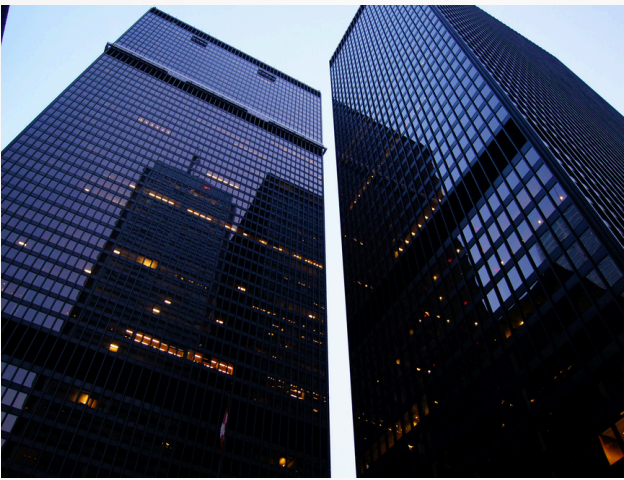


CURRENT AFFAIRS



2024
AUGUST

01/08/2024

THE INDIAN AIR FORCE'S LARGEST MULTILATERAL EXERCISE WILL BEGIN THIS MONTH

OVERVIEW

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is all set to conduct its largest multilateral exercise, Tarang Shakti, in two phases during August and September.

The program will involve the participation of 18 countries, with 10 contributing air assets and a total of 150 aircraft from both foreign countries and the IAF.

PARTICIPATION AND PURPOSE

Air Force Vice-Chief Air Marshal 'A.P. Singh announced that the exercise aims to enhance interoperability, share best practices and showcase India's indigenous defense industry.

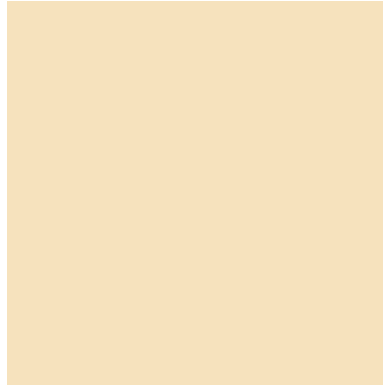
51 countries have been invited, of which 10 will participate with their assets and 18 will be for maintenance.

STEP DESCRIPTION

Germany, France, Spain and the U.K. will compete in Phase-1 from August 6 to 14 in Sullur, Tamil Nadu. will participate, which will include 32 foreign aircraft. The second phase to be held in Jodhpur from September 1 - 14 will involve 27 fighter jets and other special aircraft from Australia, Bangladesh, Greece, Singapore, UAE and the US.

The Indian Air Force will deploy more than 40 aircraft in both phases, while the Indian Navy will participate in the first phase with MiG-29K fighter jets.





THE 'ZOMBIE' PRESENT IN OUR GENES CAN ALSO HELP US DEVELOP AND FIGHT CANCER



WIDESPREAD PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE

Viruses are common and have long plagued humans with infections such as the common cold. While many viral encounters are brief and mild, some can lead to serious illness, exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

RETROVIRUSES AND GENETIC INTEGRATION

Unlike most viruses, retroviruses can integrate their RNA genome into the host's DNA using an enzyme called reverse transcriptase. This unique ability, discovered by Howard Temin and David Baltimore in 1971, has important implications for genetic research.

HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Key discoveries include the identification of cancer-causing retroviruses by Olof Bang and Ludwig Gross and in 1980 by Robert C. Gallo. Includes the isolation of the first human retrovirus, HTLV, by Gallo. In 1983, François Barre-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier discovered HIV, which earned them the Nobel Prize.

ENDOGENOUS RETROVIRUS (ERV)

Retroviruses that integrate into germ cells form ERVs, which are inherited. Comprising about 8% of the human genome, these elements have influenced development, such as placental development and cell differentiation.

FUTURE INFORMATION

Ongoing research on ERVs is expected to reveal more about their role in human biology, potentially leading to medical advances in regenerative medicine, cancer treatment, and personalized medicine



LTCG UPON TERMINATION OF LISTING

FINANCE MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

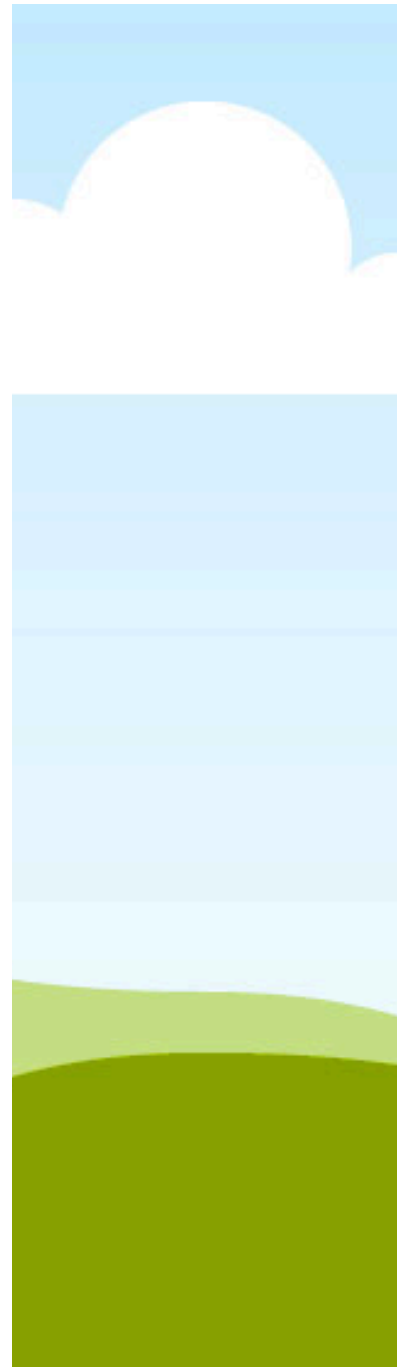
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's proposal to remove indexation for calculation of Long Term Capital Gains (LTCG) tax in the Union Budget has received little enthusiasm.

Indexation allows taxpayers to tax real profits, not just nominal profits increased by normal price increases.

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

A bank market study based on the RBI's house price index suggests that scrapping indexation will lead to a significant increase in LTCG tax. The study found that without indexation, taxes on properties purchased after 2010 would nearly triple.

It also noted a 'significant reduction in tax savings', particularly from FY 2016-17, using FY 2010-11 as the base year for comparison.



SWAPNIL WINS THIRD BRONZE MEDAL FOR INDIA

02/08/2024

Swapnil Kusale created history by winning the bronze medal in the men's 50m 3 - 3-position shooting at the Chateauroux Olympics. The feat marked India's first medal in the event.

INITIAL STRUGGLES AND RECOVERY

Struggling initially in his first kneeling shot with a 9.6, Kusale managed to stay focused by focusing on his breathing to stay calm. By the end of the first two stages, he was in 5th place but was determined to make a mark.

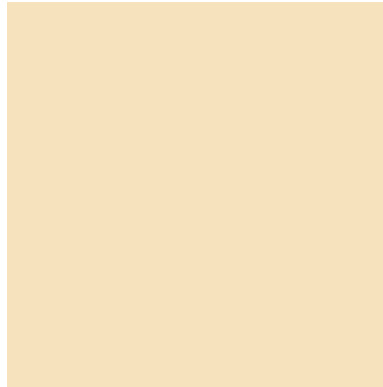
STANDING POSITION BREAKTHROUGH

In the decisive standing position, Kusale started with a 9.5 but bounced back with consistent shots in the 10 ring. His competitors, Jiri Privartsky and John Herman Hegg, faltered, allowing Kusale to grab the bronze medal.

CELEBRATIONS AND LEGACY

Although narrowly missing out on silver, Kusale's bronze was a great achievement. His smile as he celebrated while wrapped in the tricolour symbolised his new status as an icon in Indian sporting history.





A 7-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud ruled by a 6:1 majority that states can sub-classify Scheduled Castes (SCs) from the Presidential List to provide preferential treatment in public employment and education.

ENSURING SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

Citing a previous 9-judge bench verdict in the Indira Sawhney case, Chief Justice Chandrachud said that when the social status among SC groups is not comparable, the principle of sub-classification applies to SCs to achieve substantive equality.

DEBATE ON CREAMY LAYER PRINCIPLE

The 4 judges suggested that the government should apply the creamy layer principle to SCs and STs as it does to the OBC category, to exclude affluent individuals from reservations and ensure that benefits reach the underprivileged.

DISSENTING OPINION

Justice Bela Trivedi dissented, arguing that states do not have the power to modify the Presidential list of Scheduled Castes.

LEGAL BASIS

The judgment was a response to a 2020 reference about the constitutionality of certain reservation acts and was based on Articles 15(4) and 16(5) of the Constitution, which addressed the need for inter-group equality among Scheduled Castes.



CONTROLLING GESTATIONAL DIABETES IS CRUCIAL FOR THE FUTURE OF MOTHER AND CHILD

The Delhi Declaration, a pioneering document focused on the prevention of diabetes, particularly gestational diabetes (GDM), was unveiled at the 18th Annual Conference of the Pregnancy Study Group India (DIPSI) 2024, held in New Delhi in March.

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING GDM

GDM, characterized by glucose intolerance during pregnancy, increases the risk of type 2 diabetes in mothers and obesity and insulin resistance in their children. Early identification and management are crucial.

INNOVATIVE SCREENING AND TREATMENT

The Delhi Declaration promotes a government-approved single-test procedure, developed by DIPSI, for early detection of glucose intolerance.

Recommendations include medical nutrition therapy and metformin for women with high postpartum blood sugar levels to ensure euglycemia.

CALL TO ACTION FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The manifesto urges healthcare professionals to focus on early screening at 8 weeks of pregnancy and maintaining maternal glucose levels below 110 mg/dL. It also emphasises on fetal programming to prevent NCDs in future generations.

FUTURE AGENDA

DIPSI 2024 aims to increase social media advocacy, improve postpartum compliance and reduce discrimination, striving for a diabetes-free generation through early prevention and intervention.

INDIA'S PER CAPITA INCOME TO BE A QUARTER OF US LEVELS IN 75 YEARS

LONG ROAD TO INCOME EQUALITY

Despite being the fastest growing major economy, India is expected to take 75 years to reach a per capita income level of a quarter of the US, according to a World Bank report.

India is one of over 100 countries, including China, that are at risk of falling into the 'middle income trap'.

DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING DEVELOPED STATUS

The 'World Development Report 2024' mentions Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambition to transform India into a developed economy by 2047. The report suggests that achieving this in 50 years, as Korea did in 25 years, will be a significant challenge.

OUTDATED ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

The World Bank criticised several middle-income countries for relying on outdated investment strategies. Chief economist Indermeet Gill warned that without a new approach, these countries risk falling behind in economic progress.



MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP

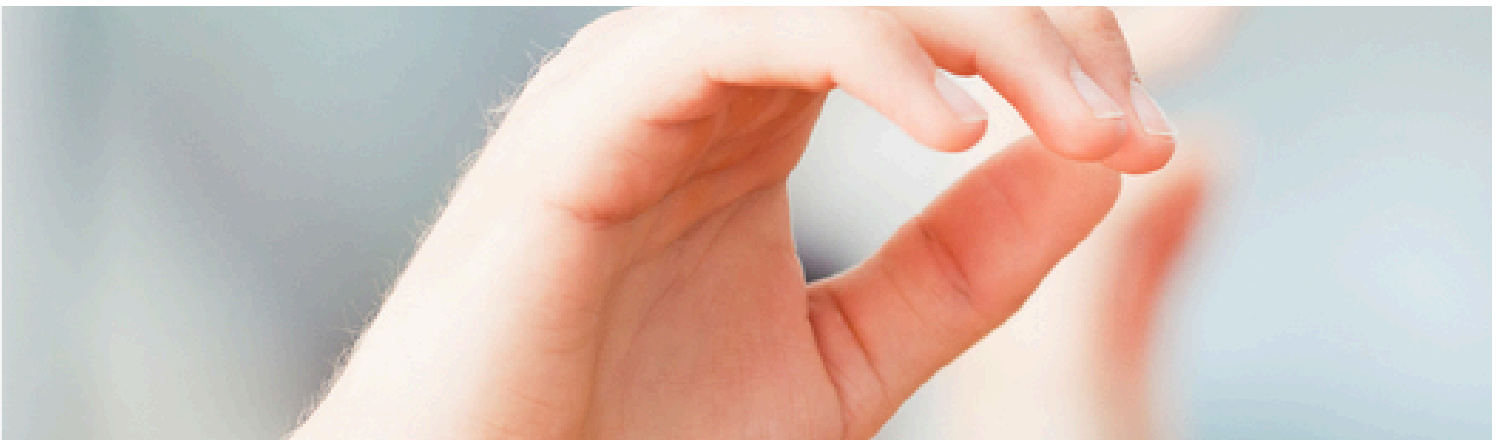
Countries such as China, India, Brazil and South Africa face considerable obstacles in reaching high-income status. The report identifies a 'middle-income trap' equivalent to about 10% of U.S. GDP per capita, currently around \$8,000.

NEED FOR NEW APPROACH

With 108 middle-income countries contributing more than 40% of global GDP, the World Bank has called for a new approach to address the growing need for a developing economy, with growing populations and the environmental concerns.

FROM NO-GO ZONE TO PERMITTED AREA: NICOBAR PORT PLAN

03/08/2024



WHY IN NEWS

Much discussion has been sparked by the Great Nicobar "Holistic Development" Project, which is being led by the National Institute for Transforming India, or NITI Aayog.

The project was first considered to be in a no-go area, but a high-powered committee (HPC) that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) created has now declared it to be acceptable.

GREAT NICOBAR 'HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT' PROJECT

Project Synopsis: The Great Nicobar Island (GNI) project is a massive infrastructure project that was started in 2021 with the goal of modernizing the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

PARTS:

Trans-shipment Port: An International Container Trans-shipment Terminal (ICTT) is anticipated to support the maritime economies of the area and the world.

Greenfield International Airport: Encouraging international communication.

Township Development: Brand-new metropolitan area with potential SEZ inclusion.

Power station: A solar- and gas-powered 450 MVA power station.

Strategic Location: Situated close to the Malacca Strait, a vital sea route that links the Pacific and Indian oceans.

The project intends to make it easier for more soldiers, bigger vessels, planes, missile batteries, and personnel to be deployed.

The improvement is essential for India's strategic interests because it is close to the Malacca Strait, especially in light of China's growing influence and presence in the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROJECT:

Deforestation: The project will result in the removal of almost 8.5 lakh trees from Great Nicobar's lush rainforests.

Animal Displacement: Vital habitats are under danger due to the de-notification of the Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary and the designation of a "zero extent" eco-sensitive zone for Galathea National Park.

Ecological Destruction: The building may permanently harm the island's biodiversity, which includes endemic species like the Nicobar Megapode and leatherback turtles. The island is home to rare and fragile tropical evergreen forest habitats.

Protection of Biodiversity: The initiative runs counter to India's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and to save highly ecologically significant places.

The Shompen and Nicobarese tribes, who make up the majority of the island's population, are worried about substantial cultural disturbance and displacement.

Local communities have expressed concerns and requested relocation, but have not gotten proper solutions, despite assertions that tribal interests are being protected.

In November 2022, the local communities withdrew their authorization for the project, which was required for it to be implemented because the property was a tribal reserve.

LEGAL AND TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

Seismic Risks: Due to its location on a significant fault line, Great Nicobar is vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis. No thorough risk evaluation has been carried out for these natural disasters.

Reports That Are Not Enough: The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report does not comply with several Terms of Reference and does not address important environmental and social repercussions.

Legal Challenges: A number of permits and exemptions given under different statutes safeguarding tribal rights, forests, and coastal habitats may encounter legal challenges in tribunals and courts.



WHAT MADE THE PROJECT FLAGGED AS A NO-GO AREA BEFORE?

First Information: According to the Andaman & Nicobar Coastal Management Authority, the township, port, and airport are all located within the Island Coastal Regulation Zone-IA (ICRZ-IA), which forbids port operations. The area covered by these areas is 7 sq km.

Environmental Concerns: Marine parks, wildlife habitats, salt marshes, turtle and bird nesting grounds, mangroves, coral reefs, sand dunes, mudflats, and ecologically sensitive zones are all included in the ICRZ-IA areas.

In ICRZ-IA, permitted activities include ecotourism pursuits such as mangrove walks and natural trails, as well as defense and strategic project-related roads and roads-on-stilts, provided they have the required permits.

WHAT CAUSED THE AREA TO BE RECLASSIFIED AS A PERMITTED AREA?

Based on a "ground-truthing exercise" conducted by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), the High-Powered Committee (HPC), which was established by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), determined that no portion of the project is located in the ICRZ-IA area.

The NCSCM verified that the project was within the authorized Island Coastal Regulation Zone-IB (ICRZ-IB) area and found that no portion of the project was within the ICRZ-IA area.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM HPC:

Coral Colonies: The Zoological Survey of India recommended that 16,150 out of 20,668 coral colonies be relocated, and the HPC agreed.

Baseline Data Collection: The HPC concluded that gathering baseline data for a single season—that is, without include the monsoon season—was sufficient to evaluate the environmental effects of the project as stated in the 2006 EIA notification.

As promised, ANIIDCO will ensure that all activities inside the ICRZ-IA area adhere to the general and specific requirements of the environmental clearance.

ANIIDCO withheld the minutes of HPC's meetings, alleging the strategic and defensive character of the initiative.

THE WAY AHEAD

As promised, ANIIDCO will ensure that all activities inside the ICRZ-IA area adhere to the general and specific requirements of the environmental clearance.

ANIIDCO withheld the minutes of HPC's meetings, alleging the strategic and defensive character of the initiative.

An impartial entity should carry out a thorough and open EIA to evaluate the project's whole environmental and social ramifications.

It is important to put into practice efficient ways to reduce the project's negative environmental effects, such as wildlife conservation, carbon offsetting, and habitat restoration.

It is imperative to adopt a participative approach that involves the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes. Plans for a just and equitable resettlement ought to be created.

Building trust requires regular public engagements and information dissemination about the project.

Investigate other methods of development that put sustainability first and reduce their negative effects on the environment.

Create a strong monitoring system to keep tabs on the environmental and social effects of the project.



Encouraging the least advanced SCs to have sub-quotas enhances social justice.

The case law around affirmative action has been continuously developing. It has evolved from the idea of formal equality, which was founded on the broad concept of non-discrimination, to substantive equality. By accepting diversity and providing accommodations for persons with historical and social disabilities, reservations are no longer viewed as an exception to the equality standard but rather as a way to further the idea of equality. This trend is supported by the most recent Supreme Court ruling that permits States to divide Scheduled Castes (SC) into groupings and provide preferential treatment to the weaker and more disadvantaged members of those groups.

The Court has rejected the argument that the SCs are one homogeneous class and that subclassification would be against the equality criterion by a majority of 6 to 1. The ruling overturns a 2005 ruling by the Constitution Bench (*E.V. Chinnaiah v. AP*), which had declared an Andhra Pradesh law that divided SC people into groups unlawful. Subsequently, the Court decided that States may not "tinker" with the list of SCs after the President notifies it in accordance with Article 341 and that only Parliament could amend the list through legislation. The Punjab and Haryana High Court referenced this ruling when it invalidated a preferential sub-quota for Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs under the SC quota.

When the case reached the highest court, a Bench questioned *E.V. Chinnaiah's* accuracy and forwarded the inquiry to a bigger Bench.

The majority decision is predicated on the explicit acknowledgment that SCs are not a monolithic class. Although they have a common constitutional status under the Presidential List, this does not indicate that their levels of backwardness are the same. True, they have a shared heritage of being untouchable, but historical and factual data show that their degree of advancement varies.

States have the authority to further identify and provide advantageous treatment to the weaker segments of SCs. According to four judges, in order to fully implement the affirmative action concept that the least advantaged should receive the benefits of the program and not be pushed aside by those who are more advanced than them, the "creamy layer" among the SCs must be excluded from reservation privileges. It could be difficult to apply the "creamy layer" idea, which was previously limited to OBCs.

The opinions may not be legally binding at this time, and the Bench was not asked to rule on the exclusion of Dalits from the more advanced parts. Even though that might happen eventually, the emphasis should be on ensuring that Dalits who are marginalized receive sufficient representation.



NEW ALZHEIMER'S BLOOD TEST

04/08/2024

Why in News?

Researchers at Lund University, Sweden, have developed a new blood test, PrecivityAD2, which is about 90% accurate in diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease (AD) even at early stages of mild cognitive impairment.

Significance: This test is a breakthrough in the diagnosis of AD as it offers a non-invasive, simpler, and cost-effective alternative to the current expensive and complex diagnostic methods like amyloid or Tau PET scans. Traditionally, cerebrospinal fluid is obtained via lumbar puncture for diagnosis, making the blood test a revolutionary advancement.

Impact on Diagnosis and Treatment: Blood tests are set to transform the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of AD. They could replace invasive PET scans, providing a first-line defense in diagnosing the disease. With easier and more affordable testing, early diagnosis and treatment of AD could be significantly improved.

Accuracy and Validation: In studies involving 1,123 patients, the blood test showed an accuracy of 91% in identifying clinical AD. This is a substantial improvement compared to the diagnostic accuracy of 61% in primary care physicians and 73% in dementia specialists using traditional methods.

Future Prospects and Challenges: Researchers advocate for further studies on the clinical impact of these biomarkers. While costs are expected to decrease over time, making the test more affordable, in India, MRI and PET scans remain the primary diagnostic tools due to limited availability of the blood test.

REVISITING SUB-QUOTAS FOR SCHEDULED CASTES

Why in News?

A seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court has ruled that states can sub-divide Scheduled Castes (SC) for sub-quotas within the reservation for Dalits. This overturns a 2004 judgment by a five-judge bench which held such sub-classification as impermissible without parliamentary approval.

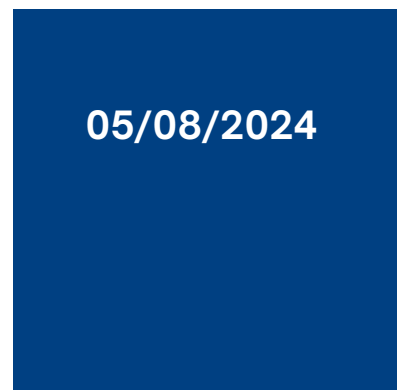
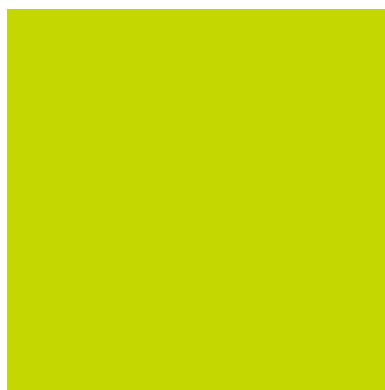


Historical Context: The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservation) Ordinance, 1999, aimed to create sub-groups within SCs, assigning varying reservation percentages. This was challenged and struck down in E.V. Chinnaiah (2004), asserting that SCs constitute a single homogenous class under Article 341 of the Constitution.

Rationale for Sub-Classification: The court acknowledged differences in advancement levels among SC communities. It highlighted the need for sub-classification to ensure fair representation of weaker castes, citing empirical evidence of discrimination within SCs. Sub-classification should be based on an "intelligible differentia" and serve a rational purpose.

Views on Creamy Layer Exclusion: The creamy layer concept, applicable in OBC reservations, was discussed. Some judges supported excluding the affluent among SCs to prevent the benefits from being monopolized, while others felt it contradicted the notion of SCs as a homogenous class.

Implications: The judgment empowers states to tailor reservations to address intra-caste disparities, potentially improving representation for marginalized SC communities. However, it emphasizes that such actions should not alter the fundamental homogeneity of SCs, maintaining judicial scrutiny over such measures.



CONCERNS ABOUT INFLATION PERSIST AS PRICING PRESSURES EXTEND BEYOND FOOD.

Why in news?

Due to the general election early in June and the subsequent establishment of a new government at the Center, state spending on public works continued to have a significant negative impact on production in India's eight primary infrastructure sectors. The country's northern and western regions saw heatwaves in May and June that had a significant negative influence on many economic activities, contributing to the general decline in industrial production.

Data on the Index of Eight Core Industries

The Commerce and Industry Ministry released preliminary data on the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) on July 31. The data indicates that the output of five of the sectors experienced either significant slowdowns in growth or contractions from the previous year. As a result, the overall growth of the core sector slowed to 4%, a 20-month low. Power generation fell 3.6% from May's record high level, while the output of refinery products—which, at 28%, has the biggest weight on the ICI—contracted year over year for the first time in five months.

Monsoon impact :

The commencement of the monsoon rains in certain regions of the nation contributed to a reduction in the YoY expansion of the crucial electricity sector, which has the second-heaviest weight of around 20%. The pace of growth virtually halved to 7.7% from May's 13.7%. But June's crippling heatwaves, which the India Meteorological Department estimated to be at a 14-year high, reduced demand for steel as building projects found it difficult to resume in the sweltering heat. After a 6.8% pace in May, steel output fell 4% from the previous month, bringing down the year-over-year rise to just 2.7%. The bright spot was coal, as output growth jumped from 10.2% in May to 14.8% in June.

The most recent HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which is based on private surveys, suggests that manufacturing activity overall decreased somewhat in July. According to a poll conducted by S&P Global among purchasing managers at around 400 firms, the PMI in July eased to 58.1 from 58.3 in June due to somewhat lower gains in new orders and output. The genuinely unsettling conclusion of the PMI survey, however, goes beyond the slight slowdown in manufacturing activity. It indicates that firms have been raising selling prices at the sharpest rate in over 11 years due to a notable increase of input costs.

Goods makers report having to pay more for steel, coal, paper, rubber, and packaging. This means that the outlook for overall inflation, both at the wholesale and retail levels, is not encouraging. The Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India has a tough job ahead of it when it convenes this week to discuss its interest rate position. In the fight to control inflation, officials cannot afford to let their guard down given the evident indications that price pressures are extending beyond food.



KERALA REQUESTS THAT THE CENTER LABEL LANDSLIDES AS A "NATIONAL DISASTER."



Why in news?

The Center has been asked by the Kerala government to designate the Wayanad landslide, which destroyed at least three villages, as a national catastrophe.

Union Minister of State for Tourism visit

Union Minister of State for Tourism Suresh Gopi stated that the Center was considering the legality of the demand and had to follow a number of procedures.

He said the Kerala government has been asked to submit a report to the Center. He asked the State to ask the Center to release additional support.

According to officials, the Union government would be able to allocate more funds for recovery and climate change mitigation initiatives, such as moving communities residing in disaster-prone areas, if the landslide were officially declared a natural disaster. A national catastrophe tag was also demanded by V.D. Satheeshan, the Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly.

Landslide impacts

The official death toll, according to the State administration, is 221. Given that over 200 people have gone missing and that rescuers have been recovering bodies and severed body parts, it may increase. At least 9,000 victims of the accident have taken up residence in relief camps managed by the government.

The State administration has disclosed intentions to build a community for those who survived the catastrophe.

06/08/2024

The Lok Sabha has passed the spending authorization Finance bill for the financial year 2024-25

On Monday, the Lok Sabha approved expenditure demands of around ₹140 lakh crore from various ministries. This important step completes two-thirds of the legislative approvals required for the full budget for fiscal year 2024-25.



KEY ACCEPTANCES

The Lower House has passed the Appropriation (No. 2) Bill 2024 with demands for grants. The Bill empowers the Government to draw a specified amount from the Consolidated Fund of India to cover services for the ensuing financial year.

The guillotine proposal was used

The approval process has been expedited by implementing the guillotine proposal after discussing the demands for grants for the four ministries. This procedural step allowed the necessary approvals to be passed quickly, ensuring that the legislative process for the budget could proceed efficiently.

A gene that regulates blood pressure in racehorses may also help human athletes

Horse racing has been a beloved hobby for centuries. Recently, researchers have found that it can help us understand how blood pressure is regulated during exercise.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Previously, researchers knew that horses with this genomic region ran faster but could not link it to any physical trait. Now they have linked it to better racing performance and lower blood pressure during exercise. This gene, shared between trotters and standardbreds, is associated with better athletic performance in both horses and humans, underscoring its widespread importance.

Major genetic findings

On June 17, researchers at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences discovered a DNA sequence in horses that enhances racing performance. This sequence affects the levels of two proteins that regulate blood pressure. Their findings were published in PLoS Genetics.

Implications for health

The research sheds light on the mechanism of blood pressure modulation, which provides information about heart health. The sequence identified also affects other physiological processes affected by hormone signaling.



Discovered in the Ganges Delta

07/08/2024

AN ANCIENT EARTHQUAKE

OFFERS A FUTURE WARNING

Finding of an Extended-Lost Seismic Event

An expedition conducted by Dr. Elizabeth Chamberlain, an assistant professor of geochronology at Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands, visited the Ganges delta in Bangladesh in 2018. Their objective was to investigate an old riverbed, referred to as a "paleochannel," located roughly 45 kilometers south of the present-day Ganges in order to learn more about the historical movements of the river. It turned out that this area, which is being cultivated for rice, contained hints of a major and long-forgotten earthquake event.

The Significance of Sand Dikes and Earthquake Data

A kilometer east of the team's discovery of the paleochannel were two sizable sand dikes. The first hard proof that an earthquake had significantly changed the Ganga's path more than 2,500 years ago came from these formations, which are produced when sediments on a riverbank liquefy and move. Dr. Chamberlain said, "We had a feeling we were looking at a big event—the type that is rarely recorded and studied by scientists."

The Significance of Sand Dikes and Earthquake Data

A kilometer east of the team's discovery of the paleochannel were two sizable sand dikes. The first hard proof that an earthquake had significantly changed the Ganga's path more than 2,500 years ago came from these formations, which are produced when sediments on a riverbank liquefy and move. Dr. Chamberlain said, "We had a feeling we were looking at a big event—the type that is rarely recorded and studied by scientists."

Speculating About the Cause of the Earthquake

Even though the effects of the earthquake are amply demonstrated, one important question is still unanswered: where did the earthquake originate? The experts believe it may have started in the hills of Shillong or the Indo-Burma mountain ranges, which both lie on the border between the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. For whatever reason, the earthquake changed the path of one of the most important rivers in the world as well as the landscape.



Potential Risks: The Importance of Being Ready

The study's conclusions, which were released in June 2024 in Nature Communications, will have a big impact on how people are ready for disasters in the future. A University of California, Santa Barbara associate professor of sedimentology, Vamsi Ganti, observes that "this finding implies that the effects of big earthquakes may be even more catastrophic than previously believed." Large river avalanches could result from strong earthquakes.

With an estimated population of 630 million, the Ganges-Meghna-Brahmaputra delta is especially susceptible to these kinds of disasters. Avalanches have been responsible for some of the deadliest floods in recorded history, and they can trigger devastating avalanche cascades in the case of an earthquake. Human activities like building embankments and raising sea levels, together with climate change, make the region more vulnerable to natural disasters



Call for Collaborative Research and Preparedness

Dr. Till Hanebuth, a marine geosciences professor at Coastal Carolina University, emphasized the importance of this discovery. He pushed for increased efforts to forecast large earthquakes that could produce river avalanches and stressed the importance of decision-makers and the general public being aware of the risks. He cautioned that "climatic and geological issues of such magnitude do not care about political borders" and urged close cooperation in monitoring, research, and disaster planning among Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.

Conclusion

In conclusion, preserve the future by drawing lessons from the past.

It is believed that by learning more about the past of earthquake-induced river avalanches, scientists may be able to stop more fatalities. The historic earthquake that changed the Ganga's path in one of the world's most populous areas is a sobering reminder of the unseen forces that mold our environment and the value of being ready for anything unexpected.

India Alliance protest against GST in brief

India Alliance parties protest against GST Life and Health Insurance Demonstration at Makar Dwar of Parliament in protest against 18% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on premiums. He described this tax as a huge burden on the middle class and termed it "tax terrorism".

Why is this in the news?

India alliance parties protest against implementation of 18% GST on life and health insurance premiums K.T. They claim that it puts more burden on the middle class and this step reflects the government's irrational thinking.

Key Points: Rahul Gandhi claims Modi govt has reduced general health insurance premiums ₹24,000 crore has been collected from the people.

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor termed GST on health insurance as illegitimate because the people of India Already spend the most on health issues.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari also discussed this issue.

Background: There have been many controversies regarding GST in the last few years. The issue of implementing GST on health and life insurance has already come up for discussion. Many officials and leaders have expressed their displeasure on this issue.

Result: The government should understand how important health and life insurance is to the common people and There is a need to remove the GST.

Government should amend policies to increase access to health and life insurance in India So that it can be accessible to all sections of people.

The government needs to help people by subsidizing health and life insurance and making it GST free. A plan should be made.

Keeping in mind the interest of the common people, tax exemption on health insurance should be given, so that their There should not be too much burden on him.



08/08/2024

The Finance Bill passed by
THE LOK SABHA
MODIFIES THE LTCG TAX PROVISION
ON IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES.



Why in the news?

The central government loosened the recently implemented new capital gains tax on real estate, giving taxpayers the choice to migrate to a new, lower tax rate or continue with the previous system, which had a higher rate with indexation advantage. On Wednesday, the Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill 2024.

In her 2024–2025 budget address, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman suggested reducing the long-term capital gains tax on real estate from 20% to 12.5%, although she did not include the indexation benefit. She proposed a bill change today to include the option.

The new provision was criticized for increasing tax incidence and discouraging real estate investment, which led to the revision.

Indexation benefit:

The primary modification in the bill pertains to the reinstatement of the indexation benefit for properties sold before July 23, 2024.

What does the New amendment say ?

Now, under the new scheme, individuals or HuFs who bought residences before July 23, 2024, have the option to pay LTCG tax at a rate of 12.5% without indexation or to receive the indexation advantage and pay 20% tax. Afterwards, the Lower House voted by voice to accept the bill with 45 official modifications.

Sitharaman on middle class taxation:

Sitharaman added that encouraging investment and helping the middle class were the goals of the FY25 Budget plans.

According to her, middle-class investors in the stock market will profit from the increase in the tax exemption ceiling on long-term capital gains in listed stocks and bonds to Rs 1.25 lakh from Rs 1 lakh.

She claimed that without significantly raising taxes, the Modi administration has eased compliance and implemented a more straightforward tax system. She continued by saying that the removal of customs duties on a variety of items will encourage investment and trade as well as create jobs

Bill to be referred to Rajya Sabha now:

The Rajya Sabha will now debate the Finance measure 2024, although the Constitution does not provide the Upper House the authority to reject a money measure. Only such bills may be returned, and the law is deemed authorized if they fail to do so within the allotted 14 days.

In response to calls for the elimination of the GST on life and health insurance premiums, Sitharaman stated that the states receive 75% of the GST collected.

All states used to tax insurance premiums before imposing an 18% GST on health insurance (premium). According to Sitharaman, the tax was consequently automatically incorporated into GST when it was implemented.

India briefly evacuates non-essential staff and families of politicians from Dhaka to Bangladesh In the wake of the violence

India on Wednesday evacuated "non-essential" staff and The families of the politicians have been called back. This decision has been taken voluntarily and by commercial flights. However, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and Consulates in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and Sylhet remain operational.

Three Key Points

Why is this in the news?

Due to the ongoing violence and protests in Bangladesh, India has withdrawn from its High Commission in Dhaka. It has been decided to recall non-essential staff and families of politicians. This ensures security in the face of the spread of violent incidents and changes in the political situation.

Key Points:

India has voluntarily recalled non-essential staff and political families.

The Indian High Commission is fully functional in Dhaka.

The staff and Rajnyak family are returning by commercial flights.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also had to leave the country and come to India due to violent protests.

Indian states have issued special helpline numbers for assistance.

Background:

Violent protests are not new in Bangladesh given its political instability. Historically, there have been several political crises in Bangladesh after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Moments of violence have been witnessed. Due to this violence, major changes are taking place in political management, due to which Rajnyak and Safety of families has become a priority.

Result:

Given the current violence and political situation in Bangladesh, it is high time that all countries in the world should re-examine their security plans and we need to see how India and other countries act in this situation.

India needs to keep its citizens safe and those whose condition is critical. Special plans should be prepared to provide assistance.

To analyze and put forward relief plans to deal with the local political situation and instability.

Need:

It should be ensured that full preparation is done to deal with such situations in future. International cooperation is needed to bring political stability in Bangladesh. With this, the welfare and safety of the local people can be ensured.

ANNOUNCING HIS RETIREMENT FROM WRESTLING IS VINESH PHOGAT

09/08/2024

Why in news?

On Thursday, the Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat declared her retirement from the sport, following her disqualification from the 50-kg Olympic division final the previous day.

Reason :

At the morning weigh-in before the final, the seasoned wrestler weighed 100 grams over the allowed limit and was disqualified.

Phogat requested that she be given a shared silver medal in an appeal against her disqualification that was filed in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) a few hours ago. The information was verified to PTI by an Indian Olympic Association (IOA) source inside the visiting Indian delegation.



Government views:

The government of Haryana declared that Phogat will receive the same facilities and prize money as an Olympic silver medallist.

THE FIRST STATE TO ADOPT DISASTER INSURANCE IS NAGALAND

Nagaland has partnered with SBI General Insurance to launch the nation's first disaster management insurance program. The Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS), a brand-new program, is intended to offer protection from natural disasters.

Parametric insurance: what is it?

The way parametric insurance operates is by providing fixed benefits based on particular occurrences, like the intensity of a natural disaster. This implies that prompt financial assistance is provided following a disaster, negating the necessity for in-depth damage evaluations.

Parametric insurance: what is it?

The way parametric insurance operates is by providing fixed benefits based on particular occurrences, like the intensity of a natural disaster. This implies that prompt financial assistance is provided following a disaster, negating the necessity for in-depth damage evaluations.

The MoU's goals

The primary objectives of the accord are to safeguard Nagaland's crucial infrastructure and mitigate financial damages resulting from natural disasters. The program will assist in preventative disaster management by covering the entire state. This is an example of the collaborative effort between SBI General Insurance and the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) to improve the state's capacity to handle catastrophes.

Importance of the Project

Nagaland is leading by example as the first state in India to use this kind of finance structure. With greater preparedness and reaction to disasters, people and resources would be better protected. This novel approach aims to achieve this.

Additional Information About Nagaland

Northeastern Indian state of Nagaland is home to sixteen large tribes, each with distinctive customs. It is home to *Dendrocalamus giganteus*, the second-largest species of bamboo in the world. Every year, the Hornbill Festival honors the diversity of cultures in the state. The capital city of Kohima saw one of the biggest battles of World War II. Nagaland residents have long engaged in "jhum," or shifting farming. The state's official language is English. Along with its vivid festivals like Moatsu and Sekrenyi, Nagaland is renowned for its handcrafted shawls.

BRONZE IN 57 KG

WRESTLING WON BY

AMAN SEHRAWAT

AT PARIS 2024

10/08/2024

Aman Sehrawat of India created history in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games by taking home a bronze medal in the men's 57 kg wrestling division, adding a memorable moment to India's Olympic wrestling heritage. His performance was outstanding, demonstrating his talent and willpower all along the tournament. With an outstanding score of 13-5, Sehrawat's victory over Darian Toi Cruz of Puerto Rico in the bronze medal match solidified his status as a rising talent in the sport.

HOW TO GET THE MEDAL

Aman Sehrawat of India created history in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games by taking home a bronze medal in the men's 57 kg wrestling division, adding a memorable moment to India's Olympic wrestling heritage. His performance was outstanding, demonstrating his talent and willpower all along the tournament. With an outstanding score of 13-5, Sehrawat's victory over Darian Toi Cruz of Puerto Rico in the bronze medal match solidified his status as a rising talent in the sport.

Round of 16: Aman Sehrawat got off to a great start by easily dispatching Vladimir Egorov of North Macedonia, winning 10-0.

Quarterfinal: He defeated Zelimkhan Abakanov of Albania 12-0 thanks to his better technical skills, extending his winning run.

Semifinal: He lost a close match against Japan's top-seeded player Rei Higuchi, but he didn't let it stop him from moving on to the next challenge.



Final Score and Outcome

Sehrawat didn't waver in the face of the semifinal loss. He put up a strong performance in the bronze medal match, defeating Cruz and earning a podium spot. This accomplishment carries on India's successful Olympic wrestling heritage, which dates back to 2008. In addition to commemorating Sehrawat's trip, his achievement shows how Indian wrestling is becoming more and more powerful on the international front.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Youngest Wrestler: Aman Sehrawat, the youngest male wrestler from India competing in the Paris Games, is barely 21 years old.

Historic Achievement: After Ravi Kumar Dahiya's silver medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, his bronze medal extends India's winning streak in the Olympic wrestling competition.

Aman Sehrawat's journey to the Olympics started in the national trials when he defeated seasoned wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya, demonstrating his potential and paving the way for his future in Indian wrestling.

AMAN SEHRAWAT: WHO IS HE?

On July 16, 2003, Aman Sehrawat was born in Haryana. He is a renowned freestyle wrestler who competes in the 57 kg weight class. Sehrawat first gained recognition in junior wrestling events, when he took home two medals: one from the Asian U23 Wrestling Championships in 2022 and one from the World Wrestling U23 Championships in 2021. His distinctive wrestling style has been developed by his training, which is firmly based in customs from his hometown. Aman Sehrawat is a vital figure to follow in the future of Indian wrestling because of his perseverance and talent, which have allowed him to go from small-time contests to the Olympic podium.

AMIDST THE MPOX EPIDEMIC IN AFRICA

THE WHO CONVENES AN EMERGENCY MEETING.

The World Health Organization (WHO) called an urgent meeting to discuss whether to declare a public health emergency of international concern due to the serious mpox outbreak that is now affecting Africa. Fifteen African nations—including formerly unaffected Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda—are already reporting confirmed cases of mpox.

Present-Day Data

In these countries, there have been 2,030 confirmed cases of mpox in 2024, along with 13 fatalities. Along with the significant increase in suspected cases—which now total over 15,000—more than 500 deaths have been documented. Compared to the previous year, when there were 1,145 cases and seven deaths, there has been a considerable increase.

DIFFERENTIAL CONCERNS

90% of cases of the virus have been reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where a novel strain known as clade 1b has emerged. This variation has a 10% death rate, making it especially hazardous for young children. Additionally, mutations that the current tests can overlook make it more difficult to diagnose. Deaths from this cross-border variety have been reported in the DRC, South Africa, and Burundi.

MPOX: WHAT IS IT?

The virus that causes mpox, also known as monkeypox, is a member of the Orthopoxvirus family. In 1958, it was initially found in lab monkeys. The virus can be contracted by touching contaminated objects, coming into intimate contact with an infected person, or being bitten by an infected animal. Fever, rash, and enlarged lymph nodes are among the symptoms. Most cases of mpox occur in Central and West Africa. Certain protection against mpox can be obtained with smallpox vaccination. The virus's primary hosts are rats, not monkeys, despite its name. A public health emergency was declared for mpox in 2022 as a result of outbreaks that were taking place beyond of its usual geographic range.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S (WHO) FACTS

- **On April 7, 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) was established.**
- **It is situated in Switzerland's Geneva.**
- **There are 194 member nations of WHO.**
- **to guarantee that everyone on the planet has access to quality medical care.**
- **It treats medical crises and manages illnesses like polio.**
- **Doctors can refer to ailments globally by using the same terminology thanks to the WHO's International Classification of Diseases.**
- **It targets the variables that impact health by means of a number of programs.**

THREE UNDERWATER STRUCTURES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ARE NAMED BY INDIA

In response to suggestions from India, three undersea geographical features in the Indian Ocean have been given official names. These include the Ashoka Seamount, Chandragupt Ridge, and Kalpataru Ridge, which were recently acknowledged by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BUILDINGS

Ashoka Seamount: This 180 square kilometer underwater mountain was found in 2012 by the Russian research ship Akademik Nikolay Strakhov.

Chandragupt Ridge: This long, oval-shaped ridge covers 675 square kilometers and was discovered in 2020 by the Indian research ship MGS Sagar.

Kalpataru Ridge: This 430 square kilometer ridge was also found in 2012 by the Akademik Nikolay Strakhov and may provide a home and food supply for marine species.

CONTEXT OF HISTORY

India has contributed to the naming of seven underwater features in the Indian Ocean, most of which bear the names of Indian scientists. Among these previously mentioned features are:

In 1992, Raman Ridge was named in honor of renowned physicist Sir CV Raman.

1993's Panikkar Seamount: A monument dedicated to oceanographer NK Panikkar.

Named after the Indian research ship, Sagar Kanya Seamount (1991).

Wadia Guyot (1993): DN Wadia, the geologist, recognized.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The 2004-launched Indian Southern Ocean Research Programme includes these discoveries. These ocean studies, which have focused on a variety of subjects like the chemistry of the ocean and the diversity of marine life, have been led by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa. By highlighting India's scientific accomplishments in worldwide oceanography, naming these undersea structures not only fosters national pride but also advances our understanding of marine ecosystems.

CONCERNING THE INDIAN OCEAN

At 20% of the planet's surface, the Indian Ocean is the third-largest ocean in the world. It is bordered by 38 nations and home to Lake Urmia, the biggest saltwater lake in the world. There are distinct ecosystems found in the ocean, such the Seychelles' Aldabra Atoll, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The world's largest seawater exchange, the Agulhas Current, is another feature of the Indian Ocean. It has the only oceanic trench in this area, the Sunda Trench, and the Indian Plate, a tectonic plate that has broken apart.

THE CARBON CYCLE: NATURE'S METHOD FOR CARBON MANAGEMENT

The carbon cycle has been nature's method of eliminating extra carbon from the atmosphere for billions of years.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is released into the atmosphere by life forms and volcanic eruptions in the natural world. During photosynthesis, plants and trees subsequently take in and store this CO₂.

THE ROLE OF PLANTS IN MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

The carbon cycle has recently drawn attention as a means of mitigating climate change. The ability of plants to store carbon created by burning fossil fuels can provide a break. This is a view that fossil fuel companies and governments alike have adopted in an attempt to reduce their steadily increasing carbon footprints.

NEW STUDY REVEALS SHORTCOMINGS IN CARBON STORAGE ESTIMATES

However, a recent study by a global team of experts that was published in the journal Science indicates that plants take more CO₂ from the atmosphere than anticipated and also retain it for a shorter amount of time before releasing it into their environment.

Using climate models, the researchers examined the remnants of nuclear bomb testing carried out by the US and the USSR in the 1960s in order to validate their conclusions

THE IMPACT OF NUCLEAR TESTING ON CLIMATE RESEARCH

Scientists subsequently discovered that the numerous nuclear bomb tests carried out in the second half of the 20th century during the Cold War preserved a climate of fear throughout the world and provided a chance to study climate change.

RADIOCARBON AS A TOOL FOR MEASURING CARBON DYNAMICS

Radioactive material was sprayed all over the earth by the explosions, with a large amount ending up in the atmosphere. Radiocarbon, another name for the isotope carbon-14, was one of them. Compared to the nucleus of the more widely used carbon-12, the nucleus of this atom contains two more neutrons. Although very little radiocarbon is present in nature, the atmospheric concentration of radiocarbon increased throughout time as a result of nuclear bomb tests.

The Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT), which forbade nuclear testing on land, in the air, or underwater, was signed by Cold War superpowers in 1963. After this year, the amount of radiocarbon in the atmosphere stopped rising. Using models, Dr. Graven and her colleagues monitored the decline in this level from 1963 to 1967 and discovered a steady decline.

CARBON ABSORPTION AND THE EFFICIENCY OF PLANT PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Radiocarbon frequently forms CO₂ bonds with oxygen. During photosynthesis, plants, trees, and other vegetation absorb this CO₂ to create food and, eventually, energy. The models the researchers used to analyze the data indicated that radiocarbon was entering vegetation from the atmosphere.

"The system is cycling faster overall."

In order to survive, plants produce their own sustenance. During photosynthesis, they take up CO₂ from the atmosphere and use it to produce glucose. Part of the glucose is consumed by the plant, and the remainder is stored as starch in the leaves. As the plant respire, some carbon is also exhaled by the CO₂ it exhales. There is currently no direct method for measuring the rates at which carbon is gained and lost by vegetation. However, they have been able to determine the amount of carbon that worldwide vegetation hosts thanks to satellite data.

REVISED ESTIMATES OF CARBON STORAGE IN VEGETATION

The new study's authors estimated the annual amount of carbon stored in vegetation worldwide using climate models. This figure has been estimated by earlier research to be between 43 and 76 billion tonnes of carbon annually worldwide. However, the research team estimated that it might be as high as 80 billion tons annually, with the majority of the carbon being stored in the plant's non-woody sections, such as its leaves and finer roots.

In addition, plants must be expending carbon faster than previously believed if the higher number is accurate. If not, the scientists reasoned, their carbon content would exceed what was calculated from satellite data.

The results also clarified the rate at which carbon is transferred from vegetation to the atmosphere.

THE NEED FOR ACCURATE CLIMATE MODELS AND CONSIDERATIONS

It would be difficult to determine the precise impact on the carbon cycle "In theory, you should incorporate every detail, but there are irreducible uncertainties, a lack of data, and gaps in our understanding."

According to him, certain assumptions in the models used in the study to simulate the storage of carbon in vegetation could drastically alter the outcomes.

INCORPORATING RADIOCARBON INTO CLIMATE PROJECTIONS

The Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP), established in 1995 by the World Climate Research Program, creates climate projections that are used to create the United Nations' climate reports.

To generate more accurate estimates for the CMIP, researchers from many nations combine their separate climate models. However, radiocarbon data hasn't been used to test the majority of these hypotheses.

The "Community Earth System Model 2" created by the U.S. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research was the only model to incorporate radiocarbon into its simulations; nevertheless, it also indicated that plants had absorbed a significantly lower amount of radiocarbon than what Dr. Graven and colleagues discovered.

There have always been unknowns in climate models.

"They're not in error. They are not flawless. It resembles an automobile that can be driven but pulls to one side. Therefore, a mechanic must inspect it to ensure that it eventually drives straight.

Several of the most recent versions of the CMIP models—versions 5 and 6—were employed in the study. According to Dr. Wieder, the shortcomings found in the study are more of a springboard for further investigation into climate modeling. "We need this kind of data in order to make improvements to the models for CMIP 7 and beyond."

Nevertheless, every one of these climate specialists concurred that more consideration should be given to radiocarbon in climate projections. "Limited resources, both funding and effort, available for model development and observational research" have so far hindered radiocarbon inclusion.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR CLIMATE MODELING

In the future, he continued, "representation of isotopes, ice sheet dynamics, permafrost, etc. in models is likely to gain momentum."

Waqf Act and Amendment

ON AUGUST 8, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE LOK SABHA TO AMEND THE WAQF ACT OF 1995.

The proposed law, to be renamed the Integrated Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 2024, seeks to increase central control over waqf properties and allow non-Muslims to join waqf boards for the first time.

MAJOR PROVISIONS AND CHANGES

The bill introduces centralized registration of waqf properties, empowers the Center to audit waqf properties and revises the definition of 'waqf', limiting its creation to Muslims who have been practicing for at least five years. .

It also abolishes the 'Waqf by Use' concept and allows non-Muslim members in Waqf institutions.

CONS AND CONCERNS

The bill has faced criticism from several opposition parties and legal experts for potentially violating the religious rights of the Muslim community. It has been referred to a joint parliamentary committee for further investigation.



12/08/2024



STATISTICAL EFFECTS PUSH

INFLATION TO 59-MONTH LOW OF 3.54% IN JULY

India's consumer inflation fell sharply in July, falling to 3.54% from 5.1% in June, its lowest level in nearly five years. Food inflation also eased, falling to 5.4% from 9.4% in June.

BASE EFFECT BEHIND THE DECLINE

The decline was mainly due to the base effect of last July, when inflation was higher at 7.4% and the food index rose 11.5%. Prices rose 1.4% month-on-month despite the overall decline, while food prices rose 2.8%.

URBAN VS. RURAL INFLATION

Urban consumers experienced a sharper drop in inflation to less than 3%, while rural inflation remained higher at 4.1%. Food prices rose 5.9% in rural areas compared to 4.6% in urban areas.

FUTURE INFLATION FORECAST

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the inflation forecast for the July-September quarter to 4.4%, indicating a likely rise in prices in the coming months.

IIT-MADRAS RETAINS TOP SPOT IN NIRF RANKINGS FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW

For the sixth consecutive year, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has been ranked the top academic institute in India, according to the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. The rankings were announced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

KEY RANKINGS AND CATEGORIES

IIT Madras has also topped the engineering category for the ninth consecutive year. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru continued to top the universities and research categories.

IIM-Ahmedabad has been named the best management institute for the fifth year while AIIMS New Delhi retained its position as the top medical institute.

NEW CATEGORIES AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION

The 2024 rankings have introduced three new categories:

- Open universities
- Skills universities
- State public universities

Participation has seen a significant increase, with 6,517 institutions submitting over 10,000 applications. The government is considering including institutions from neighboring countries in future rankings.

13/08/2024



DAY LENGTHENING IS A RESULT OF

POLAR ICE

MELTING BROUGHT ON BY CLIMATE CHANGE.

THE INVISIBLE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

How melting ice is slowing Earth's rotation Climate change, which is often discussed in terms of rising temperatures and extreme weather events, has a wide-reaching impact that extends to regions we don't notice. One such surprising impact is the effect of melting polar ice sheets on Earth's rotation. Researchers have found that as polar ice melts, Earth's rotation slows down, an effect that, although very small, can have significant implications for our technological and time measurement systems. Understanding Earth's rotation change The process behind this change is rooted in a basic physics principle called "conservation of angular momentum." This principle explains that as the ice melts and moves toward the equator, Earth's rotation slows down. To understand this, imagine an ice skater who is spinning with his hands outstretched. When he contracts his hands, he spins faster; when he spreads them, he spins slower. Similarly, as polar ice melts and redistributes, Earth's shape and rotation speed also adjust.

Melting ice contributes to the Earth's sphericity, causing a slight bulge around the equator, explains Mostafa Kiani Shahvandi, a geophysicist at ETH Zurich. This changes the moment of precession, causing the planet's rotation to slow down.

THE EFFECTS OF SLOWING ROTATION

Recent studies, which analyze data from the last 200 years, show that climate change has caused the Earth's rotation to slow by about 1.3 milliseconds per century. If high emissions scenarios continue, this slowing could double to 2.6 milliseconds per century. While this may seem trivial, even small changes can affect our extremely precise time measurement systems.

Duncan Agnews, emeritus professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, says this shift, even if small, highlights the profound effects of climate change. Precise time measurement technologies such as GPS, stock trading systems and space travel are crucial. The milliseconds added to this could affect these systems, demonstrating how climate change affects even the most fundamental aspects of our modern lives

Melting ice contributes to the Earth's sphericity, causing a slight bulge around the equator, explains Mostafa Kiani Shahvandi, a geophysicist at ETH Zurich. This changes the moment of precession, causing the planet's rotation to slow down.

CALL TO ACTION

The evidence is clear: climate change is not just transforming our environment but also affecting the fundamental processes of our planet. Given these changes, it is imperative that we act swiftly to reduce emissions and control their impacts. The slowing of the Earth's rotation is a clear sign that our actions have far-reaching consequences. To avoid further disruption and protect our planet, we must accelerate the transition to sustainable practices and curb emissions. The time to act is now, before the consequences become even more profound and impossible to control.

DRDO CONDUCTS FLIGHT TEST OF LONG-RANGE GLIDE BOMB

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Tuesday conducted a successful first flight test of the long-range glide bomb (LRGB) Gaurav. The test was carried out off the coast of Odisha using Indian Air Force's Su-30 MK-I fighter jets.

Key Features of Gaurav

Gaurav is a 1,000 kg class air-launched glide bomb, designed to attack targets at long ranges. The bomb uses a highly accurate hybrid navigation system to steer towards its target after launch.



ASEAN-INDIA FELLOWSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SCIENCES

The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Sciences is an initiative launched to strengthen the partnership between India and ASEAN member countries. The program is designed to support postgraduate studies in agriculture and allied sciences, promoting mutual growth and collaboration in these fields.

OBJECTIVES

- **Promote Higher Education:** The fellowship aims to provide students from ASEAN countries with opportunities to pursue master's degrees in various emerging fields of agriculture and allied sciences at Indian agricultural universities.
- **Capacity Building:** The initiative focuses on building a pool of expert human resources in ASEAN, contributing to the development and growth of agriculture and allied sciences in the region.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** The program aims to strengthen the ties between India and ASEAN countries through educational and research collaborations, supporting India's 'Act East Policy' and the 'Indo-Pacific Vision'.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- **Fellowships:** Starting from the academic year 2024-25, a total of 50 fellowships (10 per year) will be awarded to students from ASEAN member countries. The fellowship covers tuition fees, living expenses, and other incidental costs.
- **Duration:** The fellowship program is set to run for five years, funded under the ASEAN-India Fund.
- **Research and Education:** The program will expose students to cutting-edge research in Indian agricultural universities, preparing them for future innovations in agriculture and allied sciences.

SIGNIFICANCE

- **Strengthening ASEAN-India Relations:** The fellowship program is a cornerstone in enhancing India-ASEAN relations, reflecting India's commitment to ASEAN unity and centrality.
- **Addressing Food Security:** By providing quality research-based education, the fellowship aims to address food security issues in ASEAN countries through collaborative efforts with India.
- **Intercultural Exchange:** The program fosters intercultural and international exchange of knowledge, bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to learn and innovate in the field of agriculture.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

- **Sustainable Development:** The fellowship aligns with India's goals of sustainable development in the agricultural sector by ensuring the quality of agricultural education and research.
- **Strategic Partnership:** The initiative supports India's strategic partnership with ASEAN, enhancing collaboration in key areas like agriculture, education, and research.
- **Global Influence:** By hosting international students and fostering research collaboration, India strengthens its global influence in agricultural education and innovation.



HONORS AND AWARDS CONFERRED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024

HONORARY RANKS AWARDED

On the occasion of Independence Day 2024, the Ministry of Defence announced the conferment of various honorary ranks. These ranks are awarded as a mark of recognition for exceptional service, both to serving personnel and those who have retired. The honorary ranks conferred include:

HONORARY CAPTAIN AND HONORARY LIEUTENANT:

- **Active List:** A total of 450 honorary ranks were awarded.
- **Post-Retirement:** A total of 1,352 honorary ranks were awarded after retirement.
- **Honorary Naib Subedar Ranks:** 3,819 honorary ranks were conferred post-retirement



GALLANTRY AWARDS

The President of India conferred several gallantry awards to Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel for their exceptional courage, leadership, and professionalism in handling life-threatening situations during various operations. These awards included the prestigious Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) and the Shaurya Chakra. Below are some notable recipients:

- Wing Commander Akshay Arun Mahale was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his exemplary courage and presence of mind during a critical in-flight emergency on September 26, 2023, where he successfully averted a catastrophic situation by skillfully maneuvering the aircraft away from populated areas and safely recovering it.
- Junior Warrant Officer Vikas Raghav was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his bravery during a humanitarian operation on August 15, 2023, in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. He led the rescue of 494 individuals during severe floods, demonstrating exceptional courage and professionalism.
- Sergeant Ashwani Kumar received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his courageous actions during a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operation on August 15, 2023. He played a crucial role in saving 510 lives, displaying remarkable bravery in adverse situations.
- Squadron Leader Deepak Kumar was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for his exceptional gallantry during a night sortie on August 25, 2023. He successfully force-landed a gravely stricken aircraft, showcasing extraordinary piloting skills and composure under life-threatening conditions.
- Squadron Leader Mahipal Singh Rathore received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his bravery during a critical takeoff situation on January 4, 2024. His prompt and decisive actions averted a potential disaster, ensuring the safe recovery of the aircraft.
- Wing Commander Anand Vinayak Agashe was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his leadership during flood relief operations in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, on August 15, 2023. He coordinated the rescue of over 1,000 individuals, demonstrating meticulous planning and exceptional flying skills.
- Wing Commander Jaspreet Singh Sandhu received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his actions during an aircraft emergency on January 25, 2024. His quick thinking and expertise ensured the safe recovery of the aircraft from an unprecedented control failure situation.
- Wing Commander Vernon Desmond Keane was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for his gallantry during a sortie on July 24, 2023. Despite a critical dual engine failure, he managed to safely recover the aircraft, preventing a potential disaster in a densely populated area.

These awards recognize the bravery and dedication of the Indian Air Force personnel in protecting national assets, saving lives, and executing their duties with the highest level of professionalism and courage.

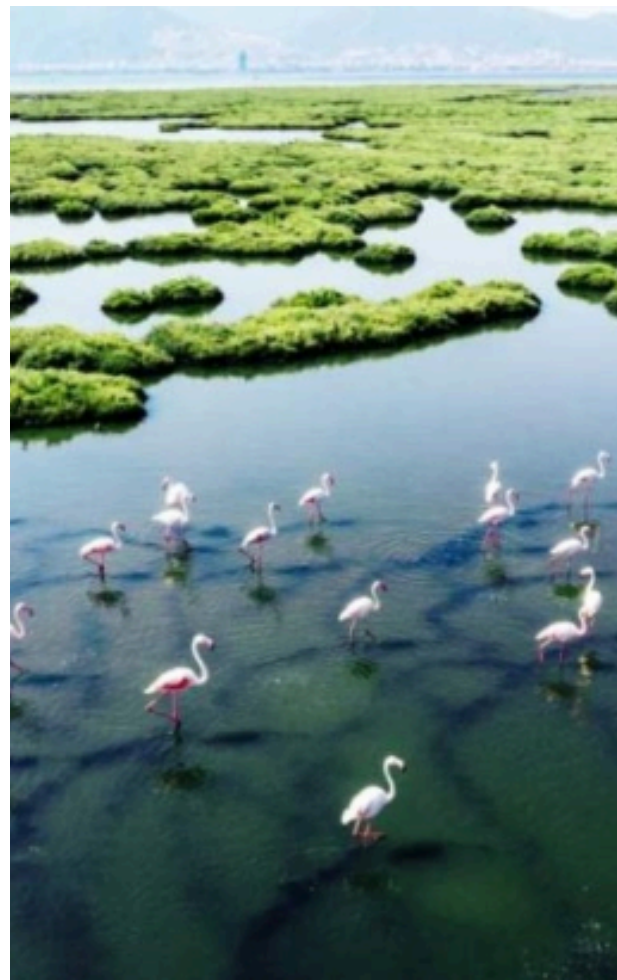
ADDITION OF THREE NEW RAMSAR SITES ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024

On the eve of Independence Day 2024, India has added three new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites, bringing the total number of Ramsar sites in the country to 85. These new additions are part of India's ongoing efforts to conserve and manage its wetlands, which are crucial for maintaining biodiversity and supporting ecological balance.

NEW RAMSAR SITES

THE THREE NEWLY DESIGNATED RAMSAR SITES INCLUDE:

1. Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu): A large shallow wetland situated in the Tiruppur District, this sanctuary spans an area of 125.865 hectares. It is home to a diverse range of species, including 191 bird species, and plays a crucial role in groundwater recharge and agricultural water supply in the region.
2. Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu): Covering 5,151.6 hectares, this brackish shallow lake is located on the Coromandel Coast. It serves as an important stopover site for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway and supports a rich biodiversity, including degraded mangrove patches and reed beds.
3. Tawa Reservoir (Madhya Pradesh): Spanning 20,050 hectares, this reservoir is situated near Itarsi town and is part of the Satpura Tiger Reserve. It supports a wide range of aquatic flora and fauna and serves as a critical habitat for both local and migratory birds.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADDITION

- Growth in Ramsar Sites: With the addition of these three sites, India's total Ramsar site area now stands at 1,358,068 hectares. This expansion reflects the government's commitment to wetland conservation and its role in global environmental efforts.
- Policy Push for Conservation: The increase in Ramsar sites is a testament to the significant policy push from the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and

Climate Change for the conservation and management of wetlands in India. This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of creating harmony with nature and promoting a "Green Bharat."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND PROGRESS

India has been a signatory to the Ramsar Convention since February 1, 1982. Between 1982 and 2013, the country designated 26 Ramsar sites. However, from 2014 to 2024, 59 new wetlands have been added, indicating a strong focus on environmental conservation over the past decade.

Leading States in Ramsar Sites

Tamil Nadu leads the country with the highest number of Ramsar sites (18), followed by Uttar Pradesh, which has 10 Ramsar sites.

THE CENTER LAUNCHED A NEW AI-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM FOR PEST MANAGEMENT

The central government has unveiled the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS), an AI-powered platform designed to help farmers manage pests by connecting them with agricultural scientists and experts through mobile phones.

PROMOTION OF SCIENTIFIC PEST MANAGEMENT

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has highlighted that the NPSS aims to reduce farmers' dependence on pesticide retailers and encourage a scientific approach to pest control.

The system uses AI to analyze data, giving farmers timely advice on pest management.

BENEFITS FOR FARMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NPSS, expected to help around 14 crore farmers, enables users to send photos of infected crops to experts for quick identification and advice.

Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi emphasized that this system will help in the precise use of pesticides, improve pest control, increase crop yields, and preserve soil health. This technology has been successfully tested and will be promoted in the states.

WHY DID THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN LEAVE THE POST?

On August 14, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced his resignation as leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), ending his term earlier than expected.

CONSTANT CHALLENGES DURING KISHIDA'S TENURE

Kishida, who took office in October 2021, has struggled with low approval ratings and has faced controversies, including the LDP's ties to the Unification Church and a fundraising scandal.

The scandal has affected his position despite pressure to disband his faction and disband other factions. Although prosecutors chose not to indict him or other senior LDP leaders, Kishida's popularity remains low, with 74% of respondents opposing his continued leadership.





LEADERSHIP CONTENDERS AND PROSPECTS

With Kishida gone, potential successors are gearing up for leadership elections. The candidates include Shigeru Ishiba, LDP Secretary General Toshimitsu Motegi, Digital Minister Taro Kono, Economic Security Minister Sane Takaichi, and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

The new leader will have to address Japan's economic issues before the next national election and boost the LDP's electoral prospects.

DIGITAL PLATFORM POWERED BY DRONE MAPPING READY TO REVIVE SOLAR ENERGY SCHEME

DELAY IN PM-KUSUM YOJANA

The Rs 34,000 crore PM-Kusum scheme aimed at promoting solar energy in agriculture is running behind its targets.

The scheme, launched to install 100 GW of solar power on farmers' land, install 1.4 lakh solar pumps and connect 3.5 lakh grid-connected farm pumps to solar power, has seen limited progress, generating only 256 MW of electricity by June 2023. plants and 3.97 lakh solar pumps have been installed. The deadline has been extended to 2026.

CHALLENGES OF LAND AVAILABILITY

A major obstacle is the difficulty in acquiring suitable agricultural land for solar projects. Unlike utility-scale projects in regions like Gujarat and Rajasthan, agricultural land requires pooling of multiple parcels, making project development complex.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN RAJASTHAN

In response, Rajasthan, in partnership with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP), is using drone technology to map land parcels, helping facilitate solar installations. As a result of this approach, 12.3 MW has been installed in the state and there are plans to expand it further.

16/08/2024

US RENEWS SUPPORT FOR MYANMAR

OPPOSITION AFTER CHINA'S WANG MEETS MILITARY JUNTA

On Friday, the US pledged continued support for Myanmar's democratic opposition after China's endorsement of the military junta's transition plans. Two senior US officials met virtually with Myanmar's shadow National Unity Government, made up of lawmakers ousted in a 2021 coup, and major ethnic insurgent groups such as the Karen National Union.



COMMITMENT TO PRO-DEMOCRACY EFFORTS

The US State Department praised these groups for their collaborative efforts to build an inclusive federal democratic Burma.

The US reaffirmed its commitment to extend direct support to pro-democracy actors aimed at helping them take steps toward a transition to civilian rule that respects the will of the Burmese people.

CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR THE JUNTA

China, a major ally and arms supplier to the Myanmar junta, has recently expressed support for the junta's transition plans, including promised elections, during a meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and junta leader Min Aung Hlaing.

CABINET APPROVES THREE METRO RAIL PROJECTS

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved three major metro rail projects, including the Bengaluru Metro Phase-3, which is expected to cost ₹15,611 crore.

Additionally, the Thane Integral Ring Metro Project has been approved at a cost of ₹12,200 crore, while the Pune Metro extension has been approved with a budget of ₹2,954.5 crore.

NEW CIVIL ENCLAVE FOR BIHAR

The Cabinet also gave the green signal to the construction of a new civil enclave at Bihta in Bihar at an estimated cost of ₹1,413 crore. The new facility is designed to address the capacity crunch at the Patna airport.

The passenger terminal at the Bihta Indian Air Force base will handle 3,000 passengers during peak hours and serve 50 lakh passengers annually, with expansion to accommodate 1 crore passengers in the future.

EXPANSION AT BAGDOGRA IAF BASE

Further, the Cabinet approved the expansion of the existing civil enclave at Bagdogra Indian Air Force Base.

LATERAL ENTRY IN UPSC

UPSC SEEKS CANDIDATES FOR 45 LATERAL ENTRY POSTS IN MINISTRIES

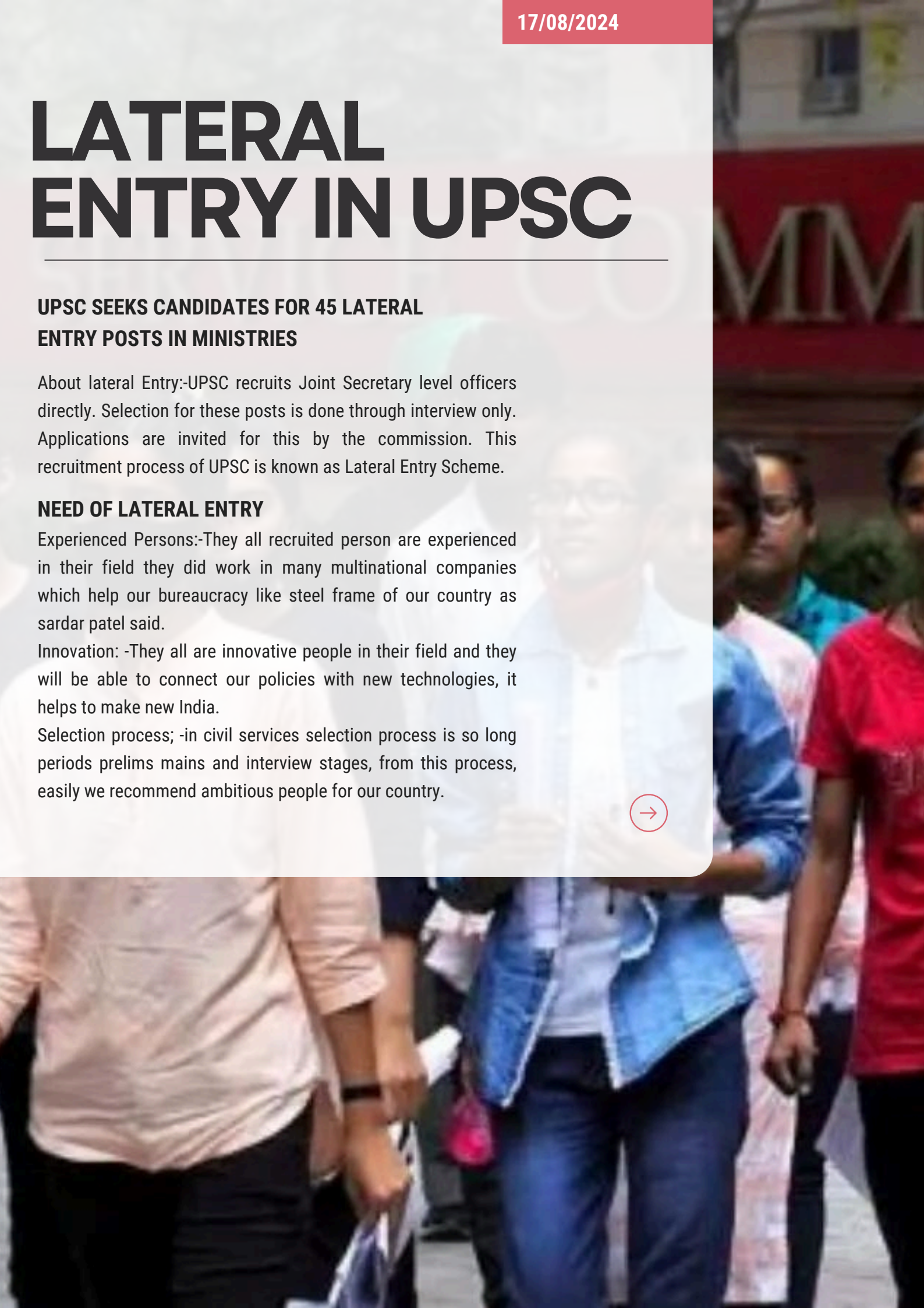
About lateral Entry:-UPSC recruits Joint Secretary level officers directly. Selection for these posts is done through interview only. Applications are invited for this by the commission. This recruitment process of UPSC is known as Lateral Entry Scheme.

NEED OF LATERAL ENTRY

Experienced Persons:-They all recruited person are experienced in their field they did work in many multinational companies which help our bureaucracy like steel frame of our country as sardar patel said.

Innovation: -They all are innovative people in their field and they will be able to connect our policies with new technologies, it helps to make new India.

Selection process; -in civil services selection process is so long periods prelims mains and interview stages, from this process, easily we recommend ambitious people for our country.



ARGUMENTS AGAINST LATERAL ENTRY :-

Differences in work culture may often come in the way.

The width and depth of field experience which the civil services provide is not available with outside talent.

Interests and motivation vary from person to person. Therefore, short term entry of officers through lateral entry might lead to corrupt practices.



WAY FORWARD :-

Lateral entry shouldn't lead to politicisation of bureaucracy.

Government must also allow deputation of its officers to private sector as well so that they get exposure to market practices and fresh ideas.

A good managerial system encourages and nurtures talent from within instead of seeking to induct leadership from outside.

The remedy lies not through lateral induction but through more rigorous performance appraisal and improved personnel management.

The government can consider lateral entry to head certain mission-mode projects and public-sector entities where private-sector expertise actually matters.

The process of selection needs to be transparent. A credible statutory agency like UPSC should be entrusted with the responsibility of recruitment.

UN REFORM

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945.

It is currently made up of 193 Member States. Its mission and work guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter and implemented by its various organs and specialised agencies.

Its activities include maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES: -

Development Reform: Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) will require bold changes to the UN Development System (UNDS) for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, centred on a strategic UN Development Assistance Framework and led by an impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinator.

Management Reform: To confront global challenges and to remain relevant in a fast-changing world, United Nations must empower managers and staff, simplify processes, increase accountability and transparency and improve on the delivery of our mandates.

There are concerns for improving efficiency, avoidance of duplication, and the minimization of waste in the functioning of the entire UN system.

Financial Resources: Contributions of the Member States should have, as their fundamental underpinning, the capacity to pay principle. The Member States should pay their contributions unconditionally, in full and on time, as delays in payments have caused an unprecedented financial crisis in the UN system. Financial reforms hold the key to the future of the world body. Without sufficient resources, the UN's activities and role would suffer.

Peace and Security issues Threats to

Peace and security: The range of potential threats to peace and security that UN has to face, are following poverty, disease, and environmental breakdown (the threats to human security identified in the Millennium Development Goals), conflict between states, violence and massive human rights violations within states, terrorism threats from organized crime, and the proliferation of weapons - particularly WMD, but also conventional.

Terrorism: Nations that support groups that are widely linked to terrorism, such as Pakistan, are not held accountable specifically for these actions. To this date, the UN still does not have a clear definition of terrorism, and they have no plans to pursue one.

Nuclear Proliferation: In 1970, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was signed by 190 nations. Despite this treaty, nuclear stockpiles remain high, and numerous nations continue to develop these devastating weapons. The failure of the nonproliferation treaty details the ineffectiveness of the United Nations and their inability to enforce crucial rules and regulations on offending nations.

General Assembly membership has expanded considerably. In 1965, the membership of the Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15. There was no change in the number of permanent members. Since then, the size of the Council has remained frozen. This has undermined the representative character of the Council. An expanded Council, which is more representative, will also enjoy greater political authority and legitimacy.

India has been calling for the reform of the UN Security Council along with Brazil, Germany and Japan (G-4). The four countries support each others' bids for the permanent seats in the top UN body. Any expansion of permanent members' category must be based on an agreed criteria, rather than be a pre-determined selection.

UNSC Veto power: It is often observed that UN's effectiveness and responsiveness to international security threats depends on judicious use of the UNSC veto.

Veto Power: The five permanent members enjoy the luxury of veto power; when a permanent member vetoes a vote, the Council resolution cannot be adopted, regardless of international support. Even if the other fourteen nations vote yes, a single veto will beat this overwhelming show of support.

There are proposals on future of Veto power: limiting the use of the veto to vital national security issues; requiring agreement from multiple states before exercising the veto; abolishing the veto entirely;

Any reform of the veto will be very difficult: Articles 108 and 109 of the United Nations Charter grant the P5 (5 permanent members) veto over any amendments to the Charter, requiring them to approve of any modifications to the UNSC veto power that they themselves hold.

Non-Conventional Challenges Since its creation, UN is working with goal of safeguarding peace, protecting human rights, establishing the framework for international justice and promoting economic and social progress.

New challenges, such as climate change, refugees and population ageing are new fields it has to work.

Climate Change: From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. reaching unsustainable levels.

Population Ageing: It is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services,

such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties.

Refugees: The world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home by conflict and persecution at the end of 2016. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also 10 million stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

Conclusion:- Despite having many short-comings, UN has played a crucial role making this human society more civil, more peaceful & secure in comparison to time of its origin at 2 World War. United Nations, being the world's largest democratic body of all nations, its responsibility towards humanity is very high in terms of building democratic society, economic development of people living in acute poverty, & preserving the Earth's Ecosystem in concern with Climate Change.

HIGH FIRE RISK IN CENTRAL INDIAN FORESTS: RESEARCH WARNS

18/08/2024

A mix of natural and human factors is increasing the risk of forest fires in the forests of Khandwa and North Betul, in Central India. August 14, 2024 saw the publication of a paper that brought attention to this issue.

Study Synopsis

Vibha Sahu from the Indian Institute of Forest Management led the research. The study discovered a concerning trend by examining 22 years' worth of satellite data from the MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer): North Betul has experienced an increase in annual fires, whereas Khandwa has seen an average rise of three fires annually.

EVALUATION OF FIRE RISK

According to the study, 50% of the forests in North Betul and roughly 45% of the woodlands in Khandwa are now located in regions with a high or extremely high risk of wildfire. The northern and southeast parts of Khandwa are the most susceptible. The northwest and northeastern regions of North Betul are primarily high-risk areas.

Factors Changing the Risk of Fire

These woodlands have higher fire hazards due to a number of causes. Three main factors are the kind of vegetation, the topography of the area, and human activity. For instance, fires are more likely to occur along roads or in woods with extremely flammable plants, such as the teak forests in Khandwa.

ACCURATE MODELING

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a technique that the researchers utilized to forecast future fire locations. This method divides various regions into five fire risk categories, which aids in concentrating fire prevention efforts where they are most required. Local communities' behaviors increase the risk of fires. For instance, burning bushes to gather tendu leaves and mahua flowers is a common practice that inadvertently raises the risk of fires. This emphasizes how these communities need to be properly educated and made more aware of safer resource management practices.

CONSEQUENCES FOR PRESERVATION

The results of this investigation are essential to conservation efforts. Authorities can create efficient fire control plans to save these woods and the populations who depend on them by determining the most fire-prone locations. In order to lessen the risk of forest fires in Khandwa and North Betul, the study highlights the urgent need for focused planning and resource allocation. Lead researcher Vibha Sahu demands that this developing issue be addressed right away.

CONCERNING KHANDWA

Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa is renowned for having a rich cultural history. Historic attractions like the Omkareshwar and Ujjain temples are located there. The city's role in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny adds to its historical significance. Khandwa has a strong agricultural sector, producing mostly cotton and pulses, and is well-served by Indian Railways. The Narmada River, which is considered sacred, flows close by, further contributing to the region's cultural significance.

CONCERNING NORTH BETUL

North Betul, a region in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district, is renowned for its woods and abundant biodiversity. The Satpura Range, which offers beautiful scenery and a wide diversity of fauna, is located in the vicinity. In addition to being one of India's leading soybean growers, Betul holds an annual Jain festival honoring the local way of life. In addition, the region is home to ancient landmarks like the Bhimbetka rock shelters, and its tropical environment has an impact on local everyday life and agriculture.

FIRST CASE OF MPOX STRAIN OUTSIDE OF AFRICA REPORTED IN SWEDEN

On August 15, 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that Sweden was the first nation outside of Africa to record a case of the mpox virus's developing clade I strain. The World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) due to the fast spread of clade 1b, a variant of clade 1. Three sites in the United States, mostly in California and Illinois, have reported finding mpox in their wastewater. These sites are connected to clade II, which was a component of the 2022 outbreak. The United States has not discovered the more hazardous clade I, which is common in Africa.

Data and Distribution: In 2024, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and eleven other nations, including Burundi, Cameroon, and Nigeria, reported 2,100 confirmed cases of mpox and 13 fatalities. Compared to the previous year, when there were 1,145 confirmed cases and seven deaths, there has been a notable increase.

Vaccine Development: The WHO is expediting the mpox vaccine Emergency Use Listing (EUL) protocol in response to the outbreak. By increasing vaccine accessibility for low-income nations lacking national regulatory approval, this initiative seeks to bolster public health defenses against the problem on a worldwide scale.

About Mpox: The mpox virus, which is a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus, is the cause of Mpox, also known as monkeypox. It was originally discovered in 1958 in study monkeys. Close contact with an infected person's lesions, bodily fluids, or respiratory droplets is the primary way that mpox is transmitted. Fever, rash, and enlarged lymph nodes are among the 2-4 week-long symptoms. Although previously only identified in Africa, instances increased worldwide in 2022. In addition to animals like rats and primates spreading the virus, the smallpox vaccine provides some protection against monkeypox.

Information About the World Health Organization

WHO: The Geneva-based World Health Organization was founded in 1948 and is a component of the United Nations.

Members: 194 nations collaborate on global health challenges under this umbrella organization.

HIV Test: The first blood test to diagnose HIV was authorized by the WHO in 1985.

WHO recommendations contributed to the 1980 elimination of smallpox.

World Health Day: The World Health Organization observes April 7 as "World Health Day" each year.

Antimicrobial Resistance: The World Health Organization declared the issue of microorganisms developing medication resistance to be a worldwide health emergency in 2017.

Health Rules: WHO oversees guidelines for national responses to hazards to public health.



K. HEMA COMMITTEE REPORT

ISSUES IDENTIFIED: -

Casting couch: -Extensive reports of casting couch practices where sexual favours are demanded by influential industry figures in exchange for roles.

bans and discrimination: A mafia of male producers, directors and actors exerts control, capable of banning individuals who displease them.

Substance abuse: Incidents of drugs and alcohol abuse affecting the safety and professionalism on sets.

Wage disparity and inhuman working condition: -Significant discrepancies in pay and work conditions particularly affecting women and junior artists.

Safety concerns: Many women feel unsafe in accommodations provided during shoots due to harassment by inebriated men.

Pressure to compromise: New comers are often misled to believe that success in industry requires compromise on their morals.

Fear of trout fission: witnesses hesitate to speak out due to fear of retaliation affecting their careers and personal safety.

MANIPULATION OF INDUSTRY MECHANISM:

Control over casting and movie releases through the film chamber of commerce with product controllers play a key role in enforcing bans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal and structural reforms: Enactment of specific statutes and the establishment of a tribunal to address and redress geosciences.

Internal complain committee enforcement: strengthening of icc mechanism to operate without influence of intimidations from powerful industry figures.

SUPPORT AND SAFETY FOR ALL WORKERS

Introduction of mandatory safety measures, fair working conditions and timely payments specially for junior artist and other vulnerable groups.

Infrastructure improvement: -provision of special facilities like changing rooms and toilets on sets to prevent health issues and ensure dignity.

OBSERVATIONS

Impact of testimonies: Audio clips video evidence and screenshots were provided by some witnesses to substantiate their claims.

Investigation necessity: legal experts stress on legal investigation into the sexual harassment allegations detailed in the report.

Verification of allegations: Some witness provided complete evidence such as video and audio clips and screenshots supporting claims of sexual harassment and exploitations.

Privacy and confidentiality: The committee protected the anonymity of witnesses by not recording their names, address etc.

LEGAL PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATION

Government role: The government must decide to either accept or rejects the findings of the Hema committee report, acceptance would necessitate further legal actions.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM(SIT):

Former director general of prosecution Asaf ali advocates for the formation of an sit to investigate on all aspects of sexual harassment.

Supreme court stance: -Already supreme court take stance for transparent and government to investigate it on criminal procedure.

Legal framework: -In this aspect government should take a step and try to make strong law against sexual harassment for any work place.

PRIVACY OF ADOLESCENT TODAY

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The right to privacy generally refers to the individual's ability to control personal information and to be free from unwarranted intrusion. This right can vary depending on the jurisdiction and the legal framework in place.

The right to privacy for adolescents is an evolving area of law and policy. Generally, it encompasses several aspects:

Personal Information: Adolescents have the right to control their personal data, including how it's collected, used, and shared. This includes privacy in digital communications and social media.

Medical Records: In many jurisdictions, adolescents have the right to confidential medical care, including access to certain health services without parental consent or notification.

Educational Records: Privacy protections also extend to educational records, which are usually governed by laws like FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) in the U.S.

Legal Protections: The extent of privacy rights can depend on the age of the adolescent and local laws. For example, laws may vary on whether parental consent is required for certain activities or decisions.

Balancing Interests: While adolescents have privacy rights, these are often balanced with parental rights and responsibilities. Schools, for example, might need to navigate between respecting student privacy and ensuring safety.

The right to privacy for adolescents is intended to protect their development and autonomy while recognizing the need for parental guidance and intervention.

IMPACT: -

A breach of privacy for adolescents can have several significant impacts:

Emotional and Psychological Effects: Exposure of private information can lead to anxiety, depression, and a feeling of betrayal. Adolescents may experience a loss of trust in others, leading to issues with self-esteem and mental health.

Social Consequences: Privacy breaches can lead to bullying, harassment, or social ostracism, especially if sensitive information is made public. This can affect an adolescent's social relationships and reputation.

Academic Impact: If privacy breaches occur within an educational context, they can disrupt an adolescent's academic performance due to stress or distraction.

Long-Term Effects: Early breaches of privacy can have lasting consequences, affecting future opportunities and relationships. Personal data misused or disclosed may impact an adolescent's future digital footprint and professional life.

Legal and Financial Implications: In some cases, breaches can lead to legal disputes or financial costs, especially if sensitive information is used maliciously.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations that might advocate against the right to privacy for adolescents often center around concerns about safety and oversight, including:

Parental Oversight: Advocates might suggest increased parental access to digital communications or social media accounts to protect adolescents from online dangers, such as cyberbullying or predatory behavior.

Monitoring and Surveillance: Schools or institutions might recommend monitoring of educational activities or communications to prevent harmful behavior and ensure compliance with regulations.

Disclosure for Safety: In situations where there are concerns about safety or legal issues, recommendations may include allowing certain disclosures of private information to authorities or guardians.

Educational Transparency: Advocates may support greater transparency in educational settings to monitor and address behavioral issues or academic performance.

Balancing these recommendations with respect for the adolescent's autonomy and privacy is crucial.

OEKOTEX

Oeko-Text certification ensures that textiles are free from harmful substances and are safe for human health. The ultimate goal is to ensure that products meet strict environmental and safety standards, which are assessed through various tests. There are different Oeko-Text certifications, such as Standard 100, which focuses on harmful substances, and others that address specific aspects of sustainability.

IMPACT: -

Environmental impact: -

Oeko-Text certification impacts products by ensuring they meet high safety and environmental standards.

Consumers impact: - It helps consumers make informed choices about the safety of textiles they use, promotes responsible manufacturing practices.

Brand capability: -enhance a brand's credibility and marketability by demonstrating a commitment to quality and safety.

Sustainability: - it create sustainable society which create a well being of all aspects of present apsected demand.

SIGNIFICANCE: -

The significance of Oeko-Text certification lies in several key areas:

Consumer Trust: It provides assurance to consumers that the products they purchase are free from harmful substances and are safe for human use.

Safety Standards: It ensures that textiles meet stringent safety criteria, reducing the risk of exposure to toxic chemicals and allergens.

Environmental Impact: By adhering to Oeko-Text standards, manufacturers often implement more sustainable and eco-friendly practices, contributing to reduced environmental impact.

Market Differentiation Products with Oeko-Text certification can stand out in the market, offering a competitive edge by demonstrating a commitment to quality and safety.

PENSION PORTAL

Features: -

New features and upgrades: Many countries are introducing new features to their pension portals to improve user experience, such as real-time tracking, enhanced security, and better accessibility.

Policy Changes: Governments might be updating pension policies or regulations, which could impact how people manage their retirement savings through these portals.

Cyber security Concerns: As pension portals handle sensitive financial information, there are ongoing discussions about how to safeguard against cyber threats and data breaches.

To get the most current and relevant news, you might want to check recent updates from financial news websites or official announcements from pension regulatory bodies.

BHAVISHYA PORTAL

The Bhavishya portal is an online platform managed by the Government of India for pension-related services. It aims to streamline and digitize the process of managing pension accounts for central government employees. Here are some key aspects:

Features: The portal offers functionalities such as pension account tracking, application for pension, and accessing pension-related information and services.

Updates: Look out for recent updates on new features, improvements in user interface, or changes in the portal's functionality.

User Support: Check for any new guidelines or support systems for users to address issues or queries related to their pension accounts.

For the latest updates on the Bhavishya portal, you can visit the official website or check news releases from the Ministry of Finance or other relevant government departments.

SUPREME COURT FORMS TASK FORCE TO ENSURE DOCTORS SAFETY

BACKGROUND OF THE INITIATIVE

Supreme court action: - Supreme court of India led by chief justice D.Y. Chandrachud had constituted National task force in response to the rape and murder of junior doctor at R. G. kar medical college and hospital in Kolkata.

Reason for action: -The court described this incident as a systematic failure in ensuring the safety of medical professionals and indicated that this horrific crime highlighted the urgent need for enhanced security measures.

21/08/2024



Objectives of the national task force: -

The objective of a national task force generally involves addressing specific issues or challenges that require coordinated efforts across different sectors or levels of government. The goals typically include:

Problem Identification and Assessment: Analyzing the scope and impact of the issue at hand.

Strategy Development: Formulating actionable plans and policies to address the problem effectively.

Coordination and Collaboration: Facilitating cooperation among various stakeholders, including government agencies, organizations, and community groups.

Implementation and Oversight: Overseeing the execution of strategies and ensuring adherence to plans.

Evaluation and Reporting: Assessing the outcomes of the actions taken and reporting progress or recommending further actions.

The specific focus of the task force can vary widely, from addressing public health crises to managing economic challenges or responding to natural disasters.

SUPREME COURT DIRECTIVES

In the Kolkata rape case, the Supreme Court of India has issued various directions to ensure justice and proper handling of the case. Generally, such directions may include:

Ensuring Fair Investigation: Directing authorities to conduct a thorough and unbiased investigation into the allegations.

Protection of Victim's Rights: Ensuring that the victim's rights are protected, including confidentiality and safety.

Timely Proceedings: Mandating swift legal proceedings to avoid delays in justice.

Monitoring by Higher Authorities: Instructing higher judicial or administrative bodies to monitor the progress of the case.

For specific details about recent directions or rulings, you would need to refer to the latest news updates or official court orders, as these can change based on the case's progress.

MALAYSIA ENTRY INTO BRICS

Context-After many years impasse India, Malaysia raise strategic partnership, discuss entry to BRICS.

About BRICS: - BRICS is an acronym for an association of five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It was originally known as BRIC before the inclusion of South Africa in 2010. The group aims to enhance cooperation and coordination among its member countries across various domains, including economic, political, and cultural areas.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

Economic Cooperation: To promote trade and investment among member countries and advocate for a more balanced global economic system.

Political Coordination: To work together on global issues and reform international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Cultural and Educational Exchange: To foster closer cultural ties and collaboration in education and research.

Development and Innovation: To support and share best practices in development and innovation.

KEY INITIATIVES

BRICS Summits: Annual meetings where leaders discuss and coordinate on global and regional issues.

New Development Bank (NDB): Established to fund infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies.

Contingent reserve Arrangement(CRA) :-A financial safety net to provide support to member countries in case of balance of payments problems.

BRICS seeks to amplify the voice of emerging economies in global affairs and promote a multipolar world order.

GROSS ENVIRONMENT PRODUCT INDEX

The Gross Environment Product (GEP) Index is an indicator designed to measure the economic value of environmental protection and conservation activities. It aims to account for the benefits that arise from maintaining and improving environmental quality, complementing traditional economic metrics like Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

KEY FEATURES OF THE GEP INDEX

Environmental Value: It quantifies the contribution of environmental conservation to economic welfare, capturing the value of ecosystem services and environmental improvements.

Complement to GDP: Unlike GDP, which measures economic activity and output, the GEP Index focuses on the benefits derived from environmental quality and sustainability efforts.

Holistic Assessment: It includes various factors such as pollution reduction, resource conservation, and ecosystem health, providing a more comprehensive view of the economic impact of environmental policies.

Policy Tool: The GEP Index can be used by policymakers to assess the effectiveness of environmental regulations and investments in green technologies.

The GEP Index aims to integrate environmental considerations into economic planning and decision-making, highlighting the importance of sustainable development.

BENEFITS OF GREEN ENVIRONMENT PRODUCT INDEX

The Green Environment Product (GEP) Index, or similar environmental metrics, offers several benefits:

Holistic Assessment: Provides a comprehensive measure of environmental quality and the economic value of conservation efforts, integrating environmental health into economic assessments.

Informed Decision-Making: Helps policymakers and businesses make more informed decisions by considering the economic benefits of environmental protection alongside traditional economic metrics.

Sustainable Development: Promotes sustainable practices by highlighting the value of preserving natural resources and reducing pollution, encouraging investments in green technologies and practices.

Policy Effectiveness: Allows evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental policies and initiatives, guiding adjustments to improve outcomes.

Public Awareness: Raises awareness of the economic benefits of environmental conservation, potentially increasing public support for green initiatives and sustainable practices.

Economic Incentives: Provides a basis for creating economic incentives and investments in environmental protection by demonstrating its financial value.

HAKKI PIKKI TRIBES

The Hakki Pikki tribe, also known as the Hakki Pikki or Hakki Pikki, is a tribal community predominantly found in the southern Indian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Here are some key aspects of the Hakki Pikki tribe:

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Lifestyle: Traditionally, the Hakki Pikki are known for their semi-nomadic lifestyle. They often engage in activities like hunting, gathering, and trading in forested areas. In recent times, many have transitioned to more settled forms of livelihood.

Occupation: Historically, the tribe was involved in hunting and gathering, but they are also known for their skills in traditional medicine, using herbs and natural remedies.

Cultural Practices: They have a rich cultural heritage, including unique rituals, music, dance, and traditional crafts. Their cultural practices are closely tied to their environment and natural surroundings.

Language: They speak a dialect of the Dravidian language family, which is influenced by the languages of their surrounding regions.

Social Structure: The tribe has a distinct social structure with traditional leaders and a system of governance that reflects their customs and practices.

Challenges: Like many indigenous groups, the Hakki Pikki face challenges related to modernization, land rights, and preservation of their traditional way of life. Efforts are ongoing to address these issues and support their rights and development.

The Hakki Pikki tribe's unique cultural and social practices contribute to India's rich diversity of indigenous communities.



LAWMAKERS WITH DECLARED CASES CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

22/08/2024



Scope of the report: -The report analyzes 755 out of 776 affidavits of MP'S and 3938 out of 4033 affidavits of MLA across all 28 States and eight union territories over the past five years.

FACTORS BEHIND CRIME AGAINST WOMEN BY POLITICIAN

Crimes against women by politicians can stem from a combination of factors, including:

Power Dynamics: Politicians often hold significant power and influence, which can lead to abuse of that power. The imbalance in power may be exploited to perpetrate crimes against women with a reduced fear of consequences.

Impunity: There may be a perception of impunity among some politicians, believing they are shielded from legal repercussions due to their status or political connections.

Corruption: In some cases, political and legal systems may be corrupt or compromised, leading to inadequate responses to crimes and a lack of accountability for perpetrators.

Cultural Attitudes: Deep-seated patriarchal and sexist attitudes can contribute to a culture where women's rights are not respected, and crimes against them are minimized or ignored.

Lack of Legal and Institutional Support: Inadequate legal frameworks, weak enforcement mechanisms, and insufficient support for victims can make it difficult to address and prevent such crimes effectively.

Addressing these issues requires systemic change, including strengthening legal institutions, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their position, are held accountable for their actions.

WAY FORWARD: -

Addressing crimes against women by politicians in India requires a multifaceted approach:

Strengthening Legal Frameworks: Ensure that laws related to sexual harassment, assault, and abuse are robust and clearly defined. Implement and enforce stricter penalties for perpetrators, including politicians.

Independent Investigations: Establish independent bodies to investigate allegations against politicians to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure impartiality.

Judicial Accountability: Enhance the accountability of the judiciary to ensure swift and fair trials. Special fast-track courts for such cases can help expedite justice.

Support Systems for Victims: Develop comprehensive support systems for victims, including counseling, legal aid, and protection services, to encourage reporting and assist survivors throughout the legal process.

Transparency and Anti-Corruption Measures: Increase transparency and reduce corruption within political and legal institutions to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their status, face consequences for their actions.

Public Awareness and Education: Promote awareness about women's rights and gender equality to challenge cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate violence against women.

Political Will and Ethical Standards: Encourage political parties to adopt and enforce ethical standards for their members and support zero-tolerance policies towards any form of abuse.

These measures require collaboration between the government, civil society, and the legal system to create a more equitable and safe environment for women.

MIYAWAKI METHOD

Context: -To combat urban heat island and pollution create mini forest with miyawaki method

The Miyawaki method is a technique for creating dense, native forests quickly. Developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, it focuses on planting a variety of indigenous species in a compact area to achieve rapid growth and biodiversity. Key aspects of the method include:

Selection of Native Species: Use a mix of native plants that are well-adapted to the local environment. This increases resilience and supports local wildlife.

Soil Preparation: Prepare the soil by enriching it with organic material to enhance fertility and structure.

Dense Planting: Plant trees and shrubs closely together to create competition, which encourages them to grow upwards quickly and form a dense canopy.



Maintenance: Regularly maintain the forest by watering, mulching, and managing weeds to support the initial growth phase.

Minimal Intervention: After the initial establishment phase, minimal intervention is required, as the forest becomes self-sustaining.

The Miyawaki method is praised for its ability to restore ecosystems rapidly, improve urban green spaces, and combat climate change.

BENEFITS OF MIYAWAKI METHOD: -

The Miyawaki method offers several benefits for urban and rural areas:

Rapid Growth and Development: Trees grow faster and create a dense forest canopy within a few years, compared to traditional methods of afforestation.

Biodiversity Enhancement: By using a mix of native species, the method promotes local biodiversity and provides habitat for wildlife.

Climate Benefits: Dense forests help in carbon sequestration, reducing the urban heat island effect, and improving air quality.

Soil Improvement: The method enriches the soil through the decomposition of organic matter from plants, improving soil health and water retention.

Water Management: Dense forests help in better water infiltration and reduced runoff, which can mitigate flooding and erosion.

Aesthetic and Recreational Value: The creation of green spaces enhances urban aesthetics and provides recreational areas for communities.

Reduced Maintenance: Once established, Miyawaki forests require minimal maintenance as they become self-sustaining.

Overall, the Miyawaki method is effective for ecological restoration and enhancing green infrastructure in both urban and rural settings.

PM MODI VISIT TO POLAND

KEY POINTS

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Poland, key points included:

Strengthening Bilateral Relations: The visit aimed to enhance diplomatic and economic ties between India and Poland, focusing on expanding cooperation in various sectors.

Trade and Investment: Discussions centered on increasing trade and investment flows between the two countries, with a focus on sectors like technology, defense, and energy.

Strategic Partnerships: The visit reinforced strategic partnerships, particularly in defense and security, and explored collaboration on regional and global issues.

Cultural and Educational Exchanges: Promoting cultural and educational exchanges to build mutual understanding and strengthen people-to-people connections was a key aspect of the visit.

Regional and Global Issues: Dialogue included regional and global issues, including security challenges and climate change, to align on common interests and objectives.

These points reflect the broader goals of deepening relations and fostering collaboration between India and Poland.

OBJECTIVE WITH POLAND: -

POLAINDIA AND POLAND AIM TO ACHIEVE SEVERAL OBJECTIVES IN THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS:

Economic Cooperation: Boost trade and investment flows, focusing on sectors such as technology, defense, energy, and infrastructure.

Strategic Partnership: Enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest, including defense, security, and regional stability.

Cultural and Educational Exchange: Foster people-to-people connections through cultural, academic, and educational exchanges to build mutual understanding and cooperation.

Scientific and Technological Collaboration: Promote joint research and innovation, particularly in fields like IT, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy.

Regional and Global Coordination: Align on regional and global issues such as climate change, security challenges, and international diplomacy to strengthen their positions on global platforms.

Development Cooperation: Explore opportunities for development aid and technical assistance in areas where Poland and India can complement each other's strengths.

These objectives aim to create a robust and multifaceted relationship that benefits both countries across various domains.

WAY FORWARD

To advance India-Poland relations, several strategies could be pursued:

Strengthening Trade and Investment: Enhance economic ties by exploring new investment opportunities and trade agreements. Focus on sectors like technology, pharmaceuticals, and green energy where both countries have mutual interests.

Expanding Strategic Cooperation: Deepen collaboration in defense and security, including joint exercises and technology sharing. Address regional and global security challenges through coordinated policies.

Enhancing Cultural and Academic Exchanges: Increase scholarships, academic partnerships, and cultural programs to foster people-to-people connections and mutual understanding.

Collaborating on Innovation and Technology: Promote joint research initiatives and innovation projects, especially in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and biotechnology.

Strengthening Diplomatic Engagement: Maintain high-level dialogues and regular consultations to address global and regional issues, ensuring alignment on key international matters.

Developing Infrastructure and Development Projects: Collaborate on infrastructure projects and development initiatives that leverage both countries' expertise and resources.

These approaches aim to build a robust and mutually beneficial partnership between India and Poland, leveraging their strengths to address shared challenges and opportunities.

BHIMA RIVER

Context: -Two youth drawn in bhima river

The Bheema River, also spelled Bhima, is a significant river in India, flowing through the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Telangana. Here are some key points about the river:

Source and Course: The Bheema River originates in the Western Ghats, specifically from the Bhimashankar range in Maharashtra. It flows southeastward through the Deccan Plateau, eventually merging with the Krishna River near the town of Afzalpur in Karnataka.

Length: The river spans approximately 800 kilometers (about 500 miles) in length.

Tributaries: Major tributaries of the Bheema include the Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, and Tungabhadra rivers.

Significance: The Bheema River is vital for irrigation in the Deccan region, providing water to agricultural lands and supporting local economies.

Historical and Cultural Importance: The river is mentioned in various historical and cultural contexts, including ancient texts and local folklore.

Environmental Concerns: The river faces challenges such as pollution and over-extraction, impacting its health and sustainability.

Efforts to manage and conserve the Bheema River are crucial for maintaining its ecological balance and supporting the communities that depend on it.

23/08/2024

IIA discovers a new way to unravel the mysteries of the Sun by studying solar magnetic fields

Astronomers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have developed a new method to unravel the mysteries of the Sun by analysing the magnetic fields in different layers of its atmosphere. The research used data from the Kodaikanal Tower Tunnel Telescope.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

IIA scientists have studied a sunspot with complex features using simultaneous observations in hydrogen-alpha and calcium II spectral lines.

Their analysis provided valuable insights into the stratification of the magnetic field at different atmospheric heights, enhancing our understanding of solar dynamics. The study highlights the importance of advanced telescopic techniques in solar research.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT INDIAN SPACE MISSIONS

Success after Chandrayaan 3

India's space programme did not remain quiet despite the peace at the Sriharikota spaceport after the successful landing of Chandrayaan 3's Vikram lander on the Moon. Prime Minister Modi had declared August 23 as India's National Space Day, marking this achievement.

KEY MISSIONS AND MILESTONES

ISRO launched the Aditya-L1 solar mission on September 2, 2023, reaching its orbit around the Earth-Sun Lagrange point by January 2024. The Gaganyaan mission demonstrated crew protection systems, moving ahead with its first abort test on October 21, 2023.

RESEARCH AND FUTURE PLANS

ISRO also launched ExpoSat, an X-ray polarimeter satellite, and INSAT-3DS, a meteorological satellite, while finalizing the development of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV).

The focus is now on long-term research, with plans for a Gaganyaan roadmap extending to 2047, including a new launch vehicle (NGLV) and a possible lunar mission. Meanwhile, NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) continues to handle commercial missions.

WHAT IS VACCINE-DERIVED POLIO?

A two-year-old child in Tikrikilla, Meghalaya has been diagnosed with vaccine-derived polio, a rare condition caused by a mutated strain of poliovirus found in the oral polio vaccine (OPV).

The case, confirmed by the Union Health Ministry, is not related to the wild poliovirus, but has raised concerns in the West Garo Hills district, where authorities are on high alert.

HOW DOES VACCINE-DERIVED POLIO OCCUR?

Vaccine-derived polio can develop when the weakened poliovirus in OPV mutates and regains its ability to cause paralysis, especially in individuals with low immunity or in areas with poor vaccination and sanitation.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported a rise in vaccine-derived type 2 poliovirus outbreaks since the global shift from trivalent to bivalent OPV in 2016.

GLOBAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT POLIO

To reduce the risk of vaccine-derived polio, the WHO has authorised a genetically modified type 2 oral polio vaccine, which is less likely to cause the disease.

24/08/2024



SPACE SECTOR CONTRIBUTED ₹20,000 CRORE

TO INDIA'S GDP IN THE LAST DECADE

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

India's space sector has significantly boosted the country's economy, contributing nearly \$24 billion (₹20,000 crore) to the gross domestic product (GDP) in the last decade. The sector has directly supported 96,000 jobs in the public and private sectors.

MULTIPLIER EFFECT AND PRODUCTIVITY

For every dollar generated by the space sector, there is a multiplier effect of \$2.54 on the Indian economy.

Moreover, the space workforce in India has proven to be 2.5 times more productive than the country's broader industrial workforce.

REPORT

These findings were presented by Steve Bochinger, associated executive advisor of Novaspace, during the National Space Day celebrations. The report, prepared by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), evaluates the socio-economic impact of the space sector from 2014 to 2023.

The study was conducted by Indian research firms IconOne and Novaspace, with inputs from representatives of 56 public and private organizations.

Narendra Modi's Ukraine visit was more of a balancing attempt than a peace effort

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Kyiv and meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is being seen as an attempt to balance India's position on the Russia-Ukraine war.

Since Russia's invasion in February 2022, India has maintained a neutral stance, abstaining from UN resolutions criticising Russia and circumventing Western sanctions.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT

The visit is the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine since Ukraine's independence in 1991. During the visit, Modi and Zelensky discussed the ongoing conflict and signed agreements on cooperation in agriculture, culture and medical products.

However, there was no significant progress on the strategic partnership or other key requests from Ukraine.

INDIA'S ROLE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The big question is whether India will play a more active role in peace efforts. So far, India has limited its involvement to diplomatic messaging, without fundamentally changing its stance on the conflict.

ODISHA CM LAUNCHES MUCH-AWAITED ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR WOMEN

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi on Friday announced the implementation of the 'Subhadra Yojana'. Under the initiative, one crore poor women aged between 21 and 60 years will be given Rs 50,000 over five years.

SCHEME DETAILS

The 'Subhadra Yojana' is a key election promise of the BJP, which recently ended the 24-year tenure of former chief minister Naveen Patnaik. Under the scheme, every eligible woman will get Rs 10,000 annually to be disbursed in two installments of Rs 5,000 each on Rakhi Purnima Day and International Women's Day (March 8).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To qualify for Subhadra, women should not be receiving Rs 1,500 or more per month or Rs 18,000 or more per year from other government assistance programmes.

Retrospective effect of BNSS section on detention

On Friday, the Centre announced that Section 479 of the Indian Civil Security Code (BNSS), which governs the maximum detention period for undertrial prisoners, will be applied retrospectively.

CUSTODY IMPLICATIONS

Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati confirmed that the provision will apply even if the offence was registered before July 1. This means that undertrial prisoners will get the benefit of the new maximum detention limits set by Section 479, regardless of when their offences were registered.

KEY DETAILS

The retrospective application of Section 479 is aimed at ensuring that the revised detention limits are applied uniformly, providing potential relief to those who have been detained for longer than the newly prescribed maximum period.

25/08/2024



UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME

Context:-The unified pension scheme started by our prime minister on Saturday, this scheme is related to government employees, this scheme aims to assure pension for government employee family. It will be effective from 1 April 2025.

Features of unified pension scheme:-

- 1• **Benefit:-** Those who work for 25 years or more will get full benefits.
- 2• **Investment:-** To decide the pension, the average of the basic part of the salary taken in the last 12 months at the time of retirement will be taken. Roughly, 50 percent of the basic will be given as pension.
- 3• **Benefit to family:-** If the employee dies while in service, his family or partner will get 60% of the family pension. At present, it is 50 percent. Family pension is half.
- 4• **Tenure:-** At least ten years of service will be mandatory to get pension. On retirement after a minimum of 10 years of service, the minimum pension will be Rs 10,000 per month.

5• **Nps and Ups:-** Employees will have the option to choose between NPS and UPS. Those who have already chosen NPS will also get its benefit. It is believed that NPS holders will benefit by going to UPS.

6• **State government:-** on the basis of the central scheme, state governments will also be able to implement this model.

7• **Contribution:-** For this, employees will not have to make a separate contribution. The central government will bear its share, which will be about 18 percent. While the employee's contribution will be ten percent in this as in NPS.

8• **Inflation:-** They get the benefit of inflation indexation.

BENEFIT OF UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME

1. **Assured pension:-** This scheme provides assured pension to family members after retirement of employee.

2. **Social security:-** It provides social security to family members where they will get minimum pension.

Dearness relief:- where it will provide inflation index because on time to time inflation will go high so, it will benefit to all members of unified pension scheme.

Support:- It will support all pension era and its family members.

NICOBAR PROJECT

Context:- Recently ministry of environment given Statement On tribal issues because of Nicobar Project.

Purpose:-

1• promote the holistic development of Greater Nicobar. The project involves the construction of an international container trans-shipment terminal, a greenfield international airport, a power plant and a township complex. In addition, offices of multinational corporations will be set up by felling one lakh trees in tropical rainforests.

2• **NICOBAR** The scheme involves the use of a total of 244 sq km of lush green forest and coastal areas within the boundaries of the biosphere reserve.

3• **Area:-** The project area falls within a 10 km Standing radius of Galathea Bay National Park and Campbell Bay National Park. However, it lies outside the notified ecologically sensitive zone around the national parks.

4. infrastructure Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) de-notified the entire Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary for the construction of the port and other related infrastructure. Concerns about the Nicobar Project

5• **Trees:-** The project will involve felling of millions of trees in pristine rainforests and destruction of about 12 to 20 hectares of mangrove cover.



ABOUT 10 HECTARES OF CORAL COVER MAY BE AFFECTED.

6•Tribal issue:- local Shompen and Nicobari tribe natives will be affected.

7•Impact on species:-Some rare species like the leatherback sea turtle, Nicobar megapode (a flightless bird of the Nicobar Islands), Nicobar macaque and saltwater crocodile will also be affected by the project

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NICOBAR PROJECT:-

1• Infrastructure development:-The creation of infrastructure (ports, airports, etc.), which will increase employment opportunities for local people.

2• promote tourism:-It will help create tourism potential in the region, leading to increased income generation.

3• Connectivity:-Development of world-class infrastructure will help improve inter-island connectivity.

4• Social security:- it will create affordable state-of-the-art facilities for healthcare, quality education, and adequate air, sea and web infrastructure. Purpose:he

5• Geopolitical interest:-The Nicobar Islands, located near the Strait of Malacca, demand the building of strong infrastructure to membersrserset the geopolitical interests in the region.

The islands also house India's only tri-services command (Andaman & Nicobar Command).

Key points:-

1.About:-It is located in orissa it derives it's name from simul tree.

It is under project tiger 1973 Status in 1956.

It is declared biosphere reserve in 1994.

Location:-

It is situated in mayurbhanj district of orrissa,it is near eastern ghats.

Vegetation:- It has different type of tree and 96 type of species available in that area.

Tribes:- Erenga kharias tribe inhabited in simlipal biosphere reserve.

wildlife:- reserIt had many types of tigers and elephant besides 306 type of bird species etc. 6.Others:-It is vulnerable for forest fire and

Also it is important biosphere reserve of india.



TACKLING FRICTIONS IN CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

Why in News?

The global cross-border payments market, valued at \$181.9 trillion in 2022, is projected to grow significantly, reaching \$256.5 trillion by 2032. Cross-border payments, essential for international trade and economic activities, have historically been characterized by high costs, slow speeds, and complex regulatory environments. Despite advancements in technology, these payments continue to face significant challenges, which necessitate innovative solutions to improve efficiency and accessibility.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION

Cross-border payments have evolved from manual processes involving letters of credit and checks to more advanced methods facilitated by banks through wire transfers. The integration of trade, currency exchange, and industrialization has been central to this evolution. However, the system remains fraught with inefficiencies, leading to high costs and delayed transactions, which pose barriers to financial inclusion and economic growth.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIONS

Technological advancements are introducing new methods for cross-border payments, such as distributed ledger technology (DLT), blockchain, and digital wallets. These innovations aim to reduce costs, increase speed, and enhance transparency. Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) projects and Instant Payment Systems (IPS) are also gaining prominence, offering more secure and efficient means of transferring funds across borders.

CHALLENGES IN CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

Regulatory and Compliance Issues:

One of the primary challenges in cross-border payments is navigating the complex regulatory landscape, which varies across jurisdictions. Legal and compliance costs are significant, particularly concerning anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-financing of terrorism (CFT) requirements. The inconsistency in regulations across countries creates friction, affecting the smooth flow of payments.

TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION:

While new technologies promise efficiency, their integration with existing systems poses challenges. Issues such as interoperability, data sharing, and ensuring customer privacy are critical to the successful implementation of innovative payment solutions.

OPERATIONAL RISKS:

Operational risks, including cybersecurity threats and the need for robust dispute resolution mechanisms, are also major concerns in cross-border payments. Establishing secure, reliable, and transparent systems is essential to address these risks and enhance user trust.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Bilateral and multilateral initiatives are being undertaken to streamline cross-border payment systems. The Financial Stability Board (FSB) and other global organizations are working towards creating frameworks that ensure security, transparency, and efficiency. Efforts are also being made to standardize Know Your Customer (KYC) processes and harmonize regulations to reduce friction in cross-border transactions.

CONCLUSION

Improving cross-border payments is crucial for global economic integration and financial inclusion. Addressing the challenges of high costs, slow processing times, and regulatory complexities requires innovative solutions and collaborative international efforts. The future of cross-border payments lies in leveraging emerging technologies, enhancing regulatory cooperation, and ensuring robust operational frameworks to meet the growing demand for efficient and secure transactions across borders.

NASA'S DECISION ON BOEING CAPSULE

Why in News?

NASA has deemed the use of Boeing's Starliner capsule as too risky for the return of astronauts currently stationed at the International Space Station (ISS). The decision stems from a series of technical failures, including thruster issues and helium leaks, which occurred during the capsule's latest tests.

CURRENT SITUATION

Two seasoned astronauts, who have been on the ISS since June, were initially scheduled to return to Earth using the Starliner capsule. However, due to safety concerns, NASA has postponed their return until February 2025, opting to use a SpaceX capsule instead. The astronauts will remain on the ISS until the next SpaceX flight, which is set to launch in late September, bringing additional crew members to the station.

SAFETY CONCERNS WITH STARLINER

The decision not to use the Starliner capsule is based on the recent technical issues, which include problems with thrusters and helium leaks in the propulsion system. These issues have raised significant safety concerns, leading NASA to prioritize the safety of the crew over the schedule. Boeing, which developed the Starliner, has been working on resolving these issues but has faced multiple setbacks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NASA AND BOEING

NASA's decision reflects its commitment to crew safety, learning from past experiences such as the Space Shuttle disasters. The ongoing challenges with the Starliner capsule also highlight the difficulties faced by Boeing in delivering a reliable spacecraft. The delays in the Starliner program have implications for Boeing's reputation and its commercial partnerships with NASA.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

While the current situation poses challenges, NASA remains committed to finding a safe solution for the astronauts' return. The decision to rely on SpaceX's proven technology underscores the importance of reliability in space missions. The ongoing issues with the Starliner capsule will likely lead to further scrutiny and efforts to address the technical problems before it can be deemed safe for future missions.

CONCLUSION

NASA's cautious approach in handling the technical issues with Boeing's Starliner capsule highlights the agency's emphasis on crew safety. The decision to delay the astronauts' return and use alternative technology reflects the complexities of space missions and the critical importance of addressing safety concerns before proceeding with any high-risk operations.

MASS WASTING IN TIBET AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

Why in News?

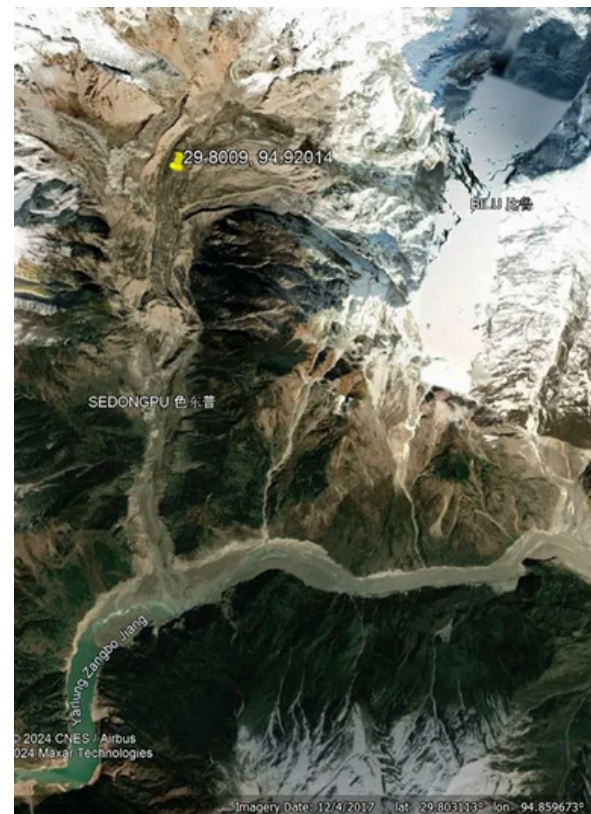
A recent study highlights the increasing frequency of mass wasting events in the Sedongpu Gully of the Tibetan Plateau since 2017. This region, which rarely experienced temperatures beyond 0°C before 2012, is now showing significant signs of warming. The combination of long-term warming and seismic activity has intensified landslide occurrences, raising concerns, particularly for India's northeastern region.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The Sedongpu Gully is located within the catchment of the YarlungTsangpo River in Tibet, which flows downstream to become the Brahmaputra River in India. The gully is characterized by steep slopes and deep gorges, making it highly susceptible to landslides. The YarlungTsangpo River is a crucial water source for India, especially for the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study, published in a journal of geotechnical engineering, revealed that more than 700 million cubic meters of debris have been mobilized in the Sedongpu Gully catchment since 2017. Researchers used satellite data to identify 149 significant mass wasting events, categorizing them into three sub-patterns. These events are primarily driven by a combination of increasing temperatures and seismic activity, leading to enhanced landslide activity in the area.



IMPACT ON INDIA

The mass wasting events in the Tibetan Plateau have direct implications for India, particularly for the northeastern states. The debris from these landslides has the potential to block the flow of rivers like the YarlungTsangpo, leading to the formation of temporary lakes. The breach of these blockages can result in catastrophic flash floods downstream, as seen in previous events in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang and Assam's Dhemaji districts. The increased sediment load also poses a threat to riverine ecosystems and the overall hydrological stability of the region.

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The study underscores the broader implications of climate change and seismic activity on the stability of glacial regions. The hyperactivity observed in the Sedongpu Gully is indicative of the significant impact of global warming on the region's geomorphological processes. The findings suggest a need for continuous monitoring and effective disaster management strategies to mitigate the risks posed by such events.

CONCLUSION

The increasing frequency of mass wasting events in Tibet poses a significant threat to India, particularly in terms of potential flash floods and disruptions to river systems. As climate change continues to alter the stability of glacial regions, there is an urgent need for cross-border cooperation and comprehensive disaster management strategies to address the emerging challenges in the region

VIGYAN DHARA SCHEME



Context: Vigyan Dhara scheme is an initiative by the Indian government aimed at promoting agricultural productivity through scientific methods. Launched under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), it focuses on providing farmers with knowledge, technologies, and practices to improve crop yields and overall agricultural efficiency.

THE SCHEME TYPICALLY INVOLVES:

1. Knowledge Dissemination:

Providing farmers with access to scientific information and techniques for better crop management.

2. Training Programs:

Conducting workshops and training sessions to educate farmers on modern agricultural practices.

3. Technology Transfer:

Facilitating the adoption of new technologies and innovations in farming. Overall, Vigyan Dhara aims to bridge the gap between scientific research and practical farming to enhance agricultural sustainability and productivity.

ISSUES

1. Implementation challenge : Inconsistent execution across different regions can lead to disparities in the quality and reach of the scheme's benefits.

2. Limited Outreach: The scheme may not adequately cover all areas, particularly remote or less developed regions where access to information and training is limited.

3. Farmer Engagement: Some farmers may be resistant to adopting new technologies or practices due to a lack of trust or perceived risk.

4. Resource Constraints: Insufficient funding or resources can hamper the ability to provide comprehensive training and support.

5. Coordination Issues: Effective coordination between different stakeholders, including government bodies and local organizations, is crucial but can sometimes be lacking. Addressing these issues involves improving implementation strategies, enhancing outreach efforts, and ensuring better resource allocation and coordination.

Solution:-To address the issues faced by the Vigyan Dhara scheme, the following solutions could be implemented:

1. Enhanced Implementation: standardise procedures and practices to ensure uniformity in the execution of the scheme across different regions. Regular monitoring and evaluation can help identify and rectify inconsistencies.

2. Broaden Outreach: Develop targeted communication strategies and utilize local networks to reach remote or underserved areas. Partnerships with local organizations and community leaders can enhance coverage and engagement.

3. Increase Farmer Engagement: Build trust through participatory approaches, including involving farmers in the decision-making process and demonstrating the tangible benefits of new technologies. Providing incentives or support for early adopters can also encourage wider acceptance.

4. Allocate Resources Effectively: Ensure adequate funding and resources are allocated to the scheme. This includes investing in infrastructure, training materials, and personnel. Prioritize areas with the highest need to maximize impact.

5. Improve Coordination: Foster better coordination between various stakeholders, including government agencies, research institutions, and local organizations. Establish clear roles and communication channels to streamline efforts and avoid duplication.

6. Feedback Mechanisms: Implement robust feedback mechanisms to gather input from farmers and other stakeholders. This feedback can help refine the scheme and address any emerging challenges.

By addressing these areas, the effectiveness of the Vigyan Dhara scheme can be significantly improved, leading to better outcomes for farmers and enhanced agricultural productivity.

28/08/2024



HIMACHAL ASSEMBLY

PASSES BILL TO RAISE MARRIAGE AGE OF WOMEN FROM 18 TO 21

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly has passed a bill that raises the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024, introduced by Women Empowerment Minister Dhani Ram Shandil, was approved by voice vote. The bill amends the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which was originally aimed at preventing child marriages.

Focus on women's progress

The bill underlines the importance of delaying marriage to support women's career development and physical growth. It seeks to provide women with more opportunities to pursue higher education, thereby promoting gender equality.

Government's commitment to women's interests

Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu stressed that the bill reflects the government's commitment to serve the best interests of women.

He highlighted that Himachal Pradesh is the first state in India to enact such a law, with the Congress party leading the women empowerment initiative.



29/08/2024

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DIRECTS STATES TO STRENGTHEN HOSPITAL SECURITY PROTOCOLS



To stop violence against doctors and to protect their safety, the Center on Wednesday ordered the states to implement night patrols, security assessments of district hospitals, and access controls to large medical facilities.

VIRTUAL GATHERING WITH IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVES

Chief secretaries and director generals of police (DGPs) attended the virtual meeting, which was co-chaired by secretaries of the Union ministries of health and home.

THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HEALTHCARE SAFETY AND HEALTH

The ten-member National Task Force (NTF), which was established by the Supreme Court, convened for the first time the day before this meeting to establish a policy for the protection and safety of healthcare workers. The task team made the decision to consult with other stakeholders more broadly.

REACTION TO ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT

An official source stated that the meeting was held in response to the Supreme Court's order from August 22 to guarantee that certain fundamental minimum safeguards are implemented by state and union territory governments (UTs) while the NTF report is being received. The meeting was held to address the doctors' concerns regarding their safety at work.

UT AND STATE GOVERNMENTS' SECURITY PROTOCOLS

The representatives from the state and UT administrations briefed the Center during the meeting on the measures they had taken to improve security and create a safer working environment for healthcare professionals in public and private hospitals, medical schools, and other healthcare facilities.

IMPORTANT SECURITY MEASURES TALKED ABOUT

The source continued, "These included joint security audits at government district hospitals and medical colleges by district magistrates, the superintendent of police along with the dean or director of these institutions; police verification of contractual and outsourced employees working in government hospitals; and the provision of chief security officers in hospitals and medical colleges."

EXTRA SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CENTER

The Center also asked officials from the state and union territory administrations to see to it that blind spots have CCTV cameras installed, that the revised locations under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) are displayed, and that the "112" helpline for medical personnel in busy hospitals is integrated.

30/08/2024



31ST WMCC CONFERENCE BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA TO RESOLVE DIFFICULTIES

BEIJING HOSTS THE 31ST WMCC MEETING BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA.

At the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in Beijing on Thursday, India and China engaged in a "frank, constructive and forward-looking exchange of views" regarding the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in an effort to "narrow down the differences" and find a "early resolution" of the outstanding issues, according to a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

REACTION TO THE PREVIOUS WMCC MEETING

Although there were no military discussions at the Corps Commander level in between the two meetings, the 30th WMCC conference, which took place on July 31, is held less than a month ago from this one.

TRANSPARENT AND PROSPECTIVE CONVERSATIONS ON LAC

"Building on the results of the WMCC meeting last month, and in accordance with the directives given by the two Foreign Ministers' meetings in Astana and Vientiane in July 2024 to expedite their discussion, the two sides engaged in an open, positive, and forward-looking exchange of views on the situation along the LAC in order to reduce disagreements and find an early resolution of outstanding issues. In light of this, they also decided to step up communication via military and diplomatic channels, according to the statement.

DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING CALM AND PEACE IN BOUNDARY REGIONS

Hong Liang, Director General of the Boundary & Ocean Affairs Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed the Chinese mission, while Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the MEA, led the Indian team. In compliance with pertinent bilateral agreements, protocols, and understandings achieved between the two governments, both parties resolved to "jointly uphold" peace and tranquility on the ground in border areas. According to the MEA, "it was emphasized that the restoration of calm and peace, as well as respect for the LAC, are the essential basis for the restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations."

HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF CHINA AND INDIA LATELY

S. Jaishankar, the minister of external affairs, and Wang Yi, the counterpart from China, have met twice in the past two months: last week in Vientiane, Laos, and on the fringes of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in Kazakhstan in July. They emphasized that there is a four-year military standoff at the LAC that needs to be resolved with "purpose and urgency." The two nations have been engaged in WMCC and Corps Commander-level negotiations in an attempt to end the standoff near the Ladakh–Arunachal frontier.

31/08/2024

ECONOMIC

OUTLOOK BALANCED BUT REFORMS NEED TO ACCELERATE

India's real GDP growth for Q1:2024 - 25 fell to 6.7%, the lowest in 5 quarters, below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) estimate of 7.1%.

The fall in GDP growth reflects a slowdown in economic momentum, although gross value added (GVA) grew slightly higher at 6.8%.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND PRIVATE CONSUMPTION

The government's plan to raise capital expenditure by 17% has been hampered by the general election, which requires intensive efforts to meet expenditure targets.

Meanwhile, private consumption rose to a six-quarter high of 7.4% on the back of easing inflation, although food prices remain high.

UNCERTAIN MONSOON IMPACT

The monsoon, though better than last year, has been erratic, hurting agricultural growth. Agriculture GVA grew to 2% but the coming weeks will determine the sector's recovery and its impact on food inflation. RBI is concerned about the loss of a potential 1% GDP growth if interest rate cuts are delayed.