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MK Yadav Sir

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India eyes multiple mineral pacts with African nations

Private players will be invited to take part in exploration, trade within those countries

WITH KUNAR
New Delhi, 19 May

India is planning to soon sign new and updated mineral pacts with about a dozen countries in Africa. The Ministry of Mines is in discussions with Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Business Standard has learnt.

"Negotiations are ongoing with around a dozen countries, and more will be added to the list soon. We aim to secure India's mineral supply chain, and African countries have all the minerals we require," said a senior government official.

"The aim of these mineral agreements will encompass not only meeting the demand for critical minerals, but also addressing all of India's mineral requirements," the official added.

THE WISHLIST



■ **Côte d'Ivoire:** Diamonds, manganese, gold, nickel

■ **Madagascar:** Graphite, chromite, nickel, cobalt, ilmenite

■ **Malawi:** Uranium, phosphates, bauxite, coal, rare earths, graphite, titanium

■ **Zimbabwe:** Chromium, platinum, gold, nickel, coal

■ **South Africa:** Gold, platinum group metals, chromium, manganese, coal

Cobalt, nickel, graphite, diamonds, platinum, and uranium are among the major minerals found in Africa. Currently, India has memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with six African countries – Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. So far, India has courted several African nations

under multilateral initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuel Alliance.

Government officials stated that alongside central agencies, private players will also be invited to take part in exploration, mining, and mineral trading within these countries.

"Beyond public sector undertak-

ings (PSUs), private players will also be encouraged to engage with these countries. Mining firms such as Vedanta and Jindal already have a presence there. We aim to leverage their expertise and assist in expanding their operations in Africa," another official said.

According to Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI), there are many Indian private players like Vedanta Group, Jindal Steel & Power, Santa Mines & Minerals, Ashapura Group of Companies, among others.

Spectre of China
A successful trade deal with Africa will assist India in meeting its mineral requirements.

But industry executives believe that India's pursuit of minerals will face challenges due to China's significant presence in the continent.

(With inputs from Sahayon Chakraborty)

Read more on business-standard.com

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Context: India is planning to soon sign new and updated mineral pacts with about a dozen countries in Africa.

Minerals Pact with African Countries

- **Countries:** Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- **Objective:** The aim of these mineral agreements will encompass not only meeting the demand for critical minerals, but also addressing all of India's mineral requirements.
- **Minerals:** Cobalt, nickel, graphite, diamonds, platinum, and uranium are among the major minerals found in Africa.
 - Currently, India has memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with six African countries – Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
 - India has courted several African nations under multilateral initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuel Alliance.
- **Strategic Mineral Supply Chain:** The DRC has the largest cobalt reserves in the world, at around six million metric tonnes, as of 2023.
- **Expanding Lithium Plants:** Chinese-funded new lithium plants in Zimbabwe are set to begin operations in 2024. Others in the pipeline are Mali, Ethiopia, the DRC, and Namibia, according to S&P Global.

India's Response to Mineral Demand

- **Acceleration in Mine Auctions:** To meet its mineral demand, India has accelerated the pace of auctioning mines, with a particular emphasis on critical minerals.
- **Critical Minerals List and Auctions:** The Centre released its first critical minerals' list in June 2023 and announced the first round of critical minerals auctions in November of the previous year.
- **Number of Mineral Blocks:** Currently, 38 critical mineral blocks are up for auction. Since 2015, a total of 354 mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned, according to the Ministry of Mines data.

NIMHANS bags the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for 2024 by the World Health Organization

Context: National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, an Institute of National Importance under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has been awarded with the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for 2024 by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion

- **About:** It recognizes individuals, institutions and/or governmental or non-governmental organizations that have demonstrated remarkable contributions to health promotion.
- **Established by:** WHO in 2019.
- **Initiative of:** Ministers of Health of Member States of the African Region.
- **Aim:** The Award aims at rewarding work that has extended far beyond the call of normal duties.

Nelson Mandela

- **Early life:** Born in South Africa, Mandela's upbringing was deeply rooted in the complexities of his nation's history and struggles.
- **Anti-Apartheid Revolutionary:** Mandela emerged as a prominent figure in the fight against apartheid, advocating for the dismantling of racial segregation and discrimination.
- **Political Leader and Philanthropist:** He not only led the anti-apartheid movement but also dedicated himself to philanthropic endeavors aimed at uplifting the marginalized communities.
 - He advocated for a democratic South Africa where all races, languages, and viewpoints could coexist harmoniously, striving for equality and inclusivity.
- **Presidency (1994-1999):** Mandela's presidency marked a pivotal moment in South Africa's history, symbolizing the triumph of democracy over oppression.
- **Published Works:** "Long Walk to Freedom" and "Conversations with Myself".

India is warming fast; endured its 2nd-hottest year on record in 2023: State of Environment in Figures 2024

Context: The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and Down to Earth magazine recently launched the State of India's Environment report 2024.

State of Environment in Figures Report

- **About:** It is the annual publication by Down to Earth and Delhi-based think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and a “unique collation of statistics which provides a snapshot of the state of affairs in the country using numbers”.
- **Covers subjects:** Health, energy, climate change, water, agriculture, waste and air pollution, among others

Key Highlights of the Report

- The share of buses in India's registered vehicles dropped from just over **11% in 1951 to 0.07% in 2020**.
- Most thermal power plants are non-compliant with sulphur dioxide emission norms; only **16% meet the standards, and only 9% of the capacity allocated** to states/UTs is compliant.
- 21% of municipal solid waste in India remains unprocessed, and over 80% of legacy waste remains unremediated in 15 states and Union Territories.
- **In 2022, an average of 30 farmers and farm labourers** committed suicide every day in India; since 2023, there have been 195 major farmer protests across 22 states, mostly about land acquisition and other issues beyond the MSP.
- **In 2022, young people constituted nearly 83%** of India's total unemployed population, with 66% of them being educated.
- **State of the states:** In 26 states/UTs, non-communicable diseases account for 50 per cent of the total deaths.
 - These states/UTs include Delhi, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana and most states in the northeastern parts of the country, among others.
 - Twenty-three of the states/UTs have not achieved 100 per cent tap water connections in rural households, with West Bengal emerging as one of the states lagging behind.
- **State of climate:** 2023 was India's second hottest year on record -- 102 weather stations across 26 out of 36 states/UTs witnessed record-breaking temperatures.
 - India ranks as the 20th most disaster-affected country in the world.”
 - In terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, India's share jumped up 115 per cent between 1994 and 2019: in 2019, the country emitted 2,647 million tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent of GHGs.

POTENCY TEST

Test to examine if a man is capable of sexual intercourse, used in divorce, paternity, and sexual assault cases

ANATA DAL (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, who returned to Bengaluru from Germany on Friday, has been taken into custody by a Special Investigation Team (SIT). The SIT which is investigating sexual assault allegations against Prajwal is likely to have him take medical tests, including a potency test.

What is a potency test?

A potency test is conducted to examine whether a male has the capacity to develop or maintain a penile erection to be able to perform a sexual act. This medical 'evidence' is brought in cases involving sexual assault, divorce, and even in paternity suits. In divorce and paternity cases, a fertility test along with a potency test is commonly done.

Section 53 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) allows examination of "blood, blood-stains, semen, swabs in case of sexual offences, sputum and sweat, hair samples and finger nail clipping by the use of modern and scientific techniques including DNA profiling and such other tests which the registered medical practitioner thinks necessary in a particular case", on the accused for investigation.

Why is the test relevant in sexual assault cases?

In sexual assault cases, the prosecution brings a potency test report to the court to counter any potential defence from the accused that he is incapable of sexual intercourse. Such a defence, however, is far from foolproof.

Potency is not permanent, and can vary depending on several physiological and psychological factors. Just because a man is unable to develop or sustain an erection at the time of the test, does not mean that he cannot do so at other times.

Thus, reports submitted in court simply indicate whether the accused is ca-



Prajwal has been sent to police custody till June 6. PTI

pable of sexual intercourse or not at the time of the test, and only have corroborative value.

This is similar to the 'two-finger' test done for the prosecutrix to determine the laxity of the hymen, that is, whether a woman is habituated to sex. It is also not determinative of whether a forced sexual intercourse has occurred. While this test is still commonly used, it is not considered to be strong evidence.

In fact, in a sexual assault case, it is only the statement of the survivor that is treated as complete evidence.

Moreover, even if potency tests had some sort of relevance before 2013, a change in the law has now made them even less relevant. Prior to 2013, Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that defined rape was limited to a peno-vaginal intercourse. Intercourse would often be the benchmark to determine if the offence involved rape or a lesser crime. However, after the 2013 criminal law amendments, the definition of rape was expanded.

Now, under the law, rape includes penetration of "any object", "mouth" to "any part of body" of a woman. A non-peno-vaginal contact does not necessarily need a test of potency at all.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Context: Recently returned from Germany, a political party MP in Bengaluru has been detained by a Special Investigation Team probing sexual assault allegations, potentially subjecting him to various medical tests, including potency assessment.

Potency Test

- **About:** It is conducted to examine whether a male has the capacity to develop or maintain a penile erection to be able to perform a sexual act. It is commonly used in legal contexts like sexual assault, divorce proceedings, and paternity disputes.
- **Section 53 of CrPC:** It authorizes the use of modern scientific techniques, including potency tests, for investigating sexual offenses.
- **Relevance in Sexual Assault Cases:**
 - **Countering Defence Claims:** Potency test reports are presented by the prosecution to counter claims of the accused's incapability for sexual intercourse.
 - **Potency's Variability:** Potency can vary due to physiological and psychological factors, making test results indicative but not definitive.
- **Legal Evolution and Impact:**
 - **Shift in Legal Definition:** Pre-2013, rape was narrowly defined, often focusing on peno-vaginal intercourse as the benchmark for determining the severity of the offense.
 - **Expanded Definition of Rape:** Post-2013 amendments to Indian Penal Code (IPC), rape now encompasses a broader range of acts beyond peno-vaginal intercourse, reducing the necessity of potency tests in some cases.

UN awards Major Sen's peacekeeping efforts

Virinda Tulsian

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NEW DELHI: Major Radhika Sen, a peacekeeper serving with the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), has been honoured for her outstanding efforts in empowering local communities, particularly women.

Major Sen received the prestigious "2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award" from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during a ceremony at the world body's headquarters on Thursday on the occasion of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Expressing her gratitude for the award, Major Sen said: "Getting this prestigious award on behalf of all the peacekeepers working in MONUSCO as well as my country, India, it was just amazing, cannot describe it in words."

"Gender-sensitive peacekeeping is everyone's business, not just us, the women. Peace begins with all of us in our beautiful diversity," she added.

Born in Himachal Pradesh in 1993, Major Sen joined the Indian Army eight years ago. She graduated as a biotech engineer and was



UN Secretary-General António Guterres honours Major Radhika Sen in New York. PTI

pursuing her Master's degree from IIT Bombay when she decided to join the armed forces. She served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from March 2023 to April 2024 as the Commander of MONUSCO's Engagement Platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion.

Hailing the efforts of Major Sen and all peacekeepers, Guterres said: "In an escalating conflict environment in North Kivu, her troops actively engaged with conflict-affected communities, including particularly women and girls."

GENDER ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Awards)

Context: Indian peacekeeper Radhika Sen conferred U.N. military gender advocate of the year award for 2023.

Gender Advocate of the Year Award

- **About:** It recognises individual military peacekeeper's dedication and efforts in promoting principles of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.
- **Establishment:** 2016.
- **Aim:** This award aims to acknowledge the dedication of individual military peacekeepers.
- **Selection Process:** The awardee is selected among candidates nominated by Force Commanders and Heads of Mission from all peace operations, highlighting their exceptional contributions to gender equality and peacekeeping efforts.
- **India's Contribution:** India, currently the 11th largest contributor of women military peacekeepers to the United Nations with 124 deployed, has played a significant role in promoting gender equality within peacekeeping missions.
 - Earlier, Major Suman Gawani from India was a co-recipient for 2019. She had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan.
- **Tradition of Contribution:** India has traditionally been among the largest troop and police-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions, showcasing its commitment to global peace and security.
- **Significance as a Contributor:** India's status as the 2nd largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping underscores its substantial contribution to international efforts in maintaining peace and stability.

Male Y chromosomes evolving faster, reveals DNA analysis of humans and apes

Context: A recent study revealed the rapid evolution of the Y chromosome, showing that only 14-27% of ape Y chromosome DNA sequences are similar to those in humans. This suggests a much faster evolutionary rate for the male sex chromosome.

Key Points of Study

- **Chromosome Similarity:** Over 90 percent of ape X chromosome sequences align with the human X chromosome, showing relative stability in evolution.
- **Recent Divergence:** Some ape species diverged from the human lineage only seven million years ago, a brief period in evolutionary terms, indicating rapid evolution of Y chromosomes.
- **Previous Characterisation:** Prior to this study, the sex chromosomes of our closest relatives, non-human apes, were only partially characterized, whereas human sex chromosomes had been fully sequenced.
- **Divergence of Orangutans and Chimpanzees:** Bornean and Sumatran orangutans diverged from each other approximately 1 million years ago, while chimpanzees and bonobos diverged around 2.5 million years ago.
 - Human lineage divergence from ape lineages occurred roughly 7-20 million years ago.
- **Use of Computational Tools:** Scientists used a computational tool known as alignment to identify chromosomal regions that have remained relatively unchanged throughout evolution, providing insights into evolutionary pressures on the genome.

Difference between DNA, Gene, and Chromosome

- **DNA:** It is the molecule that carries genetic information for the development and functioning of an organism.
 - DNA is made of two linked strands that wind around each other to resemble a twisted ladder a shape known as a double helix.
 - **Composition:** It is made up of four letters, representing four chemicals: Adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine.
 - The DNA palindromes can be over one hundred thousand letters long.
- The DNA palindromes on the primate X and Y chromosomes almost always contain genes, a unit of heredity passed from parent to offspring.
- **Gene:** It is considered the basic unit of inheritance.
 - **Transmission:** Genes are transmitted from parents to offspring, shaping the genetic makeup and influencing traits in the offspring.
 - **Coding for Proteins:** Most genes encode for specific proteins or segments of proteins, serving diverse functions essential for cellular processes and overall bodily functions.
- **Chromosome:** These are thread-like structures located inside the nucleus of animal and plant cells.
 - Each chromosome is made of protein and a single molecule of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA).

Watchdog fines IAS coaching centre ₹3L for 'misleading ads'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) imposed Rs 3 lakh fine on Maluka IAS coaching institute for advertising "misleading claims guaranteeing success" in prelims and mains in UPSC Civil Service exam 2022. The institute had claimed that over 120 of its students were selected in the exam.

"The decision was taken to protect and promote rights of consumers as a class and ensure that no false or misleading advertisement is made of any goods or services which contravenes the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 2019," the CCPA said.

The order passed by CCPA chief commissioner Nidhi Khare said CCPA found out the institute advertised various types of courses but information with respect to the course opted by the advertised successful candidates in

Civil Service exams results was concealed in the advertisement. "This has the effect of consumers falsely believing that all the successful candidates so claimed by the institute had opted for the paid courses advertised by the institute on its website and brochure," the authority said.

Earlier in response to a notice served by CCPA, Maluka IAS had submitted details of only 136 successful candidates and only two of them had purchased any kind of course. Remaining 134 had joined a "free interview guidance course".

The authority said this fact was not disclosed in the advertisement, thereby deceiving consumers into believing that such successful candidates owe their success to the coaching institute.

On the institute's claim of "guaranteed prelims and mains", CCPA said it misleads consumers.

Context: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) imposed Rs 3 lakh fine on IAS coaching institute for advertising "misleading claims guaranteeing success" in prelims and mains in UPSC Civil Service exam 2022.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- **About:** CCPA is a regulatory body established in 2020 based on the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- **Establishment:** In 2020
- **Control by:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs.
- **Composition:** Chief Commissioner as head, and only two other commissioners as members.
- **Objective:** To promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- **Powers of the Authority:** Section 21 of the Act defines the powers given to the CCPA to crack down on false or misleading advertisements.
 - The CCPA **aims to protect the rights of the consumer** by cracking down on unfair trade practices, and false and misleading advertisements that are detrimental to the interests of the public and consumers.
 - The CCPA will have the **powers to inquire or investigate matters** relating to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices suo motu, or on a complaint received, or on a direction from the central government. **Under Section 20 of the Consumer Protection Act**, the proposed authority will have powers:
 - To recall goods or withdrawal of services that are dangerous, hazardous or unsafe.
 - Pass an order for refund the prices of goods or services so recalled to purchasers of such goods or services.
 - Discontinuation of practices which are unfair and prejudicial to consumer's interest.

Indian Air Force Contingent Reached Alaska To Participate In Multi-National Exercise, Red Flag 24

Context: An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent recently arrived at the Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska to participate in the prestigious multi-national exercise, Red Flag 24.

Red Flag 24

- **About:** It is an advanced training program that spans over a period of two weeks, focusing on honing the skills and tactics required in aerial combat scenarios.
 - The exercise is designed to replicate a realistic and challenging environment, bringing together aircrew and equipment from different nations and services.
- **Organized by:** United States Air Force Warfare Centre (USAFWC), while the Alaska exercise is managed by the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), a component of the United States' Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM).
- **Scale and Participation:** Approximately 3100 service members are expected to fly, maintain, and support more than 100 aircraft during the exercise.
- **IAF's Involvement:** The Indian Air Force deployed Rafale fighter jets for the Red Flag 24 exercise, showcasing international cooperation.
- **Historical Context:** Since its inception in 1975, Red Flag exercises have aimed to create a comprehensive learning environment by simulating realistic combat scenarios.
- **Locations:** There are two distinct Red Flag exercise locations: Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada and Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska.

Indian researchers develop new way to mass produce proteins using MSG

Context: Researchers at the Department of Biochemistry, Indian Institute of Science, have developed a novel method for the production of recombinant proteins.

Recombinant Proteins

- **About:** These are proteins encoded by recombinant DNA that has been cloned in an expression vector that supports expression of the gene and translation of messenger RNA.
- **Modification:** Gene modification via recombinant DNA technology can result in the expression of mutant proteins.
- **Variation:** Recombinant proteins are manipulated versions of native proteins, generated diversely to enhance production, alter gene sequences, and produce commercial goods.
- **Fusion of Sequences:** They are formed by fusing sequences that might not naturally occur in an organism.
- **Mass Production Methods:** Recombinant proteins, including vaccine antigens, insulin, and monoclonal antibodies, are mass-produced by cultivating modified bacterial, viral, or mammalian cells in large bioreactors, with yeast *Pichia pastoris* being widely used.
- **Applications of Recombinant Proteins:**
 - Essential for exploring health and disease mechanisms in biomedical research.
 - Crucial in the development of biotherapeutic agents for various diseases.
 - Utilized in the production of protein-based polymers for drug delivery, antibodies, enzymes for disease treatment, and protein scaffolds for tissue engineering.

Protein

- **About:** It serves as the workhorse in biological systems, facilitating crucial processes such as gene expression, cell growth, proliferation, nutrient uptake, intercellular communication, and apoptosis.
- **DNA as the Blueprint:** The blueprint for protein synthesis is encoded within DNA, which acts as a template for tightly regulated transcriptional processes, resulting in the production of messenger RNA (mRNA).
- **Building Blocks:** Proteins are constructed from building blocks known as amino acids, with approximately 20 different types that can link together in various combinations.

Trump Guilty On All 34 Counts In Hush-Money Trial

First US Ex-Prez To Be Convicted Of A Crime: Falsified Docs To Cover Up Sex Scandal That Threatened 16 Prez Campaign

New York's Donald Trump was found guilty on all 34 counts in a hush-money trial on Tuesday. The verdict, which came after a two-week trial, found Trump guilty of falsifying documents to cover up a sex scandal that threatened his 2016 presidential campaign. The judge ruled that Trump had paid a former model to delete a damaging text message and to pose with him in a compromising position. The judge also found Trump guilty of falsifying documents to cover up the scandal. The verdict is a historic moment in US history, as it is the first time a former president has been convicted of a crime.

The judge, Judge John Lewis, ruled that Trump had paid a former model, Stormy Daniels, to delete a damaging text message and to pose with him in a compromising position. The judge also found Trump guilty of falsifying documents to cover up the scandal. The verdict is a historic moment in US history, as it is the first time a former president has been convicted of a crime.

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Context: Donald Trump became the first former US president ever convicted of a crime after a New York jury found him guilty on all charges in his hush money case.

President of USA

- **About:** The President of the United States serves as both the Head of State and the Head of Government, wielding executive powers and overseeing the administration of the government.
 - The President of India does not have the same level of executive authority as the President of the United States. They act on the advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.
- **Term and Re-election:** The President serves a term of four years and can be re-elected for a maximum of two terms, allowing for continuity or change in leadership based on popular mandate.
 - The President of India serves a fixed term of five years.
- **Eligibility:** The US Constitution outlines age, citizenship, and residency requirements for presidential candidates.
- **No Limitations on Character:** There are no explicit restrictions based on character or criminal record for presidential candidacy.
- **Prison Cell Presidency:** Even serving as president from a prison cell isn't prohibited by the Constitution.
- **Limited Role:** The President does not have a direct role in forming the government. Instead, the President is elected separately from the legislative branch, and government formation is the prerogative of the winning party in Congress.
- **Pardon Power:** The President of the US holds the constitutional right to pardon or commute sentences related to federal crimes, a power granted without limit by the US Supreme Court.

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