

DAILY PT POINTERS

7 September, 2024



The Hindu-Health(GSII)-Page 1

Health Ministry approves new treatment regimen for multidrug-resistant TB

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Friday approved the introduction of a new treatment regimen for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in India.

The BPaLM regimen consisting of four drugs — Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, and Moxifloxacin — has proven to be a safe, more effective and quicker treatment option than the previous MDR-TB treatment procedure, the Ministry said.

It added that the country was working towards the elimination of TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target for eliminating the disease under the sustainable development goals.

As part of these efforts, the Ministry has introduced the BPaLM regimen,

The new era

What does the introduction of the new treatment regimen mean for India's 75,000 drug-resistant TB patients?

1 It has been proven to be safe, more effective and a quicker treatment option than the previous MDR-TB treatment procedure

2 It brings down treatment time to around six months from the earlier duration of 18 to 24 months

3 It has been found to be cheaper for both health systems and patients



The regimen consists of four drugs — Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid and Moxifloxacin

a novel treatment for MDR-TB, under its National TB Elimination Programme.

High success rate

This regimen includes a new anti-TB drug, Pretomanid, in combination with Bedaquiline and Linezolid (with or without Moxifloxacin).

Pretomanid had earlier been approved and licensed for use in India by the Central Drugs Standard

Control Organisation.

While traditional treatments can last up to 20 months with severe side effects, the BPaLM regimen can cure drug-resistant TB in just six months with a high success rate.

India's 75,000 drug-resistant TB patients will now be able to benefit from this shorter regimen. Along with other advantages, there will also be overall savings in cost.

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- It added that the country was working towards the elimination of TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target for eliminating the disease under the sustainable development goals.
- As part of these efforts, the Ministry has introduced the BPaLM regimen, a novel treatment for MDR-TB, under its National TB Elimination Programme.

The Hindu –Art and Culture(GSI)-Page 6

Atham pageantry paints temple town in vivid colours heralding Onam festival in Kerala

Thripunithura Atham pageantry marks the beginning of Onam celebrations with vibrant colours, traditional art forms, and message of unity amid festivities

Updated - September 06, 2024 04:43 pm IST - KOCHI

THE HINDU BUREAU



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Pulikkali artistes perform during 'Athachamayam' procession marking the start of annual harvest festival of Onam at Thripunithura, near Kochi, in Ernakulam district of Kerala on September 6, 2024. [Photo Credit: Thulasi Kakkat

Thousands of people flocked to the temple town of Thripunithura in Kerala to witness the traditional Atham pageantry, which marked the onset of Onam celebrations

- Origin: Kerala, India
- Timing: Malayalam calendar month of Chingam (August–September in the Gregorian calendar)
- Significance: Commemorates the Vamana avatar of Vishnu and the homecoming of Emperor Mahabali
- Mythological Context: Related to Kashyapa and Parashurama
- Major Event For: Malayali people both in Kerala and abroad
- Type of Festival: Harvest festival
- Other Major Festivals: Along with Vishu and Thiruvathira
- Observations: Celebrated with various festivities

The Hindu –Governance(GSII)-Page 10

Judicial appointments not the prerogative of a single individual: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court held on Friday that the process of judicial appointments to constitutional courts in the country is not the Chief Justices' "prerogative" and must be consultative.

The apex court said the Collegium system of judicial appointments, followed since it was brought into effect in 1993 by the Supreme Court itself, was a "collaborative and participatory process" involving all the members of the Collegium, which includes the senior-most judges of the court concerned.

"The process of judicial appointments to a superior court is not the prerogative of a single individual. The underlying principle is that the process of appointment of judges must reflect the collective wisdom that draws from diverse perspectives," a Bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and P.K. Mishra observed.

The judgment is based on a petition filed by the two senior-most judicial officers on their proposed elevation as judges of the Himachal Pradesh High Court. The case revealed that the Chief Justice of the High Court chose to "individually" address the Supreme Court Collegium on the suitability of the two judicial officers without keeping his High Court Collegium colleagues in the loop.

"The Chief Justice of a High Court cannot individually reconsider a recommendation and it can only be done by the High Court Collegium acting collectively," the court held. It said the "High Court Collegium should now reconsider the names of Chirag Bhanu Singh and Arvind Malhotra for elevation as judges of the High Court".

The judgment stated to carefully balance transparency in the judicial appointments process with the need to maintain confidentiality.

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Indian Express-IR (GSII)-Page 1

FIRST AFTER WITHDRAWAL

A thaw in chill: Delhi, Male hold defence talks

Defence Secy-level dialogue touches
on bilateral military exercises

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 6

FOR THE first time since India withdrew its uniformed military personnel from the Maldives early this year, New Delhi and Male held a defence dialogue here Friday at the level of top officials where they discussed "on-going defence cooperation projects" and "forthcoming bilateral military exercises".

This is significant since a chill has gripped bilateral relations since President Mohamed Muizzu assumed office last year on the plank of his "India Out" campaign.

The last defence cooperation dialogue was held in March last year in Male when then President Ibrahim Solih was in office, months before Muizzu took over as President.

According to an official state-

EXPLAINED

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Renewal
roadmap

TALKS ARE a bid to renew the Delhi-Male defence co-operation after the strain in ties following Muizzu's India-Out campaign. Over the years, India has given equipment, trained personnel and is working on strategic projects in the island nation.

ment by the Defence Ministry on the 5th Defence Cooperation Dialogue between India and the Maldives, the Indian delegation was led by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane while the Maldivian delegation was headed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

- India and the Maldives held a fresh round of "productive" defence dialogue with a focus on the situation in the Indian Ocean and ways to expedite implementation of ongoing defence projects.
- The defence dialogue in Delhi took place nearly a month after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar paid a three-day visit to the Maldives, in the first high-level trip from New Delhi after the island nation's pro-China president Mohamed Muizzu assumed office.
- The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the overall bilateral ties including in areas of defence and security witnessed an upward trajectory under the previous government in Male.

Indian Express-IR(GSII)Page 7

Jaishankar: IMEC will be cornerstone of global connectivity, add to growth

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 6

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) will be a cornerstone of global connectivity with the potential to add to growth and resilience across the world.

Addressing the CII India Mediterranean Business Conclave, Jaishankar said the IMEC — announced during the G20 summit last year — has opened new possibilities.

"The IMEC aims to become a cornerstone of global connectivity, providing a robust frame-



MEANWHILE: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets former Japan PM Shinzo Abe's wife Akie Abe in New Delhi. PTI

work for boosting trade and other flows across critical regions. By integrating innovative logistics and sustainable practices, it holds the potential to sig-

nificantly contribute to both growth and resilience," he said.

On the conflict in West Asia, Jaishankar said the situation has disrupted shipping routes.

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- "The IMEC aims to become a cornerstone of global connectivity, providing a robust framework for boosting trade and other flows across critical regions. By integrating innovative logistics and sustainable practices, it holds the potential to significantly contribute to both growth and resilience

Indian Express-IR(GSII)-Page 20

Formalised 'gender apartheid': Taliban's morality law against women

RISHIKA SINGH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 6

TALIBAN SUPREME leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has directed officials to enact Afghanistan's "morality law", formalising and codifying the restrictions on women and other groups in the country.

The Ministry of Propagation of Virtue, Prevention of Vice and Hearing Complaints published the 114-page code, the first formal enactment of such laws since the Taliban took power in August 2021, late last month.

Not to be seen or heard

The code makes it mandatory for a woman to veil her entire body at all times in public, and deems a face covering as "essential to avoid temptation and tempting others".

The Associated Press quoted the document as saying that a woman's voice is deemed "intimate", and should not be heard singing, reciting, or reading aloud in public. A report in *The Guardian* noted a provision that says women should not be heard singing or reading aloud even inside their homes.

According to *The AP* report, the playing of music and mixing of men and women who not related are banned. Women and men are forbidden from even looking at each other if they are not related by blood or marriage.

Ravina Shamdasani, chief spokesperson of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the law effectively renders women "faceless, voiceless shadows".

Other provisions in the code sanction the persecution of LGBTQ people and religious minorities, and lay down rules on the

appearance of men. An *AP* report said men must not wear clothing that ends above the knee, and are forbidden from closely trimming their beards.

Increasing repression

In the past, the Taliban have enforced such policies using threats, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and excessive force, according to a UN report.

Heather Barr, associate director of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch, told *Reuters*: "A lot of these rules were in place already, but less formally—and now they are being formalised... This is a sign of what we've been seeing over the last three years... a steady and gradual escalation of the crack-down." The regime completed three years

in power in August.

UN experts said the code introduces "new, even more repressive measures". "Empowered by the new law, the Taliban's morality inspectors have extensive authority to arbitrarily detain and punish individuals.

Ordinary citizens [are] encouraged to report transgressions," they said—which would worsen the "already pervasive climate of fear and surveillance across Afghan society".

The same, 25 years later

UN experts described the measures as "gender apartheid", and "disturbingly similar" to what was seen in the previous Taliban regime (1996-2001). "The group has not moderated its approach since its return to power," they said.

The Taliban were driven from power by US-led forces who invaded Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks in 2001; however, the group could never be destroyed.

As the costs of the US presence mounted and the American-backed government struggled to establish control Afghanistan, several rounds of talks were held between the US government and the Taliban in Doha, mediated by Qatar, for a power-sharing agreement.

Many cautioned against engaging with the Taliban, but the US, desperate to get out of Afghanistan, went ahead. In 2020, the Doha Agreement was signed, and the US said it would withdraw its armed forces after talks between the Taliban and Afghan government to decide the future of Afghanistan's democracy.

By mid-2021, as the full US withdrawal neared, Taliban forces gained ground in ma-

major cities in quick succession. The last American forces left amid chaos, with the Taliban in Kabul, and President Ashraf Ghani having fled the country.

In his first press conference, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said, "Our sisters, our men have the same rights," adding, "They are going to be working with us, shoulder to shoulder with us." However, Mujahid also said that Afghan women must live their lives "within our frameworks of Sharia".

Soon after, the Taliban banned education for girls beyond Class 6. Punishments such as public stoning, flogging, and executions have also been reported since then.

The US has made its support to the Taliban in part contingent on such measures being withdrawn. But several Muslim-majority countries and China have given official or de facto recognition to the regime.

- Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has directed officials to enact Afghanistan's "morality law", formalising and codifying the restrictions on women and other groups in the country.
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Indian Express-Health(GSII)-Page 20

NIGHT-TIME LIGHT POLLUTION LINKED TO HIGHER ALZHEIMER'S RISK: STUDY

RESEARCHERS IN the US have found a correlation between light pollution at night and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease.

"Exposure to artificial light at night is one environmental factor that may influence Alzheimer's," researchers Robin Voigt, Bichun Ouyang, and Ali Geshavarzian of Chicago's Rush University Medical Center wrote in the study published in *Frontiers in Neuroscience* on Friday.

The disease

Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia, an umbrella term for a range of conditions that involve the loss of cognitive functioning. It involves the formation of plaques and tangles in the brain, and the accelerated aging of certain neurons concerned with storage and processing of memory.

Early symptoms include forgetfulness — and as the illness progresses, patients become more confused, lose their way around familiar places, and have difficulties with planning and completing simple tasks.

According to WHO estimates from 2023, more than 55 million people suffer from dementia worldwide, with Alzheimer's contributing to around 75% of these cases. Anywhere between 3 and 9 million Indians are believed to suffer from the disease, a number that is set to grow as

ously considered.

The study used satellite-acquired light pollution data from the US, and mapped it along with publicly available Medicare data reports on the prevalence of Alzheimer's. Other medical data on variables known or believed to be risk factors were incorporated into the analysis.

Researchers found that while conditions like diabetes and hypertension were correlated more strongly with the prevalence of Alzheimer's than night-time light intensity, the latter was more strongly associated with the disease

than alcohol abuse, chronic kidney disease, depression, heart failure, and obesity — all commonly cited risk factors.

The correlation with light exposure was more stark when it came to early-onset Alzheimer's i.e., for those under the age of 65.

Robin Voigt, one of the study's authors, told *The Guardian* that exposure to light at night disrupts natural circadian rhythms and hampers sleep, making individuals more susceptible to the disease. Additionally, "disruption of circadian rhythms is associated with increased risk of diseases that are risk factors for Alzheimer's including obesity, diabetes, and depression," the study says.

Too much light



Researchers in the US have found a correlation between light pollution at night and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease.

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Indian Express-Geography(GSI)-Page 20

Why La Niña is delayed, and how it could still impact India's weather

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 6

THE INDIA Meteorological Department (IMD) said last week that neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions were prevailing over the Indian Ocean, and there was a higher likelihood of La Niña conditions developing "during end of the monsoon season" — that is, towards the end of this month.

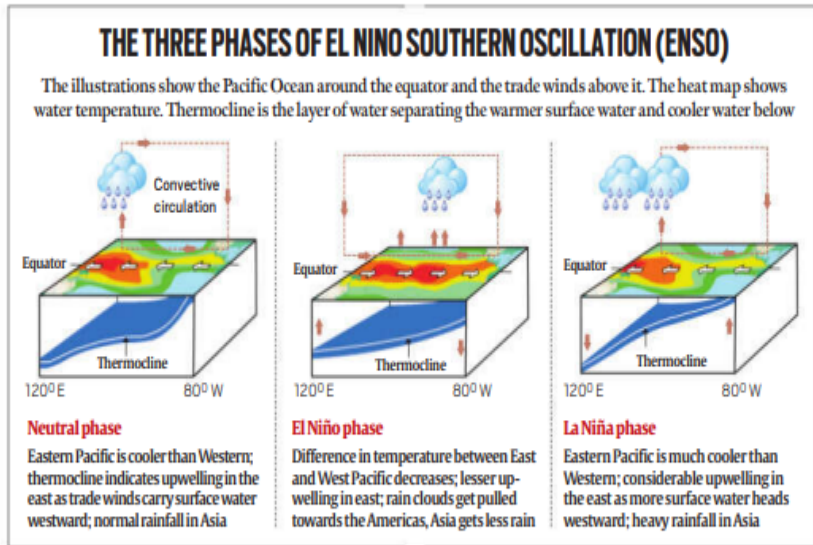
Major global agencies have been off the mark in their forecast of the onset of La Niña — the climate phenomenon that is associated with enhanced monsoon rainfall over India — this year. What impact could the late onset of La Niña have on India?

ENSO and The Little Girl

La Niña ('The Little Girl' in Spanish) is a phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), which is a major driver of global natural climate variability. ENSO is characterised by changes in sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean as a result of atmospheric fluctuations overhead. These changes alter and interfere with the global atmospheric circulation, and influence weather worldwide.

ENSO has three phases — warm (El Niño or 'The Little Boy' in Spanish), cool (La Niña), and neutral — which occur in irregular cycles of between two and seven years.

During the neutral phase of ENSO, the eastern Pacific Ocean (off the northwestern coast of South America) is cooler than the western Pacific (around Indonesia and the Philippines).



tivity. The previous El Niño event occurred between June 2023 and May 2024. One of the longest recorded La Niña episodes lasted from 2020 to 2023.

Anthropogenic climate change has exacerbated the impact of both El Niño and La Niña-related hazards, including high temperatures, heavy precipitation and droughts.

Weather model predictions

and September. The prediction of "above normal" monsoon rainfall this year was based on the likely emergence of La Niña.

A major reason cited by weather modellers and meteorologists for the inaccurate prediction is the severity of the emerging La Niña — it is likely to be fairly weak, and weather models are generally more accurate about strong La Niña (or El Niño) phases.

Other factors, including inter-seasonal

ing the southwest monsoon, but it is too late now for it to play any direct role this season. India as a whole recorded almost 16% surplus rainfall in August, and IMD has forecast 109% "above normal" rain over most geographical areas for September.

But La Niña, after its onset by late September-October, could still influence rainfall during the northeast (winter) monsoon (October-December) in Tamil Nadu, coastal

- All leading global agencies were significantly off the mark in their La Niña predictions this year.
- India had pinned hopes on the influential climate phenomenon to drive enhanced rainfall during August-September. Now that a delay in **La Niña's onset is imminent**.
- La Niña (or 'The Little Girl' in Spanish) is a phase of what climatologists refer to as the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a phenomenon that is a key driver of global natural climate variability. ENSO is characterised by changes in sea temperatures along the tropical Pacific Ocean due to atmospheric fluctuations overhead. These changes alter and interfere with the global atmospheric circulation, and influence weather worldwide.
- Occurring in irregular cycles of anywhere between two to seven years, ENSO has three phases — warm (El Niño or 'The Little Boy' in Spanish), cool (La Niña), and neutral.
- In India, El Niño is associated with suppressed rainfall during the monsoon season, while La Niña is known to help monsoon activity.

PIB-Defense(GSIII)-Page 10

India Successfully Carries Out Launch Of Agni-4 Ballistic Missile From Integrated Test Range At Chandipur



- A successful launch of an Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile, Agni-4, was carried out from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha on September 06, 2024.
- The launch successfully validated all operational and technical parameters. It was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command.
- The Agni missiles are long-range, nuclear weapons-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missiles developed by India.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Defense(GSIII)

Ministry of Defence

INDIA - FRANCE BILATERAL NAVAL EXERCISE VARUNA

'Indian Naval Ship Tabar & LRMR P8I Aircraft Participate in the 22nd edition of IN - FN Bilateral Exercise VARUNA in the Mediterranean Sea'

Posted On: 06 SEP 2024 6:05PM by PIB Delhi

- **The bilateral exercise VARUNA which began in 2001 is the backbone of IN- FN relationship** and has evolved significantly over the years towards enhancing interoperability and exchange Best Practices. The conduct of 22nd edition of VARUNA in the Mediterranean Sea marks a significant milestone in the maritime domain between India and France displaying Indian Navy's outreach and commitment towards sustained operations far away from IOR.
- VARUNA also exemplifies the commitment of Indian and French Navies towards enhancing interoperability through collaborative efforts. The Indian Navy remains committed to fostering partnerships with like-minded navies across the world.