

Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता

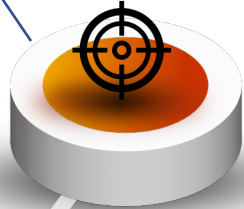


The Indian EXPRESS

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

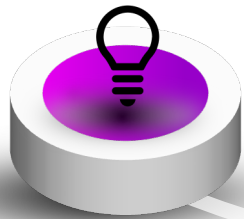


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The Hindu

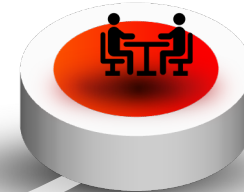


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Same-sex union can rock societal values: Centre

Any change in human relationship should come from legislature, not court, Centre says in its affidavit in response to a Supreme Court decision to examine petitions on same-sex marriage

Krishna Das Rajanigopal
NEW DELHI

The Centre, in an affidavit in the Supreme Court, has frowned upon same-sex marriage while invoking the "accepted view" that a marriage between a biological man and woman is a "holy union, a sacrament and a *sanskara*" in India.

The institution of marriage has a sanctity attached to it and in major parts of the country, it is regarded as a sacrament, a holy union, and a *sanskara*. In our country, despite statutory recognition of the relationship of marriage between a biological man and a biological woman, marriage necessarily depends upon age-old customs, rituals, practices, cultural ethos and societal values.

The affidavit came in response to the court's decision to examine petitions to allow solemnisation of same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, which provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law.

"Parliament has designed and framed the marriage laws in the country, which are governed by the personal laws and codified laws relating to customs of various religious communities, to recognise only the union of a man and a woman to be capable of legal sanction, and thereby claim legal and statutory rights and consequences. Any interference with the same would cause a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country and in accepted societal values," the government said.

The government said the court had only decriminalised sexual intercourse between same-sex persons in its 2018 judgment in *Navtej Singh Johar*, and not legitimised this "conduct".

Silicon Valley Bank 'contagion' may leave India unscathed, say Finance Ministry officials

Vikas Dhotot
NEW DELHI

The failure of the U.S.-based Silicon Valley Bank may only hit some Indian tech start-ups and IT firms for now, while any broader "contagion" effects that may arise will neither reach Indian shores in a hurry nor are they likely to trigger "systemic risks", according to top Finance Ministry officials.

However, the Centre is cognisant of the fact that the key underlying trigger for the bank's woes — rapidly rising U.S. interest rates that have rendered past government bond holdings "underwater", or loss-making securities could impinge on the operational health of other financial institutions as well. If these troubles spread, a resultant flight to safety among global investors



Officials say there will be no systemic issues for India from the bank's troubles.

on the Indian economy. "At this point, it is not yet clear if there will be ripple or contagion effects on more banks in the U.S. following this bank's woes. So we don't expect any major effects to spill over on our economy for a while... There may only be some impact on individual start-ups and tech companies who get some funding from there," another official said.

The official quoted earlier also asserted that there should be no systemic issues for the bank's troubles for India. "It may affect specific companies that have investments from SVB or IT firms that have deposited some of their US operations' income there."

IN BRIEF



Satish Kaushik's friend's wife raises murder charge

NEW DELHI
Days after actor-director Satish Kaushik passed away following a cardiac arrest in Delhi, a woman claiming to be married to Kaushik's friend Vikas Malu charged her husband with "conspiring and murdering" the actor-director over a monetary dispute. » Page 2

EDUCATION PLUS » PAGE 5

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Riot of colours



Bright hues: Revellers play with colours during a traditional procession, gov., on the occasion of Rang Panchami, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday. The district administration has sought the gov.'s inclusion in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. » Page 12

Soon, net-zero waste must for buildings

Sreerama Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Ensuring net-zero waste and treating liquid discharge will soon be made mandatory for new housing societies and commercial complexes in the country as part of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry's push for reforming and modernising the sewage disposal system.

DETAILS
» PAGE 12

Video alleging attack on migrant workers in Tamil Nadu shot in Patna: Bihar police

Amli Bhelela
PATNA

The Economic Offence Unit (EOU) of the Bihar police has lodged an FIR against Manish Kashyap, a prominent YouTuber, in a case related to the sharing of a fake video of alleged attacks on migrants from Bihar in Tamil Nadu.

Spreading fake news: Bihar man arrested in Jharkhand

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

A special team of the Tamil Nadu police on Saturday arrested Prashant Kumar, 32, a native of Bihar, in Jharkhand on the charge of spreading fake news that migrant workers were attacked in Tiruppur.

"The EOU found that the videos were fake and FIRs have been lodged. Ten-member committees are probing the case and, altogether, 30 videos have been identified, along with 20 Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts. The investigation is under way," Mr. Gangwar said.

Mr. Kashyap tweeted a video on March 8, which is fake and objectionable. Rajesh Ranjan Kumar, of Gopalganj district, who had uploaded the clip, revealed during interrogation that it was shot in Patna, he said.

"Not arrested yet" On Sunday, Mr. Kashyap posted a photo featuring handcuffs on his new Twitter handle, claiming that he had been arrested by the Bihar police. The authorities issued a statement saying the photo was fake, and he had not been arrested yet. The police said it was an old photo, and another FIR would be lodged in this regard.

and had submitted its report to the Chief Minister's Office on March 11. In a separate case, a youth, identified as Umesh Mahato, was arrested from

Bihar's Gopalganj district on March 11 for spreading rumours about the death of a migrant in Tamil Nadu. He had uploaded a fake video on social media.

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Har Dil Apko Saath


Same-sex union can rock societal values: Centre


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Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

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“The institution of marriage has a sanctity attached to it and in major parts of the country, it is regarded as a sacrament, a holy union, and a *sanskar*. In our country, despite statutory recognition of the relationship of marriage between a biological man and a biological woman, marriage necessarily depends upon age-old customs, rituals, practices, cultural ethos and societal

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UNION GOVERNMENT AFFIDAVIT



values,” said the 56-page affidavit filed on Sunday. Any “deviation” from this “statutorily, religiously and socially” accepted norm in “human relationship” can only happen through the legislature and not the Supreme Court, the government said.

The affidavit came in

response to the court’s decision to examine petitions to allow solemnisation of same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, which provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law.

“Parliament has designed and framed the

marriage laws in the country, which are governed by the personal laws and codified laws relating to customs of various religious communities, to recognise only the union of a man and a woman to be capable of legal sanction, and thereby claim legal and statutory rights and consequences. Any interference with the same would cause a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country and in accepted societal values,” the government said.

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CONTINUED ON

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From Page One

'Same-sex union can rock societal values'

The court, while decriminalising homosexuality, had never accepted same-sex marriage as part of the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.

'Cannot be compared' The government said a same-sex marriage cannot be compared to a man and woman living as a family with children born out of the union.

Registration of marriage of same-sex persons would also result in violation of existing personal law as well as codified law provisions.

The government said there was a 'compelling interest' for the society and the state to limit recognition to heterosexual marriages only.

Several petitions, including ones by partners Supriya Chakrabarty and Abhinav Gupta, have been filed. They argued that the non-recognition of same-sex marriage amounted to discrimination that struck at the root of the dignity and self-fulfilment of LGBTQ+ couples.

The court had issued separate notices to the Union of India and the Attorney General of India. It had transferred various pending issues before various High Courts, including in Kerala and Delhi, to itself.

Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Neeraj Kishan Kaul, Manish Kumar, and advocate Arundhati Katoju had argued that this was a sequel to the Navtej case.

The petitioners had said the 1954 Act should grant same-sex couples the same protection it allowed inter-caste and inter-faith couples who want to marry.

SVB 'contagion' may leave India unscathed

However, the official noted that the underlying issue could hit other banks too, citing veteran banker Uday Kotak's remark on the SVB impasse that this was an accident waiting to happen.

'It could happen elsewhere too as government bond holdings of post have lost value owing to the rise in yields and need to be marked to market and the losses provided for,' the official averred.

Future triggers Officials don't expect similar challenges for Indian banks or financial institutions as the cumulative rate hike of 250 basis points effected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) over the past year, have still only taken interest rates 'back to pre-Covid levels, while the surge in the U.S. [rates] has been much sharper'. One basis point (bp) equals 0.01%.

U.K. pension funds 'Some U.K. pension funds have also faced challenges. India can only brace itself. We know it may run but don't know where and when, so it is best to carry an umbrella,' he reiterated.

If the U.S. Federal Reserve - which is now increasingly expected to hike rates by another 50 bp this month - remains hawkish, and there is a shift of trouble in any other global bank or shadow lender, this could trigger a flight to safety, tanking India on concerns for capital flows from Indian markets and may hurt the rupee, the official cautioned.

Adani group repays \$2.15-bn loan before March 31 deadline, prepays Ambuja Cements debt

The Hindu Bureau AHMEDABAD

The Adani Group said on Sunday that it has completed a \$2.15 billion before the March 31 deadline. Additionally, the promoters have also prepaid the \$500-million loan facility used for financing the haulage of Ambuja Cements Ltd.

In a statement, the Group said that the entire prepayment programme of \$2.65 billion has been completed within six weeks. This is in line with quality management and access to capital at sponsor level.



supplementing the solid capital prudence adopted at all portfolio companies,' the statement said. The Group began prepayment after its stocks were battered on the bourses after the U.S. stock market's Hindenburg Research published a scathing report on the group's business practices accusing it of stock manipulation and accounting fraud. The Group has denied. While the Adani statement did not detail source of money for repayment, these came within days of the promoters selling minority stakes in four listed companies to U.S.-based QQQ Partners for \$55,466 crore.

INS Sahyadri joins maritime exercise with French Navy

Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

The Navy's guided missile frigate INS Sahyadri joined two maritime warships of France in carrying out a two-day maritime partnership exercise in the Arabian Sea.

The exercise on Saturday and Sunday witnessed a wide spectrum of drills as including cross deck landings, boarding exercises and seamanship evolutions, the officials said.

The French Navy deployed Mistral-class amphibious assault ship FS Du moule and La Fayette class frigate FS La Fayette in the exercise.

'The seamless conduct of the exercise reaffirmed the interoperability and high level of cooperation between the two navies,' the Indian Navy said in a joint statement.

INS Sahyadri is fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, which makes her capable of detecting and neutralising surface and subsurface threats.

India, Australia for early conclusion of pact on market access

Phyllis Goyal and Don Farrell pleased with progress in negotiations. CECA will create new jobs, raise living standards, says joint statement

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Phyllis Goyal and his Australian counterpart Don Farrell countered the India-Australia joint ministerial Commission on Saturday and discussed negotiations for a full-scale free trade pact and steps to spur investment flows into both countries.

In a joint communication issued on Sunday, Mr. Goyal and Mr. Farrell, Australia's Trade and Tourism Minister, said they were pleased with the progress in resolving various bilateral technical market access issues and 'look forward to completing' the India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) soon.

'Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese look forward to an early conclusion of an ambitious CECA, which will build on the foundation laid by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) last year,' including new areas of trade, investment and cooperation. CECA will create new employment opportunities, raise living standards and improve the general welfare in both countries,' the statement said.

The Ministers also discussed engagements in the G20, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). On the IPEF, the Ministers said the two countries would continue to work together on areas of mutual interest, including the clean economy and resilient supply chains.



Phyllis Goyal and Australian Minister Don Farrell at a press meeting after the 18th joint ministerial meeting. (HT/PTI/ANSA/REUTERS)

G-20 meet to focus on blue economy, responsible AI

Devash K. Pandey GURMATTI

Responsible application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the blue economy will be the primary issues in focus during transformatory sessions at the three-day Supreme Audit Institutions-20 (SAI-20) Engagement Group delegates' meet starting on Monday.

The Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, is the chair of the SAI-20 Engagement Group under India's G-20 Presidency.

Conserving ocean assets "Blue economy" is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of our ecosystem.

Responsible AI is a governance framework aimed at which data can be collected and used; how AI models should be evaluated; and how to best deploy and monitor the models.

Responsible AI is a governance framework aimed at which data can be collected and used

The framework can also define who is accountable for any negative outcomes of AI," the CAG said in a statement.

Delegates from G20 member countries, guest nations and other international organisations will attend the event. The SAI-20 Engagement Group under India's G-20 Presidency.

Army rescues 370 tourists stranded in snow in Sikkim

The Hindu Bureau GURMATTI

Troops of the Indian Army's Tribhakti Corps helped the local police and administration in Sikkim rescue 370 tourists who were stranded in heavy snowfall on Saturday.

The tourists were stuck in some 800 vehicles that were returning from Nathu La, a mountain pass on the border with China, and Tsongpo or Changuang lake to Gangtok.

The rescue mission, named Operation Himrahal, continued through the night on Saturday, the Gawahati-based defence spokesperson, Lt. Col. Mahendra Rawat, said.

"The tourists were moved to safe areas and provided shelter, warm clothing, medical aid and hot meals. The troops arranged accommodation for the 370 tourists (178 men, 142 women and 50 children)," he said.

Detailed coordination was done with the General Reserve Engineering Force for the road opening on Sunday. The road was cleared to enable the vehicles to move to Gangtok.

Purple revolution



Changing fortunes: Women working in a lavender field in Jammu & Kashmir's Baramulla district on Sunday. (PTI)

India's silence on Beijing's role in Saudi Arabia-Iran deal is disquieting

NEWS ANALYSIS

Subhashit Haddar NEW DELHI

The Saudi Arabia-Iran agreement signed in Beijing on Friday, if successful, will have a far-reaching impact worldwide. The result of negotiations that were kept secret till they reached agreement could signal an ending of tensions between Riyadh and Tehran after many years; peace in Yemen, where the two countries have carried out proxy battles; and a boost for China's efforts to project itself as a peace-maker.

While the agreement has been welcomed by the United Nations, France, Jordan and West Asian countries, it is also seen as a counter to the U.S.-backed Abraham Accords, and will be greeted with some concern in the U.S. and the UAE.

Disquieting for Delhi Though New Delhi has not formally reacted to the announcement so far, the fact that two close partners such as Saudi Arabia and Iran have reached a deal with Beijing's influence is disquieting, given India's current tensions with China.

China's experts say previous attempts brokered by Iraq and Oman had not succeeded in any breakthrough. "While Saudi-Iranian normalisation is good news, China being the middle is bad news for South Block," said P.K. Kumaraswamy, Professor of Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). "However, it is an opportunity for India to rework its priorities and pay serious attention to regional developments" rather than be "surprised" by the development, he added.

Other analysts have pointed to India's focus on the CECA, quadrilateral agreement with Israel, the U.S. and UAE, which may have taken the spotlight away from its ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia. In November, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman cancelled a visit to India, which is expected to be rescheduled this year.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian cancelled his participation in this year's Raisina Dialogue, run by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Observer Research Foundation, reportedly after posting a promotional video for the event that appeared critical of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Strained U.S.-Saudi ties While the U.S.-Iran tensions have definitely receded, given an absence of strategic vision in conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, the U.S. has shown many Middle Eastern countries losing faith in the U.S., and broadening their options to players like Russia for energy matters, and China for economic and political matters," said Tahira Ahmad, a former Ambassador and author of West Asia at War.

More civilian flights from Russia to Indian cities

Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

India and Russia have "in principle" agreed to revise their bilateral air services agreement which allows Russian carriers to be allowed to operate as many as 64 weekly flights to various Indian cities, according to a senior official.

Under the existing agreement, Russia can operate up to 52 weekly civilian flights.

India has "in principle" agreed to increase the number of weekly flights that Russian carriers can operate to India to 64. The bilateral air services agreement will be amended in due course, the official said.

Currently, Aeroflot is operating seven weekly flights to India while the balance of power remains with the U.S., its influence and commitment in the region have definitely receded, given an absence of strategic vision in conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, the U.S. has shown many Middle Eastern countries losing faith in the U.S., and broadening their options to players like Russia for energy matters, and China for economic and political matters," said Tahira Ahmad, a former Ambassador and author of West Asia at War.

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Purple revolution



Changing fortunes: Women working in a lavender field in Jammu & Kashmir's Baderwah district on Sunday. PTI

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EXPRESS NETWORK

2ND LEG OF BUDGET SESSION TODAY. GOVT SAYS FINANCE BILL PRIORITY

With first Test century since 2019, a Kohli message: His story is still in the making



Virat Kohli celebrates his century on Day 4 of the Test against Australia, in Ahmedabad on Sunday. India finished their innings at 571 runs. **ANIND HANJURIA**

STUDY IN RESTRAINT: 186 FROM 364 BALLS ANCHORS INDIAN REPLY AND 91-RUN LEAD

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 12

ON A strangely overcast day, about an hour after noon, with Virat Kohli on 99 and Nathan Lyon starting a fresh over, the clouds miraculously parted for the sun to shine over the giant bowl of the stadium. The stage was set for the world to see Virat Kohli in a better light.

Those in the higher tiers ran down the stairs for a closer view of Kohli reaching 100. Test hundred, the moment for which Kohli had waited for three-and-a-half years. Fearing that the daring and the frenzied crowd might jump over the fence to give Kohli a bearhug, the security staff, with their walkie-talkies held close to their mouths, stood in attention. Close to 45,000 had opted to spend their Sunday at the Narendra Modi Stadium with the hope that Kohli, unbeaten on 99 at stumps on Saturday, would score at least 41 more runs.

He took his time but Kohli did score those runs. In the day's second session, half-an-hour after lunch, on the second ball of Lyon's 53rd over, he reached his hundred. His unexpected struggle to square to reach his hundred awaited 28th Test hundred was followed by a quiet, but emotional, celebration. A younger Kohli would have burnt his lungs, strained his nerves and cursed the gods.

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AFFIDAVIT IN TOP COURT

Opposing pleas in SC on same-sex marriages, Govt: Let House decide

AMANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

OPPOSING PETITIONERS seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages, the Centre has said the Supreme Court that the "legislative understanding of marriage in the Indian statutory and personal law regime" refers only to marriage between a biological man and biological woman and any interference "would cause a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country and in accepted societal values".

Urging the court to leave the issue to Parliament, the Centre asserted that any "recognised deviation... can occur only before the competent legislature". It also said that "despite the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the country".

The affidavit was filed in the top court in response to a batch of petitions seeking recognition of same-sex marriages under the law. The Supreme Court had issued notices on these petitions in November last year and in January this year. They are likely to come up for hearing Monday.

In its affidavit, the Centre said that "a plain reading of various provisions of the Constitution that relate to the legislative as being the

union of one man and one woman only".

"The language employed in the provisions thereof eg. 'male', 'woman', 'husband', 'wife' etc is proof positive that (the) legislature is making these laws never intended that they should apply to any union other than heterosexual marriages. The terms used are specific, being capable of only one possible definition. It said.

Using such gender specific language was a conscious decision of Parliament and shows that gender specific application of these laws is part of the legislative policy... given the clear intent of Parliament expressed in the Acts, the court ought not to adopt a construction that would defeat such intent nor should it expand the definition of marriage to such classes who were never meant to be covered under it... To do so would completely distort the language of the statute," it said.

The Centre said that "any other interpretation except treating 'husband' as a biological man and 'wife' as a biological woman will make all statutory provisions unworkable apart from being completely contrary to the consistent legislative policy which is based upon the considered opinions of law makers which are based on cultural ethos and societal values in each country".

It said that as a same-sex marriage, it is neither possible nor feasible to term one as "husband" and the other as "wife" in the

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNAY

Forget Cambridge and streetlights, the bridge is the main attraction.

IDEA EXCHANGE

"We have tried to make C20 a people's president"

AMTIBHANK

Columnist

PAGE 15

RSS annual meeting begins with tributes, on list is Mulayam

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

A THREE-DAY annual meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) apex decision-making body began at Samaliba in Haryana Sunday with tributes to late Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Mulayam Singh Yadav and other public figures who passed away over the past year.

Sources said apart from Mulayam, tributes were paid at the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) to former JDU leader Sharad Yadav, senior lawyer Shanti Bhushan, former Union Minister Yogeshwar Prasad and former Governors Om Prakash Kohli and Kamraj Nath Tripathi, architect Balkrishna Doshi, and singers Vani Jayaram, Bhupinder Singh and Shivamogga Subbanna. The list included Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hariban.

In all, sources said, the Sangh paid tributes to about 100 personalities. The list also included Bollywood personalities Satish Kaushik, Javed Akhtar and Nitesh Mishra, and industrialists such as Vikram Kirloskar and Jamshed Tata.

The Sangh paying tributes to Mulayam is significant as its cadre had held his then UP government responsible for opening fire on kar sevaks in Ayodhya at the peak of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Modi slams Rahul remarks: No power can harm our democracy

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Sunday hit out at senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his recent remarks in London that were critical of the government, saying "some people are putting Indian democracy on a pedestal and insulating the terms of the country".

"The roots of Indian democracy draw from our history. No power in the world can damage the democratic tradition of our country. Yet some people are putting Indian democracy on a pedestal and insulating the terms of the country," PM Modi said in Dharwad in Karnataka, where he is on a tour.

"The statue of Lord Basaveshwara in London, but it is unfortunate that in the same London, questions were raised on India's democracy. The roots of India's democracy have been nurtured for centuries. No power in this world can harm India's democratic tradition. Despite this, some are constantly putting Indian democracy on a pedestal."

He said, "People of Karnataka should beware of such people." "The statue of Lord Basaveshwara in London, but it is unfortunate that in the same London, questions were raised on India's democracy. The roots of India's democracy have been nurtured for centuries. No power in this world can harm India's democratic tradition. Despite this, some are constantly putting Indian democracy on a pedestal."

MoS says will meet start-ups affected by collapse of US bank

SOLIMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

IN THE first official reaction to the Silicon Valley Bank collapse, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar Sunday said he will meet executives of affected Indian start-ups to understand the impact and how the government can help them.

"All start-ups have reached out to me, and there is a general worry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of India's 'startup decade' has a big role for the success of our start-ups and innovation ecosystem. We want to be supportive of our young Indians in whatever way we can. We won't let SVB's failure slow their growth," Chandrasekhar told the Indian Express.

On Sunday, the Indian Express reported on how the collapse of SVB sent shockwaves across the Indian start-up community, given that a number of them are the bank's customers.

Assam cops admit to mix-up over 'criminal' killed in encounter

SUKRITA BARUIAH
GUWAHATI, MARCH 12

ON THE morning of February 24, the Assam Police gunned down a man in an alleged encounter and claimed that he was Kenaram Basumatary, a surrendered Bodo militant and a "vet-ran criminal." Complaints by a distressed family, an exhumation and a DNA analysis later, now emerges the police killed someone else.

On February 25, when Baswar Mchacharya, a resident of Jengrenghara village in Jorhat district, saw local news flashing images of "deceased criminal

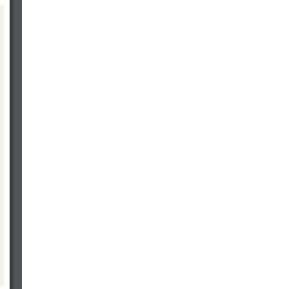
Russia crude in tank, India steps up petroleum product exports to EU as region shuns Moscow

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

AS THE European Union (EU) weans itself off refined petroleum products from Russia, Indian refiners, particularly private sector companies, are rushing in to fill the gap, making the region the top destination for India's refined product exports, government data shows.

This comes as Indian refiners snipe up discounts on Russian crude oil shunned by the EU and Western powers, with analysts pointing to a clear possibility of a supply glut from Russian barrels reaching the EU's markets via India.

In the ramp-up to the EU's ban on Russian petroleum products from February 5, India saw its refined product exports to the region rise for five straight months, data from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S) shows.



Ukraine's youngest MP on Kolkata life, and the war that shaped him

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

AT 27, Sviatoslav Andriyovich Yurash, the youngest member of Ukraine's parliament, has seen what many don't in their lifetime.

A resident of Lviv in western Ukraine, he came to study international relations at Calicut University in 2013, cut short his India stay to join the anti-Russia movement after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Associated himself with stand-up comedian-turned-politician Volodymyr Zelenskyy, became an MP at 23

and lost "a special friend" to Russian missiles.

With Ukraine engaged in a war with Russia for over a year, he also fought in the trenches of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Bakhmut, and is "ready to die" for the country. Not that the young MP would ever do so for himself or his country. "If Russia stops fighting, there will be peace. If we stop fighting, there will be no Ukraine," says Yurash.

In Delhi for the Raisina Young Leaders Programme, organised as part of the Raisina Dialogue that is conducted by the Observer Research Foundation and the Ministry of External Affairs, Yurash remembers his time in Kolkata fondly. "Call me 'Sweet Love'... that's what my friends in Calcutta University would call me. My name Sviatoslav would sound like a ready-made pronunciation," Yurash, dressed in a shirt with yellow and blue stripes, told the Indian Express.

"I still remember the bookshops on College Street (in Kolkata) and the street food I ate in the city. I would get Delhi belly, one, say I would get Delhi belly, but I never had any problems. I also celebrated Durga Puja in Calcutta that year," Yurash recalls wistfully.

The 6-foot-tall Ukrainian was 17 when he came to India from his Warsaw University in Poland as part of a year-long exchange programme. "I came to Calcutta in the autumn of 2013, but I had to return in six months as the revolution in Maidan (a central public square in Kyiv) was gathering momentum," he says.

In February 2014, protests in Kyiv led to the ousting of pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, followed by the "Revolution of the Dignity" and became the youngest MP in Ukraine's 450-member parliament and would soon go on to be the

the Second World War, so fighting in my blood."

Tragedy struck closer home in the early days of March last year when his "very special friend" for over 10 years, Aleksandr, died. Russian shelling "We had known each other since we were teenagers... her death filled me up with hate for the Russian military," he says.

The tragedy led to him volunteering for the Ukrainian armed forces. In the summer of 2022, Yurash was hit in the chest by a 133 Battalion of the Bucha Territorial Defence Forces and the

Russia crude in tank, India steps up petroleum product exports to EU as region shuns Moscow

SUKALP SHARMA

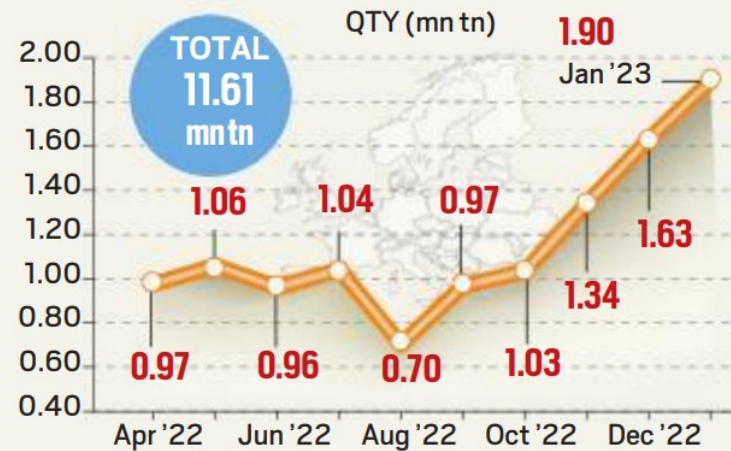
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In the run-up to the EU's ban on Russian petroleum products from February 5 — owing to the Ukraine invasion — India saw its refined product exports to the region rise for five straight months, data from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) shows.

PETROLEUM PRODUCT EXPORTS TO EU



CRUDE OIL IMPORTS FROM RUSSIA



Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics

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SCIENTISTS' CAUTION
Horseshoe crabs are disappearing



DELHI CONTINUES
Cong. moves privilege notice against Modi

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Ukraine fallout
ICG issues arrest warrant against Putin

WORLD ► PAGE 13

RELOCATION AGREEMENT
Advaxis left high and dry in the Nilgiris

Families complain of broken promises

GROUND ZERO ► PAGE 9

DAZZLING DUO
Trishita Gayatri pair moves into semifinals

SPORT ► PAGE 17

IN BRIEF

Delhi budget session off to stormy start

NEW DELHI: The budget session of the Delhi Assembly began on a stormy note on Friday as BJP and AAP MLAs raised slogans against each other just as the Lieutenant-Governor began his speech in the House. ► Page 2

19 new districts in Rajasthan ahead of Assembly poll

JAIPIUR: In a politically significant move ahead of the Assembly election, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot on Friday announced the formation of 19 new districts, taking the total number of districts in the State to 50. ► Page 5

Maharashtra, U.P. among 7 States to get textile parks

Centre expects the parks to attract investments worth ₹70,000 crore, generate jobs for 20 lakh people and create an integrated value chain for the sector, says Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal

All-in-one parks

The PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) scheme was announced in October 2021.

- The parks will come up by 2025-27.
- The total outlay for the parks is ₹4,445 crore, though the initial allocation in the 2022-24 Budget is only ₹200 crore.
- States have offered to provide at least 1,000 acres, says Minister Goyal.
- Spinning, weaving, processing, dyeing and printing will be done at one location.
- Effort is to reduce logistics cost of textile industry and make it globally competitive.

as centres of opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain — from spinning, weaving, processing, dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing — all at one location. "The textile industry has been unorganised. This increased wastage and logistical costs impact the competitiveness of country's textile sector. The cluster-based approach, a vision of the Prime Minister, will solve several problems of the sector," Mr. Goyal said. Environmental clearances would also be eased under the scheme, he said. Textiles Secretary Rachna Shah said the Ministry had selected the locations in a transparent manner. On March 14, officials in Arunachal Pradesh's Changiang district found several illegal timber depots in the core area of the 1,985 sq. km Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve. Park officials bumped into the illegal logging activities while trying to find out why a tiger came out of the core area of the reserve after so many years. The tiger was caught on cameras set up near the park's Deban Forest Inspection Bungalow, after forest guards reported some pugmarks on January 31. It was the second tiger spotted in Namdapha after one in 2015. "There are reasons to believe that the logging activities may have forced the tiger out of the dense, core area of Namdapha towards the bungalow, which is close to a 157-km road from Miao to Vijaynagar through a large stretch of the park," a forest official said, declining to be quoted. The office of Namdapha's field director is at Miao, a sub-divisional town. Vijaynagar, close to the Myanmar border, is Changiang's remotest circle headquarters. CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

Tiger helps uncover timber 'depots' in Arunachal reserve

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A tiger spotted after an eight-year gap could have helped uncover timber 'depots' deep inside India's easternmost tiger reserve. On March 14, officials in Arunachal Pradesh's Changiang district found several illegal timber depots in the core area of the 1,985 sq. km Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve. Park officials bumped into the illegal logging activities while trying to find out why a tiger came out of the core area of the reserve after so many years. The tiger was caught on cameras set up near the park's Deban Forest Inspection Bungalow, after forest guards reported some pugmarks on January 31. It was the second tiger spotted in Namdapha after one in 2015. "There are reasons to believe that the logging activities may have forced the tiger out of the dense, core area of Namdapha towards the bungalow, which is close to a 157-km road from Miao to Vijaynagar through a large stretch of the park," a forest official said, declining to be quoted. The office of Namdapha's field director is at Miao, a sub-divisional town. Vijaynagar, close to the Myanmar border, is Changiang's remotest circle headquarters. CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

Delhi govt. allots Sisodia's house to new Minister Atishi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

First-time Delhi Minister Atishi has been allotted the official residence of former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who was arrested by the CBI last month and had later resigned from the Cabinet. A letter to this effect dated March 14 was issued by the Public Works Department (PWD). Mr. Sisodia has been directed to vacate the house by March 21. A senior PWD official said the allotment of the house to Ms. Atishi — who holds the PWD portfolio apart from Education, Power, Women and Child Development and Tourism — was a routine procedure. "Compliance with law" AAP said it is the law that a Minister upon resigning from office is bound to vacate their government residence within 15 days. "This order is nothing but compliance with the law," the party said in a statement. However, the BJP saw the allotment of the house to Ms. Atishi as an admission of Mr. Sisodia being guilty in the excise case. The PWD has sought Ms. Atishi's acceptance within eight days of the date of issuance of the letter, failing which the allotment would stand cancelled.

Will keep distance from BJP, Congress ahead of Lok Sabha election, says Akhilesh after meeting Mamata

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Samajwadi Party (SP) will maintain equal distance from both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress, party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Friday following an hour-long meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee at her residence in Kolkata. The SP chief's remarks are in tune with Ms. Banerjee's recently announced stand that her party would be contesting the Lok Sabha election on its own. "Regional parties vital" "In Bengal, we are with Mamata *didid*. Right now, our stand is to maintain equal distance from both the BJP and the Congress," said Mr. Yadav, who is in the city for the SP's national executive meeting. He added that the regional parties will hold the key to victory in the 2024 poll. "If you look at the States, then most MPs who will be elected [in 2024] will be neither from the BJP nor the Congress," Mr. Yadav told journalists who asked him if the BJP could be defeated without the support of the Congress. He said he was hopeful of an alliance or a front taking shape before the poll. "Everyone wants a chance as nobody has caused as much damage as the BJP has done to the country," Mr. Yadav said his party aims to increase its tally in the poll. "In U.P., we will contest the election with the parties with whom we have an alliance," he said.

In dry Bihar, drunk man gets ditched for missing his wedding

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

The poor implementation of prohibition in dry Bihar surfaced yet again last week when a drunk bridegroom gave his wedding a miss and paid dearly for it. By the time Satish Kumar Mandal — of Atchhak village in Bhagalpur — sobored up the next morning (March 14) and led the wedding procession to the house of the bride, Neha of Mirzapur village, she refused his hand, saying he could not "spend the rest of her life with a drunkard and a liar who doesn't understand his responsibilities." Her stand was appreciated by her relatives and the villagers. The story did not end there. The bride's family then held the groom and his relatives hostage, demanding that they reimburse them for the money spent on wedding arrangements. The local police

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Maharashtra, U.P. among 7 States to get textile parks

Centre expects the parks to attract investments worth ₹70,000 crore, generate jobs for 20 lakh people and create an integrated value chain for the sector, says Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has selected sites in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to set up new textile parks, a year and a half after the PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) scheme was announced.

Listing the seven select States in a tweet on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the parks would “provide state-of-the-art infrastructure for the textiles sector, attract investment of crores and create lakhs of jobs”.

The scheme was announced in October 2021, and the parks will be set up by 2026-27. The total outlay for the project is ₹4,445

All-in-one parks

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■ The total outlay for the project is ₹4,445 crore, though the initial allocation in the 2023-24 Budget is only ₹200 crore

■ States have offered to provide at least 1,000 acres, says Minister Goyal



■ Spinning, weaving, processing/ dyeing, printing and garment manufacturing will be done at one location

■ Effort is to reduce logistics cost of textile industry and make it globally competitive

crore, though the initial allocation in the 2023-24 Budget is only ₹200 crore.

“PM MITRA mega textile parks will boost the textiles sector in line with 5F (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) vision,” Mr. Modi tweeted, adding that the scheme would be a great example

of the government’s policy of ‘Make in India’ and ‘Make for the World’.

The Centre envisages an investment of nearly ₹70,000 crore into the parks, with employment generation for about 20 lakh people, Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal said.

The parks will function

as centres of opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain – from spinning, weaving, processing, dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing – all at one location. “The textile industry has been unorganised. This increased wastage and logistical costs impact the competitiveness of country’s textile sector. The cluster-based approach, a vision of the Prime Minister, will solve several problems of the sector,” Mr. Goyal said. Environmental clearances would also be eased under the scheme, he said.

Textiles Secretary Rachna Shah said the Ministry had selected the locations in a transparent manner, having considered 18 proposals from 13 States.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

After paper leak, Telangana cancels PSC examinations

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) has cancelled the Group-I, Divisional Accounts Officer (DAO) and Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE) exams after the paper leak scandal broke out.

A statement from the TSPSC on Friday said that a special meeting of the commission convened on Friday examined the report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and also the internal enquiry of the commission and decided to cancel the examination.

The Group-I preliminary examination will be reconducted on June 11 and the dates for the other two

exams be announced later, the statement added.

The leakage scandal broke out with the arrest of a TSPSC employee Praveen, who allegedly leaked the AEE paper for monetary considerations and sold it to Renuka, who is also arrested now. She in turn sold it to two of her known acquaintances for ₹10 lakh each. The Begum Bazar police investigated the case on a complaint lodged by the TSPSC officials who said their computers were hacked.

Later, the case was transferred to a Special Investigation Team of the Central Crime Station.

So far, nine people have been arrested, including two TSPSC employees and a police constable.

SC issues notice to CBI in BRS MLAs' poaching case

Justice Sanjay Khanna says Telangana Police will not continue with the investigation. State government says CBI probe will prove ineffective as the agency is 'controlled' by BJP in the Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday issued formal notice to the CBI in a case concerning allegations that the BJP conspired to poach Telangana's Bharat Rashtira Samithi legislators.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Khanna and M.M. Suresh, however, said there was no need to issue notice to the Centre.

The Telangana government, represented by senior advocate Dushyant Dave, has questioned a State High Court decision to transfer the case to the CBI when the State had already set up a seven-member



Pilot Rohith Reddy

Special Investigation Team to probe the allegations of poaching. Mr. Dave had contended that a CBI probe would prove ineffective as the agency was "controlled" by the ruling BJP in the Centre.

On March 13, the Bench orally made it clear that the CBI should hook its hands while the case is now with the Supreme Court.

On Friday, Justice Khanna conveyed the same message to the Telangana Police.

"We are making it clear that the Telangana Police will not continue with the investigation," Justice Khanna addressed Mr. Dave.

"There is no question about that. We had stopped long back... we are awaiting the outcome," Mr. Dave assured.

The court listed the case after 10 days.

Three people — Ramachandra Bharati alias Sa-

ish Sharma, Nandu Kumar and Simhayaji Swamy — were already convicted and accused in the case after a complaint was lodged by BRS MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy, among four legislators, against them on October 26.

The trio was arrested while they were allegedly trying to lure the four MLAs of the ruling BRS to join the BJP. Recently, they were granted bail by the High Court.

As per the FIR copy, Mr. Reddy alleged that the accused offered him ₹100 crore and in return the legislature had to leave the BRS and contest as a BJP candidate in the next Assembly election.

IN BRIEF



G-20 delegates pay obeisance at the Golden Temple

Delegates of different countries, who came to Amritsar to participate in a G-20 meeting, paid obeisance at the Golden Temple here on Friday. On their arrival, the delegates were welcomed by Shriromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhami. The SGPC organised a special event to honour the G20 delegates in a hall at the plaza.

4 policemen held for taking prisoner to shopping mall

A police sub-inspector and three constables were suspended for allegedly taking an undertrial prisoner lodged in a jail here to a shopping mall, officers said on Friday. SI Ramsewak and constables Anuj Dharma, Nitin Rana and Ramachandra Prajapati were suspended for dereliction of duty, a statement by the Lucknow Police Commissionerate said. Officers said One Rishabh Rai, who was arrested in a case of Arms Act, complained of health issues. The police personnel were deployed to take Rai to the hospital. While returning from the hospital, the policemen took him to a shopping mall.

Indore court issues arrest warrant against actor KRR

The Indore district court has issued an arrest warrant against film producer-actor Karnal Rishabh Khatri aka KRR for not remaining present in a defamation case filed against him by actor Manoj Bajpayee. Mr. Bajpayee filed a case against Mr. Khatri after the latter, in a few tweets in 2021 allegedly called him a drug addict. The Judicial Magistrate First Class posted the next hearing to May 10.

SC refuses to quash summons against Cardinal Alencheray

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to quash summons issued by a trial court in Kerala to Cardinal Mar George Alencheray of Syro-Malabar Church in criminal cases against him of conspiring to fraudulently dispose of archdiocesan properties worth crores of rupees between 2012 and 2017. The church leader, the Eparchy of

Bathery and the Catholic Diocese of Thamarassery had separately filed special leave petitions against a decision of the Kerala High Court in August 2023 refusing to quash the criminal proceedings against the Cardinal.

"But as it is necessary to curtail vexatious and frivolous complaints against innocent persons, it is equally essential to punish the guilty after conducting a fair trial," a Bench of Justice

Dinesh Maheshwari and Bela Trivedi observed.

Justice Trivedi said three lower courts had discussed in detail "the prime facts involved in the appellant in the alleged offence" and said that having carefully examined the record of the complaints in question, we do not find any illegality in the orders passed by the trial court issuing summons against the appellant," Justice Trivedi said.

Kerala Assembly adjourns as Opposition goes on protest

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Assembly adjourned nine minutes after it convened on Friday following raucous protests by the Opposition United Democratic Front (UDF).

"Suffice it to say that the Opposition legislators vociferously condemned the government for slapping non-bailable criminal charges on UDF members, including women MLAs, for their protest in front of

the office of Speaker A.N. Shamsheer on Wednesday. Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan said the police overlooked the injuries inflicted on Opposition MLAs by their ruling front counterparts and posed lenient charges on the Opposition legislators. He accused Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of duplicity.

He added that hours before Mr. Vijayan called the Opposition for a reconciliation

meeting in the Speaker's chamber on Thursday, the police booked the legislators on severe criminal charges that offered little scope for bail and entailed more than 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.

Later, two Communist Party of India (CPI) members, Sachin Dev and H. Salam, called a press conference to deny the Opposition's charge that they had assaulted the UDF legislators.

Elephant kills tribal man at Kannur's Aralam farm

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

A 43-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant inside the Aralam farm in Kerala's Kannur on Friday.

Raghu, who had gone to collect firewood, was killed by the elephant, which came out of thick vegetation inside the tribal settlement area adjoining the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary.

The incident took place in the 10th block of the farm around 2.30 p.m.

Since 2014, as many as 14 lives have been lost to wild animal attacks in the Aralam farm.

Despite assurances from the government, trespassers in the Aralam farm still have little respite from wild animal attacks.

Home away from home



In safe hands: A three-month-old elephant calf, which was separated from its herd, was brought to Theppakadu elephant camp in Madurai. Tiger Baskaran in Tamil Nadu. An attendant feeds the calf with another hand. Forest Department officials are trying to raise it in captivity. Mahout Bommnan, whose story was documented in the Oscar-winning film 'The Elephant Whisperers', has been charged with taking care of it. The calf is being fed baby formula as well as nutritional supplements. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Jagan draws PM's attention to A.P.'s unresolved issues

The Hindu Bureau
TUVANANDA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at New Delhi on Friday and urged him to expedite several issues pending even nine years after the bifurcation of the State.

In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister reminded him that some key issues remained unmet despite several rounds of discussions held by the government and the state.

The Chief Minister contended under the Chairmanship of Union Finance Secretary to attend to a plethora of issues mentioned in the AP Reorganisation Act.

Mr. Reddy urged the Prime Minister to release the pending amount of ₹36,625 crore under Resource Gap Funding for the fiscal 2014-15 and enhance the credit limit of ₹7,923 crore which was reduced from ₹42,472 crore post-COVID-19 pandemic, besides reimbursing the arrears of ₹2,600.74 crore incurred by the State government on the Polavaram Project.



A.P. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy honouring Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a meeting in New Delhi on Friday.

He appealed to Mr. Modi to accept the Technical Advisory Committee's estimates of ₹55,548 crore for the Polavaram project.

He also appealed to Mr. Modi to grant permission for 12 million acres in the State for which clearances were pending.

Carcasses of Olive Ridleys on Krishna district shores in A.P. worry tourists

Rajalaxmi Srinivas
AVANIGADDA

Carcasses of endangered Olive Ridley turtles were seen washed up on the shore at several places and in some islands in Krishna district.

Tourists visiting the beaches in the district have expressed concern over the mortality of the Olive Ridley turtles. Fishermen were found on some of the carcasses of the turtles, the villagers said.

Dead turtles were found at Palakayattipeta and Light House and other places. "The carcasses washed ashore one or two days



A dead Olive Ridley turtle found on the shore near the Light House in Krishna district.

"The reason behind the deaths is being ascertained, say Forest Department officials.

pollution or oil exploration along the shore in Krishna district. Still, many Olive Ridley turtles are dying. Officials should ascertain the reasons behind the deaths of the endangered species," said a tourist Ch. Srikanth.

"No mass mortality" Speaking to *The Hindu*, Avaniigadda Forest Range Officer (FRO), K.V.S. Raghava Rao said.

va Rao said there was no mass mortality of the Olive Ridley turtles along the shore in the region.

"We are getting information on carcasses of the turtles at some places. Forest Department officials are trying to find out the exact reason for the deaths. This is a matter under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972," the FRO said.

"Carcasses of one or two turtles were noticed on the shore every week. Recently, we noticed the dead Olive Ridley turtles at Light House and at Palakayattipeta village," Mr. Raghava Rao said.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have developed a low-cost star sensor for astronomy and small CubeSat class satellite missions.

The star sensor named StarBerry-Sense can help small CubeSat class satellite missions find their orientation in space.

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) said that the StarBerry-Sense is ready for launch under the PSLV-Orbital Platform by ISRO and can be used for CubeSat and other small satellite mis-



Exploded view of StarBerry-Sense star sensor developed by researchers of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics.

sions in the future.

Based on commercial/off-the-shelf components, the star sensor costs less than 30% of those available in the market. The main instrument of the instrument is a single-board Linux computer based on Raspberry Pi 4, which is widely used among electronics hobbyists.

"We coupled some high-

been published in the Journal of Astronomical Telescopes, Instruments, and Systems.

"Any satellite needs to know where it is pointed in space, and the instrument used for this purpose is called a star sensor. The position of stars in the sky is fixed relative to each other and can be used as a stable reference frame to calculate the orientation of a satellite in orbit. This is done by the instrument identifying the stars in the sky towards which the star sensor is pointed," said Bharat Chandra, Ph.D. scholar at IIA and the first author of the research, which has

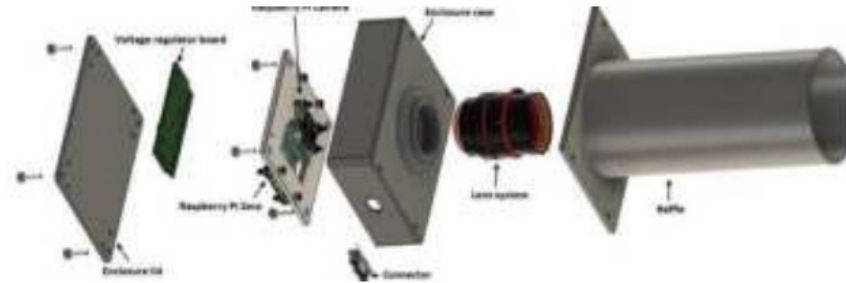
Indian Institute of Astrophysics researchers develop low-cost star sensor

The Hindu Bureau
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From Page One

Maharashtra, U.P. among 7 States to get textile parks

Mr. Goyal hoped that the proposed world-class industrial infrastructure would attract cutting-edge technology and boost foreign direct investment and local investment in the sector. The Textile Ministry will oversee the execution of projects in the PM MITRA parks, according to an official statement.

"An SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) owned by Centre and State Government will be set up for each park which will oversee the implementation of the project. The Ministry of Textiles will provide financial support in the form of Development Capital Support up to ₹500 crore per park to the Park SPV," the Ministry said.

"A Competitive Incentive Support (CIS) up to ₹300 crore per park to the units in PM MITRA Park shall also be provided to incentivise speedy implementation. Convergence with other Government of India schemes shall also be facilitated in order to ensure additional incentives to the master developer and investor units," added the statement.

Mr. Goyal said that State governments have offered to provide at least 1,000 acres of land for free for the parks and will also facilitate provision of all utilities such as power and water. He said that ₹200 crore has been allotted as an initial investment.

"PM MITRA Parks represent a unique model where the Centre and State governments will work together to increase investment, promote innovation, create job opportunities and ultimately make India a global hub for textile manufacturing and exports," the Ministry added.

Tiger helps uncover timber 'depots' in forest

The core area, largely inaccessible, is often not patrolled because the park is understaffed, the official said. Park officials got a whiff of the logging activities while checking out the tiger's haunts in the core area.

According to a first information report (FIR) filed by forest range officer T. Mall at the Miao police station, eight people were caught on March 14 during a raid led by Changlang's Deputy Commissioner Sunny K. Singh. All eight, arrested later, are from Miao and adjoining villages. The team seized an excavator, a pickup and two trucks, one loaded with logs. Another excavator and two trucks were found abandoned.

"As per the preliminary survey, more than 2,000 CFT (cubic foot) of timber is lying at several depots on route", requiring extraction and scientific assessment, the FIR read.

"We will go to every possible length under the ambit of the law to preserve the rich flora and fauna of Namdapha National Park. All sections of relevant laws have been invoked to book the people involved (in timber smuggling)," Mr. Singh told The Hindu.

"The administration has directed forest officials to ensure strict monitoring of all the suspected areas along the boundary of Namdapha and take stringent action against the micro-carts. Efforts will be made to protect our catchment areas from any disturbances such as timber operation," he said.

Officials said timber smuggling could be connected to encroachment in the core areas of Namdapha along the Miao-Vijaynagar Road.

Cong. moves privilege question against PM

Party general secretary K.C. Venugopal writes to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar seeking breach of privilege proceedings against Narendra Modi over his 'mocking' remarks in the Upper House asking why former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's family did not use the surname

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal on Friday wrote to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar seeking breach of privilege proceedings against Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on why former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's family did not use his surname.

In his notice, Mr. Venugopal mentioned that the comments of the Prime Minister were "distasteful, derogatory and defamatory" against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

"The move comes a day after reports that the BJP is exploring the possibility of getting Mr. Gandhi 'suspended' if he does not apologise for his 'democracy under threat' remarks."

The Prime Minister had made the remarks during



Unhappy stand: Manoj Prasad, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition MPs during a protest over the Adani issue, at Parliament House complex in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

his reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha on February 9 during the first part of the Budget session. "I hereby give a notice of question of privilege against the Prime Minister of India under Rule 188 of

the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Council of States (Rajya Sabha) for having cast reflections upon members of Parliament by his reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address on February 9, 2023," Mr. Venugopal said in his notice.

The Congress leader, also in his notice, claimed that Mr. Modi's question on why the Gandhis did not use Nehru as a surname is "insulting and derogatory". Prime Minister knows very well that the daughter does not take the surname of the father.

Congress flags SEBI silence over NSE stance

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday raised questions about the stock market regulator's silence on the issue, Mr. Ramesh asked. "Why is SEBI (Securities Exchange Board of India) standing by as the NSE chooses to protect the Adani Group's interests rather than that of lakhs of small investors?"

"Despite knowing that, he deliberately mocked... The tone and tenor of the remark are insinuating and derogatory in nature. This clearly amounts to casting reflections upon Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi by the Prime Minister, which breaches their

group's stocks that have been added to various Nifty indices. Moving into the market regulator's silence on the issue, Mr. Ramesh asked: "Why is SEBI (Securities Exchange Board of India) standing by as the NSE chooses to protect the Adani Group's interests rather than that of lakhs of small investors?"

privileges and tantamounts to contempt of the House. I seek privilege proceedings against Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, for making derogatory, insulting, distasteful and defamatory remarks," the Congress leader said in his notice.

SC to have talks with govt. on office space for lawyers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Friday said the Supreme Court preferred talks with the government for more land to provide lawyers office space over using its judicial power, which may lead to "disquiet".

"The flexing of judicial powers by the top court may convey the impression that the court is trying to 'bulldoze' the government to expand its own needs."

A Special Bench of Chief Justice Chandrachud, Justices S.K. Kaul and P.S. Narasimha said it would be better for the administrative side of the top court to approach the government around the issue.

The Bench was hearing a plea by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) for more land for



office space in the vicinity of the Supreme Court complex.

SCBA president, senior advocate Vikas Singh, even referred to how alternate land has been given to the nearby Foreign Correspondents Club.

Chief Justice Chandrachud reacted by asking Mr. Singh "how can we take over the different institutions around us? Yes, lawyers are part of our institution. If we start using our own orders to protect our own institution, it will lead to the disquiet. It will give an impression that the Supreme Court is using its Judicial

powers to expand its own needs", Justice Kaul said the SCBA's needs can be put forward as an administrative proposal.

"Yes, lawyers have a need. But trust the court to take care of the need referred to the Law Commission for further examination. We cannot use our judicial power, which may lead to 'disquiet', Chief Justice Chandrachud observed.

Justice Narasimha said it would be more beneficial for lawyers to allow administrative dialogue to happen rather than insist on judicial orders from the court.

"The government takes our proposals on the administrative side very seriously. For example, in the e-courts project, the government gave ₹7,000 crore around it, a single calling. We engage constantly with the government on the administrative side," the Bench informed the lawyers.

It finally reserved the case for orders.

Law panel to examine simultaneous elections

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The issue of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies was referred to the Law Commission for further examination. In favour of holding simultaneous elections as it would not only result in savings to the exchequer but it also enlist "imperatives" such as amending the Constitution and bringing all political parties on board.

He said that simultaneous elections would require amendments in "not less than five" Articles of the Constitution — Articles 83 relating to duration of Houses of Parliament, 85 dissolution of Lok Sabha, 172 duration of the State legislatures, 174 dissolution of the State legislatures, and 356.

Mr. Rijju also quoted the recent Supreme Court order to state that political background by itself has "not been an absolute bar" to appoint an otherwise suitable person as a judge.

Political leanings
The Minister's written answer was in response to a question from Congress leader Manish Tewari who had asked if it is a practice to seek R&AW reports and if the government factored in political leanings in judi-

Seeking reports from R&AW on judges not usual, says Rijju in LS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Seeking reports from Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) on recommendations for the appointment of judges to High Courts and the Supreme Court is not issued and is done only under extraordinary circumstances involving national security, Law Minister Kiren Rijju informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Mr. Rijju also quoted the recent Supreme Court order to state that political background by itself has "not been an absolute bar" to appoint an otherwise suitable person as a judge.

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cial appointments. Responding to the bit about R&AW feedback and sexual orientation of a person proposed for judgeship, the Minister said "generally, it is not a practice to seek R&AW reports except in extraordinary circumstances, involving issues related to national security. Mr. Rijju added: "Through the reply did not mention any detail, Mr. Tewari tweeted, "I fail to understand what 'extraordinary circumstances' warranted R&AW input for judgeship of Saurabh Kirpal."

Ways of worship cannot be a reason for conflict between communities, says RSS chief

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat launched the first Urdu translation of the Samaveda, one of the four Vedas of Hinduism, by Bollywood scriptwriter and filmmaker Ishita Durrani at New Delhi on Friday. Mr. Bhagwat, while praising the efforts of Mr. Durrani, stated that "different ways of worship cannot be a reason for conflict between communities".

"We must understand that there are several paths that are being taken by different people. Some worship land, some water and some fire. But the destination of every human being is one and the same," Mr. Bhagwat said, while quoting a story from the Vedas.

Mr. Bhagwat, who in the past had maintained that untouchability and discrimination are grave threats to society and must be shunned, cited another



Mohan Bhagwat during the launch of the first Urdu translation of the Samaveda, at Red Fort in New Delhi on Friday. RUP MOORTHY

story in which a student is being told how a person becomes "respected" because of his integrity and not by his birth. "Vyakti ka gaurav uski pehchanana jata, uski swabhava jata, uski swabhava jata, uski swabhava jata," he said.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Durrani compared the time of Mughal ruler Aurangzeb and the present regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and maintained that the former had lost and the latter has won

when it comes to saving the humanity.

The RSS chief, on several occasions, had maintained that it is important for the different sections of society together, to make India "vishwa guru" (know-nothing) as well as BJP, on several occasions, have hinted towards strengthening their Muslim ties.

Howeve, RSS general secretary Dattatraya Hosabale, on March 14 had said that RSS "never went to anyone but it never rejects the invitation from anyone".

States get 3 weeks to reply to pleas against anti-conversion law

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday gave States three more weeks to file counter-affidavits to petitions challenging their anti-religious conversion laws, even as senior advocate Dushyant Dave said that 40 people are on the run and missionaries catering to the needs of the poor in Uttar Pradesh have been shut down owing to these statutes.

Each State's law was used by the other as a 'building block' to make a more 'virulent' law, says petitioners' lawyer.

States which have been made parties in multiple petitions, are asked to only file a common affidavit in order to save time.

'Virulent laws'
Mr. Singh had further argued that these State laws by India D.Y. Chandrachud, senior advocate C.U. Singh, to take all the sections of society and peace, said that more States are trying to jump into the bandwagon "even while the court is hearing the cases."

Chief Justice Chandrachud said that his Bench does not keep a case pending for long and gave the petitioners two weeks to submit their rejoinders after the States have filed their counter-affidavits.

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The court said that

'AIADMK general council can only suspend not expel, members without notice'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The AIADMK general council can, at best, suspend a party member and not expel him/her from the primary membership who is using a charge memo and an opportunity to explain and defend himself, members R. Vaithilingam and K.P. Prabhakar in order before the Madras High Court on Friday.

Senior counsel Vijay Narayan representing the general council, said these two suits could be heard by a similar suit, filed by Alangulam MLA K.P. Prabhakar. Seeking two weeks for filing counter-affidavits to all the three suits and one week for a rejoinder to make a more senior counsel urged the court to adjourn the matter by three weeks.

Senior counsel C.S. Vaithilingam representing the AIADMK and its interim general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, said the resolutions passed at the general council meeting, held on July 11, 2022, lacked legal backing.

He argued that the Supreme Court had only upheld the conduct of the July 11, 2022 meeting and had not given any finding on the validity of the resolutions.



Legal wrangles: J.C.D. Prabhakar, R. Vaithilingam and Manoj Pandian, who were expelled from the AIADMK. FILE PHOTO

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Ways of worship cannot be a reason for conflict between communities, says RSS chief

Ishita Mishra

NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat launched the first Urdu translation of the *Samaveda*, one of the four Vedas of Hinduism, by Bollywood scriptwriter and filmmaker Iqbal Durrani at New Delhi on Friday. Mr. Bhagwat, while praising the efforts of Mr. Durrani, stated that “different ways of worship cannot be a reason for conflict between communities”.

“We must understand that there are several paths that are being taken by different people. Some worship land, some water and some fire. But the destination of every human being is one and the same,” Mr. Bhagwat said, while quoting a story from Vedic texts.

Mr. Bhagwat, who in the past had maintained that untouchability and discrimination are grave threats to society and must be shunned, cited another



Mohan Bhagwat during the launch of the first Urdu translation of the *Samaveda*, at Red Fort in New Delhi on Friday. R.V. MOORTHY

story in which a student is being told how a person becomes “respected” because of his integrity and not by his birth. “*Vyakti ka gotra uskey janam se nahi pehechana jata, uski satyanishtha se pehechana jata hai* (the lineage of a person doesn’t come from where he is born but from his integrity),” he said.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Durrani compared the time of Mughal ruler Aurangzeb and the present regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and maintained that the former had lost and the latter has won

when it comes to saving the humanity.

The RSS chief, on several occasions, had maintained that it is important to take all the sections of society together, to make India ‘*vishwa guru*’ (knowledge giver).

The Sangh as well as BJP, on several occasions, have hinted towards strengthening their Muslim outreach. However, RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, on March 14 had said that RSS “never went to anyone but it never rejects the invitation from anyone”.

Disruptions continue in Parliament; Cong. hits out at mute telecast of LS proceedings

First week of Budget Session's second leg was a washout with both Houses in a logjam over protests. Opposition members react sharply to televised proceedings being inaudible and accuse the ruling party of stifling dissent but Lok Sabha Secretariat says it was the result of a technical glitch

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The first week of the second leg of the Budget Session was a washout, as both ruling and Opposition parties hardened their stance, with the audio of the televised proceedings of the Lok Sabha being muted. Sources in the Lok Sabha Secretariat told The Hindu that the audio of the televised proceedings got muted because of a "technical issue", but the Opposition members reacted sharply and accused the ruling establishment of stifling their voices.

Lok Sabha adjourned for the day in 20 minutes, after it convened in the morning amid slogan shouting by both Treasury and Opposition benches. The ruling side continued to demand that the Opposition members be allowed to speak. Coinciding with



Amid chaos, Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day in 20 minutes, after it convened in the morning amid slogan shouting by both Treasury and Opposition benches. (PI)

while the Opposition reiterated its call for a joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani-Hindaleng issue.

Adding to the chorus, the Congress members soon after the House assembled for the day demanded that Mr. Gandhi, who was present in the House, be allowed to speak. Coinciding with

their slogans "Rahul Ji Ko Bolein Do" (Let Mr. Gandhi speak), the audio of Sansad TV was muted.

On Friday, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his chamber, asserted that there cannot be any break-through unless Mr. Gandhi is allowed to speak. "It is his right to speak

smoothly. People did not send you here to do this. I will give everyone an opportunity to speak, but it is your House has to be in order," Mr. Birla said. As protesting against the ruling party, the Speaker adjourned the House.

The Congress reacted sharply to the audio of Sansad TV being muted. Party's Deputy Leader in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, called it "a new low for democracy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor tweeted, "The muting of sound on Sansad TV is a new technique. You don't need to switch off individual microphones. If you can shut down the transmission of sound to the world".

Party's general secretary, Ram Ramesh, speaking to The Hindu, said the Chairman directed the House Physk Goyal to authenticate the sessions made up on March 13 and 14.

switched off in India's Parliament. I had immediately challenged that opportunity to speak, but it is your House has to be in order," Mr. Birla said. As protesting against the ruling party, the Speaker adjourned the House.

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Rahul Gandhi is part of toolkit working against India: Nadda

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president J.P. Nadda on Friday joined the ruling party chorus demanding an apology from Rahul Gandhi for the remarks the latter made in U.K. on the state of Indian democracy.

He accused Mr. Gandhi of becoming a "permanent part of the toolkit" working against India that seeks a weak government so as to exploit it for its benefits.

The Congress immediately hit back, with party president Mallikarjun Kharge saying that those who are "anti-national" themselves must not preach his party about patriotism, ruling out any apology from Mr. Gandhi.

In a video statement, Mr. Nadda accused Mr. Gandhi of speaking the language of "anti-India" in the guise of "anti-India" George Soros, a billionaire financier and alleged that the Congress and the "so-called left liberals" have become a part of the "deep state" conspiracy involving forces against the country.

"Anti-national" Congress leaders have been speaking the language of patriotism, he added. He said that Mr. Gandhi's remarks are also an insult to the people's mandate and a result of the Congress' frustration about their consecutive defeats in general elections and State Assembly polls.

It is a very serious matter, Mr. Nadda said, and people of India are saying that what sin did we commit that we were born in India? Such a person, he said, is "economically and strategically" against India.

"Never before in independent India, has any leader done what Mr. Gandhi has done on foreign soil," Mr. Nadda said, pointing out the irony, Mr. Nadda said the comments

Never before in independent India, has any leader done what Mr. Gandhi has done on foreign soil. J.P. NADDA, BJP President

against the Indian democracy was made in a country that subjugated India for long.

The Congress has dismissed the BJP's accusations and asserted that Mr. Gandhi will not apologise. He has sought permission to speak in Parliament to respond to the criticism levelled against him by the ruling party members in both Houses.

Parliamentary proceedings have so far been a washout over the row.

Mr. Kharge said, "They are anti-nationals from before. Even at the time of independence, they [BJP people] did not participate in the movement to get freedom for the country. Those who are anti-national about their consecutive defeats in general elections and State Assembly polls."

Mr. Modi himself has gone to six-seven countries and said on foreign soil that people of India are saying that what sin did we commit that we were born in India? Such a person, he said, is "economically and strategically" against India.

He reminded the ruling party of Mr. Modi's comments during his visits to China, United States and South Korea, where he "insulted the citizens of India".

NIA files three chargesheets against PFI, its leaders

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed three separate chargesheets against the now-banned Popular Front of India (PFI), its leaders and members on multiple charges.

On Friday, the agency arraigned 12 accused in two separate cases in Kochi and Chennai. "With these, the total number of chargesheets filed by the NIA against the PFI this month has gone up to four. The first chargesheet was filed in Jaipur on March 23 and the second in Hyderabad on March 16," it said.

Political tussle intensifies with registration of film title

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



The fight for political optics over the narrative of fic-tion has become a hotbed of contention between Gowda and Nanje Gowda, propped up by the BJP as the new banner-bearer who killed Tipu Sultan, intensified with the saffron party and the Janata Dal (JD) trading barbs on Friday. With an eye on the dominant Vokkaliga votes that are crucial in the Old Mysore region in Karnataka Assembly election, the fight only became bigger after a film title "Uri Gowda Nanje Gowda" was registered.

Reiterating that Vokkaliga votes were being insulted by the BJP that is portraying

them as killers of a freedom fighter, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy took exception to the registration of the film title with the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, and accused film producer and BJP Minister Munirathna of taking the title under the Vrushabhathi Productions.

4,999 YouTube links blocked: IT Ministry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As many as 4,999 YouTube links have been blocked by the Union government so far, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

These include individual YouTube videos and entire channels. The orders were passed under the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards) Blocking for Access of Information Act, 2009, and do not include channels and videos taken down in response to court orders.

Until March 10, 974 "social media URLs, accounts, channels, pages, apps, web pages, websites, etc." have been blocked in 2023 under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2008. The review committee is required to meet at least once a month to see if 69A blocking orders were necessary.

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India to host African Chiefs Conclave, field training exercise

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Indian Army is set to host the second edition of the Africa-India field training exercise (AFINEX-23) from March 21 to 30, and African Chiefs Conclave on March 28 in Pune.

"The objective is to build upon the initiatives taken to strengthen India-Africa relations, with a focus on enhancing peace and creating opportunities to exchange ideas," a Defence official said.



TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT LADAKH SKILL DEVELOPMENT MISSION

Tel No: 0192-253363, Fax No: 253365, E-mail: teedsm@rediffmail.com
ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE FOR GEM BID

The Ladakh Skill Development Mission (LSDM) invites bid for the project: Project Management Unit on Skill Development in UT of Ladakh through GeM portal.

Table with 4 columns: S.No, Name of Project/Bid, GEM BID NO & DATE, Last Date. Row 1: Custom Bid for Services - Project Management Unit on Skill Development in UT of Ladakh, GEM22023/B/3199771, 03-04-2023.

Further details, if any, may be obtained from the OSD with Comm./Secy, Technical Education and Skill Development Department, Civil Secretariat, Leh Ladakh - 194101 during working hours or through email: teedsm@rediffmail.com. Bidders are advised to read the complete RFP document along with corrigendum(s) posted on the GeM portal.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice. Tender No: 184/2023-3P-CORNER. For Supply and Laying Distribution Lines Providing FHTCS to houses in Kollam, Kottayam and Sankarapada panchayats, EMD: Rs. 500000. Tender Fee: Rs. 10000. Last Date for submitting Tender: 10-04-2023, 04:00 PM.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Office of the Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture, BBMP South Zone, 9th Cross, 6th Main, Jayanagar 2nd Block, Bengaluru-560 011.

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT) (Two Cover System) (KW-3 to KW-4) (Through GeM Procurement Portal Only).

Table with 3 columns: S.No, Name of the work, Estimated Cost, EMD Amount. Row 1: Beautification of Horticulture works at Town Hall Circles, Medians & Islands in Chickpet Constituency, 1,00,00,000/-, 2,00,000/-.

Calendar of Events: (1) Date of Notification: 17-03-2023, (2) Tender can be downloaded from: 18-03-2023, (3) Pre bid Meeting: 22-03-2023 at 11:00 AM, (4) Tender Closing Date: 28-03-2023 at 4:30 PM, (5) Technical bid opening date: After Approval of Technical bid, (7) This tender notice can also be downloaded from: www.bidsmg.gov.in. Further particulars can be obtained from the office during working hours on working days or from website: https://proc.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/-, Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture, (South Zone), BBMP

Government of India | Bharat Mukher Directorate General of Health Services. BCG Vaccine Laboratory, Guindy, Chennai-600032.

VACANCY - REGULAR. Applications are invited to fill the following posts in BCGVL, Guindy, Chennai under the Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, on deputation (including Short Term Contract Basis).

Table with 4 columns: Sl. No., Post, Posts, Classification. Row 1: Director, 1, Group 'A', Level-10, (Pay 47,700/-).

The details of qualifications, educational qualifications, experience, age and date of application, etc. along with application information may be accessed from website: www.bcgvl.gov.in

Applications may be sent directly to Deputy Director (EP), BCGVL, Guindy, Chennai-600032. Director, BCGVL, Guindy

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice. Tender No: 5002023-3P-CORNER. For Supply and Laying Distribution Lines Providing FHTCS to houses in Kollam, Kottayam and Sankarapada panchayats, EMD: Rs. 500000. Tender Fee: Rs. 10000. Last Date for submitting Tender: 10-04-2023, 04:00 PM.

Government of Kerala FOREST & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT. Wildcat Nests 23/09/2023. Tender No. 3/2023-3P-CORNER. For Construction of 111 Cages, Laying Distribution Lines and Providing FHTCS to houses in Kollam, Kottayam and Sankarapada panchayats, EMD: Rs. 500000. Tender Fee: Rs. 10000. Last Date for submitting Tender: 10-04-2023, 04:00 PM.

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED. INVENDER NOTICE. For the project: Project Management Unit on Skill Development in UT of Ladakh through GeM portal.

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NEW DELHI

The Indian Army is set to host the second edition of the Africa-India field training exercise (AFINDEX-23) from March 21 to 30, and African Chiefs Conclave on March 28 in Pune.

“The objective is to build upon the initiatives taken to strengthen India-Africa relations, with a focus on enhancing peace and creating opportunities to exchange ideas,” a Defence official said.

IN BRIEF



Farmers halt march after word from Maharashtra govt.

The long march of farmers and tribals has halted after an assurance from the Maharashtra government, but their representatives on Friday said they would continue to head to Mumbai if they saw no concrete steps from the government to address their issues. "We need to see concrete action from the government that our issues will be addressed or else we will head to Mumbai," Vinod Nikole, CPI(M) MLA said. His party colleague Jiva Gavli is spearheading the march of thousands of farmers from Nashik. Their demands range from 6000 per quintal retail to onion farmers, a 12-hour uninterrupted power supply to farmers, and waiver of farm loans. —

ED files chargesheet in Chinese loan application case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet against seven entities and five individuals in connection with the Chinese loan application case. A special court has taken cognisance of the chargesheet in which three financial technology companies, allegedly controlled by Chinese nationals, have been named. The three firms are Mad Elephant Network Technology Private Limited, Banyonyx Technology Private Limited and Cloud Atlas Future Technology Private Limited. Among the other accused entities are three non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) registered with the RBI and one payment gateway, the agency said.

'Kailasa' cons 30 U.S. cities with 'sister-city' scam, says report

Self-proclaimed godman and fugitive Nithyananda's "United States of Kailasa" has signed a "cultural partnership" with over 30 American cities, a media report has said, days after the city of Newark in New Jersey said it rescinded a "sister-city" agreement with the fictional country. According to Kailasa's website, there are over 30 American cities that have signed a cultural partnership with the fake nation of Kailasa — cities from Richmond, Virginia to Dayton, Ohio, to Buena Park, Florida. A report in Fox News on Thursday said that "we are finding out the supreme fake pontiff" has a "long list of cities that he's duped." —

Godhra case: SC to hear pleas of State, convicts on March 24

The Supreme Court on Friday said it will hear on March 24 the appeals of the Gujarat government and the bail pleas of several accused who are serving life imprisonment in the 2002 Godhra train burning case. A Bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices P.S. Narasimha and J.B. Pardiwala, meanwhile, directed the counsel for the Gujarat government and the convicts to provide a soft copy of the consolidated chargesheet and the period spent in jail till now. The Bench adjourned the hearing after it was apprised that solicitor General Tushar Mehta was then unavailable. —

SC seeks govt. reply to minor's petition on sawing Western Ghats

Court asks Environment Ministry to file counter-affidavit to the plea seeking reinstating of recommendations of the Gadgil report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Environment Ministry to file its counter-affidavit to a petition filed by a minor, M. Kavaya, a resident of Nilgiris, seeking judicial intervention to protect the Western Ghats from destruction.

"Month by month, the Western Ghats is being chipped away... Please intervene," senior advocate Jaywant and advocate Shibani Ghosh, for Ms. Kavaya, urged a Bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud. The court listed the case for July. It said the Centre and other authorities had to file their counter-affidavits in four weeks.

The petition has been in limbo for the past two years since the court issued a notice in 2020. Several environmental activists and NGOs such as the Goa Foundation and Peaceful Society, Bandora,



Key link: The future of south India was intimately linked with the survival of the Western Ghats, the Goa Foundation said. FILE PHOTO

from across six Western Ghats States have joined hands with Ms. Kavaya to seek judicial intervention to reinstate the recommendations of the Dr. Madhav Gadgil-led Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel's report.

Ms. Kavaya and seven other children have sought "justice in terms of inter-generational equity" and that unbridled "development" in the ancient mountain system would leave their generation without a future or a livelihood. They have sought an

"effective, sustainable and credible conservation regime" for the Western Ghats, its diverse ecosystems and ecologically sensitive zones".

Goa Foundation said the petition concerned a total land area of 1,29,037 sq.km. While 50 million people were directly dependent on the Western Ghats and another 200 million were indirectly dependent. The future of entire southern India was intimately linked with the healthy survival of the Western Ghats, it said.

Rajasthan govt. plans mainstreaming of millets in programmes

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The Congress government in Rajasthan has planned mainstreaming of millets in the public-funded programmes with the convergence of several departments, which will lead to demand generation while the involvement of rural households, anganwadis centres and self-help groups. The State ranks at the forefront of millet cultivation in India, producing about 41% of the country's yield.

Following the declaration of 2022 as the International Year of Millets by the U.N. General Assembly, the State has been promoting indigenous varieties of the coarse grains with a special focus on the conservation of local and traditional recipes. A two-day Rajasthan Millet Conclave held here earlier this week laid emphasis on research on millets.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said at the conclave that a "robust infrastructure" existed in the State for research on millets, while this year's separate agriculture budget would provide new opportunities to the farmers, start-ups and agricultural entrepreneurs to move ahead.

The State government was formulating strategies for better production, management and marketing of millets, he said.

A declaration moved by R. Dayakar Rao, CEO-Nutrihub, Indian Institute of Millets Research, Hyderabad, highlighted the need for value addition, environmental design plan and branding to boost millets in the State with a commercial angle for millet cultivation.

The State government is considering a proposal to include millets in the mid-day meals programme for schools and anganwadi centres.

Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway turns the spotlight on state of custody cases abroad

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Activists called for the Ministry of External Affairs to take a stronger interest in the case of child custody cases in the West, as the launch of the movie Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway, which focussed on the diplomatic relations between India and Norway in 2011, put the spotlight on other such current cases, including one involving an infant in Germany.

The film was released across the country on Friday, even as the Norwegian Embassy in Delhi called it a "work of fiction", and decried the Norwegian Child Welfare services.

The case involved the confiscation of two young children from an Indian parent by their parents in Norway, and the children were not returned to their parents' custody due to "cultural differences", and the government was bound by privacy laws from giving specific details of the case. "In Norway, we value and respect different family systems and cultural practices, also when these are different to what



The film is based on the book *The Journey of a Mother*.

through to get my children back. The film can show just 20% of the trauma which we had to endure," Sagarkita, who has now reverted to her maiden name of Chakraborty, told *The Hindu* before the screening of the movie.

In a detailed statement, the Norwegian Embassy in Delhi refused the charges, saying that the children were not removed from their parents' custody due to "cultural differences", and the government was bound by privacy laws from giving specific details of the case. "In Norway, we value and respect different family systems and cultural practices, also when these are different to what

we are accustomed to — apart from corporal punishment in the upbringing. There is zero tolerance for violence in any shape or form," it added.

This has directed more queries to the government over the case of Baby Arha Ghosh, the two-year-old daughter of a couple from Ahmedabad who was taken into childcare custody by German authorities in September 2021, alleging that she had been abused at home, a charge her parents, Bhavesh and Dhara Shah, deny. Despite the matter being raised by Minister S. Jaishankar with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in December 2022, and officials discussing the issue during German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visit to Delhi last month, there has been no headway.

According to former Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, there are many Indian families settled abroad who are victims of stringent child protection norms of European countries and the Indian government needs to have a comprehensive plan to help them.

Horseshoe crabs disappearing off Odisha's coast; scientists worried

Satyansankar Barik
BILUPANESWAR

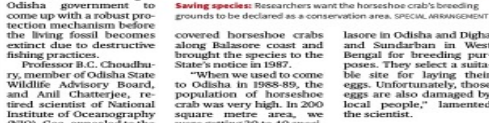
Horseshoe crabs, one of the oldest living creatures on earth and medicinally priceless, appear to be disappearing from their familiar spawning grounds along Chandipur and Balarangadi coast in Odisha's Balasore district.

Scientists have urged Odisha government to come up with a robust protection mechanism before the living fossil becomes extinct due to destructive fishing practices.

Professor R.C. Choudhury, member of Odisha State Wildlife Advisory Board, and Anil Chatterjee, retired scientist of National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, appealed to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to place the horseshoe crab on the list of marine species for which a Species Recovery Plan has to be developed.

Dr. Chatterjee first discovered horseshoe crabs along Balasore coast and brought the species to the State's notice in 1987. "When we used to come to Odisha in 1988-89, the population of horseshoe crab was very high. In 2000 square metre area, we were getting 30 to 40 specimens. Last month, I found there were hardly any of such animals," he said.

"Like olive ridley sea turtles, these crabs are basically deep-sea animals. They come to coasts of Balasore and Digha and Sundarban in West Bengal for breeding purposes. The animal is critical for human health. If we don't put any effort now, horseshoe crabs would not be found in India in next few years," he warned.



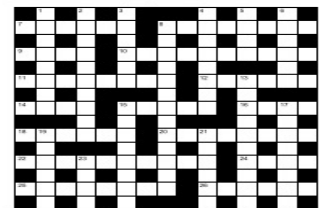
Saving species: Researchers want the horseshoe crab's breeding grounds to be declared as a conservation area. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

loped from a reagent of horseshoe crab to help treat pre-eclampsia.

The scientist said only a few countries in the world have horseshoe crab population and India is one among them. "This is the oldest living creature on earth. Palaeontological studies say the age of horseshoe crabs is 450 million years. The creature has lived on earth without undergoing any morphological change. Scientists are surprised to find strong immune system in animal that helped it survive millions of years. The animal is critical for human health. If we don't put any effort now, horseshoe crabs would not be found in India in next few years," he warned.

In a letter to Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Dr. Choudhury suggested that the horseshoe crab's breeding grounds be declared as a conservation reserve to protect the species.

THE CROSSWORD 13816
(Set by Crescent)



- Across**
7 Aware of tailing part at once (6)
8 Uncovered huge ramps built outside old temple towers (8)
9 Crack shot (4)
10 Absent-mindedness of boss taken in pronounced good sport (5,3)
11 Wine and song clearing international deal abroad (3)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at <https://qzoo.puzzles.hindu.in/>

- 12 Plenty of heads undergoing decapitation (6)
14 Forgetting about Britain once in French town (4)
15 Predatory bird runs on purpose (5)
16 Award resembling a jewel without a hint of gold (4)
18 Articulations happening to brook notes (6)
19 Rent uses and has given normal face (5)
22 Case of poop in water causing lump in the throat (5,5)
24 Characters in Alhaz answering call to prayer (4)
25 Wonderful cast just missing an Oscar (6)
26 Parrots straining without crests (6)
Down
1 Still in shadow around quarter past noon (8)
2 Check parking charges in zone (10)
3 Bar, short piece in cross (6)
4 Drop one slip following over where restrictions are removed (4-4)
5 Incompetent sailor back from ship retires (4)
6 Dirty spaces with soil on sides of garage (6)
8 Oily pork stew boiled with bit of garlic and mushroom (4,4,5)
9 Old-fashioned fencing épées cast firmly held (4-6)
15 Bears in America caught in spots (8)
17 Devices to butcher time revolutionary alliances (4-4)
19 Classic numbers, look back on those making impressions (6)
21 Grate behind threshold for bird (6)
23 Action film, one being screened (4)

SUDOKU

9	3	7	1	5				3
1				3			2	
	1	7	3				6	9
		9	5		1	2		
8	2				9	3	4	
	8			9				7
5				4	6	3		2

Solution to previous puzzle

9	6	2	1	4	3	8	7	5
4	8	1	5	6	7	2	3	9
3	5	7	9	8	2	6	4	1
6	4	9	3	1	4	5	7	2
5	4	9	7	2	6	3	1	8
2	1	8	4	3	5	9	6	7
7	2	2	2	2	5	8	1	9
6	8	9	5	6	1	4	7	3

FAITH

Reason-oriented actions

Lord Rama assigned some reason or the other for each and every action that He had undertaken.

When Rama was in Panchavati with His wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, the demoness Sarpamaka asked Rama to take her for His wife. Rama replied that He was already married and told wrongly that His brother was as handsome as He was. Lakshmana told Sarpamaka that he was the servant of Rama and that she would also be a servant if she married him. She came back to Rama and persuaded him to marry him.

Angered by this, Lakshmana cut off the nose and ears of the demoness, who approached her cousins Kara and Dhushana to fight Rama.

Kara sent 14,000 soldiers. Rama asked Lakshmana to take care of the sages and Sita and fought with and slayed the soldiers. Kara was uprooted like a tree by a cyclone. Like a ferocious wave that is put down after it touches the shore, Dhushana was calmed down by the arrows of Rama.

Three reasons are cited for Rama's act of killing the Rakshasas, said Smt. Prabha Senesh in a discourse.

1. It is an opportunity for Rama to protect the sages.

2. The 14,000 soldiers were actually sages in their previous birth and were reborn as Rakshasas because of a curse. Rama slayed and redeemed them.

3. When Rama refused to take Sita to the forest, she told Rama that her father would think of Him as 'a woman in the garb of a man' — 'Striyam purusha vishramam'. To demonstrate His valour, He fought single-handedly without any assistance.

'Kailasa' cons 30 U.S. cities with 'sister-city' scam, says report

Self-proclaimed godman and fugitive Nithyananda's "United States of Kailasa" has signed a "cultural partnership" with over 30 American cities, a media report has said, days after the city of Newark in New Jersey said it rescinded a "sister-city" agreement with the fictional country. According to Kailasa's website, there are over 30 American cities that have signed a cultural partnership with the fake nation of Kailasa – cities from Richmond, Virginia to Dayton, Ohio, to Buena Park, Florida. A report in Fox News on Thursday said that "we are finding out the supreme fake pontiff" has a "long list of cities that he's duped. PTI

BUSINESS AS USUAL By UNNAY

THE WORLD XI TO VISIT MOSCOW FOR TALKS WITH PUTIN ON UKRAINE, STRENGTHEN TIES PAGE 16

Police add charge of extortion against Aniksha: She sought Rs 10 cr from Amruta Defence counsel questions arrest timing

SAGAR RAJPUT & SADAF MOKAD MUMBAI, MARCH 17 THE MUMBAI Police informed a special court Friday that "designer" Aniksha Jaisinghani blackmailed and demanded Rs 10 crore from Amruta Fadnis, wife of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, following which an extortion related charge had been added to the case. The IPC provision invoked is Section 385 - putting or attempting to put in a person the fear of injury in order to commit extortion. While the FIR was registered against Aniksha and her father Anil Jaisinghani on February 20, alleging a bribe offer of Rs 1 crore to Amruta, police officers said an extortion attempt was made a couple of days after the FIR. Aniksha was arrested Thursday, a day after The Indian Express first reported the February 20 FIR. She was produced in a special court in Mumbai which granted her custody to the police on March 21 on the ground that her custodial interrogation was necessary for further investigation. While seeking her custody, police said the 25-year-old

PFI had teams to kill targets, carry out orders of its parallel court: NIA

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 17 THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) has told a court that the banned group Frontline India (FI) had established various wings to eliminate their targets and also used its highly trained cadres to carry out verdicts of its parallel court of 'court of justice'. The NIA chargesheet submitted at the special court in Kochi on Friday is primarily related to the agency's raids on PFI members in Kerala and other states in September last year. Following the raids, the Union Ministry issued a ban on PFI and its associate organisations, including the Bharat India Foundation (BIF) and Campus Front of India, for five years, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The NIA also filed a chargesheet in Tamil Nadu in connection with the agency's raids. "The chargesheets filed in

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SHIVANI NAIK MUMBAI, MARCH 17 GAYATRI GOPICHAND Pullela and Treesa Jolly have had contrasting lives. Gayatri's father runs a state-of-the-art badminton academy in Hyderabad and is credited with producing the country's most decorated shuttlers. Treesa's father built her a mud court at Pullingame village in Kannur and switched to a tarpaulin surface when it rained. Their varied journeys notwithstanding, Friday

CONFRONTATION STALLS HOUSE FOR FIFTH DAY Standoff deepens: BJP says Rahul part of toolkit, Cong sees plot in LS audio loss

BJP insists on apology, Cong sees privilege move against PM

SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, MARCH 17 THE WAR of words between the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress intensified Friday with the BJP sharpening its attack on Rahul Gandhi by accusing him of assaulting India's sovereignty on foreign soil, and the Congress retaliating by seeking a breach of privilege notice against Prime Minister Narendra Modi over remarks directed against the Gandhi family. CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



After an Opposition protest at Parliament on Friday. ANI

Shah: Let two sides sit with Speaker, discuss a way out

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 17 KEEPING LIP his party's criticism of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah said Friday that the logjam in Parliament can end if the Opposition comes for talks. He said the governing system cannot run with only the Treasury or only Opposition as CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



The bungalow on Mathura Road that has been allotted to Delhi minister Atishi. Praveen Khanna

Families of Sisodia, Jain get a week to vacate bungalows, allotted to Atishi, Bharadwaj

GAYATHRI MANI & JATIN ANAND NEW DELHI, MARCH 17 DELHI'S FORMER deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's official residence has been allotted to newly sworn-in minister Atishi while that of former health minister Saurabh Jain has been allotted to his successor Saurabh Bharadwaj, according to separate orders from Delhi government's Public Works Department (PWD). The orders state that the families of the two former ministers, who are currently in prison, have seven days to vacate these properties. Saurabh has the option of not claiming the allotted bungalow. If these are not claimed, as per norms, till March 22, the allotment offered to them will be treated as cancelled. The orders state that Sisodia and Jain hand over possession of their official accommodations "on or before March 21. In a statement, the Aam Admi Party (AAP) said, "This order of allotment is a complete violation of the law... it is the law that a minister upon resigning from his/her office is bound to vacate the government residence occupied by them within 15 days. Sisodia was arrested last CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

I shut down 600 madrasas, want to close all: Himanta

ASSAM CHIEF Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said he intends to shut down all madrasas in his state, maintaining that they are not needed in "New India". Addressing a large gathering after inaugurating a High School on Thursday in Belagari, Karnataka, where elections are due soon, he said, "I come from Assam, where everyday people arrive from Bangladesh. There is a threat to our cultural identity. I have shut down 600 madrasas, but my intention is to shut down all madrasas. It was said here you say something? I replied I can say such a thing because we don't have madrasas, we need doctors and engineers. Schools in colleges and universities are our need," he said, adding "there is no need for madrasas in New India". Sarma accused the Congress and Communists of "distorting history and 'misrepresenting' facts. He also called the Congress the "new Mughals". The AIJDF and Congress criticised his remarks, saying these were against the "spirit of the Constitution". -WHYPTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE GUWAHATI, MARCH 17

ASSAM CHIEF Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said he intends to shut down all madrasas in his state, maintaining that they are not needed in "New India". Addressing a large gathering after inaugurating a High School on Thursday in Belagari, Karnataka, where elections are due soon, he said, "I come from Assam, where everyday people arrive from Bangladesh. There is a threat to our cultural identity. I have shut down 600 madrasas, but my intention is to shut down all madrasas. It was said here you say something? I replied I can say such a thing because we don't have madrasas, we need doctors and engineers. Schools in colleges and universities are our need," he said, adding "there is no need for madrasas in New India". Sarma accused the Congress and Communists of "distorting history and 'misrepresenting' facts. He also called the Congress the "new Mughals". The AIJDF and Congress criticised his remarks, saying these were against the "spirit of the Constitution". -WHYPTI

Z-plus security, 5-star stays: Man poses as PMO official in J&K, held

BASHARAT MASOOD & RASHI MISHRA SRINAGAR, AHMEDABAD, MARCH 17 VIDEOS AND photographs from the snowy slopes of Gulmarg and Uri's Aman Setu: high-profile meetings with Jammu and Kashmir bureaucrats; accommodation in 5-star hotels and Z-plus security - Kiran J Patel pulled off this and much more while posing as an Additional Director (Planning and Strategy) in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) during his two visits to the Union Territory before the Bhatnagar case. On Friday, the J&K Police arrested Kiran J Patel in Srinagar. He was accused of impersonating the PMO official for two weeks ago in Srinagar. He was arrested in Hyderabad at the Palaces, a 5-star property in Srinagar, on March 2, following the tip-off from the J&K Police in New Delhi. His police remand in Srinagar. A first information report (FIR) was filed against him. CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Gayatri Gopichand Pullela and Treesa Jolly beat Chinese pair Li Wei and Liu Xuan Xuan 21-14, 18-21, 21-12 on Friday. AP

Raj Bhavan should be a no-conflict zone, says Bengal Governor

LIZ MATHEW NEW DELHI, MARCH 17 WEST BENGAL Governor C V Ananda Bose said Friday that improved ties between his office and the elected government in West Bengal are part of an evolution process in cooperative federalism, and emphasized that to Raj Bhavan should become a no-conflict zone". Bose, who took charge in November last year at a time when a long-drawn conflict was playing out between the Raj Bhavan and the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government, said that as Governor he would follow the path of conciliation and cooperation. In his opinion, in place of confrontation there should be negotiation. Antipathy should be replaced by empathy and passion should be tempered with compromise. Always a middle path seems to be better for society, A Raj Bhavan should become a no-conflict zone," Bose said at The Idea Exchange programme of The Indian Express. Ties between the Raj Bhavan and the Trinamool Congress government were strained during the tenure of Bose's immediate predecessor Jagdeep



Governor C V Ananda Bose at The Indian Express office

Dhankar, the current Vice-President of India, because of the latter's prolonged and often public criticism of the state government's functioning. The ties appeared to improve after Bose took charge on November 23 last year, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee acknowledging in public the cordial relations as she called the Governor a "perfect gentleman". Bose's attempts to learn Bengali was well appreciated as well in the state. On the occasion of Republic Day, the Governor even organised a "Fashter Khori (frustration with a chalk)" ceremony that marks the annual celebration of the state government's functioning. CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Govt worry on EPS: Gap between benefits and contribution, shifting demographics

ANANCHAL MAGAZINE NEW DELHI, MARCH 17 A HIGH actuarial deficit in the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) is reflecting the gap between the net present value (NPV) of contribution and benefits, and a progressive increase in the number of pensioners going forward, are two key concerns the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is grappling with as it attempts to implement the modifications to EPS in 2014. The EPS is the social security pension scheme offered by the EPFO to organised sector workers. In its response during the proceedings in the Supreme Court last year, the EPFO had pegged the pension fund's actuarial deficit rising to over Rs 15 lakh crore for implementation of the higher pension plan after the Kerala High Court set aside the modifications to EPS in 2014. Two officials aware of the debate among those managing the fund said. The projected deficit between the NPV of contribution and NPV of benefit is very large and it is one of the reasons the fund opposed it in appeals in the earlier court cases, one of the officials added above said. The Supreme Court decision provided a relief to the EPFO which reduced the number of members/ pensioners who could gain from higher pension options. CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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India moots action plan to mark 2023 as year of tourism development at SCO meet

DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

INDIA MOOTED an action plan to mark 2023 as the year of tourism development in the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) region at the tourism ministers' conference in Varanasi on Friday. While Lu Ying Chuan, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism from China, attended physically, representatives from Russia and Pakistan joined the meeting virtually, said a statement by the Ministry of Tourism on Friday.

Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy chaired the meeting, attended by Yerzhan Yerkinbayev, Vice-Minister of Culture and Sports, Kazakhstan; Samat Bekturovich Shatmanov,

Deputy Minister of Culture, Kyrgyzstan; and Azamov Ulugbek Axmatovich, First Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, Uzbekistan; even as Vladimir Evgenyevich Ilyichev, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Russia; Muminzod Kamoliddin, Chairman of the Tourism Development Committee, Tajikistan; and Aun Chaudhry, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Tourism and Sports, Pakistan, attended virtually.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials from departments of tourism from the SCO member countries, besides representatives from the SCO Secretariat, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of External Affairs, said the statement.

At the end of the meeting, a joint action plan for implement-

ing the agreement between the Member States on cooperation in the tourism sector was finalised and approved. It comprises promotion of the SCO tourism brand, promotion of the cultural heritage of member states; sharing of information and digital technologies in tourism; and promotion of mutual cooperation in medical and health tourism.

The member countries will also undertake various activities jointly, such as SCO tourism exhibition, SCO Food Festival, webinars and seminars on tourism, conference and expert sessions on promotion of tourism in the region.

The meeting also adopted the Action Plan for 'Year of Tourism Development in the SCO Space in 2023'. The document identifies a list of activities and events to promote and showcase tourism

products of SCO member states. The meeting was preceded by two expert working group meetings held under Chairmanship of India – the first one was held online in January, while the second in physical mode on March 14-15 in Varanasi, the ministry says.

Interestingly, Kashi has been declared as the first tourism and cultural capital of SCO. Officials say the recognition will bring the city to a greater prominence in the global tourist map. The initiative will highlight the spiritual, mystic and knowledge aspects of Kashi, they added. The next meeting of the SCO Heads of Tourism Administrations will be held in Kazakhstan in 2024.

Four bilateral meetings of India with China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan were also held on the sidelines.



EXPLAINED SCIENCE

WHAT'S NEW IN NASA'S NEW SPACESUIT?

SPACESUITS worn by astronauts for the upcoming Artemis missions, NASA's first attempt at landing humans on the Moon after 1972, will be a significant upgrade on the bulky — and iconic — suits in which Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the lunar surface.

THE BLACK-ORANGE-BLUE suits have been provided by Axiom Space, NASA said. The first prototype was revealed on Wednesday during an event at which James Stein, the suit's chief engineer, demonstrated how easily astronauts could squat and move around in it.

THE NEW SUITS will be worn during the Artemis III mission, the program's first Moon landing, which is scheduled for 2025.

WITHOUT A SUIT, humans cannot survive on the lunar surface. The suits insulate astronauts, and protect them against extreme temperature fluctuations. They also provide astronauts with a constant supply of oxygen and optimum air pressure around their bodies. They are pressurised, and are more human-shaped space vehicles than a piece of clothing.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



Axiom Space chief engineer Jim Stein demonstrates the prototype spacesuit. *AP*

Australia to buy 220 Tomahawk missiles from US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CANBERRA, MARCH 17

AUSTRALIA SAID it's planning to buy up to 220 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the United States after the US State Department approved the sale Friday.

The deal comes days after Australia announced it would buy nuclear-powered attack submarines from the US to modernise fleet amid concern about China's influence in Indo-Pacific.

Australian officials said the new nuclear-powered submarines would be able to fire the Tomahawk missiles.

Japan last month also declared plans to upgrade its military in an effort to deter China, including buying 400 Tomahawk missiles for deployment as soon as 2026.

The Australian missile sale comes with a price tag of nearly \$900 million. The prime contractor will be Arizona-based Raytheon Missiles and Defense.

Daily Current Affairs

Manipur Government Withdraws from SoO Agreement

- On March 10,2023 the Manipur government decided to withdraw from the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with two militant groups, Kuki National Army (KNA) and Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), alleging their involvement in inciting agitation among forest encroachers.
- 10 मार्च, 2023 को मणिपुर सरकार ने दो उग्रवादी समूहों, कुकी नेशनल आर्मी (केएनए) और जोमी रिवोल्यूशनरी आर्मी (जेडआरए) के साथ ऑपरेशन निलंबन (एसओओ) समझौते से हटने का फैसला किया, जिसमें वन अतिक्रमणकारियों के बीच आंदोलन भड़काने में उनकी भागीदारी का आरोप लगाया गया।

Who are the Kukis?

- The Kukis are an ethnic group including multiple tribes originally inhabiting the North-Eastern states of India such as Manipur, Mizoram and Assam; parts of Burma (now Myanmar), and Sylhet district and Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh.
- While Kuki is not a term coined by the ethnic group itself, the tribes associated with it came to be generically called Kuki under colonial rule.

- कुकी एक जातीय समूह है जिसमें मूल रूप से मणिपुर, मिजोरम और असम जैसे भारत के उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्यों में रहने वाली कई जनजातियाँ शामिल हैं; बर्मा (अब म्यांमार) के कुछ हिस्से, और सिलहट जिला और बांग्लादेश के चटगांव पहाड़ी इलाके।
- जबकि कुकी जातीय समूह द्वारा गढ़ा गया शब्द नहीं है, औपनिवेशिक शासन के तहत इससे जुड़ी जनजातियों को सामान्य रूप से कुकी कहा जाने लगा।

What led to the Kuki insurgencies in Manipur?

- Manipur, formerly a princely state including parts of Burma, made the accession into India after Independence (made a full-fledged State only in 1972).
- The resentment over the **“forceful” inclusion into India** and delay in granting statehood led to the rise of various insurgent movements.
- मणिपुर, जो पहले बर्मा के कुछ हिस्सों सहित एक रियासत था, ने स्वतंत्रता के बाद भारत में प्रवेश किया (केवल 1972 में एक पूर्ण राज्य बना)।
- भारत में "जबरदस्ती" शामिल किए जाने पर नाराजगी और राज्य का दर्जा देने में देरी के कारण विभिन्न विद्रोही आंदोलनों का उदय हुआ।

- Post-independence insurgent movements in Manipur, carried out by valley-based groups or Meiteis, can be traced back to around the 1960s, when various groups **demanding self-determination and separate statehood** for Manipur, inspired by left ideology.
- The roots of Kuki militancy lie in conflicts of ethnic identity.

- मणिपुर में आजादी के बाद के उग्रवादी आंदोलनों, जो घाटी-आधारित समूहों या मेइती द्वारा किए गए थे, को 1960 के दशक के आसपास वापस देखा जा सकता है, जब विभिन्न समूहों ने वामपंथी विचारधारा से प्रेरित होकर मणिपुर के लिए आत्मनिर्णय और अलग राज्य की मांग की थी।
- कुकी उग्रवाद की जड़ें जातीय पहचान के संघर्षों में हैं।

- First was the demand for self-determination solely for groups belonging to their ethnic fabric, meaning the **dream to form a Kukiland** which includes Kuki inhabited regions of Myanmar, Manipur, Assam and Mizoram.
- The second reason for insurgency lies in the inter-community **conflicts between the Kukis and the Nagas in Manipur.**

- सबसे पहले केवल उनके जातीय ताने-बाने से संबंधित समूहों के लिए आत्मनिर्णय की मांग थी, जिसका अर्थ कुकीलैंड बनाने का सपना था जिसमें म्यांमार, मणिपुर, असम और मिजोरम के कुकी बसे हुए क्षेत्र शामिल हैं।
- उग्रवाद का दूसरा कारण मणिपुर में कुकी और नागाओं के बीच अंतर-सामुदायिक संघर्ष है।

What is the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)?

- The Zomi Revolutionary Army is an armed Zomi nationalist insurgent group formed in 1997, following an increase in ethnic tensions between the Kuki people and the Paites tribe in Churachandpur district of Manipur, India.
- Its parent organisation, the Zomi Revolutionary Organisation, was founded in April 1993.
- ज़ोमी रिवोल्यूशनरी आर्मी एक सशस्त्र ज़ोमी राष्ट्रवादी विद्रोही समूह है, जिसका गठन 1997 में भारत के मणिपुर के चुराचंदपुर जिले में कुकी लोगों और पाइट्स जनजाति के बीच जातीय तनाव में वृद्धि के बाद हुआ था।
- इसका मूल संगठन, ज़ोमी क्रांतिकारी संगठन, अप्रैल 1993 में स्थापित किया गया था।

- Pu K Guite, a Zomi leader from Karbi Anglong (Mikir Hills of Assam), is the founder president of the organisation.
- It is one of the most powerful group operation in Manipur.

- कार्बी आंगलोंग (असम की मिकिर हिल्स) के एक ज़ोमी नेता, पु के गुइटे, संगठन के संस्थापक अध्यक्ष हैं।
- यह मणिपुर में सबसे शक्तिशाली समूह ऑपरेशन में से एक है।

Leaders	Thanglianpau Guite
Dates of operation	1997–present
Group(s)	Zomi Revolutionary Organisation
Headquarters	Churachandpur, Manipur, India
Active regions	Zogam (Zoland)

What is the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Pact?

- There are nearly 30 Kuki insurgent groups in Manipur, of which 25 are under tripartite Suspension of Operations (SoO) with the Government of India and the state. As many as 17 are under the umbrella group Kuki National Organisation (KNO), and eight are under the United People's Front (UPF).
- मणिपुर में लगभग 30 कुकी विद्रोही समूह हैं, जिनमें से 25 भारत सरकार और राज्य के साथ त्रिपक्षीय संचालन निलंबन (एसओओ) के तहत हैं। 17 छत्र समूह कुकी नेशनल ऑर्गनाइजेशन (केएनओ) के तहत हैं, और आठ यूनाइटेड पीपुल्स फ्रंट (यूपीएफ) के तहत हैं।

What is the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Pact?

- The SoO pact was signed on August 22, 2008, with the primary objective of initiating political dialogue.
- Talks are ongoing under AB Mathur, former special secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), as the interlocutor.
- The Kuki outfits who were initially demanding a separate Kuki state have come down to a ‘Kukiland territorial council’, which would have financial and administrative powers independent of the Manipur Assembly and government.

What is the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Pact?

- राजनीतिक संवाद शुरू करने के प्राथमिक उद्देश्य के साथ 22 अगस्त, 2008 को SoO समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए थे।
- वार्ताकार के रूप में रिसर्च एंड एनालिसिस विंग (रॉ) के पूर्व विशेष सचिव एबी माथुर के तहत वार्ता चल रही है।
- कुकी संगठन जो शुरू में एक अलग कुकी राज्य की मांग कर रहे थे, अब एक 'कुकीलैंड क्षेत्रीय परिषद' में आ गए हैं, जिसके पास मणिपुर विधानसभा और सरकार से स्वतंत्र वित्तीय और प्रशासनिक शक्तियां होंगी।

Terms of SoO Pact

- The Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) oversees the effective implementation of the pact.
- Security forces, including state and central forces, cannot launch operations, nor can the underground groups.
- Signatories of UPF and KNO abide by the Constitution of India, laws of the land, and territorial integrity of Manipur.
- They are prohibited from committing atrocities and extortion.
- The militant cadres are confined to designated camps, with arms deposited in a safe room under a double-locking system.
- The groups are given arms only to guard their camps and protect their leaders.

Terms of SoO Pact

- संयुक्त निगरानी समूह (JMG) संधि के प्रभावी कार्यान्वयन की देखरेख करता है।
- राज्य और केंद्रीय बलों सहित सुरक्षा बल, न तो अभियान शुरू कर सकते हैं और न ही भूमिगत समूह।
- यूपीएफ और केएनओ के हस्ताक्षरकर्ता भारत के संविधान, देश के कानूनों और मणिपुर की क्षेत्रीय अखंडता का पालन करते हैं।
- उन्हें अत्याचार और जबरन वसूली करने से मना किया जाता है।
- उग्रवादी कैडरों को नामित शिविरों तक ही सीमित रखा जाता है, जिसमें हथियार एक डबल-लॉकिंग सिस्टम के तहत एक सुरक्षित कमरे में जमा किए जाते हैं।
- समूहों को केवल अपने शिविरों की रक्षा करने और अपने नेताओं की सुरक्षा के लिए हथियार दिए जाते हैं।

Daily Current Affairs

Japanese Encephalitis

- A study conducted in Gorakhpur district, India, involving 266 children vaccinated with the Chinese SA-14-14-2 vaccine (a live, attenuated vaccine) for Japanese encephalitis, found very low levels of neutralising antibodies IgG at different time points after vaccination.
- भारत के गोरखपुर जिले में जापानी एन्सेफलाइटिस के लिए चीनी एसए-14-14-2 वैक्सीन (एक जीवित, क्षीण टीका) के टीके लगाए गए 266 बच्चों को शामिल करते हुए एक अध्ययन में टीकाकरण के बाद अलग-अलग समय बिंदुओं पर एंटीबॉडी आईजीजी को निष्क्रिय करने के बहुत कम स्तर पाए गए।

Key facts

- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is a flavivirus related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses, and is spread by mosquitoes.
- JEV is the main cause of viral encephalitis in many countries of Asia with an estimated 68 000 clinical cases every year.
- Although symptomatic Japanese encephalitis (JE) is rare, the case-fatality rate among those with encephalitis can be as high as 30%.
- जापानी एन्सेफलाइटिस वायरस (जेईवी) डेंगू, पीले बुखार और वेस्ट नाइल वायरस से संबंधित एक फ्लैविवायरस है, और मच्छरों द्वारा फैलता है।
- जेईवी एशिया के कई देशों में वायरल एन्सेफलाइटिस का मुख्य कारण है, जिसके हर साल अनुमानित 68 000 क्लिनिकल मामले हैं।
- हालांकि रोगसूचक जापानी एन्सेफलाइटिस (जेई) दुर्लभ है, एन्सेफलाइटिस वाले लोगों में मृत्यु दर 30% तक हो सकती है।

- Permanent neurologic or psychiatric sequelae can occur in 30%–50% of those with encephalitis.
- 24 countries in the WHO South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions have endemic JEV transmission, exposing more than 3 billion people to risks of infection.
- There is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving severe clinical signs and supporting the patient to overcome the infection.
- Safe and effective vaccines are available to prevent JE. WHO recommends that JE vaccination be integrated into national immunization schedules in all areas where JE disease is recognized as a public health issue.

- एन्सेफलाइटिस वाले 30% -50% लोगों में स्थायी न्यूरोलॉजिक या मनोरोग परिणाम हो सकते हैं।
- डब्ल्यूएचओ दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया और पश्चिमी प्रशांत क्षेत्र के 24 देशों में स्थानिक जेईवी संचरण है, जिससे 3 अरब से अधिक लोगों को संक्रमण का खतरा है।
- बीमारी का कोई इलाज नहीं है। उपचार गंभीर नैदानिक संकेतों से राहत देने और रोगी को संक्रमण से उबरने में सहायता करने पर केंद्रित है।
- जेई को रोकने के लिए सुरक्षित और प्रभावी टीके उपलब्ध हैं। डब्ल्यूएचओ की सिफारिश है कि जेई टीकाकरण को उन सभी क्षेत्रों में राष्ट्रीय टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम में एकीकृत किया जाए जहां जेई रोग को सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य समस्या के रूप में पहचाना जाता है।

Japanese encephalitis, countries or areas at risk

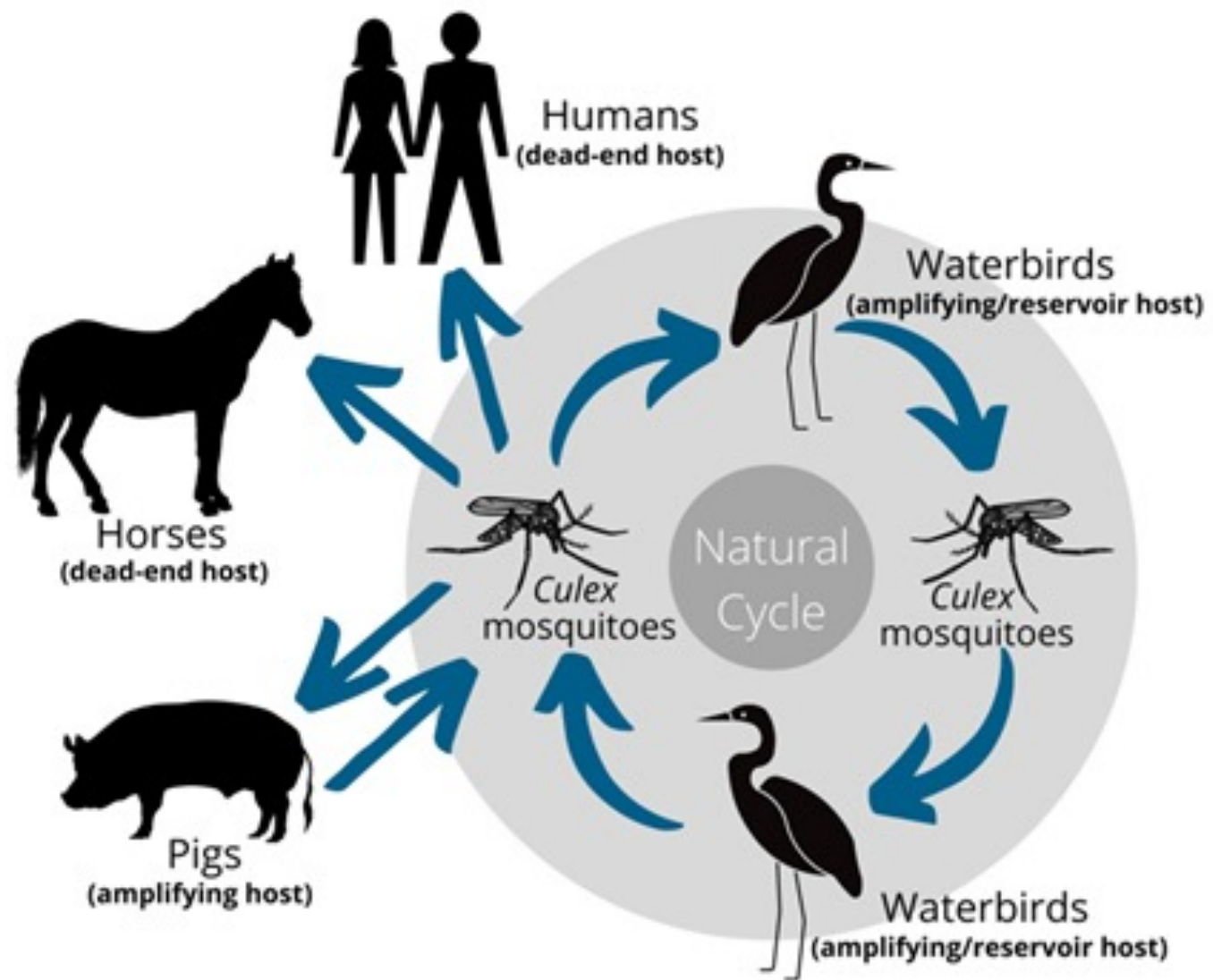


■ Countries or areas at risk
■ Not applicable

Map production: Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals (IVB), World Health Organization (WHO)
Data source: IVB database
Date of slide: 02/05/2018

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SURGE IN CASES

■ NO. OF JE CASES

● DEATHS

*Till November

2015

8

1

2016

32

5

2017

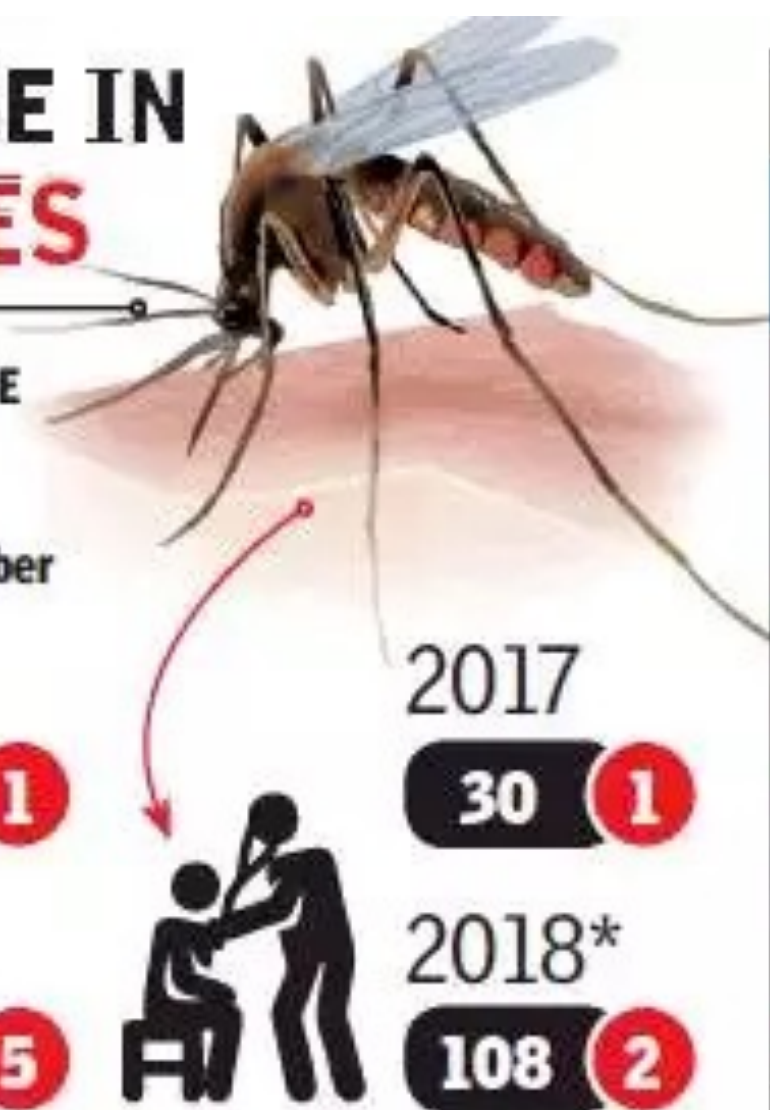
30

1

2018*

108

2



IMPACT ON CNS

JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS, A MOSQUITO-BORNE VIRUS, AFFECTS THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

➤ It is spread by Culex vishnui group of mosquitoes



➤ It is transmitted to humans via the bite of an infected mosquito

➤ Japanese Encephalitis mostly affects children below the age of 15 years

➤ About 25% of the affected children die

➤ Among the survivors, about 30% to 40% children suffer from physical and mental impairment

➤ There is no specific anti-viral medicine available for Japanese Encephalitis virus

Cases are managed symptomatically



What does the Study on Vaccine for Japanese Encephalitis Suggest?

- The study found that seroprotection against the virus decreased in the vaccinated children.
- Nearly 98% of the children who received the vaccine did not have any IgG antibodies against the virus.
- Similar results were seen in a study carried out in Bangladesh, where children were immunised with the Chinese vaccine.
- अध्ययन में पाया गया कि टीका लगाए गए बच्चों में वायरस के खिलाफ सीरोप्रोटेक्शन कम हो गया।
- टीका प्राप्त करने वाले लगभग 98% बच्चों में वायरस के खिलाफ कोई आईजीजी एंटीबॉडी नहीं थी।
- इसी तरह के परिणाम बांग्लादेश में किए गए एक अध्ययन में देखे गए, जहां बच्चों को चीनी टीके से प्रतिरक्षित किया गया था।

Benefits of Jenvac

- In contrast, a trial carried out using an inactivated vaccine (Jenvac), developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with NIV Pune using a virus strain collected in India, has found superior protection at the end of two years even with a single dose.
- Jenvac has been approved as a single-dose vaccine; two doses of Jenvac are used as part of the Universal Immunisation Programme.
- इसके विपरीत, भारत बायोटेक द्वारा एनआईवी पुणे के सहयोग से भारत में एकत्र किए गए वायरस स्ट्रेन का उपयोग करके विकसित एक निष्क्रिय वैक्सीन (जेनवैक) का उपयोग करके किए गए एक परीक्षण में एक खुराक के साथ भी दो साल के अंत में बेहतर सुरक्षा पाई गई है।
- जेनवैक को एकल-खुराक वाले टीके के रूप में अनुमोदित किया गया है; यूनिवर्सल टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम के हिस्से के रूप में जेनवैक की दो खुराक का उपयोग किया जाता है।

Daily Current Affairs

Dragon Fruit

- Under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a roadmap is being prepared for the cultivation of dragon fruit in the identified potential area to increase the production of exotic and niche area fruits. The target for area expansion under MIDH for Kamalam is 50,000 ha. in 5 years.
- मिशन फॉर इंटीग्रेटेड डेवलपमेंट ऑफ हॉर्टिकल्चर (एमआईडीएच) के तहत विदेशी और विशिष्ट क्षेत्र के फलों के उत्पादन को बढ़ाने के लिए चिन्हित संभावित क्षेत्र में ड्रैगन फ्रूट की खेती के लिए एक रोडमैप तैयार किया जा रहा है। कमलम के लिए एमआईडीएच के तहत क्षेत्र विस्तार का लक्ष्य 50,000 हेक्टेयर है। 5 साल में।

Dragon Fruit

✓ Cholesterol-Free

✓ Fat-Free

✓ Good Source of Fiber

Dragon Fruit contains vitamin C, magnesium, and is packed with healthy fiber

(6 ounces, cubed)

22g
CARBS

0g
FAT

102
CALORIES

5g
FIBER

2g
PROTEIN



10 HEALTH BENEFITS OF DRAGON FRUIT!



BONES AND TEETH

Great source of calcium & phosphorous which work together to improve bone mass and prevent osteoporosis.



NERVOUS SYSTEM

High in B Vitamins which aid in the formation of nerve cells and healthy fats for proper conductive signalling.



EYE SUPPORT

Contains Vitamin A in the form of carotene needed for proper colour vision and prevention of night blindness.



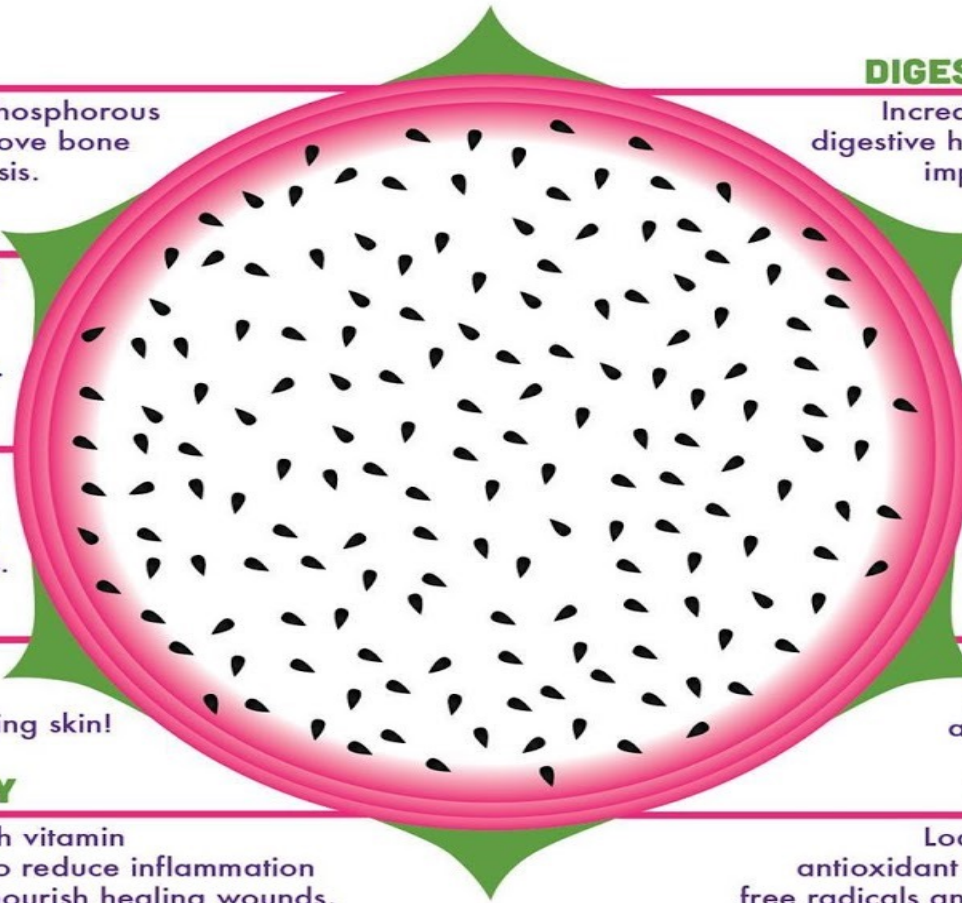
GLOWING SKIN

Antioxidants and essential fatty acids for blemish-free, softer, tighter, younger looking skin!



ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

Provide alkalinity due to high vitamin & mineral content, helping to reduce inflammation and irritation in joints, and nourish healing wounds, cuts, bruises and scrapes (as well as prevent disease).



DIGESTION & METABOLISM

Incredibly high in fibre for optimal digestive health. Aids in weight loss via improvement of metabolic rate.



CARDIOVASCULAR

Prevent cardiovascular disease, lower cholesterol & reduce high blood pressure.



ANTI-AGING

Antioxidants work against free radicals and make your skin tighter & younger looking!



IMMUNITY

High vitamin & mineral content to improve immunity and prevent disease & illness.



CANCER PREVENTION

Loaded with phytoalbumins, an antioxidant that prevents cancer-causing free radicals and blocks tumour cell growth. Also rids the body of toxic heavy metals.



Daily Current Affairs

Operation Trishul

- Under Operation Trishul, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has extradited 33 people hiding in other countries, involved in various criminal activities.
- ऑपरेशन त्रिशूल के तहत, केंद्रीय जांच ब्यूरो (CBI) ने विभिन्न आपराधिक गतिविधियों में शामिल 33 लोगों को दूसरे देशों में छिपाकर प्रत्यर्पित किया है।

- Under Trishul, 27 suspects were extradited in 2022. This year, two suspects have been extradited every month on an average, with the number already touching six in the first quarter shows.
- The operation has gathered steam after an Interpol conference last year in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah highlighted the need for global cooperation in tracing fugitives.

- त्रिशूल के तहत, 2022 में 27 संदिग्धों का प्रत्यर्पण किया गया था। इस साल, औसतन हर महीने दो संदिग्धों का प्रत्यर्पण किया गया है, पहली तिमाही के शो में यह संख्या पहले से ही छह को छू रही है।
- ऑपरेशन पिछले साल एक इंटरपोल सम्मेलन के बाद भाप बन गया था जिसमें प्रधान मंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और गृह मंत्री अमित शाह ने भगोड़ों को खोजने में वैश्विक सहयोग की आवश्यकता पर प्रकाश डाला था।

- Under 'Trishul', the CBI geolocates criminals with help of Interpol channels and seeks their deportation or extradition through the formal route, an official explained.
- Not just tracing suspects, the operation involves tracing the proceeds of financial crimes.

- एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि 'त्रिशूल' के तहत, सीबीआई इंटरपोल चैनलों की मदद से अपराधियों का पता लगाती है और उनके निर्वासन या प्रत्यर्पण की मांग करती है।
- न केवल संदिग्धों का पता लगाना, ऑपरेशन में वित्तीय अपराधों की आय का पता लगाना शामिल है।

Daily Current Affairs

Reservation for Women in Politics

- A political party recently called for the long-delayed Women's Reservation Bill to be introduced in Parliament.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the Women's Reservation Bill on 9 March 2010. However, the Lok Sabha never voted on the bill. The bill lapsed since it was still pending in Lok Sabha.
- एक राजनीतिक दल ने हाल ही में लंबे समय से विलंबित महिला आरक्षण विधेयक को संसद में पेश करने का आह्वान किया।
- राज्य सभा ने 9 मार्च 2010 को महिला आरक्षण विधेयक पारित किया। हालाँकि, लोकसभा ने कभी भी विधेयक पर मतदान नहीं किया। बिल लैप्स हो गया क्योंकि यह अभी भी लोकसभा में लंबित था।

History of Political Reservation for Women

- The issue of reservation for women in politics can be traced back to the Indian national movement.
- In 1931, leaders **Begum Shah Nawaz** and **Sarojini Naidu** wrote, “**To seek any form of preferential treatment would be to violate the integrity of the universal demand of Indian women for absolute equality of political status.**”
- राजनीति में महिलाओं के लिए आरक्षण के मुद्दे का पता भारतीय राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन से लगाया जा सकता है।
- 1931 में, नेताओं बेगम शाह नवाज़ और सरोजिनी नायडू ने लिखा, “किसी भी प्रकार के तरजीही व्यवहार की मांग करना राजनीतिक स्थिति की पूर्ण समानता के लिए भारतीय महिलाओं की सार्वभौमिक मांग की अखंडता का उल्लंघन करना होगा।”

- This was written in their letter to the British Prime Minister, on the status of women in the new Constitution by three women's bodies.
- The issue of women's reservation came up in Constituent Assembly debates as well, but it was rejected as being unnecessary.
- It was assumed that a democracy would accord representation to all groups.

- यह तीन महिला निकायों द्वारा नए संविधान में महिलाओं की स्थिति पर ब्रिटिश प्रधान मंत्री को लिखे उनके पत्र में लिखा गया था।
- संविधान सभा की बहसों में भी महिला आरक्षण का मुद्दा उठा, लेकिन इसे अनावश्यक बताकर खारिज कर दिया गया।
- यह मान लिया गया था कि एक लोकतंत्र सभी समूहों को प्रतिनिधित्व प्रदान करेगा।

- However, in the following decades, it became clear that this was not to be the case.
- As a consequence, women's reservation became a recurrent theme in policy debates.

- हालाँकि, बाद के दशकों में, यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि ऐसा नहीं होना था।
- परिणामस्वरूप, नीतिगत बहसों में महिला आरक्षण एक बार-बार आने वाला विषय बन गया।

What is the Women's Reservation Bill?

- The Women's Reservation Bill proposes to reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women.
- Reserved seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the state or union territory.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act.
- महिला आरक्षण विधेयक में महिलाओं के लिए लोकसभा और राज्य विधानसभाओं में 33% सीटें आरक्षित करने का प्रस्ताव है।
- आरक्षित सीटों को राज्य या केंद्र शासित प्रदेश के विभिन्न निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों में बारी-बारी से आवंटित किया जा सकता है।
- इस संशोधन अधिनियम के लागू होने के 15 साल बाद महिलाओं के लिए सीटों का आरक्षण समाप्त हो जाएगा।

Global Averages

	Lower chamber and unicameral	Upper chamber	All chambers
Total no. of MPs	37,248	7,062	44,310
Men	27,425	5,255	32,680
Women	9,823	1,807	11,630
Percentage of women	26.4%	25.6%	26.2%

The present status of Women representation in politics worldwide.

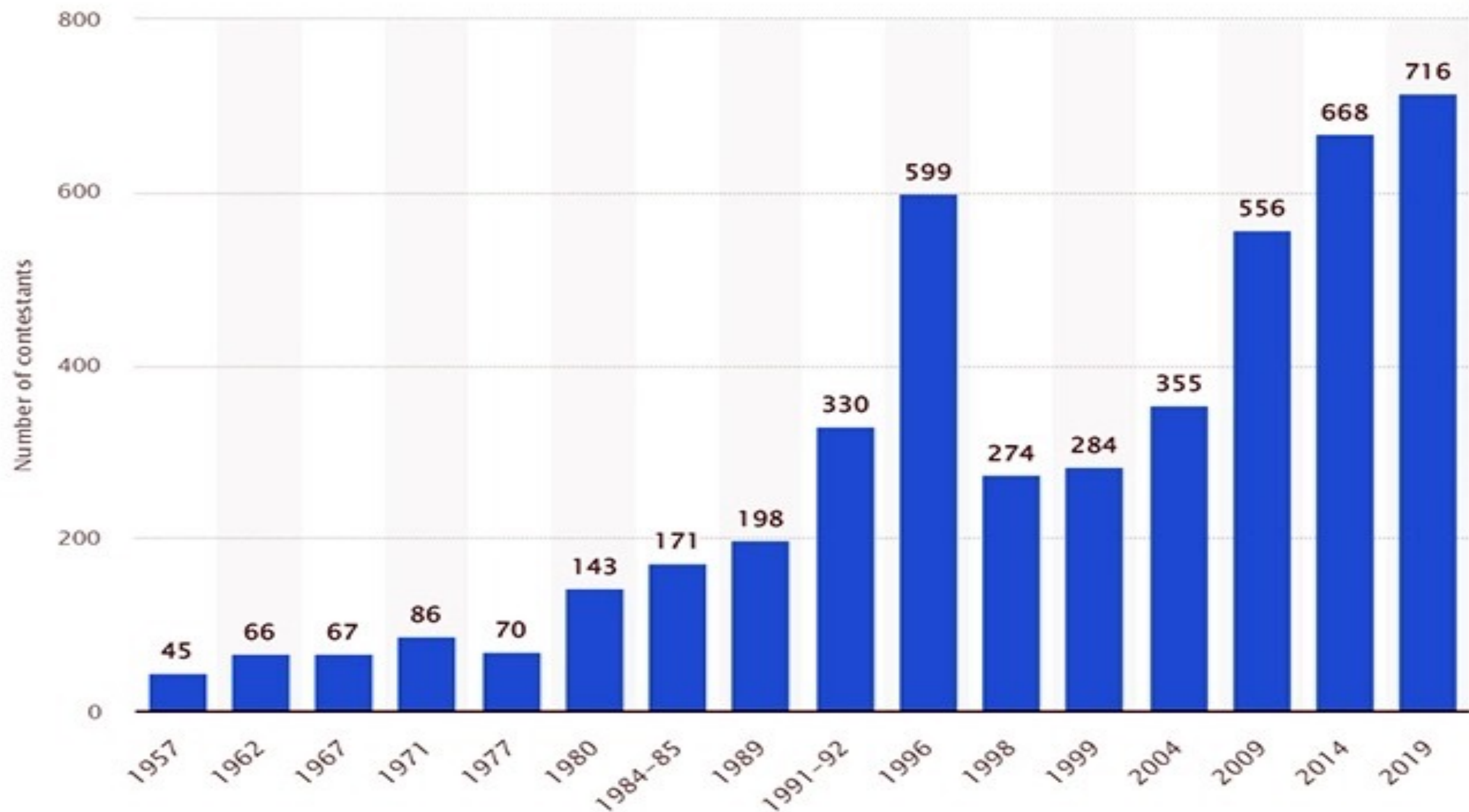
- **Representative governments increased but women count remains low:** According to UN Women, as of September 2022, there were 30 women serving as elected heads of state and/or of government in 28 countries (out of a total of 193 UN member states).
- **Dichotomy in active participation:** There is the dichotomy between the rapid increase of women's participation as voters in elections and other political activities, and the slow rise of female representation in Parliament.

The present status of Women representation in politics worldwide.

- प्रतिनिधि सरकारें बढ़ीं लेकिन महिलाओं की संख्या कम रही: संयुक्त राष्ट्र महिलाओं के अनुसार, सितंबर 2022 तक, 28 देशों में (कुल 193 संयुक्त राष्ट्र सदस्य राज्यों में से) राज्य और/या सरकार की निर्वाचित प्रमुखों के रूप में 30 महिलाएं कार्यरत थीं।
- सक्रिय भागीदारी में विरोधाभास: चुनाव और अन्य राजनीतिक गतिविधियों में मतदाताओं के रूप में महिलाओं की भागीदारी में तेजी से वृद्धि और संसद में महिला प्रतिनिधित्व में धीमी वृद्धि के बीच विरोधाभास है।

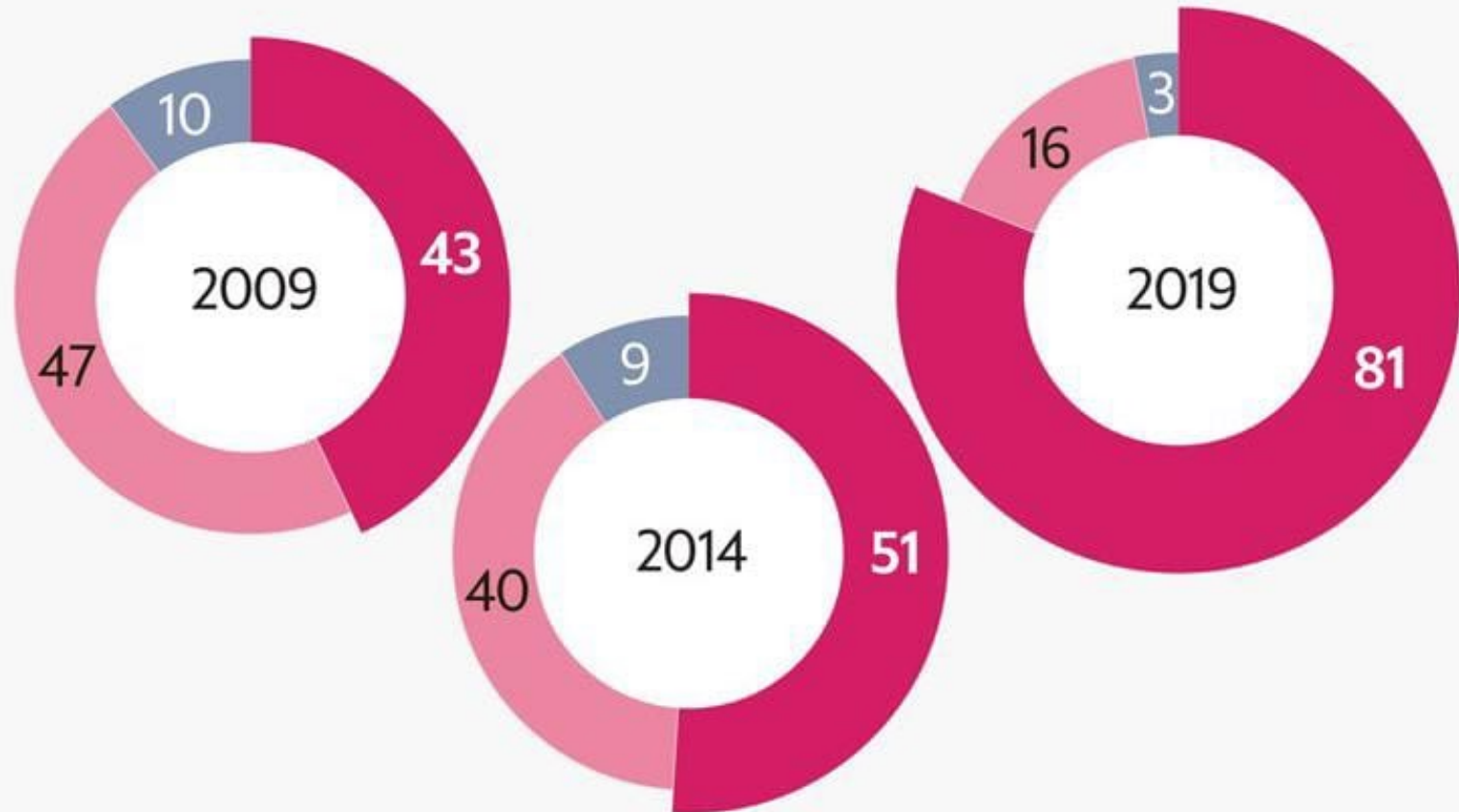
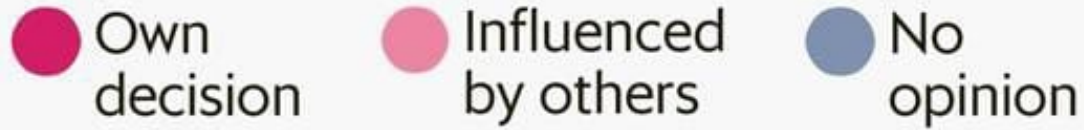
- **Global average women representation:** As of May 2022, the global average of female representation in national parliaments was 26.2 percent.
- **Above average representation:** The Americas, Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa have women's representation above the global average;
- **Below average representation:** Asia, the Pacific region, and the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region, are below average.

- वैश्विक औसत महिला प्रतिनिधित्व: मई 2022 तक, राष्ट्रीय संसदों में महिला प्रतिनिधित्व का वैश्विक औसत 26.2 प्रतिशत था।
- औसत से अधिक प्रतिनिधित्व: अमेरिका, यूरोप और उप-सहारा अफ्रीका में महिलाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व वैश्विक औसत से ऊपर है;
- औसत प्रतिनिधित्व से नीचे: एशिया, प्रशांत क्षेत्र और मध्य पूर्व और उत्तरी अफ्रीका (MENA) क्षेत्र, औसत से नीचे हैं।



Women increasingly exercising their own free choice in election vote

What women said about their election pick in Lok Sabha elections (in %)



Source: National Election Studies, CSDS Data Unit

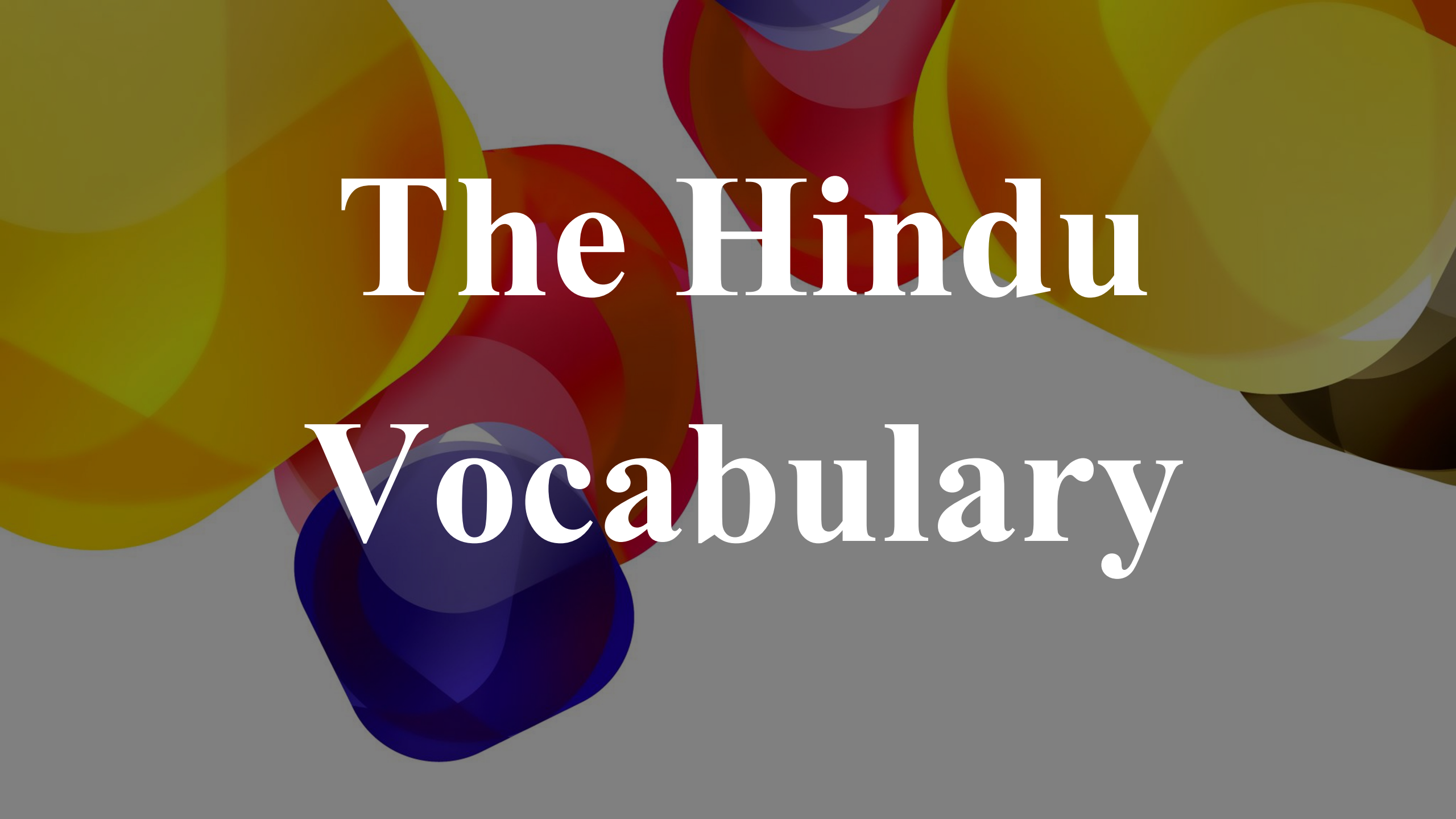
Daily Current Affairs

Bumchu Festival: Sikkim

- Bumchu is an annual holy water vase ritual commemorated in Tashiding Monastery, one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, located on a hilltop overlooking the Rangeet River in Sikkim.
- बुमचू एक वार्षिक पवित्र जल फूलदान अनुष्ठान है जो ताशीदिंग मठ में मनाया जाता है, जो सिक्किम में रंगीत नदी के ऊपर एक पहाड़ी की चोटी पर स्थित सबसे पवित्र बौद्ध तीर्थ स्थलों में से एक है।

- The Bumchu festival commemorates a supernatural occurrence that took place in the 18th century under Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal.
- Bumchu means “pot of sacred water” in Tibetan.
- The vase is opened during the event, and the water inside is shared among the worshippers.
- The water is thought to have healing qualities and to grant luck and riches to those who drink it.
- The celebration takes place on the 14th and 15th of the first lunar month, which often falls in February or March.

- बुमचू उत्सव एक अलौकिक घटना की याद दिलाता है जो 18वीं शताब्दी में चोग्याल चकदोर नामग्याल के तहत हुई थी।
- बुमचू का अर्थ तिब्बती में "पवित्र जल का बर्तन" है।
- घटना के दौरान फूलदान खोला जाता है, और अंदर का पानी उपासकों के बीच साझा किया जाता है।
- ऐसा माना जाता है कि पानी में हीलिंग गुण होते हैं और इसे पीने वालों को भाग्य और धन प्रदान करते हैं।
- उत्सव पहले चंद्र महीने की 14वीं और 15वीं तारीख को होता है, जो अक्सर फरवरी या मार्च में पड़ता है।



The Hindu Vocabulary

Pestilent (Adjective) : विनाशक: likely to cause or capable of causing death

Synonyms: lethal, deadly, harmful

Antonyms: salubrious, beneficial, salutary



Disseminate (Verb) : फैलाना : spread
(something, especially information) widely

Synonyms: propagate, spread, circulate,
transmit

Antonyms: repress, suppress, stifle,
discountenance



Confer (प्रदान करना)

Meaning: grant (a title, degree, benefit, or right).

Synonyms: accord, bestow

Antonyms: deprive, disclaim



Snubbing (verb)

Meaning: rebuff, ignore, or spurn disdainfully. (तुच्छ समझना)

Synonyms: rejecting, isolating, repulsing

Antonyms: respecting, valuing, admiring



Sacrament (संस्कार/प्रतिज्ञा)

Meaning: an important religious ceremony in the Christian Church, such as baptism or communion

Synonyms: rite, liturgy, ritual

Antonyms: denial, disarray



1. Recently, the U.S. banking regulators shut down the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) Financial Group, causing shockwaves in the startup community. Which phenomenon was seen in the fall of SVB? Select the most appropriate answer.

- a) Asset liability mismatch of federal bank of USA
- b) Bank run of SVB
- c) Hyperinflation in US economy
- d) Creative destruction of US economy

1. हाल ही में, यू.एस. बैंकिंग नियामकों ने सिलिकॉन वैली बैंक (एसवीबी) वित्तीय समूह को बंद कर दिया, जिससे स्टार्टअप समुदाय में झटका लगा। एसवीबी के पतन में कौन सी घटना देखी गई थी? सर्वाधिक उपयुक्त उत्तर का चयन कीजिए।

- a) यूएसए के फेडरल बैंक की संपत्ति देयता बेमेल
- b) एसवीबी का बैंक रन
- c) अमेरिकी अर्थव्यवस्था में अत्यधिक मुद्रास्फीति
- d) अमेरिकी अर्थव्यवस्था का रचनात्मक विनाश

Answer – B

- The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank was caused by the US Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates, leading to less appetite for risk and resulting in investors pulling out their money to meet their liquidity needs.
- This is a case of bank run, when customers lose faith in an institution's ability to look after their money, and large numbers withdraw their deposits all at once.

2. Consider the following statements about 'National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)'

1. It is an autonomous body funded by the Higher Education Financing Agency that assesses and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
2. It categorizes institutes into six categories and presently done on a voluntary basis

Select the correct statement(s)

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. 'राष्ट्रीय मूल्यांकन और प्रत्यायन परिषद (NAAC)' के बारे में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार करें

1. यह उच्च शिक्षा वित्तपोषण एजेंसी द्वारा वित्त पोषित एक स्वायत्त निकाय है जो उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों (HEIs) का मूल्यांकन और मान्यता देता है।
2. यह संस्थानों को छह श्रेणियों में वर्गीकृत करता है और वर्तमान में यह स्वैच्छिक आधार पर किया जाता है

सही कथन का चयन करें

- a) केवल 1
- b) केवल 2
- c) 1 और 2 दोनों
- d) न तो 1 और न ही 2

Answer – D

- Statement 1 - The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is a government organisation in India that assesses and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- It is an autonomous body funded by the University Grants Commission and headquartered in Bangalore.
- Statement 2 - NAAC grades institutes on an eight-grade ladder. The ratings of institutions range from A++ to C. If an institution is graded D, it means it is not accredited.
- At present, the Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC is done on a voluntary basis.

3. Consider the following statements regarding reservation for women in Indian polity:

1. After independence, various governments have tabled bills for one third reservation for women in Indian legislatures, but none has been passed yet.
2. Currently there is no reservation for women at any level of political organisation in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. भारतीय राजनीति में महिलाओं के लिए आरक्षण के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार करें:

1. आजादी के बाद, विभिन्न सरकारों ने भारतीय विधानसभाओं में महिलाओं के लिए एक तिहाई आरक्षण के लिए विधेयक पेश किए हैं, लेकिन अभी तक कोई भी पारित नहीं हुआ है।
2. वर्तमान में भारत में राजनीतिक संगठन के किसी भी स्तर पर महिलाओं के लिए कोई आरक्षण नहीं है।

उपरोक्त कथनों में से कौन-सा/से सही है/हैं?

- a) केवल 1
- b) केवल 2
- c) 1 और 2 दोनों
- d) न तो 1 और न ही 2

Answer – A

- National Perspective Plan for Women recommended in 1988 that reservation be provided to women right from the level of the panchayat to that of Parliament.
- These recommendations paved the way for the historic enactment of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution which mandate all State governments to reserve one-third of the seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and one-third of the offices of the chairperson at all levels of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, and in urban local bodies, respectively.
- Within these seats, one-third are reserved for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe women.

4. Which of the following nation are participants of Exercise Sea Dragon 23

1. USA
2. India
3. China
4. South Korea

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 & 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2 & 3
- d) 1 and 4 only

4. निम्नलिखित में से कौन सा देश एक्सरसाइज सी ड्रैगन 23 में भाग ले रहा है

1. यूएसए
2. भारत
3. चीन
4. दक्षिण कोरिया

ऊपर दिए गए कथनों में से कौन सा/से सही है/हैं?

- a) केवल 1 और 2
- b) केवल 1, 2 और 4
- c) 1, 2 और 3
- d) केवल 1 और 4

Answer – B

Coalition sends message to Beijing, Indian Navy joins drills in the Pacific

Anti-submarine warfare drills being staged by United States, Canada, India, Japan and South Korea

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, MARCH 16

THE UNITED States, Canada, India, Japan and South Korea are staging joint anti-submarine warfare drills amid talks between Japanese and South Korean leaders aimed at strengthening their alliance with Washington against threats from China and North Korea.

The Sea Dragon 23 exercises that started on Wednesday will culminate in more than 270 hours of in-flight training "ranging from tracking simulated targets to the final problem of tracking a U.S. Navy submarine," the US 7th Fleet said in a news release.

Pilots and flight officers from all participating countries will also hold classroom training sessions to "build plans and discuss tactics incorporating the capabilities and equipment of their respective nations," the 7th Fleet said.

The drills are being held as a competition, with the country winning the most points taking home the "Dragon Belt."

The US Navy is being represented by two P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft, currently based in Guam. It did not say where the exercises would be held or how long they would last.

With 50 to 70 ships and sub-



The Indian Navy has sent a P8I aircraft to Guam. PIB

marines, 150 aircraft and more than 27,000 sailors and marines ready to deploy at any given time, the 7th Fleet "routinely interacts and operates with Allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region," it said.

That includes operating in the South China Sea, where it routinely draws Beijing's anger by sailing and flying near islands held and fortified by China, which claims the strategic waterway virtually in its entirety.

Other nations, as yet unidentified, are also taking part in the "Security Bond-2023" exercises, which China's Defense Ministry says will "help deepen practical cooperation between the participating countries' navies... and inject positive energy into regional peace and stability."

EXPLAINED E String of disputes

THE EXERCISES also come as China's navy is taking part in joint search and rescue exercises in the Gulf of Oman with Iran and Russia, three of the countries most at odds with the United States. China's dispute with Japan over tiny islands in the East China Sea has also heated up recently, with both sides accusing each other of violating their maritime territory.

Japan, South Korea renew relations at Tokyo summit

MARI YAMAGUCHI
TOKYO, MARCH 16

JAPAN AND South Korea agreed to resume regular visits between their leaders and take steps to resolve a trade dispute during a highly anticipated summit Thursday, in what Japan's prime minister called a "big step" to rebuilding the two nations' security and economic ties as they try to fix a century of difficult history.

In his opening remarks, Kishida said that the meeting will mark the resumption of regular visits between the leaders, which have been on hold for more than a decade. He said the countries had agreed to resume defense dialogue and vice-ministerial strategic talks, while also restarting a process of trilateral talks among Japan, South Korea and China.

Yoon said meeting "has special significance as it shows the people of both countries that South Korea-Japan relations are off to a new beginning after being plagued..."

He added that countries are "partners that must cooperate on security, economic issues and global agendas."



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol (left), and Japanese PM Fumio Kishida

N Korea fires ICBM warning

Seoul: North Korea test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile Thursday just hours before the leaders of South Korea and Japan were to meet at a Tokyo summit expected to be overshadowed by North Korean nuclear threats. The missile flew about 1,000 kilometers with a maximum altitude of 6,000 kilometers during the 70-minute flight, as per to South Korean and Japanese assessments. AP