# Daily Current Affairs











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Survakumar keen to play Tests for India



Champai will join BJP on Friday. savs Himanta

Champai Soren, former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, will join Bharativa Janata Party on August 30, Jharkhand Assembly election in-charge and Assam Chief Ministe Monday, IP PAGE 5

### Modi and Biden 'share concern' over Bangladesh

NEW DELHI India and the U.S. have "shared concern" about developments in Bangladesh, said the government after U.S. President Joseph Biden and Oriem Micrister Navardes Modifi-Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to each other, » PAGE 6

### Colombo port welcomes Indian, Chinese warships

# ri Lanka's main port in plombo on Monday

Colombo on Monday welcomed India's war ship IN Mumbol, as well as three Chinese warships, piquing interest in the island nation

### India should extradite Hasina says BNP leader

DHAKA

India should extradite former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Bangladesh, demanded Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, eneral secretary of the

# At least 38 killed in 3 militant strikes in Balochistan province

Attacks take place in Musakhail, Qalat and Bolan districts; at least 21 militants were killed by security forces while 14 security personnel were 'martyred' during the attacks, says Pakistan military; it yows to bring the perpetrators to justice

# Associated Press QUETTA

unmen in south-western Pakistan killed at least 38 people in three separate at-tacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of vio-lence in the restive Balochistan province, with re-ports of other shootings and destruction in the area

as well.

Twenty-three people
were fatally shot overnight
after being taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in
Musakhail, a district in Balochistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said.
The attackers burned at
least 10 vehicles before
fleesing.

Ploughing through



gunmen killed at least nine people, including four pol-ice officers and five pas-sersby, in Balochistan's Qa-lat district, authorities said. The bodies of six peo-In a separate attack, ple were found in Bolan,

where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They al-so attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Ba-

were reported in those attacks.

The military said 14 se-curity forces personnel were "martyred" while res-needings type the attacks. ponding to the attacks. Those appeared to be in-

"Sanitisation operations are being conducted and the instigators, perpetra-tors, facilitators and abet-tors of these heinous and cowardly acts, targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice," the mil-

cluded in the overall toll

itary said in a stater Sarfraz Bugti, the Chief Minister in Balochistan, told reporters in Ouetta told reporters in Quetta that operations against the insurgents are under way, and "those who killed our innocent civilians and se-curity personnel will be dealt with a full force." Balochistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks.

## Fresh charges of harassment roil Kerala's film industry

Amid the allegations of sex-ual harassment rolling the Malayalam film industry, more women have come forward and levelled charges against prominent figures. They also ex-pressed their willingness to give evidence to the Spe-cial investigation. Team probing the allegations.

# BJP warns Kangana for comments on farmers' agitation

### The Hindu Bureau

tanced itself from the con-troversial remarks on the farmers' agitation made by its MP and actor Kangana Ranaut, declaring that she

Ranaur, declaring that she was not authorised to make such statements on the statements of the statement of not the opinion of the par-ty. Kangana Ranaut is neither permitted nor authorised to make state-

ments on party policy is-sues". "[She] has been di-rected not to make any such statements in future. The BJP is committed to following the principles of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka

slammed Ms. Ranaut.

In a post on X, Mr. Gand-hi said: "The BJP MP call-ing farmers, who sacrificed



Kangana Ranaut

700 of their comrades during the 378-day marathon struggle, as rapists and re-presentatives of foreign

"These shameful anti-

organisation of about 400 farmers' outfits, said the painful but not surpris-ing". "It is not surprising that this MP is making such utterances because it has been the long-standing policy of the BIP to insult, de nigrate and discredit the historic anti-corporate the SKM at the borders of

statement. It added that "not a sin-It added that "not a single person was killed in any violence caused by the farmers' movement during the entire period of farmers' struggle around the capital city but 736 farmers sacrificed their lives.

The SKM demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself apologise to the farmers of protes for

to the farmers of India for the "reprehensible and un-truthful" comments made by an MP of his party.

# Amid rising Statehood demands, Shah | Centre yet to list violation of ground announces 5 new districts for Ladakh

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that five new districts — Zan-skar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang — would be created in the Union Territory of Ladakh for "bolstering governance in every nook and cranny". Ladakh now has two districts - Leh and Kargil -with autonomous hill deveopment councils.

dra Modi said it was a step towards better governance and prosperity and the dis-

more focused attention, bringing services and op-portunities even closer to the people".

The decision comes days before the September 1-October 2 padayatra to Delhi planned by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), an in-fluential civil society group in the region.



'Not giving up'
Cherring Dorjay Lakruk,
co-chairman, LAB told The
Hindu, "There is no giving
up on our march to Delhi.

Our struggle will continue. The decision to create the new districts does not change our demand for a Sixth Schedule status. While there were demands from Zanskar and Nubra to create new districts, there was no such demand from the other three districts."



Statehood," Mr. Kargili ad-

ded. The inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (protec-tion of tribal areas), job re-

Making a dash: A farmer and his team of oxen plough through the mud at the Nangarni Spardha — a traditional race held at the peak of the rainy season — at Dervan village in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. RALWAISH KAKADE

# The Congress questioned the intention behind the move and asked whether the new districts would have elected councils on

the lines of Leh and Kargil gress general secretary (communications), said on social media platform X: "The elected Autonomous Hill Development Council for Leh was established in the other three districts."

Echoing this, Sajiad Kar.

servation for locals and daths should be given an Assembly, the creation of seven districts. Sabha seat for the results of seven districts addates the control of seven districts. Sabha seat for the respective of the control of seven districts of the control of the

# rules by Kuki-Zo groups: KNO leader

surgent groups, Seilen Haokip, spokesperson and senior leader of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), said in an interview

He said the Kuki-Zo-Earlier this year, the Mani-pur Assembly passed a re-solution abrogating the (SoO) pact with the United People's Prost (UPP) and (SoO) pact with the United People's Prost (UPP) and Issidians of 25 insurgent groups for instigating vio-tations of 25 insurgent The tripartite agree-ment that was signed bet-ment, the Home Ministry, and the insurgent groups in 2008 is under review fol-towing the related of the Hmar groups were not "se-cessionists". Their demand for a political solu-tion of a separate administration in Manipur was within the framework of the Constitution, and they should not be labelled "anti-India", he said, "Pre "anti-India", he said. "Pre May-3, our demand was for autonomous territorial councils within Manipur but that has been thrown out of the window by the events that started on May 3 (2023). There is a para-digm shift in our demands, taking into consideration

# the ground realities. In May, our MLAs submitted a representation to the Home Minister that we want separate administra-tion (SA). In July, August, and September, we conand September, we con-cluded that SA is now be-ing defined as Union Terri-tory with legislature. We have defined SA as UT, we will be like Delhi," he said.



tend the pact in February. Mr. Haokip said the reasons for reviewing the ground rules had not been revealed to them.

"There are seven camps each with KNO and UPF.

each with KNO and UPF.
The approved list of cadres
are 2,200. The weapons
(with cadres) are mostly
are the control of the control
"The State is proposing
a new mechanism to deal
with the violation allegations. When things were
normal, these matters
would be dealt by a joint

monitoring group, chaired by Home Ministry, with participants from the State. Since May 3, these meetings have not taken place," he noted. "There is no mechanism to deal with these ground rules violations. The viola-tions have not been listed, itemised yet. It is not re-

itemised yet, it is not re-vealed to us yet, because the platform is not there,"

'State against peace with A.K. Mishra, adviser

(northeast), Home Minis-try, in Delhi last week said Home Minister Amit Shah wanted "SoO for peace" and by unilaterally abroand by unilaterally abro-gating the pact, the State government was acting against peace. "Centre wants to talk, for which SoO has to be extended. The State did not send its representative (to extend the tripartite pact)," Mr. Haokip said.

# Amid rising Statehood demands, Shah announces 5 new districts for Ladakh

# Vijaita Singh

**NEW DELHI** 

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that five new districts – Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang – would be created in the Union Territory of Ladakh for "bolstering governance in every nook and cranny". Ladakh now has two districts – Leh and Kargil – with autonomous hill development councils.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was a step towards better governance and prosperity and the districts would "now receive more focused attention, bringing services and opportunities even closer to the people".

The decision comes days before the September 1-October 2 padayatra to Delhi planned by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), an influential civil society group in the region.

The LAB, along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been demanding Statehood since 2020.

# 'Not giving up'

Cherring Dorjay Lakruk, co-chairman, LAB told *The Hindu*, "There is no giving up on our march to Delhi. Our struggle will continue. The decision to create the new districts does not change our demand for a Sixth Schedule status. While there were demands from Zanskar and Nubra to create new districts, there was no such demand from the other three districts."

Echoing this, Sajjad Kargili of the KDA said, "Ladakh should be given an Assembly, the creation of seven districts validates the demand.".

"If there is no Assembly and if it is only being done for bureaucratic control, then it should not be a reason to divert our demand for Sixth Schedule and



**Amit Shah** 

Statehood," Mr. Kargili added.

The inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (protection of tribal areas), job reservation for locals and two Lok Sabha and one Rajya Sabha seat for the region have also featured in their demands.

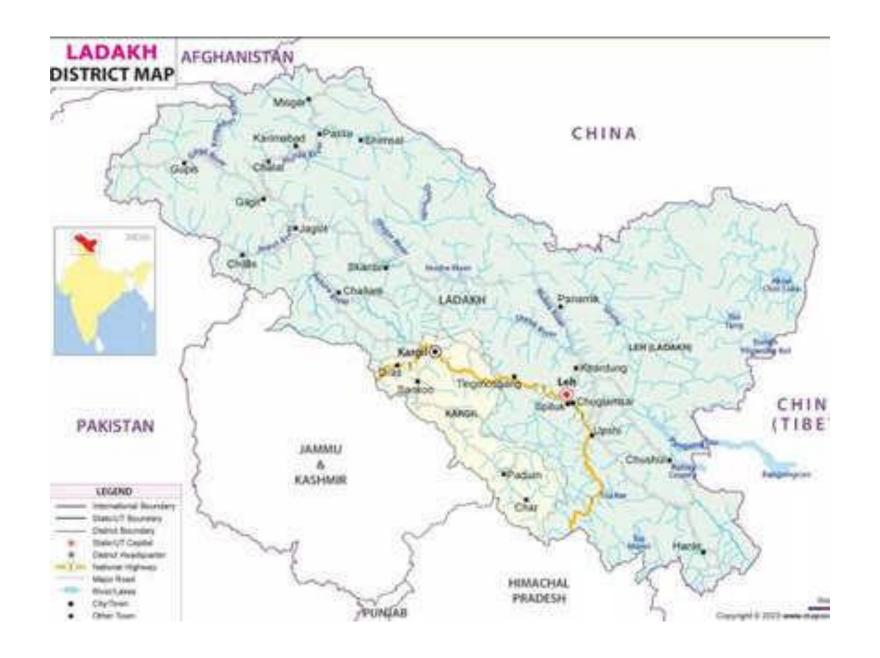
The Union Home Minister said the new districts would take the benefits meant for the people to their doorstep by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny.

People have hit the streets on several occasions demanding protection of their culture, identity, land and jobs from "outsiders"

# **Questioning intent**

The Congress questioned the intention behind the move and asked whether the new districts would have elected councils on the lines of Leh and Kargil.

Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary (communications), said on social media platform X: "The elected Autonomous Hill Development Council for Leh was established in 1995. The elected Autonomous Hill Development Council for Kargil was set up in 2003. Now 5 new districts have been formed in Ladakh in addition to Leh and Kargil. Will there be elected Autonomous Hill **Development Councils for** each of the 5 new districts as well? "



The article you've uploaded discusses the Union Home Minister Amit Shah's announcement about the creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh

. The new districts are Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang.

This decision is aimed at improving governance and ensuring that government services reach every part of the region.

Key points from the article:

**New Districts**: Five new districts have been created in Ladakh to ensure better governance and access to services. Ladakh previously had only two districts: Leh and Kargil.

**Political Reactions**: The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have been demanding statehood for Ladakh.

They have stated that while the creation of new districts is a step forward, it does not address their demand for Sixth Schedule status, which seeks to protect tribal areas, job reservations, and more significant local governance powers

# **Public Sentiment:**

People in Ladakh have expressed concerns over the protection of their culture, identity, land, and jobs from "outsiders." There have been street protests demanding these protections.

# **Protests force BJP to pare** down J&K candidates' list

Full list of 44 candidates released after meeting attended by Modi, but following vocal dissent at Jammu office, party releases names for only first phase after revising list twice in quick succession

mid protests at its Jammu office, the BJP on Monday re-vised its list of candidates for the Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir twice in quick succession after withdrawing a first list of 44 candidates. The party has now named 16 candidates – 15 in the first revised list and one in the econd – for the first phase

of polling.

The initial list had the The initial list had the names of 15 candidates for the first phase, 10 for the second and 19 for the third. The names for the second and third phases have

meeting of its Central Election Committee on Sunday night in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and on Monday morning, released the list of 44 names. Disappointed ticket aspirants and those upset by the omission of the names of the BIP State unit chief. Ravinder Raina unit chief, Ravinder Raina, and senior party leader Ka-vindra Gupta staged a prot-est at the party's Jammu of-fice, leading to the



scrapping of the list.

The initial list covered
36 constituencies in the
Jammu region and eight in
the Kashmir Valley. It
named nearly a dozen prominent leaders, including
several former Ministers
who have ionized the party. who have joined the party in the past five years. Ten former MLAs, including former Deputy Chief Mi-nister Nirmal Singh and former State party chief Sat Paul Sharma, had been

dropped. Sources in the party said Sources in the party said that fresh lists of candi-dates for the second and third phase would be out soon. "Today, we have re-leased the list for the first

phase seats, along with a list of star campaigners. We will be releasing the rest of the names by and The list now includes the name of Shagun Pari-har, 29, whose father Anil Parihar and uncle Ajit Pari-har, a senior BJP leader, were killed in a terror at-rack in Kishtwar five years

In the Chenab Valley of the Jammu region, the BJP has fielded former Ministers Sunil Sharma (Padder ters Simil Sharma (Padder-Nagseni constituency); Shakti Raj Parihar (Doda-West); Daleep Singh Pari-har (Bhaderwah); Shagun Parihar (Kishtwar); Tariq

dropped this time. In the Kashmir Valley, the BJP has fielded its vice-

president Sofi Yousu (Srigufwara-Bijbehara); Syed Showkat Gayoor Andrabi (Pampore): Arshid Bhat (Rajpora); Javed Ahmad Oadri (Shopian); Mohammad Rafio Wani (Anantnao mad Rafiq Wani (Anantnag West); Syed Wazahat (Anantnag); Veer Saraf (Shangus-Anantnag East); and Choudhary Roshan Hussain Gujjar (Kokernag).

## Champai will join BJP on Friday, says Himanta

Champai Soren, former Jharkhand Mukti Moccha (JMM) leader and former Chief Minister of Jhark-hand will Join the Bharati-ya Janata Party (BJP) in Ranchi on Friday. The Informatia Biswa Shand Darkhand & Seerbk-

Sarma, Iharkhand Assemb Sarma, marknand Assenno-ly election in-charge and Assam Chief Minister, on social media platform X late night on Monday. He also posted a photo of se-mior BJP leader and Union

nior BP leader and Union Home Minister Amir Shah with Mr. Champai during the meeting in Delhi. In the Minister of Jharkhand and distin-guished Adivasi leader of our country, Champai So-ren ji met Union home mi-nister Amir Shah ji a short while ago, he will officially join BJP on August 30, in Ranchi," Mr. Sarma said. Mr. Champai had earlier

announced that he would float a party. On August 18, Mr. Champai had shared an X post saying that he was "insulted" by the was "insulted" by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha while he was the Chief Mi-

In the video, Mr. Gandhi talked about the coming elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and mentioned how Statehood had been nister.

Earlier, Mr. Sarma had
said that he personally
wanted Mr. Champai to
join the BJP.

# 

taken away for the first taken away for the first time in Indian history. "We are clear, the way it was done, we did not like. But, now for us the princi-ple is to get the Statehood back and that includes re-presentation for the peo-

Rahul Gandhi says running

Jammu and Kashmir from

Delhi does not make sense

ple of Jammu Kashmir, and Ladakh. This status of run-ning Kashmir, running Jammu from Delhi does

Systemic issues

Systemic issues
In a message, accompanying the video on his YouTube channel, Mr Gandhi
said, "These girls are enrolled in various colleges,
studying subjects like Law,
Physics, Journalism, and

Political Science – I under-stood their expectations and challenges deeply. We spoke about the Kolkata in-cident and its broader im-plications, particularly re-garding the harassment of

Mr. Gandhi said that the students had shared their concerns over how such incidents reflect systemic is sues that need addressing and how they impacted women's safety and digni

ty across regions.
"The women of Kashmir have strength, resilience have strength, resilience, wisdom, and a lot to say, but are we are giving a chance for their voices to be heard," Mr. Gandhi added.

# Veteran Congress leader and Nanded MP Vasantrao Chavan passes away at 70

# + The Hindu Bureau

Vasantrao Chavan, veteran Congress leader and Nand-ed MP, passed away at 70 on Monday after battling a prolonged illness. He had been unwell for

several days and was undergoing treatment in a hospital in Hyderabad. In the Lok Sabha elec-

tion, Mr. Chavan secured a big victory over the BJP's incumbent MP. Prataprae Patil Chikhalikar. He had won the seat despite ill health and big desertions. including that of former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, who joined BIP ahead

van, who joined BJP ahead of the polls. Soon after the election results were out, the Con-gress veteran had thanked Mr. Ashok Chavan for de-fecting to BJP. Born in Nai-gaon in Nanded district, Mr. Vecaran Chapter were



Vasantrao Chavan

a gram panchayat member for a long time and later became a zilla parishad mem-ber in 1990 and 2002. He was elected to the Maha rashtra Legislative Council in 2002 and as an independent MLA in 2009 from dent MLA in 2009 from Naigaon Assembly seat (af-ter it was formed in 2009). Mr. Vasantrao Chavan was re-elected to the State's Lower House as Congress's candidate in 2014 elections and was also the chairman of Nanded District Central

Cooperative Bank from 2021 to 2023. 2021 to 2023.

Maharashtra Congress
chief Nana Patole and
Leader of the Opposition
in the State Vijay Wadettiwar offered condolences.

"The news of the demise of a senior leader of
the Congress party MP of

the Congress party, MP of Nanded Lok Sabha Constituency Vasantraoji Chavan is very shocking. He always gress party even in adverse aditions and brought the gress party is with the Cha-

gress party is with the Cha-van family in this grief," Mr. Patole said in a post on ACC Maharashtra in-charge and former M.A. S.A.Sampath Kumar called on the family members of Nanded Mr tributes to the late leader and spoke to the family members.

# INDIA reaches deal: 51 seats for NC: 32 for Congress; friendly fight in five

## Sandeep Phukan

the National Conference (NC) and the Congress on Monday announced a seat-Monday announced a seat-sharing formula for the Jammu and Kashmir As-sembly election. While the National Con-

ference will contest 51 seats, the Congress will field candidates in 32 seats. One seat each has been al-lotted to the CPI(M) and mu and Kashmir National Panthers Party

Tuesday is the last day for filing of nomination for the 24 Assembly consti the 24 Assembly consti-tuencies that go to the polls in the first phase on Sep-tember 18. While 16 of these seats are in the Kash-mir Valley, eight are in the Jammu region.

The formal announce-ment was made at a joint press conference at Nation-

press conference at Nation-al Conference president Farooq Abdullah's resi-



Friendly contest Jammu and Kashmir Con-gress president Tariq Ha-mid Qarra said "a friendly contest" would be held in five seats as they could not arrive at an auroement arrive at an agreement.

However, the Congress
leader was quick to add
that it would take place in a
"cordial and disciplined

manner". Though the Con-gress and the National Con-ference had announced an ference had annount or alliance last week during the visit of Congress presi-dent Mallikarjun Kharge dent Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposi-tion in the Lok Sabha Ra-hul Gandhi, serious diffe-rences emerged between the two parties over seat-sharing.

The breakthrough came

teiterating the demand for the restoration of State-hood for Jammu and Kash-mir, Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, has said it does

not make sense to run Jam-mu and Kashmir from New Delhi. Mr. Gandhi made these

remarks at an interaction with Kashmiri women dur-

ing his recent visit to Srina-gar, a video of which was

gar, a video of which was released on Monday.

"My problem with the Prime Minister [Narendra Modil] is that he does not listen to anyone. I have a problem with someone who from the beginning believes that they are right. Even if he sees something the sees with the see

it. So then that type of per-son will always create

some problem or the oth-er," Mr. Gandhi said.

ty, it does not come from

weakness," the Congress leader added.

"It comes from insecuri-

after Congress general se-

Cretary (organisation) R.C. Venugopal and senior lead-er Salman Khurshid were rushed to Srinagar to talk to the top leadership of the National Conference.

National Conference.

Along with Jammu and
Kashmir in-charge Bharat
Solanki, Mr. Venugopal
and Mr. Khurshid arrived
at the residence of Farooq
Abdullah and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah in the Gupkar area to break the dea dlock before the last day of filing of nomination ends on Tuesday for the first

Leaders of both the parties said the list of seats

ties said the list of seats each party would be con-testing, as well as the names of the candidates, would be issued soon. Election to the 90-mem-ber Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be held in three phases on Sentemthree phases on Septem-ber 18 and 25 and October 1. The results will be announced on October 4.

### RJD MP slams Manoj Tiwari for his remark on Rahul

# The Hindu Bureau

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and Buxar MP Sud-hakar Singh on Monday slammed BJP MP Manoj Ti-wari over his statement on Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. While speaking to media in Patra on Sunday media in Patna on Sunday Mr. Tiwari had said that Mr Gandhi required a mental

heck-up. Attacking Mr. Tiwari over his statement. Mr. Singh aid that he has maligned ing vulgar Bhoipuri songs

BJP had plenty of leaders who take pride in insulting the Congress leader but are actually insulting themselves and becoming the laughing stock.

"He should also apologize for his statement against Rahul ji," the RJD leader sahu.

# Employees, pensioners in Punjab and Haryana dismiss UPS, call for implementation of OPS

Several State government employees and pensioners in Punjab and Haryana, who have been demanding restoration of the Old Pen-sion Scheme (OPS), have dismissed the Union go-vernment's latest Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

In Punjab, where the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) the restoration of the OPS

As the delay in the re-ise of standard operating Scheme Restoration Sang-harsh Committee have ex-



pressed their anguish on different occasions. With the Centre's UPS announ-cement, employees have only grown more anxious. Employees currently un-der the National Pension System (NPS) have asked the State government not to consider implementing

plement the OPS in Punjab without further delay.

'Not in our interest'
"We are against the Centre's UPS as it is not in the interest of the em-ployees or pensioners. We urge the AAP government

waiting for its implementain 2022. Later, it constituted a committee to formu-late the SOPs for imple-menting the OPS, but it's going to be close to two ears now and yet the Puniab government has not ome out with the SOPs or details about the scheme," Jasvir Singh Talwara, State convener of the joint em-

to not consider the UPS. In

convener of the joint em-ployee-pensioners' front, told The Hindu.
"To step up our strug-gle, we will stage a march towards Punjab State As-sembly on September 3, during the ongoing session of the Assembly. We want the AAP government to im-

1, the restoration of OPS for government employees has emerged as a key poll issue. Members of the Pen-sion Bahali Sangharsh Samiti (Haryana) are travelling across the State in support of their demand to restore the OPS. They too have dismissed the latest

have dismissed the latest UPS.

UPS.

The against the UPS and the See against the UPS and the See and the OPS that we want to be restored. We are going across the State in a phased manner with our OPS Tiranga march our OPS Tiranga march political parties to extend support to our demand of restoring the OPS. 'Vijender Ubhariwal, president of the front, ead.

# POCSO court sends accused in Badlapur assault case to iudicial custody for 14 days

The accused in the Badla-pur child sexual abuse case was sent to 14 days of judicial custody by a special Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences POCSO) court in Kalvan on Monday.

The Special Investiga-

The Special Investiga-tion Team probing the case presented the accused be-fore the court at the end of his properties. The STF also sought the court's permission to hold an identification parade in-volving the suspect who al-legedly sexually assaulted as school's washroom. In the school's washroom. In the First Information Report (FIR), Sections 6 (aggravat-

dentification parade involving the suspect who allegedly sexually assaulted

ed penetrative sexual as-sault) and 21 (failure to report or record a case) of the POCSO Act have been invoked, the police in-

Massive protests
The accused, who worked
at the school as a cleaner,
was arrested on August 17.
A fast-track trial was ordered on August 20 after a massive protest erupted over the incident. An SIT was formed to investigate the case, after al-legations of delay in FIR re-gistration and police

Minister Deepak Kesarkar citing the report drafted by the Women and Child Welfare Department and the Education Ministry after investigating the case, said, "Since the two female at since the two female at-tendants, who were sup-posed to assist girls to the washroom did not turn up for interrogation, we have for interrogation, we have considered that they have no explanation to give. The principal and class teacher were informed on August 14 about the incident but did not report it. So, they should be charged under POCSO Act's Section 19(2) and 21(2).

# Employees, pensioners in Punjab and Haryana dismiss UPS, call for implementation of OPS

# Vikas Vasudeva

**CHANDIGARH** 

Several State government employees and pensioners in Punjab and Haryana, who have been demanding restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), have dismissed the Union government's latest Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

In Punjab, where the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government announced the restoration of the OPS in 2022, its implementation is yet to see the light of day.

As the delay in the release of standard operating procedures (SOPs) following the OPS notification continues, employees and pensioners under the banner of the Old Pension Scheme Restoration Sangharsh Committee have ex-



Government employees from across the country gathered at the Ramlila Maidan to demand the restoration of the OPS. FILE PHOTO

pressed their anguish on different occasions. With the Centre's UPS announcement, employees have only grown more anxious. Employees currently under the National Pension System (NPS) have asked the State government not to consider implementing the UPS, and instead, implement the OPS in Punjab without further delay.

# 'Not in our interest'

"We are against the Centre's UPS as it is not in the interest of the employees or pensioners. We urge the AAP government

fact the Punjab government had in 2022 announced the restoration of the OPS, but we are still waiting for its implementation. The State government issued the OPS notification in 2022. Later, it constituted a committee to formulate the SOPs for implementing the OPS, but it's going to be close to two years now and yet the Punjab government has not come out with the SOPs or details about the scheme," Jasvir Singh Talwara, State convener of the joint employee-pensioners' front, told The Hindu.

to not consider the UPS. In

"To step up our struggle, we will stage a march towards Punjab State Assembly on September 3, during the ongoing session of the Assembly. We want the AAP government to immediately implement the OPS," Mr. Talwara said.

In neighbouring Haryana, where the Assembly election is due on October 1, the restoration of OPS for government employees has emerged as a key poll issue. Members of the Pension Bahali Sangharsh Samiti (Haryana) are travelling across the State in support of their demand to restore the OPS. They too have dismissed the latest UPS.

"We are against the UPS and it's only the OPS that we want to be restored. We are going across the State in a phased manner with our OPS Tiranga march and are urging people and political parties to extend support to our demand of restoring the OPS," Vijender Dhariwal, president of the front, said.

# UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME VS OLD & NEW A COMPARISON



# **OPS**

"Guaranteed 50% of Last Drawn Salary" and "Dearness Allowance Adjustments."

- Gratuity
- No Contribution
- Fixed Pension

# UPS

"50% of Average
Basic Pay + Inflation
Indexation" and
"Guaranteed Pension,
Family Benefits."

- Assured Family Pension
- Inflation Protection
- Minimum Pension

# **NPS**

"Market-Linked Returns" and "No Guaranteed Pension."

- Tax Benefits
- Employee Contribution
- Flexible Withdrawals





|                         | Old Pension Scheme<br>(OPS)      | National Pension<br>Scheme (NPS)           | Unified Pension<br>Scheme (UPS)   |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Guaranteed pension      | Yes                              | No   | Yes   |
| Pension amount          | 50% of last drawn basic pay + DA | Market-linked, depends on fund performance | 50% of average basic<br>pay over the last 12<br>months + DA                             |
| Government contribution | Not applicable                   | 14% of basic pay + DA                      | 18.5% of basic pay + DA   |
| Employee contribution   | Not applicable                   | 10% of basic pay + DA                      | 10% of basic pay + DA   |
| Inflation protection    | Yes                              | No   | Yes   |
| Lump sum payment        | No                               | No   | 1/10th of the monthly<br>pay (basic + DA) for<br>every 6 months of<br>service completed |
| Minimum pension*        | ₹9,000 + DA                      | No   | ₹10,000 + DA  |



# Media groups call on EU to suspend treaty with Israel

Agence France-Presse

Some 60 media and rights organisations on Mon-day urged the European Union to suspend a co-operation accord with Israel and impose sanc-tions, accusing it of "massacring journalists" in

"In response to the unprecedented number of journalists killed and other repeated press free-dom violations by the Israeli authorities since the dom violations by the israen authorities since the start of the war with Hamas, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and S9 other organisations are call-ing on the European Union to suspend its Associa-tion Agreement with Israel and to adopt targeted sanctions against those responsible", the groups said in a joint statement

said in a joint statement.

The call came ahead of a meeting by EU Foreign Ministers in Brussels on Thursday. "More than 130 Palestinian journalists and media professionals have been killed by the Israell armed force that the properties of the pr

"The Israeli government is clearly trampling on this article. The EU, which is Israel's leading trade partner, must draw the necessary conclusions from this and must do everything to ensure that the (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu government stops massacring journalists and respects the right to information and press freedom by

# Ending the war on Gaza would relieve Israel's struggling economy, say experts

Nearly II months into the war with Hamas, Israel's economy is taking a toll with small businesses hit hard and international trust compromised; as the Army grind ahead with an offensive that threatens to escalate into a wider conflict, economists say a ceasefire is the best way to stop the damage

Associated Press

n Jerusalem's Old City, nearly all souvenir shops are closed. In Haifa's flea market, forlorn merchants polish their wares on empty streets. Airlines are cancelling flights, businesses are failing and luxury hotels are half empty. Nearly II months into

Nearly II months into the war with Hamas, Is-rael's economy is strug-gling as the country's lead-ers grind ahead with an offensive in Gaza that shows no signs of ending and threatens to escalate into a wider conflict. Prime Minister Benja-min Netanyahu has tried to

min Netanyahu has tried to alay concerns by saying a constructive war ever between is thought the constructive war ever between is thought the constructive war ever between is thousands of small businesses and compromised international trust in an international trust in an area of the constructive way to see a consumits say a casefur is the best way to stop the

damage.
"The economy right now is under hige uncer-tainty, and it is related to the security situation – how long the war will go on, what the intensity will be and the question of whether there will be further escalation," said Karnit Flug, Israel's former central bank chief who is



and small businesses.
"The hardest thing is
that we do not know when
the war will end," said Israeli tour guide Daniel Jacob, whose family is living
off savings. "We need to
finish the war before this
year's end. If it is another
how long we are wing to
how long we are wing to

how long we are going to make it."

duty as a reserve soldier to find out that business had

dried up. He was forced to shutter the tourism com-

Mr. Jacob. 45, returned

mocracy Institute, a Jerusa-lem think tank.

Toll on Gaza The war has inflicted a far heavier toll on Gaza's alreaheavier toll on Gaza's alrea-dy broken economy, dis-placing 90% of the popula-tion and leaving the vast majority of the workforce unemployed. The fighting has killed more than 40,000 people, according to health officials normy has recovered from previous

recovered from previous shocks, including shorter wars with Hamas. But this longer conflict has created a bigger strain, including the cost of rebuilding, compensating families of victims and reserve soldiers, and vast military ending. shutter the tourism com-The drawn-out nature of pany he spent two decades

the fighting and the threat Iran and its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, have an especially harsh impact on especially harsh impact on tourism. Though tourism is not a major driver of the economy, the damage has hurt thousands of workers and small businesses.

the formerly bustling port of Haifa, a major hub of is-raeli import-export where massive container ships would often stop, was still. With Yemen's Houthi re-bel group endangering

ships passing through Egypt's Suez Canal, many long-haul ships have stopped using Israeli ports as hubs, said a port official who spoke on the condi-tion of anonymity because he was sharing internal information.

vernment, which pays him half his pre-war salary ev-

ery few months.
Meir Sabag, a Haifa antiques dealer whose shop sat empty, said business is worse now than during the COVID-19 pandemic.
On a recent weekday, the formerly bustling port

Renewed U.S.-led cease-

fire efforts appear to be sputtering, and Iran and Hezbollah have threatened to avenge the recent assasleaders, raising the threat of a wider regional war. These fears have prompted major airlines, including Delta, United and Lufthan-

and out of Israel.
Yacov Sheinin, an Israeli
economist with decades of economist with decades of experience advising Israeli Premiers and government Ministries, said the total comment to \$120 billion, or 20% of the country's gross domestic product.

Of all 38 member countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation for Economic Cooperation

and Development, Israel's economy underwent the biggest slowdown from april to June, the organisa-tion had reported. The Is-raeli GDP was projected to grow 3% in 2024. The Bank of Israel now predicts a of Israel now predicts a growth rate of 1.5% - and that is if the war ends this

Status downgraded U.S.-based credit rating agency Fitch downgraded Israel's status from A-plus to A earlier this month, fol lowing similar downgrades by agencies S&P and Moody's. The downgrading could raise the government's borrowing costs.
"In our view, the con-

the possibility of "signifi-cant additional military spending, destruction of infrastructure and more sustained damage to economic activity and

In another worrying sign, the Finance Ministry this month said the coun-try's deficit over the last 12 onths has risen to over 8% of GDP, far exceeding the 6.6% deficit-to-GDP rathe 6.6% deficit-to-GDP ra-tio the Ministry projected for 2024. In 2023, Israel 's budget deficit was roughly 4% of its GDP. The downgrade and the deficit have increased pres-sure on the Israeli govern-

sure on the Israeli govern-ment to end the war and reduce the deficit - so-mething that would require unpopular decisions such as raising taxes or cut-

ting spending.

But Mr. Netanyahu
needs to keep his coalition
afloat, and his hard-line Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, wants the war to continue until Hamas is decimated.

decimated.

Mr. Smotrich has maintained that Israel's economy "is strong" and vowed to pass a "responsible budget that will continue to support all the needs of the war, while maintaining fiscal, figure produced. cal frameworks and pro-moting growth engines."

Meanwhile, many small businesses have closed be-cause their owners and employees were called up for reserve military duty. Others are struggling amid the broader slowdown.

## Australia gives <sup>+</sup> millions of workers 'right to disconnect

Agence France-Presse

Australia gave millions of Australia gave minions or workers the legal right to "disconnect" on Monday, allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours

to monitor, read, or res-pond to their employers' attempts to contact them outside work hours – un-less that refusal is deemed

Unions welcomed the move, saying it gave work-ers a way to reclaim some work-life balance. "Today work-life balance. "Today is a historic day for work-ing people," said Michele O'Neil, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

"Australian unions have reclaimed the right to knock off after work," she said.

said.

In the streets of Sydney, people appeared to welcome the change.

"I have a very hard time

disconnecting and even though I may not necessa-rily be logged on, my brain is constantly working over-time," not-for-profit work-er Karolina Joseski said.

er karolina Joseski said.

But the reform got a
cool welcome from Australia's top industry body.

"The 'right to disconnect' laws are rushed, poorly thought out and deeply confusing," the Australian Industry Group said in a

ployers and employees will now be uncertain about whether they can take or make a call out of hours to offer an extra shift," it said. The law is similar to

# Sri Lankan Marxists pledge to welcome foreign capital

Agence France-Presse

Sri Lanka's main Marxist Sri Lanka's main Marxist leader and a key presiden-tial hopeful in elections next month pledged on Monday to selectively wel-come foreign investors, es-pecially in green energy, if he wins.

er Agricultural Minister and vocal campaigner against graft, is popular with voters fed up with the endemic corruption he blames for the island's 2022 economic meltdown

The September 21 vote will be the first since prot esters furious at an unnre esters furnous at an unpre-cedented financial crisis toppled strongman Presi-dent Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Current President Ranil Wickremesinghe, elected by Parliament after the



Anura Kumara Dissanayake ouster, is seeking a man-

loan to stabilise the

economy. But Mr. Dissanayaka promises to renegotiate that deal - although he has not provided specific changes beyond wanting

changes beyond wanting to cut heavy taxes. "We will invite foreign companies into sectors like renewable energy, where we do not have the capaci-ty to invest large amounts

There are 39 candidates There are 39 candidates in the fray, but next month's contest is viewed as mainly between Mr. Dissanayaka, Mr. Wickremesinghe and the Leader of the Opposition Sajith Premadasa.

The Company of the Company of the Sanayaka contested the 2019 presidential electron but came a dissipance of the Company of the

tial election but came a distant third with just three per cent of the vote.

Mr. Dissanayaka is also pledging to scrap Sri Lan-ka's presidential system and revert the country to the British-style parliamentary democracy, which ex-isted until 1978.

However, almost all Sri Lankan leaders in the past three decades have pro-mised to scrap the power-ful presidency, but failed to deliver.

down Nepali mountains

## Neighbourhood hero



# Frequent accidents could hit Nepal's tourism sector amid economic woes

# Sanjeev Satgainya

Death of 27 Indian pligrims in a bus accident at Abu Khaireni in central Ne-pal on Friday has once again put the spotlight on the poor road safety record of the country which is al-ready battling criticism ov-er poor air safety. Con-cerns are growing that frequent accidents could hit the country's tourism Death of 27 Indian nilgrims

tourist town of Pokhara to the capital Kathmandu, arashtra veered

injury during treatment in Chitwan.

Road accidents in Nepal Road accidents in Nepai are so common that many have stopped calling them "accidents", just as there has been a public outcry with people calling them "murder on the roads."

roads are extremely unsafe for multiple reasons, in-cluding that a majority of road sections do not even fulfil the basic engineering criteria.

and during monsoon, mudslides are common, which make Nepal's moun-Except for in the plains. tain highways even riskier," said Mr. Gajurel. "Also, our Nepal's winding highways are built by slicing parts of mountains, making them said Mr. Gajurei. "Also, our roads are not technology-friendly. For example, had there been roadside bar-riers along the highway,

the Indian pilgrims might not have plunged into the

According to govern-ment data, nearly 24,000 people died on Nepal's roads in the last one de-

dents, while accountability never becomes an issue. Despite being too common

"Lack of accountability"

"And Nepal has failed to
prevent both road and air
accidents," said Mr. Gajurel, adding that such lack
of accountability can have of accountability can have a profound impact on the country's tourism sector.

Nepal, a country with a struggling economy, is a straggler in manufacturing and exports, hence it heavily banks on tourism.

And Indians account for

10.00.000 tourists visited Nepal by air, and data shows one third of them issue. The message that nothing is safe - neither air were from India The acnor road – will stick to the traveller," said Ashoke Pok harel, Director of Shangr were from India. The ac-tual number of Indians vis-iting Nepal could be much higher because there is no proper record-keeping of those who enter Nepal overland through various bender points. harel, Director of Shangri La Tours Pvt. Ltd.

The number of visitors from India this year was ex-pected to rise as 6,50,000 foreign visitors have alrea-dy arrived in Nepal as of Ju-ly 31, with Indians account-ing for elect to one third of

border points. Tourism industry insid-ers said Friday's bus accident may have a huge im-pact on Indian arrivals.

Just last month, mudslides swept two passenger buses into the Trishuli river. At least 59 people were killed, including seven In January last year, four

bers down. "There obviously will be some blowback, especially in the next few days and weeks while the news cycle 72 killed in the Yeti Airlines plane crash in Pokhara."It plays out," said Pokharel.

ing for close to one-third of the total.

perts say the recent crash-es could bring the num-

ie total. Tourism industry ex-

# Australia gives millions of workers 'right to disconnect'

Agence France-Presse SYDNEY

Australia gave millions of workers the legal right to "disconnect" on Monday, allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours work calls and texts from their bosses.

People can now refuse to monitor, read, or respond to their employers' attempts to contact them outside work hours – unless that refusal is deemed "unreasonable".

Unions welcomed the move, saying it gave workers a way to reclaim some work-life balance. "Today is a historic day for working people," said Michele O'Neil, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

"Australian unions have reclaimed the right to knock off after work," she said.

In the streets of Sydney, people appeared to welcome the change.

"I have a very hard time disconnecting and even though I may not necessarily be logged on, my brain is constantly working overtime," not-for-profit worker Karolina Joseski said.

But the reform got a cool welcome from Australia's top industry body. "The 'right to disconnect' laws are rushed, poorly thought out and deeply confusing," the Australian Industry Group said in a statement.

"At the very least, employers and employees will now be uncertain about whether they can take or make a call out of hours to offer an extra shift," it said.

The law is similar to those of some European and Latin American countries. JESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE PM: REITERATED SUPPORT FOR RETURN OF PEACE IN UKRAINE

\$7,00 (\$8 BIHAR & RAIPUR \$12 SRINAGAR) WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.CO.

# IEMA COMMITTEE REPORT AFTERMATH

# Kerala police file first case, more senior actors accused of sexual misconduct

SHAJU PHILIP

Malayalam Movies Artistes AMMA) being named as ac-used, and Kerala Police filing its

ased, and selections using its stage in this connection.

On Sunday, director and erala State Chalachtra Academy in the state Chalachtra Academy in the selection of the selecti

On Monday, the police reg-tered a non-bailable case inst Ranjith based on the uplaint of a woman actor

### At Delhi govt shelter home. teen died of assault' in Jan, no FIR till date

ANKITALIPADHYAY

JANUARY this year, a 16-year-d living at Asha Kiran, a Delhi vernment-run shelter home the mentally challenged, lost life because of "blunt force in-ies". Till date, however, no FIR s been registered in connec-

The shelter home has been in he eye of a storm after it came olight that 14 deaths took place here in less than a month in July, arlier this month, the Delhi ligh Court had sought a report

ithe matter.

The Indian Express has learnt at on the morning of January i, the 16-year-old complained at he was 'unable to breathe' e was taken to Baba Saheb as declared dead on arriva

An autopsy was conducted at ne hospital the next day. The ost-mortem report states. Death was due to hemorrhagic ck consequent to internal in ies to the abdomen. All in

HE WORLD



OVER 70 KILLED AFTER ATTACKS IN PAK'S BALOCHISTAN

# registere against Ranjith

Case registered

**EXPRESS NETWORK** BANSTOTHREATS: REPORT DETAILS HOW 10-15 MEN CONTROL INDUSTRY

conduct. Ranjith has said the al-legation was an outcome of a "concerted move" against him after he became chairman of the Academy. In the wake of the release of

the Justice Hema Committee report, which had exposed CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# BUSINESS AS USUAL BY UNNY

JUNIOR DOCTOR'S RAPE-MURDER CASE

lead fight for justice

No party flags, banners at protest, say doctors. Partha Paul

WhatsApp groups to

raising funds: Doctors

Modi said they also discussed the Bangladesh situation and emphasised the need for early restoration of normalcy and ensuring the safety of Hindus th While Modi has flagged the



This was Modi's first talk with Biden after Kyiv visit. File

AKRAMM

People take cover inside a metro station in Kyiv during a Russian missile and drone strike on Monday. Russia launched over 100 missiles and around 100 attack drones at Ukraine, killing at least five persons and striking energy facilities. Reuters PAGE

# Modi and Biden discuss Ukraine, safety of Hindus in Bangladesh

India, US emphasised return of law & order in Dhaka: PMO

DAYS AFTER returning from Kviv Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to US President Joe Biden on Monday and briefed him on his visit to Ukraine. In a post on X.



safety of Hindus in Bangladesh

ENGALURU, AUGUST 26

land allotment in Karnataka, with the BJP questioning the grant of a Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board

(KIADB) site to a trust run by

nis son Rahul, in March 2024.

WITH THE Haryana Assembly

ongress president Mallikarjun harge's family and headed by

charge of the interim govern-ment in Dhaka, this was the first time that the issue was dis-cussed between India and the US at the highest level. Modi first raised the issue

soon after Yunus was sworn in, when he extended his best

As Kharge family trust gets plot in

aerospace park, BIP says new scam

Wilhara Trust - almost a wear af-

given "at prescribed price, with



AMID ITS balancing act ANID ITS balancing act on Ukraine, India has ex-pressed willingness to play a role in restoring peace. Modi raising Bangladesh in his con-versation with Biden sig

up civic ameniues at the aero-space park, to be allocated under the Scheduled Caste quota. In a post on X, Kharge's other son and the Kamataka IT/BT and Rural Development and Panch-ayat Raj Minister, Priyank Kharge, denied the allegations. The site al-lorted was not an industrial plot

cial purposes", he said. "It is for ed-ucational purposes. The intention

of the trust is to set up a multi skill

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

GLOBAL INVESTOR, analyst, au-thor and an expert, who reveals the big picture on socio-eco-nomic and political issues vividly, Ruchir Sharma wrote in

his latest book that government

have made capitalism less fair and less efficient and that is slowing economic growth and fuelling popular anger. Sharma, Chairman of Rockefeller International and Founder and Chief Investment

Officer of Breakout Capital, an in-vestment firm focused on emerging markets, will be the

meant for industrial or corr

# 51 seats for NC, 32 for Cong, friendly fight in 5: Allies seal deal for J&K polls

Filing of nominations for first phase of voting in 24 constituencies ends today

vince and four in Jammu, ere they will be in a friendly ight, the National Conference and Congress sealed their deal on Monday for the coming Assembly elections in the Union

territory.

After negotiations at NC president Farooq Abdullah's residence lasting through the day, culminating on the eve before the nomination deadline for the first phase

formula with Farooq Abdulla

US diplomats with NC leader Omar Abdullah at his residen

# BIP's first list cancelled. pruned to 16 names as old guard 'protests'

BASHAARAT MASOOD

THE BJP'S election campaign for Jammu and Kashmir got off to a less than happy start Monday when the party had to withdraw its first list of candidates within

our of turncoats. The revised list that the BJP put out had names of candidates for 16 of the 24 Assembly seats tionally a militant hot bed. The filing of nominations for this phase ends Tuesday.

phase ends Tuesday.

The party's previous list had
44 names, for constituencies
across the three phases in which
voting is being held in J&K. The
lijb' then announced it was withdrawing the list, and deleted it
from all its official channels.

# Not authorised to speak on policy issue: BJP raps Kangana for farm remark

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA, SWEETY KUMARI & ATRI MITRA KOLKATA, AUGUST 25 VIKAS PATHAK, ASAD REHMAN & RAAKHI JAGGA NEW DELHIL LUDHIANA, AUGUST 26

UNDER A bamboo canopy, sur-rounded by posters, messages and an altar dedicated to the junior doctor who was raped and murdered at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College & Hospital, a movement has been brewing since the discovery of her body

on August 9.

What started as a sponta-neous protest by her colleagues on August 9, has turned into a 24/7 movement for justice — a largely apolitical one — opposite
the Emergency building at R G
CENTRE HITS BACK
AT BENGAL PAGE 8

Doctors' Front, a general body of medicos from across the state, has been spearheading the fight, the globe via "official" WhatsApp groups. Through all this, they have been facing several chal-lenges — from alleged attempts by a section of the hospital ad-ministration to stop the protest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



elections just ower a month away, the BJP on Monday quickly dis-sociated itself from its Lok Sabha MP Kangana Ranauri's statement that "dead bodies were hanging and rapes were taking place" during the 2020-21 farmers' ag-itation against three farm laws

apology".
"What happened in Bangla-

Ruchir Sharma, global investor

and author, is guest at Adda today

guest at the Express Adda in

At the Express Adda, Sharma



University Tho

# How India's U-15 winner trained in China, won local tournament at 6

## HIVANI NAIK

ABINARAYAN PATRI knows a

ournament withiers get medals ind better quality racquets. He should know. His daugh-er, Tanvi, won a local tourna-

It was in China - a country own for its tough training and an assembly line of champion shuttlers — that Tarryi picked up

Odisha's Balasore, is a software professional with Cognizant. In 2015, the company gave him a chance to work with Nike's sports vertical. Patri had other options, he could have gone to

hub," he explains. "After office, I would play at a nearby court. I loved badminton in college, but loved badminton in college, but there were no facilities back then. Tanvi followed me to the courts

hubs in China, "For footwork, or, Tantvi, won a local tournarefert as a resident of China, at
tent as, when she was just six
for China's Jiangsu province.
"I chose China: though
super list internanoul title, the Asian Under-15.
Jiangsu is small, it is ports-ordented and known as their biggest
ented and known as their biggest
enter and known as their biggest
enter and known as their biggest
enter and known as their bi





Tanvi after winning a local tournament as a 6-year-old; in action at the U-15 Asian Championship at Chengdu, China

epaper.indianexpress.com

don't usually smash when that young. But her coaches would smash at her body, so her de-

smash at her body, so her de-fence improved quickly, and be-cause children like to respond in kind, she started copying started to the started copying and the started copying the local coaches — Zhang Lei and Wu — would usge Patri to re-main by the countside for three days a week. "Their coaches teach parents too, and tell them teath parents too, and left inter-to practice at home before re-turning the next day, So I stoo for four hours, picking up stuff. I also got a net installed at my apartment in China, so the is technically very strong — apartment in China, so the net-

that he always had 200-300 shuttles stocked at home. After the Patris returned to India in 2020, the videos of little

Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) in Bengaluru, and she was invited to train there. She is now under the wings of the PPBA and the NGO, Olympic Gold Quest. PPBA coach Sagar Chopda

coaches, think she won't reac

started on a fitness rout

# **EXPLAINED GLOBAL**

# WHAT IS UKRAINE'S HOME-GROWN 'GAME-CHANGER' MISSILE?

PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR Zelenskyy, on Saturday, confirmed the existence of a new homegrown long-range weapon — a missile-drone hybrid — which can strike deep into Russia. The Palianytsia was used for the first time on Saturday to target a Russian military installation, officials said without providing further details.

# Born out of necessity

The Palianytsia was born out of necessity, with its development starting some 18 months ago. Currently, the United States and other Western allies provide long-range weapons to Ukraine but restrict their usage deep into Russian territory out of fears of further escalation.

The Institute for the Study of War said that Russia was "leveraging sanctuary space in deep rear areas" for military infrastructure. At least 250 significant targets in Russia are within range of ATACMS missiles, but current restrictions allow Ukraine to strike only 20 of them, ISW estimated.

# Possibly, a game-changer

The Palianytsia with a 700-km range, comparable to the ATACMS, will allow Ukraine to bypass western restrictions.

Ukraine's technology minister, Mykhailo Fedorov, told *The AP* that "this will be a game changer" because Ukraine will be able to "strike where Russia doesn't expect it today". He said: "It's impossible to produce enough air defense systems to protect such a large territory... [the Palianytsia] opens up the possibility of operating deep behind enemy lines.

The missile has a solid-fuel booster that accelerates it, followed by a jet engine, a specialist told *The AP*. Each missile costs less than \$1 million, and the military is turning to the private sector to bring down production costs further.

AP

- The article discusses Ukraine's newly developed long-range weapon, the **Paliantysia** missile, which has been described as a potential "game-changer" in the ongoing conflict with Russia.
- **Development Out of Necessity**: The Paliantysia was developed over the past 18 months, largely out of necessity due to restrictions imposed by Ukraine's Western allies on using their supplied longrange weapons deep into Russian territory.

• Capabilities and Range: The missile is reported to have a range of 700 km, comparable to the U.S.-supplied ATACMS. This range allows Ukraine to strike deep within Russian territory, targeting key military installations.

- **Strategic Impact**: Ukraine's technology minister, Mykhailo Fedorov, suggested that this missile could be a "game-changer" because it allows Ukraine to bypass Western restrictions and strike at targets that Russia may not anticipate.
- The missile's development was in response to Russia's strategy of placing significant military infrastructure deep in rear areas, leveraging these "sanctuary spaces."

# Technical Details:

- The Paliantysia missile is said to be a missile-drone hybrid with a solid-fuel booster and a jet engine, making it capable of penetrating deep into enemy lines.
- It is also noted for its cost-effectiveness, with each missile costing less than \$1 million, and the production being driven by private sector involvement to further reduce costs.

# Two new US-India agreements: a short history of growing defence ties

**EXPLAINED** 

STRATEGY

# **AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA**

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 26

INDIA AND the US have signed a Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers, the latest in a series of bilateral military agreements that have enhanced defence and security cooperation between the two countries over the past decade.

During Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's four-day official visit that concluded on Sunday, the partner nations agreed to advance priority co-production projects including jet engines, unmanned platforms, munitions, and ground mobility systems under the 2023 US-India Roadmap for Defence Industrial Cooperation.

# Two new agreements

**SOSA:** Under SOSA, the US and India will provide reciprocal priority support to each other for goods and services that promote national defence. It will "enable both countries to acquire the industrial resources they

need from one another to resolve unanticipated supply chain disruptions to meet national security needs", the US Department of Defense (DoD) said in a statement.

India is the 18th SOSA partner of the US. While SOSA, according to the DoD, are an important mechanism to strengthen interoperability with US defence trade partners, it is legally non-binding. The DoD has been working to conclude another agreement with India, the Reciprocal Defence Procurement (RDP) Agreement, which will be binding.

RDP Agreements are intended to promote rationalisation, standardisation, interchangeability, and interoperability of conventional defence equipment with US allies and other friendly governments. The US has signed RDP Agreements with 28 countries so far.

MOU ON LIAISON OFFICERS: The Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers is a progression on a decision taken earlier to increase information-sharing between India and the US, and to post Indian armed forces officers in key strategic US Commands. India will deploy the first Liaison Officer to the US Special Opera-

tions Command headquarters in Florida.

# **Cooperation milestones**

The vision for bilateral defence cooperation was encapsulated in the September 2013 Joint US-India Declaration on Defence Cooperation and the 2015 Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship, in which the two countries committed themselves to increasing cooperation in the sector.

**2023 ROADMAP:** The roadmap for defence industrial cooperation released last year envisioned the conclusion of SOSA and the RDP Agreement.

The US endorsed the integration of the Indian defence industry into global supply chains, and extended support to India to develop naval and maritime infrastructure to create an Indo-Pacific regional hub for ship and aircraft repair and maintenance.

Priority areas of cooperation identified in the roadmap included Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), Undersea Domain Awareness, Air Combat and Support, including Aero engines, munitions systems, and mobility.

iCET: In January 2023, the US-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) was discussed to expand the strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation. National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Jake Sullivan discussed opportunities for greater cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, including co-development and co-production, and ways to

deepen connectivity across our innovation ecosystems.

INDUS-X: In June 2023, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official state

visit to the US, the DoD and Ministry of Defence launched the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X), which took forward the commitment to build a defence innovation bridge under iCET.

**FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS:** In 2002, India and the US had signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) to facilitate sharing of military information. Between 2016 and 2020, the two sides signed four more agreements.

The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) of 2016 established the basic terms, conditions, and procedures for reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies, and services between the two militaries.

In 2018, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), an India-specific version of the Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA), was signed to secure military communication between the countries, facilitate access to advanced defence systems, and enable India to optimally utilise its existing US-origin platforms.

The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) of 2020 aimed to facilitate the sharing of military information including maps, nautical charts, and other unclassified imagery and data.

Additionally, in 2019, the Industrial Security Annex (ISA) to the GSOMIA was signed to facilitate the exchange of classified information between the defence industries of the two countries.

# Other deals and sales

- In 2016, the US designated India as a Major Defence Partner. Commensurate with this designation, in 2018, India was elevated to Strategic Trade Authorisation tier 1 status, which gave it licence-free access to a range of military and dual-use technologies regulated by the US Department of Commerce.
- Earlier in 2012, the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) agreement was signed to promote industrial cooperation and defence trade between the two countries.
- ■There is also a Memorandum of Intent between the US Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) and the Indian Defence Innovation Organization-Innovation for Defence Excellence (DIO-iDEX).
- Big-ticket Indian military procurements from the US include MH-60R Seahawk multirole helicopters, Sig Sauer Rifles, and M777 ultra light howitzers.
- Negotiations are underway to manufacture GE F-414 jet engines in India for the LCA MK 2 fighters, and to procure 31 MQ-9B High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) UAVs. Deliveries of the GE-F404 engines for the LCA Tejas Mark-1A are underway.

# For 'frictionless credit', RBI to launch technology platform; to call it Unified Lending Interface: Das

# **HITESH VYAS**

MUMBAI, AUGUST 26

RESERVE BANK of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), to enable frictionless credit, will soon be introduced. The pilot project for a public tech platform for frictionless credit was already announced in August last year.

Speaking at the Global Conference on Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies, Das highlighted that ULI will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in the country, just as United Payment Interface (UPI) revolutionised the payment ecosystem.

"Continuing on the journey of digitalisation of banking services, last year we launched the pilot of a technology platform which enables frictionless credit. From now on, we propose to call it the Unified Lending Interface (ULI)," Das said.

While announcing the pilot project for frictionless credit in August last year, the RBI had said that for digital credit delivery, the data required for credit appraisal are available with different entities like Central and State governments, account aggregators, banks, credit information companies and digital identity authorities. However, they are in separate systems, creating hindrance in frictionless and timely delivery of rule-based lending, it has said.

Das noted that ULI facilitates seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including even land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders thereby cutting down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.

The ULI architecture has common and standardised APIs (Application Programming Interface), designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources, which reduces the



Shaktikanta Das, Governor, Reserve Bank of India. File

complexity of multiple technical integrations. It will also enable borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, quicker turnaround time without requiring extensive documentation, he said.

"In sum, by digitising access to customer's financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet Plug and play' ULI

THE ULI architecture has common and standard-ised APIs (Application Programming Interface), designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from sources, which reduces the complexity of multiple integrations.

demand for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers," Das explained.

He further said that while the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) can make processes simpler and more efficient, lenders need to be mindful of adopting such new-age technologies in critical decision-making segments such as loan sanction-

ing.

"AI promises to make processes simpler and efficient. It can also emulate decision making to a great extent. However, when it comes to regulated financial institutions, there should be careful adoption of AI in critical decision-making segments, for example, in loan sanctioning," he said.

He said since AI is a datadriven science, the authenticity of data being used in training the models, the possibility of biases and concerns about data privacy need to be carefully examined.

Going beyond understanding the risks posed by AI, financial institutions should clearly outline the liabilities and ensure a calibrated and responsible adoption.

"It is important to be proactive to leverage the capabilities of new technologies, but at the same time it is essential to be abundantly mindful of the associated risks and challenges," he said.

FULL REPORTON www.indianexpress.com

- Introduction of ULI: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced that the ULI will be introduced to facilitate seamless and consent-based access to digital information for credit appraisal. The pilot project for this platform was announced last year.
- Comparison to UPI: Das highlighted that ULI could transform the lending space in a manner similar to how the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) revolutionized the payments ecosystem in India.

- Streamlined Credit Appraisal: ULI aims to cut down the time required for credit appraisal by integrating data from various entities such as Central and State governments, banks, account aggregators, and digital identity authorities. Currently, these entities operate in silos, leading to delays in lending.
- Plug and Play Architecture: The ULI platform will have a common architecture and standardized APIs designed for a "plug and play" approach. This will ensure easy and secure digital access to information from multiple sources, reducing the complexity of integrating different systems.

- Focus on Al Integration: The RBI Governor also discussed the potential of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into the ULI platform. While AI can simplify processes, especially in loan sanctioning, Das emphasized the need for careful adoption, particularly in regulated financial institutions, due to concerns about data privacy and biases in decision-making.
- Targeted Sectors: The platform is expected to cater to large unmet demands for credit, particularly in the agricultural sector and among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

• Responsible Adoption of Technology: Das stressed the importance of understanding and mitigating the risks associated with new technologies like AI while leveraging their capabilities for the benefit of the financial sector.

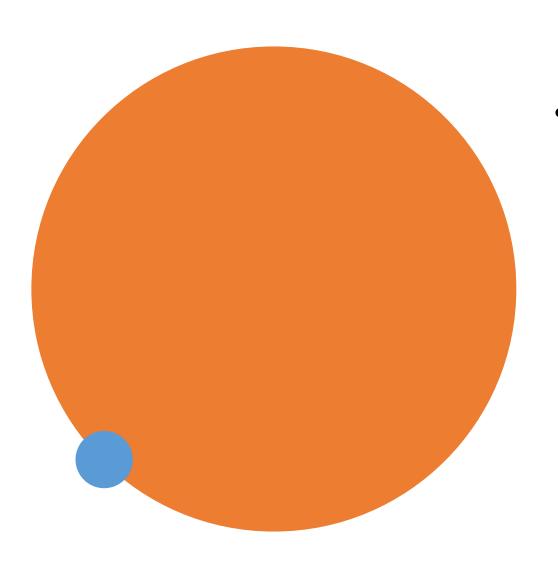
# Registration of Exotic Animals

- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) asked people, organisations, and zoos to register any exotic animals they have that are listed under Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (Amendment Act, 2022).
- The registration must be done electronically through the PARIVESH 2.0 portal and submitted to the Chief Wildlife Warden of the respective State.

# What are the Key Facts About the Exotic Species?

# **About Exotic Animals:**

• Exotic species are animal or plant species moved from their original range (location) to a new one. These species are introduced to a new location most often by people.



# • Examples of Exotic Animals:

• Ball python (western Africa), Iguana (Central and South America), Cockatiel (Australia), Redeared slider turtle (USA and Mexico), African grey parrot (Central Africa), Amazonian parrot (South and Central America) etc are examples of exotic animals in India.

- Legal Requirement:
- As per the Living Animal Species (Reporting and Registration) Rules, 2024, any person possessing a species listed in Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, must report and register the species.
- Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022 introduced Section 49
  M, requiring the registration of possession, transfer, birth, and death
  of species listed in the CITES Appendices and Schedule IV of the Wild
  Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

- Concerns with Exotic Species:
- Non-Regulation: Exotic species are imported to India and bred in captivity without proper registration which may pose a threat of zoonotic diseases.
- Impending Pandemic: The Covid-19 pandemic, a zoonotic disease, brought attention to the dangers of unregulated trade and ownership of exotic animals.
- Smuggling of Exotic Animals: Activists have raised concerns about the increased smuggling of endangered exotic animals into India from Southeast Asia and other regions.

What are the Key Facts About the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA)? About WPA, 1972: It aims to protect wild animals, birds, and plants, and address related issues to ensure the ecological and environmental sustainability of the country.

- Schedules of WPA, 1972: The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has four schedules after the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022.
   Schedule I: For species that receive the highest level of protection. E.g., Tiger, Elephants, Rhino etc.
- Schedule II: For species that receive a lesser degree of protection. E.g., Kites, Eagle, Falcons prinias etc.
- Schedule III: For plant species
- Schedule IV: For species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). E.g., Bear.

- What is the PARIVESH 2.0 Portal?
- About: PARIVESH 2.0 is a web-based application for online submission and monitoring of Environmental, Forest, Wildlife, and Coastal Regulation Zone clearances.
  - PARIVESH is an acronym for Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous, and Environmental Single Window Hub.
- Ministry: It has been developed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

## Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife

#### 42nd Amendment

Act, 1976: Forests & Protection of Wild Animals and Birds (moved from State to Concurrent List)

#### Article

48 A: State shall endeavor to protect & improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife of country

#### Article

**51 A (g):**Fundamental duty to protect & improve natural environment including forests and Wildlife

## Legal Frameworks

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 Biological Diversity
Act, 2002

## Major Conservation Initiatives

## Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):

- Financial assistance provided to State/UT Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife
- (9) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

## National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)

- Guidelines for Eco-tourism in Protected Areas
- Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau: To combat wildliferelated crimes

#### Wildlife Division (MoEFCC):

- Policy and law for conservation of biodiversity and Protected Area network
- Technical and financial support to the State/ UTs under IDHW, Central Zoo Authority and Wildlife Institute of India

#### Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):

Collection, collation of intelligence & its dissemination, establishment of centralized Wild Life crime databank, coordination etc.

#### Wildlife Crime Control:

- (5) Operation Save Kurma
- (5) Operation Thunderbird

## Species-Specific Initiotives

Protection and conservation of Greater Adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract Dolphin Conservation in Non-Protected Area Segment of Ganga River

Conservation Breeding Centre for Wild water buffalo (2020)

Recovery programme for Snow leopard (2009) Recovery programme for Vultures (2006)

Project Elephant (1992)

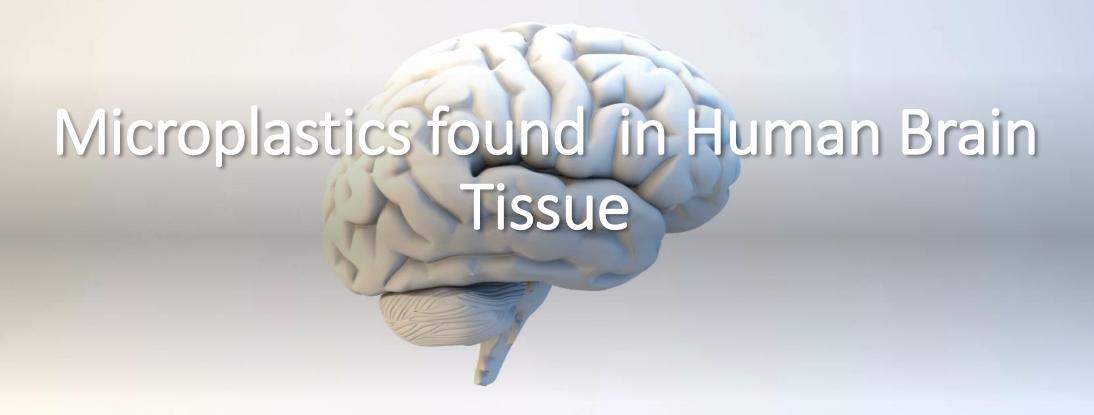
Project Tiger/National Tiger Conservation
Authority (NTCA) (1973)

## India's Collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- (CBD) © Convention on Biological Diversity
- (9) World Heritage Convention
- Ramsar Convention
- The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)
- ( United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- (IWC) International Whaling Commission
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- (4) Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

- If a particular plant species is placed under Schedule VI of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, what is the implication? (2020)
- (a) A licence is required to cultivate that plant.
- (b) Such a plant cannot be cultivated under any circumstances.
- (c) It is a Genetically Modified crop plant.
- (d) Such a plant is invasive and harmful to the ecosystem.

- In India, if a species of tortoise is declared protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, what does it imply? (2017)
- (a) It enjoys the same level of protection as the tiger.
- (b) It no longer exists in the wild, a few individuals are under captive protection; and now it is impossible to prevent its extinction.
- (c) It is endemic to a particular region of India.
- (d) Both (b) and (c) stated above are correct in this context.



 Studies reveal alarming levels of microplastics in human brain tissue, underscoring the urgent need to address plastic pollution.

•

## About Microplastics:

- Microplastics are defined as synthetic solid particles sized ranging from 1 micrometre to 5 millimetres (mm), which are insoluble in water.
- They are particularly harmful to the oceans as they don't readily break down into harmless molecules and adversely affect the health of marine organisms, which mistake plastic for food.

## **Key findings:**

Microplastics in Brain Tissue: Detected in brain samples at higher concentrations than other organs.

<u>Health Risks</u>: Linked to oxidative stress, cardiovascular issues, and potential cognitive impairments.

**Environmental Ubiquity**: Found in various human organs including lungs, placentas, and reproductive organs.

**Regulatory Gaps:** No current standards for microplastics in food or water in the US.

**Rising Levels**: The concentration of microplastics in the brain has increased over time.

**Animal Studies**: Show links to fertility issues, cancer, and endocrine disruption.

## <u>Initiatives Taken to tackle microplastics:</u>

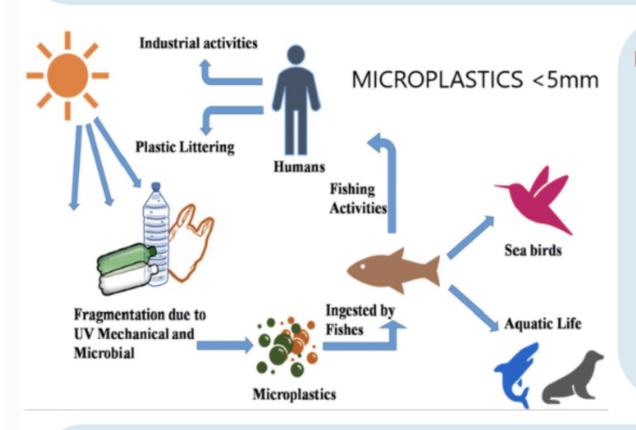
## **Global Initiatives:**

- Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML)
- GloLitter Partnerships Project
- London Convention, 1972

## <u>India-Specific Initiatives:</u>

- Elimination of single-use plastic
- Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016
- Un-Plastic Collective

As per the new study, with our every breath, we may be inhaling substantial quantities of microplastics that eventually flow into our blood and accumulate on our organs

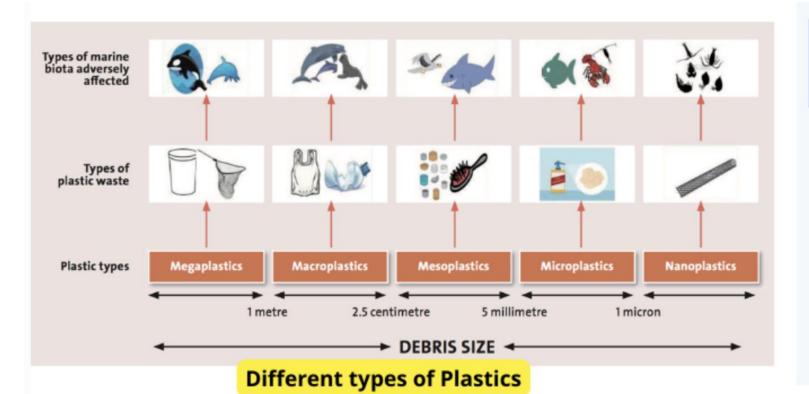


## Impacts:

## **Health impact**

- On Humans: The smallest particles can enter blood streams and collect in organs like the liver and brain
- As per WHO, the level of microplastics in drinking-water is not yet dangerous for humans but called for more research into potential future risk.
- On Aquatic animals: Microplastics damage aquatic creatures including turtles and birds. It blocks digestive tracts, and alters feeding behavior

Environmental Impact: According to the IUCN, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year and make up about 80% of all marine debris



## Where the Ocean's **Microplastics Come From** Estimated share of total microplastics in the world's oceans, by source



Synthetic textiles

35.0%







City dust

24.0%

Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature

**Sources of Plastics** 

Car tires

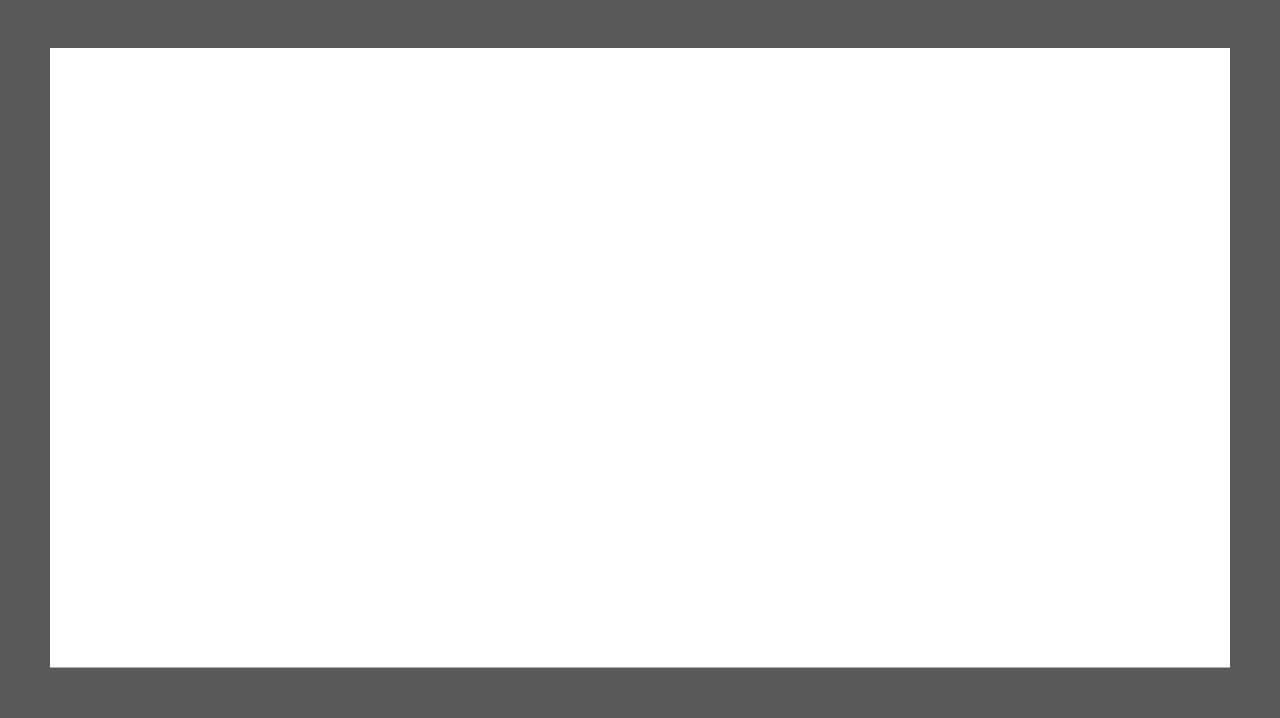
28.0%



The world's first mRNA lung cancer vaccine, BNT116, has begun clinical trials across seven countries, including the UK, the US, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and Turkey.

This vaccine targets <u>non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)</u>, the most common form of the disease, by <u>instructing the body</u> to attack cancer cells and prevent their recurrence.

The vaccine uses messenger RNA technology, similar to COVID-19 vaccines, to prompt the immune system to recognize and fight NSCLC cells.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS COURSE

- **UPDATED CURRENT AFFAIRS (2023+2024)**
- **©COMPLETE NOTES(PDF)**

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