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BEGINS Unit for the Lok Subha election. Graphic shows turnout in select

INSIDE



contributor to financial wealth

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a nationa asset and a major contributo to the nation's financia wealth. "It is the spirit of the forest that moves the earth," a lench headed by Justice MM undresh obs red >> PAGE 3



Terror supplier now struggling + for food: Modi

> HOPAL/LUCKNOW Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday took a swipe at Pakistan at an election rally in Madhya Pradesh, saying that a neighbouring country that used to "supply terror" is now "struggling even for atta (flour)", » PAGE 5

while Bihar had the lowest attendance at 48.88% The Hindu Bureau

Lakshadweep saw the highest voting at 83.88%.

A 62.37% was record-ed in the first phase of the Lok Sabha election on Friday, which sealed the fate of candidates in 102 constituencies across 21 States and Union Territories.

The voting percentage is likely to go up when reports from all polling sta-tions are obtained, the Election Commission (EC) said in a statement. The poll body also commended the "high" voter turnout "despite the heatwave".

The poll percentage was 69.4 in the first phase of the 2019 Lok Sabha

the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Polling has been com-pleted for 16 states and Unis phase, including Tamil Na-du, Uttarakhand, Anda-man and Nicobar, Laksh-adweep and most north-eastern States. Pro-tin Gadkert, Kaeimoghi Gaurav Gogoi and Bhupen-dra Yadav were among the contestants in this phase.

on june 4, Annorg the States where this offling took place, incidents of violence were reported from Manipur, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh. Lakah-ter turnout of 83.88% and Bihar the lowest of 48.88%, as per provisional EC data at 11.30 p.m. of 69.46%. Voters in Eka-napuram in Kancheepu-ram district boycotted the polls to protest against the acquisition of farmland for a greenfield airport for Channai a greenheid airport ior Chennai. In ethnic violence-hit Manipur, the voter turnout was 72.17%. Violence was reported in areas under the Inner Manipur seat straddling the Meitei-ma-

69.46% polling in T.N. The seven-phase polls would end on June I and counting would take place Tamil Nadu, where voting took place for all 39 Lok Sabha seats, saw a turnout

First phase of polls records over 62% turnout EC has reported violence and disturbances from

EC has reported violence and and Chhattisgarh booths in Manipur, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh

completed in the first phase of the election

1 32 in Sikkim. The BJP and 32 in Sikkim. The BJP had won the remaining Arunachal Pradesh seats

wave the flags of Pa

Agence France-Presse

Iran's state media reported explosions in the central province of Isfahan on Fri-day, as U.S. media quoted officials as saying Israel had carried out retaliatory strikes arainst its

strikes against its arch-rival. Israel had warned it would hit back after Iran fired hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel almost

a week ago, in retaliation for a deadly strike – which Tehran blamed on its foe –

that levelled Iran's consu-

Syria

lar annex at its embassy in

er several Iranian cities were activated, state media reported, after the coun-

ria. Air defence systems ov-

....

polling station at Thamna-pokpi in Bishnupur dis-trict, reportedly injuring unopposed on March 30. Sporadic violence

three persons. No violence was report-ed from the Outer Manipur seat reserved for the Sche-duled Tribes. Very few people from In West Bengal, voting took place in the constituencies of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar and the the Kuki community came out to vote. Kuki politicians had decided not to contest the polls. turnout was a high 80.55%. The three seats in north of Bengal which voted in the Elections were also held first phase saw sporadic in-cidents of violence. The Cooch Behar Lok

jority Imphal Valley. Un-identified armed men fired for 50 of the 60 Assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh several rounds outside a

ok Sabha elect

Sabha seat, where the EC at 48.88. The crucial eight Sabha seat, where the EC had deployed about II2 companies of Central armed police forces, was rife with allegations from political parties against each other. A voter sus-tained invision the amount at 48.88. The crucial eight seats of western Uttar Pra-desh saw a voting percen-tage of 60.25. The Samaj-wadi Party and the ruling BJP traded barbs over bo-one woting

Polling for 10 States and Union Territories was

polling in five consti-tuencies in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region conclud-ed peacefully without any tained injuries in the eye in the Sitalkuchi area when he was coming out after ex-ercising his franchise. There were also reports of crude bombs being placed outside the house major untoward incident The voter turnout aver-aged 61.87%. being

of BJP booth president in an attempt to threaten them. Videos aired by local television channels Of the 102 seats going to the polls on Friday, the BJP-led National Democrat Alliance won 43 seats showed supporters of BJP and the Trinamool Conand parties in the INDIA bloc 48 seats in the 2019 gress throwing stones at election At least 60,000 State

gress throwing stones at some places, about the second state of the sabha second state of the comprised five districts and 18 Assembly segments of Jammu and Kashmir, corded. This is the first Par-corded. This is the first Par-corded. This is the first Par-diament polls in Jammu and Kashmir since the State into two union terri-At least 60,000 State and paramilitary person-nel were deployed across Naxal-infested Bastar where a CRPF jawan was killed when a shell of an under-barrel grenade launcher accidentally ex-ploded in Galgam village in basyn was on at was domb team was on an area domi State into two union terri-tories and scrapped 70 nation exercise. In another incident, another CRPF personnel was injured years of special constitu-tional position in 2019. In Bihar, voting took place in four Lok Sabha when he came in contact with an IED laid by Naxals in the same district. seats of Gaya, Jamui, Nawa-da and Aurangabad with total voting percentage put

RELATED REPORTS



around 81%

Kumar Iha said.

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Manipur sees 72% turnout

oll hos

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Amid complaints of voter intimidation, booth-cap-turing, and violence across several polling booths, the first phase of the Lok Sab-ha election in Manipur concluded on Friday evening, with officials pegging the average turnout of the State's two constituencies at 72.17%.

Three persons were arrested in connection with the violence. While the Inner Mani-

pur constituency reported a turnout of around 76.05%, parts of Outer Ma-nipur saw 65.22% polling, as per provisional data from the Election Commission at 11.30 p.m. The turnout for Inner Manipur in the 2019 election was

CH CON



court obal East Manipur PEUTEPS

On Friday night, the Ma-nipur Police said that it had arrested three persons in cident at a school in im-phal in which one person in conjunct. In conjunct, ender, Congress Committee deah Congress Committee ing, rigging of votes, and coercion of votes, by armed miscreants in as arrest page segments. Else On Friday night, the Ma around 83%. Voting will take place in the end of the second place of the cond phase on April 26. Multiple poll officers in the State confirmed to The-eral instances of electronic voting manachines (EVMs) being damaged during dis-re-polling may be called

re-polling may be called for. These instances were spread across three or four polling booths in a couple of districts, CEO Pradeep 12 Assembly segments. Ele-ven of these segments were in the Inner Manipur

He added that candiwere in the Inner Manipur seat such as Thongju, Khu-rang and others. The party has sought a repoll in most of these polling booths. In Outer Manipur, the Con-gress complained of booth-He added that candi-dates of the Congress, BJP and an Independent in the Inner Manipur seat had filed complaints of booth-capturing at multiple loca-tions. He said the complaints would be examined and action taken. capturing in voting centre of the Sugnu area.

1000

Explosions shake Iran; U.S. media reports Israeli raids

Krishnadas Rajagopal NEW DELHI

ground of elections.

them pending without res-ponses indefinitely, Mr. Bhushan said.

The petitioners said the henomenon had been

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during the first pha

The Supreme Court on Fri-day questioned the basis of Executive Magistrates issu-ing blanket orders prohib-iting yatras to uphold de The conduct of elections is neither a valid ground recognised under Section 144, nor an emergent situation to mocratic and electoral values, dharnas and public justify imposition of sweeping prohibitory meetings during the entire duration of the Lok Sabha orders elections, till the declara PRASHANT BHUSHAN tion of poll results. "How can such orders

SC assails poll-time

prohibitory orders

be passed?" Justice B.R. Gavai exclaimed in open seen in many States, in-cluding Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi. The Bench directed Ma-The indignant query

The indignant query from the Bench, also com-prising Justice Sandeep Mela, came of the advance prasanna S. and Cheryl D'Souza, for petitioner-ac-tivists Aruna Roy and Nik-Prasanna S. and Cheryl D'Souza, for petitioner-ac-tivists Aruna Roy and Nik-ry orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Proce-dure Code Gower of Exec-vision of the Section 144 of the Criminal Proce-dure Code Gower of Exec-vision of the Section 144 of the Criminal Proce-tant Code Gower of Exec-vision of the Section of the Section 144 of the Criminal Proce-tant Code Gower of Exec-vision of the Section of the Section 144 of the Criminal Proce-tant Code Gower of Exec-tion of the Section of Exec-tion of the Section of the Section of the Section 145 of the Section of the Section of the Section 145 of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Criminal Proce-tant Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Section of the Section of the Section 146 of the Section of the Sect The Bench directed Ma-gistrates to decide the ap-plications within three days. The ambit of the court's interim order would extend across the would extend across the country. blanket prohibi-tory orders directly affect the civil society and gener-al public from freely dis-cussing, participating, or-ganising or mobilising on issues a affecting them ahead of elections." Mu-court.

orders on public gather-ings) had been issued in the past six months on the court. "The conduct of elec-tions – being the ostensible reason for invoking Sec-tion 144 – is neither a valid State authorities and Ex-ecutive Magistrates deal with applications seeking permission for public meetings and yatras with a deafening silence, keeping

ground recognised under Section 144, nor an emerion to justify im gent situa position of sweeping pro-hibitory orders," Mr. Bhushan submitted. The court listed the case for hearing in two weeks. try's official broadcaster said explosions were heard

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1 1

near Isfahan city. There launched from inside tran

launched from inside tran, and that its radar systems had not detected unidenti-nan airspace. Fars news agency re-reserves agency re-close to Oalpaparestan, near Isfahan airport and the 8th Shekarl army air agency spokesman Hos-sein Dalirium said "several" drones had been "success-Mr. Dalirian said on X near Isfahan city. There had been no reaction from had been no reaction from and the or line of the dam-age remained unclear. An anonymous Israeli official cold The Washing-bidity of the state of the official cold The Washing-liation for Iran's barrage and intended to signal that Israel had the ability to Iran's Tasnim news

Iran's Tasnim news agency, citing "informed sources", denied that Iran had been attacked from outside. "Contrary to the Mr. Dalirian said on X

there were "no reports of a missile attack". rumours and claims" in fo "Reports indicate there reign media. "there are no "Reports indicate there was no major damage or large explosions caused by the impact of any air threat," the official IRNA news agency said. reports of an attack from abroad on Iran's central ci-ty of Isfahan or any other

ty of istanan of any other part of the country", it said. Three Iranian officials told The New York Times that small drones carried out the attack, possibly PAISI STAVE MUM » PAGE 12

Explosions shake Iran; U.S. media reports Israeli raids



Iranians wave the flags of Palestine and Iran they as lead an anti-Israel demonstration in Tehran. AFP

Agence France-Presse TEHRAN

Iran's state media reported explosions in the central province of Isfahan on Friday, as U.S. media quoted officials as saying Israel had carried out retaliatory strikes against its arch-rival.

Israel had warned it would hit back after Iran fired hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel almost a week ago, in retaliation for a deadly strike – which Tehran blamed on its foe – that levelled Iran's consular annex at its embassy in Syria.

Air defence systems over several Iranian cities were activated, state media reported, after the country's official broadcaster said explosions were heard

Israeli or Iranian officials, and the extent of the damage remained unclear.

near Isfahan city. There

had been no reaction from

An anonymous Israeli official told *The Washington Post* the strike was retaliation for Iran's barrage and intended to signal that Israel had the ability to strike inside Iran.

Iran's Tashim news agency, citing "informed sources", denied that Iran fhad been attacked from outside. "Contrary to the trumours and claims" in foreign media, "there are no reports of an attack from vabroad on Iran's central ci-ty of Isfahan or any other tpart of the country", it tsaid. Three Iranian officials rold *The New York Times* that small drones carried

launched from inside Iran, and that its radar systems had not detected unidentified aircraft entering Iranian airspace.

Fars news agency reported "three explosions" close to Qahjavarestan, near Isfahan airport and the 8th Shekari army airbase, while Iran's space agency spokesman Hossein Dalirian said "several" drones had been "successfully shot down".

Mr. Dalirian said on X there were "no reports of a missile attack".

"Reports indicate there was no major damage or large explosions caused by the impact of any air threat," the official IRNA news agency said.

that small drones carried **RAISI STAYS MUM** out the attack, possibly **PAGE 12**

Saturday, April 20, 2024

IPS officer Nalin Prabhat appointed NSG chief

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Senior Indian Police Ser-vice (IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat has been appoint-ed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's coun-tercherorism and counter-Krishnadas Rajagopal NEW DELHI he Supreme Court has asserted in a judgment that for-ests in India are a national asset and a major contribu-tor to the nation's financial ter-terrorism and counter-hijack force. Mr. Prabhat is a 1992

batch IPS officer of the wealth. Andhra Pradesh cadre. He is currently posted as Addi-tional Director-General, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), in Jammu and Kashmir.

M.M. Sundresh observed in a judgment based on an appeal filed by the State of Court decision "graciously gifting" forest land to a private person. The State's forest officials had made conflicting affidavits in court. The apex court or dered 45 labh in costs from eard 45 labh in costs from and the private persons. According to an order by Department of Person-nel and Training, the ap-pointments committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment till the date of his superannua tion, August 31, 2028.

The committee has also approved the appointment of IPS officer Sapna Tewari as the Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) The State was asked to open an enquiry against its for a tenure of two years or own forest officials till the date of her superan-nuation, April 30, 2026. The judgment has come at a pivotal time when the

"It is the spirit of the forest that moves the earth," a Bench headed by Justice M.M. Sundresh observed Green assets: The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regularise encroachments in protected forests.

> controversial Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act servation) Amendment Act (PCAA) 2023, has attracted widespread criticism. The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regu-larise encroachments in protected forests and de-termine diversions of for-estiands. The Act has been criticised for naving the criticised for paving the way for the commercial exploitation of forests. "Depletion and disap-pearance of forests would

Forests a national asset and major

contributor to financial wealth. SC

The judgment comes at a pivotal time when the controversial Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2023 has attracted

widespread criticism: court says concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate national wealth now a reality



News

ultimately lead to a mas-sive extinction of organ-isms," Justice Sundresh observed. observed. The court said concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate a nation's wealth had be-come a reality. "A country with account forest with excess forest cover would be in a position to sell its excess carbon credit to the one in deficit. This in equivalent' turn underlines the signifi cance of forests in contri-

of forests against climate change. It referred to a 2022-2023 report of the Re-serve Bank of India (RBI) on the macroeconomic im-pact of climate change and changing natures of rain. forests serve as a major sink of carbon dioxide (CO2). The value of mitigachanging patterns of rain-fall. These factors could cost the economy 2.8% of its GDP and depress the livtion has put a conservative \$5 per tonne of CO2 locked in forests, this huge sink of ing standards of nearly half of its population by 2050 about 24,000 mt of CO2 is worth \$120 billion, or ₹6 lakh crores. The court quoted from a 2009 report of the Minis-try of Environment and Forests titled 'India's Forest Forests titled 'India's Forest and Tree Cover: Contribu-tion as a Carbon Sink', which said that from '1995 to 2005, the carbon stocks stored in our forests and trees have increased from 6,245 million tonnes (mt)

of its population by 2050. "India could lose anywhere around 3% to 10% of its GDP annually by the year 2100 due to cli-mate change," the judg-ment noted from the RBI document. document. "The report of the RBI presents a very disturbing scenario. The report clear-ly suggests the enormous potential impact of climate change on soclety, leading to serious job losses in every sector. Therefore, the adverse effect will be on the future of the nation as a to 6,662 mt, registering an annual increment of 38 mt of carbon or 138 mt of CO2 whole, as against an identi-

Justice Sundresh high-lighted the protective role fiable group," the judg-ment said.

Centre asks FSSAI to initiate 'appropriate action' against Nestle

Bindu Shajan Perappadan The WHO has for years warned again the presence of high sugar content in baby food product

The Consumer Affairs Mi-nistry on Friday asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSA) tion" against the Nestle group for allegedly selling baby products with high sugar content in India. The Ministry initiated this ac-timation of the Safety Safety Safety and that Nestle's Cerelac. tance, and any deviation from safety standards could lead to serious could lead to serious health concerns," the letter to FSSAI noted. Arun Gupta from the Breastfeeding Promotio products sold in India con Network of India said tha tained 2.7 grams of added sugar per serving, while the products sold in coun-India needs to review its food safety laws and en-sure that they are impletries such as Germany, Switzerland, France, and the United Kingdom did not contain added sugar.

sure that they are imple-mented strictly. "Business-es operate for profit but the government must en-sure the safety of its cit-zens. Any laxity in the laws will ensure that the balth in the laws will ensure that the balth case wulnerable infants gets compromised," he said. Serious concerns' "High sugar content in ba-by products raises serious concerns about the poten-tial implications for the The World Health Or health and safety of chil

dren in our country. The health and well-being of ganization (WHO) has for years now warned against our citizens, especially in-fants and young children, is of paramount importhe presence of high sugar content in baby products

medical

evaluation of

Centre releases curriculum | India delivers first batch of BrahMos | SC orders framework for anganwadis supersonic missiles to Philippines

between India and Russia. The first batch was deli-vered aboard a transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force which landed in the

Philippines on Friday after

noon. Specifics of the deliv ery made were not imme

diately available. The Philippines is acquiring the

systems under the Horizor

2 of the Revised Armed

Forces of the Philippines Modernisation Program

Maitri Porecha

to develop skills which will help a For the first time, the Unchild easily transition ion government has re-leased a curriculum advisinto Grade 1 able to be taught to children aged three to six years, thus giving an impe-us to pre-school learning is that children are going is that children are going up school ladder without learning to read and write [which may lead them to lack in achieving age-ap-propriate learning levels like math and language skills]," said Professor Ven-

tus to pre-school learning in 14 lakh anganwadis across the country. In the second second second additional second second additional second second (MWCD) has released the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024 titled 'Aad-hashila', on the lines of hashila', on the lines of hashila', on the lines of policy 2020 and the Na-Policy 2020 and the Na-Curriculum Frame work. Aadharshila (translated as foundation stone) is a detailed 48-week curriulum meant for learning in the age group of three to six years in anganwadis. There are 14 lakh angan-

wadis in India which serve and are also psychosocially as nodal points in villages for the health and nutribetter adapted than peers who did not receive any tion needs of pregnant mothers and children. "Concern in the policy formal education before six years of age. The curriculum in-

after attacking police team in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee have report-ed the discovery of fossilis of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago durring a period called the Middle Eccene. The fosilis wave formed in Kurch Cristi Researchers at the Indian A group of six African na allegedly assault nel from the Cent tionais allegedly assaulted personnel from the Central Crime Branch (CCB), Ben-galuru city police, who were about to arrest one of them on drug peddling charge, on the outskirts of the city on Thursday. Local Middle Eocene. The fossils were found in Kutch, Guja-rat, and the reptile, named police olice personnel, who ame to the rescue of the Vasuki Indicus, could have CCB, were also attacked. A total of four police een anvwhere between 10 metres and 15 metres

personnel sustained minor njuries and are undergo ing treatment. The Africar nals, who assaulted

them, are at large. Sleuths from the Anti-Sleuths from the Anti-Narcotics Wing of the CCB, Bengaluru, arrested an African national on April 6 and recovered 4 kg of MDMA crystals from his house worth 44 crore. Probing the case, a team of CCB officials went to Ma-valliours when they were

the authors note. Professor Sunil Bajpai and post-doctoral re-searcher Debajit Data at the IIT-Roorkee stumbled upon 27 pieces of a "par-tial, well preserved" verte-bral column of the snake at the Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch. vallipura, when they were attacked ******

cludes a weekly play calen-Dinakar Peri dar with four weeks of in itiation which include

academic activities. The next 36 weeks are spent on India delivered the first batch of BrahMos super-sonic cruise missiles to the exploring, free play, con versation, creation and ap-preciation, and reflection Philippines on Friday. In January 2022, the Philip-pines concluded a \$375-million deal with India for that involves various activities, including storytelling. singing rhymes, arts and crafts. three batteries of a shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos becoming the The last eight weeks are first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia.

The last eight weeks are spent reinforcing learnings of previous weeks and ob-manco. Activities and ti-metable are segregated age-wise with detailed re-quirements of materials needed. The curriculum hegekills, vocabulary build-ing, boosting imagination. ing, boosting imagination, cial development, and developing self-esteem, which will help a child easi-ly transition into Grade 1. This framework will

This framework will serve as a base for States to develop their own cultural-ly appropriate curriculums seen as a solution to tackle challenges of children. The delivery comes amid the showdown bet-



augment the defensive posture of the Philippines armed forces once the systems are operationalised. During his visit to the Philippines in March, Ex-ternal Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in a meeting with the Secretary of Na tional Defence of the Philippines Gilberto C. Teodo-ro, Jr. reaffirmed India's tment to upholding a rules-based international order and promoting

supersonic cruise missiles, the BrahMos missiles will provide deterrence against any attempt to undermine our sovereignty and sovereign rights, especially in the West Philippine Sea." The contract includes the delivery of three mis sile batteries, training for operators and maintainers a sues-oased international order and promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. In January 2022, then operators and maintainers as well as the necessary Integrated Logistics Support package. The coastal de-

fence regiment of the Phi-lippine Marines will be the primary user of the missile systems From January 23 to Fe-bruary 11, 2023, 21 Philip-

examination of a 14-year-old rape survivor who is 28 and maintenance of the systems in Nagpur and were awarded interim mis-sile badges by the Indian Navy chief, Admiral R. Hari

uating the mental or physi cal status of the mino The court directed the examination to be con ducted on Saturday a Mumbai's Sion Hospital. I listed the case for April 22 The Medical Termina-tion of Pregnancy (MTP) Act caps the upper limit for termination of pregnancy at 24 weeks.

pregnant teen The Hindu Bureau The Supreme Court on Fri day directed the medica pine Navy personnel were trained in the operations

weeks pregnant. A Bench of Chief Justice

A Bench of Chief Justice DX. Chandrachud and Jus-tice J.B. Pardivalia assem-hours to pass the order in a special hearing. The girl's mother has sought the medical termi-the Bombay High Court had declined her pies. The Bench found that was arrived without eval-uating the mental or physi-Navy chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar. As reported earlier, sev-eral countries have ex-pressed interest in acquir-ing BrahMos systems and discussions are in ad-vanced stages with Indone-sia and Thailand, among others.

others. BrahMos is a joint ven ture between the DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and the mis sile derives its name from Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers. The missile is capa-ble of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and seaand, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets and has been long inducted by the In-dian armed forces.

amid the showdown bet-ween the Philippines and China in the South China Sea and will significantly ⁶ Africans flee | Fossils of huge prehistoric | Left a safer bet than Congress, its snake found in Kutch mine leaders are not turncoats: Yechury

me.

Jacob Koshy

ong, or as big as a modern

It belonged to the now-extinct Madtsoiidae snake

family but represents a un-ique lineage from India, the authors note.

day school bus

The curriculum helps

skills]," said Professor Ven ita Kaul, former NCERT of ficial and member of the internal committee that designed the curriculum. Prof. Kaul said longitudi fol

nal research which fol lowed 42,000 Indian chil

dren up to primary grades

for about five years indicat-ed that children who have

received early childhood

education are expected to do much better in school



arrow indicates the level at which the re-The discovery, the auth-ors report in the peer-re-viewed journal, Nature one, conjoined landmass. It likely had a cylindrical body, hinting at a robust and powerful build, and

Scientific Reports, could improve understanding of was as big as Titanoboa, a how the Madtsolidae spemassive snake that once roamed the earth and is reportedly the longest ever known, said a press state-ment from IIT-Roorkee.

cless evolved in different kinds of climate, as well as the factors that contribut-ed to large body sizes. One of the case bidy hencers is tures in the tropical cli-mate of that time. Vasuk Indicus existed at a time when the earth today and Africa, India and South America were ment from IIT-Roorkee. "This discovery is signif-icant not only for under-standing the ancient eco-systems of India but also for unravelling the evolu-tionary history of snakes on the Indian subconti-nent...," Dr. Bajpai said in a statement. statement.



Sitaram Yechury

Parakka rakkandy. "In Kerala too, people think it's a safer bet to have the Left which is unlikely to defect to the BJP. In Wes Bengal and Tripura, we are getting killed. But our lead-ers don't become turncoats. That sort of chara

coats. That sort of charac-ter you require in the party, which the Congress doesn't have,' he said, wait to a sort of the construction of the construction of the velled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi against the CPI(M) and the Kerala go-vernment, Mr. Yechury said Mr. Modi was deliber-imation as the agencies un-



Philippines Defence Secre-tary Delfin N. Lorenzana, who signed the contract said, "As the world's fastest

der him could not come up with anything incriminat-ing in the diplomatic baggage gold smuggling cas even after years of investigation. "The point is the boot is

"The point is the boot is always on the other foot for Mr. Modi. He makes these reckless allegations while he is singularly res-ponsible as the head of the Union government for hav-ing conducted these inves-tigations," Mr. Yechury said. while he is singularly res-ponsible as the head of the the attacks on Opposi-ting conducted these inves-ing conducted these inves-ing a split in Opposition add. the Income Tax De-partment freezing the start of the INDIA bank account of his party in Thrissur, he said detaints

...



The action of the I-T De partment in the midst of While targeting over 400 seats, the BJP and Mr partment in the midst of election, a year after re-ceiving the data, smacked of maila fide intentions, es-pecially when it is read with the arrests of Delhi and Jharkhand Chief Minis-Modi knew fully well that Modi knew fully well that they had hit the ceiling in terms of the number of seats in 2019 in States where the sharpening of

where the sharpening of communal polarisation worked for them. If free and fair elections were held, the CPI(M) would improve its electoral performance in West Ben-gal and Tripura, he said. (Read full interview at newsch live/Workury) newsth.live/Yechury)

sharpening of polarisation

Saturday, April 20, 2024

IPS officer Nalin Prabhat appointed NSG chief

The Hindu Bureau

Senior Indian Police Ser-vice (IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat has been appoint ed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism and counter

hijack force. Mr. Prabhat is a 1992 batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre. He is currently posted as Addi-tional Director-General, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), in Jammu and Kashmin

wealth.

According to an order Department of Personby Department of Person-nel and Training, the appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment till the date of his superannua-tion, August 31, 2028. The committee has also approved the appointment of IPS officer Samea Teamer

approved the appointment of IPS officer Sapna Tewari as the Special Director in Bursan (B) he Intelligence Bureau (IB) for a tenure of two years or till the date of her superan-nuation, April 30, 2026.



M.M., Sundresh observed in a judgment based on an appeal filed by the State of relangana against a High grifting" forest land tos private person. The State's forest officials had made matters worse by filing conficting affidavits in court. The appex court or both the State government both the State government and the private persons. servation) Amendment Act servation) Amendment Act (FCAA) 2023, has attracted widespread criticism. The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regu-larise encroachments in protected forests and de-termine diversions of fortermine diversions of the estlands. The Act has been criticised for paving the and the private persons. The State was asked to open an enquiry against its own forest officials ploitation of forests. The judgment has come at a pivotal time when the "Depletion and disap-pearance of forests would

A major sink The judgment said India's forests serve as a major sink of carbon dioxide (CO2). The value of mitigation has put a conservative Green assets: The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regularise encroachments in protected forests. ultimately lead to a mas

Forests a national asset and major

contributor to financial wealth. SC

The judgment comes at a pivotal time when the controversial Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2023 has attracted

widespread criticism: court says concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate national wealth now a reality

ultimately lead to a mas-sive extinction of organ-isms," Justice Sundresh observed. The court said concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate a nation's wealth had be-come a reality. "A country with excess forest cover wild be as a position of the to the one in deficit This in

Dinakar Peri

\$5 per tonne of CO2 locked in forests, this huge sink of about 24,000 mt of CO2 is worth \$120 billion, or ₹6 lakh crores. The court quoted from a 2009 report of the Minis-try of Environment and Forests titled 'India's Forest

outing to the financial wealth of a country," the court noted.

THE HINDI

News

Forests titled 'India's Forest and Tree Cover: Contribu-tion as a Carbon Sink', which said that from '1995 to 2005, the carbon stocks stored in our forests and trees have increased from 6,245 million tonnes (mt) to 6,662 mt, registering an annual increment of 38 mt of carbon or 138 mt of CO2 to the one in deficit. This in equivalent". Justice Sundresh high-lighted the protective role turn underlines the signifi-cance of forests in contri-

The Consumer Affairs Mi-nistry on Friday asked the Pood Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSA) for the Construction of the group for allegedly selling baby products with high sugar content in India. The Ministry initiated this acc of forests against climate change. It referred to a 2022-2023 report of the Re-serve Bank of India (RBI) on the macroeconomic im-pact of climate change and changing natures of rainchanging patterns of rain-fall. These factors could cost the economy 2.8% of its GDP and depress the living standards of nearly half of its population by 2050. tion following a report that said that Nestle's Cerelac "India could lose anywhere around 3% to 10% of its GDP annually by the year 2100 due to cliproducts sold in India con-tained 2.7 grams of added sugar per serving, while the products sold in counthe products soid in coun-tries such as Germany, Switzerland, France, and the United Kingdom did not contain added sugar. mate change," the judg-ment noted from the RBI document

document. "The report of the RBI presents a very disturbing scenario. The report Clear-by suggests the enormous provide the second second change on society, leading to serious job losses in ev-ery sector. Therefore, the adverse effect will be on the future of the nation as a "Serious concerns" "High sugar content in ba-by products raises serious concerns about the poten-tial implications for the health and safety of chil-dren in our country. The health and well-being of our criterens especially in whole, as against an identi-fiable group," the judg-ment said.

Centre asks FSSAI to initiate 'appropriate action' against Nestle

Bindu Shajan Perappadan The WHO has for years warned again the presence of high sugar content in baby food products

3

tance, and any deviatio from safety standards could lead to serious health concerns," the letter to FSSAI noted. Arun Gupta from the Breastfeeding Promo Network of India said that

India needs to review its food safety laws and ensure that they are imple mented strictly "Bus es operate for profit but the government must enthe government must en-sure the safety of its citi-zens. Any laxity in the laws will ensure that the health of the citizens and in this case vulnerable infants gets compromised," he sold

SC orders

The World Health Or-ganization (WHO) has for years now warned against the presence of high sugar content in baby products.

Centre releases curriculum |India delivers first batch of BrahMos framework for anganwadis supersonic missiles to Philippines

The first batch was deli

Maitri Porecha

For the first time, the Un-ion government has re-leased a curriculum advis-able to be taught to children aged three to six usare thas guing an immointo Grade 1

years, thus giving an impe-tus to pre-school learning in 14 lakh anganwadis across the country. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has released the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024 titled 'Aad harshila', on the lines of the National Education

Policy 2020 and the Na-tional Curriculum Frame-work, Aadharshila (translated as foundation stone) is a detailed 48-week curriis a detailed 48-week curri-culum meant for learning in the age group of three to six years in anganwadis. There are 14 lakh angan-wadis in India which serve

as nodal points in villages for the health and nutri-tion needs of pregnant mothers and children. "Concern in the policy

six years of age. The curriculum in-

Jacob Koshy

day school bus. It belonged to the now-extinct Madtsoiidae snake

6 Africans flee after attacking police team in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau

Researchers at the Indian Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee have report-ed the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eccene. The fossils were found in Katch, Gaja-were found in Katch, Gaja-been anywhere between A group of six African na-tionals allegedly assaulted personnel from the Central Crime Branch (CCB), Ben-galuru city police, who were about to arrest one of them on drug perdiling them on drug peddling charge, on the outskirts of the city on Thursday. Local police personnel, who came to the rescue of the CCB, were also attacked. A total of four police been anywhere between 10 metres and 15 metres long, or as big as a modern-day school bus.

personnel sustained minor niuries and are undergo ing treatment. The Africa ationals, who assaulted

nationals, who assaulted them, are at large, and the same search of the same hard of the same transformation of the same transformation of the same transformation of the same and the same same transformation of the same and the same same transformation of the same and the same same transformation of the same transfor nationals, who assaulted them, are at large. Sleuths from the Anti-barcoites Wing of the Can be and recovered 4 kg of MDMA crystals from his house worth 44 crore probing the case, a team of an team of the state of the probing the case, at team of a state of the state of the probing the case, at team of the state of the state of the probing the case, at team

The curriculum helps to develop skills cludes a weekly play calen dar with four weeks of in itiation which includes which will help a academic activities. The next 36 weeks are spent on exploring, free play, conchild easily transi versation, creation and ap-preciation, and reflection that involves various activi-ties, including storytelling, is that children are going up school ladder without learning to read and write [which may lead them to lack in achieving age-ap-

singing rhymes, arts and crafts. The last eight weeks are propriate learning levels like math and language skills]," said Professor Venspent reinforcing learnings of previous weeks and ob-servation of kids' performance. Activities and ti-metable are segregated age-wise with detailed reita Kaul, former NCERT of-ficial and member of the hcial and member of the internal committee that designed the curriculum. Prof. Kaul said longitudi-nal research which fol-lowed 42,000 Indian chilage-wise with detailed re-quirements of materials needed.The curriculum helps in developing listen-ing skills, vocabulary building skills, vocabulary built-ing, boosting imagination, following instructions, so-cial development, and de-veloping self-esteem, by transition into Grade 1. This framework will serve as a base for States to develop their own cultural by appropriate curriculums seen as a solution to tackle challenges of children. lowed 42,000 Indian chil-dren up to primary grades for about five years indicate ed that children who have ed that children who have education are expected to do much better in school and are also psychosocially better adapted than peers who did not receive any who did not peefore aix vears of ace.

me. The delivery comes amid the showdown bet-ween the Philippines and China in the South China Sea and will significantly

The Panandhro Lignite Mine where the fossils were found. Red arrow indicates the level at which the remains were discovered.

The discovery, the auth-

The discovery, the auth-ors report in the peer-re-viewed journal, Nature Scientific Reports, could improve understanding of how the Madtsolidae spe-cles evolved in different

kinds of climate, as well as the factors that contribut-ed to large body sizes. One

ed to large body sizes. One of the causative factors is held to be high tempera-tures in the tropical cli-mate of that time. Vasuki Indicus existed at a time when the earth looked quite different from today, and Africa, India and South America were



landed in the Philippines on Friday, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

vered aboard a trans augment the defensive posture of the Philippines armed forces once the sysaircraft of the Indian Air Force which landed in the Force which landed in the Philippines on Friday after-noon. Specifics of the deliv-ery made were not imme-diately available. The Philippines is acquiring the systems under the Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Fodes of the Philippines Fodes of the Philippines Mee. The Station Program-me. armed forces once the sys-tems are operationalised. During his visit to the Philippines in March, Ex-ternal Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in a meeting Jaishankar in a meeting with the Secretary of Na-tional Defence of the Phi-lippines Gilberto C. Teodo-ro, Jr. reaffirmed India's commitment to upholding a rules-based international order and proposition

order and promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. In January 2022, then

medical evaluation of pregnant teen

e regiment of the Phi-be Marines will be the The Hindu Bureau

The Supreme Court on Fri-day directed the medical examination of a 14-year-old rape survivor who is 28 works programmers A Bench of Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Jus-tice J.B. Pardiwala assem-bled urgently after court

hours to pass the order in a special hearing. special hearing. The girl's mother has sought the medical termination of the pregnancy. The Bombay High Court had declined her plea. The Bench found that the High Court's decision and Russia's NPO Mashi-nostroyeniya and the mis-sile derives its name from Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers. The missile is capa-ble of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air arrainet surface, and eas



sed interest in acquir pressed interest in acquir-ing BrahMos systems and discussions are in ad-vanced stages with Indone-sia and Thailand, among others. BrahMos is a joint venture between the DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashi-

The court directed the examination to be con-ducted on Saturday at Mumbai's Sion Hospital. It listed the case for April 22. The Medical Termina-tion of Pregnancy (MTP) Act caps the upper limit for termination of rememane against surface and sea-based targets and has been long inducted by the Intermination of pregnancy at 24 weeks.

Fossils of huge prehistoric | Left a safer bet than Congress, its snake found in Kutch mine leaders are not turncoats: Yechury

and the second

S. Anandan

Before hurling allegations at the CPI(M) in Kerala, the Congress will do well to ask itself why a large number of people joining the BIP are Congress leaders, said CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Vechury in an inte-Parakkandy. The Hindu at

Parakkandy. "In Kerala too, people one, conjoined landmass. It likely had a cylindrical body, hinting at a robust and powerful build, and was as big as Titanoboa, a think it's a safer bet to have the Left which is unlikely to defect to the BJP. In West Bengal and Tripura, we are getting killed. But our leadmassive snake that once roamed the earth and is re ers don't become turners don't become turn-coats. That sort of charac-ter you require in the party, which the Congress doesn't have," he said. portedly the longest even known, said a press state-ment from IIT-Roorkee.

ment from ITT-Koorkee. "This discovery is signif. tatin ting the anclu eco-systems of India but also for unravelling the evolu-on the India subconti entra...," Dr. Bajpaisaid in a statement.



Philippines Defence Secre-

tary Delfin N. Lorenzana, who signed the contract said, "As the world's fastest

supersonic cruise missiles, the BrahMos missiles will

the BrahMos missiles will provide deterrence against any attempt to undermine our sovereignty and sove-rence and the source of the the West Philippine Sea." The contract includes the delivery of three mis-sile batteries, training for operators and maintainers tegrated Logistics Support

tegrated Logistics Support package. The coastal de-

Sitaram Yechury der him could not come up with anything incriminat-ing in the diplomatic bag-gage gold smuggling case even after years of investigation. "The point is the boot is

always on the other foot for Mr. Modi. He makes these reckless allegations while he is singularly reswhile he is singularly res-ponsible as the head of the Union government for hav-ing conducted these inves-tigations," Mr. Yechury said.

said. On the Income Tax De-partment freezing the bank account of his party in Thrissur, he said details

of all accounts across the country using the CPI(M) PAN card were consolidat-tion of the CPI(M) by the party and "there were times when the Elec-tion Commission of India and other authorities went on record saying that we construct the there are also fulfilled that obligation in time. Even the ruling party does not do that, but no a pan-Indian grand narra-tive, but an understanding State level to keep the BP out which was achieved in most States. It was not tried in States is like Kerala where the BP was a non-event are placed by the out of the BP was a non-event are placed by the out of the BP was a non-event are placed by the place of the BP was to be a state of the BP was to be a sta idea was to ensure anti-in-cumbency against the Tri-namool Congress govern-ment should not favour the does not do that, but no questions are asked". BJP. So, the INDIA bloc of-fered a very viable, stable alternative, he said. I-T Dept. action The action of the I-T De

partment in the midst of election, a year after re-ceiving the data, smacked of mala fide intentions, es-While targeting over 400 seats, the BJP and Mr. Modi knew fully well that they had hit the ceiling in terms of the number of pecially when it is read with the arrests of Delhi and Jharkhand Chief Minisseats in 2019 in State where the sharpening of communal polarisa worked for them.

and Jharkhand Chief Minis-ters, the attacks on Opposi-tion leaders, and engineer-ing a split in Opposition parties, etc, he said. Mr. Yechury slammed a major section of the media for parroting a BP-spon-sored narrative. The INDIA bloc was never meant to be worked for them. If free and fair elections were held, the CPI(M) would improve its electoral performance in West Ben-gal and Tripura, he said. (Read full interview at newsth.live/Yechury)

was arrived without eval uating the mental or physi cal status of the minor. The court directed the

IPS officer Nalin Prabhat appointed NSG chief

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat has been appointed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism and counterhijack force.

Mr. Prabhat is a 1992 batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre. He is currently posted as Additional Director-General, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to an order by Department of Personnel and Training, the appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment till the date of his superannuation, August 31, 2028.

The committee has also approved the appointment of IPS officer Sapna Tewari as the Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) for a tenure of two years or till the date of her superannuation, April 30, 2026.

| Agency overview | |
|--|---|
| Formed | 16 October 1984; 39 years ago ^[1] |
| Employees | 10,000 active personnel |
| Annual budget | ₹1,273.19 crore (US\$159.4 million) (2024– 25) ^[2] |
| Jurisdictional structure | |
| Operations urisdiction | India |
| Legal urisdiction | Republic of India |
| Governing body | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| Constituting Instrument | National Security Guard Act, 1986 |
| Operational structure | |
| Headquarters | New Delhi |
| Minister responsible | Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs |
| | |
| Agency executive | Daljit Singh Chaudhary, IPS, Director General of NSG |
| Agency executive Parent agency | Daljit Singh Chaudhary,IPS, Director General of NSG Ministry of Home Affairs |
| Agency executive Parent agency Regional Hubs | Daljit Singh Chaudhary,IPS, Director General of NSG Ministry of Home Affairs Mumbai · Kolkata · Hyderabad · Chennai · Gandhinagar |
| Agency executive Parent agency Regional Hubs | Daljit Singh Chaudhary,IPS, Director General of NSG Ministry of Home Affairs Mumbai · Kolkata · Hyderabad · Chennai · Gandhinagar Notables |
| Agency executive Parent agency Regional Hubs Significant Operations | Daljit Singh Chaudhary,IPS, Director General of NSG Ministry of Home Affairs Mumbai · Kolkata · Hyderabad · Chennai · Gandhinagar Notables Black Thunder Ashwamedh Combat missions in Jammu and Kashmir |

Forests a national asset and major contributor to financial wealth: SC

<u>The judgment comes at a pivotal time</u> when the controversial Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2023 has attracted widespread criticism; court says concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate national wealth now a reality

Krishnadas Rajagopal NEW DELHI

he Supreme Court has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a national asset and a major contributor to the nation's financial wealth.

"It is the spirit of the forest that moves the earth," a Bench headed by Justice M.M. Sundresh observed in a judgment based on an appeal filed by the State of Telangana against a High Court decision "graciously gifting" forest land to a private person. The State's forest officials had made matters worse by filing conflicting affidavits in court. The apex court ordered ₹5 lakh in costs from both the State government and the private persons. The State was asked to open an enquiry against its own forest officials.

The judgment has come at a pivotal time when the pe



Green assets: The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regularise encroachments in protected forests.

controversial Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act (FCAA) 2023, has attracted widespread criticism. The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regularise encroachments in protected forests and determine diversions of forestlands. The Act has been criticised for paving the way for the commercial exploitation of forests.

"Depletion and disappearance of forests would ultimately lead to a massive extinction of organisms," Justice Sundresh observed.

The court said concepts of carbon credit and green accounting to evaluate a nation's wealth had become a reality. "A country with excess forest cover would be in a position to sell its excess carbon credit to the one in deficit. This in turn underlines the significance of forests in contributing to the financial wealth of a country," the court noted.

A major sink

The judgment said India's forests serve as a major sink of carbon dioxide (CO2). The value of mitigation has put a conservative \$5 per tonne of CO2 locked in forests, this huge sink of about 24,000 mt of CO2 is worth \$120 billion, or $\gtrless 6$ lakh crores.

The court quoted from a 2009 report of the Ministry of Environment and Forests titled 'India's Forest and Tree Cover: Contribution as a Carbon Sink', which said that from "1995 to 2005, the carbon stocks stored in our forests and trees have increased from 6,245 million tonnes (mt) to 6,662 mt, registering an annual increment of 38 mt of carbon or 138 mt of CO2 equivalent".

Justice Sundresh highlighted the protective role of forests against climate change. It referred to a 2022-2023 report of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on the macroeconomic impact of climate change and changing patterns of rainfall. These factors could cost the economy 2.8% of its GDP and depress the living standards of nearly half of its population by 2050.

"India could lose anywhere around 3% to 10% of its GDP annually by the year 2100 due to climate change," the judgment noted from the RBI document.

"The report of the RBI presents a very disturbing scenario. The report clearly suggests the enormous potential impact of climate change on society, leading to serious job losses in every sector. Therefore, the adverse effect will be on the future of the nation as a whole, as against an identifiable group," the judgment said.

- The Indian State of Forest Report (ISFR) is

 a biennial assessment of India's woodlands and tree assets.

 The inaugural report, the first India State of Forest Report, was published in 1987.
- The responsibility for releasing this report lies with the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Increase in Total Forest and Tree Cover:

The total forest and tree cover in India have grown by 2,261 sq km since the 2019 assessment (ISFR-2019).

Forest cover increased by 1,540 sq km, and tree cover increased by 721 sq km.

The overall forest and tree cover now account for 80.9 million hectares, equivalent to 24.62% of the country's geographical area.

- Increase in Forest Cover (Top States):
- Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km), Telangana (632 sq km), and Odisha (632 sq km) are the top three states with increased forest cover.
- Open forests witnessed a greater increase than dense forests.
- Area-wise Forest Cover:
- Madhya Pradesh holds the largest forest cover in the country, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Maharashtra.

Percentage-wise Forest Cover:

The top five states in terms of forest cover as a percentage of total geographical area are Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%), and Nagaland (73.90%).

States/ UTs with more than one-third area under Forest Cover:

17 states/UTs have forest cover covering more than 33% of their land area.

- Over 75%: Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya.
- Approximately 33% to 75%: 12 states/UTs, including Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, and Odisha.
- Increase in Mangrove Cover:
- Mangrove cover has increased by 17 sq km since 2019, reaching a total of 4,992 sq km.
- Odisha (8 sq km), Maharashtra (4 sq km), and Karnataka are the top three states with increasing mangrove cover.

India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000: Global Forest Watch

- India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six percentdecrease in tree cover during this period, according to the latest data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project.
 - The Global Forest Watch tracks forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources.

• Primary Forest

Loss: India lost 4,14,000 hectares of humid primary forest (4.1 per cent) from 2002 to 2023, making up **18 percent** of its total tree cover loss in the same period.





- Tree Cover Gain: In India, the top 6 regions were responsible for 54% of all tree cover gain between 2000 and 2020. Karnataka had the most tree cover gain.
 - From 2000 to 2020, India gained **1.4% of the global total.**
- All Tree Cover: As of 2010, the top 7 regions represent 55% of all tree cover.
 - Arunachal Pradesh had the most tree cover followed by Assam, Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Odisha.

India delivers first batch of BrahMos supersonic missiles to Philippines

Dinakar Peri NEW DELHI

India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines on Friday. In January 2022, the Philippines concluded a \$375million deal with India for three batteries of a shorebased, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia. The first batch was deli-

vered aboard a transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force which landed in the Philippines on Friday afternoon. Specifics of the delivery made were not immediately available. The Philippines is acquiring the systems under the Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernisation Programme.

The delivery comes amid the showdown between the Philippines and China in the South China Sea and will significantly



The batch was transported on an Indian Air Force aircraft that landed in the Philippines on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

augment the defensive posture of the Philippines armed forces once the systems are operationalised.

During his visit to the Philippines in March, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in a meeting with the Secretary of National Defence of the Philippines Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. reaffirmed India's commitment to upholding a rules-based international order and promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. In January 2022, then

Philippines Defence Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana, who signed the contract said, "As the world's fastest supersonic cruise missiles, the BrahMos missiles will provide deterrence against any attempt to undermine our sovereignty and sovereign rights, especially in

the West Philippine Sea." The contract includes the delivery of three missile batteries, training for operators and maintainers as well as the necessary Integrated Logistics Support package. The coastal de-

fence regiment of the Philippine Marines will be the primary user of the missile systems.

From January 23 to February 11, 2023, 21 Philippine Navy personnel were trained in the operations and maintenance of the systems in Nagpur and were awarded interim missile badges by the Indian Navy chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar.

As reported earlier, several countries have expressed interest in acquiring BrahMos systems and discussions are in advanced stages with Indonesia and Thailand, among others.

BrahMos is a joint venture between the DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and the missile derives its name from Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers. The missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and seabased targets and has been long inducted by the Indian armed forces.

India has set a **defense export target** of ₹50,000 crore by 2028-29.

Defense exports of India have touched Rs 21,083 crore in the FY 2023-24, a growth of **32.5%** over the last fiscal year.

The private sector and the defense public sector undertakings (DPSUs) contributed around **60% and 40%**, respectively, in exports from India.

- The country is currently exporting military hardware to around **85 countries**, with around 100 local firms involved.
- According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, between 2000 and 2023, Myanmar remained the largest importer of Indian weapons, accounting for 31 per cent of India's exports and Sri Lanka followed at 19 per cent.
 - Mauritius, Nepal, Armenia, Vietnam, and Maldives were other major importers.

- India's defense production grew substantially from Rs 74,054 crore in 2016-17 to Rs 108,684 crore in 2022-23.
 - Out of this, 21.96 per cent of the production was done by private companies.



Fossils of huge prehistoric snake found in Kutch mine

Jacob Koshy NEW DELHI

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee have reported the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eocene. The fossils were found in Kutch, Gujarat, and the reptile, named Vasuki Indicus, could have been anywhere between 10 metres and 15 metres long, or as big as a modernday school bus.

It belonged to the nowextinct Madtsoiidae snake family but represents a unique lineage from India, the authors note.

Professor Sunil Bajpai and post-doctoral researcher Debajit Datta at the IIT-Roorkee stumbled upon 27 pieces of a "partial, well preserved" vertebral column of the snake at the Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch.



The Panandhro Lignite Mine where the fossils were found. Red arrow indicates the level at which the remains were discovered.

The discovery, the authors report in the peer-reviewed journal, *Nature Scientific Reports*, could improve understanding of how the Madtsoiidae species evolved in different kinds of climate, as well as the factors that contributed to large body sizes. One of the causative factors is held to be high temperatures in the tropical climate of that time.

Vasuki Indicus existed at a time when the earth looked quite different from today, and Africa, India and South America were one, conjoined landmass. It likely had a cylindrical body, hinting at a robust and powerful build, and was as big as Titanoboa, a massive snake that once roamed the earth and is reportedly the longest ever known, said a press statement from IIT-Roorkee.

"This discovery is significant not only for understanding the ancient ecosystems of India but also for unravelling the evolutionary history of snakes on the Indian subcontinent...," Dr. Bajpai said in a statement.



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GREATRESPONSE SAYSPM

Clashes in Manipur and

West Bengal, CRPF man

killed in Chhattisgarh

SUKRITA BARUAH, JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU

GUNFIRE AND clashes a

overall process was smooth.

& SANTANU CHOWDHURY GUWAHATI, RAIPUR, COOCH BEHAR, APRIL 19

polling booths, the death of a CRPT jawan, and alle-gations of EVMs being damaged marred the elec-toral process in Manipur, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, even as Election Commission officials said the

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 22 PAGES

BUSINESS AS USUAL BY UNNY

DD News under Opp

fire over new

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The new DD News logo was unveiled on Tuesday

TWO DAYS after DD News, the flagship channel of state-run Doordarshan, unveiled its new official logo – changing its colour from ruby red to saffron – the ra-

DIVYAA NEW DELHLAPRIL 19

saffron logo

Stand by

ALL COMPANIES AND ALL AND ALL

in first of seven phases polling stations of Manipur thanks those who voted 62% turnout in 102 constituencies as Phase One of Decision 2024 ends

REPOLL LIKELY IN VIOLENCE-HIT



'Fadnavis said he will groom my son Aditya as CM, and he would move to Delhi... made me look like a liar impact? Has the alliance bee too late in getting off the

VANDITA MISHRA & SHUBHANGI KHAPRE MUMBAI, APRIL 19



Congress cadre bikhra had Congress cadre bikhra had tha (was fragmented), it has been energised. Till 2023, peo-ple were afraid to speak, not any more. Now they feel democracy is in danger. If Rahul or I come out, people think someone it reainst the BIP) they al find courage to speak aga hoothe vaade (false promise I was watching a Youtul video yesterday, in which farmer was asked if he had got 6,000(of/PM-Kisan). He said the fammer was asked if he naw foot and the said the lpay RS I lakh for & tiliser in a year, a 18,000 as CST. 5 18,000 as CST. 5



have got Rs 6,00 from the government, but the gov INTERVIEW ernment owes mel 12,000. Earlier, dari mahaul tha (the UDDHAV

was an atmospher of fear). Now peop think halo hara sak hain (BJP can be defeated). Everything has its time. If tw years ago we had said dictato ship, people would not have be d us. Today, sourne aa go

hai, it has come to the fore

n)". Why did BIP do this t olit the alliance and the Se of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Mumbai.

But isn't the realignment of political forces in harashtra causing fusion for the people? Where did it start, the people see. We were with the BJP

CONTINUED ON PAGE

A woman, carrying her daughter, casts vote at a polling station in the border village of Zokhawthar in Mizoram's Champhai district, Friday, Reuters PAGES 6, 7

Uttarakhand Overall (102 sents)

No. of seats: 88

od at 70% in 2019, the e turnout this time o a decrease. However,

d to a decrease. However, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

vote were being allowed to cast their votes beyond 6 pm, EC offi-cials said. While the average turnout in these 102 Lok Sabha

Polling in the first VOTING TURNOUT 2024 phase augurs well Tamil Nadu for next phases: 65.19% 54.06% 62.37% CEC Rajiv Kumar 2019:72.38% 2019:61.64% 2019:69.89% OTHER STATESAUTS IN PHASE 1: AD DAMININATH NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEATS

official logis – changing its: closeru tional broadcaster has come un-der fire from Opposition particles While the broadcaster played down the issue as a newe change down the issue as a newe change the need for effecting the change the need for effecting the change On Tuesday evening, DD News posted on its official X han-On Tuesday evening, DD News posted on its official X han-tisth an increasing "While on val-ues remain the same, we are cert easily for a news journey like Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripuru, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal Nover throadslood finance antil 9 pm Source: Election Commission FROM JAMMU and Kashmir to Tamil Nadu Maharashtra to werbefore. Experience the all-w DD News!" Manipur, the first phase of polling in the Lok Sabha elec-Phase 2 voting on APRIL 26 prime and the concentration of the around 62% until 9 pm in 102 constituencies across 21 states and Union Territories, the phase with the largest number of seats in the seven-phase 2024 polls. According to Election Commission of India data, constituencies of Phase Land the

ew DD News!" "We have the courage to put: occuracy over speed, Facts over laims, Truth over sensational-sm...Because if it is on DD News, it is the truth! DD Newsa Sach Ka," it added turnout in the 102 Lok Sabha

Iharosa Sach Ka," It added. Soon after, TMC Rajya Sabha AP Jawhar Sircar, who was the EO of Prasar Bharati between 2012 and 2014, said, "National CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Set ready for a news journey like



SHAJU PHILIP PRIL 19

GERALA CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Ajayan Friday reminded Rahul Sandhi, who had questioned why the BJP government at the Centre was not acting against the CPI(M) leader like it had done

mother (Indira Gandhi) who had jailed us for one-and-a-half years (during the Emergency) when she suppressed the entire country." On Thursday, at a rally in Kannur, Rahul had said, "Two chief ministers are in jail. How come this is not happening to the Chief Minister of Kenda 21 am at CPI(M) leader like it had done with other Opposition CMs, that it was Rahul's "grandmother who had jailed us for one-and-a-half years". Addressing an election event Kozhikode, Vijayan said, "Rahul s worried why the Kerala Chief Chief Minister of Kerala? I am at-tacking the BJP 24x7, and the Chief Minister of Kerala is attacking me Ainister is not being questioned ind why he is not being taken into ustody... It was your grand-24x7. This is a bit puzzling." The CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



92 Assembly constituencies of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, where state legislature polls were held simultaneously, stood

at 62.37% as of 9 pm. Polling was to end at 6 pm, but those who were in line to

BIG PICTURE

IN 10 YRS GOVT PLANS TO BOOST NCC STRENGTH TO 27 LAKH CADETS MINOR'S ABORTION PLEA: SC ORDERS MEDICAL EXAM would be deployed by the PAGE 9



Minister Narendra Modi à an election rally in Damoh in hydriad and a showher the con-your and the source of the country for this. An IAF C-17 Globernaster transport aircraft delivered the mis-sile system to the Philippines The delivery, Friday. AND Brahmos Aerospace Pvt Marine Corps, Sources said three batteries of the weapon system

Amid South China Sea

tension, India delivers

Ltd is looking to export the missile system and its compact next generation version BrahMos NG to at ing South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt. Philippines in their coastal areas CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

and some tough fights; oth VIKAS PATHAK MUZAFFARPUR, APRIL 19 predict an upset, still others keeping their cards close to -----Chest. Conversations on Priz Minister Narendra Modi and policies are intense and divid but his supporters underline IN BIHAR, which voted Friday in four Lok Sabba constituencies and where elections for the state's 40 seats will be held in all seven phases, there appears to be no overwhelming wave in 8-1 TINA (there-is-no-alt

favour of one party, no single emotive issue that has captured the imagination of voters. It's a state key to the number game that will help decide who returns to the Centre. Across large swathes, as one travels from the districts in the south on

the border with Iharkhand to those in the north close to Nepal, what is clear though is the voter's nuanced response. Some say the ruling NDA

factor this election and that th BJP under Modi should do be



BJP under Modastiould to bette than those dissing the BJP. Yet they concede that the tally may dip below the 2011 near-sweep of 39 out of 40 sears There is one consensus that seems to cut across quite a few fault lines, even among detrac tors of the RJD. Tejashwi Yada

To regain a lost citadel, CPM relies on popularity of 'teacher amma' PAGE 1 ANCHOR Left Democratic Front (LDF) go

SHAJU PHILIP

through the Covid-19 pandemic dominates the campaign. In a video, Shailaja, a for mar lassroom and talks of the CBK(M)'s stand on the Gitzenship Amendment Act (CAA), explain-ing that the law "discriminates based on religion". There is even ROM POSTERS to social media posts, "fearcher amma" is the cen-tral focus of the CPI(M/s cam-paign in north Keral/s Vadakara Lok Sabha constituency. The party's candidate K K Shailaja "seacher", the former state health minister, is popularly referred to as the "pride of Kerala" by her supporters and Left workers. a "dine with Shailaja" outreach programme through which vot-ers have a meal with her.

epaper indianexpess.com



times since 2009, when Congress vetram Mulliapally Ramachandran defeated the CPI(M) 59 25 sheedev by 55,000 2014, but his margin came down to 3,000 votes. In 2019, the Congress's KMuralaedharan de-feated the CPI(M) 59 Jayarajan by 85,000 votes. from Matt nur in Ka

a come with Shatagar outreach is one price of the disclar by the second state of the r. will



CPI(M) candidate K K Shailaja campaigns in Kuttiady in" Vadakara constituency. Express

The constituency, which Vadakara Assembly constituency. The constituency, which votes along with the rest of the 191.06% sabita seats on Agril 26 in of political violence and the CPI(M)'s alleged role in it has dented its prospects in the con-tained in May 2012, rebel CPI(M) worker TP Chandrasetkharan who started a breakaway party called the Revolutionary Marsiat

Party of India (RMFT) was hadeed so doubly members of the Later party workers have been are howen allegady being pre-part of the bearty party worker allegady being pre-part of the bearty party worker allegady being pre-part of the bearty part of the part of the party part of the bearty part of the bearty part of the party of India (RMPI) was hacked

Vadakara Assembly constituency, This February, the Kerala Kerala utilital of two CPR(M) leaders who were the accused in the marker case based on an appeal Woldence again became a talking point in the constituency Note while alleged/prak-ing a crude bomb in the con-stituency? Panura raca, A dozen People, too, discuss violence and say it has a bearing on the outcome of the polls. It Thalassery, Churai Chundran, teacher by profession, says the cher by profession, says th it in Vadakara will be tough e young and the women vot are against violence in pol tics. Their reaction to the cu stituency's Panur area. A dozen party workers have been ardevelopments would be cruci

is a politician who has wo his father Lalu Prasad doe fade away. CONTINUED ON PAGE

ernment and held a "peace rally in Panur on Wednesday.

CM Nitish Kumar at a poll rally in support of NDA candidate Girdhari Yadav in



The poll body had unique challenges in two of the states - while Manipur has been in the grip of ethnic violence since May last year, Chhattisgarh's Bastar

Jodo Nyay Yatra in Mur Did the yatra have any

Bihar buzz: Modi leading light,

Tejashwi sonrise, Nitish sunset

4 LOK SABHA CONSTITUENCIES VOTED IN PHASE-I

India expands its share in China's imports in FY24

FE BUREAU New Delhi April 19

EVEN THOUGH CHINA'S imports from the world declined last fiscal, India managed to increase its exports to its northern neighbour by 8.07% on year in 2023-24 to \$16.67 billion, according to the commerce ministry data.

India's imports from China recorded a moderate growth of 3.29% to \$ 101.75 billion in the last financial year.

In calendar year 2023, while China's merchandise imports fell 5.5%, India's exports to the country went up by 7.1% on year.

China's merchandise exports, too, contracted in 2023 in dollar terms, for the first time since 2016. The decline was 4.6%.

China's economy has been facing significant challenges in 2023 including declining property investment, accumulating debt risk and weak consumption growth.



The biggest item of export to China in FY24 was iron ore and concentrates, cotton yarn, quartz, and unwrought aluminium.

The biggest item of import from China in the fiscal was machinery of all kinds, which accounted for almost 50% of total imports.

Other major items of imports from China were plastics and its articles, chemicals, steel and steel products and fertilisers.

Parkinson's Disease



 Scientists have found a new genetic variant associated with Parkinson's disease, offering insights into the evolutionary roots of various familial forms of parkinsonism and paving the way for improved understanding and treatment of the condition.

What is Parkinson's Disease?

About: Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder that impairs movement and can lead to immobility and dementia over time.

The disease usually occurs in older people, but younger people can also be affected.

Men are affected more often than women. The prevalence of PD has doubled in the past 25 years. India shares around 10% of the global burden of Parkinson's disease.

Causes: The exact cause of Parkinson's disease is not fully known yet, but it is believed to involve a **combination of genetic and environmental factors.**

• It is primarily characterized by the loss of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain, leading to motor and non-motor symptoms.

Symptoms: Motor symptoms include slow movement, tremors, rigidity, and walking difficulties.

• Non-motor symptoms include cognitive issues, mental health disorders, sleep disturbances, pain, and sensory problems.

- **Treatment:** There is no cure for Parkinson disease, but therapies including medicines, surgery and rehabilitation can reduce symptoms.
 - Levodopa/carbidopa, a combination medicine that increases the amount of dopamine in the brain, is the most common medication.

- Consider the following statements:
- 1.Genetic changes can be introduced in the cells that produce eggs or sperms of a prospective parent.
- 2.A person's genome can be edited before birth at the early embryonic stage.
- 3. Human induced pluripotent stem cells can be injected into the embryo of a pig.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 2 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Tiantong Project

Recently, Chinese engineers and scientists have created the world's first satellite enabling smartphones to make calls without mobile towers.

It is aimed at emergencies where mobile connectivity may be disrupted, people can directly seek help by connecting to an overhead communication orbiter.

What is the Tiantong Project?

About: The Tiantong satellite initiative represents a strategic response to the evolving landscape of telecommunications, characterised by the increasing demand for connectivity, especially in remote and disaster-prone regions.

Each Tiantong satellite is designed to have a lifespan of 12 years, and its antenna undergoes daily temperature changes of up to 160 degrees Celsius while simultaneously transmitting and receiving electromagnetic waves in 800 different frequency bands. The first satellite of the Tiantong-1 series was launched in August 2016, with the second and third satellites following in 2020 and 2021.

The three satellites form a network in a geosynchronous orbit at an altitude of 36,000km, covering the entire Asia-Pacific region from the Middle East to the Pacific Ocean. In September 2023, Huawei Technologies launched the world's first smartphone supporting satellite calls, connecting directly to Tiantong satellites, followed by similar models from other companies.

Chinese consumers have embraced these products, with Huawei alone selling tens of millions of units, surpassing SpaceX's Starlink satellite service with over 2 million global customers.

Environmental Movement in Indonesia

Religious leaders in Indonesia are responding to the threats posed by rising sea levels and extreme weather events by actively shaping the environmental movement.

As the world's largest exporter of coal and palm oil, the country wields significant influence over the global climate crisis.

The archipelago nation is vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme weather events, while rural communities are affected by climate change-induced droughts.

In 2007, during the UN Climate Summit in Bali, Indonesian religious leaders from diverse faiths presented an interfaith statement that emphasised the role of religious teachings and local wisdom in inspiring grassroots action.

This growing trend in Indonesia is the emergence of "Green Mosques" and "Green Churches."

To reduce the **ecological footprint** a number of other steps have also been taken such as:

- Installation of Solar Panels
- Implementing Water Recycling Systems
- Using Energy-Efficient Faucets

• Indonesia is also planning to relocate its capital from Island of Jakarta to Borneo due to severe congestion, pollution, and rapid sinking, which is projected to submerge a significant portion of the city by 2050.

NASA's Mars Sample Return Program

Recently, NASA's Perseverance Rover, nicknamed Percy, created the **first "sample depot on another world"** by putting down **ten rock sample tubes** that were supposed to be returned to Earth as part of the **Mars Sample Return Campaign**.

However, the plan is **too expensive** costing \$11 billion, and will only be executed by the **year 2040**.

- Perseverance rover:
- It is a robotic explorer part of NASA's Mars 2020 mission.
- Launched in July 2020, it landed on Mars' Jezero Crater in February 2021.
- It is a Mars rover about the size of a car but weighs only about 1,025 kilograms with all instruments on board.
- It collects rock and soil samples, encasing them in tubes for a future return to Earth.
- A Multi-Mission Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator, which uses heat from plutonium decay to generate electricity, acts as the power source for the rover.

Skytrax World Airport Awards-2024



- Recently Hamad International Airport in Doha has been named as the best airport in the world by the research firm Skytrax.
- About
- The Skytrax World Airport Awards have been handed out Since 1999 and are based on surveys of passenger experiences in several areas, including arrivals, check-in, immigration, shopping, transfers, security, and departure.

Changi Airport in Singapore ranked **2nd** and **Incheon Airport in Seoul** was awarded the best family-friendly airport for 2024 and ranked **3rd** number.

Tokyo's twin facilities of Haneda and Narita took fourth and fifth spots.

- Indian Scenario
- Four airports in India were included in the top list.
- The Delhi airport remained 36th on the list, while the Mumbai airport slipped to 95th.
- Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Hyderabad airport moved up to 61st place and Bengaluru airport pushed ten spots, moving up to 59.
 - RGIA clinched the 'Best Airport Staff in India & South Asia 2024'.

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Thank you guys.