

## Finland to join NATO

- Finland's leaders on Thursday came out in favour of applying to join NATO, and Sweden could do the same within days, in a historic realignment
- The Kremlin reacted by warning it will be forced to take retaliatory "military technical" steps
- The Nordic Council is an official body which facilitates inter-parliamentary cooperation between the Nordic nations of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland as well as from the autonomous areas of the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands. Its headquarters is located in Copenhagen, Denmark.

### About NATO

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 member states 28 European states, the United States, and Canada.
- NATO is a system of collective security: its independent member states agree to defend each other against attacks by third parties. It was established during the Cold War

in response to the threat posed by the Soviet Union.

- The alliance remained in place after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and has been involved in military operations in the Balkans, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa.
- The NATO headquarters is located in Brussels, Belgium, while the headquarters of Allied Command Operations is near Mons, Belgium. The organization's motto is "animus in consulendo liber" (Latin for "A mind unfettered in deliberation").

## THE HINDU

### Sagittarius A\* (SgrA\*)

- Scientists from the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) facility, at press conferences held simultaneously at several centres around the world, revealed the first image of the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way.
- The image of Sagittarius A\* (SgrA\*) gave further support to the idea that the compact object at the centre of our galaxy is indeed a black hole, strengthening Einstein's general theory of relativity.
- In 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope facility, a collaboration of over 300 researchers, made history by releasing the first-ever image of a black hole, M87\* the black hole at

the centre of a galaxy Messier 87, which is a supergiant elliptic galaxy.



### About Black hole

- A black hole is a location in space with a gravitational pull so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape it.
- A black hole's outer edge, called its event horizon, defines the spherical boundary where the velocity needed to escape exceeds the speed of light.
- Matter and radiation fall in, but they can't get out. Because not even light can escape, a black hole is literally black.
- Contrary to their name's implication, black holes are not empty. In fact, a black hole contains a great amount of matter packed into a relatively small space.
- Black holes come in various sizes and can exist throughout space.

### The event horizon

- The event horizon of a black hole is linked to the object's escape velocity

the speed that one would need to exceed to escape the black hole's gravitational pull.

- The closer someone came to a black hole, the greater the speed they would need to escape that massive gravity.
- The event horizon is the threshold around the black hole where the escape velocity surpasses the speed of light.

### THE HINDU

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### Question of notifying minorities

#### The story so far:

- A public interest litigation (PIL) under the consideration of the Supreme Court of India challenges the power of the Centre to notify minority communities at a national level.

#### Who is a minority and who decides that?

- The PIL specifically questions the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions or NCMEI Act 2004, terming it arbitrary and contrary to Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
- Section 2(f) says "minority, "for the purpose of this Act, means a community notified as such by the

Central Government.” Section 2(c) of the of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992 also gives the Centre similar powers.

### What does the PIL argue?

- The petitioner argues that the Centre’s decision was arbitrary since the SC had held, in the T. M. A. Pai Foundation vs State Of Karnataka case of 2002 that, “for the purpose of determining minority, the unit will be State and not whole India.”
- The petitioner argued that the Centre’s notification has created an anomalous situation in which the communities declared as minorities by the Centre enjoy the status even in States/UTs where they are in majority (Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir and Christians in Nagaland for instance) while followers of Hinduism, Judaism and Bahaism who are minorities are not accorded the same status under the Act.
- The petition seeks the SC to curtail the Centre’s power to notify national minorities or direct the Centre to notify followers of Hinduism, Bahaism and Judaism as minorities in States/UTs where they are actually fewer in numbers; or direct that only those communities that are “socially, economically and politically non-dominant” besides

being numerically smaller in States/UTs be allowed the status of minorities.

## THE HINDU

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### India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)

- The story so far: A project called the India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) finds that nearly 23% out of 2.1 million Indians have uncontrolled blood pressure.

### What is the IHCI?

- Recognising that hypertension is a serious, and growing, health issue in India, the Health Ministry, the Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India began a five-year initiative to monitor and treat hypertension.
- Hypertension is defined as having systolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 90 mmHg or/and taking anti-hypertensive medication to lower his/her blood pressure.
- India has committed to a "25 by 25" goal, which aims to reduce premature mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025. One of the nine

voluntary targets includes reducing the prevalence of high blood pressure by 25% by 2025.

- The programme was launched in November 2017. In the first year, IHCI covered 26 districts across five States Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.
- By December 2020, IHCI was expanded to 52 districts across ten States Andhra Pradesh (1), Chhattisgarh (2), Karnataka (2), Kerala (4), Madhya Pradesh (6), Maharashtra (13), Punjab (5), Tamil Nadu (1), Telangana (13) and West Bengal (5).

## THE HINDU

### International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

- India's food production could drop 16% and the number of those at risk for hunger could increase 23% by 2030 due to climate change, says a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on climate change and food systems.
- It was developed with inputs from scientists from the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) and other leading global economic modelling efforts, the report notes.
- The number of Indians at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million in 2030 and, if the effects of climate change were to be factored in, it would increase to 90.6 million.
- The aggregate food production index will, under similar conditions, drop from 1.6 to 1.5.
- On a positive note, climate change will not impact the average calorie consumption of Indians and this is projected to remain roughly the same at 2,600 kcal per capita per day by 2030 even in a climate change scenario.
- Baseline projections indicate that global food production will grow by about 60% over 2010 levels by 2050 in the context of climate change.
- Production and demand are projected to grow more rapidly in developing countries due to projected growth in population and incomes.
- Diets are also shifting toward higher-value foods, including more fruits and vegetables, processed foods, and animal-source foods, outside high-income countries.
- Meat production is projected to double in South Asia and West and

Central Africa by 2030 and triple by 2050.

- Despite this, per capita consumption levels in developing countries will remain less than half of those in developed countries.
- However, regional differences in access to food mean that nearly 500 million people are projected to remain at risk of going hungry.
- Globally, about 70 million more people will be at risk from hunger because of climate change, including more than 28 million in East and Southern Africa, the report added.

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