

# **The Hindu**

## **Front Page**

### **IIT-M ranked country's top higher education institute (Page no. 1) (GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, is yet again the top higher educational institute in the country followed by Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, and IIT Bombay, according to the Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2022.

Among Indian universities, IISc, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, Jamia Milia Islamia, Jadavpur University and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham were among the top five. And among the top five colleges in the country are Miranda House, Hindu College, Presidency College, Loyola College and Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

The top five medical institutes are All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, Christian Medical College, Vellore, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences, Bangalore and Banaras Hindu University.

The top five management institutes are Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru, IIM Kolkata, IIT Delhi and IIM Kozhikode.

This is the seventh consecutive edition of NIRF, which was launched in September 2015. It ranks colleges, universities and research institutions and also provides an overall ranking of all of them combined. Institutes are also ranked across seven subject domains, namely engineering, management, pharmacy, law, medical, architecture and dental.

A total of 4,786 institutions were evaluated on five parameters, which include teaching, learning and resources (TLR), research and professional practice, graduation outcome, outreach and inclusivity and perception.

While participation in the NIRF was voluntary in the initial years, it was made compulsory for all government-run educational institutions in 2018.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said at an event held to launch the rankings that accreditation and assessment of every higher education institution will be made mandatory and all institutions will have to be part of the NIRF ranking system.

He said that the two accreditation systems - National Assessment and Accreditation Council for institutional accreditation (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation for programmes (NBA) - will be merged and institutes will have to have either NAAC accreditation or NIRF rank to be able to receive government funds.

## **States**

### **Monkeypox: Kerala on high alert (Page no. 5) (GS Paper 2, Health)**

All districts have been put on high alert following the confirmation of monkeypox in a 35-year-old man, a native of Kollam district, who had flown into the capital three days ago, Health Minister Veena George said after chairing a meeting of officials.

Five districts — Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Kottayam — had been put on special alert as the flight contacts of the patient belonged to these districts.

These people had been put on surveillance for 21 days and health workers would contact these persons twice a day to check on their health and to watch out for symptoms.

In case they developed fever or any other symptoms, they would be subjected to all tests, including COVID. Tests would be conducted for monkeypox if any individual exhibited a symptom specific to the disease.

Ms. George said isolation facilities were being readied in all districts as well as at all medical college hospitals.

Monkeypox had been reported in some 65 countries and as travellers from these nations were arriving in the State, all four international airports had been asked to maintain vigil.

The Health department was setting up a monitoring cell at the State-level. All districts were being given clear guidelines. Ms. George gave the specifics of the flight from the UAE on which the patient had travelled.

The person arrived at the Thiruvananthapuram airport at 5 p.m. on July 12 on a Sharjah-Thiruvananthapuram Indigo flight, 6E 1402.

He was on seat number 30 C. The flight had 164 passengers and six cabin crew. The 11 persons in the nearby seats had been put on the high-risk contact list

The other passengers should also do self-monitoring and if they developed any symptoms within the next 21 days, they should get in touch with health workers. With the help of the police, all efforts were being made to get in touch with these passengers.

A total of 16 persons were currently on the primary contact list, including the 11 “high-risk” contacts, the patient’s father and mother, the taxi driver who drove him from the airport to Kollam, the auto driver who took the patient to the hospital in Kollam, and the dermatologist in the private hospital at Kollam.

### **Minister in a fix over remarks on MGNREGA (Page no. 5)**

#### **(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

Union Minister of State for Ministry of Panchayati Raj Kapil Moreshwar Patil has found himself in a difficult situation over the alleged corruption in the MGNREGA scheme in West Bengal.

Mr. Patil, who had initially said that he was not aware of any corruption relating to MGNREGA in the State, changed his stand two days later and said the State government is unable to present the utilisation certificate because of corruption. The change in the statement comes after the West Bengal unit of the BJP reacted to the his comments, saying that he was unaware of the situation on the ground.

On Friday, Mr. Patil said he had come across corruption in implementation of MGNREGA in West Bengal and will visit panchayats the next time he visits the State.

This was in complete contrast to his remarks. The Minister had even urged journalists to provide any information that they had on the issue.

The issue of non-payment of MGNREGA wages had been dominating the politics of Bengal for the past few months. CM Mamata Banerjee has alleged that the Union government had not paid wages for MGNREGA since December 2021.

## **Editorial**

### **The Ukraine war and the return to Eurocentrism (Page no. 6)**

#### **(GS Paper 2, International Relations)**

The war in Ukraine has been underway for over four months. What began as a European conflict has had global repercussions.

Of course, Ukraine and its people have borne the maximum brunt. More than five million Ukrainians have left the country and over eight million are internally displaced.

Rising casualties and large-scale destruction have set back the country by decades. Recent estimates for rebuilding the destroyed cities and infrastructure are as high as \$750 billion.

During 2020-21, most economies that could afford to, provided generous financial support to its citizens in the form of direct payments and subsidised food to tide over the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supply chains suffered disruptions, aggravated by politics. Economic recovery has generated demand, creating inflationary pressures.

Today, inflation rates are rising across the world and in the largest economies have reached levels not seen since the early 1980s. As these countries tighten money supply, fears of recession loom large.

The war in Ukraine has aggravated the situation for the poorer countries by creating food and fertilizer shortages. The sharp surge in energy prices threatens the prospects of economic recovery.

Prospects of collective global action to deal with these challenges appear remote, given growing tensions among major powers. And so, the war grinds on, with no end in sight.

It is a fact that Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022 in gross violation of the United Nations Charter and international law; it is equally true that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is not an innocent bystander.

In 2022, Russia is the guilty one but NATO’s folly was to forget that the cost of its expansion goes up as it gets closer to the Russian border. Its strategic error was in concluding that Russia was in terminal decline and adopting an ‘open door’ policy.

By 2005, 11 former East European and Baltic states had joined NATO. Addressing the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin described NATO’s decision of moving eastwards and deploying forces closer to Russian borders, “a serious provocation”.

## **News**

### **Bangladesh on path of modernisation: Rajnath (Page no. 9)**

#### **(GS Paper 3, Defence)**

Lauding the socio-economic development ushered in by Bangladesh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said Pakistan should introspect and learn a lot of things from India's eastern neighbour.

"One of our neighbouring countries is struggling with religious fanaticism, bigotry and narrow-mindedness. The country itself is struggling with poverty, unemployment and terrorism and sometimes it tries to harass India also.

That country needs to introspect and learn a lot from Bangladesh," he said at an event in Kolkata. While Mr. Singh did not name Pakistan, his remarks were clearly directed at the western neighbour.

The Defence Minister said India as a neighbour was very happy that Bangladesh was moving fast on the path of development.

Mr. Singh said Bangladesh had shunned religious fanaticism and taken the path to modernisation, moderation and secularism. "The kind of socio-economic development ushered in by Bangladesh is an example for several countries in the world," he said.

Pointing out that Bangladesh had created an identity for itself in the region, Mr. Singh expressed the hope that in times to come Bangladesh would reach greater heights.

India has stood by Bangladesh in sectors like health, education, economy, connectivity and security and will continue to do so in the future.

The remarks by the Defence Minister come at a time when Bangladesh is celebrating 50 years of its Independence. In May this year, Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited West Bengal, inaugurated a 'Maitri Sangrahalaya (Friendship Museum)' and while referring to the Bangladesh War of Independence, he had stressed on the contribution of India in the struggle.

Mr. Singh was in Kolkata to attend the launch of 'Dunagiri', a Project 17A frigate at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited.

If India is increasing its strength it is not only for itself but also for its friends," the Defence Minister said, adding that India wanted friendly ties with all its neighbours.

### **36 Rafale jets delivered to India: French envoy (Page no. 9)**

#### **(GS Paper 3, Defence)**

France has delivered all 36 Rafale fighter jets to India, said the French Envoy in India, Emmanuel Lenain, speaking on the sidelines of the French National Day celebrations. However, while 35 jets have arrived in India, one jet still remains in France.

One Rafale jet, which is the instrumented aircraft on which the 13 India specific enhancements (ISE) are being tested, is still in France.

This is also the Rafale built for India and designated RB008. RB stands for former Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria who, as then Deputy Chief of IAF, led the Indian negotiation team and had a major role in the contract negotiations.

The last batch of three Rafale jets had arrived in India in February, taking the total Rafales in inventory of the Indian Air Force to 35.

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, work on upgrading all the Rafale jets in service to the Indian standard configuration with the 13 ISE is currently underway in India. All ISE have already been qualified and certified.

The naval variant of the French jet, Rafale-M, is in the race along with Boeing F-18 Super Hornet for the Indian Navy's tender for jets to operate from its aircraft carriers.

In January, the Rafale-M had demonstrated its compatibility by operating from the Navy's shore-based test facility in Goa, while the F-18 carried out demonstration in May.

The report on the operational demo is expected soon, after which the Navy would undertake a staff evaluation. Navy officials have said that they would recommend an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) to conclude the deal.

India and France had signed a €7.87 billion inter-governmental agreement (IGA) in September 2016 for 36 Rafale multi-role fighter jets in fly-away condition, following the surprise announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2015 citing "critical operational necessity" of the IAF.

## **World**

### **Iran, Belarus to be newest SCO members (Page no. 11)**

#### **(GS Paper 2, International Relations)**

Iran and Belarus are likely to be the two newest additions to the China and Russia-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) grouping.

Expanding the group is among the issues that leaders of the grouping, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are likely to discuss at the SCO summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in September.

The current SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, a veteran Chinese diplomat, told reporters on Friday the grouping hopes for an in-person summit in Uzbekistan, which could see Mr. Modi meet with Mr. Xi for the first time since 2019.

So far, all participating countries have confirmed the attendance of their leaders but the format of attendance is not finalised. All wish to switch to the traditional way of meeting which is more efficient,” said Mr. Zhang, who recently visited Samarkand and said the facilities for the summit would be constructed by the end of this month.

At the same time, the epidemic situation is changing and there are new variants emerging,” he said, adding a note of caution, with last year’s summit held virtually on account of COVID-19.

China, Russia and four Central Asian states — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan — were the founding members of the SCO, while India and Pakistan joined the grouping in 2017 in its first round of expansion. Last year’s summit in Dushanbe agreed for Iran to join, while Belarus has also begun the membership process.

In the Samarkand summit, we expect the leadership to adopt a document on the obligations Iran must fulfil to gain membership. The legal procedures of Belarus’s accession are also about to start.

We need to build consensus on the acceptance of Belarus,” Mr. Zhang said. “The significance of this round of expansion is that it shows the SCO’s rising international influence and that the principles of the SCO charter are being widely accepted.

China and Russia are looking to frame the grouping as a counter to the West — particularly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine — and Mr. Zhang sought to draw a sharp contrast between the SCO and NATO.