

● POLITY

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

U.S. BLAMES INDIAN OFFICIAL FOR 'PLOT' AGAINST PANNUN

CONTEXT: India has set up a "high-level" committee to inquire into the U.S. allegation about an Indian plot targeting Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a U.S.-based Khalistani activist wanted on terror charges.

Under lens

India has formed a panel to probe allegations of a plot to kill Khalistani separatist **Gurpatwant Singh Pannun** on U.S. soil

- The panel will probe nexus between organised criminals, gunrunners, terrorists, and others, the MEA said

What does the U.S. Justice Department say?

- Involvement of Indian operatives, including an Indian Intelligence official

- Indictment by U.S. authorities of individuals, including Indian wanted criminal Nikhil Gupta, now under arrest, for advance payoff of \$15,000 for hitman



AFP

- Links between plot against Pannun and killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada

- Gujarat Police dropped charges against Gupta at the behest of Indian officials

The indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice, publicly released on Wednesday, accuses a senior yet unnamed Indian Intelligence official, referred to as CC-1, of masterminding the assassination plot. U.K.-based Financial Times of warning by the U.S. to India about "concerns" of Government of India involved in the plot to assassinate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the founder of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), is wanted in India for propagating a separatist "Sikh referendum" in several countries. He most recently issued a threat against Air India flights. Despite India's designation of Mr. Pannun as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 2020, the MEA did not confirm whether it had demanded his extradition to India.

The Union Ministry of External Affairs has constituted a high-level inquiry committee on November 18, 2023. The Ministry has not referred specifically to the allegations of involvement of government operatives, while it mentioned that the U.S. had shared "inputs" on a "nexus between organised criminals, gun runners, terrorists and others", which the government is investigating.

INTERNAL SECURITY

CENTRE AND MANIPUR INK DEAL WITH BANNED MEITEI INSURGENT BODY

CONTEXT: The Centre and the Manipur government have signed a peace agreement with the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), a banned Meitei extremist organisation and also the oldest armed group based in the Manipur valley.

The UNLF was formed in 1964 seeking Manipur's secession from India and has been operating both within and outside Indian territory. It is one of the eight Meitei extremist organisations that the MHA has declared as unlawful associations under the anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The Union Ministry for Home Affairs has extended the ban for another five years last week.

As many as 65 cadres of one of the UNLF factions led by K. Pambei have joined the peace pact. These 65 cadres are said to have entered Manipur during the ongoing ethnic violence. The other faction of the UNLF, led by R.K. Achou Singh alias Koireng, is still out of the pact.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIA BACKS UN RESOLUTION AGAINST ISRAEL FOR NOT LEAVING SYRIAN GOLAN

CONTEXT: India has voted in favour of a draft resolution in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that expressed deep concern over Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Syrian Golan is a region in southwest Syria that was occupied by Israeli forces on June 5, 1967.

The 193-member UNGA voted on the draft resolution 'The Syrian Golan' under agenda item 'The situation in the Middle East' on Tuesday. The resolution, introduced by Egypt, was adopted by 91 votes in favour, eight against and 62 abstentions. Australia, Canada, Israel, the U.K. and the U.S. voted against it. The resolution also stressed the illegality of the Israeli settlement construction in the Golan.



"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

MAJOR OIL AND GAS FIRMS HAVE PLEDGED TO GO CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2050: COP-28 CHIEF

CONTEXT: Sultan Al Jaber, president-designate of the 28th Conference of Parties (COP-28) at a press briefing ahead of the two-week-long United Nations climate summit noted commitments provided by several oil and gas companies to become net zero — or carbon neutral — by 2050.



The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that oil and gas operations account for around 15 % of total energy-related emissions globally, or about 5.1 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. Another major step that the COP-28 presidency under the UAE could take credit for was getting the world's two major economies — the U.S. and China — “aligned” toward climate action and reducing methane emissions.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

WHAT IS BEHIND THE HALAL CERTIFICATE BAN IN U.P.?

CONTEXT: On November 18, the Uttar Pradesh Government’s Food Security and Drug Administration banned the “manufacture, sale, storage and distribution of halal-certified products with immediate effect”.

Why was it banned?

The complainant accused several halal certifying outfits of issuing “forged” certificates to “increase their sale among a certain community”, violating “public trust” and created “social animosity” in the process.

How are halal certificates issued?

Halal certificates are given by the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind’s Halal Unit and the Halal Shariat Islamic Law Board, both of whom have been cleared by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies. While the Shariat Islamic Law Board enjoys permission for certifying food products, the Jamiat’s unit can certify only meat.

What about export products?

Significantly, the ban was imposed only on sales,

manufacture and storage within Uttar Pradesh and not meant for export products. As of now, there is no ban on Halal certification for export products. Our Halal unit has been giving certificates only for export purposes.

Meanwhile, the retailers, whose business was thrown into a chaos due to the hastily imposed ban, revealed that while many vegetarian food items carry Halal certificates when exported to Muslim countries, at times, the packages exceeded the number of export items. Those extra packages were at times used in the domestic market. The products were vegetarian anyway, and hence unlikely to hurt anyone’s sentiments.

What has the government done?

Within a week of the announcement of the ban, the State government gave a belated breathing period to all concerned. It allowed retailers 15 days to withdraw any such food items from their shelves. It asked the 92 state-based manufacturers who had been getting halal certification from non-certified organisations, to recall and repackage their products.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN URBAN AREAS HAS COME DOWN: SURVEY

CONTEXT: According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the unemployment rate in urban areas of the country decreased from 7.2 % in July-September 2022 to 6.6 % in July-September 2023.

Tracking jobs

The table shows unemployment rate in urban areas for those aged 15 years and above

Survey period	Male	Female	Total
July – Sept. 2022	6.6	9.4	7.2
Oct. – Dec. 2022	6.5	9.6	7.2
Jan. – March 2023	6	9.2	6.8
April – June 2023	5.9	9.1	6.6
July – Sept. 2023	6	8.6	6.6



■ Unemployment rate fell from 7.2% in July – September 2022 to 6.6% in the corresponding period in 2023

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey

The survey for the period July-September 2023 was released on Wednesday by the Union Labour Ministry. If 6.6 % is the unemployment rate for persons of age 15 years and above, for men, it was 6 %. For women, it decreased from 9.4 % in July– September last year to 8.6 % this year. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) in urban areas increased to 49.3% in July– September 2023 for persons aged 15 years and above. The LFPR increased to 73.8 % for males, while LFPR increased to 24.0 % for females.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GOVT. LISTS FOUR J&K BILLS, CRIMINAL LAW LEGISLATION

CONTEXT: The Union government has listed four Bills related to Jammu and Kashmir, including the one pertaining to reservation of Assembly seats for “Kashmiri migrants”, to be taken up for discussion in the Winter Session of Parliament that commences December 4.



The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023; the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023; the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023; and the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023 were introduced in the

Lok Sabha on July 26 but were taken up for discussion or passage in the Monsoon Session.

The J&K Reorganisation Amendment Bill seeks to nominate two members from the “Kashmiri migrants” community, who “migrated” when militancy was at its peak in 1989-90, as members of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of J&K. One of the members will be a woman.

It also proposes to nominate one member from “Pakistan-occupied Kashmir” who was displaced in the 1947-48, 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan wars.

INTERNAL SECURITY

‘CONSPIRACY UNDER PMLA STANDS ONLY IF LISTED CRIME INVOLVED’

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court clarified that a person will be booked for criminal conspiracy under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) only if the intrigue was hatched to commit a crime specifically listed in the Schedule of the Act.

The offence punishable under Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) will become a scheduled offence only if the conspiracy alleged is of committing an offence which is specifically included in the Schedule. The court rejected an argument made by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) that Section 120B of the IPC was included in Part A of the PMLA Schedule of Offences. If the allegation was of making a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence which was not a part of the Schedule, the offence would become a scheduled offence.

The court said the interpretation suggested by the ED would defeat the legislative object of making only a few selected offences as scheduled offences under the PMLA. Every crime which may generate proceeds of crime need not be a scheduled offence (under the PMLA). The Court declared any offence under Section 120B of IPC included in Part A of the Schedule will become a scheduled offence only if the criminal conspiracy is to commit any offence already included in Parts A, B or C of the Schedule.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

FREE FOODGRAIN SCHEME TO CONTINUE FOR FIVE MORE YEARS

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced at an election rally in Chhattisgarh that the scheme to provides free foodgrains to 81.35 crore people would be extended by five years.



The Centre launched the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and ended it in December 2022. From January 1, 2023,

the scheme had subsumed other schemes under the National Food Security Act such as the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households for one year. AAY card holders will get 35 kg of foodgrains for a family every month and the beneficiaries of the other scheme will 5 kg a person a month.

The government expenditure for the scheme would be around ₹ 11.8 lakh crore for the next five years. PMGKAY, among the world’s biggest social welfare schemes aims at ensuring food and nutrition security for 81.35 crore persons, at an estimated cost of ₹ 11.8 lakh crore over a five-year period.

Ensuring food security at this scale during Amrit Kaal would play a pivotal role in dedicating efforts towards building an aspirational and developed India. The scheme would provide nation-wide uniformity in the delivery of foodgrains free of cost in all States and Union Territories through a network of over five lakh fair price shops under a common logo. It will also enable ease of living, in terms of allowing beneficiaries to lift free of cost foodgrains from any fair price shop in the country under the One Nation One Ration Card initiative.



“If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it.”
—Benjamin Franklin

AGRICULTURE

CENTRE TO PROVIDE DRONES TO 15,000 WOMEN'S GROUPS FOR USE IN AGRICULTURE

CONTEXT: The Centre will provide drones to 15,000 progressive women self-help groups (SHG) to be rented out to farmers for agricultural purposes. The drone services are envisaged to be used by the farmers for nano fertilizer and pesticide applications.



The scheme will have a financial outlay of ₹1,261 crore for two years beginning 2024-25. The groups would be identified from the total 89 lakh SHGs formed under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana. The groups would get Central financial assistance at 80% of the cost of drone. The total expense of a drone and its accessories is about ₹10 lakh. About 80% of the cost or up to ₹8 lakh, will be provided by the Centre. The drone pilot will get an honorarium of ₹15,000 and a co-pilot about ₹10,000.

A well-qualified member of the SHG, aged 18 and above, will be elected for a 15-day training, comprising five-day mandatory drone pilot training and additional 10-day training for agriculture purpose of nutrient and pesticide application, while another member of the group will be selected for training as technician or assistant. The approved initiatives under the scheme is expected to help these self-help groups earn an additional income of at least ₹1 lakh a year.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

CABINET APPROVES ₹24,104-CR. OUTLAY FOR TRIBAL WELFARE

CONTEXT: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a special development mission for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) with a total outlay of over ₹24,104 crore over a three-year period.

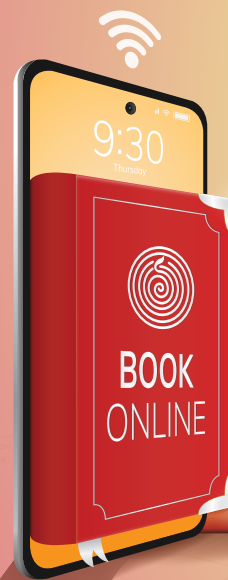
The PM Janjati Adivasi Nyay Maha Abhiyaan (PM-JANMAN) was announced in the Union Budget and launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 15 to improve the overall socio-economic conditions of the 75 tribal groups recognised as particularly vulnerable.

It will focus on 11 critical interventions, part of existing schemes, and will be implemented by nine Ministries. The mission aims to build 4.9-lakh pucca houses, lay 8,000 km of connecting roads, and bring piped water to all households in over 22,000 villages. It will also provide community water pipelines to 2,500 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups villages, each with fewer than 20 households.

The scheme aims to build 2,500 anganwadis centres, set up 1,000 mobile medical units (10 per district), install mobile towers in 3,000 villages, and set up 500 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras to facilitate the sale of forest produce. The Skill Development Ministry will facilitate the skills and vocational training in the selected villages.

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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

GOVT. PAVES WAY FOR 16TH FINANCE PANEL

Fresh formulation

The 16th Finance Commission will have time until Oct. 31 2025, to recommend the tax sharing math between Centre and States

- Panel will also prescribe measures to augment Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement resources of panchayats, local bodies



- An Advance Cell was set up in the Finance Ministry last November to oversee preliminary work

- Panel may review existing arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives

The Union Cabinet approved the terms of reference (ToR) for the Sixteenth Finance Commission, which will recommend the formula for sharing revenues between the Centre and the States for the five-year period beginning on April 1, 2026. The government has set a deadline of October 31, 2025, for the panel to submit its recommendations.

Apart from the key recommendation on distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Centre and States and allocation among States of the respective share of such proceeds, the panel will also prescribe measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement resources of the panchayats and local bodies on the basis of recommendations made by the respective State Finance Commissions.

Under the ToR, the panel will recommend principles that should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to the States by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues. Also, it may review the existing arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives and make appropriate recommendations.

The government had established an Advance Cell in the Finance Ministry on November 21, 2022, to oversee the preliminary work pending formal constitution of the panel. Subsequently, a Working Group headed by Finance Secretary and Secretary (Expenditure) and comprising several senior officials was set up to assist in the formulation of the ToRs. As part of the consultative process, views and suggestions were sought from the State governments and Union Territories (with legislature) on the ToRs and duly deliberated by the group.

Finance Commission of India

The President of India appoints the Finance Commission every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary. Article 280 (2) empowers the Parliament to make laws that lay down procedures and qualifications for appointment as members to the Finance Commission. The Parliament enacted the Finance Commission (Miscellaneous

Provisions) Act, 1951. The Finance Commission make non-binding recommendations to the Government of India. Hence, recommendations of the Union Finance Commission are advisory nature.

Constitutional functions and mandate of the Fourteenth Finance Commission:

1. Formulate principles governing vertical devolution of net proceeds from divisible pool of taxes between the Union and the States and horizontal distribution among States respectively.
2. Recommend principles governing transfer of Grants-in-aid to the States from the Consolidated Fund of India.
3. Recommends measures needed to augment Consolidated Fund of States, including supplementing resources of Panchayats and Municipalities.
4. Recommends any other matter referred to the Commission by the President in the interests of sound finance of the State Treasury.
5. Comprehensively evaluate the fiscal status of the States and recommend measures to safeguard the fiscal autonomy of States with specific suggestions to ensure fiscal prudence with fiscal targets and restraints under the FRBM Act.
6. Look into issues like disinvestment, GST compensation, sale of non-priority PSUs and subsidies.
7. Recommendations for the successor states on reorganisation of Andhra Pradesh under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.
8. Tackling ecological and environmental challenges and climate change to maintain sustainable growth.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL GROWTH TO SLOW NEXT YEAR, BUT ECONOMY WILL AVOID A HARD LANDING'

CONTEXT: The global economy will slow slightly next year but the risk of a hard landing has subsided despite high levels of debt and uncertainty over interest rates, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said on Wednesday.

Global growth is set to moderate from 2.9% this year to 2.7% in 2024 before picking up in 2025 to 3.0%, the Paris-based policy forum said in its latest Economic Outlook. Growth in advanced economies that make up the OECD's 38 members was seen headed for a soft landing with the United States holding up better than expected so far. The OECD forecast U.S. growth would slow from 2.4% this year to 1.5% next year, revising up its estimates from September, when it had predicted U.S. growth of 2.2% in 2023 and 1.3% in 2024.

Though the risk of a hard landing in the U.S. and elsewhere had eased, the OECD said that the risk of recession was not off the table given weak housing markets, high oil prices and sluggish lending.

'China's realty bubble'

China's economy was also expected to slow as it grapples with a deflating real estate bubble and consumers save more in the face of greater uncertainty about the outlook. Its growth was seen easing from 5.2% this year to 4.7% in 2024 — both marginally higher than expected in September — before slowing further in 2025 to 4.2%, the OECD forecast.

In the euro area, growth was seen picking up from 0.6% this year to 0.9% in 2024 and 1.1% in 2025 as Germany, the region's largest economy, emerged from a recession this year. Nonetheless, the OECD warned that, because of the high level of bank financing in the euro zone, the full impact of interest rate hikes remained uncertain and could weigh more on growth than expected.

And Japan would see growth slow from 1.7% this year to 1.0% in 2024 before picking up to 1.2% in 2024.

- 1. Polling day activities:** Non-interference with the free movement of voters, not influencing voters inside or near polling stations, and not displaying any election propaganda within 100 meters of a polling station.
- 2. Functioning of the party in power:** Not using government resources for campaigning, not announcing new projects or schemes during the election period, and not making promises that would influence voters.

The MCC is an important tool for ensuring free and fair elections in India. It helps to level the playing field for all parties and candidates and prevents any misuse of power or position.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

A BETTER MODEL

CONTEXT: In recent days, the ECI has wielded the MCC against the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and its Delhi unit president; Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi; Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) supremo and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and his son and cabinet colleague K.T. Rama Rao following alleged violations of various kinds.

This catalogue of ECI actions might give an appearance of even-handedness, but issues that it did not address too require attention. Congress complaints against Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, for charges comparable if not more serious than those against Opposition leaders, have been ignored.

Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a set of guidelines or a code of ethics that was set out by the Election Commission of India for political parties and candidates to conduct themselves during elections. The MCC is designed to ensure free and fair elections by preventing any misuse of power or position by the ruling party or any other party or candidate.

The MCC is not legally enforceable but is considered to be a moral obligation that all political parties and candidates should follow. The Election Commission can take action against any party or candidate who violates the MCC.

Salient features:

- 1. General conduct:** Avoiding appeals to caste or communal feelings, refraining from making false or provocative statements, and respecting the right of every individual for peaceful and undisturbed home-life.
- 2. Meetings and processions:** Avoid holding meetings or processions near polling stations, not using loudspeakers during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the close of the poll, and not using vehicles for propaganda within 100 meters of a polling station.



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ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

BANKS THAT FUNDED COAL PLANTS NEED AN ESCAPE PLAN

CONTEXT: The clean energy in the electricity mix has increased to about 23%, over 55% of India's current energy needs are still being met by coal. The acceleration of this transition towards greener energy is essential to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5°C.

Nonetheless, with the tightening of climate policies, a large portion of assets reliant on coal may diminish in value, leading to 'stranded' assets. Stranded assets are investments that face the risk of losing value and turning into liabilities. This risk arises due to unforeseen shifts in market conditions, changes in regulations, alterations in consumer preferences, and technological advancements. This situation could impact banks and financial institutions that have both direct and indirect ties to the fossil fuel sector. While climate emergency does take priority, a plan to save the banks — which are exposed to the sector — should also be formulated to reduce impact, a paper published as part of the Reserve Bank of India's November 2023 bulletin argues.

In India, particularly, where the average age of coal plants is only 13 years, the financial risk associated with decommissioning these plants is considerably greater than it is in many other countries, the paper argues. More importantly, public sector banks and non-banking financial institutions (NBFC) carry most of the risk. Also, among NBFCs, the Power Finance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation, which operate under the Ministry of Power, bear 90% of the loan burden. Only 4% of the financing for coal-fired thermal power plants in India came from private banks

Green energy push may leave banks in red

The charts were sourced from the RBI's report titled, 'Transitioning India's Power Sector: Repurposing of Coal-Fired Power Plants', and a IISD report titled, 'India's Energy Transition: Stranded coal power assets, workers and energy subsidies'



Chart 1: Share of loans provided to 140 thermal power plants in India till December 2022

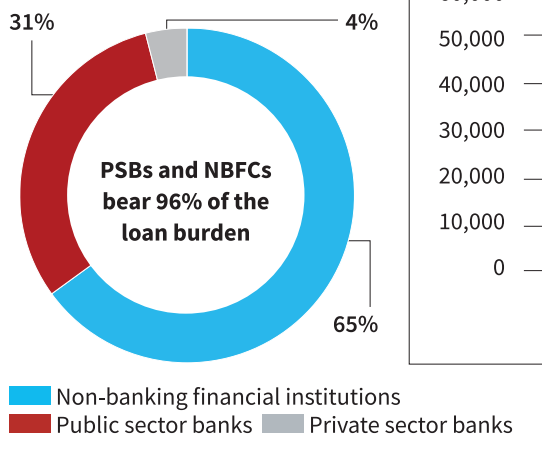


Chart 2: Lending for coal-fired thermal plants and renewable power projects (in ₹ crore)

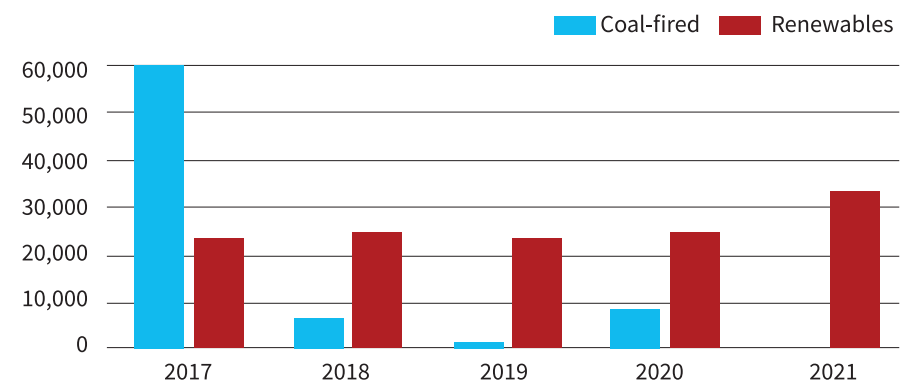
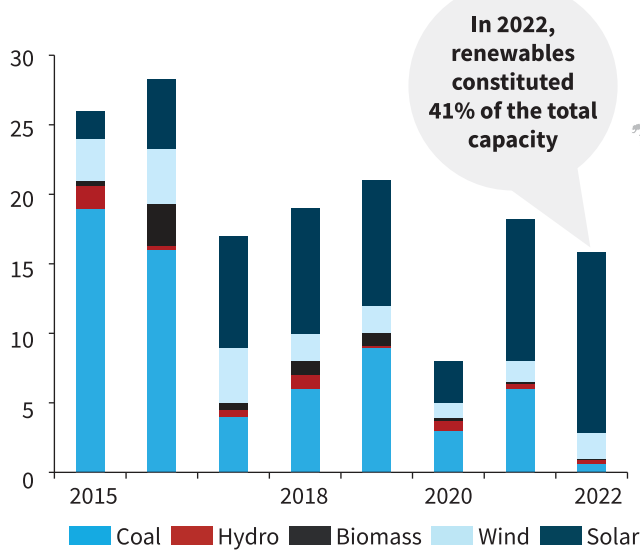
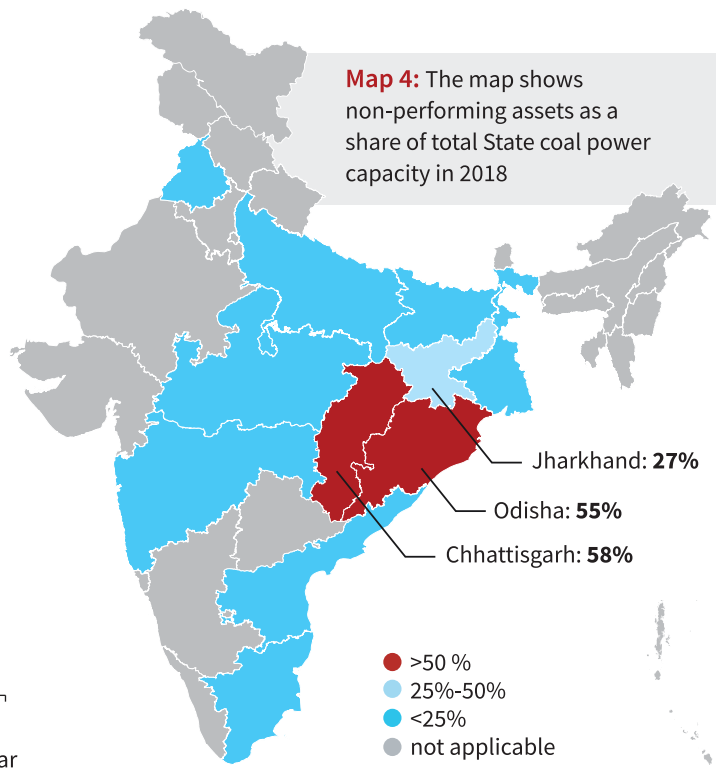


Chart 3: The chart shows India's power generation capacity addition (in GW)



Map 4: The map shows non-performing assets as a share of total State coal power capacity in 2018



ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

UNDERSTANDING RAT-HOLE MINING



Two scientific methods of mining — vertical drilling and auger or horizontal drilling — were employed to rescue 41 workers on November 28 after 17 days of being trapped in the partially-collapsed Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand. The last leg of the rescue involved rat-hole mining, once used extensively in Meghalaya.

What is rat-hole mining?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned it in April 2014. Rat-hole mining, of two types, is so named as it involves digging tunnels 3-4 feet deep, barely allowing workers to crawl in and out. They have to squat while extracting coal with pickaxes.

The side-cutting type of mining is usually done on hill slopes by following a coal seam — dark brown or black-banded coal deposited within layers of rock— visible from the outside. The box-cutting entails digging a circular or squarish pit at least 5 sq. metre in width up to a depth of 400 feet. Miners who drop down in makeshift cranes or using rope-and-bamboo ladders dig horizontally after finding the coal seam. The tunnels are dug in every direction from the edge of the pit, resembling the tentacles of an octopus.

Why is such mining banned?

Coal mining boomed after Meghalaya attained statehood in January 1972. The Coal Mines Nationalisation Act, 1973 does not apply to Meghalaya, a Sixth Schedule State. The landowners are thus also the owners of the minerals beneath. The State has an estimated reserve of 576.48 million tonnes of low-ash, high-sulphur coal belonging to the Eocene age (33-56 million years ago).

Unlike in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, coal seams in Meghalaya are very thin. This, makes rat-hole mining more economically viable than opencast mining. However, the terrain and expenses involved discouraged mine owners from employing advanced drilling machines. Labourers mainly from

Assam, Nepal, and adjoining Bangladesh risked the hazards of rat-hole mining — asphyxiation because of poor ventilation, collapse of mines due to lack of structural support, and flooding — to earn thrice or four times as much as working in farms or construction sites. Apart from issues of safety and health, unregulated mining led to land degradation, deforestation, and water with high concentrations of sulphates, iron, and toxic heavy metals, low dissolved oxygen, and high biochemical oxygen demand. At least two rivers, Lukha and Myntdu, became too acidic to sustain aquatic life.

What is the way forward?

The stakes for a section of locals have been so high that the State government has been under pressure to facilitate the resumption of mining legally.

In May 2023, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the Coal Ministry approved mining leases for four of the 17 prospective licence applicants. This would lead to the commencement of 'scientific' mining ensuring minimal environmental impact through sustainable and legally compliant extraction procedures. Anti-mining activists, who are assaulted by miners off and on, said that 'scientific' would eventually be a fancy tag in a State where profit has driven coal mining.

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