

14 May 2024

Sushil Modi, Ex Deputy Chief Minister Of Bihar, Dies At 72



Key Points:

- ❖ Senior BJP leader Sushil Modi died at Delhi's All-India Institute of Medical Sciences Monday evening. The 72-year-old was battling cancer and was admitted in the intensive care unit of AIIMS for the last one month.
- ❖ The stalwart leader, once the BJP's best-known face in Bihar, had opted out of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections also on account of his health. He had announced it on social media with a post on X, formerly twitter, on April 3. "I have been battling cancer for the last 6 months.
- ❖ Now I feel that the time has come to tell people. I will not be able to do anything in the Lok Sabha elections. I have told everything to the PM. Always grateful and always dedicated to the country, Bihar and the party," his post read.
- ❖ Over 11 years between 2005 and 2020, In two stints, he served as the Deputy of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Kerala has banned oleander flowers in temple offerings



Key Points:

- ❖ Two Kerala government-controlled temple boards, which together manage 2,500-odd temples in the state, have banned use of oleander flowers (locally known as arali) in temple offerings after a 24-year old woman died after accidentally chewing some oleander leaves.

First, what exactly happened?

- ❖ Surya Surendran, a 24-year old nurse, died on April 30, prima facie due to accidental oleander poisoning. Surendran had gotten a new job in the UK, and was set to depart on April 28. That morning, however, she chewed some leaves of the oleander plant which grew outside her house in Pallipad, Alappuzha. She was on her phone, and probably did not understand how dangerous this was. She soon developed uneasiness, and vomited a few times. Later that day, she collapsed at the Kochi airport, and died a couple of days later at a hospital. When asked about what she

had eaten, she had told doctors about chewing oleander leaves and flowers. The forensic surgeon, who conducted her autopsy, informed the police about poisoning from oleander.

What is oleander?

- ❖ *Nerium oleander*, commonly known as oleander or rosebay, is a plant cultivated worldwide in tropical, subtropical, and temperate regions. Known for its drought tolerance, the shrub is often used for ornamental and landscaping purposes.
- ❖ In Kerala, the plant is known by the names of arali and kanaveeram, and is grown along highways and beaches as a natural, green fencing. There are different varieties of oleander, each with a flower of a different colour.

How is oleander used in traditional medicine?

- ❖ The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API), a government document that describes the quality, purity, and strength of drugs used in Ayurveda, mentions oleander. According to API, an oil prepared from the root bark can be used to treat skin diseases.

How toxic is oleander?

- ❖ Even though it is prescribed in some ayurvedic formulations, oleander's toxicity has also long been recognised across the world, and as researchers Shannon D Langford and Paul J Boor wrote, the plant has been "exploited

therapeutically and as an instrument of suicide since antiquity." (*Oleander toxicity: an examination of human and animal exposures* published in the journal *Toxicology* in 1995).

- ❖ Moreover, ingestion or inhalation of smoke from burning oleander can also be intoxicating. This is due to the properties of cardiac glycosides (a type of chemical) including oleandrin, folinerin, and digitoxigenin, which are present in all parts of the plant.
- ❖ "Cardiac glycosides are steroidal compounds capable of exerting pharmacological effects on cardiac muscle. The primary therapeutic value of these glycosides lies in their ability to exert profound tonic effects on the heart [stronger and faster heart contractions]," Langford and Boor wrote.

"However, the therapeutic window is small and overdose/toxicity is frequently encountered when using these drugs," they added.

- ❖ Effects of oleander toxicity include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, rashes, confusion, dizziness, irregular heartbeat, slow heartbeat, and, in extreme cases, death. According to the website of New York's Mount Sinai hospital, "Symptoms last for 1 to 3 days and may require a hospital stay. Death is unlikely."

Nepal climber Kami Rita Sherpa climbs Mt Everest for 29th time



Key Points:

- ❖ Nepali Sherpa climber Kami Rita has scaled Everest for the 29th time, surpassing his own record of 28 ascents. He now holds the record for the most ascents of the world's tallest peak in its 71-year climbing history.
- ❖ Kami Rita Sherpa, also known as 'Everest man,' embarked on the Spring Season Everest expedition from Kathmandu, accompanying a team of approximately 28 climbers. Seven Summit Treks organised the expedition to conquer the world's highest peak. He completed his first ascent of Everest in 1994, at 24.
- ❖ According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Kami Rita has scaled Everest nearly every year since his first climb, totalling 29 ascents now.
- ❖ In 2020, the south side of Everest in Nepal was closed to climbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but a partial reopening in 2021 allowed Kami Rita to achieve his 25th summit in May 2021.

Nepal

- ❖ Capital- Kathmandu
- ❖ Currency- Nepalese rupee
- ❖ President- Ram Chandra Paudel
- ❖ Prime minister- Pushpa Kamal Dahal

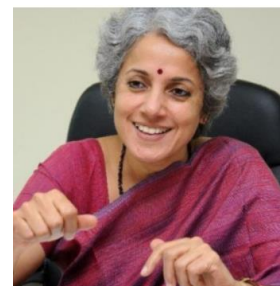
SAIL-Bhilai to set up Chhattisgarh's first 15-Mw floating solar plant



Key Points:

- ❖ Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP), the Chhattisgarh-based arm of the state-run Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), will install the state's first 15-megawatt (MW) floating solar project in its Maroda-1 reservoir to improve its carbon footprint.
- ❖ The steel major is undertaking various projects to reduce carbon emissions, conserve energy, and promote renewable energy.
- ❖ The solar plant will be set up in Durg district. The project is being implemented through NTPC-SAIL Power Supply Company Limited (NSPCL), a 50:50 joint venture company of National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and SAIL.

Dr Soumya Swaminathan to be awarded honorary doctorate by Canada's McGill University



Key Points:

- ❖ Dr Soumya Swaminathan, most recently WHO's Chief Scientist, has been named among the 10 exceptional individuals who will receive honorary degrees from Canada's prestigious McGill University as part of the Spring 2024 Convocation ceremonies.
- ❖ More than two centuries old, McGill, a public research university in Montreal, grants honorary degrees to individuals "who have lifetime records of outstanding scholarly, scientific, or artistic achievement, or of exceptional contributions to the public good through professional or philanthropic activity.
- ❖ In 2017, Swaminathan joined the World Health Organisation (WHO) as Deputy Director General (Programmes), and, in March 2019, was named its first Chief Scientist, a role she filled through the Covid-19 pandemic until late 2022.

Idashisha Nongrang appointed first woman DGP of Meghalaya



Key Points:

- ❖ Senior IPS Officer Idashisha Nongrang has been named first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Meghalaya state.

- ❖ A 1992 batch Indian Police Service officer, she will replace Lajja Ram Bishnoi who will retire on May 19.
- ❖ She will serve as the State's police chief till May 19, 2026.
- ❖ Nongrang is also the first tribal woman to ascend to this prestigious rank.
- ❖ Capital – Shillong
- ❖ Chief Minister – Conrad Kongkal Sangma
- ❖ Governor – Phagu Chauhan

Japan defeated Pakistan to win the 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Trophy



Key Points:

- ❖ Japan has won its maiden Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey trophy by defeating Pakistan 4-1 in the penalty shoot-out in the final.
- ❖ The final was played at the Azlan Shah Stadium in Ipoh, Malaysia.
- ❖ Japan won the trophy, with Pakistan in second place. Malaysia was in third place, followed by New Zealand, South Korea, and Canada in last place.
- ❖ Six teams, Japan, Pakistan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, and the host team, Malaysia, participated in the 2024 event.

Neeraj Chopra finishes 2nd with 88.36m throw in Doha Diamond League



Key Points:

- ❖ Neeraj Chopra finished second with a best throw of 88.36m throw while India's Kishore Jena's best was 76.31m in Doha Diamond League.
- ❖ Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic, who finished first with a best effort of 88.38. while Anderson Peters\ claimed the third spot.
- ❖ Meanwhile, India's Kishore Jena, who claimed the silver medal at the Asian Games last year with a personal best of 87.54m, endured a disappointing Diamond League debut, finishing ninth with a best throw of 76.31m.

International Day of Plant Health

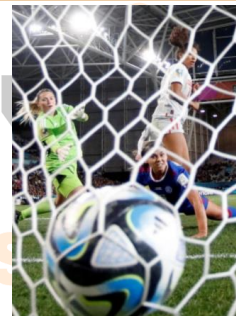


Key Points:

- ❖ The International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) is observed on 12 May.
- ❖ **Objective** – To raise awareness about the necessity of protecting plant health in order to prevent hunger, reduce poverty, safeguard biodiversity, and promote economic development.

- ❖ Theme 2024 – Plant Health, Safe Trade, Digital Technology
- ❖ The IDPH resolution was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in March 2022.
- ❖ The United Nations established the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) to draw public attention to the necessity of safeguarding plant health in order to prevent hunger, reduce poverty, safeguard biodiversity, and promote economic development.

UN proclaims May 25 as World Football Day



Key Points:

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming May 25 as World Football Day. The sport is called soccer in the United States.
- ❖ The day marks the 100th anniversary of international football tournament in history the first with the representation of all regions which took place on May 25, 1924 during the summer Olympic Games held in Paris, according to the resolution.

- ❖ The 193-member General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus with a bang of the gavel by its president, Dennis Francis, to applause from diplomats in the assembly chamber. It was co-sponsored by more than 160 countries.

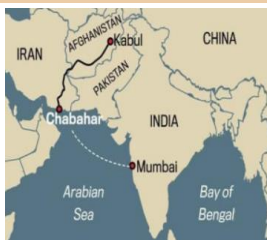
Punjabi poet Surjit Patar passes away



Key Points:

- ❖ Noted Punjabi poet Surjit Patar passed away at the age of 79 in Punjab's Ludhiana.
- ❖ Patar's notable achievements include receiving top honours like Padma Shri and the Sahitya Akademi Award for his work of writing in a regional language.
- ❖ Patar hailed from Patar Kalan village in Jalandhar and retired as a professor of Punjabi from Punjab Agricultural University.
- ❖ He received the Padma Shri in 2012 and served as the president of the Punjab Arts Council.

India Signs 10-Year Contract to Operate Iran's Key Chabahar Port



Key Points:

- ❖ India and Iran on Monday signed a 10-year contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically important Chabahar port in Iran, a move that will boost regional connectivity as well as trade ties.
- ❖ This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port that will also have a multiplier effect on trade among India, Iran and Afghanistan as efforts continue to directly tap the potential in Central Asia, bypassing neighbouring Pakistan.
- ❖ According to an official statement, the contract was signed by India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) and Iran's Port & Maritime Organisation (PMO), in the presence of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
- ❖ The Indian Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), a subsidiary of IPGL, facilitated the first consignment of exports from Afghanistan to India in 2019.
- ❖ According to him, Chabahar is not only the closest Iranian port to India but it is also an excellent port from a nautical point of view.
- ❖ India has been pushing for the Chabahar port project to boost regional trade, especially for its connectivity to Afghanistan. India

and Iran have projected the port as a key hub for the INSTC project. The INSTC is a 7,200-km- long multi-mode transport project for moving freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

- ❖ India has been developing Chabahar Port and discussions on the development of the port dates back to 2003 during Iranian President Muhammad Khatami's visit to India. In 2013, India committed to investing USD 100 million towards the development of Chabahar Port.

- ❖ Earlier, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for development of Chabahar Port by India was signed in May 2015. Thereafter, the contract was executed on May 23, 2016, At Iran during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iran.
- ❖ Chabahar is an oceanic port. By leveraging Chabahar Port, India aims to bypass Pakistan and establish direct access to Afghanistan and beyond, into Central Asia. Kandla port in Gujarat is the closest to the Chabahar port at 550 Nautical Miles while the distance between Chabahar and Mumbai is 786 Nautical Miles.

