

TN Food Safety index score improves this year, stands second

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu has improved its ranking in the State Food Safety Index this year with second spot, after it had slipped to third place in 2023. Kerala topped the list released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Friday, while Jammu - Kashmir stood in the third spot of the rankings. Among the large States, Tamil Nadu stood first in 2022 with 82 points, but slipped to third rank and scored 57 points in 2023. Kerala stood first in 2023 and 2024 consecutively, while the rankings have improved for Tamil Nadu this year.

The State Food Safety Index takes several parameters into account to evaluate food safety, hygiene practices, awareness, human resources and institutional data, compliance, food testing infrastructure and surveillance, training and capacity building and consumer empowerment in various States and Union Territories. The rankings are released for three categories of Small States, Large States and Union Territories.

The Food Safety Index noted that Tamil Nadu has a significant number of full-time designated food safety officers, and it has constituted the State Level Advisory Committee and District Level Advisory Committee, which conducted meetings as scheduled. This is one of the key markers of the improved performance of the State in the food safety index.

Consumer empowerment was another key section for Tamil Nadu, highlighted by FSSAI last year as the State participated actively in FSSAI's Eat Right India (ERI) initiatives. Additionally, a significant number of awareness programmes on food safety and hygiene have been conducted for consumers and other stakeholders in the region. Currently, Tamil Nadu Food Safety Department is also conducting 'Food Safety on Wheels' training and awareness programme for school students and organising camps on hygiene ratings as part of community campaigns.

PMK demands white paper on job creation, says DMK failed in its poll promises



CHENNAI: Alleging that the DMK government has failed to create 50 lakh job opportunities in the private sector as promised before elections, PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss demanded the government release a white paper on job generation. "A statement from the government claimed that

68,038 persons and 5.08 lakh persons have been given jobs in government and private sectors respectively. But the government is yet to clarify whether all the jobs in the government sector are direct recruitment or on a contract basis," Anbumani said in a statement. He also slammed the DMK government for

hiking electricity tariffs thrice after coming to power. This has resulted in the closure of several small, micro and medium enterprises, he claimed. "This is the harsh reality. Amidst such a stark picture, claiming 5 lakh job generation in the private sector is misleading. The government has the responsibility to inform the people of the truth. The incumbent should release a white paper on jobs provided in government and private sectors," he urged. Anbumani said that DMK has failed in its promise of 5.50 lakh and 50 lakh new jobs in government and private sectors respectively. "A mere 10 per cent of the promise has been realized to date," he said. "The government should apologise to the people for its failure and acknowledge that they have misled them," he said.

One nation, one election proposal is 'dangerous', not needed for India: KAMAL HAASAN

CHENNAI: Calling the 'one nation, one election' proposal a dangerous move against the federal structure of the nation, actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) president Kamal Haasan on Saturday strongly opposed the BJP government's move to implement the. He listed out reasons why he opposed the proposal. "I am citing examples to make you easily understand how dangerous the 'one nation one election' proposal is. There are ample examples and lessons from across the World on how wrong the policy is. Such a decision left a deep scar in Europe and Russia. I believe it isn't needed for India too," he said while addressing his party's general council meeting at Kamarajar Arangam here after being reelected as party president.

Kamal said that if simultaneous polls had been held in 2014 or 2015, it would have led to a complete sweep, resulting in a dictatorship, loss of freedom of speech and dominance of a single



leader against the ethos of the constitution and nation. "You have to be thankful that we escaped from such a fate (from the implementation of simultaneous polls in 2014 polls). It is more like we escaped from a dangerous disease more virulent than COVID," he noted.

Even though some might think such streamlining of polls would be helpful, it is a fallacy, the MNM chief said. Kamal asked the party workers, who had convened at the general council meeting, to imagine what would happen if all traffic lights flash in the same colour at the same time. He stressed the importance of allowing people time to think and

make independent choices in a staggered election process followed at present.

Referring to himself as a 'failed politician', Kamal acknowledged the challenges he faced but added that failure is not a permanent state. He reminded his party workers that positions, including that of Prime Minister, are also not permanent. Without naming anyone, he affirmed that the democratic foundations laid by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi,

Dr BR Ambedkar, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru could not be easily overturned, despite efforts to undermine them.

Groundbreaking New Data Unveils Secrets of Artic Glacier Loss



It is not a secret that glaciers are melting, and that it causes a problem with sea levels rising, but a new way of reading, collecting, and analyzing data using

AI, can make us better understand what is happening with the glaciers in the Arctic. A dedicated team of researchers recently presented a new high-resolution calving front

dataset from 149 glaciers in Svalbard spanning from 1985 to 2023. This innovative dataset, featured in the Earth System Science Data journal, offers an important tool to bet-

ter understand the mechanisms behind glacier calving, or the breakup of icebergs, which can help to enhance our understanding of the climatic drivers behind glacier loss in Svalbard and the Arctic.

The mass loss of glaciers has accelerated in the past several decades, significantly contributing to global sea-level rise. However, many of the mechanisms behind glacier loss, in particular calving dynamics of marine-terminating glaciers, have not been well understood. "This new study uses a state-of-the-art deep learning model to generate a 38-year record of calving front changes for Svalbard tidewater glaciers with an unprecedented density, using high-resolution satellite images," says Dr. Tian Li, a researcher in the EU funded Arctic PASSION project based at Bristol Glaciology Centre and the lead author of the study. The majority of Svalbard's marine-terminating glaciers are retreating with a couple of exceptions. Credit: Dr. Tian Li. The dataset includes almost 125,000 individual calving front traces with the result showing a retreating trend for the majority of Svalbard's glaciers. Using the extensive satellite data catalog, the researchers were able to analyze seasonal and annual variations, as well as capture the timing of surg-

ing events, where the glacier moves substantially over a short period. These findings can help to better understand and predict future glacier loss in the Arctic. According to Tian Li, "This dataset can be used to improve the mass balance assessments for Svalbard tidewater glaciers. Additionally, it enables the exploration of the drivers and processes controlling glacier calving. This is crucial for understanding the calving dynamics, a key indicator of how glaciers respond to climate change."

"The dataset is part of the outputs from Arctic PASSION's work on building an improved observing system for the key climate variables of the Arctic Cryosphere system and will also be integrated into Arctic PASSION's work to build an operational end-to-end forecasting and monitoring system for Arctic land ice." Says Tian Li. Going forward, the team of researchers plans to apply the methodology to all the other tidewater glaciers in the Arctic.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 37 TN fishermen near Neduntheevu



CHENNAI: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 37 fishermen from Tamil Nadu near Neduntheevu for crossing the Indian Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in their territorial waters on Saturday.

According to a Thanthi TV report, one boat and three trawlers were seized by the Sri Lankan Navy. Earlier this week, the Sri Lankan Navy apprehended 14 fishermen from Pudukkottai and seized three mechanised boats on charges of crossing the IMBL.

Chilling Revelations: Ice Shells Expose Alien Ocean Temperatures

A novel method by Cornell scientists uses ice shell thickness to predict ocean temperatures on distant moons, offering new insights into their potential for life. Cornell University astrobiologists have devised a novel way to determine ocean temperatures of distant worlds based on the thickness of their ice shells, effectively conducting oceanography from space.

Available data showing ice thickness variation already allows a prediction for the upper ocean of Enceladus, a moon of Saturn, and a NASA mission's planned orbital survey of Europa's ice shell should do the same for the much larger Jovian moon, enhancing the mission's findings about whether it could support life.

The researchers propose that a process called "ice pumping," which they've observed below Antarctic ice shelves, likely shapes the undersides of Europa's and Enceladus' ice shells, but should also operate at Ganymede and Titan, large moons of Jupiter and Saturn, respectively. They show that temperature ranges



where the ice and ocean interact - important regions where ingredients for life may be exchanged - can be calculated based on an ice shell's slope and changes in water's freezing point at different pressures and salinities. If we can measure the thickness variation across these ice shells, then we're able to get temperature constraints on the oceans, which there's really no other way yet to do without drilling

into them," said Britney Schmidt, associate professor of astronomy and of earth and atmospheric sciences. "This gives us another tool for trying to figure out how these oceans work. And the big question is, are things living there, or could they?"

Along with current and former members of Planetary Habitability and Technology Lab, Schmidt is a co-author of "Ice-Ocean Interactions on Ocean Worlds Influence Ice Shell Topography," published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets.

Icefin Robot Under the Ice Near McMurdo Research Station

The Icefin robot under the ice near McMurdo research station, operated by the US Antarctic Program. Credit: Rob Robbins USAP Interdisciplinary Insights and Future Explorations In 2019, using the remotely operated Icefin robot, Schmidt's team observed ice pumping inside a crevasse beneath Antarctica's Ross Ice Shelf.

The researchers mapped ranges of potential shell thickness, pressure, and salinity for ocean worlds with varying

gravity and concluded that ice pumping would occur in the most probable scenarios, though not in all. They found that ice-ocean interactions on Europa may be similar to those observed beneath the Ross Ice Shelf - evidence that such regions may be some of the most Earth-like on alien worlds, said Justin Lawrence, a visiting scholar at the Cornell Center for Astrophysics and Planetary Science and a program manager at Honeybee Robotics.

NASA's Cassini probe generated data sufficient to predict a temperature range for Enceladus' ocean, based on the slope of its ice shell from poles to equator: minus 1.095 degrees to minus 1.272 degrees Celsius. Knowing temperatures informs understanding of how heat flows through oceans and how they circulate, affecting habitability. The researchers expect ice pumping to be weak at Enceladus, a small moon (the width of Arizona) with dramatic topography, while at larger Europa - nearly the size of Earth's moon - they predict it acts quickly to smooth and flatten the ice shell's base.

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