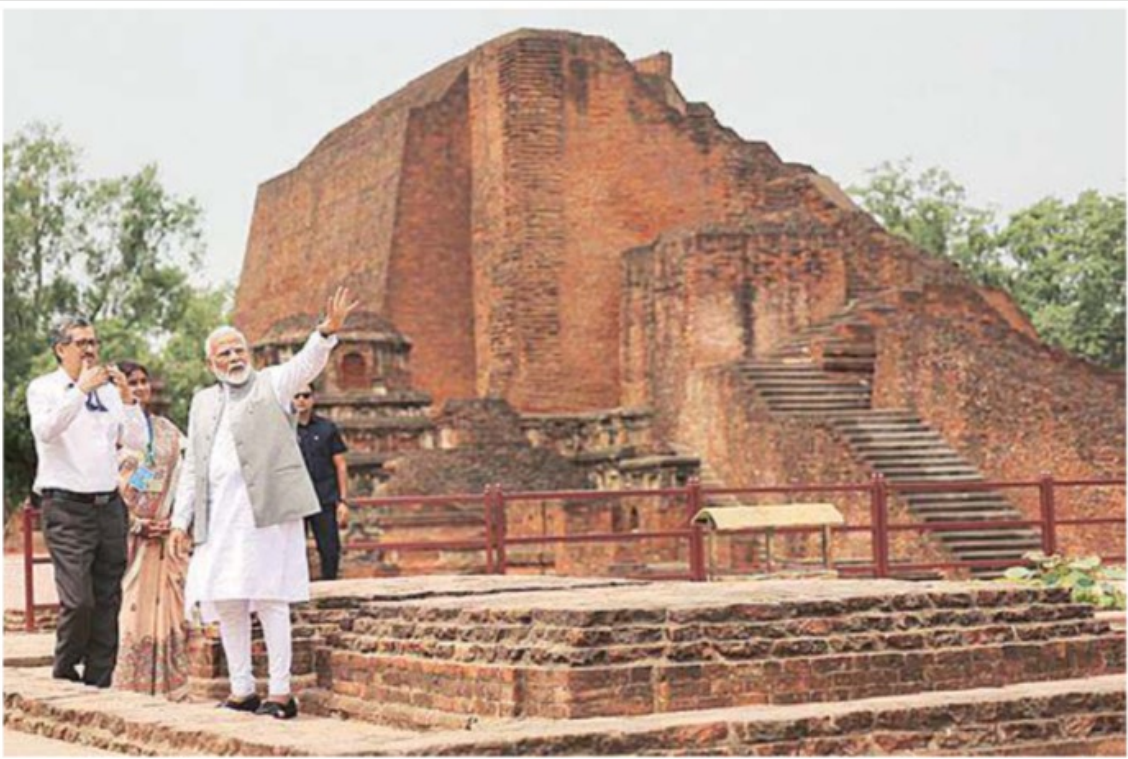


Newspaper Analysis

(20.06.2024)





NEW NALANDA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the ruins of the ancient university at Nalanda in Bihar Wednesday. Inaugurating the new Nalanda University campus, he said it should be the centre of India's identity with 'perennial flow of knowledge'. PTI REPORTS, PAGES 6, 18

As a new campus rises at an ancient site, the story of Nalanda

SANTOSH SINGH & ARJUN SENGUPTA
PATNA, NEW DELHI JUNE 19

THE CAMPUS of Nalanda University was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday.

Spread across 455 acres, it is located in Rajgir, roughly 100 km from Patna, and merely 12 km away from the ruins of the eponymous ancient Buddhist monastery, considered to be among the greatest centres of learning in all of Antiquity.

'Reviving' Nalanda

It was then President APJ Abdul Kalam who officially proposed 'reviving' Nalanda in 2006. Addressing the Bihar Assembly, he said: "To recapture [Nalanda's] past glory... it has been proposed to establish a Bodhgaya Nalanda Indo-Asian Institute of Learning in partnership with select Asian countries".

In 2007, the proposal to re-establish

Nalanda was endorsed at the East Asia Summit in Mandaue, Philippines. This endorsement was re-iterated in the East Asia Summit of 2009, in Hua Hin, Thailand.

In total, 17 countries other than India — Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam — have helped set up of the university. Ambassadors of these countries attended Wednesday's inauguration ceremony.

The Bihar Assembly, in 2007, passed the University of Nalanda Bill to facilitate the creation of a new, international university near the site of the ancient learning centre in Rajgir. In 2010, Parliament replaced this Act with the Nalanda University Bill, which deemed the proposed university to be one of "national importance", and laid down rules regarding how it would be governed.

In 2013, the masterplan for the campus, proposed by renowned architect BV Doshi's

EXPLAINED EDUCATION



Administrative block of the newly inaugurated Nalanda University. Nalanda

Vastu Shilpa Consultants, was chosen after an international competition.

Centre of research, learning

Nalanda University admitted its very first batch of fifteen students in 2014, to the School

of Historical Studies, and the School of Ecology and Environmental studies. Classes were held in the Rajgir Convention Centre, with Bihar government-operated Hotel Tathagat acting as temporary hostel premises for the students. The faculty comprised six teachers.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, who had been associated with the project since 2007, became the University's first Chancellor, and then-President Pranab Mukherjee became the first Visitor.

Since 2014, four more schools have been established — the School of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religion, the School of Languages and Literature, the School of Management Studies, and the School of International Relations and Peace Studies. The university currently offers two-year Master's courses, PhD programmes, and a few diploma and certificate courses.

Campus to behold

By 2022, 90% of the campus's construction was completed. At the time, the university boasted 800 students, including 150 in-

ternational students from 31 countries. At full capacity, the campus can accommodate as many as 7,500 students and teachers.

With a built area of only 8%, university officials say that the campus attempts to "match the architectural and geographical setting the ancient Nalanda University would have provided". In fact, the administrative block specifically recreates the exposed brick architecture, and elevated staircase that is the signature image of the Nalanda ruins.

That being said, the campus is a mix of the modern and the traditional. Natural light streams into classrooms' smart wideboards and electronic podiums. While air-conditioned, it utilises various methods, such as hollow walls, to provide natural cooling.

Water bodies — Kamal Sagar ponds — cover over 100 acres of the campus's area. Another 100 acres are covered in greenery. The campus boasts a drinking water treatment plant, and a water recycling plant, as well as a yoga centre, a state-of-the-art auditorium, a library, an archival centre, and a fully equipped sports complex. No cars are allowed inside.

Nalanda Mahavira

Mahavira in Sanskrit/Pali means 'great monastery'. Nalanda Mahavira was active from the fifth to thirteenth century CE.

The chronicles of seventh century Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang provide the most detailed description of ancient Nalanda. Hsuan Tsang estimated that at the time of his visit, the monastery housed 10,000 students, 2,000 teachers, and a gargantuan retinue of servants.

Multiple scholars, however, have disputed this figure based on archaeological evidence from the ancient university's ruins. That being said, Nalanda was definitely no an average Buddhist *vihara*.

"Under its aged and saintly abbot Silabhadra, Nalanda also taught the Vedas Hindu philosophy, logic, grammar and medicine. It would seem that the student population was not not confined to the Buddhist order, but that candidates of other faiths who succeeded in passing a strict oral examination were admitted," historian A I Basham wrote in his classic *The Wonder that was India* (1954).



Costs of inequality



ASHWINI DESHPANDE

Persisting gender gaps in India across several sectors are a drag on society and economy

THE 2024 EDITION of the Global Gender Gap Index places India at 129 out of the 146 countries it surveyed. This puts India at the 18th position from the bottom. For comparison, of the 156 countries included in 2021, India was at the 17th position from the bottom. Thus, overall, India's ranking has remained in the bottom 20 over years.

Like all indices, the Global Gender Gap index, first introduced in 2006, is a précis measure. It is a combination of four different sub-indices — economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment — each summarising multiple indicators. The index lies between 0 and 1, with 1 denoting complete parity. It is important to note that this index focuses on gender gaps, that is, the focus is on the position of women relative to men (gender equality), rather than to their absolute position. The idea is to track changes in gender gaps both over time and across countries.

Like all indices, it does not include everything that matters for gender equality, but focuses only on a few key measures. It should not be seen as a comprehensive treatise on gender equality, but as a useful pointer or a highlighter of key summary statistics that can be reliably measured and tracked. The value of the overall index as well as subindices shows how much of the gap has been closed.

At the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), we have developed an interactive tracker which allows readers to see the change in India's position over time since 2006, and relative to other countries separately for each of the sub-indices, as well as for the overall index (<https://tinyurl.com/476nbn55>). The lowest value of the index is 0 (far left) and the highest value is 1 (far right).

The 2024 report shows that on "Health

and Survival Score", India's value is at 0.951 which means that 95.1 per cent of the male-female gap has been closed. Similarly, in educational attainment, 96.4 per cent of the gap has been closed. India has done well on these indicators but since several other countries have done better, India is at 112th position in the educational ranking and at 142nd position in the health rankings among 146 countries.

The Economic Participation subindex is based on gender gaps in labour force participation, share in managerial positions, wage gaps, and wage parity (equal pay for equal work). On this, India's score at 39.8 per cent places it at the 142nd position among 146 countries. While this is an improvement since 2021 (when it was 32.6 per cent), it is very low in absolute terms, and is lower than the 2012 score of 46 per cent.

To put this score in perspective, countries with the lowest levels of economic parity are Bangladesh (31.1 per cent), Sudan, (33.7 per cent), Iran (34.3 per cent), Pakistan (36 per cent), India (39.8 per cent), and Morocco (40.6 per cent). These economies all register less than 30 per cent gender parity in estimated earned income and less than 50 per cent gender parity in labour force participation.

In political participation, even though India has closed only 25.1 per cent of the gap, its global rank is 65. This reflects the fact that while the rest of the world has made significant forward strides towards gender equality in the economic, educational and health spheres, the global progress on gender equality in political participation remains low. We should note that India's position was at 51 in 2021 with a value of 27.6 per cent, implying that India's score has worsened over the last two years. This is lower than India's score around 2014 (43.3 per cent). Thus, over the last

decade, the progress on this sub-index has worsened.

The report shows that India and its immediate neighbours — South Asia as a region ranks 7th out of the eight regions in the world, above Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Within the seven countries that comprise South Asia, India's rank is at five, with Bangladesh leading the region at the 99th position globally. Thus, India belongs to a region that ranks low on gender parity and does poorly compared to several of its immediate neighbours.

While there has been an improvement in several dimensions for Indian women, this report points to the persistence of gender gaps in selected indicators. It also reminds us that just a decade back, India's gender gaps were lower. Should we sit up and take notice or shoot the messenger?

There is ample research documenting the staggering economic costs of sidelining women. An OECD estimate reveals that gender-based discrimination in social institutions could cost up to \$12 trillion for the global economy, and that a reduction in gender discrimination can increase the rate of growth of GDP. Internalisation of this understanding would mean that gender equality has to be mainstreamed into economic policy making, rather than viewed as a residual concern to be tackled later, as an afterthought.

However, equality in the economic sphere can materialise only when society treats women as independent, intelligent, capable adults who are free to make their individual choices in all matters concerning their lives, and are included as equals at all levels of decision-making.

The writer is professor of economics and founder director, CEDA, Ashoka University. Views are personal

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The 2024 edition of the Global Gender Gap Index ranks India at 129 out of 146 countries, placing it among the bottom 20 nations globally. Despite some improvements, India's overall gender parity remains low, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment.

1. Context and Background of the Article

The Global Gender Gap Index, introduced in 2006, measures gender gaps across four sub-indices: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. India's low ranking reflects persistent gender disparities, despite improvements in certain areas. The index is a tool to track changes in gender gaps over time and across countries, focusing on the position of women relative to men.

2. How it is Relevant for BPSC Exam

- **Social Issues:** Understanding gender disparities is crucial for addressing social issues and formulating inclusive policies.
- **Current Affairs:** The index and India's ranking provide insights into ongoing efforts and challenges in achieving gender equality.
- **Public Policy:** Knowledge of gender gap indices helps in evaluating and improving public policies aimed at gender parity.
- **Economic Development:** The article highlights the economic impact of gender discrimination, relevant for discussions on economic growth and development.
- **Essay Paper:** Data facts and dimensions if a essay comes on Women

Body

- **Details of the Global Gender Gap Index**
 - **Ranking and Sub-indices:**
 - India ranks 129 out of 146 countries, with the index measuring economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.
 - The index focuses on gender gaps, highlighting the position of women relative to men rather than their absolute position.
- **India's Performance in Sub-indices**
 - **Health and Survival:**
 - India has closed 95.1% of the male-female gap in health and survival, ranking 142nd globally.
 - **Educational Attainment:**
 - 96.4% of the gender gap in educational attainment has been closed, with India ranked 112th.
 - **Economic Participation:**
 - India scores 39.8% in economic participation, ranking 142nd, reflecting significant gender gaps in labor force participation, managerial positions, and wage parity.
 - **Political Empowerment:**

- Only 25.1% of the gender gap in political participation has been closed, placing India at 65th globally. This is a decline from the 2021 rank of 51.
- **Comparison with Neighboring Countries**
 - **South Asia Region:**
 - South Asia ranks 7th out of eight regions globally, with India at 5th within the region.
 - Bangladesh leads the region at the 99th position globally.
- **Economic Impact of Gender Gaps**
 - **Economic Costs:**
 - Gender-based discrimination can significantly hinder economic growth, with OECD estimates suggesting potential costs of up to \$12 trillion globally.
 - Reducing gender discrimination can enhance GDP growth rates, emphasizing the need to integrate gender equality into economic policymaking.
- **Need for Societal and Policy Reforms**
 - **Mainstreaming Gender Equality:**
 - Gender equality should be a core component of economic policies, rather than a secondary concern.
 - **Empowerment and Inclusion:**
 - Achieving gender parity requires societal changes that recognize women as independent, capable individuals.
 - Inclusion of women in all levels of decision-making is essential for meaningful progress.
- **Implications for Policy and Society**
 - **Policy Recommendations:**
 - Policymakers should focus on closing gender gaps through targeted initiatives in education, health, economic participation, and political empowerment.
 - Continuous monitoring and reporting on gender parity can guide effective interventions.
 - **Societal Changes:**
 - Societal attitudes towards women must shift to support their independence and decision-making capabilities.
 - Gender equality efforts should involve both men and women to create a more inclusive society.

Conclusion

India's low ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index highlights significant gender disparities, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment. Addressing these gaps requires comprehensive policy reforms and societal changes to ensure women are treated as equals and included in all aspects of decision-making. Achieving gender equality is not only a moral imperative but also crucial for economic growth and development.

Govt hikes paddy MSP by ₹117 to ₹2,300 per quintal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 19

THE CENTRAL government Wednesday raised the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by 5.35% to Rs 2,300 per quintal for 2024-25 kharif marketing season.

According to the government, the highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has been recommended for oilseeds and pulses which includes niger seed at Rs 983 per quintal, followed by sesamum at Rs 632 per quintal and tur/arhar at Rs 550 per quintal.

The expected margin to farmers over their cost of production are estimated to be highest in case of bajra at 77% followed by tur at 59%, maize at 54% and urad at 52%. For the rest of the crops, margin to farmers over their cost of production is estimated to be at 50%.

Announcing the decision Wednesday evening, Union I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Cabinet has approved the MSP

for 14 kharif crops based on recommendations from the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The crucial decision comes ahead of state polls such as in Haryana and Maharashtra.

He said the MSP for common grade paddy has been hiked by Rs 117 to Rs 2,300 per quintal. For the 'A' grade variety, it has been increased to Rs 2,320 per quintal for the upcoming kharif season.

Addressing media persons, Vaishnaw said the government had taken a policy decision in the 2018 Union Budget that MSP should be at least 1.5 times the cost of production, and this was followed in the latest MSP hike. "The cost was scientifically calculated by CACP," he said.

As per a PTI report, the Food Corporation of India currently holds a stockpile of around 53.4 million tonnes of rice, which is four times the required buffer for July 1. It is sufficient to meet demand under welfare schemes for a year without the requirement of fresh procurement.

What is MSP?



WHAT IS HEAT STROKE?

It occurs when the body is no longer able to control its rising temperature and the sweating mechanism, which usually helps it cool down, fails

Signs to watch out for:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Rapid pulse
- Extreme thirst
- Dry, swollen tongue
- Feeling disoriented, dizzy or delirious
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions, seizures or coma
- Possible sweating, skin may feel deceptively cool
- Body temperature more than 40°C



The maximum temp in the city has not dropped below the 40-degree mark for 38 days straight. *Gajendra Yadav*

DOS AND DON'T'S

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority has issued guidelines to minimise the heat wave impact and to prevent serious ailment or death because of a heat stroke:



- Drink sufficient water, even if not thirsty

■ Use ORS, homemade drinks like *lassi*, *torani* (rice water), lemon water, buttermilk, etc. which helps to rehydrate the body

- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose, and porous cotton clothes
- Use protective goggles, umbrella/hat, shoes or *chappals*



- Avoid going out in the sun, especially between noon and 3 pm

■ Keep animals in shade and give them plenty of water to drink



- Avoid alcohol, tea, coffee and carbonated soft drinks, which dehydrate the body



- Avoid high-protein food and do not eat stale food

■ Avoid strenuous activities when outside temperature is high outside

■ If you faint or feel ill, see a doctor immediately



- Do not leave children or pets in parked vehicles

■ Use fans, take a bath in cold water frequently



Don't wait for KAVACH

Anti-collision system will take time to come into operation on a large scale. Till then, the Railways can utilise available funds for other steps towards shoring up safety

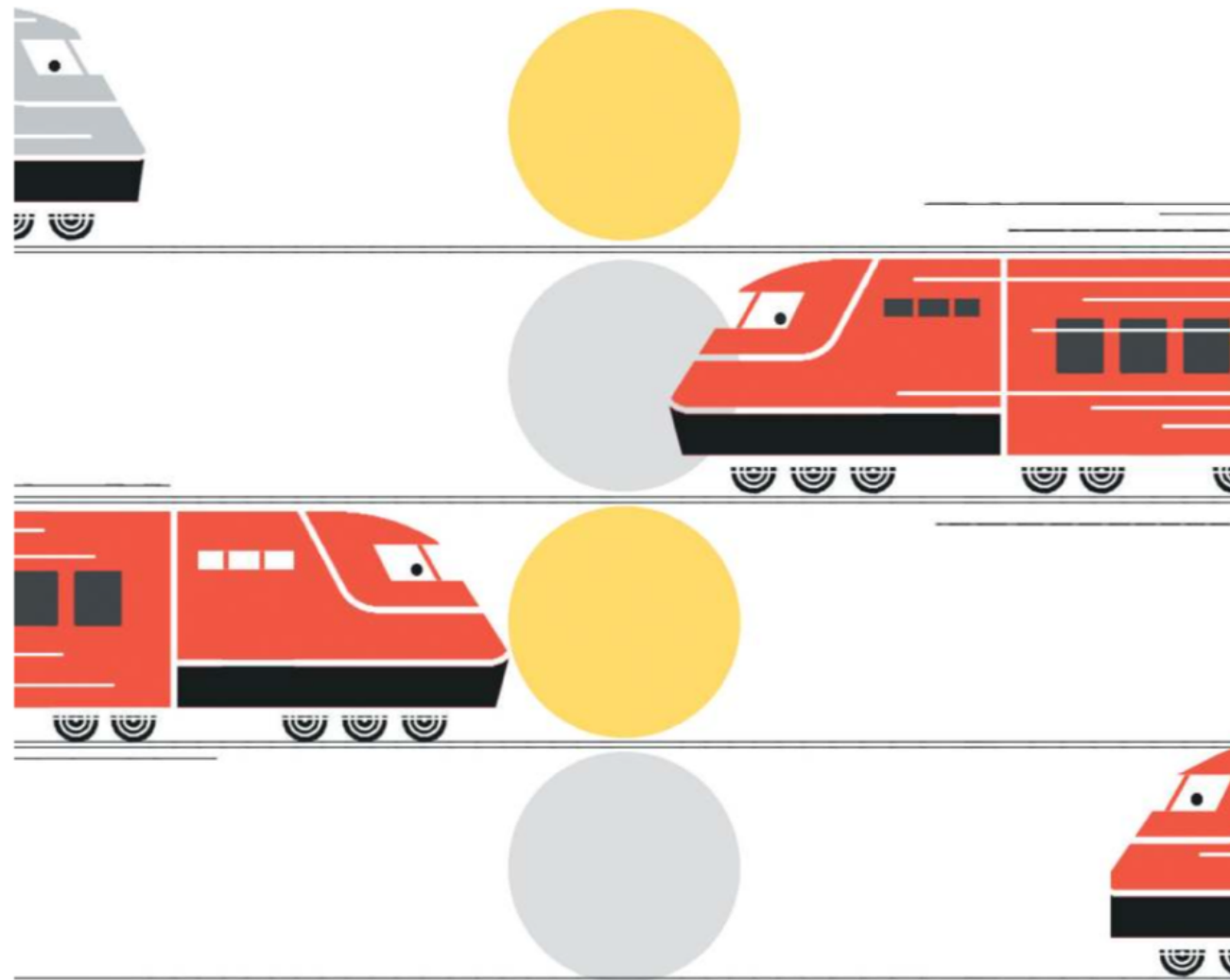


M JAMSHED

WHAT IS MOST striking about any train accident which results in deaths is that most of the time, the accident was avoidable. Safety is a feature of rail operations — it is not an externality. Yet, once again, two trains collided at Rangapani, and one of these, unfortunately, was the passenger-carrying Kanchenjunga Express. Many precious lives were lost and several people were injured, including crew members entrusted with the responsibility of safe operations.

Collisions are the worst kind of accidents and invariably result in casualties. During the year 2022-23, a total of six collisions took place on the Indian Railways compared with only two during 2021-22. In 2023-24, four more have taken place. Most of these collisions involved casualties and injuries to passengers. While the numbers show improvements overall, when you take a long-term perspective, safety from harm does take precedence over speed and comfort. And so the only performance indicator for accidents on the IR is that they must be at zero.

The reduced number of accidents speaks highly of the efforts being made by IR. However, with the number of collisions, the focus is better shifted to tackling, reduc-



U.N., PALESTINIAN FIGURES SAY ONLY UNDER A LAKH PEOPLE REMAIN

Israeli tanks push deeper into Rafah, forcing more Gazans to flee north

Heavy shelling, gunfire hit tents of the displaced, say residents

REUTERS
CAIRO, JUNE 19

ISRAELI TANKS backed by warplanes and drones advanced deeper into the western part of the Gaza Strip city of Rafah on Wednesday, killing eight people, according to residents and Palestinian medics.

Residents said the tanks moved into five neighborhoods after midnight. Heavy shelling and gunfire hit the tents of displaced families in the Al-Mawasi area, further to the west of the coastal enclave, they said. Some eight months into the war, there has been no sign of let up in the fighting as efforts by international



Palestinians receive food aid in south Gaza's Khan Younis on Wednesday. Reuters

China eyes plan to link railways across Southeast Asia, expand BRI

Proposal to connect Kunming in China to Singapore via Malaysia, Thailand

REUTERS
KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 19

CHINA SAID it was willing to study a plan to connect Malaysia's \$10-billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) to other China-backed railway projects in Laos and Thailand, potentially expanding Beijing's Belt and Road initiative across Southeast Asia.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, who is on a three-day visit to Malaysia, said on Wednesday the proposal would make the central line of a proposed Pan-Asia Railway, running from Kunming in China to Singapore, a reality.

"This will better promote the construction of new international land and sea trade corridors, enhance regional connectivity, and deepen the building of the ASEAN community," Li said.

Li was speaking during a ground-breaking ceremony at a construction site for the ECRL - a 665-km railway that will link peninsular Malaysia's east and west coasts by the end of 2026. Malaysia's government said in March it would consider extending the China-backed project to its border with Thailand.

Li is on the third leg of a trip that has included New Zealand and Australia, as China looks to expand influence and invest-

ments in the Asia-Pacific region amid an ongoing rivalry with the United States.

He met Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in the administrative capital of Putrajaya, following his arrival in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday for a visit to mark 50 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

After Wednesday's closed-door meeting, Li and Anwar witnessed the signing of more than a dozen pacts, including renewing a five-year programme to collaborate in areas such as trade and investment, agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure and financial services, a statement after the meeting showed.

The programme, which will expire in 2028, was first introduced in 2013. The two countries also vowed to review visa-free travel arrangements set to expire in coming months. China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009, and the foreign ministry said total trade was valued at \$98.9 billion in 2023.

Anwar and Li on Wednesday agreed that China and relevant countries from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should independently handle the South China Sea issue, according to a report by Chinese news agency Xinhua.





Name the River:



