

# KSG: NEWSPAPER CRUX

23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2022

A small river that stopped flowing 70 years ago in Odisha's Cuttack district is set to be rejuvenated. The State government has started working on its revival plan following a recent direction from the National Green Tribunal (NGT). This is probably the first serious attempt being made to restore a river to its original shape in Odisha. The Sukapaika river originated from another river, the Mahanadi, near Ayatpur village.

It flowed 27.5 km before meeting the Mahanadi again at Bankala. In the 1950s, the State's water resource engineers had in their wisdom closed the Sukapaika river mouth enabling development of the Taladanda Canal System, a major canal of the State. This led to the river mostly drying up. The process was aggravated by agricultural encroachments that had sprung up on the riverbanks.

Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) spend most of their time outside protected areas, putting them on a dangerous collision course with people. Researchers put tracking collars on 102 elephants and found that the animals tend to wander out of nature reserves where forests have become very dense to nosh on grasses, bamboo, palms and fast-growing trees in clearer areas. The finding has important implications for the long term survival of the animals.

Astronomers have spotted what they think might be the most powerful explosion ever observed. The explosion is a gamma-ray burst which is known as GRB221009A, which might have been caused by a supernova that left behind a black hole. "Informally, we've been calling it the BOAT — the brightest of all time," says astronomer Jillian Rastinejad. The problem, for scientists, is that the explosion is so bright that it is overwhelming the detectors of gamma-ray telescopes.

Booster shots against current SARS-CoV2 variants seem to help the human immune system to fight variants that do not exist yet. This is the implication of two new preprint studies analysing how a booster shot or breakthrough infection affects antibody producing cells in humans. Some of these cells evolve over time to exclusively create new antibodies that target new strains in the body, whereas others produce antibodies against both new and old strains of SARS-CoV2.

## PUT FOREST CONSERVATION RULES, 2022, ON HOLD: NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES (NCST) PANEL CHIEF

1. Stating that new rules infringe upon land rights of tribal people NCST panel chief has recommended to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to put them on hold. Forest Conservation Rules, 2022 deal with implementation of Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980 and aim to streamline process of approvals and help India increase forest cover. They prescribe procedure to be followed for forest land to be diverted for non-forestry uses such as highway development, railway lines, and mining.

2. Key provisions of new rules Constitution of an Advisory Committee, a regional empowered committee at each of the integrated regional offices and a screening committee at state/UT level. States given responsibility of settling forest rights of forest dwellers and allowing diversion of forest land. Prescribe time frame of review for different kinds of projects.

3. However, several concerns were raised against rules such as: Goes against Forest Rights Act, 2006 that requires governments to seek consent of forest dwellers before allowing a project on their traditional lands. Do not mention earlier requirement of attaining a gram sabha NOC before diverting forest land for a project.

4. **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)-NCST is a constitutional body under Article 338A. It aims to protect and promote constitutional, socio-economic, legal and civil rights of STs in the country. It consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members.** They are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.

## SUGARCANE PRODUCTION IN INDIA SHIFTING FROM SOUTH TO NORTH: NSO REPORT

1. According to National Statistical Office (NSO) report: Six sugarcane producing northern Indian states (M.P, U.P, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand) saw a 42% increase in their output value between 2011 and 2020. Five states from south (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra) saw decline of 32.4% during the same period.

2. Reasons for this shift Larger irrigated area in Northern region. Higher State Advisory Price (SAP) over and above the Centre's Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) being offered in North. While Centre announces FRP, states fix their own sugarcane price called 'SAPs, which are usually higher than FRP. Also, southern states are diverting their water to other high value crops.

3. Climatic conditions for sugarcane There are two distinct agro-climatic regions of sugarcane cultivation in India, viz., tropical and subtropical. Largest producers of sugarcane include: U.P, Maharashtra, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh etc. Optimum temperature for germination of stem cuttings is 32° to 38°C. It slows down below 25°. Can be grown on all types of soils ranging from sandy loam to clay loam. Very high or very low temperature deteriorate juice quality and thus affecting sugar quality.

## TAKE SUO MOTU ACTION AGAINST HATE SPEECH CRIMES WITHOUT WAITING FOR COMPLAINT: SUPREME COURT (SC)

1. SC, while hearing a plea to curb hate speeches in the country, issued a set of interim directions to Governments of NCT of Delhi, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh including: Hate speech cases should be suo motu registered and offenders should be proceeded against in accordance with law.

2. SC highlighted specific provisions (153A, 153B, 295A etc) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) under which hate speech offenders ought to be booked. SC held that any hesitation to act as per directions would be viewed as contempt of court. There is no specific legal definition of 'hate speech' in India. Law Commission (LC), in its 267th Report, defined hate speech as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief etc.

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Getting less than five hours of sleep in mid to late life could be linked to an increased risk of developing at least two chronic diseases. Researchers found that sleep duration of five hours or less at age 50 was associated with 25% increased risk of mortality over the 25 years of follow up — which can mainly be explained by the fact that short sleep duration increases the risk of chronic disease(s) that in turn increase the risk of death.

During the COVID19 lockdown, many countries observed historic improvements in ambient air quality. Our study shows that despite the historic improvements in ambient air quality, PM2.5 exposures increased for 65% of Indians and a third of the global population during the lockdown, largely attributed to biomass cooking activity. One element of our study was to present India's most comprehensive PM2.5 exposure disparity and environmental justice analysis — this allowed us to assess which demographic groups have the highest PM2.5 exposures. Rural women have the highest levels of air pollution exposure. However, during the lockdown, working age men and school going children observed the largest exposure increases.

Grazing animals can have a significant impact on the stability of soil carbon in grazing ecosystems, finds a study. Researchers from Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc), observed that experimentally removing grazing animals from the ecosystem resulted in higher fluctuations in soil carbon from one year to the next. The research has been published in PNAS.

China's ruling Communist Party closed its once in five year congress confirming leader Xi Jinping's precedent defying third term, and paving the way for his domination of Chinese politics for the next five years. Four allies of Mr. Xi, 69, are expected to be appointed on Sunday to the new seven member Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), a clean sweep made possible by the apparently forced early retirement of other officials.

Months after the Union Home Ministry announced on Twitter that it had directed the Delhi government to declare the "present location" of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in

3. Other suggestions to tackle hate speech LC has proposed two new sections, Section 153C and Section 505A in IPC to criminalise hate speech specifically. Similar proposals have been made by Bezbaruah Committee and Viswanathan Committee. Also, Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws (formed in 2020) is examining issue of having specific provisions to tackle hate speech.

4. Other SC judgements related to hate speech—State Of Karnataka And Anr vs Dr. Praveen Bhai Thogadia, 2004— SC held that state or the district authorities were well within their rights to prohibit entry so that one does not make speeches, which creates public order issue. Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan vs U.O.I. & Ors, 2014—SC lays down certain guidelines with regard to politicians making inflammatory speeches.

## PAKISTAN OUT OF FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF) INCREASED MONITORING

1. FATF's decision on Pakistan came 4 years after it was placed on the increased monitoring, externally referred to as the Grey List, to curb terror financing and money laundering. FATF also removed Nicaragua from increased monitoring jurisdiction.

2. FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to protect the global financial system against money laundering, terrorist financing and financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has 39 members so far, including India. FATF sets international standards, that aim to prevent these illegal activities and harm they cause to society, recognised as: Global anti-money laundering (AML) and Counter-terrorist financing (CFT) standards.

3. Grey List—Officially known as Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring, it is a list of countries that are actively working with FATF to address strategic deficiencies in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. Countries considered in the grey list may face: Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB; Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries; Reduction in international trade; International boycott etc.

4. Black List—Officially known as High-Risk Jurisdictions, it is a list of countries that FATF considers non-cooperative in global effort to combat money laundering terrorist financing, and financing of proliferation.

## INTERNATIONALISATION OF RUPEE HAS RISKS, BUT UNAVOIDABLE: RBI DY GOVERNOR

1. Making a strong pitch for Internationalisation of rupee, he also stated that India needs to calibrate its moves to evolving size of economy, size of external sector etc. Internationalisation of rupee is a process that involves increasing use of the local currency in cross-border transactions.

2. It involves promoting rupee for import and export trade and other current account transactions followed. It also refers to adopting full capital account convertibility (freedom to convert local financial assets into foreign financial assets and vice versa). Presently, India allows full current account convertibility.

3. Benefits of Internationalisation of rupee Reduced Foreign Exchange Reserves requirement due to reduced dependence on Foreign Currency for Trade. Reduced Vulnerability to External Shocks. Mitigates Currency Volatility risks for Indian Business with increased bargaining power. Lower transaction costs of cross-border trade and investment.

4. Challenges/Risks in Internationalisation of rupee Makes Domestic Monetary Policy more challenging. It involves non-residents holding Rupee balances in India to acquire Indian assets. Such assets could heighten vulnerability to external shocks.

RBI Measures of Internationalisation—Put in place a mechanism to facilitate international trade in rupees, in July 2022. Linking of domestic interest rate and currency markets with offshore rupee markets.

## NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE(NCMC)

1. NCMC under Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary reviewed

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**Delhi a detention centre, the Ministry said in an RTI reply that the information was “secret”.**

**Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) is likely to visit India 14 to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit is likely to last a few hours and both leaders are expected to depart for Bali in Indonesia to attend the G-20 summit on November 15 and 16. Sources say the visit could cast doubts over Mr. Modi’s attendance at meetings with the 10member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the 18member East Asian Summit (EAS) leaders meeting in Cambodia around the same time.**

preparedness for possible cyclonic storm “Sitrang” over Bay of Bengal. NCMC was set up in the wake of a natural calamity for effective coordination and implementation of relief measures and operations.

2.It functions under Ministry of Home Affairs and is an integral part of Natural Disaster Management System. It is headed by Cabinet Secretary and Secretaries of all concerned Ministries/Departments as well as organizations are members of Committee. NCMC gives direction to Crisis Management Group as deemed necessary.