

DAILY PT POINTERS

20th May, 2024



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Tamil Nadu sanctions release of ₹1,229 cr. for rural jobs scheme

While ₹921.78 cr. is Central aid for MGNREGA, ₹307.26 cr. is State govt's share; Centre had raised wages under scheme by ₹25 per worker per day

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has recently accorded sanction to release ₹1,229 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme for 2024-25. While ₹921.78 crore (75%) is the Central assistance for the scheme (material component), ₹307.26 crore (25%) is the State government's share, according to a government order issued in this regard.

Earlier this year, the Government of India had increased wages under the MGNREGA by ₹25 per worker per day. In March this year, the Central Empowered Committee approved "20 crore person days" under the labour budget for Tamil Nadu for 2024-25. The Government



Lifeline: In March this year, the Union government approved ₹319 per person per day under MGNREGS for T.N. workers. FILE PHOTO

of India had, that month, approved ₹319 per person per day under the scheme for workers in Tamil Nadu.

The 'work week' under the MGNREGA begins every Thursday and ends the following Wednesday, and works are taken up in clusters within a village. The wages for unskilled labour under this scheme have been fixed based on the Rural Schedule of Rates. The

wage was increased to ₹294 per worker per day from April 2023. Funds for the scheme has three components – wage for unskilled labour (for which 100% of the funds are provided by the Union government), for civil works material (the Centre gives 75% of funds, State, 25%), and for salary and other expenditure (the Centre gives 100% of funds).

- The Tamil Nadu government recently accorded sanction to release ₹1,229 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for 2024-25.
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand driven wage employment Scheme and funds are released State/UT on the basis of "agreed to" Labour Budget and performance of the States during the year.
- It provides at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- It requires that priority be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries be women.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



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Why is the European Union probing Facebook and Instagram?

The European Union has said it is concerned that Facebook and Instagram's recommendation engine could exploit the weaknesses and inexperience of children and stimulate addictive behaviour.

Noted Analyst:

The story so far: The European Union has opened fresh investigations into how Facebook and Instagram's recommendation engine works and if they are taking to protect children as they children, a website that could lead to a host of apps of that nature and make the news.

What led to this investigation? The EU has said it is concerned that Facebook and Instagram's recommendation engine could "exploit the weaknesses and inexperience of children and stimulate addictive behaviour". The EU's concern is that these apps could make children more susceptible to addictive behaviour than so-called "stable" apps offer for both users to watch increasingly addictive content. As part of the probe, the commission will look into how one of app developers tries to present children under the age of 13 from accessing Facebook and Instagram. It will also find out whether the company is complying with the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA), and whether it has been of privacy, safety and security for minors.

What does the DSA mandate? The DSA DSA sets out a list of

platforms, which have over 10 million users in EU, to provide a report on their recommendation system. It is not based on user profiling and data that data with the Commission and national authorities to assess compliance under the law.

The platform also required to take measures to protect minors from content that may impact their physical, mental or social development. Additionally, platforms must be required to ensure an prompt the rights of minors, including age verification and parental consent tools that are aimed at helping minor sign up for or make purchases, Facebook and Instagram have more than the age limit and new users of these apps could be on any large platforms, bringing them under the law's purview.

The EU regulator will now carry out an in-depth investigation as a "number of platforms" and get feedback by seeking additional requests for information, including interviews and inspections. The commission can also accept commitments made by firms to comply with measures aimed at protecting the investigation.

What has Meta done to protect children on its platform? Meta said that in the past, Meta has been

looking at a driver "family protection" tool for new social media users, but that tool is not being used because of its complexity of the app's operating system.

Additionally, the company said it would look at measures to protect users under 18 years of age by giving content restrictions and boosting parental supervision tools.

It is not the only investigation into platforms facing in the EU. In April, the regulator opened an investigation, accusing Meta of using facial lock to detect deceptive or harmful content in its range of advertising and social media content.

The social media giant's new spin-off app, aimed at teens, is being tested in a number of countries, including the UK, France and Italy.

Are these platforms under scrutiny of other countries outside the EU? Data before the US was implemented in the EU, Meta's Instagram boss had said in the US. The report by the Wall Street Journal, published in June 2022, said the platform "has a user and a growing user base of accounts partly devoted to the promotion and purchase of under-age pornography."

At the time, the company said it was working on "improving internal controls" and that it had "done and will continue to do" to address the concerns of the EU's regulators in the field of child safety regulations in general.

What are the general priorities of protecting minors online? With children growing up in an increasingly digital world, it has become increasingly difficult for parents and caregivers to ensure their online safety. There are a number of ways they can help to keep their children safe and have an age-appropriate to protect their child's digital experience.

These could include setting up a list of apps, choosing age-appropriate apps and games and setting up child-friendly sites and social engines, and ensuring age-appropriate content is accessible for developmental platforms they are using. Parents also need to supervise or limit screen time with their children while in use. They can also engage in family activities or help pay to online predators.

An online dating, social media, and other services can also be used to help parents report and "block" accounts with offensive content and limit open conversations to ensure an adult is available if a warning doesn't help.

- The European Union opened fresh investigations into Facebook and Instagram over suspicions that they're failing to protect children online, in violation of the bloc's strict digital regulations for social media platforms.
- The DSA regulates online intermediaries and platforms such as marketplaces, social networks, content-sharing platforms, app stores, and online travel and accommodation platforms. Its main goal is to prevent illegal and harmful activities online and the spread of disinformation. It ensures user safety, protects fundamental rights, and creates a fair and open online platform environment.

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Balancing two forms of SNCA protein could help manage Parkinson's

Today, Parkinson's is treated symptomatically by increasing the levels of dopamine or, more drastically, by grafting new neurons in place of dead ones. A solution based on the SNCA protein is more desirable because it will offer a more sustainable resolution.

Somdatta Karak

Synuclein alpha (SNCA) is a mysterious protein. It's present in healthy cells but we don't know what it does there. It is notorious for its involvement in age-related neurodegenerative diseases. Twenty-seven years ago, researchers first associated SNCA with Parkinson's disease. People with this disease lose neurons that communicate with each other using dopamine as a neurotransmitter in a part of their brain.

These dopaminergic neurons have been found to contain aggregated masses of protein called Lewy bodies. Most of these proteins are SNCA.

Since then, researchers have reported SNCA molecules aggregating in the brains of people with other neurodegenerative diseases as well. But its presence is most prominent in brains with Parkinson's. SNCA is abundant in neurons, especially in dopaminergic neurons. It is found near the nuclei of these cells and at the junctions between two neurons. Its role of scaffolding as well as forming fibrous structures, so called neurofibrils, and other proteins, which take up mechanical three-dimensional structures, SNCA can fulfil in multiple ways. Misfolded proteins don't function correctly.

But beyond these observations, researchers don't understand the dynamics of the formation of these aggregates and how exactly they affect neurons.

Two populations
A recent study from Swati Rajchandran's lab at the CSIR Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, published in the *Journal of Cell Science*, reported two ways in which SNCA is present as aggregates in cells one that interferes with the structural integrity of cells' nuclei and another that allows the cell to degrade misfolded proteins. The researchers found that the former are related to diseased states while the latter is important for healthy cells.

As such, the study highlights the importance of striking a balance between these two SNCA populations to manage Parkinson's disease. The researchers cultured neurons outside a living body, providing them with nutrients in a laboratory setup. In these neurons, they artificially created structures resembling Lewy bodies by adding some amount of misfolded SNCA, called seeds.

Over time, they found two SNCA populations in the cells. One was around the nuclei, shaped like filaments tens of



A group of varied aggregated alpha-synuclein fibrils. For its involvement in age-related neurodegenerative diseases, CSIR-CMMP, Hyderabad

micrometers long, much like Lewy bodies. The other population was also around the nuclei but as much smaller short or called aggregates. Such aggregates are formed when cells localize misfolded proteins into a small bunch (like collecting the trash in a corner) for further processing.

Reaching the nucleus
They noted that the Lewy body-like structures formed very slowly. Most of the time, the aggregates took up the SNCA proteins and didn't allow the Lewy-body-like structures to grow. But in their experiment, when the researchers repeatedly seeded neurons with misfolded SNCA, the Lewy-body-like structures formed faster and became big enough to affect other parts of the cell. At one point, they became too populous for the aggregates to mitigate their presence.

The enlarged Lewy-body-like structures were situated at the periphery of the nuclei of the cells, and the researchers have argued that this damages the nuclear envelope.

Sometimes, the structures also entered the nucleus. So it is likely that the accumulation of misfolded SNCA would render the nucleus dysfunctional and eventually kill it. In addition, Lewy-body-like structures can pass from one cell to another, so the effect could cascade to neighbouring cells as well.



Twenty-seven years ago, researchers first associated SNCA with Parkinson's disease. People with this disease lose neurons that communicate with each other using dopamine as a neurotransmitter in their brains.

Dr. Rajchandran's team was able to cross-check its findings in mice with Lewy-body-like structures in their brains. They reported that the increasing prevalence of these structures induced conditions mimicking Parkinson's disease. They also found that all the cells so affected also had damaged nuclear envelopes.

A therapeutic target?
Many Parkinson's disease researchers are focused on reducing the prevalence of SNCA in neurons as a therapeutic measure. Researchers are going about this in various ways, but haven't yet found one that has been approved for sale. One way is to reduce the cellular SNCA content. A smaller population of SNCA means lower misfolded SNCA, too. Researchers have achieved this by stopping the SNCA gene from expressing itself or by destroying the SNCA protein inside cells, once the cells make them. However, either of these interventions needs to happen only in select locations. If all the SNCA everywhere is taken away, the entire body will die. Another workable solution has been to

THE GIST

SNCA is abundant in neurons, especially in dopaminergic neurons. It is found near the nuclei of these cells and at the junctions between two neurons. It's of public interest as well as forming fibrous structures. Misfolded proteins don't function correctly.

It study reported two ways in which SNCA is present. One that interferes with the structural integrity of cells' nuclei and another that allows the cell to degrade misfolded proteins. The former are related to diseased states while the latter is important for healthy cells.

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use a gene-editing tool, like CRISPR-Cas9, at a precise location. Researchers have tried this method in cell cultures and model animals but a significant challenge is to cross the blood-brain barrier, a liquid that filters the blood that goes into the brain, and which would also prevent a component CRISPR from passing through.

To surmount this barrier, some researchers have tried to inject molecules that inhibit the SNCA gene through the skull, directly into the desired brain region. Others have used small molecules that modulate its access to the barrier. Some researchers have also identified enzymes that degrade proteins in select brain cells, but with varying efficacy. Another possibility is to stop SNCA from forming large aggregates. Dr. Rajchandran has suggested balancing the SNCA population between aggregates and Lewy bodies. The more SNCA that goes into the aggregates, the less there will be available to make Lewy bodies. How this can be achieved is still being worked out.

Parkinson disease (PD) is a brain condition that causes problems with movement, mental health, sleep, pain and other health issues.

PD gets worse over time. There is no cure, but therapies and medicines can reduce symptoms. Common symptoms include tremors, painful muscle contractions and difficulty speaking.

The disease usually occurs in older people, but younger people can also be affected. Men are affected more often than women.

Nucleosynthesis: the element factory

Karthik Vinod

Stellar nucleosynthesis is the process by which stars forge elements inside their cores. The only element not formed in this way is hydrogen, the most abundant and lightest element in the universe: it was formed in the initial aftermath of the Big Bang.

The cores of stars have crushing pressures and temperature. For example, the sun's core temperature is about 15 million degrees C. In these harsh conditions, the nuclei of atoms undergo nuclear fusion.

The hydrogen nucleus is just one proton. Inside the core, these nuclei come together to form helium nuclei (two protons and two neutrons). This is the p-p (short for proton-proton) process.

In more massive stars, however, stellar nucleosynthesis treads a different path — one dictated by the availability of energy. More massive stars have a higher core temperature,



The cores of stars have crushing pressures and temperature. Representative image. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

return increases its temperature, triggering nuclear fusion yet again. This process goes back and forth until the star starts to produce iron in its core. Iron is the lightest element for which fusion consumes more energy than it releases. Elements heavier than iron can only be synthesised outside a star when it goes supernova.

- **Nucleosynthesis** is the creation of new atomic nuclei, the centers of atoms that are made up of protons and **neutrons**. Nucleosynthesis first occurred within a few minutes of the Big Bang.
 - Stellar nucleosynthesis is the process by which stars forge elements inside their cores.
- Nucleosynthesis requires a high-speed collision, which can only be achieved with very high temperature. The minimum temperature required for the fusion of hydrogen is 5 million degrees

Indian Express-Polity and Governance(GSII)-Page 3

Rs 100 cr — a 3rd of MPLAD funds still unutilised

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, MAY 19

IN THE last 10 years, Lok Sabha members elected from Delhi's seven constituencies have not utilised Rs 100 crore from their entitled Rs 311.5 crore funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme. The Parliamentarians were unable to avail Rs 81 crore from the central government while they failed to spend Rs 19.75 crore that was dispersed by the government.

The MPLADS is a scheme that was set up by the Centre in 1993 to enable MPs to recommend developmental works for creation of assets and amenities in sectors such as drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads. Each MP is entitled to Rs 5 crore annually, released in two equal instalments. This means that the MPs have Rs 25 crore at their disposal, which are to be spent over five years. However, the period of 2019-2024 saw the entitlement of the MPs reducing from Rs 25 crore to Rs 17 crore due to Covid pandemic.

During the last 10 years, every MP representing the seven Delhi constituencies has been from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

How does the



Chandni Chowk MP Harsh Vardhan recommended 364 projects but only 98 were completed. Archive

remained unreleased. Out of the amount that they received, the MPs were not able to spend Rs 16.82 crore on any project. In the 17th Lok Sabha, elected in 2019, the entitlement was Rs 124 crore out of which the MPs managed to get only Rs 45.5 crore while Rs 78.5 crore remained unreleased. Out of the amount that they received, the MPs could not spend Rs 2.93 crore on any of the projects.

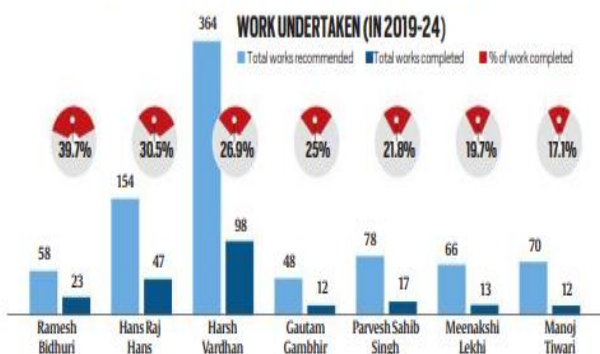
The MPs received only Rs 17 crore from 2019-2024 due to the Covid pandemic and the fund disbursement remained suspended from April 6, 2020 to November 9, 2021; no funds were allocated to the scheme for financial year 2020-21. For the remaining period between November 10,

only candidate in Delhi who has been given ticket by the BJP again to contest from Northeast Delhi.

An official involved in the implementation of the MPLAD scheme said that an MP's initiation and active participation is required so that they propose developmental projects, ensure that the funds are released and then actively monitor the projects so that they are completed. Otherwise, the money isn't disbursed, the official added.

"The rule says that you have to propose your set of demands to the Centre's Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) for the set projects, without which money will not be disbursed," the official said. As per the details available on

HOW DELHI MPs PERFORMED



16TH LOK SABHA (2014-2019)

MP Name	Constituency	Total Entitlement	Total release by Govt	Total release Pending	Unsanctioned Balance	Unspent Balance
Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk	Rs 25 cr	Rs 25 cr	0	Rs 0.30 cr	Rs 1.09 cr
Dr Udit Raj	Northwest Delhi (SC)	Rs 37.50 cr	Rs 37.50 cr	0	Rs 0.11 cr	Rs 2.70 cr
Maheesh Giri	East Delhi	Rs 25 cr	Rs 25 cr	0	-Rs 0.13 cr	Rs 1.83 cr
Manoj Tiwari	Northeast Delhi	Rs 25 cr	Rs 25 cr	0	Rs 0.10 cr	Rs 1.44 cr
Parvesh Sahib Singh	West Delhi	Rs 25 cr	Rs 25 cr	0	Rs 0.18 cr	Rs 2.69 cr
Ramesh Bidhuri	South Delhi	Rs 25 cr	Rs 25 cr	0	Rs 0.28 cr	Rs 3.79 cr
Meenakshi Lekhi	New Delhi	Rs 25 cr	Rs 22.50 cr	Rs 2.50 cr	Rs 1.46 cr	Rs 3.28 cr

17TH LOK SABHA (2019-2024)

Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk	Rs 22 cr	Rs 7.50 cr	Rs 14.50 cr	Rs -13.22 cr	Rs 0.16 cr
Hans Raj Hans	Northwest Delhi (SC)	Rs 17.00 cr	Rs 5.00 cr	Rs 12 cr	Rs -8.53 cr	0

- The MPLADS is a scheme that was set up by the Centre in 1993 to enable MPs to recommend developmental works for creation of assets and amenities in sectors such as drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads.
- Each MP is entitled to Rs 5 crore annually, released in two equal instalments. This means that the MPs have Rs 25 crore at their disposal, which are to be spent over five years.
- However, the period of 2019-2024 saw the entitlement of the MPs reducing from Rs 25 crore to Rs 17 crore due to Covid pandemic.

Green credits: Govt nod to 12 projects, 24 under consideration

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, MAY 19

THE CENTRE has approved 12 greening projects under the Green Credit Program (GCP), which was notified last year as a market-based mechanism designed to incentivize voluntary environmental actions across diverse sectors, officials aware of the development said.

Estimates of 24 plans submitted by different state forest departments are under consideration, the officials said.

The government has been pushing the public-sector undertakings (PSUs) to take a lead in registering for the programme, especially in mining heavy states, and is developing guidelines for third-party verification of projects under the scheme, sources added.

The GCP, notified on October 13, 2023, seeks voluntary participation in "environmental positive actions" such as afforestation, water conservation, waste management among others from PSUs, private industries, non-profits and individuals. The GCP's governance

EXPLAINED E Verification mechanism

THE INDIAN Council of Forestry Research and Education is working on evolving a mechanism for third-party verification of greening projects. The council is looking at a timeline of another month to finalise a draft on third-party verification and if stakeholders who register under the scheme could be included in the monitoring panel.

platform. The greening activities will happen on degraded land parcels and state forest departments have identified over 10,000 hectares of degraded land so far.

Over the past few months, the Environment Ministry has held meetings with the PSUs to push for registration under the initiative, with a special focus initially

a mechanism for third-party verification of greening projects, sources from the government body said. "We are looking at a timeline of another month to finalise a draft on third-party verification. We are also deliberating on whether stakeholders who register under the scheme should be included in the monitoring committee," the source said.

Under the green credit rules, the ICFRE can deem an entity a 'designated agency' to carry out verification of activities executed under the programme. Discussions are also underway on evolving a definite mechanism on linking the green credits to the compensatory afforestation compliance of industries, a senior government official said.

The GCP has provided for exchanging the credits meeting compliance of compensatory afforestation. This refers to the legally mandated afforestation that industries and government agencies have to undertake on non-forest land equivalent to the size of forests that are felled.

Speaking on registration seen under the GCP so far, senior forest

- Green Credit Program (GCP) notified on 13th October, 2023 is an innovative market-based mechanism designed to incentivize voluntary environmental actions across diverse sectors, by various stakeholders like individuals, communities, private sector industries, and companies.
- The GCP's governance framework is supported by an inter-ministerial Steering Committee and The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) serves as the GCP Administrator, responsible for program implementation, management, monitoring, and operation.
- In its initial phase, the GCP focuses on two key activities: water conservation and afforestation.

Indian Express-Environment(GSIII)-Page 10

Illegal mining in Sariska

SC has been trying to stop illegal mining in and around Sariska tiger reserve since 1991. It has been thwarted for reasons that include uncertainty about the reserve's borders. A new order presents another opportunity

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, MAY 19

THE SUPREME Court has ordered the Rajasthan government to shutter 68 mines operating within a 1-kilometre periphery of the critical tiger habitat (CTH) of the Sariska reserve. The order, passed on May 15, is the latest of many attempts by the country's top court since the 1990s to halt the mining of marble, dolomite, and limestone in Sariska in violation of laws. Both the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Environment Protection Act, 1986 prohibit quarrying in and around a tiger reserve.



A quarry in operation in the core area of the Sariska tiger reserve. Jay Mazoomdaar

In the 1990s

In May 2005, the SC ordered the CBI to investigate the disappearance of tigers from the reserve in the Aravalli roughly halfway between Delhi and Jaipur. That was almost a decade and a half after the court first took up the issue of illegal mining in Sariska.

In October 1991, in a PIL filed by a local NGO, the SC issued an interim order that "no mining operation of any nature shall be carried on in the protected area" of Sariska, and set up a fact-finding committee under the chairmanship of Justice M L Jain, a retired judge of the High Court.

Based on a "traced map provided by the Forest Department," the Jain Committee found in 1992 that the protected areas covered "about 800 sq km". In April 1993, the SC ordered the closure of 262 mines within that area.

In the 2000s

Ten years later, the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the SC submitted a damning report on mining around the Jamua

side the 100-metre periphery of the sanctuary. The state stuck to the 100-metre regulation in its draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) notification for Sariska in 2011.

Meanwhile, in January 2002, the Indian (now National) Board for Wildlife had proposed to notify areas within 10 km of national parks and sanctuaries as ESZs. But after several state governments expressed concerns, the Board had asked them, in May 2005, to identify suitable areas and submit proposals for site-specific ESZs.

After many states failed to respond, the SC intervened in December 2006. The court warned that if the states failed to respond within four weeks, it might have to consider the original plan of ESZs of 10-km width.

In the 2010s

In September 2012, the CEC submitted a

for the areas lost to such concessions, revenue villages are alleged to have been arbitrarily included in the tiger reserve, impinging on the rights of residents.

A decade after Sariska became a tiger reserve in 1978, Rajasthan issued mining leases inside the reserve to many who had obtained no-objection certificates (NOCs) from the then field director of Sariska, even though he did not have any authority to issue such NOCs.

In 1993, Rajasthan's proposal to compensate for these illegal mines by adding 5 sq km of revenue land to the reserve was rejected by the SC. But the 'swap' happened anyway, according to two retired forest officials who have served in the Alwar district.

Uncertain boundaries

The area statement records submitted to the SC in 1993 did not tally with the accompanying map. The discrepancies were so glaring that the surveyor was constrained to add a face-saver on the map: "Prepared by me as per the direction of FD (Forest Department), PT (Project Tiger), Sariska."

In 1999, the Sariska management claimed to have lost several land records. The forest bosses in Jaipur then borrowed the said records from the Revenue Department, which in 2003 claimed these documents were never returned.

In August 2008, when Rajasthan approached the Survey of India to undertake the demarcation work in Sariska, the then state forest head wrote in a letter that "the exact boundary, including the location of pillars, is not known". Survey of India backed out of the job because Rajasthan failed to provide reliable maps and records.

In the absence of demarcated boundaries

- The Supreme Court has ordered the Rajasthan government to shutter 68 mines operating within a 1-kilometre periphery of the critical tiger habitat (CTH) of the Sariska reserve.
- Both the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Environment Protection Act, 1986 prohibit quarrying in and around a tiger reserve.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-History(GSI)

President's Secretariat

PRESIDENT OF INDIA PAYS FLORAL TRIBUTES TO NEELAM SANJIVA REDDY ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Posted On: 19 MAY 2024 4:22PM by PIB Delhi

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu paid floral tributes to Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, former President of India, on his birth anniversary at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (May 19, 2024).



- Neelam Sanjiva Reddy served as the sixth President of India from July 25, 1977, to July 25, 1982. Born on May 19, 1913, in Illur, Andhra Pradesh,
- He took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement Reddy was elected as the President of India in 1977. Notably, he was the first person to be elected to this high office unopposed.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Governance(GSII)

Ministry of Defence

INAUGURATION OF UMEED NIKETAN BY PRESIDENT AIR FORCE FAMILY WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Posted On: 18 MAY 2024 1:14PM by PIB Delhi

Mrs. Neeta Chaudhari, President Air Force Family Welfare Association visited Base Repair Depot Air Force Palam on 17 May 24 and inaugurated **Umeed Niketan**, an advanced Therapy Centre for children with special needs. Mrs. Neeta Chaudhari and other esteemed dignitaries were received by Air Commodore Harsh Bahl, Air Officer Commanding, Depot and Wing Commander (Mrs) Reena Bahl (Retd) President Air Force Family Welfare Association (Local). The **Umeed Niketan** has been conceived and conceptualized to create a nurturing environment where children with special needs can think, grow and learn to develop life skills through recreational activities tailored to their unique abilities. From sensory explorational, speech therapy to adaptive sports and interactive immersive experience, the center offers diverse range of programmes designed to promote physical, emotional and social well being of special children. The Umeed Niketan would cater to nearly 55 specially abled children who are helped by a dedicated team of trained special educators. The inauguration was held in a befitting manner and was attended by all the regional Presidents of Air Force Family Welfare Associations from across the country. In addition, spouses of all senior Air Marshals from Delhi area were also present to witness this heartwarming inauguration. This special event underscores IAF's ongoing commitments for improving the facilities for the welfare of the Air Force families.

- **Umeed Niketan**, an advanced Therapy Centre for children with special needs.
- The **Umeed Niketan** has been conceived and conceptualized to create a nurturing environment where children with special needs can think, grow and learn to develop life skills through recreational activities tailored to their unique abilities.