

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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STUDENT EDITION
MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022

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SRI LANKA BLOCKS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AFTER IMPOSING EMERGENCY CURFEW

Opposition lawmakers in Sri Lanka on Sunday marched in the capital, Colombo, defying President Gotabaya Rajapaksa move to impose a nationwide curfew and state of emergency after protests blaming the government for an economic crisis swelled. Internet users were also unable to access Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and other social media platforms...

X-PLAINED Why Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis in decades

WHAT The Sri Lankan (SL) economy has been facing one of its worst-ever economic crises, resulting from mismanaged government finances and ill-timed tax cuts, besides the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Huge piles of foreign debt, series of lockdowns, soaring inflation, shortage in fuel supply, fall in foreign currency reserves and devaluation of currency has adversely impacted the country's economic growth.



WHAT LED TO THIS CRISIS: Sri Lanka's economy was in trouble even before Covid struck. The lockdowns further added to its woes and impacted the informal sector hard, which accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the country's workforce.

- The country's foreign exchange reserves have fallen 70 per cent in the past two years to about \$2.31 billion, leaving it struggling to pay for essential imports, including food and fuel. The financial crisis also stemmed from a critical shortfall in foreign currency, leaving traders unable to finance imports.
- Tourism, one of the key sources of foreign exchange for the country, was badly hit due to the Covid pandemic. Besides, remittances from Sri Lankans working overseas also declined sharply.
- Job losses have become a common phenomenon in almost every household. Besides, fall in earnings has led to rise in poverty rates.
- Non-availability of fuel to generate hydroelectricity has led to a shortage of 750 megawatt of thermal power.

HOW IT HAS IMPACTED LIVES

- 1 Fight for fuel:** The crisis is so bad that people are struggling for something as basic as fuel. In fact, Sri Lanka ordered troops to petrol stations last week, as sporadic protests erupted among thousands of people who had queued up for fuel
- 2 Soaring inflation:** Many people in the country are opting for cheaper food items, in order to curtail on expenses. They are also reducing entertainment bills to zero. Even a cup of tea now costs ₹ 100, up from ₹ 25 as of October last year, according to a report by the country's local media website
- 3 Doctor's visit, medicines expensive:** Medicines have also become increasingly
- 4 Devaluation of currency:** Sri Lanka's central bank has devalued the rupee by up to 15 per cent

HOW IT CAN AFFECT INDIA

- **Chinese influence may increase:** SL's dependence on China during this crisis could be a threat for India. Beijing has been trying to spread its influence over Colombo since a last few years, but owing to Indian diplomacy, things could not succeed the way dragon wanted. Since Colombo is a strategic location, India must be cautious of every Chinese attempt to influence SL, feel experts
- **Economic aspects:** Although New Delhi does not import large number of goods from Colombo, handling of Indian Trans-Shipments is a major challenge now due to absence of labour. The non-availability of vehicles to transport our shipment (SL is an important Trans-shipment hub, which handles nearly 48% of our International Cargo) is posing big problems
- **Refugee crisis:** Millions of Sri Lankans are fleeing and taking shelter in India, which is an area of concern. Moreover, it could give rise to rebel groups

India sees warmest March in 122 years, lowest rainfall since 1908



India recorded its warmest March in 122 years with a severe heat wave scorching large swathes of the country in the month, the India Meteorological Department said on Saturday. The weather department attributed the unusual heat to the lack of rainfall due to the absence of active western disturbances over north India and any major system over south India.

- In March 2010, the country had recorded a maximum temperature of 33.09 degrees Celsius
- The MeT department said the country's average mean temperature of 26.67 degrees Celsius in March was the second highest after 26.671 degrees Celsius recorded in March 2010
- The countrywide average minimum temperature of 20.24 degrees Celsius in March was the third-highest in 122 years after 20.26 degrees Celsius in 1953 and 20.25 degrees Celsius in 2010

Environment

Insect borne viruses may trigger next pandemic: WHO

Insect-borne pathogens pose an 'increasing' risk and could lead to the next pandemic, according to the World Health Organisation. Arboviruses like Zika, yellow fever, Chikungunya and dengue are a group of pathogens, which are spread by arthropods, such as mosquitoes and ticks. They top the list for the next potential outbreak that could esca-



late into a pandemic, especially as almost four billion people live in tropical and sub-tropical areas where they thrive.

- Arboviruses are increasing in prevalence, and currently present a public health threat in tropical and sub-tropical areas
 - Since 2016 more than 89 countries have faced Zika outbreaks, while yellow fever risk has 'been on the rise since the early 2000'
 - Every year, dengue fever infects 390 million people in the 130 countries where it is endemic – it can cause haemorrhagic fever and death
 - Yellow fever poses a high risk of outbreaks in 40 countries and causes jaundice and severe haemorrhagic fever and death
 - Chikungunya is less well-known, but it is present in 115 countries and cause severe and joint-disabling arthritis
- (Source: Daily Mail)

NEWS IN CLUES

FOR WHICH TAX WAS AMITABH BACHCHAN MADE BRAND AMBASSADOR?

- CLUE 1:** It's also known as the Constitution's 101st Amendment Act.
- CLUE 2:** The implementation of this Act took 17 years.
- CLUE 3:** Its launch was the 5th time since independence that the parliament convened at midnight.

ANSWER: GST. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection for the month of March 2022 hit an all time high, with a collection in excess of ₹ 1.42 lakh crore, beating the previous high of ₹ 1.4 lakh crore in January 2022. First mooted in 2000, it was finally implemented in 2017 with its launch done on the midnight of July 1, 2017 at a special convening of both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha

50% FACTOID

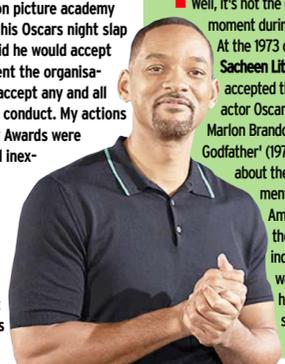
The amount of single-use plastic, which contributes to marine litter, according to the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR). The maximum litter accumulation occurs in the back-shore rather than in the intertidal zone. Moreover, urban beaches have higher accumulation rates than the rural beaches, it said. Samples from coastal water, sediment, beach, and biota are analysed for micro/meso/macro plastics pollution. An increase in the abundance of micro-plastics is observed along the east coast of India during the monsoon. The stations nearer to the river mouth had higher numbers of micro-plastic concentrations



Will Smith resigns from film academy over Chris Rock slap

Will Smith has resigned from the motion picture academy following his Oscars night slap of Chris Rock, and said he would accept any further punishment the organisation imposed. "I will accept any and all consequences for my conduct. My actions at the 94th Academy Awards were shocking, painful, and inexcusable," Smith said. Smith's resignation came two days after the academy met to initiate disciplinary action against Smith for violations against the group's standards of conduct.

- Well, it's not the only "crazy" moment during a telecast. At the 1973 ceremony, **Sacheen Littlefeather** accepted the best actor Oscar on behalf of Marlon Brando for 'The Godfather' (1972) to speak about the mistreatment of Native Americans in the Hollywood industry. This was on the heels of the standoff between law enforcement officials and Native Americans at Wounded Knee (a massacre of nearly three hundred Lakota people by soldiers of the US Army). After receiving the award, Littlefeather claimed that John Wayne had to be restrained by security men to prevent him from forcibly removing her from the stage
- **Roman Polanski** was convicted in 1978 of sexually assaulting a 13-year-old girl before fleeing to France, but won an Academy Award for directing 'The Pianist' in 2002. He was expelled in 2019.



READING HABIT

Foreign-language comics are a fantastic resource when you're learning a new language

BOOST YOUR FOREIGN LANGUAGE skills with comics

If you want to study a new language, why not try reading comics in the language? Many non-English speakers love English comics like "The Hulk" or "Spiderman", and some of them have used the medium to learn how to read and understand English. Students of Japanese have found Manga to be a very enjoyable way to practice the language. Whether you read comic strips or a graphic novel, there are many reasons why comics are a great way to get exposure to a language.

Learners of all levels can benefit from reading comics. They can introduce you to plenty of new vocabulary and phrases in context, which will help you better understand and remember the language. Since key words and phrases will also be repeated, you'll likely find yourself reaching for a dictionary less and less as you progress through the comic. Comics are full of common idioms, metaphors, and slang, and they often present language that is actually spoken by native speakers. Comics also provide great exposure to the culture of the language.

Here are some iconic foreign-language comics from around the world that can get you started:

FRENCH – Les Aventures de Tintin by Hergé

"The Adventures of Tintin" is not only one of the most-translated comics in the world, but also one of the most-translated books of all times, existing in an estimated 115 languages right now. The

Franco-Belgian series ran between 1929 and 1976, telling the story of the reporter Tintin and his dog Snowy as they travel the world. Some of the materi-

al admittedly hasn't aged well — particularly the representation of Africans — but Tintin is still a massively influential work that helped define Europe in the 20th century.

GERMAN – Käpt'n Blaubär's Seemannsgarn by Walter Moers
"Captain Bluebear" creator Walter Moers is a true master of diversity. His best-known work is this family-friendly comic about the sea-faring dark blue bear, who has become popular all over the world through books and TV. The bear is an old, apparently retired

SWEDISH – Rocky by Martin Kellerman

This autobiographical comic strip features the author, Martin Kellerman, as an anthropomorphic, hilariously self-deprecating dog. It's not hard to see why it has been translated into several languages. Available as a daily strip or graphic novel, Rocky is an addictive yet easy way to learn Swedish. Thanks to its hip-hop references and a certain self-aware irony, this comic oozes cool. The use of borrowed language and shared cultural references make this a laid-back way for intermediate learners to broaden their vocabulary.

ty at the end of each one.

SPANISH – Mafalda da by Quino

"Mafalda" is one of the most popular Spanish comics in Latin America. It was created by Joaquín Salvador Lavado Tejón (better known as Quino) in Argentina in 1964. This comic follows the adventures of Mafalda a little girl who is concerned about mankind and world peace. She likes to defy her elders and question them and their legacy. The little girl pictures herself as an interpreter when she grows up working for the UN helping build a better world and achieving world peace. Mafalda has been often compared to Peanuts, but Quino was inspired explicitly by the socio-political situation of Argentina, and South America more generally, making the comic tied to the place and time it was written in.

ITALIAN – Lupo Alberto by Guido Silvestri

"Lupo Alberto" is a famous Italian comic book series created by Guido Silvestri in 1974. It details the adventures of Lupo Alberto, a blue wolf. The protagonist of the comic book, Lupo Alberto, takes the shape of the common man who has a goal in life and a certain amount of bad luck. Alberto, a resident of the McKenzie farm, always tries to steal a hen named Martha, but Moses, a sheepdog, is the obstacle to his plans and does everything to stop him. The conflicts between Alberto and Moses were the subject of the first strips of the series. The premise is generally simple; the first comic book, for example, was about Alberto trying to steal a hen from a farm, but he's constantly foiled by Moses the sheepdog. The comic inspired an animated television show of the same name, and Lupo Alberto was also used in the 1990s in an anti-AIDS campaign.

captain who likes to tell his grandchildren stories about his life as a seafarer. They regard them as tall tales, even though there's usually proof of their veri-

BOOM!



CHAUCER COINED TWITTER AND MORE

An author, philosopher, astronomer, courtier, bureaucrat and diplomat, Geoffrey Chaucer is widely acclaimed as the greatest English poet of Middle Ages. You may not have been aware, but a large number of words which you use today have been invented by authors. Geoffrey Chaucer is given credit for coining around 2000 words in English. It does not mean that he introduced these words, but for the first time, these words were found in his extensive writings between 1374 & 1386.

FEMININITY

Femininity appeared in "The Man of The Law's Tale." The meaning of the word is supposed to be womanhood.

GALAXY

The word has been derived from Latin galaxia, which Chaucer spelled 'Galaxye' in "The House of Fame." He seems to mean the Milky Way.

PLUMAGE

Plumage, which means 'the covering of feathers on a bird' is an extension of Latin 'pluma.'

It was first used by Chaucer in "The Squire's Tale" where he compares a falcon's plumage to that of a nobleman.

DISMEMBERING

This word appeared in "The Parson's Tale" where Chaucer actually means Christ's soul separating from his body due to sin. Today this word means one's body torn to pieces.

WOMANHOOD

Chaucer invented 'womanhood' to fill language gap. For nearly two centuries in medieval Britain, the word manhood existed but womanhood did not. Women could be categorised linguistically and socially by their marital or sexual status as maidens, wives, and widows, but there was no collective term in Middle English to denote their experience outside of or beyond these social roles and sexual identities.

TWITTER

Extremely popular in contemporary time, Twitter was first used by Chaucer in "The Canterbury Tales" to describe the sound of birds chirping. Think, how might Chaucer feel about people tweeting if he were alive today?

VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day only became associated with romantic love during the late 14th century, when Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343-1400), author of "The Canterbury Tales", made the association in his poem "The Parlement of Foules", written sometime in the 1380s, possibly in 1382.

— Indiatimes.com

BRAIN AND LANGUAGE



AT A LOSS FOR WORDS

MORE ABOUT THE LANGUAGE DISORDER BRUCE WILLIS HAS...

Actor Bruce Willis is stepping away from acting after being diagnosed with aphasia, his family has announced. Aphasia is a communication disorder that affects the ability to understand and express language, according to the Aphasia Institute. Aphasia is usually the result of a stroke, affecting about 30 per cent of stroke survivors. But it can also be caused by a brain tumour, brain injury, and is sometimes an early symptom of dementia.

Aphasia can impair all four modalities of language-based communication: speaking, writing, understanding spoken language, and reading. The left hemisphere of the brain typically controls language, so aphasia can result when a stroke or injury occurs in that region. There are many types of aphasia, March of Dimes Canada explains — such as Broca's aphasia (the inability to fluently express language, with poor speech), apraxia of speech (the loss of ability to execute the movements required for speech production), and Wernicke's

aphasia (severely disorganised language that can sound like babbling) — and the exact location of damage in the left hemisphere will determine the type. But people with aphasia are typically still cognitively intact.

The irony here is that it is language that can also keep your brain healthy. There is enough recent evidence to prove that there is a positive impact of language on brain health or rather cognition — with a later onset of dementia. Learning more than one language can keep you young for longer. Your brain starts to decline around the age of around 25. Over the years, things like your efficiency, working memory, processing speed, and concentration declines at an accelerating rate. Speaking more than one language makes that decline less steep. Learning a new language is a great activity to keep your brain active. It's highly challenging, and there's the bonus of being able to communicate better with more people. Meaning, becoming bi- or multi-lingual opens horizons you may not even know existed.

BUILD YOUR VOCAB

10 WORDS A MUSICOPHILE MUST KNOW

A CAPELLA

Group or solo singing without instrumental accompaniment. Some groups use their voices to emulate instruments, while others are more traditional and focus on harmonising.

AD LIBITUM

Probably more recognisable as "ad lib", it means "at the discretion of the performer." It gives the performer control over the passage, for example, changing the tempo of a particular passage, or a part that may be omitted if desired.

CADENCE

A cadence is a sequence of chords used

to signify the end of a phrase.

BPM

The acronym BPM stands for "Beats per Minute" and refers to the number of beats that will occur within sixty seconds.

CRESCENDO

A crescendo is a gradual increase in dynamic volume during a section of music.

MOTIF

A motif in music refers to a specific melody or series of notes is used in different ways throughout a piece of music or song.

RHAPSODY

A rhapsody is a one-movement piece of music that explores multiple free-flowing sections that don't necessarily relate to one another.

DYNAMICS

In music, the term dynamics refers to the intensity and volume with which a note should be played. The most basic dynamic is piano (soft), forte (hard), and mezzo (medium).

SOPRANO

A soprano is a range of pitches in the highest register of tones, this range is higher than the alto range of pitches.

TEMPO

Tempo is the pace or speed at which a piece of music is played. Usually, the tempo will define the length and duration of a quarter note.



TRIVIA TIME

FUN FACTS ABOUT JAPANESE LANGUAGE

Japan is the only country to have the Japanese language as their official language.

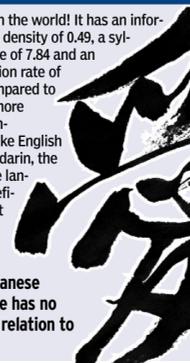
But, this does not mean Japan is the only place where the language is spoken. For example, in the Republic of Palau, Japanese is considered a minority language is spoken there. As of 2010, 1% of Californians and 15% of Hawaiian residents speak Japanese!

The Japanese language is one of the most fast-paced spoken languages in the world. Research has been done and shown that Japanese is confirmed as one of the most-fast paced spoken lan-

guages in the world! It has an informational density of 0.49, a syllabus rate of 7.84 and an information rate of 0.74. Compared to 6 other major languages like English and Mandarin, the Japanese language definitively out beat them.

The Japanese language has no genetic relation to

any other languages. Kanji is adopted from Chinese characters and used as a Japanese writing system. Despite popular beliefs, Japanese is not related or derived from the Chinese language at all. They do not belong to the same language family as Chinese. Considered to be one of the most unique languages in the world, the Japanese language is said to have no direct derivation! How interesting is that!



Queries relating to language skills

Do you find grammar confusing? Do you get stuck with words when writing a letter, an essay or a blog? Do you have a fear of public speaking? Or do you simply want to improve your communication skills? Times NIE is here to help you to master the intricacies of the English language. Just shoot us your queries on toinie175@gmail.com

