

SUPREME COURT FORMS TASK FORCE TO ENSURE DOCTORS' SAFETY AFTER BRUTAL MURDER

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: The recent tragic incident involving the rape and murder of a junior doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has prompted the Supreme Court of India to take urgent action to address the safety and security of medical professionals across the country.

Supreme Court Forms National Task Force for Doctors' Safety

In response to the rape and murder of a junior doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, the

Supreme Court has established a National Task Force (NTF) to develop safety protocols for medical professionals. The NTF will recommend measures including infrastructure development, enhanced police presence, CCTV installation, night transport, and safety audits. The decision was driven by a systemic failure to protect medical professionals, especially young women doctors.

Concerns Over Safety in Hospitals

Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, leading a three-judge Bench, emphasized the need for a national protocol for safe working conditions for doctors, highlighting the vulnerability of women in the medical profession. The Bench noted that many hospitals lack basic facilities like separate duty rooms, sanitation, and security, contributing to the unsafe environment.

Task Force Members and Government Involvement

The NTF includes prominent medical professionals and ex-officio members from the Cabinet, Union Ministries, and medical bodies. The Centre has been given a month to collect data from States and Union Territories on the security and facilities available in government-run hospitals.

Supreme Court Criticizes Inadequate Safety Standards

The Supreme Court criticized existing laws, stating that punishment alone does not address the root causes of violence against medical professionals. The court underscored the need for improved safety standards in hospitals, pointing out that doctors often lack secure resting places and face unrestricted access by patients and their attendants.

Doctors' Strike and Health Ministry's Response

Following the incident in Kolkata, doctors across the country have been protesting, demanding enhanced security measures, including a Central Protection Act for Doctors and the installation of CCTV cameras in hospitals. The Health Ministry has responded with measures like mock drills, secured transport, and restricted night duties for women health professionals, although it has ruled out

introducing a Central law for their safety.

CBI Investigation and Future Steps

The Supreme Court has directed the CBI to submit its investigation report on the Kolkata case. The Health Ministry has also issued an advisory for enhanced security in government health institutes, focusing on preventing unauthorized access and ensuring the safety of healthcare employees.

AFTER BACKLASH, UNION GOVT. ORDERS CANCELLATION OF LATERAL RECRUITMENT

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

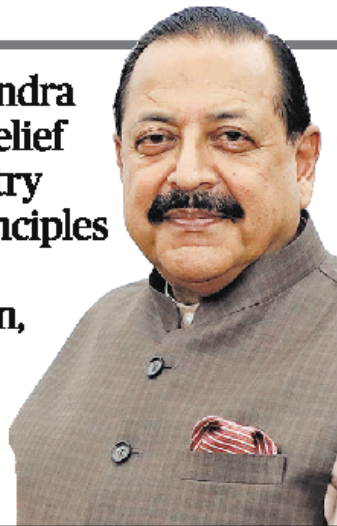
Union Government Cancels Lateral Recruitment

Key Points:

- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has canceled the lateral recruitment process for middle and senior level positions in the Union government following backlash.
- The cancellation is due to the absence of reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in the initial recruitment plan.
- The decision was made after protests from both the Opposition and the Lok Janshakti Party, a

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is of the firm belief that the process of lateral entry must be aligned with the principles of equity and social justice enshrined in our Constitution, particularly concerning the provisions of reservations

MINISTER JITENDRA SINGH'S LETTER TO UPSC CHAIRPERSON



coalition partner of the ruling National Democratic Alliance.

- The government emphasized the importance of aligning lateral recruitment with the principles of equity and social justice, particularly concerning reservations.
- The move is seen as a departure from the ad-hoc process of lateral entry that was prevalent under the previous Congress-led government.

AFTER YEARS OF IMPASSE, INDIA, MALAYSIA RAISE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, DISCUSS ENTRY TO BRICS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The upgraded "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" between India and Malaysia marks a significant step towards strengthening bilateral ties and cooperation, especially after a period of tension over various issues.



INDIA AND MALAYSIA STRENGTHEN TIES

Upgraded Strategic Partnership

- India and Malaysia have elevated their bilateral relationship to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."
- This upgrade signifies a renewed commitment to cooperation and collaboration between the two nations.

Key Agreements and MoUs

- Several agreements and MoUs were signed during Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

- These documents cover various areas of cooperation, including trade, investment, and defense.

Support for Malaysia's BRICS Membership

- India has pledged to support Malaysia's bid to join the BRICS grouping.
- Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has been actively advocating for his country's inclusion.

Geopolitical Challenges and Indo-Pacific Cooperation

- The two leaders discussed the current geopolitical landscape, including tensions in the Indo-Pacific region.
- They reaffirmed their commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Positive Outlook for Bilateral Relations

- Both leaders expressed optimism about the future of India-Malaysia relations.
- They highlighted the shared cultural and historical ties between the two nations.

Overcoming Past Challenges

- The upgraded partnership marks a turning point after a period of strained relations.
- The two countries have agreed to move beyond past disagreements and focus on strengthening their cooperation.

SENIOR ARMY LEADERS DELIBERATE ON ROAD MAP FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

DEFENCE



Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi chaired a critical meeting with senior Army leadership to chart the Indian Army's future course during the Amrit Kaal, aligning with India's vision to become a developed global player by 2047. This was the first high-level meeting under Gen. Dwivedi since he took charge. The discussions focused on transforming the Army into a modern, agile, technology-enabled, and self-reliant force capable of winning multi-domain wars. Key goals included reorganizing command structures, enhancing infrastructure, and improving multi-domain capabilities across land, air, cyber, and space to protect national interests.



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SC SAYS NO TO EUTHANASIA FOR AGED COUPLE'S COMATOSE SON

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Plight of the Parents

- An aged couple sought permission for passive euthanasia for their 30-year-old comatose son.
- The son had been in a coma for 11 years after a fall.
- The parents had exhausted their resources and were emotionally drained.

Court's Decision

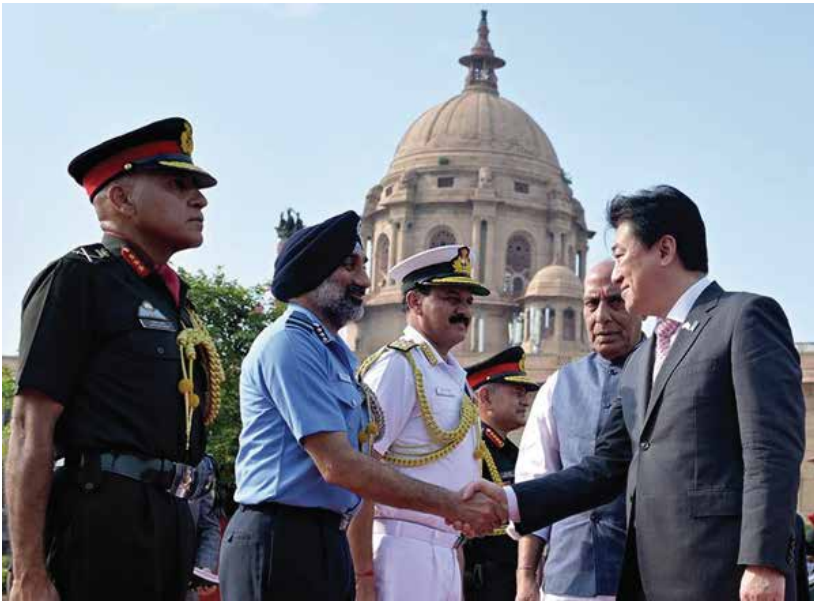
- The Supreme Court refused to grant the plea.
- The court ruled that the situation did not qualify as passive euthanasia.
- Active euthanasia, which involves intentionally ending a life, is not legal in India.

Challenges Faced by the Parents

- The parents faced significant emotional and financial burdens due to their son's condition.
- They had sought medical advice but were unable to find a doctor willing to assist with their request.

INDIA, JAPAN CONDUCT '2+2' DIALOGUE WITH FOCUS ON INDO-PACIFIC

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



India-Japan 2+2 Dialogue: Strengthening Partnership in the Indo-Pacific

Focus on Indo-Pacific Cooperation

- The India-Japan 2+2 dialogue focused on strengthening cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Both sides expressed their commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- Growing Strategic Partnership
- The India-Japan relationship has evolved into a special strategic and global partnership.
- Both countries recognize the importance of

- reliable partners in a volatile world.

Shared Values and Goals

- The partnership is based on shared democratic values and the rule of law.
- India's goal of becoming a developed country by 2047 aligns with the importance of defense cooperation with Japan.

Defense Collaboration

- The defense sector is a key area for India-Japan cooperation.
- Both countries aim to strengthen their defense partnership to achieve their respective goals.

TRADE, DEFENCE, AND CULTURAL TIES TO BE IN FOCUS DURING PM'S VISIT TO POLAND

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India-Poland Relations: A Growing Partnership

Historical Ties and Humanitarian Efforts

- India and Poland share a historical bond dating back to World War II when Poland sought refuge in India.
- Poland played a crucial role in evacuating Indian students from Ukraine during the Russian invasion.

Economic Cooperation

- Bilateral trade between India and Poland is significant, with Poland being India's largest partner in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Indian companies have invested in various sectors in Poland, while Polish companies have a presence in India.
- There is potential for further growth in trade, but India needs to improve its visibility and provide clear guidelines for Polish businesses.

Defense Collaboration

- Defense ties between India and Poland are strengthening.
- India has appointed a defense attaché in Poland, and Polish companies have secured defense contracts and joint ventures in India.

Cultural Exchange

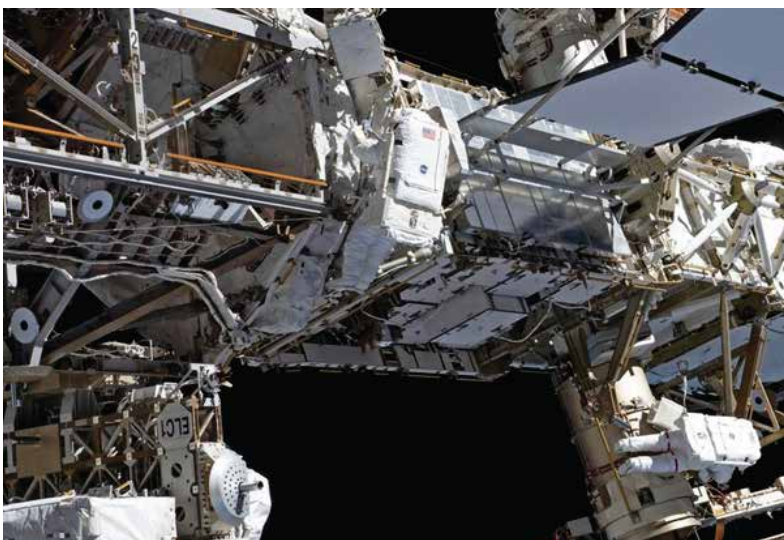
- India and Poland share cultural ties, which will be highlighted during Prime Minister Modi's visit.
- The visit will be significant as it is the first by an Indian PM to Poland in 45 years.

Poland's Strategic Importance

- Poland's position as a gateway to Europe and its upcoming presidency of the EU council make it a strategic partner for India.

SUNITA AND BARRY WILL BE ON THE ISS LONGER THAN EXPECTED. WHAT NEXT?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



CONTEXT: The unexpected extension of Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore's stay on the International Space Station, caused by technical issues with the Starliner spacecraft, presents a unique set of challenges. The prolonged mission requires careful planning for logistics, adjustments to living conditions, and consideration of potential return options for the astronauts.

Unforeseen Delays and Extended Stay on the ISS

Mission Overview

- The original plan for Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore's mission was a brief eight-day test flight of

the Boeing Starliner.

- Due to technical issues with Starliner, their stay has been extended to several months.

Current Crew and Expedition

- The ISS currently houses nine crew members as part of Expedition 71.
- Several crew members are scheduled to return in September 2024.
- Expedition 72 will begin in September 2024 with a seven-member crew.

Supply and Logistics

- The ISS has sufficient supplies of food, water, oxygen, and other essentials.
- Recent cargo resupply missions have replenished the station's resources.
- The crew has adapted to the challenges of living in a confined space, including limited laundry facilities and exercise time.

Potential Return Plans

- If Starliner remains unfit for return, NASA has a backup plan involving the SpaceX Crew 9 Dragon mission.
- There may be further adjustments to the crew rotation schedule depending on Starliner's status.

Historical Context

- This is not the first time astronauts have had to extend their stays on the ISS due to technical issues or unforeseen circumstances.
- Previous instances include the Columbia tragedy and various spacecraft malfunctions.

ON THE RIGHT PATH

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: Elections will address the yearning for substantive democracy in J&K.

- **Election Announcement:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in three phases between September 18 and October 1, addressing a significant gap in the democratic process in the region.
- **Democratic Deficit:** The absence of an elected State legislature, following the abrogation of J&K's special status, bifurcation, and conversion into a Union Territory (UT), led to widespread despondency and alienation among the population.
- **Supreme Court Directive:** The Supreme Court, while upholding the abrogation of special status, mandated that Assembly elections be held by September 30, 2024, and stressed the importance of restoring statehood soon.
- **Increased Political Participation:** Despite previous political setbacks, there has been a noticeable increase in participation in local body and parliamentary elections since 2019, particularly in the Valley.
- **Past Electoral Dynamics:** The last Assembly elections saw a communal split in voting, with the BJP dominating in Jammu and parties like the PDP, NC, and Congress winning in the Valley.
- **Potential Alliances:** The NC and Congress, which were part of the INDIA bloc in the 2024 general election, may form an alliance with smaller parties in the upcoming elections, with a focus on restoring statehood and promoting secular governance.
- **Preventing Communalization:** There is a need for elections in J&K to focus on civic issues and rights discourses, rather than communal lines, to help restore peace and stability in the region.

REGRESSIVE MOVE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The West Bengal government's regressive guideline of minimizing night duty for women healthcare professionals as a solution to their safety concerns, arguing that it will lead to women losing jobs and financial independence instead of addressing the root causes of gender violence.

REDUCING WOMEN'S WORK HOURS: A REGRESSIVE SOLUTION TO VIOLENCE

The Need for Real Safety Measures

- The recent killing of a woman doctor in Kolkata highlights the urgent need for effective measures to ensure women's safety in the workplace.
- The West Bengal government's guideline of minimizing night duty for women is a regressive step that fails to address the root causes of gender violence.

The Impact on Women's Employment

- Reducing women's work hours will only lead to them losing jobs and financial independence.
- India's already low labor force participation rate for women will be further hampered.

The Need for Comprehensive Safety Measures

- The government must focus on implementing comprehensive safety measures such as separate rest rooms, safe zones with CCTVs, and mobile phone apps.
- These measures should be in place for all women workers, not just healthcare professionals.

The Role of the Supreme Court and Society

- The Supreme Court's announcement of a national task force to investigate women's safety is a positive step.
- Society must undergo a fundamental change in mindset and promote gender justice to combat violence against women.
- Campaigns like "reclaim the night" are crucial in raising awareness and demanding action.

A GROUND PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE MASS EMPLOYMENT

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The proposed ground plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for sustainable mass employment in India, focusing on community-driven initiatives, vocational education, skill development, and public-private partnerships to create quality jobs with dignity, aligning with broader efforts to improve human development indicators and economic productivity.

1. Addressing Wage Issues

- **Recognizing Wage Challenges:** Acknowledge the low wage conditions in India, where earning ₹25,000 a month places one in the top 10%. Short-duration skill programs often fail due to low wages that do not support a dignified life in urban areas.
- **Public Employment:** Advocate for increased public employment, which is currently lower in India compared to developed countries. The state must ensure a floor rate for wages and provide high-quality public goods.

2. Community-Based Skilling Initiatives

- **Decentralized Skilling:** Skilling needs should be identified at the local level through community action, involving gram sabhas and urban basti samitis. Professionals should assist in creating personalized employment plans for youth.

- Convergence of Human Development Initiatives: Integrate education, health, skills, nutrition, livelihoods, and employment initiatives at the local government level, especially with women's collectives. This ensures community accountability and improves public goods outcomes.

3. Education and Employability

- Vocational Courses in Colleges: Introduce vocational and certificate programs alongside undergraduate courses to improve employability. Colleges should be encouraged to offer practical courses such as tourist guiding or counseling.
- Standardizing Healthcare Education: Implement standardized nursing and allied health-care courses across all states to meet international benchmarks. This will create a skilled workforce for both domestic and international markets.
- Community Care Cadres: Establish community cadres of crèche care-givers to enable women to work without fear. This initiative should be modeled after the Rural Livelihood Mission's Community Resource Persons.

4. Investment in Technical Institutions

- Revamping ITIs and Polytechnics: Invest in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics as skill development hubs. These institutions should be autonomous, community-managed, and work as feeder schools for vocational education.

5. Enterprise and Innovation in Schools

- Enterprise Skills in Schools: Introduce enterprise and start-up skills in high schools, with professionals visiting to impart practical knowledge. This will encourage innovation and better understanding of business processes from an early age.

6. Industry Collaboration for Apprenticeships

- Co-sharing Apprenticeships: Implement a co-sharing model for apprenticeships with industry partners. This ensures that the industry has a stake in training and employs skilled workers.

7. Capital Loans for Women-Led Enterprises

- Streamlining Capital Loans: Simplify access to working capital loans for women-led and first-generation enterprises. The focus should be on scaling successful models like the Start Up Village Enterprise Programme under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission.

8. Skill Accreditation and MGNREGA Utilization

- Universal Skill Accreditation: Launch a universal skill accreditation program for skill-providing institutions, with joint sponsorship of candidates by the state and industry.
- Optimizing MGNREGA Funds: Use 70% of MGNREGA funds in water-scarce and high-deprivation blocks, focusing on livelihood security through income-generating initiatives. Prioritize skills development for MGNREGA wage earners to improve productivity and wage rates.

9. Scaling Up Apprenticeships

- Enhancing Apprenticeship Programs: Expand apprenticeship opportunities to facilitate youth absorption into workplaces. Ensure that successful apprenticeships lead to employment with wages that support a dignified life.

This plan aims to create sustainable mass employment with dignity by addressing wage issues, investing in education and skills, fostering community engagement, and ensuring industry collaboration.

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WEST ASIA CRISIS SPELLS TOUGH CHOICES FOR CHINA, RUSSIA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh has escalated tensions between Israel and Iran, with potential implications for regional stability and the broader geopolitical landscape. The competing interests of major powers like the United States, China, and Russia in the region add further complexity to the situation.

The Complex Dynamics of the Middle East

The Assassination of Ismail Haniyeh and Rising Tensions

- The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, a prominent Hamas leader, has significantly increased tensions between Israel and Iran.
- A full-scale war between the two nations is a possibility, and Iran is expected to retaliate forcefully.

The Role of Major Powers

- The conflict in Gaza is not only a regional issue but also a reflection of the broader power struggle between the United States and its allies, and a China-led group.
- Iran has played a pivotal role in this power dynamic, forming alliances with Russia and China.

Competing Interests and Influence

- While Russia and China have a shared goal of undermining U.S. influence in the Middle East, their individual interests may diverge.
- Both powers have established their own spheres of influence in the region, sometimes working independently.

China's Diplomatic Efforts

- China has been more actively involved in diplomatic efforts, including mediating between Saudi Arabia and Iran and supporting the Palestinian cause.
- Beijing's stance on the Palestinian issue is driven by both moral and strategic considerations.

Russia's Military Involvement

- Russia has been militarily engaged in Syria since 2015, supporting the Assad regime and establishing a permanent presence in the region.
- Russia and Iran have cooperated closely in Syria, with Iran using the country as a base for its proxies.

The Nuclear Issue

- The potential for Iran's nuclearization remains a major concern for the international community.
- China and Russia, along with the Western powers, have expressed concerns about Iran's nuclear program.
- The recent election of a moderate Iranian president and the appointment of familiar diplomats may offer hope for renewed nuclear negotiations.

Regional Realities

- Russia has been more aggressive in undermining Western power in the region, while China has been more cautious.
- The U.S. remains committed to maintaining a presence in the Middle East, despite the challenges and complexities of the region.

The Implications of Haniyeh's Assassination

- Iran may face pressure from its proxies to retaliate against Israel for the assassination of Haniyeh.

- A full-scale war between Israel and Iran could have significant consequences for regional stability and the global balance of power.

ANALYSIS: The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh has significantly heightened tensions between Israel and Iran, threatening to escalate into a full-scale war. This conflict is not merely a regional issue but also a reflection of the broader geopolitical rivalry between the United States and its allies, and a China-led group. While China and Russia share a common goal of undermining U.S. influence in the Middle East, their interests and approaches differ. Iran's nuclear ambitions remain a major concern for the international community, and the recent leadership changes offer a potential opportunity for renewed negotiations. The region faces a complex and uncertain future, with the potential for further escalation and instability.

CREATING EMPLOYMENT IN THE LONG RUN

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

A CRITIQUE OF INDIA'S BUDGETARY APPROACH AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

The Limitations of Annual Budget Announcements

- The focus on grand announcements and headline-grabbing schemes undermines the effectiveness of the annual budget process.
- There is a lack of accountability for the implementation of previous year's initiatives.

The Failure of Disinvestment Targets

- Despite repeated announcements, the government has struggled to achieve its disinvestment targets.
- This indicates a disconnect between policy statements and actual implementation.

The Ineffectiveness of Employment Initiatives

- The government's recent employment initiatives, while well-intentioned, are likely to be ineffective.
- The internship program for corporates faces several challenges, including limited participation and a lack of demand.
- The government's reliance on supply-side measures ignores the underlying demand-side constraints in the job market.

The Persistent Job Crisis

- Despite claims of job creation, India continues to grapple with a significant unemployment crisis.
- The RBI's data on job creation has been questioned due to methodological limitations.
- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) shows a modest increase in labor force participation rate.

The Role of Government in Job Creation

- The government should focus on creating jobs in essential public services, particularly green jobs.
- Addressing deficiencies in public services can improve quality of life, generate a productive workforce, and create employment opportunities.
- Timely recruitment and measures to curb paper leaks in government exams can help alleviate the pressure on job seekers.

Conclusion

- The government's approach to addressing the unemployment crisis has been flawed, relying on short-term measures and neglecting long-term investments.
- A comprehensive economic package focused on essential public services is necessary to create sustainable employment opportunities.
- By addressing the underlying issues of demand, skills development, and public sector efficiency, the government can effectively tackle the unemployment crisis.

ON THE ETHANOL BLENDING PROGRAMME

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Ethanol for blending

With the government restricting the use of B-heavy molasses and sugarcane juice for ethanol production from December 2023, grain-based ethanol production has increased to maintain blending percentages

Ethanol supplied to oil marketing companies

Supply-year	C-heavy molasses	B-heavy molasses	Sugarcane juice	Surplus rice	Damaged grains	Maize	Total (in litre crore); blending % in brackets
2019-20	74	68	15	0	16	0	173 (5.00)
2020-21	39	183	39	2	39	0	302 (8.10)
2021-22	11	265	85	49	24	0	434 (10.02)
2022-23	6	235	128	74	32	32	506 (12.06)
2023-24*	39	95	56	0	76	135	401 (13.00)

Supply years are December-November, December to October for 2022-23 and November to October for 2023-24

*Data available only for November-June

Shortage: Sugar mill workers load harvested sugarcane on to a tractor trolley in Sangli district, in Maharashtra, in 2022. REUTERS



CONTEXT: The economists argue that India's inflation-targeting regime has been effective and should be maintained, despite recent calls for changes. They emphasize the positive outcomes achieved under this framework and caution against abandoning it in favour of a more discretionary approach.

THE GIST

- The roadmap for achieving ethanol blending targets, prepared by the Niti Aayog, had laid down that the capacity of sugarcane-based distilleries would need to increase from 426 crore litres in 2021 to 760 crore

litres in 2026, while grain-based distilleries' capacity should increase from 258 to 740 crore litres.

- Ethanol will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will also prevent an estimated foreign exchange outgo of some \$4 billion per year, as per Maruti Suzuki company estimates, and bolster the rural economy by promoting the cultivation of various crops through an assured market.
- Meanwhile, the developing ethanol economy has impacted States differently. While the fuel ethanol pricing is the same across India, States determine the pricing of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) that goes into making liquor for consumption and other uses.

India's Ethanol Blending Program: Progress and Challenges

Progress Towards 20% Ethanol Blending

- India is making significant strides towards achieving its target of blending 20% ethanol with petrol by 2025-26.
- Ethanol production capacity has increased substantially, driven by government incentives and industry investments.
- The country has already achieved blending percentages of 13% to 15%.

Food versus Fuel Dilemma

- The food versus fuel debate continues to be a concern, as ethanol production can impact food security.
- Recent events, such as increased maize imports, highlight this tension.
- While there are concerns about food surpluses, industry experts believe that India has enough grains and sugar to meet both food and fuel needs.

Diversifying Ethanol Sources

- The government should focus on diversifying ethanol sources beyond first-generation (1G) ethanol from foodgrains and sugarcane.

- Second-generation (2G) and third-generation (3G) ethanol, which have a less significant impact on food security, should be prioritized.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Sugarcane Production:** Expanding sugarcane production requires additional water resources and may divert irrigation from food crops.
- **Grain-Based Ethanol:** The use of grains like maize for ethanol production can impact food prices and availability.
- **State-Level Policies:** Different states have varying policies regarding ethanol production and pricing, which can influence the attractiveness of fuel ethanol versus other ethanol products.
- **Fuel Efficiency:** While ethanol can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foreign exchange outflows, it may affect the fuel efficiency of existing vehicles.

Future Outlook

- India's ethanol blending program has the potential to contribute to energy security, reduce carbon emissions, and boost the rural economy.
- Addressing the challenges related to food security, fuel efficiency, and state-level policies will be crucial for the long-term success of this program.
- By diversifying ethanol sources and implementing sustainable practices, India can achieve its ethanol blending goals while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and economy.

INFLATION TARGETING IN INDIA: A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Regime review

RBI's inflation targeting regime has worked well, argue Barry Eichengreen (UCLA, Berkeley) and Poonam Gupta (NCAER)

■ **'Weight of food-price inflation in CPI basket should be reduced to better reflect circumstances of Indian households'**

■ **Term the 4% target with +/- 2 percentage points tolerance band as 'broadly appropriate'**



■ **Say RBI not overly hawkish or reactive to every small deviation in inflation rate**

The Benefits of Inflation Targeting

- Experts opine that RBI's inflation-targeting regime has been effective in India.
- They emphasize the positive outcomes, such as lower and less volatile inflation, better-anchored inflation expectations, and more effective monetary policy transmission.

Recommendations for Improvement

- While the current inflation targeting framework is generally appropriate, the authors suggest some tweaks to enhance its performance.

- They propose reducing the weight of food-price inflation in the CPI inflation basket to better reflect Indian household circumstances.

The Success of Inflation Targeting

- The RBI has successfully met the inflation targets set under the inflation-targeting agreement, with only one instance of exceeding the upper tolerance band in recent years.
- This demonstrates the effectiveness of the regime in managing inflation.

Addressing Criticisms

- The authors refute the argument that inflation targeting has made the RBI overly hawkish or reactive to small deviations in inflation.
- They provide evidence to support the positive outcomes achieved under this framework.

Conclusion

- The economists conclude that abandoning inflation targeting would be risky and counterproductive, given its proven success in India.
- They advocate for maintaining the current regime while considering minor adjustments to improve its effectiveness.

POLAND AND HUNGARY BECOME KEY NEW DRIVERS OF EUROPE'S SOLAR GROWTH

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: The rapid growth of solar energy in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and Hungary, is a testament to the region's commitment to clean energy and the increasing affordability of solar installations. This shift away from traditional fossil fuels like coal is crucial for addressing climate change and achieving energy independence.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE'S SOLAR ENERGY SURGE

Rapid Growth in Solar Generation

- Solar energy production in Central and Eastern

Europe has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, outpacing other European regions.

- Poland and Hungary have been key drivers of this expansion, with significant increases in solar-powered electricity generation.

Factors Driving Solar Growth

- **Affordability:** Solar installations have become more cost-effective compared to other forms of electricity generation, making them attractive for investment.
- **Supportive Policies:** Governments in the region have implemented favourable policies to promote clean energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Increasing Solar Capacity

- Central and Eastern Europe's top solar producers have expanded their solar generation capacity at a faster rate than their regional peers.
- This expansion has laid the foundation for continued growth in solar output in one of Europe's most industrialized areas.

Overcoming Challenges

- Despite starting from a lower base, Central and Eastern Europe has made significant strides in solar energy production.
- The region has demonstrated its ability to compete with wealthier economies in Western Europe in terms of solar growth.

Future Outlook

- The region's strong policy support for solar energy and the successful deployment of innovative projects like agrivoltaics suggest a promising future for solar growth in Central and Eastern Europe.
- With continued investment and advancements in technology, the region could play a significant role in Europe's transition to a clean energy future.

TAIWAN CONDUCTS LIVE-FIRE MISSILE DRILLS AS CHINA RAMPS UP MILITARY THREATS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: Taiwan's live-fire missile drills are a direct response to China's increasing military threats and territorial claims over the island. The exercises demonstrate Taiwan's commitment to its defense capabilities and its resolve to deter China's aggressive actions.

Increasing Military Pressure from China

- China has intensified its military threats against Taiwan, claiming the island as its own territory.
- Beijing has been particularly critical of Taiwan's new President, Lai Ching-te, whom they consider a separatist.

Taiwan's Deterrence Efforts

- Taiwan has strengthened its military capabilities in response to China's threats.
- The country has purchased advanced weaponry from the United States and revitalized its domestic arms industry.
- Taiwan has also extended the length of mandatory military service to enhance its defense capabilities.

Live-Fire Missile Drills

- Taiwan conducted live-fire missile drills on Tuesday, demonstrating its military readiness.
- A variety of missiles, including domestically produced and U.S.-made weapons, were successfully launched.
- The drills were a clear message to China that Taiwan is prepared to defend itself.

Ongoing Tensions

- China has continued to send military aircraft and ships near Taiwan's shores, a tactic seen as intimidation.
- Taiwan's Defense Ministry has reported increased Chinese military activity in recent days.
- The ongoing tensions between Taiwan and China highlight the delicate geopolitical situation in the region.

“Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you’re finished.”—Leslie Nielsen



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