

# DAILY PT POINTERS

10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024



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

### Union Cabinet gives nod for continuation of free fortified rice supply till Dec. 2028

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the continuation of supply of free fortified rice under various welfare programmes from July 2024 to December 2028.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the rice fortification initiative would continue as a central sector initiative with 100% funding by the Centre in order to ensure inclusive nutritional security in the country. The move is aimed at addressing anaemia and micronutrients deficiency.

Free fortified rice will be provided under programmes such as Targeted Public Distribution System



**Nutritional security:** Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

development Service, and PM POSHAN in all States and Union Territories. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had in April 2022 decided to implement it in a phased manner by March 2024.

“All three phases have

sal coverage to supply fortified rice in all schemes of the government was achieved by March 2024,” the government said.

According to the National Family Health Survey conducted between 2019 and 2021, anaemia remains

men across various age groups and income levels. Besides iron deficiency, other vitamin and mineral deficiencies such as Vitamin B12 and folic acid also persist, impacting the overall health and productivity of the population, the government said.

#### ‘Ideal vehicle’

“Rice is an ideal vehicle for supplying micronutrients in the Indian context as 65% of the population consumes it as a staple food. Rice fortification involves the addition of fortified rice kernels enriched with micronutrients (iron, folic acid, Vitamin B12) to regular rice (custom milled rice) as per standards prescribed by the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards)

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- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the rice fortification initiative would continue as a central sector initiative with 100% funding by the Centre in order to ensure inclusive nutritional security in the country. The move is aimed at addressing anaemia and micronutrients deficiency.
- Free fortified rice will be provided under programmes such as Targeted Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Service, and PM POSHAN in all States and Union Territories. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had in April 2022 decided to implement it in a phased manner by March 2024.



## The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 13

# RBI holds rate at 6.5%, shifts stance to 'neutral'

Central Bank thus opens the door for a rate cut in the near future; Monetary Policy Committee notes that currently the macroeconomic parameters of inflation and growth are well balanced

**Lalatendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday maintained its benchmark interest rate at 6.5% for the 10th successive monetary policy review since April 2023, but opened the door for a rate cut in the near future by shifting its policy stance to “neutral”.

The *status quo* on interest rates was approved by a majority of five out of six members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) which met for three days starting October 7, with three new external members on board.

The change of the policy stance from “withdrawal of accommodation” to “neutral” was, however, unanimously agreed upon by the committee, along with a resolve to unambiguously focus on a durable alignment of inflation with the target, while also sup-

porting growth.

“The MPC noted that currently the macroeconomic parameters of inflation and growth are well balanced. Going forward, the moderation in headline inflation is expected to reverse in September and likely to remain elevated in the near-term due to adverse base effects, among other factors,” RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

“It is with a lot of effort that the inflation horse has been brought to the stable, that is closer to the target within the tolerance band compared to its heightened levels two years ago,” Mr. Das said. Retail inflation was under the central bank’s median target of 4% in July and August.

“We have to be very careful about opening the gate as the horse may simply bolt again. We must keep the horse under tight leash, so that we do not lose control. Going for-



Shaktikanta Das

ward, we need to closely monitor the evolving conditions for further confirmation of the disinflationary impulses,” he said.

The RBI did not alter its 7.2% GDP growth projection and the 4.5% average inflation estimate for 2024-25, with risks evenly balanced. However, it did lower its second quarter inflation projection to 4.1% from 4.4%, even as it expects that pace to pick up 4.8% in the October to December quarter.

Asked about the inflation analogy moving to horses from an elephant cited in earlier policy statements, Mr. Das said: “It is not a shift. Earlier I used elephant, this time I am using horse. The reason is that it is a war against inflation and in a war, elephants and horses are used historically.”

Stating that domestic growth has sustained its momentum, with private consumption and investment growing in tandem, he said resilient growth had given the RBI the space to focus on inflation so as to ensure its durable descent to the 4% target. “In these circumstances, the MPC decided to remain watchful of the evolving inflation outlook in the coming months,” the Governor said.

“Unexpected weather events and worsening of geopolitical conflicts constitute major upside risks to inflation,” he said.

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## Modi to hold bilateral talks with leaders at ASEAN-India summit

Relations with ASEAN a central pillar of Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision, says External Affairs Ministry announcing the PM's two-day visit

Kallol Bhattacharjee  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Laos on Thursday and Friday to attend the 21st ASEAN-India and the 19th East Asia Summits.

The annual events are crucial as they are being held against the backdrop of fast developments in Myanmar where ethnic armed organisations are battling the military junta of the country, creating hurdles for regional connectivity and security plans.

"India is marking a decade of the Act East Policy this year. Relations with ASEAN are a central pillar of the Act East Policy and our Indo-Pacific vision," the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday announcing the visit.

Mr. Modi will reach the Laotian capital Vientiane on Thursday and will hold bilateral meetings with leaders of the ASEAN coun-



**Major meet:** The ASEAN summit is crucial as it comes at a time when India's neighbour Myanmar is going through a crisis. AFP

Laos is the current chair of ASEAN and Mr. Modi will be travelling at the invitation of his Laotian counterpart, Sonexay Siphandone.

### Maritime issues

The ASEAN summit, which began on October 6, is significant as it is being held against the backdrop of heightened tension between the Philippines and China over maritime issues in the South China Sea and the crisis in Myanmar

the junta. Apart from the regional leaders, Laos will host Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The events in Laos will be the first diplomatic engagement by the new Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who took charge on October 1. During his stay in Vientiane, Mr. Modi will witness the Lao adaptation of the Ramayana.

The ancient Indian classic is celebrated as *Phra Lak Phra Lam* (*Phra Lakshman Phra Ram*) and it is

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Laos on Thursday and Friday to attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit. The events are taking place amid significant developments in Myanmar, where ethnic armed organizations are fighting the military junta, posing challenges to regional connectivity and security.
- The visit marks a decade of India's Act East Policy, with ASEAN central to India's Indo-Pacific vision. Mr. Modi will participate in bilateral meetings with ASEAN leaders and attend the ASEAN-India summit in Laos' capital, Vientiane. Laos, currently chairing ASEAN, invited Mr. Modi through its Prime Minister, Sonexay Siphandone.
- The ASEAN summit is taking place amid tensions between the Philippines and China over the South China Sea and the escalating crisis in Myanmar.



## The Hindu –GS 3(Science and Tech )-Page 16

### Trio wins Chemistry Nobel for work on protein design and prediction of structures

Vasudevan Mukunth  
CHENNAI

The 2024 Nobel Prize for Chemistry was shared by David Baker "for computational protein design" along with Demis Hassabis and John Jumper "for protein structure prediction," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced on Wednesday.

Heiner Linke, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said the award honoured research that connected the sequence of amino acids that make up a protein and the protein's structure.

Mr. Baker led a team that in 2003 designed a new protein using bespoke software methods. They and others have since refined these methods to be able to point the way to 'designer' proteins intended for specific applications.

Johan Åqvist, a former chair of the chemistry Nobel Committee, called the variety of proteins developed by Mr. Baker et al. to be "absolutely mind-blowing" and that "it seems that you can almost construct any type of protein with this technology".

Mr. Hassabis and Mr. Jumper received the other half of the prize for their hand in developing an artificial intelligence model called AlphaFold 2 that



**Glory moment:** (From left) David Baker, John Jumper and Demis Hassabis, the recipients of Nobel Prize for Chemistry, 2024. [ap](#)



With skillful use of artificial intelligence, Demis Hassabis and John Jumper made it possible to predict the complex structure of essentially any known protein in nature.

**HEINER LINKE**  
chair of the Nobel Committee

until then, although the structures and patterns therein were used to train AlphaFold.

"Four years ago in 2020, Demis Hassabis and John Jumper managed to crack the code. With skillful use of artificial intelligence, they made it possible to predict the complex structure of essentially any known protein in nature," Mr. Linke said.

work, around four to six years. There is usually a gap of a few decades between the work and the prize because the former does not immediately prove to be of "greatest benefit to humankind" – a criterion for winning.

For example, John Goodenough shared the 2019 chemistry prize for his work on lithium-ion batteries in 1970s. John Nash, Jr. won part of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1994 for work he had done in the 1950s.

The chemistry prize this year also continues a relatively new tradition in this category of the prize going to non-chemists – although 1981 chemistry laureate Roald Hoffmann has interpreted this to be a mark of chemistry's "far and influential reach", especially in biochemistry and molecular biology.

Mr. Baker works at the

- The 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was shared by David Baker, Demis Hassabis, and John Jumper. David Baker was awarded for his work in computational protein design. In 2003, Baker's team designed a new protein using custom software.
- His methods have since evolved to allow the creation of 'designer' proteins for specific applications.
- The Nobel Committee praised the potential of his technology to construct nearly any type of protein.
- Demis Hassabis and John Jumper were awarded for their contribution to protein structure prediction. They developed AlphaFold 2, an AI model that can predict the structure of millions of proteins.
- Before AlphaFold 2, human scientists had determined the structure of only about 1.7 lakh proteins.
- Their breakthrough, achieved in 2020, has made it possible to predict the structure of virtually any known protein.

The Hindu –GS 3(Environment)-Page 13



Declines in wildlife populations act as an early indicator of potential loss of healthy ecosystems. FILE PHOTO

## Wildlife numbers declined 73% since 1970, says WWF

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

- There has been a 73% decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations from 1970-2020, according to the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature's Living Planet Report 2024, a biennial compilation of the threats faced to wildlife. In the 2022 edition of the report, the measured decline was 69%. The report, released, said that significant "collective effort" will be required over the next five years to tackle the dual climate and nature crises. The Living Planet Index (LPI), provided by Zoological Society of London, included almost 35,000 population trends of 5,495 species from 1970-2020. The sharpest decline is reported in freshwater ecosystems at 85%, followed by terrestrial ecosystems at 69% and marine ecosystems at 56%. Habitat loss and degradation, driven primarily by the way the world organises farming and consumes food, is the most reported threat to wildlife populations around the world, followed by over-exploitation, invasive species, and diseases.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express –History(GSI)/Economy(GSIII)

## Cabinet gives nod to maritime heritage complex at Indus Valley site Lothal

DIVYAA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE UNION Cabinet Wednesday approved the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Gujarat's Lothal.

Addressing reporters, Union Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the project aims to showcase India's 4,500-year-old diverse maritime heritage. He said that once fully developed, it will be the world's greatest maritime complex, adding that the project is being developed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. The proposed complex will have several components including a Lighthouse Museum and a five-dimensional theatre offering interactive experiences. It will be completed in two phases.

Lothal was one of the southernmost sites of the Indus Valley civilization, located in the Bhal region of what is now the state of Gujarat. The port city is believed to have been built in 2,200 BC. The meaning of Lothal (a combination of Loth and (c)thal) in Gujarati is

- Union Cabinet has approved the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat. Addressing media in New Delhi, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the proposal aims to showcase India's rich and diverse maritime heritage
- Lothal, located 80 km southwest of Ahmedabad, was discovered by local villagers long before its official excavation between 1955 and 1962, led by archaeologist S R Rao.
  - He identified the large structure as a dockyard for maritime trade, capable of sluicing ships 18-20m long.
  - Lothal was believed to be a hub for maritime commerce due to the presence of seals, traded items, and stone anchors.

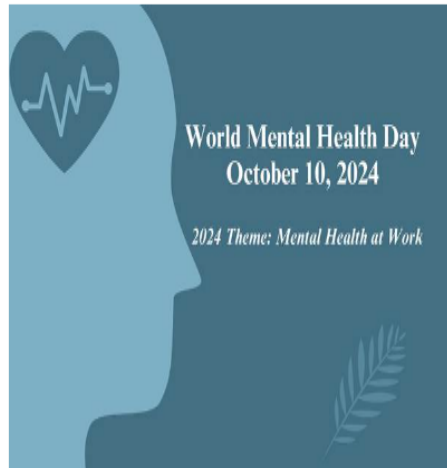
# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## PIB-Health(GSII)

### World Mental Health Day 2024: Enhancing Mental Well-Being at Work

Posted On: 09 OCT 2024 9:08AM

World Mental Health Day, observed annually on October 10, was first initiated in 1992 by the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH). This global observance aims to raise awareness about mental health issues and mobilize efforts in support of mental health care worldwide. Over the years, the day has grown into a significant platform for governments, organizations, and individuals to collaborate on initiatives that drive lasting change in mental health care. The importance of World Mental Health Day is underscored by the growing recognition of the profound impact mental health has on individuals, families, and communities.



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- The importance of World Mental Health Day is underscored by the growing recognition of the profound impact mental health has on individuals, families, and communities. **The theme for 2024, *Mental Health at Work***, highlights the critical connection between mental health and the workplace



# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-Governance(GSII)

### India Launches 'Study In India' Campaign At International Education Show In Sharjah



- India has officially launched its 'Study in India' campaign at the 20th International Education Show in Sharjah, marking a significant push to attract international students to its universities. Organized by EdCIL, a Miniratna company under the Ministry of Education, the campaign seeks to position India as a leading global education hub.
- The 'Study in India' programme showcases over 590 Indian universities and institutions, offering a variety of courses and exclusive benefits such as fee waivers and scholarships for international students. The campaign highlights India's commitment to providing quality education at affordable prices, making it an attractive destination for students from developing countries.
- India's higher education sector, ranked as the second largest in the world, continues to rise in global rankings.