

NEWS TODAY

UN REPORT WARNS OF SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ISIS TERRORISTS IN KERALA, KARNATAKA

• Report warned that there are “significant numbers” of IS terrorists in Kerala and Karnataka. It also noted that:

- AI-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) terror group is planning attacks in the region.
- IS Indian affiliate (Hind Wilayah) has between 180 and 200 members.

• IS (also known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), ISIL or Daesh) is a Sunni jihadist group with a particularly violent ideology that seized large swathes of territory in eastern Syria and across northern and western Iraq, since 2014.

- In 2019, IS claimed to have established a new province IS Indian affiliate (Hind Wilayah) in India.

• Steps to tackle terror threat in India:

- De-radicalisation drives e.g. Operation Pigeon launched in Kerala;
- Coordination between Intelligence and security agencies of Centre and States;
- Proposed National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)- integrated intelligence master database;
- National Investigation Agency- specified agency to combat terror in India etc.

ISLAMIC STATE GLOBAL PRESENCE

Countries where IS holds territory Countries where local groups have pledged allegiance to IS Countries from where large numbers of IS supporters have been arrested



Source: Heritage Foundation research and various reports.

INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERIES INCREASE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES: NSO SURVEY

• As per survey on the state of India’s health conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO):

- Over past two decades, proportion of women delivering a child in a hospital (or health care institution) increased by nearly 73% in rural India and 37% points in urban India.
- At least 9 of every 10 women now deliver a child in a hospital availing better health care facilities.
- 28.1% of women who deliver in hospital undergoes a caesarean-section or C-section surgery, leading to increase in overall cost for childbirth. (ideal rate is 10 to 15%, as per WHO).
 - Personal preferences, older mothers and role of private sector hospitals are reasons for high rate of C-sections

• Institutional deliveries can significantly reduce the risk of maternal and neonatal deaths attributable to prematurity etc.

- E.g. Infant Mortality Rate (number of deaths under one year of age for 1000 live births in a year) declined to 32 in 2018 from 129 in 1971.

• Schemes to promote institutional deliveries: Janani Suraksha Yojana (under National Health Mission), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan etc.

REMITTANCES TO INDIA ARE ESTIMATED TO DECLINE BY 25% IN FY2021: GLOBAL BANKING GROUP

• This is due to economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Many Indians working in Gulf region had recently lost jobs and more layoffs are in the offing.
 - As per the report, every 10% decrease in oil prices reduces remittances to India by 7% in the long run.
- Weak economic outlook of US would adversely affect employment and/or incomes of migrant workers.

• Remittances refer to the value of monetary transfers that is sent from the workers residing abroad for more than 1 year to the home country.

- In FY20, India was the largest recipient of remittances (in value terms) in the World, with remittances amounting to 2.7% of GDP.
- Gulf region accounted for more than half of this.

• Importance of Remittances

- Stability to current account balance: Current Account constitutes net income, interest and dividends and transfers such as foreign aid, remittances, donations among others.
- Also, remittances are associated with higher spending on education, reduced child labour in disadvantaged households, alleviating poverty and improved nutritional outcomes etc.

• Recently, government initiated SWADES initiative for skill mapping of citizens returning from overseas.

403 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SHOW COST OVERRUNS AND 530-TIME OVERRUN: MOSPI REPORT

• This is out of 1,686 projects worth Rs 150 crore and above.

- Overall cost overrun is about 19.60% of original cost and average time overrun is around 41.16 months.
- Presently, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above.

• Reasons for these overrun

- Delay in land acquisition, forest/environment clearances and lack of infrastructure support & linkages.
- Project financing issues leading to delay in finalisation of detailed engineering etc.
- Delay in tendering, ordering and equipment supply.
- No reporting of revised cost estimates leading to under-reporting.
- Law and order problems, geological surprises etc.

• Suggestions

- Improving processes and capabilities: By investing in pre-planning and site investigation, reforming procurement, strengthening contract management, collaborative planning etc.
- Strengthen people management processes i.e. Clear responsibility charter with delegation of decision-making process, adopting technology, Overcoming legacy challenges.
- Deepening stakeholder management for land acquisition and regulatory approvals.

• Steps taken in this direction: Preparing National Infrastructure Pipeline which aims to improve project preparation, Project Development Cells in Ministries, revised Model Concession agreement for Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model etc.

STATES TO BE RANKED ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INDEX (FMI) FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- FMI (by Ministry of Rural Development) **ranks the performance of the States on the basis** of certain parameters:
 - Preparation of annual plan, expeditious release of State's share, timely utilization of the funds and submission of the Utilization Certificates etc.
 - Optimum implementation of **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** & Direct Benefit Transfer.
 - ➔ PFMS is a web-based platform that helps in tracking and monitoring of flow of funds to the implementing agencies.
 - Internal Audit and Social Audit.
- **Benefit of the index**
 - **Bring in transparency** and promote the spirit of **competitive, cooperative federalism**.
 - **Optimum utilization of the funds** to ensure efficient implementation of the programmes by State Governments.
 - **Effective use of funds** for the development works at the village level.
 - **Check any irregularities** through audit process.
- On similar lines, recently **Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also decided to conduct an online audit** of 20% of the estimated 2.5 lakh gram panchayats across the country.
 - It is to be conducted through **AuditOnline, an open-source application** under e-panchayat Mission Mode Project by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
 - It will **ease access to records**, can be monitored at district, state and Centre level.

ALSO IN NEWS

Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the new credit protocol infrastructure which would democratise lending and enable small borrowers to avail funds easily. • It will act as a common language, connecting lenders and marketplaces to utilise and create innovative, financial credit products at scale. • It has been developed by technology think tank iSPIRT.
Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has entered into a partnership with IIT Delhi under UBA to boost livelihood opportunities and income generation for tribal communities. • UBA is a Ministry of Human Resource Development initiative which connects higher education institutions with villages for the economic and social betterment of rural communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It aims to create a virtuous cycle between society and an inclusive academic system by providing knowledge and practices for emerging professions. • IIT Delhi is the National Coordinating Institute for the UBA.
Siddi community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siddi community has got its first representative in Karnataka State legislature. • They are an ethnic group inhabiting India and Pakistan. • They are descendants of Africans from North-East and East Africa who were brought to India as slaves, soldiers or servants. • In India, they are spread along the coast of Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. • Current estimated population: 20,000–55,000 individuals. • Religion: Siddis are primarily Sufi Muslims, although some are Hindus and Roman Catholic Christians.
Pathalgadi Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Pathalgadi Movement (literally 'laying stones'), tribals in Jharkhand put up stone monoliths with engravings in order to enlighten Adivasi people about their constitutional and other rights. • The engravings usually highlight the special autonomy granted to Adivasi areas under (Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996). • Pathalgadi is an ancient tradition in the tribal communities of Jharkhand. Adivasis usually erected engraved stones to mark the birth or death of a person.
Khazan ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a estuarine agricultural system practiced in low-lying floodplains of Goa. • These ecosystems are reclaimed wetlands and mangrove areas, predominantly in Goa, where tidal influence is regulated by the construction of embankments and sluice gates. • They are predominantly rice and fish fields. • It protects agricultural fields and villages from salinity intrusion, inundation and floods.
Latent viral Infection (LVI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an infection that is inactive or dormant. Latent infections last the life of the host and occur when the primary infection is not cleared by the adaptive immune response. • These are opposed to active infections, where a virus is actively replicating and potentially causing symptoms. • Examples of LVI: Herpes simplex viruses type 1 and 2, HIV, cytomegalovirus etc. • Recently, questions about latency of the SARS-CoV-2 virus were raised as cases of people who had tested negative for COVID-19 testing positive again after a while emerged.
BelYo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is country's first COVID-19 blockchain platform. • It will convert COVID-19-related clinical and vaccination data of citizens currently from the physical form into digital assets. • This data then can be retrieved by contact tracing apps like Aarogya Setu. • Developed by: BelfricsBT, a global blockchain start-up, along with YoSync, a start-up incubated at IIIT Bangalore.
Kashmir saffron gets geographical indication (GI) certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kashmir saffron is the only saffron in the world that is grown at an altitude of 1,600 meters. • It has unique characteristics like longer and thicket stigma, natural deep-red colour, high aroma etc.

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