

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu: IR-Page 12

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Are Interpol's notices being politically exploited?

How do Blue corner notices differ from red corner notices in terms of timing and purpose? What steps has Interpol taken to address criticism and enhance oversight of its notice system?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:
The International Criminal Police Organization, more commonly known as Interpol, comprising 194 member countries, plays a crucial role as an information-sharing network to enable national police forces to combat transnational crimes. Concerns have been raised about the misuse of Interpol's notice system, especially the issuance of blue corner notices, which are less scrutinised than their red corner notices. Critics argue that countries often exploit

There are seven types of notices issued by Interpol – Red Notice, Yellow Notice, Blue Notice, Black Notice, Green Notice, Orange Notice, and Purple Notice.
A blue corner notice also known as an "enquiry notice" allows police forces in member states to share critical crime-related information such as obtaining a person's criminal record, and location and, having his or her identity verified among others. For instance, in January 2020, Interpol issued a blue corner notice to help locate fugitive self-styled godman Nithyananda.

How does it differ from a "red

decision. The country issuing the request need not be the home country of the fugitive, Interpol acts even on the request of a country where the alleged crime has been committed.
While blue corner notices are issued prior to the filing of criminal charges, red corner notices generally follow criminal convictions. The concerned individual can be stopped and arrested while travelling through a member state. There will also be other detrimental consequences such as the closure of bank accounts. However, Interpol cannot compel law enforcement authorities in any country to arrest the subject of a red

Singh Pannun, whom the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has listed as a "terrorist." The agency said that India has failed to provide sufficient information to support its case and that his activities have a "clear political dimension."

THE GIST

- Interpol, established in 1923, facilitates cooperation among 194 member countries to combat transnational crimes.
- Blue corner notices, also known as "enquiry notices," enable sharing of crucial crime-related information among member states.
- Questions arise about Interpol's effectiveness in preventing notice system misuse, the influence of political agendas, and the adequacy of oversight.

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What is a "blue corner" notice?

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The Hindu:Defense(GSIII)-Page 14

₹19,000-crore Navy deal for 200 BrahMos approved

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Centre has accorded approval for procurement of more than 200 BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and associated equipment for the Indian Navy at a cost of around ₹19,000 crore, people familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

The missiles will largely be deployed on various warships to enhance overall combat capabilities of the Navy, they said.

It is learnt that the proposal approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security entails acquisition of a mix of BrahMos missiles having a range of around 290 km and the latest extended range variant of the weapon with a range of around 450 km. BrahMos Aerospace Private Ltd., an India-Russian joint venture, produces the supersonic cruise missiles.

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- Proposal approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security entails acquisition of a mix of BrahMos missiles having a range of around 290 km and the latest extended range variant of the weapon with a range of around 450 km.
- The BrahMos is the main weapon for anti-ship and attack operations for the Indian navy warships which have been regularly firing the weapon system.
- The BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture of India and Russia and produces supersonic cruise missiles that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or land platforms.

World's race to eradicate Guinea worm disease nears the finish line

C. Aravinda

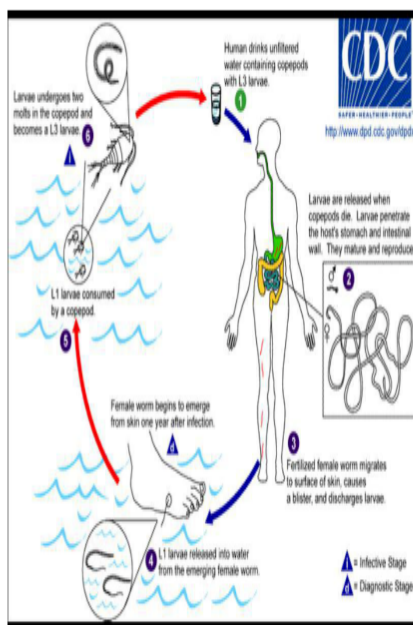
The world is on the brink of a public health triumph as it closes in on eradicating Guinea worm disease. There were more than 3.5 million cases of this disease in the 1980s, but according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) weekly epidemiological report, they dwindled to 14 cases in 2021, 13 in 2022, and just six in 2023.

At a time when medical advancements often headline with breakthrough vaccines and cures, the battle against Guinea worm disease stands out for its reliance on basic public health principles rather than high-tech interventions. Unlike many of its viral counterparts, this parasitic adversary has offered

Fast forward to the present, and space exploration has bounded into new frontiers while smallpox remains the lone entry on the list of diseases (of humans) we have managed to banish entirely. This underscores not a failure of medical science but the complex nature of disease eradication.

Infection cycle

Guinea worm disease, also called dracunculiasis, is the work of the Guinea worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*), whose infamy dates back to biblical times, when it was called the "fiery serpent" and whose presence researchers have confirmed in Egyptian mummies. Individuals whose bodies the worm has entered first experience a painful blister, usually on a lower limb. When seeking relief, they may immerse the affected



adult worm – sometimes up to a meter long – emerges. This process, which can

worm infections manifest in the legs and feet. The individual has an excruciating

thrive where access to safe drinking water is a luxury, and health education

ment was the result of a collaboration between the Indian government, local health workers, and international partners. The strategy hinged on empowering local communities with the knowledge and tools – including filtering water before use and reporting cases to health authorities for immediate response.

The strategy that brought us to the brink of eradication was straightforward: intersectoral coordination, community participation, and a sustained focus on prevention through health education. Unlike many diseases that have been cornered by medical interventions, Guinea worm disease was and is being pushed to extinction using the fundamentals of public health: ensuring access to clean water (by applying a larvicide

Central African Republic.

New reservoir

In 2020, researchers also discovered Guinea worms in animal reservoirs, particularly dogs, in Chad, casting a shadow of complexity over the final stages of eradication. This development is a crucial reminder of the disease's tenacity and, importantly, signals to countries where the disease was previously endemic, including India, to not let their guard down.

If the worm persists in this way, governments must stay vigilant and maintain adaptable public health strategies to ensure they don't lose the upper hand. This said, the significant progress made towards eradicating Guinea worm disease is also threatened by human and political factors, notably civil unrest

in the fight against Guinea worm disease a decade sooner. The interplay between health and peace is starkly evident in this context, where the absence of stability and security directly affects the fruits of eradication efforts.

Finally eradicating Guinea worm disease wouldn't just represent a victory over a single parasite but a triumph of humankind at large. It will underscore a collective moral responsibility towards the most vulnerable, and demonstrate the profound impact addressing health disparities can have on communities. Getting rid of this disease will also be a much-needed testament to what we can achieve when global efforts converge to uplift communities from preventable afflictions.

(Dr. C. Aravinda is an

- Guinea worm disease, also called dracunculiasis, is the work of the Guinea worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*), whose infamy dates back to biblical times, when it was called the “fiery serpent” and whose presence researchers have confirmed in Egyptian mummies.
- Individuals whose bodies the worm has entered first experience a painful blister, usually on a lower limb. When seeking relief, they may immerse the affected area in water, which prompts the worm to emerge and release hundreds of thousands of larvae, potentially contaminating communal water sources and perpetuating the infection cycle.
- While a worm by itself is not lethal, it debilitates those whom it infects and prevents them from earning their livelihoods. It manifests as a painful skin lesion as the adult worm — sometimes up to a meter long — emerges.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu:Art and Culture(GSI)



Devotees performing *Jalabhisheka* to Lord Bahubali during 'Mahamastakabhisheka Mahotsava' (grand consecration) held once in 12 years, at Venur in Karnataka on Thursday. H.S. MANJUNATH

- A ritual and a celebration that has no parallel anywhere in the world is the grand Mahamastakabhisheka that takes place in Shravanabelagola, Karnataka. It happens once in 12 years and is a grand spectacle that people wait for with bated breath.
- Mahamastakabhisheka is the abhisheka or anointment of the massive statue of Gomateshwara also known as Bahubali that stands atop the Vindhyagiri Hill in the town of Shravanabelagola of Hassan District, Karnataka.

Indian Express : Health (GSII)-Page 1

In 2023, India hit target towards eliminating Kala Azar, first time

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

IN A significant step forward towards eliminating Kala Azar — the second deadliest parasitic disease after malaria in the country — India has achieved the target of reporting less than one case per 10,000 population across all blocks in 2023.

Data from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme showed that there were 595 cases and four deaths of Kala Azar reported nationwide last year compared to 891 cases and three deaths in 2022.

The Indian Express has learned that the Centre has apprised the World Health

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

- visceral leishmaniasis is a parasitic infection transmitted by sandflies.
- Visceral leishmaniasis is commonly known as kala-azar (KA), a word coined in the late nineteenth century in India, which means “black disease”, referring to the greyish or blackish discoloration of the skin during infection, from the Hindi word for black (kala) and the Persian word for disease (azar).
- Kala-azar is a slow progressing indigenous disease caused by a protozoan parasite of genus Leishmania
- In India Leishmania donovani is the only parasite causing this disease
- It is characterized by irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia. Most cases occur in Brazil, east Africa and India
- It causes fever, weight loss, spleen and liver enlargement.

Indian Express:Economy(GSIII)-Page 15

CBI raids places linked to Satya Pal Malik: What is the Kiru Hydel Project, focus of corruption allegations?

The Kiru Hydel Project is being constructed between the existing Kirthai II and Kwar hydel power projects, at an estimated cost of Rs 4,287 crore. Who is involved and what are the allegations against Satya Pal Malik?

EXPRESS EX

CBI raids p
Pal Malik:

- **Kiru Hydel Project** is being constructed between the existing Kirthai II (upstream) and Kwar (downstream) hydel power projects, at an estimated cost of Rs 4,287 crore.
- It will be developed near the convergence point of river Chenab and the Singad and Bela streams, near the Patharnakki and Kiru villages in Kishtwar district.
- The deadline for initiating commercial operations is July 2025.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express:Places(GSI) / IR(GSII)-Page 15

RUSSIA CAPTURES AVDIIVKA: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR UKRAINE, EUROPE

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

As the second anniversary of its invasion of Ukraine draws closer, Russia has registered a big victory, capturing the town of Avdiivka. This is its most significant battleground gain after the city of Bakhmut in May last year.

Ukrainian soldiers had held on to Avdiivka for four months, but had to evacuate last Saturday as they were outnumbered and outgunned, even as Russia bombed the city to rubble.

Why Avdiivka mattered

Located on the frontlines in the east of Ukraine, Avdiivka had been a major centre of resistance, blocking further Russian advance. It has seen war since 2014, when Russia staged a 'military intervention' in eastern Ukraine, and was thus heavily fortified. Capturing this well-defended city opens an easier path for Russia to the rest of Ukraine.

Also, Avdiivka is close to the city of Donetsk, which Russia has occupied. Capturing Avdiivka, thus, gives a double advantage to the Russians — more Ukrainian cities are within its reach now, and Donetsk is safer from Ukrainian attempts to retake it.



A Ukrainian soldier prepares to operate a drone near Avdiivka on February 20. Reuters

US President Joe Biden too has pointed out that Ukraine lacks the necessary firepower.

What led to arms shortage

A key reason is that Republicans in the US House of Representatives are holding up a \$95-billion foreign aid package, which includes \$60 billion for Ukraine. In return for passing the package, the Republicans want stricter immigration rules at the US-Mexico border. Some hardliners, like Marjorie Taylor Greene, want the US to stop financing someone else's war, and push Ukraine towards negotiations instead.

With flows from the US stuck, the rest

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