

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Environment(GSIII)-Page1

Aid needed to meet the costs of controlling plastics: India

Jacob Koshy
BUSAN

Developing countries will comply with "control measures" on plastic only if they are compensated for the cost they entail, India said in a proposal at the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations on Wednesday. This is India's first substantive move during the talks being held in the South Korean city of Busan.

Echoing a principle from climate change negotiations, India has emphasised that there must be a transfer of technologies from developed to developing nations that must

respect "national circumstances".

Exactly what these 'control measures' and 'costs' are has not been specified yet. They are among a plethora of crucial undefined terms; in fact, there is still no agreed definition for the word 'plastic' as far as the treaty is concerned.

'Create multilateral fund'

These and many other concepts are at the heart of the talks, involving around 170 countries. Officially called the fifth Intergovernmental Negotiations Committee, which is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme, the

talks are scheduled to conclude on December 1.

India has proposed that a new dedicated multilateral fund be created with contributions to be "additional and distinct" from other financial transfers.

This fund would be governed by a duly constituted subsidiary body that will also facilitate "...transfer of technology from developed countries to developing countries, for achieving a just transition towards sustainable production and consumption of plastics, in accordance with national circumstances under the financial mechanism," India's submission added.

- During the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations in Busan, India proposed that developing countries would comply with "control measures" on plastic if compensated for related costs. Echoing principles from climate change negotiations, India emphasized the need for technology transfer from developed to developing nations, respecting national circumstances.
- India suggested creating a dedicated multilateral fund with additional contributions distinct from other financial transfers. This fund would support the transfer of technology to achieve sustainable plastic production and consumption. Key terms like "control measures" and "costs" remain undefined. The negotiations, involving around 170 countries, aim to address these issues and will conclude on December 1.

The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page1

Around two lakh child marriages were prevented in a year, says WCD Ministry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Child marriages in India halved from 47.4% to 23.3% in 2019-21 since the introduction of the Prevention of Child Marriage Act in 2006, said Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi here on Wednesday.

The Minister said around two lakh child marriages were prevented in the past one year, even as one in five girls in India is married before reaching the legal age of 18.

Recent reports by the United Nations note that, globally, the most signifi-

cant decline in child marriage rates have been observed in South Asian countries, India being a significant contributor, Ms. Devi said in her address while launching the Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (child marriage-free India campaign) here. However, despite the progress, there was no room for complacency, she said.

Focus on 7 States

The 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' campaign will focus on the seven States with high burden of child marriages – West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and And-

hra Pradesh – and nearly 300 high-burden districts where child marriage rates are high compared with the national average.

The campaign will call on every State and Union Territory to devise an action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.

A key feature of the campaign is the launch of the 'Child Marriage Free Bharat' portal, meant to raise awareness, report cases, and monitor progress.

"Guided by the past experiences of BBBP ['Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save daughter, educate daught-

er)' Programme] and the recent judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' campaign aims to bring all stakeholders together to spread awareness up to the grassroots and bring attitudinal change towards ending child marriage," Ms. Devi said.

The Union Minister added that apart from laws, "we must also focus on raising awareness because legislation alone cannot eradicate this issue".

We cannot stop until India is completely free of child marriages, she added, calling for active participation from citizens.

- Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi announced that child marriages in India have halved from 47.4% to 23.3% between 2006 and 2019-21, following the Prevention of Child Marriage Act. In the past year, around two lakh child marriages were prevented, though one in five girls in India is still married before 18.
- The 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan' campaign aims to reduce child marriage rates below 5% by 2029, focusing on seven states with high child marriage rates and nearly 300 high-burden districts. The campaign includes launching the 'Child Marriage Free Bharat' portal to raise awareness, report cases, and monitor progress. The initiative emphasizes the importance of awareness and active citizen participation in ending child marriages in India.

The Hindu-Governance(GSII) –Page4

Conversion to get job amounts to a fraud on Constitution: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has held in a judgment that religious conversion without any actual belief, largely intended to procure quota benefits, defeats the social ethos of the reservation policy and amounts to a fraud on the Constitution.

The judgment was based on an appeal filed by a woman from Puducherry, a Christian by birth, who sought conferment of a Scheduled Caste community certificate on the ground that she had embraced Hinduism. The court concluded that her claim to Hinduism was fuelled by an ulterior motive to obtain government employment under the Scheduled Caste quota.

However, the court banked on a field verification that revealed the registration of the marriage of her parents under the In-



A Puducherry woman, Christian by birth, sought an SC certificate saying she had embraced Hinduism.

Act, 1872. She had been baptised and had regularly attended church.

'No positive act'

The court said her claim to be a practising Hindu was at best "meek". There was not even a single positive act, including conversion by adopting a procedure prescribed through the Arya Samaj, to prove her claim. Neither oral nor documentary evidence backed her.

"India is a secular coun-

right to practise and profess a religion of their choice as guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution. One converts to a different religion, when he/she is genuinely inspired by its principles, tenets, and spiritual thoughts. However, if the purpose of conversion is largely to derive the benefits of reservation but not with any actual belief in the other religion, the same cannot be permitted, as the extension of benefits of reservation to people with such an ulterior motive will only defeat the social ethos of the policy of reservation," said Justice R. Mahadevan, who authored the verdict, dated November 26, for the Bench headed by Justice Pankaj Mithal.

Cancelling any Scheduled Caste community certificate conferred on her in the past, the court said conversion only to claim the benefits of reservation in employment was a fraud

- The Supreme Court ruled that religious conversion without genuine belief, primarily aimed at securing reservation benefits, undermines the reservation policy and amounts to a fraud on the Constitution. The case involved a woman from Puducherry who, born a Christian, sought a Scheduled Caste certificate after claiming to have converted to Hinduism. The court found her conversion to be motivated by the desire for government employment under the Scheduled Caste quota, with no evidence of genuine religious belief or practices.
- The court emphasized that conversion should be driven by sincere belief in the principles of the new religion, not for gaining benefits. It canceled the woman's Scheduled Caste certificate and stated that such conversions undermine the social ethos of the reservation system.
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The right to work deleted

Why has there been a surge in the deletion of workers from job cards? Does this have any relation to the government making Aadhaar-based payment systems (ABPS) mandatory in MGNREGA? What is the procedure to be followed to undertake deletions?

ECONOMIC NOTES

Shakradhar Buddha
ajendran Narayanan

Central to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the legal right to work for 100 days per year per rural household. Each household gets a unique job card containing the list of all its registered adults. One cannot work in MGNREGA without a job card. Addition of new members to job cards happens upon



THE GIST

▼ The MGNREGA scheme ensures the right to work for 100 days per year per rural household. However, it has been observed that there is an increasing number of worker deletions with a total of 10.43 crore MGNREGA workers across the country in the past four years alone

▼ The surge of deletions in 2022-23 coincided with the

- MGNREGA Overview: Legal right to 100 days of work per year per rural household; requires a unique job card for each household.
- Deletion Procedure: Deletions can occur if a household migrates, job card is a duplicate, or issued with forged documents.
- Due process requires verification, documentation, and updates in the MGNREGA Management Information System (MIS).
- Surge in Deletions: Significant increase from 1.49 crore in 2021-22 to 5.53 crore in 2022-23.
- Coincided with making Aadhaar-based payment systems (ABPS) mandatory.
- Main reason for deletions was "not willing to work," which accounted for 71% of deletions.
- Concerns and Recommendations:
 - Unverified deletions and lack of adherence to due process.
 - Importance of independent audits, regular reviews, involving gram sabhas, and efficient grievance redress systems.

Indian Express-IR(GSII)-Page 16

Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire deal

A ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon came into effect on Wednesday. Why did Israel agree to this deal? And what does this mean for the Israel-Lebanon frontier, and the region at large?

EXPERT EXPLAINS

BASHIR ALI ABBAS



IN THESE early days at least, the fresh ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah is holding.

Principally, the (unpublished) ceasefire mimics UNSC Resolution 1701, which was adopted in the wake of the 2006 conflict. Hezbollah is supposed to withdraw to the north of the Litani river, Israel to the south of the Blue Line, with the Lebanese Army remaining as the only armed force allowed between the two in South Lebanon. It gives both forces 60 days to withdraw to their respective positions.

A crucial novelty in the agreement is the addition of the United States and France to the tripartite mechanism of Lebanon, Israel, and the UNIFIL that oversees the implementation of UNSCR 1701. Notably, it does not call for a complete disarmament of Hezbollah in Lebanon, north of the Litani, while Israel proclaimed that it retains the right to strike again if Hezbollah violates the agreement (something that the Lebanese government rejects).



Lebanese troops in the city of Tyre in South Lebanon. As per the ceasefire deal, the Lebanese Army will be the only military presence in the "buffer zone". Reuters

in Northern Israel who opposed the ceasefire till the end.

What does the ceasefire mean for the Israel-Lebanon frontier?

arrangement in 2024, that is supposed to differentiate it from the 2006 predicament, has come with explicit non-commitment of any combat troops, which is arguably also more palatable for the incoming Donald Trump administration in Washington DC.

However, Hezbollah still remains entrenched in Lebanon's society and government, with 15 members in Parliament and an ally in the Speaker's office. Notwithstanding the fillip of Western presence in ceasefire oversight, Hezbollah can now shift to regaining its socio-political base, having forced Israel again to withdraw as it did in 2006.

Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah on Tuesday vowed to "carry on resistance", adding that the force that was "fighting in the battlefield will itself help to rebuild".

What does it mean for the region at large?

Two things. **FIRST**, the acceptance on the part of Lebanon and Hezbollah of even a cursory US presence in South Lebanon, could not have occurred without Hezbollah Chief Naim Qassem (who televised his acceptance to the US-proposed ceasefire draft at least a week ago) consulting Tehran.

As Iran engages the IAEA, keeps up a steady stream of signals to engage the United States for sanctions relief, and deepens its

- Israel and Lebanon agreed to a ceasefire on November 27, 2024, following Israel's security cabinet's approval of a US-backed proposal to end the 13-month-long conflict. US President Biden's Announcement: President Joe Biden confirmed the ceasefire after speaking with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Mikati, with fighting to cease at 4 a.m. local time.
- Objective of the Ceasefire: The ceasefire aims to be permanent, with a focus on preventing Hezbollah and other militant groups from threatening Israel's security. Resolution 1701: The ceasefire proposal is based on UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), which sought to end hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, establish a buffer zone, and create a permanent ceasefire.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-IR(GS2)



- India has improved its position by eleven slots and is now placed at 49th rank as per the Network Readiness Index 2024 (NRI 2024) report released on 21st November 2024, as against 60th rank scored in the NRI 2023 report. In its latest version of 2024, the Report maps the network-based readiness landscape of 133 economies based on their performances in four different pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact, covering a total of 54 variables. The report has been published by the Portulans Institute, an independent non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC.
- India has not only improved its ranking, but also improved its score from 49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024. It is noteworthy that India leads in several indicators. The report states that India secured 1st rank in 'AI scientific publications', 'AI talent concentration' and 'ICT services exports', 2nd rank in 'FTTH/Building Internet subscriptions', 'Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country' and 'International Internet bandwidth', 3rd rank in 'Domestic market scale' and 4th rank in 'annual investment in telecommunication services.'

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-Defense(GS3)



- The 11th edition of Indian Coast Guard's National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise & Workshop (SAREX-24) will be conducted under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board in Kochi, Kerala on November 28-29, 2024. The event will be inaugurated by Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh.
- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Director General S Paramesh, who is also the National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordinating Authority, will be among the dignitaries attending the event.
- The theme will be '*Enhancing Search and Rescue capabilities through Regional collaboration*'. It signifies ICG's commitment to provide succor during large-scale contingencies regardless of location, nationality or circumstances in the Indian Search & Rescue Region and beyond.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-IR(GSII)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar Highlights Key Responsibilities For Collaborative Indo-Pacific At G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting



- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar attended the Outreach Session of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Indo-Pacific partners in Fiuggi, Italy yesterday. The Minister said that the Indo-Pacific region is experiencing significant changes including new convergences and partnerships as well as anxieties, and frictions.
- The Minister also informed that the evolution of Quad has been a notable development and the Indo-Pacific landscape creates a compelling argument for a wider collaborative approach.
- Dr. Jaishankar stressed on six key responsibilities required in the Indo-Pacific region including collaborations in maritime, semiconductors and supply chains, and resources to avoid unsustainable debt. He said that increased capacities in governance, health, and technology as well as respect for international law are essential for the development of Indo-Pacific region.