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प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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An animal protection Bill that must be moved in June +

Countries across the world are reforming their animal cruelty laws and enhancing punishments for animal cruelty. Recently, Croatia imposed stricter penalties for acts of cruelty, especially the abandonment of domestic pets. Amendments to the Croatian Penal Code, which came into effect on April 2, enhance the punishment for causing unnecessary pain or suffering to animals, and for killing or severely abusing animals.

Around the same time, in India, an incident involving the killing of a community dog, Jai, by a resident of a housing society in Mumbai has galvanised the demand for enhancing punishments that Indian law prescribes for animal cruelty. #JusticeForJai has been circulating on social media platforms apart from prayer meets and candle light vigils demanding stricter criminal laws against animal cruelty.

On punishment theories

Over the years, much has been discussed about the inadequacies in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act (1960), the primary piece of legislation that criminalises various forms of cruelty towards animals in the country. Poor enforcement of this law and the meagre penalties it prescribes are often cited as reasons for its failure to achieve its main objective of preventing cruelty to animals. While this is true, there is more to this issue than meets the eye. When looked at through the lens of theories of punishment, the PCA Act seems woefully ineffective. According to the various theories of punishment, punishing someone for committing a crime could have three main goals: retribution (punishment imposed to avenge the crime committed), deterrence (punishment imposed to



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deter the perpetrator and the general public against committing such crimes in the future), and reformation or rehabilitation (punishment imposed to reform and shape the future behaviour of the perpetrator).

Bailable offences, weak fines

In its present form, the PCA Act fails to achieve all of these. First, most of the offences under the Act are bailable (the accused can seek bail from the police as a matter of right) and non-cognisable (which means that the police can neither register a first information report nor investigate or effect arrest without the express permission of or directions from a competent court). Second, the amounts prescribed as fines under the PCA Act are the same as the ones prescribed in its predecessor, the PCA Act 1890. This means that the fines are insignificant (as low as ₹10 in many cases) as they have not undergone revision in over 130 years.

Third, the law is worded in such a manner that the court dealing with the issue has the discretion to choose between imposing imprisonment or imposing a fine on the accused. This allows perpetrators of animal cruelty to get away with the most brutal forms of animal cruelty by just paying a fine in most cases. Finally, the law itself does not contain any provision for 'community service' such as prescribing volunteering at an animal shelter as a form of punishment, that could potentially reform the perpetrators. These shortcomings contribute towards making the PCA Act ineffective in punishing the crimes of animal cruelty.

In November 2022, the Draft PCA (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was published by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying

for public comments. Despite widespread public support for the Draft Bill, it was not tabled in Parliament. The Draft Bill includes significant amendments to the 1960 Act such as the inclusion of the five fundamental freedoms for animals, enhancement of the punishments and the amounts of money to be paid as fines for various offences, and addition of new cognisable offences. While it is certainly a major improvement over the present law, for certain offences such as gruesome cruelty and the killing of an animal, the draft Bill continues to provide for imprisonment and fines as two options available to a court dealing with a case of animal cruelty. Therefore, even if the draft Bill someday becomes law, it will still be possible for perpetrators to just pay the paltry fine and avoid imprisonment for committing certain acts of extreme cruelty.

Words to heed

It is important, however, to recognise that even with its limitations, the enactment of the Draft Bill could be a huge step forward for animal law in India. In 1954, while moving a Private Member's Bill to replace the archaic PCA Act (1890), its proponent Rukmini Devi Arundale had said in Parliament, "India must set a great example to all countries in the world. We must set the example not because I think we are superior but because we have spoken about ahimsa far more than any other country... So the more we talk about it, the greater is the responsibility to put into practice..." When the new government comes to power in June this year, it should accept this responsibility so that the amendments to the PCA Act (1960) will finally see the light of day.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMAL ACT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env & Eco)

Context: In recent times, countries worldwide have enhanced animal cruelty laws and punishments. The recent cruelty against community dogs in India has prompted discussions on the deficiencies within the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act (1960) and need of amendment in this Act.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, (Amendment) Bill-2022

- **About:** The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has prepared the draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act (Amendment) Bill-2022.
- **Imprisonment:** The draft proposes a maximum of 5 years imprisonment, along with a fine, for killing an animal, introducing a new clause for this purpose.
- **Definition of Gruesome Cruelty:** The Act defines gruesome cruelty as acts causing extreme pain and suffering to animals, punishable by a minimum fine of Rs 50,000 or imprisonment up to three years.
- **Care for Community Animals:** Local governments will be responsible for the care of community animals, defined as those born in a community with no claimed ownership, excluding wild animals under the Wildlife Protection Act.
- **Introduction of Five Freedoms:** A new Section 3A is proposed, outlining 'five freedoms' for animals, which include freedom from thirst, hunger, discomfort, pain, injury, and disease, the ability to express normal behavior, and freedom from fear and distress.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act (1960)

- **About:** It is the foundational law aimed at safeguarding animal rights and preventing cruelty inflicted by humans.
- **Definition of Animals:** The Act provides a comprehensive definition of animals, encompassing all living creatures except humans.
- **Offenses & Punishments:** The Act delineates various forms of animal cruelty and imposes punishments on offenders to deter such acts.
- **Guidelines for Animal Experimentation:** The Act sets guidelines for ethical experimentation on animals for scientific purposes and regulates the exhibition of performing animals.
- **Establishment of AWBI:** The Act mandates the establishment of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) to oversee and enforce its provisions.

The question of Article 31C

While hearing a case about private property, SC has asked whether Article 31C, a fundamental right, still exists. What is this article, when was it introduced in the Constitution, what has been its legal journey?

ALJO SINGH KAPURAM
INDIAN EXPRESS

CHANGING: THE ongoing hearing in the Supreme Court to decide whether the government can acquire and redistribute private property, a new-judge Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud asked a question of "radical constitutional consequence". Does Article 31C still exist?

Article 31C of the Constitution protects laws that are enacted to increase the "material resources of the community" and are directed to serve the common good. Article 31C(1) said that wealth and the means of production are not "concentrated" in the "hands of a few" (Article 31C(2)).

Article 31C of the Constitution also contains other provisions of state policy which are meant to be guiding principles for the enactment of laws, but are not directly enforceable in any court of law.

As per Article 31C, these particular directives (Articles 31C(1) and 31C(2)) can be challenged by invoking the right to equality (Article 14) or the rights under Article 19 (freedom of speech, right to assembly peacefully, etc.).

So why is the continued existence of Article 31C itself now under question? And how is this article of the Constitution related to the question of private property that the court is considering?

Introduction of Article 31C

Article 31C was introduced by The Constitution (Twenty-fifth) Amendment Act, 1971. The law was essentially framed to implement an administrative ruling under the Bank Nationalisation Act of 1970.

Article 31C says: "No law giving effect to the policy of the State towards agriculture, industry, minerals, or any other sector, specified in clause (1) of article 31 shall be deemed to be void on the ground that it is inconsistent with, or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by article 14 or article 19 of the Constitution." In other words, a law that is aimed at giving effect to such policy shall not be called in question in any court on the ground that it does not give effect to such policy.

Journey of Article 31C

The 25th Amendment Act was challenged in the seminal *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973) involving 13 judges who by a 4-1 ratio found that the Constitution has a "basic structure" that cannot be altered even



The Indian Express front page report on the Supreme Court's judgment on the *Kesavananda Bharati* case. The court ruled that even laws that are protected by Article 31C must pass the basic structure test—even if such laws can bypass Article 14 and 19 of the Constitution.

By a constitutional amendment

As a part of this verdict, the court struck down the last portion of Article 31C—the part that says: "and no law containing a declaration that it is for giving effect to such policy shall be called in question in any court on the ground that it does not give effect to such policy".

The *Kesavananda* ruling allowed land reform laws that were under challenge, but stated that even laws that are protected by Article 31C must pass the "basic structure" test—enforced by each bench comprising Articles 14 and 19. Simply put, the court ruled that the basic structure of the Constitution, but for all differences, remains the same and will apply.

In 1978, Parliament enacted The Constitution (Forty-second) Amendment Act, which expanded the protection under Article 31C to "all" laws that are aimed at giving effect to such policy. As a result, every single directive principle (Articles 36-51) was given the force of a law under Article 31C and 19 of the Constitution.

The *Kesavananda* judgment of the court was the first time that it was meant to give precedence to the directive principles over the fundamental rights which have been allowed to be relied upon to frustrate the economic reforms for implementing the directive principles.

In 1980, in its judgment in *Mithyabhai*

in Mumbai challenged the 1980 amendment at the Bombay High Court. But the High Court upheld the amendment, citing the protection granted by Article 31C to laws enacted in furtherance of Article 31C.

This decision was appealed at the SC in December 1982, where the question even

truly became whether "material resources of the community" under Article 31C(1) included private resources such as crores

properties.

Arguments in the SC

When the hearing finally began, in the first day (April 23), the nine-judge bench seemed to agree with the Centre's submission that the case should be restricted to interpreting Article 31C(1). CJI Chandrachud said: "It is very clear that the control of the

emergence into judges is squarely only on the content of 31C(1), according to reporting by the Supreme Court Observer."

However, the very next day, the bench

stated that the question of whether Article 31C still lives following the *Mithyabhai* decision has to be decided in a "constitutional uncertainty".

Senior advocate Zafar Husain, appearing for the petitioners, argued that the original version of Article 31C was "tailored" with the expanded version provided in the 42nd Amendment. This, he argued, argued, means the older version of the provision ceased to exist once the amendment came into force. Therefore, when this new

Article 31C was struck down in *Mithyabhai*, the older provision would not automatically be revived.

On the other hand, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, argued that the doctrine of revival must apply in this case, and the 42nd Amendment's alteration on Article 31C must be re-interpreted to extend the doctrine and apply to application. Mehta relied on Justice Kar

ji's observations in the case where the court struck down The Constitution (Twenty-ninth) Amendment Act (NCA Act).

Justice Karji said that the collegial system for appointment of judges would be revived once the 1980 Amendment (which introduced the National Judicial Appointments Commission) was struck down. He observed: "Once the process of substitution and reversion by way of a constitutional amendment is held to be valid and impermissible, the pre-amended provisions automatically reinforce and reverse that alone can be the reasonably inferential conclusion."

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In 1980, the Property Owners' Association

ARTICLE 31(C) (Syllabus GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Article 31C

- **About:** It protects laws enacted to ensure the “material resources of the community” are distributed to serve the common good (Article 39(b)) and that wealth and the means of production are not “concentrated” to the “common detriment” (Article 39(c)).
 - **As per Article 31C**, these particular directive principles (Articles 39(b) and 39(c)) cannot be challenged by invoking the right to equality (Article 14) or the rights under Article 19 (freedom of speech, right to assemble peacefully, etc).
- **Introduced by:** The Constitution (Twenty-fifth) Amendment Act, 1971.
- **The "Bank Nationalisation Case":** The Statement of Objects and Reasons for the amendment referenced the Rustom Cavasjee Cooper vs Union Of India, 1970 case, commonly known as the "Bank Nationalisation Case".
- **Supreme Court's Decision:** In the Bank Nationalisation Case, an eleven-judge Bench struck down The Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1969, citing Article 31(2) which required compensation for acquired property.
- **Criticism of the Banking Act:** The court found the 'right to compensation' insufficiently addressed in the Banking Act.

The Journey of Article 31C

- **Challenges to 25CAA:** The *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973) asserted the concept of the "basic structure" of the Constitution. It invalidated the latter part of Article 31C, allowing judicial review of laws aimed at implementing certain directive principles.
- **The Constitution (Forty-second) Amendment Act:** Enacted in 1976, this amendment broadened the scope of protection under Article 31C to include all directive principles. It aimed to prioritize directive principles over fundamental rights, aiming to prevent the latter from impeding socio-economic reforms.
- **Minerva Mills v. Union of India, 1980:** This case saw the Supreme Court invalidate clauses 4 and 5 of the amendment. The court affirmed that Parliament's amending power couldn't be used to bypass limitations and acquire unlimited authority.

ILO REPORT ON LABOUR (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Analysing labour on a warming planet

The link between labour productivity, human health and climate change gets scant attention, as the focus remains on economic and infrastructure resilience. The International Labour Organization's latest report points to the need to ensure that labour becomes climate-proofed

STILL CONTEXT

Background

The report says that the International Labour Organization's (ILO) latest report, 'Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate', is an urgent call to ensure the future of labour is climate-proofed and to ensure that the constantly evolving work environment is fit for the future. The report states that a vast share of the world's population, as exposed to increasing heat annually, leading to almost 20 million work-related deaths.

What are the emerging hazards?

The ILO has identified the key impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, water-related pollution, extreme weather events, workplace air pollution, vector-borne diseases and agrochemicals. These could lead to a range of health issues such as stress, stroke and exhaustion. The ILO estimates agriculture workers, workers in the construction sector, conservancy workers in urban areas and those in transport and tourism are most affected by climate change. It is the most vulnerable to the risk of the global rise in gig employment, which is highly heat susceptible. Gig workers work about 1.5% of India's total work force, which is projected to grow to about 4.5% by 2030, according to a Nasscom study. In the Indian context, all those employed per country's 2025 workforce of 600 million is susceptible to heat-related hazards.

Which sectors are affected?

Agriculture is by far the most heat susceptible sector globally, particularly so in the developing world, where informal labourers would work under the sun for long periods. The ILO's data for July 2018 June 2019 reveal that about 10% of Indian farmers have lost their crops because of heat, and some an average monthly income of \$100 over 100 days with farmers in the bottom three states of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar being worst off. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace. Agriculture is followed by India's garmenting, textiles, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector that employs about 25% of the country's workforce, or more than 22 million workers. The manufacturing sector is also one of the most vulnerable to heat stress, particularly in the garmenting and textiles sectors. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace. The sector is followed by the building and construction sector which employs about 12% of India's workforce. Workers here must cope with the heat while doing their job, as construction is a highly outdoor activity. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace. The sector is followed by the building and construction sector which employs about 12% of India's workforce. Workers here must cope with the heat while doing their job, as construction is a highly outdoor activity. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace.

What does the report say about heat hazards?

What it comes to dealing with occupational heat, the ILO states that the most vulnerable to heat stress are those in the informal sector, who are not covered by the minimum wage laws, and are often exposed to physical labour and pollution-related health hazards. In addition, in several Indian cities, air quality is poor, which adds to the heat stress. The report states that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace. The sector is followed by the building and construction sector which employs about 12% of India's workforce. Workers here must cope with the heat while doing their job, as construction is a highly outdoor activity. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace.

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Scorching heat: A vendor selling coconut water at a stall in Mumbai on April 20, 2023.

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2020 under one law - the Occupational Safety and Health Working Conditions Act, 2020 (OSH Act, 2020). While the OSH Act, 2020 is a landmark step for ensuring safety and health at work, it is not yet in force. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace. The sector is followed by the building and construction sector which employs about 12% of India's workforce. Workers here must cope with the heat while doing their job, as construction is a highly outdoor activity. The ILO estimates that about 12% of India's workforce, or more than 22 million workers, are exposed to heat stress in the workplace.

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THE GIST

The ILO has identified key impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, water-related pollution, extreme weather events, workplace air pollution, vector-borne diseases and agrochemicals. These could lead to a range of health issues such as stress, stroke and exhaustion. The ILO estimates agriculture workers, workers in the construction sector, conservancy workers in urban areas and those in transport and tourism are most affected by climate change. It is the most vulnerable to the risk of the global rise in gig employment, which is highly heat susceptible. Gig workers work about 1.5% of India's total work force, which is projected to grow to about 4.5% by 2030, according to a Nasscom study. In the Indian context, all those employed per country's 2025 workforce of 600 million is susceptible to heat-related hazards.

What are the emerging hazards?

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Key Point of Report

- **Identified Hazards:** The ILO has recognized six primary impacts of climate change: excessive heat, solar ultraviolet radiation, extreme weather events, workplace air pollution, vector-borne diseases, and agrochemicals.
- **Most Affected Occupational Groups:** The ILO highlights agriculture workers, construction sector workers, conservancy workers in urban areas, and those in transport and tourism as the most affected by climate change impacts.
- **Vulnerability of Gig Economy Workers:** The growing gig economy, including ride-hailing drivers, delivery personnel, and home repair workers, is highly susceptible to heat-related hazards due to the nature of their work.
- **Gig Employment:** India's gig economy, comprising various sectors like transportation, delivery, and services, is rapidly expanding, projected to reach 4.5% of the workforce by 2030 according to a Nasscom study.

Which sectors are affected?

- **Indian Agriculture:**
 - Nearly 90% of Indian farmers own less than two hectares of land, as per NSSO data of July 2018-June 2019.
- **MSME Sector in India:**
 - India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector employs around 21% of the country's workforce.
 - This sector comprises approximately 64 million enterprises.
 - India's MSME sector is second in size only to China's.

Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate

- **About:** This report presents critical evidence related to the impacts of climate change on OSH, to bring attention to the global health threat workers are currently facing.
- **The report addresses the following key issues:**
 - Excessive heat, Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, Extreme weather events, Workplace air pollution, Vector-borne diseases and Agrochemicals

Tobacco crop failure in Indonesia, Brazil triggers Andhra price surge

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Vijayawada: Tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh are set to reap the fallout of a substantial drop in crop output in key producing countries like Brazil, Zimbabwe and Indonesia because of weather extremes, such as drought and unseasonable rain.

Prices soared at local auctions to nearly all-time highs and are projected to climb further in the coming weeks. Currently, prices have reached Rs 280 to Rs 290 a kg and are anticipated to exceed Rs 300 a kg, representing a 30% increase from farmers' expectations.

The influx of local and small players offering competitive bids has spurred the sud-

PRICES SET TO GO UP FURTHER

➤ Trade analysts put expected crop size at 160-170 million kg

➤ Production up 20%, growers sowed a second time after crop damage in Dec's Michung cyclone

➤ Prices in local auctions touch ₹280-290/kg, against anticipated ₹220-230/kg, may continue to rise further



➤ AP stocks fetching better prices than K'taka premium crop due to dip in global production

➤ Production in Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Brazil down 20-30%, say reports

➤ China's decision to restrict exports may have also led to triggering of prices

den price surge in auctions. Despite concerns that they might face challenges due to production surpassing Indian Tobacco Board's target of 140m kg, farmers in Andhra are poised to benefit, with the

board anticipating total production to reach 160m-170m kg. Trade analysts attribute the rise in price to crop damage in Brazil and Zimbabwe.

► **High tobacco prices, P 11**

Context: Tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh are set to reap the fallout of a substantial drop in crop output in key producing countries like Brazil, Zimbabwe and Indonesia because of weather extremes, such as drought and unseasonable rain.

Tobacco

- **About:** It is derived from the leaves of the genus *Nicotiana*, a plant from the nightshade family indigenous to North and South America.
- **Global Production:** China, India, and Brazil.
- **Major Tobacco-Producing States in India:** Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Telangana, and Bihar are among the major tobacco-producing states in India.
- **Climatic Conditions for Tobacco Cultivation**
 - **Frost-Free Period:** A frost-free period of 90 to 120 days is necessary from transplanting to the last harvest of leaves.
 - **Temperature:** The mean daily temperature for optimal growth falls between 20°C and 30°C.
 - **Dry Period Requirement:** A dry period is essential for the ripening and harvest of tobacco leaves.
 - **Rainfall:** Excessive rainfall leads to thin and lightweight leaves, impacting the quality of the crop.
 - **Soil Conditions:** Tobacco crops are sensitive to waterlogging and require well-aerated, drained soils.
 - **pH Range:** The optimum pH for tobacco cultivation ranges from 5 to 6.5. Soil salinity affects leaf quality.
 - **Water Requirements:** Water needs vary based on climate and growing period, ranging from 400 to 600mm for maximum yield.

The challenge and necessity of 'balance' in use of fertilisers

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 1

Nutrient-based subsidy

Fertilisers contain nutrients that are necessary for plant growth and grain yields. Balanced fertilisation means supplying primary (N, phosphorus-P, potassium-K), secondary (sulphur-S, calcium, magnesium) and micro (iron, zinc, copper, manganese, boron, molybdenum) nutrients in right proportions, based on soil type and crop requirements.

In April 2010, the UPA government introduced a nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) system, under which a per-kg subsidy was fixed for N, P, K, and S. The idea was to wean away farmers from urea, DAP (18% N, 46% P content) and MOP (60% K) in favour of complex fertilisers containing N, P, K, S, and other nutrients in balanced proportions with lower concentrations.

Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, DAP and MOP consumption declined, and that of NPKS complexes and single super phosphate (SSP; 16% P, 11% S) rose. But NBS failed because of

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Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, DAP and MOP consumption declined, and that of NPKS complexes and single super phosphate (SSP; 16% P, 11% S) rose. But NBS failed because of

ALL-INDIA CONSUMPTION OF FERTILISER PRODUCTS

	Urea	DAP	MOP	NPKS	SSP
2018-19	314.18	92.11	29.57	90.28	35.79
2019-20	336.95	101.00	27.87	98.57	44.03
2020-21	350.43	119.11	34.25	118.11	44.89
2021-22	341.80	92.72	24.56	114.79	56.81
2022-23	357.25	104.18	16.32	100.74	50.17
2023-24	357.80	108.12	16.45	110.73	45.44

In lakh tonnes. For direct application, excluding supply to complex fertiliser units. Source: Fertiliser Association of India.

cluded urea. With its maximum retail price (MRP) being controlled, and raised by a total of just 16.5% — from Rs 4,830 to Rs 5,628 per tonne — post the introduction of NBS, urea consumption increased through the 10 years each of the UPA and Modi governments.

'Price hierarchy' challenge

The last couple of years have seen even non-urea fertilisers being brought under price control, first informally and then formally since January 2024. According to industry sources, the restriction of controls has worsened nutrient imbalances. The current MRP of DAP, at Rs 1,350 per 50-kg bag, is below the Rs 1,470 for the

10-26-26-0 and 12-32-16-0 NPKS complex fertilisers, notwithstanding their lower N and P content. Even 20-20-10-13, which accounted for nearly 5.4 mt out of the total 11.1 mt of NPKS complexes consumed in 2023-24, is retailing at Rs 1,200-1,225 per bag, only marginally lower than DAP. DAP has, thus, become the "new urea", with farmers inclined to over-apply both.

On the other hand, MOP's MRP of Rs 1,650 per bag incentivises neither farmers to apply directly nor companies to incorporate it into complexes. The most widely consumed complex fertiliser, 20-20-10-13, contains no K. "That isn't good; potassium boosts immunity against pests and diseases as well as uptake of nitrogen," a source said.

Sources said an immediate challenge is to ensure proper "price hierarchy" among non-urea fertilisers. This would mean pricing DAP the highest, MOP lowest, and complexes in between. DAP use should be restricted mainly to rice and wheat. Other crops can meet their P requirement through complexes and SSP.

The opportunity for India

India is heavily import-dependent for fertilisers, and high global prices add to both foreign exchange outgo and the government's subsidy burden.

Landed prices of imported urea, DAP, and MOP have fallen to around \$340, \$520-\$525 and \$319 per tonne respectively, from corresponding recent records of \$900-\$1,000 (in Nov-Jan 2021-22), \$950-\$960 (July 2022) and \$590 (till March 2023).

Even prices of phosphoric acid, a DAP manufacturing input, are down to \$948 per tonne from the \$1,715 levels of July-September, 2022.

The cooling of international prices gives some flexibility to the next government to rationalise MRPs of fertilisers and promote balanced plant nutrition. This could involve bringing urea under NBS and mitigating the impact of a significant hike in its MRP by increasing the subsidy rates on other nutrients.

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Context: Recently, the government's key goal after the Lok Sabha elections is likely to focus on balanced fertilization, aiming to deter farmers from excessive application of urea, diammonium phosphate (DAP), or muriate of potash (MOP) with high concentrations of primary nutrients.

Fertilizers

- **About:** It is a substance, either natural or artificial, that contains chemical elements essential for plant growth and productivity.
- **Role:** Fertilizers augment the natural fertility of soil by replenishing chemical elements depleted by previous crops or by enhancing soil fertility directly.
- **Fertilizers to Enhance Soil Fertility:** In situations where soil fertility is inadequate, natural or manufactured materials, commonly referred to as fertilizers, can be added to supply essential plant nutrients.
- **Composition of Fertilizers:** While the term "fertilizers" typically encompasses largely inorganic materials, it generally excludes lime or gypsum, which serve distinct purposes in soil management.
- **Diammonium phosphate fertilizer:** It is perfect for any agriculture crop to provide full phosphorus nutrition throughout crop growth and development, as well as a starter dose of nitrogen and low sulfur.
- **Muriate of Potash (MOP):** It is the most concentrated form of granular potassium and typically the most cost-effective. The even granule size of MOP allows for accurate spreading.

Nutrient-Based Subsidy

- **About:** Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) is a mechanism wherein the subsidy is provided to fertilisers based on their nutrient content rather than a flat rate for all fertilisers.
- **Implementation:** The NBS scheme was implemented from **April 1, 2010**.
- **Fertilizer Covered:** Nitrogen(N), Phosphorus(p), Potassium (K), and Sulphur(S).
- **Subsidized Fertilizers under NBS:**
 - NBS applies to fertilizers like Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), Muriate of Potash (MOP), Mono Ammonium Phosphate (MAP), Triple Super Phosphate (TSP), Single Super Phosphate (SSP), Ammonium Sulphate (AS), and 16 grades of complex fertilizers.
- **Objective:** The primary goal of NBS is to ensure the balanced use of fertilisers and promote the application of required nutrients to enhance soil fertility.
- **Fortification/Coating Incentive:**
 - Fortified/coated variants of subsidized P&K fertilizers, adhering to Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) provisions for Boron and Zinc, receive additional per tonne subsidies.

'India one of key geographies affected by phishing attacks'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India is one of the key countries affected by phishing attacks, where employees often click on malicious links or attachments that appear to be from legitimate sources, often leading to severe financial losses, reported Verizon Business, a New Jersey-based provider of cybersecurity solutions and products.

However, Verizon Business said, there was a silver lining as far as India was concerned as reporting practices have improved, with 20% of users now identifying and reporting phishing during simulation tests. This was only the



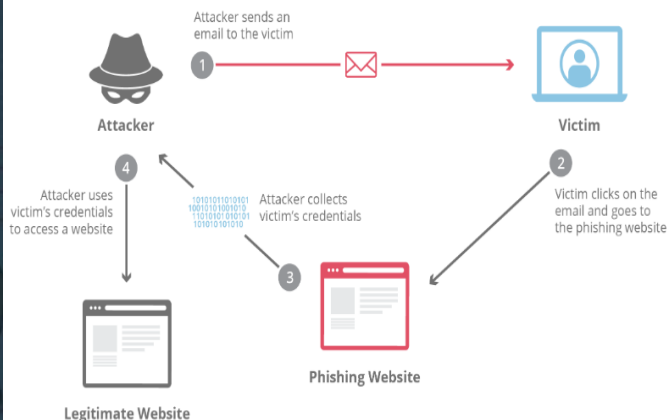
first stepping stone, as enterprises can significantly reduce human error in cybersecurity by adopting a multi-pronged approach.

The company also said in its 2024 Data Breach Investigations Report that espionage attacks dominate APAC's cybersecurity landscape, including that of India. Some 25% of APAC cyberattacks are motivated by espionage, significantly

greater than the 6% and % in Europe and North America, respectively, and the region experienced a 180% growth in vulnerability exploitation.

On an average, it took organisations surveyed about 55 days to patch 50% of their critical vulnerabilities and the non-malicious human element was involved in more than two-thirds of these breaches.

The report, was prepared after analysing 30,458 security incidents and 10,626 confirmed breaches in 2023 (two-fold increase over 2022) in the APAC region. System intrusion, social engineering, and basic web-application attacks represent 95% of the breaches in APAC.



Context: Verizon Business, a New Jersey-based provider of cybersecurity solutions, recently reported that India faces significant phishing attacks, with employees frequently falling victim to clicking on deceptive links or attachments, resulting in substantial financial losses.

Phishing Attack

- **About:** It refers to an attempt to steal sensitive information, typically in the form of usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, bank account information, or other important data to utilize or sell the stolen information.
- **Trusted Sources:** Attackers mimic reputable sources and make enticing requests to lure in victims, akin to how a fisherman uses bait to catch a fish.
- **Common Examples:** The most common examples of phishing are used to support other malicious actions, such as on-path attacks and cross-site scripting attacks.
- **Delivery Channels:** These attacks typically occur via email or instant message, and can be broken down into a few general categories.

Spear Phishing

- **About:** This type of phishing is directed at specific individuals or companies, hence the term spear phishing.

Clone Phishing

- **About:** It involves mimicking a previously delivered legitimate email and modifying its links or attached files to trick the victim into opening a malicious website or file.

Naya's women patuas are preserving a traditional artform while also securing a livelihood & identity



Context: The pioneering female patachitra artists from the village of Naya in West Bengal are now selling their artwork online and gaining global recognition.

Patachitra Painting

- **About:** It originates from eastern Indian states like Odisha and West Bengal, dating back to possibly the 12th century.
- **Origin of Term:** The term "Patachitra" derives from Sanskrit, with "Patta" meaning "cloth" and "Chitra" meaning "picture".
- **Themes:** These paintings are renowned for their intricate details and often depict mythological narratives and folktales, particularly stories of Hindu deities.
 - They serve as visual representations of ancient Bengali narrative art, aiding in the storytelling process during performances.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - Originally, Patachitra paintings were crafted for ritual purposes and as keepsakes for pilgrims visiting temples in Odisha, notably Puri, as well as other temples in the region.
- **Technique and Process:**
 - Patachitra paintings are meticulously crafted on a specialized canvas, traditionally made by layering cotton sarees with tamarind paste and clay powder.
 - Both cotton and silk canvases are now used for these paintings.
 - Artists typically begin by completing the borders before filling in colors directly without prior sketches.
 - All colors utilized are derived from natural sources such as lamp soot and powdered conch shells.

SC: Hindu marriage invalid without customary rituals

New Delhi: Observing that a Hindu marriage is a sacred process and not merely a "song and dance" and "wining and dining" event, Supreme Court has held that customary rituals and ceremonies prescribed under the Hindu Marriage Act must be strictly followed, failing which a marriage would be declared invalid even after it has been registered, reports Amit Anand Choudhary.

► Binding after saptapadi, P 11

IN THE COURTS

► SC is scheduled to hear on Friday a PIL seeking bar on namesake candidates | P 12

► Delhi HC nixes a plea that sought nod for arrested netas to campaign for LS polls through virtual mode, observing that it may result in dreaded criminals like Dawood campaigning | P 5

► A Delhi court sentences a man to RI for life for raping his 11-yr-old daughter | P 5

Context: Recently, the Supreme Court emphasized that a Hindu marriage transcends mere celebration, stating it's a sacred process, not merely "song and dance" or "wining and dining," thus asserting that adherence to prescribed rituals under the Hindu Marriage Act is crucial for validity, even after registration.

Hindu Marriage Act 1955

- **About:** It was enacted by the Parliament of India on May 18, 1955.
- **Purpose:** To define and alter the laws concerning marriage involving Hindus and others.
- **Features of the Hindu Marriage Act**
 - **Monogamy Mandate:** Bigamy is prohibited under Section 5 of the Act, disallowing a man from having more than one wife simultaneously.
 - **Minimum Age Requirement:** Both parties must meet the age criteria specified in Section 5(iii) of the Act: 21 for the groom and 18 for the bride.
 - **Restitution of Marital Rights:** Section 9 of the Act provides for the recovery of conjugal rights, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the marital bond.
 - **Voidable Marriages:** Marriages where a partner was mentally incompetent at the time or lacked legal consent are considered void under Section 5(ii)(a), (b), (c).
 - **Validity through Traditional Rites:** Marriages conducted with traditional rites and customs are recognized under the Act, with legal obligations placed on the father to care for post-marriage children.
- **Important Sections of the Hindu Marriage Act:**
 - **Section 5:** It outlines the requirements for a Hindu marriage.
 - **Section 9:** It pertains to the reinstatement of marital rights.
 - **Section 13:** It deals with the grounds for divorce, specifying when a couple can petition for divorce in court.
 - **Section 24:** It addresses post-divorce maintenance and financial assistance.

Mothers may soon report jab side-effects on babies on U-WIN

At present, only healthcare providers have access to the U-WIN platform

Priyanka Sharma
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NEW DELHI

Mother may be allowed to report side-effects of routine immunization of their babies on the government's U-WIN platform, according to plans under consideration. Earlier, adverse events—which include fever and rashes—used to be recorded manually, and doctors were informed accordingly. The move coincides with British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca admitting its covid vaccine, Covishield, can induce blood clots in rare instances.

The government's Universal Immunization Win (U-WIN) platform registers and tracks routine vaccination and immunization. At present, only healthcare providers have access to the U-WIN platform. They are able to track information in real-time on vaccination, adverse effects,

follow-ups, registration and certification.

U-WIN is similar to the CoWIN portal for covid-19 which recorded over 2 billion vaccinations in just 18 months.

India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is one of the largest public health initiatives in the world, providing free vaccination against 12 life-threatening diseases to around 27 million newborns and 30 million pregnant women annually.

Currently, U-WIN is undergoing a pilot phase in two districts of each state and Union territory, which has registered over 40 million beneficiaries and recorded 125 million vaccine doses.

A nationwide rollout is planned for the new government. "During covid-19, all efforts were

made that how should people do self-reporting post vaccination on the CoWIN portal. The same idea is being replicated to create self-reporting on U-WIN platform wherein mothers can report any kind of adverse events of their babies. Also, pregnant mothers can document and access updates about their vaccination schedules," said an official requesting anonymity.

Notably, U-WIN is set to become the world's largest electronic immunization system serving

millions of beneficiaries under the universal immunization programme. This is expected to lead to higher vaccination coverage and further reduce infant mortality.

Queries sent to the health ministry spokesperson remained unanswered.

U-WIN is undergoing a pilot phase in two districts of each state and UT, which has registered over 40 million beneficiaries and 125 million jabs

- **Comparison with Co-WIN:** U-WIN's framework draws from Co-WIN's success, which facilitated over 2 billion COVID-19 vaccinations within 18 months.
- **World's largest:** Notably, U-WIN is set to become the world's largest electronic immunization system serving millions of beneficiaries under the universal immunization programme.
- **Impact on Public Health Initiatives:** As part of India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), U-WIN contributes to one of the world's largest public health endeavors, offering free vaccination against 12 life-threatening diseases to millions of newborns and pregnant women annually.

Context: Mother may be allowed to report side-effects of routine immunization of their babies on the government's U-WIN platform, according to plans under consideration.

Universal Immunization Win (U-WIN)

- **About:** The U-WIN platform mirrors Co-WIN, the digital backbone of India's COVID-19 vaccination drive since January 2021, initially launched in 65 districts.
- **Functions:** Comprehensive Immunization Services: U-WIN manages registration and vaccination of pregnant women, and newborns, records delivery outcomes, administers birth doses, and organizes subsequent vaccination events.
- **Role as Information Repository:** U-WIN acts as the primary repository for immunization services data, facilitating reporting on antigen-wise coverage, vaccination status updates, and routine immunization session planning.
- **Digitized Tracking and Monitoring:** Every pregnant woman and newborn are digitally registered, enabling tailored tracking for vaccination, dose reminders, and follow-up on dropouts.
- **Access and Usage:** Currently, only healthcare providers can access U-WIN, utilizing its real-time tracking capabilities for vaccination data, adverse effects, follow-ups, registrations, and certifications.

Booker slavery links: Behind the criticism of the prestigious literary prize

RISHIKA SINGH
NEW DELHI, MAY 1

THE BOOKER Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in the literary world, has repeatedly come under fire for the historical links to slavery of its original sponsor, Booker Group.

Last week, a BBC Radio host reminded the organisation behind the prize that Booker Group founders George and Josias Booker did not, as the Prize website said, "manage" enslaved people — rather, they turned African people into slaves. The website then changed the word "managed" to "enslaved".

Prestigious honour

The Booker Prize was founded in 1969, initially just for writers from the Commonwealth, but was later opened to

writers all over the world. Every year, the prize is awarded to a single work of fiction in the English language. In 2004, a separate International Booker Prize was instituted for translated works.

The prize was co-founded by publishers Tom Maschler and Graham C. Greene, and from 1969 to 2001, it was sponsored by, and named after Booker Group Ltd. Booker is a British wholesale foods company that was established in 1835 as a shipping and trading company, and which is now owned by Tesco.

In 2002, British investment management firm Man Group became the sponsor of the prize, and it thus came to be known as The Man Booker Prize. After the Man Group ended its sponsorship in 2019, the American charity Crankstart took over, and reverted to the award's original name, Booker Prize.

**EXPLAINED
HISTORY**



Berger, during his 1972 acceptance speech. Youtube screengrab/TheBookerPrizes

Links to slavery

Following the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the northeastern coast of South America was divided among three European powers: the Dutch got modern-day Suriname, the French

got French Guiana (still a French overseas territory), and the British got what is now known as Guyana. Many entrepreneurial Europeans like the Booker brothers headed to these colonies in search of fortune.

The economy of Guyana was driven by the sugar and (to a lesser degree) cotton industries, with African slaves providing labour on the plantations. The Booker brothers were part of this slave-based economy.

According to the Booker website, Josias managed a cotton plantation in northern Guyana where he enslaved "nearly 200 people". Along with his brother, he would then go on to own several sugar plantations, which too were operated by slave labour.

When slavery was abolished in Guyana in 1834, "the Booker brothers received compensation from the state for 52 emancipated slaves. The Legacies of Slave Ownership database at University College London records the total sum as £2,884, equivalent to £378,000 in 2020," the Booker website says.

Indentured labour

The exploitation did not stop with the emancipation of the African slaves. Plantation owners like the Bookers joined in the exploitation of another population — Indian labourers who faced massive debt and unemployment at home, in no small part due to the agrarian policies of the East India Company.

"Rather than pay fair wages to free African workers, British planters such as the Bookers convinced the British government to help finance voyages to collect replacement sugar workers — indentured workers from India," Natalie Hopkinson, a journalism professor whose ancestors were enslaved in Guyana and worked at the Bookers' farms, wrote for *The New York Times* in 2017.

The system of indentured labour lasted until about the 1920s. The scale of the migration of labourers from India was such that people of Indian origin are today the

single largest ethnic group in Guyana.

Previous criticism

In 1972, philosopher and art critic John Berger won the Booker Prize for his experimental novel *G*. Protesting the prize's links to slavery, he donated half the prize money to the British Black Panther movement, an organisation that fought for the rights of Black people and minorities in the country.

During his acceptance speech, Berger said: "Booker McConnell has had extensive trading interests in the Caribbean for over 130 years. The modern poverty of the Caribbean is the direct result of this and similar exploitation... The London-based Black Panther Movement has arisen out of the bones of what Bookers and other companies have created in the Caribbean... [The Black Panthers] have links with the struggle in Guyana... in Trinidad and throughout the Caribbean: the struggle whose aim is to expropriate all such enterprises."

Context: The Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in the literary world, has recently come under fire for the historical links to slavery of its original sponsor, Booker Group.

Booker Prize

- **About:** It is globally recognized as the premier literary award for a single work of fiction.
- **Origins:** Founded in the UK in 1969, the Booker Prize initially celebrated Commonwealth writers before expanding its eligibility to writers worldwide.
- **Objective:** To champion outstanding fiction by honoring the best English-language novel of the year.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Any novel originally written in English and published in the UK and Ireland during the prize year qualifies for consideration.
 - Works must be original English compositions, not translations, and published by registered UK or Irish imprints.
- **Prize Rewards:** The winner of the Booker Prize is awarded £50,000, while each shortlisted author receives £2,500.
- **Booker Prize Foundation:** Established in 2002 as a registered charity, the Booker Prize Foundation oversees the awarding of both the Man Booker Prize for Fiction and the Man Booker International Prize.

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