

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

1. Bihar Special Armed Police Bill, 2021.



The Opposition in Bihar has called a statewide bandh on March 26 to protest the passed of the Bihar Special Armed Police Bill, 2021 by the Bihar Assembly.

About:

The bill aims to develop the Bihar Military Police into a well-trained and fully equipped armed police force with multi-domain expertise to cater to the development needs and the larger interest of the state.

At present, the Bihar Military Police is entrusted with the security of the Mahabodhi Temple in Gaya, the Darbhanga airport, and other industrial and commercial establishments.

The new Bill renames the Bihar Military Police as the Bihar Special Armed Police, and gives the force more teeth, on the lines of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), so it can better secure the commercial and industrial assets of the state.

Mandate of the force will be the "maintenance of public order, combating extremism, ensuring the better protection and security of specified establishments in such manner as may be notified and perform such other duties, as may be notified."

It empowers Special Armed Police officers to carry out searches and arrests without warrant, and courts being able to take cognizance of certain offences by the officers only after government sanction.

The mahagathbandhan in Bihar has called the Bill "draconian".

2. New species of red algae seen in west, south east Indian coast.



the two species have been found on the west and south east coasts of India, it suggests good prospects for their cultivation which can be put to good use economically.

Two new species of seaweed have been discovered by a group of marine biologists from Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. Named *Hypnea indica* (after India) and *Hypnea bullata* (because of the blisterlike marks on its body – bullate), the seaweeds are part of the genus *Hypnea* or red seaweeds.

They grow in the intertidal regions of the coast, namely the area that is submerged during the high tide and exposed during low tides. The discovery was recorded in the journal *Botanica Marina*.

The genus *Hypnea* consists of calcareous, erect, branched red seaweeds. "There are 61 species of which 10 were reported in India. With our two new species, the total number of species now would be 63," says Felix Bast, from the Department of Botany, in the University, who led the research.

While *Hypnea indica* was discovered Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, and Somnath Pathan and Sivrajpur in Gujarat, *Hypnea bullata* was discovered from Kanyakumari and Diu island of Daman and Diu.

Chance discovery

The researchers were on a routine survey and collected a large number of species. "Our heuristics involve making a checklist of obviously known species (by carefully examining the morphology) and shortlisting unique specimens that do not conform to existing species descriptions. Such unique specimens would be subjected to DNA barcoding to check homology with other sequences worldwide (to reduce the costs)." Dr. Bast explains.

The study also reports one other species of *Hypnea* for the first time in Indian coasts, *Hypnea nidifica*.

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carbon dioxide in the atmosphere gets dissolved in ocean waters, the seawater becomes more acidic. Algae like *Hypnea* cannot survive in acidic seawater, hence, the only way to help these species is to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels by adopting sustainable lifestyle choices.

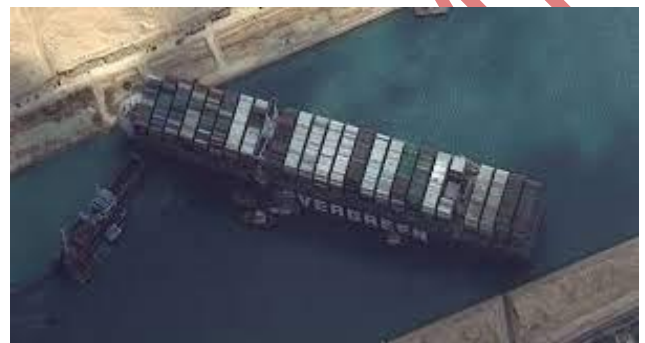
3. Iran-China to sign 25-year cooperation pact: Tehran.



- TEHRAN: Iran and China are to sign a 25-year cooperation agreement
- China is Iran's leading trade partner and was the biggest buyer of Iranian oil before then US president Donald Trump reimposed sweeping unilateral sanctions in 2018 after abandoning a nuclear agreement with Tehran.
- The pact, which will include "political, strategic and economic" components,
- The deal forms part of China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, a plan to fund infrastructure projects and increase its sway overseas that has been a marquee project for Xi.
- The three governments all face difficult relations with Washington after President Joe Biden's administration vowed to remain firm in its dealings with them, despite a new emphasis on diplomacy.
- China and Russia are both parties to the troubled 2015 nuclear accord with Iran that Biden has said he hopes to revive.
- They were both deeply critical of the unilateral sanctions on Iran reimposed by Trump and have backed efforts to revive the agreement.
- Biden has said he is not seeking "confrontation" with China, but that there will be intense competition between the rival superpowers.
- "I told him (Xi) in person on several occasions we're not looking for confrontation, though we know that there will be steep, steep competition," the US president said.
- Important Info :
- China and West Asia
- This was signed during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's ongoing six-nation tour to West Asia. Mr. Wang is visiting Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, the UAE, Bahrain and Oman.
- Five-point initiative: In Riyadh, Mr. Wang proposed "a five-point initiative on achieving security and stability in the Middle East"

advocating "mutual respect, upholding equity and justice, achieving non-proliferation, jointly fostering collective security, and accelerating development cooperation.

4. Four Point Plan chalked out by the department of Commerce to deal with Blockage of Suez Canal.



- A Four-point plan has been chalked out to deal with the situation arising from the blockage of Suez Canal. This plan was chalked out in a meeting convened by the Logistics Division, Department of Commerce, Government of India today. The meeting was chaired by Shri Pawan Agarwal, Special Secretary (Logistics) and attended by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, ADG Shipping, Container Shipping Lines Association (CSLA) and Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO). This plan includes –
- Prioritisation of cargo: FIEO, MPEDA and APEDA will jointly identify cargo particularly perishable cargo for priority movement and work with the shipping lines for the same.
- Freight Rates: CSLA assured that the freight rates as per existing contracts will be honoured. A request has been made to the shipping lines to maintain stability in freight rates during the period of this crisis. It was noted that the situation is temporary and is unlikely to have a long-lasting impact.
- Advisory to Ports: Once the blockage is over, it is expected that some bunching may take place, especially at the ports of JNPT, Mundra and Hazira. Ministry of Ports, Shipping and waterway assured to issue an advisory to these ports so as to gear up arrangements and ensure efficient handling during the forthcoming busy period.
- Re-routing decisions: Shipping lines were advised through CSLA to explore the option of re-routing of ships via the Cape of Good Hope. It was pointed that such re-routing usually takes 15 additional days' time.
- Blockage of Suez Canal since 23rd March 2021 is seriously hitting the global trade. This route is used for Indian exports/imports worth US\$ 200 Bn to/from North America, South America and Europe. It includes petroleum goods, organic chemicals, iron & steel, automobile, machinery, textiles & carpets, handicrafts including furniture, leather goods, etc.
- It was noted in the meeting that over 200 vessels are waiting on the North and South sides of the Suez Canal and about 60 vessels are getting added to the queue on a daily basis. If two more days are taken before the efforts result in clearance of the canal (digging on

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both sides, extra barges being added on every high tide, tugboats, etc. to straighten the stuck vessel), the total backlog created would be about 350 vessels. It is estimated that this backlog should take about a week's time to clear out. It was decided in the meeting to closely monitor the situation.

- India imports around 500,000 barrels per day of crude products via the Suez Canal, followed by China, which imports just above 400,000 barrels per day, and South Korea and Singapore, which import a little less than 400,000 barrels per day from the Suez Canal, according to Vortexa. Reportedly, at its peak in December 2020, India imported nearly 5 million barrels of crude oil per day. Among exporters of crude products via the Suez Canal, India is sixth in the pecking order behind Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya and Algeria at a little less than 200,000 barrels per day.

5. India- Bangladesh sign 5 MoUs, announce.



- India and Bangladesh signed 5 MoUs in the fields of Disaster Management, trade, NCC, ICT and setting up of sports facilities on the concluding day of the 2-day long official visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Wrapping up the visit, the delegation level talks were held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday. Both the leaders discussed the progress achieved in areas of health, trade, connectivity, energy, developmental cooperation and many more. They discussed bilateral issues covering areas of commerce and trade, water resources, security and defence, power and energy among others.
- The Bangladesh leg of the Banagabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition was inaugurated by the two Prime Ministers. It will be taken to other parts of the world including the UN.
- Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Hasina unveiled commemorative stamps of the postal departments of the respective countries on the occasion of the 50 years of Bangladesh India friendship.
- Both the leaders also unveiled the foundation stone for the construction of a memorial at Ashuganj honoring the martyrs of Indian armed forces in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh.
- India gifted 109 life support ambulances to Bangladesh and also 1.2 million doses of the Covishield vaccine.

- Three border haats were also opened along the India-Bangladesh border.
- During the visit a number of announcements were made.
- A direct passenger train named 'Mitali Express' will run between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.
- Prime Minister Modi invited 50 young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh to connect with India's start up ecosystem.
- 1000 Subarno Jayanti Scholarships were announced for the Bangladeshi students to study in India at the Undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- A Bangabandhu Chair will be established at Delhi University to facilitate Bangladesh studies.
- Briefing the media about the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that both countries agreed to start a new area of cooperation in the Civil nuclear and space sectors.

6. Exercise Desert Flag –VI.



- Exercise Desert Flag –VI successfully culminated today with de-induction of the Indian contingent from UAE. Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-lateral large force employment exercise hosted by UAE. The sixth edition of the exercise was conducted from 04 Mar to 27 Mar 21 at Air Force Base Al Dhafra, UAE.
- IAF participated in the exercise for the first time, fielding Su-30MKI fighter aircraft. Six countries; UAE, USA, France, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain apart from India participated with aerial assets. Jordan, Greece, Qatar, Egypt and South Korea participated as observer forces.
- The objectives for the exercise were to expose coalition participating forces to large force employment, sharpen tactical capabilities, and enhance interoperability along with fostering closer relations between the participating forces. The aim for the participating crew and specialist observers was to expose them to operational environment in scenarios requiring multinational forces working together. Timely and seamless induction and de-induction was facilitated by IAF C-17 Globe master aircraft.
- During the exercise IAF flew Large Force Engagement (LFE) missions in near realistic environment involving many aircraft of varied types. IAF successfully undertook all the planned missions, both by day and

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night, without any mission abort. All possible assistance was provided by UAE Air Force ensuring that all planned activities were completed in time.

- IAF has been actively participating in operational international exercises, wherein collaborative engagements are enhanced. A multinational Exercise in UAE with friendly forces afforded a unique opportunity to gain valuable learning to all the participating forces. The knowledge gained, lessons learnt and bonds made during the course of Ex Desert Flag-VI will go a long way in bolstering professional capabilities of the participating forces.

7. What is NISAR, the joint Earth-Observing mission of NASA and ISRO?



- NASA and ISRO are collaborating on developing a satellite called NISAR.
- **About NISAR:**
- The satellite will be launched in 2022 from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, India, into a near-polar orbit.
- It will scan the globe every 12 days over the course of its three-year mission of imaging the Earth's land, ice sheets and sea ice to give an "unprecedented" view of the planet.
- It will detect movements of the planet's surface as small as 0.4 inches over areas about half the size of a tennis court.
- NASA will provide one of the radars for the satellite, a high-rate communication subsystem for science data, GPS receivers and a payload data subsystem.
- ISRO will provide the spacecraft bus, the second type of radar (called the S-band radar), the launch vehicle and associated launch services.
- NISAR will be equipped with the largest reflector antenna ever launched by NASA and its primary goals include tracking subtle changes in the Earth's surface, spotting warning signs of imminent volcanic eruptions, helping to monitor groundwater supplies and tracking the rate at which ice sheets are melting.
- **Synthetic aperture radar:**

- The name NISAR is short for NASA-ISRO-SAR. SAR here refers to the synthetic aperture radar that NASA will use to measure changes in the surface of the Earth.
- Essentially, SAR refers to a technique for producing high-resolution images. Because of the precision, the radar can penetrate clouds and darkness, which means that it can collect data day and night in any weather.

8. DD Free Dish cross 40 million.



- DD Free Dish has continued its strong growth trajectory and its base has crossed an estimated 40 million subscribers according to the EY FICCI Media Entertainment Report 2021. The growth has been attributed to less expensive television sets, economic issues, launch of the DD Retro Channel and return of big broadcasters to the Free Dish platform. DD Free Dish has also become a second set top box within the home, used when there are no large events on television in some cases. Free Dish distributors have mentioned year on year growth in sales as well as the inability to keep up with demand due to a shortage of China-manufactured chipsets. Television households will continue to grow at over 5% till 2025, driven by connected TVs which could cross 40 million by 2025 and DD Free Dish could cross 50 million.
- DD Free Dish, is a multi-channel Free-To-Air Direct to Home (DTH) service of Prasar Bharati. Primary objective of DD Free Dish is to provide an alternative and affordable platform for quality entertainment & information to people without any subscription fee.
- Presently DD Free Dish hosts 161 TV channels including 91 Doordarshan channels (comprising of 51 co-branded educational channels), 70 private channels and 48 radio channels. With effect from 1.4.2021 DD Free Dish private TV channel bouquet would comprise of 10 Hindi GEC, 15 Hindi Movies, 6 Music, 20 News, 8 Bhojpuri, 3 Devotional and 2 Foreign channels. DD Free Dish is presently under upgradation and is expected to add another few channels in its bouquet by May 2021. Recently an online webapp has

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also been released that aids consumers in finding DD Free Dish Set Top Box dealers based on their nearest location.

- The 2021 edition of the FICCI-EY report on the Indian media and entertainment (M&E) sector released in March 2021 showcases the present and future growth scenario of every segment of M&E viz. TV, radio, print, digital, etc. in the light of demand patterns shift aided by the growth of digital infrastructure accompanied by accelerated digital media adoption.

9. Jal Shakti Ministry approves Rs 465 crore performance incentive to seven states.



- The Jal Shakti Ministry has approved Rs 465 crore as performance incentive grant to Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), a statement said on Saturday.
- It said Gujarat was among the best performing states in implementing JJM to ensure tap water supply to every household.
- Northeastern states have implemented JJM with speed and scale despite hilly terrain and forested areas, the statement said.
- It is for the first time that five northeast states have qualified for the performance incentive grant, it added.
- "Seven states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh qualified for performance incentive grant for 2020-21 under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Har Ghar Jal to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home by 2024," the statement said.
- "For performance incentive grant, the criteria include physical and financial progress under JJM, functionality of piped water supply schemes and capacity to utilise the fund. Today, Union Minister, Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Sekhawat approved Rs 465 crore as performance incentive to these states,
- Currently, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa and Telangana have become 'Har Ghar Jal' states/UT, and every household in 55 districts and 85,000 villages of the country have tap water supply, it said.
- Since the announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission on August 15, 2019, four crore households have been provided tap water connections, thus increasing the tap water supply from 3.23 crore (17 per cent) rural households in the country to more than 7.20 crore (37.6 per cent), the statement added.
- This is the "speed and scale" of the work being undertaken to provide clean drinking water to every rural household, it said.

- In the financial year 2020-21, Rs 11,000 crore was allocated for Jal Jeevan Mission and grants have been provided to states/UTs based on output in terms of functional household tap connections given and the utilisation of available central grant and matching state share.

10. ISSF Shooting: India leads medals tally with 13 Gold.



- In Shooting, India is leading the medals tally with 13 Gold, Eight Silver and Six Bronze medals in the ISSF World Cup Competition in Delhi today.
- India's Vijayveer Sidhu and Tejaswani claimed Gold medal in the 25 meter rapid fire pistol mixed team event.
- In an all-Indian gold medal match, they beat the combo of Gurpreet Singh and Ashok Abhidnya Patil 9-1 at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.
- This was India's 13th gold of the competition.
- 294 athletes from 53 countries are taking part in the tournament.
- It is the last major international outing for pistol and rifle shooters before the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.