

LAW DOES NOT PERMIT RAZING OF HOMES OF ACCUSED, SAYS SC

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

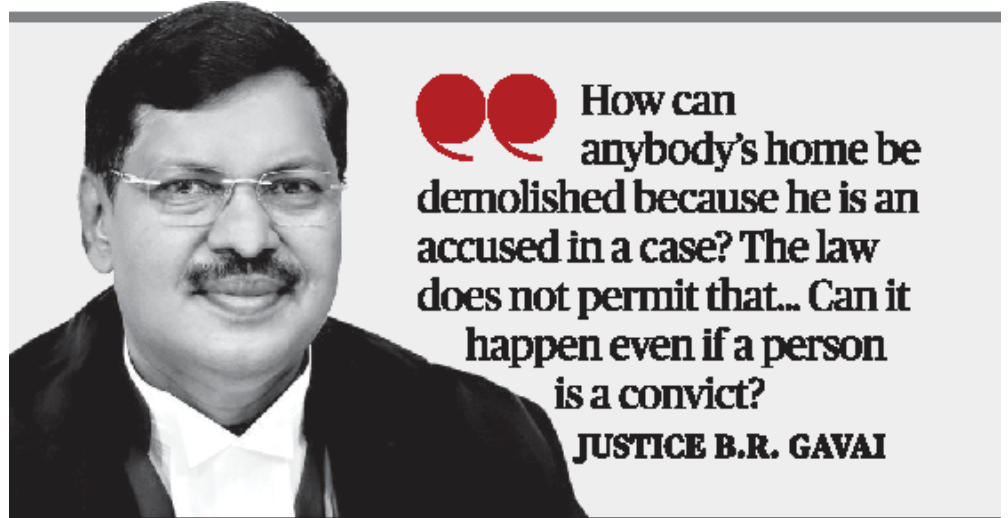
CONTEXT: The Supreme Court has questioned the practice of demolishing the homes of accused or convicted persons, emphasizing that such actions are not permitted by law. The court aims to establish guidelines to prevent arbitrary demolitions and ensure due process is followed.

SUPREME COURT CONDEMNS BULLDOZER JUSTICE

Key Points:

- **Illegal Demolitions:** The Supreme Court has strongly criticized the practice of demolishing the homes of individuals accused or convicted of crimes, deeming it unlawful.
- **Uniform Guidelines:** The court intends to establish clear guidelines to regulate the demolition of unauthorized structures, ensuring fair procedures and preventing abuse of power.
- **Retributory Demolitions:** The Uttar Pradesh government defended its actions against accusations of retaliatory demolitions, stating that they adhere to legal procedures.
- **Focus on Unauthorized Structures:** The court clarified that its intention is not to protect illegal structures, regardless of their religious or other affiliations.
- **Upcoming Guidelines:** The case has been listed for further hearings on September 17 to finalize the guidelines.

In summary, the Supreme Court has taken a firm stance against the practice of demolishing homes as a form of punishment or retaliation. The court aims to establish a standardized framework to ensure that such actions are carried out only in accordance with the law and after due process.



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THOUSANDS LEFT HOMELESS BY A.P., TELANGANA FLOODS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The incessant rains in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have led to widespread flooding, causing significant damage to infrastructure and displacing thousands of people. The governments of both states have initiated relief efforts to assist the affected population.



ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA BATTLE FLOODS

Key Points:

- **Widespread Flooding:** Heavy rainfall has caused severe flooding in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, leading to widespread damage and displacement.
 - **Humanitarian Crisis:** The death toll has risen, and thousands of people have been left homeless due to the floods.
 - **Government Response:** Both state governments have initiated relief efforts, including providing financial assistance and deploying rescue teams.
 - **Central Government Support:** The Prime Minister has assured the states of all necessary assistance from the central government.
- **Infrastructure Damage:** The floods have caused significant damage to roads, railways, and other infrastructure.
- In summary, the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are grappling with a major flood crisis. The governments are working tirelessly to provide relief to the affected population and mitigate the damage caused by the natural disaster.

PM'S VISIT TO BRUNEI, SINGAPORE TO FOCUS ON TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visits to Brunei and Singapore are focused on strengthening trade and technological ties, with key discussions on space cooperation, semiconductor agreements, and digital collaboration, underscoring India's Act East Policy and its strategic engagement with ASEAN countries.

Overview

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Brunei and Singapore, focusing on enhancing trade and technological ties, particularly in areas like space cooperation, semiconductors, digital collaboration, healthcare, and skill development.

Brunei Visit

- **Meetings and MoUs:** Modi will meet with Sultan and Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah, with discussions expected to revolve around space cooperation, building on a 2018 satellite tracking agreement.
- **Strategic Importance:** Brunei's location in the Indo-Pacific region makes it significant to India's Act East Policy and outreach to maritime neighbors.
- **Economic Discussions:** Talks will include efforts to increase India's LNG intake from Brunei and the initial steps toward defense cooperation.

Singapore Visit

- **Key Agreements:** Modi will meet Singapore's new Prime Minister, Lawrence Wong, to witness the signing of four agreements on semiconductors, digital cooperation, healthcare, and skilling.
- **Economic Ties:** Singapore, India's sixth-largest trading partner and the largest in ASEAN, is also the biggest source of



Foreign Direct Investment in India.

- **Trade Negotiations:** The visit will emphasize the need to expedite the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to improve trade figures.

Historical Context

- **Past Visits:** The visit to Brunei marks the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister since Manmohan Singh's visit in 2013 and Vice-President Hamid Ansari's visit in 2016.
- **Singapore's Significance:** The visit highlights the historical ties between India and both ASEAN nations, which were formerly under British rule.

Additional Events

- **Indian Chancery Inauguration:** Modi will inaugurate the new Indian chancery building in Bandar Seri Begawan.
- **CEO Meeting in Singapore:** Modi will address CEOs in Singapore, showcasing "India's growth story" to global business leaders.

FIRST JOINT COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE TO SEE PUSH FOR THEATRE COMMANDS

DEFENCE & SECURITY

CONTEXT: The Indian government is preparing to establish integrated theatre commands and joint logistics nodes to streamline military operations and improve efficiency. This initiative is part of a broader effort to modernize the armed forces and enhance national security.

Introduction

The Indian government is pushing for the creation of Integrated Theatre Commands and Joint Logistics Nodes to enhance military efficiency and national security.

Theatre Commands

- **Proposal:** The Services have prepared detailed modalities for the creation of three theatre commands: two land commands and one maritime command.
- **Recommendations:** All commanders of the theatre commands and the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff should be four-star officers.

Joint Logistics Nodes (JLNs)

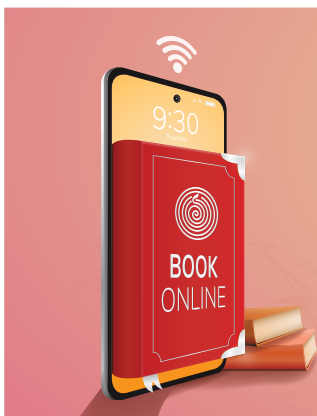
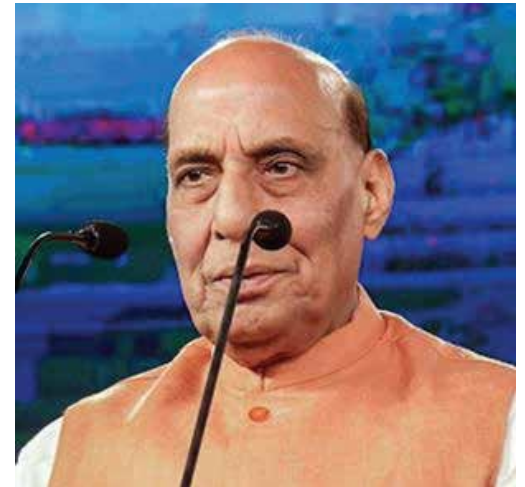
- **Expansion:** Plans are underway to establish four more JLNs in Leh, Siliguri, Sular, and Prayagraj.
- **Purpose:** JLNs provide integrated logistics to all Services, ensuring optimal resource utilization.

Jointness and Integration

- **Cross-Staffing:** Cross-posting of officers between Services is being implemented to foster jointness and integration.
- **Training:** Joint training initiatives are underway to enhance interoperability and coordination.

Joint Commanders Conference (JCC)

- **Theme:** The first JCC will focus on "Sashakt aur Surakshit Bharat: Transforming the Armed Forces."
- **Discussions:** The meeting will provide a platform for in-depth discussions on the proposed reforms.



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HECTIC NEGOTIATIONS ON FOR CONTROL OF HOUSE PANELS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The formation of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees in India's 18th Lok Sabha is delayed due to ongoing disagreements between the Union government and the Opposition, particularly the Congress, over which parties will chair key committees, leading to a political standoff.



Delay in Formation of Parliamentary Standing Committees

Nearly three months after the 18th Lok Sabha elections, the formation of Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees has been delayed due to disagreements between the Union government and the Opposition over who should chair these panels.

Composition and Entitlements

There are 24 Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees, with 16 under the Lok Sabha and eight under the Rajya Sabha. The Congress, based on its numerical strength, is entitled to chair four committees—three in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha.

Congress' Demand and Government's Response

The Congress initially sought to chair the committees on External Affairs, Finance, and Defence, but the government rejected these demands. The Congress then asked for at least one of these committees but was again denied. Instead, the government offered the Congress the Rural Development; Housing and Urban Affairs; and Labour, Textiles, and Skill Development committees.

Rajya Sabha Committees

In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress demanded the committee on Home Ministry but was instead offered the Science and Technology, Environment and Forests committee, which Congress leader Jairam Ramesh previously chaired.

Positions of Other Opposition Parties

Other opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), are also set to chair one committee each. The Trinamool Congress has been non-committal on its choice, while the Samajwadi Party, with many first-time MPs, has requested to chair a Rajya Sabha committee, likely to allow senior leader Ramgopal Yadav to take the position.

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CABINET OKAYS SEVEN SCHEMES FOR FARMERS WORTH ₹14,235 CRORE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Union Cabinet approved seven schemes for the agriculture sector with a total outlay of ₹14,235.30 crore, including the Digital Agriculture Mission, to boost nutritional security, livestock production, and the use of technology in agriculture.

Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM)

- **Purpose:** To create a unified platform for agricultural data from various sources.
- **Components:** Agri Stack, Krishi Decision Support System, Soil Profile Mapping.
- **Total outlay:** ₹2.817 crore.

Crop Science for Food and Nutritional Security

- **Purpose:** To prepare farmers for climate resilience and ensure food security.
- **Total outlay:** ₹3,979 crore.

Strengthening Agricultural Education, Management, and Social Sciences

- **Purpose:** To prepare agriculture students and researchers for current challenges.
- **Total outlay:** ₹2,291 crore.

Sustainable Livestock Health and Production

- **Purpose:** To increase incomes from livestock and dairy.
- **Total outlay:** ₹1,702 crore.

Sustainable Development of Horticulture

- **Purpose:** To promote various horticulture crops.
- **Total outlay:** ₹1,129.30 crore.



Krishi Vigyan Kendras

- **Total outlay:** ₹1,202 crore.

Natural Resource Management

- **Total outlay:** ₹1,115 crore.

CONCLUSION: The Union Cabinet approved seven schemes for agriculture, totaling ₹14,235 crore. The Digital Agriculture Mission aims to create a unified platform for agricultural data. Other schemes focus on crop science, agricultural education, livestock health, horticulture, and natural resource management.

NOD FOR PROCUREMENT OF 240 AERO-ENGINES FOR SU-30MKI AIRCRAFT

DEFENCE & SECURITY

The government has approved the procurement of 240 aero-engines for the Su-30MKI fighter jets. This will ensure the continued operational readiness of the Indian Air Force's fleet of Su-30MKI aircraft, which are a crucial component of the country's defense capabilities. The procurement will also boost domestic manufacturing and technology development in the aerospace sector.



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SC CONSTITUTES A COMMITTEE TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF FARMERS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Supreme Court has appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice Nawab Singh to resolve the farmer protests at the Shambhu border. The court urged the farmers to avoid political involvement and vacate the border to ease public hardships. The committee will seek expert advice from Professor B.R. Kamboj.

GENE OF THRONES: RULERS' GENOMES REVEAL HOW EMPIRES ROSE AND FELL

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

CONTEXT: Palaeogenomics is used to study ancient DNA and reveal the origins, migrations, and social structures of ancient empires, such as the Avars, Xiongnu, and Longobards.



THE GENETIC LEGACY OF ANCIENT EMPIRES

Palaeogenomics, the study of ancient DNA, has revolutionized our understanding of human history. By analyzing the genetic material of ancient individuals, researchers have been able to uncover the origins, migrations, and social structures of ancient empires.

This article explores the use of palaeogenomics to investigate the Avars, Xiongnu, and Longobards. Through genetic analysis, researchers have determined the Avars' Mongolian origins and their rapid migration across Eurasia. The Xiongnu empire's social structure, characterized by a genetically diverse population led by a less diverse elite, has also been revealed. Finally, the Longobards' social dynamics and the role of elite families in maintaining their power have been studied.

One of the key findings from these studies is the importance of genetic diversity in the formation and maintenance of ancient empires. The Avars, for example, were successful in establishing a vast empire due to their

diverse genetic makeup, which allowed them to adapt to new environments and form alliances with local populations. On the other hand, the Xiongnu empire's elite class, despite their limited genetic diversity, was able to maintain their power through strategic alliances and social control.

The Longobards, another example, demonstrate the role of family ties in shaping the social structure of an empire. The elite families of the Longobards intermarried to maintain their political power, creating a tight-knit community that helped them to consolidate their rule. However, as the empire declined, the Longobards were forced to adapt their social structure by incorporating local leaders into their ruling class.

These findings highlight the complex interplay between genetics, social structures, and historical events in shaping the rise and fall of ancient empires. By continuing to explore the genetic legacy of these civilizations, researchers can gain valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the success and failure of human societies.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

—Benjamin Franklin

ENHANCING OVERSIGHT

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The GST Council is set to meet on September 9 to discuss various issues related to the GST regime, including the review of the rate structure, the inclusion of items like electricity and petroleum, and the pace of refunds to taxpayers.

ENHANCING GST OVERSIGHT: KEY AREAS FOR THE COUNCIL TO FOCUS ON

- **Regular Meetings and Policy Direction**
 - The GST Council should meet more frequently to effectively address taxpayer challenges and set clear policy directions.
- **Review of the GST Rate Structure**
 - The Council should expedite the review of the complex GST rate structure and explore alternative options.
- **GST on Individual Goods and Services**
 - The Council should consider reviewing the 18% GST levy on individual goods and services like health insurance and life cover.
- **Inclusion of Electricity, Petroleum, and Alcohol**
 - The Council should assess the feasibility of including these items in the GST net, taking into account the potential impact on state revenues and Centre-State relations.
- **Greater Monitoring of Day-to-Day Operations**
 - The Council should closely monitor the implementation of GST, including revenue trends, refund processing, and taxpayer challenges.

DEALINGS AT A CHINA-AFRICA FORUM THAT INDIA MUST TRACK

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The ninth edition of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is scheduled to take place in Beijing amidst a challenging landscape for African nations. These nations are grappling with economic hardships, geopolitical challenges, and a growing sense of "summit fatigue."

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOCAC MEETING FOR INDIA'S AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

The Context of the FOCAC Meeting

The Importance of African Agency

The success of the FOCAC process for Africa hinges on its ability to set the agenda and take greater ownership of its strategic thinking. The lack of African state capacities and expertise has constrained their agency, leading to a knowledge asymmetry and a reactive stance.

Key African Priorities at FOCAC 2024

African nations are prioritizing economic development, including agricultural modernization, green energy, and industrialization. They are also seeking sustainable financing solutions to address their debt burden.

Lessons for India from China's Engagement

India can learn valuable lessons from China's engagement with Africa. These include:

- **Continuity in Engagement:** India should maintain a consistent presence in Africa through regular summits and dialogues.
- **Value-Added Investments:** India should focus on higher value-added investments in sectors like agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing.
- **Innovative Financing Solutions:** India should explore public-private partnerships, blended finance, and rupee-based transactions to support African development.
- **Leveraging Technology:** India can utilize its digital stack to enhance connectivity and financial inclusion in Africa.

By understanding the dynamics of the FOCAC meeting and learning from China's experiences, India can strengthen its own partnership with Africa and contribute to the continent's development.

THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL IS KNOTTY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, while aiming to strengthen disaster management, has been criticized for its centralizing approach, restricted definition of disasters, and potential for delayed responses.

Assessing the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill

Centralization Concerns

The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill introduces further centralization to an already heavily centralized Disaster Management Act, 2005. This top-down approach can lead to delayed responses and hinder effective disaster management.

Limited Decentralization

While the Bill aims to decentralize disaster management functions by establishing Urban Disaster Management Authorities, this is hampered by the lack of financial devolution.

Restricted Definition of Disasters

The Bill's definition of disasters remains limited and static, failing to adequately address climate-induced disasters like heatwaves. This is particularly problematic in the context of rising temperatures and their severe impacts.

Need for a Broader Approach

The Bill needs to be revised to address the disproportionate power dynamics between the central and state governments and ensure timely disbursement of funds. It should also learn from past failures in disaster management and prioritize financial preparedness.

Conclusion

The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill falls short in addressing the challenges posed by climate-induced disasters and the need for effective disaster management. A more comprehensive and decentralized approach is necessary to ensure timely responses and mitigate the impacts of disasters.



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LIMITED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE DESPITE RISING DEMAND

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: there is increasing demand for mental healthcare in India but the limited availability of mental health professionals, particularly psychiatrists, leads to inadequate access to care for many individuals.

Waiting for help

The data for the charts are sourced from the National Mental Health Survey 2015-16, the World Health Organization, and the LiveLoveLaugh Foundation



Chart 1: The number of psychiatrists required at the end of every year to meet the WHO recommendation

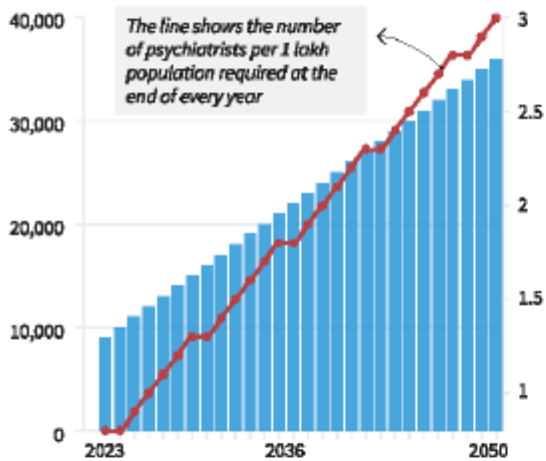


Chart 2: The number of working psychiatrists per 1 lakh people in select countries

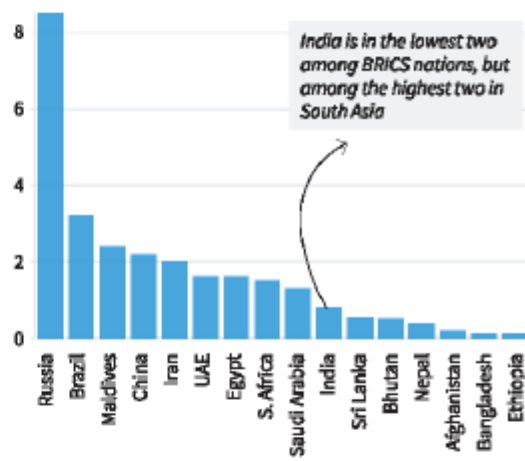


Chart 3: The number of working psychiatrists per 1 lakh people in surveyed States

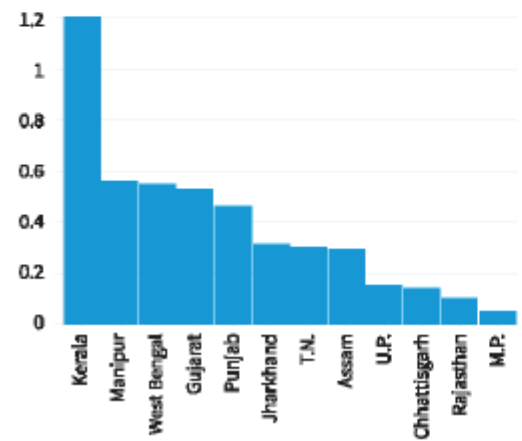
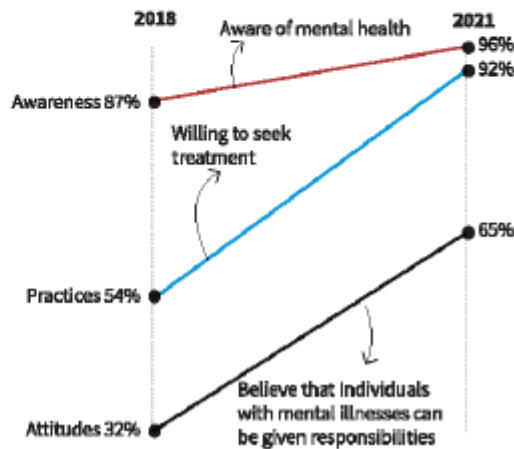


Chart 4: The share of respondents who showed various positive behaviour towards mental health in 2018 and 2021



Rising Demand for Mental Healthcare in India

Mental healthcare demand in India has increased due to shifting attitudes, yet the supply of mental health professionals remains inadequate. Despite more people seeking treatment, India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 1 lakh population, far below the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation of three psychiatrists per 1 lakh population. According to the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) conducted between 2015 and 2016, India would require 36,000 psychiatrists to meet the WHO's guidelines, but currently has only 9,000.

Long Road to Adequate Coverage

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare's 2023 report highlighted that with only 1,000 psychiatrists entering the workforce annually, it could take India 27 years to meet the WHO-recommended ratio. The report called for policy interventions to increase the supply of mental health professionals.

Regional and Global Comparisons

Within India, regional disparities exist. Kerala is the only state that exceeds one psychiatrist per 1 lakh population, while many northern and central states lag significantly. Comparatively, India's rate of 0.75 psychiatrists per 1 lakh population is low among BRICS nations, though better than other South Asian countries.

Improving Awareness and Reducing Stigma

Despite stagnant accessibility, awareness and attitudes towards mental health have improved. A 2021 study by the LiveLoveLaugh Foundation revealed a significant increase in positive perceptions of mental illness and treatment-seeking behavior. The share of respondents willing to seek treatment for mental health issues rose from 54% in 2018 to over 90% in 2021, reflecting growing awareness and reduced stigma.

ON GERMANY'S ELECTORAL ARCHITECTURE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The German federal constitutional court upheld the government's decision to downsize the Bundestag, effective from the 2025 federal elections, by scrapping "overhang" and "balance" seats to cap the number of representatives at 630, addressing concerns over the parliament's growing size and the inequality of elections under the current mixed-member proportional representation system.

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT UPHOLDS DOWNSIZING OF BUNDESTAG

On July 30, 2023, Germany's federal constitutional court upheld the government's decision to downsize the Bundestag, reducing its size from the current 736 members to 630 starting with the 2025 elections. The move aims to address concerns over the parliament's growing size and inefficiency.

Germany's Electoral Architecture: Mixed-Member Proportional System

Germany's electoral system combines first-past-the-post and proportional representation. Voters cast two votes: one for a local candidate and another for a political party. The 299 local seats are filled through direct elections, while another 299 seats are allocated based on the party's share of the second vote.

Overhang and Balance Seats: The Root of the Problem

Overhang seats occur when a party wins more direct seats than its proportional entitlement. Historically, these were allowed, but a 2008 court ruling deemed them unconstitutional for violating equal suffrage. To balance this, "balance seats" were introduced, further increasing the Bundestag's size.

Government's Legislative Reforms

The government introduced legislation in March 2023 to cap the Bundestag at 630 members. This will be achieved by eliminating overhang and balance seats, reducing the importance of direct candidate wins. The court upheld this reform, though it faces criticism for lacking broad consultation.



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WHAT IS THE UNIFIED LENDING INTERFACE BY THE RBI?

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) to streamline the credit process for farmers and MSMEs by facilitating the seamless flow of digital data between lenders and data providers.

UNIFIED LENDING INTERFACE (ULI): A GAME-CHANGER FOR CREDIT ACCESS

What is ULI?

The Unified Lending Interface (ULI) is a digital platform developed by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub to streamline the credit process for borrowers, particularly farmers and MSMEs. It facilitates the seamless flow of digital data between lenders and data providers, making credit underwriting more efficient and customer journeys smoother.

Benefits for Borrowers

- **Reduced Documentation:** Borrowers can avoid the hassle of gathering extensive documentation.
- **Faster Credit Approval:** ULI enables quicker credit appraisal and disbursement, especially for those without credit history.
- **Expanded Access:** Tenant farmers and other borrowers with limited access to traditional credit can now avail loans.

Benefits for Lenders

- **Enhanced Data Access:** Lenders can access comprehensive customer data from various sources, including government databases and satellite imagery.
- **Improved Decision Making:** ULI provides lenders with better insights into borrowers' financial profiles, enabling more informed credit decisions.
- **Streamlined Processes:** The platform's standardized APIs simplify the integration of data sources, reducing operational complexity.

How ULI Works

- **Data Aggregation:** ULI collects and aggregates data from various sources, including land records, financial information, and farming patterns.
- **Data Sharing:** Lenders can access this data through standardized APIs to assess creditworthiness.
- **Automated Decision Making:** The platform enables automated decision-making, speeding up the loan approval process.

Impact and Future Prospects

The ULI has the potential to revolutionize the credit landscape in India by providing greater access to credit, especially for underserved borrowers. The successful pilot project for Kisan Credit Card loans demonstrates its effectiveness in streamlining the credit process and reducing paperwork. As ULI continues to evolve and expand its reach, it is expected to play a crucial role in promoting financial inclusion and economic development.

DO AI AGENTS FORETELL THE NEXT WAVE OF AUTONOMY OR LIABILITY?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

CONTEXT: The rise of AI agents and the challenges they pose in terms of accountability, liability, and responsibility. It highlights the need for a nuanced approach to regulate AI agents and ensure their safe and ethical use.



THE RISE OF AI AGENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR AUTONOMY AND LIABILITY

What are AI Agents?

AI agents are advanced artificial intelligence assistants capable of performing complex tasks autonomously or upon user request. They possess cognitive skills, including natural language processing, computer vision, and deep learning.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Accountability and Liability:** The increasing reliance on AI agents raises questions about who is responsible for their actions and decisions.

- **Privacy and Security:** AI agents collect and process vast amounts of user data, raising concerns about privacy and security.
- **Manipulation and Malicious Use:** AI agents can be manipulated or used for malicious purposes, posing risks to users.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The development and use of AI agents raise ethical questions regarding their autonomy, decision-making, and potential impact on human society.

Regulatory and Legal Challenges

- **Legal Personhood:** AI agents are not currently recognized as legal entities, making it difficult to assign liability for their actions.
- **Liability of Developers and Users:** Determining who is responsible for the actions of AI agents is a complex legal issue.
- **Ethical Frameworks:** Establishing ethical guidelines for the development and use of AI agents is essential to ensure their safe and responsible deployment.

Conclusion

The rise of AI agents presents both opportunities and challenges. While they offer the potential to improve efficiency and productivity, their development and use must be carefully considered to address concerns related to autonomy, liability, and ethics. A nuanced approach is needed to regulate AI agents and ensure their safe and beneficial integration into society.

'BE WARY OF MARKET FINANCIALISATION'

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The CEA cautioned against excessive financialization in India, citing potential risks to macroeconomic stability. He highlighted the record profitability of the Indian financial sector and the high market capitalization as indicators of this trend. SEBI announced plans to reduce SIP minimums and implement a single disclosure system for listed firms.



CEA Warns Against Excessive Financialisation

Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran expressed caution about the risks of excessive financialisation, highlighting the potential threats to macroeconomic stability. Speaking at the CII Financing 3.0 Summit, he noted that India's stock market capitalization, which stands at approximately 140% of GDP, reflects record profitability in the financial sector. However, he warned that such financialisation, seen in advanced economies, could lead to unprecedented public and private debt, dependence on asset-price inflation, and increased inequality. Nageswaran stressed that while India's current capital

market growth has been beneficial, the country must avoid the pitfalls experienced by wealthier nations.

Financialization: A Brief Overview

Financialization is a term used to describe the increasing dominance of financial activities and institutions in the overall economy.

It's a shift away from a focus on production and manufacturing towards a focus on financial transactions and investments.

SEBI Chief Announces New Investor-Friendly Measures

SEBI Chief Madhabi Puri Buch announced that investors would soon be able to start Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) with as little as ₹250 per month. She also mentioned that a single disclosure by listed firms on one stock exchange would be automatically uploaded on other bourses, streamlining the process.

Addressing Allegations

Ms. Buch briefly addressed concerns related to her involvement with innovative financial products like REITs, indirectly referencing recent allegations from short-seller Hindenburg Research. However, she refrained from commenting on accusations from the Congress party regarding her past emoluments from ICICI Bank while serving at SEBI.

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

INDIA WEIGHS RUSSIA'S 'DOABLE' SWIFT

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: India's consideration of Russia's proposal to use a domestic financial messaging system as an alternative to SWIFT to facilitate trade settlements between the two countries, given the Western sanctions imposed on Russia. This move could potentially help India maintain its economic ties with Russia while navigating the complex geopolitical landscape.

INDIA WEIGHS RUSSIA'S SWIFT ALTERNATIVE A Diplomatic Balancing Act

Amidst the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, India is carefully considering a proposal from Russia to adopt its own financial messaging system as an alternative to the global SWIFT network. This move could potentially facilitate trade settlements between the two nations, especially in the face of Western sanctions imposed on Russia.

RBI Scrutinizes the Proposal

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has conducted a thorough examination of Russia's proposal and found it technically feasible. However, the central bank is continuing discussions with Russian authorities to address any potential concerns and ensure the smooth implementation of such a system.

Diplomatic Considerations

Beyond the technical aspects, the decision to adopt Russia's financial messaging system also carries significant diplomatic implications. India, as a major global player, must carefully balance its economic interests with its foreign policy objectives. The government will need to weigh the potential benefits of such a move against any potential risks or repercussions from Western nations.

A Strategic Response to Sanctions

The proposed adoption of Russia's financial messaging system can be seen as a strategic response to the Western sanctions imposed on Russia. By providing an alternative to SWIFT, India could help Russia circumvent these sanctions and maintain its economic ties. However, such a move could also potentially expose India to secondary sanctions or other forms of economic pressure.



KYIV'S BORDER BREACH WILL NOT STOP RUSSIAN ADVANCE, SAYS PUTIN

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has intensified, with Russian President Vladimir Putin claiming significant advances in eastern Ukraine, particularly in the Donbas region, while also addressing the cross-border incursion by Ukrainian forces into Russia's Kursk region. As hostilities continue, the violence has led to substantial civilian displacement and casualties on both sides.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that his army is making rapid advances in eastern Ukraine, particularly in the Donbas region, while claiming that Ukraine's cross-border incursion into Russia's Kursk region is failing. His remarks followed a heavy missile and drone assault on Ukraine, which injured at least three people in Kyiv and damaged a mosque just before the start of the new school year. Putin emphasized the hardships faced in the Kursk region but asserted that Ukrainian forces failed to halt Russia's offensive. Meanwhile, Russia's Defence Ministry reported the capture of the village of Skuchne in eastern Donetsk.

NETANYAHU UNDER PRESSURE AS RARE STRIKE DISRUPTS ISRAEL

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: In the wake of a rare general strike and mass protests over the deaths of six hostages in Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces intensified criticism from both the Israeli public and U.S. President Joe Biden, who has accused him of inadequate efforts in negotiating a ceasefire and hostage release with Hamas.



Netanyahu Under Pressure as Rare Strike Disrupts Israel

Public Outcry and General Strike

On Monday, a rare general strike in Israel disrupted daily life, driven by widespread anger and grief after six hostages were found dead in Gaza. The strike, which led to significant disruptions across the country, highlighted deep political divisions over how to handle the ongoing conflict and negotiations with Hamas.

Mass Protests and Criticism

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets in the largest protest since the war began, blaming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the failure to secure the hostages' safe return. While many citizens are

calling for a more aggressive negotiation strategy, others support Netanyahu's continued military pressure on Hamas.

U.S. President Biden's Critique

U.S. President Joe Biden, addressing reporters at the White House, criticized Netanyahu for not doing enough to reach a ceasefire and negotiate a hostage release. Biden's comments added to the pressure on Netanyahu, who faces criticism from both domestic and international fronts.

Hamas's Demands

Hamas has accused Israel of delaying ceasefire negotiations by presenting new demands. The group has proposed releasing all hostages in exchange for a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces, an end to the war, and the release of a significant number of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants.



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