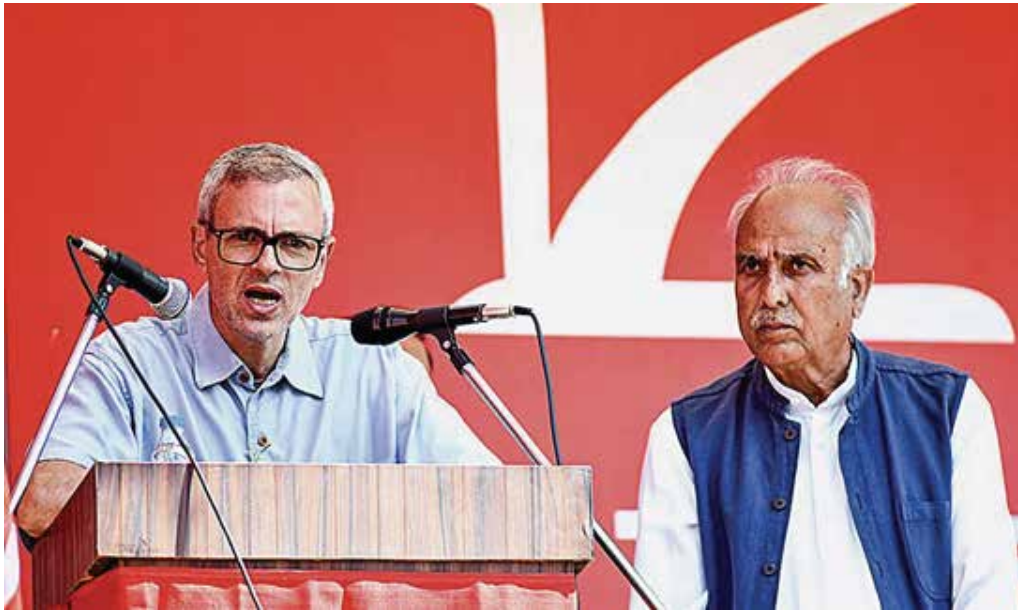


CAMPAIGNING ENDS FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF POLLS IN J&K

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



Campaigning Concludes for J&K Elections

Campaigning for the first phase of the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections ended on Monday, with a high-stakes battle for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and National Conference (NC).

Key Contenders

The electoral field includes traditional rivals, along with the BJP, Congress, CPI(M), and independents backed by the banned Jamaat-e-Islami. Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti, is contesting from Srigufwara-Bijbehara, while PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra faces tough competition in Pulwama.

Challenges to PDP

Several senior PDP leaders have defected in recent years, making this election crucial for the party's future. The NC-Congress alliance seeks to capitalize on this and revive its presence in south Kashmir.

Security Measures

Inspector-General V.K. Birdi confirmed multi-tier security arrangements, including Quick Response Teams and inter-district checkpoints, to ensure smooth polling in the first phase.

'RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR WILL POWER INDIA'S GROWTH'

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



India's Renewable Energy Sector to Drive Growth, Says PM Modi

Addressing the fourth Global Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo (RE-INVEST) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's leadership in renewable energy. He highlighted India as the first G-20 country to surpass its Paris climate goals ahead of schedule, nine years before the deadline.

Modi stated that renewable energy will be the driving force behind India's growth, with the country aiming to become the world's third-largest economy. He outlined key government initiatives in the first 100 days of his third term, including the creation of 12 new industrial cities, eight high-speed road corridors, and over 15 Vande Bharat semi-high-speed trains. Additionally, a ₹1 trillion research fund and a

₹7,000 crore viability gap funding scheme for offshore wind energy projects were announced.

Modi acknowledged India's focus on renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, nuclear, and hydropower to meet its energy needs by 2047. He praised State governments for their efforts in building renewable infrastructure, reinforcing India's target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the government's policies are rooted in inclusivity, aiming to uplift the marginalized sections of society through sustainable development.

INDIA 'STRONGLY DEPLORES' COMMENT BY IRAN LEADER

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India Strongly Deplores Iran Leader's Comment

India has "strongly" condemned a remark made by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, regarding the condition of Muslims in the country. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) issued a statement on Monday calling the comment "unacceptable" and "misinformed."

Khamenei's Remarks on Global Muslim Suffering

Ayatollah Khamenei had mentioned India, alongside Gaza and Myanmar, as places where Muslims were facing suffering. His statement, posted on social media, emphasized the need for Muslims to remain conscious of the challenges faced by the global Islamic community. "The concept of an 'Islamic Ummah' must never be forgotten," he remarked.

India's Response

In response, the MEA firmly rejected the comments, urging countries to reflect on their own human rights records before criticizing others. The statement emphasized that India does not appreciate unwarranted observations about its internal matters, particularly regarding minorities.

The Ministry highlighted that such comments are not based on facts and advised against interfering in India's domestic affairs.

18 FISHERMEN MISSING AT SEA AS HEAVY RAIN LASHES BENGAL

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



FISHERMEN STRANDED IN WEST BENGAL Heavy Rainfall and Sea Roughness

West Bengal experienced significant rainfall, leading to rough sea conditions. This posed a serious threat to fishermen who had ventured out into the Bay of Bengal. Three trawlers carrying 49 fishermen were stranded at sea due to the adverse weather.

Rescue Efforts and Missing Fishermen

Local fishermen formed search parties to locate the stranded fishermen. While contact was established with 31 fishermen in two trawlers, 18 fishermen from a third trawler remained missing. Despite pleas for assistance from the Coast Guard and Navy, their response was limited due to the turbulent

sea conditions.

Local Initiatives and Concerns

Local fishermen stepped in to rescue their fellow fishermen, sending out their own trawlers to search for the missing. Families of the missing fishermen filed reports with local police stations. The situation highlighted the urgent need for effective rescue operations and safety measures for fishermen during adverse weather conditions.

HOW QUANTUM COMPUTING CAN MAKE LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS EVEN BETTER

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



Challenges with Current Large Language Models (LLMs)

LLMs have revolutionized natural language processing (NLP) but face significant challenges. They consume substantial energy, with models like GPT-3 requiring 1,287 MWh of electricity for training. This contributes to large carbon footprints. LLMs also suffer from "hallucinations," generating factually incorrect information, and struggle with understanding syntax.

Quantum Computing to Enhance LLMs

Quantum computing offers a promising solution to these challenges. Quantum Natural Language Processing (QNLP) uses quantum phenomena like superposition and

entanglement, reducing energy costs and the number of parameters required for effective performance. QNLP can process grammar (syntax) and meaning (semantics) simultaneously, potentially mitigating hallucinations and providing more accurate language understanding.

Quantum Generative Models for Time-Series Forecasting

Quantum computing can also enhance time-series forecasting. Researchers have developed quantum generative models (QGen) that handle both stationary and nonstationary data more efficiently than classical methods. A recent study demonstrated that QGen models require fewer parameters and resources while solving complex financial forecasting problems.

Conclusion

By leveraging QNLP and quantum generative models, quantum computing has the potential to make LLMs more sustainable, energy-efficient, and sophisticated, addressing key challenges in AI development.

HOW DO EMERGENCY PROVISIONS IMPACT CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS?

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

THE GIST

- India's federal system divides powers between the Union and State governments, with States responsible for maintaining law and order.
- Articles 355 and 356 of the Constitution allow the Centre to intervene in States under certain conditions. Article 355 mandates the Centre to protect States from internal and external threats, while Article 356 permits the imposition of President's rule if a State's government fails to function according to the Constitution.

Federal Structure of Governance in India

India follows a federal system of governance with a clear division of powers between the Centre and States, as outlined in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Law and order is primarily the responsibility of State governments. However, the Centre has the power to intervene in extraordinary circumstances.

Emergency Provisions and Their Impact on Federalism

Articles 355 and 356, part of the emergency provisions in the Constitution, play a key role in Centre-State relations. Article 355 mandates the Centre to protect States from external aggression and internal disturbances, ensuring governance aligns with constitutional provisions. Article 356 allows the imposition of President's rule if a State's government fails to function constitutionally. This power has been misused in the past, but the Supreme Court's S. R. Bommai judgment (1994) limited its application, stating it should only be used in cases of constitutional breakdown, subject to judicial review.

Court Rulings and Recommendations

Courts have expanded the scope of Article 355 to allow the Centre more flexibility in maintaining constitutional governance in States. Commissions such as the Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions have recommended using Article 356 as a last resort.

Current Relevance

The ongoing violence in Manipur highlights the need for the Centre's intervention under Article 355, though Article 356 has not been invoked due to political considerations.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF AFRICAN CHEETAHS?

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT



Project Cheetah: A Complex Reintroduction

The Goal

Project Cheetah aims to reintroduce African cheetahs into India, aiming to conserve the species and restore the health of savanna habitats.

However, the project has faced significant challenges since its inception.

Challenges and Setbacks

Prolonged Captivity: The cheetahs have spent extended periods in captivity, which

can negatively impact their fitness for release into the wild.

High Mortality Rate: Several cheetahs have died since their introduction, due to factors such as disease, predation, and extreme weather conditions.

Habitat Limitations: India may not have enough suitable habitat to support a viable population of cheetahs.

Key Questions and Concerns

Long-Term Success: The project's long-term success hinges on overcoming these challenges and ensuring the cheetahs can thrive in their new environment.

Habitat Suitability: India's ability to provide adequate habitat for the cheetahs is a crucial factor.

Management Challenges: Effective management strategies are essential for the project's success.

Future Outlook

Project Cheetah remains an ambitious and complex endeavour. Despite the challenges, there is hope for its success if the necessary measures are taken to address the issues and ensure the cheetahs' well-being.

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SLIDING OIL, OMC MARGINS OFFER ROOM FOR FUEL PRICE CUT'

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT



FUEL PRICE CUT ON THE CARDS?

Global Oil Prices Decline

With global crude oil prices falling below \$70 a barrel, economists are advocating for a reduction in fuel prices in India. They argue that cheaper fuel would not only benefit consumers but also help curb inflation and boost consumption.

OMCs and Price Regulation

Although fuel prices are technically deregulated, OMCs have not adjusted prices in line with global trends for some time. This has led to a disconnect between retail prices and the cost of crude oil.

Economic Impact of a Price Cut

A fuel price cut would have several

positive effects. It could help reduce India's import bill, stabilize the rupee, and lower inflation. This, in turn, could pave the way for interest rate cuts, stimulating economic growth.

Factors Influencing the Decision

The decision to cut fuel prices may be influenced by various factors, including global crude oil prices, upcoming State elections, and government policies. If oil prices remain below \$75 per barrel, a price cut of ₹2-₹4 per litre is possible.

Conclusion

Given the current economic conditions and the potential benefits of a fuel price cut, there is a strong case for the government to consider reducing retail prices. This move would provide relief to consumers and contribute to a more stable economic environment.

WHY RATE CUTS BY THE U.S. FEDERAL RESERVE MATTER TO WORLD MARKETS

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Global Impact of U.S. Federal Reserve Rate Cuts

The U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to cut interest rates resonates globally, affecting investors and central banks alike. The size of the rate cuts and the broader economic implications remain in focus, especially with the upcoming U.S. election.



Market Reactions

A U.S. rate cut signals potential cuts from other central banks, providing relief to regions with weaker economies. It boosts global bond markets, particularly in the U.S., Europe, and the UK. Emerging markets may benefit from more flexibility in their monetary policies, though the U.S. election adds uncertainty.

Dollar and Currency Dynamics

While many hope for a weaker U.S. dollar following rate cuts, historical patterns show the dollar often strengthens after the first cut. Asian currencies have already surged in anticipation of U.S. rate reductions.

Equities and Commodities

A resumption of the global equity rally is likely if U.S. rate cuts boost economic activity without triggering a recession. Lower rates also provide a favorable environment for commodities, particularly metals like gold and copper, as reduced yields increase their appeal.

ASSASSINATION BID THWARTED AT TRUMP'S FLORIDA GOLF COURSE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was unharmed after an apparent assassination attempt was foiled by the Secret Service on Sunday at his golf course in West Palm Beach, Florida. While golfing, Secret Service agents spotted a gunman hiding in bushes near the property line and fired at him. The suspect fled the scene, leaving behind an AK-47-style rifle and other items, but was later arrested.

This attempt comes just two months after Mr. Trump sustained a minor injury from a shooting at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. The suspect has been identified as 58-year-old Ryan Wesley Routh from Hawaii, though his motive remains unclear.

Mr. Trump thanked supporters on social media,

describing the day as "interesting." Law enforcement officials acknowledged that because Mr. Trump is no longer in office, the full golf course had not been secured.

In response, President Joe Biden stated that he had instructed his team to ensure the Secret Service has all necessary resources to protect Mr. Trump. The incident has raised concerns over the adequacy of his security detail.

MORALITY POLICE WILL NOT 'BOTHER' WOMEN, SAYS IRAN'S PEZESHKIAN

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has pledged to prevent morality police from harassing women. His statement comes on the second anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death, which sparked widespread protests against the country's strict dress code. Pezeshkian emphasized that the morality police were not meant to confront women and vowed to take action to ensure they do not bother them.



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

—Benjamin Franklin

EU TO NAME A NEW DEFENCE TSAR, BUT DOUBTS REMAIN ON THE POST'S POWERS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

EU to Appoint New Defence Commissioner Amid Uncertainty

The European Union (EU) is set to name a new Defence Commissioner, as promised by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. This move underscores Europe's commitment to bolstering its defence sector, especially in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, doubts remain about the actual power of the position.



Limited Authority

While the role was originally intended to be central to the EU's defence strategy, the lack of an EU army and the reluctance of member states to cede control over their national defence industries raise concerns. Analysts question how much influence the new commissioner will wield without substantial financial backing or authority over key sectors.

Challenges in Defence Spending

Ms. von der Leyen has estimated that the EU will need €500 billion in defence investments over the next decade, but the current budget allocations fall far short. Convincing member states to contribute to these efforts and open their industries to competition remains a significant challenge.

Future Potential

Despite uncertainties, experts believe the position may grow in importance over time, especially as the U.S. potentially reduces its involvement in Europe's defence. The new Defence Commissioner could take on additional responsibilities like cybersecurity and infrastructure protection.

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Vedhik IAS Academy
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