

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

An airport without planes, a revolving restaurant with no diners, a debt laden seaport — Sri Lanka's economic crisis has been exacerbated by Chinese funded projects that stand as neglected monuments to government extravagance. The South Asian island nation borrowed heavily to plug years of budget shortfalls and trade deficits, but squandered huge sums on ill considered infrastructure projects that have further drained public finances. Many of the white-elephant projects that helped fuel the current crisis now gather dust in Hambantota district, home of the powerful Rajapaksa clan, which used its political clout and billions in Chinese loans in a failed effort to turn the rural outpost into a major economic hub.

12 deaths from Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever since the start of the year in Iraq. The tickborne disease, also known as Congo fever, causes severe haemorrhaging, with people usually catching it through contact with the blood of infected animals, according to the World Health Organization. The disease has a fatality rate of between 10 and 40% of all cases.

9 percentage by which India's coal-based power generation registered a rise at 1,02,529 million units (MU) in April as compared to the year ago period. This comes at a time when the country is facing a major power crisis. The gas based power generation which has fallen drastically in the country aggravated the crisis. The coastal thermal power plants are now generating around half of their capacity because of the sharp rise in the prices of imported coal. This has resulted in a gap between the demand and supply of electricity.

326 number of cases registered in the country under the controversial colonial era law of sedition between 2014 and 2019. According to the Union Home Ministry data, a total of 326 cases were registered under the sedition law — the highest, 54, in Assam — between 2014 and 2019. Out of the cases registered, chargesheets were filed in 141 cases while only six people were convicted for the offence. However, according to the data, not a single case led to conviction between 2014 and 2019.

PAWAI LAKE

1. In a setback to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Bombay High Court allowed PILs challenging the construction of a cycling and jogging track around Powai Lake and said the cycle track was illegal. Recognised as a wetland, the Powai Lake is located in the north-eastern suburbs of Mumbai, Maharashtra.

2. **The Powai Lake is an artificial man-made lake located to the north of Mumbai and southwest of Thane. It was formed as a result of two dams built on the Mithi River in 1891. The purpose was to create a reservoir for providing water supply in Mumbai.** However, water quality degraded within a few years, and it was declared unfit for drinking. It is being used for industrial purposes.

3. **Management** - The Maharashtra State Angling Association (then called Bombay Presidency Angling Association), formed in 1936, currently controls and manages the lake. In 1995, the National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP) included Powai Lake among India's 10 main lakes to be revived and improved. This program, launched in 2002, was implemented by BMC. As a result of this move, the condition of the lake has considerably improved.

PANTANAL WETLAND

1. Brazilian scientists warn that Pantanal wetland is at risk of collapse. Pantanal Wetland of the South America is the world's largest wetland. This is a freshwater wetland spans for more than 179,000 km² in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia.

2. **It consists of highest concentrations of flora and fauna in South America. Most of its land is used for traditional cattle ranching and fishing by local communities and sport fishers,** with relatively little impact on its ecosystems.

3. This wetland is at risk of collapse due to a series of local and seemingly minor decisions that fail to account for their cumulative impact on one of Earth's most biodiverse ecosystems. In 2000, it was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

4. **Threat-** Climate change, deforestation in Amazon rainforest and severe drought and massive fires.

STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS 2022

1. The 2022 edition of the State of the World's Forests (SOFO) was released during the World Forestry Congress. According to the SOFO report, the world has lost 420 million hectares (mha) of forests in the last 30 years (1990-2020) due to deforestation. This loss is approximately 10.34% of its total forest area 4.06 billion ha (31 per cent) of the earth's geographical area. It added that although the rate of deforestation was declining, 10 mha of forests were lost every year between 2015 and 2020. More than 700 mha of forest (18% of total forest area) is in legally established protected areas. But, forest biodiversity remains under threat from deforestation and forest degradation.

2. Unless additional action is taken, an estimated 289 mha of forests would be deforested between 2016 and 2050 in the tropics alone, resulting in the emission of 169 GtCO₂e. The report also presented three pathways for achieving green recovery and tackling environmental crises, including climate change and biodiversity loss: Halting deforestation and maintaining forests Restoring degraded lands and expanding agroforestry Sustainably using forests and building green value chains.

3. **Diseases - SOFO 2022, stated that 15% of 250 emerging infectious diseases have been linked to forests. It further stated that 30% of new diseases, reported since 1960, can be attributed to deforestation and land-use-change.** Deforestation, particularly in the tropics, has been associated with an increase in infectious diseases such as dengue fever and malaria. SOFO 2022 suggested for better and more responsible land-use planning to address the "underlying drivers of disease emergence".

4. **Fuel** - Approximately 124 million more people fell into extreme

The Supreme Court indicated a willingness to wait, though wondering for how long, for the government to “re examine” the colonial law of sedition. However, the court asked the government to respond within the next 24 hours on how it intended to protect the interests of people already arrested and facing prosecution under Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code. The court further sought the government’s response on whether the use of the British era law could be suspended in view of the reconsideration process.

With States’ borrowing limits for this year set to be cut in tune with their off budget borrowings since 2020/21, some States that had borrowed more in the pandemic years could face challenges in raising resources, ICRA said on Tuesday. While the rating agency expects States to borrow ₹8.4 lakh crore during FY23, with a borrowing limit of 3.5% of GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product), the off budget debt calculations could lead to large downward adjustments in some States’ effective borrowing room even as uncertainty around payment of GST compensation dues has confounded borrowing plans.

India exported a record 1.4 million tonnes (MT) of wheat in April, four trade sources said, providing some relief to grain markets as buyers scramble for alternatives to Black Sea supplies hit hard by the war in Ukraine. April is the first month of the fiscal year. India, the world’s second biggest wheat producer, exported a record 7 million tonnes of the grain in fiscal 2021-22.

The European Union accused the Russian authorities of carrying out a cyberattack against a satellite network an hour before the invasion of Ukraine to pave the way for its assault. It marked the first time the EU has formally blamed the Russian authorities for carrying out a cyberattack, the bloc’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

Russia forces pounded the vital port of Odesa, Ukrainian officials said on Tuesday, as part of an apparent effort to disrupt supply lines and weapons shipments. On the other end of the southern coast, they hammered a steel plant where Ukrainian fighters are denying Moscow full control of another critical port.

The government is working to bring in more stringent norms for social

poverty after COVID-19. This may have longer-term impacts on wood-based fuel, as there is evidence of increased wood-based fuel use in some countries during the pandemic.

5.Population - SOFO 2022 further stated that the world population is projected to reach 9.7 billion people by 2050. This will increase competition for land, as the demand for food for this large population will rise by 35 to 56 per cent by the 2050s. The annual global consumption of all natural resources combined is expected to more than double from 92 billion tonnes (2017) to 190 billion tonnes (2060) due to increases in population size and affluence. It further stated that annual biomass extraction was expected to reach 44 billion tonnes by 2060, from 24 billion tonnes in 2017.

6.Demand for forest-based biomass is expected to rise further, mainly due to construction and packaging. It states that according to estimates, restoration of degraded land through afforestation and reforestation could cost-effectively take 0.9 to 1.5 GtCO₂e per year out of the atmosphere between 2020 and 2050. More than 140 countries have pledged, through the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use, to eliminate forest loss by 2030 and to support restoration and sustainable forestry. To this end, an additional \$19 billion has been allocated to help developing countries achieve these objectives.

ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADE

1.The Rocket-Propelled Grenade attack on the Punjab Police’s Intelligence headquarters in Mohali late Monday night has brought the weapon into focus. The Rocket-Propelled Grenade (RPG) is a weapon of Soviet origin. Its initials stand for Rucknoy Peotivotankovvy Granaromyot, which roughly translated means a handheld anti-tank grenade launcher. It is a portable, shoulder fired weapon, which is easy to operate.

2.It can cause widespread damage whether used in an anti-personnel mode, against armoured vehicles or against buildings. There are different versions of the RPG which are designed as per the usage of the weapon with varying capacity of the warhead, effective range and penetration levels. Origin - The origins of RPG lie in the various conflicts that have taken place in modern military warfare, dating back to World War I.

3.The most prolific of the handheld weapons developed by western military powers has been the RPG. The RPG has made its presence felt in almost every major insurgency or terrorism-affected region in the world. The Soviet-origin RPGs have been used extensively in the Vietnam conflict as well as in conflicts in Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Iraq and even closer home, in Jammu and Kashmir. Security forces in J&K have, in the past, recovered RPGs from slain terrorists, and have also found evidence of its use.

4.Threat - There is a thriving illicit market for Soviet-origin weapons like the RPG, which are still in circulation worldwide. Such weapons are not difficult to procure by arms smugglers, and these then find their way to terrorist organisations. Eastern European countries, especially those from the former Soviet Union bloc, are well known markets for the sale and purchase of these weapons.

THALASSEMIA

1.Every year World Thalassaemia day is observed on May 07 in order to create the awareness to honour the struggle of patients suffering from the disease. Thalassaemia is an inherited blood disorder caused when the body doesn’t make enough of the protein hemoglobin, a part of red blood cells (RBCs). Hemoglobin enables RBCs carry oxygen to all the cells of the body. Thalassaemia can cause anemia, leaving you fatigued.

2.Causes - Thalassaemia is caused by mutations in the DNA of cells that make hemoglobin - the substance in RBCs that carries oxygen throughout your body. The mutations associated with thalassaemia are passed from parents to children. Hemoglobin molecules are made of chains called alpha and beta chains that can be affected by mutations.

3.In thalassaemia, the production of either the alpha or beta chains are reduced, resulting in either alpha-thalassaemia or beta-thalassaemia. In alpha-thalassaemia, the severity of thalassaemia you have depends on the number of gene mutations you inherit from your parents. The more mutated genes, the more severe your thalassaemia.

4.Risk factors - Factors that increase your risk of thalassaemia

media platforms aimed at increasing accountability for content on these platforms, which may lead to dilution of safe harbour rules that protects intermediaries from being held liable for third party content on their platform, a senior government source told.

The tropical storm 'Asani' in the Bay of Bengal became a severe cyclonic storm on Tuesday and is advancing towards Andhra Pradesh, though current forecasts indicate that it is likely to edge close to Vishakapatnam and thereafter veer off towards the Northwest Bengal and Odisha coasts without making landfall.

include: Family history of thalassemia. Thalassemia is passed from parents to children through mutated hemoglobin genes. Certain ancestry. Thalassemia occurs most often in African Americans and in people of Mediterranean and Southeast Asian descent.