

Headlines

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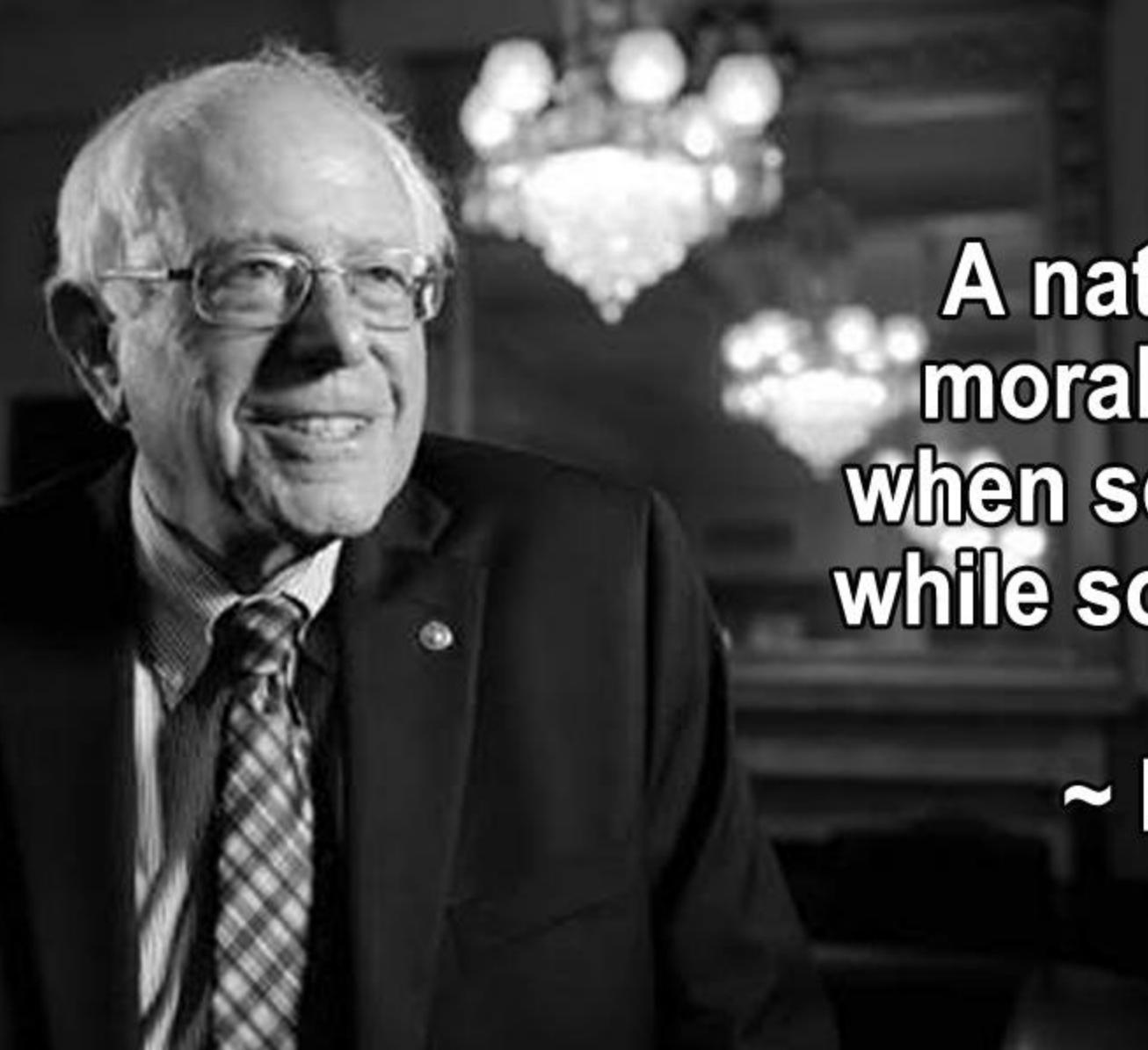
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Join me on Telegram :- Prashant Tiwari

Username:- **UPSCwithPrashant**



**A nation will not survive
morally or economically
when so few have so much,
while so many have so little.**

~ Bernie Sanders

श्रीलं परम भूषणम्



- In India, National Civil Service Day is celebrated every year on April 21 in recognition of the invaluable services rendered by civil servants to the nation.
- This date marks the famous address by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in 1947 to the first batch of IAS at Metcalfe House in Delhi.
- In this speech, he emphasized civil servants as the steel frame of India, the very quality that held the nation together and intact.
- It is a day for civil servants to reflect on their duties, which renew their obligation to serve the public.
- While the occasion honors excellence in governance, it also involves awarding the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration for new and effective work in governance.
- Thus National Civil Service Day is an occasion to salute civil servants but also reminds us of the core values of integrity, commitment, and impartiality that constitute the spirit of Civil Services of India.



UPSC IAS

PRELIMS TO INTERVIEW (P2I)

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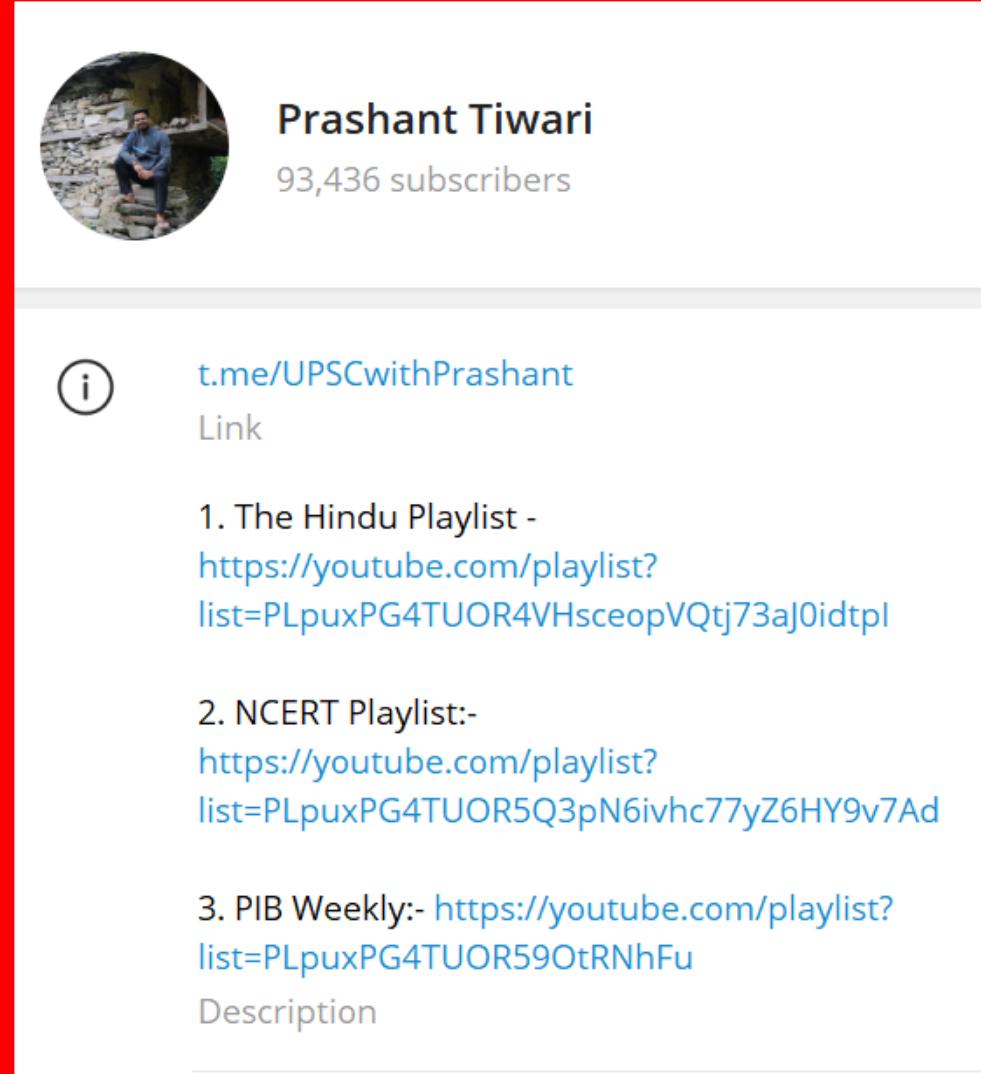
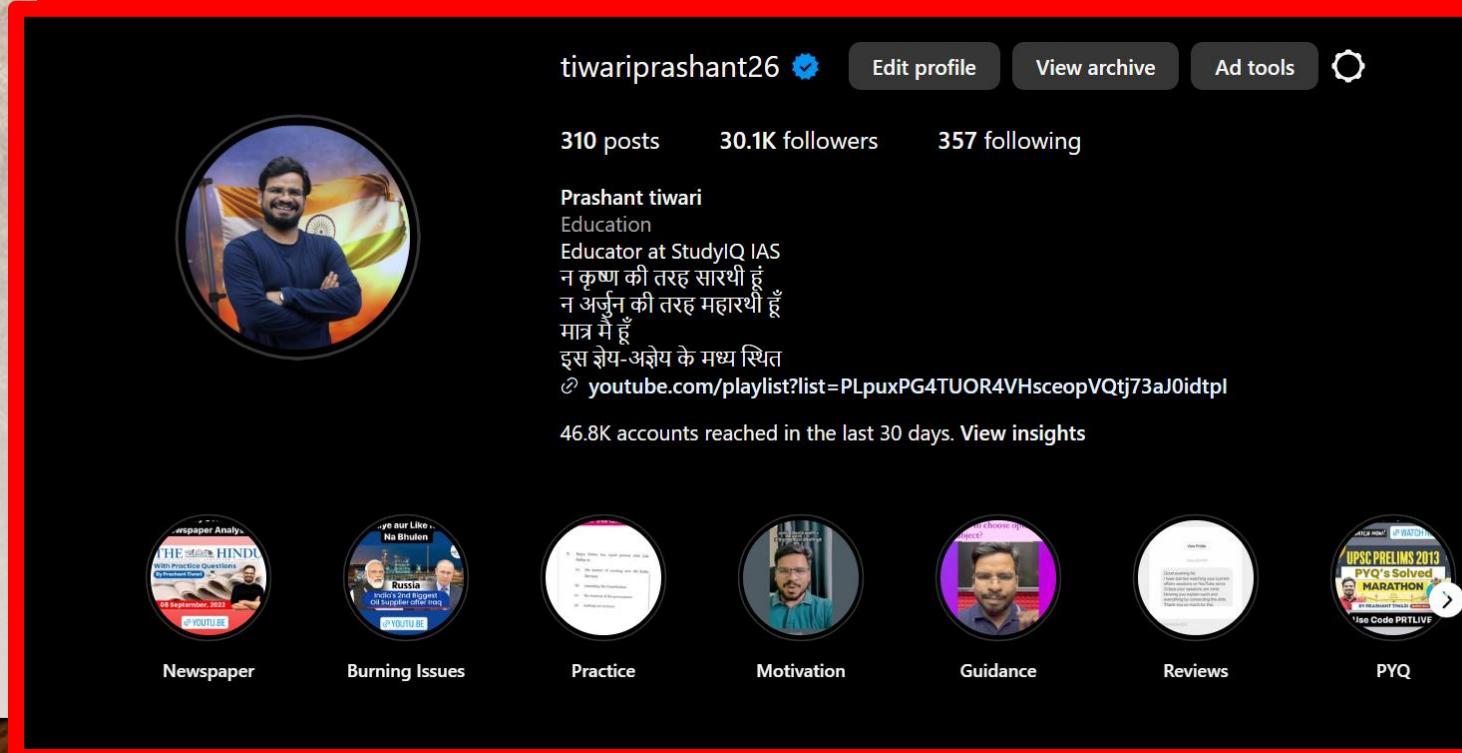
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Link

1. The Hindu Playlist -
[https://youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLpxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aj0idtp1](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aj0idtp1)
2. NCERT Playlist:-
[https://youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLpxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad)
3. PIB Weekly:- [https://youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLpxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)
Description

To address demand of loco pilots, Railways fitting toilets in engines

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Though the Railway Board recently found a demand of loco pilots for a toilet break while running trains to be not “operationally feasible”, the Railway Ministry has said it is trying its best to ramp up urinal facilities in locomotives.

To queries sent by *The Hindu*, the Ministry said in a written reply 883 locos had been fitted with toilets.

“While before 2014, no locomotive was fitted with urinal facility, initiatives have been taken to provide waterless urinal facilities in locomotives since 2018 based on feasibility, with 883 locos having been fitted with the same. Also 7075 locos have been fitted with air-conditioning systems,” it said.

“Toilets are being fitted in all new locomotives that are being manufactured.



The Railway Ministry says that older locomotives are being retrofitted with toilets. GETTY IMAGES

Also, older locomotives are being retrofitted with toilets. Design modifications are being done in older locomotives for this purpose.”

The Railways have close to 15,000 functional locomotives.

A top Railway official said that when a train had many stops, loco pilots could use the toilets at the stations.

Every train runs with a loco pilot and an assistant loco pilot. “While the solution is to have loos inside locomotives, new design locos have toilets inside – like Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat and Namo Bharat trains. While older locos don’t have loos, loco pilots can use loos at stations,” the official said.

On short-haul trains, the crew can use toilets at the

terminal stations. In case of passenger trains, the crew uses toilets when the train is standing at the station.

In 2016, based on recommendations of a high-power committee, duty hours of loco pilots were reduced from 10 hours to nine, the Ministry said in its reply.

On long-haul trains, the entire crew, including train manager, loco pilot and assistant loco pilot, were changed after some hours. For example, the Mumbai Central-New Delhi Tejas Rajdhani Express (train no. 12951) has eight stops and three slots of duty changes for the crew in a journey that takes 15-and-a-half hours.

The official said that the train crew had designated time slots for duty that mostly average seven hours, and they deboard at designated stops.

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Fact

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Two cheetahs move to new home in Madhya Pradesh

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav releases Prabhas and Pawak into Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary; the six-year-old males are from the batch of cheetahs brought from South Africa in February 2023

Mehul Malpani

BHOPAL

Two cheetahs, Prabhas and Pawak, moved to their new home as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav released them into the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary on Sunday.

The six-year-old males are from the batch of cheetahs brought to the Kuno National Park from South Africa in February 2023.

They will now sprint in their 64-sq. km enclosure at Gandhi Sagar that is spread between Mandsaur and Neemuch districts, with the Chambal river cutting the sanctuary into almost two equal halves.

Calling the Cheetah Project an ambitious initiative by Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Yadav said the goal was to increase the number of cheetahs in India and preserve the species. Cheetahs were first introduced at Kuno in September 2022.

“Encouragingly, the project is achieving success. Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary has become the second site in the State, after Kuno National Park, where chee-



New territory: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav releases a cheetah into the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. PTI

tahs are being reintroduced,” he said. Mr. Yadav said efforts were on to bring more cheetahs from South Africa, Kenya, and Botswana.

Four to arrive

Four cheetahs are scheduled to be translocated to Gandhi Sagar from Botswana in May, while four will arrive later in the second phase, the State government had said in a state-

ment on April 18.

Mr. Yadav claimed that following the intercontinental translocation, Kuno had recorded the highest number of cheetah births in the world.

Earlier in the day, a 20-member team, led by Kuno’s Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF), Uttam Kumar Sharma, transported the two cheetahs by road to Gandhi Sagar, located over 250 km away from Kuno.

The team will spend seven days at the sanctuary, during which the Gandhi Sagar staff, who have received extensive training at Kuno, will get accustomed to handling the big cats.

With the movement of two of its cats, Kuno now has 24 cheetahs – 14 in the wild and 10 in enclosures.

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Content.

- Project Cheetah is an initiative by the Government of India to reintroduce cheetahs into the wild after they were declared extinct in the country in 1952.
- Project Cheetah involves importing cheetahs from Africa and establishing them in suitable habitats within India, particularly in national parks and wildlife reserves.
- The goal of Project Cheetah is to restore the ecological balance, promote biodiversity, and enhance wildlife tourism and conservation efforts in India.
- Although attempts to relocate Cheetahs to India began in 2009, the Supreme Court of India finally gave the green signal for such efforts in 2020.
- For this Project Cheetah, India has partnered with the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), an international organisation founded in Namibia in 1990 dedicated to saving the cheetah in the wild.



African Cheetah

Vulnerable

Appendix - I

Africa (Northwest Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa)

Diverse diet due to bigger habitat

Bigger in size as compared to asiatic cheetah, slightly bigger build and sturdy legs and neck



Asian Cheetah

IUCN STATUS

CITES STATUS

DISTRIBUTION

FOOD INTAKE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Critically Endangered

Appendix - I

Only few left in Iran

Limited sources, medium sized prey like Chinkara, Gazelle etc.

Slightly smaller and slender than the African Cheetah, their neck is much smaller and slender. Their legs are slender

Content.

- ‘Reintroduction’ of a species means releasing it in an area where it can survive.
- Reintroducing large carnivores has become a widely recognised strategy for conserving threatened species and restoring ecosystem functions.
- Cheetahs are thought to have vanished from India after Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Koriya hunted and killed the last three Asiatic cheetahs recorded in 1947.
- It was declared extinct by the Government in 1952.
- Under Project Cheetah, the Prime Minister of India released wild Cheetahs in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- The Cheetahs introduced in the Kuno National Park were brought from Namibia.
- This is the world’s first inter-continental wild carnivore translocation project.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):

- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- It was established in 2006 under Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

NTCA Composition:

- Minister in charge of MoEFCC (as Chairperson),
- Minister of State in MoEFCC (as Vice-Chairperson),
- three members of Parliament, the Secretary (MoEFCC), and other members.
- The Authority lays down standards, guidelines for tiger conservation in the Tiger Reserves, National Parks and Sanctuaries.
- The Tiger Conservation Authority would be required to prepare an Annual Report, which would be laid in the Parliament along with the Audit Report.

Tackle heatwaves with short- and long-term measures

In March 15, some States and cities in India experienced the first of severe heatwaves for the year 2025. This was 20 days earlier than the first severe heatwave in 2024. In the last decade, the number of severe heat days and the severity/intensity of heatwaves have been rising. The year 2024 was the warmest year on record at about 1.55°C above pre-industrial level, according to the World Meteorological Organization. In India, December 2022 was the hottest December since temperature monitoring in the country started in 1901. The frequency of heatwaves in India has increased in the last two decades, in comparison to the previous two decades.

The impact of rising external temperature and heatwaves along with humidity and wind speed, is reflected in the form of heat stress. When the outside temperature reaches close to our body temperature of 37° Celsius, the body fails to release the internal heat which is generated as a part of the basal metabolic rate. Thus, one starts to feel heat-stressed. Heat stress can affect multiple organs including the kidneys, the liver and the brain, and may cause sickness and even death.

Socio-economic impact and equity issue
However, heatwaves have many non-health and socio-economic impacts. Climate change, specifically rising temperature, is one of the causes of farming sector stress in India. With rising temperatures, it becomes difficult for farmers to work in the field and harvest comes down. Livestock can die, further impacting the poor and farmers. Heat stress can reduce livestock production, food production, farm productivity and the ability of outdoor workers/workforce productivity. As India is a labour-intensive country, especially in the agriculture and construction sector, heatwaves result in an individual's reduced working ability. Thus, loss of work hours and loss of job reduce personal and family income. In India, up to 75% of the workforce, or 380 million people are dependent on heat-exposed labour. There are estimates that heat stress results in an economic loss of 3% to 5% of GDP in many countries including India. There are estimates that in 2023, nearly 6% of work hours in India were lost due to heat stress. As temperature rises, electricity demand and power cuts affect industrial production. Heatwaves and heat stress impact personal income and may slow down a nation's economic growth.

Heat-related data indicate that the impact of heat stress is worst on the poor, the marginalised, migrants, subsistence workers, women, and the elderly. Women are additionally impacted due to social norms such as working in the kitchen, the need to wear clothing due to cultural requirements, or space allocated for sleeping. From every angle, it is a matter of inequity.

As early as the middle of the 19th century, researchers and scientists made observations that urban areas have a higher temperature than rural areas, arriving at the inference that much of the rise in temperature is human made. Yet, it took



Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya

is a practising physician and expert in global health, with nearly 17 years of professional work experience with the United Nations system including the World Health Organization and UNICEF

another 150 years for the first heat and health action plans (HHAP) to be prepared in the European countries; ironically, the first such efforts were from the non-tropical regions, between 2003 to 2008.

In 2013, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, became the first municipal corporation in Asia to develop a heat action plan (HAP). Since then, and in the last decade, more than 23 Indian States and around 140 cities across India have State- and city-level HAPs. India's National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) also provides heat advisories and other health-related information through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Heat action plans need nuances

Most HAPs have four to five components, i.e., early prediction of heatwaves to raise alerts; increasing awareness among the communities/people on actions to be taken; and preparing and getting the health system ready to manage health conditions. The fourth component of such plans focuses on ensuring long-term measures to reduce heat, government initiatives to increase the number of trees and parks and keeping gardens open for public use. There is experience, from various cities, about painting rooftops white to reflect heat. The fifth component of HAP must be collecting, analysing and interpreting heat stress, and also morbidity and mortality data. Though many Indian States and cities have HAPs, their implementation demands more attention. These HAPs have shown partial success and only in some settings where city authorities work with the State government, engage local public health institutions, subject experts, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.

As India might be heading into another warm year, there are some learning and action points which should be considered.

First, every State should consider developing and/or updating its HAP, informed and guided by the learnings and best practices from the existing plans. The HAP should factor in humidity and not just temperature. The HAPs should be developed based on a local vulnerability assessment. Plans should ensure the clear accountability and the responsibility of various identified stakeholders. These should be activated from the beginning of March.

Second, a review article published in the medical journal, *Preventive Medicine: Research & Reviews*, noted that most Indian cities have excess mortality due to heat stress, which demands better heat stress-related data collection. Besides, when heat-stress related data is not comprehensive and an under-estimation, it is worthwhile interpreting available data to review who the people who suffer a heat stroke are and which part of the city they live in, which, in turn, would provide useful, actionable and potentially lifesaving information.

Third, a few countries such as the United Kingdom have started Heat Health Alert (HHA) systems which use both daytime and nighttime

maximum temperatures. The HAPs in India also need to factor in the day and nighttime temperature monitoring. There is also a need for more sophisticated and specific warning systems which can predict thermal comfort and the timings during the day when temperatures are likely to be low. This can ensure health as well as continuity of work such as school and office functioning.

Fourth, the long-term preventive measures of HAPs need to be strengthened. Better building and urban infrastructure and building material need to be promoted. Heatwaves impact the poor the most, and it is during these periods that governments should also consider financial support for informal sector workers who may suffer wage losses.

Fifth, a 2022 study from three Asian countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) suggested that the universal 'stay indoors' advisory during specific hours may not be helpful for all families. People in a poor neighbourhood and in a confined space that is surrounded by high-rise buildings may experience higher temperatures in their homes and outside, in comparison to the rest of the city. Even within cities, there is a need for geography and social context-specific heat advisories.

Need for a people-centric approach

Sixth, it is time that more Indian cities start 'summer or cold shelters' similar to winter shelters. There are already some States that are developing a 'cool roof policy' to promote the use of material in building roofs which will keep houses cool by reflecting sunlight. Prevention of heatwaves needs more practicable and science-based innovations.

Seventh, during heatwaves, local authorities carry out a lot of short-term measures such as advisories to drink a lot of water. However, to make that happen, municipalities and city authorities need to ensure the easy availability of drinking water points, and the availability of electrolyte solution/ORS powder. Offices and workplaces (both formal and informal) should allow staggered work times and also early morning and late evening work. Work can be closed during the day, especially for those who work in the informal sector and open spaces.

The evidence is that investments in heat-related actions and adaptation are highly cost effective. Therefore, every effort should be made to reduce the economic burden of heat stress in hospitals and emergency rooms and its indirect social and economic costs. With every passing year, in India and globally, the average temperature is rising. Therefore, the actions should be focused not just on short-term measures but also on long-term strategies to address the challenges of rising temperatures and steps such as enhanced coordination between multiple agencies, with *inter alia* initiatives such as provision of insurance coverage for lost work days. If policymakers and planners remember that a heatwave is an equity issue and that the approach has to be people-centric, half of the task will be done.

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- Thus, one starts to feel heat-stressed. Heat stress can affect multiple organs including the kidneys, the liver and the brain, and may cause sickness and even death.
- However, heatwaves have many non-health and socio-economic impacts. Climate change, specifically rising temperature, is one of the causes of farming sector stress in India.

Content.

- Livestock can die, further impacting the poor and farmers. Heat stress can reduce livestock production, food production, farm productivity and the ability of outdoor workers/ workforce productivity.
- As India is a labour-intensive country, especially in the agriculture and construction sector, heatwaves result in an individual's reduced working ability.
- Thus, loss of work hours and loss of job reduce personal and family income.
- In India, up to 75% of the workforce, or 380 million people are dependent on heat-exposed labour.
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- In 2013, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, became the first municipal corporation in Asia to develop a heat action plan (HAP).
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- India's National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) also provides heat advisories and other health-related information through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
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Enabling legislation

**Nomination of persons with disabilities
to local bodies is a pioneering move**

Affirmative action remains one of the most effective ways of addressing historical wrongs and systemic deprivation. The most recent attempt to address deep-rooted discrimination against persons with disabilities in Tamil Nadu is likely to have a far-reaching impact for the community. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin tabled two Bills in the Assembly last week to increase the number of persons with disabilities in all local bodies in the State. While one Bill seeks to nominate persons with disabilities to all town panchayats, municipal councils and municipal corporations with amendments to the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, the second intends to bring into law the decision to nominate one person with disabilities to all village panchayats, panchayat union councils and district panchayats by amending the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act. Mr. Stalin said once these Bills are enacted, there would be guaranteed posts for 650 persons with disabilities in urban local bodies, 12,913 in village panchayats, and 388 in panchayat unions, besides 37 persons with disabilities in district panchayats. At the moment, there are only 35 persons with disabilities in urban local bodies, he informed the House. Besides ensuring dignity for persons with disabilities, and eroding stigma and discrimination, this change would empower the community, involving their representatives in decision-making at the grassroots level.

It is the role of the government to take along its citizens, particularly those who may have an impediment that might come in the way of their harnessing equal opportunities as the rest of the population. After the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution that allowed for one-third representation of all seats in panchayati raj institutions and urban local bodies to be reserved for women, some States, including Tamil Nadu, increased this to 50%. Since then, the very raucous and long-drawn-out battle was finally resolved in 2023, with the Women's Reservation Act being passed for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. This will be effective after the publication of the Census conducted following the Act's commencement. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu's effort to appoint persons with disability is the first such effort in the country at bringing a marginalised community not merely into the mainstream but as leaders of society, thus raising their profile and larger acceptance, besides bringing change that will benefit the rest of the society. Given the initial experience of implementing women's reservation in panchayati raj, where women panchayat leaders were de facto replaced by the husband in decision-making, it is important that the government ensures the benefit truly reaches the intended – in this case, persons with disabilities.

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Calling out American trade illegality

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The world is shaken by the reckless decision of the United States to impose reciprocal tariffs, which were announced on April 2, 2025, though it has been paused for 90 days, barring the tariff rates on China. The illegality of these tariffs under international trade law, as defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO), makes little difference to U.S. President Donald Trump, who treats international norms with derision. Since the announcement of the tariffs, countries have responded in various ways, with some openly criticising the U.S. while others have chosen to remain silent.

Criticising the U.S.

Several nations have condemned the U.S. for imposing illegal tariffs and undermining the fundamental principles of international trade. Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong remarked recently that the imposition of reciprocal tariffs "is a complete repudiation of the MFN principle", which is a cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. Similarly, Brazil stated that these tariffs "violate" the U.S.'s commitments under WTO rules. Another BRICS nation, China, has openly criticised the U.S. for breaching its WTO obligations and has initiated a dispute within the WTO. In addition, China has imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. imports. Japan has also formally stated that the unilateral imposition of tariff rates contradicts WTO agreements. Canada, too, has not hesitated to challenge the legality of the U.S. actions. It has imposed retaliatory tariffs and filed a legal claim at the WTO regarding U.S. tariffs on Canadian automobiles and automobile parts. The positions adopted by these countries are justified; international trade is complex and cannot operate effectively without fundamental rules. If a powerful country disregards these rules, other nations that uphold the rule-based system must



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India's weak-kneed response is jarring especially at a time when it should be leading the Global South and advocating a fair and just trading order

call out that country.

While some nations have refrained from explicitly condemning the U.S. for violating international law, they have expressed general dissatisfaction with the unjustifiable increase in tariff rates. For instance, Fiji referred to the tariff hikes as 'unfair', and Italy's Prime Minister described them as a 'mistake'.

However, some countries have chosen to maintain silence regarding the U.S.'s illegal actions, issuing insipid statements that they are carefully examining the U.S.'s decision. These countries neither criticise the U.S.'s blatantly illegal actions nor formally express their discontent. India falls into this category.

Reasons behind India's silence

There are primarily two reasons presented to justify India's silence on the U.S. tariffs. First, India is negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the U.S., and it is deemed not in India's interest to criticise the U.S. for its illegal actions publicly. This reasoning is questionable. The U.S. is also negotiating with India but has not hesitated to express its dissatisfaction with India's high tariff rates publicly, even when they are legal. Mr. Trump has openly criticised India's tariff levels on several occasions. Yet, it did not prevent the U.S. from negotiating with India even prior to the announcement of the reciprocal tariffs. Moreover, India is not the only country negotiating bilaterally with the U.S.; many nations are in similar situations, and yet have publicly called out the U.S. for its unilateral actions. Claiming that the U.S.'s actions violate WTO law should not hinder negotiations, as New Delhi is not confronting Washington by imposing retaliatory tariffs but reminding it to honour international trade rules. Presumably, India will privately communicate this to the U.S., but a public statement would show its commitment to

a rule-based trading order.

The second reason is that the WTO's dispute settlement body is currently dysfunctional. Therefore, calling out the U.S. for its illegal actions, such as by filing a legal claim at the WTO, is useless. This transactional perspective is flawed because it limits the role of international law to material outcomes such as compliance and enforcement. We must move beyond this narrow view. A key function of any legal system is its ability to differentiate between sheer public power and legitimate authority. Even though international law may not always and immediately punish decision-makers for non-compliance, it enables other actors to question those in power and to argue that their actions are illegitimate. Both China and Canada are well aware of the dysfunction of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. However, this has not deterred them from filing legal claims against the U.S.; they understand that they can use international law to strengthen their case for legitimacy.

Respect for trade rules

Recently, around 40 WTO member countries, including many developing nations, issued a statement supporting trade multilateralism and WTO rules in response to U.S.-imposed tariffs. Notably, India, which often champions a rule-based trading system, did not sign this statement. In accordance with its professed vision, this is a crucial moment for India to lead the Global South by advocating trade multilateralism and building a coalition against unilateral actions. History should remember India as a nation that defended national interests while taking up the cudgels for the developing world to establish a fair and just trading order.

The views expressed are personal

Content.

- The world is shaken by the reckless decision of the United States to impose reciprocal tariffs, which were announced on April 2, 2025, though it has been paused for 90 days, barring the tariff rates on China.
- The illegality of these tariffs under international trade law, as defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO), makes little difference to U.S. President Donald Trump, who treats international norms with derision.
- Criticising the U.S.
- Several nations have condemned the U.S. for imposing illegal tariffs and undermining the fundamental principles of international trade.
- India's silence

Content.

- There are primarily two reasons presented to justify India's silence on the U.S. tariffs. First, India is negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the U.S., and it is deemed not in India's interest to criticise the U.S. for its illegal actions publicly.
- The second reason is that the WTO's dispute settlement body is currently dysfunctional. Therefore, calling out the U.S. for its illegal actions, such as by filing a legal claim at the WTO, is useless.
- Recently, around 40 WTO member countries, including many developing nations, issued a statement supporting trade multilateralism and WTO rules in response to U.S.-imposed tariffs. Notably, India, which often champions a rule-based trading system, did not sign this statement.

U.S. visas issued to Indian students decline by 30%

The decline in the number of visas issued to Indian students was the highest among the top source countries by a significant margin

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

In February 2025, the first month of the second Donald Trump administration, the number of student visas issued to Indians by the U.S. dropped by 30% compared to the same month the previous year. This decline was notably higher than the overall 4.75% decrease in student visas granted by the U.S. to all countries combined. Moreover, the drop in student visas issued to Indians was much sharper than the decline in visas issued to Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese students.

This worrying statistic comes at a tumultuous time when the visas of over 1,000 international students, including Indians, across the U.S. have been terminated or revoked without much notice. According to the Associated Press, at least 1,100 students across 170 colleges across the U.S. have been affected. Many students have filed lawsuits against the terminations. Associated Press quoted the name of at least one such Indian student, Manikanta Pasula, who was about to get a Master's degree in computer science at Rivier University in New Hampshire. Chinmay Deore, along with four other students at public universities in Michigan, have also filed a lawsuit. According to a report in *The Hindu*, the Indian government too has shifted its stance, from advising the students to "follow the law" to "offering them support" by reaching out to the affected students. Officials of the External Affairs Ministry are now advising affected students to pursue the "legal route".

Chart 1 shows the percentage drop in F-1 visas (student visas) issued in February 2025 compared to February 2024. It shows the data only for the top four countries that received the most number of student visas in February 2024.

In February 2025, 6,804 F-1 vi-

sas were issued in total – a 4.75% drop from the 7,143 visas issued in February 2024. During the same period, the number of F-1 visas issued fell from 1,179 to 1,117 (a 5.2% drop) for Chinese students, 500 to 452 for Japanese students (a 9.6% drop), and from 326 to 302 (a 7.4%) for Vietnamese students. The number of F-1 visas issued for Indian students dropped from 590 to 411 (a 30% decline).

Moreover, the waiting time for a student visa is the longest in Delhi compared to the waiting time in the capitals of the other countries listed in Chart 1. On average, Indian students (including exchange visitors) wait 58 days for a U.S. visa, whereas students in Tokyo wait only 15 days, and those in Hanoi and Beijing face an average wait time of just two days (**Chart 2**).

While the recent overall decline in student visas, and its disproportionate impact on Indian students, may be attributed to Mr. Trump's aggressive policies, the struggles faced by international students are not new. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sharp decline in applications for international student programmes. As a result, there was a surge in applications in the post-pandemic years, which led to a significant increase in rejections.

Chart 3 compares the denial rates of F-1 visas and all other visa categories from 2013 to 2024. From 2013 to 2021, the denial rates for both categories remained relatively similar, but a sharp divergence emerged in the post-pandemic years. In 2024, 41% of student visa applications were denied, compared to the 22.1% of all other types of visa applications that were denied – a gap of nearly 19 percentage points. Before the pandemic, the largest difference was just 6 points (in 2016).

In fact, in 2023 and 2024, over half a million students were denied visas. **Chart 4** shows the absolute number of F-1 visas issued and denied by the U.S. between 2013 and 2024.

Indian students bear the brunt

The data for the charts were sourced from Travel.State.Gov (U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs)



Chart 1: Percentage drop in F-1 visas (student visas) issued in February 2025 compared to February 2024



Chart 2: Student visa wait times (in days) for the capitals of countries mentioned in Chart 1

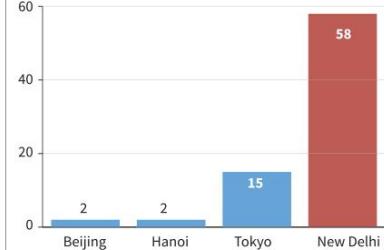


Chart 3: Denial rates of F-1 visas (student visas) and all other visa categories from 2013 to 2024. Figures in %

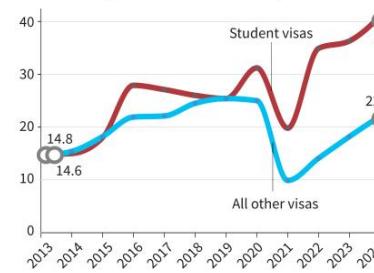
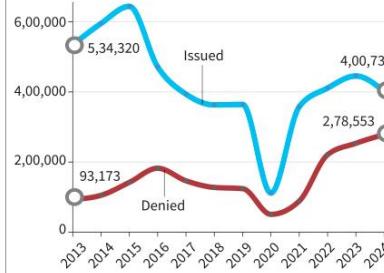


Chart 4: Absolute number of F-1 visas issued and denied by the U.S. between 2013 and 2024

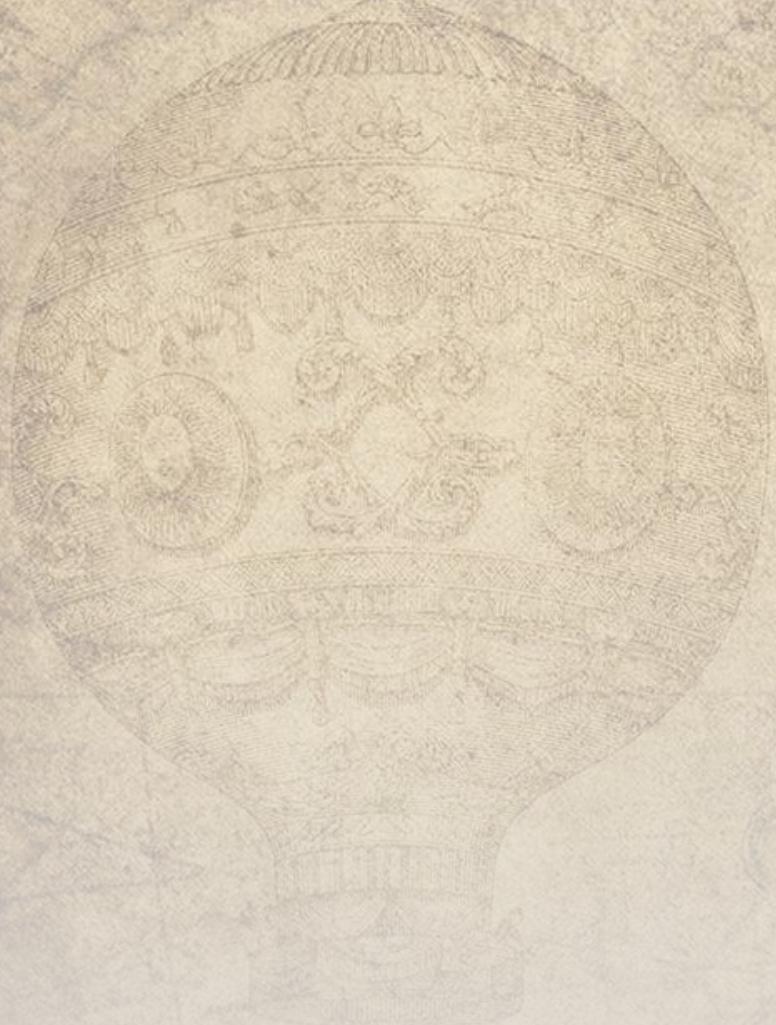


Content.

- In February 2025, the first month of the second Donald Trump administration, the number of student visas issued to Indians by the U.S. dropped by 30% compared to the same month the previous year.
- This decline was notably higher than the overall 4.75% decrease in student visas granted by the U.S. to all countries combined.
- Moreover, the drop in student visas issued to Indians was much sharper than the decline in visas issued to Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese students.
- F-1 visas (student visas)

Fact

- While the recent overall decline in student visas,, and its disproportionate impact on Indian students, may be attributed to Mr. Trump's aggressive policies, the struggles faced by international students are not new.
- From 2013 to 2021, the denial rates for both categories remained relatively similar, but a sharp divergence emerged in the post-pandemic years.
- In 2024, 41% of student visa applications were denied, compared to the 22.1% of all other types of visa applications that were denied — a gap of nearly 19 percentage points. Before the pandemic, the largest difference was just 6 points (in 2016).
- In fact, in 2023 and 2024, over half a million students were denied visas.





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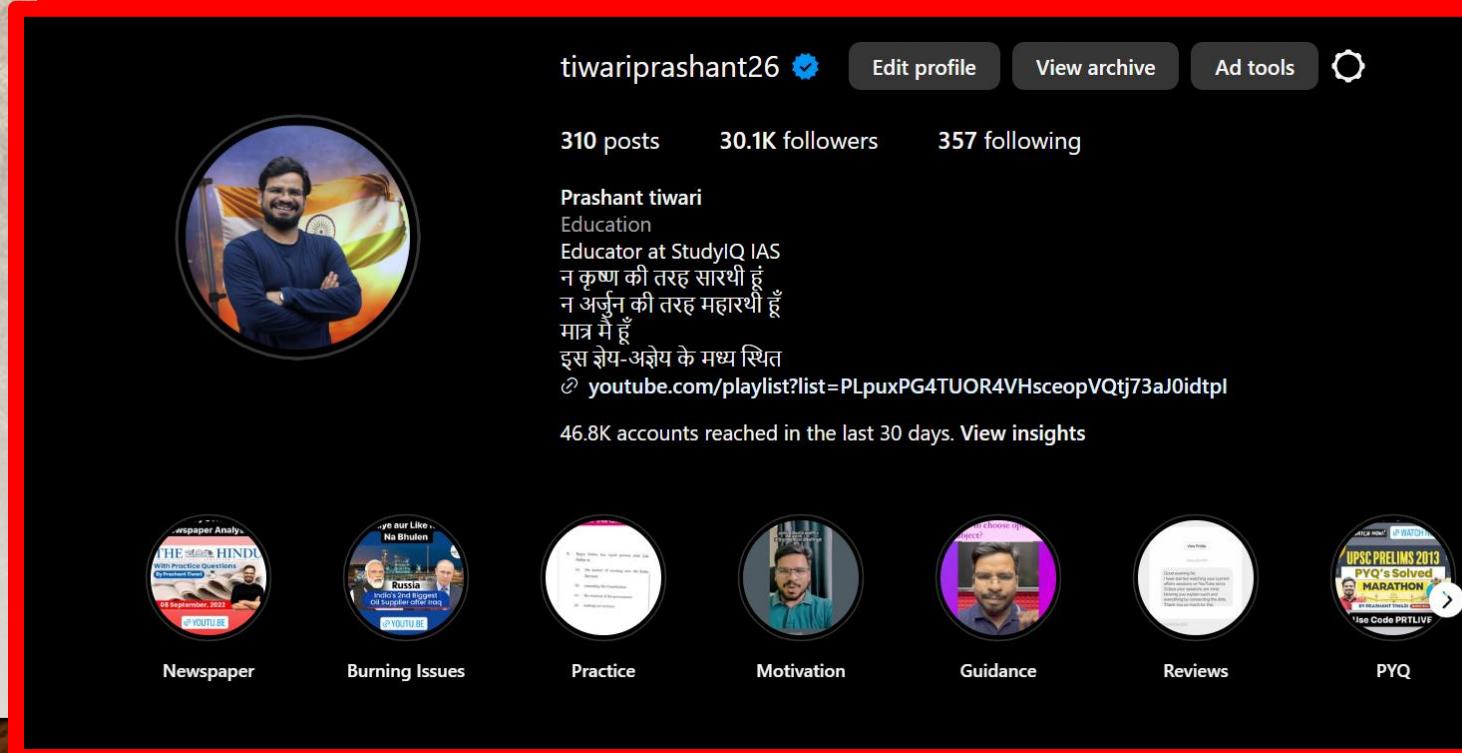
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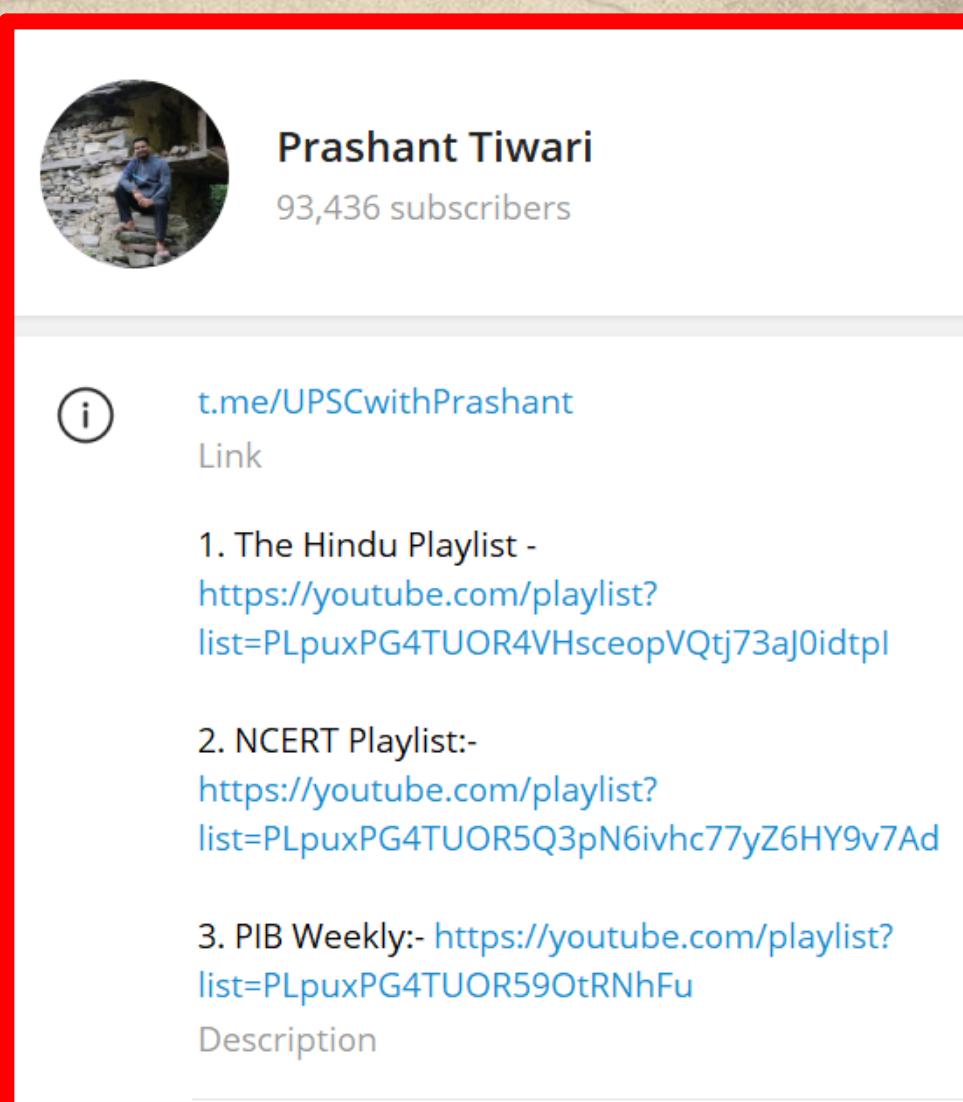
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