

# DAILY PT POINTERS

21 August, 2024



## The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page-1

# SC forms a task force to ensure safety of doctors

Taking up a *suo motu* case over the rape and murder of a doctor in a Kolkata hospital, the court asks the body to recommend security measures, safety audits and enhanced police presence

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Supreme Court on Tuesday constituted a National Task Force to work out the modalities of safety measures for medical professionals. The NTF will recommend security measures on hospital premises; infrastructure development, including separate restrooms; technological interventions to limit access to critical hospital areas; CCTV cameras; provision of night transport; counselling services; crisis workshops; quarterly safety audits; and enhanced police presence in hospitals.

A three-judge Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, explaining why the court



Doctors of RML Hospital watch a live-stream of the Supreme Court hearing in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

had taken *suo motu* cognisance of the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the State-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, said the case laid bare the systemic failure in providing safety to medical professionals. The court said the "horrific" crime was the last straw and "the

nation cannot wait for another rape and murder in order to bring in safety laws for medical professionals and doctors".

The Centre was given a month to collate data from States and Union Territories on security and infrastructure facilities at all government-run hospitals.

## Ex-principal booked on graft allegations

**KOLKATA**

The Kolkata Police have booked Sandip Ghosh, former principal of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, on allegations of corruption and irregularities and sent him a notice to appear before the police allegedly for disclosing the victim's identity. » **PAGE 12**

This would include whether they have complied with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

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**REGRESSIVE MOVE**  
» **PAGE 8**

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The Hindu –IR (GSII)-Page 1

## India, Malaysia upgrade strategic partnership, discuss entry to BRICS

**Sahasini Haidar**  
NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia decided to upgrade ties to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” on Tuesday, during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, as part of a visit aimed at moving beyond several years of tensions.

The two leaders announced the decision to upgrade the 2010 Strategic Partnership, which had been made an “Enhanced Strategic Partnership” in 2015, along with a number of agreements and MoUs signed in their presence. India would also work with Malaysia on its request to join the BRICS grouping –



**Boosting ties:** Narendra Modi and Anwar Ibrahim during a meeting at Hyderabad House in Delhi on Tuesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

one that Mr. Ibrahim has been pushing for, officials said.

“Malaysia is an important partner of India in ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific region,” Mr. Modi said after the meeting.

“We are committed to

freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international laws. And, advocate peaceful resolution of all disputes,” he added.

Speaking At the Indian Council for World Affairs on Tuesday evening, Mr.

Ibrahim praised India’s “unique, multi-aligned approach” and “astute and adept compartmentalisation of priorities and challenges” that he said Malaysia should learn from in dealing with global conflicts.

“Whereas the Atlantic Ocean must bear the dark history of imperial expansion, gruesome colonisation, and chattel slavery and as the Pacific Ocean world is riddled with tensions and on the epicentre of the renewal of the Cold War, here in the Indian Ocean world we can create a stable and resilient backbone for the global economy,” he said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12

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- Both Prime Ministers held discussions on the entire range of bilateral cooperation including political, defence and security cooperation, economic and trade, digital technologies, start-ups, fintech, energy including renewables, healthcare, higher education, culture, tourism and people-to-people relations.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## The Hindu –Governance (GSII)-Page 3

### SC refuses to permit euthanasia for aged couple’s comatose son

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to grant an aged couple’s plea to allow “passive euthanasia” for their 30-year-old son, who has been lying comatose at home for 11 years after a fall from the fourth floor of a building.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud was visibly moved by the plight of the parents, who said they had exhausted both their savings and willpower taking care of their son.

“This is a very, very hard case,” Chief Justice Chandrachud said.

The Chief Justice said that the man, Harish Rana, who had sustained extensive head injuries from the fall in 2013, was not on a ventilator or any kind of life support. He was still taking in nutrition through a food pipe. Letting him go would not amount to passive euthanasia, as he was not dependent on any external device to stay alive.

Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life sup-

port or treatment necessary for maintaining life.

“In this case, it would amount to active euthanasia, which is not legal,” the Bench told the parents’ counsel.

The couple had moved the top court after the Delhi High Court had refused to constitute a medical board to consider their plea for euthanising their son.

The court sought the aid of the Additional Solicitor General to explore the possibility of shifting Mr. Rana to a government hospital for treatment and care.

- Euthanasia is the act of deliberately ending a person’s life to eliminate pain or suffering
- Ethicists **differentiate between active and passive euthanasia.**

Active euthanasia	Passive euthanasia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as assisted suicide, it is the act of deliberately and actively doing something to end a person’s life.</li> <li>• It is done through steps such as administering a lethal injection or overdose of medication.</li> <li>• Active euthanasia involves directly causing the patient’s death,</li> <li>• This type of euthanasia is illegal in most countries, including India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is defined as intentionally letting a patient die by withholding artificial life support such as a ventilator or a feeding tube</li> <li>• This can include removing a patient from life support or not providing treatment for a terminal illness.</li> <li>• Passive euthanasia is legal in some countries, including India, under certain circumstances and with proper consent.</li> </ul>

## The Hindu-Environment(GSIII)-Page 10

### On the ethanol blending programme

India is on its way to achieve its target of blending 20% of petrol with ethanol by 2025-26. However, the food versus fuel equation continues to hang over the ethanol conversation with questions regarding fuel efficiency, its costing, etc. like.

#### ECONOMIC NOTES

##### Multi-faceted

India is on its way to achieve its target of blending 20% of petrol with ethanol by 2025-26, says, by the introduction of blending 1% ethanol in petrol from 2023-24 and the increase in ethanol production capacity. However, the food versus fuel equation continues to hang over the ethanol conversation as several factors have slowed down the ethanol production from 2018-19. The ethanol production has been slow in the past few years as it has to be compensated for non-food crops, such as sugarcane, which is a major crop. The industry, however, expects to see an increase in ethanol production in the coming years. The industry, however, expects to see an increase in ethanol production in the coming years. The industry, however, expects to see an increase in ethanol production in the coming years.

#### Ethanol for blending

The government is targeting to increase ethanol production to 10 million tonnes by 2025-26. The ethanol production is expected to increase from 4.2 million tonnes in 2022-23 to 10 million tonnes in 2025-26. The ethanol production is expected to increase from 4.2 million tonnes in 2022-23 to 10 million tonnes in 2025-26.

Year	Production (million tonnes)	Blending (million tonnes)	Blending %	Production (million tonnes)	Blending (million tonnes)	Blending %
2022-23	4.2	0.5	12	4.2	0.5	12
2023-24	4.5	0.7	15	4.5	0.7	15
2024-25	5.0	1.0	20	5.0	1.0	20
2025-26	10.0	2.0	20	10.0	2.0	20

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The sugarcane field in Maharashtra, India, is a major source of ethanol. The ethanol production is expected to increase from 4.2 million tonnes in 2022-23 to 10 million tonnes in 2025-26.

#### THE GIST

The roadmap for achieving ethanol blending targets, prepared by the Niti Aayog, had laid down that the capacity of sugarcane-based distilleries would need to increase from 426 crore litres in 2021 to 760 crore litres in 2026, while grain-based distilleries' capacity should increase from 258 to 740 crore litres.

Meanwhile, the developing ethanol economy has impacted States differently. While the fuel ethanol pricing is the same across India, States determine the pricing of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) that goes into making liquor for consumption and other uses.

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- Ethanol will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will also prevent an estimated foreign exchange outgo of some \$4 billion per year, as per Maruti Suzuki company estimates, and bolster the rural economy by promoting the cultivation of various crops through an assured market.
- Meanwhile, the developing ethanol economy has impacted States differently. While the fuel ethanol pricing is the same across India, States determine the pricing of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) that goes into making liquor for consumption and other uses.

## The Hindu-Health(GSII)-Page 11



### How blood-based tests for cancer screening could save lives

A multi-cancer early detection test detects cancer signals such as circulating tumour DNA or circulating tumour cells – released by cancerous cells in the blood – at early stages, when treatment is most effective. But these tests are not yet approved by the US Food and Drug Administration

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Cancer is responsible for 18% of deaths from non-communicable diseases, making it the second leading cause of mortality in India. In 2022, around 14 lakh new cancer cases were recorded in India, a number expected to rise by 12% by 2025. According to the World Health Organization, breast, cervical, ovarian, and colorectal cancers are most common among women while lung, esophageal, colorectal, and stomach cancers dominate among men.

### The importance of cancer screening

When cancer is detected late, survival rates plummet while the cost of care skyrockets. On the other hand, early detection makes cancer easier to treat and causes less suffering. This is why many countries have set ambitious targets to ensure no cancer goes undetected. For instance, the U.K. National Health Service plans to increase the proportion of people diagnosed at an early stage from 50% to 75% by 2028. Early detection through screening is a cornerstone of an effective national cancer strategy. Most European countries, North America, Australia, and parts of Asia have adopted organised cancer screening, but such programmes are still uncommon in India

## The Hindu-Health(GSII)

### Polio case in Meghalaya is vaccine-derived, says official

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
**Rahul Karmakar**  
NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI

A case of vaccine-derived polio is suspected in a two-year-old child at Tikrikilla in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. A senior Union Health Ministry official said on Tuesday that this was not a case of wild polio but an infection some people with low immunity acquired.

The World Health Organization declared India polio-free in 2014 after the last case of wild poliovirus in the country was reported in 2011.

Officials in West Garo Hills are on high alert after the emergence of the case. "The two-year-old child

**'This is not a case of wild polio but an infection some people with low immunity acquire'**

from Tikrikilla was found to have symptoms of poliomyelitis more than a week ago. The child was diagnosed with acute flaccid paralysis at a hospital in Assam's Goalpara," Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said. Health officials in the State said stool and other samples collected from the child were sent to testing centres in Kolkata and Mumbai run by the National Institute of Virology.

"We are still examining the issue. It is a very serious situation that will be

reviewed soon," Mr. Sangma told journalists in Shillong.

The oral polio vaccine (OPV) contains an attenuated or weakened form of the virus, which activates an immune response in the body. During this time, this vaccine-virus is also excreted. On rare occasions, an excreted vaccine-virus can continue to circulate for an extended period of time.

The longer it is allowed to survive, the more genetic changes it undergoes. In very rare instances, the vaccine-virus can genetically change into a form that can paralyse. This is what is known as a circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), according to the WHO.

- A case of vaccine-derived polio is suspected in a two-year-old child at Tikrikilla in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. A senior Union Health Ministry official said on Tuesday that this was not a case of wild polio but an infection some people with low immunity acquired.
- The World Health Organization declared India polio-free in 2014 after the last case of wild poliovirus in the country was reported in 2011.
- Poliovirus is highly infectious. The incubation period is usually 7–10 days but can range from 4–35 days. The virus enters the body through the mouth and multiplies in the intestine. It then invades the nervous system. Up to 90% of those infected experience no or mild symptoms and the disease usually goes unrecognized.

## Indian Express-Space(GSIII)-Page 15

### NEW STUDY SUGGESTS LIQUID WATER DEEP INSIDE MARTIAN ROCKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 20

SCIENTISTS HAVE discovered a reservoir of liquid water in the rocky outer crust of Mars, according to a new study. While researchers have known about water ice at the Martian poles for a long time, this is the first time they have discovered liquid water on the planet.

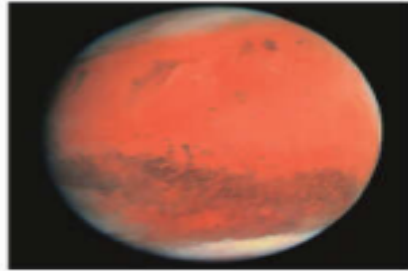
The study, 'Liquid water in the Martian mid-crust', was published last week in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. It was carried out by Vashan Wright, Matthias Morzfeld, and Michael Manga of the University of California San Diego.

The findings could help researchers better understand the water cycle of Mars, which in turn could unlock questions related to the evolution of the planet's climate, surface, and interior. The discovery could also provide impetus to the ongoing search for evidence of life on Mars.

#### How was the study carried out?

For their study, the researchers used data from NASA's Mars Insight Lander, which touched down on the planet back in 2018 and retired in December 2022. The lander was equipped with a seismometer, which recorded more than 1,300 seismic waves — created by Marsquakes and meteorite impacts — deep inside the planet over four years.

The researchers examined the speed



Water 10-20 km in Mars' crust. ESA

according to a report by *New Scientist*.

#### What are the findings of the study?

That layer is located at depths of about 10 to 20 km in the Martian crust. The study suggests that the water could have seeped from the surface billions of years ago when Mars harboured rivers, lakes, and possibly oceans.

Speaking to *The Guardian*, Vashan Wright, co-author of the study, said, "On Earth, groundwater underground infiltrated from the surface, and we expect this process to have occurred on Mars... The infiltration must have happened during a time when the upper crust was warmer than it is today."

The researchers said that if the measurements at the Insight Lander location were representative of the whole planet

According to a new study, there could be oceans' worth of liquid water deep in the rocky outer crust of Mars. While scientists have known about water ice at the Martian poles for a long time, this is the first time they have discovered liquid water on the planet.

. The fourth planet from the Sun, Mars, is one of Earth's two closest planetary neighbors (Venus is the other). Mars is one of the easiest planets to spot in the night sky – it looks like a bright red point of light.



# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB-Miscellaneous

President's Secretariat

### PRESIDENT OF INDIA PRESENTS NATIONAL GEOSCIENCE AWARDS

Posted On: 20 AUG 2024 1:45PM by PIB Delhi

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu presented the National Geoscience Awards-2023 at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre today (August 20, 2024).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that to achieve India's goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, it is important to achieve self-sufficiency in mineral production. She was happy to note that the government is taking many steps like integration of geoscientific data through National Geoscience Data Repository Portal, use of AI and emerging technologies in exploration and mining of mineral resources. She expressed confidence that these steps will enable us to understand our natural wealth better and utilize it properly.

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu presented the National Geoscience Awards-2023 at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre today (August 20, 2024).

- The National Geoscience Award is instituted by the Ministry of Mines, Government of India with the aim to honour individuals and teams for extraordinary achievements and outstanding contributions in various fields of geosciences.

The Ministry of Mines confers National Geoscience Awards every year in three categories:

- National Geoscience Award for Lifetime Achievement
- National Geoscience Award
- National Young Geoscientist Award

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-Defense(GSIII)

### US & South Korea Begin Large-Scale Joint Military Exercises



- United States and South Korea kicked off a large-scale joint military exercises, aimed at strengthening their combined defence capabilities and deterring threats from North Korea. The annual Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises comes amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
- The exercise will see more than 200 South Korean and US fighter jets fly around the clock for five days this week. The US stationed 28,500 troops in the South for combined defence against North Korea.
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