● **POLITY**   ● **ECONOMICS**   ● **TECHNOLOGY**   ● **ECOLOGY**

DEFENCE DEALS IN LAST LEG AHEAD OF PM'S PARIS VISIT

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The imminent finalization of two significant defense deals between India and France, is coinciding with Prime Minister Modi's anticipated visit to Paris for an AI summit. These deals, involving the purchase of Rafale-M fighter jets and Scorpene-class submarines, aim to bolster the Indian Navy's capabilities and address critical defense requirements.

Shopping list

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to be in Paris in February, India is looking to seal arms deals

WHAT THE COUNTRY WANTS?

■ 26 Rafale-M fighter jets for the Navy's aircraft carriers

■ Three more Scorpene-class conventional submarines

■ The two deals are expected to be put before the Cabinet Committee on Security for approval soon

" It is just matter of completing the formalities of the acquisition process and we expect that if not this month, next month, hopefully, this [Scorpene submarines] and Rafale-M deals should be signed

Navy chief Admiral **DINESH K. TRIPATHI** in December

India needs the naval version of the Rafale for INS Vikrant

Key Points:

● **Rafale-M Fighter Jets:**
○ India plans to acquire 26 Rafale-M fighters for its aircraft carriers.* Includes 22 single-seater jets and four twin-seater trainers.
○ It is crucial to bridge the gap until the indigenous carrier-based fighter is developed.
○ Expected to be cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security soon.

● **Scorpene-Class Submarines:**
○ Three additional Scorpene submarines to be procured from Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, in partnership with the Naval Group of France.
○ Repeat order following the successful induction of five Scorpene submarines.
○ Vital for the Navy, considering the aging fleet and delays in other submarine projects.

● **Timing and Significance:**
○ Deals likely to be finalized before PM Modi's Paris visit for the AI Summit.
○ Both deals are government-to-government, facilitating swift implementation.
○ Reflects the deepening defense ties between India and France.

Conclusion:

The impending finalization of these substantial defense deals underscores the strategic partnership between India and France. The acquisition of Rafale-M fighters and Scorpene-class submarines will significantly enhance the Indian Navy's capabilities and contribute to strengthening India's maritime security posture.

FOUR MAOISTS, HEAD CONSTABLE KILLED IN GUNFIGHT IN BASTAR

INTERNAL SECURITY

CONTEXT: A deadly encounter between security forces and Maoist insurgents in the Abujhmad forests of Chhattisgarh resulted in the deaths of four Maoists and one head constable.

Key Points:
● Encounter and Casualties:
○ A gunfight erupted between security forces (DRG and STF) and Maoists in the Abujhmad forests.
○ The encounter lasted from Saturday to Sunday afternoon.
○ Four Maoists were killed.
○ One head constable, Sannu Karam, of the DRG lost his life.
● **Maoist Hideout:**
○ Abujhmad is a densely forested region known as a stronghold for Maoist activities.
○ Security forces have intensified operations in the area, leading to the killing of over 200 Maoists since last year.
● Weaponry and Aftermath:
○ Security forces recovered automatic weapons like AK-47 from the slain Maoists.
○ The bodies of the deceased Maoists were recovered.
○ Head Constable Karam's last rites were conducted in Dantewada.
● Official Statements:
○ Chhattisgarh Chief Minister expressed condolences for the head constable's martyrdom and reiterated the commitment to combating Naxalism.

CONCLUSION:
The encounter highlights the ongoing struggle against Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh. While security forces have made significant progress in recent months, the incident underscores the challenges and risks involved in combating the armed group in the region.

TAMIL NADU CM STALIN OFFERS $1-MILLON PRIZE FOR DECODING INDUS VALLEY SCRIPT

ART & CULTURE

Context : The Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC), one of the oldest known civilisations, remains an enigma due to the undeciphered script it left behind. Marking a century since the discovery of this civilisation, Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has launched significant initiatives to advance research on the Indus Valley and its potential connections to Tamil culture. These efforts aim to promote the understanding of this ancient civilisation, strengthen the hypothesis of a Dravidian connection, and encourage scholarly contributions worldwide.

Mohenjodaro_0322_A   Mohenjodaro_0356_A   Mohenjodaro_0357_A
Mohenjodaro_0361_A   Mohenjodaro_0372_A   Mohenjodaro_0375_A

Key Points
INITIATIVES ANNOUNCED BY TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT
1. $1-Million Prize for Deciphering the Script
○ Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin announced a $1-million prize for experts or organisations who successfully decipher the Indus Valley script.
○ This initiative aims to solve a century-old mystery and encourage international collaboration.
2. Iravatham Mahadevan Chair and Research Grant
○ ₹2 crore allocated for establishing a chair in the name of noted archaeologist and epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan.

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○ The chair will support research by the State Department of Archaeology and the Indus Research Centre at the Roja Muthiah Library.

3. Awards for Numismatists and Epigraphists

○ The state will institute two awards to honour individuals contributing to the study of Tamil culture and its ancient roots.

4. Foundation Stone for Sir John Marshall Statue

○ A statue of Sir John Marshall, who discovered the Indus Valley Civilisation, was initiated in Tamil Nadu to commemorate his contribution to history.

Significance of Indus-Tamil Connections

● **Graffiti Parallels**

○ Over 60% of graffiti marks found in Tamil Nadu resemble scripts on Indus seals.

○ 90% of South Indian graffiti marks share parallels with Indus Valley scripts, reinforcing potential Dravidian links.

● **Cultural Continuity**

○ Scholars highlight continuities between the Indus Valley and subsequent South Asian cultures, particularly Tamil Nadu.

● **Dravidian Hypothesis**

○ John Marshall's discovery shifted perceptions, suggesting that the Indus Valley predated Aryan Civilisation and possibly spoke a Dravidian language.

Contributions of Scholars

1. **International Conference**

○ Scholars like Gregg Jamison and R. Balakrishnan emphasized the importance of conferences to foster research and exchange ideas.

○ Focus on the dynamic and evolving nature of cultures over time.

2. **Dravidian Paradigm**

○ Balakrishnan's research links Sangam literature's cardinal directions ('Mel/Merku' and 'Keezh/Kizhakku') to urban planning in Indus cities.

○ Indus Valley lifestyle was unique, with sophisticated urban features like drainage systems, grid-patterned streets, granaries, and wells.

Conclusion

The initiatives launched by the Tamil Nadu government reflect a strong commitment to unraveling the mysteries of the Indus Valley Civilisation and its links to Tamil heritage. By offering incentives, promoting research, and fostering global collaboration, these efforts could lead to a deeper understanding of ancient cultures and their enduring legacies. As scholars continue to explore the connections between the Indus Valley and Tamil Nadu, these initiatives mark a pivotal moment in celebrating and preserving India's shared cultural heritage.

IN DALLEWAL'S CASE, SC BALANCES HIS RIGHT TO EXPRESSION AND THE STATE'S DUTY TO SAVE HIS LIFE.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The legal and ethical dilemmas surrounding the Supreme Court's order to hospitalize farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a hunger strike. The court grapples with balancing Dallewal's fundamental right to freedom of expression (including the right to protest through hunger strike) with the state's responsibility to protect human life.

Points:

● **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:**

○ Hunger strike is recognized as a legitimate form of protest in India, with historical and legal precedent. 1

○ Supreme Court judgments acknowledge its connection to Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha and its significance in democratic discourse.

○ Courts have emphasized that hunger strikes, when conducted peacefully, do not inherently pose a threat to public order.

● **State's Responsibility:**

○ The state has a duty to protect life, but forceful intervention can disrupt the very essence of a hunger strike and potentially

undermine the protester's cause.

○ Courts have cautioned against arbitrary state action and emphasized the need for "reasonable restrictions" that do not unduly interfere with the right to peaceful protest.

● **Case Law:**

○ The Madras High Court has played a crucial role in defining the boundaries of state intervention in hunger strike protests.

○ Case law emphasizes the importance of upholding democratic rights while ensuring public safety and order.

Conclusion: The Dallewal case presents a complex legal and ethical challenge. The Supreme Court must navigate this delicate balance by upholding the right to freedom of expression while ensuring the safety and well-being of the individual. The state's response must be measured, avoiding unnecessary interference with the right to peaceful protest while fulfilling its duty to protect life.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION RULES: CENTRE PROMISES ADEQUATE TIME FOR COMPLIANCE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Context: The Indian government is outlining key features and timelines for the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, aiming to balance innovation with robust data protection safeguards for citizens.

Key Points:

● **Balancing Innovation and Protection:**

○ The draft rules aim to uphold the rights outlined in the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023.

○ They strive to strike a balance between fostering technological advancements and ensuring strong data privacy protections.

● **Compliance and Transition:**

○ The government assures adequate time for all entities, from small businesses to large corporations, to adapt their systems and comply with the regulations.

○ Processing of data based on pre-existing consent remains valid, but users must be notified of their rights under the new law.

● **Digital Data Protection Board:**

○ The Data Protection Board will function as a digital office, allowing citizens to file complaints electronically.

● **Stakeholder Feedback and Transparency:**

○ Public can submit feedback on the draft rules through a designated portal until February 18th, 2025.

○ Structured interactions with stakeholders like civil society, industry, and government bodies are planned to gather further feedback.

○ All feedback will be considered before finalizing the rules.

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- Data Localization and User Rights:
○ The rules mandate platforms to obtain user consent in their preferred language (English or any of the 22 Indian constitutional languages).
○ Users will have online access to mechanisms for withdrawing consent, data access requests, data updates/deletion, grievance redressal, and Data Protection Board complaints.
○ While data storage within India isn't mandatory, restrictions might apply to specific categories of data transfers outside the country.

Conclusion: The draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules represent a significant step towards establishing a comprehensive data protection framework in India. The emphasis on providing adequate time for compliance, fostering transparency through public feedback mechanisms, and empowering users with control over their data reflects the government's commitment to creating a balanced ecosystem that safeguards citizen privacy while promoting innovation.

FOUR-LANE BANIHAL BYPASS OPENS IN J&K'S RAMBAN

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The inauguration of a newly constructed four-lane bypass in Banihal, Jammu and Kashmir, which aims to significantly improve connectivity and travel times on the crucial NH-44, a vital link between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India.

Points:
- **Completion of Banihal Bypass:**
○ The 2.35-km four-lane bypass in Banihal town, Ramban district, has been completed at a cost of ₹224.44 crore.
○ It addresses traffic congestion caused by roadside markets and shops on NH-44.
○ Initially, two-lane traffic will be allowed, with four-lane traffic to be permitted after junction development within 15 days.
- **Benefits of the Bypass:**
- Significantly reduces travel time for vehicles traveling to the Kashmir Valley.
- Improves connectivity and strengthens national security logistics.
- Boosts tourism prospects in the region.

- **NH-44 Upgrades:**
○ The Centre is undertaking major upgrades to NH-44, including the construction of tunnels, to ensure year-round connectivity between Kashmir and the rest of India.
○ Travel time on the Jammu-Srinagar section of NH-44 has already been reduced significantly.
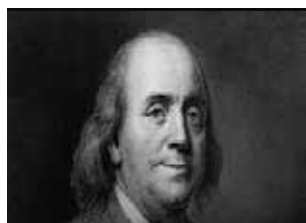- **Addressing Challenges:**
○ The mountainous terrain of Ramban district presented significant challenges in road construction.
○ Multiple tunnels, including Marog-Digdol and Digdol-Khuni-Nallah, are nearing completion to further improve traffic flow.
- **Inauguration:**
○ The newly constructed bypass was inaugurated by National Conference MLA Banihal Sajjad Shaheen.

Conclusion: The completion of the Banihal bypass marks a crucial step in enhancing connectivity and improving travel times on NH-44. These infrastructure developments are vital for the economic and social development of Jammu and Kashmir, facilitating easier access to the region for tourists and ensuring smooth movement of goods and people.

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

–Benjamin Franklin

TRAI TO SOON BRING IN TIGHTER REGULATIONS TO CONTROL SPAM

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Context: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) upcoming initiatives to enhance consumer protection and streamline telecom operations, including stricter spam regulations, a pilot project to digitize customer permissions for commercial communications, and a review of its IT systems.

Key Points:

● **Spam Control:**

Ø TRAI will introduce tighter regulations to curb spam messages and calls.

Ø A new consultation process will examine an authorization framework for telemarketers.

● **Digitization of Customer Permissions:**

Ø A pilot project will onboard existing paper-based and past customer permissions for receiving commercial communications onto the DLT platform.

Ø This will involve verifying the validity of these permissions and offering opt-out options to customers.

● **Separate STVs for Voice and SMS:**

Ø TRAI maintains its stance on the regulation requiring service providers to offer separate STVs for voice calls and SMS.

Ø Focuses on consumer choice and the right to pay only for the services they need.

● **IT System Revamp:**

Ø TRAI is undertaking a major overhaul of its IT systems to streamline processes and reduce the burden of filings for telecom companies and other stakeholders.

Ø Deloitte is expected to submit its report on the IT system revamp soon.

  Conclusion : TRAI's initiatives demonstrate a commitment to protecting consumer interests, combating spam, and improving the overall efficiency of the telecom sector. By digitizing customer permissions, strengthening spam regulations, and modernizing its IT systems, TRAI aims to create a more consumer-friendly and efficient telecom ecosystem.

MOVING AWAY FROM COAL A MUST: SOUTH AFRICAN COURT UPHOLDS 'CANCEL COAL' CASE

ECOLOGY & ENVIORNMENT

CONTEXT: A landmark court ruling in South Africa where the government's plan to expand coal-fired power generation was deemed unlawful due to its potential negative impacts on the environment and children's health.

Key Points:

● **"Cancel Coal" Case:**

○ Civil society organizations challenged the government's plan to add 1,500 MW of coal power to the national grid.

○ They argued that this would harm the environment and negatively impact children's health.

● **Court Ruling:**

○ The court ruled in favor of the civil society organizations.

○ Found that the government failed to adequately consider the environmental and health impacts of coal power, particularly on children.

○ Determined that the government's plan was inconsistent with the South African Constitution.

● **South Africa's Energy Mix:**

○ Coal currently dominates South Africa's energy mix, contributing to significant greenhouse gas emissions.

○ The country has international commitments to reduce emissions under the Paris Agreement.

● **Importance of the Ruling:**

○ This case highlights the growing role of courts in addressing climate change concerns.

○ Emphasizes the importance of considering the rights of future generations and the environmental impacts of energy policies.

○ Demonstrates the significance of civil society engagement in environmental justice and climate action.

Conclusion: The South African court's decision marks a significant victory for environmental justice and climate action. It underscores the importance of considering the long-term environmental and health consequences of energy policies and the crucial role of courts in holding governments accountable for their environmental obligations. This ruling serves as a precedent for future climate litigation cases globally and highlights the growing recognition of the need to transition away from fossil fuels towards cleaner energy sources.

NO SECRET AFFAIR

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The recently released draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules in India and emphasizes the importance of open and transparent deliberations in the rule-making process.

Key Points:

● **Significance of the Draft Rules:**

○ The draft rules aim to implement the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, of 2023, which seeks to protect citizens' data privacy rights.

○ The rules address key aspects like data collection purposes, children's data protection, government exemptions, and data breach procedures.

● **Concerns Regarding the DPBI:**

○ Concerns remain about the institutional design of the Data Protection Board of India (DPBI).

● **Need for Transparency and Open Deliberations:**

○ The government's lack of transparency in the rule-making process is criticized.

○ Open deliberations are crucial for stakeholders like industry associations and the public to participate effectively.

● **Key Objectives of Data Protection:**

○ The editorial highlights the importance of minimizing data collection, promoting data disclosures, penalizing data breaches, and discouraging surveillance practices.

● **Timely Implementation:**

○ The need for timely implementation is emphasized to ensure public trust in the government's commitment to data protection.

Conclusion: The editorial calls for a more open and transparent approach to the rule-making process for the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules. It emphasizes the need for timely implementation and adherence to the core principles of data protection to safeguard citizens' privacy rights in the digital age.

THE OUTLOOK FOR INDIA IN THE YEAR AHEAD

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Examines India's geopolitical challenges in 2025, focusing on its relationships with neighbours, shifting dynamics in West Asia, and the growing threat of cyberattacks.

● **Geopolitical Uncertainties:**

○ **China:**

■ Border tensions with China persist despite recent disengagement efforts.

■ China is strengthening its influence in the Global South, potentially outflanking India.

○ **South Asia:**

■ Political instability in neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal poses challenges to India's regional influence.

○ **West Asia:**

■ The fall of the Assad regime in Syria could have significant regional implications, impacting the balance of power and potentially affecting India's interests.

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■ The decline of Iranian influence and the rise of Israel and Türkiye are potential outcomes.
● **The Digital Threat:**
○ Cyberattacks are increasing significantly in India, posing a major threat to national infrastructure.
○ The convergence of technologies is exacerbating this threat.
Conclusion: This emphasizes the need for India to navigate a complex and challenging geopolitical landscape in 2025. It also highlights the importance of proactive diplomacy, strong security measures, and a robust response to the growing digital threat to ensure India's continued progress and stability.

SYMBOLISM MUST NOT BECOME MISPLACED SHOWMANSHIP

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Context: Explores the significance of symbols and their impact, using the recent controversy over the removal of a 1971 war painting from the Indian Army Chief's office as a case study. It examines how symbols can convey identity, leadership, direction, faith, and competency.

KEY POINTS:
● **Importance of Symbols:**
○ Symbols represent important facets of life and convey powerful messages.
○ Leaders utilize symbolism strategically to communicate their views and values.
● **Examples of Symbolism:**
○ Masada (Israel): Symbolizes resilience and the unwavering spirit of the Israeli nation.
○ Space Shuttle Discovery Flypast (US): Symbolizes national pride in technological achievement and leadership in space exploration.
○ Placards of Truman and Nehru: Symbolize leadership qualities and a sense of duty.
○ OP Baba Shrine (Siachen Glacier): Symbolizes faith and a sense of protection for soldiers.
● **1971 War Painting Controversy:**
○ The removal of the iconic 1971 war painting sparked debate about the importance of historical symbols.
○ The painting represented India's military prowess and served as a powerful symbol of national pride.
● **Symbolism and Local Context:**
○ The installation of Shivaji's statue in Ladakh has raised concerns about the appropriateness of the chosen symbol.
○ The article argues that symbols should be chosen carefully to resonate with the local context and evoke meaningful connections.
CONCLUSION: This emphasizes the importance of thoughtful and meaningful symbolism. It argues that symbols should be carefully chosen to reflect shared values, inspire individuals, and convey authentic messages. Misplaced symbolism can be counterproductive and diminish the intended impact.

IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S MEGA-DAM PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Context: Examines the implications of China's mega-dam project on the Brahmaputra River, highlighting the geopolitical tensions and environmental concerns surrounding this transboundary river system.
Key Points:
● **Geopolitical Tensions:**
○ China's mega-dam project at the Great Bend of the Brahmaputra has significant implications for downstream countries like India and Bangladesh.
○ Riparian countries are engaged in a race to build dams, driven by geopolitical considerations and a desire for water control.
○ The lack of a comprehensive treaty on transboundary water sharing exacerbates tensions.
● **Environmental Concerns:**
○ Dams disrupt the natural flow of the river, impacting ecosystems, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of riverine communities.
○ The Medog dam project poses significant risks to downstream communities in terms of water availability, flooding, and

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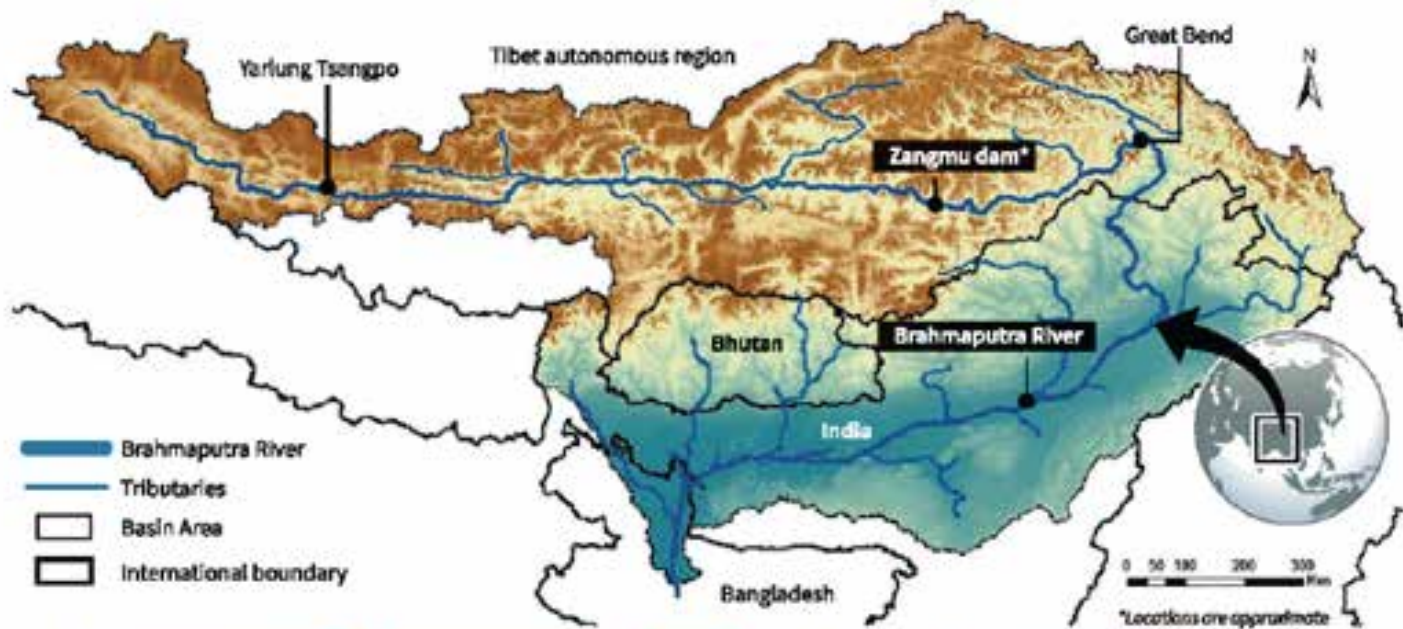**Page o8**

ecological disruption.
○ Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), further exacerbating the risks.
● **Need for Regional Cooperation:**
•   The article emphasizes the need for a bioregional approach to river management, prioritizing the ecological integrity of the Himalayan region.
•   Regional cooperation and a shared understanding of the river's importance are crucial for mitigating risks and ensuring sustainable water resources for all riparian countries.

Taming the 'rogue' river

The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. This map shows its flow from the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China through Bhutan and India into Bangladesh.

Power play: Zangmu was the first hydropower project on China's Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo) to become operational, in 2014. PICTURE: TWITTER

Source: Non-decisions are also decisions: power interplay between Bangladesh and India over the Brahmaputra River (DOI: 10.1080/1125080 60.2018.1554767)

Conclusion: The Brahmaputra River basin faces significant challenges due to the interplay of geopolitical interests, environmental concerns, and the impacts of climate change. The construction of mega-dams, particularly China's project at the Great Bend, poses serious risks to the ecological balance of the region and the livelihoods of millions of people. This underscores the urgent need for regional cooperation, a shared understanding of the river's ecological significance, and a shift towards sustainable and equitable water management practices.

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EMPOWER THE GUARDIANS OF THE EARTH, DO NOT ROB THEM

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Key Points:
● **Indigenous Rights Violation:**
○ The establishment of three wildlife sanctuaries in southern Nicobar disregards the traditional rights and land ownership of the indigenous Payuh people.
○ The government's decision to create these sanctuaries without proper consultation or consent from the indigenous communities constitutes a violation of their rights.
● **Cultural and Ecological Significance of the Islands:**
○ The islands of Meroë and Menchal hold

significant cultural and spiritual importance for the Payuh people.
○ These islands are vital for the islanders' sustenance and have been traditionally managed by the community.
● Concerns Regarding the Mega Project:
○ The proposed mega infrastructure project on Great Nicobar poses severe environmental threats, including deforestation, coral reef destruction, and displacement of endangered species.
○ The project will also have a significant impact on the livelihoods and well-being of the indigenous Shompen people.
● Need for Indigenous-led Conservation:
○ The article emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the indigenous peoples' knowledge and practices in conservation efforts.
○ It argues that empowering indigenous communities to manage their own lands is crucial for effective and sustainable conservation.
Conclusion: The establishment of wildlife sanctuaries in southern Nicobar without proper consultation with the indigenous communities highlights the ongoing issue of dispossessing indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands. The article calls for a shift in approach, emphasizing the need to support and empower Indigenous communities as guardians of their land and custodians of biodiversity. By respecting their rights and integrating their traditional knowledge into conservation efforts, we can achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes for both people and the environment.

INDUSTRY MOVES AT SNAIL'S PACE ON CAPEX

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Key Points:
● **Slowdown in Private Investment:**
○ Despite tax cuts and policy support, corporate investments have remained sluggish.
○ Factors contributing to this include weak earnings, slowing demand due to inflation, and economic uncertainty.
○ The RBI's Systemic Risk Survey indicates that private capex may not revive significantly in the near future.
● **Consumer Demand Weakening:**
○ High inflation and the RBI's measures to curb unsecured lending are expected

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to further dampen consumer demand.
- **Role of Government Investment:**
○ Government investment has also slowed down, impacting overall economic growth.
○ There is a need for increased government spending, particularly in infrastructure, to drive economic activity.
- **Challenges Faced by Corporates:**
○ Weak earnings growth, particularly in the first half of FY25, has hindered investment plans.
○ Concerns regarding cheap imports, especially from China, are impacting sectors like steel.
- Need for Policy Support:
○ The article emphasizes the need for continued policy support to encourage private investment.
○ Measures to address concerns related to imports, improve ease of doing business, and boost consumer confidence are crucial.

Conclusion: There is a slowdown in private investment in India despite various government initiatives. While some sectors have shown signs of investment activity, the overall pace remains sluggish. Addressing factors such as weak earnings, slowing demand, and global economic uncertainty is crucial to revive private investment and drive sustainable economic growth. Continued policy support, including measures to address concerns related to imports and boost consumer confidence, is essential to unleash the "animal spirits" of Indian businesses and achieve the desired level of economic growth.

BANGLADESH CANCELS VISIT OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS UNDER PACT BETWEEN INDIA AND HASINA GOVT.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The cancellation of a judicial training program for Bangladeshi officials in India highlights growing tensions between Dhaka and New Delhi following regime change in Bangladesh and the controversial presence of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in India.

KEY POINTS

1. Cancellation of Judicial Officers' Visit
○ Bangladesh's Ministry of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs canceled the scheduled visit of judicial officials to India.
○ The officials were set to attend a training programme at the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, from February 10 to 20, 2025.

2. Background of the Programme
○ The training programme was part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed during Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in 2017.
○ It aimed to improve the capacity and expertise of Bangladeshi judicial officers through training provided by India's National Judicial Academy.

○ The Indian government was financing the programme, with no financial involvement from Bangladesh.

3. Officials Involved
○ The delegation included 50 judicial officials from various ranks, including Assistant Judges, District Judges, and Senior Judges.

4. Reason for Cancellation
○ The cancellation reflects the interim Bangladeshi government's intent to review and potentially nullify agreements signed during Sheikh Hasina's tenure.
○ The development follows Dhaka's request for the extradition of Sheikh Hasina, who is currently in India after her removal from power in 2024.
○ The interim government cites allegations against Ms. Hasina, including police crackdowns during her rule in July-August 2024.

5. India's Response

○ Dhaka has issued a formal note verbale requesting Ms. Hasina's extradition.

○ India has acknowledged the request but has not disclosed its decision.

CONCLUSION : The cancellation of the judicial training programme underscores the strained relations between Bangladesh and India following regime change in Dhaka. As the interim government reevaluates agreements signed during Sheikh Hasina's tenure, bilateral ties may face further challenges, with the extradition issue likely to remain a significant point of contention.

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