

# DAILY PT POINTERS

8<sup>th</sup> May, 2024



## The Hindu-Health(GSII)-Page 5

### Kerala on alert as man dies of West Nile fever

Sources say that a 79-year-old man from Thrissur died on May 3; five cases have been reported in Kozhikode and four patients have been discharged in the district and 2 in Malappuram; Health Minister says there is no need to worry; officials have been told to intensify pre-monsoon cleaning drive

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOZHIKODE

The Kerala government issued an alert in the State on Tuesday against West Nile fever, a mosquito-borne viral infection, after one death and eight cases were reported from Kozhikode, Malappuram and Thrissur districts in recent days.

According to official sources, the death of a 79-year-old man from Vadanappally in Thrissur on May 3 has been attributed to the infection. Five cases have so far been reported in Kozhikode. There are two suspected cases in Malappuram too.

Kozhikode Collector

Snehil Kumar Singh told mediapersons on Tuesday evening that four of the five infected persons had been discharged from the Government Medical College Hospital. One person is still under treatment.

Three of them are natives of Kozhikode city and one each from Koodaranhi and Nanminda. Another suspected patient has been admitted to a private hospital, Mr. Singh added.

#### Minister's statement

A statement from Health Minister Veena George said the infection had been reported from various districts in the State since 2011 and there was no reason to worry. District Medical Of-



**Battling the virus:** The Kozhikode Collector says that four infected persons have been discharged from hospital. FILE PHOTO

ficers have been told to intensify pre-monsoon cleaning drives in coordination with the Department of Local Self-Government and the respective

district administration, she added.

The infection was confirmed after samples of blood and cerebrospinal fluid of suspected patients

were examined at the Virus Research and Diagnostic Lab attached to the medical college hospital. They were later sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, for official confirmation.

#### Symptoms of fever

Symptoms of the infection include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, stupor, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis.

Most of the symptoms are similar to that of Japanese encephalitis. However, 80% of the patients need not show any symptoms.

The disease is spread by

the Culex species of mosquitoes. As per the World Health Organization (WHO), human infection is most often the result of bites from the infected mosquitoes. This happens when they feed on infected birds, which circulate the virus in their blood for a few days.

There has been no human-to-human transmission so far.

The WHO says that the treatment is supportive for patients with neuro-invasive West Nile virus, often involving hospitalisation, intravenous fluids, respiratory support, and prevention of secondary infections. No vaccine is available for humans.

- West Nile Virus (WNV) can cause neurological disease and death in people.
- WNV is commonly found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia. WNV is maintained in nature in a cycle involving transmission between birds and mosquitoes. Humans, horses and other mammals can be infected.
- West Nile Virus (WNV) is a member of the *flavivirus* genus and belongs to the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex of the family *Flaviviridae*.
- West Nile Virus (WNV) was first isolated in a woman in the West Nile district of Uganda in 1937. It was identified in birds (crows and columbiformes) in Nile delta region in 1953.

## The Hindu-IR(GSII)

# India opens up investment options for Russia to channel rupee balance

**Amiti Sen**  
NEW DELHI

Russia's payment woes with India may finally be coming to an end.

Thanks to allowances made by the RBI, Russian entities now have a bouquet of investment options – not just government securities and bonds but equity and loans – to channelise their accumulating rupee balance.

“Russia is no longer struggling to repatriate the rupee balance which has been continuously accumulating in its special vostro accounts in Indian banks due to increased shipments to India



**Growing trade ties:** Russia is now India's second largest source of imports, after China, surpassing the UAE and the U.S. REUTERS

through various means, including converting it to dirhams or yuan. But, now, the rupee balance is being gainfully invested in the country itself,” the source said. India is also trying to

a bearing on Russia's investments in India, he added.

“Why should the U.S. be bothered (about Russia's investments)? We are not dealing in dollars. And it is

- Russia's payment woes with India may finally be coming to an end
- Russian entities now have a bouquet of investment options — not just government securities and bonds but equity and loans — to channelise their accumulating rupee balance.
- India and Russia put in place a rupee payment system to circumvent the West's banking and economic sanctions post its attack on Ukraine in February 2022.
- Under the mechanism, a number of Russian banks, including Gazprom and Rosbank, opened rupee vostro accounts with authorised dealer banks in India such as UCO, HDFC and ICICI for enabling rupee trade between the two countries.

## The Hindu-IR(GSII)

### Claims of chemical weapon use in Ukraine ‘insufficiently substantiated’, says watchdog

**Agence France-Presse**  
THE HAGUE

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said on Tuesday that information it had received until now on alleged chemical weapons use in Ukraine was “insufficiently substantiated.”

The OPCW also said it had not yet received an official request to investigate any claims after the United States accused Russia last week of using the toxic agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian troops.

“Both the Russian Federation and Ukraine have accused one another and reported allegations of use of chemical weapons to the Organisation,” the OPCW said in a statement.

“The information provided to the Organisation so far by both sides, together with the information

**Russian Federation and Ukraine have accused each other of using chemical weapons, OPCW said**

available to the Secretariat, is insufficiently substantiated,” the group added.

The OPCW nevertheless described the situation as “volatile” and “extremely concerning regarding the possible re-emergence of use of toxic chemicals as weapons.”

Last week, the U.S. State Department accused Russia of having used a chemical weapon against Ukrainian forces in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

In addition to the chemical agent chloropicrin, Russia also used “riot control agents (tear gas) as a method of warfare in Uk-

raine, also in violation of the CWC,” the department said in a factsheet.

Chloropicrin is an oily liquid with a pungent odour known as a choking agent that was widely used during World War I as a form of tear gas.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention label it a “lung-damaging agent” that can cause severe irritation to skin, eyes and respiratory systems.

The OPCW specifically prohibits its use.

The Kremlin hit back immediately at the allegations, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying they “sound completely baseless and unsubstantiated.” Russia has said it no longer possesses a military chemical arsenal, but the country faces pressure for more transparency over the alleged use of toxic weapons.

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#### Do you know ?

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force on 29 April 1997. The OPCW, with its 193 Member States, oversees the global endeavour to permanently and verifiably eliminate chemical weapons.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB:Health(GSII)/Economy(GSIII)

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers

### Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals launches the MEDITECH STACKATHON 2024 in collaboration with CII at New Delhi

India's MEDTECH industry holds immense potential with projections estimating a growth rate of 28% annually: Dr Arunish Chawla

Industry captains and key stakeholders to brainstorm on the Value Chain Mapping of the select medical devices to facilitate meaningful discussions on the way forward

Posted On: 07 MAY 2024 3:48PM by PIB Delhi

Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers Dr Arunish Chawla, launched the MEDITECH STACKATHON 2024 in collaboration with CII in New Delhi today. The MEDITECH STACKATHON is a groundbreaking initiative designed to catalyze transformative change within India's burgeoning MedTech sector by undertaking a comprehensive value chain analysis of select medical devices. Through close consultation with industry leaders, policymakers, and experts, the STACKATHON aims to address critical challenges, foster domestic manufacturing, and reduce import dependence, thereby positioning India as a global leader in medical technology. Joint Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals Shri RP Singh and Chairman, CII National Medical Technology Forum Shri Himanshu Baid and other senior officials of the Department and representatives of the Industry were present on the occasion.

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- India's MedTech industry holds immense potential, with projections estimating a growth rate of 28% annually, reaching a size of USD 50 billion by 2030.
- currently, India is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest market for medical devices in Asia and among the top 20 globally.
- Net imports for 2022-23 stands at USD 4101 Million with import coverage ratio of 0.45.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB-IR(GSII)

Ministry of Finance

5th Joint Group of Customs (JGC) meeting between India and Bhutan was held on 6th-7th May, 2024 in Leh, Ladakh

The 5th JGC meeting discussed a host of bilateral issues for further enhancing cooperation between the two countries

India and Bhutan agreed on discovering new strands of complementarities that can be maximised for mutual benefit

Posted On: 07 MAY 2024 8:58PM by PIB Delhi

The 5<sup>th</sup> Joint Group of Customs (JGC) meeting between India and Bhutan was held on 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 in Leh, Ladakh. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Surjit Bhujabal, Special Secretary and Member (Customs), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Government of India, and Mr. Sonam Jamtsho, Director General, Department of Revenue and Customs, Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan.

- The 5<sup>th</sup> JGC meeting discussed a host of bilateral issues such as opening of new Land Customs Stations and notifying new trade routes, development of infrastructure, automation and digitisation of transit processes, prevention of smuggling, coordinated cross-border management, pre-arrival exchange of Customs data, bilateral agreement on Customs cooperation and movement of transit cargo under electronic cargo system among others.
- India is Bhutan's top trade partner both as an import source and as an export destination. Since 2014, India's trade with Bhutan has more than tripled from \$484 million in 2014-15 to \$1,615 million in 2022-23, accounting for about 80% of Bhutan's overall trade. Trade with Bhutan through the land Customs Stations is significant as Bhutan is a land-locked country. Enhancing connectivity with Bhutan is pivotal to India's '*Neighbourhood First*' and the '*Act East*' Policy.