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A woman with glasses is sitting at a desk in a library, reading a book. The background is a green-tinted image of a library with bookshelves. The quote is overlaid on the image in white text. There are two blue rectangular boxes: one in the top right and one in the bottom center.

“
The successful warrior is the
average man, with laser-like focus.”

Bruce Lee

23 PAKISTANI NATIONALS RESCUED
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HC seeks norms on accessibility of films
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INSIDE

BJP using NIA to target leaders, says Trinamool

INDIA bloc leaders prepare for big showdown

Centre extends validity of FCRA registrations

Big powers need to stop strangling N. Korea: Russia

Russia said on Friday that major powers needed a new approach to North Korea, accusing the United States and its allies of ratcheting up military tensions in Asia and seeking to "strangle" the reclusive state.

MOSCOW
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Grand alliance announces Bihar seat-sharing deal

According to the agreement, RJD will contest 26 seats, and the Congress nine in the State

Five of the total 40 Lok Sabha seats have been allocated among the CPI(ML), CPI and CPI(M)

In 2019, BJP-led NDA won 39 seats, while Cong. won just one of the nine seats it contested

Amaranath Tewary
PATNA
A day after the last date for filing nomination papers for the first phase of Lok Sabha election scheduled on April 10, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress-led mahagathabandhan (grand alliance) in Bihar announced their seat-sharing agreement on Friday. According to the agreement, the RJD will contest 26 seats and the Congress nine, while five seats have been allocated among the three Left parties — the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The announcement was jointly made by the parties at the State headquarters of the RJD here.



Battle-ready! Leaders of the grand alliance after releasing the candidates list in Patna on Friday.

While the RJD will contest Patna, Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui, Nawada, Saran, Patlipatana, Buxar, Jhijharpur, Jehanabad, Darbhanga, Banka, Araria, Munger, Sitamarhi, Jhansi, Madhubani, Siwan, Seohar, Vaishali, Hajipur, Supaul, Valmikinagar, East Champaran, Madhepura, and Gopalganj, the Congress will fight in Kishanganj, Katihar, Saran, Patna Sahib, Sasaram, West Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, and Maharajganj. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election too, the Congress had contested nine seats winning the lone Kishanganj seat. The BJP-led NDA had won the remaining 39 seats in the State. Among the Left parties, the CPI (ML) is to contest three seats — Bhojpur (Ara), Nalanda and Kara-

kat. While the CPI will contest the Begusaral seat, for which it has already announced Anandkishore Rai as the candidate, the CPI(M) will contest the Khagaria seat. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, was conspicuous by his absence during the announcement. In the State Congress chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh, though, was present. The Congress is to contest the Khagaria seat. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, who is also the Leader

42 killed in Syria as Israeli airstrikes hit missile depots

Associated Press
BEIRUT
Israeli airstrikes early on Friday near the northern city of Aleppo killed or wounded "a number of" people and caused damage, the Syrian Army said. An opposition war monitor said the strikes killed 42, most of them Syrian troops.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the strikes hit missile depots for Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group in a new area near Aleppo International Airport, home to a sprawling military facility.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 12

Congress accuses BJP of unleashing 'tax terrorism'



Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Ajay Maken and Pawan Kherra at a press conference in New Delhi on Friday.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
Accusing the Union government of resorting to "tax terrorism" against the principal Opposition party to demand a new seat in the Lok Sabha election, the Congress on Friday said it would file a public interest litigation petition to recover ₹4,600 crore from the BJP for its violations in the past seven years, he said, adding, "We have analysed all the submissions of the BJP to the Election Commission. The party has gathered every year."

Mr. Maken said that they had moved the Supreme Court and the case relating to the ongoing tax dispute has been listed for hearing on April 1. Asked about the United States government taking note of Congress's financial troubles, Mr. Maken said "this is an internal matter and the Constitution empowers us to take on the BJP".

Rahul's warning
Talking to social media platform X, senior party leader Rahul Gandhi warned that when the government changes, there would be strict action against all its MPs and MLAs in 2019. Mr. Maken said political parties have to fill up a proforma of Form 24A, in which two basic and important pieces of information have to be furnished — the names and addresses of their donors. However, there were over 1,400 entries of donors that didn't have an address, and these totalled a

Discussed 'peace formula' with India: Ukraine Foreign Minister

Kalid Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI
India and Ukraine on Friday discussed a "peace formula" for the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, visiting Foreign Minister of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba said at the conclusion of official exchanges.

Mr. Kuleba, who was on a two-day visit to India, met with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and described the Russian campaign against Ukraine as a "full-scale war", while arguing for energising India-Ukraine relations with new projects. "In New Delhi, I had sincere and comprehensive talks with Mr. Jaishankar about Ukraine-India bilateral relations, the situation in our regions, and global security. We paid specific attention to the peace formula and next steps on the



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, in New Delhi on Friday.

path of its implementation," Mr. Kuleba said, after the official interaction that was also attended by Secretary (West) Pawan Kapoor and J.P. Singh, Joint Secretary of the External Affairs Minister's Office, and others. In comments to The Hindu on Thursday, Mr. Kuleba had urged India to play a "more proactive role" in the upcoming peace process in Switzerland. "Momentum in ties" "We have been looking forward to this visit. In recent months, we have had interactions at various levels. This has created a certain momentum in our bilateral relations. Your visit gives us an opportunity to understand the situation in your region," said Mr. Jaishankar in his opening remarks at the delegation-

to meet soon in Switzerland. Mr. Kuleba had earlier called upon India to participate in the summit along with other major countries in the world. Prospects of the summit, however, received a jolt with Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Maria Zakharova dismissing the possibility of Moscow's participation in the Switzerland-led peace talks. "Zelensky's formula is nothing but alchemy," said Ms. Zakharova.

The Ukraine's President had presented a 10-point peace plan in 2022 during the G-20 summit in Bali. That plan which called for "complete withdrawal of Russian forces from the 1991 borders", was rejected immediately by Moscow. Russia feels that Mr. Zelensky's peace formula does not take the Russian

level meeting. Since the beginning of the crisis, India has maintained contact with both Ukraine and Russia as well as other stakeholders. On March 16, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval spoke with Andriy Yermak, head of the office of the Ukrainian President, which was followed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's telephonic conversation with President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv and Russian President Vladimir Putin. "Global Peace Summit" The mention of the peace formula by Mr. Kuleba has attracted attention as a "Global Peace Summit" aimed at ending the stale-mated conflict is expected

IN BRIEF



10 killed in road accident in JK&M, PM announces ex gratia

Ten passengers were killed when a vehicle plunged into a deep gorge on the Jammu Srinagar national highway on Friday. Officials said the passenger rail rolled down a deep gorge near the Battery Chashma area in the Ramban district in a pre-dawn accident. The area was witnessing a major rainfall when the rail rolled down around 300 meters, officials said. Officials could not immediately confirm the exact cause of the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the accident. He announced ex gratia of two lakh rupees from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the next of kin of each deceased.

Tripura Bar Council to launch drive to identify fake lawyers

The Bar Council of Tripura has announced plans to conduct a survey in order to identify and remove fake lawyers from the State. A senior council member on Friday said that they have reached out to all bar associations in the State requesting a list of advocates, who claimed to have obtained their law degree after 1990. The decision was announced amid concerns that some individuals may have obtained their degree through corrupt means and falsely enrolled in the bar associations. The deadline for submitting the list is April 15.

IMA releases charter of demands from doctors

Bindu Shajhan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) will engage with political leaders to put across its committee's demands for the upcoming election, with the doctors demanding that the Centre help them maintain the "purity of modern medicine, to bring in strict measures to protect medical staff while on duty, reduce GST burdens on healthcare providers and insurance, and exempt small and medium hospitals up to 50 beds and clinics from the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2002".

The association has released its charter of demands and has asked local branches to engage with political leaders to "elucidate them about the needs of the community," said its national president R.V. Asokan.

Delaying new duty norms hampers air safety: pilots' body

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The aviation safety regulator's decision to delay implementation of new pilot rest and duty norms indefinitely "endanger air safety and safety of passengers", a nationwide body of pilots has said in its letter to the government. The new rules were framed following concerns over increasing fatigue among pilots. They provided enhanced rest by raising the weekly rest from 36 hours to 48 hours and curtailing night-time flying, which is known to impact alertness levels and crew performance, among other measures.

Safety of passengers
"The action of the DGCA not only endangers pilot safety but also undermines the safety of frame flight, which the implementation

Notify norms to make movies accessible to disabled persons: HC

Court directs I&R Ministry to notify the guidelines by July 15; the order came on a petition by four persons with visual and hearing disabilities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has given the Centre time till July 15 to notify the guidelines for making films accessible to persons with hearing and visual disabilities. The court said accessibility was enforceable as a legal right and that even private parties have to take reasonable measures to enable greater accessibility for persons with hearing and visual disabilities.



Mandatory provision: The Delhi High Court said accessibility was enforceable as a legal right. FILE PHOTO

The court observed that the provision of accessibility features mandatory and provides reasonably released in India do not cater to disabled persons in an "adequate manner". The court ordered. The court's order came on a petition by four persons with visual and hearing disabilities who were seeking for "persons with disabilities" under the provision of accessibility features mandatory and provides reasonably released in India do not cater to disabled persons in an "adequate manner".

The court ordered that the film producers' association and to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in October 2019, to use audio description and subtitles and closed captions in all films. The Ministry had issued various directions to the film producers' association and to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in October 2019, to use audio description and subtitles and closed captions in all films.

Celebratory firing at weddings is a recipe for disaster, says SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, in a judgment, has highlighted the often disastrous consequences of "uncontrolled and unwarranted" celebratory firing at weddings, including the maiming or loss of innocent lives.

This is the second time in as many years the court has raised its voice against the culture of gun-toting bravado. In February 2022, the court had condemned the easy availability and possession of guns, mostly country-made or unlicensed, in States like Uttar Pradesh as a feudal practice that cocks a snook at a very basic fundamental right - the right to life - guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Recently, the court again came across the case concerning the death of a man who was fatally shot in the neck by a fellow guest at a wedding in 2016. The act of celebratory firing during marriage ceremonies is an unfortunate yet prevalent practice in our nation. The present case is a direct example of the disastrous consequences of such uncontrolled

A man was fatally shot in the neck by a fellow guest at a wedding in U.P.

The shooter, Shabd Ali, was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder. The Allahabad High Court had dismissed his appeal, and he had approached the Supreme Court for review.

Justice Sharma, who authored the judgment, found him guilty of culpable homicide, but not murder. The top court concluded there had been no previous enmity between Ali and the man who died. On a single bullet had been fired. The man had died instantly.

The court ordered Ali to be imprisoned for the remainder of his sentence. Last year, the court had similarly expressed its disquiet at the large number of cases concerning the possession and use of illegal guns in Uttar Pradesh.

Manipur govt. assures HC of aid to UPSC aspirants

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has accepted the Manipur government's assurance to extend financial assistance to candidates from the hill districts who have opted for centres outside the strife-torn State for the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2024.

The government's assurance came in response to a plea by the Zomi Student Federation seeking to set up examination centres in the hill districts of Manipur. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which organises the exam, handed over an affidavit filed by the Manipur government, expressing its inability to open examination centres in Chura-chandpur and Kangpokpi districts.

The UPSC said candidates from the hill districts who have at present opted for centres outside the examination centre can choose any of the following centres - Aizawl (Mizoram), Kohima (Nagaland), Shillong (Meghalaya), Jirap (Assam), Jorhat (Assam), Kohima (Assam), and Imphal (Manipur), and Delhi.

CROSSWORD 14136
(set by Gassaluf)

1	Down
2	Show me everything past yours, you did too (3,4)
3	Zero Lactobacillus acidophilus initially found in milk only containing 56.44 grams salt per kilogram, say (5)
4	Self assistance to impoverished countries (7)
5	Allying party-thriller kills guests at the end (5)
6	Small time criminal thought by exhausted tourist using charm (7)
7	Games apps malfunctioning? A man says! No good! (9)
8	TV show episode storyline captivates one (5)
9	Bear eating a bit of lunch with honey, essentially to become Neger? (7)
10	Not 'I' but bubbling with energy and angipic! (6)
11	Indian open printing vendor's uncertainty in trouble with the bank (9)
12	"No, hand jive," said tripping person (5)
13	Wanted to humbly request grants, accommodations (7)
14	Low interest EMIs terms ensure poor loan (5)
15	After taking top job, cleaned and pressed (9)
16	State-owned radio broadcast (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

FAITH
God, the ultimate refuge

One of the 12 Azhwar, Sri Kulasekara, is sufficed with the title Perumal and called Kulasekara Perumal. His work Thirumozhi is called Perumal Thirumozhi. Kulasekara Azhwar's poems are devotional in nature, being dedicated to the most prominent avatars of Lord Vishnu like Rama and Krishna. Sri Bharathan Swamy said in discourse that the Azhwar emphasised that God alone is the ultimate refuge.

In all verses in the Vth decade, he expressed his helplessness and said he had no other recourse for succour than Lord Narayana.

The Azhwar says:
"I have no other go if you fail to wipe out my sorrows. Even if a mother pushes her child for disobedience, he will hold her feet crying, so do I."
"Cling to you like a wife who holds on to her husband irrespective of his attitude. Like citizens expect their king to save them at their only protector, I look upon you."
"I am like a patient who still loves his surgeon for curing illness despite his piercing with sharp instruments and causing pain."
"A bird that slept on a ship's mast when it started, woke up in the mid-sea and tried to search for the shore, seeing nowhere near, it returned to the mast. I am like that bird."
"Like all rivers confluence in the ocean, you are my final destination. Even if it does not rain, the standing crop will look upon the sky to pour and give relief. I yearn for your divine grace."
Those who recite this Vth decade will not go to hell, will not have rebirth and will derive His blessings.

Notify norms to make movies accessible to disabled persons: HC

Court directs I&B Ministry to notify the guidelines by July 15; the order came on a petition by four persons with visual and hearing disabilities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has given the Centre time till July 15 to notify the guidelines for making films accessible to persons with hearing and visual disabilities.

The court said accessibility was enforceable as a legal right and that even private parties have to take reasonable measures to enable greater accessibility for persons with hearing and visual disabilities.

The court observed that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has framed draft guidelines for accessibility standards in cinema halls for persons with hearing and visual disabilities and is in the process of finalising the same.

“The guidelines shall now be finalised by the Ministry and shall be notified on or before July 15, 2024. It is made clear that the said guidelines shall make



Mandatory provision: The Delhi High Court said accessibility was enforceable as a legal right. FILE PHOTO


the provision of accessibility features mandatory and provide a reasonable period for compliance by all stakeholders, in an expeditious manner,” the court ordered.

The court’s order came on a petition by four persons with visual and hearing disabilities who sought directions on making films accessible to them. They argued that though various rights have been recognised for “persons with disabilities” under

the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, most films which are released in India do not cater to disabled persons despite the statute having been enacted more than five years ago.

The Ministry had issued various directions to the film producers’ association and to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in October 2019, to use audio description and subtitles and closed captions in all films.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act) mandates that the government make movies accessible to people with visual and hearing disabilities. The draft guidelines for making theaters more accessible include:

- Providing at least two pieces of equipment per 200 seats, such as:
 - Smart glasses for displaying captions
 - Closed caption stands near seats
 - Small screens below the big screen for captions/subtitles
 - Headphones/earphones for audio description
 - Mobile apps and other technologies for assistance during shows
- Accessibility features should become an integral part of all content
 - For example, video includes separate files for the visuals and the audio
 - Surveys have suggested the inclusion of accessibility features as separate files in the Digital Content Package (DCP) 

Indian Navy seizes hijacked Iranian vessel, rescues crew

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

Indian Navy ships *Sumedha* and *Trishul* intercepted and freed a hijacked Iranian fishing vessel (FV), *Al-Kambar*, after forcing the pirates to surrender, the Navy said late on Friday.

“After more than 12 hours of intense coercive tactical measures as per the Standard Operating Procedures, the pirates on board [the] hijacked FV were forced to surrender. The crew, comprising 23 Pakistani nationals, have been safely rescued,” a Navy spokesperson said. “Indian Naval specialist teams are presently undertaking thorough sanitisation and seaworthiness checks of the FV in order to escort her to a safe area for resuming normal fishing activities.”

Al-Kambar was approximately 90 nautical miles southwest of Socotra when it was reportedly boarded by nine armed pirates. The



Rescue mission: Iranian fishing vessel *Al-Kambar*, which was reportedly boarded by nine armed pirates. @indiannavy/X

Navy spokesperson said that based on inputs of a potential piracy incident on Thursday, two Indian Navy ships, deployed in Arabian Sea for maritime security operations were diverted. *INS Sumedha* intercepted *Al-Kambar* during early hours of Friday and was joined subsequently by guided missile frigate *INS Trishul*.

This is the latest in a series of incidents of piracy in the Arabian Sea and off Somalia in the past few

months. As reported by *The Hindu* earlier this week, the pirate mother vessel that was used to hijack Malta-flagged merchant vessel *MV Ruen* on December 14 was itself an Iranian fishing vessel. *Al Ashkaan* with 24 Pakistani crew members was hijacked earlier by seven Somali pirates on November 29 near Socotra Island off the coast of Yemen.

It was taken to Somalia and later used to hijack *Ruen*.





INS SUMEDHA



**INDIAN NAVY – PROFESSIONAL FORCE
ANCHORING STABILITY, SECURITY AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY**



Attack ID: 073-17
Date: 01-06-2017
Vessel: Product Tanker
Status: Fired Upon
Full report: [View](#)

Actual Attack Suspicious Attack Suspicious Vessels



THE EAST INDIA COMPANY TRADE, c. 1800



The Trucial States, UAE & Oman

The Pirate Coast?

Why would 'piracy' become a problem for the EIC? Where do you think it would appear? What do you think might be the response for the EIC?

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Delaying new duty norms hampers air safety: pilots' body

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

The aviation safety regulator's decision to defer the implementation of new pilot rest and duty norms indefinitely "endangers pilot safety and safety of passengers", a nationwide body of pilots has said in its letter to the government.

The new rules were framed following concerns over mounting fatigue among pilots.

They provided enhanced rest by raising the weekly rest from 36 hours to 48 hours and curtailing night-time flying, which is known to impact alertness levels and crew performance, among other measures.

Safety of passengers

"The action of the DGCA not only endangers pilot safety but also undermines the safety of passengers which the implementation

of revised CAR (Civil Aviation Requirement or rules) could prevent," the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) has said in its letter to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday.

The FIP underlines that the commercial interests of airlines should not surpass the health and safety of pilots.

The pilots' body was referring to the amendment of March 26 to the new pilot duty and rest norms notified in January, following which the regulator removed the June 1 deadline for implementing the rules. The modification allows airlines to follow the old 2019 duty and rest norms for pilots "till approval of their respective scheme" in conformity with the new rules, and does not provide a specific time frame for implementation.

GAZA STRIP

Israel's Netanyahu approves talks on Gaza ceasefire, hostage release



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved on Friday new talks on a Gaza ceasefire, a day after the world's top court ordered Israel to ensure urgent humanitarian aid reaches people in the Palestinian territory. The new talks on Gaza ceasefire and hostage release will take place in Doha and Cairo. AP

PARIS

France looking at plant to process spent uranium to bypass Russia



The French government said it is "seriously" studying the option of building a plant to convert and enrich reprocessed uranium to cut its reliance on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. The only plant in the world that currently converts reprocessed uranium for use in nuclear power plants is located in Russia. AP

SAN FRANCISCO

Musk's Grok-1.5 AI chatbot to be available on X starting next week



Elon Musk said his artificial intelligence startup xAI's latest Grok-1.5 chatbot will be available on his platform X next week. Earlier this month, Mr. Musk said xAI would open-source Grok, days after the billionaire sued Microsoft-backed OpenAI for allegedly abandoning its original mission in favour of a for-profit model. REUTERS

BEIJING

Chinese tech giant Huawei says profits more than doubled in 2023



Chinese tech giant Huawei said on Friday its profits more than doubled in 2023, as it ramps up efforts to bounce back in a year that saw the company apparently defy U.S. sanctions with the release of a high-end smartphone. Huawei said it generated a profit of 8.7 billion yuan (\$12 billion) last year. AP

Israeli airstrikes near Syria's Aleppo kill 42: war monitor

Casualties include 36 Syrian troops and six Hezbollah fighters; dozens injured in what is the deadliest such attack in years, says Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

Associated Press BEIRUT

The Syrian Army says Israeli airstrikes early on Friday near the northern city of Aleppo killed or wounded "a number of" people and caused damage. An opposition war monitor said the strikes killed 42, most of them Syrian troops.



Same story: Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government controlled parts of Syria in recent years. REUTERS

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said Israeli strikes hit missile depots for Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group in Aleppo's southern suburb of Jibreen, near the Aleppo international airport, and the nearby town of Safira,

causing the deadliest such attack in years. There was no immediate statement from Israeli officials on the strikes. Israel, which has vowed to stop Iranian entrench-

ment in its northern neighbor, has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government-controlled parts of Syria in recent years, but it rarely acknowledges them. On Thursday, Syrian state media reported airstrikes near the capital, Damascus, saying the country's interior minister, Hani Khayyat, said.

Ukraine's state-owned grid operator, Ukrenergo, said Friday's attack deliberately targeted thermal and hydroelectric power plants across central and western regions. DTEK, Ukraine's largest private electricity operator, also said that three of its thermal power plants had been damaged in the attack. It

Russia strikes Kyiv's energy infra with drones, missiles

Associated Press KYIV

Moscow launched a large-scale attack on Ukraine's energy infrastructure on Friday, with a mass barrage of 99 drones and missiles hitting regions across the country, Ukraine's armed forces said.



Counter strikes: Ukrainian troops from anti-drone mobile air defense unit at their position in Chernobyl on Thursday. REUTERS

Air raid warnings rang out across the country, with 10 Ukrainian regions announcing emergency power shutdowns in the city of Odesa.

Escalating strikes Russia has escalated its attacks on Ukraine in recent days, launching several missile barrages on the capital, Kyiv, and hitting energy infrastructure across the country. Large-scale blackouts have already

affected Ukraine's Kharkiv, where 7,000,000 people lost power in an attack on March 22.

Five people, including a 5-year-old girl, were wounded during the attack in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region. He later said that another man had been killed and one more injured in a separate drone attack on Friday.

Moscow to begin spring draft of conscripts

Agence France-Presse MOSCOW

Russia will begin calling up tens of thousands of soldiers next week in a conscription drive to replenish its armed forces and build up its military reserves.

Moscow says conscripts are not sent to fight in Ukraine but the draft — which happens twice a year — is amid persistent rumours of a new wave of mobilisation for the Ukraine offensive.

"The spring draft will be held from April 1," a senior Russian official said.

Some 1.47,000 conscripts were drafted during last year's spring call-ups. Russian men aged between 18 and 30 are eligible to be called up after lawmakers increased the upper age limit from 27 last year.

Beating the heat



A vendor prepares crushed ice at a fresh market in Bangkok on Friday. Thailand braces for more hot weather with temperatures expected to rise above 40° Celsius during a severe heatwave period, according to the Thai Meteorological Department. AP

Nine held in Tajikistan for Russia concert hall attack

Associated Press MOSCOW

Nine persons have been detained by Tajikistan over suspected contact with the perpetrators of last week's attack by gunmen on a suburban Moscow concert hall that killed 144 people, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said on Friday.

Those detained are also suspected of having connections with the Islamic State group.

Russia's Investigative Committee said on Thursday it had detained another suspect in relation to the raid on Crocus City Hall, on suspicion of being involved in financing the attack. It did not give further details of the suspect.

Following UN veto, Russia says big powers need to stop 'strangling' North Korea

Russia had vetoed the annual renewal of sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear programmes.

Pyeongyang carried out its first nuclear test in 2006, underscoring the dividend that Kim Jong-un has earned by moving closer to President Vladimir Putin amid the war in Ukraine.

"Old templates" "It is obvious to us that the UN Security Council can no longer use old templates in relation to the problems of the Korean Peninsula," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman

Maria Zakharova said.

Ms. Zakharova said the U.S. was stoking military tensions, that international restrictions had not improved the security situation and that there were severe humanitarian consequences for the population of North Korea, formally known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The U.S. State Department said on Thursday that Russia's veto had "cynically undermined international peace and security" and accused Moscow of seeking to bury reporting by the panel of experts on its own "collusion" with North Korea to get weapons.

U.S. President assures Pakistan PM Shehbaz of continuous support

Press Trust of India ISLAMABAD

Marking the first official communication with a Pakistani Premier during his tenure, U.S. President Joe Biden has dashed off a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressing continuous support and highlighted that the ties between the two nations are critical for bilateral and regional peace and security.



Joe Biden

After assuming office in January 2021, Mr. Biden neither telephoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan after his election victory nor spoke to Mr. Sharif when he succeeded Mr.

Minister Imran Khan dubbed as "rigged," Mr. Khan, who is the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, had also openly accused the U.S. of orchestrating his downfall after he was removed through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022.

Vital factor

According to the contents of Mr. Biden's letter, shared by the U.S. Embassy here, "The enduring partnership between our nations remains critical to ensuring the security of our people and the United States will continue to stand with Pakistan to tackle the most pressing global and regional

challenges of our time." Mr. Biden added that through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance framework, the two nations would continue strengthening their climate resilience, supporting sustainable agriculture and water management and advancing Pakistan's recovery from the devastating floods of 2022. He wrote that the United States remains "committed to working with Pakistan to protect human rights and promote progress." "Together, we will continue to forge a strong partnership between our nations and close a bond between our people," the letter concluded.

Associated Press TOKYO

Five persons who took a Japanese health supplement have died and more than 100 have been hospitalised as of Friday, a warning from a pharmaceutical company issued a recall of the products, officials said.



Tough split: Akihiko Kobayashi of Kobayashi Pharmaceutical Co. arrives at a news conference in Osaka in Japan on Friday.

Osaka-based Kobayashi Pharmaceutical Co. came under fire for not going public quickly with problems with its products.

People are undergoing treatment in hospitals after taking products — including Benikoji Cholestol Help — that contain an ingredient called benkoji, a red species of mold.

Some people developed kidney problems after taking the supplements, but the exact cause was still under investigation.

PARIS

France looking at plant to process spent uranium to bypass Russia

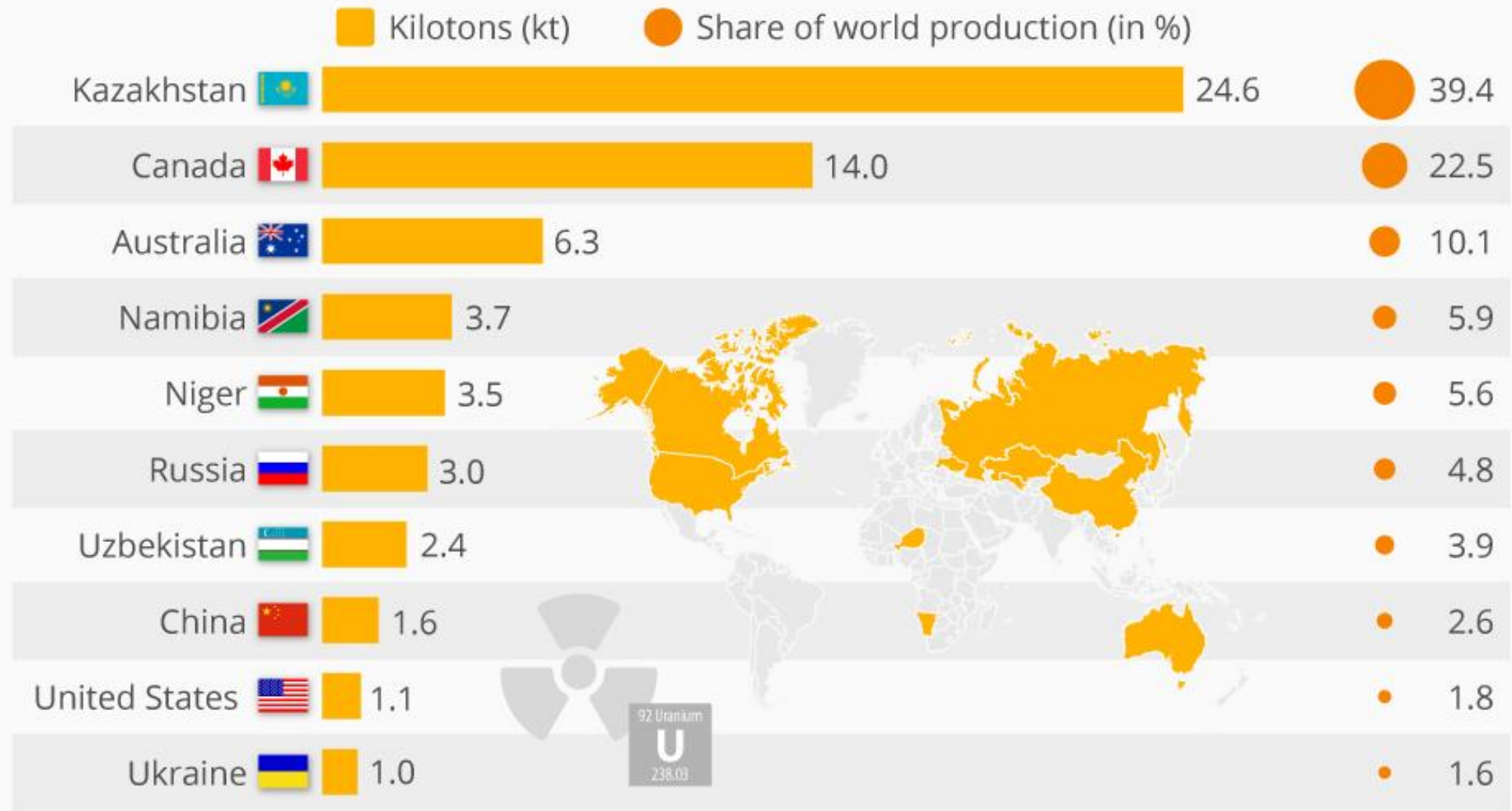


REUTERS

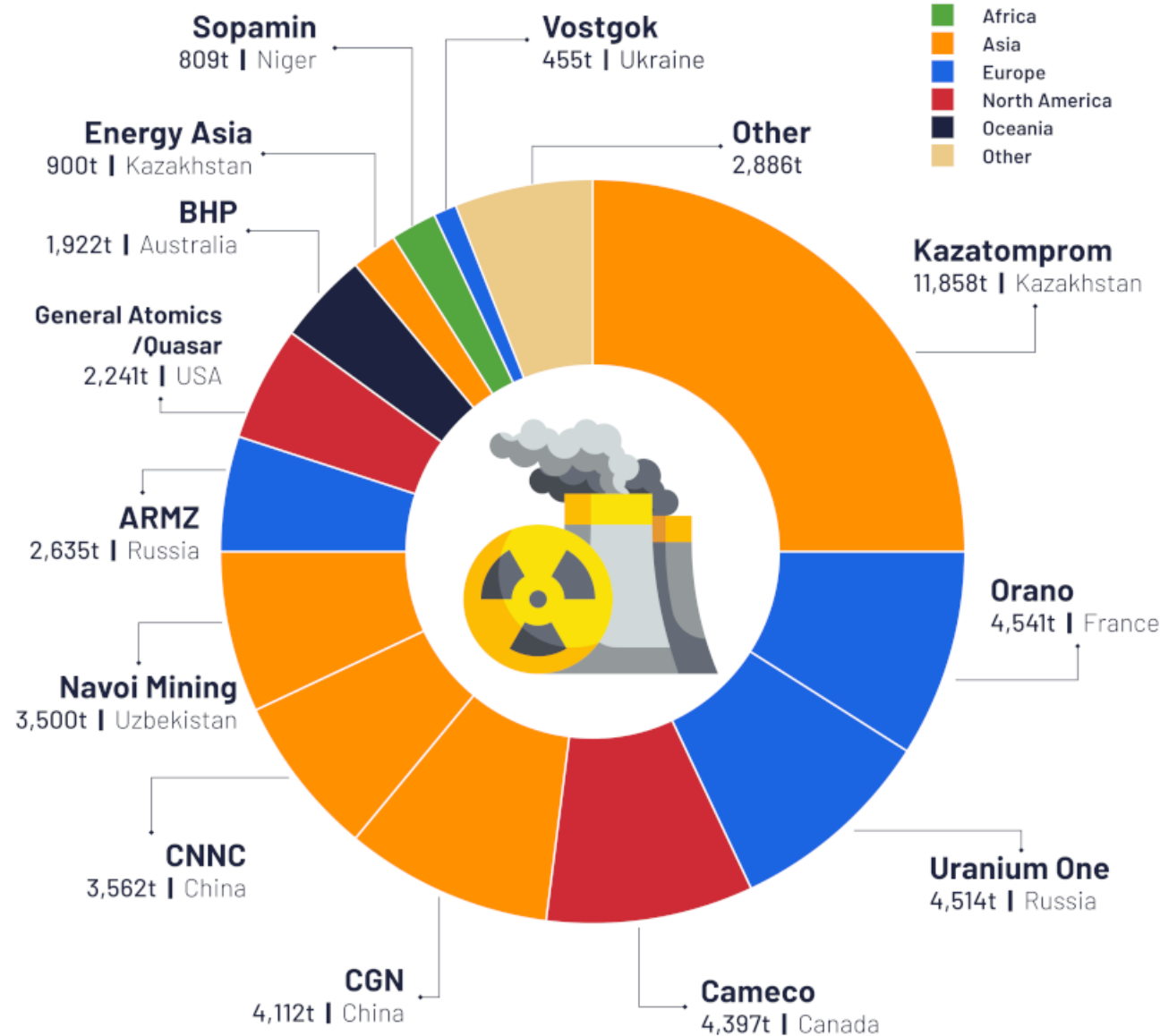
▲ The French government said it is “seriously” studying the option of building a plant to convert and enrich reprocessed uranium to cut its reliance on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. The only plant in the world that currently converts reprocessed uranium for use in nuclear power plants is located in Russia. AFP

Where the Uranium comes from

Ranking of countries with the largest production volume of uranium in 2016 (in kilotons)



Biggest Uranium Companies by 2021 Production

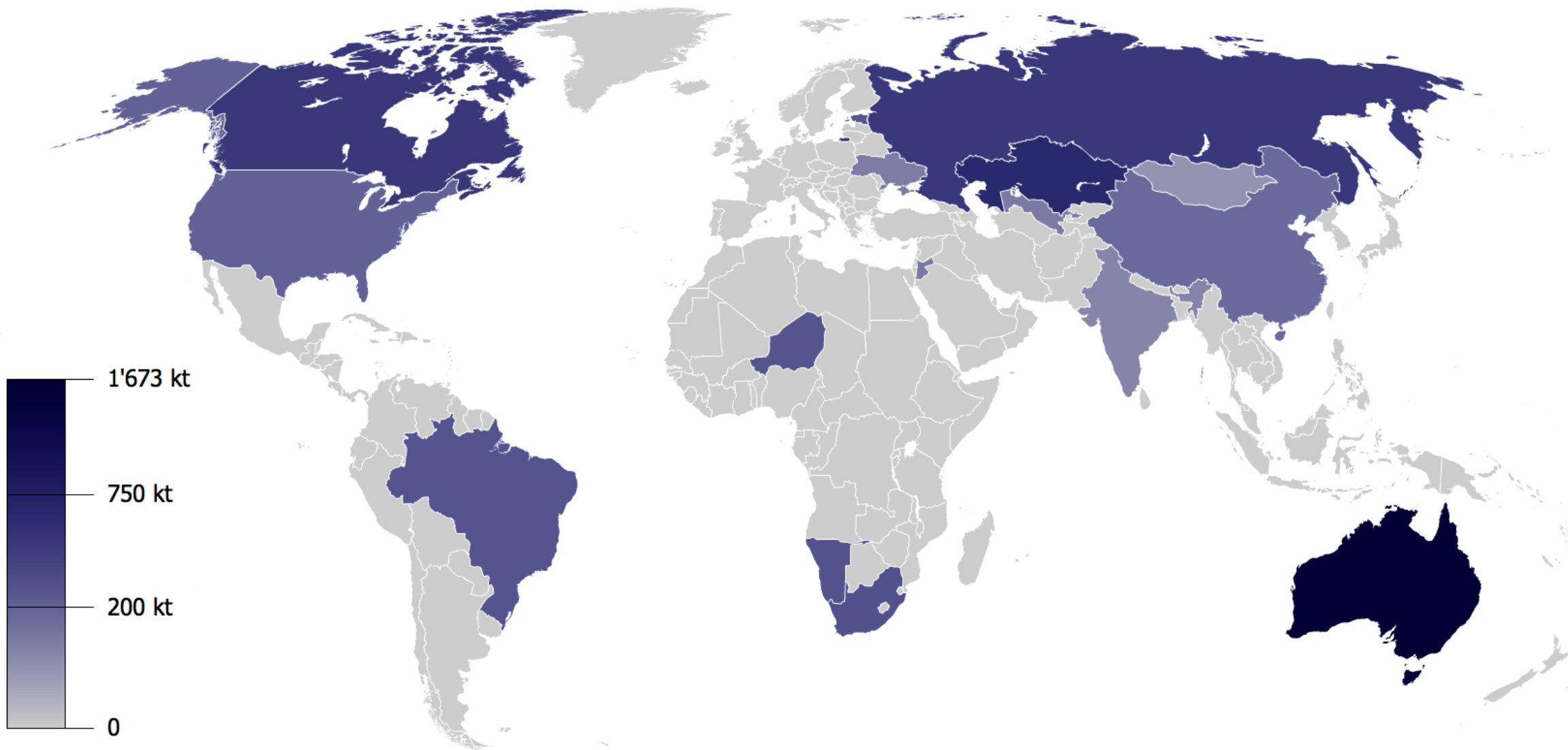


Source: World Nuclear Association
t = tonnes

Created by genuine impact

More charts: genuineimpact.substack.com





URANIUM RESERVES

BY COUNTRY

ALL FIGURES IN TONNES



As of 2021 figures rounded. Source: World Nuclear Association (Aug 2023)

BUSINESS AS USUAL



WORLD

ISRAEL TOLD TO OPEN MORE LAND CROSSINGS FOR GAZA AID

Day after Mukhtar's death, son for autopsy by AIIMS panel, Opp for high-level probe

ASAD REHMAN, MANISH SAHU & LALMANI VERMA
CHENNAI, LUCKNOW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

A DAY after jailed gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari died of cardiac arrest in Banda prison of Uttar Pradesh, his son Umar Ansari Friday alleged foul play and sought an autopsy by a panel of doctors from AIIMS, New Delhi even as Opposition parties in the state demanded a high-level inquiry.

According to the post-mortem examination conducted by doctors at Banda Medical College on Friday, the "cause of death is heart attack (myocardial infarction)", officials said. Following the autopsy, Mukhtar's body was sent in an ambulance — accompanied by a police convey — to his home in Mohammadabad in Ghazipur for last rites. The body was expected to reach Mohammadabad in the early hours of Saturday.

As mandated under procedure, a chief judicial magistrate's court Friday ordered a judicial inquiry into the death. Banda Chief Judicial Magistrate Brajendra Das Gupta appointed Carina Singh, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (MP-MLA Court Banda), to conduct the probe and submit a report within a month.

Separately, under the jail manual rules, a high-level inquiry was ordered by Banda

FIRST VISIT TO INDIA BY UKRAINE FOREIGN MINISTER

India and Ukraine talk war and peace; summit in Switzerland on table as well

Delhi says yes to joining but given polls, unsure of commitment on participation level

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

IN HIS first visit to India, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Friday and held "sincere and comprehensive" talks on the peace process to end the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, including India's participa-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in New Delhi, Friday. **AV**

tion at the peace summit being organised by Switzerland. Neither the dates of the summit — slated for this summer — nor the level of participation has been announced by Switzerland yet posing a challenge for New Delhi since India is in election mode until June 4 when the results will be in.

Committing to participation — and specifying the level in the government's hierarchy — is tricky under these circumstances. But New Delhi has conveyed the message that it is willing and ready to participate in the Swiss summit at an "appropriate level". The Indian Express has learned.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED

Kyiv to Delhi: The long arc

FROM CRITICISING India for buying Russian oil to Friday's meeting, Kyiv has travelled a distance in its outreach to Delhi. Zelenskyy met Modi for the first time in May last year. Visits by two Dy Ministers followed in January. Foreign Ministers spoke, as did PM and Zelenskyy this month. The ball is in Delhi's court on the Swiss summit.

Tax terrorism, says Cong, as it gets an I-T notice to pay Rs 1,823 cr

By this logic, BJP violated tax laws, should pay Rs 4,600 crore: Kharge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

WITH LESS than three weeks to go before the first phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party Friday said it had received fresh notices for five years (1994-95 and 2017-2018 to 2020-21) from the Income Tax department, asking it to pay Rs 1,823 crore.

The demand for the previous three financial years (2014-15 to 2016-17) was still awaited, party leaders said.

While the party has received the demand notices for a whopping Rs 1,823 crore, no detailed orders (the nature of alleged undeclared income for each financial year) has yet been served on them.

Elajya Sabha member V K Tankha, who was handling some of the tax litigation for the party, told The Indian Express, "The Congress certainly does not have the funds to pay the tax demanded and penalties applied. We do not know that notices have come for around Rs 1,800 crore and that more demands from the Income Tax, are to follow. But we are prepared to take up the challenge and it is the people who will have to fight our battles now."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Three days before SC scrapped scheme, Govt cleared printing of Rs 10,000-cr bonds

13 days after apex court order, SBI was told to 'immediately put a hold'

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

THREE DAYS before the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds as unconstitutional, the Finance Ministry had given final approval for the printing of 10,000 electoral bonds each of Rs 1 crore by the SPMCL (the security Printing and Minting Corporation of India).

And it was on February 28, a fortnight after the Supreme Court order that the Finance Ministry told State Bank of India to "immediately put a hold" on printing of the bonds.

This has been revealed in file notes of correspondence and emails exchanged between the Finance Ministry and SBI obtained by The Indian Express under the Right to Information Act. These records also reveal that the SPMCL had already printed — and dispatched to the SBI — 8,350 bonds. In all, 22,217 electoral bonds

were redeemed since the inception of the scheme. The BJP redeemed Rs 8,451 crore; Congress Rs 1,350 crore; Trinamool Congress Rs 1,707.81 crore and BJS Rs 1,467.30 crore.

The instructions to stop the printing went out in a mail titled "Hold on Printing of Electoral Bonds — Electoral Bond Scheme 2018" dated February 28 from SBI to SPMCL.

The SBI's Assistant General Manager of its Transaction Banking Department wrote: "We have acknowledged the receipt of 4 boxes of Security Features of Bonds containing total 8,350 Bonds email dated 23.02.2024. As in the file

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates at the PM's residence in New Delhi. They discussed issues ranging from AI to climate change to empowerment of women. **PTI**

CHAT & MESSAGE

On rule of law, Dhankhar counters Germany, US: Look within, India doesn't need lessons

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

COUNTERING RECENT comments by Germany and the US on the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Vice-President Jageed Dhankhar said Friday that India has a robust judicial system and does not need lessons from any country on the rule of law.

"Recently, people are telling

Founders' Day celebrations of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi. Last Friday, Sebastian Fischer, spokesperson for Germany's foreign office, responding to a question on Kejriwal's arrest, had said: "We assume and expect that the standards relating to independence of judiciary and basic democratic principles will also be applied in this case."

Two days later, Reuters reported that the US State

Department spokesperson, responding to an emailed query, had said: "We encourage a fair, transparent and timely legal process for Chief Minister Kejriwal."

The Ministry of External Affairs had issued a strongly worded statement.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

us about the rule of law. One country in Europe, a developed democratic, principles will also be applied in this case."

Two days later, Reuters reported that the US State

Father of approver in Delhi excise case gets NDA ticket in Andhra

SREENIVASA JANVALA
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

MAGUNTA SRINIVASULU Reddy, whose son Raghava Magunta Reddy is an accused turned approver in the Delhi excise policy case that has led to the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Friday got a Lok Sabha ticket from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), a key BJP ally in Andhra Pradesh.

As reported by The Indian Express, ever since the father-son duo switched from the YSR



Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, who got a TDP ticket, with son Raghava Magunta Reddy. **AV**

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

Soumyarendra BARKER

OF THE top 20 advertisers on Facebook and Instagram during March 17-23, seven accounts ran ads for the BJP — and no other account in the top 20 spends ran surrogate ads for any other political party — an analysis of Meta's ad library by The Indian Express showed.

The top 20 advertisers cumulatively spent Rs 1.38 crore during

In first week of poll code, surrogate ads on Meta give BJP early start

the week. Apart from those placing surrogate ads for the ruling party, the BJP itself spent more than Rs 2.3 lakh (number 4 in the top 20 list) to run its promotions; the party's state units in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, ran ads worth over Rs 19 lakh.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) was the sixth highest political advertiser having spent more than Rs

WHO SPENT WHAT

Surrogate Advertisers	Political Parties
7 Accounts all pro-BJP, amount spent ₹85 lakh	BJP ₹2.3 lakh
MemeKross: ₹29.8 lakh	TMC ₹14 lakh
Mudde Ki Baat: ₹20.2 lakh	BJP (Andhra & Odisha) ₹9 lakh
Sidhe Chachreva: ₹9.5 lakh	INC ₹5 lakh

₹1.38 cr. Money spent by top 20 political advertisers on FB, Insta (Mar 17-23)

14 lakh across two pages, and the Congress came in at number 13, spending a little over Rs 5 lakh to run ads from Rahul Gandhi's Facebook page.

Surrogate political advertisers employ a variety of content genres, ranging from memes, cartoon strips, to clips, which are edited at times to convey information that may be misleading.

The top surrogate advertisers names listed are not necessarily owners linked to the party they promoted. Calls made to the

telephone numbers mentioned on their Facebook pages did not yield a response.

Calls to these advertisements garnered millions of eyeballs, says Meta, and despite some of these advertisements carrying communal overtones, Meta let them pass.

In response to a question, however, a Meta spokesperson said surrogate advertisers attempting to circumvent its policies by not disclosing party affiliations are "subject to strict enforcement measures".

"We are committed to promoting transparency, accountability and authenticity in advertising, particularly regarding political ads on Meta's platforms. We require all advertisers running such ads to complete the authentication process and include a verified 'Paid for by' disclaimer to identify the entity person responsible for the ad... Ads found to be violating will be disapproved during review, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Message of Good Friday, possible origins of name, and date it is observed

RISHIKA SINGH

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

GOOD FRIDAY, which was observed on March 29, marks the day of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead the following Sunday, which is commemorated as the joyous day of Easter.

Sacrifice and forgiveness

Jesus of Nazareth (present-day Israel) is believed to have lived a humble life as a carpenter more than 2,000 years ago. Judaism was the prevalent religion, and the region was under the rule of Romans.

Jesus preached the message of compassion and brotherhood, and criticised the

powerful classes for stifling the weak. He also challenged the existing social, religious, and political setup.

According to the Biblical account, before his final meal, known as the Last Supper, Jesus told his followers that one of them would betray him to the authorities. He blessed the bread and wine, and referred to them as his body and blood, which is understood as Jesus offering himself as sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

After Jesus was betrayed by his follower Judas, the authorities charged him with blasphemy and sentenced him to death by crucifixion. He was nailed to a cross on a Friday, and left to die.

On the third day after his death — Sunday — Jesus is believed to have risen

from the dead, in a miracle known as Resurrection, which is celebrated on Easter.

Harvard University's Pluralism Project says, "Those who have followed the path of Christ through the centuries have understood his life, death, and resurrection as a profound affirmation of God's presence in the midst of humanity."

Timothy Aakhe, pastor at Triumphant Ministries in Kalimpong, West Bengal, said:

"On this day (Good Friday), Jesus made a sacrifice for the sins of all of humankind. There is a universal flaw of guilt, which is a feeling all humans experience at one point in their lives. It comes from doing things one should not have done, or not doing the things they should have done. Forgiveness for such ac-

tions requires atonement... For Jesus, to forgive the sins of all, he had to pay a price."

Why 'Good' Friday?

There are several theories as to why the word 'Good' is associated with the day.

Fiona MacPherson, senior editor at the Oxford English Dictionary, told the BBC earlier that in older times, it was thought the word simply "designates a day on (or sometimes a season in) which religious observance is held".

According to *The Baltimore Catechism*, a US Catholic school text, Good Friday is good because Christ "showed His great love for man, and purchased for him every blessing". The *Catholic Encyclopedia* suggests

"God's Friday" or *Gottes Freitag* in German as an origin for 'good'.

Different dates each year

Good Friday is observed on a different date every year depending on the full Moon. The Royal Museums Greenwich website says, "The simple standard definition of Easter is that it is the first Sunday after the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox."

Based on the Earth's position in its orbit around the Sun and the degree of its axis tilt, the spring equinox is the day when both the northern and southern hemispheres receive the same amount of light and darkness from the Sun.

But this is not an exact science. March 21 is observed as the spring equinox, even

though the 'real' date may be a day early or late. "The reasons for this are that the method is then independent of longitude on the Earth and is thus independent of time zone. It also allows the date of Easter to be calculated in advance regardless of the actual motion of the Earth around the Sun," the Royal Museums Greenwich site says.

Traditions, observance

Good Friday is observed through various traditions. In some places, a re-enactment of the crucifixion is done, or a Church service is held. "Essentially, Christ the Lord is remembered on the day, we pray and express our devotion through offerings, and feel gratitude for his sacrifice. His words and teachings are also recalled," Pastor Aakhe said.

**EVERYDAY
CULTURE**

BRINGING DOWN TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN SEOUL, OUTSKIRTS WILL INCREASE CITIZENS' FAMILY TIME, EXPERTS BELIEVE

South Korea hopes new speed train links will help boost birthrate

**CYNTHIA KIM
& JIHOON LEE**
SEOUL, MARCH 29

SOUTH KOREA is launching a high-speed train service that will reduce the travel time between central Seoul and its outskirts, a project officials hope will encourage more youth to consider homes outside the city, and start having babies.

South Korea has the world's lowest fertility rate, and its youth have often cited long commutes and cramped, expensive housing in greater Seoul, home to

about half the population, as the main reasons for not getting married and starting a family.

The birth rate in Seoul is even lower than the national average, and the government has tried to boost the number of newborns through subsidies, with little success.

Officials are now pinning their hopes on the Great Train eXpress (GTX), a 134 trillion won (\$99.5 billion) underground speedtrain project that, by 2035, will provide six lines linking Seoul to several outlying areas.

On Friday, President Yoon Suk Yeol inaugurated a section



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol gets on a train after the opening ceremony of GTX-A in Seoul on Friday. Reuters

of the first line, which will cut the commute time from Suseo in capital to the satellite city of Dongtan to 19 minutes from 80 minutes now on a bus.

The shorter commute "will enable people to spend more time with their family in the mornings and evenings," he added.

The line is due to go into service on Saturday, and once fully operational, the GTX will be one of the fastest underground systems in the world, with trains travelling at speeds of up to 180 km per hour (112 mph), officials said.

Owning a home in South Korea is costly, with median prices hitting a peak in June 2021 after rising 45% over five years.

Seoul is particularly expensive, offering some of the worst value for money per square foot of any advanced economy, analysts say.

Land Minister Park Sang-woo told Reuters the GTX would allow young people to consider homes far away from the capital without having to spend hours commuting.

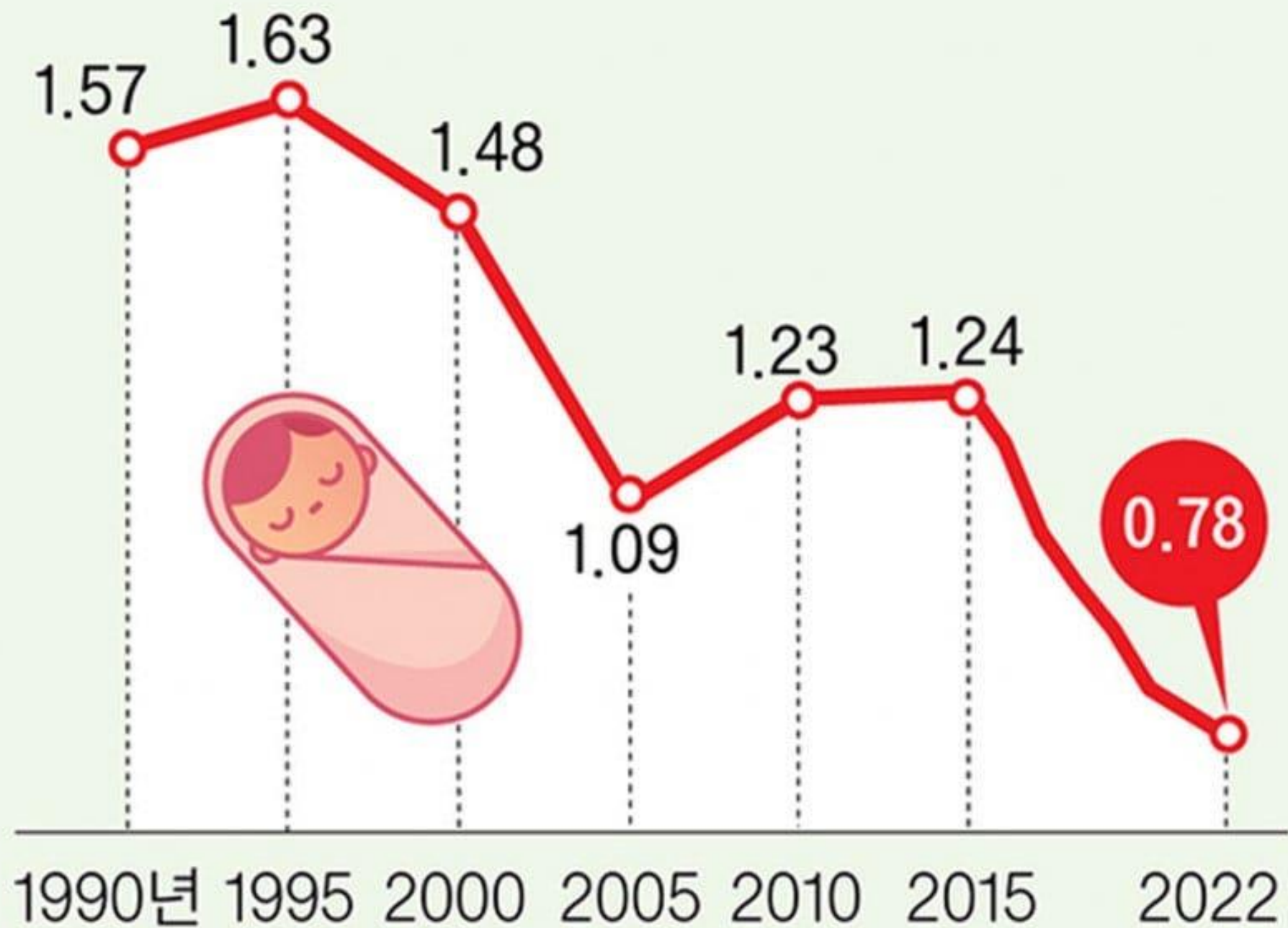
The time they get back can go towards their families, he added. "With two-hour commute

on the way home, for example, how can anyone make time for babies? The idea is to give people more leisure time after work," he said.

Some analysts, however, said the GTX could contribute to the decline of rural South Korea, by sucking more people into the already overcrowded capital.

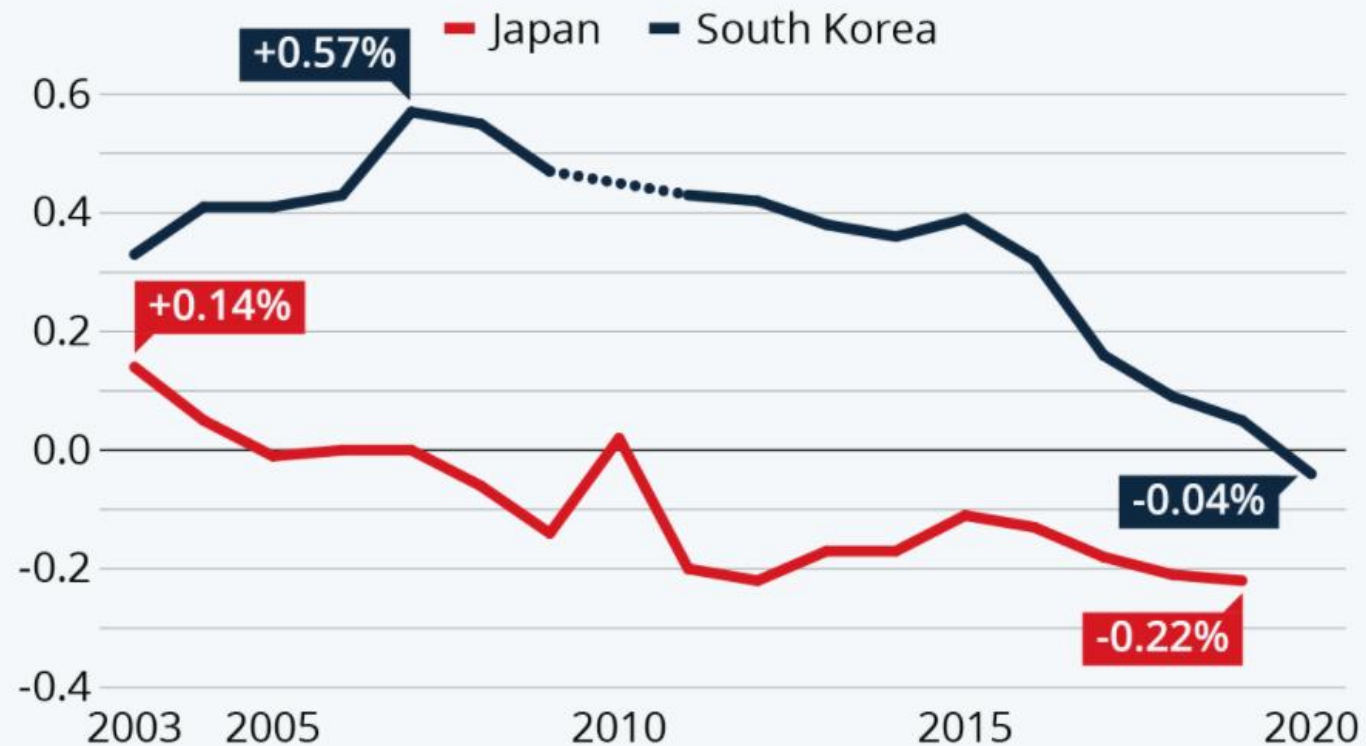
"To revive regional towns facing extinction, the most important thing is to equip other areas with a similar kind of public infrastructure too," said Kim Jin-yoo, professor of Urban Planning & Transportation Engineering at Kyonggi University. **REUTERS**





Populations Declining in Japan and South Korea

Annual percent change of the population of Japan and South Korea (2003-2020)



No comparable figure for 2010 (Korea) due to data configuration change

Sources: Statistics Korea, Statistics Bureau of Japan



2017 List by the World Bank

Rank ▼	Country	Fertility rate in 2017 (births/woman) ◆
192	 Singapore	1.2
191	 Moldova	1.3
190	 Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.3
189	 Italy	1.3
188	 Spain	1.3
187	 Portugal	1.4
186	 Malta	1.4
185	 Ukraine	1.4
184	 Greece	1.4
183	 Poland	1.4
182	 Luxembourg	1.4
181	 Croatia	1.4
180	 Japan	1.4

H5N1 Bird Flu

- 
- A photograph of a bird, possibly a species of flycatcher, perched on a dark, textured branch. The bird is facing left, with its wings fully extended to the right. Its plumage is primarily white and grey, with a distinct yellowish-brown patch on its chest and throat. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey, making the bird stand out. The overall image has a slightly desaturated, muted color palette.
- H5N1 bird flu, a highly pathogenic virus, has been spreading globally, posing a significant threat to birds and wildlife.
 - What is H5B1 Bird Flu?
 - Background:
 - Avian influenza A(H5N1) or H5B1 Bird Flu is a highly pathogenic virus that primarily circulates among birds but can infect mammals.
 - H5N1 originated from a virus outbreak in China in 1996 and rapidly evolved into a highly pathogenic strain.
 - Since 2020, it has spread across Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, South America, and even mainland Antarctica.
 - India experienced the first H5N1 outbreak in the State of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 2015.

A bald eagle is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a dark blue background. The eagle's head is turned towards the left, and its talons are visible. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

- **Impact on Animals:**

- **Wild birds, including endangered species like California condors, have been severely affected by H5N1.**
- **The main species affected used to be chicken.**
- **Marine mammals, such as sea lions and dolphins, have suffered mass deaths in regions like Chile and Peru.**
- **Mammals like foxes, pumas, bears in North America, and farmed minks in Spain and Finland, have also been infected.**

-

A bird with its wings spread, perched on a branch. The bird has a dark head and back, a lighter breast, and dark wings and tail. The background is a plain, light color.

- **Human Risk and Spread Factors:**

- While rare, humans can contract bird flu, primarily through contact with infected birds.
- Climate change may exacerbate the spread of the virus, altering bird behaviour and increasing interactions between bird species.

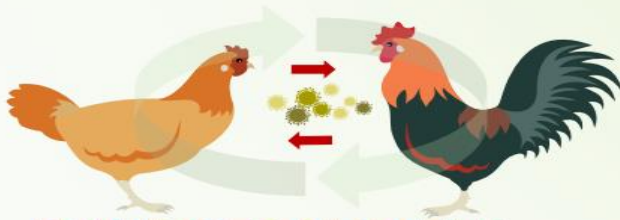
About **Bird Flu**



WHAT IS BIRD FLU?

Bird flu is an infectious disease in birds caused by avian influenza type A viruses. It may cause mild to severe illness or sudden death in birds. Domestic poultry like chickens are particularly vulnerable.

Avian influenza viruses do not usually infect humans but may sometimes be transmitted to humans who have contact with infected poultry and their secretions and faeces, or contact with contaminated surfaces.



HOW DOES BIRD FLU SPREAD BETWEEN BIRDS?

- Direct contact with nasal and respiratory secretions from infected birds
- Direct contact with infected bird faeces
- Contamination of feed and water
- Contact with contaminated equipment and humans

KEEPING PET BIRDS SAFE

- Keep your pet birds away from wild birds and their droppings.
- Use a bird-proof cage or enclosure with fine wire mesh netting preferably with a roof over the aviary.
- Separate all new birds from existing ones for at least 21 days to monitor for signs of illness.
- Adopt hygiene practices such as washing hands thoroughly with soap after handling birds and their cage(s).
- Do not bring birds back to Singapore without a valid import permit from NParks/Animal & Veterinary Service.

WHAT IF MY PET BIRD FALLS SICK OR DIES?

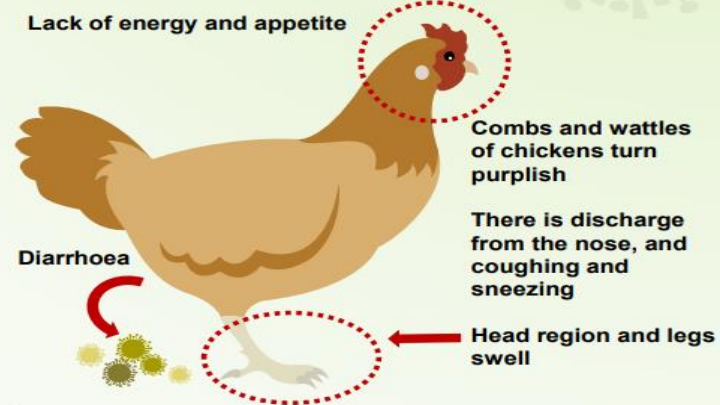
- Immediately bring your sick bird to see a vet.
- Keep it away from healthy birds.
- Wash and disinfect the cage regularly while wearing a mask and gloves.
- Wear a mask and gloves when disposing of dead birds. Place the bodies in a plastic bag tightly sealed with a rubber band or cable tie.
- Adopt hygiene practices such as washing hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling the bird and its cage.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH FREE-ROAMING CHICKENS IN SINGAPORE?

- As a precaution, please avoid touching or feeding free-roaming chickens.
- If you come into contact with free-roaming chickens, you should practise good hygiene habits and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

SIGNS IN INFECTED BIRDS

Lack of energy and appetite



Combs and wattles of chickens turn purplish

There is discharge from the nose, and coughing and sneezing

Head region and legs swell

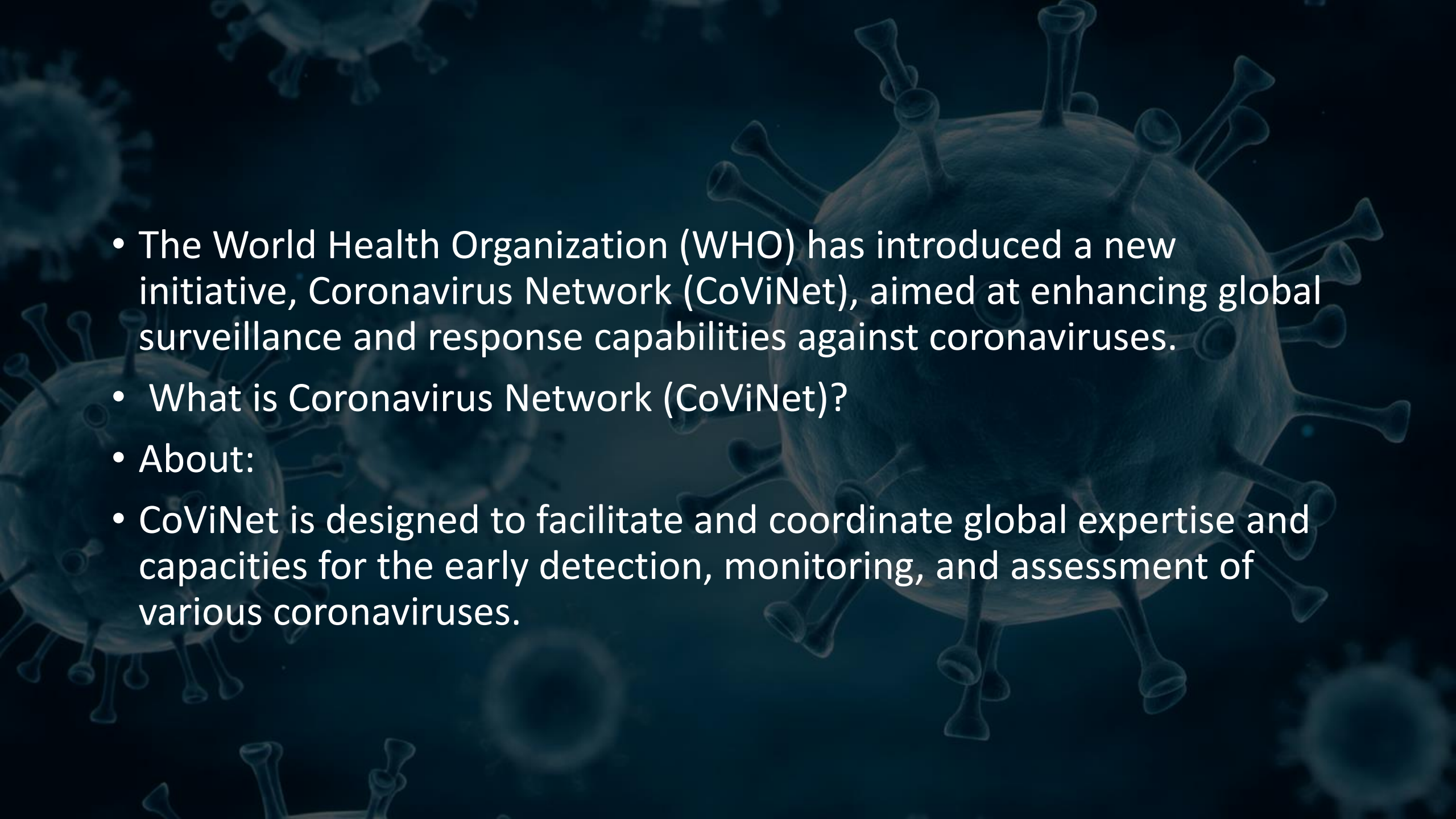
Diarrhoea



- 
- **H1N1 virus is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to which one of the following diseases? (2015)**
 - **(a) AIDS**
 - **(b) Bird flu**
 - **(c) Dengue**
 - **(d) Swine flu**

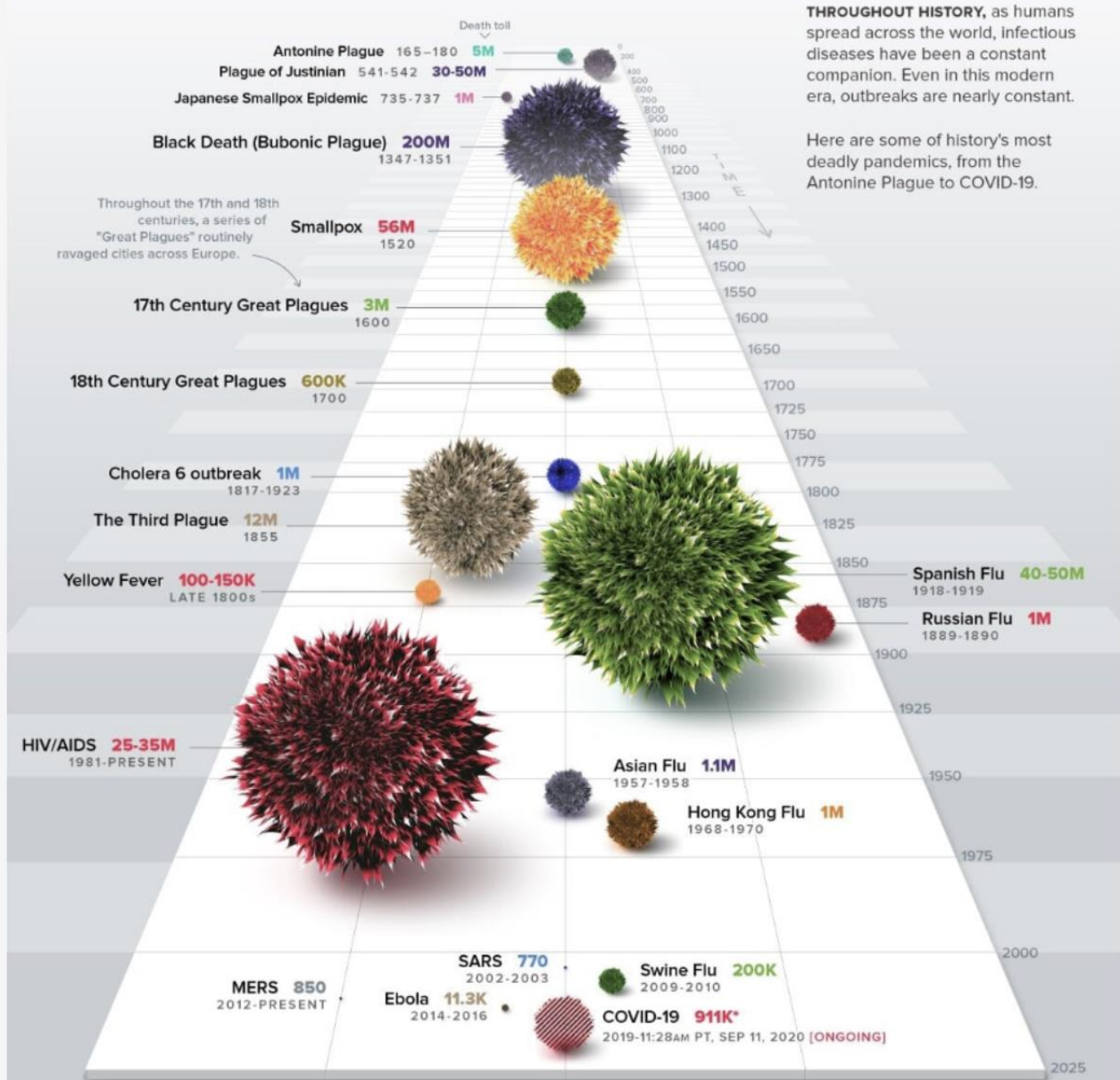
The background of the image consists of a dense, repeating pattern of dark blue, wavy lines that create a textured, almost fabric-like appearance. The lines are curved and flow across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall color is a rich, dark blue.

WHO launches CoViNet

- 
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has introduced a new initiative, Coronavirus Network (CoViNet), aimed at enhancing global surveillance and response capabilities against coronaviruses.
 - What is Coronavirus Network (CoViNet)?
 - About:
 - CoViNet is designed to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for the early detection, monitoring, and assessment of various coronaviruses.

HISTORY OF PANDEMICS

PAN-DEM-IC (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.



200M
Black Death (Bubonic Plague)
 1347-1351



The plague originated in rats and spread to humans via infected fleas.

The outbreak wiped out 30-50% of Europe's population. It took more than 200 years for the continent's population to recover.

56M
Smallpox
 1520



Smallpox killed an estimated 90% of Native Americans. In Europe during the 1800s, an estimated 400,000 people were being killed by smallpox annually. The first ever vaccine was created to ward off smallpox.

40-50M
Spanish Flu
 1918-1919



30-50M
Plague of Justinian
 541-542



The death toll of this plague is still under debate as new evidence is uncovered, but many think it may have helped hasten the fall of the Roman Empire.



25-35M
HIV/AIDS
 1981-PRESENT



12M
The Third Plague
 1855



5M
Antonine Plague
 165-180



3M
17th Century Great Plagues
 1600



1.1M
Asian Flu
 1957-1958



1M
Russian Flu
 1889-1890



1M
Hong Kong Flu
 1968-1970



1M
Cholera 6 outbreak
 1817-1923

A series of **Cholera** outbreaks spread around the world in the 1800s killing millions of people. There is no solid consensus on death tolls.



1M
Japanese Smallpox Epidemic
 735-737



911K*
COVID-19

2019-11:28AM PT, SEP 11, 2020 [ONGOING]

*John Hopkins University estimates



600K
18th Century Great Plagues
 1700



200K
Swine Flu
 2009-2010



100-150K
Yellow Fever
 LATE 1800s



11.3K
Ebola
 2014-2016



850
MERS
 2012-PRESENT



770
SARS
 2002-2003



Internet Freedom in India

India has consistently topped the **global list of countries imposing internet bans**, with approximately **60% of all recorded blackouts worldwide**.

Shutdowns flared up during the protests against the **Citizenship Amendment Act in 2019**, the **abrogation of Article 370 in 2019**, and the **introduction of Farm Bills in 2020**.

About

State imposed shutdowns in the last decade have cited **national security and threats to public order**.

- Internet disruptions in India accounted for more than **70% of the total loss to the global economy in 2020.**
- Regionally, **Jammu and Kashmir** saw the highest number of shutdowns in the last 12 years.
-

Legal Provisions Relating to Internet Shutdown

Grounds: Indian States and Union Territories can impose an internet shutdown only in case of a “public emergency” or in the interest of “public safety”, according to the Indian Telegraph Act.

- However, the law does not define what qualifies as an emergency or safety issue.

Till the year 2017, shutdowns were imposed largely under **Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**.

- **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India Case:**

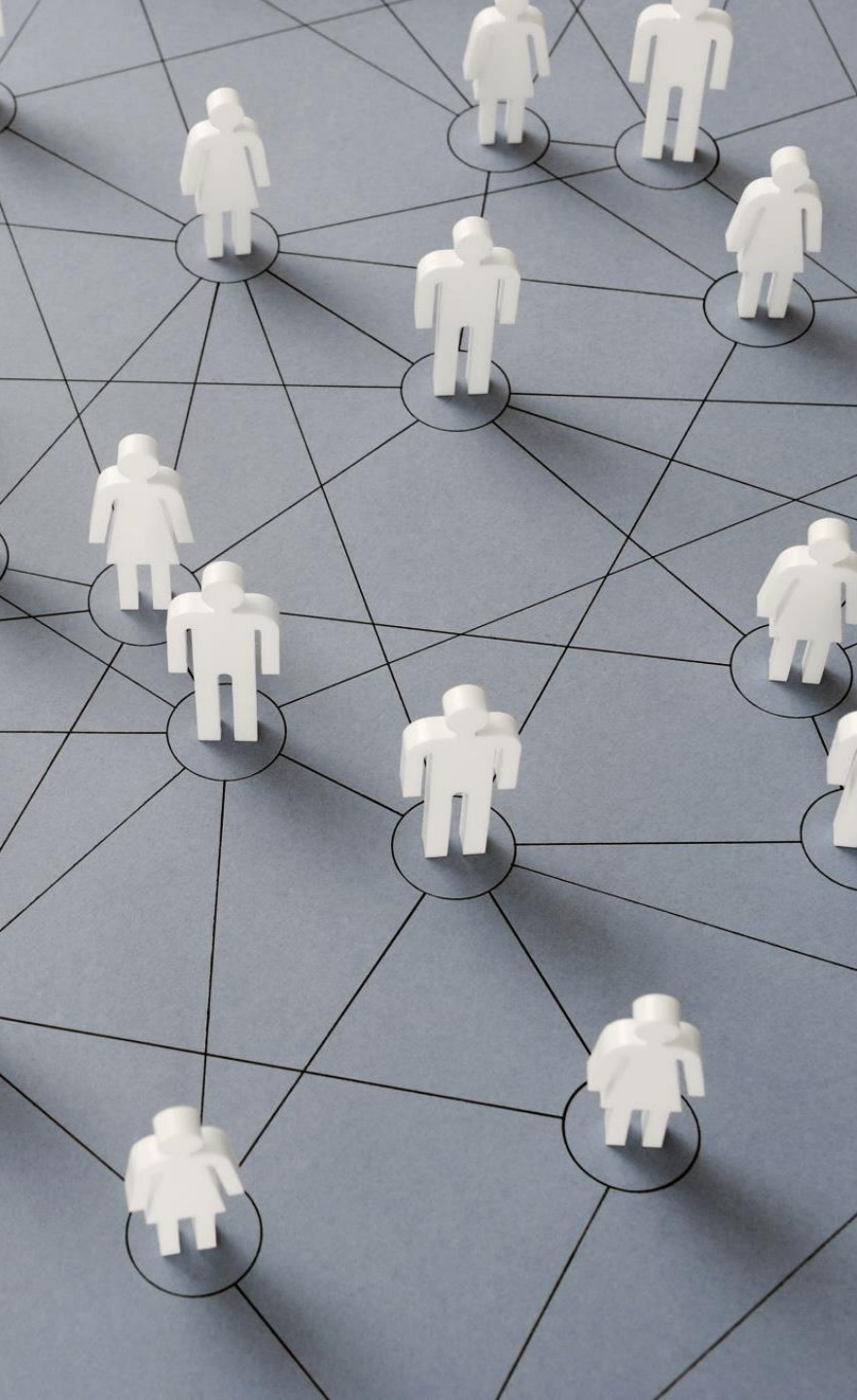
- **In 2020** the Supreme Court by **ruling on Jammu and Kashmir Internet shutdown** held that **indefinite internet shutdowns** by the State is not permissible under Indian Constitution.

- The apex Court further stated that **imposition of Section 144** can not be used as a mechanism to avoid genuine protest which is permitted under the Constitution.

- a. **Section 144** has very specific parameters, only if those parameters are satisfied then only a Magistrate can pass the orders



- **Arguments in Favour of Internet Shutdown by the Government**
- **National Security**
- **Temporary and Targeted Measure**
- **Preventing Unrest and Violence**
- **Counteracting Fake News and Disinformation:**



- **Arguments Against the Internet Shutdown by the Government**
- **Impact on Freedom of Expression:**
- **Global Image and Investment**
- **Human Rights Concern**
- **Economic Disruptions:**

The background of the image consists of a dense field of vertical lines of varying heights and colors, including shades of green, purple, and white, set against a solid black background. The lines are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured, digital-like effect.

Anthrax



- Kuttanad is a delta region situated in the west coast of **Kerala**.
- The Kuttanad Below Sea-level Farming System (KBSFS) is the **only system in India that practices rice cultivation below sea level**.
- The rice fields, which are popularly known as **"Puncha Vayals"** exist in 3 landscape elements:
 - **Karapadam** (upland rice fields)
 - **Kayal** (wetland rice fields)
 - **Kari** (land buried with black coal like materials)

Kuttanadan Region (Kerala District Wise)

- 57%
ALAPPUZHA
- 30%
KOTTAYAM
- 13%
PATHANAMTHITTA
- WATER BODY
- KUTTANAD
WETLAND
REGION

Arabian Sea



kuttanadan.com

A photograph of two astronauts in white space suits standing on a dark, rocky surface, likely Mars. They are silhouetted against a bright, golden sunset sky with scattered clouds. The astronaut in the foreground is looking towards the right. A dark blue horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Global Summit on Extreme Heat" in white, sans-serif font.

Global Summit on Extreme Heat

It is the 1st Summit on Extreme Heat.

Aim – To find solutions to lessen impacts of extreme heat, save lives and mitigate costs as 2023 was the hottest on record.

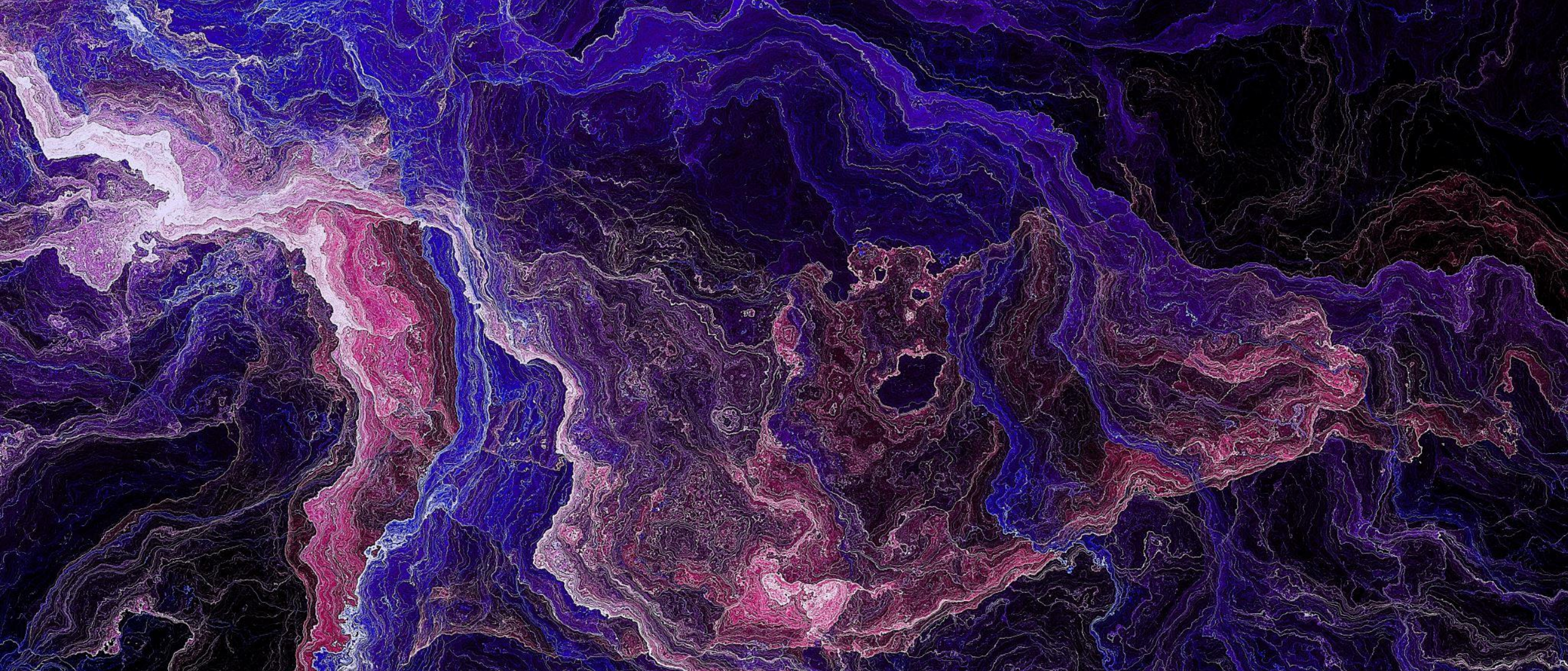
Organized By – United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).



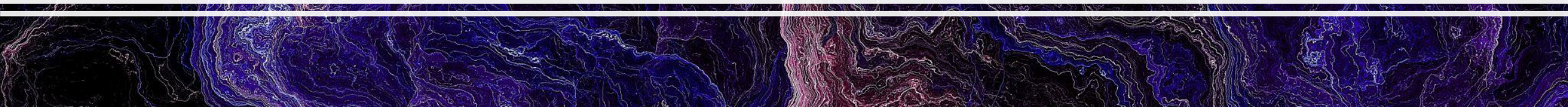
Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary

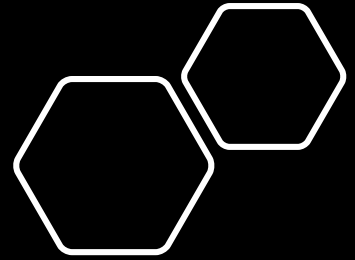
- ***Telangana is presently grappling with forest fires in Tadvai region of Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary in Mulugu and Amrabad Tiger Reserve.***
- **It was declared as a wildlife reserve in 1953.**
- **The vegetation here is tropical dry deciduous.**
- **The sanctuary is bordered by the Laknavaram Lake.**
- **The perennial river Dayyam Vagu flows through this sanctuary.**
- **The sanctuary is also famous for the Sammakka Saralamma Jatara.**
- **Sammakka Saralamma Jatara is a tribal festival for honouring the goddesses' Sammakka and Saralamma.**





Fun fact









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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some wearing suits. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. The overall mood is celebratory and professional.

Thank you
guys.
