

# DAILY PT POINTERS

27<sup>th</sup> February, 2024



# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## The Hindu: Art and Culture (GSI)-Page 6



A Theyyam performance at Sree Kurumba Bhagavathi temple in Kannur, Kerala, on Monday. - Photo: PTI

- Theyyam is one of the most spectacular of the ritual arts forms of Northern Kerala.
- Theyyam performances include the myths and stories of the many gods and celestial spirits in Kerala mythology, and its performers are vigilant and committed to guarding the purity of the art form and preserving its ritualistic heritage.
- Theyyam, believed to have been derived from the word Daivam, meaning god, is based on the belief that immortal spirits enter into mortal bodies to perform a ritual dance of divine revelation.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu: S&T-Economy(GSIII)-Page 11



**What is Bitcoin halving and what does it mean for the crypto community?**

- Bitcoin halving refers to the 50% reduction in the reward paid to Bitcoin miners who successfully process other people's cryptocurrency transactions so that they can be added to the public digital ledger known as the blockchain. In order to "grow" Bitcoin's blockchain and keep the ecosystem running, Bitcoin miners rely on advanced computer equipment to solve a complex mathematical puzzle through a process known as 'Proof of work.' This intense activity is the reason Bitcoin transactions result in huge carbon footprints and require vast amount of electricity. No real mining is carried out.
- The Bitcoin miners with cutting-edge computer equipment, working on an industrial scale, are most likely to solve the puzzle first and claim their prize, which is currently set at 6.25 Bitcoin (BTC). While the reward amount is set, the true value of this prize fluctuates based on BTC prices in the market, and when the owner chooses to sell. Bitcoin mining increases the supply of BTC in circulation while Bitcoin halving reduces the rate at which these coins are released, making the asset more scarce. Scarcity is seen as pushing up prices, as is the case with gold.

## The Hindu:GS 3-S&T-Page -14

### India-specific AI model to find gestational age developed

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Researchers have developed an India-specific artificial intelligence model to precisely determine the gestational age of a foetus in the second and third trimester of pregnancy.

The model has been designed by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad. It is part of an interdisciplinary group for advanced research on birth outcomes – DBT India initiative (GARBH-Ini) programme.

The Garbhini-GA2 is the first late-trimester GA estimation model to be developed and validated using Indian population data. Currently models used for Western population are in use which could prove erroneous when applied in the later part of pregnancy due to variations in the growth of the foetus in the Indian population, the researchers say.

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The Indian data would help to provide appropriate care for pregnant women and determine the precise date of birth, thus reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.

Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, said GARBH-Ini, the department's flagship programme, was being validated across the country.

Several investigators, including Himanshu Sinha, associate professor, Bhubat and Jyoti Mehta School of Biosciences, Department of Biotechnology, IIT-Madras, and Shinjini Bhatnagar, principal investigator of the programme and a distinguished professor

at TIISTI, were involved in the project.

The findings were published in the peer-reviewed *Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia*.

Mr. Sinha said advanced data science and AI/ML techniques were used to build tools to predict unfavourable birth outcomes and the first step is to develop accurate GA models that perform significantly better than currently used models designed using western populations.

**End-to-end partnership**  
Ms. Bhatnagar said the application of sophisticated data science tools was not sufficient. Ensuring that technological advancements yield tangible benefits in the clinical realm lies in the end-to-end partnership between clinicians and data scientists. "Such collaboration ensures that the development of solutions is not only technically sound but also clinically relevant and seamlessly integrated into healthcare workflows," she said.

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The Hindu:IR(GSII)

## Last holdout Hungary approves Sweden's NATO membership

**Agence France-Presse**  
BUDAPEST

Hungary's parliament on Monday ratified Sweden's bid to join NATO, clearing the final obstacle for an enlargement of the military alliance spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The vote ends more than a year of delays that left fellow NATO partners furious as Ukraine battled Russian troops.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson hailed a "historic day", while NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Sweden will make the alliance "stronger and safer".

Speaking about Russia's

potential reaction at a press conference, Mr. Kristersson said, "The only thing we can expect with any certainty is that they don't like Sweden becoming a member of NATO, nor Finland".

### Final conditions

While Finland became the 31st member of the U.S.-led defence alliance in April last year, Sweden's bid had been held up.

Turkiye only ratified it last month.

On Monday, Hungary finally followed, with 188 members of parliament voting in favour and six against Sweden's accession.

- Hungary's parliament ratified Sweden's bid to join NATO, clearing the final obstacle for an enlargement of the military alliance spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. NATO was created by 12 countries from Europe and North America on 4 April 1949. NATO's founding member countries were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- At present, NATO has 31 member countries. These countries, called NATO Allies, are sovereign states that come together through NATO to discuss political and security issues and make collective decisions by consensus.
- *NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty – Article 5 of the Washington Treaty*

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu:Health(GSII)

## Govt. launches project aimed at anaemia control in girls

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre launched an initiative on Friday to improve nutrition in adolescent girls using Ayurveda.

The project for anaemia control under Mission Utkarsh will be a joint public health initiative by the Ministries of Ayush and Women and Child Development and would be launched in five aspirational districts first as a pilot project.

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- The two ministries signed an MoU for the scheme. Union Minister for Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani were present at the ceremony.
- Under Mission Utkarsh, 15 central ministries or departments will work to elevate districts at the bottom, to State and national averages. This project will cover approximately 10,000 Anganwadi Centres in the five districts.
- Ayush systems, backed by evidence from institutions like ICMR, will offer cost-effective solution to tackle anaemia,.

The Hindu:Economy(GSIII)

## Govt. concludes G-Sec borrowing for FY24

Shishir Sinha

NEW DELHI

The government will not borrow through Treasury Bills “for the sake of borrowing” during the remaining period of current fiscal, a senior Finance Ministry official said.



- A Government Security (G-Sec) is a tradeable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments.
- It acknowledges the Government’s debt obligation. Such securities are short term (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year) or long term (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the Central Government issues both, treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities, which are called the State Development Loans (SDLs).
- G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are called risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

## Indian Express-(GSII)-Governance

### Centre amends IT rules to issue orders for destroying interception records

In a gazette notification on Monday, the IT Ministry said that it was amending Section 23 of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009 by substituting “security agency” with the words “competent authority and the security agency”.

- The government has amended the Information Technology (IT) rules to allow for the Home Secretary or other bureaucrats in the Centre to issue directions to destroy digital records of interception or decrypt information. So far, the power lied with security agencies, such as law enforcement bodies.
- The change will broaden powers of the Centre to issue directions to destroy digital evidence.
  - the IT Ministry said that it was amending Section 23 of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009 by substituting “security agency” with the words “competent authority and the security agency”.
- The Rule 23 of this law states that every record, including electronic records pertaining to directions for interception or monitoring or decryption of information and of intercepted or monitored or decrypted information shall be destroyed by the security agency in every six months except in a case where such information is required, or likely to be required for functional requirements.