

DAILY PT POINTERS

20th February, 2024



HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu:Places (GSI)-Page 10

Why was there a political deadlock in Northern Ireland?

What made the Democratic Unionist Party rejoin the Stormont Assembly?

Garimella Subramanian

The story so far:

Northern Ireland (NI) has finally developed a new government this month after a hiatus between the two main parties since the 2022 elections to the Stormont Assembly. The pro-Irish unity Sinn Féin party garnered the largest number of seats. This is the first time since the creation of NI that Stormont has its first nationalist Prime Minister in Michelle O'Neill. Emma Little-Pengelly of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), staunchly committed to remaining in the U.K., is the deputy first minister.

Why did it take so long to form a government?

The DUP, a constituent of the Conservative-led government, was a signatory to Britain's 2020 withdrawal agreement from the European Union (EU). The party has nevertheless not reconciled itself to the internal trade

border created between NI and the rest of Britain, and has hence boycotted Stormont institutions since the 2022 regional elections. The border in the Irish sea was necessitated by the Conservatives' insistence that the decision to leave in the 2016 referendum meant nothing short of a clean break with the EU. Following tortuous negotiations, the U.K. recognised that letting NI stay in the EU customs union was the only option to ensure that the north and south of Ireland remained border-free so as to protect the integrity of the 1998 Good Friday agreement and the EU single market. Thus, NI functions under the dual jurisdiction of the U.K. and the EU. That is to say, the region is uniquely both a territory within the UK, as well as governed by EU customs regulations and the single market in trade relations with Britain. The rest of the U.K. remains entirely outside the EU.

What is the new deal in Belfast?

The 2023 Windsor framework addressed

NI's concerns over the U.K.'s withdrawal protocol and simplified the paperwork required to send goods to Great Britain from NI. The framework allowed a green lane to U.K. firms that joined the so-called Britain Trusted trader scheme to send goods to NI. Conversely, U.K. goods destined to Ireland and other EU countries are to be cleared via a red lane after a more stringent scrutiny of documentation.

A proposal announced in January, called the Command Paper, eases procedures even further. It replaces the "green lane," by simply exempting 80% of goods transported from Great Britain to Northern Ireland from checks, besides setting up a body to preserve the latter's status in the U.K.'s internal market. Still, the latest arrangement does not detract from the fact that companies from Great Britain sending goods to NI will continue to process more paperwork, relative to firms that trade between destinations within Great Britain. This is the price of NI's dual jurisdiction.

How will Sinn Féin and DUP cohabit?

Sinn Féin is counting on a clear victory in the upcoming Irish elections and thus occupying office on either side of the divide as a boost to future reunification. Ms. O'Neill, did hint at a referendum on Irish unification taking place a decade down the line. She was however careful to emphasise that her government would work for the prosperity of the whole region. Now that it has rejoined the government, the DUP must deliver for the people as a whole, given that the NI's economy has outperformed that of Britain's post-Brexit. The party may feel comforted by surveys that point to NI majority's preference for the constitutional status quo, even though the Catholics outnumber the Protestants as per the 2021 Census. At the same time, the DUP cannot overlook that 56% of people in NI rejected Brexit in 2016.

What are the challenges ahead?

The pressures exerted by Brexit will invariably persist until an unlikely reversal of the historic decision. But their resolution will not be helped by persistent political deadlock that has undermined the justifiable requirement for compulsory coalitions between the unionists and nationalists. The Irish Prime Minister has recently called for reform of the system he regards as no longer fit for the purpose. It may be time for a relook at the present arrangement.

The writer is Director, Strategic Initiatives, AgnoShin Technologies.

- Northern Ireland is bordered by the Republic of Ireland in the south and west. In the east, it is separated from Scotland by the North Channel.
- Northern Ireland is separated from England and Wales in the east and southeast by the Irish Sea.
- In the north, it is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean.



HEADLINES OF THE DAY

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EU launches Red Sea mission as U.S. ship is attacked twice



- The European Union launched a naval mission on Monday to protect Red Sea shipping from Yemen's Houthi rebels as a U.S.-owned cargo vessel repeatedly came under fire in the region.
- The EU aims to have the mission — called Aspides, Greek for “shield” — up and running in a “few weeks” with at least four vessels.
- The U.S. is already spearheading its own naval coalition in the area.
- The dozens of Houthi attacks have roiled shipping in the Red Sea.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu:S&T(GSIII)-Page 22

Hundred years ago, Satyendra Nath Bose changed physics forever THE PREMIUM

Despite a long career in physics, he published sparsely and never produced another work of similar value

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NIRMALYA KAJURI

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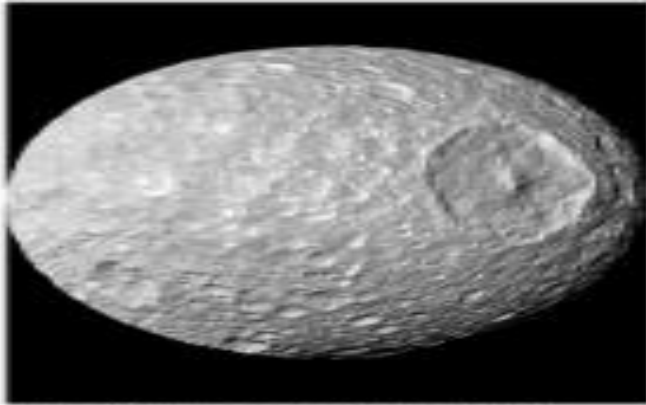
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- Satyendra Nath Bose was one of the founding fathers of quantum mechanics, the most successful description of the physical world.
- His pioneering work on quantum statistics has paved the way for development of modern quantum technologies including Bose-Einstein condensation, quantum superconductivity, and quantum information theory.
- In 1924, Bose authored the last of the four revolutionary publications which led to the new quantum mechanics (the others being those of Planck in 1900, Einstein in 1905, and Niels Bohr in 1913).
- Half the fundamental particles in the Universe – BOSONS – are named after him.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

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A view of Saturn's moon Mimas captured by NASA's Cassini spacecraft from 9,500 km away on February 13, 2010. Its prominent Herschel crater is visible towards the right. NASA/CPL-CALTECH/SPACE SCIENCE INSTITUTE

***Saturn's
moon Mimas
may have
ocean under
its crust***

Priyali Prakash



- Mimas was discovered on Sept. 17, 1789 by English astronomer William Herschel, using his 40-foot reflector telescope.
- Mimas is the smallest and innermost of Saturn's major moons.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu: Education (GSII)

'Class 10, 12 exams will be held twice a year from 2025-26'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA,
RAIPUR

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday said students will get an option of appearing for Class 10 and 12 board examinations twice a year from the academic session 2025-26.

Mr. Pradhan was speaking after launching the PM SHRI (Prime Minister Schools for Rising India) scheme in Chhattisgarh under which 211 schools of the State will be upgraded. The function was held at the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay auditorium in Raipur.



- PM SHRI will provide high-quality education in an equitable, inclusive and joyful school environment that takes care of the diverse background, multilingual needs, and different academic abilities of children and makes them active participants in their own learning process as per the vision of NEP 2020.
- PM SHRI Schools will provide leadership to other schools in their respective regions by providing mentorship.
- The PM SHRI Schools will be developed as **Green schools**, incorporating environment friendly aspects like solar panels and LED lights, nutrition gardens with natural farming, waste management, plastic free, water conservation and harvesting, study of traditions/practices related to protection of environment, climate change related hackathon and awareness generation to adopt sustainable lifestyle.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu: Miscellaneous

Despite being freed from detention, Thaksin may still face lese majeste



- Thailand's lese-majeste law, which forbids the insult of the monarchy, is among the strictest in the world.
- According to Article 112 of Thailand's criminal code, anyone who defames, insults or threatens the king, the queen, the heir-apparent or the regent will be punished with a jail term between three and 15 years.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Indian Express:S&T(GSIII)-Page 15

SpaceX launches Intuitive Machines' private 'Odysseus' Moon lander

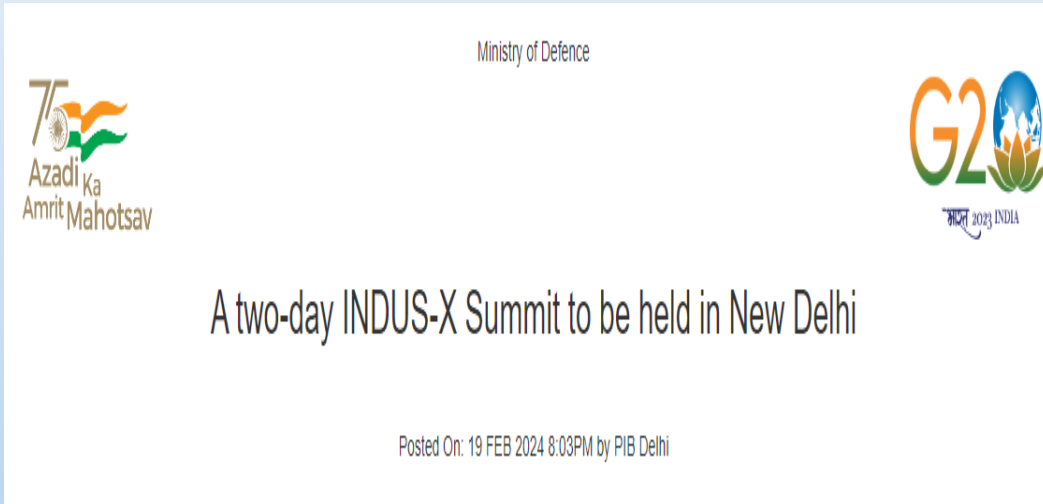
SpaceX launched Intuitive Machines' IM-1 mission, which could be the first private moon lander to make a lunar soft landing if it succeeds.

- A moon lander built by Houston-based aerospace company Intuitive Machines was launched from Florida on a mission to conduct the first U.S. lunar touchdown in more than a half century and the first by a privately owned spacecraft.
- Intuitive Machines is a commercial company that has been contracted by NASA to send its science and technology instruments to the Moon.



HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB:IR(GSII)



- The two-day Summit marks a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts between India and the United States in defence innovation. It is being organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence, iDEX under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, and Department of Defence, US. The summit aims to be a pivotal event driving strategic technology partnerships and defence industrial cooperation between India and the USA.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air: Education(GSII)

PM Modi to launch Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan digitally at Mumbai University

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will digitally launch the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA)
- funds were sanctioned to various higher educational institutions of the country under PM Usha to strengthen the higher educational institutions of the country, develop infrastructural facilities, and implement new educational activities.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air :Art and Culture(GSI)

Khajuraho Dance Festival to begin in Madhya Pradesh

The Khajuraho Dance Festival is starting today in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. This is the 50th year of celebration of this prestigious dance festival. The festival will be inaugurated today by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav.

In the Khajuraho Dance Festival, various classical dances like Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Kuchipudi will be performed by the renowned artists of the country till the 26th of this month. With the aim of promoting tourism in the state, on the first day of this dance festival, more than 1500 artists will try to create a world record by performing Kathak in Kathak Kumbh. This annual cultural festival will take place in the picturesque backdrop of the Khajuraho Temple Group. The festival is being organised by the Culture Department of the Madhya Pradesh Government in collaboration with Ustad Alauddin Khan Academy of Music and Arts.



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