

DAILY PT POINTERS

27 January, 2025



The Hindu-GS2(Welfare Schemes)Page 1

No extra allocation for MGNREGS; wages delayed

Sobhana K. Nair NEW DELHI

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme Guarantee (MGNREGS), the Union government's flagship scheme to provide guaranteed employment of 100 days for rural workers, has not received an additiona budgetary allocation in 2024-25 despite a deficit, resulting in delay in disbursal of wages to workers.

Sources said the Rural Development Ministry was short of ₹4.315 crore for the work was done". wages for which a fund transfer order had been generated. Section 3 (3) of the MGNREG Act says "the dishursement of daily wag-



Uncertain times: MGNREGS workers at a reconstruction site on the outskirts of Amritsar, FILE PHOTO

later than a fortnight after When there is a contithe date on which such nued delay in material component payout, the lo-The Centre has a liabilical vendors who supply the raw material become ty of ₹5,715 crore against its share for material comporeluctant to supply, breaknents. The Centre bears ing the work cycle. 60% of the cost of the ma-In February 2024 in the to ₹1.11.500 crores one of tage of funds is a high

term, ₹86,000 crore was closely monitoring the programme say the low allotted for the scheme. budgetary allocation leads Despite the deficit and repeated requests, no addito artificial suppression of tional funds were given. demand. This problem was also flagged by the Par-

liamentary Standing Com-

Past trend

This is breaking from the mittee on Rural Developpast trend of allocating additional funds. To criticism on low allocation for the programme, the Centre has maintained that it is a

ment in its report tabled in February 2024. "The pruning of funds at Budget Estimate stage itself does have a cascading demand-driven scheme effect on various imporand additional allocation is tant aspects such as timely made whenever needed. release of wages, release of For example, in 2020-21, material share etc. which when the pandemic drove have a telling impact on reverse migration to the progress of the the villages and the demand Scheme. The Committee for work soared, the feels that for smooth im-Centre revised the original plementation of MGNRE allocation of ₹61,500 crore GA at ground level, shor-

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Union government's flagship scheme to provide guaranteed employment of 100 days for rural workers, has not received an additional budgetary allocation in 2024-25 despite a deficit, resulting in delay in disbursal of wages to workers.
- The mandate of the MGNREGA is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.



The Hindu-GS2(Governance)Page8

Should Governors head State universities?

The Governor's role as Chanceller of State universities has become rollikissed undermining university automates and causing avernance issues, expectally in Scares with Opposition-led governments: various reform models have been proposed to reduce political interference and improve university administration

ACCOUNTS A SPREET L Askoli Tardhan Motty

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THE GIST

- The role of the Governor as Chancellor of State universities, inherited from British colonial rule, has been a source of controversy in India. Originally designed to centralize control, it has often been politicized, especially after 1967 when Governors, often appointed for political loyalty, began asserting authority over universities. This has led to conflicts, delays in university appointments, and reduced autonomy.
- Various commissions have recommended reforms, advocating for the Chancellor's role to be ceremonial and for university autonomy to be protected.
- Some states have passed laws to replace the Governor with a State-appointed or university-elected Chancellor, but approval for these reforms from the President has often been delayed. Reforming the Chancellor system is seen as essential for ensuring accountability, reducing political interference, and promoting academic freedom.



The Hindu-GS3(Environment)Page4

Sundarbans Bird Festival records over 150 species

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

About 154 species of birds were spotted during the third Sundarbans Bird Festival. Aimed at the promotion of avifauna, the estimation exercise was held from January 22 to January 26, during which birders recorded 51 species of migratory birds and 103 species of resident birds.

Forty birders across six teams spotted 31,926 birds during the exercise. About 100 bird species were re-

- About 154 species of birds were spotted during the third Sundarbans Bird Festival. Aimed at the promotion of avifauna, the estimation exercise was held fromJanuary 22 to January 26, during which birders recorded 51 species of migratory birds and 103 species of resident birds.
- Sundarban is the largest deltaic region of the world and encompasses over hundreds of islands (105), with a maze of innumerable rivers, rivulets, and creeks. The name 'Sundarban' means "beautiful forest" and it is believed to be derived from a mangrove tree species 'Sundari' (Heritiera fomes). The Indian Sundarban is the southernmost part of the estuarine delta formed by the River Ganges and Brahmaputra, bordering the Bay of Bengal. It is located little south of the Tropic of Cancer between the latitudes 21'51' and 22'31'N, and longitudes 88'10' and 89'51'E, mainly in the coastal districts of West Bengal, i.e. South 24-Parganas and North 24-Parganas (Arbesi Block only)



Indian Express-GS2(Governance)Page 6

Hunting fields of England to Parliament: Origins of whip system

VIKAS PATHAK NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

that party whips curtail an MP's Commons, is said to have talked no-confidence motion. freedom of expression by en- about how the King's ministers freedom, and subjecting your representative to servility. You What is the history of the do not allow such a person to use whip system in India? his or her mind," Dhankhar had residence on January 23. In popular perception, a party the party's wishes. There are con- to be present at the time of voting for defiance of a whip. Where does the term whip come from? rassment to the party. It originates from the hunting

straying hounds back into the on a motion is counted - on a days, directs members to be pres- Who enforces the whip in politice comparison of the conversion of the comparison of the conversion of the

Anglo-Irish politician and philoso- the real strength of the party or A three-line whip to party Themostimportant role in the Former Lok Sabha Speaker pher Edmund Burke. As per alliance and is seen as symbolic members by a party's chief whip whip system is that of the chief Sumitra Mahajan told The Indian Courtenay Ilbert's book of whether they are indeed in a carries the heading "Three-Line whip of a political party, said Express that the whip system Parliament, Its History, majority. Failure to demonstrate Whip". Under each sentence, Achary. There are also additional was important for the function-VICE PRESIDENT Jagdeep Constitution and Practice, Burke, majority in the Lower House in there are three thick horizontal whips, apart from the chief whip. ing of Parliamentary democracy. Dhankhar's recent statement during a speech in the House of such a context can also lead to a lines. Largely the norm these The Minister of Parliamentary "If you are an Independent MF days, this kind of whip directs Affairs is the government's chief you are free and can choose how Given that parties require their members to be present and vote whip in the Lok Sabha and can re- to vote on a matter. However, if forcing a party line has sparked a "had made great efforts to get MPs to be present and vote as per as per the party line. debate. "Why should there be a their followers together" and "had the party line during division (vot-Achary said if a member vio- ruling alliance to issue a three-line you have been elected because of whip? Whip means you are cur-sent for their friends to the northing) on an important matter, the lates a three-line whip, which is whip to their members to be pres-aparty vote. Being a member of a tailing expression, curtailing and to Paris, whipping them in", party chief whip in a House is re- the strictest of directions by a ent and vote in a certain manner, party also means that you agree guired to inform all membersabout what the party leadership thinks of h In India, the whip system is as an important matter. The told a group of students at his 🛛 old as its parliamentary history, 🛛 whip also has to ensure 📲 🚛 🍙 according to former Lok Sabha their attendance when secretary-general PDT Achary. the vote takes place. gualification can happen State for Parliamentary Affairs is leave the party," she said. whip is sacrosanct, especially The system is important for par-Essentially, the whip is the bridge for violation of a three-line whip. the government's chief whip, but when it comes to being present liamentary functioning as parties between the party leadership and There were always members who what matters for members of par- crucial for all political parties, an in Parliament when a matterim-see voting on some matters as the MPs and also has a sense of thought that this curtailed their ties most are the directionsissued All-India Whips conference has portant for the party is up for vot- crucial to how their politics is per- which members ought to speak freedom, but even the Supreme by their whips. ing and casting their vote as per ceived. Hence, MPs are expected on different issues in Parliament. Court has said that the whip system is necessary for the preserva-Why is the whip system sequences, including expulsion, on matters critical to the party What are the different kinds tion of political parties," Achary important? and follow the organisation's line. of whips? said. He said the party system was Absence or voting against the There are three kinds. A one- at the root of Indian parliamen- Parliament, former parliament Parliamentary Affairs, the conferparty line can be a huge embar- line whip just informs members tary democracy and that violation secretary M N Kaul and former ence provides a forum "to the about a vote but permits them to of a whip can have serious conse- Chief Election Commissioner S L whips of various political parties For the ruling party or parties abstain. A two-line whip asks quences in the context of the Anti-Shakdher write: "In a legislative – ruling as well as Opposition, at fields of England, where a whip- of the ruling coalition, full attention them to be present but does not Defection Law that came into body, not only the fate of a partice the centre as well as in the statesper-in was a member of the hunt- dance and compliance during di- tell them how to vote. The three- force in 1985. ing party whose job was to bring vision - where each MP's vote line whip, largely the norm these

guest leaders of all parties of the you are elected on a party ticket, party, the leader of the "If a member of a party in the rul- with its ideology and policies. So, party can recommend ing alliance violates a whip by its discipline is necessary. You can his or her disqualification chief whip, the leader of the party express disagreement with, say, a to the Presiding Officer of can recommend the member's Bill in an internal party forum. the House. "As per the disqualification," Achary said. In Once the party has made a deci-Anti-Defection Law, dis- the Rajya Sabha, the Minister of sion, you should either comply or Given that the whip system is been held since 1952, when the first Lok Sabha was constituted. The first such event was held in Indore on September 13, 1952 In Practice and Procedure of Organised by the Ministry of ular measure under consideration to sit together and exchange their but the very life of the Council of views," says the Handbook on the Ministersitselfmay depend upon Working of the Ministry of the result of a cingle division " Darliamentary Affair

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's recent **statement** that party whips curtail an MP's freedom of expression by enforcing a party line has sparked a debate.
 - In parliamentary terms, a "whip" refers to both a written order directing party members to follow a specific action and the party official responsible for issuing such directions. The term originates from the British practice of "whipping in" lawmakers to align with the party line. A whip can instruct members to be present for important votes or vote in a particular manner. In India, each party appoints a chief whip to issue these directives, with additional whips assisting in the process.



Indian Express-GS2(Health)Page 6

Guillain-Barré Syndrome cases in Pune reach 101

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS PUNE, JANUARY 26

THE NUMBER of cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder, crossed the 100 mark in Pune on Sunday. One suspected GBS death was also reported from Solapur. Initial unconfirmed reports hinted at the possibility of the victim having contracted the infection in Pune and later travelled to Solapur.

Besides the Solapur case, the Maharashtra health department also identified another 18 persons suspected of GBS in Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad, Pune rural and a few from neighbouring districts. Of the 101 patients undergoing treatment at various hospitals, 16 are on ventilator support. While 68 patients are male, 33 are women.

A central team of health officials is expected to visit Pune on Monday to monitor the situation.

An analysis by the state health department since the beginning shows that of the 101 patients, 19 are below 9 years, 15 are in the 10-19 age group, 20 in the 20-29 age group, 13 in the 30-39 age group, 12 in the 40-49 age group, 13 in the 50-59 age group, 8 in the 60-69 age group, and one in the 70-80 age group.

As many as 81 patients are from areas coming under the Pune Municipal Corporation, 14 from areas under the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, and the remaining 6 from other districts.

Cases came to light when hospitals began reporting GBS patients mainly from Sinhagad Road, Khadakwasla, Dhayari, Kirkatwadi, and surrounding areas.

Suspecting contamination, water samples from different parts of Pune have been sent for chemical and biological analysis. In the initial days of the outbreak, 23 blood samples were also collected and sent to the ICMR-National Institute of Virology. These blood samples tested negative for dengue, zika, and chikungunya. However, of the 11 stool samples of the GBS patients, nine tested positive for the norovirus infection. 3 of these samples also tested positive for Campylobacter lejuni bacterial infection.

- The number of cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder, crossed the 100 mark in Pune.
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a rare condition where the immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system, causing muscle weakness, loss of sensation, and, in severe cases, paralysis, breathing difficulties, and problems with swallowing or speaking



Indian Express-GS3(Environment)Page 12

Why J&K is issuing 'Aadhaar' to each chinar tree

BASHAARATMASOOD SRINAGAR, JANUARY 26

THE JAMMU & KASHMIR government has launched an initiative for the conservation of the region's chinar trees, which have been dwindling in number over the years. The initiative involves conducting a census of chinar trees and assigning each one of them a "Tree Aadhaar" number.

What is a chinar tree?

Chinar, also known as Oriental plane tree (plantus orientalis), is a maple-like tree with a huge canopy. It is found in cool climate regions with sufficient water. It takes 30 to 50 years for a chinar tree to mature and 150 years for it to reach its full size. The tree can grow up to a height of 30 metres while its girth ranges between 10 and 15 metres.

How did the tree get its name?

Why is the chinar significant? The name 'chinar' was given to the tree by Mughals - some suggest it was Mughal emperor Jahangir who coined the name. It is said Kashmiri, are a major tourist attraction in the that the term 'chinar' came into use after Kashmir valley during the autumn season.



Chinar trees in Srinagar. The tree's leaves turn red-gold in autumn. Shuuib Masoodi

someone witnessed crimson red chinar tree when their green leaves slowly change into leaves from a distance during the autumn crimson red and gold. They also find a speseason, and shouted "Che nour ast" - a cial place in the art, literature and craft of he told The Indian Express. Persian phrase meaning "what flame is that?" Kashmir - local papier mache and embroidery work, hand-woven carpets, and walnut wood carvings often feature chinar motifs. Chinar trees, called Buen or Boovn in

What is the chinar conservation project? To cut a chinar tree, the government's nod latitude, age, height, girth, health, etc.

is needed, even if the tree is on someone's private property. However, often, the trees are cut anyway. The new project aims to make sure the government can track the status of each tree.

Thus, the new initiative involves conducting a census of chinar trees across the Kashmir valley and the Chenab region. As part of the process, the government has not only enumerated chinar trees but also given a unique identity - called Tree Aadhaar - to each chinar tree. The census has been done district-wise. Each tree has been geo-tagged. According to Dr Syed Tarig, the coordina-

tor of the project, 28,560 chinar trees have been enumerated and GI-tagged so far. "We think the total number of chinar trees in Jammu and Kashmir is somewhere between 32,000 to 33,000. Out of these, we have tagged 28,560 trees, which are accessible,

Tarig also said the authorities have started putting a metallic QR code on chinar trees. The code when scanned will provide information about the particular tree on 25 pa-

rameters. These include the longitude and

The Jammu & Kashmir government launched the "Tree Aadhaar" mission to conserve chinar trees, which are declining in number. The initiative involves a census and unique identification for each tree, including geo-tagging and QR codes with details like age, height, health, and environmental threats. The project has tagged 28,560 chinar trees, with a total goal of 32,000-33,000 trees. Chinar trees are culturally significant and are the state tree of Jammu & Kashmir.

Do you know?

Chinar, also known as Oriental plane tree (*plantus orientalis* var cashmeriana), is a maple-like tree with a huge canopy and is found in cool climate regions with sufficient water. The tree is a characteristic of the Eastern Himalayas.

N NEXT

Indian Express-GS2(Health)Page 12

PARAQUAT

A 24-year-old woman in Kerala has been sentenced to death for poisoning her boyfriend with paraquat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

A SESSIONS court in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram district last week awarded the death sentence to 24-year-old Greshma for murdering Sharon Raj, with whom she was in a relationship, in 2022. Greeshma poisoned Sharon with a chemcal herbicide called paraquat.

What is paraquat?

Paraquat, also known as paraquat lichloride or methyl viologen, is one of he most commonly used herbicides in he world. It is primarily used to control he growth of weeds and desiccate crops ike cotton before harvest. Paraquat's sale s banned or regulated in many countries is it is extremely toxic for humans.

low does paraquat poisoning occur?

While most poisonings occur via oral ngestion, the chemical may also be toxic upon prolonged skin contactor inhalation. According to the US Centers for Disease Control, paraquat causes direct damage when it comes into contact with the linng of the mouth, stomach, or intestines. It spreads rapidly through the body, and causes adverse reactions in the lungs, liver, diate symptoms after consumption.

Are there treatments for paraquat poisoning?

While there are no known antidotes for paraquat poisoning, an article published in the National Medical Journal of India (NMJI) in 2021 suggests the use of immunosuppression or charcoal haemoperfusion as experimental treatments.

The CDC suggests immediately swallowing activated charcoal or Fuller's earth (*multani mitti*), to which the chemical would stick and thus not be absorbed by the body. Hospitalisation is a must.

What are some restrictions on the use of paraquat?

In India, paraquat's use is governed by the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC), under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. A 2021 notification by the Agriculture Ministry restricts its use to the following crops: wheat, rice, tea, coffee, potato, grapes, maize, rubber and apple. Paraquat may also be sprayed in certain water bodies to combat bulrush (Typha latifolia), waterthymes (Hydrilla verticillata) and water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes).

However, various studies and news reports have found that these regulations A 24-year old woman was <u>awarded the death</u> <u>sentence</u> by a Thiruvananthapuram court which found her guilty of poisoning her boyfriend in 2022 with a chemical herbicide called paraquat.

Paraquat, also known as paraquat dichloride or methyl viologen, is one of the world's most-used herbicides. A toxic chemical, paraquat is primarily used to control the growth of weeds and desiccate crops like cotton before harvest.

 The WHO classifies paraquat as Category 2 (moderately hazardous and moderately irritating) chemical. Its sale is banned in over 70 countries, including China and the European Union, due to its potent toxicity. However, it is widely used in the US and in India.

Indian Express-GS1(Geography)Page 12

Why Trump wants Greenland

Trump has said Denmark would be committing a 'very unfriendly act' if it did not allow the US to take over Greenland, What's behind the US President's increasingly aggressive bid for a snow-covered island?

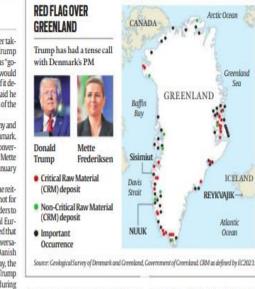
AMITABH SINHA & YASHEE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

IN HIS first remarks on Greenland after taking office, US President Donald Trump Saturday said he was sure America was "going to have it". He also said Denmark would be committing a "very unfriendly act" if it decided to not let that happen. Trump said he wanted Greenland "for the protection of the free world".

Greenland was once a Danish colony and is now an autonomous province of Denmark. It has also emerged that Trump's conversation with Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on this issue earlier in January turned very cold.

Frederiksen's office had then said she reiterated to Trump that Greenland was not for sale, and that it was up to the Greenlanders to decide their future. However, several European media organisations had reported that Trump had used threats during that conversation, including imposing tariffs on Danish goods coming into the US. On Saturday, the Financial Times, quoting sources, said Trump was aggressive and confrontational during that 45-minute conversation.

Greenland is the world's largest but



months, the Covid-19 pandemic had pushed to be based on Greenland for the first time. At everything else to the backburner. that time, German forces had already taken actively involved in prospecting, mining an

 but also built a nuclear reactor and a facil ity to dispose of nuclear waste. The competition with the Soviet Unior and its successor state Russia, is no longe that keen. The renewed attempt to acquir Greenland under Trump is now being see as prompted by the desire to counter the ris ing influence of China in the region. Greenland is mineral-rich, having larg deposits of traditional resources like gold nickel and cobalt, but also some of th biggest reserves of rare earth minerals lik dysprosium, praseodymium, neodymium and terbium. Of the 34 classified rare eart minerals. Greenland has about 23. It is thes that have brought the island a lot of atten tion, along with several prospecting min ing companies. The rare earth minerals have sudden

gained prominence because of their use i critical emerging technologies in the renew able energy sector, new military application and consumer electronics. Outside of Greenland, these critical min

erals are heavily concentrated in China which controls the bulk of the global produc tion and supply.

Crucially, China too has entered Green land in a big way. Chinese companies are ver

US President Donald Trump reiterated his controversial interest in acquiring Greenland, an autonomous territory under Danish control.

Greenland, the world's largest <u>island</u>, lying in the North Atlantic Ocean. Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat) is noted for its vast tundra and immense glaciers.





PIB –GS3(Environment)



Prime Minister's Office

PM congratulates Indore and Udaipur on joining the list of 31 Wetland Accredited Cities in the world

Posted On: 25 JAN 2025 5:52PM by PIB Delhi

- PM congratulates Indore and Udaipur on joining the list of 31 Wetland Accredited Cities in the world
- The Wetland City Accreditation scheme, introduced by the Convention on Wetlands, encourages cities to conserve and sustainably manage urban wetlands. This scheme promotes public awareness, municipal planning, and the socio-economic benefits of preserving wetlands.