# **Daily Current Affairs**



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## **By Bhunesh Sir**

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Dar hum ko bhi lagta hai raste ke sannatte se Lekin ek safar par ae dil ab jaana to hoga





### Modi announces ₹100 cut in LPG refill price

sed 14.2-kg

The rise and fall

1.000

AUG. 1, 2014

nine-year high of ₹1,103 per 14.2-kg cylinder to ₹903. With Friday's cut, an LPG cylinder will cost ₹803.

Congress charge Congress leader Randeep

nouncement an "election

gimmick". "The Congress-UPA go-vernment used to buy LPG

national election."

Surjewala called the an

The decision comes ahead of Lok Sabha elections; Congress calls it a 'poll gimmick': this is the second cut in prices in six months; rates were slashed in Aug, ahead of Assembly polls in 5 States

#### The Hindu Bureau

eeks before the Lok Sabha elec-tions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a reduc-tion in domestic LPG pric-es by t100 a cylinder. "This will significantly

es by floo a cylinder. "This will significantly ease the financial burden on millions of households across the country, espe-cially benefiting our Nari Shakti. By making cooking gas more affordable, we also aim to support the well-being of families and en-sure a healthier environment," Mr. Modi said on X, adding that the anno ment was being made on the occasion of Interna-tional Women's Day.

This is the second reduction in cooking gas prices in six months. Rates prices in six months. Rates were cut by ₹200 per cylin-der in late August ahead of the Assembly elections in five States, including Mad-hya Pradesh and

hya Pratesa Rajasthan. That revision brought down the price from a

vernment used to buy LPG at the international price, which was 28% more than the current price, but gave it to people at less than half the price by giving huge subsidies," Mr. Surjewala I-T tribunal rejects Cong. appeal against

#### ₹210-crore penalty this to coincide with the The Hindu Bureau

EW DELHI Expressing disappointment over the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal's (TRAT) dismissal of the Congress party's appeal against the imposition of penalsty for uturns for previous years, the party on Friday said it was exploring all legal op-tions and will move the High Court very soon. ment over the Income Tax

tions and will move the High Court very soon. The ITAT had on Friday dismissed the appeal of the Congress against the impo-sition of penalties of ₹210 crore by the Income Tax (I-T) Denartment

Congress treasurer. He claimed that neither the BJP nor any national political party has, in the history of the country, paid income tax penalty. T) Department. The party had moved the ITAT against the I-T Department's penalty over discrepancies in filing tax Congress' legal cell head Vivek Tankha said the ITAT has not followed its own returns for 2018-19 but did not get relief. "We are ex-ploring all legal options and will move the High precedents in this regard and the party will be ap-Court very soon. The BJP government has deliber-ately chosen the timing of proaching the High Cour soon.

#### Rahul, Tharoor, Baghel in Cong. first list of candidates

The Hindu Bureau

prominent names include former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, to contest from Rajnandgaon; Con-gress Working Committee member and sitting MP Shashi Tharoor from Thi-ruvananthapuram. Congress leader Rahul Congress leader Rahul from Rajnane Gandhi will seek re-elec-gress Working abbas seat in Kerala in the upcoming election. He was one of the 39 candidates in the party's first list, re-leased on Friday. Other **PAGE4** 

CM (CON)

Russian Army Devesh K. Pandev Con Kallol Bhattacherjee. NEW DELHI gress treasurer Ajay Maken told The Hindu. Mr. Maken termed the Offers for support jobs

said in a post on X. Mr. Surjewala said the

UPA government bought LPG at ₹880.5 per cylinder but made it available to the

public at ₹399-₹414, whe

buys it at ₹740 per cylin

der, while an amount of

€900 to ₹1,000 is charged

Nod for subsidy The Trinamool Congress, West Bengal's ruling party, dubbed the reduction a "token cut" and a "cheap political stunt".

Centre warns

against offers

of jobs with

reas today, the governi

from the people.

I-T Department's action to take away funds from the with the Russian Army made by unverified agents are "fraught with danger and risk to life", the Exterparty's accounts as "an at tack on democracy" as i tack on democracy" as it has come just abead of the Lok Sabha election and has tion party without finds to contest. "If the principal Opposition party cannot spend a single paisa, how can one expect fair elec-tions and will democracy Congress treasurer. It nal Affairs Ministry said on Friday, announcing that stern action has been instern action has been in-itiated by the Central Bu-reau of Investigation against the agencies that conned Indian nationals. The CBI on Thursday searched 12 locations in ram, Mumbai, Armbala, Chandigarh, Madurai, and Chennai.

PAGE 3

last year.

ULL REPORT Cadets perform a motorcycle stunt during the passing out parade at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai on Friday. B. VELANKANNI RA.

#### The Hindu Bureau

They have been on a hunger strike in jail for a fortnight, demanding transfer to any prison in Pupiab The Assam Police arrested the superintendent of Di-bruggarh Central Jall on seizure of electronic gad-gets from 10 inmates be-chainer to are. Amritpal Singh, the chief of Waris Punjab be, chief of Waris Punjab be, have been booked under have been booked under have been and Security Act and lodged in the prison in ant wear. The Assam Police arrested Puniab. Punjab. Dibrugarh's Superinten-dent of Police, V.V. Rakesh Reddy told presspersons on Friday that Nipen Das was arrested under rele-vant sections of the Unlaw-ful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Assam Prisons - objectionable materials" found in the cell of the Sikh extremists in

"A thorough search op-thorough search op-tho extremists mid-February.

(C)

#### Army officer abducted from home in Manipur, rescued in a few hours

#### Abhinay Lakshman

11111

Hot commodity: This is the

second reduction in cooking gas prices in six months.

Rates were cut in late August

**Balancing** act

ahead of the Assembly

elections in five States.

₹1,101

Amid the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur, a serv-ing Jumior Commissioned Officer of the Indian Army, who was on Friday morn-ing abducted from his home in Thoubal district, was rescued the same evening after an hoursevening after an hours-long search operation launched by security forcas in the State, The Hindu has learnt. A source said that the JCO, Naib Subedar Konsam

Kheda Singh, of Thoubal's Charangpat Mamang Lei-kai, was on leave and was On Thursday, the Union Cabinet approved the con-tinuation of the targeted subsidy of ₹300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 12 refills abducted from his resi-dence in a vehicle around 9 a.m. on Friday, adding that per year for beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ulithe cause of the abduction was not yet known. The officer was rescued around 6:30 p.m. and was

rested under the UAPA in Dibrugarh.

of the Pradhan Mantri Uji-wala Yojana (PMUY) dur-hydron (PMUY) dur-more than 10.27 crore PMUY beneficiaries. The government will ne-the operation of the pro-tice of the phase of the phase the subsidies of the phase of the subsidy is credited di-rectly to the bank accounts of eligible beneficiaries. around 6:30 p.m. and was taken to the Waikhong pol-ice station near Kakching, another source told The Hindu. A Ministry of De-fence spokesperson later confirmed the same in a reart on Y post on X. The Manipur Police is said to have begun its in-



Ever since the conflict, Army personnel posted for duty in the 3 have been met with resistance from civilian groups. FILE PHOTO

vestigation in this case. This is the fourth in-stance of soldiers either on Throughout last year, the Kuki-Zo people have in-sisted on removing Manileave or on duty or their repur Police personnel from latives being targeted since the ethnic conflict began in the State last May between the dominant valley-based Meitei people and the hills-based Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zo people. Ever since the conflict,

smartph

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equipped with remote key-pads, a spy camera, and

Ever since the conflict, Army personnel posted for duty in the State have been met with resistance from civilian groups like the Mei-ra Paibl (women's group of the Meltei community). Personnel of the Manipur Rifles Police have been resisted by the Kuki-Zo people of the State.



INS Jatayu to keep watch over Arabian Sea

tadars, jetties, airfield and trahMos missiles — the Indian BrahMos missiles — the Indian Navy's newest base being established on Lakshadweep's Minicoy Island, *JWS Jotopu*, will have all these and many more. "Jatayu will be the 'watch-keeper' for Bharat at the gateway of Arabian Sea," said Vice-Admiral Shekhar Sinha, former Western Naval Commander. » PAGE 3 +

> NEW DELHI The Union government has tweaked the new ₹75,000-crore PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli fojana (rooftop solar-free electricity scheme). From an initial plan to fully subsidise the installation of 1 kW-3 kW solar systems in one crore households, the scheme will now only contribute up to 605 of the costs. » PAGE S

Expanding Israeli settlements a



INSIDE

### NEW DELHI Dehi CM and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday launched the party's election campaign in Dehi. The party is contesting on four of the city's seven Lok Sabha seats in alliance with the Coamers, P. BRIG the Congress. » PAGE 2

areas like Moreh, which are dominated by their pe MINICOV/ROCHI

were routinely stopped from going int areas of conflict by wome areas of conflict by women of the Meitel community -Meira Paibis'; and of in-stances when the women were seen checking the Ar-my personnel's IDs to iden-tify their ethnicity.

ople, accusing it of taking the side of the Meitei com-munity in the conflict. Meanwhile, there have also been instances where Ar my personnel – specifical-ly from units of the Assam

'war crime': UN

GENEVA The UN human rights office says in a report published on Friday that the establishment and expansion of Iraceli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem amount to a war crime. The report covers the one-aver norical from the one-year period from November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2023, to PAGE 11

Assam jail chief held after seizure of devices from inmates dress any health issues ices. Subsequent inquiries The hunger strike was

yielded compelling evi-dence implicating the jail superintendent." he said. the peg for Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the U.S.-based leader of the prodence implicating the jail superintendent," he said. Mr. Reddy said Das's complicity in the illegal ac-quisition of the electronic gadgets raised serious con-cerns about the mainte-nance of law and order and national security. Khalistan Sikhs for Justice, to issue a death threat to Assam Chief Minister Hi-

Assam Chief Minister Hi-manta Biswa Sarma on March I. "... Amritpal Singh and his associates are on a hun-ger strike in Dibrugarh jail. Order the shifting of Amrit-pal and his associates to Amritsar jail or face the consequences..." a caller Hunger strike He also said the Sikh pri-soners on hunger strike were under regular medi-cal supervision and actions consequences...," a caller claiming to be speaking on behalf of Pannun said. were being taken to ad-6 .....

Centre tweaks PM rooftop solar scheme

## Modi announces ₹100 cut in LPG refill price

<u>The decision comes ahead of Lok Sabha elections</u>; Congress calls it a 'poll gimmick'; this is the second cut in prices in six months; rates were slashed in Aug. ahead of Assembly polls in 5 States

#### The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

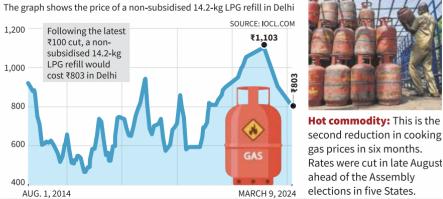
eeks before the Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a reduction in domestic LPG prices by ₹100 a cylinder.

"This will significantly ease the financial burden on millions of households across the country, especially benefiting our *Nari Shakti*. By making cooking gas more affordable, we also aim to support the wellbeing of families and ensure a healthier environment," Mr. Modi said on X, adding that the announcement was being made on the occasion of International Women's Day.

This is the second reduction in cooking gas prices in six months. Rates were cut by ₹200 per cylinder in late August ahead of the Assembly elections in five States, including Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

That revision brought down the price from a

### The rise and fall



nine-year high of ₹1,103 per 14.2-kg cylinder to ₹903. With Friday's cut, an LPG cylinder will cost ₹803.

#### **Congress charge**

Congress leader Randeep Surjewala called the announcement an "election gimmick".

"The Congress-UPA government used to buy LPG at the international price, which was 28% more than the current price, but gave it to people at less than half the price by giving huge subsidies," Mr. Surjewala

said in a post on X.

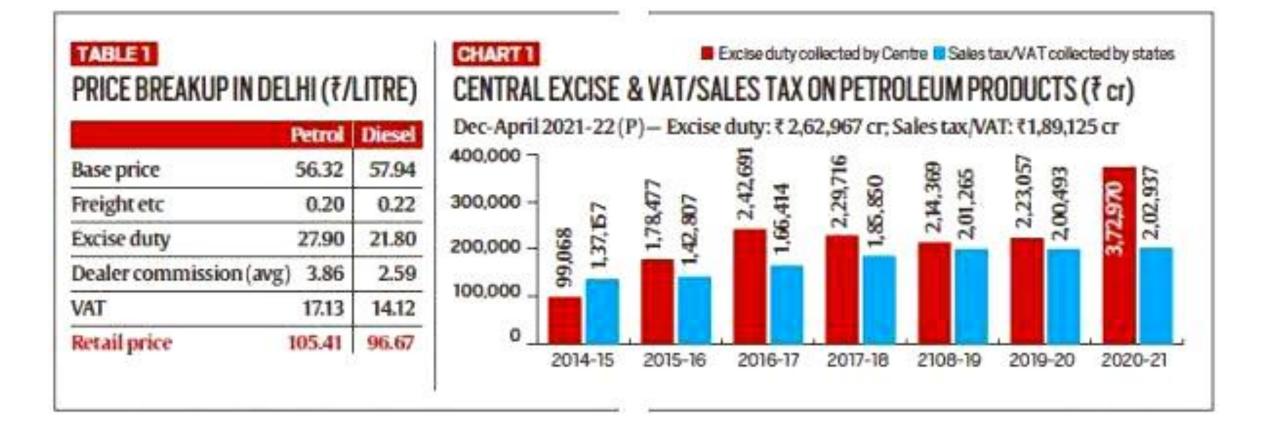
Mr. Surjewala said the UPA government bought LPG at ₹880.5 per cylinder but made it available to the public at ₹399-₹414, whereas today, the government buys it at ₹740 per cylinder, while an amount of ₹900 to ₹1,000 is charged from the people.

#### Nod for subsidy

The Trinamool Congress, West Bengal's ruling party, dubbed the reduction a "token cut" and a "cheap political stunt". On Thursday, the Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the targeted subsidy of ₹300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 12 refills per year for beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) during FY 2024-25. As on March 1, 2024, there were more than 10.27 crore PMUY beneficiaries.

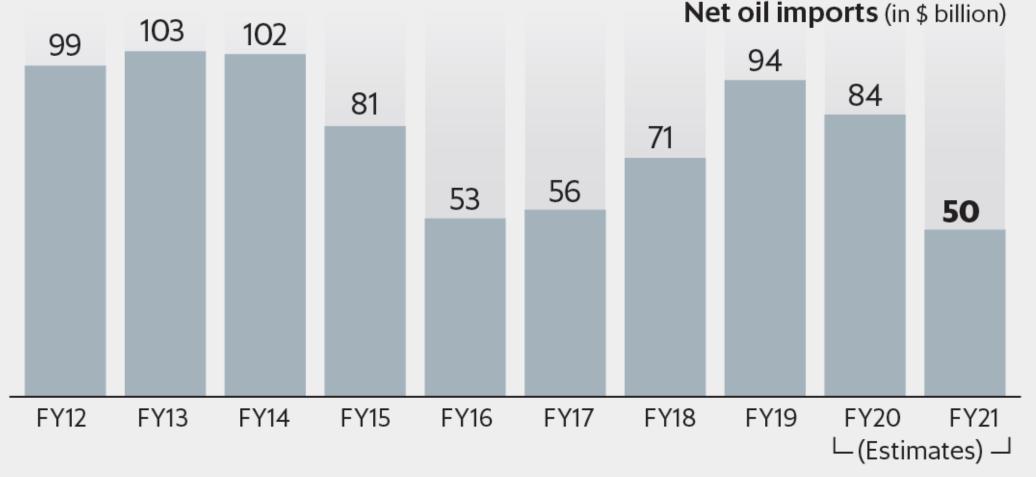
The government will incur a total expenditure of ₹12,000 crore for 2024-25. The subsidy is credited directly to the bank accounts of eligible beneficiaries.

gas prices in six months. Rates were cut in late August ahead of the Assembly elections in five States. On Thursday, the Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the targeted subsidy of ₹300 per 14.2 kg

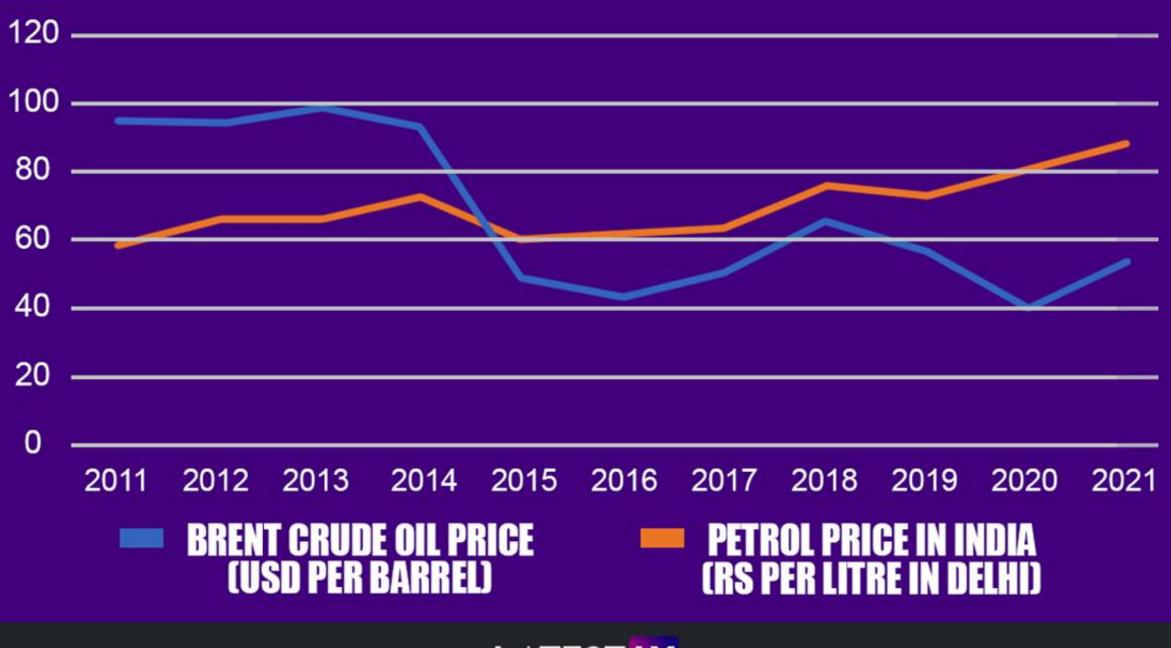


## **Crude bonanza**

According to the sensitivity analysis of UBS, a \$10 per barrel drop in crude price reduces India's oil import bill and, hence, current account deficit by \$15 billion.



UBS estimates Brent crude average price at \$39 per barrel in FY21 Source: Bloomberg, CEIC, UBS



LATEST LY

#### IN BRIDE



#### Can't live without teaching. want my job back: Saibaba

Former Delhi University professor GAN. Salbaba demanded that he be reinstated by the varsity and compensated for the bet years of service. The service of the service of the service of the Defence and Release of Dr. Salbaba comprising academicians, lawyers and Left politicians definitions of the service of the prosecution failed to establish charges against S8-year-old said he can't live without teaching and wants to resume his job as a professor. In S8-year-old said he can't live without teaching and wants to resume his job as a professor. wants to resume his job as a professor.

#### Officials asked to give proper meals, water to Sanjay Singh

A Delhi court has directed the authorities concerned to provide healthy and nutritious diet and bottled drinking water to AAP leader and Member of Parliament Sanjay Singh, arrested in an excise policy case, during his production in ourts outside the national capital. Special Judge M.K. Nagpal passed the order on an applicati M.K. Nagpai passed the order on an application moved by Mr. Singh alleging he was not provided basic amenities like clean drinking water, proper diet and hygienic living conditions at places of his stay during production before courts outside

#### U.P. STF arrests smuggler who reached Noida for wedding

Leanding in Noida for a weeding did not turn out to be fun for a wanted liquor and drug trafficker, the fun for a wanted liquor and drug trafficker, Task Force (STF) ahead of the function, official said on Friday. Rinku Rathi, aged around 50, is allegedly an inter-State smuggler and carried a allegedly and the state of the function, official said on Friday. Rinku Rathi, has allegedly been trafficking liquor procured from Haryana to parts of Utar Pradesh, Rajasthan and even to dry STF. He has also allegedly been involved in drug trafficking from Odisha and nearby areas to Delhi agency said. en agency said. m

#### After two months, leopard captured in Dehradun

Capture Commission in Definition and a several attacks on locals in the outskirts of the Uttarakhand team on Thursday. A several attacks the several several attacks and the several team on Thursday. A hunt was on for the last two months to capture the leopard which had killed two endeting and the several several several department, patrolled the Singli area of Raipur range in the district where the leopard was seen department, patrolled the Singli area of Raipur cameras had been put up in the area to sport the leopard, he said. Villagers of the area who were after news about the capture reached them. m ter news about the capture reached them.

THE HINDU

States

### **Kejriwal launches AAP's** Lok Sabha campaign for **Delhi. hits out at Centre**

Party's slogan aims to place Sansad mein bhi Kejriwal; AAP chief says his party's MPs will become voice of city's people; BJP attacks AAP, says it could not even fight on all seats of Delhi on its own



Mann, termed the seven BJP MPs of Delhi "voice-less" and promised to "be-come your voice. All our MPs will become your with the Congress, which will field candidates on three seats. Both parties, which drew a blank in the last two Lok Sabha elecvoice". The BJP attacked AAP, saying, "A party that does not have the confitions in the national capi-tal, are members of the Indence to contest elections on all seats of the city on its own is dreaming of making Delhi 'even more Developmental, Inclusive prosperous'." 'Common man'

founded to take on the BJP-led National Democratic led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The Delhi CM, who was accompanied by his Pun-jab counterpart Bhagwant Mr. Kejriwal said members of the party had worked hard to make AAP, which was founded at Ramlila



Arvind Keyriwal, Bhagwant Mann and other leaders launching election campaign in New Delhi on Friday, SHASH SHEKHAR KASH Maidan nearly 12 years ago

a national party. He at-tacked the BJP-led Central government, accusing it of placing hurdles in the development works planned by the Delhi government. "People from the BJP and the L-G have tried to and the L-G have tried to stop all your work. Every good work that I try to do for you, these people try to stop. Why? These people hate the two crore people of Delhi because they

dared to elect an ordinary man as their Chief Minister thrice," he said. use the people of



Saturday, March 9, 2024

na after he arri

#### PM Modi reaches Assam amid rising anti-CAA sentiments

The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

near Tezpur and took a chopper to Panbari in Go-laghat district from where he undertook a 16 km road-Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached Assam's Ka-ziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on Friday evening amid rising sentishow to the Assam police guest house in Kaziranga's Kohora area.

Anti-CAA protest The Prime Minister's visit was preceded by widespread anti-CAA protests by members of the All Assam Students' Union and the United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), a 16-party bloc headed by the Congress.

been brewing across large swathes of Assam since Home Minister Amit Shah said the rules of the piece of legislation would be ad soon

ED raids premises linked to U.P.-based 'gangster' and his associates: documents seized

northeast

study said.

#### The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Hindu Bureau

on four of the city's seven

(INDIA)

Lok Sabha seats in allia

Alliance

<u>He is accused of</u> <u>helping illegal</u> Bangladeshi migrants The Enforcement Directo-rate (ED) has conducted searches at multiple locaobtain Aadhaar cards tions in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur and Mumbai in connection with an alleged extortion and land grabbing case involving a "gangster" who has also been accused of helping il-legal Bangladeshi migrants obtain Aadhaar cards based on forged based on forged document. Sky has taken and the second second second even for the second second of the second second second dev second second second second dev second second second dev second second second des has des second s

National

bloc

lanki and his men indulged in extortion; land grabhing of both the private and the government land, includ-ing threat, using muscle power and political in-structions for sale. ....than Solanki was involved in siding ilegal Rangladeshi aiding ilegal Rangladeshi aiding ilegal Rangladeshi by procuring Aadhaar card by procuring Aadhaar card on the basis of false docu: During the searches, the agency covered the pre-mises of irfan Solanki, fals agency covered the pre-mises of irfan Solanki, fals additional and the searches, the agency covered the pre-mises of irfan Solanki, fals additional searches, the agency covered the pre-mises of irfan Solanki, fals additional additional and the searches and his associate real e-tate builders shaukar Ali and his associate real e-tate builders shaukar Ali

NEWS ANALYSIS fake business entities had been set up to route the ill-gotten money and to give colour to the tainted funds Anuj Kumar HAZIABAL as legitimate businesses in-come. As alleged, Irfan So-lanki and his brother have constructed and are living in a luxurious three-floor

in a linking the second second

crimice' were used to car-mated the property value to be over 100 crore. The search operations label to be a search operation of the search operations and the search operations darises having description of illegal receipts, invest-ments in partnership, land anounting to about 1400 crore to 550 crore, besides evidence of investment of bai-based property.

Meghalaya's Byrnihat most polluted 'city' in India

#### The Hindu Bureau

Meghalava's Byrnihat, industrial town on the border with Assam, was the most polluted 'city' in India during February, data released by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said on Friday

The study, based on the The study, based on the monthly average of (partic-ulate matter) PM2.5, has put the spotlight on hazar-dous air pollution levels in urban centres across the States in the northeast, otherwsite considered the gountry. According to the GREA

According to the CREA report, Byrnihat recorded a monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 183 µg/ m3, which was around 60 µg/m3 higher than in Bi-har's Araria, the secondding to the CREA city in India for February

SM (1999)



sed data on polluted cities in India. FILE PHOTO

most polluted city in the

(C)

2024. The other urban centre Theoset which most pointed city in the Happur in Uttar Pradesh and Kajasthan's Hanuman-garh were the third and the fourth most polluted cities. In that were also almost 1.8 times the PM2.5 concentra-tion recorded for Delhi for the same period, which city in India for February The other urban centress in the northeast which most polluted cities in In-bari (Sth), Agartala (2th), Guwahati (19<sup>19</sup>), and Na-gaon (28th), highlighting the worsening pollution le-vels across the region.

Published by Nervala Labdeman at Kasheri Buildines. 859-860. Area Salai. Overnal 620002 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT. 17D. Editor: Suresh Narehalth (Responsible for selection of news under the PEB Act

tinuous ambient air quality

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"The data emphasise the pressing need for sig-nificantly bolstering air quality monitoring in the nitoring stations in the rn States, six recorded PM2.5 levels beyond the prescribed dai-ly National Ambient Air northeastern States to Quality Standard (NAAQS) by the Central Pollution track air pollution levels ef fectively," Sunil Dahiya, a South Asia analyst at Control Board. CREA, said. Cleanest cities Sivasagar, Silchar, Aizawl, and Imphal recorded

CREA, said. These States, once re-nowned for their pristing nessing a concerning shift due to unregulated indus-trial operations, inadeq-uate public transportation construction lacking effi-cient pollution control construction lacking effi-cient pollution control rebuirters, and or ber coll. On the brighter side, there was a significant im-pebruary with 36 cities fail-ing into the good' categononthly average PM2.5 concentrations below the concentrations below the NAAQS and were the clean-est cities in the region. "I have a set of the set of the cond cleanest city in India, followed by Silchar from in Madhya Pradesh and the hind cleanest was 'ijayapu thowever, none of the ci-ties complied with the WHO-safe guideline con-vitudy said. PM2.5, the study said. ing into the 'good' catego-ry. This was 14 more than the 22 'good' urban centres in January.

vealing her cards only after the notification of the Lok Sabha poll and the Azad Su-presence falt in some pock-ets of western U.P., the BJD is the some some some some some is Dailt-MBC most back-ward classes) outreach. It started with the recent out of the four new Minis-ters who took cath, two be-ward category and one was jatas, the primary vote bank of the BSF. The move bank of the BSF. The move wind out of the Samajwadi BJP rule. In the Assembly election and bypolls, Dalit support for the SP has in-creased. However, in the

wind out of the Samajwadi Party's PDA – picchde (backward classes or ju Pal, who was allegedly gunned down by gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed, voted in favour o OBCs). Dalits and alpsank

The ASP, which is active in the Moradabad-Saharanpur division, is expected to take political mile age out of the principal Opposition party in the State arrived at the Milak episode after the between the Rashtriya Lok Dal and the ASP that was seen during ASP that was seen during the Khatauli bypoll was cut short when Chaudh Jayant Singh drifted to wards the National Demo

Atiq

1559 0971 - 751X

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the principal Opposition is a sear-sharing formula with the Congress, the original go-to party for Dalits before the regional parties gained in the search of the search o



yealing her cards only after are being defiled during the

creased. However, in the Vadav belt, they still see the OBCs as a bigger threat Dates of the the the the Dates of the the the the Hayam Singh opposed reser-vation in promotion, but Hayam Singh opposed reser-vation in promotion, but polse, Also, after the Raiya Sabha polis, the BJP sup-porters are bragging about how 67 legislator (Proja Pai-bur Pai, who was allegedh) up Pai, who was allegedh)

hyak (minorities) - plank. It also sought to quell the BJP candidate because Ms Pal got 'divine justice' dur-ing the BJP rule. growing apprehension ove privatisation of government jobs and demand for caste census, which is finding traction on the ground afte

wards the National Demo-cratic Alliance. Meanwhile, to revival m the Dalit conscience as it has a Dalit president. But when Mallikarjun Kharge dent, it also quickly changed Brijlal Khabri as the State president and opc promov, it is raking up the For now, it is raking up the Hamirpur episode on socia media, but it is time to hi and portraits of Ambedkar the ground running.



## coming general election in Delhi on its own". "In the past decade, AAP has misled people and attained the status of a na-tional party. But now the people of Delhi, Punjab,

Delhi elected an ordinary person as their CM, mem-ber of the second second second the L-G and those in the Central government, are seeking revenge," he ad-ded. The Punjab CM also-dents to vote for the AAP MPs in Delhi, saying the party does not "engage in pion,".

Jatav teenager in police fir-ing in Milak area of Rampur

district. On Thursday, as the State reeled under the news of the father of one of

news of the father of one of the victims of the Hamirpur gang rape. Case. allegedly president J.F. Nadda ad-dressed the party's Dalit president J.F. Nadda ad-dressed the party's Dalit Me Dalit capital of Utrar Pradesh, with Dalit Minis-ters in the Union and State While Chief Minister Yoo gi Adityanath held similar meetings across the State In Uberation in Utrar Pradesh

iberation in Uttar Pradesh assumes greater signifi-cance coming just ahead of the Lok Sabha election. In 2019, the BJP won 15 of the 17 reserved seats in

the State, which sends 80

The other two went to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

However, recent events suggest that the fight for 21.1% of the Dalit share of

the total vote is very much on. The Scheduled Caste

vote is broadly divided into

vote is broadly divided into Jatavs (II.7%), Pasis (3.3%), Valmikis (3.15%), Gonds, Dhanuks and Khatiks (I.2%), and others (I.6%).

10.2 minimum a minimum (2.4 min) with the BIP is sure of wresting the rest, it is seen that the BIP is sure of wresting the rest, it is seen share to single digits. The party secured around 19% (3% in the 2022 Assembly poll. BIP sources say it won't be easy, especially af year to be any, especially af year to be any, especially af year the voting pattern of Valmikis remained largely has episode of 2020, but ja-tav fury is a lot more diffi-cult to handle. With the possibility of Mayawati re

....

nembers to the Lok Sabha

Delhi elected an ordinar

Goa, and Gujarat [where AAP is contesting general election in alliance with the Congress] will reject Kejriwal so outrightly that the AAP will lose its nation al party status," he said.

#### ments against the Citizenhip (Amendment) Act. He is scheduled to go on a safari at the national park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the lar-gest habitat of the one-hormed rhino, and lay foundation stones for pro jects worth ₹18,000 crore

Fight for Dalit vote hots up in U.P.

as BJP steps up outreach and SP. Cong. rake up case of atrocities

The anti-CAA mood has

"Will reject AAP" Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said it was "as-tonishing" that AAP, which has so many MLAs in Del-hi, "does not have the courage to contest the up-

on Saturday. He will be the third Prime Minister after Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi to visit the park. Mr. Modi arrived by a special aircraft at Salnibari

2

## Meghalaya's Byrnihat most polluted 'city' in India

#### The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

Meghalaya's Byrnihat, an industrial town on the border with Assam, was the most polluted 'city' in India during February, data released by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said on Friday.

The study, based on the monthly average of (particulate matter) PM2.5, has put the spotlight on hazardous air pollution levels in urban centres across the States in the northeast, otherwise considered the greenest part of the country.

According to the CREA report, Byrnihat recorded a monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 183  $\mu$ g/m3, which was around 60  $\mu$ g/m3 higher than in Bihar's Araria, the second-



**Rising pollution:** Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air released data on polluted cities in India. FILE PHOTO

most polluted city in the country.

Hapur in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan's Hanumangarh were the third and the fourth most polluted cities.

The PM2.5 levels in Byrnihat were also almost 1.8 times the PM2.5 concentration recorded for Delhi for the same period, which was the 14th most polluted city in India for February

#### 2024.

The other urban centres in the northeast which made it to the list of 30 most polluted cities in India in February were Nalbari (5th), Agartala (12th), Guwahati (19<sup>th</sup>), and Nagaon (28th), highlighting the worsening pollution levels across the region.

Out of 11 cities with continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations in the northeastern States, six recorded PM2.5 levels beyond the prescribed daily National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) by the Central Pollution Control Board.

#### **Cleanest cities**

Sivasagar, Silchar, Aizawl, and Imphal recorded monthly average PM2.5 concentrations below the NAAQS and were the cleanest cities in the region.

Sivasagar was the second cleanest city in India, followed by Silchar from the area at the 23rd spot.

The cleanest was Satna in Madhya Pradesh and the third cleanest was Vijayapura in Karnataka.

However, none of the cities complied with the WHO-safe guideline concentrations for PM2.5, the study said. "The data emphasise the pressing need for significantly bolstering air quality monitoring in the northeastern States to track air pollution levels effectively," Sunil Dahiya, a South Asia analyst at CREA, said.

"These States, once renowned for their pristine environment, are now witnessing a concerning shift due to unregulated industrial operations, inadequate public transportation infrastructure, rampant construction lacking efficient pollution control measures, and other contributing factors," he said.

On the brighter side, there was a significant improvement in air quality in February with 36 cities falling into the 'good' category. This was 14 more than the 22 'good' urban centres in January.

Pollutant	Averaging time	2005 AQGs	2021 AQG level
PM <sub>2.5</sub> , μg/m³	Annual	10	5
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	25	15
PM10, μg/m³	Annual	20	15
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	50	45
O₃, µg/m³	Peak season <sup>b</sup>		60
	8-hour <sup>a</sup>	100	100
NO₂, μg/m³	Annual	40	10
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	2001-02	25
SO₂, μg/m³	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	20	40
CO, mg/m <sup>3</sup>	24-hour <sup>a</sup>		4

### Table 1. Recommended 2021 AQG levels compared to 2005 air quality guidelines

## **REVISED AFTER 16 YEARS**

### WHO | Then & Now

Pollutant*	Average	2005*	2021*
DM2 5	Annual mean	10	5
PM2.5	24-hour mean	25	15
DIALO	Annual mean	20	15
PM10	24-hour mean	50	45
0	Peak season	NS**	60
03	8-hour mean	100	100
10	Annual mean	40	10
NO <sub>2</sub>	24-hour mean	NS**	25
SO2	24-hour mean	20	40
CO	24-hour mean	NS**	4

India's National Ambient **Air Quality** Standards (NAAQS) Average Annual mean 24-hour mean PM2.5 40 60 PM10 60 100 NO<sub>2</sub> 40 80 SO<sub>2</sub> 50 80 Average (8 hour mean) D<sub>3</sub> 100; CO 2

\* micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m3); \*\*NS - Not Set; PM2.5 & PM10 - Particulate Matters; O<sub>3</sub> - Ozone; NO<sub>2</sub> - Nitrogen Dioxide; SO<sub>2</sub> - Sulfur Dioxide; CO - Carbon Monoxide

#### Saturday, March 9, 2024



**Centre warns against offers** 

India is in talks with Moscow to bring back citizens duped into fighting in the Russia-Ukraine war;

of jobs with Russian Army

action being taken by the CBI against agents and visa consultancy firms who conned people



#### Misuse of potable water to attract fine of ₹5.000 in Bengaluru

#### The Hindu Bureau

In response to the water scarcity in Bengaluru and surrounding districts, the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewage Board Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewage Board (BWSSB) has issued an or-der prohibiting the use of potable water for non-es-sential purposes, including washing vehicles, garden-ing, and for entertainment washing vehicles, garden ing, and for entertainment purposes like water foun tains. Additionally, malls and theatres have been in-structed to limit water

usage. The BWSSB has introduced fines for violators. starting at ₹5,000 and escalating to ₹500 per day for sut quent violations Furthermore, the board has established a dedicat has established a dedicat-ed call centre for citizens to report any misuse of wa-ter. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar urged ci-tizens to report violations,

Sudha Murty nominated to

Raiva Sabha

Philanthropist and author

Sudha Murty was nominat-ed to the Rajya Sabha on Friday by President Drou-padi Murmu. Prime Minister Naren-dra in his post on X lauded the 73 war-old's contribu-

the 73-year-old's contribu-tion in diverse fields, say-ing that her presence in the

Upper House was a "po-werful testament to Nari Shakti (women power)". Speaking to The Hindu over phone from Thailand where she is on a lecture

tour, Ms. Murty said the nomination had come as a surprise and that she wa rticularly thrilled as it

ha Murty was n

n Kannada and English

The Hindu Bureau

some concern, especially among residents of inde

pendent houses that have no access to treated water. While large apartments have been mandated to install in-situ sewage treat ment plants and have ac cess to recycled water, there is no such facility in any independent house in any independent house in Bengaluru. The order comes a day after the Bengaluru Urban district administration capped the prices of water tankers.

and assured swift action by the board. The order has raised several questions, includ-ing how the ban on misuse of potable water will be en-forced. Sources in the BWSSB said while citizens BWSSB said while citizens are encouraged to report violations in their areas, as-sistant engineers will tour their jurisdictions to look for and book offenders. The order has sparked

agents and unscrupulous elements who recruited them on pretexts and false promises. The CBI yester-day busted a major human trafficking network by con ducting searches in several cities and collecting in-criminating evidence," said

Devesh K. Pandey Kallol Bhattacherjee NEW DELHI

ffers for support jobs with the Rus-sian Army made by

criminating evidence," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokes-person of the Ministry. The CBI on Thursday searched 13 locations in Delhi, Thiruvananthapu-ram, Mumbala, Ambala,

unverified agents are "fraught with danger and risk to life", the External Af fairs Ministry said on Friday, announcing that sterr action has been initiated by action has been initiated by the Central Bureau of In-vestigation against the agencies that conned In-dian nationals into fighting for the Russian forces in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. "We have strongly taken up the matter with the Rus-sian covernment for early sian government for early discharge of such Indian nationals [who were duped by agents]. Strong action has been initiated against

Hemil Mangukiya, centre, from Gujarat was recruited by an agent as a helper but died fighting for Russia on the war front. REUT Chandigarh, Madurai, and ties. No arrests have been made so far The agency had come across 35 instances of peo-ple sent abroad.



This is fraught with danger and risk to life," Mr. Jaiswal said during the weekly briefing. The CBI on Friday con cluded the searches in con-nection with the case

nection with the case against visa consultancy firms and agents, alleging their involvement in the trafficking of Indian nation-als to Russia on the pretext of employment opportuni-

Dinakar Peri

State agencies". The States claim that the actions of the ED, often in cases in which the predi-

cate offence is not a sche-duled offence under the

made so far. "These traffickers have been operating as an or-ganised network and were luring Indian nationals through social media chan-nels like YouTube, etc. and also through their local contacts/agents for highly-paid jobs in Russia. The-reafter, the trafficked Indian nationals were trained in combat roles and de-ployed at front bases in the tussia-Ukraine war zone against their wishes, thus,

outting their lives in grave danger. It has been ascer. tained that some of the vic-tims also got grievously in-jured in the war zone," the CBI said. Upon reaching Russia, their passports were taken

by the agents there "They were being trained in combat roles and provid-ed with the Russian Army uniform and badges," the

agency alleged. Names in FIR Among those named in the First Information Report (FIR) are 24x7 RAS Overseas Foundation (Delhi) and its director Suyash Mu-kut; O.S.D Bros Travels & Visa Services (Mumbai) stan, was shut down and the consular responsibili-ties were taken over by Af-ghan officials who are conand its director Rakesh Pandey; Adventure Visa Services (Ambala, Chandiidered to be pro-Taliban. "An Indian delegatio

Services (Ambala, Chandi-garh, Punjab) and its direc-tor Manjeet Singh; Baba Vlogs Overseas Recruit-ment Solutions (Dubai) and its director Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan. The others include Sri-vidhya (Madurai), Ramesh Kumar Palanisany and Kumar Palanisamy and Santhosh (currently based in Russia) from Tamil Na-du; Tomy and Job from Thiruvananthapuram; Adven-ture Visa Services (Ambala) and Tanu Kant Sharma (Palwal, Haryana); Christi-na, a resident of Russia; na, a resident of Russia; Mohammed Sufiyan Da-wood Ahmad Darugar and his wife Pooka from Maha-rashtra; and Moinuddin Chhippa (Rajasthan), who is currently in Russia.

A senior Indian diplomat has met with "Afghan auth-orities" in Kabul, the Exter-nal Affairs Ministry con-firmed on Priday. The development came months after the Embaasy of Afghanistan here, which ghanistan here, which with affliction to the rea-

Kallol Bhattacheriee

with affiliation to the pre-Taliban government of the Islamic Republic of Afghan-

Indian diplomat met 'Afghan authorities'

in Kabul, says govt.

gun making the first moves to reconnect with Afghan istan, after the violent istan, after the violent overthrow of the Ashraf Ghani government in 2021. That visit was followed by manitarian assistance to the country. On Thursday, Tailban's Foreign Almistry spokes-port and Ministry spokes-port of the Ashraf Santo that Mr. Singh had met "An Indian delegation led by Joint Secretary (PAD, Ministry of External Affairs is on a visit to Affahanis-tan... During the visit, the delegation held meetings with senior members of the Affahan authorities. The of the Affahan authorities the Affahan authorities. The of the Affahan authorities is a senior member of the per-tarian assistance to the per-

that Mr. Singh had met

itarian assistance to the pe-ople of Afghanistan and with "Foreign Minister". "Mr. Muttaqi expressed also discussed the use of Chabahar port by Afghan traders," said Ministry spo-kesperson Randhir Jaiswal. gratitude for the recent In dian humanitarian and medical assistance to Af ghanistan, stressing the re J.P. Singh, the official in-charge of Pakistan, Afghansumption of projects by In dia. their diplomatic dia stan and Iran - PAL-related presence in Afghanistan presence in Alghanistar and the provision of consu-lar services to Afghans particularly Afghan stu-dents and patients," Mr Balkhi said in a social me-dia nost. issues, met Taliban's Fo-reign Affairs in-charge Amir Khan Muttaqi on Amir Annu Thursday. Mr. Singh had visited Ka-bul in 2022 as India had be-

#### Delhi sub-inspector kicks people offering namaz, suspended

#### Samridhi Tewari

na said. An inquiry into the incident has also been

inspector Manoj Kumar Tomar followed a protest by local residents, con-

by local residents, con-demnation by political leaders, and widespread outrage on social media, with many people de-manding action against Mr. Tomar after the video of the incident went viral.

'Stepped on prayer mat' The incident took place The incident took place around 2 p.m., during Fri-day prayers near the Inder-lok metro station at Makki

Jama Masjid. A number of local residents used their mobile phones to shoot

The suspension of sub-

nitiated.

footage of the policeman kicking and shoving people who had gathered on a sec tion of the road to offer na-maz. In the video, he can A Delhi policeman, who was seen kicking people ofwas seen kicking people of-fering Friday namaz on a road in north Delhi's Inder-lok area, has been sus-pended with immediate ef-fect, Deputy be seen stepping on the prayer mat used by the de-votees, and shouting at the men to leave the area. Deputy oner of Police (North) Manoj Kumar Mee-

Road blockade After the incident, Inder lok residents blocked the road and demanded action

lopment plan which offi-cials and experts say will shore up India's security against Mr. Tomar, who is a police post in-charge. Se footprint on the islands lo-cated very close to critical Sea Lanes of Communicacurity was beefed up in the area to maintain law and order. Paramilitary force tion (SLOC). have also been deployed. Amid the tension, prot esters blocked the roads,

tion (SLOC). This is especially signifi-cant as Chinese naval foot-second states of the second nave of the second second second nave second second second naises from the Maldives. Indian Ocean. Minisches also just a few hundred miles from the Maldives. Indian Ocean. Minisches and facilities were innaven-tagent, new infrastructure and facilities were innaven-ties were innaven. esters blocked the roads, preventing vehicular movement. The incident took place just a few days ahead of the month of Ramzan. Joint Commissioner of Police (Central Range) Par maditya and Additional Commissioner of Police (Eastern Range) Sagar and facilities were inaugu-rated at Karwar naval base in Karnataka by Defence Singh Kalsi also reached the spot to diffuse the situation. Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday. These include two major piers and seven

Radars, jetties, airfield and BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles — the Indian Namissiles – the indian Na-vy's newest base being es-tablished on Minicoy Is-land in Lakshadweep, INS Jatayu, will have all these and many more. The upgrade is part of a long-term capability deve -

Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar and Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel at the com ing of INS Jatayu, PTI

Backed by BrahMos, Navy base on Minicoy

Island to act as 'gatekeeper' in Arabian Sea

residential towers com-prising 320 houses for of-ficers and civilian defence need for heightened sur-veillance amidst the prevailing geopolitical deve-lopments," Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar personnel as well as 149 single officers' Admiral R. Hari Kumar said. "INS Baaz to the east in Andamans and now, INS Jatayu in the west at Mini-coy, will serve as the eyes and ears of the Navy," he stated accommodation accommodation. "New radar facilities at Minicoy will augment sur-veillance and coastal bat-teries of extended range BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles with a range of around 450 km will give alid ears or the row, it. "Jatayu will be the watch-keeper' for Bharat at the gateway of Arabian Sea," said Vice-Admiral Shekhar Sinha, former huge flexibility in respond-ing to threats," officials in the know said.

"As we commission [INS] Jatayu, it is crucial to recognise the pressing Western Naval Commander, noting its proximity to the busy Nine Degree Channel, the approximate-ly 200-km wide area bet-ween Minicoy and Kalpeni/ Suheli Par islands of Laksh-adweep. Situated at the tip of India's Exclusive Ecobro has been given a \$4,500-crore contract to expand the runway to 22000 is plan for the devy, hopment of dual-use air-field which will have a lon-ser runway making it of India's Exclusive Eco-nomic Zone (EEZ), it also serves as a deterrent against any future adversa-rial presence, making Ja-tayu a "formidable static strate of particular ger runway making i capable of handling the Na vy's P-81 long-range mari time patrol aircraft.

> The Phase I construction of Karwar base under Pro-ject Seabird, which was completed in 2011, was de signed to accommodate 10 ships. The Cabinet Com-mittee on Security has since granted approval for Phase IIA of Project Seabird which will see the

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aircraft carrier". "Unfolding geopolitical Karwar naval base canvas in the Indian Ocean calls for fortification of Minicoy Island, a valuable asset. Apart from becom-ing a tourist paradise, Min-icoy has potential of be-coming a formidable gatekeeper of Arabian Sea," he told The Hindu. sea," be told *The Hindu*. There is already an on-going effort for infrastruc-central government in coordination with Island Development. Bevelopment. Aavog has joined hands with the Ministry of Clevi Aavog has joined hands with the Ministry of Clevi Authority of India for ex-pansion of Agatti Island Air held while Larsen & Tou-

bird which will see the base expanded for berth-ing of 32 ships and subma-rines, along with 23 yard-providing a berthing space of more than 6 km. "The centrepiece of Phase ILA works is an icon-ic Govered Dry Berth, metros, taller than the Qu-

SC sends mixed signals as ED-States tussle becomes frequent

NEWS ANALYSIS

particularly thrilled as it had come on the Interna-tional Women's Day."The nomination has come as a doubly thrilled to be pre-sented this honour on Wo-men's Day," she said. Ms. Murty, wife of Info-sys co-founder N.R. Na-rayana Murthy, has auth-Krishnadas Raiagopal

ored several books. She chaired the Infosys Foundation for over two decades, and through the foundation carried out sev eral philanthropic activi-ties. She is the recipient of

the Padma Shri in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in 2023. Ms. Murty was born in Shiggaon, in Karnataka, in 1950. A graduate in Com-puter Science engineering from the Indian Institute of Sciences cho men the first arom the Indian Institute of Science, she was the first woman engineer at Tata Engineering and Locomo-tive Company.

CM

meanwhile, has sent mixed signals from multiple Benches while dealing with these cases. While one Bench has called for a "strange and unusual". Jus-tice Trivedi even remarked that the Tamil Nadu go-vernment was making "an unnecessary issue out of methics." nothing".

"neutral mechanism" to The past few months have seen States ruled by Opposift through cases to check if hidden political vendetsition parties fight tooth tas and one-upmanship and nail the Directorate o were at play between the Enforcement (ED) in the Centre and States, another Bench led by Justice Bela Trivedi prioritised the in-Supreme Court. The frequency of the

The frequency of the cases has raised questions, both inside and outside the courtcoord, as to whether the work of the the sector of the

TRABAT P. 1 117 nothing". This came when the Ma-dras High Court had re-corded a prima facie find-ing that the agency had no jurisdiction to summon the - -There are also cases in officials. The High Court had summed up ED's sum-

which the Supreme Court bas plainly refused to intervene PMLA, violate the princi-ples of federalism.

had summed up ED's sum-mons as "just an attempt to investigate the possibility of identifying any proceeds of crime as a result of any criminal activity, which is not so far registered by the State aemocies"

"Fair mechanism" In January, a top court Bench led by Justice Surya Kant suggested a "fair and transparent" mechanism or body to "look into the inter-State ramifications, especially when different

parties are at the Centre and States, and keep intact the object of punishing the guilty while preventing vindictive arrests". vernment led by Bhupesh Bhagel in Chhattisgarh, who alleged that the ED was "running amok" to "implicate" the Chief Mi-nister in a noney launder-In this case, the ED had approached the top court against the arrest of its ofing case linked to a ₹2.000crore liquor scam. ficer, Ankit Tiwari, by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corrup tion in a bribe case. Several ED raids and searches across the State had pre-ceded Mr. Tiwari's arrest. Again, in May last year, a Again, in May last year, a Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice (now re-tired) Sanjay Kishan Kaul had warned the ED against creating an "atmosphere of

fear". The top court was dealarguments by his lawyers that the Supreme Court ing with a petition filed by the earlier Congress go-

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Similarly, in July 2023, a Bench headed by Chief Jus-tice of India D.Y. Chandra-chud refused to interfere with a Calcutta High Court order allowing ED to invest There are also cases in tigate Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerie which the Supreme Court has plainly refused to in the West Bengal teach tervene. When former Jharkers' recruitment scan case. Mr. Banerjee's la When former Jhark-hand Chief Minister He-mant Soren mowed the Su-phile arrow of the sec-phile arrow on money lumn-dering charges in a land scam case, a Bench led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked him to approach the ST he court did not heed arguments by his lawyers wyers had submitted that such scams were "created to terrorise certain peoto terrorise certain peo-ple". Mr. Banerjee is a ne-phew of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The Supreme Court trimmed ED's wings when it dismissed PMLA pro-ceedings against Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.



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Sudha Murty

### Sudha Murty nominated to Rajya Sabha

#### The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Philanthropist and author in Kannada and English Sudha Murty was nominated to the Rajya Sabha on Friday by President Droupadi Murmu.

Prime Minister Narendra in his post on X lauded the 73-year-old's contribution in diverse fields, saying that her presence in the Upper House was a "powerful testament to Nari Shakti (women power)".

Speaking to *The Hindu* over phone from Thailand where she is on a lecture tour, Ms. Murty said the nomination had come as a surprise and that she was particularly thrilled as it had come on the International Women's Day."The nomination has come as a pleasant surprise, and I am doubly thrilled to be presented this honour on Women's Day," she said.. Ms. Murty, wife of Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy, has authored several books. She chaired the Infosys Foundation for over two decades, and through the foundation carried out several philanthropic activities. She is the recipient of the Padma Shri in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in 2023. Ms. Murty was born in Shiggaon, in Karnataka, in

Shiggaon, in Karnataka, in 1950. A graduate in Computer Science engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, she was the first woman engineer at Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company.

Member of	f Parliament, Rajya Sabha		
	Incumbent		
	Assumed office 8 March 2024		
Nominated by Draupadi Murmu			
Constituency	Nominated (Social work & Education)		
Personal details			
Born	Sudha Kulkarni 19 August 1950 (age 73) Shiggavi, Bombay State (present-day Karnataka), India		
Spouse	N. R. Narayana Murty		
Children	Akshata Murty and Rohan Murty		
Relatives	Rishi Sunak (son-in-law)		
Alma mater	<ul> <li>KLE Technological University,</li> <li>Indian Institute of Science,</li> <li>Cornell University</li> </ul>		
Occupation	Member of Parliament & Chairperson of Infosys Foundation Children's writer		
Awards	Padma Shri (2006) Daana Chintamani Attimabbe Award (2010) Padma Bhushan (2023)		

#### English

- Wise and Otherwise (2002)
- Mahashweta (2002)
- How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories (2004)
- The Old Man And His God (2006)
- Gently Falls The Bakula (2008)
- The Bird with Golden Wings (2009)
- The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk (2012)
- Grandma's Bag of Stories (2012)
- House of Cards (2013)
- Dollar Bahu (2013)
- The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories (2013)
- The Mother I Never Knew (2014)
- Something Happened on the Way To Heavens (2014)
- The Magic of the Lost Temple (2015)
- The Serpent's Revenge (2016)
- Three Thousand Stitches (2017)
- The Man from the Egg (2017)
- Here, There, Everywhere (2018)
- The Upside Down King (2018)
- How The Sea Became Salty (2019)
- The Daughter From A Wishing Tree (2019)
- How The Onion got its layers (2020)
- Grandparents Bag of Stories (2020)
- The Gopi Diaries: Coming Home (2020)
- The Gopi Diaries: Finding Love (2021)
- The Sage With Two Horns (2021)
- The Gopi Diaries: Growing Up (2022)
- The magic of the lost story

## Backed by BrahMos, Navy base on Minicoy Island to act as 'gatekeeper' in Arabian Sea

#### Dinakar Peri MINICOY/KOCHI

Radars, jetties, airfield and BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles – the Indian Navy's newest base being established on Minicoy Island in Lakshadweep, *INS Jatayu*, will have all these and many more.

The upgrade is part of a long-term capability development plan which officials and experts say will shore up India's security footprint on the islands located very close to critical Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC).

This is especially significant as Chinese naval footprint, which includes 'research vessels', has seen massive expansion in the Indian Ocean. Minicoy is also just a few hundred miles from the Maldives.

In addition to *INS Jatayu*, new infrastructure and facilities were inaugurated at Karwar naval base in Karnataka by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday. These include two major piers and seven



Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar and Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel at the commissioning of INS Jatayu. PTI

residential towers comprising 320 houses for officers and civilian defence personnel as well as 149 single officers' accommodation.

"New radar facilities at Minicoy will augment surveillance and coastal batteries of extended range BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles with a range of around 450 km will give huge flexibility in responding to threats," officials in the know said.

"As we commission [*INS*] *Jatayu*, it is crucial to recognise the pressing

need for heightened surveillance amidst the prevailing geopolitical developments," Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar said. "*INS Baaz* to the east in Andamans and now, *INS Jatayu* in the west at Minicoy, will serve as the eyes and ears of the Navy," he stated.

*"Jatayu* will be the 'watch-keeper' for Bharat at the gateway of Arabian Sea," said Vice-Admiral Shekhar Sinha, former Western Naval Commander, noting its proximity to the busy Nine Degree Channel, the approximately 200-km wide area between Minicoy and Kalpeni/ Suheli Par islands of Lakshadweep. Situated at the tip of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), it also serves as a deterrent against any future adversarial presence, making *Jatayu* a "formidable static aircraft carrier".

"Unfolding geopolitical canvas in the Indian Ocean calls for fortification of Minicoy Island, a valuable asset. Apart from becoming a tourist paradise, Minicoy has potential of becoming a formidable gatekeeper of Arabian Sea," he told *The Hindu*.

There is already an ongoing effort for infrastructure augmentation by the Central government in coordination with Island Development Authority and NITI Aayog.

For instance, the NITI Aayog has joined hands with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India for expansion of Agatti Island airfield while Larsen & Tou-

bro has been given a \_ ₹4,500-crore contract to expand the runway to 2,800 meters. For Minicoy, there is plan for the development of dual-use airfield which will have a longer runway making it capable of handling the Navy's P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft.

#### Karwar naval base

The Phase I construction of Karwar base under Project Seabird, which was completed in 2011, was designed to accommodate 10 ships. The Cabinet Committee on Security has since granted approval for Phase IIA of Project Seabird which will see the base expanded for berthing of 32 ships and submarines, along with 23 yardcraft and include piers, providing a berthing space of more than 6 km.

"The centrepiece of Phase IIA works is an iconic Covered Dry Berth, standing at a height of 75 metres, taller than the Qutub Minar in Delhi," according to the Navy. INS Kadamba or Naval Base Karwar or Project Seabird is an Indian Navy base located near Karwar in Karnataka.
The Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya is based at Karwar. The Indian Navy is expanding the strategically crucial naval base in Karnataka's Karwar as part of project 'Seabird'.
Karwar is the home base of the only aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya

#### Saturday, March 9, 2024

#### THE HINDU Business

#### NBRIEF



#### TVS Motor displays products at auto exposition in France

TVS Motor Company (TVSM) is showcasing its product range at one of Europe's premier auto expositions 'Salon de Deux Roues, Lyon 2024' in France till March 10. On display are TVS Apache RR 310, TVS Apache RTR 310, TVS Ronin notorescles electric scooters (TVS iOube S TVS N), and performance scooters (1 vS IQUBE 5, 1 vS X), and performance scooter TVS Ntorq. TVSM recently partnered with Emil Frey, a 100-year-old enterprise with extensive distribution network and deep market insights in Europe, TVSM said.

#### Fund of Funds commits ₹9,500 cr. for start-ups: SIDBI

SIDBI Chairman S. Ramann on Friday said the Fund of Funds for Start-ups (FFS) has committed 59,500 crore for the promotion of new ventures in the country. FFS facilitates funding needs for start-ups through participation in the capital of SEBI-registered Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs). The commitment of ₹9,500 crore has led to more than 100 AIFs raising ₹56,000 crore more, the SIDBI Chairman said at the TiEcon Delhi 2024 conference here, m

#### Now, consumers can pay merchants in Nepal via UPI

The NPCI on Friday announced that the Unified Payment Interface (UP) is now ilso in codes to make payments to Nepalese merchants, according to an official statement. In the first phase, the partmership will enable Indian onsumers to make instant, secure, and convenient UPI payments across various busine stores in Nepal by using UPI-enabled apps, the NPCI said in the statement. en us business

Trade Ministers from some EFTA nations are also likely to be India and the four-nation India and the four-nation European Pree Trade Asso-clation (EPTA), which in-clude Switzerland, Find Character and Control of Con-sign a long-negotiated free trade agreement on March 10, aimed at increasing trade and investment ferm, Job control of the Con-ternation and the Control of Control of Con-ternation and the Control of Control of Con-ternation and the Control of Control of Con-ternation and the Control of Control of Control of Con-ternation and the Control of Control of Control of Control of Con-ternation and the Control of present for the signing of the TEPA to investments worth \$100 billion from the four-coun-try bloc into India over the next 15 years generating an estimated one million jobs, officials said. "The India-EFTA TEPA is expected to be signed on Sunday as go-vernment officials and ineconomic growth, accord-ing to multiple sources. The proposedIndia-EF-TA Trade and Economic dustry representatives from all EFTA countries Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is expected to lead and India have been in

Thali economics Crisil's monthly 'Roti Rice Rate' shows onion 29% and tomato prices surged 38% YoY last

Plate prices rose 7% in February, dri-wen by a spurt in onion and tomato prices, even as non-vegetarian plate costs slid 9% from a year earlier, as per Crisil's monthly report on food plate costs tit-led 'Roti Rice Rate'.

food

led 'Roti Rice Rate'. The report, which flags trends in food price gains ahead of the official retail inflation numbers, noted that onion prices climbed 29% and tomato prices surged 38%. The prices of

The Hindu Bureau

**7** egetarian



'Food plate costs show vegetarian

Crisil's monthly food cost assessment shows a surge in onion, tomato prices pushed up vegetarian plate costs from a year

earlier, but a 2% sequential drop pushed the plate's price to a 7-month low-pon-vegetarian plate costs slid 9% vear-on-vear

formed accordingly," an in-dustry official said. Trade Ministers from

some of the EFTA coun-

some of the EFTA coun-tries are also likely to be present for the signing of the TEPA, a representative of an EFTA country told The Hindu businessine. This is the first FTA where India has got a com-mitment on investment martner pations an official

partner nations, an official had said. The pact is also likely to bring down the huge trade deficit India has

with the bloc, officials said. (The writer is with The

(The writer is w

Two States

thali prices rose 7% in February'

rice and pulses, which ac-count for 21% of the cost of a representative home-cooked vegetarian food plate, also rose 14% and 20%, respectively. "The decrease in the cost of the non-vegetarian thali was due to a decline of around 20% year-on-

India. four-nation EFTA bloc

likely to ink FTA on March 10'

EoUs, SEZs to

sops until

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

sh Goyal said.

are fair and cover all scena

rios avoiding all possible biases, she added.

When asked to com ment on Elon Musk's state

ment: that AI is a 'destru-

tive force', she said AI is now ubiquitous in busi-nesses of all sizes, and in

consumer and residentia

nology we must leverage this to augment human in-telligence and enhance our productivity," Ms. Mana-kame added.

The firm attributed this to "the spread of bird flu in Andhra Pradesh and in-creasing temperature creasing temperatures, as well as rising demand" ahead of Ramadan. es account for about half of the cost of a non-vegetar-ian thali. "The cost of the veg tha-li eased [from January] due to a decline of 14% and 3% Broiler costs However, on a sequential basis, vegetarian food plate to a decline of 14% and 3% on-month in prices of onion and potato, respec-tion and potato, respec-tion and pathear remained flat," said Crisil's analytics unit, which computes the average cost of preparing a thail based on input prices prevailing in north, south, east and west India. osts dropped 2% from Ja-nuary levels to hit ₹27.5. their lowest level since July

due to lower supply

since April 2020.

If lowest level since july 3. Non-vegetarian tes were 4% more ex-isive on a month-on-nth basis, rising to ₹54, realler prices force on ex-celler prices force on ex-tended for the force of the force on ex-tended for the force on ex-tended for the force of the oiler prices rose an es-ed 10% from January

r in broiler prices on a

high base of last fiscal," Cri-sil Market Intelligence and Analytics said. Broiler pric-

2023

Vikas Dhoot

The Centre on Friday de-

cided to keep the returns offered on various small savings schemes un-

offered on various small savings schemes un-changed for the April-June quarter, quashing hopes of a pre-election raise in rates as was done ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Batter commerce achieves

Rates on most schemes have been raised over the

last six quarters, but the re-turn on the Public Provi-dent Fund (PPF), which

had been raised to 8% ahead of the 2019 polls,

has been frozen at 7.1%

Meenakshi Verma Ambwani

The Food Safety and Stan-dards Authority of India

(FSSAI) has asked airlines ensure prepared food rved on flights is proper-

cluding labelling norms

It also directed airlin

and private-label products. This advisory follows com-plaints by several passen-gers that contaminated

plaints by several passen gers that contaminated food is being served on air lines. This also prompted the FSSAI to pull up some airlines and caterers.

Passenger awareness "The flight operators shall

ensure the passengers are well aware of the FSSAI li-

cence number of both the caterer/manufacturer as

well as the flight operators.

details in case of prepared

foods such as the name of

the Caterer, FSSAI licenc

which are airlines, Basi

NEW DELHI

Small savings interest rates left unchanged

Telecom spectrum

May 20

The Hindu Bureau

auction set for

Auctions for telecommuni-cations spectrum in the high frequency bands of 800 megahertz, 900 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz, and 26 giga-hertz will be held on May 20, the Department of 75

20, the Department of Te-lecommunications (DoT)

announced on Friday, in

viting bid applications

cretary Neeraj Mutai tou reporters in Barcelona ear-lier this year that the go-vernment didn't expect re-venue on the lines of PPF returns The PPF's returns, as per venue on the line 2022's ₹1.5 lakh crore.

20229 t1.5 lakh crore. MSTC Ltd., formerity the Metal Scrap Trade Corpo-ration, will be advising DoT on the auction. A pre-bid auction will take place on March 18, and mock auc-tions will take place on April 13 and 14. Dof indicated that tel-Dof indicated that tel-naging the spectrum they the formula, should have been 7.51% for the Octoberbeen 7.51% for the October-December 2023 quarter, as per the central bank. The Finance Ministry has rea-soned the PPF returns need not be raised as they were fully tax-free. The returns on the Su-target Academic Academic the second the Academic the Su-

Ine returns on the Su-kanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, introduced by PM Narendra Modi in 2015, which are also tax-free, naging the spectrum they acquire, but "prior clea-rance" will be required to use it for non-mainstream were raised to 8% in April 2023 and further to 8.2% for the current quarter. telecom services.

<sup>+</sup> Fabric maker 'Liquid Fund inflows Donear mulls surged 69% in Feb.' ₹400-cr. plant in Jammu

#### M. Soundariya Preetha COIMBATORE

Fabric maker Donear will invest ₹400 crore to set up a unit in lammu to mak carpets and rugs, MD Ra-endra Agarwal said. ing to AMFI data. ETF Fund inflow

Donear has bought land in Jammu for building the plant which will be operaplant which will be opera-tional in two years. [As much as) 90% of the pro-duction will be exported and with this unit, Donear will venture into home tex-tiles, he added. Mr. Agarwal said he

TFF Fund inflow jumped to 56,461.67 crore from 8571 crore. Large-cap of 5251.14 crore in Ja-nuary, data crore in Ja-nuary, data from the Asso-clation of Mutual Funds in Net Assets Under Man-agement (AUM) of the Mu-lual Fund (MP) industry in India grew to 554,54,241.01 India grew to 554,54,241.01 India grew to 554,54,241.01 planned to set up exclusive retail outlets for Neo Stretch, a 'four-way stretch fabric' to provide comfort ₹52,74,000.70 crore in Jaand shape retention, and expected 10% of domestic business from this fabric. nuary. SIP AUM grew to ₹10,52,566.04 crore from ₹10.26.996.23 crore.

Mini Tejaswi BENGALURU

Some believe artificial in-telligence (AI) could be more biased than humans

as the technology may dis-play stronger racial and gender biases than people do. How can banks, hospi-

tals, governments, and pu-blic service bodies deploy Generative AI to run their

functions globally and yet ensure fair treatment of their customers and

citizens? Well, Teja Manakame, VP, IT India, Dell Technol-

ogies says, biases can inad-vertently be introduced in the system based on the

prompts used to generate

results. She advises exer-

5M (1998)

The Hindu Bureau MUTUAL Liquid funds turned out to be the biggest gainers in February as inflows surged 69% from January to 883,642.33 crore, accord-

Chalasani said

ble populations." Ms. Ma-

nakame also cautioned that 'equitable' may not al-

ways mean 'impartial', and that AI systems may re-quire human oversight or

equitable results. She said outcomes from

the use of any technology

the use of any technology are based on how we use it. Al is just another technolo-gy without any human cog-nition. The system inhe-rently does not have any bias but depends on how it is trained. How we train the pend on how we train the models. The data sets we

models, the data sets we use, and the design of prompts etc. Hence it is crucial that the data sets

used for training models

Exercise caution to keep biases away

cising caution while designing prompts to avoid such unfair bias to guard against discrimination. Talking to The Hindu about ethical AI, she said,

"AI must be honest, fair, and equitable. It must avoid unfair bias and guard against prejudice, and

marginalisation of vulnera-

from AI models, says Dell's Manakame

Amiti Sen

nounced outbound ship ments from Special Eco-nomic Zones (SEZs) and Export Oriented Units 145 821 595 252 (EOUs), accounting for about a quarter of India's exports, will be eligible for MF folios touched an all-MF folios touched an all-time high of 17,41,95,535 in February, AMF1 said. The number of SIP accounts and the folion of SIP accounts and the folion of SIP ac-counts, totalling 8.26 crows there is a surge in SIP ac-counts, totalling 8.26 crows tors's commitment to disci-tors's commitment to disci-

exports, will be eligible for tax refunds under the Re-mission of Duties and Tax-es on Exported Products (Berger States) the Advance Authorisation (AA) scheme, that permits the Advance Authorisation (AA) scheme, that permits porated in the export pro-duct, will also be covered under RoDTEP, Commerce ush foroval suid. tors' commitment to disciplined wealth accumula-tion," AMFI CEO Venkat

get RoDTEP unveil India's first critical mineral licence September 30 auctions Abhishek Law The Centre on Friday an

#### In a first, two States - Kar-

nataka and Rajasthan -have introduced auctions for exploration licences of critical and deep-seated minerals, while four others minerals, while four others – Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh – are ex-posed for the second second Auctions in Rajashan and Karnataka were intro-duced on March 6, and co-vered critical and deep-seated minerals such as gold, copper and lithisam. served on flights is proper-ylabelled and display key information, including use by date and time" and tothers. It also said flight-kitchen operators and in-flight food-service provid-ers must comply with the Food Safety and Standard Chuding babelling norms.

Other States "So, six States were in advanced stages to launch auction for exploration li-cences, Andhra Pradesh, cences. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pra-desh, and Maharashtra are next in line and are expect-ed to launch the auctions in next few days. This is a first for India," Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister for Mines, told businestline durine an interaction.

during an interaction. Mr. Joshi had previously handed over 20 blocks for exploration to the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan,

Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and consumer and residential applications. "We see the usage of AI in every aspect of life, right from purchasing someth-ing online to self-driving vehicles. This technology makes our lives easier and onburger, extended easier and Ladakh Ladakh. As per a Mines Ministry troduced the auction of one block each of gold, copper and lithium. While Rajasthan unveiled action of rare earth element, rare metals and potash. (The writer is with The Hindu businessiting) enhances customer expe riences. As with any tech

the Caterer, PSSAI licence number, Date and Time of packaging, and Use by Date and Time, shall be en-sured on the packaging as applicable as per FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020," the FSSAI said in an advisory. Also, they must inform passengers that they can podge food-transf grie ....

of caterer on prepared food: FSSAI tells airlines

Simply-flying: The FSSAI clarified airlines can obtain one FSSAI

Food-related grievances can be lodged on the FSSAFs Food Safety Connect to ensure they comply with App. says FSSAI the licensing norms, espe-cially when selling pre-packaged food products

Display 'use by date', name

in terms of "Kind of Bus vances on the FSSAI's Food Safety Connect App. It said flight kitchen operators and in-flight food service providers "shall comply" with the FSS Act. 2006 and Rules and Regulations, in-cluding FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020

in terms of "Kind of Busi-ness" in their FSSAI licence applications. It added the flights from flight kitch-ens must also obtain a sep-arate FSSAI licence. The Food Safety Author-ity also clarified a drilines can obtain one FSSAI B-cences in different States.

Surveillance drive The Authority also stated in its surveillance drive to cences in different States. It added airlines selling pre-packaged food should also indicate themselves as "retailer" in the licence"

pancies in the description of "Kind of Business" in Manufacturing licence "In case airlines get pro-

which is in-flight

the ESSAI licences. "It has been observed "It has been observed that food is being prepared by Flight Kitchen Opera-tors, which are catevers lo-tors, which are catevers lo-cinity of the airports and then transferred through specialised vehicles like in-sulated refrigerated vans/ wagons to the flights. In the flights, food is then under their brand name, they shall obtain an appro-priate manufacturing li-cence," FSSAI added. It also noted airlines also need to obtain a separate FSSAI.ticcncc in ase the FSSAI.ticcncc in ase the FSSAI.ticcnc is with the food, among other things. (The writer is with The Hindu businessiline) served to passengers of that particular flight



nces in different States, BU

through the staff of the air food services," it added. The FSSAI has asked that flight kitchen operators describe themselve as "food services (caterer) vances on the FSSAI's Food

inspect the supply chain of food served to in-flight passengers, it observed discre

> packaged food products manufactured or imported under their brand name

> > -



13

## 'India, four-nation EFTA bloc likely to ink FTA on March 10'

### <u>Amiti Sen</u>

### NEW DELHI

India and the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Switzerland, Finland, Norway and Liechtenstein, is likely to sign a long-negotiated free trade agreement on March 10, aimed at increasing trade and investment flows, job creation and economic growth, according to multiple sources.

The proposedIndia-EF-TA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is expected to lead

### Trade Ministers from some EFTA nations are also likely to be present for the signing of the TEPA

to investments worth \$100 billion from the four-country bloc into India over the next 15 years generating an estimated one million jobs, officials said. "The India-EFTA TEPA is expected to be signed on Sunday as government officials and industry representatives from all EFTA countries and India have been informed accordingly," an industry official said.

Trade Ministers from some of the EFTA countries are also likely to be present for the signing of the TEPA, a representative of an EFTA country told *The Hindu businessline*.

This is the first FTA where India has got a commitment on investment and employment from partner nations, an official had said. The pact is also likely to bring down the huge trade deficit India has with the bloc, officials said.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)





## **TRADE DEALS: A STATUS CHECK**

## PACTS BEING PUSHED BEFORE THE POLLS

India-EFTA deal: To be announced Sunday

India-Oman deal: Legal scrubbing underway India-UK: Reviewed by PMO



PACTS CONCLUDED 2022: India-UAE FTA

**2022:** India-Australia interim FTA

## FTAs EXPECTED AFTER ELECTIONS

A comprehensive India-Australia deal India-EU deal: 7th round of talks ended last month



reduce LPG cylinder price om Friday midnight. With this rice reduction, the standard BACK AT RAMESHWARAM CAFE Price reduction, the standard 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder would cost Rs 803 in Delhi, Rs 802-50 in Mumbai, Rs 829 in Kolkata, and Rs 818.50 in Chennai, The effective LPG cylin-der price for PMUP consumers – Guests attend the reopening ceremony of Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on Friday, a week after a blast left 9 people injured. The cafe will open to public 6 am Saturday, Johendry M PAGE Sudha Murty picked uding the subsidy benefit -ald be Rs 503 in Delhi, Rs 02.50 in Mumbai, Rs 529 i skata and Rs 518.50 in Chenna for Rajya Sabha, PM

The anno uncement can day after the Union Cabinet ap-proved the continuation of the PMUY subsidy for the finanunderlines 'nari shakti' ial year 2024-25 (FY25) at an CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



SUDHA MURTY (73), philan-PM AT CREATORS' AWARDS: CAN SENSE TIME AHEAD OF TIME thropist and former chairperson of Infosys Foundation, was nomi-nated to the Rajya Sabha on Friday. Announcing the nomination, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on 'X: 'I am delighted that the President of India has cominated (BerrSodb Modertui) CONG'S FIRST LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR LOK INDIA POISED TO SIGN TRADE AGREEMENT

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 WITH EFTA P.8. 6. 11 RELATED REPORT P15

#### In '21, RSS-linked magazine said her Former Infosys Foundation chairperson Sudha Murty foundation backs tukde tukde gang

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY DEEPTIMAN TIWARY

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of Sodba Murty as a nominee to the Rajya Sabha shows the distance travsanha shows the distance trav-elled. Just over two years ago. RSS-affiliated magazine Panche-jonye had accused infosys and its foundation, then chaired by her, of deliberately trying to desta-bilise the Indian economy and heating Name. helping Naxals, Leftists and "tukke tukke gans".

'n a report in September 2021, in CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Govt hospitals

THE BIP is on the werge of striking an electoral deal with the Telogu an electoral deal with the Telogu Sena. Party (JSP) in Andhra Peadesh and taking a major stride towards bringing back one of its former allies to the NDA fold. TDP president N Chandra-habu Natiou and JSP chief Pawan by the Control of the East of the Sector Markowski ratio 60: 40 (30): 10 in the case of North-East and hilly states). Government hospitals account for 58% of all facilities empanelled. In a country where the pri-vate sector anyway accounts for more hospitalisation cases – Kalyan are awaiting anothe round of discussion with Unio Pound of discussion with Union Home Minister Amit Shi They are expected to discuss the number of Lok Sabha seats that each side wants to contest, sources said. Naida, according to insiders, is ready to give the BJP four to five seats of Andhra 60% in urban areas and 52% in ru al areas - this trend affirms tha for a big section of the popula tion that was dipping into its sav-ings for treatment in private hos-

pitals, the Ayushman Bharat CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 h's 25 Lok Sabha sea TOMORROW, PART 2: TOP TREATMENTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Ayushman Bharat counter at AIIMS, Delhi, Tashi Tob NO. OF PATIENTS (% SHARE)

In Private Hospitals 80% 60.48% 65.59% 55.19% 60% 40% 39.52% 34.41% 44 81% 20% 2018-19 2021-22 2023-24

SCALE AND SPREAD NO. OF PATIENTS TOTAL EXPENDITURE Pvt hospitals Govt hospitals 748,778.61cr 724,039.15 cr (67%) (33%) Pvthospitals Govt hospitals 2.95 cr (54%) 2.52 cr (46%) 1 Total 5.47 cr - 635 Total 772.817.77 c



Centre imprint across states

#### KAUNAIN SHERIFF M

OVER TIME, Prime Mini Narendra Modi's reference the Ayushman Bharat health in-surance scheme launched in eptember 2018, point to three

September 2010, point a key takeaways. One, the scheme holds promise in reducing out-of-pocket expenditure of the poor. Two, it provides patients and their families access to critical medical treatments and emer-

atments and emer-gency care that were previously financially unat-tainable. Three, its influence is most pronounced in

marginalised communities, par-ticularly Scheduled Tribes, From a political standpoint, Modi has underscored that the scheme is integral to building trust. While health is a state subect, this scheme has allo him to make the Central govern-ment a key stakeholder in pro-viding access to free healthcare to citizens across states, irrespec-tion of which even in progen tive of which party is in powe The study of the RTI data weals this and more Particular his and more. Particular in the south, ruled most CONTINUED ON PAGE

#### PAGE 1 ANCHOR Kick-off to history: Premier League gets first Indian-origin referee

#### NITIN SHARMA

HEN SUNNY Singh Gill blows histle at London's Selhurst

irk Stadium on Saturday, he ill become the first person of with Asian origin to referee a outh Asian origin to referee a atch in the English Premier ague. And in doing so, the 39old will be carrying forward he family legacy.

sunny's appointment to offi-te the match between Crystal lace and Luton Town was anins the only referee to have worn a turban in the English Football League or EFL, the diviapaper sindlanex pss.com

nounced Tuesday by the Professional Garne Match, which appoints referees for Premier Loggue games. In other a manupuer clash for a ma-jority of football followers be-yond those of the two clubs, for It Tibe a moment for generations. Summy is the elder of the two soms of Jamai Singh Cill, Co, who "It's a very proud moment not just for the family or me but the whole Sikh and Asian and Indian community in England," Jarnail Singh Gill told The Indian



near Moza in Puniab and moved became the first South Asians to while watching and che officiate in the same EFL match in 2021. And last January, Bhupinder

ngland when Jamail was just three: At 20, Jarnail officiated his first local league game and it wasn't before long that he dis-continued his mechanical engi-rental service at Heatthrow Airport. Then for five years, he worked with the Metropolitan Police before returning to his pas-tion 150°ER, matches until 2011. became the first Indian-origin person to officiate as an assistant referee in a Premier League match (Southampton vs Nottingham Forest). Nottingham Forest). But Sunny has reached where no one from his family — or the South Asian community

2018-19

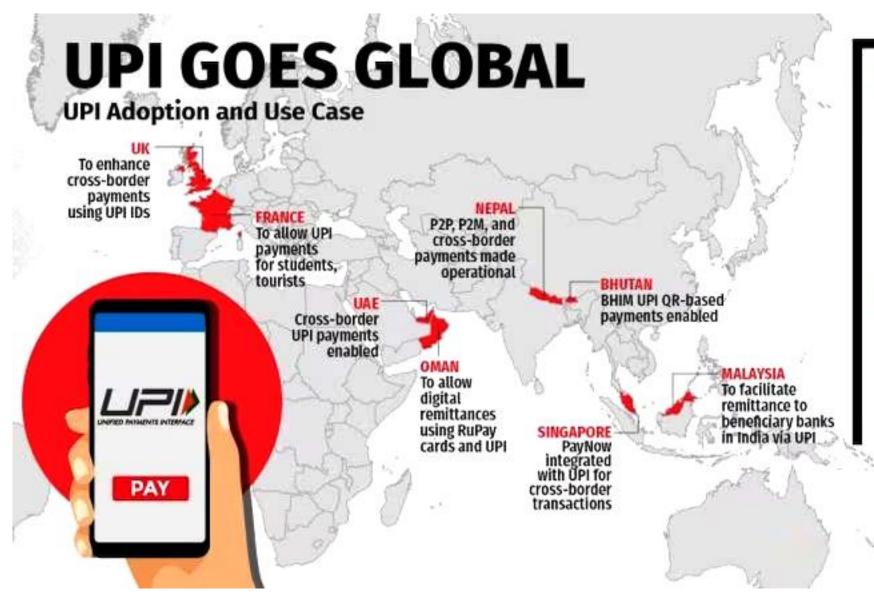
sion – refereeing, which he did in 150 EF, matches until 2011. bett, 'said jarnali, 'Seeing Sunny Sunny'sbrother, Bhupinder, is also a referee. In fact, the isblings and there will be some tears CONTINUEDON PAGE 2 

him on along with 30,000 odd fans (in the stadium)." ans (in the stadium)." According to Jamail, Sunny's love for football grew when he would take the two boys to be his linesmen in local tourna-ments held by the South Asian munity. The brothers t of football at the local k in England – did. "I will be emotional as a fa-thet," said Jarnail, "Seeing Sunny When he was 15, Sunny d

2023-24

## UPI GOES LIVE IN NEPAL, FOLLOWING TIE-UP WITH NIPL

THE NPCI ON Friday announced that UPI is now live in Nepal. UPI users can scan QR codes to make payments to Nepalese merchants, an official statement said. This follows a tie-up between the National Payments Corporation of India International Payments (NIPL) and Nepal's Fonepay Payment Service in September last year.



### OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

UPI QR payments for countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan

### OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

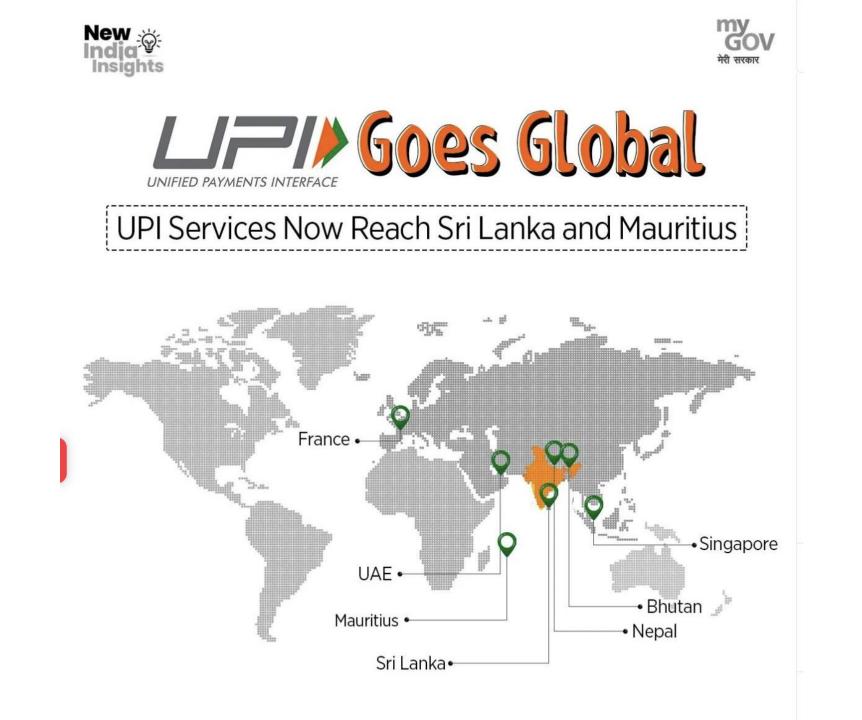
Indian payment channels to be enabled in Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland

1

25

# UPI goes global: Adoption in different countries

Jul-21 Aug-2 Bhutan Malay Royal Merch Monetary Asia Authority of Bhutan	r <b>sia Sin</b> nantrade Mor Aut Sing	netary Phil hory of Can gapore, Sou Now Liqu	-21 japore, Malaysia, T ippines, Vietnam, ibodia, Hong Kong th Korea, Japan id Group (cross bo tal payments prov	, <b>Taiwan</b> , Network International
Oct-22 Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland Worldline	Aug-Sept 2023 United Kingdo Terra Pay, PayXpert		Neopay	<ul> <li>Feb-22</li> <li>Nepal</li> <li>ancials, Gateway</li> <li>Payments</li> <li>eq Bank) Service,</li> <li>Manam</li> <li>Infotech</li> </ul>
Oct-22 Oman Central Bank of Oma	an Cer	<b>t-22</b> <b>E</b> ntral Bank of UAE	Apr-2 Londo PPRO	and the second





## Kick-off to history: Sunny Singh first Indian-origin referee in EPL

NITIN SHARMA Chandigarh, March 8

WHEN SUNNY SINGH Gill blows the whistle at London's Selhurst Park Stadium on Saturday, he will become the first person of South Asian origin to referee a match in the English Premier League (EPL). And in doing so, he will be carrying forward the family legacy.

Sunny's appointment to officiate the match between Crystal Palace and Luton Town was announced Tuesday by the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL), which appoints referees for Premier League games.

While the game itself might not be a marquee clash for a majority of football followers beyond those of the two clubs, for the Gills, from Iver near London, it'll be a moment for generations.



(From left) Sunny Singh Gill with father Jarnail Singh Gill and brother Bhupinder Singh Gill. PROFESSIONAL GAME MATCH OFFICIALS LIMITED

When he was 15 Sunny did stick with me because I knew it

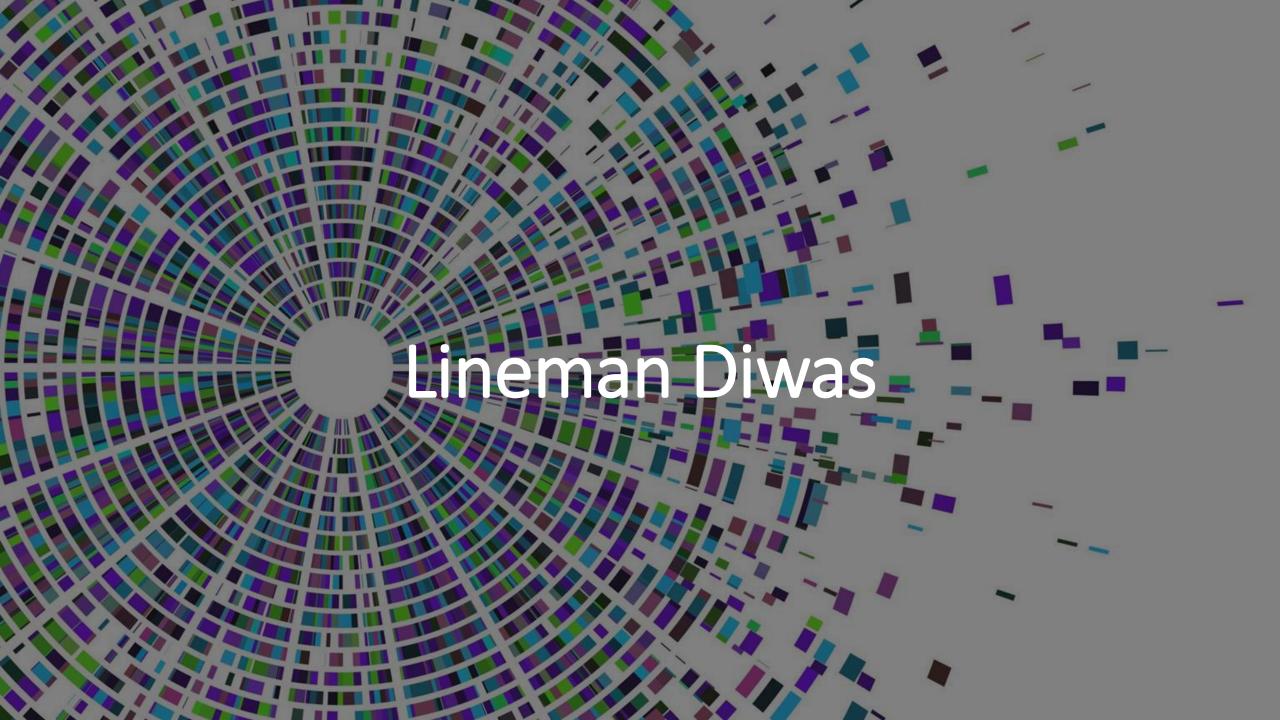
der, is also a referee. The siblings

# FIR and General Diary

- The Supreme Court(SC) of India in the case Shailesh Kumar v. State of UP (now State of Uttarakhand) 2024 has clarified the legal position regarding the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) and General Diary entries by the police.
- The apex court has held that information disclosing the commission of a cognisable offence needs to be recorded as an FIR in the designated FIR book, rather than being documented in the General Diary maintained by the Police under the Police Act, 1861.
- The court emphasised that a General Diary entry cannot precede the registration of an FIR unless a preliminary inquiry is deemed necessary.

Aspect	General Diary Entry	FIR
Purpose	Record complaints and incidents for administrative purposes or future reference	Register a cognisable offence for investigation
Nature of Offense	Both cognisable and non-cognisable	Only for cognizable offences
Documentation	Internal police record	For public record
Distribution	Copies are not provided to the complainant or Judicial Magistrate; sent to superior officers	Copies provided to the complainant, superior officers and Judicial Magistrate
Judicial Oversight	Magistrate may inspect General Diary upon request	Magistrate receives copies of FIR for oversight
Complainant's Signature Required	Not required	Required

- With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2021)
- 1.Judicial custody means an accused is in the custody of the concerned magistrate and such an accused is locked up in a police station, not in jail.
- 2.During judicial custody, the police officer in charge of the case is not allowed to interrogate the suspect without the approval of the court.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
  (b) 2 only
  (c) Both 1 and 2
  (d) Neither 1 nor 2

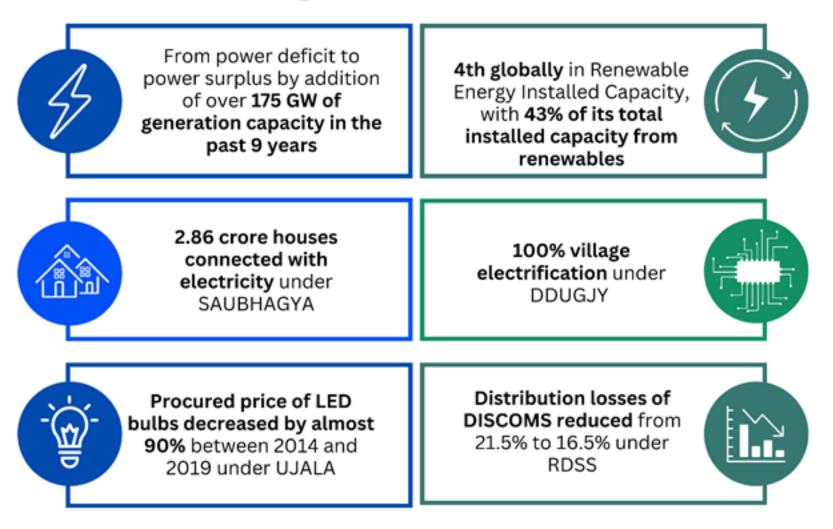


The Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, pays tribute to the nation's power sector frontline workers on the fourth edition of Lineman Diwas (4th March 2024) in New Delhi.

Lineman Diwas celebrates the dedication and service of linemen and ground maintenance staff who ensure uninterrupted electricity distribution nationwide.

- The theme for Lineman Diwas 'Seva, Suraksha, Swabhiman' underscores the linemen's commitment, sacrifice, and contribution to society.
- The event facilitated the exchange of safety best practices, showcasing safety equipment and tools, and screening videos to reinforce workplace safety protocols.

### **Transforming the Power Sector in India**



## State Specific Disaster

 Kerala declares man-animal conflict a state-specific disaster, becoming the 1st state in the country to do so. In Kerala – This announcement is due to Man-Elephant conflict which had claimed lives of many people.

- Managing authority in India *Forest Department*, as per the Wild Life Protection Act 1972 unless it is declared as State specific disaster.
- The <u>chief wildlife warden of the state</u> is the only authority to take a call on a wild animal wreaking havoc in human settlement.

- **Responsible authority** <u>State disaster management authority</u> (<u>SDMA</u>) as per the Disaster Management Act 2005.
- At the state level The <u>Chief Minister is the ex officio</u> <u>chairman</u> of the SDMA.
- In the districts The district disaster management authority (DDMA) is *headed by the district collector*.
- Powers SDMA can take actions <u>overriding other norms</u>, including those under the Wildlife Protection Act.

State specific Disasters	Declared State	
Snakebite	Odisha	
Lightning	Odisha, Kerala & Assam	
Coastal Erosion	Kerala	
Soil Piping		
Strong Wind		
Heat waves, Sunburn and Sunstroke		

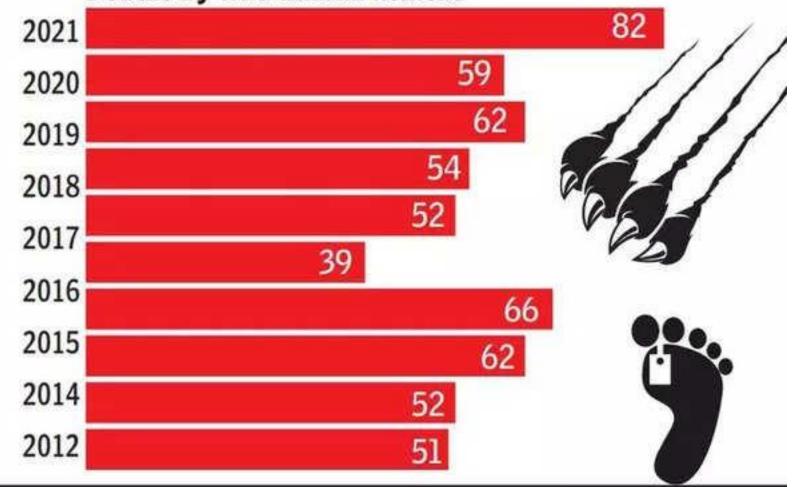


# CALL OF THE WILD

Year	Human kills	Injuries	Cattle kills	Crop damage
2017	53	686	5,961	37,971
2018	50	349	8,311	38,347
2019	36	299	9,258	37,971
2020	47	412	9,139	38,347
2021	83 KJ	553	10,317	56,402
2022	94	472	6,965	27,183

### **SPIKE IN DEATHS IN LAST 5 YEARS**

### Deaths by wild animal attacks



#### FATAL CROSSINGS

#### Numbers need perspective

16.8L

18.3 L

42.6 L

26.8 L

H S Singh said that human-animal conflicts must be seen in the historical perspective. "According to the January 1907 issue of Indian Forester journal, India's oldest document of forestry and wildlife, 2,167 deaths were reported in the country in 1904 when India's human population was one-fifth of the present population," he said. "Of these deaths, 45 human deaths were caused by elephant attacks, 401 by leopard attacks, 786 by tiger attacks, 153 by wolf attacks, 88 by bear attacks, and 24 by hyena attacks." He added: "As many as 555 people had lost their lives in conflicts with other species." Singh said that if we compare today's situation with that of 1904, it will become evident that attacks by carnivorous animals have decreased while elephant attacks have increased manifold.

#### NATIONAL WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN (2017 GUIDELINES)

Conduct surveys to Year collect primary and secondary data on 2019-20 HWC (Human-Wildlife Conflict) at national, 2018-19 regional, and state levels 2017-18 Ascertain population 2016-17 status and trends for various species involved 2015-16 in intensive conflict situations with people 2014-15 2013-14 Develop national and Dregional conflict-2012-13 mitigation plans 2011-12



169

133

74

71

9

11

15

#### PEOPLE-INDUCED PROBLEM

The Indian government's National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2031 states: "It is important to understand that Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) is largely a human-induced phenomenon, combined with speciesspecific behavioural ecology of animals and external environmental factors." Thus, all conflict-mitigation measures should be developed on the basic premise of meaningful engagement with and the participation of all primary stakeholders, especially local communities.



# "Sea Defend"Sea Defenders-2024"ers-2024"

 Sea Defenders-2024 exercise is scheduled to take place off the coast of Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

 Sea Defenders, 2024 is a bilateral cooperation between the *Indian Coast Guard* (ICG) and the *United States Coast Guard* (USCG).

### Pritzker Architecture Prize

- Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto was recently declared as the winner of the 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize.
- It is the highest <u>international award in the field of</u> <u>Architecture</u> and referred as the <u>"Architecture Nobel"</u>.
- It has been awarded <u>every year</u> since its founding in **1979**.
- **Instituted by -** Jay A Pritzker, the late founder of the Hyatt Hotels chain, and his wife Cindy

# Bengaluru's driverless metro train

- A Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) system enabled driverless metro train is set to commission in <u>Bengaluru,</u> <u>Karnataka.</u>
- Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) is a modern system that uses radio communication to transfer timely & accurate train control information.

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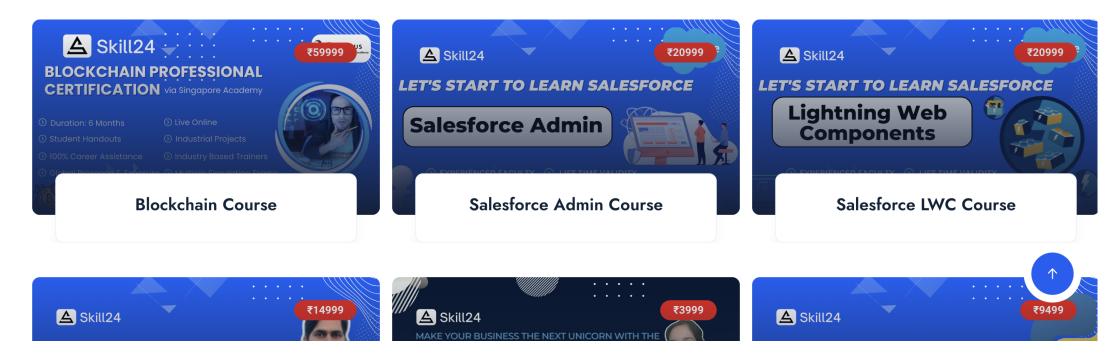
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# Thank you guys.