

# **The Hindu**

## **Front Page**

### **BJP nominee elected Speaker in Maharashtra; trust vote today (Page no: 1) (GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

Setting the stage for a legal battle between the two factions of the Shiv Sena, Rahul Narvekar of the BJP was elected Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly on Sunday.

He got 164 votes against the 107 won by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) nominee Rajan Salvi, a Sena MLA from Rajapur in Ratnagiri district.

The two-day Assembly session was convened to elect the new Speaker. The Sena faction led by new Chief Minister Eknath Shinde supported Mr. Narvekar.

The Speaker's election was the first test in the Assembly faced by Mr. Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The new government, formed after Mr. Shinde rebelled against Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, will face the trust vote on Monday.

In the 287-member Assembly (original strength of 288 reduced by one following the death of one Sena MLA), the government will require the support of 145 MLAs. Going by the happenings during the Speaker's election, the trust vote could be a mere formality.

On Sunday, after the House was convened, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal announced the programme of Speaker's election as directed by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. In a sarcastic tone, Nationalist Congress party (NCP) leader Jayant Patil congratulated the Governor for giving the go-ahead to the election after the formation of a new government.

## **States**

### **Celebrating the unknown and the unsung (Page no: 5) (GS Paper 1, History)**

Hundred years ago, in August 1922, the forests of the Godavari Agency in Madras Presidency witnessed attacks on three police stations over three continuous days.

Alluri Sitarama Raju, along with 500 tribals, attacked the police stations of Chintapalli, Krishnadevipeta, and Rajavommangi and walked away with 26 police carbine rifles and 2,500 rounds of ammunition.

Sitarama Raju did not belong to the tribal community but understood the restrictions that the British colonial administration placed on the tribal way of life.

Forced labour, embargoes on collecting minor forest produce and bans on tribal agriculture practices led to severe distress among the Koyas of the Godavari Agency area. Known as the "Rampa Rebellion" or "Manyam Rebellion", between August 1922 and May 1924, Alluri led a protracted battle against the British in support of the tribal community.

Legend has it that Alluri Sitarama Raju himself would forewarn the British officers of an imminent attack and would challenge them to stop him with the superior resources that they had at hand.

He was finally captured, tied to a tree and shot dead. However, the patriotic spark that he and several other heroes across the nation reinforced continues to thrive within all of us.

For that matter, the Rampa Rebellion serves as a proxy for the many struggles of tribal and non-tribal communities against British rule that have either been completely forgotten or have not gotten the attention that they deserve.

Popular cinema has often tried filling the gap and they have been fairly successful at that. However, film is just one dimension in restoring such incidents into our national consciousness.

## **Editorial**

### **Technology is no panacea for custodial deaths (Page no: 6) (GS Paper 2, Governance)**

India has a grim record in police brutality and custodial violence. Between 2001 and 2018, 1,727 persons died in police custody, but only 26 policemen were convicted for such deaths.

The recent spate of custodial deaths in Tamil Nadu has yet again highlighted the methods used by the police during interrogation.

It is not uncommon knowledge that the police, when they grow increasingly frustrated with the trajectory of their interrogation, sometimes resort to torture and violence which could lead to the death of the suspect.

Custodial deaths are common despite enormous time and money being spent on training police personnel to embrace scientific methods of investigation. This is because police personnel are humans from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.

Given the problem of custodial deaths, technology has been proposed as a silver bullet by many. Several technological solutions are available to help prevent custodial deaths.

These include body cameras and automated external defibrillators. There is no doubt that technology can help avert police custodial deaths. For example, body cameras could hold officers liable.

Deception detection tests (DDTs), which deploy technologies such as polygraph, narco-analysis and brain mapping, could be valuable in learning information that is known only to a criminal regarding a crime.

### **Dogged by inflation (Page no: 6)**

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

Two recent sets of macro-economic data — the Government's Index of Eight Core Industries for May, and S&P Global's survey-based Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the manufacturing sector for June — posit an economy where industrial momentum is being weighed down by relentless price pressures.

Provisional output in May across the eight core industries, spanning coal to electricity, grew by an average 18.1% from the corresponding month in 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic's second wave had badly disrupted economic activity.

Core output growth was led by double-digit year-on-year expansions in refinery products, electricity, steel and coal, which together account for three-fourths of the index.

The four sectors bearing weights of about 28%, 20%, 18% and 10%, respectively, posted expansions of 16.7%, 22%, 15% and 25.1%, respectively. Cement and fertilizers, too, saw robust growth of 26.3% and 22.8%.

However, on a sequential basis, growth in output over April 2022's levels was significantly slower, reflecting the 'optical illusion' created by low production in the year-earlier period.

While the index as a whole registered month-on-month growth of 2.6%, petroleum products expanded 1.9%, electricity grew by 1.5%, and steel by a relatively healthier 5%.

Disconcertingly, cement, a key building material that reflects activity levels in the job-intensive sectors, actually saw output shrink 3.2% from the preceding month.

## **OPED**

### **Why is defection a non-issue for voters? (Page no: 7)**

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

The reason why a poor record on honesty and frequent switching of candidates from one political party to another (defection) hardly concerns Indian voters is simply that a very large section of the electorate chooses the party and not the candidate during elections.

If merits and demerits of candidates had any bearing on voting considerations of Indian voters, many defectors and candidates with questionable records would not have made it to the Indian Parliament or the Assemblies of different States.

In some instances, there may be well-founded reasons for an elected MLA or MP to defect from one party to another.

But the reason why many legislators and parliamentarians defect to other parties for purely personal gains is that they know voters will not punish them for their actions and will support them if they contest election on the ticket of any "popular" political party.

Similarly, many of them also know that it is the party's ticket and the popularity of its leader that helps them win the election.

What they are careful about is to keep themselves accessible to people and help them in getting their work done. When some voters decide to choose the candidate rather than the party during elections, the ability to get work done remains the biggest asset for the candidate, no matter how.

The findings from the National Elections Studies conducted by Lokniti-CSDS indicate, during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, 58% voters mentioned voting for the party while 33% said they voted for the candidate.

The proportion of voters who voted for the party declined slightly to 52% during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections while 37% voters preferred voting for the candidate.

There is a slight increase in candidate-centred voting amongst Indian voters during the last few years, but the evidence over the years for Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections suggests that a large majority of Indian voters vote for the party and not for the candidate. This party-centred approach is prevalent amongst both uneducated as well as educated voters, amongst urban and rural voters and amongst voters with various degrees of media exposure. It is this strong trend of party-centred voting which neutralises any displeasure, if at all, that voters may have about their chosen representatives defecting and contesting again on a different party ticket.

### **We need an urgent national plan on electrical safety (Page no: 7)**

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

There are reasons to be proud of the growth of the Indian power sector since independence. There has been significant growth in infrastructure, nearly all households have an electricity connection, amid promises of providing 24x7 electrical supply and achieving net zero emissions by 2070.

While these are commendable, there are also many problems that the sector faces, electrical accidents being a tragic one. Understanding the problems and failures is essential for growth and success. And it is unfortunate that the increasing rate of electrical accidents is a problem that has not received sufficient attention of those who plan, regulate and operate the electricity sector.

National or State policies or programmes do not provide targets or specific resource allocation for safety. In some cases where resource is allocated, it is under-utilised or a small portion is spent on staff for safety kits or training.

As per the data from the National Crime Records Bureau, the number of fatalities and rate of deaths (per lakh population) due to electric shocks and fires has been steadily increasing over the years.

From 2,957 deaths and 0.36 deaths per lakh population in 1990, it has increased to 15,258 deaths and 1.13 deaths per lakh population in 2020. Data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) conveys the same story in terms of increasing fatal accidents.

It is worth mentioning that in many developed countries, the number of deaths has been reducing over the years and the deaths per lakh population is of the order of 0.03 or lower.

Accidents, as the saying goes, do not just happen, but are caused. From the analysis of available data, it appears that over 90% of the people who die due to electrical accidents are the general public. Hence, any attempt to reduce such accidents must include the safety of general public as a top priority.

## **Explainer**

### **Strains on India-Russia defence cooperation (Page no: 8)**

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

The story so far: As the war in Ukraine stretches over four months with no end in sight, it has given rise to apprehensions on Russia's ability to adhere to timely deliveries of spares and hardware.

When the war began in February, top officers stated that the Indian armed forces have stocks of spares and supplies for eight to ten months and the expectation was that the war would end quickly.

However, as it stretches on with no clear endgame, there are apprehensions on Russia's ability to adhere to the timelines for both spares as well as new deliveries.

Army's dependency on certain weapon systems specially in the area of air defence, rockets, missiles and certain tanks from Russia and Ukraine and said that as far as the immediate impact was concerned "the supply chain of certain spares and ammunition has got impacted to some extent, but we have adequate stocks to last for a reasonable period of time.

They are also looking at certain alternative mitigation measures and identifying alternate sources from friendly foreign countries while in the long term, this is also an opportunity for the private industry to step up production and meet the requirements.

The Defence Ministry and Services have carried out assessments on the possible impact on timely deliveries due to Western sanctions on Russia.

Officials have stated that while some timeline lapses and shipping delays were possible, there would not be any dent on the Army's operational preparedness along the borders especially the Line of Actual Control.

In addition, the armed forces have also made significant emergency procurements in the last two years since the standoff in Eastern Ladakh and have stocked up on spares and ammunition.

Therefore, there shouldn't be any immediate urgency for spares and other requirements, officials noted. Russia has assured India that it would adhere to delivery timelines.

## **The functioning of the National Investigation Agency (Page no: 8)** **(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the probe into the June 28 killing of tailor Kanhaiyya Lal (48) in Rajasthan's Udaipur over a social media post supporting suspended Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Nupur Sharma. Now, the Union Home Ministry has handed over to the agency the investigation of a similarly executed murder of pharmacist Umesh Kolhe (54) at Amravati in Maharashtra on June 21.

It is a central agency mandated to investigate all the offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, friendly relations with foreign states, and the offences under the statutory laws enacted to implement international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations.

These include terror acts and their possible links with crimes like smuggling of arms, drugs and fake Indian currency and infiltration from across the borders. The agency has the power to search, seize, arrest and prosecute those involved in such offences.

Headquartered in Delhi, the NIA has its branches in Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, Jammu, Chandigarh, Ranchi, Chennai, Imphal, Bengaluru and Patna.

In the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in November 2008, which shocked the entire world, the then United Progressive Alliance government decided to establish the NIA.

In December 2008, former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram introduced the National Investigation Agency Bill. The Home Minister had then said the agency would deal with only eight laws mentioned in the schedule and that a balance had been struck between the right of the State and duties of the Central government to investigate the more important cases. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

## **Text and Context**

### **Beyond male and female, the right to humanity (Page no: 9)** **(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

The Supreme Court judgment recognising the rights of transgendered persons is a landmark ruling and restores faith in the Court's ability to recognise gross injustice.

The Bench comprising Justices K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri has also restored the image of the Court as capable of bold moves when it comes to addressing the denial of the right to be human simply on the basis of one's sexual status and conduct.

The Court's progressive image was in tatters after the Suresh Kumar Kaushal v. NAZ Foundation ruling in December 2013 that re-criminalised gays and lesbians, and overruled the 2009 Delhi High Court's decision that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was not applicable to consensual sexual relations between adults.

The ruling in National Legal Services Authority (NLSA) v. Union Of India has far-reaching implications. It is a courageous decision that embeds the rights of transgendered persons primarily within the right to equality in the Indian Constitution.

In this sense it is a more dynamic decision than the Delhi High Court ruling regarding Section 377, which was largely based on the right to privacy.

The Court held that non-recognition of gender identity violates the rights to equality and life, and that transgendered persons should not be compelled to declare themselves as either male or female.

The lack of recognition of their gender identity curtails their access to education, health care and public places, and results in discrimination in the exercise of their right to vote and secure employment, driving licenses and other documentation where eligibility is contingent on declaring oneself as either male or female.

## **News**

### **Indians can get? 10 lakh from relatives abroad (Page no: 10)** **(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)**

The Union Home Ministry has amended certain rules related to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), allowing Indians to receive up to ₹10 lakh in a year from relatives staying abroad without informing the authorities. The earlier limit was ₹1 lakh.

In a notification, the home ministry also said that if the amount exceeds, the individuals will now have 90 days to inform the government, instead of 30 days earlier.

In a separate notification, the home ministry made five more offences under the FCRA “compoundable” instead of directly prosecuting the organisations or individuals.

Earlier, only seven offences under the FCRA were compoundable.

The new rules, Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2022, were notified by the home ministry through a gazette notification on Friday night.

“In the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011, in rule 6, for the words “one lakh rupees”, the words “ten lakh rupees” shall be substituted; and for the words “thirty days”, the words “three months” shall be substituted,” the notification said.

Rule 6 deals with intimation of receiving foreign funds from relatives. It stated earlier that “any person receiving foreign contribution in excess of one lakh rupees or equivalent thereto in a financial year from any of his relatives shall inform the central government (details of funds) within 30 days from the receipt of such contribution”.

### **Not only to Bengal, Centre owes MGNREGS funds to many other States too (Page no: 12) (GS Paper 2, Welfare Schemes)**

As on July 1, the Union government owes funds to 15 States under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) as per the official data published on the Union Rural Development Ministry website, including West Bengal, where last week workers who haven't been paid for five-months hit the streets.

Since January, the Union Rural Development Ministry has not released any funds to West Bengal, citing procedural lapses including absence of social audits to ensure transparency in implementation of the scheme.

The centre owes ₹7,130 crore to the State, out of which ₹2,800 crore is just by way of wages of the workers. However, even in the States that do not have these issues, at the end of the first quarter of the financial year, even the first tranche of MNREGA funds hasn't yet landed.

Take for example Bihar, a state ruled by JD(U) and BJP in this financial year, which has an accumulated dues of ₹2,611 crore.

The Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh is an MP from Begusarai, Bihar. The centre had released the last instalment in March, just before the last financial year came to a close. As per officials of the State MNREGA department, out of the total pending amount, ₹701.28 crore are dues that the union government owes to MNREGA workers in the State.

This amount has not been cleared since June 7, for over 23 days now. This is in direct violation of the MNREGA ACT, which clearly States that the wages have to be paid within a fortnight.

Madhya Pradesh, another BJP-run state has a similar story. The centre owes the State ₹1,322 crore. As per state Principle Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development Umakant Umrao, while there has not been any substantial delay in the wage component of the MNREGA funds, the dues are largely for the material component, of which the centre bears 60 per cent and 40 per cent the States have to arrange.

### **GST decision upsets dairy farmers (Page no: 12) (GS Paper 3, Economy)**

The decision of the GST Council in its 47th Meeting held last week in Chandigarh to impose 5% GST on dairy items like “pre-packed, pre-labelled curd, lassi and butter milk” and to increase GST on dairy machinery and milking machines from 12% to 18% has drawn criticism from farmers’ organisations and milk cooperatives.

Various cooperatives are waiting for the notification of the Centre to take the next step, while farmers fear that the decision will result in increase in the price of the by-products.

R.S. Sodhi, Managing Director, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) (Amul) said they are waiting for the notification. “We do not have any clarity at the moment.

We have seen newspaper reports that GST will be levied on curd and buttermilk. We are waiting for the notification,” he said, adding that the prices of both the products likely to rise if GST is imposed on them.

The increase in the GST on dairy machinery and milking machines will have a direct impact on the price of milk too. Pradeshik Cooperative Dairy Federation (PCDF) of Uttar Pradesh, the largest milk producing State in the country, will also meet soon to assess the impact of GST on the by-products and the machinery.

“The impact of this will be on the consumers as prices will increase. We have to assess the impact. We will consult with all district unions of farmers and will approach the government after that,” said PCDF general manager Tapesh Yadav.

### **Targeting GI tag, Mayurbhanj’s superfood ‘ant chutney’ to find more tables (Page no: 12) (GS Paper 3, Science and Technology)**

People often keep a safe distance from red weaver ants as their sting inflicts sharp pain and reddish bumps on the skin. Despite this, weaver ants are popular in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district among the people, mostly tribals, for the mouth-watering food item that is made out of it – the Kai Chutney.

This savoury food item, rich in valuable proteins, calcium, zinc, vitamin B-12, iron, magnesium, potassium, sodium, copper, fiber and 18 amino acids, is known to boost the immune system and keep diseases at bay.

In Odisha, scientists are now fine-tuning their research to make a presentation for the geographical indications (GI) registry of Kai Chutney.

Applied under food category, the GI tag would help develop a structured hygiene protocol in the preparation of Kai Chutney for standard wider use. GI labels enhance the reputation and value of local products and support local businesses.

Weaver ants, scientifically called *Oecophylla smaragdina*, are abundantly found in Mayurbhanj throughout the year. They construct nests with leaves of host trees.

“When required, leafy nests of ants are plucked from their host trees and collected in a bucket of water before sorting and separation from leaves and debris.

Larval and adult stages of the ants are preferred and are either eaten raw or turned into “chutney” by mixing them with spicy ingredients,” said Jagannath Patra, a scientist at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). The chutney is prepared by mixing and grinding salt, ginger, garlic and chilly and is sold by tribals in rural markets.

According to the application for GI registry submitted by the Mayurbhanj Kai Society Limited, “The nests are strong enough to withstand wind and are impermeable to water.