

Daily Current Affairs



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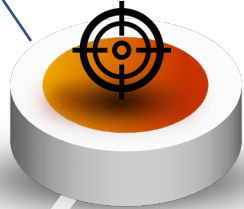


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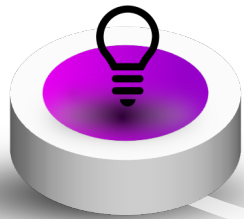
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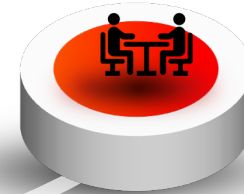
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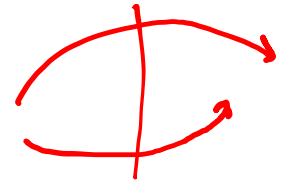
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INSIDE



Shah's AFSPA remarks: J&K paries: 'cautious'

SRINAGAR
Union Home Minister Amit Shah's broad hints, made in an interview, at the Centre's readiness to revise the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Jammu and Kashmir evoked cautious and guarded reactions from regional parties in the Union Territory. > PAGE 4

Don't have money to contest polls, says Nirmala

NEW DELHI
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has decided not to contest the Lok Sabha election, she said on Wednesday, citing the lack of "money to contest" the poll and her inability to meet the "winnability criteria" in States that she could have considered contesting from. > PAGE 5

Pirates used an Iranian vessel to hijack MV Ruen

NEW DELHI
Pirates that have come to light in India that the pirate vessel ship that was used to attack Maldivian merchant vessel MV Ruen on December 14 was itself an Iranian-managed fishing vessel Al Ashkoon with 24 Pakistani crew members, hijacked earlier on November 25, 2023. > PAGE 6

Xi Jinping meets U.S. executives to draw investment

BEIJING
"The history of China-U.S. relations is a history of friendly relations between the two peoples," Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday as he met with representatives of U.S. businesses on Wednesday as Beijing seeks to attract foreign investment. > PAGE 14

Priest can certify CAA eligibility, says govt. helpline

It is mandatory to submit 'eligibility certificate' validating religion of an applicant under CAA | As per the rules, the certificate can be issued by a 'locally reputed community institution' | The authority that can issue the certificate was not specified when CAA Rules were notified

NEW DELHI
A local priest may issue an "eligibility certificate" under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 to validate the religion of an applicant, according to a response received by *The Hindu* through the Union Home Ministry's helpline on CAA.
The certificate, a mandatory document, is to be enclosed along with the application on the CAA portal. "The reasons for which applicant wishes to acquire Indian citizenship" must also be stated.

Route to citizenship
A brief outline of the application process under the CAA:
• The entire process is online but applicants will have to present themselves on an appointed day before a committee, which will verify the documents.
• The applicants have to submit a clutch of documents, which include an eligibility certificate to validate the religion of the applicant. Any local priest can certify the faith of the persons.
• The reasons for which applicant wishes to acquire an Indian citizenship is also to be stated.
The certificate, *The Hindu* was told that "any local priest can be asked to issue it".
A source said on Wednesday, "Any institution which has the trust of people can issue the certificate. The final decision to grant citizenship will be taken by the empowered committee, the local institution is only recommending that they belong to a particular faith."
The form says that the person issuing the certificate will have to specify his/her name and address and confirm that the applicant belongs to one of the six communities from the three countries and age is 18 years or above.
"According to Dharam-veer Solanki, 44, around 100 Pakistani Hindus living in the Majnu ka Tila area of North Delhi have registered on the portal so far.
"Some of us got the eligibility certificate from the Arya Samaj mandir and some from the Shiv Mandir nearby. We are waiting for the documents to be processed," said Mr. Solanki, who came to India with his family in 2013.
According to the CAA Rules, after the documents have been uploaded, the applications will be sifted by a district-level committee headed by the Superintendent of the Department of Post.
The applicant will have to visit this committee on the appointed day when the documents will be verified in person. Mr. Solanki said he was yet to get a call from the committee.
The final decision on applications will then be taken by the empowered committee headed by the Director (Citizens Operations) in each State.

Spiritual dusk



Holy occasions: Muslims who are currently fasting for Ramadan leave after prayers at the Jama Masjid in Delhi, on Wednesday. REUTERS

India strongly objects to U.S. remarks on Kejriwal's arrest

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI
India on Wednesday summoned a U.S. diplomat and expressed "strong objection" to the remarks of the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department on the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a case of alleged corruption.
In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said that "few democracies should respect each other's sovereignty", and highlighted India's "independent judiciary".
"We take strong objection to the remarks of the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department about certain legal proceedings in India. In diplomacy, states are expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others. The responsibility is even more so in case of fellow democracies. It should otherwise end up setting unhealthy precedents," the ministry said.
On Monday, the spokesperson of the State Department said the U.S. government hoped Mr. Kejriwal's case would be treated through a "fair, transparent and timely legal process".
"We encourage a fair, transparent, and timely legal process for Chief Minister Kejriwal," the spokesperson had said.
"India's legal processes are based on an independent judiciary which is committed to objective and timely outcomes. Casting aspersions on that is unwarranted," the Ministry said on Wednesday.
U.S. official summoned Gloria Berben, the U.S.'s Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, was also summoned to a 40-minute meet at the South Block on Wednesday to convey the protest officially, according to sources.
Despite New Delhi's stern summons, the U.S. repeated its concerns at its briefing in Washington on Wednesday, saying the U.S. "continues to follow" the Centre's actions in the run-up to the election. "We are also aware of the Congress party's allegations that tax authorities have frozen some of their bank accounts," U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.
"We encourage fair, transparent and timely legal processes for each of these issues... We don't think anyone should object to that," he added in the comments that came in response to a journalist who cited a report by Amnesty International.
HC REFUSES TO INTERFERE
» PAGE 4

₹50 lakh stolen from 'unguarded' van carrying cash to ATM in Kerala's Uppala

The Hindu Bureau
KASARAGOD
In a brazen daylight theft, ₹50 lakh was stolen from a van that was taking the money to fill cash vending machines, at Uppala here in Kerala on Wednesday.
The incident occurred outside an ATM of the Axis Bank around 2 p.m.
The van involved in the incident belongs to a private agency, Secure Valley. Notably, it arrived at the location without security personnel.
An officer at the Manjeshwar police station said the theft occurred due to a grille on the rear windows, said the officer.
The thief broke the right side rear window and took away the cash kept there, he said.
The police detained the driver and seized the van.
Focus on CCTVs
District Police Chief P Bijoy told media that there is indication that only one person was behind the robbery. Many CCTVs in the area are not working due to road construction work. The police have initiated an investigation focusing on some active CCTVs. (With PTI inputs)

Election Commission issues notices to Shrinete, Ghosh for 'offensive' remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/KOZHIKOD
The Election Commission on Wednesday issued showcause notices on the Congress Supriya Shrinete and the BJP's Dilip Ghosh for their "offensive, insulting", and "undignified" comments against BJP candidate and actor Kangana Ranaut and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee respectively.
Their remarks were "undignified and in bad taste" and violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), the EC said in separate official statements.
Supriya Shrinete and Dilip Ghosh have to respond by March 29.
The MCC has been in force since March 16 when the road construction work election was announced.
"After being slammed by the party, Mr. Ghosh said he was "sad" as his language had been described as unparliamentary, but claimed he had merely countered Ms. Banerjee's statements.
The poll body said the comments also violated its advisory to parties to maintain dignity during electioneering.
"Low level personal attacks to insult the rival shall not be made," the Commission said, also warning against social media posts vilifying and insulting rivals.
Both leaders have been asked to respond to the show cause notices by the evening of March 29.

A brief outline of the application process under the CAA

- The entire process is online but applicants will have to present themselves on an appointed day before a committee, which will verify the documents

- The applicants have to submit a clutch of documents,



which include an eligibility certificate to validate the religion of the applicant. Any local priest can certify the faith of the persons

- The reasons for which applicant wishes to acquire an Indian citizenship is also to be stated

Muslim
Religion
Priest

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

Why in news?

Anti-CAA activist-MLA Akhil Gogoi was released from jail recently.



What is CAA?

The law seeks to make foreign illegal migrants of certain religious communities coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship.



Criteria

- The person must have resided in India or been in central government service for the last 12 months and at least 11 years of the preceding 14 years.
- For certain illegal migrants, the number of years of residency has been relaxed from 11 years to five years.

Citizenship of India

- Birth in India
- Descent
- Registration
- Naturalisation
- Incorporation of territory into India

Exceptions

- The tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura.
- Karbi Anglong (in Assam), Garo Hills (in Meghalaya), Chakma District (in Mizoram), and Tripura Tribal Areas District.



Part 2

Minutes

2019

Citizenship

5

Part 2
(Article 5-11)
5

A PERSON OF INDIAN ORIGIN (PIO)

- Means a **foreign citizen** (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal)
- A **foreign citizen whose one of the parents/ grandparents/ great grandparents was born** and a **permanent resident** of India
- Who is a **spouse** of a citizen of India or a PIO

BENEFITS

1. PIO card holders **do not require a visa to visit India** for a period of 15 years from the date of issue of the PIO card.
2. They are **exempted from registration at FRRO/ FRO** if their **stay does not exceeds 180 days**, In case if the stay exceeds 180 days, they shall have to register with FRRO/ FRO within the next 30 days
3. They **enjoy parity with NRIs in economic, financial and educational benefits**
4. All **future benefits** that would be exempted to **NRIs** would also be available to the **PIO card holders**

PIO VS OCI

OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA (OCI)

A **foreign national**, who was **eligible to become citizen of India** on **26.01.1950** or was a citizen of India on or at anytime after **26.01.1950** or belonged to a territory that became part of India after **15.08.1947** is **eligible for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)**. Minor children of such person are also eligible for OCI. However, if the applicant had ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh, he/she will not be eligible for OCI.

BENEFITS

- OCIs are **entitled to a multipurpose, multiple entry, lifelong visa** allowing them to visit India at any time, for any length of time and for any purpose
- **Exempted from police reporting** for any length of stay in the country
 - **Have also been granted all rights in the economic, financial and education fields in parity with NRIs** except, the right to acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties

IN BRIEF



YSRCP govt. undid progress achieved under TDP: Naidu

Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said the YSRCP government had undone the progress achieved and developmental works initiated during the TDP term. Addressing a public meeting at Palamner in Chittoor district, he blamed Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for the backwardness of the Rayalaseema region in the last five years. "Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy is a traitor of Rayalaseema," Mr. Naidu said while addressing the meet.

Two seriously injured after car hits two-wheeler in Vizag

Two persons were severely injured after a speeding car hit them on the BKTS Road at Arilova in Visakhapatnam late on Tuesday, the police said. The car, driven by a B.Tech student, was reportedly in an inebriated condition, she lost control over the vehicle and hit a two-wheeler and then the median, the police said. The injured were shifted to a hospital. The police said the student also suffered injuries but was saved owing to the air bags.

CJ DY. Chandrachud prays at Tirumala temple

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud on Wednesday visited the Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh, where he paid obeisances to the presiding deity. Chief Justice of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh Dhirej Singh Thakur accompanied the CJI. Later, the CJI paid a visit to SV Medical University.

ED issues fresh summons to Isaac in masala bonds case

The Hindu Bureau KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to former Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac asking him to appear before its investigators at its Kochi office on April 2 in connection with an investigation into the issue of masala bonds by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).

Dr. Isaac had not turned up despite earlier summons by the agency to appear for interrogation. The ED suspects that funds were raised and utilised in violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act.

Karnataka BJP MLC resigns, may join Congress

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Former Journalist Tejaswini Gowda resigned as Member of the Legislative Council in Karnataka on Wednesday. This comes amid reports that Ms. Gowda may quit the BJP and join the Congress as she is upset over not being fielded in the Lok Sabha election. Ms. Gowda was hoping to get a BJP ticket from either Mysuru-Kodagu or Bengaluru-North constituencies. She reportedly even tried to lobby with the Congress for the Mysuru-Kodagu ticket, they added.

ED files case against Pinarayi's daughter in CMRL pay-off case

The agency has acted on the basis of ET report that Veena and her company Exalogic Solutions Private Ltd had received ₹1.72 crore as monthly payments from Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd

The Hindu Bureau KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered an Enforcement Case Investigation Report (ECIR) in connection with the alleged monthly pay-off controversy involving the company of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter T. Veena.



Veena Vijayan

The ECIR has been registered by the Kochi unit of the agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

The Central agency has acted on the basis of the report by the Income Tax in-

vestments from the Kochi-based Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL) despite there being no evidence of any services given in return.

The probe by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs into the monthly pay-off case is progressing.

It is learnt that the ED probe will include the individuals and entities on the record of the Income Tax Interim Settlement Board order.

Besides Ms. Veena, the role of CMRL and the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC),

which holds 13.4% shares in CMRL, will also be investigated.

The High Court of Karnataka had in February rejected a petition filed by Exalogic Solutions Private Limited questioning the action of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) ordering a probe by the SFIO into the affairs of the company.

The MCA had told the court that illegal payments made to the extent of ₹135 crore by CMRL to various political functionaries in Kerala and certain other entities, including Exalogic, had necessitated the probe.

Seers tell BJP to replace Pralhad Joshi in Dharwad

The Hindu Bureau HUBBALLI

Veerashaiva Lingayat seers from various mathas who met here on Wednesday set a deadline for the BJP to replace Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in the Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency, citing the "ill-treatment meted out to the community and the seers".

In a quick reaction to the demand, BJP veteran and former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, a Lingayat, categorically denied the community in candidacy in the constituency. He, however, said he would speak to the seers to clear their misunderstanding.

Earlier in the day, scores of seers from Veerashaiva Lingayat mathas from across the region led by Sri Dingaleswar Swami of Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Math held a meeting at Moortisar Math in Hubballi in the presence of Sri Gurusiddha Rajayogindra Swami which was chaired by Sri Mallikarjun Swami of Muruga Matt.

The meeting reportedly discussed the various socio-political and religious issues concerning the community and the need for religious heads to plunge into electoral politics in the wake of ill-treat-



Sri Dingaleswar Swami along with Sri Gurusiddheswar Swami, Sri Mallikarjun Swami and other seers in Hubballi. KIRAN BAKALE

ment of the community leaders and seers reported by Mr. Joshi.

Later, addressing presspersons along with various seers, Sri Dingaleswar

Swami criticised Mr. Joshi and said the Union Minister remembered the seers only during polls.

The seer said that the Veerashaiva Lingayat seers

Cong. MLAs divided over Kolar nominee

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Factionalism in the Kolar unit of the Congress came to the fore on Wednesday with five Congress legislators, including a Minister, threatening to resign over the possibility of the party bringing ticket to Chikka Peddanna, son-in-law of Food and Civil Supplies Minister K.H. Muniyappa, from the Kolar (reserved) seat for the Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Muniyappa is a seven-time MP.

The drama unfolded in the court that illegal payments made to the extent of ₹135 crore by CMRL to various political functionaries in Kerala and certain other entities, including Exalogic, had necessitated the probe.

da, and two MLAs - Anil Kumar and Naseer Ahmed demanded that party ticket be given to a candidate from the 'Right' section of the Scheduled Castes and not to Mr. Peddanna, who belongs to the 'SC Left'.

The two MLAs displayed their resignation letters in front of journalists and met Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, Minister Byrathi Suresh rushed to the Chairman's chamber and convinced them not to submit their resignations.

Party functionaries see Wednesday's drama as part of the ongoing tussle between two factions of the Kolar Congress - one led by Mr. Muniyappa and another by former Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar - for supremacy in the district.

will urge the BJP high command to change the party candidate for Dharwad Lok Sabha Constituency and nominate another candidate before Sunday. "If not, we will meet again on April 2 to decide on the course of action," he said.

No change Speaking on the development later in the evening, Mr. Yediyurappa categorically denied any change in the candidature of Mr. Joshi.

"Mr. Joshi has been doing good work, taking people of all communities along with him. That's who

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given him various responsibilities and posts," he said.

Regarding the charge against Mr. Joshi by Dingaleswar Swami and the meeting of the seers, he said that Veerashaiva Lingayat seers have been with the party for long and any misunderstanding among the seers will be cleared.

Mr. Joshi, who was also present in the press conference, declined to reply to any of the personal charges against him but said that he has a lot of respect and devotion towards the seer and the Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Matt.

One team



Armed forces personnel of India and the U.S. take part in the bilateral exercise, Tiger Triumph 2024, off Andhra Pradesh coast on Wednesday. The 14-day exercise is meant to strengthen coordination between the forces and refine their capabilities in disaster relief operations. PTI

'Centre betraying Kannadigas by not giving drought aid'

The Hindu Bureau

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday accused the BJP leadership and the Union government of "betraying" the interest of seven crore Kannadigas by denying them their due share of funds to take up drought relief measures.

He also lashed out at Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who had refuted Mr. Siddaramaiah's claims that Karnataka was not receiving its due share of tax or that there was no equity in tax devolution.

New entrants Mr. Siddaramaiah was speaking at a public programme in which several BJP and JD(S) leaders, including former MUDA chairman H.V. Rajeev, former councillor Malllesh, and former Mayor Bhyrapa, quit their respective parties and joined the Congress.

The Chief Minister was scathing in his attack on the Finance Minister, and said the Karnataka government was not seeking funds for the implementation of the (devol) guarantee schemes as was being projected. He also challenged the BJP top leadership to a debate on the issue of equitable devolution of tax and the "injustice" to Karnataka on resource allocation. "We can have the debate either in Bengaluru or Delhi," he said.

"We have adequate budgetary provisions for implementation [of poll guarantees]. While nearly two crore jobs have been created this year for the implementation of the five



Siddaramaiah

guarantee schemes, over ₹2,000 crore had been earmarked in the State Budget for 2024-25," said Mr. Siddaramaiah.

What Karnataka was demanding was its share of funds that was sanctioned by the 15th Finance Commission. The commission had allocated additional funds to the State for various programmes, including ₹5,000 crore for rejuvenation and reclamation of lakes in Bengaluru and ₹3,000 crore for the peripheral ring road project, he said.

'Sought funds thrice' He said that though the State submitted memoranda to the Centre three times seeking ₹1,170 crore as drought relief, not a rupee had been released so far, though the law mandates that assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund be released within a month. This, despite the fact that 224 out of 243 taluks are reeling under severe drought this year, the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power promising to double the farmers' income and generate ₹5,000 crore has been done on this front, he said.

Now, boys can learn Mohiniyattam at Kalamandalam

Decision taken unanimously in the governing council meeting of the deemed university for arts and culture in Kerala; move comes in the wake of Kalamandalam Sathyabhama's purported remarks against dancer R.L.V. Ramakrishnan

The Hindu Bureau THIRISSUR

In a historic move, Kerala Kalamandalam, a deemed university for arts and culture, has opened its doors for boys to learn Mohiniyattam. The restrictions has lifted gender restrictions to enrol in its Mohiniyattam courses. The decision was taken unanimously in the governing council meeting of the Kalamandalam on Wednesday. The admission for the Mohiniyattam course will be open from next academic year onwards.

Mohiniyattam up to the postgraduate level.

The comments by Ms. Sathyabhama had sparked criticism from various fields across the State.

The Kerala State Human Rights Commission and State SC/ST commissions have initiated cases against Ms. Sathyabhama. Meanwhile, Mr. Ramakrishnan has lodged a complaint with the Chalalady police against Ms. Sathyabhama.

As the incident occurred in Thiruvananthapuram, the complaint will be transferred to the capital, according to the Chalalady police.



Graceful dance: A file photo of R.L.V. Ramakrishnan during a Mohiniyattam performance in Kerala.

One team



Armed forces personnel of India and the U.S. take part in the bilateral exercise, Tiger Triumph 2024, off Andhra Pradesh coast on Wednesday. The 14-day exercise is meant to strengthen coordination between the forces and refine their capabilities in disaster relief operations. PTI

Preventing a China-Taiwan conflict

With expanding national interests, India has stronger compulsions to act against far-off hazards, India finds its interests entangled in disputes on the far edges of Asia, including in Taiwan. China claims Taiwan as its own, and is feverishly preparing to seize the island by force if necessary, while the U.S. has increasingly clearly signalled that it would probably fight to defend Taiwan. India is highly unlikely to fight in a conflict over Taiwan. It has vital economic and security interests, and valuable policy levers, to ensure that such a conflict never happens.

Maintain the status quo
New Delhi has three main reasons to do so. First, it has a stake in the status quo, with Taiwan as a self-governing territory that does not declare independence. India and Taiwan have expanded trade seven-fold since 2001 and are exploring possible free trade agreement. The Taiwanese firm, Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation, has partnered with the Tata Group to build India's first semiconductor fabrication plant. An agreement was signed recently to send Indian workers to Taiwan. India's industry, critical supply chains, and overseas population are all increasingly invested in an enduring peaceful status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

Second, any Chinese aggression against Taiwan would be catastrophically costly for India. Such a scenario would, in effect, cripple global trade between China and Taiwan, which would create disruptions throughout Asia and West Asia. A recent Bloomberg study estimates that the costs of a conflict would amount to over 10% of global GDP. India's economy would suffer a greater shock than the U.S. economy and its other valuable sectors, from electronics to pharmaceuticals, would run dry of components and materials. A protracted or general war between China and the U.S.,



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spreading beyond Taiwan, could spill over in multiple directions. It could ignite the already tense India-China land border. It could wipe out or take offline sizeable portions of Chinese, American, and other regional countries. It could, possibly, on which the world depends. And it could raise the risk of unthinkable nuclear escalation. A conflict over Taiwan is something that India simply cannot afford, especially as it seeks stability and growth for national development.

Third, while a conflict itself would be calamitous, its outcomes could further worsen India's long-term international position, depending on which side prevails. A limited conflict, where China has relative advantages of concentrating force near Taiwan, is also the most likely scenario to end in a Chinese victory over Taiwan and a corresponding defeat of the U.S. and its allies. If China, through the crucible of a battle, thereby displaces the U.S. as the region's pre-eminent military power, it would undermine the region's entire security architecture. American security guarantees would be less credible, neighbours may seek to assure their security with more arms or offensive postures, and China's military would be free to further perfect unchecked influence, including into the Indian Ocean. It may even feel emboldened to press its claims on Arunachal Pradesh. India is not an American ally, but it does depend on the U.S. for its military modernisation and a broadly benign strategic environment.

What India can do
What, then, can India do to help prevent this calamity? Beijing's strategy for Taiwan uses all instruments of national power, from international law to economic and political leverage, aside from military coercion. It would be wiser to pursue less costly and disruptive military ways as long as they remain viable. Given the stakes

involved, it would only resort to a military campaign once it is satisfied that it has adequately set the conditions for victory. The military balance across the Taiwan Strait will therefore be the most critical deterrent, but non-belligerent states like India can buttress deterrence by convincing Beijing that it has not adequately set the conditions. India has six types of policy options at its fingertips: international law arguments; building narratives opposed to aggression; coordinated diplomatic messaging; economic co-ordinating; active information operations to support the Taiwanese people; and military support to the U.S. forces in the Indian Ocean. Each option can be calibrated to variable levels of ambition and political appetite; and they can be adapted and applied by many other countries.

These options can also advance India's grand strategic position, regardless of their impact on the China-Taiwan dispute. Enacting these policies would, first and foremost, lend India more leverage in its intensifying strategic competition with China. They also offer additional pathways for India to deepen its cooperation with the U.S., thereby accelerating its national rise. And they offer a wider agenda for Indian international leadership, especially among countries of the Global South, which otherwise would be passive or at best uncoordinated in deterring Chinese aggression more broadly.

Such policies, therefore, are not a favour to Taiwan or the U.S.; they would be an act of Indian self-interest. Depending on the political context, they may invite Chinese retaliation, but no policy is cost-free, and India has recently shown a tough willingness to weather Chinese opprobrium when necessary. India's expanding interests and ambitions suggest the need for different policy settings, and the costs of such policies would be dwarfed by the costs of doing nothing.

Telangana's fiscal challenge

The government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling its six guarantees

STATE OF PLAY

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The Telangana government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling the six guarantees that the cabinet promised, and they are struggling to raise resources for meeting its immediate commitments including payment of salaries, pensions, and interests. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that close to half the revenue receipts are being spent on these three heads alone, according to the provisional figures released by the Controller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

While tax revenue for the current fiscal is projected at ₹1.52 lakh crore in the budget estimates, expenditure on salaries/wages (₹38,627 crore), pensions (₹3,024 crore), and interest payments (₹22,407 crore) account for ₹74,058 crore. This is in addition to subsidies, which amount to ₹12,958 crore. The CAG figures show that the State's overall revenue stood at ₹1.51 lakh crore, 70.16% of ₹2.16 lakh crore of the budget estimates, with just a month left for the conclusion of the financial year.

In this backdrop, the implementation of the six guarantees is cost-free, and India has recently shown a tough willingness to weather Chinese opprobrium when necessary. India's expanding interests and ambitions suggest the need for different policy settings, and the costs of such policies would be dwarfed by the costs of doing nothing.

Telangana

supply of LPG cylinder at ₹500, free power up to 200 units to eligible households under the Gruha Jyoti scheme, houses to the poor under the Indramma scheme, and a sustenance allowance for women.

The State started implementing free bus travel for which it needs to reimburse more than ₹300 crore a month to the State Road Transport Corporation. It has started enhancing the health coverage limit as well. The government made a provision of ₹53,196 crore in the ₹2.75 lakh crore vote-on-account budget for 2024-25, for the implementation of the six guarantees. The budget saw no hikes in taxes and duties in any form. The government made a provision of ₹2,418 crore for Gruha Jyoti for the next fiscal. This takes the total allocation to Transco and distribution companies to ₹16,825 crore as the government affirmed its commitment to implement 24x7 free power supply to farmers. The government allocated ₹7,740 crore for the Indramma housing scheme. It decided to sanction 3,500 houses to each of the 119 Assembly constituencies in the State. The actual burden on the exchequer on account of implementation of the six guarantees is yet to be ascertained.

Though the government is keen to implement its guarantees, the mismatch in the bud-

get estimates and the actual estimates over consecutive years raises doubts over the availability of the resources towards this end. The overall revenue receipts in February ended remained ₹1.51 lakh crore against the ₹2.16 lakh crore projected in 2023-24. Of this, ₹41,448 crore was in the form of borrowings and other liabilities.

Another area where excess projection is leading to short-fall in the actuals is grants in aid and contributions from the Central government. While the government estimated ₹41,259 crore revenue under the head for the fiscal, the actual realisation till the end of February remained at just ₹6,985 crore.

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bharti Vikraman admitted that the gap between the estimates and actuals for the current fiscal could be as high as ₹70,000 crore. Substantiating his claim is the huge difference between the budget estimates and actuals at the end of February.

Coupled with these are the restrictions imposed by the Union Finance Ministry on the state's market borrowings, using financial management. But these have been relaxed to some extent after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Mr. Bharti Vikraman met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in January. The State needs to explore new avenues to augment its resources and not just depend on revenue through excise and sale land passibility. In addition, it should also focus on areas where there are said to be leakages. The demands to the government revenue and need to be frugal so that Telangana can deal with challenges on the financial front.

2024 records hottest-ever January and February

In February 2024, the average global temperature was 15.4°C, the warmest-ever for any February

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

This year's February was the hottest February ever. So was this year's January. This is in continuation of a streak: the last seven months of 2023 also marked record highs for those months. Records have been set and broken in successive years, which means that the world is heating up. Not only are temperatures rising, but they are also rising at a faster rate than ever before. The gap between the record temperatures set in 2023 and 2024 and the old records from previous years which were broken are considerably wide, showing that the rise in temperature is rapid.

Chart 1 shows the monthly average global surface temperature by year. The numbers 1 to 12 on the horizontal axis represent the months of the year, from 1 for January to 12 for December. For clarity, the year 2020 and the subsequent years are highlighted in red. In February 2024, the average temperature was 15.4°C, the warmest ever for any February. The previous record was set in 2016 when the average temperature touched 13.42°C. That record broke the previous record of 13.33°C, set in 2020.

In January 2024, the average temperature was 13.14°C, again the warmest ever for any January. The previous record was set in 2020 when it touched 13.02°C. That broke the previous record of 12.99°C, which was set in 2016. Map 2 shows the country-wise average monthly surface temperature as on February 15, 2024. South Sudan in east Africa and Ghana and Togo in west Africa, crossed the 30°C mark, which makes them the hottest countries on that date. In 62 countries, the average temperature on that day was over 25°C. In 41 countries, including India, it was over 20°C. In-

dia's average temperature on that day was 20.17°C. While in terms of the global average, this year witnessed the hottest February in 2024. These include many countries in Europe such as Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland. India's hottest ever February was recorded in 2006, when the average temperature was 21.4°C. Chart 3 shows the monthly surface temperature deviations by year. While the absolute temperatures in a month are depicted in Chart 1, the deviation from a specific month's average surface temperature compared to the 1991-2020 mean is depicted in Chart 3.

In February 2024, the deviation was +0.81°C. That is, the temperature that month was 0.81°C above the 1991-2020 average for February. This is the highest deviation ever recorded for a February. In January 2024, the deviation was +0.70°C, again the highest deviation ever recorded for a January. Map 4 shows the country-wise monthly surface temperature deviations compared to the 1991-2020 mean, as on February 15, 2024. The deviation was over +2°C in most of Europe and northern America. Some parts of Africa and South America too recorded a similar high deviation on that date, while India's was +0.3°C.

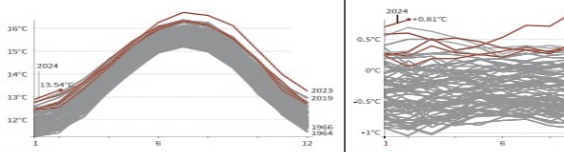
According to the Copernicus monthly bulletin, European temperatures in February 2024 were 3.3°C above the 1991-2020 average for February, with higher above-average temperatures experienced in central and eastern Europe. Outside Europe, temperatures were above average over northern Siberia, central and north-west North America, most of South America, across Africa, and in western Australia.

Breaking temperature records

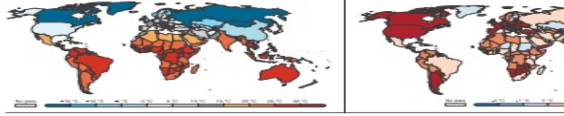
The data for the charts was sourced from Our World in Data and Copernicus Climate Change Service



Chart 1: The chart shows the monthly average global surface temperatures by year. The numbers 1 to 12 on the horizontal axis represent the months of the year. The last nine months have been the warmest on record.



Map 2: The map shows the country-wise average monthly surface temperature as on February 15, 2024. In 62 countries, the average temperature on that day was over 25°C. In 41 countries, it was over 20°C.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 28, 1974

Minister rules out nationalisation of more industries

New Delhi, March 27: The Industrial Development Minister, Mr. C. Subramaniam, today ruled out further nationalisation of industries for the present.

Replying to the debate on the budget demands for his Ministry in the Assembly, Mr. Subramaniam said the first task now was to have stable conditions in the industries already in the public sector. "The trouble starts" as soon as any industry was nationalised.

Mr. Subramaniam ridiculed the leftist demand for the immediate nationalisation of the larger industrial houses. "Unless conditions were created in the public sector projects to make them run smoothly, there was no point in further nationalisation."

Mr. Subramaniam said that the very people who were advocating the cause were playing politics in public sector projects. Repudiating the charge by a CPM member that the Government had "shamelessly retreated" from its industrial policy vis-a-vis big industrial houses, Mr. Subramaniam said even in restricted areas earmarked for the larger houses, medium entrepreneurs were given preference to the former. The larger houses were allowed only to "fill in gaps" in production targets.

He said many top level executives had been giving up posts in the private sector and joining public enterprises. With proper men at the top, the whole situation in some of the public sector undertakings had dramatically changed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 28, 1924

Case against Marconis

London, March 26: At the King's Bench Division today in the action brought by James A. Malcolin against Marconi's wireless telegraph company for commission in connection with the proposed wireless telegraph supplies for China, Justice Anton gave judgment. Defendant has succeeded with costs contingent upon their payment to the plaintiff of a commission of 66 thousand sterling when received from the Chinese government.

2024 records hottest-ever January and February

In February 2024, the average global temperature was 13.54°C, the warmest-ever for any February

DATA POINT

du Data Team

This year's February was the hottest February ever. So was this year's January. A continuation of a streak: seven months of 2023 also recorded highs for those months. Records have been set in successive years, which means that the world is warming up.

Not only are temperatures rising, but they are also rising at a faster rate than ever before. The gap between the record temperatures of 2023 and 2024 and the old records from previous years which have been broken are considerably larger.

India's average temperature on that day was 20.17 °C.

While in terms of the global average, this year witnessed the hottest February, the same is not true for all the individual countries. For instance, of the 194 countries depicted on the map, only 58 witnessed their hottest February in 2024. These include many countries in Europe such as Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland. India's hottest-ever February was recorded in 2006, when the average temperature was 21.94°C.

Chart 3 shows the monthly surface temperature deviations by year. While the absolute temperatures in a month are depicted in Chart 1, the deviation from a long-term average is shown in Chart 3.

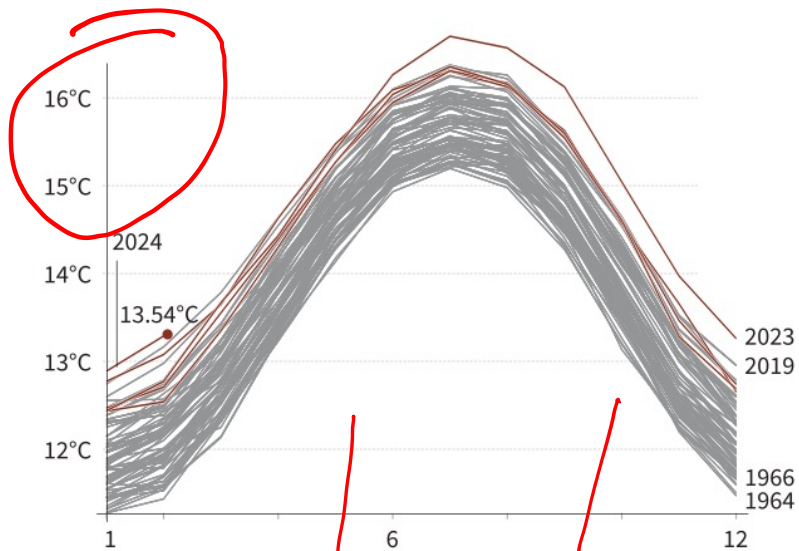
Breaking temperature records

The data for the charts were sourced from Our World in Data and Copernicus Climate Change Service



Bone dry: Cattle grazing on the dried bed of Kerala's longest river Bharathapuzha near Ottapalam, Palakkad. KK MUSTAFAH

Chart 1: The chart shows the monthly average global surface temperatures by year. The numbers 1 to 12 on the horizontal axis represent the months of the year. The last nine months have been the warmest on record



Map 2: The map shows the country-wise average monthly surface temperature as on February 15, 2024. In 62 countries, the average temperature on that day was over 25°C. In 41 countries, it was over 20°C

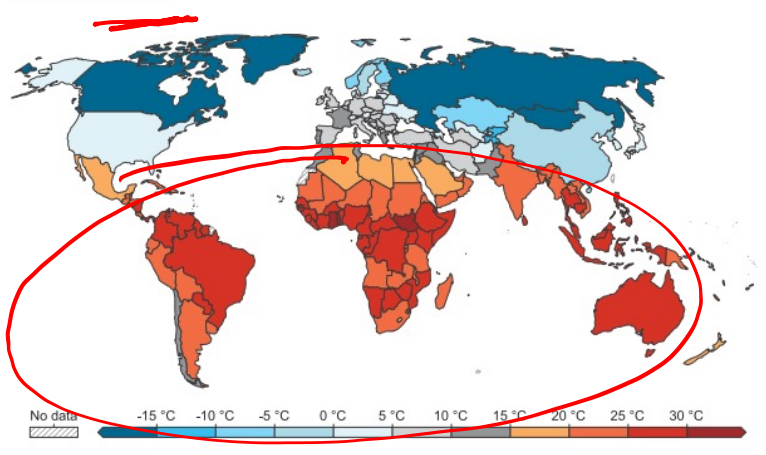
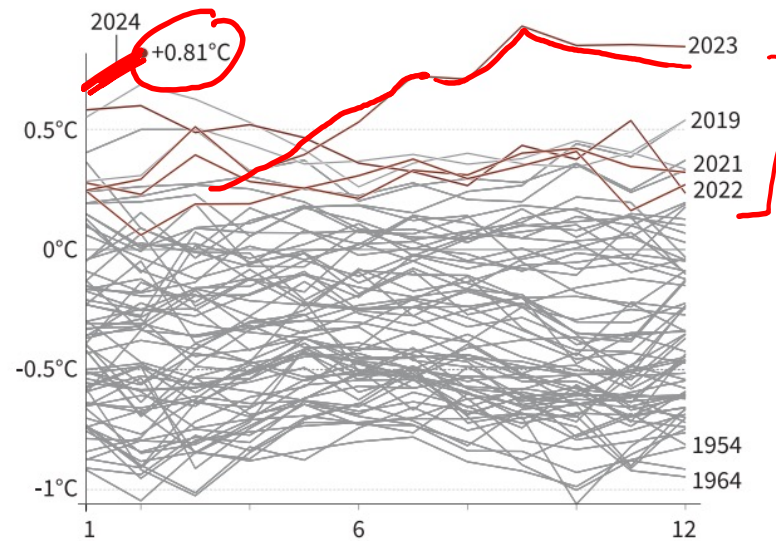
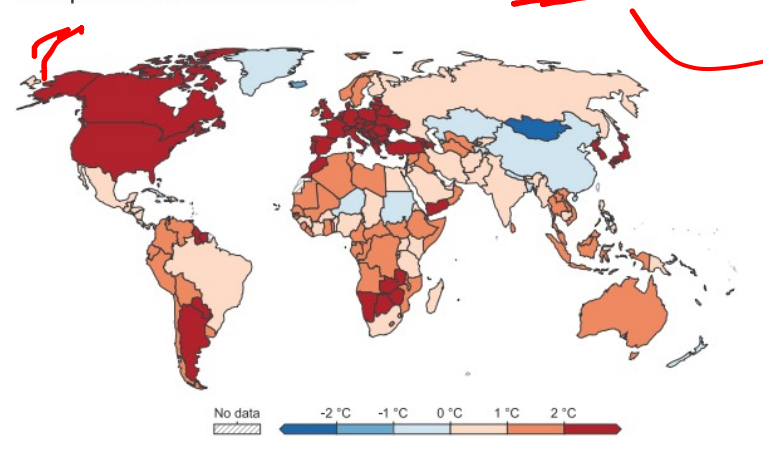


Chart 3: The chart shows the monthly surface temperature deviations by year, that is, the deviation of a specific month's average surface temperature from the 1991–2020 mean. In February 2024, the deviation was +0.81°C



Map 4: The map shows the country-wise monthly surface temperature deviations compared to the 1991–2020 mean as on February 15, 2024. The deviation was over +2°C in most of Europe and northern America



1.82

T.C

BALTIMORE Search for six bodies in Baltimore bridge-ship collision continues



Emergency services combed the cold waters of Baltimore harbour on Wednesday in search of the bodies of six men...

BANGKOK Thailand's Lower House passes Bill on same-sex marriage



Thailand parliament passed a same-sex marriage Bill in a landslide on Wednesday, paving the way for the nation to become the first in Southeast Asia to legalise same-sex marriage.

ISLAMABAD Pakistan high court judges allege intelligence agencies' interference



Six judges of the Islamabad High Court sought intervention by the Supreme Judicial Council against the alleged interference in the working of the judiciary by Pakistan's intelligence agencies.

GENEVA UN official who filed report on Israel genocide complains of threat



Francesca Albanese, the UN expert who published a report saying there were reasonable grounds to believe Israel has committed genocide in Gaza during its military campaign against Hamas...

China to develop Sri Lanka's deep sea port and airport

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena holds talks with his Chinese counterpart. Beijing is the island nation's biggest bilateral creditor and will assist Colombo's restructuring of external debt.

Agence France-Presse COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China — the island's biggest bilateral creditor — would assist Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout.

Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but



Timely ties: Sri Lanka Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Wednesday.

could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates. Sri Lanka in 2022 ran one of the world's largest foreign exchange deficits on its \$46 billion foreign debt. Months of protests forced then-President

Mr. Gunawardena said Beijing had offered "assistance to develop" Colombo International Airport and Hambantota port, the statement added, without giving further details.

Japanese project halted A Japanese-funded expansion of Colombo airport had been on hold since Sri Lanka's sovereign debt default.

The southern sea port of Hambantota was handed to a Chinese state-owned company in 2017 on a 99-year lease for \$1.2 billion.

India and the U.S. are both concerned that China's foothold at Hambantota, on the island's southern coast, could boost its naval advantage in the Indian Ocean.

Palestinians denied of homeland, India talks to Russia 'bluntly': Jaishankar

Kallol Bhattacharjee NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on Wednesday said that a response to the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip has to acknowledge the fact that the Palestinian people were "denied the right to their homeland".

"How different pulls and pressures can be. On the one hand, what happened on October 7 was terrorism. On the other hand, nobody would countenance the death of innocent civilians. Countries may be justified in their own minds in responding, but every response must take into account something called international humanitarian law."



S. Jaishankar

they have been denied their homeland," he said. In the backdrop of the conflict that intensified after the Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, Mr. Jaishankar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval have maintained dialogues with various stakeholders in West Asia as well as in eastern Europe.

7 Lebanese, Israeli killed in exchange of fire on border

Associated Press HEHBARIYE

An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics centre linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early on Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said.

The strike on the village of Hehbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group along the Lebanon-Israel border, raising concerns of further escalation along the frontier that has been active for the past five months of the Israel-Hamas war.

The paramedics association said the Israeli strike was "a flagrant violation of humanitarian work."

Security beefed up for Chinese workers after Pak. bombing

Agence France-Presse PESHAWAR

Pakistan ramped up security guarding Chinese engineers building Beijing-linked projects in the nation's northwest, an official said on Wednesday, a day after five workers were killed in a suicide bombing.

Beijing is Islamabad's closest regional ally and Pakistan has benefited from billions of dollars of investment in recent years, but has struggled to guarantee the safety of Chinese migrant workers. The five Chinese engineers — plus their Pakistani driver — were killed while travelling between Islamabad and a hydroelectric dam construction site in Dassi, in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

A high-ranking official from the provincial interior ministry said on Wednesday that at the more than two-dozen sites hosting Chinese engineers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security was stepped up.

"Directives have been issued to all law enforcement agencies to enhance security for Chinese nationals and all other foreigners," he said on condition of anonymity.

Xi meets U.S. business executives in an attempt to attract foreign investment

Agence France-Presse BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with representatives of U.S. businesses on Wednesday as Beijing seeks to attract foreign investment and reassure American business firms in the face of a slowing economy.

Officials are keen to bring in investment to kick-start growth as they battle a range of headwinds including a prolonged property-sector crisis, semiconductor youth unemployment and a global slowdown that is hammering demand for Chinese goods.

Hosting the group of executives at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, state

Economic growth rates in China have been ~~slowing~~ **have been aiming for years with the latest target pegged at 5%**

broadcaster CCTV showed Mr. Xi chucking as he expounded on what he characterised as the mutual reliance between Beijing and Washington.

Among the attendees was Cristiano Amon, CEO of Qualcomm, a major property-sector critic — which are at the forefront of U.S.-China tech rivalry — whose foreign ministry showed.

CEO of private equity giant Blackstone. "Differences will always exist, because people are different, and even people from the same family are different, too," Mr. Xi said.

Mr. Xi should seek common ground and build more consensus. This is true between nations and as well as between family members," he added.

History of friendly ties Mr. Xi said that "the history of China-U.S. relations is a history of friendly exchanges between the two peoples". Mr. Xi told the U.S. executives that "as long as both sides see each other as partners and show mutual respect, coexist in peace

and cooperate for win-win results. China-U.S. relations will get better" according to a readout published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Economic growth rates in China have been trending downwards for years, and Beijing this month set an annual target of "around 5%" — significantly lower than the breakneck rates that powered the country's meteoric rise to prosperity.

The crucial China-U.S. economic relationship has also suffered as the two powers clash on flashpoint issues from technology and trade to human rights as well as over the self-ruled island of Taiwan and the South China Sea.

Forced labour



Activists from the animal rights group PETA, wearing prison uniforms and monkey masks, gathered outside the Royal Thai Embassy in Tokyo on Wednesday to protest against the Thai government forcing labour of endangered pig-like, galther macaques in the coconut industry.

India releases second tranche of ₹500 crore for Bhutan infra work

Press Trust of India THIMPU

India has released the second tranche of ₹500 crore to Bhutan for the development of infrastructure related to the GyalSung Project.

This comes less than a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 23 concluded a fruitful two-day state visit to Bhutan.

Modi's visit During the visit, he assured Thimphu of New Delhi's firm support in its quest for development and agreed to provide ₹10,000 crore to

India had earlier agreed to provide ₹10,000 crore to the Himalayan nation over the next five years

the Himalayan nation over the next five years. The second tranche was handed over by India's Ambassador to Bhutan, Sudhakar Dalela to Bhutan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Lyonpo D N Dhunyel.

The first tranche of ₹500 crore was released on January 28 earlier this year.

Myanmar Army behind Facebook pages spewing hate speech: UN probe

Agence France-Presse GENEVA

Myanmar's military was behind dozens of seemingly unrelated Facebook pages spewing hate speech against the Rohingya prior to its dramatic 2017 crackdown against the mostly Muslim minority, a UN probe found on Wednesday.

Facebook has long been accused of helping spread hate against the Rohingya. Myanmar's military was behind dozens of seemingly unrelated Facebook pages spewing hate speech against the Rohingya prior to its dramatic 2017 crackdown against the mostly Muslim minority, a UN probe found on Wednesday.



Myanmar's junta chief Min Aung Hlaing attended a ceremony to mark the country's Armed Forces Day in Naypyidaw on Wednesday.

for \$150 billion, claiming the social network failed to stem the hate speech directed against them.

Now, the United Nations' Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) says there is clear evidence Myanmar's military secretly orchestrated the hate speech campaign.

The military had in a "systematic and coordinated" manner "spread material designed to instil fear and hatred of the Rohingya minority", the investigators said in a fresh report.

"It accomplished this by creating a clandestine network of pages on a social media site with the potential to reach millions."

The IIMM analysis looked at content posted on 43 Facebook pages between July and December 2017.

That report found that seemingly unrelated pages, most of them with no outward affiliation to the military and including some devoted to news and popular culture, formed an interconnected network — the Military Network — on Facebook.

BANGKOK

Thailand's Lower House passes Bill on same-sex marriage



AFP

Thailand parliament passed a same-sex marriage Bill in a landslide on Wednesday, paving the way for the nation to become the first in Southeast Asia to recognise marriage equality. The Bill, passed with 399 to 10 votes in the Lower House, must be approved by the Senate and endorsed by the King before becoming law. AFP

Accepted

Asean
Singapore + Thailand

Marital rights same-sex couples do not enjoy in India



- Government ~~pensions~~ and ~~medical benefits~~
- Claiming ~~leave~~ travel allowance for partner
- Right to ~~property~~ or inheritance
- Joint ~~adoption~~
- In case of separation, there is no provision to ~~seek~~ maintenance by the economically weaker partner
- Right to take emergency ~~medical decisions~~

Handwritten signature in red ink, possibly reading 'Kuljeet Kaur'.

Arguments from both sides

WHAT CENTRE SAID

- Family issues are far beyond mere recognition and registration of marriage between persons belonging to the same gender
- Living together as partners and having sexual relationship by same-sex individuals is not comparable with the Indian family unit concept of a husband, a wife and children which necessarily presuppose a biological man as a 'husband', a biological woman as a 'wife' and the children born out of the union between the two

PETITIONERS' RESPONSE

- The government's position is curious given the (Hindu Marriage) Act itself wiped out several recorded Hindu traditions that existed prior to codification. Whoever drafted the response also seems clueless about the 60-odd genders recognised in Hindu historical texts not to mention it has failed to provide any textual basis prohibiting the marriage of these 60-odd genders.
- The progeny argument is particularly ridiculous because it implies any marriage shorn of biological offspring is not a marriage

Support

(2) Lik
posture

It's a 21st century feeling

33 countries recognise same-sex marriage and civil unions

The **Netherlands** was the first, in **2001**

Momentum is growing — **2022** has seen **Chile, Slovenia, Switzerland** and **Mexico** join the club

In November, the US Senate passed a same-sex marriage protection bill with bipartisan support

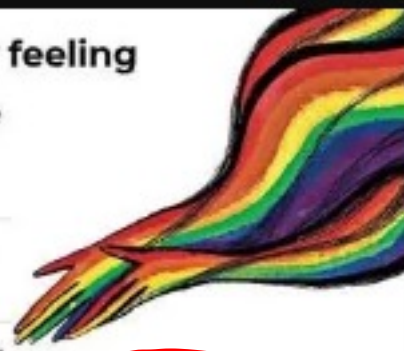


— **70% of Americans** now support same-sex marriage

Also in November, **Singapore's parliament** decriminalised sex between men. Its **Section 377A** grew especially untenable after Indian SC read down Section 377

Japan is the only G7 country that does not allow same-sex marriage. But recently a Tokyo district court underlined the infringement of the human rights of same-sex families

Taiwan is the only Asian country to have legalised same-sex marriage. Its parliament approved the landmark decision in 2019. Its constitutional court struck down the Civil Code's definition of marriage as being only between a man and a woman in 2017



China to develop Sri Lanka's deep sea port and airport

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena holds talks with his Chinese counterpart; Beijing is the island nation's biggest bilateral creditor and will 'assist' Colombo's restructuring of external debt

Agence France-Press
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China – the island's biggest bilateral creditor – would “assist” Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout.

Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but



Timely ties: Sri Lanka Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Wednesday. AFP

could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.

Sri Lanka in 2022 ran out of foreign exchange to finance essential imports and declared a sovereign default on its \$46 billion foreign debt. Months of protests forced then-President

Gotabaya Rajapaksa out of office.

Mr. Gunawardena's office said Premier Li Qiang had promised China would “assist Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process continuously and help Sri Lanka to develop its economy”.

Mr. Gunawardena said Beijing had offered “assistance to develop” Colombo International Airport and Hambantota port, the statement added, without giving further details.

Japanese project halted
A Japanese-funded expansion of Colombo airport had been on hold since Sri Lanka's sovereign debt default.

The southern sea port of Hambantota was handed to a Chinese state-owned company in 2017 on a 99-year lease for \$1.12 billion.

India and the U.S. are both concerned that a Chinese foothold at Hambantota, on the island's southern coast, could boost its naval advantage in the Indian Ocean.

Free
Free - Ting
46 Bx - default

THE PORT OF
KANKASENUTHURAI

THE PORT OF
POINT PEDRO

- MAJOR PORTS
- MINOR PORTS

THE PORT OF
TRINCOMALEE

- a. World's second largest natural harbor.
- b. Average of 11 vessels per month.

THE PORT OF
COLOMBO

- a. Largest Port in Sri Lanka with most traffic.
- b. Four container terminals.
- c. Average of 335 vessels per month.

THE PORT OF
OLUVIL

THE PORT OF
GALLE

- a. Natural harbor.
- b. Secondary Port in Sri Lanka.
- c. Average of 6 vessels per month.

THE PORT OF
HAMBANTOTA

- a. Newest port in Sri Lanka.
- b. Average of 29 vessels per month.

Handwritten notes in red ink:

- Go 76^{km}
- China
- 138
- 29 vessel
- 500 sail/mth

THEATRE OF RECONSTRUCTION



NEW PEAKS

SRH registers highest total in IPL, the game sees record aggregate



K.R. DEEPAK

Sunrisers' 277 for three against Mumbai Indians in Hyderabad on Wednesday is the highest in IPL history, eclipsing the 263 for five by Royals Challengers Bangalore versus Pune Warriors in the 2013 edition. The match aggregate of 523 is not only the biggest in an IPL game, but also in men's T20s (previous record: 517, SA vs. WI, 2023).

MAXIMUM OF MAXIMUMS

A record 38 sixes smashed in Sunrisers-Mumbai Indians game



K.R. DEEPAK

The 38 sixes recorded in the SRH-MI game is the highest for a T20 match, surpassing the 37 in an Australian Premier League game by Sunrisers-Mumbai Indians in 2019. Sunrisers hammered 38 sixes while Mumbai Indians tonked 20. Abhishek and Klaassen led the chart with seven each.

SOLACE

Mumbai Indians' spirited chase earns it a record but not a win



K.R. DEEPAK

MI's 246 for five, in pursuit of SRH's gargantuan 277 for three, is the highest score in the IPL for a team batting second (Ishak Sharma top-scored with 64). The previous best was the 226 for six scored by RR against KXIP in Sharjah in 2020. Unlike MI, RR was successful in the chase on that occasion.

DOUBLE CENTURY

Rohit plays his 200th IPL match in Mumbai Indians colours



ANI

Mumbai Indians' star batter and former skipper Rohit Sharma played his 200th match in the league for his franchise, when he took to the field against Sunrisers Hyderabad, on Wednesday. Rohit had earlier represented the now-defunct Deccan Chargers between 2008 and 2011, playing 45 matches for the team.

Records go for a six as SRH outshines MI in run fest

After Head, Abhishek and Klaassen power Cummins' side to the League's highest total of 277, Hardik's men stay in the hunt for a major part of the chase before losing steam and finishing at 246

IPL-17
V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

Travis Head played a gem of an innings, Abhishek Sharma was stunning and Heinrich Klaassen flamboyant as the trio fashioned Sunrisers Hyderabad's impressive 31-run win against Mumbai Indians in a high-scoring IPL league match at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Wednesday night.

Rollicking start

When Mumbai began the daunting chase of 278, it was obvious that the target was too high.

This despite Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan ensuring a rollicking start before both fell, going for big shots.

Later, local boy Tilak Varma showcased his power-hitting with a brilliant knock but that was not good enough as Sunrisers captain Pat Cummins struck the big blows — removing Rohit and Tilak — at crucial moments to end short-circuit Mumbai Indians' hopes.

Tim David too came up with some big hits towards the end but Mumbai need-



ed something extraordinary and it didn't happen. Earlier, Mumbai's gamble to put the best in backfield badly as the bowling looked ordinary, the exception being Jasprit Bumrah.

Sunrisers posted the highest total of 277 for three in IPL history, eclipsing the previous best of 263 for five by Royal Challengers Bangalore against Pune Warriors in 2013.

The home team's move to prefer Head to Marco Jansen proved to be a great one as the Australian opener, dropped on five at mid-off by Tim David off Hardik Pandya's first ball in the se-



Unstoppable: Klaassen, Abhishek and Head tore the Mumbai Indians attack apart, hitting fours and sixes at will. K.R. DEEPAK

cond over of the innings, played some extravagant strokes, especially treating 18-year-old South African left-arm pacer Kwena Maphaka with disdain, pulling him nonchalantly for two huge sixes and straight driving to the fence with aplomb.

Southpaw Abhishek was equal to the occasion against both pace and spin, pulling pacer Gerald Coetzee for a six and later hitting leg-spinner Piyush Chawla for three sixes in his first over.



Unstoppable: Klaassen, Abhishek and Head tore the Mumbai Indians attack apart, hitting fours and sixes at will. K.R. DEEPAK

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Mayank Agarwal c David b Hardik 31 (24), Travis Head c Dhir b Coetzee 62 (24), Rav 36, Abhishek Sharma c Dhir b Chawla 63 (28), Rav 26, Aiden Markram (not out) 42 (28), Jaiswal 46, Heinrich Klaassen (not out) 80 (34), 44, 76; Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-2, w-12), 19. Total for three wks. in 20 overs: 277.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-45 (Mayank, 4.1 overs); 2-113 (Head, 7.5), 3-161 (Abhishek, 10.6).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Maphaka 4-0-66-0, Hardik 4-0-46-1, Bumrah 4-0-36-0, Coetzee 4-0-57-1, Chawla 2-0-34-1, Madan 2-0-23-0.

MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma c Abhishek b Cummins 26 (28), Ishan Kishan c Markram b Shabbaz 34 (28), Rav 40, Naman Dhir c Cummins b Unadkat 30 (24), Jaiswal 24, Tilak Varma c Mayank b Cummins 64 (34), 24, 0/5, Hardik Pandya c Klaassen b Unadkat 24 (28), Jaiswal, Tim David (not out) 42 (22), 24, 34; Romario Shepherd Impact Player in place of Maphaka (not out) 35 (5), 24, 14; Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-1, w-5), 11. Total for five wks. in 20 overs: 246.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-56 (Kishan, 3.2), 2-66 (Rohit, 4.3), 3-152 (Dhir, 10.4), 4-182 (Tilak, 14.1), 5-224 (Hardik, 17.6).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-53-0, Unadkat 4-0-47-2, Shabbaz 3-0-31-1, Cummins 4-0-35-2, Imanir Impact Player in place of Head (not out) 4-0-52-0.

Toss & Match

PoM: Abhishek, SRV won by 31 runs.

Samson's RR determined to build on momentum, Pant's DC eyes big win

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Royals got most things right on Sunday.

Skipper Sanju Samson won the toss and justified his decision to bat first with a superb 62 not out. The move to promote Riyan Parag paid off, and the bowlers did a good job too, as Royals won by 20 runs to open its IPL campaign on a satisfactory note against Lucknow Super Giants.

They will look to capitalise on that when they take on Delhi Capitals, which should be keen to recover from its disappointing opening fixture, when the neighbouring franchisees face off on Thursday. Capitals were beaten by Punjab Kings by four wickets, after a not-so-good effort with the bat.

The batter most in focus was, of course, Rishabh Pant, who was returning to cricket after his horrific car accident in December, 2022. He made only 18 and should be eager to play one of his eye-catching knocks.

Capitals, playing their second successive away match, will also want to Australian openers David Warner and Mitchell Marsh to convert starts. The bow-ling — featuring the formid-



Next stop: Royals players fine-tune their fielding skills while Capitals skipper Pant has a stint at the nets. SIVU KUMAR PUSHPAKKAR

TODAY'S MATCH

Jaiyum, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 27

RR 1 | DC 16

RR won by 57 runs, 2023

Live on STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & DC-NEWS

myer and Dhruv Jurel. There is variety in the Royals attack, in the form of Trent Boult, R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal and Sandeep Sharma.

Parag's hard work rewarded

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Rajasthan Royals may have surprised many when Riyan Parag came out to bat at No. 4 against Lucknow Super Giants, but that was something the Royals management seems to have thought off well before Season 17 of the IPL started.

Parag celebrated his promotion up the order in style, making a 29-ball 43. Coach Kumar Sangakkara was pleased as he talked about the strategic move at the press conference on Wednesday.

"We looked at how Riyan performed over the years," Sangakkara said. "It is a difficult thing for someone like Riyan who has an overall game to only get the toughest parts of the game, where he has to come in and up the run rate at the death."

"The hard work he has put in and the runs he has scored in the domestic season played a part in that decision."

Delhi Capitals' director of cricket Sourav Ganguly said he needed to bat better. "With Rishabh Pant back, the batting is stronger," he said.

"If we bat well, we will win a lot of matches because we have the bow-ling."

Ruturaj's bold calls should hold CSK in good stead



Pace is ace: The speedsters, rather than spinners, delivered for CSK against Titans. S.R. BHAGHATHAN

Sankar Narayanan E.I.
CHENNAI

One of the trademarks of a typical Chennai Super Kings team, especially while playing at its fortress, M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, is having a plethora of spinners at its disposal.

And it would have come as a surprise that Ruturaj Gaikwad's side brought death-bowling specialist Matheesha Pathirana into the bowling line-up in place of spinner Mheesh Theekshana for the fixture against Gujarat Titans at Chepauk on Tuesday.

Uncharacteristic move CSK's uncharacteristic move worked like magic, on a pitch with a tinge of green on it, as the five-time

IPL champion trounced GT by 63 runs, with each of its five medium pacers taking at least one wicket.

Not a spinners' day Ravindra Jadeja not being required to bowl his full quota of overs (2-0-15-0), and the opposition tweakers Rashid Khan (4-0-49-2) and K. Sai Kishore (3-0-28-1) finding it tough to create an impact made CSK's decision to tinker with its combination look even better.

CSK's ploy, though, would not have solely relied on the nature of the track. The think-tank saw the upside in having two death bowlers in Pathirana and Mustafizur Rahman — which also helped get the best out of Tushar Desh-

pande who could finish his spell (4-0-21-2) by the 16th over — and went with the horses-for-courses option.

GT seamer Mohit Sharma voiced the same opinion during the post-match press conference. "I feel CSK would have gone with two spinners if the pitch was drier," Mohit said. "Every team comes as a package. And, depending on the scenario at the ground, sides look to bring out the best playing XI," he added.

It is still early days in Ruturaj's captaincy career and the fact that he is not averse to taking bold calls to optimise the resources he has — something that M.S. Dhoni is known for — should hold him in good stead.

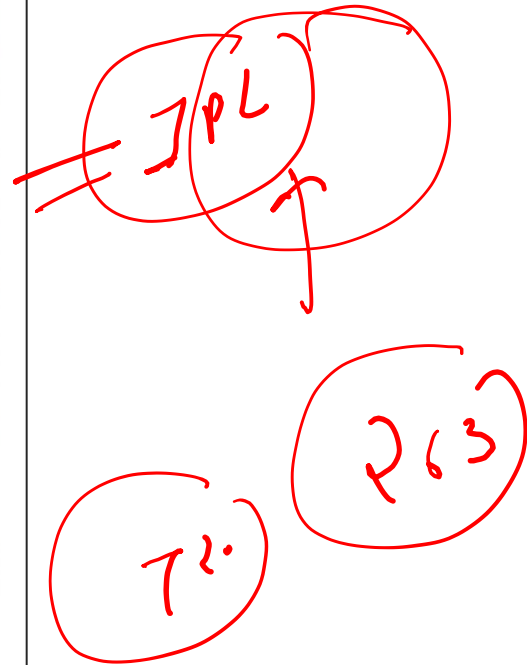
NEW PEAKS

SRH registers highest total in IPL, the game sees record aggregate



K.R. DEEPAK

▲ Sunrisers' 277 for three against Mumbai Indians in Hyderabad on Wednesday is the highest in IPL history, eclipsing the ~~263~~ for five by Royals Challengers Bangalore versus Pune Warriors in the 2013 edition. The match aggregate of 523 is not only the biggest in an IPL game, but also in men's T20s (previous record: 517, SA vs. WI, 2023).



BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNAY



Citing law, NGT rejects SPG plea to extend life of 3 PM vehicles

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

THE NATIONAL Green Tribunal (NGT) has rejected a prayer by the Special Protection Group (SPG) to extend the registration of three diesel-run specialised armoured vehicles "needed for the specific purpose of security of the Prime Minister".

In its order dated March 22, the NGT principal bench of chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Dr A Senthil Vel, which rejected the SPG application, cited the Supreme Court's October 2018 order that banned diesel vehicles older than 10 years from plying on the roads of Delhi NCR.

"We are conscious of the fact that these three vehicles are special purpose vehicles which are

EXPRESS NETWORK

SADANAND DATE, 26/11 HERO, IS NIA CHIEF PAGE 7

ED REMAND ENDING, CM WILL BE IN DELHI COURT TODAY
No interim relief for Kejriwal, HC grants ED time to respond to pleas

Arrest disables him from active role, level-playing field uneven: Singhvi

MALAVIKA PRASAD
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

DECLINING TO interfere further with the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi excise policy case, the Delhi High Court issued notice Wednesday to the Enforcement Directorate to file for interim relief seeking immediate release from custody, listing it on April 3 for "final disposal".

Kejriwal's remand in ED custody ends Thursday when he

EXPRESS NETWORK

ED SUMMONS AAP'S GOA CHIEF, REACHES PUNJAB TOO PAGE 7

will be produced before the Rouse Avenue Court.

The single-judge High Court bench of Justice Swarajna Kanta Sharma, in its order, noted that the prayer seeking Kejriwal's release in the main petition

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Lt Governor: Delhi govt will not be run from jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

A DAY after the BJP complained to him about Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal issuing directions to his ministers while being in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate, Lt Governor V K Saxena said Wednesday that the Delhi government will not be run from jail.

Responding to a question at the Times Now Summit in New



Lt Governor V K Saxena

Delhi, Saxena said, "I can assure the people of Delhi that the government will not be run from jail."

Following Kejriwal's arrest last week by the ED in connection with its probe into the Delhi

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Senior US diplomat Gloria Berbera leaves South Block after being summoned by the MEA on Wednesday.

EXPLAINER
Drawing a red-line

THE SUMMONING of Western diplomats — both from countries with which India has strong strategic ties — signals that Delhi will push back on criticism on "domestic issues". This is an important red-line in the run-up to the elections.

Hours after summons, US again flags due process in Kejriwal, Congress cases
Germany dials down, underlines cooperation, 'atmosphere of trust'

SHUBHAJITROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

HOURS AFTER India summoned a senior US diplomat on Wednesday and objected to the State Department's remarks on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, the US reiterated that it "follows these actions closely" and "encourages fair, transparent, timely legal processes".

"We continue to follow these actions closely, including the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Lalit Kala Akademi chief's powers curbed by Culture Ministry

Orders no appointment or financial decision without consulting ministry

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

IN AN unprecedented move, the Ministry of Culture has curtailed the powers of the Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA) Chairman, V Nagdas, barring him from taking any "administrative actions", including on matters related to "appointment, recruitment, transfer, disciplinary action and financial decisions", without consulting the ministry.

Nagdas (64), a painter and printmaking artist from Kerala, was appointed to the post on March 13 last year for a three-year term.

When contacted by The Indian Express, officials in the ministry said the order was sent



Chairman V Nagdas, appointed in March 2023 for 3-yr term

"in view of certain decisions taken by the chairman." Nagdas was not available for comment.

The order issued by the ministry on January 8, 2024, addressed to Nagdas, cites his failure to respond to an earlier "complaint" and also alleges non-compliance with the ministry's "administrative directions".

"As per right of the central government mentioned in rule 19(1) of General Rules and Regulations of LKA, you are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

3 days before its chief quit, CPR got tax notice for Rs 10.16-cr

RITUSARIN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

FOLLOWING THE cancellation of its tax exemption status in June last year, the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), one of the country's premier think tanks, has received its first tax demand for Rs 10.16 crore for the financial year 2022-23. The CPR has been given one month to pay this.

This demand has been raised based on a calculation of receipts of Rs 19.25 crore and the CPR now being treated as an AOP (association of persons). The demand notice was dispatched on March 22.

On March 26, the CPR announced that its chief executive, Yamini Aiyar, would step down April 1 and senior fellow Srinivas Chokkakula would take over.

Details available with The Indian Express show that the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

With 'joining committees' in districts, BJP engineers a 'Cong exodus' in MP

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, MARCH 27



talking to Congress workers over the phone, something he never imagined would happen in his lifetime.

Varma, dressed in a white shirt and jeans, confidently strides towards the Madhya



MP BJP chief V D Sharma with new entrants from Congress

Pradesh BJP headquarters as junior party workers greet him. "I worked in the Bilgaol municipal corporation for five years. These days, I get to decide the Congress

INSIDE

YOGI HITS THE TRAIL: AFTER LORD RAM'S HOLI IN AYODHYA, MATHURA WAITS
AAP'S PUNJAB MP, MLA JOIN BJP
PAGE 6

leaders who want to join our party. I am a member of the new joining committee and it is my job to decide which Congress

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Tum kehte ho sab theek hai
Har saal kyun paper leak hai?



Har-ghar cylinder keh kar
400 ka cylinder kiya 1100 paar



Vaada tha denge saalana 2 crore rozgaar
Yuva bhatak rahe berozgaar



Mitron ki 16 lakh crore loan maafi
Kisaanon ke saath kyun nainsafi?



Jab 73% sankhya hamari
Phir kyun kam hai hissedari?

MERE VIKAS KA DO HISAAB



HAATH BADLEGA HALAAT

NREGA wages: Goa sees highest hike of ₹34 per day, UP, Uttarakhand lowest at ₹7

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

THE CENTRE on Wednesday notified new wage rates for unskilled manual workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 for the financial year 2024-2025, with Goa seeing the maximum hike of 10.56% over the current wage rate, and Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand recording the lowest raise of 3.04% each.

The new wage rates, notified by the Ministry of Rural Development under sub-section (1) of section 6 of MGNREGA 2005, will become effective from April 1, 2024.

As per the notification, the highest rate of NREGS wage (Rs 374 per day) has been fixed for Haryana, while the lowest (Rs 234 per day) has been fixed for Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

As far as the state-wise increase over the current year (FY 2023-2024) is concerned, Goa has seen the maximum hike of 10.56% (Rs 34), taking the wage to Rs 356

NEW WAGE RATES (₹/DAY)

HIGHEST HIKE IN...

State/UT	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Increase
Goa	₹322	₹356	10.56%
Karnataka	₹316	₹349	10.44%
Andhra Pradesh	₹272	₹300	10.29%
Telangana	₹272	₹300	10.29%
Chhattisgarh	₹221	₹243	9.95%

LOWEST HIKE IN...

State/UT	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Increase
Rajasthan	₹255	₹266	4.31%
Kerala	₹333	₹346	3.90%
Lakshadweep	₹304	₹315	3.62%
Uttar Pradesh	₹230	₹237	3.04%
Uttarakhand	₹230	₹237	3.04%

per day for FY 2024-2025 against Rs 322 per day in the current fiscal.

In fact, three other states — Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana — have also seen over 10% hike in the NREGS wages.

In Karnataka, the new NREGS wage rate will be Rs 349 per day, 10.44% higher than the existing

rate of Rs 316 per day.

For Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the NREGS wage rates have been fixed at Rs 300 per day for 2024-2025, which is 10.29% higher as compared to Rs 272 per day during the current financial year. Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which share the

same wage rate under the NREGS, have seen almost 10% hike — Rs 243 per day from the existing Rs 221. Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, which share the same NREGA wage rate, have recorded the lowest hike at just 3.04% from existing Rs 230 to Rs 237 per day. Eight other states have seen a hike below 5% — Haryana, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

Overall, the wages have seen an average increase of about 7% — from the existing all-India average wage rate of Rs 267.32 per day to Rs 285.47 per day for the financial year 2024-25. The Central government fixes state-wise wage rates for NREGS workers under sub-section (1) of section 6 of the MGNREG Act, 2005. The NREGS wage rates are fixed according to changes in the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index- Agriculture Labor), which reflects the increase in the inflation in the rural areas.

Last week, the ministry had sought the permission of the Election Commission for notifying the revised NREGA wages, which the poll panel granted.

1991

235

234

Job

Hotel

Govt

29 March

India TB Report-2024: Missing cases shrinking, 95% got treatment in 2023

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

THE GAP between the estimated number and actual cases of tuberculosis (TB) is closing, according to the India TB Report 2024 released by the Union Health ministry on Wednesday. This is an important marker as the “missing cases” are assumed to not have received treatment, continuing to spread the infection to others.

There were only 2.3 lakh missing cases in 2023, as compared to 3.2 lakh the year before, the report states. This gap has been reducing over the years, especially with the

	India TB Report 2020	2023	2024
Estimated TB cases	26.9 lakh	27.4 lakh	27.8 lakh
Number of cases reported	24.04 lakh	24.2 lakh	25.5 lakh
Reporting from private sector	6.8 lakh	7.3 lakh	8.4 lakh
% cases from private sector	28.20%	30%	32.90%
Estimated mortality	4.36 lakh	3.2 lakh	3.2 lakh

government’s Ni-kshay portal tracking all TB patients.

According to the report, the majority of the TB cases are still reported by the government health centres, even as there has been an

uptick in notifications by the private sector. Nearly 33% or 8.4 lakh of the 25.5 lakh cases reported in 2023 came from the private sector. To compare, only 1.9 lakh cases were reported by the private sec-

tor in 2015, the year considered to be the baseline by the programme that is geared towards the elimination of the disease.

The estimated incidence of TB in 2023 increased slightly to 27.8

lakh from the previous year’s estimate of 27.4 lakh. The mortality due to the infection remained the same at 3.2 lakh as per the data. These estimates are based on a new methodology that India developed and has since been accepted by the World Health Organisation.

Last year, when the in-country model was used to estimate the number of cases and deaths due to tuberculosis, there was a sudden drop in the mortality figures seen in the global report released by the WHO. India’s TB mortality dropped from 4.94 lakhs in 2021 to 3.31 lakhs in 2022. The number of cases reported in

a year also went down from 29.4 lakh in 2021 as per the previous method to 27.4 lakh in 2022, according to the data.

The report shows that India reached its 2023 target of initiating treatment in 95% of patients diagnosed with the infection. It says 58% of those diagnosed were offered a test to check whether their infection was resistant to the first line drugs, an increase from 25% in 2015. The programme recommends drug susceptibility treatment to ensure that people who may have drug resistant TB are able to access e therapies from the get go instead of being treated with the first-line therapy initially.

THE HARSH COUGH

Tuberculosis is curable and preventable but India accounts for 25% of the world's cases. Every year, India reports 15 lakh new cases

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



Cough with sputum and blood



Chest pain



Weakness



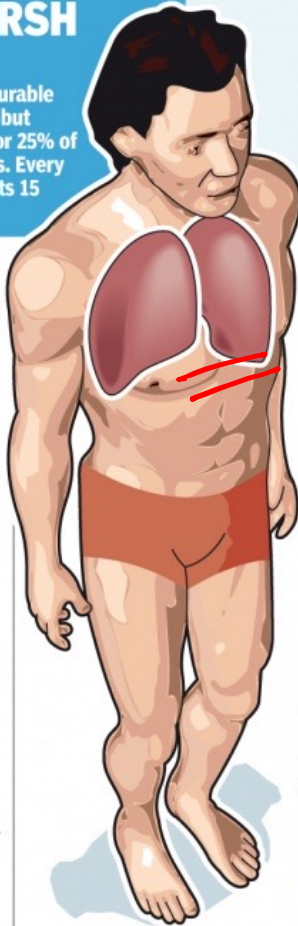
Weight loss



Fever



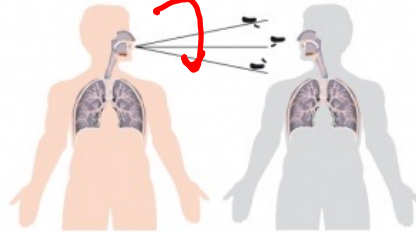
Night sweats



WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS?

TB is an infectious, airborne disease that commonly affects the lungs. It is caused by the Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacteria

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?



Through the air – if an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks and others breathe in the air

ESTIMATED NEW TB CASES (ALL FORMS) PER 100,000 POPULATION



1/3 of the world's population has latent TB, which means they have been infected by the bacteria but are not ill and cannot transmit the disease

1/3

Latent TB

PREVALENCE

People registered for treatment (2011)

India 15 lakh

TN 79,830

STUDY FINDINGS

No. of TB patients 10,477

No. over 60 1,485

Male-female ratio in elderly 4:1

Incidence among elderly 259

Incidence in other patients 142 (per 100,000 population)

38%

of elderly unlikely to respond to treatment

WHO IS AT RISK?



Children



People with HIV



Smokers



Elderly

Treatment is less effective in people with diabetes, hypertension and cardio vascular diseases

(Source: WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2012; Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme 2011; REACH)

INDIA'S BILATERAL TRADE WITH PAKISTAN

(in \$ million)

Financial Year	Exports from India	Imports to India	Total Trade	Increase	Balance of Trade
2003-04	286.94	57.74	344.68	80%	+ 229.2
2004-05	521.05	94.97	616.02	78.72%	+ 426.08
2005-06	689.23	179.56	868.79	41.03%	+ 454.23
2006-07	1,350.09	323.62	1,673.71	92.64%	+ 1,026.47
2007-08	1,950.53	287.97	2,238.50	85.23%	+ 1,662.56
2008-09	1,440	370.17	1,810.17	7.52%	+ 1,179.83
2009-10	1,573.32	275.94	1,849.26	2.1%	+ 1,297.38
2010-11	2,039.53	332.52	2,372.05	28.27%	+ 1,707.01
2011-12	1,541.28	397.66	1,939.21	- 18.25%	+ 1,140.37
2012-13	2,064.79	541.87	2,606.66	34.42%	+ 1,523
2013-14	2,274.26	426.88	2,701.15	3.62%	+ 1,847.38
2014-15	1,857.18	497.31	2,354.49	- 12.83%	+ 1,359.87
2015-16	2,171.14	441.03	2,612.16	10.94%	+ 1730.11
2016-17	1,821.87	454.49	2,276.36	- 12.86%	+ 1367.38
2017-18	1,924.28	488.56	2,412.83	6%	+ 1435.72
2018-19	2,066.56	494.87	2,561.44	6%	+ 1571.69

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

1.8 B\$

1.5 B\$

2.5 B\$

Police hero of 26/11 attack is new NIA chief

MOHAMED THAYER
Mumbai, March 27

SADANAND DATE, THE 1990 batch IPS officer who took on terrorists during the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, was on Wednesday appointed as the head of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Date, whose bravery and presence of mind led to the rescue of hostages at the Cama and Alless hospital for women and children, is known as a no-nonsense officer with a squeaky-clean image. "The 26/11 attack remains the most challenging event of my career,

and it will stay with me life-long. I tried to do whatever was best to my ability," Date, who was later awarded the President's police medal for gallantry, had told *The Indian Express*.

Date, currently the chief of the Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS), has served in several key postings in the past, including as the first Commissioner of the newly formed Mira Bhayandar Vasai Virar Police



Sadanand Date is an IPS officer of the 1990 batch

Commissionerate that came up in 2020, Joint Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, and later Joint Commissioner of the Crime Branch in Mumbai city.

Date, who holds a doctorate from Pune university, is also a qualified cost and management accountant from ICAI.

Officers who have worked with him recall Date as a workaholic and a thorough officer. A former colleague

from Date's time with the Economic Offences Wing said that since that particular department included a lot of case files that needed to be read, Date would reach office at 8.30 am instead of 9.30 am so that through the day, he was not occupied with reading the case files and was available to meet people.

"Since such a senior officer would reach an hour earlier, all officers had to ensure they reached on time and were thorough with the paperwork as Data would go through everything with a toothcomb," an officer recalled.

2009

Agency overview

Formed 2009 (15 years ago)^[1]

Employees 649^[2]

Annual budget ₹200.53 crore
(US\$25 million)
(2023–24 est.)^[3]

Jurisdictional structure

Federal agency [India](#)

(Operations jurisdiction)

Operations jurisdiction [India](#)

Size 3,287,263 square kilometres
(1,269,219 sq mi)

Population 1,428,627,663

Legal jurisdiction [India](#)

Governing body [Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India](#)

Constituting instrument [National Investigation Agency Act, 2008](#)

General nature [Federal law enforcement](#)

Operational structure

Headquarters CGO Complex
[New Delhi, India](#)

 [28.5884°N 77.2329°E](#)

Elected officer responsible [Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs](#)

Agency executive [Shri Sadanand Date, IPS, Director General](#)

PM targets Cong. over lawyers' letter to CJI
NEWS » PAGE 4

World wastes 1 bn meals a day
NEWS » PAGE 6

Israeli forces continue bombardment in Gaza
WORLD » PAGE 14

Did the electoral bonds scheme enable extortion?
Were donations linked to regulatory action?
OPINION » PAGE 9

Parag turns it around for RR against DC
SPORT » PAGE 13

INSIDE



'BJP re-launched Operation Lotus to break AAP'
NEW DELHI
BJP Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj on Thursday alleged that the BJP has launched 'Operation Lotus' to engineer defeat of the Aam Aadmi Party. » PAGE 2

Govt. extends AFSPA in parts of Arunachal
NEW DELHI
The Union Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in three districts and areas falling under the jurisdiction of three police stations in Namsai district in Arunachal for another six months. » PAGE 4

Varun pens letter to voters after BJP denies ticket
NEW DELHI
BJP MP Varun Gandhi — all but expelled in this Lok Sabha poll cycle after he was denied ticket from his constituency, Pilibhit — penned an embassy, Pilibhit — to his voters, emphasising his bonds with them. » PAGE 5

India should lead the way on peace process: Ukraine
NEW DELHI
Ukraine hopes that India will play a key role in the summit hosted by Switzerland this summer and also play a role in bringing Russia to the table, said Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, ahead of a bilateral meeting on Friday. » PAGE 8

Core sector output growth spurts to 6.7% in Feb.

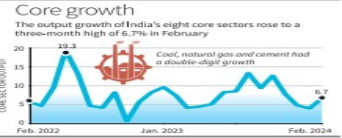
Double-digit upticks in the natural gas, cement, coal industries lead to three-month high levels | Fertilizers saw a fall of 9.5%; this is the second month in a row that output has taken a tumble | As both Union and State governments rush to meet targets, infrastructure will stay at 6% in March too

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

India's eight core sectors' output growth spurred to a three-month high of 6.7% in February, led by double-digit upticks in coal, natural gas and cement even as fertilizers' production fell 9.5% to record the sharpest contraction since May 2021. January's Index of Core Industries (ICI) was revised to reflect a 4.1% rise, compared with the previous estimate of 3.6%, but that remained the slowest growth in 15 months. This is the second month in a row that

fertilizers' output dipped year-on-year, and marks the first such streak in two years. In absolute terms, overall output levels were at a three-month low and 4.9% below January's levels, which had marked a ten-month high. In sequential terms, the only segment to record an uptick over January's production level was cement (up 1.7%).

Crude oil production in year-on-year terms, crude oil production grew at an all-time high pace of 7.9% in February, although that was aided by base effects as output had dropped 4.9% in the same month last year. Natural gas output grew 11.3%, which was the highest in two years. The upticks in February also marked a four-month peak for cement (10.2%), electricity (6.3%), and coal (11.6%). While steel production



Pre-poll splurge lifts fiscal deficit
NEW DELHI
Spending sharp rise in spending ahead of the fiscal year end, the Centre's fiscal deficit soared from 64% of the revised estimates in January to 86% by the end of February. The deficit hit ₹15 lakh crore in the first eleven months of 2023-24. » PAGE 9

age of slightly over 40% in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), economists expect industrial output growth to recover from the 3.8% uptick recorded in January. IICRA chief economist Aditi Nayak reckoned the IIP would record an expansion of 6% to 8% in the month of February, while Bank of Baroda's chief economist Madan Sabharwal pegged it in the range of 4% to 5%.

2023-24 has been smart at 7.7%, coming over the 6.8% growth last year," Mr. Sabharwal said. CareEdge Ratings' chief economist Rajani Sinha said IIP growth may pick up to around 5.5% in February, while India Ratings and Research projected it to rise 9%. As both the Union and State governments rushed to meet their capex targets in March, the core infrastructure sectors' growth is expected to stay around 6% this month as well, said India Ratings' economists Sunil Kumar Sinha and Paras Jasral.

A riot of colour



A worker engaged in fogging activity is silhouetted against the dramatic lights of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's Entology Wing, ahead of the multimedia laser, music and musical fountain show, near the Sainisagar. NAGARA GOPAL

Delhi HC dismisses plea to remove Kejriwal as CM

Soibham Rocky Singh NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday rejected a petition seeking the removal of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from the post, following his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate. "This case is in the view that there is no scope for judicial intervention. It is for the other wing of the government to examine the issue in accordance with the law," a Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet P.S. Arora said. In his petition, Surjit Singh Yadav demanded that the Union, Delhi governments and the Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor be asked to explain under what authority Mr. Kejriwal is still holding the post of Chief Minister. He contended that the continuation of Mr. Kejriwal as the Chief Minister could not only lead to dis-



Arvind Kejriwal

ruption of law and order but also lead to the breakdown of the constitutional machinery of the state. The court, however, asked Mr. Yadav to show the "legal basis" which prohibits Mr. Kejriwal from acting as Chief Minister from behind bars. "If there is a constitutional failure, the President will act on it. Or the Governor will act on it. We will not act on it," the court said. "239AB (Provision in case of failure of constitutional machinery) is not to be exercised by the high court, it is to be exercised by the Governor. The Governor will exercise it, and it will go to the President, but the problem is, which we are asking you (petitioner) to show the scope for judicial interference on this issue." "We have read today's newspaper, the Lieutenant Governor is examining this issue. It will go to the President for examination, that is up to them. That (task) belongs to a different wing," the Bench said. "There may be practical difficulties. Even today we have matter where the Chief Secretary has been told to place a file before the Chief Minister. We don't know how it will operate, what will happen. But that is something else," it added. The plea argued that "sitting in jail the Chief Minister is incapable of transacting any business that the law enjoins upon him".

ED CUSTODY EXTENDED » PAGE 4

Bengaluru cafe blast case: NIA identifies bomber, arrests one

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

In a major breakthrough in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case in Bengaluru the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday said the bomber had been identified as Musavvir Shazeeb Hussain and the key conspirator in the case as Abdul Matheen Taha. Both are residents of Tirthahalli. Shivamogga district of Karnataka and are wanted by security agencies in multiple terror cases. The duo, still on the run, are also accused of being the masterminds of Mangaluru Cooiker Blast case of November 2022. Meanwhile, NIA sketched have arrested one Muzammil Shareef, a resident of



Major breakthrough: NIA has identified the suspect who planted the IED at The Rameshwaram Cafe as Musavvir Shazeeb Hussain.

nine injured. It was suspected that the Tirthahalli module could be behind the attack due to similarities in timer and detonator devices used in the IED at the restaurant and in the cooker blast. Now, the NIA has also pointed fingers at the same module. NIA had issued notices to several suspects from both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, whom they raided on Wednesday, to appear before the agency for questioning on Thursday. Of them, they arrested Chikkamagaluru town, for "extending logistic support to the other two identified accused in the case." This is the first arrest in the case. This comes after NIA teams raided 18 locations, including 12 in Karnataka,

Govt. should apologise to youth for flawed Agniveer scheme, Kharge

The Hindu Bureau DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday reacted to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement that the Narendra Modi government was open to making changes in the Agniveer scheme for recruitment to the armed forces, if required. According to the scheme, 25% of the inductees would get permanent commission while others would retire after four years of service. Calling the scheme "flawed and discriminatory", several Opposition parties have asked the government to scrap it and revert to the old system of recruitment.



Bone of contention: The Congress chief reiterated that if his party came to power, it would scrap the scheme. NAGARA GOPAL

Mr. Kharge said in a post on X. "The Congress chief said the government should first apologise to the youth and reiterated that if his party came to power, it would scrap the scheme. He added the scheme has "weakened" national security as "no youth wants to join the Army for only four years". Mr. Kharge said his party, through its "Jai Jagan" campaign, highlighted the plight of about 1.5 lakh young men who were selected for the armed forces in a regular recruitment drive between 2019 and 2022. However, induction could not take place as the Modi government suddenly announced the Agnipath Scheme.

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Rahul takes a dig at Union govt. over MGNREGS wage hike

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday took a dig at the Narendra Modi government over the revised wages for MGNREGS workers, which has gone up by 3% to 10.5% in various states, including a 7% hike for workers in Uttar Pradesh.

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi wrote, "Congratulations to MNREGA workers! The Prime Minister has increased your salary by 7%. Now he might ask you, 'What will you do with such a huge amount of money?'"

He said the government could spend ₹700 crore on a "Thank You Modi campaign" for this hike. He added that if elected, the INDIA bloc government would increase the wage of every worker to ₹400 per day.

Congress general secretary and former Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh questioned the revision coming at a time



Rahul Gandhi

when the Model Code of Conduct is in force. The Union government had taken approval from the EC before making the announcement.

"The hike ranged from 7% in Uttar Pradesh to 10.5% in Goa. The highest wage was in Haryana — ₹374. A significant jump in wages was reported in several states, including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Goa where the hikes varied from 8% to 10.5%."

Bihar followed closely behind, with a revision of 12%. These revised rates would be applicable from April 1.

ED's mission is to finish off AAP, Arvind Kejriwal tells Delhi court

Central agency's custody of Delhi CM extended till April 1; personally arguing his case, Kejriwal pointed out that a firm named in the alleged excise policy scam had donated money to the BJP, after which its owners managed to secure bail

Tabita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate's mission to finish off the Aam Aadmi Party, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal told a court in New Delhi on Thursday.

The court extended his ED custody till April 1. While being taken to the court, Mr. Kejriwal termed the alleged excise policy scam as a "political conspiracy", adding that the "people of the country will reply in the matter". When produced in court, he said he did not wish to oppose the ED's request for further custody.

Special Judge Kavari Baweja of the Rouse Avenue Courts passed the remand extension order, as the initial seven-day custody period ended on Thursday. The ED had sought nearly more days; the court granted a four-day extension.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal comes out after appearing before the court in the excise policy case on Thursday. (APRIL 02/24/2024)

Mr. Kejriwal was arrested by the agency on March 21 in a money laundering case filed in connection with the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22, and has been in its custody since then.

Personally arguing his case in Hindi, Mr. Kejriwal said the ED had two missions, the first of which was to finish off the AAP. "ED ka mission kewanu hai" (What is the mission of the ED), he asked.

which its owners managed to secure bail.

"Sarath Reddy [director of Aurbindo Pharma] has donated ₹55 crore to the BJP. He is a prominent sufficient to implicate me in the case?" Mr. Kejriwal asked.

Another witness named by the ED had given seven statements, in six of which Mr. Kejriwal had not been mentioned. "In the seventh statement, he brings in my name and he is immediately released," the Delhi CM said.

Responding to Mr. Kejriwal, the ED's counsel, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, said that he was giving evasive replies during the interrogation and was refusing to share the passwords of his accounts with the agency. He added that AAP chief was playing to the gallery by attacking the ED, and maintained that the agency has material to show that he had demanded ₹100 crore.

"kewanu mujhe fasana tha [ED's only mission was to implicate me]," said the AAP's national convener.

"Extortion racket" Alleging that the ED was running an extortion racket in the name of its investigation, Mr. Kejriwal pointed out that a firm named in the alleged excise policy scam had donated money to the ruling BJP, after

Modi targets Congress over lawyers' letter to CJJ; Kharge hits back

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi targeted the Congress and recalled how it has "called for a committed judiciary" for this 50 years ago, after a group of eminent lawyers wrote to Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud about a "vested interest group" trying to put pressure on the Indian judiciary in corruption cases involving politicians.

The letter by the group of lawyers, however, did not link any political party to the "vested interest group".

Responding to the Prime

Minister, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge reminded Modi that four judges of the Supreme Court were forced to hold a press conference in the name of "interference" from the government.

"To browbeat and bully others is vintage Congress culture, 5 decades ago itself they had called for a "committed judiciary" — they shamelessly want commitment from others for their selfish interests but desist from any commitment towards the nation. No wonder 140 crores Indians are rejecting them," Mr. Modi said in a post on X on Thursday.

The Prime Minister's

post was prompted by a letter that over 600 lawyers, including senior advocate Harish Salve and Bar Council chief Manan Kumar Mishra, wrote to CJI Chandrachud about some donors trying to put pressure on the court.

"These tactics are damaging to our courts and do not maintain a dignified silence".

The signatories to the letter targeted a section of lawyers "without naming them and alleged that they defend politicians by day and attack judges through the media at night."

"Refraining comments" In his statement, Mr. Kharge advised Mr. Modi to refrain from commenting on the judiciary. "You fail to acknowledge that during your regime, four senior-most Supreme Court judges felt compelled to hold an anti-defame courts, and the top court should "stay strong

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Govt. says U.S. remarks on Kejriwal arrest 'unacceptable'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday reiterated the Government of India's objection to the back-to-back remarks from the U.S. State Department about the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and freezing of the Chief Opposition Congress's bank accounts.

In the weekly press briefing, Ministry spokesperson Randeep Singh reminded that the modern states are "expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others". "The recent remarks by the State Department are unwarranted. Any such external imposition on our electoral and legal processes is completely unacceptable. In India, legal processes are driven only by the Rule of Law. Anyone who has similar ethos, especially fellow democracies, should have no difficulty in appreciating this fact," he said.

Official summoned The Ministry had summoned Gloria Berben, the U.S.'s Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, to a 40-minute meet at the South Block on Wednesday to convey the protest officially.

Earlier this month, the MEA had responded to the remarks of the U.S. State Department on the CAA and described them as "misplaced and unwarranted". Washington on Wednesday said that the U.S. "continues to follow" the Central government's actions in the run-up to general elections, including Mr. Kejriwal's arrest.

The U.S. response came a day after India summoned Germany's Deputy Chief of Mission Georg Enzweiler after German Foreign Office spokesperson had said Germany had taken note of Mr. Kejriwal's arrest.

Govt. extends AFSPA in parts of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday extended the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in parts of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh for another six months.

As per the notification, the AFSPA has been extended in the whole of eight districts and 21 police stations in five other districts of Nagaland. In Arunachal Pradesh, it has been extended in three districts and areas falling under the jurisdiction of three police stations in Namsai district.

In Nagaland, the notification issued under Section 3 of the AFSPA for a period of six months with effect from April 1, "unless withdrawn earlier", will be effective in Dimapur, Nisaland, Chumoukedima, and

Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phok and Peren districts and in Khuzama, Kohima North, Kohima South, Zubza and Kezocha police stations in Kohima district; Fokech, Longchun, Tuli, Longchem and Anaki C' police stations in Mokokchung district; Yanglok police station in Longjumei district; Bhandari, Champang and Kanan police stations in Wokha district; and Ghatashi, Pughoboto, Sataka, Surubato, Zoroboto and Agahunato police stations in Zunheboto district.

The AFSPA has been extended in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chokhitan police stations in Namsai district along the Assam border for another six months.

The High Court said the pleas were dismissed in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chokhitan police stations in Namsai district along the Assam border for another six months.

The Delhi High Court on Thursday rejected the Congress party's plea challenging the initiation of tax reassessment proceedings against it for assessment years 2017 to 2021 by tax

authorities. The High Court said the pleas were dismissed in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chokhitan police stations in Namsai district along the Assam border for another six months.

Heads bowed

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

A Manipur government order declaring March 31, which is Easter Sunday, a working day for all public offices in the conflict-ridden State ignited public outrage on Thursday. Following which the government was forced to modify the order and clarify that both Good Friday and Easter Sunday would remain holidays.

On Wednesday, the Manipur government issued orders in the name of the Governor, declaring that March 30, Saturday, and March 31, Sunday, would be working days for all government offices in the State.

According to the 2011 census, 41.2% of Manipur's population is Christian. The move drew sharp reactions from the Scheduled Tribes in the State, especially the Kuki-Zo community, which has borne the brunt of the fatalities in the ongoing ethnic conflict.



Devotees attend a mass prayer on the eve of Good Friday at Kurj Church, in Patna on Thursday. (ANI)

Many called it another attempt to target them by a "Meitei-majority" government. Christian rights groups such as the United Christians Forum (UCF) also called for the order to be withdrawn, calling it "institutionalised violence". Congress leader Shashi Tharoor reacted to the or-

Manipur govt. order declaring Easter as working day revoked

The Hindu Bureau
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The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

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IN BRIEF



Sacked IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt gets 20-year jail in 1996 case

More than two decades after the incident, a sessions court in Gujarat's Palanpur on Thursday sentenced sacked IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt to 20 years in jail in a 1996 case involving planting of drugs to frame a lawyer. The sentencing was pronounced on Thursday, a day after the court found Bhatt guilty of falsely implicating a Rajasthani-based lawyer by claiming, in 1996, that he had seized drugs from a hotel room in Palanpur where the lawyer was staying. Bhatt was Rajasthan's Superintendent of Police at the time of the incident and a raid was carried out at a hotel at his behest to frame the lawyer.

Mahua Moitra skips ED summons in FEMA case

Tripura's Congress leader Mahua Moitra on Thursday did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate to record her statement in connection with an inquiry under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Ms. Moitra was on an election campaign in West Bengal's Krishnanagar constituency. The agency had summoned her and Dubai-based businessman Farhan Hiranandani to record their statements concerning the suspected FEMA violations. This is the third time she was summoned by the Enforcement Directorate, but she has not yet joined the inquiry citing prior engagement. On March 23, the Central Bureau of Investigation had conducted searches in Kolkata and Krishnanagar after registering an alleged corruption case.

Advisory boards have to consider if detention is needed in eyes of law: SC

boards consisting of persons qualified to be High Court judges. Justice Pardiwala, who wrote the judgment, said the requirement to have people qualified to become High Court judges was not an empty formality, but a careful measure to ensure that a detention order of the government was put to robust scrutiny. These boards, under the various laws, have to review detention orders every three months to see whether there was sufficient cause or not. The boards should consider material placed before them; call for further information; hear the detainee and submit a report explaining whether or not detention was justified. The judgment from the top court came in an appeal filed by a man ordered by the Telangana police to

India should lead the way on peace process: Ukraine FM

Dmytro Kuleba says there is a 'change' in Delhi's perspective on the Russia-Ukraine conflict; hopes for support in engaging Russia to come to the table for summit talks expected to be held in June

Sahasini Haldar New Delhi

Ukraine hopes that India will join a peace summit hosted by Switzerland this summer and also play a role in bringing Russia to the table, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Thursday, ahead of a bilateral meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday.



For peace: Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba (second from right) pays homage at the Rajghat in New Delhi on Thursday.

Mr. Kuleba's trip, the first such high-level visit from Ukraine since the Russian attacks began in February 2022, is expected to focus on garnering diplomatic and mediatory support from the Narendra Modi government, as well as more technical assistance in reconstructing destroyed facilities in the country.

Mr. Kuleba arrived in Delhi in the morning. He visited the Rajghat and paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi. He is due to meet Mr. Jaishankar for a bilateral meeting and will also meet Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri on Friday.

The visit by the Ukrainian Minister indicates a shift in both New Delhi and Kyiv's positions — as Mr.

Kuleba had earlier been deeply critical of India's purchases of Russian oil, while the Modi government has not sent any Minister to Kyiv since the war began. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Zelenskyy to address the G-20 in 2023, as Kyiv had requested.

Mr. Kuleba said that Ukraine believed that there was a "change in the perspective" in India's position on the war now, and hoped that India would play a more proactive role in resolving the conflict through the Ukraine-initiated Swiss peace process.

"I am here because we see a change in the per-

spective of the war in India. I do believe in the capacity of India to lead, it is not just a matter of India wants to lead but India wants to lead (take the initiative) that others would follow," he said in response to a question from The Hindu during a discussion organised by the Delhi-based Council for International Dialogue and Search (CISDI), adding that India's confirmation of participation in the peace conference would have an impact on other countries around the world.

Having India on board [at the Swiss summit] would add legitimacy to the effort," he said. Pitching also for India to use its influence with Russia,

which has not indicated it would join the summit yet, Mr. Kuleba said that "at some point" talks with Russia would begin. "India can play a role in speaking to Russians about the peace process. I believe Russia needs India more than India needs Russia," he added.

Sources confirmed that the Swiss government has formally invited India to participate in the conference, expected to be held in June, and is due to send its Deputy Foreign Minister to Delhi to discuss the details; however, New Delhi has not yet responded to the invitation. Asked on Thursday, the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson said India's position on "peace" initiatives was "clear" but did not commit a response to the invitation.

"We continue to encourage peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, and remain open to engaging all ways and means that would help achieve this objective," ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in response to a question by The Hindu about the conference.

UGC proposes NET for PhD admissions; students slam move

The Hindu Bureau New Delhi

Bringing a marking system in the National Eligibility Test (NET) and taking a step towards ending the entrance examinations conducted by universities for PhD programmes, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to make the NET as "one national entrance test" for PhD admissions.



UGC Chairman M. Jagadeesh Kumar said on Thursday that from the upcoming academic session of 2024-2025, the universities in the country will have the opportunity to utilise NET scores for admissions to PhD programmes, replacing the need for separate entrance tests conducted by individual universities and higher education institutions (HEIs).

UGC Secretary Manish Joshi said in a public notice sent to all HEIs that the move, however, said the notice was exclusionary and made NET mandatory for PhD admissions. "The centralised mandate of making NET a compulsory criteria for PhD across the country in all the institutions, is likely to see the removal of university level entrance tests for PhD," the Students Federation of India (SFI) said.

eligible to be appointed as Assistant Professor and only for PhD programmes. Professor Joshi added in the notice that the NET result will be declared in percentage along with marks for admission to PhD programmes.

The students' organisations, however, said the notice was exclusionary and made NET mandatory for PhD admissions. "The centralised mandate of making NET a compulsory criteria for PhD across the country in all the institutions, is likely to see the removal of university level entrance tests for PhD," the Students Federation of India (SFI) said.

Households across the world waste 1 billion meals a day, says UN report

The Hindu Bureau New Delhi

Households across the globe wasted over one billion meals a day in 2022, even as 783 million people struggled with hunger and a third of humanity faced food insecurity, according to a new report from the UN. Report 2024, a study jointly published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme), said.

The report, released ahead of the International Day of Zero Waste (March 30), noted that in 2022, there were 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste generated (including inedible parts), and 1.32 billion kilograms per capita and almost one-fifth of all food available to consumers. "Out of the total food wast-

ed in 2022, 60% happened at the household level, while 40% was generated by businesses, including 28%, and retail 12%," the report observed. The report stressed the importance of expanding and strengthening data infrastructure to enable tracking and monitoring of food waste, including point-of-purchase data, and said that "many low- and middle-income countries continue to lack adequate systems for tracking progress

to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030, particularly in retail and food services." At present, only four G-20 countries (Australia, Japan, U.K., U.S.) and the European Union have food waste estimates suitable for tracking progress by the year.

Contrary to popular perception, the report said that the world is not a "rich country problem", the report stated, as the global economy averaged 1% of household food waste per capita in low-per-middle, and lower-middle-income countries differing by just 7 kg per capita. "Hotter countries appear to generate more food waste per capita in households, potentially due to higher consumption of fresh foods with substantial inedible parts and a lack of robust systems for tracking progress

to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030, particularly in retail and food services." At present, only four G-20 countries (Australia, Japan, U.K., U.S.) and the European Union have food waste estimates suitable for tracking progress by the year.

Another trend revealed by the data was that compared to urban areas, rural ones generally wasted less food, due to "greater diversion of food scraps to pets, compost, and home composting." The report urged governments to "raise climate ambition by integrating food loss and waste" into their nationally determined contributions.

THE CROSSWORD 14135

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a solution key.

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site. @ https://www.puzzles.org.uk/

- 13 Keeps out previous suggestions about introduction of democracy (6)
14 Proximity in orbits? Very inappropriate! (9)
15 Surveys to cut super-class taxes (5)
16 Guerrilla tactics to hold back any which way (2,3)
17 Pitch in exact point about things (2-2,5)
18 Special, large power supply circuits organised to reverse traffic jams (5-9)
19 Clear description of Company chairperson's position, perhaps? (5-9)
20 Opening in starboard on Hector's barge (4)
21 Infamous despot, provided refuge by Omani maid, is making a comeback (3,4)
22 Stander, according to some, lacking substance (7)
Down
23 Capital's magical ... and you end in paradise (7)
24 Lousy car with ultimate in stereo sound (9)
25 New bags for mugs (7)
26 Bully Asterix is carrying raised stick (6)
27 Trimmed hibiscus chain evenly set out in Japanese decoration material (9)
28 Peak is most demanding with summit obscured (7)
29 Worries picked up by model amidst a long, unending spell of concentration (3-6)
30 London suburb reached through European capital first, after bypassing Germany (9)
31 Spooner folded Edward's camp cot (4,3)
32 Instructions to computers with wacky cop (7)
33 Short photo set customised for crime de la crime (3,4)
34 "Mother India" captivates retired sailor in Bollywood location (6)
35 Follow tennis, basketball regularly (5)

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with a solution key.

FAITH

Good Friday and Easter
Good Friday is a sombre commemoration of the day Jesus Christ the saviour was crucified. He was crowned with thorns, condemned to death, carried the burden of the cross and was crucified between two thieves, according to gospel narratives. Good Friday is observed as a day of fasting and sorrow described in the German word, Karfreitag, loosely translated as mourning Friday, said Prof. Kumool Abhi. Good Friday consists of reading the gospel, the passion narrative, adoration of the cross and holy communion. The history of salvation is commemorated: Lord Jesus Christ, through His redemptive suffering takes away the sins of the world. The assurance of the divine covenant, the certitude and promise of the love of God is rejuvenated. Easter celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the third day after his crucifixion. The earliest recorded observation of Easter comes from the second century. Venerable Bede propounded the view that Easter was derived from eostre, the Anglo Saxon Goddess of spring and fertility. The Council of Nicaea decreed in 325 AD that Easter be observed on the first Sunday, following the first full moon, after Spring Equinox. In 1955, the Roman Catholic Church set the time for Easter Vigil at Easter mass at midnight. In Roman Catholic tradition the vigil has four parts: the celebration of lights focused on paschal candle, the service of light, liturgy of the word and liturgy of the Eucharist.

UGC proposes NET for PhD admissions; students slam move

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bringing a marking system in the National Eligibility Test (NET) and taking a step towards ending the entrance examinations conducted by universities for PhD programmes, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to make the NET as "one national entrance test" for PhD admissions.

UGC Chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar said on Thursday that from the upcoming academic session of 2024-2025, the universities in the country will have the opportunity to utilise NET scores for admissions to PhD programmes, replacing the need for separate entrance tests conducted by individual universities and higher education institutions (HEIs).

UGC Secretary Manish Joshi said in a public notice sent to all HEIs that the UGC had constituted an expert committee to review provisions of NET and based on its recommendations the UGC decided on March 13 that the NET score could be used for PhD admissions. He said NET candidates will be declared eligible in three categories, such as admission to PhD with Junior Research Fellowship (JRF),

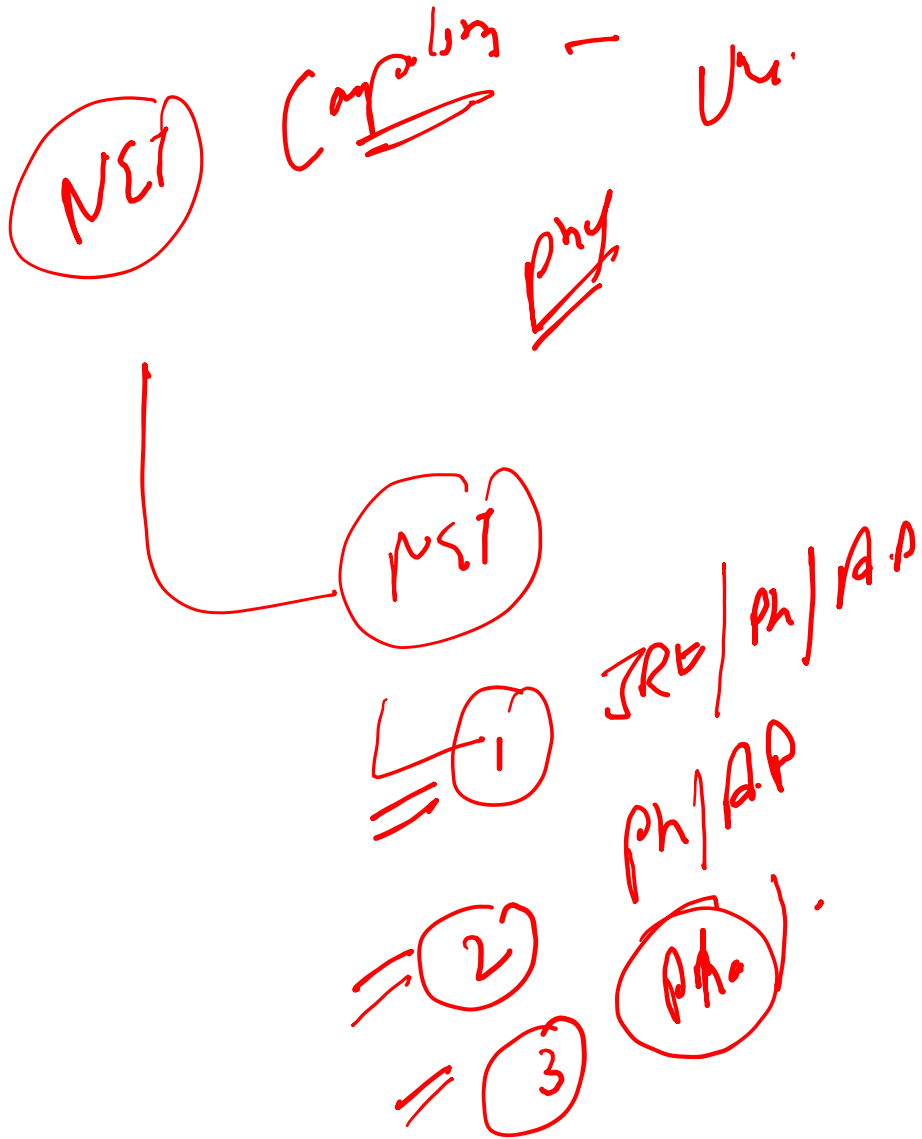


NET result will be declared in percentile along with marks for admission to PhD programmes.

eligible to be appointed as Assistant Professor and only for PhD programmes.

Professor Joshi added in the notice that the NET result will be declared in percentile along with marks obtained by a candidate to utilise the marks for admission to PhD. Students who qualify for NET and PhD eligibility will get 70% weightage for test scores and 30% weightage for interview for admission to PhD programmes.

The students' organisations, however, said the notice was exclusionary and made NET mandatory for PhD admissions. "This centralised mandate of making NET a compulsory criteria for PhD across the country in all the institutions, is likely to see the removal of university level entrance tests for PhD," the Students Federation of India (SFI) said.

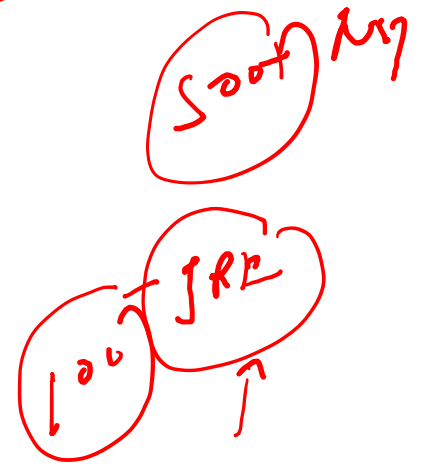


NET - Phy

A - PhD - Uni

Entrance

JRF Add



Households across the world waste 1 billion meals a day, says UN report

1E

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Households across the globe wasted over one billion meals a day in 2022, even as 783 million people struggled with hunger and a third of humanity faced food insecurity, according to the Food Waste Index Report 2024, a study jointly authored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), a U.K.-based non-profit.

The report, released ahead of the International Day of Zero Waste (March 30), noted that in 2022, there were 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste generated (including inedible parts), amounting to 132 kilograms per capita and almost one-fifth of all food available to consumers. "Out of the total food wast-



Rural areas generally wasted less food, the report said.

ed in 2022, 60% happened at the household level, with food services responsible for 28%, and retail 12%," the report observed.

The report stressed the importance of expanding and strengthening data infrastructure to enable the tracking and monitoring of food waste, pointing out that "many low- and middle-income countries continue to lack adequate systems for tracking progress

to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030, particularly in retail and food services". At present, only four G-20 countries (Australia, Japan, U.K., U.S.) and the European Union have food waste estimates suitable for tracking progress to 2030.

Contrary to popular perception, food waste was not a "rich country problem", the report stated, with observed average levels of household food waste for high-income, upper-middle, and lower-middle-income countries differing by just 7 kg per capita. "Hotter countries appear to generate more food waste per capita in households, potentially due to higher consumption of fresh foods with substantial inedible parts and a lack of robust cold chains," the report noted.

Detailing the link between food waste and climate change, the report found that food loss and waste generated "8%-10% of annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – almost five times that of the aviation sector – and significant biodiversity loss by taking up the equivalent of almost a third of the world's agricultural land". It estimated the toll of both food loss and waste on the global economy at \$1 trillion.

Another trend revealed by the data was that compared to urban areas, rural ones generally wasted less food, due to "greater diversion of food scraps to pets, livestock, and home composting". The report urged governments to "raise climate ambition by integrating food loss and waste" into their Nationally Determined Contributions.

78 cr - hungry

100 cr → MCH

2 cr 50 wats
in March
36

(din)

! v.

~

THE HAGUE
ICJ says Israel must 'ensure urgent humanitarian assistance' in Gaza



The International Court of Justice on Thursday ordered Israel to "ensure urgent humanitarian assistance" in Gaza without delay, saying "famine has set in". The ICJ also said "Israel shall... take all necessary measures to ensure, without delay... the unhindered provision... of urgently needed basic services" in Gaza. AFP

WASHINGTON
Teenage girl among four persons killed in stabbing spree in Illinois



Four persons, including a teenage girl, were killed and at least five injured after a man went on a stabbing spree at multiple addresses in Illinois in the U.S. The stabbings took place on Wednesday afternoon, Rockford police said, adding that a 22-year-old suspect was taken into custody. A motive has not been established. AFP

TAIPEI
U.S. congressional team pledges defence support for Taiwan



A bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation pledged continued support for Taiwan, days after the Congress approved \$300 million in military aid for the self-governed island. The Congress had earlier approved \$480 million to counter the Chinese government's influence in the region, as part of its Defense Appropriations Act. AP

MOSCOW
Russian military jet crashes into sea off Crimea, says Governor



A Russian military plane crashed on Thursday into the sea off Ukraine's annexed Crimean peninsula, the Moscow-installed Governor of the city of Sevastopol said. Sevastopol, the historic headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, sits on the southern tip of Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014. AFP

Bombing continues in Gaza as U.S. says Israel is ready to restart talks

Israel's forces said they struck dozens of militant targets, including tunnels, meeting between Israeli and American officials has been rescheduled. Tel Aviv's campaign has so far killed at least 32,552 Palestinians, most of them women and children

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Battles and bombardment pounded the Gaza Strip on Thursday after Washington said Israel had agreed to reschedule talks that had been cancelled amid tensions between the allies.

Israel's military said it struck dozens of militant targets, including tunnels, over the previous day, and the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza reported at least 62 more deaths over a similar period. The U.S. criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has convinced over Gaza's militant



Seeking shelter: A boy pushes a young girl in a wheelchair past a destroyed building in Gaza City on Thursday. AFP

death toll, dire food shortages, and Israeli plans to push its ground offensive against Hamas militants in Rafah. Gaza's far-southern city is crowded with displaced

and said the territory's health system is collapsing "due to ongoing hostilities and access constraints".

Strike on hospital: Bombardment and fighting have not eased despite a binding UN Security Council resolution passed on Monday demanding an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza and the release of hostages held by militants.

Mr. Netanyahu had scrapped an Israeli delegation's visit called by Washington to discuss the Rafah plan - a protest after the U.S. had abstained from voting on the UN ceasefire resolution, allowing it to pass. Israel's government has

since backtracked. White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said Israel had agreed "to reschedule the meeting dedicated to Rafah".

U.S. officials say they plan to present Israel with an alternative for Rafah, focused on striking Hamas targets while limiting the civilian toll. Even without a ground invasion, Rafah is under regular bombardment that on Wednesday left the city's air-raid shelter coping with the wounded and the dead.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 32,552 people, most of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Philippines leader warns of countermeasures as China steps up aggression in sea

Associated Press
MANILA

The Philippine President said on Thursday that his government would take action against what he called dangerous attacks by the Chinese Coast Guard and suspected militia ships in the disputed South China Sea, saying "Philippines do not yield".

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. did not provide details of the actions his government would take in the successful weeks but said they would be "proportionate, deliberate and reasonable in the face of the open, unabating and illegal, coercive, aggressive and dangerous" attacks by agents of the China coast guard and Chinese maritime militia.



Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"We seek no conflict with any nation," Mr. Marcos wrote on X, formerly Twitter, but said the Philippines would not be "cowed into silence".

Mr. Marcos's warning is the latest sign of the escalating disputes between China and the Philippines in the contested waters.

China and the Philippines, as well as Vietnam,

Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have overlapping claims to the resource-rich and busy waterway, where a bulk of the world's commerce and oil transits.

Chinese officials in Manila or Beijing did not immediately respond to Mr. Marcos's public warning, which he issued during Holy Week - one of the most sacred religious periods in the largely Roman Catholic nation.

Saturday's incident: In the latest hostilities on Saturday, the Chinese coast guard used water cannons that injured several Philippine navy crew.

The Philippines heavily damaged their wooden supply boat near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

China sends glacier water from Tibet to climate-hit Maldives

Agence France-Presse
MALE

China has sent more than a million bottles of water from melting Tibetan glaciers to the Maldives, officials said on Thursday, a gift from the world's highest mountains to a low-lying archipelago threatened by rising seas.

The Indian Ocean nation of 1,092 tiny coral islands is on the frontlines of the climate crisis, with sea levels seeping into the land and corrupting potable water, leaving it dependent on desalination plants.

Scientists say glaciers in the Himalayas are melting faster than ever due to climate change.

The Maldives Foreign Ministry said the water was a gift from Yan Jinhai, the chairman of the Xizang Autonomous Region of Tibet, lying more than 3,385-km away on the far side of the world's highest mountain range. The consignments of mineral water packed into 90 sea containers arrived last week and had been unloaded in the capital Male, a port authority official said.

"The Chairman of Xizang Autonomous Region announced his visit to the country in November," the Maldives Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"Water shortage": The Ministry rejected allegations on social media that the imported water was for the consumption of pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu, who came to power last year on an anti-Indian platform. "The government of

Salt levels have seeped into the land in the Maldives, corrupting potable water in its islands

Maldives has decided to utilise the water to provide assistance to islands in case of water shortage," it said.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in 2007 that rises of 18 cm-59 cm would make the Maldives virtually uninhabitable by the end of the century.

Mr. Muizzu promises his country - 80% of which is less than a metre (three feet) above sea level - will beat back the waves through ambitious land reclamation and building islands higher.

The congested capital island of Male has already run out of groundwater for drinking and depends on expensive desalination plants to supply the local population. A fire at the water purification plant in Male in December 2014 disrupted supplies for almost a week, causing panic.

The Chairman of the North India and regional rival China rushed ships to produce drinking water against the desalination plant was fixed.

Better known for its white sand beaches and luxury tourism, the Maldives also straddles strategic east-west international shipping routes. New Delhi considers the Indian Ocean archipelago as a vital link between the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. The Maldives has shifted into the orbit of China - its largest external creditor.

Bogged down in Kabul



A burqa-clad woman in Afghanistan carrying a plastic bag over her head while walking along a street in Kabul on Wednesday. AFP

Sri Lanka jails firebrand Buddhist monk for fanning hatred against Muslims

Agence France-Presse
COLOMBO

A Sri Lankan court on Thursday sentenced an influential Buddhist monk to four years' hard labour for fanning sectarian hatred against the island's minority Muslim population.

The Colombo High Court found Galagodaatte Gnanasara had hurt Muslims by making disparaging remarks about Islam at a 2016 press conference.

"The monk was sentenced to four years of hard labour and fined 100,000 rupees (\$330)," a court official said. "He was sent to prison to start serving his sentence."



The Colombo High Court ruled that Galagodaatte Gnanasara made disparaging remarks about Islam at a 2016 press conference. AFP

Gnanasara has been accused of instigating violence against Muslims in the Buddhist-majority country, where roughly 10% of the 22 million people follow Islam. He has close ties with Wirathu, an extremist monk based in Myanmar. This is not the first time that Gnanasara, who once

enjoyed powerful political ties, has been in jail.

Political ties: In 2018, he was sentenced to six years for intimidating the wife of a missing cartoonist and contempt of court but was freed nine months later after former President Maithripala Sirisena pardoned him.

Ex-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa later made Gnanasara the head of a panel to recommend legal reforms to ensure religious harmony. At the time, opposition lawmaker Shanakiyan Ramamanickam described Gnanasara's committee as "the definition of irony".

Sam Bankman-Fried gets 25 years for FTX cryptocurrency fraud

Reuters
NEW YORK

Sam Bankman-Fried was sentenced to 25 years in prison by a judge on Thursday for stealing \$8 billion from customers of the now-bankrupt FTX cryptocurrency exchange he founded, the last step in the former billionaire wunderkind's dramatic downfall.

U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan handed down the sentence at a Manhattan court hearing after rejecting Bankman-Fried's claim that FTX customers did not actually lose money and accusing him of lying during his trial testimony. A jury found Bankman-Fried 32, guilty on November 2 on seven fraud and conspiracy counts stemming from FTX's 2022 collapse as prosecutors have called one of the biggest financial frauds in U.S. history.

"He knew it was wrong," Mr. Kaplan said of Bankman-Fried before handing down the sentence. "He knew it was criminal. He regrets that he made a very bad call about the likelihood of getting caught. But he is not going to admit a thing as his last right."

Bankman-Fried stood with his hands clasped behind him as Mr. Kaplan read the sentence.

Apology offered: Bankman-Fried, wearing a beige short-sleeve polo shirt, acknowledged during 20 minutes of remarks to the judge that FTX customers had suffered and he offered an apology to his former FTX colleagues. The sentence marked the culmination of Bankman-Fried's plunge from



Sam Bankman-Fried

an ultra-wealthy entrepreneur and major political donor to the biggest crypto fund to date in a crackdown by U.S. authorities on malfeasance in cryptocurrency markets. Bankman-Fried has vowed to appeal his conviction and sentence.

Mr. Kaplan said he had found that FTX customers lost \$8 billion. FTX's equity investors lost \$1.7 billion, and the firm's parent, Alameda Research hedge fund Bankman-Fried founded, lost \$1.3 billion.

"The defendant's assertion that FTX customers and creditors will be paid in full is misleading. It is logically flawed, it is speculative," Mr. Kaplan said.

"A thief who takes his loot to Las Vegas and successfully bets the stolen money is not entitled to a discount on the sentence by using his Las Vegas winnings to pay back what he stole," Mr. Kaplan said.

The judge also said Bankman-Fried lied during his trial testimony when he said he did not know that his hedge fund had spent customer deposits taken from FTX. Federal prosecutors had sought a prison sentence of 40 to 50 years. Bankman-Fried's lawyer Marc Mukasey had argued that a sentence of less than 5-1/4 years would be appropriate.



Sam Bankman-Fried gets 25 years for FTX cryptocurrency fraud

Reuters

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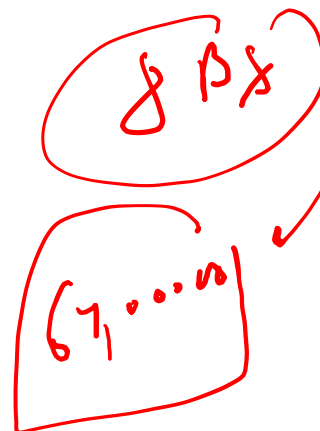


Sam Bankman-Fried

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"The defendant's asser-



A look at what Lok Sabha candidates can officially spend

95 lakh B10

70 lakh

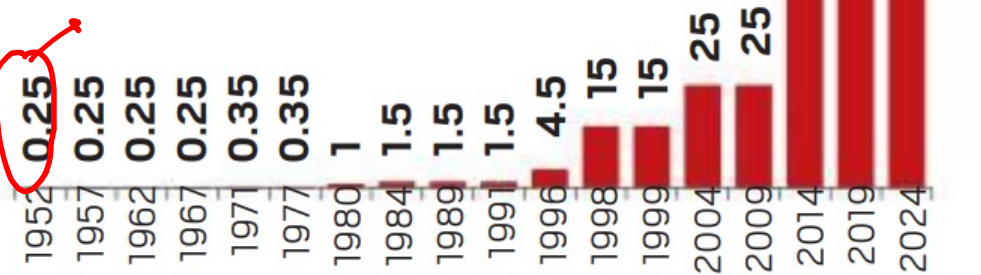
100

40 lakh

35 lakh

LOK SABHA EXPENDITURE LIMIT FOR CANDIDATES

■ Spending cap (₹ lakh)



ANJISHNU DAS

NEW DELHI, MARCH 28

AMONG THE Election Commission's (EC) key responsibilities is monitoring poll expenditure, both by parties and individual candidates.

While there is no cap on how much parties can spend, candidates are limited to Rs 95 lakh for Lok Sabha constituencies and Rs 40 lakh for Assembly seats. In some smaller states and Union Territories, the cap is Rs 75 lakh and Rs 28 lakh for the Lok Sabha and Assemblies, respectively.

The spending limits have increased over the years, including from 2019, when these were Rs 70 lakh for Lok Sabha candidates and Rs 28 lakh for Assembly contenders.

The expenditure limit refers to the amount a candidate is allowed to legally spend on election campaigning. The EC frequently revises the spending limit, largely based on cost factors and the increasing number of voters. The last time the cap was revised was in 2022. In the

first general election in 1951-52, Lok Sabha candidates were allowed to spend a maximum of Rs 25,000, and just Rs 10,000 in some Northeastern states. The limits weren't changed until 1971, when the spending cap was raised to Rs 35,000 for most states. In 1980, the cap was raised to Rs 1 lakh. In 1984, it was raised to Rs 1.5 lakh in some states and Rs 1.3 lakh in some smaller states. For states with one to two Lok Sabha seats, the cap went only as high as Rs 1 lakh, with some UTs like Chandigarh restricted to just Rs 50,000.

The next change came in 1996, the post-liberalisation election, when the limit for most states was raised three-fold to Rs 4.5 lakh, with variations depending on UT status and number of seats. In the next election, in 1998, the spending cap was raised to Rs 15 lakh.

After more than a decade, in 2004, it was again raised to Rs 25 lakh. The limit went unchanged until 2014, when it was more than doubled to Rs 70 lakh.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

● XIAOMI TAKES AIM AT TESLA IN CHINA'S EV MARKET



Xiaomi founder Lei Jun introduces the SU7, a sporty four-door sedan, during a launch event in Beijing, on Thursday. Xiaomi, a well-known maker of smart consumer electronics in China, is joining the country's booming but crowded market for electric cars.

AP




Gulaal Gota,"

- In Jaipur, Rajasthan, the age-old tradition of celebrating Holi continues. This celebration involves the practice of "**Gulaal Gota**," a unique tradition dating back around 400 years.





- **Raw Materials and Artisan Community:**

- Lac, the primary raw material for Gulaal Gota, is sourced from Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
 - Gulaal Gotas are made by Muslim lac makers, known as **Manihaars**, in Jaipur, who learned lac-making from Hindu lac makers in Bagru, a town near Jaipur.
- 

- **Historical Significance and Economic Aspects:**

- Established in 1727 by Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur, known for its vibrant culture, dedicates a lane at the Tripoliya Bazaar to the **Manihaar community**.
 - Named "**Manihaaron ka Raasta**," this lane remains a hub for selling lac bangles, jewellery, and Gulaal Gota, preserving the city's artistic legacy to this day.
- In the past, kings would ride through the city on elephant backs on Holi and toss Gulaal Gotas to the public, and the erstwhile royal family ordered Gulaal Gota at its palace for the festival.

-

India's Foreign Direct Investment Trends






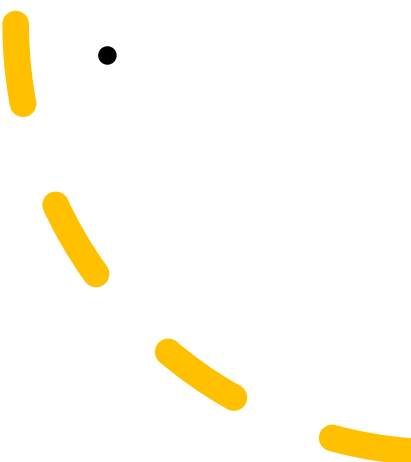


The Finance Ministry has released a comprehensive review shedding light on India's foreign direct investment (FDI) landscape, revealing both declines and hopeful prospects.



India's net FDI inflows dropped by almost 31% to USD 25.5 billion over the first ten months of 2023-24.

- 
- 
- Overall global FDI flows rose by 3% to an estimated USD 1.4 trillion in 2023, but flows to developing countries fell by 9% due to economic uncertainty and higher interest rates.
 - While a modest increase in global FDI flows is anticipated in 2024, significant risks remain, including geopolitical tensions, high debt levels, and global economic uncertainties

- 
- Around 65% of India's FDI equity inflows were observed in services, drugs and pharmaceuticals, construction (infrastructure activities), and non-conventional energy sectors.
 - The Netherlands, Singapore, Japan, the USA, and Mauritius accounted for approximately **70% of the total FDI equity inflows into India.**
- 

FDI and FPI



Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

About:

- Investment made by foreign entities/individuals in **businesses and assets** located in a different country

FDI Routes:

- Automatic Route:**
 - No prior government approval required
 - Up to 100% allowed in non-critical sectors
- Government Approval:**
 - Necessary in certain sectors or for investments above specific thresholds
 - Administered by **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** and RBI

Examples of Approval via Auto and Govt Route:

- Banking (Private sector): up to 49% (auto) + above 49% and up to 74% (Govt)
- Defence: up to 74% (auto) + above 74% (Govt)
- Healthcare (Brownfield): up to 74% (auto) + above 74% (Govt)
- Telecom Services: up to 49% (auto) + above 49% (Govt)

Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB):

- Comes under Ministry of Finance
- Responsible for processing FDI proposals - facilitated by **Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP)**
- Making recommendations for Government approval

Govt's prior approval is mandatory for FDI from countries sharing land border with India (China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan)

India's Top 5 FDI Sources (FY 2022-23):

- Mauritius
- Singapore
- USA
- Netherlands
- Japan

India's Top Sectors Attracting FDI (FY 2022-23):

- Services Sector
- Computer Software & Hardware
- Trading
- Telecommunications
- Automobile Industry



Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)

About:

- Investments made by foreign individuals, institutions, or funds in financial assets
- Known as **Fly by Night** or **Hot Money**

Imp Features:

- Purchase of financial assets** occur without gaining ownership
- Passive investment approach
- Investors earn returns through **dividends, interest, and capital appreciation**

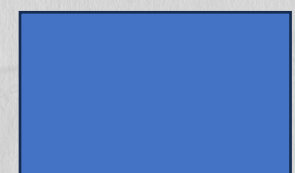
Example:

- Stocks, Bonds etc.

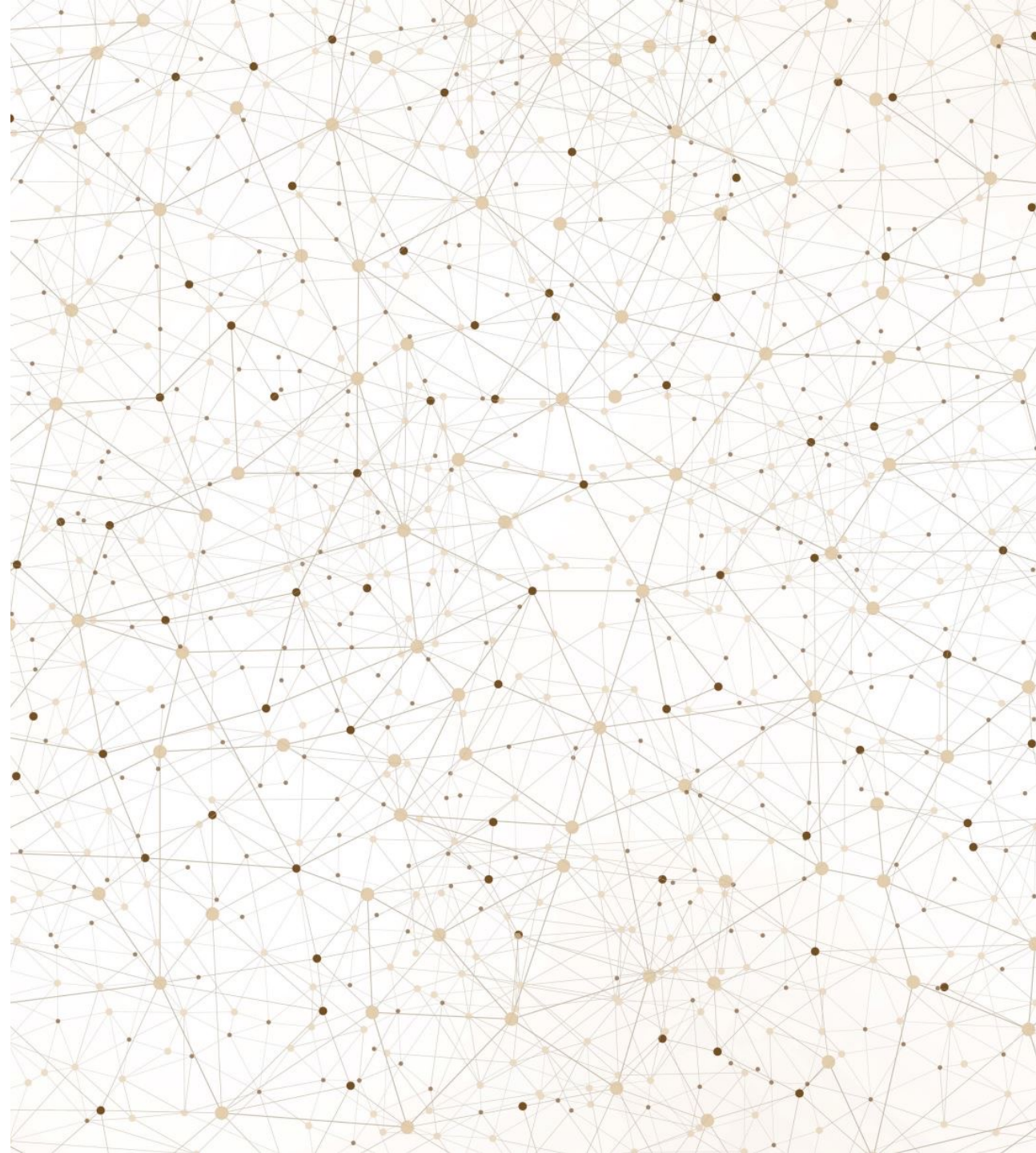
Regulatory Body:

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Difference between FDI and FPI		
Features	FDI	FPI
Nature of Investment	Long-term	Short-term
Objective	Long-term presence in a foreign country	Earning quick returns on investments
Control	Significant (over the invested entity)	No or limited control
Investments in	Tangible assets (e.g., factories, buildings)	Financial assets (e.g., stocks, bonds)
Returns	Profits, Dividends, and Capital appreciation	Dividends, Interest, and Capital appreciation
Policy Regulations	Govt policies and sector-specific regulations	Flexible regulations and easier entry/exit
Impact on Economy	Job creation, technology transfer, and economic growth	Short-term liquidity and impact on stock market performance



T+0 Settlement Cycle (or Same Day Settlement)



-
- The Indian Stock Market recently introduced the T+0 settlement cycle, marking a significant shift from the existing T+1 settlement cycle.



T+0 T+1 T+0

- **About the T+0 Settlement Cycle:**

- The trades involving shares are **settled on the same day** they occur in the T+0 system. It means shares are transferred to the buyer's account and funds are deposited in the seller's account on the same day of the trade.
 - It is a departure from the current T+1 cycle, where trades are settled by the next day.
- The T+0 settlement will be **optional for 25 stocks** and will be applicable **only** for trades executed between 9:15 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Phased Implementation:

The T+0 settlement cycle will be executed in **two phases**.

- **First Phase:** Trades executed up to 1:30 pm will be considered for settlement, which must be completed by 4:30 pm.
- **Second Phase:** It extends trading time till 3:30 pm, discontinuing the first phase.

Black Carbon

At the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow in November 2021, India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, positioning itself as a frontrunner in the race to carbon neutrality.

Black carbon is the dark, sooty material emitted alongside other pollutants when biomass and fossil fuels are not fully combusted.

It contributes to global warming and poses severe risks.

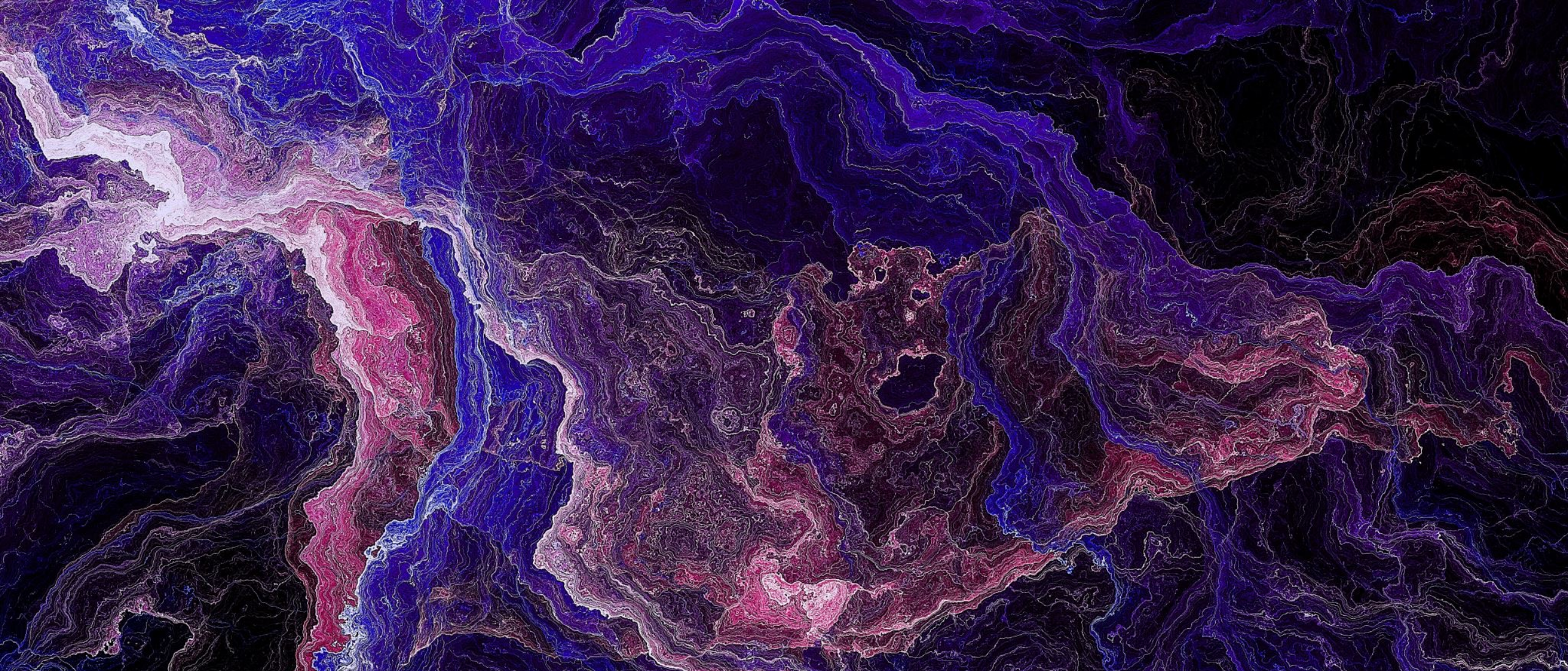
Studies have found a direct link between exposure to black carbon and a higher risk of heart disease, birth complications, and premature death.

Most black carbon emissions in India arise from burning biomass, such as cow dung or straw, in traditional cook stoves.

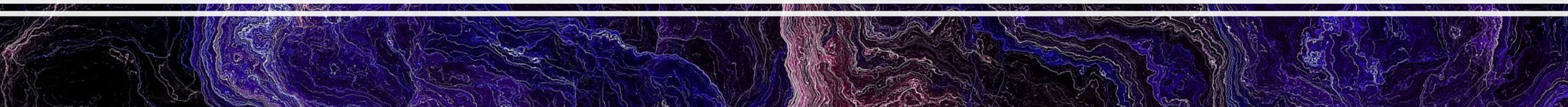
According to a 2016 study, the residential sector contributes 47% of India's total black carbon emissions.

According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India had installed a renewable energy capacity of over 180 GW by 2023 and is expected to meet its target of 500 GW by 2030.

- **Blue** – Carbon stored in ocean plants and sediments.
- **Green** – Carbon stored in terrestrial plants.
 - Green carbon reflects the carbon sequestered by land ecosystems and incorporates carbon in soils and within biomass such as trees in forests.
- **Brown** – Carbon released by incomplete combustion of organic matter.
 - It coexists with black carbon when released into the atmosphere.
 - It also changes the solar absorption pattern and the nature of clouds.
- **Red** – Carbon released through biological particles on snow and ice that reduce albedo.
- **Gray** – Carbon released through industrial emissions.
- **Teal** – Carbon stored in freshwater and wetland environments.
- **Purple** – Carbon captured through the air or industrial emissions.



Fun fact





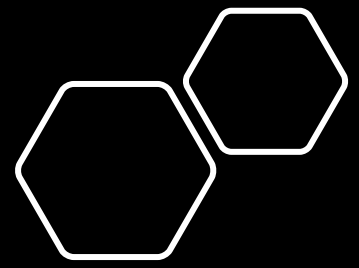
Sum

(Crown)

(Tiger)

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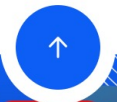
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Thank you
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