



THE HINDU  
**EDITORIAL**  
WEEKLY COMPILATION

**MAY 06 TO 11 2024**

06/05/2024

# Indian Defence University



**While the nature of war remains constant,**

its changing character imposes a premium on military education and the academic preparation required to cope with security challenges

The pressing requirement for India to establish its Defense University (IDU) to improve education and strategic thinking among its armed forces. In today's changing landscape of warfare it is essential to have an educational system that can adapt to current and future security challenges. This necessity is evident, from the presence of institutions in neighbouring countries like Pakistan and China where multiple universities are dedicated to education. The idea of IDU was initially suggested post-independence with milestones such as a recommendation in 1967 and 'in principle' approval in 2010 for its setup in Gurgaon. However progress has been sluggish. The absence of a Professional Military Education (PME) system poses a gap in India's defence readiness. IDU aims to blend knowledge with training promoting inter service cooperation through a comprehensive curriculum covering both scientific and humanistic disciplines. This endeavour is deemed critical, for nurturing thinking and enhancing the capabilities of armed forces personnel when dealing with intricate challenges. While the establishment of Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) falls short in meeting the requirements of education it underscores the significance of operationalizing IDU effectively to address these specialized needs.

07/05/2024

## Mullaperiyar Dam Dispute

**T.N., Kerala should discuss dam safety; legal recourse must be the last resort**



The disagreement, over the Mullaperiyar dam between Tamil Nadu and Kerala has yet to find a resolution, ten years after the Supreme Court permitted Tamil Nadu to increase the water level from 136 ft to 142 ft. Tamil Nadu, benefiting from the dam accuses Kerala of hindering upkeep and failing to adhere to the Dam Safety Act of 2021 which requires a safety assessment by 2026. On the hand Kerala, where the dam is situated remains apprehensive about its safety due to its age (129 years). Associated risks. Despite these conflicts certain legal steps have been taken such as implementing a rule curve, for managing the dams gates. Moreover there is contention surrounding a car park project proposed by the Kerala government that Tamil Nadu disputes based on Survey of India data concerning its location.

Both states have historically maintained relations. There are calls for them to resume diplomatic talks in order to settle their disagreements amicably without resorting to lengthy legal battles. Engaging in dialogue could facilitate understanding of each other's concerns and potentially prevent further escalation driven by political or emotional factors.



08/05/2024

# Plastic solution

## **Plastic pollution cannot be ended by treaties, without investment in alternatives**

The Global Plastics Treaty, which aims to reduce plastic usage is facing obstacles following its round of talks. Despite the participation of, than 175 United Nations member countries reaching an agreement remains elusive prompting another negotiation session set for November in Busan, South Korea. Economic concerns stand as a hurdle with oil producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, the United States, Russia, India and Iran showing reluctance in committing to specific deadlines for cutting down plastic production.



A group of nations supported by European countries advocates for implementing reduction measures around 2040. Disagreements persist regarding the decision making process within the treaty framework on whether contentious matters should be resolved through voting or consensus. India shares concerns with nations and insists that any binding measures must address the availability, accessibility and affordability of alternatives while also emphasizing support for capacity building, technology transfer and financial aid—a reflection of the 'common but differentiated responsibility' principle observed in climate negotiations. In 2022 India introduced amendments to the Plastic Waste Management Rules that prohibit single use plastics; however enforcement remains inconsistent. Excludes products like small bottles and multi layered packaging, from regulation. Around the world nations such, as Brazil, China, India and the United States are responsible for 60% of waste. The article highlights that tackling pollution goes beyond agreements; it demands significant funding, in cost effective alternatives to set achievable reduction goals.

09/05/2024

## Onion Exports


**Restrictive revocation of onion export ban sends wrong signals to farmers**



The article talks about the revisions made to India's onion export policy. Following a six month ban, on exports due to prices and supply challenges the Indian government has classified onion exports as 'unrestricted' but subject to certain conditions, such as a minimum export price of \$550 per ton and a 40% export duty. This change in policy which includes a permission for 2,000 tons of onion exports before Gujarat's election has stirred up controversy among farmers in nearby states. While there are arguments that these measures will help stabilize prices and support farmers there is uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of the high base price and export duty. The decision to lift export bans in Egypt and Pakistan has also had an impact on onion prices. Farmers have been dealing with a year of export restrictions since the August affecting their earnings. A report from the Centre for Civil Society revealed that farmers saw a 21% reduction in income due to export bans between 2015 and 2020. The ongoing policy changes are viewed as damaging to farmers confidence in planting crops, which's crucial, for managing inflation and achieving India's goal of becoming a food provider globally.

10/05/2024

# Cybersecurity in an AI-Infused World



With increasing misuse of generative AI, ensuring that consumers can navigate digital spaces safely has become crucial

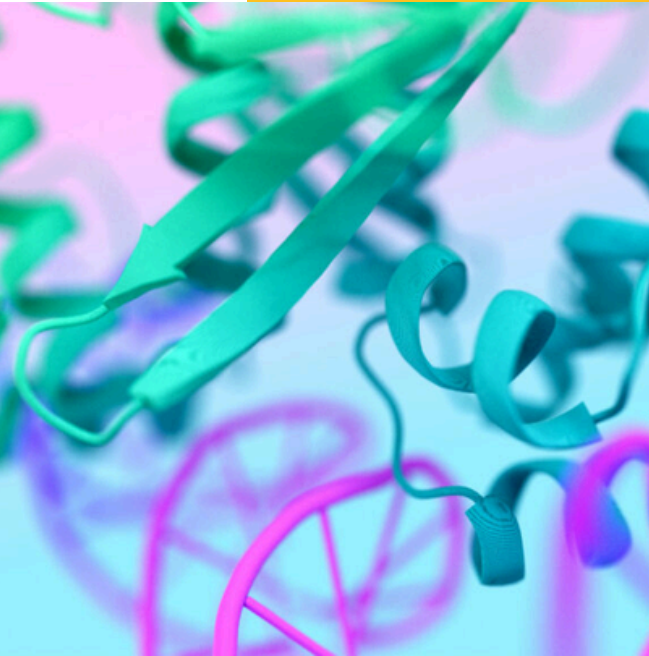
The rapid advancement of generative AI has significantly transformed industries, boosting productivity and efficiency. However, it has also introduced a new era of cyber-risks. Recent incidents, like the fraudulent use of AI to mimic voices for extortion, have highlighted the urgent need for enhanced cyber security measures. A study shows a massive spike in phishing and credential phishing incidents, attributed largely to the misuse of generative AI. As cyber threats evolve, becoming more sophisticated and complex, the need for robust cyber security measures has never been more critical. From cognitive behavioural manipulations to breaches of biometric identification systems, the scope of these threats is vast. The increased reliance on generative AI has led to a surge in undetectable phishing attacks and privacy concerns among organizations. Global efforts to mitigate these risks include the Bletchley Declaration, signed by world leaders to address the harmful use of AI. At the corporate level, enhancing digital awareness through training and fostering digital fluency is essential. Furthermore, NGOs play a key role in educating the public about cyber literacy, creating a more resilient defence against these evolving digital threats.

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11/05/2024

## DeepMind's AlphaFold 3



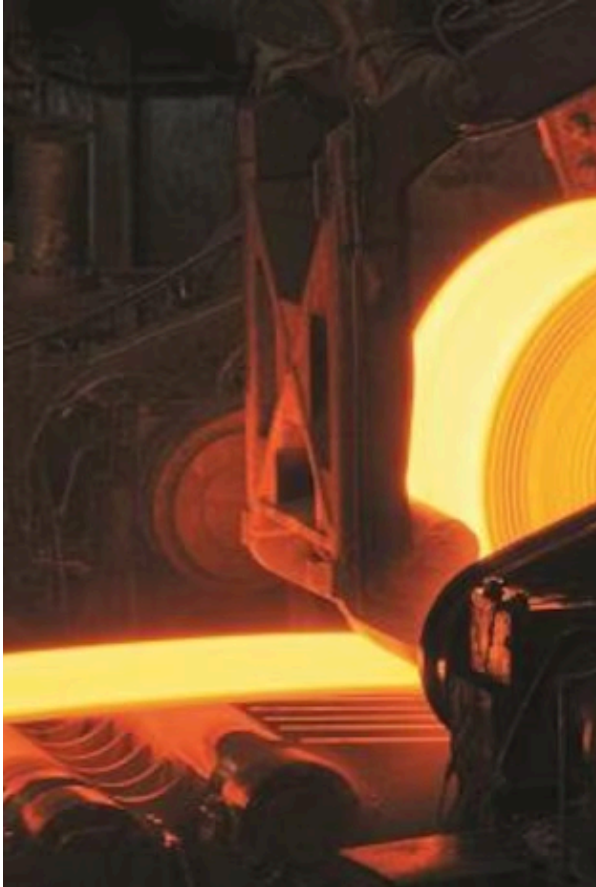
**Free use of AlphaFold 3  
must extend to scrutiny  
of its inner mechanisms**

DeepMind's AlphaFold 3 is the latest in a series of AI tools designed to predict protein structures, a critical aspect of structural biology. Proteins, which are long chains of amino acids, fold into specific shapes that determine their function. Misfolded proteins can lead to diseases. AlphaFold 3, following its predecessors from 2018 and 2020, has significantly improved the understanding of protein structures, demonstrating this prowess in the Critical Assessment of Protein Structure Prediction contest. It boasts nearly 80% accuracy and extends its modeling capabilities to DNA, RNA, ligands, and their modifications.

However, the release of AlphaFold 3 has been met with familiar concerns. While the tool predicts structures accurately, it doesn't explain the underlying mechanisms of protein folding, leaving this task to scientists. Its potential to accelerate drug discovery remains uncertain, as many drugs fail in clinical trials due to unforeseen interactions. Furthermore, access to AlphaFold 3 is limited, and its internal workings are not open for public scrutiny. Given the importance of AlphaFold 3 to healthcare and its reliance on publicly funded research data, DeepMind is urged to consider alternative revenue models to avoid the pitfalls of restricted access that have affected scientific papers and medicines.

13/05/2024

## Sluggish Industrial Output Growth



**The small rise in industrial output holds some worrying portents**

In March India's factory output growth slowed to 4.9% down from 5.6% in February as reported by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). This year's growth though slightly higher than the year's decline remains modest with mining output hitting a 19 month low at 1.2% and manufacturing growth at 5.2%. On the side electricity generation saw an increase of 8.6%. The National Statistical Office anticipates a 5.8% uptick in output for the year 2023 24 just above last year's figure of 5.2%. This rise is primarily driven by mining which saw a surge of 7.5% while manufacturing and electricity showed improvements. However production of consumer durables and non-durables experienced increases of 3.6% and 4% respectively remaining below pre COVID levels. The slow rebound in household spending among lower income households presents a challenge for investment as a catalyst for economic expansion. Generating jobs and enhancing wage levels are crucial for fostering a recovery in demand. Notably labour intensive sectors such as apparel and electronics witnessed contractions in the year 2023 24 due in part to subdued exports. It is imperative for the government to tackle these issues to spur investment and instil confidence, among consumers.