

# **The Indian Express**

## **Front Page**

### **Twitter takes Centre to court over some orders for takedown of content (Page no: 3)**

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

In its latest faceoff with the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Twitter has initiated legal action against some of the government missives ordering it to take down certain content posted on the microblogging site, according to sources with knowledge of the matter.

Last month, the IT Ministry had written to Twitter, asking it to comply with its orders by July 4 or lose its safe harbour protection under the intermediary rules.

Alleging disproportionate use of power by officials, the social media company moved the Karnataka High Court Tuesday against the Ministry's content-blocking orders issued under Section 69 (A) of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

It is learnt that in its filing, Twitter has claimed that many of these blocking orders are procedurally and substantively deficient under Section 69 (A) of the Act. This includes aspects such as not giving prior notice to users before taking down content posted by them.

According to another source, the company alleged that MeitY has failed to demonstrate how some of the content it wants taken down falls under the purview of Section 69 (A).

In several cases, Twitter has claimed that the basis on which multiple accounts and content flagged by the Ministry are either "overbroad and arbitrary" and "disproportionate".

Twitter has also told the court that some of the content flagged by the Ministry may pertain to official accounts of political parties, blocking which could be violative of the right to free speech, a source said.

## **Govt and Politics**

### **Poll panel issues notification for VP elections (Page no: 7)**

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

THE ELECTION Commission on Tuesday issued a notification for the August 6 poll for the office of the Vice-President and set in motion the process of filing nomination papers by candidates.

According to the notification, July 19 is the last date for filing nominations. The Election Commission last month announced that election to the office of the Vice-President will be held on August 6 as the term of Venkaiah Naidu ends on August 10.

As per Article 68 of the Constitution, an election to fill the vacancy of the outgoing Vice-President is required to be completed before the expiration of the term.

The EC has appointed Utpal Kumar Singh, Secretary-General, Lok Sabha as the Returning Officer for the Vice-Presidential election.

The scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on July 20 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is July 22.

Both the NDA government and opposition parties have not named their candidates for the elections yet.

The name of former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has been doing the rounds as a potential candidate for the NDA government.

In the Vice-Presidential polls, the electoral college comprises 788 members of both houses of Parliament. Since all the electors are MPs, the value of each MP's vote would be the same.

## **Express Network**

### **Odisha figures among tops states in implementing NFSA : Govt reports (Page no: 8)**

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

Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal released Tuesday the first State Ranking Index for implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

Among the 20 big states and Union Territories (UTs), Odisha topped the list while Goa came last. Tripura ranked first and Ladakh came last among the 14 smaller states and UTs.

The states and UTs were ranked based on three parameters for the year 2022. The first measures "coverage of NFSA, rightful targeting, and implementation of all provisions under NFSA" while the second "analyzes the delivery platform

while considering the allocation of foodgrains, their movement, and last-mile delivery to Fair Price Shops (FPS)". The third "focuses on nutrition initiatives of the department".

"Overall, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh scored the highest and secured the top three positions in the Index. The states performed very well on all the parameters and indicators governing the implementation of NFSA through TPDS (targeted public distribution system)," says the State Ranking Index for NFSA report.

"Among the special category states (the northeastern, Himalayan, and the Island states), Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim obtained the top positions," the report said.

"Despite the logistical limitations in these areas, they displayed a high degree of accomplishment in competing with the general category states as well," it added.

## **Editorial Page**

### **Learning from deluge (Page no: 10) (GS Paper 3, Disaster Management)**

This year's floods in Assam have been merciless. In many parts of the state, both rural and urban, shoals of water drove people from their homes and forced many of them to seek shelter for their livestock.

In many places, people failed to save standing crops. Granaries were damaged and mud houses were filled with sand brought by the rivers in spate. The retreating waters — before the onset of another flood cycle — could leave behind more wreckage. Ironically, however, they also offer hope for the depleted soil.

The story of this year's floods starts in the Bay of Bengal. As we know, the Bay has a major influence on the monsoon in Northeast India.

Two coupled ocean-atmosphere phenomena, one from the distant Pacific, La Niña and another in the tropical Indian Ocean, a negative dipole condition, combined to create high rainfall in the Bay of Bengal.

Weeks before the usual monsoon season, rains had already drenched the basin. To add to that, a warmer atmosphere because of climate change can hold more moisture leading to intense bouts of rain. Parts of the Northeast experienced a month-and-a-half of rains in 10-12 days.

This is just one cycle of the annual floods — more are likely to come this month and in August, perhaps later as well. There are lessons to learn from the current cycle of flooding, which occurred in places that have not been flood-prone in recent years. This indicates that environmental factors unique to each locality are responsible for the floods.

Assam is hit by several rounds of floods every year. The lowlands and riverine areas bear the brunt of the deluge. The flooding pattern is usually repeated year-to-year.

However, at times, this pattern is disturbed — this year for example. Such massive floods are also not unusual in Assam. But there is no standard pattern to the recurrence of mega, unpredictable floods. In the last century, they occurred in 1934, 1950, 1954, 1955, 1966, 1988 and 2004 – this list is by no means exhaustive.

The incidence of such megafloods depends on several variables like unusually high rainfall and the failure of critical embankments. Besides the toll they take, such floods can adversely reconfigure the landscape.

### **Obsessing about diversity (Page no: 10) (GS Paper 2, Governance)**

The obsession with diversity haunts India. "India is marked by unity in diversity," Nehru observed. The fact, of course, is that nations all over the world are diverse.

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan are diverse. So are China, Russia, Germany, Poland, Great Britain and France.

Perhaps the only non-diverse nations that exist in the world are some of the pocket-sized nations in Northern Europe, which have a population less than Delhi. Diversity or its absence is never a problem. The absence of a national will is, as is the belief that some people within the nation do not belong.

Diversity never vanishes. People merely stop obsessing about it. In 19th century Europe, people realised that it made sense to live together as a nation rather than insist on a lesser identity, whether of religion or region or caste.

The modern state system has emerged based on impersonal rules that are neutral to such identities. In Britain, such a realisation was already present in the early 19th century.

In France, Napoleon forced unity even though as recently as 1999, an official report from France identified the continued existence of some 75 distinct languages in that country.

Germans and Italians consciously sought out cultural unity among their diverse political groups. Even the USSR, one of the most diverse countries in the world, managed to find unifying threads that would hold its people together.

Come to think of it, China is even more culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse than India. “Han” – the term used to denote the people who are the supposed majority in China — was before the 20th century, merely used to denote a civilised person as opposed to the barbarians; much like the word “Arya” is said to have been used in India before unthinking Indians were seduced by the idea that it stands for race.

“Han” did not refer to an ethnic group. Modern Chinese scholars Zhang Lei and Kong Qingrong in their 1999 book *Coherence of the Chinese Nation* write that, “according to Confucianism, the distinction between ‘hua (xia)’ (civilised Han) and ‘yi’ (minority barbarians) was a cultural boundary rather than a racial and national boundary”.

They explain that “the barbarian-civilised distinction did not indicate racial or national exclusiveness. Instead, it was a distinction involving differentiated levels of cultural achievement”.

The Chinese, unbeknown to Indians, profess five major and over 20 minor religions and, speak in over 13 mutually unintelligible languages.

On gaining independence in 1948, China worked to strengthen the nation over divisive extra-national identities. India went the other way — highlighting divisions rather than what held people together. That is a problematic way of ordering things.

### **Nutrition dose (Page no: 10) (GS Paper 2, Governance)**

An inter-ministerial panel has recommended significant changes to the National Food Security Act (NFSA) which the government would do well to implement.

Pointing out that the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have “aggravated the silent crisis” of malnutrition, the committee has made a strong case for giving more teeth to the Act.

It has sought a legal mandate for the inclusion of protein-rich foods such as eggs, nuts and legumes in nutritional schemes at the school and anganwadi levels. Guidelines of programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Scheme and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme do have protein-related norms but, by all accounts, most state governments have failed to do adequate justice to them.

Eggs, for instance, are served in mid-day meals in only 13 states and three Union Territories. State governments often cited food-related sensitivities to oppose their inclusion in nutritional programmes.

The panel takes such reservations on board by proposing that “those who do not consume eggs may be provided double the proposed quantity of nuts and seeds”.

The committee’s report acquires urgency in view of the concerns documented by the National Family Health Survey-5. The percentage of anaemic children up to the age of five, for instance, has gone from 59 per cent in the last survey to 65 per cent.

At the same time, obesity has gone up in children of all age groups. This clearly suggests unhealthy eating habits and the absence of micronutrients in diets. The inter-ministerial committee has suggested a corrective.

Instead of the purely calorie-centric approach of the NFSA, it recommends the incorporation of micronutrients — iron, zinc, vitamin C, vitamin B12, folic acid, vitamin A and vitamin B2 — in diets.

This, as a 2021 study conducted by the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition and the University of Baltimore shows, could be as simple as mixing a powder of these dietary essentials into a small portion of the cooked noon meal and serving it as the first few bites.

Care should be taken to make sure that the meal comprises healthy ingredients in the first place. Moreover, anganwadis and schools need to have adequate stocks of capsules of vitamins and minerals.

But a number of reports and surveys have revealed that this is not always the case. A legal mandate for micronutrients could be the first step toward pushing the Centre and state governments to address this deficit.

## **Idea Page**

### **Putting policy to the test (Page no: 11) (GS Paper 2, Governance)**

As undergraduate admissions open in the coming weeks, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) is poised to transform Indian higher education. There is much that is wrong with this sector and change is urgently needed.

Unfortunately, the sweeping changes the NEP brings are likely to make things even worse. The reasons have been widely debated in the academic community, and are worth reiterating as the moment of reckoning arrives.

The NEP’s core objective for higher education is to make it “holistic” and “multidisciplinary” – these words appear 41 and 70 times respectively in the 60-page document. As a broad objective, “holistic and multidisciplinary education” (HME) is uncontroversial and even welcome, but the devil is in the details. The NEP ties the goal of HME to three

specific reforms: A four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP); a “multiple exit/entry system” (MEES); and a nationwide Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) system for storing and transferring credits.

The NEP notes (para 11.9, p.37) that the undergraduate degree “will be of either three or four-year duration”, but asserts in the next sentence that the FYUP “shall be the preferred option” since it allows for the “full range” of HME.

We know that the US and some other countries follow the four-year format, but we also know that in Europe and the UK, the three-year format is preferred for HME. A well-known example is the Philosophy-Politics-Economics (PPE) three-year BA at Oxford University.

Given that the three-year format is used in reputed institutions abroad and was already established in India, the change to the FYUP as the universal norm for degrees in general education requires justification.

The Multiple Exit/Entry System or MEES has no necessary relationship with the FYUP but has nevertheless been integrated into it.

Delhi University is inaugurating an FYUP with four exit points – one in each year, with its own credential. A certificate is awarded after one year, a diploma after two, and different Bachelors’ degrees after the third and fourth years.

As stated in a July 2021 UGC document, the MEES has three aims: Reducing the dropout rate; providing flexibility and a wider choice of subjects to students; and enabling credit transfers for lateral movement or re-entry. Once again, these are laudable objectives, but it is unclear how the MEES will achieve them.

## **Explained**

### **Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan :the region ,status ,crackdown (Page no: 13)**

#### **(GS Paper 1, Geography)**

At least 18 people were killed and 243 wounded during last week’s government crackdown on protests in Uzbekistan’s autonomous province of Karakalpakstan. The protests had broken out in response to the government’s plan to restrict the region’s long-held autonomy.

On Friday, thousands took to the streets of the region’s capital, Nukus. In response, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said on Saturday (July 2) that the government would abandon its plan to amend articles of the constitution relating to Karakalpakstan’s autonomy and its right to secede. Mirziyoyev also declared a month-long state of emergency in the northwestern province.

The name Karakalpakstan is derived from the Karakalpak people, an ethnic minority group of around 2 million. Karakalpak translates to ‘black hat’, referring to their traditional headgear.

The Karakalpaks consider themselves to be a distinct cultural group in Uzbekistan. Their Turkic language – Karakalpak – is closely related to Kazakh and is one of the 7 languages of instruction in Uzbekistan’s public schools. Their separate language is a crucial aspect of their cultural identity.

In their genealogical narrative, the Karakalpaks claim to share a common point of origin with the neighbouring Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkmen, but believe that over time they diverged from the others.

This narrative marks the Karakalpaks as culturally separate from their neighbouring groups, according to Reuel R Hanks, a scholar of Central Asia studies.

The Karakalpak people settled around the Amu Darya (a river that feeds into the Aral Sea) in the 18th century. By 1873, they partly came under Russian rule and by 1920 were completely incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Their region, Karakalpakstan, was an autonomous area within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Russia during 1917-1922), before it was made a part of Uzbekistan as the Karakalpak Autonomous Socialist Republic (ASSR) in 1936.

### **Nairobi flies (Page no: 13)**

#### **(GS Paper 3, Species In News)**

Around 100 students of an engineering college in East Sikkim have reported skin infections after coming in contact with Nairobi flies, officials said on Tuesday (June 5).

The population of Nairobi flies, a species of insect native to East Africa, is growing at a fast pace on campus of the Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) in Majhitar, officials were quoted as saying.

The flies can overwhelm new areas in search of breeding grounds and food supply, Health Department officials said.

The college administration said infected students had been given medication and were recovering. One student who was recently infected had to undergo surgery in his hand.

Nairobi flies, also called Kenyan flies or dragon bugs, are small, beetle-like insects that belong to two species, *Paederus eximius* and *Paederus sabaeus*.

They are orange and black in colour, and thrive in areas with high rainfall, as has been witnessed in Sikkim in the past few weeks. Like most insects, the beetles are attracted by bright light.

Usually, the insects attack pests that consume crops and are beneficial for humans — but at times, they come in contact with humans directly and cause harm. Health officials say these flies do not bite, but if disturbed while sitting on anyone's skin, they release a potent acidic substance that causes burns.

This substance is called pederin, and can cause irritation if it comes in contact with the skin, leading to lesions or unusual marks or colouring on the skin.

The skin begins to heal in a week or two, but some secondary infections can occur, especially if the victim scratches the irritated skin.

### **Bhagyalakshmi temple in Hyderabad and BJP push for Bhagyanagar (Page no: 13)**

#### **(GS Paper 1, Art and Culture)**

News agency ANI on Sunday (July 3) quoted senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad as saying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said at the party's national executive that "Hyderabad is Bhagyanagar, which is a significance for all of us".

The BJP's national general secretary (Organisation) B L Santhosh tweeted that Modi had mentioned that "Sardar (Vallabhbhai Patel) gave us 'Ek Bharath' here in Bhagyanagar".

The statements attributed to the Prime Minister have restarted conversations around an old BJP demand for renaming Hyderabad as Bhagyanagar.

In December 2020, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, while on a visit to Hyderabad ahead of municipal elections in the city, had visited the Bhagyalakshmi temple which, according to some BJP leaders, derives its name from Bhagyanagar, as Hyderabad was originally known.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who too was campaigning in Hyderabad, pitched for renaming the city, saying, "Some people were asking me if Hyderabad can be renamed as Bhagyanagar. I said — why not?"

The temple in question is a small shrine dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, adjacent to the southeast minar of the iconic Charminar, the late 19th century monument located in the heart of the Old City of Hyderabad.

The southeast minar constitutes the back wall of the temple, which is made of bamboo poles and tarpaulin, and has a tin roof.

There is no definitive history of how and when the temple came up, but it has been there since at least the 1960s, when the current idol of the goddess is said to have been installed.

The construction of the Charminar was begun in 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, apparently to commemorate the end of the plague in his dominions — and according to Secunderabad MP G Kishan Reddy, the temple predates the monument.

## **World**

### **Finland, Sweden sign to join NATO but need ratification (Page no: 14)**

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

The 30 NATO allies signed off on the accession protocols for Sweden and Finland on Tuesday, sending the membership bids of the two nations to the alliance capitals for legislative approvals.

The move further increases Russia's strategic isolation in the wake of its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine in February and military struggles there since.

The 30 ambassadors and permanent representatives formally approved the decisions of last week's NATO summit when the alliance made the historic decision to invite Russia's neighbor Finland and Scandinavian partner Sweden to join the military club.

Despite the agreement in the alliance, parliamentary approval in member state Turkey could still pose problems for their final inclusion as members.

Last week, Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that Ankara could still block the process if the two countries fail to fully meet Turkey's demand to extradite terror suspects with links to outlawed Kurdish groups or the network of an exiled cleric accused of a failed 2016 coup in Turkey.

He said Turkey's Parliament could refuse to ratify the deal. It is a potent threat since NATO accession must be formally approved by all 30 member states, which gives each a blocking right.