

**DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY**

***Daily News Feed***

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# UNRWA, a lifeline for Palestinians amid decades of conflict

**Agence France-Presse**  
GENEVA

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, which Israel has vowed to ban on Thursday, is seen by some as an irreplaceable humanitarian lifeline in Gaza, and as an accomplice of Hamas by others.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has for more than seven decades provided essential aid and assistance to Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini has described the organisation as "a life-

line" in its charge. Warning that implementation of the Israeli order would be "disastrous", Mr. Lazzarini said this week that the agency was determined "to stay and deliver until it is no longer possible to do so".

UN chief Antonio Guterres demanded that Israel retract its order, insisting that UNRWA was "irreplaceable".

However, the agency has long been a lightning rod for harsh Israeli criticism, which ramped up dramatically after Hamas's deadly attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, sparked

its charge. Warning that implementation of the Israeli order would be "disastrous", Mr. Lazzarini said this week that the agency was determined "to stay and deliver until it is no longer possible to do so".

UNRWA was established in December 1949 by the UN General Assembly following the first Arab-Israeli conflict after Israel's creation in May 1948.

The agency began its operations on May 1, 1950, tasked with assisting some 750,000 Palestinians who had been expelled or fled during the war. It was supposed to be a short-term fix, but in the absence of a



An Israeli right-wing activist hangs a flag at the shuttered gate of UNRWA's West Bank Field Office in Jerusalem on Wednesday. AFP

assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until June 30, 2026.

Under its charge has ballooned to nearly six million across Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria.

normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict". Their descendants also have refugee status.

## Major operations

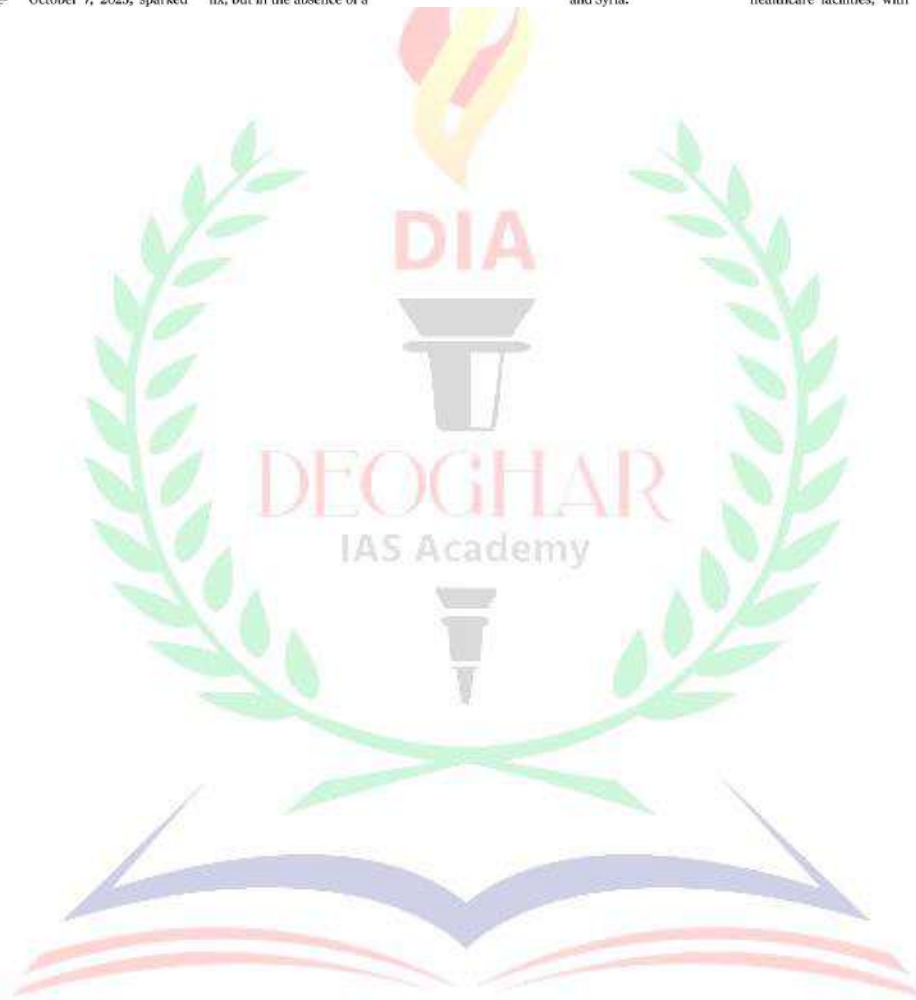
UNRWA is the main provider of basic public services for registered Palestinian refugees. The organisation counts 58 official refugee camps and runs more than 700 schools for over 540,000 students.

It also runs 141 primary healthcare facilities, with

provides emergency food and cash assistance to some 1.8 million people.

In the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation was already critical before the war between Israel and Hamas began in October 2023, with more than 80% of the population living below the poverty line.

UNRWA, which employs some 13,000 in Gaza, has seen 273 of its staff killed and two-thirds of its facilities there damaged or destroyed. The agency says it has brought in 60% of the food that has reached Gaza since the war began and has provided shelter to ov-



# Philippines to remove U.S. missile system if China stops 'sea aggression'

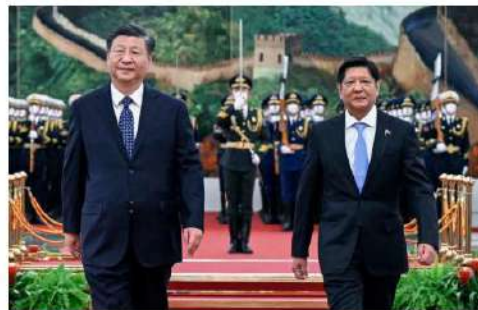
China had demanded the removal of the missile system, claiming it incites geopolitical confrontation and an arms race; the missile system was repositioned closer to Manila to enhance military readiness amid Philippines' rising tensions with China

**Associated Press**  
MANILA

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. offered on Friday to remove a U.S. missile system from the Philippines if China halts what he called its "aggressive and coercive behaviour" in the disputed South China Sea.

The U.S. Army installed the Typhon mid-range missile system in the northern Philippines in April last year to support what the long-time treaty allies described as training for joint combat readiness.

China has repeatedly demanded that the Philippines remove the missile



**Hard stance:** Chinese President Xi Jinping and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during a ceremony in Beijing in 2023. AP

system, saying it was "inciting geopolitical confrontation and an arms race".

Asked by reporters about China's criticism of the missile system, Mr. Marcos said he did not un-

derstand the Chinese position because the Philippines does not comment on China's missile systems which "are a thousand times more powerful than what we have".

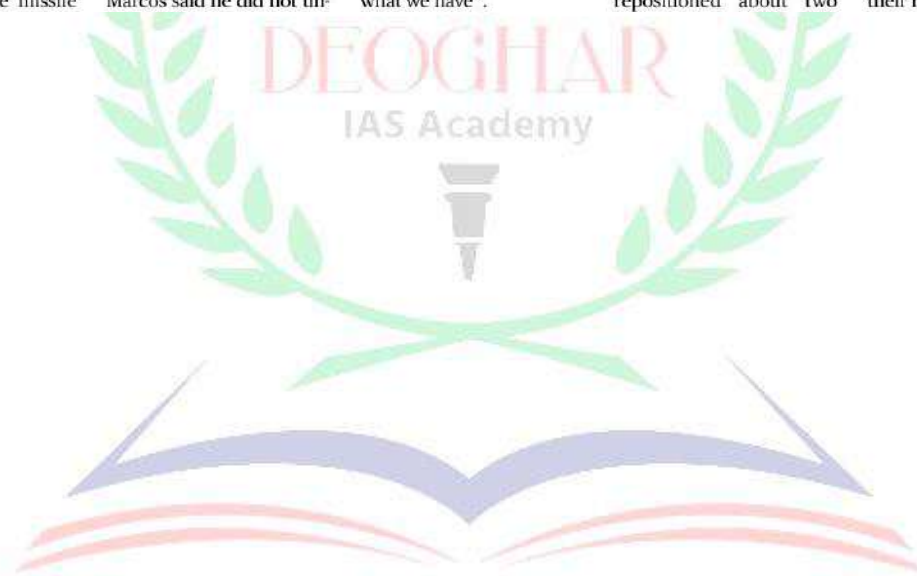
"Let's make a deal with China: Stop claiming our territory, stop harassing our fishermen and let them have a living, stop ramming our boats, stop water cannoning our people, stop firing lasers at us and stop your aggressive and coercive behaviour, and we'll return the typhon missiles," Mr. Marcos told reporters.

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on the Philippine leader's remarks.

The U.S. Army's mobile Typhon missile system, which consists of a launcher and at least 16 Standard Missile-6 and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles, was repositioned about two

weeks ago from the northern Philippines to a strategic area nearer the capital, Manila, in consultation with Philippine defence officials, a senior Philippine official said.

The Philippine official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the sensitive issue in public, said the U.S. missile system is now nearer an area where Chinese and Philippine coast guard and Navy forces have been involved in increasingly tense face-offs in the South China Sea. Tomahawk missiles can travel over 1,600 km, which puts parts of mainland China within their range.







A still from Apple TV's *Severance*. APPLE TV

# What 'Severance' teaches us about corporate indoctrination

The vision behind Apple TV's biting fable of modern work culture feels uncomfortably proximate to the truths exposed in the ongoing work week debate in India. What *Severance* captures so brilliantly is the corporatisation of human identity itself

Ayaan Paul Chowdhury

There's something serene about the symmetrical sterility of Lumon Industries, the central setting of *Severance*. With its sophomore season back after three long years, the Apple TV+ series creates a world of impossibly clean lines, unpigmented lighting, and a distinct lack of clutter; save, of course, for the existential detritus festering in the minds of its "innies". For the unacquainted, employees at the fictional megacorporation willingly undergo a surgical procedure that bifurcates their consciousness into two: an "outie," who lives their life blissfully ignorant of work, and an "innie," whose entire existence begins and ends within the office. The logical conclusion behind this terrifying corporate utopia is obvious – workers are stripped of any semblance of individuality to become the perfect cogs in the machine.

For its Indian audiences tuning in amidst the recent conversation about grueling 90-hour workweeks, the uncomfortable ideas that drive the series forward may be starting to hit a little too close to home. When Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy spearheaded the ongoing work week debate by suggesting that India's youth should clock longer hours to "compete with global standards," he was likely unaware that his words mirrored the ethos of Lumon.

## The erasure of the 'human'

The absurdity of Lumon's existence, of course, is what makes *Severance* so compelling. Employees spend their days performing tasks incomprehensibly abstract – sorting numbers into meaningless categories based on instinct (disturbingly relatable for anyone who's

ever contemplated the value of their Excel sheet). The conceit feels painfully reflective of the compartmentalisation required to survive the unspoken reality of modern work and Lumon workers have no reason to question this system, having been denied the very concept of life outside of it.

Though technically free to walk out the door, India's young workforce faces its own form of cognitive severance. The growing chorus of business leaders advocating for marathon work weeks couches its demands in the language of patriotism and sacrifice. "Work harder for the nation," they implore, as if citizenship were contingent upon unpaid overtime. But beneath this mythology of personal achievement, lies a familiar refrain: time is currency.

What *Severance* captures so brilliantly is the corporatisation of human identity itself. Its characters are stripped of everything that makes them human: families, friends, desires, even names. They become the most efficient tools of productivity, rewarded not with any fiscal benefits, but with infantilising perks – melon bars, waffle parties, and the infamous "Music-Dance Experience". It's hard not to draw parallels to the performative incentives that have often been dangled before corporate employees: the patronising pat on the back after a 12-hour shift, the ubiquitous beanbags in the break room, the platitudes about "teamwork" plastered on HR emails announcing budget cuts.

*Severance* suggests that the true horror of Lumon lies not in its strangeness but in its familiarity. We recognise its rituals and its logic, because we've lived them. It's a distilled corporate indoctrination that creates the illusion of purpose.

If Lumon's innies represent the ideal worker – fully compliant and eternally

available – then their outies also embody the aspirational employees who are detached enough to sign away their autonomy but still invested enough to stay. The much-maligned comment by L&T's S.N. Subrahmanyam, who quipped about employees spending Sundays "staring at their wives," drew ridicule for its crudeness, but the underlying sentiment seems quite familiar. After all, if life outside work is framed as meaningless, why bother having it at all?

## Small acts of resistance

Though what makes *Severance* more than just clever satire is the manner in which it explores the cracks in the system. Beneath the impeccable facade of Lumon's corporate Eden, brews a simmering rebellion. Whispered conversations shielded from higher-ups' gazes and stolen glances at 'forbidden' files are the small acts of resistance that serve as a powerful counter-narrative to the dehumanising grind. Even the most oppressive systems rely on the complicity of those they oppress, and that resistance, no matter how quiet, is always possible.

The internet's reaction to Luigi Mangione's alleged assassination of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson recently, has exposed a similar seething undercurrent of anti-capitalist rage. For many, Mangione's ascent into a pop cultural messiah seems to tap into the same chagrin that led Willy Loman to his tragic end in *Death of a Salesman* or drove Peter Gibbons to rebel against the corporate tyranny in *Office Space*.

Today's working class increasingly views corporate behemoths as adversaries in a zero-sum game, and it's no coincidence that much of the support for Mangione came from a generation saddled with crushing debt and dwindling faith in institutions that seem incapable of

reform. The internet's response to the workweek debate only furthers this disillusionment, as calls for these inhumane hours reduce life to the same transactional drudgery that defines Lumon.

For the Indian workforce, the show has started to feel alarmingly cautionary. The push for longer hours has begun redefining labour as identity, as morality, and as duty; and it's the selfsame worldview that flattens the complexity of human lives into neat rows of KPIs. While none of us will ever walk Lumon's halls, many may yet recognise its suffocating grip in our own workspaces. Whether it's a 90-hour workweek or another weekend devoured by the ceaseless pings of Outlook notifications, the insidious unspoken mantra remains: your time belongs to the company.

By presenting Lumon as this dichotomy of plausibility and exaggeration, *Severance* has forced us into confronting distressing truths about the systems that govern our lives. How much autonomy can we surrender in the name of professionalism or patriotism before we lose sight of ourselves entirely? How much of our time have we given up to employers who see us as columns on a balance sheet? And how much further are we willing to endure before we finally say enough?

The debate over workweeks isn't merely about clocking in more often than not; rather, the kind of society we're willing to sustain. Will we continue extracting time as though it's an infinite resource, or finally reclaim it as something precious – a space for joy, rest, and, perhaps most radical of all, rebellion? For those staring down the bleak eternity of another insufferably long day at work, the question might just feel especially urgent.

# The science is clear, crowd disasters are preventable

**T**his week, in India, 30 people were killed in a deadly crowd crush that occurred at the Maha Kumbh. This writer's heart goes out to their families and friends. Tragedies such as this one have become far too common across the world at religious pilgrimages, sporting events, and even music concerts. As someone who studies crowd disasters, what makes them even more terrible is that they are almost entirely preventable.

Crowd crushes are dangerous, deadly, and immensely scary. They are also scientifically well understood, easy to predict, and inexpensive to prevent. Yet, they continue to occur with surprising frequency in highly modern societies. While this writer joins the people of India in mourning the shocking and senseless loss of life, it is her hope that governments and event organisers everywhere use this tragedy as an opportunity to commit to making the changes necessary to keep crowds safe.

## Linked to crowd density

Crowd crushes occur when the density of a crowd becomes too high. Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that, at crowd densities of five persons per square metre, there is a risk of crowd injuries, and that at seven people per sq.m or more, the likelihood of death or serious injury is high. Crowd density is strongly influenced by the physical space around the crowd. If, for example, a crowd must navigate or gather in a space that is too small, crowd density can increase to dangerous levels rapidly and become deadly. Preliminary reporting from the Maha Kumbh suggests that this is precisely what happened there: a large crowd developed behind a barrier, compressing its members into a dangerous density with tragic consequences.



**Tracy Hresko Pearl**

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Similar disasters have occurred all throughout the world in recent years. In November 2021, 10 people were killed in a crowd disaster at a live music concert in Houston, Texas, U.S. In October 2022, a crowd crush in Itaewon, South Korea killed 159 people at a Halloween festival. In April 2023, nearly 90 people were killed in Sanaa, Yemen, at a charity distribution event. And, in December 2024, 35 people were killed at a religious festival in Nigeria.

These examples are just a small sampling of a type of catastrophe that happens more often than people may think.

## For planners and governments to note

So, why do these injuries and deaths keep happening after so many high-profile disasters? If you believe many of the news stories and commentary that often surround such tragedies, these crushes are the fault of crowds that are "out of control". We are too quick to blame the victims in these scenarios, and too eager to use conventional wisdom, stereotypes, and rules of thumb as substitutes for actual science.

But, the science itself is clear: preventing crowd crush requires keeping crowd densities at safe levels, and the only entities who can do so effectively are the local governments, event organisers, and promoters who plan and oversee these large events. Individual members of crowds themselves have a very limited ability to perceive what is happening to the crowd as a whole, and virtually no ability to control it. Once a crowd reaches a dangerous density, moreover, nobody in the crowd can meaningfully influence what is happening around them. In fact, at that point, the crowd members themselves may not even be able to take a full breath.

Event planners and local governments can take

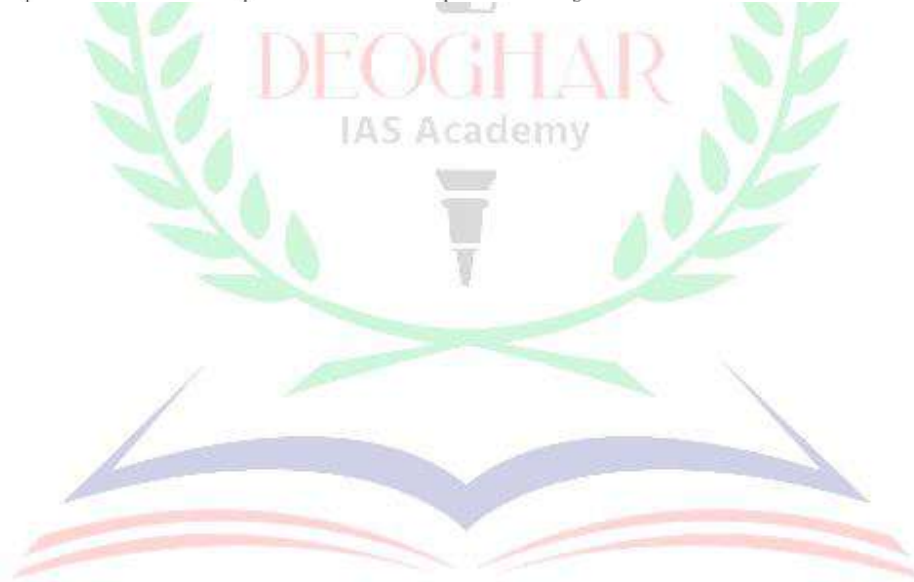
relatively easy steps to nearly eliminate the risk of crowd crush. They can open more entries and exits. They can stagger arrival times for large events. They can make sure passageways travelled by crowds are free from debris and other obstacles that might compress the crowd into bottlenecks. They can also segment the crowd into groups to prevent a sudden crowd surge. Planners do this each year on New Year's Eve at Times Square in New York City: placing the crowd into segmented areas of roughly 100 people each to prevent the massive crowd from clustering in ways that might create a dangerous crowd density. It is simple, it is relatively inexpensive, and it works.

## On organisers and the economic factor

The problem is that, currently, in most nations, nothing requires promoters, planners, or local governments to do any of this. Worse, event organisers themselves have a vested interest in keeping such laws off the books. Instead, they have a strong economic incentive to pack as many people as possible into events to maximise ticket, food, and merchandise sales.

The tragedy at the Maha Kumbh, however, should inspire governments everywhere to reconsider their hands-off approach to crowd crush and pass sensible laws and regulations requiring event planners, promoters, and venues to take the basic steps needed to reduce the risk to individuals at large events. Even small amounts of planning and minimal changes to a venue can almost eliminate the risk that crowd members will be injured, trampled, or squeezed to death on their feet while still allowing everyone to have a good time. The cost of waiting to make such changes will continue to be measured in human lives.

Crowd crushes are scientifically well understood, easy to predict, and inexpensive to prevent





## More and better

### India needs good educational infrastructure in all districts

**T**he Supreme Court of India's ruling that there can be no reservation based on residence in admission to PG medical courses is consistent with the constitutional mandate of equality before law, but may adversely affect the priorities and health-care requirements of the States. The Court has reminded everyone that there is only one 'domicile' for Indians, and that the right to seek admissions anywhere in the country must be open to residents of all States. This is in line with a series of verdicts on the question whether there can be admissions based on institutional preference or residential requirements. The view is that institutional preference, that is choosing candidates who had passed out of an institution for admission to PG courses in the same institution, is constitutionally permissible; and that admission to UG medical courses can have a residential requirement, primarily because the basic medical needs of a region can be better addressed by admitting more people from the same background so that doctors emerging from the system would render public service there. However, on the principle that higher qualifications brook no compromise with merit, the prevailing view is that PG courses should not be open for any such residential preference, as the need to attract the best talent is higher.

Many States do fill up PG seats in government medical colleges, and seats available to them in private colleges, barring those that are filled on an all-India basis, with candidates drawn from their own States. Candidates from other States can enter PG medical courses in a State only through the national quota. This system, now impermissible, has its own justification, as PG students form the backbone of medical services in government hospitals. In addition, such students have the additional incentive of joining government service and, thereby, acquiring eligibility to apply for PG courses as 'service candidates'. The southern States, in particular, have invested heavily in medical education, establishing a college in almost every district. These would like to accommodate more candidates from their States to keep their medical services going and with an eye on future manpower needs. It is expected that aggrieved States may seek a review of this judgment. It is likely that the verdict will result in the Union government finding one more way to restrict the role of the States in medical admissions. Interestingly, the distinction the Court has made between PG and UG courses when it comes to prioritising local needs may be a sound argument in itself for questioning the continuing tendency to centralise even UG admissions across streams. The solution lies in creating educational infrastructure of near-uniform quality in every district.





# What WHO's recommendation for low sodium salt means for India

The WHO released guidelines recommending lower-sodium salt substitutes, essentially including potassium chloride and reducing percentage of sodium chloride in table salt. This comes after the international body strongly recommended reducing sodium intake to less than 2g a day

Ramya Kannan

**O**ne of the initial heroes of what was possibly the most successful and biggest public health campaigns in the country was salt. Introduced, fortified with iodine, in the 1950s, it marshalled a public health amelioration that improved the lives of people across generations, nearly wiping out iodine deficiency in India (except in a few hard-to-reach regions) and its vast array of attendant problems, including the slowed growth of children with hypothyroidism. Now, it seems as if salt's time has come, once again, to effect major health changes in the population, improving the health of Indians all over again.

The WHO released a set of guidelines on Sunday recommending the use of lower-sodium salt substitutes (LSSS), essentially including potassium chloride and reducing the percentage of sodium chloride in table salt. This comes after the international body strongly recommended reducing sodium intake to less than 2g/day. Notably, the WHO has proposed to launch this LSSS revolution from within homes, providing its recommendations for table salt that is used in households. The recommendation does not pertain to salt used in packaged foods or foods cooked outside of home. Also, this recommendation is for adults (not pregnant women or children) and excludes individuals with kidney impairments or with other conditions that might compromise potassium excretion.

The WHO, however, with this set of guidelines, is talking to not just the people, but hopes to address and provide guidance on the use of low-sodium salt substitutes for policy-makers, programme managers, health professionals, and other stakeholders in their efforts to reduce sodium intake and reduce the risk of hypertension and related NCDs through a range of policy actions and public health interventions.

## Salt's impact on the body

Why is salt important, and why is it that salt has again become a vehicle to bring about sweeping public health behaviour change. To answer that, we would have to look at the widespread use of salt, and its impact on the human body itself. Sodium, the primary ingredient in salt, hitches a ride with water and travels the bloodstream. Sodium forces the body to retain water and more salt naturally means more water in the blood vessels, which increases the pressure, literally and figuratively. "Reducing salt consumption, therefore, reduces the load on the system, by significantly decreasing the volume in the blood, thus impacting directly, positively on blood pressure," says Priya Chockalingam, founder, Cardiac Wellness Institute, Chennai. "This is significant, particularly given the culture in India, where topping up with salt is almost a given. If you reduce your consumption of salt, there is no doubt that it will have an impact on cardiovascular health and prevent strokes," she adds.

Hypertension is also a major risk factor for atherosclerosis, where fatty deposits (plaques) build up inside the arteries, causing them to narrow and harden, thereby restricting blood flow and



Reducing salt consumption reduces the load on the system. FILE PHOTO

increasing the risk of getting heart attacks and stroke. Excessive salt consumption also leads to vascular stiffness, making blood vessels less flexible. Potassium also improves vascular function. "There is no doubt that any reduction in salt consumption is good to prevent atherosclerosis. The benefits of low sodium salt substitutes are quite wide ranging, and will bear testing out further on project mode," says J. Amalorpavanathan, vascular surgeon, and member, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission.

The statistics are sobering and if we truly paid attention to these facts, we might have as a race decided to leave salt out of our diets. Globally, each year, 8 million deaths are associated with poor diets, and of these, 1.9 million are attributable to high sodium intake. Way back in 2013, an updated systematic

**While the benefits of a low sodium salt are plentiful, experts also caution that upping potassium intake is not for all, particularly those with kidney disease**

review of studies (published in the *British Medical Journal*), where salt was reduced by 4.4 g/day for at least 4 weeks found that systolic blood pressure was reduced by 4 mmHg and diastolic blood pressure by 2 mmHg, having a positive impact on cardiovascular health.

Studies from across the world have proven this, repeatedly, prompting the WHO to recommend limiting the sodium intake per person to below 2 grams per day to reduce blood pressure and risk of CVDs. Reducing salt consumption is an effective way to reduce

noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), and chronic kidney disease by lowering blood pressure. It also lowers the risks of other conditions associated with high sodium intake, such as gastric cancer, the guideline says.

The Chennai-based Sapiens Health Foundation, last year, launched the 'Losalter Group', emphasising the need to cut salt intake and also took online, a website to create awareness on the impact of salt on health. Rajan Ravichandran, chairman of the foundation, said the Losalter Group will create awareness on the problems caused by an excess consumption of salt. "We will train 300 physicians throughout the country. They will be educated on salt and health and given toolkits to propagate the message to the people," he explains. He adds that the onus of reducing salt intake is with the public, government, and the food industry, while stressing on 'signal labelling' for food products, in order to guide people to make healthy choices.

Vivekanand Jha, executive director, The George Institute for Global Health in India, terms this initiative of the WHO as "killing two birds with one stone", particularly in the Indian context. "While the consumption of sodium in the salt comes down, there is also a perspective that the normal intake of potassium is low, substituting sodium with potassium will address this second issue as well, again with a beneficial impact on cardiovascular health," he explains.

## Low salt options are costly

While there are some brands that do sell low NaCl (sodium chloride) with KCl (potassium chloride added) in the market, the problem is that these products are more expensive than regular salt, that costs very little, Prof. Jha adds. "The way to change behaviour effectively is to change what is available to consume. Costs will also come down with wider use. Government policy must mandate use of low sodium salt alternatives in the country and the state should work with industry to ensure proper display (at eye level) of these alternatives on supermarket shelves and shops," he says.

While the benefits of a low sodium salt are plentiful, experts also caution that upping potassium intake is not for all, particularly those with kidney disease. The WHO makes it clear that those who have conditions that do not support increasing the consumption of potassium must stay away from the proposed alternative. However, Dr. Priya Chockalingam while agreeing that salt is grossly overused in India, adds that it is possible there is a huge population with undetected kidney disease, and to put them on a potassium enhanced salt diet might not be advisable.

She makes it clear that reducing sodium chloride consumption would, on the whole, be beneficial in India, given the staggering burden of cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases including hypertension and diabetes. But, it is equally essential to keep a watchful eye on the possibility of hyperkalaemia (excess potassium levels in the blood), given poor health seeking behaviour in the country and undiagnosed cases of kidney failure, she adds.

(ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)



The WHO recommends limiting sodium intake per person to below 2 grams per day to reduce blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular diseases. AFP

# *INSV Tarini* crosses most remote part of earth

## **The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

As part of the ongoing mission to circumnavigate the globe under the Navika Sagar Parikrama-II, Indian Navy officers Lieutenant Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A., aboard sailing vessel *INSV Tarini*, passed through Point Nemo on Thursday during the leg of sailing from Lyttelton Port, New Zealand, to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Point Nemo, located in the South Pacific, is known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility – the most remote location on earth, situated 2,688 kilometres from the nearest landmass.

“The officers have also collected vital water samples from the point, which will be analysed by the National Institute of Oceanography. These samples will provide valuable insights into oceanic conditions, including the presence of marine biodiversity and chemical composition contributing to global oceanographic research,” a Navy official said.





# Three inter-State committees to draft social security plan for workers

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The two-day *Chintan Shivir* of the Labour Ministers and Secretaries, which concluded on Thursday, has decided to form three panels comprising five States each to develop a sustainable model for comprehensive social security coverage for workers.

The committees will submit their reports in March. The meeting also elaborately discussed the implementation of various clauses under the new four Labour Codes.

The proposed shift from labour inspector to labour inspector-cum-facilitator model was one of the major labour reforms discussed at the meeting. "The overall objective of this reform is to reduce the compliance burden and promote ease of doing business, along with ensuring decent working conditions, equal opportunities at work and improved employee-employer relationships," the Union Labour



The two-day meeting of Labour Ministers and Secretaries specifically discussed the welfare of construction workers. REUTERS

Ministry said in a release after the meeting.

The meeting, chaired by Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, was the last of the six regional workshops and several other consultations held over the past year with all 36 States and Union Territories on the implementation of the four Labour Codes and the expansion of social security coverage.

"Three Committees comprising five States each were formed. Building on the discussions during the workshop, these Commit-

tees will hold consultations and develop a sustainable model for comprehensive social security coverage for workers," he presented in March," the Centre said.

The meet specifically discussed the welfare of construction workers. *The Hindu* had reported recently that the various State welfare boards for construction workers have not yet used the cess worth ₹70,744.16 crore they collected from the employers for the welfare of the workers. Mr. Mandaviya stressed developing sus-

tainable social security models for the workers.

"States showcased the progress made in utilising building and other construction workers cess funds in giving social security coverage, besides developing education and skill development institutions for children of building and construction workers. Innovative ways of utilising these resources for providing various social welfare initiatives like pension were widely deliberated," the Ministry's release added.

The Ministry told the participants that it was designing a dedicated Social Security and Welfare Scheme for gig and platform workers.

"Modalities of funding, data collection, and administration of the Scheme were discussed and States were urged to prioritise the sharing of data of unorganised workers, with a focus on gig and platform workers and support in their registration on eShram on mission mode," it added.



# Ensure that provisions against terrorism in new criminal laws are not misused, stresses Shah

## **The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The provisions against organised crime, terrorism, and mob lynching in the new criminal laws must not be misused, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday, calling for circulars to be issued with provisions requiring permissions from the highest level to safeguard against any such misuse.

He was speaking while reviewing the implementation status of the three new criminal laws in Gujarat, in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

The Home Minister urged the State government to ensure the implementation of the new criminal laws in all police commissionerates by April 30, and across the entire State at the earliest.

He commended Gujarat



Amit Shah

for achieving the timely filing of chargesheets in over 92% of cases involving sentences of more than 10 years.

He emphasised that for the remaining cases, a review should be conducted to ensure the utilisation of the provision in the Act that allows seeking permission from the court. He emphasised the need to establish a system where FIRs can be transferred between two States through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network

and Systems (CCTNS).

He said that the police should provide the details of people detained for questioning on the electronic dashboard, along with the seizure list, and the cases to be forwarded to the courts. He also directed the State Director-General of Police to continuously monitor these cases, calling for network connectivity speeds in police stations to be boosted to 30 mbps over the prescribed standards.

Noting that the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) includes a provision for trial in absentia, which allows legal action to be taken against absconding criminals, Mr. Shah said this should be initiated against fugitives who have been evading the country for a long time in cases related to national security.



# Extreme climate events impacting rain in southwest coast, says study

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

India's southwest coast has seen a steady rise in extreme rainfall events, increasing at a rate of 0.23 mm per season, according to a study by a team of researchers from the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), and the UK Met Office.

Titled 'Deciphering the Relationship Between Moisture Flux and Monsoon Extreme Rainfall Ov-



**Steady changes:** The southwest coast witnessed a rise in extreme rain events, going up at a rate of 0.23 mm per season. FILE PHOTO

er the West Coast of India', the study was published in the *International Journal of Climatology*.

"The study showed that the southwest coast has seen a steady rise in extreme rainfall events, in-

creasing at a rate of 0.23 mm per season. This trend is strongly tied to the thermodynamic component of moisture flux, which itself correlates with warming SSTs in the southeast Arabian Sea," according to Ajil Kottayil, scientist at the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research, CUSAT, who had guided the study authored by Tesna Maria, a doctoral scholar at the centre.

Since 2014, SSTs have exceeded 28 degrees Celsius, creating a conducive environment for intensified moisture transport and rainfall, says the study.

