

11- 16 | 2024



THE HINDU EDITORIAL WEEKLY COMPILATION

11/03/2024



CRISIS OF TIME RAPID GROWTH, SUCH AS BENGALURU'S, AND SHORT-TERMISM CANNOT COEXIST.

The Karnataka water crisis has affected over 7,000 villages, 1,100 wards, and 220 talukas, primarily in Mandya and Mysuru districts, linked to the Cauvery river watershed and KrishnarajaSagar dam, crucial for Bengaluru. The crisis results from insufficient rainfall in the preceding year, undermining the Cauvery's replenishment. Despite Bengaluru's wealth, it faces water shortages due to overreliance on the Cauvery and groundwater, worsened by low recharge rates. The city's unpreparedness contrasts with historical water engineering. Climate change amplifies unpredictability, urging bipartisan, long-term solutions for a circular water economy, reducing external dependence, and prioritizing the Cauvery's health. The crisis exposes Bengaluru's mismanagement, affecting lakes and perpetuating short-termism. Urgency exists for sustainable practices, emphasizing the preservation of water sources and lasting solutions transcending political cycles to address evolving climate change challenges effectively.

13/03/2024

CLOSED AND INSULAR PORTUGAL IS NOT IMMUNE TO THE RISE OF THE FAR-RIGHT IN EUROPE

Portugal, renowned for its stability as a liberal democracy, faces a potential shift as far-right populist sentiments gain momentum. The recent parliamentary election results revealed a close race between the centre-right Social Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, with the surprise ascent of the far-right Chega party, promising to address issues like immigration and support measures such as chemical castration for certain sex offenders. Chega, founded in 2019, secured 18% of the votes, positioning itself as the third-largest party. Despite Chega's leader André Ventura expressing interest in coalition talks, the Social Democratic Party's leader, Luís Montenegro, has ruled out any collaboration. Following the collapse of the Socialist government last year due to investigations into handling mining projects, the new Prime Minister, likely from the Social Democratic Party, must navigate economic challenges, including low wages, inflation, housing crises, and healthcare protests, all while contending with the rise of the far-right. The election outcome reflects a shifting political landscape in Portugal and raises questions about the country's future political direction.

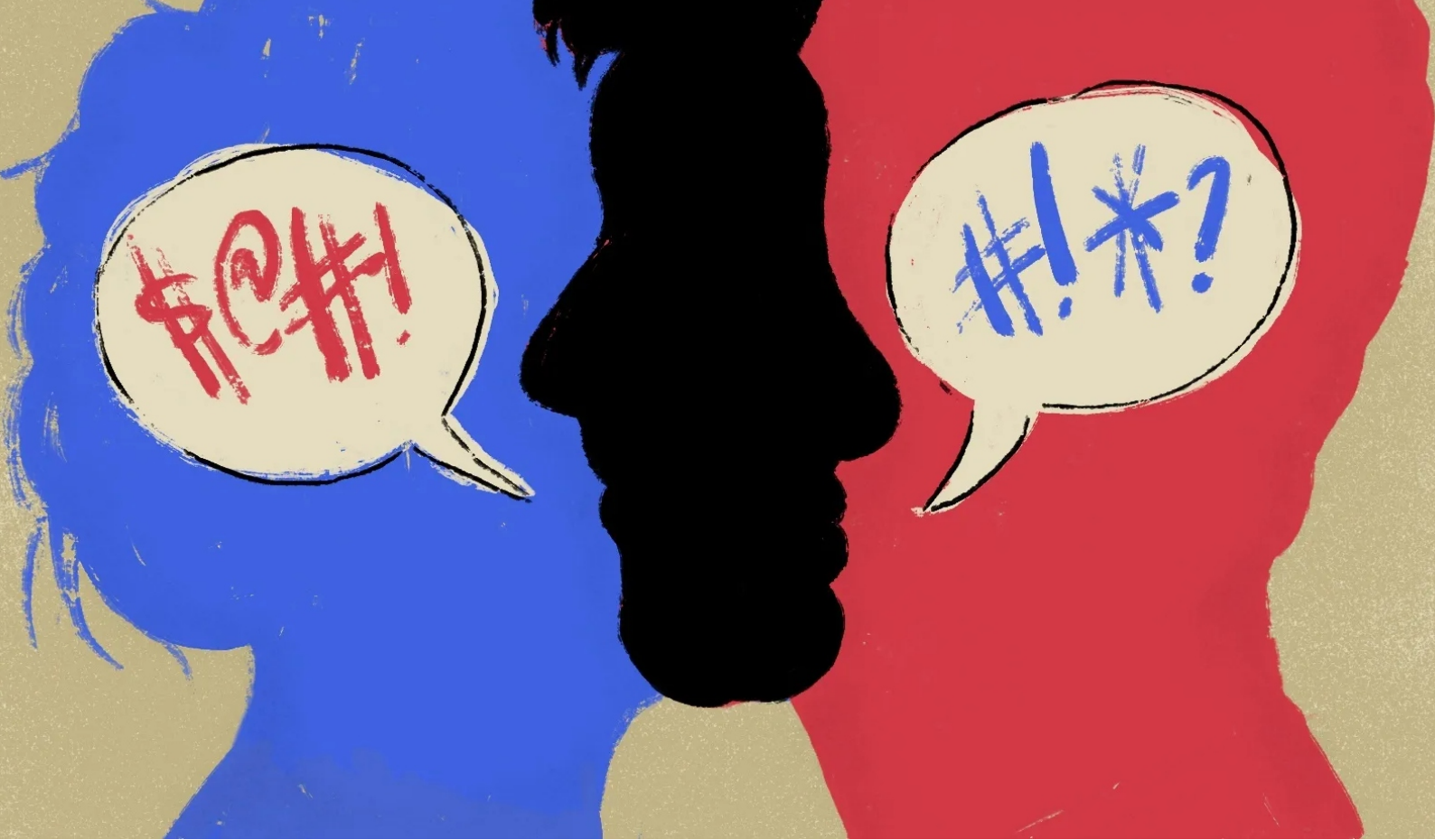


14/03/2024



A FRESH STANCE INDIA'S FREE TRADE PACT WITH FOUR EU NATIONS MATTERS EVEN IF GAINS ARE LIMITED.

India recently signed the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), comprising Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Initiated in 2008 but delayed after the UPA government's exit, the pact focuses on enhancing market access, particularly for Indian service firms, architects, accountants, and nurses. With Switzerland being India's largest EFTA trade partner, the deal aims to attract \$100 billion in foreign direct investment and create a million jobs over 15 years. Consumers can anticipate cheaper imports like wines and chocolates, while producers may access affordable machinery. Despite the tariff cuts being tied to investment inflows, assessing outcomes will take 20 years. Notably, this agreement follows the UAE deal and is India's first with a Western nations' grouping, indicating a shift from its earlier aversion to trade pacts. Furthermore, the TEPA includes non-trade issues like labor, human rights, environment, and gender, a move signaling India's readiness for free trade amid global protectionist trends. Ratification is expected by 2024, marking a positive step towards international economic engagement.



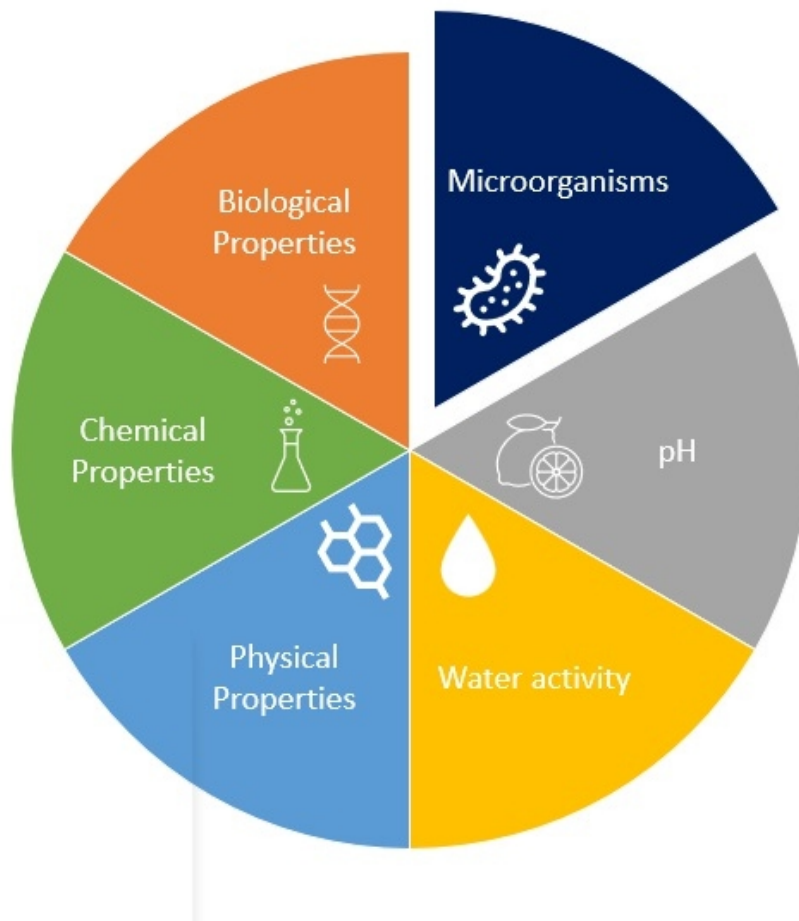
15/03/2024

SQUARE ONE BOTH REPUBLICANS

AND DEMOCRATS NEED ALTERNATIVE VOICES TO
ARTICULATE VISION.

With Nikki Haley's withdrawal from the Republican nomination race for the 2024 presidential election, the stage is now set for a rematch between incumbent President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump. This outcome was largely expected, as they are the only viable candidates from their respective parties. Haley represented hopes for conservative values but Trump's nativist-populist style dominated Republican primaries, fueled by his unfinished agenda from his previous term. Biden's age raises concerns about his ability to handle the presidency, and the lack of alternative Democratic leaders is worrying for the party's future. Despite polls favoring Trump, the election's outcome will hinge on factors like voter turnout, swing state preferences, and legal issues against Trump. The absence of alternative leadership suggests ongoing partisan deadlock, though there's a call for new visions in American politics to serve national interests better. The hope lies in emerging voices within both parties offering fresh perspectives on the American Dream amidst evolving national and global political landscapes.

16/03/2024



FOOD FACTOR INFLATION IS IMPACTING PERSONAL CONSUMPTION AND HURTING GROWTH.

The latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) data shows persistent volatility in food prices, impacting broader inflation and hindering economic growth, particularly personal consumption. February's CPI remained stable at 5.09%, but food prices surged, with the Consumer Food Price Index rising by 8.66%. Vegetable prices, especially potatoes, onions, and tomatoes, saw significant increases, driving concerns as they constitute a substantial portion of food consumption. Despite government measures like the onion export ban, prices remain high due to reduced crop outputs and insufficient water storage for summer-sown crops, notably in the southern region. RBI Deputy Governor Michael Patra warned of the economic risks posed by elevated food inflation, highlighting its impact on private consumption, especially in rural areas. To ensure inclusive and sustained growth, policymakers must address inflation to prevent discontent as the country approaches elections.