

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Governance(GSII)/Economy-Page 9

Siliguri corridor a crucial link with Northeast, SSB presence boosts security: Amit Shah

Sashastra Seema Bal guards 2,450 km of the country's border with Nepal and Bhutan; Mr. Shah said that as the Home Minister of the country, he is assured that the borders will be protected because SSB jawans are deployed there

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- Union Home Minister Amit Shah emphasized the strategic importance of the Siliguri corridor, which connects Northeast India to the rest of the country. He highlighted the role of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) in ensuring security in the region, which borders Nepal, Bhutan, and China.
- Shah made these remarks during the 61st Raising Day celebrations of SSB in Siliguri, where he commended the force's efforts in securing India's borders and tackling left-wing extremism, especially in Bihar and Jharkhand.

The Hindu-Economy-Page 10

New undersea cables to boost India's digital connectivity

Two new submarine cable systems will provide additional Internet links to Asia and Europe even as India takes a more active role in discussions on undersea cable resilience and security

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

With data use increasing year on year, India's undersea cable network is growing. Two new cable systems are set to be launched in the coming three months: the India Asia Xpress (IAX) and the India Europe Xpress (IEX), both connecting India with additional Internet links to the two continents. This comes even as India takes a more active role in discussions around submarine cable security and resilience.

Both cable systems, cumulatively over 15,000 kilometres in length, are owned by Reliance Jio, with a strategic investment from China Mobile. The IAX connects Chennai and Mumbai with Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia in Asia, and the IEX connects them with France, Greece,



Experts say India is emerging as a strong maritime cable network player in the region. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

gannath Panda, head of the Sweden-based Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) wrote recently. The new cable systems bolster India's "defense strategy in terms of the resilience of the cables against physical damages or digital disruptions from cyberattacks by state

the South China Sea region, and India's proactive role will be closely watched, and India won't shy away from taking a leading role there," he said. In March, three submarine cables connecting India to West Asia and Europe were disrupted, impacting traffic to India. While that incident had an

has been felt worldwide, and India is no exception. Telecom Secretary Neeraj Mittal is part of the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience established by the International Telecommunication Union. IT Secretary S. Krishnan asked at an event earlier this month, "Are we stable within the country that all services within this country can be offered even in the event of a disruption?"

Bangladesh connection
The Bangladeshi government recently put on hold plans by Internet service providers in that country to sell bandwidth to North-east India, according to reports from local media. This setback, however, has limited impact for India, said Suvesh Chattopadhyaya, an undersea cable industry veteran. North-east States are already served by fibre laid on top

- India's undersea cable network is expanding with the launch of two new systems: the India Asia Xpress (IAX) and the India Europe Xpress (IEX), set to connect India to additional internet links in Asia and Europe.
 - Cable System Details:
Both systems are over 15,000 km long and owned by Reliance Jio, with strategic investment from China Mobile.
 - IAX connects Chennai and Mumbai to Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia; IEX links them to France, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Djibouti.
- Geopolitical Significance: The expansions reflect rising data traffic and India's increased geopolitical ambitions, particularly in terms of submarine cable security.

The Hindu-Defence(GSIII)-Page 10

Defence Ministry signs ₹7,629 crore contract with L&T for 100 more K9 artillery guns

A statement said the procurement will catalyse the artillery modernisation and enhance overall operational readiness of the Indian Army.

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THE HINDU BUREAU



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- The Defence Ministry signed a ₹7,629 crore contract with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for 100 additional 155 mm/52 calibre K9 Vajra-T self-propelled tracked artillery guns for the Indian Army.

Purpose: The procurement aims to modernize artillery and enhance the operational readiness of the Indian Army.

Technology: The K9 Vajra-T features cutting-edge technology, capable of delivering long-range accurate fires at a high rate of fire.

Operable in sub-zero temperatures and high-altitude areas.

Economic Impact: The project will generate over nine lakh man-days of employment over four years. Encourages participation of Indian industries, including MSMEs.

Indian Express-Environment(GSIII)-Page 12

WHY AND HOW DID THE UNITED STATES ERADICATE 'MURDER HORNETS'?

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

THE NORTHERN giant hornet, nicknamed the "murder hornet", has been eradicated in the United States, the Department of Agriculture said on Wednesday. The insect was first spotted in Washington state near the Canadian border in 2019. Efforts quickly began to track down and get rid of the invasive species which poses a threat to bees and agriculture. Washington was the only state in the US that has had confirmed sightings of the northern giant hornets.

What made 'murder hornets' a threat?

The hornets, which can be 2 inches long and are an invasive species from Asia, first came under the spotlight in 2013 when they killed at least 42 people in China, and seriously injured 1,675, according to a report by the Associated Press.

The species poses a significant threat to insects and native pollinators. 'Murder hornets' can kill an entire beehive of honeybees in just 90 minutes.

"The hornets can enter a 'slaughter phase' where they kill entire hives by de-

through most beekeeper suits, delivering almost seven times the amount of venom as a honey bee. Moreover, they have the ability to sting multiple times.

How did the US eradicate 'murder hornets'?

State, federal, and international government agencies joined forces to eradicate northern giant hornets in the US.

The first task was to find the nests of hornets. This was a challenge as hornets usually build their nests in forested areas, often in an underground cavity, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

"In some cases, entomologists captured a live hornet, attached a radio tag to it, released it, and tracked the hornet back to its nest," a report by CBS News said.

After locating a nest in a tree, entomologists "plugged the nest with foam, wrapped the tree in plastic and vacuumed out the hornets" the report said. They also used carbon dioxide to kill any of the remaining hornets.

The public participated in the process by helping entomologists track down hornet nests, and agreeing to place traps at their residences.

Dr Mark Davidson, deputy administrator at USDA's Animal and Plant Health



Wikimedia Commons

- The Northern giant hornet, also known as the "murder hornet," has been eradicated in the United States, according to the Department of Agriculture. First spotted in Washington state in 2019, the species posed a significant threat to bees and agriculture.
- The hornets, which can be up to 2 inches long, are known for killing entire beehives by decapitating bees and posing risks to native pollinators.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-Economy(GSIII)

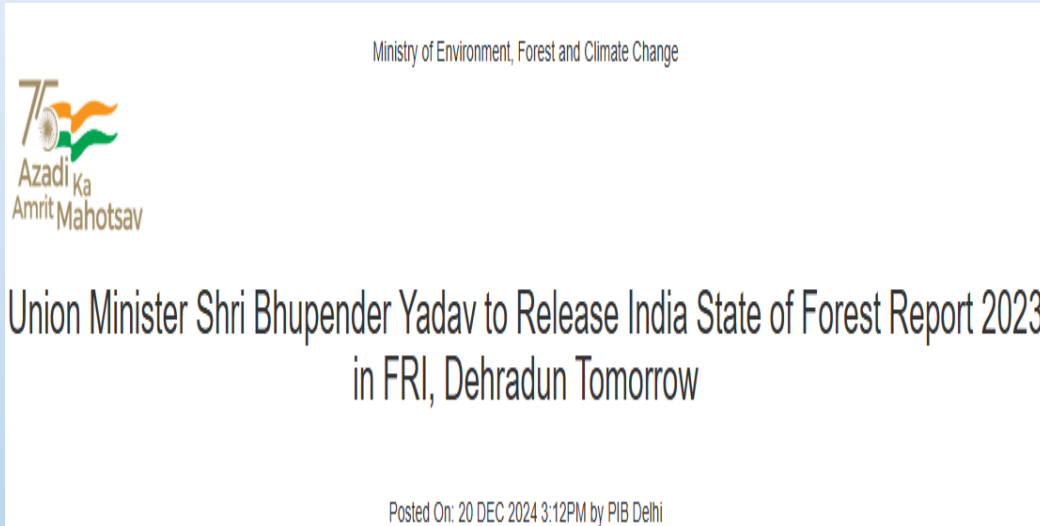


- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$350 million policy-based loan under the second subprogram of Strengthening Multimodal and Integrated Logistics Ecosystem (SMILE) program.
- The SMILE program is a programmatic policy-based loan (PBL) to support the government in undertaking wide-ranging reforms in the logistics sector in India. The programmatic approach comprises two subprograms, which aim to expand India's manufacturing sector and improve the resilience of its supply chains.
- The program establishes and operationalizes a comprehensive policy framework to enhance logistics efficiency through (i) strengthening the institutional bases for multimodal logistics infrastructure development at the national, state, and city levels; (ii) standardizing warehousing and other logistics assets to strengthen supply chains and incentivize greater private sector investment; (iii) improving efficiencies in external trade logistics; and (iv) adopting smart systems for efficient and low emission logistics.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Environment(GSIII)



- Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Sh. Bhupender Yadav will release the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023 in presence of Minister of State Sh. Kirti Vardhan Singh and Secretary, Smt. Leena Nandan tomorrow in FRI, Dehradun.
- The “India State of Forest Report (ISFR)” is brought out by Forest Survey of India (FSI) on a biennial basis since 1987. The report provides vital information on Forest and Tree resources of the country, based on two major activities viz., Forest Cover Mapping (FCM) and National Forest Inventory (NFI) of FSI. FSI has been publishing the report since 1987 and this report will be 18th such report in the series.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

DD News-Environment(GSIII)

Indian Environmentalist Madhav Gadgil Receives UNEP's Lifetime Achievement Award 2024



- Madhav Gadgil received the UNEP Lifetime Achievement Award, the United Nations' highest environmental honor.
- Known for his influential Gadgil Report on protecting India's Western Ghats, Gadgil has authored over 200 scientific papers and seven books. He founded the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science and helped establish India's first biosphere reserve.
- Gadgil has been instrumental in laws like the Biological Diversity Act and the Forest Rights Act. His work has earned him several prestigious awards, including the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan.