

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

With more than 50% of the population in Bihar identified as “multidimensionally poor”, the State has the maximum percentage of population living in poverty among all the States and the Union Territories, according to Government think tank NITI Aayog’s Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). As per the index, 51.91% of the population in Bihar is poor, followed by Jharkhand (42.16%), Uttar Pradesh (37.79%), Madhya Pradesh (36.65%) and Meghalaya (32.67%). On the other hand, Kerala registered the lowest poverty levels (0.71%), followed by Puducherry (1.72%), Lakshadweep (1.82%), Goa (3.76%) and Sikkim (3.82%). “The development of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index of India is an important contribution towards instituting a public policy tool which monitors multidimensional poverty, informs evidence based and focused interventions, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind,” NITI Aayog Chairman Rajeev Kumar said in the foreword. He said India’s national MPI measure uses the globally accepted and robust methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). “Importantly, as a measure of multidimensional poverty, it captures multiple and simultaneous deprivation faced by households.”

Ghare Baire, the popular museum exhibition in Kolkata that showcased two centuries of art in Bengal and was housed in a building almost as old, is shutting down on Sunday after enriching the cultural landscape of the city for nearly two years. The announcement was sudden, with DAG Museums, a private entity that ran the show in collaboration with the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Archaeological Survey of India (both under the Culture Ministry), issuing a statement on Friday that they would be downing the shutters of Ghare Baire on November 28. “Ghare Baire combined sensitive displays with extensive notes in English and Bengali on artists, art movements and individual artworks spanning the gamut of early European aquatints, Kalighat and Early Bengal paintings, prints, drawings, paintings in watercolour, oil and acrylic, photography as well as sculpture. Its galleries and courtyard were used for workshops and as performance spaces, creating a dynamic cultural space in the

VULTURE BEES

1. These are tropical stingless bee species that have evolved into carrion-feeding or meat-eating bees. These bees are the only bees in the world that have evolved to use food sources not produced by plants. These bees have evolved an extra tooth for biting flesh and an acidic gut that more closely resembles that of vultures rather than other bees. Typically, bees don't eat meat. But the Vulture Bees has evolved the ability to do so, presumably due to intense competition for nectar.

2. **Vulture bees and related species feed on meat for their protein. Unlike humans, whose guts change with every meal, the guts of most bee species are colonized by the same 5 core microbes over 80 million years of evolution.**

But, given their radical change in food choice, it is found that the vulture bees' gut bacteria differed dramatically from those of a vegetarian bee. Gut bacteria, like Lactobacillus, harbor Carnobacterium, helps vulture bees fight pathogens on rotting meat. They help produce acid which helps the bees to fight toxins that form on rotting flesh.

3. The carrion-feeding bees gathered the flesh in little baskets on their hind legs, where other bees collect pollen, or swallowed the meat to store in their stomachs. Purpose - The bees were preparing to carry the chicken back to their hives, where they would enclose the meat chunks in pods, leave them there for 2 weeks, then feed them to their babies. The adults don't need to eat protein. They survive on nectar.

DEAD SEA AND SINKHOLES

1. Thousands of sinkholes have formed around the Dead Sea, which has lost a third of its surface area since 1960. Sinkholes are very common in limestone/karst areas. A sinkhole is an opening more or less circular at the top and funnel-shaped towards the bottom. Its size varies in area from a few sq. m to a hectare and with depth from a less than 0.5 metre to 30 metres or more.

2. Some of these form solely through solution action (solution sinks). Others might start as solution forms first and if the bottom of a sinkhole forms the roof of a void or cave underground, it might collapse leaving a large hole opening into a cave or a void below (collapse sinks or dolines). Solution sinks are more common than collapse sinks.

3. Quite often, sinkholes are covered up with soil mantle and appear as shallow water pools. Anybody stepping over such pools would go down. When sink holes and dolines join together because of slumping of materials along their margins or due to roof collapse of caves, long, narrow to wide trenches called valley sinks or Uvalas form.

4. **Dead Sea The Dead Sea or Salt Sea is the landlocked salt lake between Israel and Jordan located at the lowest point on earth. It is one of the four saltiest bodies of water in the world.** It is the world’s deepest hypersaline lake. Dead Sea is called the Dead Sea due to the harsh environment (extreme salinity of its water) in which plants and animals cannot flourish. The special conditions of the lake are an outcome of its extreme geomorphological structure alongside a harsh desert climate. But, it has been receding by about a metre every year.

SDG URBAN INDEX

1. NITI Aayog under the Indo-German Cooperation releases the inaugural SDG Urban Index and Dashboard 2021–22. The SDG Urban Index and Dashboard ranks 56 urban areas on 77 SDG indicators across 46 targets of the SDG framework across 15 SDGs. SDG 14 (life below water) has not been included as it is relevant for only coastal areas. SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) has been excluded as the progress of its targets is monitored at the national level. While progress under SDG 15 (life on land) has been measured using two indicators, they have not been used in estimating the scores, owing to lack of adequate coverage.

2. **The statistical methodology for the SDG Urban Index, used for the SDG India Index and North Eastern Region District SDG Index as well, is drawn from the globally accepted**

city. Ghare Baire (at home and the world) derived its name from the title of Rabindranath Tagore's iconic novel, which later inspired Satyajit Ray to make a film by the same name.

President Ram Nath Kovind said on Friday that Members of Parliament (MPs), whether they represent the ruling party or the Opposition, are defenders of the dignity of Parliament and one should not confuse competition to be rivalry. Amid a boycott by around 15 Opposition parties, President Kovind addressed MPs in the Central Hall of Parliament on the occasion of Constitution Day to commemorate the day the Indian Constitution was adopted. Mr. Kovind said there may be differences of opinion, but no difference should be so great as to hinder the real purpose of public service. "The Opposition is, in fact, the most important element of democracy," he noted. "Without an effective Opposition, democracy becomes ineffective. It is expected that the Government and the Opposition, despite their differences, continue to work together in the best interests of the citizens."

In his address on Constitution Day, the CJI said the Constitution of today, built upon the foundations laid by the framers, was a richer and more complex document than it was when it was adopted in 1949. "This is a result of the dialogue that took place both inside and outside the courtroom, resulting in novel and unique interpretations," he said. The Chief Justice said "no one can forget" the pivotal role played by the legal community in the freedom struggle. "None can forget the contributions of lawyers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Patel and Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, whose dedication and sacrifices for the cause of the people are legendary... All of us here are successors of that glorious legacy."

The virtual meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Russia, India and China on Friday revealed the inherent differences among the three countries on the future of the Indo-Pacific region. The discussion among Sergey Lavrov, S. Jaishankar and Wang Yi revealed that Russia and China consider the Indo-Pacific an exclusive concept, while favouring the notion of "Asia-Pacific region" that they consider "inclusive". A statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs referred to Mr. Lavrov's comments in the meeting in which he reportedly described the Indo-Pacific region as "not a partnership of equals" and supported the notion

methodology developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

Ranking - For each SDG, the urban areas are ranked on a scale of 0-100, based on their position to achieve the SDG targets set for 2030. Overall or composite urban area scores are then generated from the Goal-wise scores to measure aggregate performance of the urban area.

3. Urban areas have been classified as below based on their composite score: Aspirant: 0-49 Performer: 50-64 Front-Runner: 65-99 Achiever: 100 Shimla, Coimbatore and Chandigarh topped the Index, while Dhanbad, Meerut and Itanagar were at the bottom of the index.

GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY REPORT, 2021

1. The Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 was released by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA). The reports refer to 3 main regime types - Democracies, Hybrid and Authoritarian Regimes. Hybrid & authoritarian regimes are classified as non-democratic. The report aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. It offers specific policy recommendations to spark new and innovative thinking for policymakers, governments and civil society organizations supporting democracy.

2. **Number of countries moving towards authoritarianism in 2020 was higher than that of countries moving towards democracy. Findings - The report said that the 20 countries moved in the direction of authoritarianism, but 7 countries moved towards democracy.** The US and three members of the European Union (EU) [Hungary, Poland and Slovenia] have also seen concerning democratic declines.

3. The pandemic has prolonged this existing negative trend into a 5-year stretch, the longest such period since the start of the 3rd wave of democratization in the 1970s. Democratically elected Governments, including established democracies, are increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics. India - Some of the most worrying examples of Democratic backsliding are found in some of the world's largest countries (Brazil, India).

FSSAI RELEASES DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR GM FOODS

1. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has released draft regulations for GM foods. Overview of the Draft: No one can manufacture or sell any food products or food ingredients derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) without prior approval. Specifies norms that labs will need to adhere for testing GM foods. The proposed regulations will apply to "Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or Genetically Engineered Organisms (GEOs) or Living Modified Organism (LMOs) intended for direct use as food or for processing."

2. The regulations' ambit will include food products, that may have been made using food ingredient or processing aid derived from GMOs, even if GM content is not present in the end-product. Genetically Modified Organisms or Genetically Engineered Organisms "shall not be used as an ingredient" in infant food products. The draft also proposes labelling norms for food products that contain one per cent or more than one per cent of GMO content.

3. **GMO regulation in India:** The task of regulating GMO levels in imported consumables was initially with the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Union environment ministry. Its role in this was diluted with the enactment of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and FSSAI was asked to take over approvals of imported goods.

4. **What are Genetically Modified Organism (Transgenic Organism)?** In GMO, genetic material (DNA) is altered or artificially introduced using genetic engineering techniques. Genetic modification involves the mutation, insertion, or deletion of genes. Inserted genes usually come from a different organism (e.g. In Bt cotton, Bt genes from bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* are induced). Genetic modification is done to induce a desirable new trait which does not occur naturally in the species.

5. **GM techniques are used in:** Biological and medical research, Production of pharmaceutical drugs, Experimental medicine (e.g. gene therapy), Agriculture (e.g. golden rice, Bt cotton etc.), Genetically modified bacteria to produce the protein insulin, To produce biofuels from some GM bacteria, etc.

SUBANSIRI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT (LSHP)

1. Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (SLHEP), is an under-

of the Asia-Pacific as a more “inclusive and harmonious” framework. India, along with the U.S., Japan and Australia, has formed the quadrilateral framework to ensure free and open maritime lanes in the Indo-Pacific region.

India is in talks with Pakistan to firm up the “modalities” for sending humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, an official said here on Friday. At the weekly press briefing here, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India took the initiative to send food and medicines to Afghanistan in the first week of October, and added that New Delhi does not seek to place “conditionalities” while sending humanitarian assistance. “India has always stood by the people of Afghanistan, be it [regarding] humanitarian support or development assistance. We received on Wednesday a response from the Government of Pakistan to our proposal made on October 7, 2021, for providing humanitarian assistance of 50,000 tonnes of wheat and lifesaving medicines that we want to send to the people of Afghanistan. We are examining the response of the Government of Pakistan

construction gravity dam on the Subansiri river along the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

2.Subansiri River (gold river), originates in the Tibet Plateau and enters India through Miri hills in Arunachal Pradesh.

3.It is the largest tributary of Brahmaputra River. The project is being developed by the state-run National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC).

4.It will be the single largest hydroelectric plant in India when completed. The project is expected to be completed in 2023.