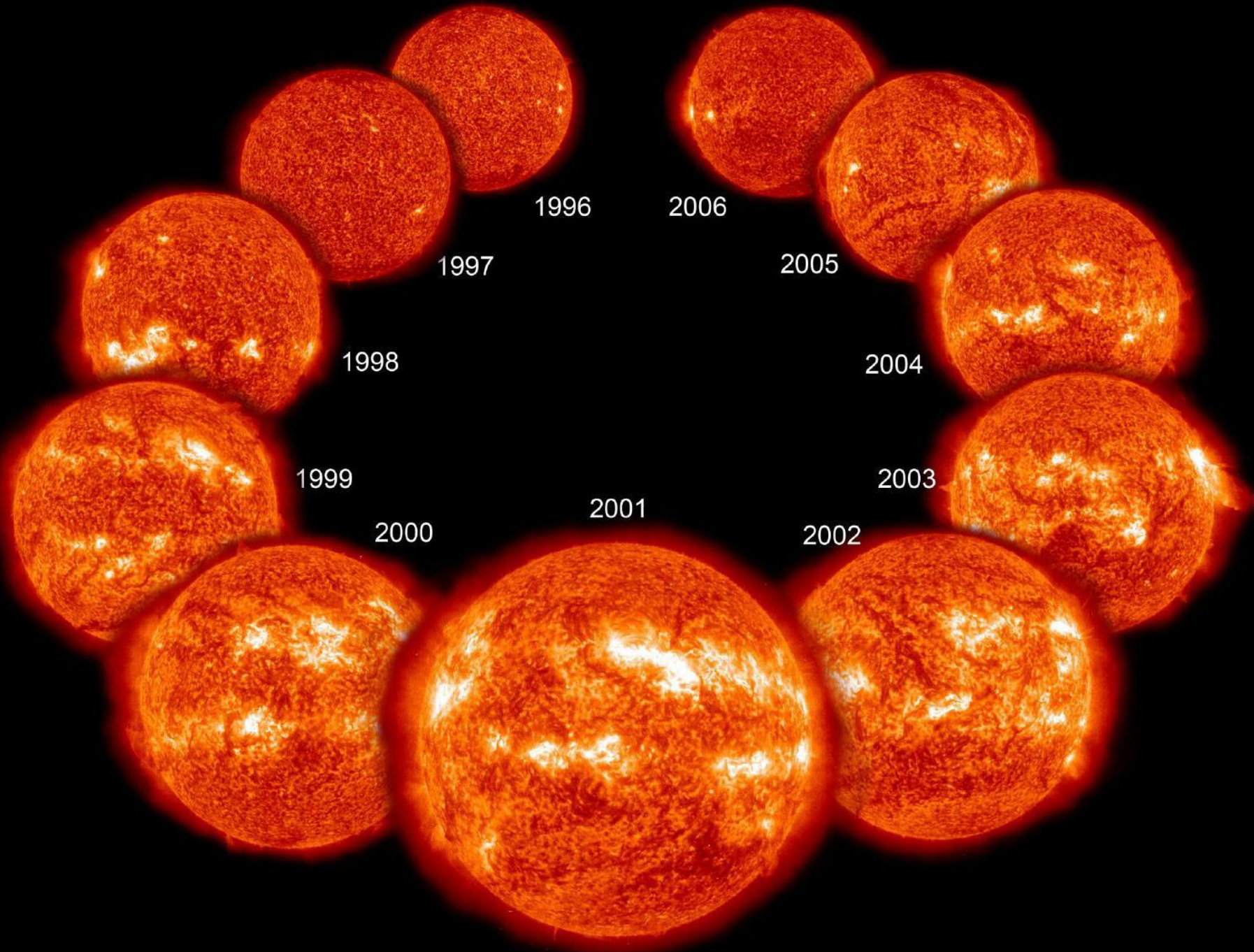
Astronomers use many different ways to forecast the strength of the next solar cycle. This includes the-

oretical calculations based on dynamo models, extrapolations, precursor methods, etc.

The precursor method uses the value of some measure of solar activity at a specified time to predict the strength of the following solar maximum.

Number of sun spots

In a recently-published work, IIA researchers discovered that the width of the supergranular cells on the solar surface during the minimum year of the solar cycle is related to the number of sunspots seen during the subsequent solar cycle maximum. This simple method can be used in space weather forecasting.



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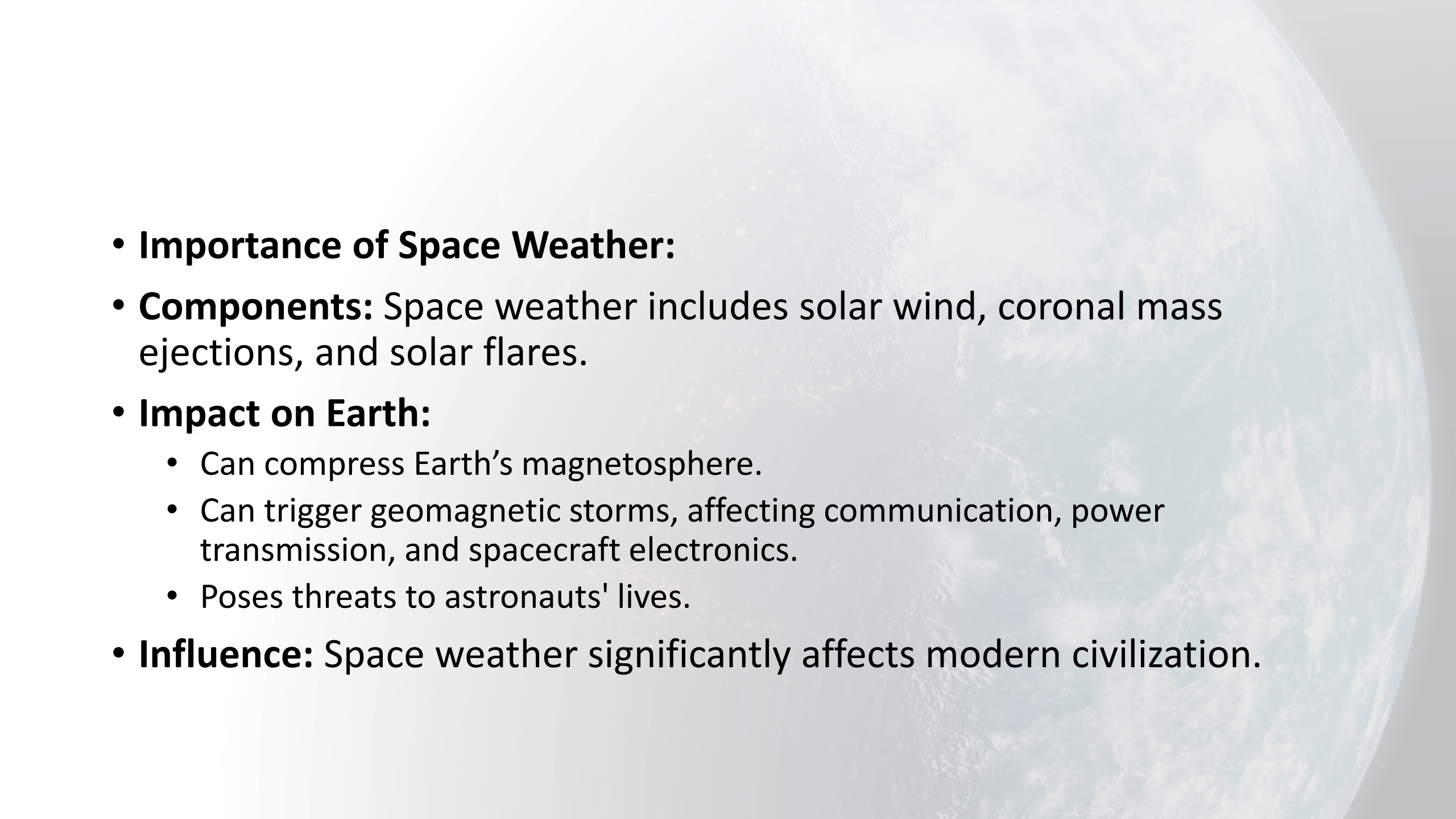


- **Research by Indian Astronomers:**

- Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have developed a new method to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle.
- The research also contributes to advancements in space weather forecasting.

Discovery and Data Used:

The astronomers discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory.

- 
- **Importance of Space Weather:**
 - **Components:** Space weather includes solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares.
 - **Impact on Earth:**
 - Can compress Earth's magnetosphere.
 - Can trigger geomagnetic storms, affecting communication, power transmission, and spacecraft electronics.
 - Poses threats to astronauts' lives.
 - **Influence:** Space weather significantly affects modern civilization.



- **Methods of Solar Cycle Prediction:**


- Astronomers use various methods to forecast the strength of the next solar cycle.


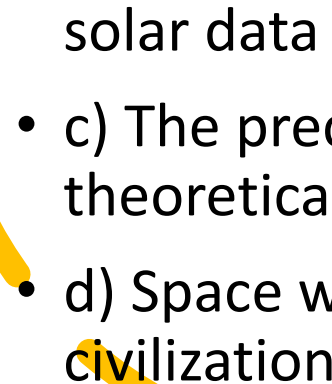
- **Precursor Method:**

- Utilizes some measure of solar activity at a specific time to predict the strength of the next solar maximum.



1. New Finding on Sunspots:

1. Recent research by IIA reveals that the width of the supergranular cells on the solar surface during the minimum year of the solar cycle is related to the number of sunspots in the subsequent solar cycle maximum.
 2. **Utility:** This method is simple and can be used in space weather forecasting.
- 

- 
- Which of the following statements is correct regarding the new method developed by Indian astronomers to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle?
 - a) The method primarily uses current solar activity data collected over the past 50 years.
 - b) The new method includes the discovery of a correlation using 100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory.
 - c) The precursor method does not consider solar activity and relies solely on theoretical models.
 - d) Space weather forecasting does not have significant implications for modern civilization.
- 

IN BRIEF



Tiger Reserve employees reinstated in Arunachal

Fifty-seven casual employees of the Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, India's easternmost tiger reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, have been reinstated three months after their services were terminated. The reinstatement order said the "engagement" was following the approval of the annual operation plan of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for the financial year 2024-25 and was "contingent on the timely release of funds." These employees were recruited under the NTCA's Project Tiger during 2023-24 to strengthen the efforts to conserve the big cat and other fauna. They were laid off citing funds constraints on May 1. This had led to a series of protests by the sacked workers and their families.

ED attaches assets valued at ₹678.48 cr. of Avantha Group

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable properties worth about ₹678.48 crore belonging to various entities of the Avantha Group owned and controlled by Gautam Thapar. The land attached under the PMLA is in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Uttarakhand. The ED said ₹1,307.06 crore had been diverted to the Avantha Group companies by taking loans. "Most of the funds have been paid without the field of agriculture and ultimately the funds paid to Avantha Group companies remained outstanding on Avantha Group," it added.

'Bomb-like objects' found in Assam after ULFA(D) warns of 'armed protest'

The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

Security forces in Assam on Thursday recovered "bomb-like objects" from several places in the State, including one near Dispur, the State's seat of power in Guwahati.

The Assam Police combed the spots where the outlawed Liberation Front of Assam (independent) claimed to have planted bombs to instigate its "armed protest" on independence Day. In an emailed statement, the outfit said it had planted bombs in 24 locations across the State and shared names with photos of 19 sites, eight of them in Guwahati. The outfit, however, said the bombs did not explode between 6 a.m. and noon because of

"technical errors". It also said the spots were made public keeping people's safety in mind. "At two places in Guwahati, suspicious articles were found which were opened by the police's bomb disposal squad. These articles do not have ignition devices inside though some circuits and

batteries were spotted. The substance inside is being sent for forensic/chemical examination," Director-General of Police Gyansendra Pratap Singh posted on X. "Similar articles have been seen at Lakhimpur, Sivassagar, Nalbari and Nagaon which have been safely disposed of," he added. Mr. Gandhi met a group of people from Manipur living in Delhi, who shared their heartbreaking struggles since the clashes broke out in the northeastern State. "They spoke of the pain of being separated from loved ones and the physical and mental toll the conflict has taken on the communities," he said in a post on X. "Out of concern for their safety and fearing retribution, they requested that

Centre launches new AI-based surveillance system to manage pests

NPSS will connect agriculture scientists with farmers; agriculturists can take a photo of infested crops or the insect using the system on their phones and this will reach scientists and experts

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday launched the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) powered by artificial intelligence (AI) to help farmers to connect with agriculture scientists and experts by mobile phones for controlling pests.

Launching the programme, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the aim was to reduce the dependence of farmers on pesticide retailers and to inculcate a scientific approach among them towards pest management. The NPSS will analyse latest data using AI tools to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.

Relaunching the system at an event at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Mr. Chouhan said, "All new developments in the field of agriculture should be beneficial for the farmers." He added that increasing yield was a priority for the Modi government. "The system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. The benefits of this technology must go to farmers," the Minister said.



Tech solution: The AI-based system will help in identifying pests and controlling them.

for the Modi government. "The system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. The benefits of this technology must go to farmers," the Minister said.

The Ministry said the NPSS would help about 14 crore farmers in the country. The Centre envisages connecting scientists with farmers using it. Farmers can take photos of the insect

using the system on their phones and this will reach scientists and experts. "Using the correct quantity of correct pesticide at the correct time is the challenge and this system will help farmers to address this challenge," Union Agriculture Secretary Deshraj Chaturvedi told The Hindu. He said it would also help in addressing the problem of using excessive pesticides. "This system will help cure diseases at the proper time using technology. It will help in accurate diagnosis and accurate treatment. This will build confidence among farmers and production will also increase. This can save the farmer's money and needs no additional funding," he said.

He added that the technology would be sent to the States and they can propagate this using their outreach programmes. "We have successfully done pilot schemes on the system and it was released based on proper trials," Mr. Chaturvedi said.

Rahul again urges Modi to visit Manipur, resolve conflict at earliest

Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi, leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, on Thursday again urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit violence-hit Manipur and get the Union and the State governments to work towards a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict at the earliest.

Mr. Gandhi met a group of people from Manipur living in Delhi, who shared their heartbreaking struggles since the clashes broke out in the northeastern State. "They spoke of the pain of being separated from loved ones and the physical and mental toll the conflict has taken on the communities," he said in a post on X.

Out of concern for their safety and fearing retribution, they requested that



His faces not shown, the Congress leader said as he shared a picture of them holding his hand.

work towards a peaceful resolution at the earliest," he said. The meeting, held shortly after Mr. Gandhi's attendance at the Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort, was a message of solidarity with the people from the northeastern State, Congress leaders said.

Those who met him shared with him their pain of being cut off from their friends and families and about the friendships that had ended as a result of the conflict. They also spoke of the problems of physical

As we celebrate Independence Day, let us reflect on the plight of Manipur, where true freedom remains elusive.

RAHUL GANDHI Leader of Opposition

Standardise pay scale for medical students, teachers, says NMC

Hindu Shajan Perappadan NEW DELHI

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has proposed that the pay scale structure of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi be adopted for interns, postgraduate and super-specialty students, and medical college teachers to ensure equity and fairness in compensation, promote job satisfaction and attract high-quality faculty and students.

The National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students of the NMC said in its report, "In alignment with UGC pay scales regulations, we propose the AIIMS, New Delhi pay scale for all medicals." It stated that standardising pay scales, retirement and rotational headship policies across UGC institutions will ensure equity and attract high-quality faculty.

Prohibiting private practice for medical teachers and providing non-practising allowances can maintain the quality and integrity of education, it added. The task force said that standardised salaries simplify administrative processes, enhance transparency, and reduce

Report recommends implementing pay and recruitment policies of AIIMS, Delhi for all

potential unfair practices such as ghost faculty. It advised that the current retirement policy should be standardised and recommended implementing a rotational headship system for department heads to introduce new ideas and practices, and prevent toxic environments under inefficient leadership.

The task force has submitted some general recommendations and those for identification of high-risk groups such as students living with mental illness. The report highlights that insufficient stipends that do not match living costs or workload, coupled with delays in payments, create financial instability for medical students. The task force has suggested constituting mentor-mentee programmes to provide guidance and professional development opportunities. "These programmes should involve regular meetings, training for mentors, and support for mentees," the report said.

75,000 new medical seats in next five years, says PM

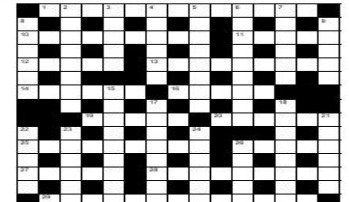
The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address, announced that the Centre would create 75,000 more medical seats over five years as part of its move to augment healthcare infrastructure.

"In the past 10 years, we have ensured that there are nearly one lakh medical seats nearly 25,000 youngsters go abroad for medical education. It astonishes me that they have to go to such places. My government recognises the growing demand for medical education in the country and it is due to this that the addition is being planned," he said.

He said the new seats would fulfil the dreams of aspiring doctors and enhance healthcare capacity.

THE CROSSWORD 14255 (set by Afterdark)



- Across 1. Prosecution's fumble on the last case gets Ruby, say (8,5) 2. Send back old artwork to edit, change (9) 3. Game with sweetest cut short? No (9) 4. Belonging to the home inside (5) 5. At the end, milk held by bean counter in ground becomes noticeable in this (9)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.pepp-link.jp/r7a

- 14. Elegant doctors carrying drugs at Sydney outskirts (6) 15. Plant supervisor in store after losing sources (5) 16. Guard at bay facing resistance (5) 17. Sticking in the corner side (6) 18. ...dummy, ran seesaw to grasp (9) 19. Lead to health resort at the other half of town (5) 20. Delight in hotel at seaside (5) 21. Issue ruler has with prince going west shown at say, between 8 pm and 10 pm (5,4) 22. Shikabily attired agents found in a place full of commercial enterprises (7,6) Down 1. Shopkeeper's trailer broke down (8) 2. Bird seen on an instrument that messes materials (5) 3. Lazy tortoise? Right away route (6) 4. Lazy tortoise? Right away route (6) 5. Plan to rewrite creations that lack essence (8) 6. Hill given to the French women are for dishes (9) 7. Organic compound with nitrogen and iodine placed in cooler in the front (6) 8. Specialist's bankrupt, broke (6) 9. Might be poor, loses head up debt almost (5) 10. One on road, cold and completely lifeless (5-4) 11. Immediately after this, desperately phone to procure grub from the centre (8) 12. Contestant at the last stage has a record after strong international advantage essentially (9) 13. Bird on horseback? Catch (6) 14. Narrow pipes, user cut in half (5) 15. Zoro active American on pub at market (6) 16. Long trailer with a corner by ferocious pet (5) 17. ...

SUDOKU

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FAITH Permanent abode

While people are destined to be born in this world due to their past deeds (Karma), scriptures explain how to get liberated. Various Acharyas help us reach Sri Vaikunta, the heavenly abode of Lord Narayana. It is called Nithya Vibuthi, and those who reach it will enjoy the divine bliss forever. Sri Anantapadmanabhachariar Swamy said in a discourse about whether the heavenly abode Sri Vaikunta would also be subject to deluge like other worlds as in Mahabharata (universal destruction), everything will disappear except God. It is enjoying Moksha (divine) in Sri Vaikunta only until the deluge Lord Krishna Himself says in the Bhagavad Gita that all the worlds of the cosmic sphere, including the world of Brahma, the God of creations, are destructible, and those who attain them are subject to return. But on reaching Him (the heavenly abode of Sri Vaikunta), the Lord says there is no return (Aatrabrahma Bhuvanebhya: Chapter VIII, verse 16). This applies to all other worlds except Sri Vaikunta. At the end of his work Sri Bhaskya, acharya Sri Ramamuja says "Anavruthe sabdath Anavruthe sabdath", "Na cha punaravarthathe" - those who reached Sri Vaikunta do not return and will have no rebirth. Sri Parasara Bhattar and Sri Vedanta Desika also emphasised the same. Our living world is called "Lesavibhuthi", created by God for His favourable activities. He is not happy without Lesavibhuthi, and hence, He undertakes creations. An Acharya says God is everything. He creates, swallows and creates again (Thene ulagil ellam).

Centre launches new AI-based surveillance system to manage pests

NPSS will connect agriculture scientists with farmers; agriculturists can take a photo of infested crops or the insect using the system on their phones and this will reach scientists and experts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday launched the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) powered by artificial intelligence (AI) to help farmers to connect with agriculture scientists and experts by mobile phones for controlling pests.

Launching the programme, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the aim was to reduce the dependence of farmers on pesticide retailers and to inculcate a scientific approach among them towards pest management. The NPSS will analyse latest data using AI tools to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.

Releasing the system at an event at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Mr. Chouhan said, "All new developments in the field of agriculture should be beneficial for the farmers." He added that increasing yield was a priori-



Tech solution: The AI-based system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. A.M. FARUQUI

ty for the Modi government. "Farmers need better seeds for increasing productivity. Our scientific community is working along with the farmers towards this," he said.

'For fast solution'

He said technology should reach the fields, and the NPSS was such an effort. "If we get to know about the pest attack at the beginning of the attack, it will

help in finding a fast cure. This system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. The benefit of this technology must go to farmers," the Minister said.

The Ministry said the NPSS would help about 14 crore farmers in the country. The Centre envisages connecting scientists with farmers using it. Farmers can take photos of the infested crops or the insect



using the system on their phones and this will reach scientists and experts.

"Using the correct quantity of correct pesticide at the correct time is the challenge and this system will help farmers to address this challenge," Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi told *The Hindu*.

He said it would also help in addressing the problem of using excessive pesticides. "This system can help cure diseases at the proper time using technology. It will help in accurate diagnosis and accurate treatment. This will build confidence among farmers and production will also increase. This can save the soil too. It is a technological platform and needs no additional funding," he said.

He added that the technology would be sent to the States and they can propagate this using their outreach programmes.

"We have successfully done pilot schemes on this system and it was released based on proper trials," Mr. Chaturvedi said.

- 
- According to a recent report, as much as 40% of the world's agricultural crops are lost to pests each year.
 - The United Nations declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health, which has been extended until 1st July, 2021.
- 



- **Impact of the Plant Pests:**

- It leaves **millions of people without enough food to eat.**
- It **adversely impacts agricultural activities** and thereby, the primary source of income for rural poor communities.
- **Invasive pests** cost countries **at least USD 70 billion annually** and are one of the **main drivers of biodiversity loss.**

To make trade safe, it is important to implement **international plant health standards and norms**, such as those developed by the **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)** and **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.

- The IPPC is a **plant health treaty** signed by over 180 countries including India.
- It aims to **protect the world's plant resources** from the spread and introduction of pests, and promote safe trade.

There is a need for **more research as well as investment** in strengthening national plant health systems and structures.

Launch of National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS):

The Union government launched the NPSS, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), to assist farmers in managing pests.

The system allows farmers to connect with agriculture scientists and experts via mobile phones.



- **Objective of the NPSS:**

- Reduce dependence on pesticide retailers.
- Encourage scientific approaches to pest management among farmers.

- **Functionality of the NPSS:**

- Farmers can take photos of infested crops or insects using their mobile phones.
- These photos are then sent to scientists and experts for analysis and advice.

- **Benefits of the NPSS:**
- **Accurate Pest Control:** The system helps in identifying pests and provides guidance on the correct use of pesticides.
- **Increased Productivity:** By addressing pest attacks early, the system aims to enhance crop yield.
- **Cost-Effective:** It offers a technological platform without the need for additional funding, saving costs in pest management.

- **Impact on Farmers:**

- Helps farmers use the correct quantity of pesticides at the right time.
- Contributes to reducing the misuse of pesticides and helps in disease management.

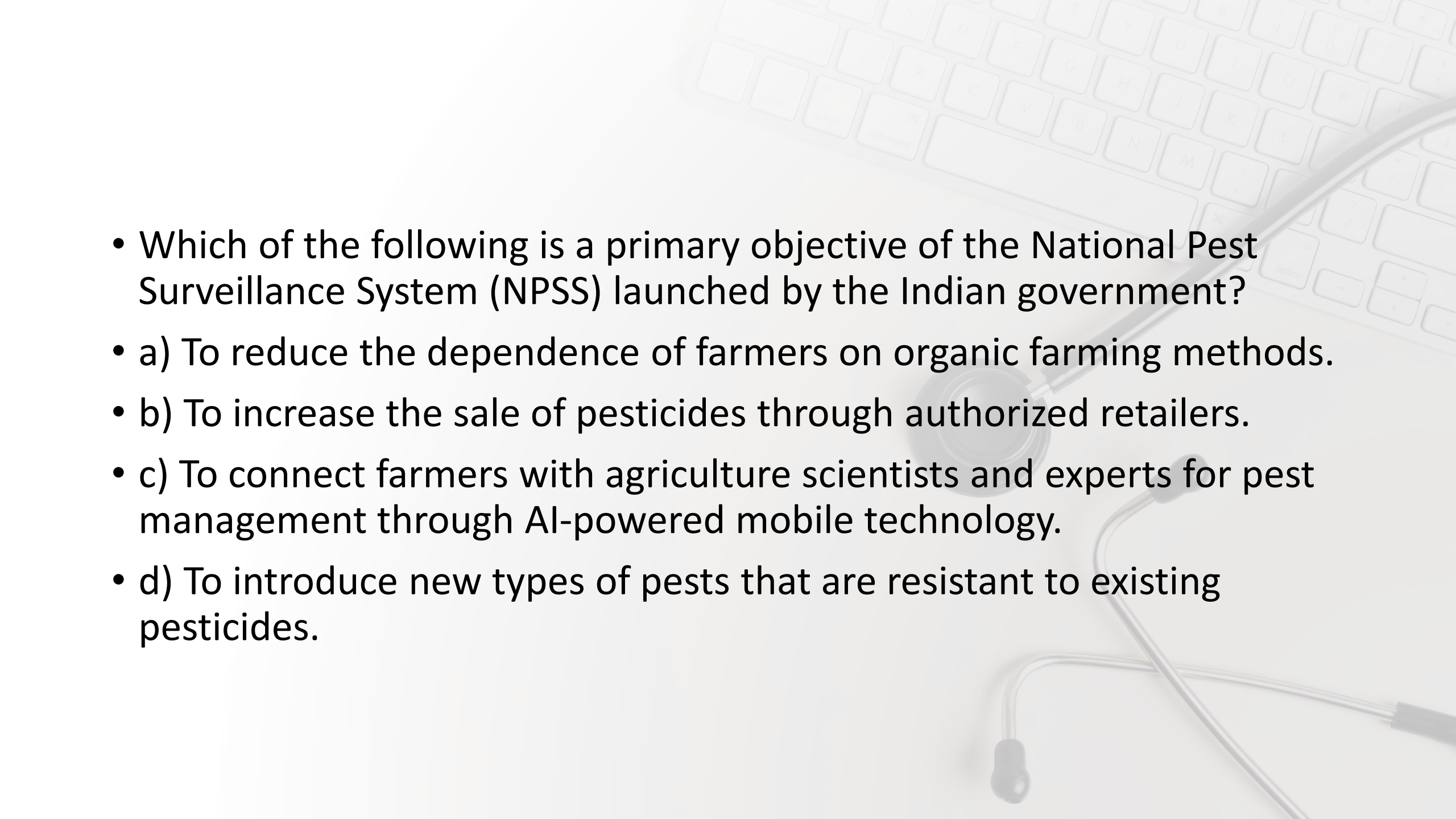
- **Government's Vision:**

- The system is expected to benefit about 14 crore farmers across India.
- The Centre plans to extend the system to the states, which will further promote it through outreach programs.

The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of small, light-colored silhouettes of people holding hands in a circle, arranged in a larger circular formation. This pattern is centered and serves as a decorative backdrop for the text.

1. Pilot and Implementation:

1. The NPSS has undergone successful pilot schemes and trials, ensuring its effectiveness before full-scale implementation.

- 
- Which of the following is a primary objective of the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) launched by the Indian government?
 - a) To reduce the dependence of farmers on organic farming methods.
 - b) To increase the sale of pesticides through authorized retailers.
 - c) To connect farmers with agriculture scientists and experts for pest management through AI-powered mobile technology.
 - d) To introduce new types of pests that are resistant to existing pesticides.

'WANT 1 LAKH YOUTH IN POLITICS, 75,000 NEW MEDICAL SEATS IN 5 YEARS'

PM's UCC pitch: Time for secular civil code, lived 75 yrs with communal one



A military helicopter showers flower petals during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day address to the nation from Red Fort on Thursday. *Photo: Rishabh*

To say we had a communal civil code until now is insult to Ambedkar: Cong

ASAD REHMAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

INDIA BLOC allies Congress and the BJP criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for seeking a "secular civil code" in his Independence Day speech Thursday, while calling the existing one "communal" and "discriminatory".

The Congress called the PM's remarks "a gross insult" to Dr B R Ambedkar, while the BJP said Modi's address seemed like "an election speech".

EC visits over, J&K, Haryana may go to Assembly polls together

TRITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

WITH THE three election commissioners having visited only Jammu & Kashmir and Haryana so far, and with the Supreme Court's September 30 deadline for holding elections in the Union Territory fast approaching, J&K and Haryana, by all indications, could go to polls together first.

Elections to the State Assemblies of Maharashtra, Haryana and J&K had been due in the next six months. The terms of the Maharashtra and Haryana Assemblies end in November, and J&K's in January next year.

J&K, which has been without an elected House for five years now, is also due for polls since the Supreme Court, while upholding the abrogation of Article 370 in December last year, set a deadline of September 30, 2024, for holding elections.

Californium that wasn't: How 'radioactive' metal kept Bihar cops on edge

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, AUGUST 15

ON AUGUST 9, the police in Bihar's Gopalganj seized what they thought was a highly unusual and dangerous contraband: 50 grams of the highly radioactive metal Californium, estimated to be worth Rs 850 crore. Soon, atomic scientists dressed in special anti-radiation suits, protective gloves and nuclear grade half masks de-

scented on Gopalganj and isolated it, only to eventually discover that it might not be radioactive at all.

Californium is a silvery-white synthetic radioactive metal with the atomic number 98 on the periodic table. First made in 1950 at Berkeley, California — from where it derives its name — Californium is a very strong neutron emitter and is used in portable metal detectors for identifying gold and silver ores, to identify water and oil layers in oil wells, and detect metal fatigue and stress in aeroplane parts. It is highly radioactive and prohibitively expensive, with one gram costing Rs 17 crore in the international market.

On Bangladesh, says its development will always have India's good wishes

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

INVOKING THE Constitution and the Supreme Court, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch Thursday for the Uniform Civil Code, saying it's time the country moves towards a civil code that is "secular" and not "communal" and "discriminatory" as the existing one.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 78th Independence Day, the Prime Minister said, "In our country, the Supreme Court has repeatedly discussed the Uniform Civil Code. Many times orders have been given because a large section of the country believes — and there is truth in it — that the Civil Code that we are living with is actually a kind of Communal Civil Code, a discriminatory Civil Code."

Wary BJP allies wait and watch, underline need for 'consensus'

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & NIKHIL HENRY
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi called for a "secular civil code" for the country, in place of the existing "communal civil code", during his Independence Day speech Thursday, BJP allies TDP, JDU (U) and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) reacted with caution.

Thought she might die, says Vinesh's coach on weight-cut before final

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, AUGUST 15

VINESH PHOAGAT's coach at the Paris Games, Wally Alos, has said he feared that the wrestler might die by the end of the five-and-a-half-hour of intense weight-cut the night before the Olympic final.

Experts from FSI teams at Kachalkote Police Station in Gopalganj, Bihar, found lump

Experts from FSI teams at Kachalkote Police Station in Gopalganj, Bihar, found a lump and wrapped it in carbon paper.

The last of BJP's 3 promises

FOR THE BJP, the UCC is the last of those promises that needs to be fulfilled — its goals of ending JRC's special status under Article 370 and constituting a National temple in Ayodhya have been attained. Party-ruled Uttarakhnd's UCC is to serve as a template for other states under the party until a nationwide law is enacted.

years of the Constitution, and the spirit of the Constitution also tells us to do what the Supreme Court of the country tells us.

Business as Usual

By UNNY

Letting you see inside, but, in your own language.

AFTER THE late-night vandalism at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, police on Thursday arrested 12 people and are looking for dozens of others who were part of the mob.

India put all eggs in one (Hasina) basket, needs to shift policy: BNP

SHUBHAJIT ROY
DHAKA, AUGUST 15

UNDERLINING THAT India's foreign policy mandarins in South Block made a "massive policy blunder" and "policy blunder" by deciding to put "all its eggs in one basket", top BNP leader and former Cabinet minister Abdul Muhsin Khan said, "We believe in 'immediate need' for India to have a "renewed look" at its Bangladesh policy in the wake of crisis" following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Damaged medical equipment at the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, which was vandalised by a mob on Wednesday night.

RELATED REPORT, PAGE 6

Kolkata rape-murder: Mob targets protesters, vandalises hospital; 12 arrested so far

Protesting doctors claim police left them when miscreants showed up

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, AUGUST 15

AFTER THE late-night vandalism at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, police on Thursday arrested 12 people and are looking for dozens of others who were part of the mob.

On Thursday morning, the emergency building took the brunt of what had transpired the previous night. The police ran faster than the mob, with large numbers of aged medical equipment, broken beds, and destroyed medicines scattered across rooms on the ground floor, while doctors and nurses could be seen trying to erect their protest tents again.

We did all we could, can't shoot people: Police chief

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, AUGUST 15

HOURS AFTER a violent mob stormed into R G Kar Medical College and Hospital and vandalised the area where people were protesting against the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the institute, Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal said the police did "everything we could, but we can't shoot the people".

Experts from FSI teams at Kachalkote Police Station in Gopalganj, Bihar, found lump

Experts from FSI teams at Kachalkote Police Station in Gopalganj, Bihar, found a lump and wrapped it in carbon paper.

India put all eggs in one (Hasina) basket, needs to shift policy: BNP

Underlining that India's foreign policy mandarins in South Block made a "massive policy blunder" and "policy blunder" by deciding to put "all its eggs in one basket", top BNP leader and former Cabinet minister Abdul Muhsin Khan said, "We believe in 'immediate need' for India to have a "renewed look" at its Bangladesh policy in the wake of crisis" following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Business as Usual

By UNNY

Letting you see inside, but, in your own language.

AFTER THE late-night vandalism at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, police on Thursday arrested 12 people and are looking for dozens of others who were part of the mob.

We did all we could, can't shoot people: Police chief

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, AUGUST 15

HOURS AFTER a violent mob stormed into R G Kar Medical College and Hospital and vandalised the area where people were protesting against the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the institute, Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal said the police did "everything we could, but we can't shoot the people".

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Odisha women to get one-day menstrual leave

SUJIT BISOYI

BHUBANESWAR, AUGUST 15

THE ODISHA government on Thursday announced one-day menstrual leave for the working women in both private and government sectors – a decision widely hailed by rights activists and women employees.

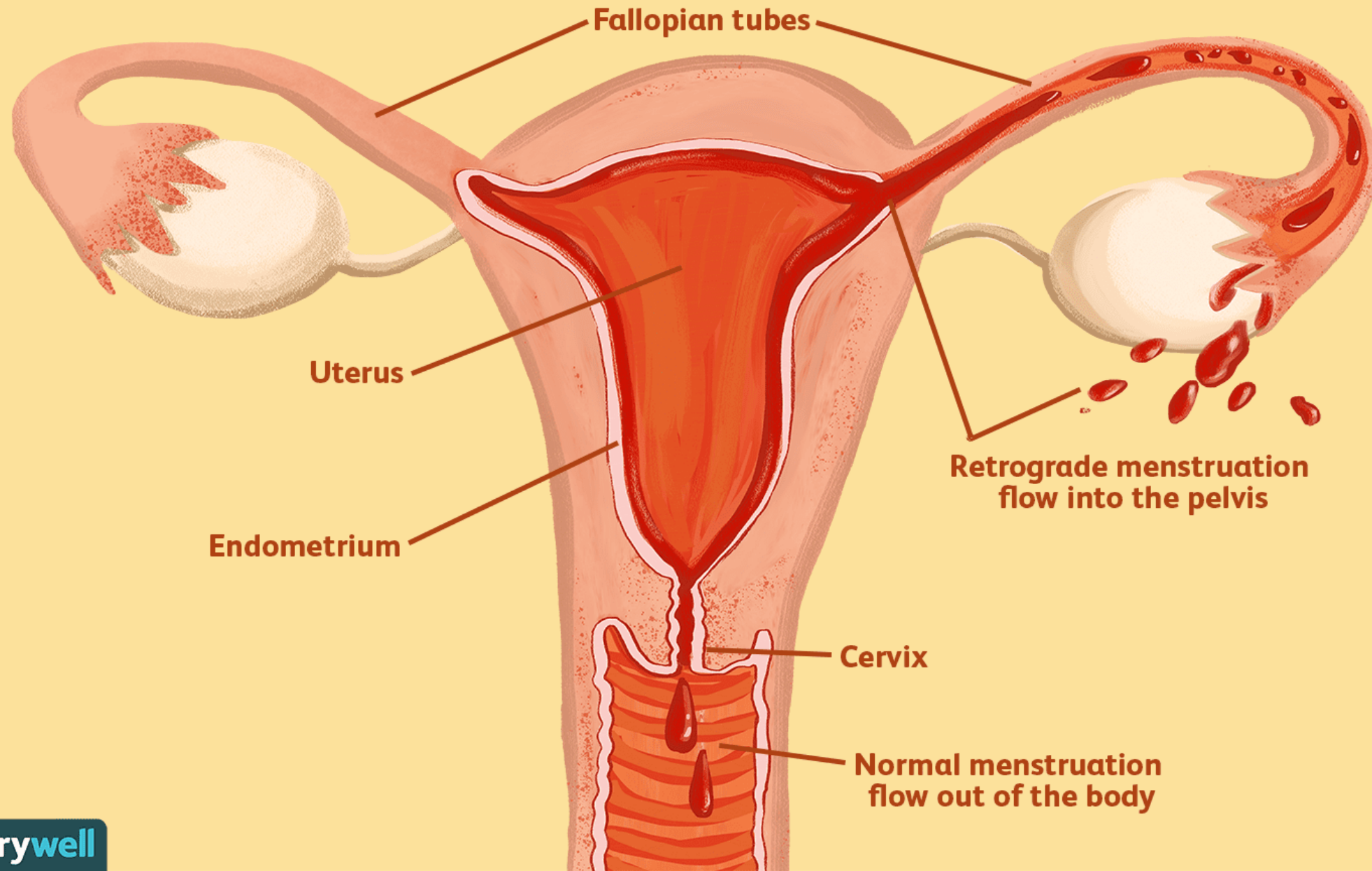
Deputy CM Pravati Parida made the announcement during Independence Day celebrations at Cuttack. “Earlier menstrual leave was not allowed. Now, it would be optional for the working women to avail leave on the first or second day of the menstrual cycle. It will be applied for both the government and private sector employees,” Parida said. The government would soon come up with detailed guidelines, sources said.

Odisha is the third state after Kerala and Bihar to bring in a menstrual leave policy.

- **What is Menstruation?**

- Menstruation, or period, is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a woman's monthly cycle.
- It is a normal process for girls and women who have reached puberty.
- Every month, girl or women's body prepares for pregnancy.
- If no pregnancy occurs, body gets rid of the lining in the uterus.
- The menstrual blood is partly blood and partly tissue from inside the uterus.
- The length of a period can be different for each person, but usually lasts for 3-7 days.

Retrograde Menstruation



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT MENSTRUATION

MYTHS

You can't get pregnant during your period.

You should avoid activities like exercise and sex when you're on your period.

Your period should last exactly one week each month.

There's one best way to deal with period blood.

FACTS

Chances of getting pregnant while on your period are slim, but they're still there.

Exercise helps relieve symptoms associated with your period.

Your body is unique, and so is your monthly cycle.


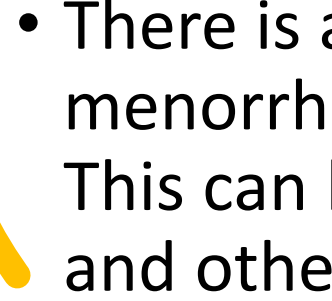
There are a lot of methods to soak up menstrual blood. Choose what works best for you.

- **What is the idea behind the Menstrual leave?**

- **Paid leaves:** Menstrual leave is a Policy of allowing women to take paid leave from work or school during their menstrual period.

- **Allows to rest:** This leave is specifically for the days when a woman is menstruating and is intended to allow her to rest and manage symptoms such as cramps and fatigue, which can be particularly severe for some women.

- **Reducing the stigma:** The idea behind menstrual leave is to help reduce the stigma associated with menstruation and acknowledge that it is a normal and natural bodily process.

- 
- The menstrual cycle can be affected by external factors such as stress, changes in temperature and altitude, and even exposure to certain chemicals and toxins.
 - This can cause changes in the length of the cycle, the intensity of bleeding, and the severity of symptoms.
 - There is also a small percentage of women who experience menorrhagia, which is an excessive bleeding during menstruation. This can be caused by hormonal imbalances, fibroids, endometriosis, and other underlying medical conditions.
- 



Advantages:



Acknowledging the pain and discomfort

Will help create workplaces more inclusive

Reducing the stigma associated with menstruation

Increase productivity

- 
- **What is the State of Menstrual Leaves in India?**
 - **Menstrual (Period) Leave:** It refers to leave options for working women to take paid or unpaid leave during menstruation, which can impair their ability to work.
 - **Implemented Policies:**
 - Bihar introduced a menstrual leave policy in 1992, offering women employees two days of paid menstrual leave monthly.
- 

- 
- 
- Kerala, as of 2023, grants menstrual leave to female students across universities and institutions and up to 60 days of maternity leave to female students over 18 years old.
 - **Corporate Initiatives:** Some Indian companies have implemented menstrual leave policies, with Zomato introducing 10 days of paid period leave annually in 2020. Other companies like Swiggy, class24 and Byjus have followed suit.

The Women's Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill in 2018, have not succeeded.

Countries Having Implemented Menstrual Leaves:

Spain, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Zambia and Vietnam.

Spain is the first European country to grant paid menstrual leave to workers, with the right to three days of menstrual leave per month, which can be expanded to 5 days.

Why latest mpox outbreak is 'emergency of international concern'

ANONNA DUTT

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

THE WORLD Health Organisation, sounding its highest level of alarm, declared mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on Wednesday. This is the second time the infection has received the designation in as many years — the outbreak between July 2022 and May 2023 was also declared as PHEIC.

The decision to sound the alarm was taken after an upsurge of cases reported from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and neighbouring countries. At least 99,176 cases and 208 deaths due to mpox have been reported from 116 countries since 2022, according to data from the WHO.

What is mpox?

Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, is a viral disease that causes a skin rash, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes, along with pox-like rashes that last for two to three weeks. It is a self-limiting disease but can lead to death, especially among children and those with weak immune systems.

While the infection has been reported in humans since 1970, it mostly affected people in the endemic regions in Africa till 2022.

What is driving the current concern?

The current concern stems from the spread of clade Ib of the MPXV, which is predominantly transmitted through sexual contact.

Organisms belonging to a clade share common ancestors. When it comes to mpox, there are two different clades: clade I and clade II, with the former deadlier than the latter.

Sexual transmission of clade I infections has not been reported previously.



to humans in close proximity. Clade Ia infections that spread this way continue to affect parts of DRC where the disease was endemic.

Now, over 100 cases of clade Ib infections have been reported in four countries neighbouring DRC — Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda — that have not reported mpox before. The numbers are likely to be higher as many with symptoms might not have been tested. This is coupled with an increase in the total number of mpox cases. More than 15,600 cases and 537 deaths have been reported so far this year alone.

"The emergence of a new clade of mpox, its rapid spread in eastern DRC, and the reporting of cases in several neighbouring countries are very worrying. On top of outbreaks of other mpox clades in DRC and other countries in Africa, it's clear that a coordinated international response is needed to stop these outbreaks and save lives," WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday.

into several distinct lineages in the human population, where it is fast acquiring many new mutations.

Is India at risk?

The first case of the more contagious clade Ib mpox infection outside Africa was reported from Sweden on Thursday. With interlinked global travel, the cases may reach other countries as well.

During the 2022 global outbreak, India too reported cases of mpox, albeit of the less deadly clade II type. Initially, infections were reported among some people from Kerala who had a history of international travel. But later even those without a history of international travel got infected in Delhi. At least 27 laboratory confirmed cases and one death was reported in India, according to the WHO data.

IHR Emergency Committee Chair Professor Dimie Ogoina said, "The current upsurge of mpox in parts of Africa, along with the spread of a new sexually trans-

mitted there, and later caused a global outbreak in 2022. It is time to act decisively to prevent history from repeating itself."

Are there vaccines for mpox?

There are at least two vaccines currently in use for mpox, which have been recommended by the WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization.

Last week, an Emergency Use Listing for mpox vaccines was triggered by the WHO, which will accelerate vaccine access for lower-income countries which have not yet issued their own national regulatory approval. This listing also enables bodies such as GAVI and UNICEF to procure vaccines for distribution in these countries.

WHO is working with countries and vaccine manufacturers on potential vaccine donations, and coordinating with partners through the interim Medical Countermeasures Network to facilitate equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and other tools, the organisation said.



Difference Between Small Pox, Chicken Pox, Mpox

Feature	Smallpox	Monkeypox	Chickenpox
Virus	<i>Variola virus</i>	<i>Monkeypox virus</i>	<i>Varicella-zoster virus (VZV)</i>
Severity	Highly severe, often fatal	Milder than smallpox, rarely fatal	Mild
Status	Eradicated in 1980	Endemic in Central and West Africa, cases emerging elsewhere	Common childhood illness, less common due to vaccination
Transmission	Highly contagious through respiratory droplets and contact with infected lesions	Spread through contact with infected animals, lesions, or bodily fluids	Highly contagious through respiratory droplets and contact with lesions
Symptoms	Fever, headache, severe fatigue, vomiting, followed by a deep-seated, pus-filled rash	Fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes, followed by a rash that progresses through stages	Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, followed by an itchy, fluid-filled rash
Vaccination	No longer needed	Not routinely recommended, may be given to high-risk individuals	Routine vaccination for children and adults who haven't had chickenpox

- **WHO Declaration on Mpox:**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) declared mpox (previously known as monkeypox) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) following an upsurge in cases.
- This is the second time mpox has been declared as a PHEIC; the previous instance was between July 2022 and May 2023.

- **Global Mpox Statistics:**

- As of 2022, there have been at least 99,176 cases and 208 deaths reported from 116 countries.
- The recent decision to sound the alarm was triggered by increased cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and neighboring countries.

- **What is Mpox?**

- Mpox is a self-limiting viral infection caused by the mpox virus (MPXV).
- Common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, swollen lymph nodes, and pox-like rashes lasting two to three weeks.
- While the infection has been present in humans since 1970, it was mostly confined to Africa until 2022.

A background image showing a rack of laboratory test tubes. The tubes are arranged in a grid, with some containing colored liquids (blue, purple, orange) and others containing clear liquids. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the text in the foreground.

- **Current Concerns:**

- The main concern stems from the spread of clade Ib of MPXV, which is predominantly transmitted through sexual contact.
- Clade Ib organisms are more deadly than other clades of the virus.
- More than 15,600 cases and 537 deaths have been reported in 2023.

- **India's Risk:**

- India reported its first case of the more contagious clade Ib mpox strain, identified in a Swedish traveler.
- During the 2022 outbreak, India had 20 reported cases, with one death.
- WHO data suggests at least 27 laboratory-confirmed cases and one death in India.



- **Vaccines and Response:**

- At least two vaccines are currently in use for mpox, recommended by WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization.
- An Emergency Use Listing for mpox vaccines was triggered by WHO, expediting access to vaccines for lower-income countries.
- WHO is coordinating with countries, vaccine manufacturers, and partners to facilitate global access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.

- Which of the following is a significant concern driving the WHO's declaration of mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)?
- a) The emergence of a new, less deadly strain of mpox that does not require urgent global attention.
- b) The spread of clade Ib of the mpox virus, which is more deadly and predominantly transmitted through sexual contact.
- c) A decrease in the global spread of mpox cases, leading to reduced surveillance.
- d) The discovery that mpox is confined only to African countries, eliminating the need for global action.

Thaksin's daughter to be next Thailand PM

BLOOMBERG
August 15

THE DAUGHTER OF former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra is now the favourite to become the Southeast Asian nation's next prime minister, a move that would signal continuity after another party member was ousted from the top job on Wednesday.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra, 37, received the backing of a majority of lawmakers in Thaksin's Pheu Thai party at a meeting on Thursday. The final decision will be taken by party executives, who plan to meet at 4 pm local time, senior party member Suriya Juangroongruangkit said.

Paetongtarn is the youngest of Thaksin's three children and the nominal leader of Pheu Thai, the biggest group in an 11-party coalition seeking to retain power after a court disqualified fellow Pheu Thai member Srettha Thavisin as prime minister.

Local media earlier reported that another party member, former law minister Chaikasem Nitisiri, 75, was the frontrunner to become the next premier.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra received the backing of a majority of lawmakers in Thaksin's Pheu Thai party

The 500-member elected House of Representatives is scheduled to hold a special session on Friday to choose a new leader after Srettha was removed from office by the nation's Constitutional Court for an ethical violation.

The appointment of either Paetongtarn or Chaikasem would signal few changes to policies pursued by Srettha's

administration, which focused on bolstering growth through looser fiscal policies and tackling the high cost of living and near-record household debt.

Pheu Thai, which is effectively controlled by Thaksin and his family, has secured the support of some of the nation's biggest pro-royalist conservative parties after a deal that brought the former leader back to Thailand following a prolonged exile. As long as the alliance holds, it has the support of more than 300 lawmakers in the lower house, enough to overcome any opposition.

Anutin Charnvirakul, leader of the second-biggest group Bhumjaithai Party and a top contender from the conservative camp, said his party would back any Pheu Thai nominee. "While it is still too early to tell, a new cabinet that is able to provide a good balance between coalition parties may stand to last the remainder of the four-year term and provide some medium-term political stability," according to Kaseedit Choornawat, an analyst at Citigroup.

Religion (2023) ^[2]	90% Buddhism 5% Islam 2% Christianity 1% no religion 1% undeclared
Demonym(s)	Thai
Government	Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monarch Vajiralongkorn • Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai (acting)
Legislature	National Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper house Senate • Lower house House of Representatives
Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sukhothai Kingdom 1238–1438 • Ayutthaya Kingdom 1351–1767 • Thonburi Kingdom 1767–1782 • Rattanakosin Kingdom 6 April 1782 • Constitutional monarchy 24 June 1932 • Current constitution 6 April 2017
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total 513,120 km² (198,120 sq mi) (50th) • Water (%) 0.4 (2,230 km²)
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 estimate ▲ 65,975,198^[3] (22nd) • 2010 census 64,785,909^[4] (21st) • Density 132.1/km² (342.1/sq mi) (88th)

GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
• Total	▲ \$1.644 trillion ^[5] (23rd)
• Per capita	▲ \$23,401 ^[5] (74th)
GDP (nominal)	2024 estimate
• Total	▲ \$548.890 billion ^[5] (26th)
• Per capita	▲ \$7,812 ^[5] (88th)
Gini (2021)	▲ 35.1 ^[6] medium inequality
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.803 ^[7] very high (66th)
Currency	Thai baht (฿) (THB)

The background of the slide features a light blue and white color scheme with a pattern of palm tree fronds. The fronds are depicted in a semi-transparent, ethereal style, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

- **Paetongtarn Shinawatra's Candidacy:**

- Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra, is now favored to become Thailand's next Prime Minister.
- She received the backing of a majority of lawmakers in Thaksin's Pheu Thai party during a meeting held on Thursday.



- **Pheu Thai Party Dynamics:**

- Pheu Thai is effectively controlled by Thaksin and his family and is the largest group in an 11-party coalition.
- The party is seeking to maintain power after the Constitutional Court disqualified Pheu Thai member Srettha Thavisin as Prime Minister.



- **Political Support:**

- Pheu Thai has secured support from some of the nation's biggest pro-royalist conservative parties after a deal that facilitated Thaksin's return to Thailand following a prolonged exile.
- The coalition has the support of more than 300 lawmakers in the 500-member House of Representatives, which is enough to overcome any opposition.



- **Upcoming Decision:**

- The House of Representatives is scheduled to hold a special session on Friday to elect a new leader after Srettha was removed from office.

- **Implications for Thailand:**

- The appointment of either candidate is expected to bring changes to the policies pursued by the previous administration under Srettha, which focused on bolstering growth through looser fiscal policies.
- There is an emphasis on tackling the high cost of living and record household debt.
- Analysts suggest that a new cabinet that balances coalition partners might ensure political stability for the remainder of the four-year term.

Fun fact

**Myth: You need to wait 24 hours
before reporting a missing
person.**

Word of the day

Sentient:

endowed with feeling and unstructured consciousness; consciously perceiving

Synonym: animate

Usage: *That boy is so sentient of his surroundings.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/sentientpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ˈsɛn ti ənt/

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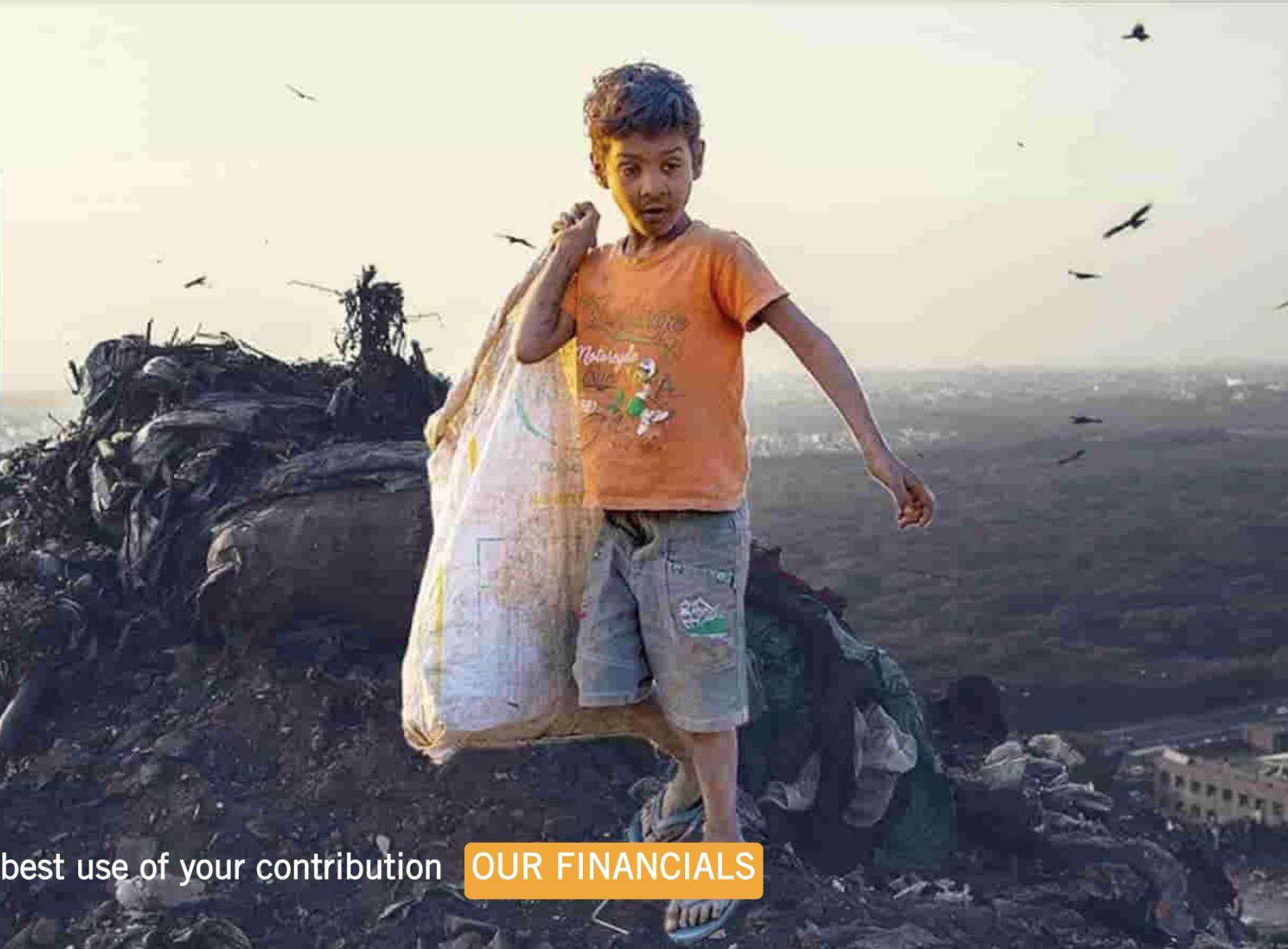
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GIVE A CHILD THE GIFT OF EDUCATION TODAY

Join Hands



We make the best use of your contribution OUR FINANCIALS

A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is low, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere. There are some red dots and an orange bar in the top left corner, likely part of a graphic design.

Thank you
guys.
